

Successes and Challenges in Building Seattle SA

A Contribution to the Discussion Initiated by Tony and Jeremy's Document about Organizational Structures

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November 8, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Seattle Socialist Alternative has grown rapidly from 50 members to over 200 members in only 4 years, while leading mass campaigns that have had a significant impact among Seattle workers and the U.S. left. In this same period, we successfully made the transition from 2 to 10 branches (although we temporarily merged 2 of the 10 branches because of summer vacations and so many Seattle branch leaders being in Minneapolis). It has been a real challenge to grow so fast starting with only a small layer of cadre.

This year in particular, we have experienced difficulties and challenges in Seattle, particularly over the summer and fall. In our view this is mainly a result of a number of disruptions facing our leadership team and a certain weakening of the Seattle Executive Committee and of the Party-Building Team.

This year we lost Jess when she moved to Ireland for personal reasons after serving on the Seattle Executive Committee and as the City Organizer. This required transitioning Ty into the City Organizer position and onto the SEC. The Party-Building Team was also weakened when we arranged for Freeman to work in the Bay Area most of this year and for Sasha to work in Minneapolis for half of this year. (Even though they were replaced by excellent comrades the turnover was still disruptive). As Bryan K. outlined at our City Committee in June, the national Executive Committee also proposed moving Stephan to national work and off the Seattle Executive Committee and the Party-Building Team. Over-all the PBT went from five to four full-timers (plus Whitney part-time), and the lack of an office, alongside comrades being out of town for long periods, added further challenges.

To put this discussion in its proper context, we believe it helps to start with a balance sheet of our work in Seattle in recent years and the organizational structures we developed to meet the challenges we faced.

1. TREMENDOUS PROGRESS

We are very proud of the tremendous successes and achievements of the Seattle organization. These have come through our hard work, imagination and political seriousness, with tremendous assistance from comrades nationally and internationally. We have scored historic victories for the socialist movement and the CWI with the election of the first independent socialist in a major U.S. city in decades and leading the struggle to pass \$15 in the first major U.S. city. We also led a historic campaign to re-elect Kshama as well as other major socialist electoral challenges (Sawant in 2012 and Spear in 2014). We also stopped rent hikes for 7,000 SHA residents, passed the Carl Haglund law, helped block the police bunker, won \$29 million for affordable housing, taxed the rich, won rights for renters, passed Indigenous People's Day, and more.

We have played a key role in quadrupling SA's membership nationally and helping comrades learn how to lead mass work and develop a dialogue among broader layers of working people. We have set a pioneering model for the U.S. left for how to use an elected position, helping the socialist movement develop bold new tactics.

In the labor movement we have established ourselves as a known force and developed valuable relationships with a wide layer of leading left union activists. For the first time, we had an SA member on the MLK Central Labor Council starting in 2014 and 2015 (Kshama), and again in 2017 (Justin V). We have made modest but important steps toward building SA in an organized way within key unions, most recently highlighted by two members being elected onto the SEA E-Board, another comrade being elected onto a local WFSE E-Board, and the presence we are developing in the building trades.

Throughout this time we have seen a qualitative political growth of many members and an important layer of developing cadre. We have developed a number of new working-class women leaders at all levels of the organization. We have grown from 2 to 10 branches in 4 years - possibly the fastest growth of members and branches throughout the CWI over this period. This would not have been possible without a significant development of a wider layer of consolidated members, cadre, and a broader leadership layer developing in the branches and citywide. The City Committee assisted this by developing more branches and keeping the size of each branch smaller to open the space for a greater number of members to participate in each branch and take on positions of leadership and responsibility.

We have developed our annual democratic City Conventions (with over 100 members attending the 2016 City Convention and 150 in 2017, including visitors from other branches). We have also established: a 27-member City Committee which meets almost every month (with additional invitations), a well-organized Party Building Team and council office team that have helped to develop a new layer of comrades stepping up as full-timers, weekly meetings of the Branch Organizers, and bi-monthly meetings of the Paper, Recruitment, and Finance organizers.

We did this while freeing up full-timers to dedicate resources to the national organization or leave Seattle to make extended visits to assist other areas or relocate for political or personal reasons (Patrick to New York and Jess to Ireland — each of whom served as the main City Organizer — as well as Sasha to Minneapolis this year and Freeman to the Bay Area this year).

