

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN SWEDEN

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Although conditions in Sweden differ widely from those in the United States, many basic problems encountered in establishing a program of social security are common to the two democracies. This summary, drawn from the introductory chapters of a comprehensive report on provisions for the aged in Sweden, outlines the setting in which these and other social programs have developed in that country.

IN SPITE OF its modern outward appearance, the up-to-date efficiency of its administration, and the charming sophistication of its people, to the student of social affairs Sweden has the atmosphere of history. As has been aptly said, it is a "modern democracy on ancient foundations." Perhaps it is because the industrial revolution and urbanization came later there than elsewhere, perhaps it is because in recent times the country has escaped the violence of war; but whatever the cause, one feels in Sweden the force of historical continuity. Economic growth and social change have never been so rapid or so violent as to get beyond control. Public policy has never been altogether dominated by the doctrinaire *laissez faire* of the Manchester School or by the defiant individualism of the American frontier. For generations the Swedes have lived in an ordered society, and although the sources of political power have shifted from the King to the estates and from the estates to the people, and the sanctions of political action have passed from religion to an enlightened rationalism, the Swedish people accept the rule of law and tradition with practical good sense. Government is a realistic business to be efficiently performed, and the ordinary citizen is orderly and law abiding. The Swede is not without a touch of temperament, but he does not express his individuality by defying the law. He is the product of a stable and vigorous culture, and it is natural that he should believe in the possibility of achieving social progress along rational lines and through the medium of parliamentary government.

The National Background

Sweden is the largest of the Scandinavian countries in area, population, and wealth. Its territory is almost one and a half times that of Great

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Britain and Ireland. The population of 6.3 million places it among the smaller countries of Europe, but, unlike Belgium or Holland, it is not compactly contained within a small compass. The economic expansion which began in the sixties and seventies of the last century came relatively late as compared with other countries of Western culture, a circumstance which permitted Sweden to meet the changes of the industrial revolution better equipped to deal with its problems than were those countries which first felt its impact. The Nation had time to carry through necessary political reforms before it was called upon to test the strength of the liberal state in dealing with the problems of public regulation and control on a large scale.

In the political and social fields, Sweden seems to have made the transition from the past to the present without destructive waste. The erection of factories and mills close to the mines and forests and the dispersion of natural resources made possible a decentralization of industry which has spared the Nation the affliction of the great city and has resulted in a wholesome balance between town and country. Though the proportion of the people occupied in industry and trade has been increasing steadily during the past 50 years and in 1930 absorbed about 54 percent of the population, agriculture has maintained an important position, occupying 39 percent of the population; the public services and the liberal professions accounted for the remaining 7 percent. Because of the decentralization of industry, about half of the persons engaged in industrial pursuits live in small communities in rural areas. According to the census of 1930, 70 percent of the total population of Sweden lived in rural areas and only 16 percent in towns of 20,000 or more inhabitants.

During the period of industrialization, there has been a steady movement of population from the farms to the towns and cities and overseas. Neither the growing demand for labor at home

nor the efforts of the Government to discourage migration abroad have been effective in preventing people from leaving the country, and the stream of emigration to America which reached its crest in the 1880's continued to flow strongly, until the World War and its aftermath all but closed the United States to European settlers. Though Swedish statesmen may lament this loss of population to the New World, the needs of industrial progress have been met without disturbing the cultural unity of the country by attracting immigrants from other nations. For two centuries there has been little infusion of foreign blood into the Swedish population, and, except for the nomadic Lapps and the Finns in the North, there is no significant minority which can be differentiated on the basis of race, religion, or nationality. The intimacy of the village pervades the larger cities. The complete registration of citizens which has been carried on continuously since the early part of the eighteenth century undoubtedly strengthens the feeling of social solidarity and at the same time contributes to the efficiency of civil government.

