

**Inaugural speech by Willy Brandt as the new President of the Socialists  
Internationale at their congress in Geneva, November 26, 1976**

There are new, serious duties for me. I will try to do them justice  
to become and connect with it the hope that from this Geneva Congress  
May something go out that leaves its mark.

We need a new start in our cooperation. I want my contribution  
but I depend on a lot of support: on good advice and  
on the willingness to understand and communicate with one another, tasks  
to take over, to bring forces together and in reasonable coordination  
take meaningful initiatives.

Honesty towards all of you dictates that I be factual  
The limitations of my presidency make it clear: I want to and may one day  
not my duties as chairman of the German Social Democrats  
to neglect. On the other hand, my responsibility as President of the  
International only result from what we decide together and what  
results from our shared convictions. The chairman of the  
Internationale is not a guardian of the parties, and I don't want for that in either  
Be claimed what the individual parties due to the  
Conditions under which they operate and on the basis of their personal responsibility  
consider represented to be correct.

Before I comment on the tasks of the International, I would like one

Greetings are addressed to women and men who want their freedom and freedom persecuted in many countries because of socialist convictions and in Prisons are tormented. You should know that we have good thoughts are with them and feel closely connected to them.

This also applies to those who leave home because of their convictions had to and possibly also have been expatriated. We have to as always ever see to it that our states offer safe refuge for the exiles.

I send a warm greeting to the movements that are in different parts of the world struggling for peace and freedom and social Righteousness. I call the women's peace campaign in Northern Ireland the Struggle for the freedom of the majority in southern Africa, the self-sacrificing struggle

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about social progress in large regions of Latin America and Asia. All over, where it is about the servitude and exploitation of man by the Overcoming people, we are also affected, challenged and also called to find ways and means of solidarity.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to those who came before us in the Socialist Have carried international responsibility. Name them all as representative of them I am our friend Bruno Pittermann, whose services everyone here knows. Of the Precipitation of what those who worked before us have achieved remains in our care. We want to pass on as much as possible to the young women and men who follow us in the chain of generations. I want that we adjust to close contact with the forces that are coming up, with which we - I hope - the renewal and strengthening of the democratic Can advance socialism a good deal.

We stand in the tradition of the International as a strong idea and as one now a historical movement on which much hope was focused - very much more than it could fulfill. That forces us to be humble. Nothing is gained when we take words for reality or ourselves  
Do much more than we can do.

112 years have passed since the International Workers' Association in London was launched. 87 years since the International Workers' Congress in Paris, 53 years old, since I was a little boy in the Hamburg trade union building came when after the First World War the Socialist Workers' International was re-established. 25 years since - after the devastation of the Second World War - our current international union through the Frankfurt Congress could be brought on the way.

If you will, this is a story of defeat:

Defeats of peoples, reason, humanity. The two world wars could not be prevented. Always new forms of tyranny spread. Socialism as a freedom movement has been widely perverted.  
But you can also ask:

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What would the peoples have been spared, at least after the first? World War I listened to the advice of democratic socialists? And How much better the world would be today if the proposals would have penetrated, which from far-reaching responsibility before 1945 in bomb-ridden London or through us in Stockholm in an international Group of democratic socialists were put on paper? Or the one out

the socialist resistance in France and Italy came from the Indian freedom struggle and the Japanese labor movement from which great American reservoir of freedom and the many small springs of one global struggle for national and social liberation?

Many warnings were ignored or did not get through. In many places were first made painful experiences in vain. That would be just a story of failure if we hadn't learned anything from this experience ourselves.

At the same time, we also have reason to be proud: in a large number of countries democratic socialists have tried their hand at government and - together with the trade unions - can help make that out Millions upon millions of lawless proletarians have become citizens with equal rights are. In almost all parts of the world, the age of colonialism is behind us. In more areas than we may be aware from day to day, freedom-socialist thoughts found their expression in the thinking of those who too have to act, or in the rebellion of those who no longer only deal with themselves want to leave.

Most of us should agree that the general Orientation on which our Frankfurt Declaration of Principles of 1951 is based lies deserves to be affirmed. We will also agree that the Experiences - and what experiences! - of the past quarter of a century need to be processed. We cannot escape this while we are us - and that is the decisive factor! - the tasks of the 80s and 90s turn to. I do not want us to have the debate on the programmatic Neglect the basics, but it would be just as wrong if the practical Work of coordination, the exchange of opinions and experiences, the Understanding about joint actions would be neglected.

