

Fascistic elements in Republican Party threaten Democrats O'Rourke and Ocasio-Cortez

Matthew Taylor
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Two developments on Thursday reflect the growth of fascistic elements within the Republican Party, encouraged by President Donald Trump's racist war on immigrants, his attacks on socialism and his attempts to brand the Democratic Party as "radical socialist."

During Thursday night's Democratic Party debate, a commercial sponsored by the political action committee New Faces GOP showed a picture of Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's face going up in flames, while the narration linked her to the mass killings carried out by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia during the 1970s. The Maoist Khmer Rouge, covertly backed by the US, was a rabidly anti-working-class, nationalist movement.

The ad opens with a picture of Cortez bursting into flames while the narrator declares, "This is the face of socialism and ignorance. Does Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez know the horrors of socialism?" The photo then burns completely away to reveal piles of human skulls, fleeing refugees and other scenes from the Cambodian killing fields.

The narrator, Elizabeth Heng, is the daughter of Cambodian immigrants and a candidate for a California congressional seat in 2018, a contest she lost by 15 points to her Democratic opponent. She is the executive director of New Faces GOP, which seeks to recruit youth and minorities into the Republican Party.

The commercial aired on multiple ABC TV affiliates, including in Washington DC, New York City and Houston.

The website for New Faces GOP identifies four central issues: the struggle against socialism, which the group pledges to stop "from plaguing America once and for all"; the promotion of "federalism"—coded

language for the gutting of social welfare programs and labor protections; immigration, i.e., support for Trump's mass incarceration and deportation of immigrants; and opposition to the alleged censorship of "conservative" views on the internet.

In July, Trump attacked Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, itself a reformist faction of the Democratic Party, and three other supposedly "progressive" Democratic congresswomen known collectively as the "squad," telling them to "go back where you came from." This was in line with his strategy of whipping up far-right and fascistic forces on the basis of extreme nationalism and racism in advance of the 2020 elections and beyond.

Also on Thursday, a Texas Republican state representative, Briscoe Cain, responded to statements made during the Democratic presidential candidates' debate by former Texas Congressman Beto (Robert Francis) O'Rourke calling for outlawing the possession of military-grade automatic weapons by tweeting, "My AR is ready for you Robert Francis."

Interviewed later on CNN, Cain essentially defended his tweet and accused O'Rourke of creating a provocation in order to deprive gun owners of their weapons.

In the Democratic debate, none of the candidates identified the fascistic character of Trump's demagoguery, which is directed above all against the working class. Nor did Ocasio-Cortez or O'Rourke warn of the growing threat of far-right political violence.



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