Seattle Democrats endorse Socialist Alternative's Kshama Sawant

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Kshama Sawant, a leading member of Socialist Alternative, has received an official endorsement from the 43rd Legislative District (LD) Democratic Party in Seattle.

The 37th LD Democrats have voted for "no endorsement", effectively endorsing Sawant, as the rules for the 37th LD prevent them from formally endorsing someone who is not officially a member of the Democratic Party.

The endorsements for Sawant make even more clear what her tenure in the Seattle City Council has already demonstrated, that Socialist Alternative is an adjunct of the Democratic Party, a party that has overseen the destruction of living standards and the transfer of vast sums of wealth to the top 1 percent.

Kshama Sawant is running for re-election in the November elections for Seattle City Council. In the primary elections held in August, Sawant fell in the polls, receiving only 37 percent of the vote, the lowest vote for an incumbent since 1997. It is also much lower than her 2015 primary vote of 52 percent.

Her main opponent in this years' race is Egan Orion, a right-wing candidate who has been endorsed by real estate organizations and the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. Orion has been flooded with campaign donations from over a dozen of Amazon's top executives, including Jay Carney, former press secretary for the Obama administration.

In a letter on June 25 posted on Sawant's campaign website, members of the Democratic Party write, "Councilmember Sawant is the candidate in District 3 who best embodies those core values of Democrats in Seattle and in Washington State." They continue, "We will never forget the key role she played in winning a $15 minimum wage for Seattle, inspiring other cities and states to adopt it as well."

Socialist Alternative, in an article posted on its website on October 4, promotes the illusion that the official endorsement by the Democratic Party is "a major upset against Seattle's political establishment."

"These endorsements for socialists in Seattle, alongside more progressive Democrats like Tammy Morales in other council races, highlight the widespread support for progressive and socialist ideas among rank-and-file Democrats who are frustrated by the pro-corporate leadership of the city's political establishment."

It goes on to call for a "united front" with the Democratic Party. "Socialist Alternative and Kshama Sawant have emphasized the need for a united response by progressives, labor, Democrats, and socialists… Any genuine united front effort, however, requires being honest about political disagreements while raising them in a proportional and constructive way to bring movements forward."

Socialist Alternative's promotion of the Democratic Party as some sort of vehicle for reforms is a political fraud. Like the Democratic Socialists of America, they attempt to sow the illusion that there exists a "left-wing" in the oldest capitalist party in the world. Their role is to funnel workers and youth who are moving to the left back into the arms of the Democratic Party.

Sawant has based her 2019 re-election campaign on purely Democratic Party politics, such as "rent control," the "Green New Deal" trumpeted by Democrats Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders, and propping up the anti-worker union apparatus.

The $15 Now movement aggressively promoted by Sawant and Socialist Alternative gave political cover to Democrats throughout the country. Even ex-Democratic mayor Ed Murray, speaking on MSNBC's

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"Morning Joe" program, admitted that "The minimum wage would be about $21 an hour here in the city of Seattle, which is a very expensive city, if we actually wanted to get a real livable wage." He goes on, "Fifteen dollars would still be very hard for someone making that wage."

Despite the glorification of the $15 minimum wage, the reality is that it has done little to combat the growing social inequality in the city and nationwide. It has not put a dent in the profit margins of large corporations such as Amazon and Boeing. Additionally, in the seven years since the 15 Now movement began, the poverty-level wage amount has been eroded by inflation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, prices are nearly 12 percent higher in 2019 than in 2012.

It was from the very beginning a political maneuver aimed at quelling increasing opposition to inequality and bolstering illusions in the Democratic Party.

The elections are being held against the backdrop of a mounting social crisis facing the working class and youth. Seattle is the 15th largest city in the US and has a population of nearly three-quarters of a million. The two richest men in the world, Amazon's Jeff Bezos ($165.6 billion) and Microsoft's Bill Gates ($103.8 billion) live just outside the city.

Housing prices have increased 57 percent in the last six years, forcing many to choose paying rent over other bills. At the same time, record profits were recorded for Amazon, Starbucks, Microsoft and other companies. While ranking as the 15th largest city in the US, Seattle has the third-highest homeless population, or nearly 13,000 people, behind New York and Los Angeles.

Four of the seven incumbents have decided to step down as a result of a backlash to the head tax on corporations making over $20 million a year. The tax was passed by the Democratic Party-controlled Seattle City Council last year and quickly repealed four weeks later.

After the city council unanimously voted to halve the original version of the tax under threat from Amazon and other companies, Sawant responded by presenting the cowardly move as a "win" for both big business and workers. She stated, "There is no way this tax will be a burden on big business in Seattle." She later tweeted, "Given extortion from @JeffBezos & Goliath-like clout of @amazon, even a smaller tax is huge victory & pushback on corporate bullying."

Most significantly, neither Sawant nor Socialist Alternative have said anything about the role played by the Democratic Party in the impeachment drive against the Trump administration.

The Democrats have based their entire campaign against the Trump administration on the most right-wing basis, channeling the positions of the military-intelligence apparatus. Instead of opposing Trump on his attacks on immigrants, his cultivation of a fascist movement in the United States, or his tax cuts on the rich, the Democratic Party has based their opposition on their war plans against Russia and the phony allegation of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

As with the other organizations of the pseudo-left, Socialist Alternative has said almost nothing about the political crisis in Washington and the conflicts within the ruling class. Their sole statement, published on September 30, criticizes Democrats for limiting the impeachment drive to Trump's phone call with Ukraine, but it says nothing about the Democrats own support for war and its role in channeling the interests of powerful sections of the military and intelligence agencies.

It also says nothing about the Democrats' campaign against Assange, for which Socialist Alternative has provided political cover.

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