

# Speech by Mrs Katarina Runske 1989

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to this congress. I am going to talk about the situation for families in Sweden that was one of the reasons why I left with my family. You may wonder why I chose Ireland. I have no choice you see. In November last year, I first set foot on Ireland and then I knew that when I left Sweden it would be Ireland and nothing else.

So I come from Sweden, I was born almost on the Arctic circle. If things were different I would have stayed. Sweden is very far north and a big part of the country is above the Arctic Circle. There is plenty of space and clean air for the 8 million inhabitants. We have wilderness, lots of lakes, high mountains and a long marvellous coast with hundreds and hundreds of small uninhabited islands. Sweden has not been at war since 1809, we speak one language, we have one religion. Several of our industry products are well known all over the world. Who has not heard of the Volvo cars and the Orrefors crystal. Our country has been a stable part of the world until lately.

So the Swedes have all the possibilities to live in a paradise. Sweden has been a model country for the rest of Europe. One might say that we are a few years ahead of you. That is why my speech is so terribly important.

But the development you find in Sweden you can find elsewhere too. As I am a Swede, I think I should first solve the problems in my own country before I start solving yours.

For me the word "family" means the form of married life between two persons who want to live together and to raise their children within their marriage, no more, no less.

So what is the situation for this ordinary family in Sweden? The answer is simple; it is almost impossible. Of course it did not turn out like that over night. It came creeping on to us like it does in all other countries.

In Sweden it goes back long ago. I would say it started around 1930 when Alva and Gunnar Myrdal - a very famous Swedish couple, they both got different Nobel Prizes - wrote a well known book called "Crises in the Population Question".

This is how they describe the housewife, I quote from page 249: "It is still possible for weak, stupid, lazy, no ambitious, and otherwise lesser equipped individuals to remain and make their way within the domestic work, both as housewives and as servants. And for the rest prostitution is always available". That was when it all started. And so in the name of equality women started to compete with men. Many

functions today are now taken over by women. But the worse thing is that women fight against women.

The ones working outside their homes could not accept that we wanted to stay inside and continue to look after our children and our homes. They don't respect us. The late Prime Minister, Palme - who was assassinated some years ago, proclaimed the housewife dead, his Minister of Equality said that the housewives belong in a museum and a large daily paper proclaimed housewives as traitors.

After giving us this bad reputation it was easier to start to take our rights away - it was said that no one wanted to be at home. That is today still a lie. The fact is that 85% of the women are working outside their homes. But the most important is that 83% would like to work in their homes as housewives but they can't afford it. Two parents out of three want another family politic. That is the reality of Sweden today.

It took about 40-50 years to achieve today's situation. Slowly, one step after another, all the family rights were taken away. It started in the legislation. We now reached a point where the word "family" is no longer in the law book - the Swedish code. We exist as households, and households can be two women living together or two homosexuals. As a matter of fact "The Swedish org for sexual equality" demands the right of a law that gives homosexuals right to marry.

The parents rights are not even in the constitution. Our laws look after the minorities in a much better way than it looks after the family.

The family and education policy in Sweden is clearly against the Human Rights as expressed in the second clause of the first amendment to the European Convention of Human Rights of November 4th, 1950. This clause says that the state shall respect parents to choose upbringing for their children. Swedish politicians talk very loudly about human rights in Chile and South Africa, but some rights are overlooked back home.

Very few people realise the problems with the legislation because the main problem is the family's economy. It is impossible to live on one salary in Sweden. The taxes are so high and the welfare system so complicated that those who want to stay at home are still forced to find a job outside. The Swedish tax system is the main tool for the Equality-Family Policy and that system is built on the assumption that all grown-ups support themselves and the State looks after the children. No tax-reductions are allowed if you have a large family. Costs for the duly approved day care centres are often so low that it costs more to feed a child at home. Children's allowances are paid by the State and the parents pay about 1/4 of the cost for a child. A Swedish worker earns about 110 000 SEK/ year (about £10,000). If he has a spouse working at home and two children, he must earn about 170 000 SEK in order to reach what we call a minimum standard of living.

