

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

SWEDEN: THE 1964 RIKSDAG ELECTION

The ordinary election for the Second Chamber of the Swedish Riksdag was held on September 20, 1964. The term is for four years; should the Chamber be dissolved and a new election be held during this period, the newly elected members of parliament will be in office only for the remainder of the four year term. Such an exceptional election was held in 1958. The term of the new members consequently expired at the normal time, i.e. in 1960.

The results of the three most recent elections to the Second Chamber have been as follows:

Party	Number of votes			Percentage of valid votes		
	1958	1960	1964	1958	1960	1964
Social Democrats	1,776,667	2,033,016	2,006,923	46.2	47.8	47.3
People's Party	700,019	744,142	720,733	18.2	17.5	17.0
Rightist Party	750,332	704,365	582,609	19.5	16.5	13.7
Centre Party	486,760	579,007	559,632	12.7	13.6	13.2
Communists	129,319	190,560	221,746	3.4	4.5	5.2
League of Christian Democrats	.	.	75,389	.	.	1.8
Citizens' League	.	.	64,807	.	.	1.5
Middle Parties ¹	.	.	13,557	.	.	0.3
Others	1155	2848	384	0.0	0.1	0.0
Total	3,844,252	4,254,114	4,254,780	100.0	100.0	100.0
Numbers of eligible voters	4,992,421	4,972,177	5,095,850			
Voting turnout (%)	77.4	85.9	83.9			

¹ The Middle Parties were the outcome of a purely technical arrangement between the Centre Party and the People's Party in the electoral district of Gotland. If the votes cast in favour of the Middle Parties are divided between the two parties, the respective percentages for the entire country are: People's Party 17.1 per cent; Centre Party 13.4 per cent.

The country is divided into 28 electoral districts. The seats are divided within these districts proportionally among various parties by the so-called weighted odd numbers method.

Since there are no extra seats outside the electoral districts to even the votes for achieving a greater degree of proportionality, the number of seats won by each party deviates somewhat from its actual share, as indicated by the national voting figures. Thus, for instance, in the 1964 election each elected Centre Party representative was backed by 16859 votes, while the respective figure for the Rightist Party was 18207 and for the Communists 27718. The figures for the People's Party and the Social Democratic Party are between those of the Centre Party and the Rightist Party.

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The distribution of seats in the four most recent elections to the Second Chamber has been as follows:

	1956	1958	1960	1964
Social Democrats	106	111	114	113
People's Party	58	38	40	42
Rightist Party	42	45	39	32
Centre Party	19	32	34	33
Communists	6	5	5	8
League of Christian Democrats	.	.	.	—
Citizens' League ¹	.	.	.	3
Middle Parties ²	.	.	.	2
Others	—	—	—	—
Total seats	231	231	232	233

¹ Of the three representatives elected under this designation one professed to be a member of the Rightist Party, one of the People's Party and one of the Centre Party. The two first-mentioned have been admitted to the Rightist Party's and the People's Party's parliamentary group, respectively, while the third was refused admission to the Centre Party's parliamentary group.

² The two representatives elected under this designation were members of the Centre Party and were admitted to its parliamentary group after the election. Thus the representation of the bourgeois parties in the Second Chamber was as follows: Peoples Party 43, Centre Party 35, Rightist Party 33.

To participate in the Second Chamber election the votes must have reached the age of 21 during the year preceding the election and must not be under guardianship.

The number of eligible voters increased by 120 000 between the 1960 and 1964 elections. The province of Stockholm was responsible for a considerable proportion of this increase, while the number of eligible voters in the city of Stockholm itself somewhat decreased.

Participation in the 1964 elections was two per cent less than the record figure of 85.9 per cent reached in 1960. With the exception of that record year participation in the Second Chamber election was higher in 1964 than ever before. Prior to 1960 the percentage had only once — in 1948 — exceeded 80.

Participation has decreased in every electoral district in 1964. The two southernmost districts showed now, as before, the highest return — somewhat over 87 per cent.



