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SWEDISH DEMOCRATS: NATIONALISTS IN THE PAST AND TODAY

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The paper reports the results of studying far-right political group "Sweden Democrats". In the centre of attention is their ideology with a brief characterization of this phenomenon. In the end, there is a conclusion about the numerous changes and the strengthening of its role in the modern Swedish society.

For many years Sweden was a poor Nordic country, really unattractive to immigrants. Moreover, its inhabitants have gone abroad in search of a better life – opportunities of America were attractive for the Swedes.

Recently the situation has changed. One of the main treasures of the XXth century, iron ore, became the basis for accelerated industrialization of this Nordic country. The flexible government politics has enabled the country to avoid the devastation of the Second World War. Huge companies like IKEA or Scania became the face of the Swedish economy but meanwhile Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo turned into an attractive place for migrant workers. In the middle of the century they were the Finns and other Europeans. Soon Sweden took the first group of political refugees – Hungarians and Czechs, who left their countries after the events of 1956 and 1968. Later the refugees became pain in the head of Swedish society. Since then, all major conflicts, whether civil wars in Africa or the disintegration of the USSR, caused a regular flow of refugees. The Swedish government opened the doors. In 1974 the Swedish Riksdag officially formulated and adopted into law the concept of "multiculturalism", meaning the right of immigrants to maintain their cultural characteristics – language, religion and national traditions.

Every year thousands and thousands of refugees (and people pretending to be refugees) arrived in the largest Swedish cities. As a result Sweden became one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Europe – about 20% of the population today are immigrants or their descendants.

Meanwhile, all these decades Swedish society looked at these processes without expressing any displeasure [1]. In Stockholm and Malmo there appeared ghettos and the social-democrats were still having the country under their thumb. However, the formal opposition absolutely supported multicultural policies of their political opponents. This was a key difference from Denmark and Norway, where opponents of immigration quickly managed to succeed and had the opportunity to resist the crazy politics of the left directly in Parliament. In Norway, the first success came to the "Party of Progress" in 1989. In Denmark the role of the local "Party of Progress" was important enough to enter the ruling coalition. The center-right government was forced to adopt a series of anti-immigrant laws that decreased the number of marriages with foreigners, for example.

Everything was "vice versa" in Sweden. For many years Swedish nationalist parties had no appreciable electoral support of the population and turned into the marginal ghetto of subcultural neo-Nazis and skinheads that ruled out participation in political life. "The Social Democrats and the Conservatives have dominated Swedish politics for nearly a century. Both now face a challenge from a party formed only twenty-five years ago as a violent Nazi sect. The Sweden Democrats took a mere 1,118 votes in its first election in 1988, and did not clear the 4 percent hurdle needed to enter parliament until 2010" [1].

Firstly it was a typical Sweden far-right party. The majority of visitors of annual Engelbrecht-March (in honor of the Swedish national hero Engelbrekt of Engelbretson) were skinheads, a party of militant form lovers, and the party program included incredible for Sweden items like the deportation of all immigrants, the imposition of the death penalty and the prohibition to adopt non-European children by Swedish parents.

Besides, the party was essentially regional and its slight activity was limited to the province of Skåne. It is not surprising that their progress at the national level was insignificant – 5 thousand votes in the elections in 1994.

The situation began to change in 1995. "Sweden Democrats" began to focus on respectable nationalist parties – the French "National Front" or the "Danish people's party". It's interesting that they have changed the party emblem: the old one was essentially a copy of the symbol of the British neo-fascist "National Front" and it was replaced by a stylized image of a noble anemones made in the national colors (*Hepatica nobilis*). What could be more peaceful than the party with the blue flower as its emblem [3]?

Gradually the party's position "Swedish Democrats" was also adapted for the average Swedish voter. Today the "Sweden Democrats" are positioning themselves as the party standing on the principles of social conservatism and nationalism that rejects harmful to the Swedish policy of multiculturalism [1]. A striking example of their changing is an example of Paul Gamow – ethnic Russian, who now heads a faction of the "Swedish Democrats" in the legislature of the city of Uppsala.

The main threat to Sweden and other European countries "Sweden Democrats" is islamization, mass immigration, globalization and cultural imperialism (American style of life). The "Swedish Democrats" advocate for the preservation of "Nordic" economic model and society welfare. Of course, without a huge number of immigrants [4].

The main question, which is asked by political experts about the reasons which allowed the "Swedish Democrats" to get into Parliament. The answer in general is obvious — the complete failure of the incompetent migration policy of the Swedish government. A direct consequence of immigration was the rise of unemployment rate in 2010 – about 8%, and among immigrants unemployed it was about 30%. The consequence was a weak integration of foreigners in the Swedish society. Another reason of the success of the Swedish nationalists is the general crisis of the political system of the Kingdom and the disappointment of voters in the old parties.

The first disturbing call for the official elite was the elections to the European Parliament in 2014, when the "Sweden Democrats" got almost 10% of the votes, which gave them the opportunity to send to Brussels two representatives. The second important result of the election was the defeat of the center-right Alliance and the victory of the left coalition when the centre lost 7% of the vote compared to the campaign of 2010 – they were acquired by "Swedish Democrats" [2].

Opinion polls show the growing popularity of the party. The current level of support for "Swedish Democrats" is the following: from 20 to 27% of voters are ready to give their votes for them. This makes the Swedish nationalists the leading force in the country [4].

In addition, "Swedish Democrats" focuses on international cooperation with the popular parties like the eurosceptic "UKIP". The current crisis in the EU only gives them more political points.

What is the future of the party? Much depends on the elections to the Riksdag in 2018 and what will the "Swedish Democrats" do to establish relations with some centre-right parties. Still they are the winners: the small, marginal organization has become the second largest party in the country, without changing its main idea – "Sweden should remain Swedish" [5]. We may say they have made nationalism respectable. This is a huge, massive victory – not only over the straight political opponents, but also over the whole number of previous political stereotypes [1].

The main conclusion is that nationalism requires neither military coups nor right-wing storm troopers. And we should remember this fact.

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