The ordinary worker can evidently not make it. Nor can most collar workers, or college teachers, professors or engineers. The welfare system is like a big net around us. It takes care of everything. Of course nothing is free, so 63% of the GNP goes to the public sector. To keep the image up Sweden borrows money abroad and our grandchildren will have to repay.

Out of 4.3 million households, 1.4 million are living on or below the poverty line, which means they have to get support from the State to exist. The families might get money for housing, clothing, and so forth. To get the support you have to follow certain rules. So they keep us in the net. If the welfare system is going to pay you or help you with the rent or food both parents have to be working and the children have to visit a day care centre. That is a commitment so you have to make your choice. Both parents working and you get the support. For me that is blackmailing.

It would cost the State less to have a mother at home since the cost for one place is subsidized with about 60 000 SEK/year by the State and municipality combined. Thus the cost for keeping two children in a day care centre is as high as an average worker's salary. So the money is there and given to the 'approved' day care centres. All private alternatives have to follow the State rules to get money. The family who wants to raise their own kids get nothing of the subsidies. Nor does a family who would have preferred to put their kids in private day care maybe belonging to the Church or Montessori etc., where the risk of socialistic indoctrination would be less.

The latest statistics over marriages I have are from 1986. 37,000 married and 19,100 divorced. 101,950 children were born and from that amount it was 49,300 born by unmarried mothers. That is 48.5% of all the births. 33,100 abortions were made and in 1987 that figure was 39,000 abortions. The divorce problem in Sweden is a bit different from other countries. People divorce to be able to live together. This might seem odd to you, but the reason is simple. The welfare system looks after divorced people so much better than married ones. So then people use this and they divorce just on the paper and then they can live together and have a mother at home. That is also the reason why people do not marry or do not work full time. If you stay below a certain level of income you get support by the State. We learn how to cheat to survive.

The one who stays at home has no status or rights whatsoever. The housewife gets no pension or support in any way. All rights are given to those who work outside the house. For them there is money for everything. They get 30 days paid leave/year to look after their child when it is ill.

That means for me with three children that I could be away for 3 months and then my paid vacation for 5 weeks, and I would probably get extra leave if I asked for it. I even would get paid for the time it needs to train my children to go to the day care centre. So I would get a pension, sick leave and other facilities. As a housewife I get nothing, not even respect from my fellow sisters.

The result is of course, that if you stay at home in order to look after your own children, if you add all the slander, the lack of legislation and economical fact that it is impossible to live on one salary, that is Sweden today. Something must be wrong in a society when 83% wants to stay at home and yet 85% have to work and the cost of the day care centres so high. Maybe the reason is to be found elsewhere.

The Russian leader, Lenin, said: "Give me the first years of the life of a child and that child is mine forever".

The social democrats intend to make a compulsory law that all children will have to attend a day care centre. In their party program they mention the year 1991 and the Social Minister said last month that he wants to offer a place to every child from 1.5 years old.

I will very briefly tell you a little about the indoctrination in the day care centres

Varlden i forskolan - PICTURE OF A PAGE FROM THE BOOK USED FOR SOCIALIST INDOCTRINATION

Hur gor man barn ?

Barnens Kärleksliv. - PICTURE OF A PAGE FROM THE BOOK USED FOR SEX EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AGED 3-6 IN PUBLIC DAYCARE

Everywhere day care centres grow like mushrooms from the ground. They are nicely equipped with the right toys, the right staff with the right training and they eat fibre food and are taken to different things chosen by the staff. Who do you think you are to deny your child all this?

Is your kitchen table really better than the one at the day care centre? Many parents just give up. Magazines write long articles about all the women who manage to do everything. They knit, and cook, pass difficult exams, repaint the house, bake bread and have a full time job.