Another set of factors which has contributed to the stability of Swedish life is connected with the gradual evolution of the political and social institutions of the country during the nineteenth century. The foundations of Swedish democracy in rural life and local government go back much further, but it is in the period that has intervened since 1800 that parliamentary government responsible to a democratic electorate has been firmly established. It was not until the reforms of 1866 that a democratic, two-chamber parliament was instituted, and only in 1909 was the franchise extended to include virtually the whole adult male population. In 1919 suffrage was made universal for both men and women. Today every Swedish citizen 23 years of age or over is entitled to vote, with the exception of persons under guardianship, undischarged bankrupts, and inmates of workhouses. Election to the Riksdag is organized on a basis of proportional representation. Frequently this electoral system has prevented any one party from gaining a clear majority, and consequently Sweden has had an opportunity to experiment with various methods of minority government. This method has tended to give continuity to public policy inasmuch as a new government has seldom meant a complete change, as is

the case in the two-party system familiar in England and the United States, but rather a new coalition which contains some elements of the government which preceded it. The Social Democratic Party, which today controls the National Government, holds office in coalition with the Farmers' Party, and, though its main strength lies in the trade-unions, it prides itself upon having won the support of a considerable section of the middle class.

Along with the democratization of the franchise has gone the movement for popular education. The first compulsory public-education act was promulgated in 1842. Attendance at public elementary schools is now compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 14 who are not receiving equivalent education from some other source. Continuation schools and higher elementary schools provide either practical training or general education for children who have completed the prescribed course of instruction in the elementary schools. Except for certain small fees, secondary education is tax-supported, and the possibility of numerous scholarships in the public secondary schools opens these opportunities to a considerable number of children from families of low income. University education also is free. Popular adult education is well-established through such mediums as public libraries, popular-science lectures, and the people's colleges and voluntary-study groups. A vigorous educational program in current affairs is carried on through the press and by the political parties, as well as by voluntary agencies such as the cooperative societies, trade-unions, taxpayers' organizations, and employer and trade associations.

The economic expansion of the past 60 or 70 years has provided a favorable environment for the steady development of democratic institutions. The prosperity of Sweden is shown by the rising curves of total national and per capita income over a period of 70 years. The trend of real wages for the same period shows that the gain has been shared by the workers, whose total purchasing power more than trebled between 1860 and 1930. Statistics of consumption for the past two decades add further evidence that the standard of living of the whole population has improved materially. Although international comparisons should be used with caution, Sweden undoubtedly belongs to the group of countries in which living

conditions for most sections of the industrial population are favorable. Nevertheless, as in all other countries, the great advances of the industrial revolution have not solved the Nation's economic problems or freed large sections of the people from poverty.

No altogether satisfactory data exist upon which to base a statement of income distribution. The figures published in the census of 1930 are taken from tax returns and are known to be too low, especially for the agricultural population. They serve, however, to indicate the relative size of the various income groups, and from them some broad conclusions may be drawn as to the proportion of the population living below a satisfactory standard. Thus the census for 1930 indicates that 29.3 percent of the gainfully occupied population received less than 1,000 kronor¹ a year, and in addition 22.6 percent had no stated income. Since this latter group largely consisted of persons receiving less than 600 kronor a year, it appears that more than half the gainfully occupied population had incomes of less than 1,000 kronor in 1930.

The average income of all gainful workers with stated income has been estimated at about 1,700 kronor in 1930. This figure is probably too low, but if taken as a point of reference it is significant to note that only from one-fourth to one-third of the gainful workers of the country received more than this average. Figures for 1935 show that about 50 percent of families received incomes below 2,000 kronor a year.

Average wages vary greatly among the occupations and from one part of the country to another. The average yearly wage income for married male workers in agriculture in 1937 was 1,471 kronor and for unmarried men 1,163 kronor. Women workers on farms received an average of 946 kronor. In industry and trade the figures were higher. The average for all industries, in 1936, was 2,848 kronor for men and 1,691 kronor for women.

The unequal distribution of income is indicated in the figures taken from income-tax returns. In 1930 about 50 percent of the working population earned less than 1,000 kronor a year and received 12 percent of the total income, whereas the 0.3 percent who earned 20,000 kronor or more received 9.6 percent. Property, however, is more equitably divided than income; nearly half of the

¹ The krona was equivalent to about 25 cents at 1939 rate of exchange.

privately owned property of the country belongs to persons who earn less than 2,500 kronor a year, most of whom are peasants.

It is impossible to say to what extent these incomes provide maintenance at a socially tolerable minimum standard of living. Analysis of the food consumption of 1,245 urban families of modest income, all but 4 of which had an income of 2,000 kronor or more, indicates that, while average consumption might be considered quite adequate, an improvement in diet would be beneficial to an appreciable part of the population. The undesirable living conditions imposed by low income bear most heavily on large families. Though less than 10 percent of all households in Sweden have three or more children under 15 years of age, the significance of low standards in these families should not be underestimated, since more than one-half of every new generation is reared by mothers who have given birth to three or more children.

