

PM3

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PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST
By the Social Democratic Party.

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IN CUE: There now follows a PARTY POLITICAL
BROADCAST by the Social Democratic Party.

RACE: Hello. I'm Steve Race.

BLAIR: And I'm Isla Blair.

RACE: And we want to tell you why the SDP
believes that the arts are a vitally important political
issue.

BLAIR; You may feel that "vitally
important" is laying it on a bit strong, but let's think for
a moment about the way our lives are changing. We're moving
faster into a time when leisure and the way it's used will
have a profound effect on all of us.

RACE: See, already we have millions of
retired people and, tragically, millions more who have
leisure simply thrust upon them because they're unemployed.

BLAIR: So our society is changing in a
fundamental way.

RACE: Should we ignore it?

BLAIR: Pretend it's not happening?

RACE: Anyway, what has this change got to do with the arts? Well listen for a moment to David Putnam. He's made many of the most impressive British films over the last ten years; how does he see the importance of the arts?

PUTNAM: The arts are an area in which we happen in Britain to excel. They unify rather than divide, and they have languished on the margins of government concerns for far too long. The SDP believes that the arts in society have as many functions as forms. They are crucial to any concept of freedom, of ideas, of freedom of expression, and they speak for the values of our society, and reflect our new multi-culturalism in the best possible way. They fire the imagination and the spirit; they both set and reflect fashion; the arts educate and entertain. Yet government support for the arts has tragically never been imaginative nor comprehensive enough.

BLAIR: We believe that the creative use of leisure could be one of the glories of our society and that government has a central part to play in making sure that it is.

RACE: So as to make sure that the means are made available, the SDP would create a ministry for Arts and Recreation, with a seat in the Cabinet, so the arts would become an important governmental concern which would be considered alongside health, education and defence - they'd become an issue of state.

BLAIR: Then we would make more money available. We would aim to double government spending on the

arts within five years. And the first priority for this new money would be to make sure that people who live outside London get a fair share.

RACE: We'd also make it a lot easier for private funds to be made available to the arts. We could do this by offering tax incentives. As it happens, they do this in the United States, and it's been very successful in raising funds for the arts.

BLAIR: They also have plans for making the arts much more important in education, both for children and adults.

RACE: The teaching of music has suffered dramatically as a result of cuts in the education services. I believe every child should have the chance to learn to play a musical instrument; to be taught to harness their natural abilities; to think creatively and communicate skillfully.

BLAIR: We can only do this if we make drama, painting, music, part of the core curriculum in schools.

RACE: The SDP also has plans to make the arts a natural part of our everyday lives by introducing works of art into building developments.

BLAIR: We would introduce a scheme which would require public and private developers to devote one percent of the cost of their schemes to art.

RACE: So lots of people and organisations which had not supported the arts before would start to do so.

BLAIR: And artistes would receive a regular flow of new commissions.

RACE: And so we would all receive the benefit of pictures and sculpture, so enriching our new buildings.

BLAIR: There are lots more creative ideas in the SDP's arts policy. They're all designed to liberate the arts and make them accessible to everyone. This ensures that we all have the chance to use the arts to make our lives richer and more rewarding.

RACE: That's an important aim now, but it's going to become more and more important as our lives continue to change. So let's recognise that the change is happening and plan to use the change.

BLAIR: Let's invest in something that we already do really well, and make the arts a natural part of all our lives - happiness and health of our society could depend on it.

To find out more about the SDP's arts policy, or to join the party, write to us, no stamp required, at SDP Arts, Freepost, London SW1P 3BR. SDP Arts, Freepost, London SW1P 3BR.

OUT CUE: That was a PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST by the Social Democratic Party.