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This begs the question of what the International is and what it is not, what it is be and what it cannot be. In any case, it never was and it never will be an international command center supporting the member parties prescribes which way they should go in their countries. Allegations, this is an international party with uniform doctrines nourished reactionary circles with the intention of getting us close to forces move, which are in the interests of their power development of a centralized structure serve.

All of this has nothing to do with the reality of our community. The Socialist International cannot and does not want to do without that Complexity and multicolor of their member parties that make up the result long historical developments are and the expression of different objective conditions. Even the subjective differences that appear on some We do not want sub-areas of differing opinions gelatinize. There was no social democratic world executive and there will be no to not give.

This is a consortium of sovereign parties formed by a number common basic convictions and each other - in many cases since many decades - feel connected to each other. Not instructions or Majority decisions that are alien to life shape the cooperation, but ideas and moral impulses and, last but not least, the search for common Solutions. And this in a world that is increasingly dependent on new, cross-border answers to questions that are, on the one hand, of destructive Acting threat, on the other hand, from survival in freedom and dignity.

I spoke of the program, of the principles that unite us. We should reflect on the continuity that our struggle for peace and freedom, based on justice and solidarity for many decades.

Let us remember the inaugural address of 1864. The simple laws of  
 Morality and law, which regulate the relationships of private individuals  
 should, so it said there, should also be the supreme laws of traffic  
 Nations assert. And in the statutes for the 1st International is called

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es: The emancipation of the “working class”, the broad disadvantaged strata  
 So, be neither local nor national, but *social*  
 Task that includes all countries in which modern society  
 consists.

Who of us would deny that a compass was given to us here  
 that is not out of date! Not even because of the proud achievements that the  
 Labor movement, the social democratic parties and the trade unions  
 have got behind them. Not even through fundamental changes that  
 characteristic of the relationship between states in this part of the world  
 became. I say this in this place with the waking awareness of how  
 it stood between Germany and France and what happened to it  
 Has developed better.

Or let's think of our anti-imperialist tradition! The contours of a  
 new developments were clearly mapped out. So, as the 2nd International  
 Condemned the prevailing colonial policy in Paris in 1900; than 1907 in Stuttgart the  
 Seventh Congress called for the earth's mineral resources to be at the service of  
 To face the development of all humanity; as we are in the middle of the second  
 World War I clearly linked our peace goals with the postulates of  
 Independence of states and self-determination of peoples.  
 Democratic socialists thought about people spanning early on

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Solidarity and global shared responsibility. They were more modern than their environment.

Above all, we are also in the continuity of the struggle for a socialism, who presupposes freedom and brings about freedom: the individual should develop freely in a society and in a world where the exploitation of people is overcome by people. This led to a quarrel, to a rupture with the communists, it led to clashes that were sacrificial and are far from finished. The relationship to freedom and democracy is also the test bench that determines the further development of some Communist parties will provide information.

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Democratic socialists focus on people, on their longing for freedom and peace, his urge for justice and never lost his ability to show solidarity, to show passion. This is his tradition, and that is what makes them strong.

The intellectual and political foundations of our international cooperation we will have to measure against reality again and again. Much will be of it depend on how we will shape our relationship with related parties and movements in regions where other than our traditional requirements are given: in both parts of America, in Africa, in Asia. It is important to make common ground fruitful in order to bring common goals closer get. We are not allowed to take into account the flexibility of cooperation absence. This is part of the fact that the International is not only seen as an association,

but understands it as a political organism.

The compass remains on peace and freedom, on justice and Solidarity. The way there must be free from discrimination, far from any discrimination Dictatorship, devoid of any imperialism, protected from internal interference Matters that are a matter for the peoples and their sovereignty. It is certain a way of political democracy, which we more than secure, namely expand and want to deepen. But it is also certain that there is a universally valid solution for the problems of the organization of the state and society - especially one that one-sidedly oriented towards European experiences - will not give. In any case, international solidarity extends to my understanding every country and every state with its own path to democratic freedom and to social justice.

What basics, I ask myself once again, will be our work determine? I think we will have to orient ourselves a lot by what has changed history since World War II. The World map has been redrawn. The scientific and technological revolution continues. The world economic relations are in one profound change. Another example of the historical changes of the past is the one that is becoming more and more evident Polycentrism in what has been called a communist world camp.

