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Sweden

Narrow victory for the Swedish right

- IV Online magazine - 2006 - IV381 - September 2006 -

Publication date: Wednesday 20 September 2006

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The Swedish election resulted in change of power. For the first time in 30 years Sweden will have a right majority-government. But the election victory for the conservative alliance was a narrow one. They only got two percent more votes than the left-parties, 48% against 46%. The number of parliamentary seats ended 178 for the conservative alliance against 171 for the left wing bloc. Biggest party, despite the worst election result since 1928, is still the Social-democrats (Socialdemokratiska arbetarpartiet, SAP) with 130 seats. The Social-democrats lost 14 seats whereas the biggest party in the conservative alliance, the Conservative Party (Moderaterna) won 42 which makes it the next biggest party with 97 seats. This is the best election result for the Conservative Party since 1928. A marginal gain for the greens (2 seats) and a loss of 8 seats for the Left-party only confirm the bad election results for the left-bloc.

One reason for the big success for the Conservative party is the Social-democrats themselves. For 12 years they have been in government and during this time they have been privatising, cost-cutting and generally have pursued a neo-liberal agenda, though carefully and slow. The unemployment rate in Sweden during these years has grown to be among the highest in Europe, much higher than in the other Nordic countries. Throughout the election campaign the Social-democrats denied this and put forward claims that everything in the country was all right. This gave the Conservative party and their alliance an opportunity to act as the more credible alternative for creating more jobs. The deprivation of resources to the public domain including hospitals etc by the Social-democrats together with the Greens and the Left-party created a paved road for the Conservative alliance to follow. Thus the neo-liberal policies of the Social-democratic government made it possible for the Conservative alliance to win the election with an even worse neo-liberal agenda.

In some local elections the Social-democrats has made a better result than in the national elections. This is especially noteworthy when it comes to the second city of Sweden, Gothenburg (Göteborg) where the Social-democrats got 7% more votes locally than nationally. The local Social-democrats in Gothenburg has been criticizing the social-democratic government for some years and in the election campaign they criticised the focus on "everything is alright" and wanted the campaign to focus on how to create more jobs and take better care of immigrants and refugees. Due to this the local Social-democrats, with their popular local leader Göran Johansson, stayed in power in Gothenburg city.

The Left-party is another reason for the loss of power of the Social-democrats. Unable to create a left alternative to social-democracy and nearly always supporting the social-democratic government, even when it comes to privatisations they have been no alternative for the Swedish working class. Parts of the working class instead have supported the racist Sweden-democrats in this election.

Just as worrisome as the conservative victory is the success in the local elections for the Swedish far-right, the racist party Sweden-democrats. Due to the fact that the social-democrats have been unable to create more jobs and to do anything at all about the unemployment, the Sweden-democrats have been able to use racism as a way to success. It's easy to blame the high unemployment rates on the immigrants and refugees. They did not make it to the national parliament this time, but if nothing happens inside the left and segmented extreme left in Sweden the racist Sweden-democrats will probably make it to the national parliament next time. In the local elections however, they have won seats in many local councils. Especially they got very high results in South Sweden, in areas close to Denmark. In the national election in South Sweden they got around 10%, compared to only 3% nationally. In local elections in the same area they got up to more than 20%.

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The third party that supported the social-democratic government was the Greens. Although they have never gained a strong support in the working class and are not seen as an alternative in these groups.

The second biggest party outside the parliament is the new party, Feminist Initiative, a feminist party led by an old chairman of the left-party, Gudrun Schyman. They got 1% in the national elections. Mainly votes from traditional left-wing voters despite the fact they claim to stand outside the left-right scale and also despite the fact they have no class oriented agenda at all. Their election result is definitely a disappointment for them. Just as the result for the main victor of the last European parliament elections in Sweden, Junilistan, is also a big disappointment for his EU-critic and bourgeoisie party. They got only 0,5% in the national election compared to 14% in the last election to the European parliament.

There have been a strong right wing turn in the Swedish elections. The Conservative party seem to have won a lot of votes in the middle-class from the Social-democrats but also some working class votes. They now have stronger support in the working class than the Left-party. We have also seen a significant number of working-class votes going to the extreme right, especially in local elections.

The extreme left did not have good election results and probably gained nothing taken together. The two small stalinist groups lost 6 seats together whereas the two parties with trotskyist orientation gained 6 seats. The CWI-section (Rättvisepartiet Socialisterna) thus has most local councillors (totally 8, 3 new seats) of all Swedish extreme left groups. Socialist Party (Socialistiska Partiet), the Fourth International section probably gained 3 seats and now has 4 local council seats in 4 different cities. Compared to the number of local seats (more than 200) for the extreme-right this is really nothing.

With the victory for the right-wing bourgeoisie parties the Swedish working-class probably will experience a harsh four-year period with big cuts in public spending, for example in the payment to the unemployed. There will also be more privatised schools. Most of the possibly profitable hospitals will be privatised as well as most of the state-owned corporations. The legislation to protect a worker from getting sacked will be weakened, especially for young people. The Conservative alliance will introduce legislation that will force women away from the job market and legislation that will make life more difficult for refugees. The bourgeoisie right wing government will also lower the property tax in such a way it will primarily benefit the very rich. The company taxation, already one of the lowest in Europe, will be even lower and the same goes for the tax on big fortunes. All this will probably lead to higher prices, lower wages and increased segregation.

Swedish election results, national elections

Conservative Alliance (Alliansen)		178 seats
<i>Conservative Party (Moderata Samlingspartiet)</i>	26.2%	97 seats
<i>Liberal Party (Folkpartiet liberalerna)</i>	7.5%	28 seats
<i>Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna)</i>	6.6%	24 seats
<i>Center Party (Centerpartiet)</i>	7.9%	29 seats
Left Bloc		171 seats
<i>Green Party (Miljöpartiet)</i>	5.2%	19 seats
<i>Social Democratic Workers Party (Socialdemokratiska Arbetarpartiet)</i>	35.0%	130 seats

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<i>Left Party (Vänsterpartiet)</i>	5.8%	22 seats
Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna)	2.9%	
Feminist Initiative (Feministiskt Initiativ)	0.7%	
Pirate Party (Piratpartiet) (a party formed around anti-copyright groups)	0.6%	
June List (Junilistan)	0.5%	