Standards of living vary greatly in different parts of the country. They are definitely lower in the rural areas. Especially bad conditions are found in the timber regions of Norrland and in the neighborhoods dependent upon the declining stone quarries in certain coastal districts of southern Sweden.

Housing problems have recently occupied a conspicuous position in public discussion of the standard of living. Travelers who visit the cities of Sweden are likely to be impressed by the absence of slums. City growth is a recent development, and consequently much of the construction is new. There are, however, serious defects which are not apparent to the casual observer—defects which are intensified by the conditions of overcrowding under which a large part of the Swedish people lives. In town and city alike, overcrowding is prevalent among low-income families.

There is nothing novel in the picture of inadequate living standards which these facts suggest. Undernourishment and bad housing are not conditions peculiar to Sweden. They are mentioned here only because they provide the setting for modern social-reform efforts.

The Evolution of Pensions

To understand the social politics of present-day Sweden one must know something of the past. During the nineteenth century, public relief in

Sweden was subject to the terms of a restrictive poor law administered by local authorities. The past 40 years have witnessed a process by which one after another of the dependent groups of society has been removed from the scope of the poor law and assisted by Government provisions under more favorable terms. The reaction against the hard conditions of the old poor law found expression, in the 1880's and 1890's, in an interest in social insurance programs along the lines of the early German legislation.

From the time in 1884 when Sven Adolf Hedin, a vigorous advocate of social-reform movements, first called the attention of the Swedish Riksdag to the need for a system of social insurance to the passage of the first pension act in 1913, the subject of pensions was frequently under discussion, and during the period from 1913 to 1938 few sessions of the Riksdag sat without passing amending legislation. The history of pensions spans the period of liberal influence in social politics and carries over into the opening phases of socialist predominance. Since pensions have constituted one of the major items in the welfare program of liberals and Social Democrats alike, one can trace in the development of pensions the main trends in modern Swedish social history.

The only positive action taken before 1913 was the establishment of the workmen's insurance fund in 1895. In that year the Riksdag, anticipating future legislation, voted a grant of 1.4 million kronor to prepare the way for the system of invalidity insurance. A similar appropriation was made in succeeding years so that in 1914, when a pension system was finally established, the fund amounted to about 36 million kronor. The purpose of the Pension Act of 1913 as set forth by the committee that prepared it was to provide an economically more secure and socially more worthy form of aid than was available to old people and invalids from poor relief or the charity of relatives. The new pension act went into effect on January 1, 1914. It introduced a compulsory system of old-age and invalidity insurance which included within its scope the whole adult population. It combined in one organization contributory pensions based on the insurance principle of individual equity and payable as a right, with noncontributory pension supplements and support payments financed out

of public funds, which were granted to permanent invalids who qualified under a means test.

This law of 1913 laid the basic foundation of pension insurance in Sweden from 1914 until 1937, when the law of 1935 became effective. Under the system, every Swedish citizen between the ages of 16 and 66 registered as residing in the country was liable for the payment of a yearly contribution of 3 to 13 kronor (the maximum was raised in 1921 to 33 kronor) according to the size of his income. The payment of contributions entitled a person to a contributory pension when he reached 67 years of age, or at an earlier date if he became permanently invalidated. The amount of the pension was closely related to the value of the contributions which an individual had paid, and, because the mortality statistics indicated that women would draw more heavily upon the fund than men, their benefit scale was set somewhat lower. It was clear at the outset that the contributory system would fail to provide a sufficient amount to cover the needs of persons mainly dependent upon the pension for support. In order to offset this situation a plan of pension supplements or bonuses was incorporated in the law, whereby pensioners who were declared to be permanent invalids and whose incomes fell below a certain amount might receive an annual increment in addition to the contributory pension.

A law of 1918 provided for allowances to minor children of invalids. Also, persons 15 years of age or over who were declared to be permanent invalids, whether they had paid contributions from age 16 or not, were entitled to draw support payments according to the terms established for the bonus. A national system of voluntary pensions authorized under the act provided an opportunity for the small investor to augment the benefits payable under the general program.

