

The New York Times promotes the Democratic Socialists of America

Genevieve Leigh
25 September 2018

On Saturday, *The New York Times* featured an article by Maggie Astor in their online edition headlined with the question: “Are You a Democratic Socialist?” The article, just short of an advertisement to join the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), is the latest piece in a series of favorable reviews of the organization by the newspaper.

The main purpose of the article is to convince young people interested in socialism that they should become involved in the DSA. In doing so, it falsifies the essential role and purpose of the DSA, which is an adjunct of the Democratic Party, for which the *Times* is the main media mouthpiece.

The questions are organized to accomplish several interrelated functions. First, several are posed to encourage anyone opposed to inequality to identify with the DSA. One question, for example, asks the reader, “Do you believe that everyone is entitled to a certain minimum standard of living?” while another asks, “In a capitalist system, do you believe government regulations are helpful or harmful?” Those who answer that they agree that everyone should have a minimum standard of living or that government regulations are helpful receive the response, “You agree with Democratic Socialists.”

Another question in Astor’s quiz dealing with health care associates support for universal health care with the DSA. It states that democratic socialists believe the health care industry should be socialized “like in Britain,” which in fact is not universal, quality health care and is suffering from relentless budget cuts and attempts at privatization.

Tellingly, however, the explanation goes on to say that “democratic socialists acknowledge that a fully socialized system isn’t politically achievable right now, so they support ‘Medicare for All’ in the meantime.”

This proposal, which will never be implemented, has been taken up by leading Democrats to give them a “left” cover, including Obama, whose Affordable Care Act has been a mechanism for cutting costs and shifting the burden of health care onto workers and young people.

Second, the quiz falsifies the actual program advanced by the DSA. There is only one question that deals directly with socialism, which asserts that the DSA advocates workers’ control of production. In fact, the DSA-backed candidates in the Democratic Party, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Julia Salazar, say nothing about transforming the relations of production or altering the basic structure of economic life. They campaign on the basis of proposals for mild reforms, claiming that these can be achieved within the framework of capitalism.

Third, the quiz obscures the most important component of the DSA’s politics and role, which is to promote the Democratic Party. There is no question, for example, “Do you support the Democratic Party and all its candidates?” Many young people interested in socialism would say no, but this is in fact the position of the DSA candidates. Ocasio-Cortez recently told CNN, for example, that she “looks forward” to “rallying behind all Democratic nominees, including [New York Governor] Andrew Cuomo, to make sure that he wins in November.”

In the 2016 elections, the DSA supported Bernie Sanders, who received widespread support for his statements of opposition to social inequality, before backing Hillary Clinton, the candidate of Wall Street, in the general elections. Sanders is now effectively a leading figure in the Democratic Party.

Notably absent among the *Times*’ questions is any reference to war. In the elections, the DSA candidates

are saying almost nothing about foreign policy, as they cover up for the many CIA and military candidates running as Democrats, and for the pro-war, militarist program of the Democratic Party in general. This is because the DSA candidates have no fundamental differences with the foreign policy of the Democratic Party. They are instead contributing to the suppression of opposition to imperialism, a central component of any genuinely socialist program. (See, “Ocasio-Cortez, Democratic Socialists of America candidate, covers for CIA Democrats”)

Perhaps the most significant question is the final one, which reads, “Ideally, how should major social or political changes be achieved?” Among the answers opposed to the views of the DSA include, “By any means necessary, including violence and/or revolution.” If one chooses this answer they are met with the following explanation: “This is a common point of misunderstanding for people who conflate democratic socialism with communism. Democratic socialists don’t support a revolution to overthrow capitalism.”

This is, in fact true, insofar as the DSA opposes the development of a revolutionary movement of the working class against the capitalist system. The implication of the question, however, is that while the DSA is “peaceful,” socialists who criticize its role as an adjunct of the Democratic Party are “violent” and associated with what an answer to an earlier question calls “authoritarian forms of communism,” including “Leninism, Stalinism, Maoism,” which are not “democratic.”

This is the traditional anti-Communist political amalgam, which falsely conflates the revolutionary uprising in Russia in 1917, led by Lenin and Leon Trotsky, with the bureaucratic counterrevolution headed by Stalin, who carried out political genocide against those who led the Russian Revolution.

Of course, the *Times* says nothing about the violence of capitalist society, for which the Democrats are responsible as much as the Republicans—police murders, imperialist wars, and the starving of billions of workers of the resources they need to survive. The bloodiest events of the twentieth century in the US and around the world have been carried out against the working class by the capitalist class.

As telling as any of the questions is the publication

that has produced it. What sort of socialist organization claiming to challenge the capitalist system receives the blessing of *The New York Times*, the leading mouthpiece for the Democratic Party? This is the same newspaper that is an ardent proponent of American imperialism. It is playing a central role in spearheading the Democrats’ anti-Russia campaign, which has been used to channel mass opposition to Trump behind the pro-war policies of the military-intelligence apparatus.

The DSA is being promoted by the Democratic Party-affiliated media even as the Democrats use the anti-Russia campaign to censor the internet, the main target being genuinely left-wing and socialist publications, particularly the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The *New York Times* promotes the DSA because, far from posing a threat to the capitalist system, the DSA is a principal political instrument for the Democratic Party to block and divert a leftward movement of workers and young people. Those looking for genuine socialism, including workers and young people who have joined the DSA, should be advised that such a program will not come out of the pages of the bourgeois press.



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