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A few remarks on this: It cannot be a question of setting limits to blur or to gloss over dangers. On the contrary: you have to Understand the realities of communism in the declining twentieth century. who



fighters against phantoms, loses sight of the real enemy. We no longer have it only with Moscow and Beijing and with variants of one To do national communism. We also encounter the phenomenon that - fuzzy and ambiguous - is called Eurocommunism.

I suspect it wouldn't exist if it weren't for the vitality, for the competition of the Western European Social Democracy. For me is still not decided which tactics in the interests of power are and where about development from knowledge. The well-known East Berlin conference in front of some Months gave only limited information about this. You have to take seriously that the representatives of the parties referred to here Want to remain communists; one must also note that some seem willing of them to risk democracy. Just the politically insensitive will be able to say that this is of little interest.

What the work of the Socialist International in the past few years As for: Who would deny that it was seriously flawed? With I do not associate this statement with reproaches, but with the request all of us to overcome the perceived weaknesses.

We came here to Geneva to make a fresh start. It is advisable that we do not overtax ourselves. But I think we do can assume the following improved working conditions:

The General Secretariat is to be better equipped and put in a position to perform its coordinating tasks more effectively. The Vice Presidents will be urged by me to focus on important areas of responsibility to accept.

The office in which all member parties can participate in the future will be win if it overcomes some of the routine of the last few years.

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Technical conferences will be able to play a greater role; it likes itself recommend that they come from a particularly committed member party convened and supervised, but the plans should be well coordinated be coordinated.

Occasional conferences of party leaders and heads of government will be held have their place in the orderly structures of the International in the future; they can become even more important - whether regional or more comprehensive - to the Exchange of views both between ruling parties and between to give these and those in the opposition adequate space.

With all of this, we should note that it does not affect the quantity of appointments and texts, but rather on the qualitative content of our cooperation will arrive.

I mentioned obvious weaknesses in the work so far. But I want to with four examples - which at the same time give pointers for future activities remind us that we have succeeded, quite considerable in some areas To achieve partial success.

*Example relaxation:* There is no doubt that the Social Democrats and the governments they have influenced significantly since the late 1960s have contributed to reducing tensions in the East-West relationship, Reduced threats to peace and conditions for more Cooperation - without prejudice to opposing political systems - could be created. Everything speaks in favor of not making this effort to be dissuaded. At a conference attended by our Dutch Friends invited a few weeks ago were extensive Consent to an unchanged illusion-free and at the same time persistent policy.

There was also agreement there that we should take our positions for Belgrade - in other words: for the first review of what was in 1975 in the name of security and collaboration had been put on paper in Helsinki - realistic should coordinate.

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*Example Western Europe:* In the federation of our parties within the European Community and in the Socialist Group of the European Parliament and must increasingly prove that we are capable of going beyond the national To work together across borders in such a way that the social and liberal Component in Europe is being strengthened. The envisaged direct election of Members of the European Parliament are faced with the task of creating a Adopt program platform on which as many as possible relied Social Democrats win the trust of European citizens and can justify. (I consciously said "Social Democrats", not "Social Democrats and Socialists". The different names of the parties often lead to confusion. According to my party's program this is Social Democracy the Party of Democratic Socialism).

When there is talk of European unification, cooperation is of course allowed between parties within the community with those from countries that closely related to the EC in different ways, not neglected become. This also applies to the framework given to us by the Strasbourg Council of Europe offers.

*Take Portugal as an example:* I don't want to overestimate the contribution we have made

to give the new Portuguese democracy a chance. But it is a fact that we go to friendship with Portugal - and to Socialist Party under Mario Soares - have stood as the danger threatened that one dictatorship would follow another - and as out of that Conservative camps hardly do much more than defeatist idioms were heard.

In a little more than a week, the first party conference is to take place in Madrid, our Spanish friends in theirs since the terrible civil war Land will be able to hold. From the energy and unity of the democratic socialists, it will depend to a large extent whether Spain the Can leave behind the incrustations of dictatorship quickly enough. Felipe González should know that he has us by his side.

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I would also like to convey encouragement to our friends in Greece. We not only wish them success in consolidating the democratic Institutions and overcoming internal difficulties, but also those Strength to balance with their neighbors. I have to hope the forward-looking Forces in Turkey will also do their part to ensure that the Eastern Mediterranean region can finally be pacified.

