

Ocasio-Cortez, DSA seek to give “left” cover to right-wing Democratic Party

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The vote for “democratic socialist” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in last month's Democratic Party primary in New York reflects growing interest in socialist politics and hostility to capitalism, particularly among young people. However, Ocasio-Cortez's campaign is based on a fundamental lie that is fatal to all those who are seeking to oppose inequality, war and the attack on immigrants, namely that anything can be achieved through the Democratic Party.

Workers and young people have already gone through the experience of Bernie Sanders, who in the 2016 elections spoke of a “political revolution” against the “billionaire class.” The real purpose of Sanders' campaign, however, was realized in his decision to back Hillary Clinton, the candidate of Wall Street and the military. Sanders now occupies a leadership post in the Democratic Party caucus in the US Senate.

The campaign of Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, is in the same mold. Her program consists of mild reforms that are inadequate to address poverty and inequality. Her demand for a \$15 minimum wage, for example, would still leave millions struggling to survive, and many low-wage employers, such as those at UPS, are already beginning to pay this to part-time workers.

While she says little about foreign policy, she does not oppose the US wars in the Middle East and Central Asia that have already killed more than 1 million people.

Even mild social reforms, however, are impossible without a frontal assault on the wealth of the corporate and financial elite and an economic system, capitalism,

based on the exploitation of the vast majority to ensure the profits of a tiny minority.

Ocasio-Cortez does not challenge private ownership of the corporations and banks, the economic basis for the stranglehold of the corporate-financial oligarchy over every aspect of life in America and around the world. She does not call for public ownership and democratic control of industry, finance, transport, telecommunications, energy, etc. She does not advocate industrial democracy or workers' control over production.

The DSA seeks to give a “left” cover for a thoroughly right-wing party. Far from advancing the interests of workers, the eight years of the Obama administration saw the multi-trillion-dollar bailout of the banks, which has produced soaring stock markets and record social inequality. Obama continued the wars of the Bush administration while expanding the police-state spying apparatus. This paved the way for the victory of Trump.

Since the 2016 elections, the Democrats have focused their criticism on the claim that Trump is in the pocket of Russia. The purpose has been to divert mass anger over the administration's attack on immigrants and on the working class behind the foreign policy agenda of the military-intelligence apparatus.

Ocasio-Cortez is quickly adapting her rhetoric to the requirements of the Democratic Party. Almost immediately after winning her primary election, she began reassuring the media that she would do nothing to oppose the Democratic congressional leadership. She disavowed a tweet criticizing the murder of unarmed Palestinian protesters by the Israeli military, saying she was “not the expert” on the issue and was “willing to learn and evolve.”

Challenged on her campaign call to “abolish ICE,”

the Gestapo-like agency that oversees the mass detention and deportation of undocumented immigrant workers, she gave assurances that she supported “border security”—a euphemism for the militarization of the border and criminalization of immigrant workers.

The ruling class understands very well that there is no conflict between Sanders’ and Ocasio-Cortez’ “democratic socialism” and their policies of war and social inequality. This is why the corporate media has promoted both figures. Ocasio-Cortez appeared on CBS alongside Sanders last week, nodding her head while Sanders parroted the anti-Russia rhetoric of the Democrats and the intelligence agencies, calling him an agent of Russia while saying nothing about his attacks on immigrants.

The Democratic Party has recruited ex-intelligence operatives and military officers to run for office in 2018 in record numbers. Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders traveled to Kansas last week to stump for one such candidate, James Thompson, an Army veteran who pledges to “fight for America.”

Ocasio-Cortez’s visit to Michigan this weekend to promote Abdul El-Sayed for governor is along the same lines. While El-Sayed, the former health director of the city of Detroit, has struck a populist tone in his campaign, the Democrats bear the primary responsibility for the social devastation of Detroit, including their role in driving the city into bankruptcy in 2013.

The politics of Ocasio-Cortez and the politics of the DSA reflect the interests of a privileged layer of the upper-middle class. They do not speak for the aspirations and needs of the working class and the broad mass of young people.

I am running for Congress in Michigan’s 12th District as a member of the Socialist Equality Party to fight for genuine socialism—that is, the independent political mobilization of the working class against the capitalist system. My campaign is organized around the following principles:

- The building of a mass anti-war movement based on the working class. The fight against war, and the danger of world war, is inseparable from the fight against its source, the capitalist system.
- Placing the banks and major corporations under international social control, democratically run by the working class, the vast majority of mankind. This will

place the trillions of dollars hoarded by the capitalist class at the disposal of society, so the money can be used for the abolition of unemployment, social inequality, poverty, hunger, homelessness, illiteracy and other social evils.

- The disbanding of ICE and Customs and Border Protection. The SEP calls for a policy of open borders. This includes an immediate end to deportations, the reunification of all families separated by Trump and the release of all immigrants detained by immigration authorities. In a globally-integrated world society, workers have the right to live and work in the country of their choice.

The growth of the class struggle in the United States—expressed in the teachers’ strikes this spring—must be expanded and developed through the formation of workplace and neighborhood committees, which will unite the struggles of workers across various industries and throughout the world. The formation of these committees will enable workers to prevent the sabotage of their struggles by the trade unions, such as the United Auto Workers and the Teamsters, which are agents of management and the government.

We call for an immediate end to all forms of censorship, government surveillance and blacklisting, including Google’s throttling of search results for left-wing publications such as the *World Socialist Web Site* and similar measures enacted by Facebook and Twitter. Control over the Internet must be taken out of the hands of giant telecommunications and social media corporations that are tied to the military-intelligence apparatus.

We call as well for the mobilization of working people and youth to defend Wikileaks editor Julian Assange, who is in immediate danger of being expelled from the Ecuadorian embassy in London so that he can be extradited to the United States, where he faces frame-up espionage charges that could result in his execution.

I urge all of those who support this perspective to contact the SEP and join my campaign today by visiting niles2018.com.



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