We fully agree with Tony and Jeremy that it is useful to review our structures to ensure they measure up to our current needs and to ensure we're seizing the most important opportunities around us. We always need to be flexible about our organizational structures so that they suit our political goals and the current conditions. Where we can identify ways that we can make changes that would be more effective, we absolutely should. At the same time, we should be clear about the major gains and achievements we have made and the effectiveness of the structures we have developed over the past few years. In our opinion these structures have been vital to developing our work and helping speed up the political development of comrades.

While Jeremy and Tony point to a number of real challenges we face, we believe their document left out the main causes of the challenges that our work has faced in Seattle this year: turnover, disruptions, and weakening of the SEC and Party Building Team.

2. BALANCING DIFFERENT FORMS OF EDUCATION

We agree with the emphasis in Tony and Jeremy's document on studying Marxist literature and politically developing comrades through BC, branch, and small group discussions. But we feel the document downplays the value of other aspects of cadre development. Experience in the class struggle has been just as valuable.

Participating in recent mass struggles have been crucial for developing cadre. These include: our election campaigns, *15 Now*, BLM, Bernie's campaign (especially the internal debate about our Bernie tactic), leading or participating in Trump protests, the work of our council office, housing justice campaigns, and labor struggles like the 2015 teachers strike, the teachers May Day 2017 strike vote, and the cement workers' strike.

When comrades experience first-hand the attacks from the corporate Democrats in City Hall or the betrayals of the Democratic Party Super-Delegates, the labor leaders, or Bernie Sanders himself, it really clarifies who is on which side of the barricades in the class struggle. When comrades participate in these mass campaigns where we have to engage broad layers of ordinary working people, comrades become personally invested in and connected to the struggles of the working class and the oppressed. Comrades also learn how to *apply* what they've learned from studying Marxist writings to living, breathing struggles of the working class. We learn immensely from engaging with the challenges and complications of connecting with different people's consciousness and working to raise their consciousness — in an effective yet principled way. This is where the rubber meets the road.

We are very fortunate that there has been a rising tide of radicalization and movements since 2011 where we have gained experience and, in some cases, led struggles. This window will not always be open. We will not always have the fortune of having a city councilmember or the opportunity to participate in social movements, with all their twists and turns, in which our members can learn to interact with other political trends and argue for our ideas.

The whole Seattle organization (and national and international organizations) politically developed out of the experiences of discussing and debating our demands, strategy and tactics throughout the Fight for \$15 in 2014 when we had to make a number of rapid tactical turns and compromises to mass consciousness and the union leadership. Out of these experiences, a whole layer of members learned how to apply Marxist theory, strategy, and tactics to a living struggle, enabling us to forge a new layer of emerging cadre.

Nor have mass campaigns stopped us from studying Marxist writings. Most branches and BCs continue discussing SA/CWI and Marxist readings at their weekly meetings during many of our mass campaigns.

Even at the height of our re-election battle in 2015, there were regular monthly meetings of the City Committee and weekly Branch Organizer meetings in order to combat the pressure towards a top-down approach that is inherent in such an intense election campaign. These meetings played a critical role by including the branch leaders in discussing the twists and turns of the campaign, getting their feedback, giving them more ownership of the campaign, and finding ways to include the members in the campaign. Through the branch organizer meetings, we made major efforts to involve the branches in the work of the re-election campaign and had real success in actively

involving the members. The SEC also made sure to have weekly meetings of our especially enlarged staff in 2015 that discussed international and historical questions which ensured we were politicizing our work.

3. EDUCATIONAL FORMATS

One-on-one discussions around readings is a critical part of our methods for developing cadre. But with our recent rapid growth, we have had to take new initiatives to bridge the gap between our large number of new members and our small number of cadre (who are often occupied leading council work, party-building, and campaigns). In addition to one-on-one discussions, we have regularly organized day schools and study groups when possible, and mobilized members to the national summer camps, CWI Schools, regional summer camps, and national conventions.

Specifically, over 50 Seattle comrades participated in the 2016 National Convention, 47 Seattle comrades participated in the 2016 Pacific Region Summer Camp, 55 Seattle comrades participated in the 2017 National Summer School, and 52 Seattle comrades participated in the 2017 Pacific Region Summer Camp. We have also encouraged use of the new edition of our New Member Reading Packet and the very important [SA Intermediate Recommended Readings](#).

