

# Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez praises Biden, defends war against Russia, and attacks socialist critics in interview with *The Intercept*

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On November 9 and 10, *The Intercept* published a two-part, long-form interview with Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Democrat-New York), the most prominent member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Conducted in the immediate aftermath of the midterm elections, the interview is an important political event aimed at publicly communicating the post-election strategy of a prominent faction of the Democratic Party represented by Ocasio-Cortez and other DSA-backed politicians, including Bernie Sanders, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, Jamaal Bowman and Cori Bush. The interview was conducted by *The Intercept's* D.C. Bureau chief Ryan Grim, a prominent Democratic Party journalist who formerly worked for *HuffPost* and *Politico*.

The interview was published under conditions of extraordinary political crisis for both capitalist parties in the US. The election has produced a Senate and House split almost exactly evenly between Republicans and Democrats, setting the stage for prolonged instability. Both parties are unpopular, and a recent Pew poll shows 56 percent of voters want an end to the two-party system. Trump has an approval rating in the 30s, and nearly two thirds of Americans do not want Joe Biden to run for a second term.

The political establishment is not prepared for the coming social explosion, with the cost of living having a devastating impact on the working class. Midterm exit polls showed 75 percent of the population is angry and suffering from varying degrees of economic hardship. The incoming Congress will confront the threat of powerful strikes in rail, air travel, and the West Coast docks at a time when American imperialism confronts growing opposition to its war against Russia in Ukraine. The world capitalist press is full of warnings that this winter will generate immense hardship and social protest in Europe and across the world.

In this context, Ocasio-Cortez's interview plays a critical purpose. It was published in two parts, and its aim is two parts: First it defends the Democratic Party and presents it as a source for progress, and second it denounces left-wing opposition to the Democratic Party.

## AOC: Midterms show the Democratic Party will “go all out” for progressive causes

In the interview, Ocasio-Cortez presented the Democratic Party as a vehicle for social change that has been revitalized by the midterms.

“If we’re able to pick up our Senate margin,” she said, “then we deliver on the things that we weren’t able to deliver before. I think we try again on a \$15 minimum wage. I think we codify *Roe v. Wade*, I think we go for

the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, I think we go all out on the litany of legislation that was stalled by [Sens. Joe] Manchin and [Kyrsten] Sinema.”

She said the results of the election “gives Biden a bit of a strengthened mandate” and show the Democratic Party “learned an economic lesson, which is that full employment is politically stronger than inflation.”

Ocasio-Cortez knows that even if the Democrats win 51 Senate seats, its majority still depends on the votes of Manchin and Sinema, and that the Democrats do not “go all out” even when they control both houses of Congress. The most meaningless proposals for reform, like Ocasio-Cortez’s outdated call for a \$15 minimum wage (below what most fast-food restaurants offer new hires today) are dead on arrival in the incoming congress.

As for Ocasio-Cortez’s claim that the Democratic Party’s midterm performance represented a victory for “full employment,” it is the Federal Reserve under the Biden administration that has been raising interest rates in order to systematically increase unemployment, lower wages, and boost corporate profits. When he was asked at a press conference Wednesday—“What in the next two years do you intend to do differently?”—Biden responded: “Nothing.” During the press conference, Biden boasted that his administration has “lowered the federal deficit in two years by \$1.7 trillion. No administration has ever cut the deficit that much.”

In the interview with Grim, Ocasio-Cortez twice called Biden’s press conference “smart.” Her claim that the election gives Biden a “strengthened mandate” only means a mandate for more interest rate hikes, job losses and intensified exploitation of the working class.

## Post-midterm strategy: “Using rules of Congress” to “inflict pain” on Republican Party

Ocasio-Cortez presented a strategy that she says will “inflict pain” on the Republican majority in the House but whose real purpose is to generate illusions in the DSA and Democratic Party’s ability to use the electoral system for progressive reform. In this case, Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA’s strategy is based on a parliamentary maneuver that everyone, including Ocasio-Cortez, knows is doomed to fail.

In the interview, Ocasio-Cortez called for putting forward a “discharge petition” to codify *Roe v. Wade*. A discharge petition is a rare parliamentary maneuver that allows a member of Congress to bypass House committees to bring a measure to a full vote of the house if backed by the signatures of a majority of the House. “I think discharge petition is an excellent vehicle,” Ocasio-Cortez said. “I do think using rules is going

to be quite important.”