The Swedish party structure has shown greater stability than that of any other Scandinavian country. In contrast to the neighbouring countries, no new party has succeeded in gaining representation in the Swedish Riksdag since 1945. The fact that in the 1964 elections a somewhat greater proportion of votes was cast for party designations outside the traditional five major parties is due primarily to the joint platforms by representatives on non-socialist parties in a few electoral districts. This type of cooperation must take place under new, registered party designations since separate electoral alliances may not appear on the ballot.

The Christian Democratic League — which participated in general elections for the first time in 1964 — is, on the other hand, actually a new party.

All five parties represented in the Riksdag can trace their history back to the First World War, or even further than that. Ever since the introduction of parliamentary democracy they have completely dominated the parliamentary scene. The leading position has been held by the Social Democrats. Ever since 1932, almost without interruption they have been the ruling party, either alone or in coalition with bourgeois parties.

Social reforms and other measures aiming at leveling income as well as certain controls of economic activity have characterized the thirty years of Social Democratic rule. The party, however, has made no attempts to introduce any of the more extensive changes in the ownership of the means of production that are its avowed primary goals.

Since 1945 Social Democratic support has shown slow but constant decline. In the 1952 election both the number of votes cast for and the number of seats won by the Social Democrats were below those of the bourgeois parties and the bourgeois majority only increased in the 1956 elections.

This downward trend was, however, checked at the end of the decade in connection with the heated political campaign against the bourgeois opposition to a bill introduced by the Social Democrats for the adoption of compulsory long service pensions. In the 1960 elections the proportion of votes cast for the Social Democrats was the highest ever in peace time.

While the Communists in Sweden, as in Denmark and Norway, had made considerable gains in the elections immediately before and after the Second World War, they had suffered constant losses in the number of votes and seats in the 1940's and 50's. In contrast to 1960, in the 1958 special elections held in connection with the pension debate the Communists did not put forward candidates in all electoral districts. This explains the increase of votes for the party in the 1960 election. The percentage for 1960 is, however, one half of one per cent lower than in 1956.

During most of the post-war period the People's Party has been the leading opposition party. The party won by a landslide in 1948 with a platform characterized by liberal social policy. The People's Party has primarily attracted the lower grade civil servants and smaller enterprisers, and in 1956 it was the largest party in Gothenburg and almost equal in strength with the Social Democrats in Stockholm.

In connection with the pension debate the People's Party suffered a serious set-back in the 1958 and 1960 elections. For a while the Rightist Party was the leading opposition party. It is apparent that in recent years there has been a tug-of-war within the Rightist Party between the more traditionally oriented conservative groups and circles more willing to accept the modern ideology of the welfare state. This may have contributed to the downward turn in the last elections of the Party's support, which was on the increase in the 1950's.

The Centre Party is the only bourgeois party which has participated in government since the end of the Second World War. Between 1951-57, the party was in coalition with the Social Democrats and suffered several election defeats during this period. In the Second Chamber elections of 1956 its percentage of total votes cast fell below 10.

At that time the party called itself the Farmers' League, and was very class-conscious. After it had changed its name and returned to opposition, significant progress has been noticeable in the 1958 and 1960 elections. Its base of support was further broadened by its entry into densely populated urbanized districts, where the Centre Party has found supporters e.g. among small businessmen.

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Since 1957 the Social Democrats have borne the sole responsibility for government. During this time the party has been in minority in the Second Chamber, but after 1960 the number of Social Democratic representatives there has exceeded that of the bourgeois parties. The Communists have not joined forces with the bourgeois parties in decisive votings. In certain cases the Social Democrats have also been able to take advantage of their majority position in the First Chamber.

A gain of four seats by the bourgeois parties in the 1964 elections was sufficient to give the bourgeois parties a majority in the Second Chamber. In spite of this, the

conduct of the split-up bourgeois opposition hardly gave the impression that a change of government would be likely. Characteristically, while in Denmark a bourgeois government could be discussed as a realistic proposition after the elections, bourgeois propaganda in Sweden primarily emphasized the necessity of strengthening the opposition.

The traditional division among the Swedish bourgeois parties was this time further augmented by the Rightist Party's conduct in the pensions issue.