We have also worked to use the political discussions and debates within SA for the maximum educational effect. In 2016 the SEC and City Committee organized a special citywide membership meeting to openly debate our tactics towards the Bernie Sanders campaign. Along with discussions in the City Committee and branches, these debates helped many comrades deepen their political understanding.

In April and May of this year we organized 5 special day schools for members to engage in the debate in SA on Identity Politics and Member's Bulletin #87. These schools discussed specific readings on BLM, the Marxist approach towards fighting oppression, and the philosophy of post-modernism which underlies Identity Politics. These readings and debates raised the political understanding of the Seattle organization and increased the confidence of members to boldly argue a Marxist case for fighting oppression.

We believe the SEC and City Committee have overall struck a good balance between outward action campaigns and internal ideological education. At times, we have argued against a campaigning focus to make space for cadre development through readings and internal discussion. For example, at the 2016 City Convention, when some comrades moved a proposal to launch a housing campaign, the Seattle Executive Committee argued against it to ensure there was time for reading, discussion, and strengthening the BCs.

4. THE ROLE OF SA FULL-TIMERS

Tony and Jeremy's document makes good points about the dangers of becoming over-reliant on full-timers. We agree that full-timers should not substitute themselves for the membership. Full-timers should work to maximize the active participation, engagement, and decision-making of the wider membership.

Across the country, we have encountered fresh layers of people moving toward socialist politics, but starting from a very basic level of political understanding. Everywhere we've grown this has presented special challenges, but especially here in Seattle given the scale of our growth. This challenge was further compounded from 2013 onwards as most of Seattle's more experienced

cadre were forced to put their attention toward the pressing challenges of the council office and our mass campaign work, leaving less time for party-building tasks. Visits from leading comrades from other countries helped, and we took on a number of promising newer members as full-timers, asking them to take on challenges before they were fully prepared in many cases.

Under these circumstances, we think the full-timers have done a great job of striving to educate and maximize members' participation and involvement. Tony and Jeremy's document argues that the full-timers' "job is not to run the branches." But it is important to recognize that 7 out of 10 Seattle Branch Organizers are not full-timers. It is often useful to learn and compare our work with other CWI sections, and our understanding is that this is a good ratio of branch leaders to full-timers compared with other cities where the CWI has multiple branches in one city.

The full-timers assisted our growth to 10 branches — not by substituting themselves for others — but by helping newer members for a temporary period, with the goal of the full-timers making themselves replaceable as soon as possible. Josh, for example, plays a decisive role in his branch, but helped Justin grow into becoming a Branch Organizer. Freeman was also a Branch Organizer and he worked to develop other BC members able to take over running the branch (first Tiffani, now Colin). Rebekah plays a very valuable role as a full-timer, not by substituting herself for other BC members, but as part of a team. The SEC asked other full-timers to play similar roles as we transitioned to 10 branches. We have taken many steps forward and some steps back, but overall we believe these methods have succeeded in developing a whole new layer of comrades, who are in reality running the daily activities of the branches, not the full-timers.

Tony and Jeremy's document argues that our full-timers have "become a substitute for the city committee, branches and branch committees." However, we should remember that the City Committee has been able to assert itself when it felt it necessary to disagree with proposals presented by SEC full-timers. This happened not only recently with the resolution about our work in the fall but also the proposal in early 2017 to launch a housing ballot initiative.

But one thing we do think would help the City Committee have more influence over our work is to ensure that the SEC convenes the City Committee meetings on a consistent monthly schedule. We urge the SEC to pick a consistent day of the month, such as the last Saturday of each month, to ensure that the City Committee meets monthly consistently.

We also urge the SEC to prepare the meetings in advance more so that the City Committee receives information and proposals at least a few days before the meeting rather than last minute at the meeting itself. Such a short amount of time often does not allow the City Committee to seriously consider proposals or, when necessary, present thoughtful amendments or alternatives.

5. BRANCH ORGANIZERS MEETINGS

We have real concerns about Tony and Jeremy's suggestion that Branch Organizers meet every two weeks instead of weekly, and to reduce the role of the meetings as a space for discussion and debate about our priorities and work. The weekly meetings of BOs have been absolutely vital for politically developing the BOs and providing a forum for branches to make demands and give input on the direction of our work in a timely fashion. Although Tony and Jeremy's document argues for greater branch involvement in decision-making (with which we agree), we are concerned that this suggestion would actually result in the opposite outcome.

