

The bankruptcy of DSA politics: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez endorses Biden reelection

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In a statement that encapsulates the pro-imperialist politics of the Democratic Socialists of America, New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), the standard bearer of what purports to be the Democratic Party “left,” declared her support for the reelection of President Joe Biden.

She made the announcement on Thursday, amidst media reports that Biden had decided, in advance of this week’s NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, to authorize the shipment of cluster munitions to the Ukrainian military. AOC did not even bother to refer to the barbaric move—in defiance of bans on the anti-personnel weapons that explode and kill civilians decades after being fired—so committed are she and the anti-socialist, pro-imperialist, pro-war DSA to the US-led drive to dismember Russia and steal its resources.

Their support for US militarism means as well support for ever deeper attacks on the living standards and social conditions of the working class, through which both big business parties intend to finance the escalating war drive. Only weeks ago, Biden and the Republicans agreed to more than \$1 trillion in social cuts over the next decade, a down payment on an attack on social programs that will include Medicare and Social Security.

Needless to say, AOC made no mention of Biden’s outlawing of a strike by railroad workers last fall and imposition of a pro-company contract that had been voted down by rank-and-file workers or his role in blocking a strike by West Coast dockworkers.

Ocasio-Cortez was being interviewed on the liberal podcast “Pod Save America” Thursday and was asked if she would support Biden’s renomination by the Democratic Party over his two announced opponents, motivational speaker Marianne Williamson and anti-vaccine fanatic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. “I believe, given

that field, yes,” she replied.

She had previously said (last February) that she would support Biden “with enthusiasm” if he became the Democratic Party nominee but was not endorsing until the contest for the nomination had been resolved. She has now dropped this reservation.

Ocasio-Cortez is the third member of “the squad” of supposedly left-wing representatives to endorse Biden publicly, including Greg Casar of Texas, who, like AOC, is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota.

The three other DSA-aligned members of the House—Jamaal Bowman of New York, Cori Bush of Missouri and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan—have not publicly declared themselves on Biden’s reelection.

In her comments to the podcast Thursday, Ocasio-Cortez gave an upbeat assessment of Biden’s record. “I think he’s done quite well, given the limitations that we have,” she began. “I do think that there are ebbs and flows, as there are in any presidency.

“There are areas that I think were quite strong,” she continued. “He came right out of the gate with the American Rescue Plan.”

This refers to the first legislation enacted by the Democratic Congress in the spring of 2021, which poured vast sums into further handouts to corporate America as well as providing limited benefits to sections of working people. In particular, it included an expansion of the Child Tax Credit, which cut the poverty rate for children by 50 percent but expired at the end of the year and was not renewed. The poverty rate shot back up.

AOC hailed the so-called “Inflation Reduction Act,” passed last year, claiming that its spending on renewable energy was “a massive step in terms of our climate agenda.” She then voiced a mild criticism,

declaring, “But, you know, there are also areas that I think could have gone better. The president and I think the Democratic Party in general continues to struggle with immigration.”

To use such language to describe the current regime of terror and repression against migrants, both at the border and throughout the country, expresses contempt for this most oppressed section of the working class and utter cynicism towards her own political audience.

Just as the Obama-Biden administration deported more immigrants than any other, the Biden-Harris administration has retained nearly all of Trump’s abominations and intensified many of them. Immigrants continue to be deported in huge numbers; the border is ruthlessly enforced; people fleeing oppression and poverty continue to drown in the Rio Grande or die in the Sonoran Desert.

Ocasio-Cortez went on to place the blame for any failings in the Biden record on a single obstacle: the Senate filibuster. “We have major structural issues in this country,” she said. “It starts with the US Senate. And until we have senators that are willing to stand up and stare the filibuster in the eye, it’s going to be the Senate that holds back this country from an enormous amount of progress.”

If only the Senate rules could be changed to prevent the minority of Republicans from blocking liberal legislation propounded by Biden and the Democrats, she suggested, the United States would bloom like a garden. She did not bother to note that it was Senate Democrats who refused to limit the filibuster and that Biden himself supported this decision because he was seeking bipartisan agreement with the Republicans, along with his stated aim of maintaining a “strong Republican Party.”

Most importantly, Ocasio-Cortez said nothing at all about the central policy of the Democratic Party and the Biden administration—the war in Ukraine against Russia. The administration and congressional Democrats have repeatedly backed new arms packages to Ukraine, expanding the scope of the war and escalating the risks of a full-scale military confrontation between the United States and Russia, threatening the world with the prospect of a nuclear holocaust.

The cost of the war is being placed squarely on the backs of American working people, in terms of cuts in social spending and attacks on democratic rights,

beginning with the right to strike.

In December, Congress approved the legislation banning a rail strike, including the votes of AOC and two other DSA Democrats. Biden’s Department of Labor is now moving to impose a sellout deal on the West Coast longshore workers and to block a strike by 340,000 UPS workers at the end of this month. Within days, Biden is expected to announce the appointment of a White House representative to oversee the auto industry contract negotiations. In each case, Biden has relied on the union bureaucracies, backed by the DSA, to block any struggle by the rank and file, while readying the use of federal coercion through legislation or injunctions if they fail to do so.

Ocasio-Cortez is now the dean of a growing faction of Democratic members of Congress linked to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). She is regularly given a platform on the Sunday television interview programs. AOC is also moving up within the leadership of the House Democratic Caucus.

Representative Jamie Raskin, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight and Governance Committee, has named her as his deputy, an indication of his political confidence that she will cause no trouble to the Biden administration should the Democrats regain the majority in the House of Representatives.



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