*Take Caracas, for example:* In May of this year, numerous representatives of Western European Social Democrats received an invitation from the Venezuelan Acción Democrática accepted and are more democratic with the representatives

Movements from Latin America and the Caribbean met. The Consultations that were continued in the Mexican capital were Rich in content and in line with the flexibility I recommended.

If I cite this example, it is not about those that apply among us To change procedural rules. But I would think it would be a good thing if similar encounters, those of mutual information and the search for Serving answers to current problems with interested political forces in could take place in other regions, initially perhaps in Africa, but certainly also in Asia and North America.

There is informational contact through them to a number of Arab countries Missions have been included under the direction of Bruno Kreisky were carried out. It would be good if this paved the way for a peace solution in the Middle East and on the constructive relationship between Israel and its Neighbors could be shortened.

A word of explanation on North America: We must certainly not overlook that the political structures there are determined by intellectual currents, who are related to us and alien at the same time. When we have open eyes we can observe that social democratic impulses the political and intellectual landscape of the United States and Canada quite participate; Anyway, there is a basic stream of liberality that is there never let defeat. From this follows: It is important to have the conversation with guide American friends and partners wherever and whenever

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shows interest. Organizational or even ideological restrictions are

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not appropriate.

In addition, we look forward to our next congress in 1978 in Vancouver,  
Canada to be able to hold.

I said our community would not fall into error  
allowed to undertake the impossible. But certainly not ours  
Parties can deny themselves the great tasks that every state and every  
To concern people in this world. I want to name three of these tasks.

*First: only an offensive for a secure peace can humanity die*  
Guarantee the future.

We not only live in a necessary coexistence of different people  
social order, we also live in the terrible coexistence  
an arsenal of destruction that grows day by day. The nuclear ones  
World powers have, to be sure, to the first limits of their strategic armaments  
agreed and they negotiate - hopefully with success! - about a second  
Agreement. But that doesn't stop them from growing the atomic stacks  
to let. Added to this is the urge from hitherto non-nuclear states to  
To create core capacities.

Even if it succeeds, the catastrophe of a nuclear war by humanity  
to keep away (and that must succeed!): The scourge of the so-called  
conventional wars is awful enough. We can use reason  
not to be satisfied with the unreasonable; the price is too high. In the previous one  
Years was nearly \$ 300 billion for armaments in this world  
upset. This is thirty times the net transfer of funds from  
the rich for the poor nations. I try to imagine: would too  
only a significant portion of the destructive spending constructively too  
Welfare of mankind invested, how much hardship could be alleviated, how much  
Misery to be put out of the world!

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I have called peace the ultima ratio of humanity, war the ultima irratio. I know that it is for the existing alliances - those who agree allow to stay outside - there is still no replacement. But the race of Armaments remains a marathon of irrationalism. Any realistic Proposal to limit and control armaments is worth it to be accepted, examined and negotiated.

My friends and I have suggested - and I underline it here - that the Vienna negotiations on a mutual and balanced reduction of troops and armaments in Europe from the solidification of the Expert discussions resolved and advanced at a high political level should be. The aim of the policy of détente in this field must be to ensure a state in which a military attack can take place from a standing start will be impossible. That will take a long time, and some relief Unfortunately, our budget is hard to imagine at first. But it has to start even if the first steps in the middle of Europe are only very modest could be.

I am not disregarding other suggestions. What especially since the non-aligned ones formulated at the Colombo Conference deserves our serious attention.

However, as we all know here, humanity is not only through war and Destructive means threatened. As long as hundreds of millions are starving, one can not speaking of peace with a clear conscience. 1.2 billion people vegetate today with an average income of less than \$ 200 each Year. One of the most competent men recently made a comparison over the living conditions in the developed and in the poorest countries: there

child mortality is eight times greater and life expectancy a third lower, the number of illiterate people is 60 percent higher. Of the Nutritional standard is below acceptable for half of the population Minimum and it doesn't even provide as much protein to millions of children as it does to them Brain development is necessary.

We can try to move the images of despair away from us; they get us a. They force us into the reality of the world neighborhood, ours

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daily experience became. A new solidarity is required of us, this one Corresponds to reality. If simple humanity is not enough, then at least one should submit to the laws of reason. The rich Nations will not stay rich when the poorhouses of mankind to grow. In the long run, there are no islands of privilege, no oases of Happiness at the expense of others. The offensive for peace must deal with the Combine the fight against world hardship; we have to carry them on our shoulders to take.