The first part of the weekly BO meetings have always had a political discussion, and then the second part was usually a more practical discussion on our next steps as an organization (which in itself often brings up political questions). The Party-Building Team aims to give the BOs and — through them — the branches ownership of the political and organisational proposals. For example, the SEC brought the discussion about Affordable Seattle to the BOs very early on to get feedback. The SEC also brought the discussion about a 2017 ballot initiative for affordable housing early on to the BOs. Their feedback, together with the City Committee discussions, convinced the SEC that it was best not to go ahead with the ballot initiative in 2017. The City Committee also had good political discussions about our demands around Block the Bunker based on initial and early discussions with the BOs.

We cannot see how proposing that less frequent BO meetings that have more of a study group character would help the BOs and the branches have more ownership politically and organizationally of our work. This is especially true for working comrades; it sounds counter-intuitive that more meetings are better for working comrades. But the reality is that without a clear structure of regular meetings and involvement, it can be much harder for comrades who are not full-timers to stay on top of what our organization is doing and to influence and own it.

We fully support strengthening the role of the City Committee in guiding the work in Seattle, as Tony and Jeremy suggest. But weakening the role of the Branch Organizers meetings would be counter-productive in giving branches a space to assert themselves and play a role guiding the Seattle work on a weekly basis.

6. LEADERSHIP

We are concerned that Tony and Jeremy's document unintentionally downplays the importance of leadership. For example, their document argues: "Too often, already fully-developed campaign proposals and initiatives have arrived at the branches via the Party Building Team (PBT), staff meetings, full-timers, and the Branch Organizer meetings. This has resulted in creating the sensation of a 'conveyor belt' process."

We disagree that the leading bodies (which has mainly been the elected SEC, not the bodies mentioned above) should not bring well thought-out proposals to the wider membership. In practice, such an approach would actually make it harder for the City Committee or the wider membership to have a meaningful discussion and participate in making decisions. We also are concerned this would be a recipe for making our work less strategic, less organized, and more clumsy.

Elected leadership bodies have a responsibility to brainstorm, draft, debate, and present well thought-out proposals to the membership. That is a big part of what we elect leaders to do. Those who draft proposals should share with the membership the thinking and debate behind the proposal to involve the members and help them take ownership over the process. The membership then has the power to reject, amend, or adopt those proposals. This back-and-forth process of proposals, feedback, criticism, and debate is the best way to come up with the best final product.

(Proposals do not have to originate only in leadership bodies; all members and branches are encouraged to make suggestions or proposals through the structures of our organization. In fact,

we saw a number of members moving proposals relatively recently at our last citywide convention.)

Every BC knows from experience that branches would not function well if the BOs and BCs did not draft ideas and proposals to present to branches for feedback and debate. In the same way, our Seattle organization would become weaker and less effective if the SEC and City Committee were not drafting proposals to discuss and debate with one another, the BOs, and the wider membership.

Whenever possible, the SEC needs to be responsible for working out ideas and drafting proposals well in advance, to allow time for full discussion, concerns, feedback from the City Committee, Branch Organizers, and the wider membership. This is particularly important for working comrades and comrades from oppressed communities to have ample time to give input.

The weekly Branch Organizer meetings have played a crucial role in providing a timely two-way dialogue about proposals, often floating ideas in the BCs or branches to test them out and allow a real dialogue to take place before proposals are finalized by the SEC and City Committee.

In reality, strong centralized leadership structures are essential for providing the framework for the maximum membership involvement, political education, and democratic control over the work. A weaker, less organized leadership will not empower the members. Enabling branches to give more input requires a strong leadership and clear centralized decision-making structures.

A strong leadership with transparent structures and well thought-out proposals will make clear how members can weigh in and put their stamp on the discussions and decisions. To actually achieve this requires a stronger, not weaker, central leadership in the form of the SEC and full-time resources for the efficient functioning of a citywide leadership. The weakening of the SEC and PBT in 2017 has made it harder, not easier, to bring thought-out discussions in a prepared manner in advance. This is not to suggest that the SEC always succeeded in the past in bringing proposals early enough or with sufficient preparation. This is a constant challenge that is part of the political development and strengthening of all our leadership bodies.

7. CITY-WIDE DECISION-MAKING AND NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED BRANCH WORK

We support the idea of branches looking to focus on specific issues in their neighborhoods in order to sink roots in communities where that makes sense. This is an essential aspect of our drive to divide up larger branches and establish as many small and neighborhood-based branches as possible. Branches focused on building a base in certain neighborhoods could also help us recruit and develop more members of color.