The pension act had scarcely begun to function when the illusion of permanence and stability in which the nineteenth century ended and the twentieth century began was suddenly dispelled by the outbreak of war. Instead of growing to maturity in a settled and predictable environment, the pension plan, like other social programs, has had to meet a succession of sudden and drastic changes in the economic life of the Nation. It has had to withstand violent swings of the business cycle and adapt itself to the accompanying changes

in national income, employment, the value of money, and the altered position of specific industries in the national economy, as well as to marked changes in social attitudes which are the inevitable concomitant of economic instability. These factors have been significant in their effect upon the fiscal arrangements on which the system rests and also in their bearing on public opinion and political necessity.

Although numerous acts were passed after 1913 amending various features of the original law, the main provisions of the Swedish pension plan remained intact until 1935, in spite of the fact that considerable dissatisfaction was felt with the system.

The legislation of 1935 and 1937 opens a new era in Swedish pension history. Although the system retains certain of the earlier features, such as universal coverage, the coordination of invalidity and old-age pensions, and a unified system of contributory and supplementary pensions, the purpose and the rationale have been changed. Contributory pensions are no longer reckoned on the principle of individual equity but according to a formula which, by introducing a flat amount, materially increases the sums payable to persons of low income of the present generation of pensioners and reduces the pension payable in the upper brackets of the scale. The maximum supplementary pension is increased and graded according to three cost-of-living categories. For persons who have reached age 67, the supplementary pension has acquired the status of an old-age pension without the requirement of proving permanent invalidity. The formulas for contributory and supplementary pensions are the same for both men and women. The income limit is raised, and the definition of income exempted from the means test is expanded. The national voluntary pension system is continued on much the same terms as before. Child allowances are made the subject of particular legislation and their scope is extended, though they continue to be administered by the Pension Board.

The main objective in pension reform has been to make pensions adequate so that the recipients will not be obliged to apply for poor relief. This objective has been attained only in part by the new legislation. The cost-of-living bonus is a device for increasing pensions in the towns and cities, but the scale is still too low to achieve this

result in all instances. The recognition of this fact has directed attention to the possibility of improving the standard of living of pensioners by other means, such as subsidized housing, improved medical services, extension of the communal-pension supplement, and, last but not least, the reform of the poor law.

Other Welfare Measures

Pensions comprise only one of the many and varied aspects of the Swedish welfare program. Voluntary sickness societies have been active for many years, and they have been strengthened by an act of 1931 which gives the sick funds a semi-public character; unemployment insurance is also voluntary, and some trade-union systems receive a subsidy from the National Government. Other measures financed entirely out of public funds have provided for special groups outside the scope of general relief. Dependent children, cared for outside their homes, receive assistance under the Child Welfare Act of 1924; and allowances for dependent minors, first restricted to the children of certain categories of national pensioners, have recently been extended to cover certain groups of orphans and fatherless children, including those of unmarried or divorced mothers even though the father may be known and obligated to provide properly for them but fails to do so. Blind compensation has been paid by the National Government since 1935. As early as the eighteenth century the care of the indigent sick was gradually transferred from general asylums to county hospitals. Today, medical attendance and hospital care at low rates are available throughout the country, though the accommodations are not always equal to the need.

Contrary to the predictions and desires of some reformers, the poor law has remained an important element in the total program of social provisions. Indeed, this result is to be expected. Temporary relief probably always will be necessary, and, furthermore, since the new reforms are categorical and not universal in scope, certain groups—for instance, widows per se—are not covered by any of the special programs. Even more important in the past has been the failure of the social insurance systems, notably old-age pensions and unemployment insurance, because of limited coverage or low benefits, to provide adequate protection, with the result that many persons of

low income have had to seek supplementary aid from the relief authorities. The proponents of social insurance measures have defended them, not because the benefits were adequate but because it has been their belief that once adopted in principle it would be relatively easy to increase gradually the amount of benefits.

And there is still another reason for the virility of the poor law. It too has felt the force of new ideas and the challenge of new methods of social security. The poor-relief act of 1918 widened the scope of relief which the communal authorities might furnish and set up a central board to supervise the administration of local guardians. One by one the pauper restrictions on the franchise have been removed until the receipt of relief no longer debar a citizen from voting. The change in the attitude of many guardians and relief officers has been fully as important as these legal changes. Standards of relief have been raised in response to the rising standard of living of the Nation. In a number of communes the general mixed workhouses have been converted into comfortable homes for the aged and infirm. A few communes supplement national pensions, sick care, blind compensation, and child allowances according to terms less onerous than those prescribed by the poor law. Thus relief is coming to be regarded as a positive factor in social administration.

