

Strikebreaking Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez visits New York actors' and writers' picket line

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Democratic Party House Representative, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member and strikebreaker Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez made an appearance at a picket line of striking writers and actors in New York City Monday morning. Ocasio-Cortez was accompanied by AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler.

The strike of tens of thousands of actors and writers has largely succeeded in shutting down film and television production. Projects with budgets in the hundreds of millions of dollars have been halted. The actors and writers are taking on multi-billion-dollar conglomerates.

Ocasio-Cortez is notorious for her role in the Biden administration's banning of a national strike by railroad workers and imposition of a pro-company contract at the end of last year. Ocasio-Cortez and other DSA-affiliated members of the House of Representatives have also voted to fund the bloody war in Ukraine to the tune of tens of billions of dollars, which is to be paid for through cuts to social spending and programs that are critical to millions of people.

Ocasio-Cortez and Shuler join a long list of Democratic Party politicians and trade union officials who have visited the picket lines, all enthusiastically welcomed by the leaders of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and Writers Guild of America (WGA).

The presence of Ocasio-Cortez and Shuler is an indication that the union leaderships, in communication with the Biden administration, are apprehensive about the joint strike action, which continues to inspire other sections of the working class and also represents an objective challenge to the corporate control of film and television production. Ocasio-Cortez has been

dispatched to use her fading "left" and "progressive" credentials to contain the strike movement and keep it from taking an anti-capitalist and genuinely threatening direction.

Ocasio-Cortez and Shuler spent about 40 minutes Monday walking a picket line in downtown Manhattan. Some 200 writers and actors were picketing the offices of entertainment and media conglomerates Netflix and Warner Brothers Discovery. Ocasio-Cortez gave a three-minute "pep talk" to the pickets in which she shouted through a bullhorn the familiar "left," militant-sounding phrases that have become her trademark.

"Frankly, while this is a fight against AI [Artificial Intelligence]," she told the crowd, "more than AI, this is a fight against greed." In this case, lambasting individual entertainment executives for their exorbitant incomes distracts attention from the reality that the source of the problem is the profit system itself.

Ocasio-Cortez promoted the Teamsters, UAW and AFL-CIO bureaucracies—currently in the process of trying to sell out hundreds of thousands of UPS, auto and other workers—and made countless empty calls for union "solidarity" in contract talks.

Most significantly, in an interview with *Deadline* on the picket line, Ocasio-Cortez raised the possibility of direct Congressional intervention in the Hollywood strike. "The most important actors here are workers, so it shouldn't be about Congress acting on its own," she said. "It should be us acting on behalf of our constituents. If SAG-AFTRA, WGA calls on Congress, then I think that's something that we should absolutely consider. But until then we've got to get out of their way and let the workers do their thing."

In other words, if the SAG-AFTRA and WGA

leadership calls on Congress to intervene, then Congress, with Ocasio-Cortez's blessing, will act to end the strike. As with the banning of the railroad strike, Ocasio-Cortez will insist that her support for strikebreaking was based on what "workers" wanted. Recent reports have indicated that the Biden administration has been closely following and intervening in the strike for several weeks.

The *Hollywood Reporter* wrote July 18 that leading officials from the Biden administration's Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) were "working in the shadows to find a way forward." According to the report, "Javier Ramirez—President Biden's choice to be Director of the FMCS—and Jimmy Valentine, an FMCS commissioner based in Glendale, have had meetings with the parties for weeks." The FMCS cannot impose a contract on either party. However, federal mediation, working on behalf of the Biden administration, can provide the framework that would serve as the basis for a pro-company contract.

Actors and writers should have no illusions—Ocasio-Cortez and her bureaucrat buddy Shuler are not workers' friends. She makes occasional references to "socialism" as part of a broader effort to prop up the two-party system and convince workers that the Democratic Party can be pushed to the left.

Handpicked by Democratic Party operatives in 2017 to run for Congress, the former intern for Senator Ted Kennedy and "aspiring corporate leader" has played a critical role over the last seven years in defending the interests and operations of American imperialism.

This is not the result of personal failings or mistakes, but of class orientation. Ocasio-Cortez and her "left" colleagues represent the interests of the privileged upper-middle class. Her politics are the politics of the DSA, the fake-left arm of the Democrats. Founded in 1982 as the "left wing of the possible," the DSA has worked for over 40 years to capture popular opposition to capitalism and channel it back to the big business Democrats.

The Democratic Party has received millions of dollars in donations from the media and entertainment monopolies over several decades and acts on their behalf.

Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff, a leading warmonger who has appeared several times on the picket lines and at Hollywood union rallies, has taken

campaign money directly from the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), the nemesis of actors and writers in the strike. The SAG-AFTRA and WGA leaderships promote these politicians uncritically and have no strategy other than pressing the studios and streamers for crumbs from the corporate table.

Rank-and-file writers and actors need to take control of the struggle into their own hands through the formation of independent strike committees, part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

A powerful strike movement has begun to emerge in the US and internationally, involving tens of thousands of workers across various industries. They face the same fundamental issues, driven by the crisis of the capitalist profit system. The IWA-RFC is building an international network of worker-led organizations of struggle, independent of all capitalist political parties and organizations, across industries and countries in a fight for the socialist transformation of society.



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