

# Right-wing government re-elected in Sweden

**T**HE RECENT Swedish elections were historic in many ways. In a polarised vote, with an increased turnout, the right-wing 'Alliance' was again the biggest bloc while losing its overall majority. The racist Sweden Democrats (SD) won 20 parliamentary seats and the neo-liberal Social Democrats (SAP) had their worst result since 1914.

**Per Olsson,**  
Rättvisepartiet Socialisterna  
(CWI Sweden)

On the day after the elections up to 20,000 people participated in demonstrations against racism. These demonstrations, alongside protests that stopped street meetings of the SD during the election campaign, are signs of what is coming.

The new right-wing government is far from stable and is now only able to continue with the support of one or more parties from outside of its alliance. Of the four parties in government, only the biggest, the Moderates, increased its vote.

In the 'Red-Green' opposition bloc, the Social Democrats' vote dramatically dropped while the Greens won nearly 50% more votes than in 2006 and the Left Party's vote fell from 5.85% to 5.6%, a loss of three MPs.

## Moderates gain

IT IS the Moderates, to a certain extent at the expense of its Alliance allies, who have gained from the attempt to 'buy' votes with tax reductions.

Tax reductions, alongside consumption fuelled by household debt, added to continued purchasing power for those with jobs, despite a drop of gross domestic product of 6% in 2009. The housing bubble has not yet burst in Sweden.

When the economy started to recover from its 2008/09 historic recession, while other European

countries were close to bankruptcy, this gave grounds for the myth of the financial 'successes' of the government.

The trade unions and the so-called opposition failed to organise a struggle against the massive reductions in unemployment benefits, sick pay and pensions that paid for the tax reductions.

Weakness invites aggression. After the attack on unemployment benefits, a series of measures followed to push down wages and working conditions, particularly hitting the growing number of workers with casual jobs.

Sweden now has a hung parliament with the racist SD holding the balance of power. The new political landscape marks a deepening political crisis that could result in early elections (which would be the first time in Sweden) or even a new grand coalition.

The 'Red-Greens' are in trouble, with the Greens considering a deal with the government. Locally, they already cooperate or rule in alliance with the right-wing parties in some areas.

## More attacks

THE 'MARKET', betting on a majority right-wing government, expects continued counter-reforms in the labour market and more privatisations.

What is now needed is for activists in trade unions, in rank-and-file organisations and on the left to unite in rapid action against right-wing policies and racism, with the aim of building a bigger movement.

A new right-wing government and the Sweden Democrats will strengthen all the contradictions accumulated beneath the surface of society. It is a provocation that must be met with organised resistance, mass actions and socialist policies.

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10,000 in Stockholm demo against the racist Sweden Democrats.

## Racist party wins 20 seats

**T**HE RACIST Sweden Democrats (SD) got 5.7% of the vote and 20 MPs in the elections to the Riksdag (parliament). It received 330,000 votes, more than the Left Party, the former Communist Party, and got seats in 11 regional councils.

The election result immediately led to anti-racist demonstrations, with up to 20,000 participating in demonstrations in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö the day after the elections. This shows the potential for a movement against the SD and racism.

The Sweden Democrats started as an openly fascist party, but has carried out gradual 'makeovers', ending up as an "immigrant-critical" party. Over the last few years, the SD has mainly campaigned against Muslims, naming Islam as the biggest "foreign threat" since World War Two. In their propaganda, they also claim to defend care of the elderly. But in practice, in the councils where they have seats, they have voted for huge cuts and privatisation.

For all those worried by the election results, it is now a question of organising resistance. This in turn has to be based on an analysis of why their vote is increasing. Basically, it's the same answer as why the right-wing alliance won the elections: the increased insecurity in society combined with the lack of organised resistance.

The SD is now all over the media and is guaranteed 110 million Swedish Kronor (€11 million) in state aid as a parliamentary party, but it is still a party with few active members.

When thousands attended protests during the election campaign, the SD only mobilised a handful of supporters and had to cancel several of their street meetings.

A strong anti-racist movement must be built. It needs to stress the struggle against racism: acting against racists and racist violence as well as building the struggle for jobs, education, health care and housing for everyone.

