

# Socialist Alternative proposes electoral alliance with Seattle Democrats

Eric London  
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In an October 22 statement entitled “All Nine Seattle City Council Seats Up For Grabs—The Way Forward for the Left,” Socialist Alternative announces an electoral alliance with Democratic Party candidates. The article is a programmatic and political statement that marks yet another milestone in the group’s integration into the political establishment.

Referring to a series of Democratic City Council candidates, Socialist Alternative writes: “There is no doubt their election would be a big step forward and would be welcome relief from years of conservative domination of the City Council.”

Such an endorsement of Democratic politicians could be made only by a political group that has nothing whatsoever to do with socialism.

Referencing the group’s “socialist” City Council member Kshama Sawant, Socialist Alternative seeks to prove to the Democratic Party machine that it poses no threat to the political establishment:

“As Sawant’s engagement with [Democratic Mayor Ed Murray’s] task force has shown, remaining independent of the Democrats does not prevent us from working together with Democrats on issues that help working people. And as Sawant’s close collaboration with members of the Democratic Party within *15 Now* has shown, she and Socialist Alternative are eager to fight together for working-class interests.”

At this point in Socialist Alternative’s shift ever further to the right, one is entitled to ask: How can a group that calls for voting for Democrats and collaborating with Democrats claim independence from the Democratic Party? The answer is that their talk of “independence” is a fraud. Their position is loud and clear: the election of Democrats “would be a big step forward,” and Socialist Alternative is “eager” to work in “close collaboration with members of the

Democratic Party.”

Socialist Alternative defends its alliance with the Democratic Party by claiming that it is willing to collaborate with Democrats only “on issues that help working people.” This is akin to collaborating with Cain to “help” Abel.

Let us be clear: the Democratic Party is one of two major bourgeois parties in the US responsible for decades of attacks on wages, living standards and social programs. It represents the financial aristocracy and the military-intelligence apparatus, whose aim is to carve up the world in the interests of American imperialism regardless of how many hundreds of thousands of people are killed in the process. It is not a party that has the slightest interest in “helping” working people. On the contrary, it is an irreconcilable class enemy of the working class of the world.

It is toward this party that Socialist Alternative looks for support and collaboration. The October 22 article is addressed not to confused supporters of the Democratic Party, but to “elected Democratic Party politicians, who agree with us on many issues and want to see bolder action against corporate politics.”

The article continues: “While we are eager to work together to support a common agenda on progressive change, we politically believe they are not going far enough... We urge them to use their campaigns, whether elected or not, to help us strengthen grassroots movements and generate renewed interest in left-wing politics, particularly among young people.”

These lines should be studied as a textbook example of everything socialism *isn’t*.

Socialists do not “urge” parties that represent the banks, the corporations and the military-intelligence apparatus to “help” build the revolutionary movement, nor do we criticize them for “not going far enough.”

We fight indefatigably for an understanding among working people that the development of a revolutionary movement must be based on the complete political independence of the working class from all parties and politicians of the capitalist class, whether supposedly “left,” liberal or overtly right-wing.

Among the middle-class anti-Marxists who comprise Socialist Alternative and the various other pseudo-left organizations, this core principle of revolutionary socialism is denounced as “sectarianism.”

Socialist Alternative is not a revolutionary group, and its approach to politics has nothing to do with Marxism. As far as it is concerned, class has no place in the analysis of social forces and political parties. Instead, Socialist Alternative portrays the Democratic Party as made up of a progressive “anti-corporate” faction and a “conservative” one. Even here, Socialist Alternative regrettably admits that five of the Democrats it has endorsed are financed by business interests and property developers and “have not been willing” to reject bribes from corporations.

Socialist Alternative’s orientation to the Democratic Party is not the product of a political mistake, but of its class orientation. It represents an upper-middle class layer of society that has every interest in the maintenance of capitalism.

If Socialist Alternative’s electoral alliance succeeds in taking control of the city government in Seattle, it will play a similar role as SYRIZA in Greece. In January, SYRIZA won election on a platform of opposing austerity, but within weeks of coming to power it made an agreement with the European banks for a new, brutal austerity program that included massive cuts to social programs and workers’ wages and benefits.

There is no third way between imposing the dictates of the banks and corporations and mobilizing the working class for a struggle against capitalism, and Socialist Alternative’s orientation to the Democratic Party proves that it is wholly opposed to the latter.

Its alliance with the Democrats is bound up with the ruling class’s preoccupation with finding ways to prevent the opposition of millions of workers and youth to war and inequality from taking an explicitly socialist form. These efforts are of an international character and have become a central element of bourgeois politics. The ruling class is becoming increasingly reliant on

forces like SYRIZA in Greece, Jeremy Corbyn in Great Britain and Podemos in Spain to carry through its program of austerity and war.

In the US, Socialist Alternative has endorsed the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, whose function is to channel social opposition back into the dead end of the Democratic Party. Sanders, who claims to be leading a fight against social inequality, is an economic nationalist who joins with the trade union bureaucracy and sections of the Democratic Party in working to pit US workers against their class brothers and sisters in other countries in the name of “saving American jobs.” The real content of this deeply reactionary orientation is to line up American workers behind “their” corporate bosses in the inter-imperialist economic and trade warfare that inevitably leads to shooting wars.

In the October 22 article, Socialist Action avidly promotes this anti-working class perspective, declaring its support for the AFL-CIO’s nationalist opposition to the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal. “Imagine,” it writes, “if the 2,000 organizations that opposed the TPP could come together to run hundreds of independent candidates...”

The increasing reliance by the ruling class on its pseudo-left supporters reflects, in the final analysis, the immense crisis of capitalism and the profound revolutionary potential of the present period. The fight to develop socialist consciousness in the working class today requires a fight to expose and clarify the role of the upper-middle class pseudo-socialists who seek to prop up the old, dying system. It is in opposition to such anti-working class organizations that the political and ideological foundations for social revolution will be laid.



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