What a banal strategy from someone who ran for office claiming to be a socialist! In fact, Ocasio-Cortez’s past use of discharge petitions reveals her own role as a useful cog in the Democratic Party machine, helping itself window dress as “left” while ensuring that no progressive change in government policy ever comes about.

In early 2022, when Democrats had a majority in the House of Representatives, Ocasio-Cortez co-sponsored a discharge petition insisting that members of Congress should be banned from trading stock. But members of both parties, including Speaker Pelosi herself, profit greatly by using their proximity to policy changes to bet on the stock market. As the midterm election approached, the Democratic Party wanted to both appear hostile to congressional stock trading while also taking no action against it.

Ocasio-Cortez allowed herself to be used in this process. After Ocasio-Cortez helped introduce the petition, Pelosi came out with a public statement endorsing the call to ban trading and pledging to bring the measure to the floor for a vote.

Then, evidently after discussions with Democratic leadership, Ocasio-Cortez withdrew the petition. As Ryan Grim notes in the interview, “Speaking of discharge petitions, on the stock trading ban, you had pushed a discharge petition, and then withdrew it after Pelosi promised to bring that to the floor.”

The Democratic Party’s aim in having Ocasio-Cortez’s petition withdrawn was to clear the way so that Democratic leadership could put forward a different version of a bill that one ethics watchdog said “would actively weaken government ethics, not strengthen them.” Democratic Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger told the press that Democratic leadership “knew it would immediately crash upon arrival.”

As a result, Pelosi was able to present herself as an opponent of congressional stock trading while also continuing to trade stocks.

In the *Intercept* interview, Ocasio-Cortez pathetically claimed “the discharge petition was successful” because “we were able to get leadership to move on it.”

## Ukraine and support for imperialist war

Discussion of Ocasio-Cortez’s withdrawal of the petition to ban congressional stock trading led to an easy transition to a discussion of her withdrawal of the letter calling for a negotiated end to the war in Ukraine. Within 24 hours of publishing a letter in October signed by Ocasio-Cortez and other “progressive” congresspersons warning that in the absence of negotiations with Russia the danger of a nuclear holocaust was growing each day, the Congressional Progressive Caucus withdrew the letter and called for escalating the war until “Ukraine’s victory.”

Grim notes that Ocasio Cortez “never commented on that [letter], on whether you still stood by it.”

Ocasio-Cortez said the response to the letter was “overblown” and meekly defended it on the grounds that it did not really contradict imperialist foreign policy: “Timing aside, in terms of the content of the letter ... I believe that a lot of it is quite consistent with what we’ve also been hearing from former Obama administration officials, the Biden administration.”

She pivoted to justifying the US/NATO war and blaming Russia for failed negotiations: “I think that the large asterisk is: Will Russia, is Russia, how can we bring Russia to the table without compromising Ukrainian sovereignty and just core principles of self-determination?”

Speaking as someone who receives briefings from the military and

intelligence agencies, Ocasio-Cortez said regarding recent statements by Russia indicating willingness to negotiate, “I do believe that there’s some skepticism that we’re hearing from Ukrainian officials about whether that is—the genuineness or authenticity of good faith that that announcement was made, but you know, I think that’s something that we will soon see play out.”

## Attacks her “army of critics from the left”

The purpose of the first part of Ocasio-Cortez’s interview is to present the Democratic Party as the only legitimate arena for the struggle for social change and its reckless war against Russia as a just cause. The purpose of the second part is to attack and undermine any movement outside of the control of the Democratic Party. This is the position Ocasio-Cortez has laid out many times before, including in March 2021 when she denounced left-wing criticism of the Biden administration as “bad faith” and even racist.

*The Intercept’s* Ryan Grim begins part two of the interview by referencing growing opposition to Ocasio-Cortez from the left: “At the start of her career, Twitter was a place where Ocasio-Cortez could be seen to be leading an army of supporters, but often today it seems more like she’s fighting off an army of critics from the left.”

Ocasio-Cortez said that her left-wing critics do not understand what it means to wield the responsibilities of power:

For a very long time, the left of the United States, until very, very recently, is not used to power, not used to being in power, not used to wielding power. And I think sometimes the immediate reaction to making gains is being suspicious of it, because then you can, after so long in the wilderness, eventually—I think sometimes people make the mistake of associating losing with virtue, and winning with a lack of virtue, like you must have done something wrong.

