

Socialist Alternative's Kshama Sawant attends Democratic Party fundraiser

By Eric London
7 March 2015

Kshama Sawant, Seattle's Socialist Alternative City Councilmember, was captured on video entering a February 21 fundraiser and birthday celebration for a local leader of the Democratic Party, King County Councilmember Larry Gossett.

The video was posted online, but has subsequently been removed.

Sawant and the organization to which she belongs have not yet sought to explain why a self-proclaimed socialist would spend an evening rubbing elbows and clinking glasses with the political elite in a major American city.

Nor did Socialist Alternative announce beforehand that Sawant would be appearing at an event sponsored by the Democratic Party establishment. That's because Sawant's attendance at the fundraiser is a damning exposure of the phony character of her "socialist" city council campaign and term in office.

In fact, Sawant has worked closely with the Democratic Party establishment in Seattle, including Gossett, who has already endorsed her for elections to be held later this year.

When Sawant was elected to the city council in November 2013, Socialist Alternative boasted that the election had "earth-shattering consequences," and that it would "go down as marking an historic step in re-building a socialist movement in the US, the world's leading capitalist nation." This empty bombast was echoed by the various pseudo-left formations that form a periphery around the Democratic Party.

In her inauguration speech in January, 2014 Sawant proclaimed that "my colleagues and I in Socialist Alternative will stand shoulder to shoulder with all those who want to fight for a better world."

But with whom was Sawant standing shoulder to shoulder at the Democratic Party fundraiser on the

night of February 21? We do not have the guest list, and no press accounts of the event could be found. But one can presume that Sawant conversed with and was introduced to the usual social types attending these events: wealthy bankrollers of the Democratic Party, representatives of the staffs of a coterie of local politicians, business owners, trade union bureaucrats, and—it should be noted—police representatives.

It is entirely likely that this last category of individuals was well represented at the fundraiser, considering Gossett's February 9 vote to approve a \$210 million contract to construct a new jail for juveniles. The new children's jail will include over 150 cells where the youngest victims of the American gulag prison system will be held.

Gossett's vote in favor of the children's prison came at a heated County Council meeting. Gossett stood by as police physically removed at least one protestor from the council chambers.

None of this stopped Sawant from paying homage to Gossett for his birthday fundraiser. In fact, Sawant defended Gossett when she was confronted by protesters on the now-removed video.

Gossett "has been the ally of working people for a long time," Sawant said when protesters pointed out Gossett's support for the children's prison. "He still stands for us."

Flustered, Sawant warned one protestor: "It's not good for you to treat me like an enemy."

When her official "handlers" saw that one protestor was filming the interaction, they immediately intervened to shut the filming down. After a Sawant bodyguard told a young man to turn his camera off, Sawant said: "And you're recording this now and so now you're going to put this somewhere on Facebook and make some sort of 'Hate Sawant' page or

something?”

It is understandable that Sawant did not want her attendance at the event made public, since it reveals her as a political fraud. After all, in her January 2014 inaugural speech, she proclaimed: “Let me make one thing absolutely clear: there will be no backroom deals with corporations or their political servants. There will be no rotten sell-out of the people I represent.”

To denounce Sawant for meeting with the political servants of the corporations does not quite cut at the whole truth of the matter. To state things more clearly: Sawant herself is a political servant of the ruling class.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote in the days before Sawant’s election in 2013, Socialist Alternative’s campaign in Seattle and elsewhere represented an effort “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.”

Following Sawant’s response to Obama’s 2015 State of the Union Address, the WSWS wrote :

“That Sawant and others like her call themselves socialist has no bearing on what they really are: defenders of capitalism and American imperialism. To the extent that they have grievances, it is not with capitalism itself, but with the uneven distribution of the proceeds of financial speculation within the top 10 percent.”

Sawant’s attendance at the Democratic Party fundraiser on February 21 further substantiates this analysis.

But aside from simply proving the existence of close political and personal ties between Sawant and the Democratic Party, Sawant’s attendance at this event illuminates the aspirations shared by the upper-middle class layer for whom she speaks. After decades of social counterrevolution during which the American ruling class has overseen a massive transfer of wealth from the working class to the financial aristocrats,

Sawant and her supporters want their share of the plunder. In a figurative—and now literal sense—they want their ticket to the party.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>