

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez pledges to “put aside” differences with Democratic leadership after Republican concessions to far right

Eric London
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In the first days of 2023, the reactionary and repulsive dynamic of American capitalist politics has been on full display.

For decades, the following process has played out time and time again: No matter how small its numerical presence, the far-right wing of the Republican Party dominates, the Democratic Party adapts in the name of “bipartisanship,” and its “left” flank capitulates without a fight in the name of “unity against the right.” As a result, the political axis of bourgeois politics moves to the right, and the process repeats itself. Each episode is more degrading than the last.

To socialists, this spectacle demonstrates that imperialism is reaction *all down the line* and that a movement of the working class is necessary to sweep both parties out of power and enact the revolutionary transformation of society.

To the Democratic Socialists of America, it is another opportunity to promote the tired fiction that the Democratic Party can be pushed to the left.

On January 7, *Jacobin* published an article by DSA member Neal Meyer entitled “The right played hardball in Congress. The left should take notes.”

As the title suggests, the article argues that socialists should pressure “progressive” congresspersons to “use the bully pulpit” and “fight” the Democratic Party leadership “just as hard as the right does against their leadership.” Meyer writes, “We should be prepared to go to war against Chuck Schumer, Hakeem Jeffries and others...”

Meyer asserts that this is the strategy of the DSA: “Democratic socialists use electoral politics and our position in legislatures to build our popular base,” “spread democratic socialist ideas” and “rally millions

to a program of transformational change.”

As a preliminary matter, the DSA’s record in Congress is not rallying anyone for transformational change, except in the negative sense. The DSA’s representatives have used their electoral positions to illegalize railroad strikes, fund the Israeli military and provide the American military industrial complex with tens of billions of dollars to wage the US-NATO war against Russia, risking nuclear catastrophe.

Meyer papers over these votes, writing, “As Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has said in the past, in any other country she would not be in the same party as Joe Biden. That has never been more clear than in the aftermath of Joe Biden’s decision to crush railroad workers’ right to strike to win paid leave.”

This is an unfortunate example, given the fact that Ocasio-Cortez and the rest of the DSA slate (save Rashida Tlaib) voted “to crush railroad workers’ right to strike to win paid leave.” There is a reason why Ocasio-Cortez and Biden are in the same party: The DSA plays a critical role in this sordid right-wing process, by trapping social opposition within the Democratic Party where it can be suffocated and eliminated.

Jacobin’s article is yet another example of this role. Meyer writes in a manner which makes clear the DSA is sensitive to the growing realization of the true role played by Ocasio-Cortez and her DSA cohorts. He presents the relationship between the DSA and the Democratic Party leadership as follows: “We ought to sit very uncomfortably inside the Democratic fold. It is, at best, a temporary and fraught marriage of necessity, one that we should want to exit as soon as possible.”

This is a falsification of the relationship between the

DSA's own congressional members and the Democratic leadership, as evidenced by the recent speakership fight. The DSA's representatives unanimously voted for Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries on every round in last week's leadership contest, despite Jeffries' 2021 statement that "there will never be a moment where I bend the knee to hard-left democratic socialism." In fact, Jeffries started a Political Action Committee (Team Blue) specifically to oppose left-wing challengers to Democratic incumbents. Even so, he won the votes of all those he is trying to unseat.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, confronting growing left-wing opposition to her subservience to the Democratic Party, gave an explanation which was as revealing as it was pathetic. "I see some people say Dems should negotiate to get concessions," she said in a social media post this week. "We do, but what we don't do is bring them publicly in order to empower not just Republicans but the fascist flank of the Republican Party."

This statement tracks with her record in Congress: The class struggle must be suppressed for the sake of the institutional security of the imperialist Democratic Party and the Biden administration. For this same reason Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA's congressional representatives illegalized the rail strike and denounced left-wing criticism of Biden as "privileged" and racist.

In comments to MSNBC responding to the Republican speakership fight, Ocasio-Cortez confirmed the DSA's role, saying, "What was important today was to send the message that we were united behind Hakeem Jeffries as the new minority leader, that there would be no defections, that Democrats are here, we're not going anywhere."

Undermining her own claim about the efficacy of secret negotiations, she pledged the Democratic Party would "stay 100 percent united" no matter what, adding, "We absolutely have differences," but she is "willing to put that aside."

Here, Ocasio-Cortez has accidentally told the truth. For the sake of the stability of the Democratic Party, the Democratic Socialists of America is willing to put aside its differences with the establishment, however minor they may be, by backing a party leader who has pledged to ignore them until he can remove them from Congress.

There is nothing unexpected or unusual in this

behavior. Ocasio-Cortez and the rest of the DSA's slate are not socialists, they are conformist politicians, and they are acting in conformity with the DSA's political essence as a pro-imperialist faction of the Democratic Party.

The DSA exists not to extract reforms from the Democratic establishment, but to trap social opposition and channel it behind the Democratic Party. Only an organization with such a long practice in pseudo-socialist gymnastics could try to present Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's concessions to the far right as a rallying cry for reforming the two-party system from within.



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