When asked by Grim why she is losing support from her left, Ocasio-Cortez responds:

It is a much more complicated, nuanced thing to navigate uncertainty. And so then once you have the responsibility of power, you have to make decisions on a daily basis, about what to do with it. And that takes a lot of communication and, frankly, maturity and understanding and discussion. And sometimes, the responsibility of wielding power for people requires a lot of discussion and debate, and also disagreement and how we manage disagreements. If someone makes a mistake, it’s not the same thing as someone selling out.

If Ocasio-Cortez sounds like a standard bourgeois politician, it’s because she is one. With this pretentious and ridiculous answer, she makes no attempt to address the real reasons for growing left-wing opposition to the Democratic Party and its DSA faction. It wasn’t an act of “maturity” to immediately withdraw her signature from the letter calling for negotiations to prevent nuclear war; it was an act of total cowardice.

The other “mature decisions” that Ocasio-Cortez has made while wielding “the responsibility of power” include voting for a \$40 billion

military aid package to Ukraine that included thousands of missiles, artillery shells and other weapons sent to groups like the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, as well as failing to vote against billions of dollars to fund the Israeli military. According to Ocasio-Cortez, the impoverished population of the Gaza Strip, whose homes and schools will be destroyed by Israeli missiles as a result of the DSA's votes in Congress, simply do not appreciate the weight of Ocasio-Cortez's professional responsibilities.

### **A faction fight inside the New York Democratic Party**

In recent weeks, Ocasio-Cortez dramatically undermined her claim to represent a left challenge to the Democratic establishment by campaigning actively for Kathy Hochul for New York governor. Hochul is a right-wing incumbent Democrat who as governor introduced a rule jailing homeless people for sleeping in subways. In endorsing Hochul, Ocasio-Cortez found herself allied with the state's police unions and a powerful network of Wall Street executives and real estate magnates who funded Hochul's campaign.

Speaking alongside Hochul last week at a campaign event in Manhattan, Ocasio-Cortez said: 'We cannot afford an anti-choice person. Gov. Hochul has been so strong on supporting women's right to choose. She came out here after Hurricane Ida and we worked together to make sure we could get the fastest disaster declaration to help families out here get bailed out.'

Ocasio-Cortez's campaign for Hochul provides the backdrop for her call in *The Intercept* for a change in leadership and electoral tactics of the Democratic Party of New York. On November 10, the *New York Times* also printed an interview with Ocasio-Cortez in which she rehashes the positions outlined in this portion of the interview with Grim.

"New York is the glaring aberration in what we see in [the midterm election] map," she told *The Intercept*, referencing the fact that Democrats fared very poorly in congressional elections in New York. Even Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair Sean Maloney lost his New York seat to a Republican challenger.

Ocasio-Cortez criticized "the way those campaigns were run" and said, "If Democrats do not hang onto the House, I think that responsibility falls squarely in New York state."

The reason, Ocasio-Cortez said, is that former Democratic Governor Andrew "Cuomo may be gone, but his entire infrastructure, much of his infrastructure and much of the political machinery that he put in place is still there. And this is a machinery that is disorganized, it is sycophantic. The corruption that has been allowed to continue in the New York State Democratic Party."

Ocasio-Cortez called for "decoupling the state party from the governor's mansion" and for state party chair Jay Jacobs to resign.

"Well, I think, right now, the New York State Democratic Party, the way that it is currently structured, is very reliant on the governor. And I think that between Cuomo resigning late last year, Hochul then very unexpectedly taking the gubernatorial seat, then immediately dealing with a natural disaster, having to contend with a potential primary and then a general, I don't really think that there's been as much breathing room to address that issue in that whole environment."

Hochul's rise to the governorship is less "unexpected" than Ocasio-Cortez lets on, and the DSA's post-midterm attempt to win a share of state party leadership is part of a longstanding internal party dispute between two right-wing factions of the Democratic Party. Hochul was appointed governor in August 2021 after a #MeToo-style campaign brought down elected governor Cuomo, a pro-corporate Democrat. The

sex scandal was initiated when ex-staffers alleged that Cuomo used lewd language with his staff and make women staffers feel uncomfortable by putting his arms around them or kissing them on the cheeks and hands. Calls for Cuomo's resignation came from the DSA, Republicans, and other Democrats.

A powerful section of the New York Democratic Party, ranging from the DSA to figures like Senators Gillibrand and Schumer as well as Hillary Clinton, used the scandal to settle scores with Cuomo and remove him from power. Five criminal complaints were brought against Cuomo, but all five have now been dismissed.