CWI Sweden  
retains five  
council seats

**R**ÄTTVISEPARTIET SOCIALISTISKA RÖRELSEN kept its three council seats in Luleå and two in Haninge. This is an achievement in a political climate of almost no workers' struggles, a right-wing victory in the general election, racist MPs elected and other left organisations losing votes.

We sold 2,198 election manifestos in six weeks and 917 individuals promised to vote for us, giving phone

numbers and addresses, more than in the 2006 campaign.

Stronger roots meant that we increased our vote in new districts; at the same time we are still the third biggest party, with 9.7% of the vote in Jordbro, our working-class stronghold (about 10,000 inhabitants) where our councillors, Mattias Bernhardsson and Lina Thörnblom, also live.

Our party will, as we promised, continue to initiate protests and struggles with all those who want to fight back.

The election result is proof of what support a clear socialist programme can win even in a complicated situation. Without the work done between elections, this campaign and result would not have been possible.

**Elin Gauffin and Jonas Brännberg**

# Is Ireland's economy going bust?

THE IRISH government has imposed a series of savage austerity measures to reduce the country's large budget deficit. But far from curing its economic problems Ireland's economy shrank by a further 1.2% in the second quarter of 2010, hinting at a double-dip recession.

Unemployment in Ireland now stands at 13%, with the economy having contracted 14% during the current crisis. Dublin Socialist Party councillor **Mick Barry** asks if Ireland is heading for bankruptcy.

**U**CD ECONOMIST, Morgan Kelly, was pilloried by the establishment back in May when he said it was no longer a case of whether Ireland would go bankrupt but when.

Four months on, more and more establishment voices are beginning to entertain the notion that he may have been correct.

Despite the massive cuts programme being implemented by the government, the price of borrowing by the Irish state continues to rise. The 'markets' demand a heav-

ier price despite the government's 'market-friendly' policies.

The Irish state now pays 5.58% on ten-year government bonds, more than Greece pays for its debt in the wake of the European Union/International Monetary Fund bailout.

The Standard and Poor's debt rating downgrade simply reflects the view that there is an increased risk that Ireland will not be able to meet its liabilities.

Matt Cooper wrote in the Sunday Times: "We seem to have got something of a raw deal: public spend-

ing has been slashed, the cost of borrowing is going up, and so too is unemployment. The cost will be met by this and future generations. The width of the chasm in the public finances remains so enormous it is difficult to see how cutting current spending and increasing taxes further will do anything other than send the economy into another tail spin."

Kelly's analysis back in May predicted a sovereign debt of 140% of GNP (national wealth) by late 2012. This was based on the state guarantee to the banks costing the taxpayer €33 billion for written off property development loans (out of a total €100 billion), €7 billion for written off business loans (out of a total of €35 billion) and €7 billion for written off mortgage arrears (out of a total of €140 billion).

This would result in bank bailouts ten times greater than the bank bail-

outs in the USA per head of population.

It is probably too soon to say that bankruptcy for the Irish state is inevitable but equally a Greek-style debt crisis in Ireland even before Christmas cannot be ruled out.

The lessons for the working class movement from recent developments are clear. The massive cuts and tax increases are not being ploughed into an economic recovery. They are being ploughed into a black hole to feed the banks and the insatiable greed of the markets.

The movement must reject all cuts and tax increases and deals such as the Croke Park agreement which facilitate them. A struggle must be launched against the economic policy of the ruling class and a campaign to replace the market economy with a democratic, socialist system must be launched and vigorously pursued.

the **committee for a**  
**workers international**

THE COMMITTEE for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

The CWI is organised in 40 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

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The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world. Recent articles include:



**Public sector union CPSU consultative conference in Ireland**

"Delegate after delegate raised their continued opposition to the rotten Croke Park deal."

*Denis Keane, CPSU Executive (personal capacity), 26 September 2010*



**Middle East**

Can new 'talks' deliver justice and peace? Workers need to organise independently!

*CWI leaflet: 24 September 2010*



**EU-China summit**

Bigger profits on the backs of Chinese workers.

*Joe Higgins MEP (Socialist Party Ireland) speaking in the European Parliament on the EU-China summit (video).*

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