In the fields of both finance and administration, the organization of public welfare in Sweden offers interesting examples of the successful cooperation of national and local agencies of government. Indeed, few welfare functions can be said to be the exclusive field of the National Government, the commune, or the county. It is the duty of the Ministry of Social Affairs, through its various departments, to exercise large powers of supervision and control over local affairs. Even when the commune furnishes nearly all the funds, as in the case of poor relief, a central board responsible to a national minister exercises supervision and, through its advice and influence, encourages the local authorities to bring their administration in line with national standards. There is no stereotyped pattern which determines the exact relations between the cooperating agencies of government. Each plan has been worked out to fit the needs of a particular situation, but with the extension of services and

the growing burden of costs in recent years the part played by the National Government has gained in importance. The promulgation of a definite, coordinated national policy by the Social Democratic Party has accelerated this tendency in the direction of centralized control.

The cooperation among agencies extends to the field of private effort. The activities of government directed toward establishing a socially desirable minimum standard of living for the people have not supplanted the endeavors of philanthropists, though by undertaking the main burden of the support of the indigent and the less well-to-do the Government has given to private effort an emphasis quite different from the traditional role of American philanthropy. A striking difference is the absence in Sweden of "drives" to raise money for welfare projects. Private charitable enterprises consist to a large extent of foundations created by special gifts and managed by private boards but subsidized by public funds. They function over a wide field to supplement the public social services and to experiment along new lines of development. To a marked degree they partake of a semipublic character. Expanding public social services represent only one aspect of the awakened social consciousness of the past 50 years. Private activity has also been stimulated, and even though the major role in future planning and financing must be assumed by the Government, the dimensions of the task are such that the cooperation of all is welcomed.

Present Social Planning

At the present time, the Social Democratic Party is the dominant factor in shaping social policy in Sweden. The early leadership in the modern reform movement which dates from the last quarter of the nineteenth century was assumed by individuals of enlightened views, among whom were personalities of widely varied gifts and opinions. What legislation was passed was adopted through the cooperation of the Social Democrats with the liberal parties of the Riksdag. Contributory systems of social insurance won support because they combined the principle of self-help with that of Government aid and offered a program for increasing the security and self-respect of the lower-income groups without introducing any direct changes in economic processes.

With the assumption of parliamentary control

by the Social Democrats, social policy has been given a new turn. The humanitarian motivation is not lacking, but the policies now being promulgated base their claim to support on economic considerations, whereas the earlier legislation sought to aid the poor by providing protection against certain inevitable risks of the competitive system. The proposals of the Social Democrats are framed in terms of the whole Nation, and the specific measures they advocate are regarded not as correctives but as integral elements in the economic and social life of the people.

Within the welfare field the Swedish Social Democrats have been concerned with problems of old-age security, public medical care, unemployment, and the variety of problems raised by the population crisis. Their plan for combating unemployment, chiefly by means of a program of planned public works and to a lesser extent by subsidies to private industry, has attracted the attention of economists in all countries.

Quite as arresting has been the development of a welfare program to provide security for the family as one means of increasing the birth rate. In Sweden the birth rate has been falling since 1880 even more rapidly than in most other countries of Western European culture, with the result that since 1925 it has been so far below the replacement level that the country faces an actual decrease in population in the years 1940-45. Public opinion has been aroused on the issue by the work of Professor and Mrs. Gunnar Myrdal, and since 1935 a population commission appointed by the Government has been engaged on a comprehensive study of problems of population and the standard of living. The reports of this commission and the child-welfare legislation recently enacted mark a sharp break with the social insurance philosophy which for four decades dominated social-reform movements. The new programs stress the importance of raising living standards by providing special services and assistance in kind instead of supplying cash income only. Public housing is the most conspicuous of the projects to which the theory has been applied, but other features include an extension of health services for mothers and children; free school meals, nursery schools, and better educational and developmental opportunities for the young; essential foods at low prices for large families; and similar measures. The argument for assist-

ance in kind has been elaborated in connection with the population question, but its implications extend beyond the scope of this special field, and in the future it may have a wider application.