Ocasio-Cortez's interview is intended to signal the next stage in the effort by anti-Cuomo forces in the state party to take control of the party apparatus, as indicated by Ocasio-Cortez's references to "decoupling" the governor's office from the state party.

There are no issues of principle involved in this faction fight, which takes place entirely within the boundaries of what is acceptable to the Democratic Party establishment. Ocasio-Cortez's criticisms of the state party leadership amount to tactical ones over electoral messaging and internal organizational structure. She told the *New York Times*, "It's not a small 'D' democratic structure. As a consequence, we do not have the rich democratic culture and organizing that should be happening year-round."

Ocasio-Cortez's appeal is to the Democratic Party apparatus, and she speaks not as an outsider but as a loyal ally of the Democratic establishment. "We need to get together as a team," she told the *Times*, and criticized Democratic state leaders for running ads defending the police and tacking right.

But the DSA has long courted figures like Hochul and even Schumer, undermining their attempt to present their faction as left-wing. In the pages of DSA-linked *Jacobin* magazine, New York columnist Liza Featherstone regularly sends olive branches to the most right-wing figures in the state Democratic Party. Earlier this year, Featherstone even wrote that "Schumer has embraced some of the socialists' top priorities" and that Hochul is "somewhat responsive to socialist demands."

In this faction fight, Featherstone, *Jacobin* and the DSA are careful to communicate to the Democratic Party that it is not calling for an orientation to left-wing policies, with Featherstone writing in *Jacobin* that the "Defund the police message could complicate NYC-DSA's efforts to build a mass electoral base," calling it a "risky message" that is "out of touch with well-founded fears of crime."

Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA are signaling that they are willing to sacrifice any political positions in exchange for being brought in to help lead the state party. This would open up vast resources in terms of salaried positions for the DSA and avenues of patronage.

But most importantly, Ocasio-Cortez's remarks on the state party when read in the context of the *Intercept* interview as a whole make clear the DSA faction of the Democratic Party is motivated by both pragmatic electoral concerns as well as fears that if the Democratic Party adopts a posture of open hostility to all progressive elements, it will be unable to catch and disarm growing social opposition from below.

### **Michael Harrington, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the roots of "democratic socialism"**

The contours of Ocasio-Cortez's political strategy emerge more clearly through a careful reading of the two-part interview in *The Intercept*.

This strategy has deep roots in the DSA, which since its founding in 1982 and since the founding of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee in 1973 has aimed to work within the Democratic Party to

block the growth of anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist sentiment from below and trap it within the two-party system.

The political outlook underlying Ocasio-Cortez's interview bears close resemblance to a June 1984 interview published in the *New York Times* featuring DSA founder Michael Harrington and *Dissent* editor Irving Howe, who was also a prominent DSA leader. Both Harrington and Howe were acolytes of Max Shachtman, who broke with Trotskyism and later became a proponent of US imperialism. Harrington was Shachtman's protégé, and Howe served on the editorial board of the Shachtmanite newspaper, *Labor Action*, in the 1940s.

In the 1984 interview titled "Voices From the Left," Harrington and Howe explained the meaning of the DSA's "democratic socialism."

First, Harrington explained, "Practically everyone on the left agrees that the Democratic Party, with all its flaws, must be our main political arena," adding, "We work within all the liberal organizations—some of us have even been out in the field, campaigning for one or another of the Democratic candidates. We are loyal allies and sometimes friendly critics."

Harrington argued that the reason "why socialism failed in America" in the past is that revolutionary socialists previously insisted on independence from the Democratic Party. Socialists "could not come to terms with Roosevelt" during the period of New Deal reforms in the 1930s, Harrington said, and "made a terrible mistake in counterposing themselves" to the Democrats.

Second, Harrington said democratic socialism is aimed at excluding and suppressing revolutionary socialism from "the left." Harrington identified his views as defined by "visceral anti-Communism," and Howe stated that democratic socialists have "a wholly different vision of our relationship to American society" than revolutionary socialists: "There's a feeling now that while we are very critical of many of today's American socioeconomic arrangements, we are absolutely committed to democratic institutions." In other words, they support and uphold the American capitalist state.

Third, Harrington and Howe stated that democratic socialism is based on support for US imperialism. Harrington said, "An illustration of this shift is that when I criticize American foreign policy, our intervention in Central America, I do that in the name of the national security of the United States ... Our critique is that President Reagan's policy with regard to Nicaragua does not promote the national security, it hurts it." Howe, referencing US imperialism's Cold War against the Soviet Union, responded, "And you speak of the national security because you recognize that there is a totalitarian enemy out there which needs to be met."