After their election victory in 1960, the Social Democrats had been in a position to considerably extend the pensions system by the introduction of the general long service pension scheme. The financing of the pension system called for the establishment of considerable funds. In the opinion of the Rightist leaders the size of these funds was excessive and should have been, instead, used to augment the old-age pensions of those groups who were for some reason ineligible for long service pensions.

This proposition was strongly opposed by the representatives of the other four parliamentary parties — not the least by the Centre Party and the People's Party, which pointedly accused the Rightist Party of extremism. Social Democratic propaganda presented the situation as if the entire pension system were in a real danger.

Consequently, the pension question was to dominate the election campaign also this time. Another issue carried over from the previous campaigns was the People's Party's criticism of the so-called "queue-up society", i.e. of the shortages in housing, education and social services.

Questions of taxation and general economic policies did not play any conspicuous role in the campaign. However, attacks were directed, primarily by the Centre Party, toward the government's measures in depopulated areas, and there was also insistence on a more active policy of locating industries in Norrland.

The fact that the four major parties in principle agreed on defense and foreign policies was the main reason that these issues, as usual, were kept out of the election campaign. Nor did the bourgeois parties make any serious effort to utilize in the campaign the disclosures on extensive espionage — i.e. the Wennerström affair — which had become known some months prior to the elections.

The Communists did, however, insist on strongly reducing defense expenditure, though without total disarmament. But the main theme of the leftist opposition was insistence on more efficient measures to curb price increases. Clearly following the example of e.g. the Danish Socialistic People's Party, the Communists this time chose to present themselves as a national and democratic alternative to Social Democrats.

Public interest in the election campaign centered on the television debates. In these only the five parliamentary parties were allowed unrestricted participation.

Especially in the electoral district formed by the four large cities in southern Skåne (the so-called four-cities district), also other means of propaganda were used to a great extent in the campaign.

As a reaction against the split of the bourgeois parties local forces had been united to form a common bourgeois ballot in the four-cities district. The leadership of both the Centre Party's and the People's Party's national organizations had, however, opposed the scheme. A considerable number of the local organizations decided, however, to put the plan into effect in spite of the opposition by the national organizations. Under the name of Citizens' League a ballot was drawn up, and on top of it appeared the name of the Rightist Party's representative from the district, followed by his counterparts in the People's Party and the Centre Party.

On technical grounds the Citizens' League had to be registered as a party. It was pointed out, however, that it actually constituted no new party, but was created as a matter of expediency for electoral co-operation.

With the support of the two largest newspapers in Southern Sweden — which earlier

had been supporters of the Rightist Party — the Citizens' League conducted an intensive campaign, not only in opposition to the Socialist candidates but also against the three bourgeois parties, each of which had decided to nominate their own candidate in the district.

Unlike the situation in the four-cities district, the appropriate party leadership had approved the ballot in the electoral district of Gotland under the name of Middle Parties which was a joint effort of the Centre Party and the People's Party. This co-operation was brought about by special circumstances in the district, calling for this technical arrangement.

The only really new party, the Christian Democratic League, entered candidates in somewhat over one-half of the districts. As its name indicates, its most important aim is to safeguard Christianity and oppose the moral disintegration and cultural radicalism characteristic of the present society.

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All four major parties suffered a set-back in the 1964 elections, both percentage-wise and by absolute figures. With the exception of the Rightist Party the set-back was, however, insignificant, and can be to a certain extent accounted for by the bourgeois co-operation in the elections under new party designations.

Communists were the only parliamentary party which could chalk up an increase in votes. The Party's share of the total votes cast rose, however, only by a little more than one half of one per cent.

In spite of the decrease in votes received, both the People's Party and the Centre Party made minor gains of seats.¹ The Rightist Party suffered again heavy losses and its number of seats in the Second Chamber has decreased by one third from 1958 to 1965. The Social Democrats lost one seat, while the Communists gained considerably by their rather insignificant increase in votes received — three seats.