All the women's organisations tell the same story, every woman should have her own money and not have to depend on a man. Are you just an appendix to your husband ?, is a very common question. To stand all this you have to be very strong and your children too.

It is tempting to leave your children to someone else and take a job and suddenly get respect and a salary.

It takes some time until the effect is visible in the society. Suddenly you come to a stage where the roof falls down, and then it is too late.

We have research in many fields today and they all show the problems our children and youngsters suffer from. Ask the children how they felt about being left every day. A professor pointed out that every fifth child suffers from psychological disturbances and every fourth from anxiety and fear.

He gave reasons for this: The increasing amount of working women, the divorces and the moving from the country to big cities. Another professor from the stress research institute vindicates that every third child who passes the compulsory 4 year old medical examination done by the authorities suffers from psychological disturbances. You see this doesn't concern teenagers with love problems, it concerns small children 4 years old.

We know that in Sweden over 120 children commit suicide every year. We know that small children get ulcers. We know that small children at very low ages use drugs and

alcohol. We know in what way violence spreads and today they beat the one who is already beaten.

We have statistics for it all and still we do nothing.

We have severe problems in our schools. An increasing number of children leave school after nine years without knowledge of reading and writing. The teachers complain that they have to spend so much time teaching the smaller ones how to use a knife and fork, button a coat etc.

The violence in the schools has also turned into one of the big problems and one that it is hard to get rid of. But of course we know that many children spend all their free time in front of the TV and video. And the tired parents hardly ever know what the children watch. It is an easy way for the tired parents to solve a baby-sitting problem.

In Sweden we hardly have any meals together any more. Parents eat where they work and the children are supposed to eat at school. But how many children eat when fish is served ?

The evening meal is maybe a cup of tea in front of the TV. One is too tired to cook and during the weekends the house must be cleaned and the laundry done too. A rather odd problem was brought up by the school nurses. After longer holidays children returned to school hungry and the nurses found out that the children hardly had eaten a warm meal during the holiday. School doctors pointed out that very often children came late in the afternoon and complained about headaches or stomach-aches. It turned out that they were just afraid to go home to an empty flat or house. Some of them didn't even close the front door until the parents came home.

Well, I can't stand here and say that all those problems would be solved over night if we could have a parent at home. But as it is a disaster for the families and children today we have to do something. If families will function there will have to be a Mother at home and how that is going to be solved economically is for the Government to find out. If I look after children outside my home it is called work but raising my own ones is called a "hobby".

So start there and give the housewives a possibility to stay at home as long as the children need it not as long as the politician thinks. Give the woman help when and if she wants to return to work when the children are grown up. Give every child an equal right. Don't as in Sweden where 30% of the children get 70% of economical support, those in the day care centres. Today the children are born and taken to the day care centres to be educated the right way, the grown-ups work to be able to pay taxes for the centres and the old ones are put away and they should just have the decency to die as soon as possible.

Hasn't Sweden just passed Orwell's 1984.

Let me quote Mother Teresa's opinion about Sweden. She got the Nobel Prize for peace some years ago and was interviewed in all our papers. She had visited Sweden before that and she felt sorry for the kind of poverty she found in Sweden she didn't

have at home in her slum in Calcutta. We suffer from lack of love and respect for one another, and that poverty was unknown in her slum.

Well, this is a dark picture of a wonderful country. But it is important for you to know before you start to sell out your own children in the same way. We could never dream of today's situation when this family politic started long ago. Many thought that some hours playschool every day would be nice for the children and for the Mother. Who could or would be capable to foresee what happens now. The nice offer to look after the children for some hours turns into a law where everyone will have to leave their children. It was and is all written in the program for the social democrats but we would not believe it.

We have the result and maybe Sweden can be used as a bad example but also as a good. It is for example good that the Fathers take more interest in the children. But be well aware of the other part, the other side of the coin.