Fourth, Harrington made statements making clear the DSA's brand of "socialism" is hostile to the interests of the working class and oriented to affluent sections of the middle class.

Commenting on massive job cuts that swept through American society in the 1970s and 80s, Harrington stated, "There are obsolete plants that should be closed down" but suggested slightly more social support for masses of fired workers. To address rising unemployment, Harrington proposed tax cuts for the corporations: "I think you offer certain subsidies to the private sector. I would be for Federal tax subsidies to steel corporations to create jobs...I would be for giving them a big tax break for creating jobs."

Fifth, Harrington attacked the outdated "Marxist" position that the working class is the revolutionary social force under capitalism, and instead proposed an orientation to the professional and affluent middle class.

"The class structure of American society has become much more complex," he said, referencing a large "middle class" that has "a social outlook markedly different from that of a production worker." It was a "problem within the left" that "the Marxist left of the 30s had a vision of the proletariat as a single cohesive agent of social change. Everybody

remotely aware of what is now going on has abandoned this perspective."

This was the right-wing, anti-socialist, pro-imperialist basis upon which the DSA was founded and to which it remains true today.

### **The DSA's record as a faction of the Democratic Party**

At the time the Howe-Harrington interview was published, the DSA was in the midst of a long faction fight within the Democratic Party as the party moved further and further to the political right.

For decades, the DSA's aim inside the Democratic Party has not so much been to change its policies, but rather to help the Democratic Party present a "left" face so that it can more effectively catch and suppress opposition from below. This history exposes the bankruptcy of Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA's play for a role in the leadership of the New York Democratic Party.

DSOC and the DSA emerged out of the New Democratic Coalition (NDC), a group of Democratic Party figures that had supported 1968 Democratic presidential candidates Eugene McCarthy (who was defeated at the notorious Chicago convention by Hubert Humphrey) and Robert F. Kennedy (who was assassinated after winning the California primary on June 5, 1968). In his book *True Blues: The Contentious Transformation of the Democratic Party*, DSA member Adam Hilton acknowledges that the NDC was based on a recognition of what its founders called "the impossibility of launching a successful third party."

DSOC emerged out of the NDC. Its founding in 1972 was not a product of a popular upsurge toward socialism from below, but a conscious decision taken by prominent figures within the Democratic Party.

DSOC was founded as an entirely internal Democratic Party operation which aimed to capitalize on changes to party structure implemented in 1972 by the Democratic National Committee. The structural changes, conducted under the auspices of a commission led by George McGovern (who would be the 1972 Democratic presidential candidate), created racial and gender quotas for delegate representation at party conventions. The changes were presented as giving power to the "grassroots," but were actually aimed at weakening the influence of the trade unions on the nominating process and increasing the influence of the upper-middle class.

Harrington and DSOC supported these structural changes and also backed McGovern, who was defeated in the 1972 general election by Nixon. In the following years, including through the administration of Jimmy Carter (1977-81), DSOC created another internal Democratic Party structure first called Democracy 76 and later renamed Democratic Agenda to push for changes to the Democratic Party platform.

In 1977, for example, DSOC published a statement calling for the Democratic establishment to "live up to the Democratic Party Platform." Speaking at DNC headquarters that year, Harrington said, "All of us voted for Jimmy Carter and some of us were involved in the platform process. It says right on the cover of that platform that it's a contract with the people. ... Well, we are here to collect on that contract."

But DSOC confronted a crisis of legitimacy in 1978 when its strategy was exploded by the Carter administration's shift to the right, as Carter sidelined elements within his cabinet (including Mondale) who had appealed for social reform and launched a vicious assault on the living standards of the working class. He tried and failed to crush the 1977-78 strike by coal miners with legal injunctions, and he appointed Paul Volcker as Federal Reserve chairman. Volcker infamously raised interest rates to 20 percent, triggering massive wage reductions for millions of workers. The DSA's effort to push Democrats to the left only pushed

them further to the right.

The late Mike Davis (1946-2022) detailed this period of DSA history in his 1986 essay, "The Lesser Evil? The Left and the Democratic Party."

Davis writes, "After the 1978 rightward turn of the [Carter] administration (i.e., the rejection of détente, the firing of Andrew Young, the savaging of the domestic budget, the abandonment of health reform, the curtailment of urban jobs programmes, and the defeat of labour law reform), the progressive pole notionally represented by the Democratic Agenda steadily lost ground in the face of the rise of 'neo-liberalism.'"

