

Workers and students speak at Sanders rally in New York

Our reporters
22 October 2019

On Saturday, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders held a rally at Queensbridge Park in Queens, New York. While the rally was called for New York Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other Democratic Party figures to endorse Sanders, the event drew an attendance of roughly 25,000 primarily from the New York metropolitan area.

The event was the first public demonstration with Sanders since it was announced that he had been hospitalized for a heart attack earlier this month, and was the largest campaign event so far in the contest for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

Despite Sanders' decision to endorse Clinton in the 2016 election, many people attended to express their dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party establishment and its ties to corporate interests. Many people also voiced support for an expansion of Medicare, free higher education, addressing climate change, moving towards socialism. Some also indicated that they were dissatisfied with Sanders, but saw him as the lesser evil in the 2020 election.

The WSWs spoke with workers and young people at the rally about their views on Sanders, social conditions, as well as illusions in the ability to implement reforms through the Democratic Party.

Jan, an artist in New York, said, "I came to the rally because we need a massive economic restructuring for a just society, and for a healthy world for my daughter. I understand why Sanders supported Clinton in 2016, but it was not ideal. We do need a path to state power, and we can lose a lot if there is not a release mechanism, especially when it comes to blocking someone like Trump."

Myrna, an attorney, stated that she had come "to show my support for Bernie. I had voted for him in 2016. After he endorsed Clinton I was very

disappointed, and I think it was a major mistake on his part. I ended up voting for the Green Party after that.

"I am afraid that history will repeat itself in this election, if the Democrats play their game again. You can easily imagine them using something like the super delegates to block him again. In their impeachment of Trump it is self-dealing."

Asked her thoughts about Sanders attempting to bring opposition behind the Democratic Party, she added, "I don't think that it is really working in their attempt to bring the left into the fold of the Democratic Party. It is clear that the media is essentially running on supporting anyone but Bernie. When anyone is coming into the Democratic Party from the left, it is clear that they are not welcome."

Michelle, a student at Queens College majoring in education, after being asked about why she came, responded, "Why not be here? This is the closest thing we have to socialism. But I don't trust that anybody is a real socialist, but Sanders is the best we have." She also said she had student debt.

Samir, a post-doctoral researcher, stated, "I don't think there is anything radical about Sanders. In most other industrialized countries he would be considered center. I think Sanders is the bare minimum of what Americans need."

After some discussion on the Democrats' impeachment drive against Trump, and the Democrats' exclusion of major political issues, he stated, "I think the talk about the whistleblowers is hypocritical because the Democrats were the ones [persecuting WikiLeaks founder] Julian Assange."

Jeremy, an IT worker, stated, "We need to get rid of Citizens United and the Electoral College. That doesn't represent the interests of working people. This is the only country to have the Electoral College. In the last

election, the person with the most votes is not the president, also in 2000. Most of the Democratic Party is corporate and Sanders gave the nomination to Hillary. But even if Sanders won, we would still have to get rid of the Electoral College.”



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