The Social Democrats did fairly well in communities of distinctly densely populated or industrial character, while they suffered losses in agrarian communities. Especially in the northernmost provinces, where there has been heavy emigration, the losses of the Social Democrats were pronounced; presumably the government's policy in siting industries is reflected by it. Again, in the capital and in certain districts in southern Sweden the party could register a number of victories. Excluding the province of Gotland, the Social Democrats were now, as in 1960, the largest party in all the election districts. In almost one half of the districts the party also won an absolute majority.

It has been established by interviews that the Social Democrats, compared with the Second Chamber elections of 1960, have gained ground among small businessmen while losing some support among working class voters. Furthermore, it appears that the party has not had such appeal to voters under the age of 30 as in 1960. In that election it was this group which cast their votes to a great extent for the Social Democrats. The limited data does not, however, warrant any definite conclusions.

The Communists' victories took place mainly in densely populated areas and in industrial communities. However, one cannot speak of any extensive shift from Social Democrats to Communists among the working-class voters. Nor is the increase in Communist votes e.g. in Stockholm or Gothenburg greater than the average for the whole country.

The Gothenburg district remains one of the most important Communist strongholds in the South of Sweden. The main bastion of the party, however, is the province of Norrbotten in the northernmost part of the country. As before, the Communists are the second strongest party there with approximately 16 per cent of votes cast.

The People's Party is the most pronouncedly urbanized of the parties. In 1964 too,

¹ The two seats of the Middle Parties have been transferred to the Centre Party.

the People's Party won best results in the Stockholm and Gothenburg districts. In the northern parts of the country, with a few exceptions, the liberals' set-back was noticeable. Lower-grade civil servants and similar groups still constitute the party's primary source of support.

The Rightist Party suffered losses in all electoral districts. In agrarian communities the conservatives were more or less able to maintain their position as in 1960; in the country's three major cities and their surrounding districts it suffered serious losses. It is thought that e.g. a number of smaller and bigger businessmen as well as certain groups of civil servants have withdrawn their support from the Rightist Party.

As before, the Centre Party gained a leading position in most pronouncedly agrarian communities. However in 1964 the party also had certain success in the larger cities and it succeeded, also for the first time, in obtaining a seat in the Stockholm district. Otherwise, the Centre Party lost, almost without exception, in the southern and middle parts of the country. On the other hand, the losses were compensated by the gains in the northernmost districts.

Interviews indicate that the Centre Party has been winning supporters among certain salaried groups. Its popularity among farmers has decreased, who currently constitute only approximately one half of the total Party support.

The People's Party, along with the Social Democrats, appears to be the party that has lost most votes to the Christian Democratic League. As a rule, this party received only two to three per cent of the votes in each electoral district. The disclosure of the extreme rightist background of certain prominent members of the party may have contributed to the fact that the Christian Democratic League did not gain the number of votes required for a seat in any electoral districts.

The Christian Democratic League is close to the Pentecostal Church, and its congregational contacts in part explain that the party's share of the votes reached about ten per cent in a number of communities, in particular in the provinces of Jönköping and Västernorrland — both of which have strong congregational elements.

The Citizens' League was successful to the extent that this party designation won three seats and 28 per cent of the votes in the four-cities district. It is apparent that the rallying around the Citizens' League primarily hurt the Rightist Party, which in the four-cities district lost more than two thirds of the votes received in 1960. In contrast, the Citizens' League did not manage to interfere with the Social Democrats' leading position within the district. On the contrary, the Social Democrats had there one of their best results in the entire country and won the new seat allocated to the district as a consequence of population increase.

On the basis of the above hardly any conclusion can be drawn on how the voters would react if there would be only a choice between a Social Democratic and a common bourgeois ballot. The split-up within the bourgeois camp was in the four-cities district this time, on contrary, even greater than before. The idea of Citizens' League has also won new supporters within the local patriotic organizations in other parts of the country and election co-operation will certainly be resorted to many a time.

After the election the Social Democrats continued in one-party government. As before, the ruling party does not have an absolute majority in the Second Chamber, but it has more seats than do the three bourgeois parties together. Therefore, it is of great importance for the government's aims that the Communists shall not join forces with the bourgeois parties in decisive votings.

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