

Sweden: Government toppled, at last

Arbetarmakt, Swedish section, League for the Fifth International Tue, 22/06/2021 - 11:25

Arbetarmakt, Swedish section, League for the Fifth International

Sweden's minority Social Democrat-Green government has finally been toppled, after the prime minister, Stefan Löfven, lost a vote of confidence in parliament. After the inconclusive election of 2018, the coalition took office only after accepting the neo-liberal demands of the Centre and Liberal parties in the "January Agreement". Even with their support, the government was still dependent on the Left Party, successor to the Communist Party, which agreed not to oppose it if it did not implement two key elements of the Agreement: dilution of employment rights and marketisation of rents.

The attacks on job security came, as promised, but the Left Party leader, Nooshi Dadgostar, said that she wouldn't vote in favour of no confidence should the trade-unions and employers come to an agreement on employment law by themselves. The Social Democrats then quickly pressured their allies in the union bureaucracy to work out just such a deal, and the government remained in power.

That was in October of last year. The second issue, marketisation of rents in public housing, was not so easily dodged. The proposal was that the "Swedish model" of rents being set by negotiations between the tenants' union, Hyresgästföreningen, and landlords should be replaced with free rein to landlords to set any rent they like, according to "market prices". To sweeten the pill, this would, initially, only apply to new-builds.

As we have reported previously, according to a consultant firm's report, marketisation of rents in Sweden would mean about 50 percent higher rents in Stockholm, and 30-50 percent nationally.

Last week, under pressure from her own party members and the massive campaign all over the country against this extremist proposal (which doesn't even have majority support among right-wing voters), Nooshi Dadgostar gave the government a 48 hour deadline either to withdraw the proposal or initiate new negotiations with the Tenants' Union.

Seeing his chance, Löfven announced that the Tenants' Union would be allowed to negotiate, but, as with the employment law conflict, should they not reach an agreement with the property owners, the original proposal of marketisation of rents would be passed anyway.

This time, Dadgostar and the Left Party did not roll over. They announced that they couldn't accept this "solution", and then the racist Sweden Democrats initiated a vote of no confidence. Wholly for their own reasons, the conservative Moderate and Christian Democrat parties, voted to support the motion, and at 11 o'clock yesterday, June 21, PM Löfven was brought down by the combined votes of the Left Party, the Sweden Democrats, Christian Democrats and the Moderates. He now has seven days either to resign or to call a snap election.

As Arbetarmakt wrote on Sunday, ahead of the vote, all housing and workers' movement activists who have struggled against the threat of marketisation of rents must welcome the fall of the government and

the January Agreement. Since its inception, it has been the duty of all socialists to do everything in our power to bring down the January Agreement, to fight against every part of it, to increase the pressure and, finally, topple the government.

Attention now turns to political intrigues as a new government, or possibly a snap election, is discussed. We cannot discount the possibility that the Left Party will again betray their supposed "red lines" and accept negotiations under the pressure of either a law or the spectre of a reactionary Sweden Democrat-Moderate-Christian Democrat government. It was undoubtedly the pressure from the movement against marketisation of rents on the streets that forced the Left Party leadership to support the vote of no confidence, unlike last time, over the employment law.

No matter what comes next, the task for socialists now is to step up that campaign against marketisation of rents on the streets. The political crisis will not be solved by more intrigues, negotiations behind closed doors or yet another press conference. Activists in the Tenants' Union, the Campaign Against Marketisation of Rents, trade-unionists and organised socialists must make it crystal clear that, whatever government comes next, the marketisation of rents is a red line for us. As the Campaign, which is supported by Arbetarmakt, wrote on Sunday evening: "We don't want to see any fake negotiations or treacherous deals made on the backs of renters. We know that seven out of ten Swedes, from all political backgrounds, oppose marketisation of rents. Listen to the people!"

The protest outside of parliament called by the Campaign was a good start to a hot summer fighting against any attacks on housing. While the political situation in Sweden is currently uncertain, we can be sure of one thing: stepping up the struggle is our only guarantee for fighting back the attacks of the capitalist right, no matter what government is in power.

Source URL: <https://fifthinternational.org/content/sweden-government-toppled-last>