Ocasio-Cortez says pro-Palestinian demonstrations should be “shut down” as opposition to Israeli war crimes grows

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As the fascistic Israeli regime pounds the Gaza strip with American bombs and carries out collective punishment against the civilian population of Palestine, DSA Congressperson Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has condemned pro-Palestinian protests, calling for them to be “shut down.”

“It should not be so hard to shut down hatred and antisemitism where we see it,” she said, repeating the lie that Palestine equates to racism and antisemitism. Ocasio-Cortez’s call to make it easier to “shut down” protests come as New York City Mayor Eric Adams has come under pressure for refusing to stop the pro-Palestine protest that took place in Times Square on Sunday and are part of a massive propaganda campaign to intimidate and suppress anti-war views.

“The bigotry and callousness expressed in Times Square on Sunday were unacceptable and harmful in this devastating moment,” Ocasio-Cortez continued before issuing a one-sided denunciation of Hamas for carrying out what she called “horrifying attacks against innocent civilians.” The New York congressperson made no reference to the fact that the Israeli military is currently conducting crimes against humanity against the inhabitants of the Gaza strip, killing thousands and cutting their access to electricity, water and food.

Ocasio-Cortez has long been a mouthpiece for the Democratic Party, but now she is revealing herself to be nothing but an unprincipled political fraud. Last year she wept and begged for forgiveness after failing to vote against a multi-billion-dollar bill to arm the Israeli Defense Forces. Now that the weapons she and the DSA helped the IDF procure are raining down on 2.3 million people in Gaza, Ocasio-Cortez demands all opposition be “shut down” in the language of a thuggish police chief.

The DSA and its elected officials have responded by denouncing or distancing themselves from pro-Palestinian protests as well.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman, a DSA member who voted for the bill arming Israel last year, issued a statement saying he was “shocked and disgusted by the rally held here in NY this weekend celebrating death.” He presented the anti-war protesters as Nazis who were “showing swastikas,” adding, “I condemn any demonstration that does this in the strongest possible terms.” He then urged the US and the “global community” to “stand up for all life” while saying nothing about the Israeli government’s ruthless campaign against Gaza.

New York assemblymember Zohran Mamdani, a DSA member, also denounced the anti-war rally, saying, “My support for Palestinian liberation should never be confused for a celebration of the loss of civilian life. I condemn the killing of civilians and rhetoric at a rally [on Sunday] seeking to make light of such deaths.”

The claim that the rally was “a celebration of the loss of life” is a foul slander. Protesters, including many Palestinians, were opposing the crimes of the Israeli government, which sparked the rebellion.

In any case, the coordinated denunciations of the rally began before the rally took place and have nothing to do with whatever “rhetoric” the DSA assemblymember found objectionable. The day before the rally, New York Governor Kathy Hochul issued a statement saying, “The people of Israel are facing violent terrorist attacks and civilian kidnappings. I condemn plans to rally in Times Square tomorrow in support of the

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perpetrators of these horrific actions. The planned rally is abhorrent and morally repugnant." Previously, the DSA-aligned *Jacobin* had promoted Hochul as being "responsive to socialist demands."

After the rally took place, the New York City DSA issued a pathetic statement apologizing for the fact that the group promoted it in a post on X (formerly Twitter):

"On Saturday, in anticipation of escalatory violence to come, we tweeted a promotion of a rally in solidarity with the people of Palestine. We understand why many, including our allies, were shocked by the timing and the tone of this message in a moment of profound fear and grief. We are sorry for the confusion our post caused and for not making our values explicit."

This statement makes their pro-imperialist "values" quite explicit. Translated into plain English, it reads, "We apologize for re-tweeting a post about an anti-war rally. We understand why many, including our handlers in the Democratic Party and the military-intelligence apparatus, were upset about the slip up. We promise to support the narrative from the White House and the corporate media about the war, and we will endeavor to make our spines more flexible than ever."

The DSA's statement is consistent with the position taken at their national convention, when the DSA refused to even place a resolution calling on support for Palestine on the convention agenda.

For their actions in support of the US-backed Israeli war against Palestine, Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA have won the praise of neo-conservative and Iraq War proponent Bret Stephens, who wrote a column in the *New York Times* Tuesday titled "The anti-Israel left needs to take a hard look at itself." In the article, Stevens froths in anger at left-wing opposition as "terminally self-righteous" and calls supporters of Palestine "cheerleaders for slaughter," but says "Not all the far left is so far gone," praising Ocasio-Cortez's statements and referring to her as "the [DSA's] most prominent member."

For all the DSA's efforts to claim their subservience to the Democratic Party is necessary to pressure the party to move "to the left," recent events have exposed this as nothing but lies. The Biden administration, which Ocasio-Cortez has already endorsed for a second term, denounced the statements by the DSA representatives on the grounds that it is unacceptable to make even passing reference to the conditions that exist in Gaza under Israeli occupation. Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called such statements "wrong, repugnant and disgraceful," adding, "Our condemnation belongs squarely with terrorists who have brutally murdered, raped, kidnapped hundreds, hundreds of Israelis. There can be no equivocation about that. There are not two sides here. There are not two sides."

The DSA's denunciation of anti-war and pro-Palestinian protests is yet another example of the role the organization has long played in supporting US imperialism by suppressing opposition to war and capitalism and directing it away from genuinely revolutionary politics.

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