

Socialist Alternative boasts of Democratic Party, union support in Minneapolis City Council election

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Local elections are scheduled for today in the US city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Among the candidates is Socialist Alternative's Ty Moore, who is running for City Council in the 9th Ward, which includes parts of the Longfellow, Corcoran, and Phillips neighborhoods on the city's south side.

Moore is considered a front-runner in the race, along with the official candidate of the Democratic Farmer Labor Party, as the Democratic Party is known in Minnesota.

Moore's campaign is one of two campaigns run by Socialist Alternative for city council seats in the United States. The group's candidate for City Council in Seattle, Washington won 35 percent of the vote in an August primary election, a move that was hailed by pseudo-left organizations as a major advance.

These campaigns represent an effort by groups like Socialist Alternative to establish a new prop for the two-party capitalist system. In a period of growing popular opposition to and disillusionment from the Democratic and Republican parties, Socialist Alternative serves a vital support role for the two parties by attempting to prevent the independent political mobilization of the working class. Whatever their "left" pretenses, these groups, speaking for more privileged sections of the upper middle class, operate quite consciously as a faction of the Democratic Party, in alliance with a section of the right-wing trade union bureaucracy.

In terms of its program, the campaign is entirely conventional in character. Few of Moore's demands are distinct from those demands that are raised by Democratic Party candidates. While he has made occasional calls for a \$15/hour minimum wage and similar proposals, much of his campaign has focused on

local issues like expanded bikeways "so cars aren't necessary to meet day-to-day transit needs," and for an "expanded market share for local farmers" to be achieved by pressuring "institutional buyers like public schools and the city's convention center."

Such proposals are made in the midst of the greatest economic and social crisis in the United States since the Great Depression. Almost a quarter of Minneapolisians live under the federal poverty rate, and nearly half of those residents have incomes of less than 50 percent of that rate. Roughly a third of Minneapolis children live in poverty—up from a quarter in the early 2000s.

Moore has both been promoted by and has championed endorsements from, sections of the Democratic Party establishment in the city. The campaign has made regular appeals directly to the DFL.

Moore's election site boasts of the endorsement of prominent Democrats, including Richmond, California Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, who has attempted to bolster support for the Democratic Party through a fraudulent mortgage-reduction scheme that Moore also supports (see "The housing crisis in Richmond, California and the debate over 'eminent domain'"). The outgoing council member for the 9th Ward seat, DFL member Gary Schiff, has said he has not endorsed a successor because, according to the *Star-Tribune* "he believes the candidates have similar values, but different leadership styles."

On September 10, Moore's campaign manager posted a letter, "DFL Ward 9 Convention delegates support Ty Moore for City Council," signed by over a dozen Democratic Party functionaries.

"Dear Fellow DFL Delegates," the letter begins. "Like you, we were delegates to the DFL Ward 9

Convention because we are passionate about seeing a strong progressive voice representing us on City Council next year. And it's that same passion for improving the lives of our neighbors that leads us to support Ty Moore's campaign to be our next Ward 9 City Council Member."

The letter makes reference to "our shared values" and the need to "build community power" to "win our shared vision for a just, inclusive, and vibrant city," by campaigning for such causes as "a permanent home for the Midtown Farmers Market."

As the statement makes clear, Socialist Alternative's orientation is towards the party that has overseen the multi-trillion dollar bailout of the banks and is spearheading the attack on social programs. Just last week, Food Stamp nutritional assistance for 48 million Americans was cut, without a word of protest from either the Democratic or Republican Parties.

Socialist Alternative has also made regular appeals to all other groups that are in the direct orbit of the Democratic Party. Moore's campaign has sought, won, and boasted about winning the endorsement of the Minnesota State Council of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which announced its endorsement for Moore alongside endorsements for DFL mayoral candidate Betsy Hodges and eight DFL candidates for City Council.

The SEIU has played a crucial role in disarming opposition amongst the working class to the prolonged attack on its rights and living conditions. From 1996 to 2010, under the leadership of former president Andrew Stern, the SEIU added some \$300 million in annual union dues from the pockets of its members, much of which it promptly funneled into the coffers of Democratic Party campaigns and political groups.

When Stern resigned as president in 2010, he kept his position with the Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, a panel established by the Obama administration to orchestrate the imposition of budget cuts. Stern also played an important role lobbying for Obama's regressive health care legislation.

Moore boasted that the "SEIU's endorsement is a capstone on the powerful, multi-racial grassroots coalition we're building to win this election." His desire to "bring together community and labor activists, socialists, Greens, even disgruntled Democrats" to "challenge the corporate stranglehold on our political

system," amounts to demagoguery aimed at channeling opposition to the Democratic Party into safe avenues.

Socialist Alternative also sought Ty Moore's endorsement by the pro-capitalist Green Party. Moore's organization has a long history of working with the Greens, endorsing Ralph Nader for President in the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 presidential elections and Green Party Candidate Jill Stein in 2012.

Internationally, Socialist Alternative is aligned with the Committee for a Workers International (CWI), which has sought political alliances with the ruling political parties in multiple countries across the world. The CWI's faction in Brazil promoted the election of both former president Luiz "Lula" Inacio da Silva and current president Dilma Rousseff—the latter continues Lula's track record of advancing the interests of the IMF and the World Bank, which have praised both the Lula and Dilma governments.

The CWI's Russian section marched and worked together in recent years with right-wing nationalistic forces. Its Greek section, Xekinima, has called for a united front with Stalinist parties and with the pro-European Union SYRIZA. The CWI's German section, Socialist Alternative (SAV), is part of the Left Party, which has played a role in supporting the push for war against Syria.

Socialist Alternative and its friends in the DFL and SEIU seek to subordinate the interests of the working class to the interests of warmongers and financial speculators. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, such figures may be brought forward in an effort to contain and politically disarm discontent over war, poverty, social inequality, and the capitalist system.



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