Nevertheless, at precisely this time various elements from the ex-radical "left" began moving to the right and coalescing behind DSOC. Davis continues:

It was precisely at this moment of crisis for the "left wing of realism," as the old liberal coalition began to break up, that significant additional sectors of the ex-New Left began to gravitate towards DSOC's centrist and electoralist positions. This convergence was abetted by the shift in editorial and theoretical perspectives within the group of periodicals, mutually descended from the seminal *Studies on the Left* of the 1960s, that bore most of the intellectual mantle of the US New Left: *Socialist Review* (ex-Socialist Revolution), *Kapitalstate*, and *In These Times*. All three had originally proclaimed the advocacy of "explicit socialist politics" and the building of a "new American Socialist Party;" on the eve of Reaganism, each had retreated to pragmatic endorsements of reform Democrats and to the embrace of a pseudo-phenomenal "New Populism" ... "Unity against Reagan" and unqualified support for the AFL-CIO Executive became the twin motivating slogans for DSA's headlong rush, first to Edward Kennedy, and then to Walter Mondale.

The DSA was founded in 1982 through the merger of the New America Movement and DSOC. This merger was also not the product of a shift to the left, but of a broader movement to the right among a middle class that benefited from Reaganism and was abandoning whatever past claims they had once made to being socialists. This was part of an international process of social differentiation, which was also reflected in the rise of Margaret Thatcher in England, Helmut Kohl in Germany, and the rightward volte face of Francois Mitterrand in France.

In the 1984 Democratic Party primaries, the DSA continued its movement to the right, endorsing Walter Mondale for president and snubbing the campaign of Jesse Jackson, which presented itself as an opponent of job cuts and cuts to social services. In the primary election Mondale ran a right-wing campaign, toning down the reformist element of his campaign. Davis wrote:

As the last liberal vestiges of the Mondale platform disappeared in white smoke, his left supporters sought refuge in a wonderland of ever more fantastic scenarios. While noting the rightward deflection of their candidate, DSA argued that this was all the more reason to "transform the election from an ordinary campaign into a bold progressive crusade"—as if grassroots mobilization could somehow compensate for right-wing policies. Mondale was officially invested with "exceptional left-liberal credentials" and crowned as the next "people's president." An extraordinary tableau was unveiled to show how the "party within the party" might be activated to defeat Reagan and reshape the Democratic Party leftward.

The DSA not only failed at pushing the Democratic Party leftward, it allowed itself to be swept up in the rightward movement of the Democratic milieu in which it operated. Many DSA leaders even openly embraced neo-liberal policies. As Davis noted:

Within DSA, Joseph Schwartz and National Political Director Jim Schoch appear to have gone furthest in suggesting that left politics must accept part of the terrain offered by Neo-liberalism. As Schwartz has put it, "the neo-liberal ideologues are at least taking on some tough questions about the transformation of the American political economy. Our role will likely be limited to struggling to get into the public arena a more sensitive, feasible and democratic alternative to their romance with 'high-tech' and 'picking winners'." (See "The role of DSA in the coming period," *Socialist Forum* 6, p. 54.) In a similar vein, political scientist David Plotke, a former editor of *Socialist Review*, criticized Mondale's supposed over-identification with the poor, and taking the perspective of the Democratic Party's practical needs to sustain an electoral majority, called for "combining Hart's themes with Jackson's means." ("Democratic Dilemmas," *The Year Left 1985*, London 1985, p. 125.)

The DSA continued on this rightward course throughout the 1980s through to today. Throughout the 1990s it promoted the Democratic Congressional Progressive Caucus, and in 2004 it endorsed John Kerry for president despite the fact that Kerry was opposed by multiple candidates from the left, including Howard Dean, who initially won support as an opponent of the Iraq War. Over this period, the Democratic Party has now abandoned all past association with reform, and the process that was already well developed at the time of Mondale's campaign has now become even further advanced.

But no matter how far to the right the Democratic Party moves, the DSA has been there to foster illusions that it can be moved further to the left. This is the process that underlies Ocasio-Cortez's support for Joe Biden and attempts to justify imperialist war against Russia, as well as her increasingly desperate efforts to head-off the growth of socialist opposition from below.

Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA have nothing whatsoever to do with genuine socialist politics, which is anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and which fights for the mobilization of the international working class against the state and all the political parties of the ruling class.



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