

The political fraud of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's "Green New Deal"

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Last week, newly-elected Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez released a proposal for an addendum to the rules of the US House of Representatives, to create a new congressional committee that would draft legislation for a "Green New Deal." Nine Democrats have already put their names to the proposal, including Rashida Tlaib, who like Ocasio-Cortez is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America.

The document includes the call for a transition to 100 percent renewable energy within 10 years, and actions to "virtually eliminate poverty in the United States and to make prosperity, wealth and economic security available to everyone." It calls for "a job guarantee program to assure a living wage to every person who wants one"; "massive investment in the drawdown of greenhouse gases," and "upgrading every residential and industrial building for state-of-the-art energy efficiency, comfort and safety."

The document, as with Ocasio-Cortez's politics, is characterized by a massive political fraud. It includes various left-sounding rhetoric, but is entirely directed to and dependent upon the Democratic Party. In particular, the members of the committee would be selected by the Speaker of the House, who is likely to be Nancy Pelosi, the stalwart of the Democratic Party establishment who has received the support of Ocasio-Cortez herself.

Any serious measures to stop global warming, let alone assure a job and livable wage to everyone, would require a massive redistribution of wealth and the reallocation of trillions currently spent on US imperialism's neo-colonial wars abroad.

Ocasio-Cortez's document, however, excludes any encroachment on the fortunes of the ruling class. It calls instead for "innovative public and other financing

structures," including a "new public bank," or system of banks, or "public venture funds," which in concrete terms means nothing more than new avenues for providing cheap credit to private corporations. Everything is phrased as part of consultation with "business" leaders.

Several of her proposals are explicitly aimed at promoting the interests of different sections of capital, including the call to "promote opportunities" for "entrepreneurship," and "promote economic security, labor market flexibility and entrepreneurship."

"Labor market flexibility"—that is, the ability of corporations to fire and hire at will. Such is the character of Ocasio-Cortez's great left-wing reform!

The original "New Deal," which included massive public works infrastructure projects, was introduced by Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s amid the Great Depression. Its purpose was to stave off a socialist revolution in America. It was a response to a militant upsurge of strikes and violent class battles, led by socialists who were inspired by the 1917 Russian Revolution that had occurred less than two decades before.

American capitalism could afford to make such concessions because of its economic dominance. The past forty years have been characterized by the continued decline of American capitalism on a world stage relative to its major rivals. The ruling class has responded to this crisis with a social counterrevolution to claw back all gains won by workers. This has been carried out under both Democratic and Republican administrations and with the assistance of the trade unions.

Since the 2008 crash, first under Bush and Obama, and now Trump, the ruling elites have pursued a single-minded policy of enriching the wealthy, through free

credit, corporate bailouts and tax cuts, while slashing spending on social services.

To claim as does Ocasio-Cortez that American capitalism can provide a new “New Deal,” of a green or any other variety, is to promote an obvious political fiction.

None of the signatories to the bill believes that any of its proposals—except those directly tailored to corporate interests—will ever be implemented. Its purpose is rather to promote illusions that the Democratic Party, a party of the corporate and financial elite no less than the Republicans, can be transformed into an agency of social progress.

The document states that the newly-formed committee would be required to complete its plan by January 2020 and publish its draft legislation by March 2020, immediately prior to the next presidential elections. Any such documents would be wholly aimed at providing some popular appeal to the Democrats’ election campaign. They would be permanently shelved immediately after the election, regardless of the outcome.

Ocasio-Cortez’s promotion of the “Green New Deal” is also aimed at distracting attention from her own rapid rightward shift after her primary victory.

She has backtracked on her earlier criticisms of Israeli slaughters of Gaza protesters; hailed the late Republican Senator and war criminal John McCain as an “unparalleled example of human decency and American service;” called for securing US borders, dropped her previous calls to “Abolish ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement],” and declared that this slogan “does not mean abolish deportations” of immigrants. Over the weekend, she declared her support for Nancy Pelosi as the speaker of the House.

The “Green New Deal” is another example of the political function of Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA in seeking to provide a “left” political veneer for the capitalist politics of the Democratic Party. The latter is campaigning against the billionaire demagogue Trump on a right-wing basis, attacking him not for his militarist threats, fascist rants, attacks on immigrants and efforts to build up an extra-parliamentary extreme-right movement, but for being insufficiently deferential toward the American intelligence agencies and aggressive toward Russia.

A socialist response to climate change cannot take place through the Democratic Party or within the framework of capitalism. It requires the organization of production according to a rational, scientific plan on a global scale. This requirement is fundamentally incompatible with both the private ownership of humanity’s productive forces (and the subordination of production according to the profit interests of the capitalist class), and the continued division of the world into rival national states, who compete on behalf of their own capitalist class for markets, profits and geostrategic control.

What is needed is not empty promises of a new “New Deal” bestowed from above by the capitalist class—which in any case is impossible—but socialist revolution by the working class and a fundamental transformation of society.



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