At each stage, we have to concretely weigh up the pros and cons of community-specific work in a certain neighborhood in order to balance that with city-wide, national, or even international priorities. We are not a loose federation of autonomous branches. Our strength stems in part from our numbers and unity.

If an individual branch wants to launch a major initiative that will absorb a lot of their time in their one specific neighborhood, it could be a great idea, but they first should run it by the SEC to consciously weigh up whether the local campaign will conflict with other city-wide priorities. We also have to consider the important strategic priority of orientating our work to the issues that are

engaging the most recruitable workers and youth, which, at this stage, are often not campaigns based in only one neighborhood. Many people are being radicalized by international and national issues such as inequality, racism, the climate crisis, Trump, Bernie, etc.

Branches and branch committees serve as basic building blocks and democratic units of the organization. However, branches' specific weight and decision-making role changes as we grow. When we began election campaigns in 2012 and began growing rapidly in 2014, we had to create new city-wide structures to use our party in the most effective way. We created the City Committee first and foremost to be the political rudder of the local organization. As a relatively large body of 27 people, it has to focus on discussing and debating political perspectives and guiding our overall work.

One individual branch is not sufficient for harnessing and directing the potential that exists with a city-wide membership of 200 and 10 branches, or democratically deciding the work of the city-wide organization. We need all our branches to be able, when necessary, to act in a unified fashion to strike the sharpest blow against our political enemies in the political establishment and make the biggest impact for our politics.

For example, at the time of writing this, we need to turn all Seattle branches urgently to try to help elect Ginger in Minneapolis. This requires using the central full-timers (who have not gone to Minneapolis) to assist the branches to participate in phone-banks by using phone-bank shift targets. In addition, we want to make the most of the the November 1 campout at City Hall. Both these campaigns should be taken up by all branches in a collective, unified way as much as possible.

We need city-wide leadership bodies to oversee and direct all our various areas of work such as the City Council or union work, which go far beyond the boundaries of any one branch. The City Committee is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the entire city-wide organization, since it is elected by the citywide membership at the City Convention. The City Committee elects the SEC to serve as a day-to-day leadership, with an overview and decision-making power over all areas of our work: the Party-Building Team, union work, student work, City Council work, etc. The SEC is accountable to the City Committee, and all its decisions are subject to the City Committee's review and can be overturned by the City Committee. And, in turn, the City Committee is accountable to the citywide membership meetings and the City Convention, which can review and overturn the City Committee's decisions.

Although we will always need to adjust our structures to adapt to new situations in the future, these city-wide structures have served us well in meeting the challenges of recent years.

8. INTEGRATING OUR COUNCIL WORK AND OUR WIDER PARTY WORK

We fully agree with the need for greater communication, integration, and coordination between our council office and our party/branches.

The starting point to strengthen the cohesion of our council work with the wider work of our party is political. Bringing the central political challenges and discussions facing our council office - our key priorities, demands, and messaging - into the City Committee and into the branches for democratic discussion, feedback, debate, and decision-making is the most important way to create collective ownership and improved coordination.

We fully appreciate the tremendous pressures and workload that both the SEC and the council office are under. We have tremendous respect for the fantastic work that the SEC, Kshama, and the council office have done. In order for SA to learn the most and reap the maximum benefits from this tremendous work, we think it would be better if there were more political discussions on the City Committee about the key plans, strategies, and policy ideas of our council office. We also think that we can all collectively do better in regularly informing the branches of the work our council office is undertaking.

Wherever the organization agrees to take up campaigns and initiatives centered around our council office, we should find creative ways to integrate the branches into the practical work. In this respect, the recent integration of the Affordable Seattle mobilizations for the People's Budget was an excellent example. But we need to make sure to bring important *political discussions* from the council work into the City Committee and branches, not only opportunities for involvement.

We suggest that our SEC and council office prioritize making time for a council aide to draft regular political reports about our council work to share with our City Committee and branches. Council staff and the SEC would review the draft before circulating it to the City Committee. This flow of political information would help a lot to improve coordination between branches and our council office, and it would better equip the City Committee to guide all our work city-wide.