The immediate issue before Swedish Social Democrats has been a choice between benefits in kind and a family wage. So far the family wage has not been adopted whereas some progress has been made in furthering the former program. The advocates of benefits in kind reject the device of the family wage because it reaches only a part of the population—the wage earners—leaving out such important groups as farmers, independent craftsmen, and small traders; because it runs counter to the trade-union policy of the standard wage; and because it is inimical to the principle of equal pay for equal work which women in employment hold to be essential. But they do not rest their case on these negative arguments. On the contrary, their theory is founded on the positive advantages of economy and efficiency which they anticipate from a public policy based on the principle of social provision of the essential requisites of sound family life. An individual acting alone, they say, cannot hope to obtain adequate health services, nourishing food, good housing, education, and recreation even if his wages are subsidized by a cash allowance. If the public is to be adequately served, these services need to be organized and administered along socially efficient lines.

The advocates of benefits in kind point to the experience with the insurance programs to show that, if it is deemed desirable that a group should enjoy certain advantages, the sound procedure is to supply the actual goods and services and to educate the public in their use rather than to dole out cash which may or may not be used for the purposes intended. Not only are benefits in kind cheaper, because of the economies of centralized buying and organization, but in Sweden farm income could be increased by promoting the use of such foods as milk, eggs, butter, cheese, meat, fruit, and vegetables, in which the diet of the people is deficient. Thus a program of adequate diet can be integrated with the basic economy of the country and an oversupply of agricultural products turned into a national asset. Similarly, the program of public housing can be organized in such a way as to play a part in equalizing building operations throughout the phases of the business cycle.

In addition to these considerations, the program of direct provision of goods and services appeals to many persons because it seems to solve the two troublesome problems of the means test and the supervision of family expenditure. The insurance programs, whether compulsory or voluntary, have failed to provide benefits of sufficient size to maintain a large proportion of their beneficiaries, and recourse to supplementary aid subject to a means test has been the rule rather than the exception for the aged, the permanently disabled, the sick, and the unemployed. The Swedish Riksdag has from time to time modified the severity of the tests of means and need, but in many instances they are still rigorous. In a program of assistance in kind the means test may be minimized more easily than when the plan calls for cash allowances; indeed, it is not illogical to discard it entirely when the objective of social policy is not limited to improving the status of the poor but is expanded to include planning for the needs of a democratic society.

Similarly, assistance in kind, by exercising control at the source, so to speak, offers an acceptable solution to the vexing problem of supervising family expenditure. Thoughtful observers of the Swedish social services have been satisfied with neither the inquisitorial practices of overzealous guardians nor the lack of supervision which the Riksdag has held to be appropriate for the social insurances. The socially wasteful consequences of the latter have been noted in connection with invalidity pensions and the allowances granted to children of invalids. Obviously, the laissez-faire attitude which was compatible with the individualistic ideals of nineteenth-century liberalism is not acceptable to Swedish Social Democrats, whose

aims are more definite and specific than the general enjoyment of liberty. Control, accordingly, is an essential element in their planning, but for practical as well as philosophical reasons it must be exercised with a minimum of direct interference, and from this point of view assistance in kind is almost a perfect medium for the accomplishment of the Swedish program.

Swedish social politics stands today at the threshold of a new era. Over a period of less than 30 years public policy has evolved from the negative attitude of the nineteenth-century poor law through the period of liberal self-help and enlightened philanthropy to the positive phase of social and economic planning—from a social policy which punished destitution to one which treated the symptoms of economic insecurity and, finally, to the program of prevention which the Social Democrats propose today. One sees here the logical working out of a process which, but for war and revolution, might have been the history of social democracy elsewhere. Some things have been accomplished and even more planned, but much remains to be done. All parties are committed in principle to a policy of improving the standard of national life, but there are differences of opinion regarding methods and the speed at which new ventures should be undertaken. At each new point of development there is opposition from those who fear that the extension of governmental activity will weaken the individual effort upon which economic progress depends and that the mounting expenditures for social purposes will absorb a disproportionate share of the national income. But these domestic differences may not be the determining factors in the coming decade. The fate of Sweden's social progress in the next few years is inseparable from the fate of Europe.