Both the left and the far right make advances in Swedish elections

The Swedish left advances in the elections but as a whole Parliament swings more to the right.

The Swedish elections last Sunday turned out to be an extremely even affair, giving the two blocs of traditional political forces, the four party strong right wing group, ”the Alliance” and the social democratic and Green government and its supporting force, the Left Party, almost exactly the same number of seats.

Jonas Sjöstedt, leader of Vänsterpartiet (the Left Party), declared on election night that the elections represented a great success for the left. He explained that it was only due to the increased votes of the left that the Swedish progressives have the remotest chance of staying in power, since both the social democrats and the Greens took heavy tolls. For a while it even looked as if the Greens would not make it over the 4% barrier that is necessary to get any seats at all. In the end they got 4.3%, a mere 20,000 votes above the barrier.

Vänterpartiet conducted a very strong election campaign and ended up with 7.9% of the votes, gaining 2.2% compared to the previous elections. Perhaps even more positive is a huge influx of new members, making the party reach 25,000 members for the first time in its history. An astonishing 428 new members joined on a single day, according to the Party secretary Aron Etler. The party also performed very well in the three major cities.

Swedish politics have been a strange affair for the last four years. Despite a strong right-wing majority in parliament the country has had a Social-democratic and Green government. The reason for this was that the traditional right has managed, or as some may say, been forced, to keep the doors closed to the nationalists of the Swedish Democrats party, refusing to cooperate with them at all. This went to the point where they would even rather lose votes in Parliament than accept support from the far right. This very remarkable and positive policy might however now be at end, since at least two of the four parties of the traditional right have declared themselves willing to open a dialogue with the far right.

The results show a new situation in Swedish politics, where we can begin to determine three political blocs instead of the traditional two. To the right a neoconservative block with the traditional conservatives, the Christian Democrats and the far right, in the middle the two liberal parties and to the left Vänsterpartiet, the social democrats and the Greens. Which road the country now takes depends on whether the two liberal parties are willing to stay in their alliance with the right, despite influence from the far right, or whether this is a deal breaker for them and they decide to give their support to the left instead. If they do there is a good chance of a new social democratic government, but unfortunately, with less influence for the left, despite the good election result.