One challenge we should keep in mind is that our council office is regularly compelled to carry out initiatives that are completely correct and necessary, but they are often not high priorities for the branches to take up. In order to recruit to a revolutionary organization, our branches often have to orient to a politicized minority, whereas our council office often has to address the immediate needs of specific constituents and a broad electorate who are not always as radicalized or engaged in mass struggles. This is not always the case but sometimes, for example, our council office has to orient toward faith based groups or non-profits, whereas SA branches are often engaged with activist groups like the People's Party and DSA. Sometimes this means that our council office and our branches have to put forward slightly different slogans and demands, even when we are intervening on the same exact issue. There are no easy or universal solutions to these built-in tensions, but they require conscious political discussion and democratic decisions by the elected leadership bodies of the organization.

This is part of why we are concerned about the approach Tony and Jeremy's document suggests for how to integrate the branches into the council work. There is a risk that local branches would get mixed messages about priorities from our council office and our elected party leadership bodies. We welcome initiatives from our council office, but they should be discussed and coordinated on an ongoing basis with the elected structures -- the SEC, and on wider issues with the City Committee. Initiatives from our council office need to be considered in conjunction with the priorities set by the membership through the democratic structures before determining which initiatives, demands, and slogans make sense for our branches to take up.

9. TARGETS

Tony and Jeremy's document argues: "Campaigning has sometimes meant BC members having had to give up important branch development work in order to meet targets." In our experience, the NC, SEC and PBT aims to bring proposals for targets to branches as a starting point for the branch to discuss and amend based on their discussion, not as a dictate. Even after branches discuss and

adopt targets, they should be a rough guideline, a goal to shoot for, not a mandatory quota. BC members shouldn't run themselves ragged trying to meet targets or substitute themselves for the lack of their members' engagement. Targets should be used to help us analyse a political situation, estimate what is possible in a specific political context, clarify priorities, set a collective goal and, on the basis of politically motivating those goals, maximize members' participation in activities. Targets should also be reviewed periodically as we are working toward the targets, and also after we complete the campaign, in order to review our progress and assess the merits of our perspectives and tactics.

It is true there has been, at times, a gap between how we aim to use targets and how they actually get implemented. Comrades at all levels of leadership should strive to avoid these imbalances. This is part of the necessary process of new BCs learning how to use targets and strike the right balance in their work.

It is somewhat inaccurate for Tony and Jeremy's document to claim that "targets have often been attached to campaigning work, without corresponding targets for other important branch building and cadre development work." We have had targets not only for campaigning but also for cadre development, paper sales, recruitment, study groups, summer camp participation, and fundraising to enable comrades to participate in camps and summer schools.

In the Ginger Jentzen campaign, we are seeing again how our use of targets, along with our politics, allow us to punch above our weight. Part of what separates us from others on the left is our serious, scientific approach to our work. Through discussion of our perspectives, we determine where we want to go and then develop targets to measure our impact on events.

10. BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESSES

In order to make further big strides forward in building SA in Seattle, sinking roots in the working class, and developing cadre, we believe we need to develop plans to carry out a bold campaign in 2018 that can harness our accumulated size and weight. One possible option the City Committee has begun discussing is doing a major affordable housing campaign in 2018 alongside our allies. We should use the next few months to discuss our options at all levels of the Seattle organization.

A significant victory for affordable housing in 2018 would put us in the best position to re-elect Kshama in 2019. It would also once again have an impact on the left across the country, helping to strengthen SA as a pole of attraction for the best workers and youth. Such a campaign, alongside other priorities like resisting Trump and the lawsuits against Kshama, will also serve as a vital framework for activity that will greatly aid the development of our members by providing concrete campaigns for members to step into, to take on political and organizational responsibilities. A serious campaign that draws in other important forces will also provide an invaluable experience in struggle where different ideas and politics will be put to the test in a real living battle.

A vital part of developing cadre is winning trust and leadership within broader movements, communities, workplaces, and unions. A bold campaign for affordable housing will open up big opportunities for a wider layer of members to take on leading roles in building the campaign and sink roots in key neighborhoods, movements, workplaces, and unions.

We should be looking to take significant steps forward in building SA in Seattle in 2018 to lay the strongest foundation for re-electing Kshama in 2019. With a strong political leadership, a dynamic campaign, and a systematic approach to political education and party-building, we should strive to develop the cadre to enable us to grow to 300 members and 15 branches possibly as early as 2018. This would position us well to not only lead a successful campaign to re-elect Kshama in 2019, but also fight to establish a wider slate of independent left and socialist candidates for City Council in 2019, which would represent a major breakthrough for independent left politics, not only in Seattle, but nation-wide.