It is truly time for the *second offensive* - an offensive for *new ones Relations between North and South* .

You have to learn to rethink radically before it's too late. Or more simply: One must learn to think. The sign of social democracy is in the Developed world societies quite a bit, in some of them through us Much has been achieved in coined states. A lot can be deduced from this for them Relations between Nations. A magic stroke won't do that



causes. But the campaign against hunger, against the population explosion, against the genocide of need tolerates no delay. The industrialized countries - not only those in the west! - this demands sacrifice.

I know this is easy to say; but one must realize that the crisis is the World economy is not overcome. We have employment problems and those of currencies. We have problems with raw materials and natural ones Environment. And yet we are allowed to bridge the gap between the rich nations of the northern hemisphere and the poor peoples of the south not deeper Let it become: That also means patiently and energetically continuing to work on the Elements from which a new world economic order is to become.

The right to life is the simplest of all human rights. Who this banal measures appearing sentence against reality, experiences in a shocking way, as it is on our earth. Human rights are in the statute of the United Nations and anchored verbally in almost every constitution. In In reality they are only in force for a minority. Not the respect for them but their violation is the norm to which the peoples are subject.

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And yet: if human rights did not exist, at least as a goal, as Hope it would be night. Resignation would be surrender to injustice and Despair. I therefore call for one for the Socialist International *third offensive - the offensive for human rights* .

We have learned that it is not only individual but also collective Human rights there. At the same time we know that collectives are only a sum of Individuals are. The concept of individuality likes in East and West, in North and

South can be interpreted in different ways: The individual human life here as there is a final, an ultimate value.

Securing material existence is the foundation of all others  
Human rights. In the face of starvation, the right to freedom becomes  
Expression of opinion on the abstract good. Man does not live on bread alone,  
but he needs bread to live. The fight against hunger, the fight for  
Work and social protection - this is the beginning. But also where this  
The beginning demands the utmost effort, it cannot be a license for  
Violence and arbitrariness.

The violation of human rights in one part of the world is as terrible as  
the brutality in another. Our view must be clear in all directions  
stay. In memory of what happened recently in Europe  
was possible, any arrogance is alien to me. But we must not be indifferent  
become.

That is why our sympathy goes to those organizations - I call Amnesty  
International - who have proven that people get out of their  
Indifference aroused and regimes shaken in their arrogance  
can be. Churches, unions, newspapers ... even for one  
Cooperation with the international organs of liberal and Christian  
We are open to democratic parties: there cannot be enough allies  
because the job is difficult.

This was an attempt to outline the fields of work. Some areas of the  
Discussion are staked out. There are goals set that take our whole effort

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require. We shall, I hope, avoid *one* sin: give it up to us  
easy to do. The simplifiers are always illusionists. We need  
the courage to see the world and its conditions as complicated as they are.  
We are doing justice to a good tradition: the socialist movement was  
from the beginning an appeal to the minds of mankind.

I will be careful not to pay tribute to a cheap simplification and that  
To proclaim the "third way". But I think that the democratic one  
Socialism, that social democrats have the mandate and the strength  
have to trust to shape the alternative and the alternatives. Both apply  
the singular and the plural.

We live in transition, in tensions, compromises, conflicts and theirs  
Compensation. No so-called system is completely self-contained. The big ones  
The hopes of mankind have not been fulfilled either in America or in Russia.  
I am not saying that we social democrats, we democratic socialists  
old and forever young hopes. But it's up to us, them  
at least to keep awake.

We set our principle of self-determination against the citizens  
capitalist collectivism of alienation and against  
communist collectivism of the dictatorship hostile to freedom.  
We continue our defense against the determinism of peace  
Violence.

We set our fight for concrete human rights against  
Claims to rule based on injustice and weakness.

We set spiritual mobilization against surrender in a hopelessness,  
which history still refutes. Bravery - in  
Resistance, in the service of fellow human beings, in productive thinking - becomes that  
Resist the tendency to resign.

We set reason against the rationalization of the unreasonable: the alliance

between reason and will to live, morality and self-assertion,

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Mercy and self-determination make man human  
out.

We have long since renounced the foolish utopia that "new people" form  
to want. What we work and fight for is that man and that  
Survive humanity.

