Monica Quirico has produced a nicely edited and translated work that collects together into Italian some of the writings and speeches of the assassinated Prime Minister. The volume consists of an introduction by the editor-translator and a division of Palme's work into four sections: socialism and democracy, Swedish reform, the Neo-Liberal offensive and solidarity without limits. The book also possesses a useful glossary that succinctly explains various acronyms and persons of interest.

As one reads the speeches and writings of Palme, one is struck by their relevance for today. The texts reveal a politician that was formed at a time when social democracy was not only viable and rich with promise, but one also finds an astute awareness of the threat of Neo-Liberalism and the difficulties and challenges posed by globalisation and a globalised economy. With the collapse of the Left and the dominance of a globalised market-place politics, Palme still offers hope, even after his demise. One feels the palpable urgency of his message and his commitment to improving society and the state of the world.

The Introduction, written by Quirico, presents a biographical sketch of Palme, outlining the sources and influences that helped shape him throughout the various periods of his life. Born into a Conservative family, Palme developed a deep concern for injustice and inequality while studying both in Sweden and abroad. Quirico sets the stage for her readers to begin to appreciate the various concerns and programmes of Palme's politics. Section One focusses on the speeches and writings of Palme that examine the nature and struggles of socialism and democracy. I should note, here, that the writings and speeches contained in the volume are not arranged in a strict chronological order; rather, they are organised around certain themes, which the editor-translator has rightly identified as indicative of Palme's political vision and legacy. One sees in this section Olaf Palme's struggles with various forms of socialism and how they represent themselves at the international level. Palme rejects communism as a viable form of socialism, as it undermines individual freedoms. The communism that he has in mind is the Soviet form. He is also critical of capitalism, for it values profit over individual and collective wellbeing. In fact, striking in Palme's speeches and discourses is his conviction that individual wellbeing is intimately linked with societal or collective wellbeing, including global community. Democracy and active participation in democratic politics requires a just distribution of goods so that all peoples can actively participate in government. Palme identifies work as an important social mechanism that will allow more active participation. Unemployment eats away at the very

possibility of a more communal and active sense of political life. He remarks, “The fight against unemployment takes on a crucial value in this respect, if we wish: to avoid wasting our economic resources; alleviate social tensions and personal suffering that stem from unemployment; maintain trust in our democratic form of government and reinforce democracy. Full employment not only creates wellbeing, it also distributes it. There is no greater division than between those who have work and those who do not. Moreover, the person who now suffers runs the greater risk of being unemployed. All that has been said up until now can sound quite obvious, so much so that it may ring as commonplace. But the problem is that such obvious commonplaces are not often spoken. It is good to repeat them, lest we forget them.” (99 Translation mine)

Section Two collects together some of Palme’s work on social reforms in Sweden. Here, the Swedish statesman’s commitment to the welfare state model of politics is very clear. There is an emphasis not only the intimate connection between a just and equal economic distribution of goods—an economic vision oriented toward a more encompassing goal of communal good rather than individual profit—and democracy, but one also finds here his conviction that solidarity is vital if Sweden is to carry out its social welfare values. We read: “The strength of a welfare state for all…is: it is **just** in and for itself such that all may benefit; it makes possible a redistribution among people in different phases of life and among different social groups; it is **balanced** because it consists of both rights and obligations for all; it **protects the most vulnerable**. International comparisons reveal how inefficient selective politics are in trying to lead those who live in conditions below average; it creates **liberty**, avoiding the enclosure of persons in a state of dependency, which could be difficult to get oneself out of; it offers **autonomy**. Individuals can live their lives, even when they become ill or old; it guarantees **freedom of movement**, for rights follow the person wherever he or she may be; it consists of a **limited bureaucrac**y insofar as it does not revolve around the rise and fall of certain economic conditions, which is opposite to systems that only concern themselves with the most marginalised of a society.” (161–61 Translation mine) The section ends also with Palme reminding Swedes of their uniqueness in the world and their global contribution, especially concerning advances in social wellbeing and the environment. He sees Swedish unions as making vital contributions on this score.

Section Three is one of the most poignant and salient sections of the book. Quirico has

collected here Palme's writings and discourses on the Neo-Liberal offensive. Given that, today, we have completely succumbed to the Neo-Liberal model, especially in the West, what Palme criticises and fears have come true. In many ways, reading these speeches from our present point of view makes him seem like a prophet. The late 1970's and early 1980's introduced massive economic difficulties on the world stage. One feels in the texts of this section the effects of massive unemployment, an increased cost of living due to inflation and high interest rates and the fleeing of European and North American labour markets by producers of goods in favour of places where labour is cheaper and, therefore, more profitable. The social democratic and welfare state models advanced by Palme are under severe attack as unable to sustain the goals he claims it could promote. He comments on the dissolution of unions in North America and England: "To launch a politics directly aimed at workers, especially when it deals with unemployment, social security, etc., is to attack the union, incriminating its legitimacy as the voice of its members. This is what is happening in country after country. This is why it is necessary that unions react, uniting their respective forces at the international level. The strong unions of Sweden have a particular responsibility in this battle for human rights and the freedom of unions. It is to you, I am convinced, that the future belongs." (194–95 Translation mine) Today, unions have lost their voice and workers are subject to the whims of the markets—the security of the welfare state is no longer.

Section Four concludes the volumes with a hopeful message and, perhaps, a useful tool to mobilise us against the excesses and faults of a globalised Neo-Liberal economy, with its recent crashes in 2008 and 2011. We find here various addresses that Palme gave against apartheid as well as in former war-torn Vietnam. Ultimately, solidarity, especially at an international level, is invoked as a source of change and reform; it can also prevent us from falling into a politics of fear and oppression. Solidarity is no longer local, but global, and it entails a profound social responsibility—one that Palme lived whole-heartedly, for example, as mediator in the Iran-Iraq war and in his fight against apartheid. "All of us have a role to play in the struggle against apartheid. I have reported to United Nations and to other agencies of the measures of our government. We are actively engaged so that other countries may adopt, in turn, measures similar to ours. One of the reasons why we are concerned that our actions are compatible with those of others at the international level is so that the probability increases that others may follow our example […]" (260 Translation mine)

Unfortunately, Olaf Palme's life came to an abrupt and unexpected end with his assassination in Stockholm in 1986. With his death, his fight for a more democratic society based on justice, equality and a communal well being rooted in solidarity and responsibility also came to an end. Quirico has given us an important resource for preserving and studying Palme's legacy and political message of the need for certain values that preserve and promote human life and society as well as create a more just and equitable world. Perhaps Palme's speeches and writings may help in reinvigorating the left or producing a new social democracy. Only time will tell.