

Ocasio-Cortez and the normalization of genocide as state policy

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29 August 2024

In a short, but highly significant video interview posted to X on August 25, New York Representative and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez justified the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by pointing to future attacks on democratic rights on Americans if Trump should return to the White House.

In the interview with Democratic New York City Council member Chi Ossé, taken at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Ocasio-Cortez employed a variation of the tired “lesser evil” argument to excuse genocide overseas as a necessary trade-off for supposedly protecting democratic rights domestically.

The DSA member began the interview by claiming that, while the slaughter of Palestinians would continue under a Harris-Walz administration, it would be more humane compared to Trump. “I don’t think either party right now is doing justice to Palestinians,” said Ocasio-Cortez. “That doesn’t mean that they are the same. I think that a Donald Trump presidency would be absolutely catastrophic. I mean he’s coming out here saying, ‘finish the job’ of a genocide.”

Ocasio-Cortez apparently does not consider the Biden-Harris administration’s backing of Israel’s relentless bombardment of Gaza—which, as she acknowledged has led to the deaths of “over 40,000 Palestinians”—to be “absolutely catastrophic.” Even as she spoke, Israel was preparing the expansion of the genocide into the West Bank, precisely to “finish the job.”

Passing over this extraordinary statement, Ossé replied with a question, noting that there are “a lot people with our politics” that are having a “hard time” supporting Kamala Harris. He asked: “How do you think we help them get there in November to beat Trump?”

Justifying her support for US-Israeli war crimes, Ocasio-Cortez continued:

To me, when I process this, I weigh through all of the people living under extreme levels of oppression,

especially outside of places even like New York. I think about the women that are bleeding out in ER rooms because they live in red states. I think about trans kids that are living in places where their entire families are trying to figure out if they need to pack up their entire lives and move somewhere else.

We have to hold all of those things at once. And so to me, the conclusion that I’ve come to, is having more people suffer to put on top of the already horrific suffering that’s going on in Gaza is not something that I think I’m comfortable with.

According to this bloody calculus, workers and youth must accept genocide abroad in order to maintain certain democratic rights by backing a party and an administration that is dripping in blood. In this way, Ocasio-Cortez is attempting to normalize genocide among her followers as “just another issue” alongside campaign finance reform, Medicare for All, or the “Green New Deal.”

The entire presentation of the issue is false to the core. Ocasio-Cortez actually downplays the real threat of fascism and dictatorship, not mentioning, for example, Trump’s threat to round up immigrants and deploy the military to crush domestic opposition.

It is impossible to defend any democratic rights, however, by backing the Democratic Party. The global war that the Biden-Harris administration has overseen—and which Harris pledged to continue in her speech to the DNC last weekend—has as its necessary corollary the assault on democratic rights at home.

Ocasio-Cortez has made such arguments before. In 2021, she denounced socialist opponents of Biden for advancing a “privileged critique,” because their criticisms of Biden supposedly undermined the rights of immigrants. Biden, however, has joined hands with the Republicans in escalating the assault on immigrants and refugees, which Harris again backed during her DNC speech.

The entire policy of the Biden administration has served

not to undermine the fascistic right, but to strengthen it. And Ocasio-Cortez has played and continues to play a central role.

And the Democrats' supposed commitment to democratic rights was thoroughly exposed in the nationwide police crackdown on college protesters, overseen by Biden-Harris, that resulted in over 3,200 arrests. In New York City, under the auspices of Ocasio-Cortez, Democratic Mayor Eric Adams and Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul, hundreds of students at Columbia and New York University faced expulsions, suspensions, job loss, doxxing, police and Zionist violence as well other forms of harassment.

On Thursday, Ocasio-Cortez, fulfilling her role as a cheerleader for US imperialism and vote catcher for Democrats, retweeted an Instagram statement she made attacking left-wing critics of her pro-genocide policies. The statement was headlined: "Why do leftists attack you despite multiple Palestinian rights groups ranking U [sic] as 1 of Congress's best?"

In the statement, Ocasio-Cortez claimed to have "one of the strongest vote records in Congress on Palestinian human rights and voting against bloated US military budgets," an extremely low bar to pass in the vehemently pro-Israel and pro-war US Congress.

For Ocasio-Cortez though, even this low bar is a fiction. Last October in an interview on CNN, Ocasio-Cortez walked back her previous token opposition to Israeli military funding, expressing support for the Iron Dome missile system as "absolutely legitimate."

After touting her Congressional record, the New York representative claimed in the statement that attacks against her were the result of "disinformation" and "nefarious stuff getting amplified."

As an example of "disinformation," she recounted an incident in which she was confronted in Chicago over her refusal to characterize the genocide in Gaza as a genocide, which she did not do in her speech endorsing Harris. Ocasio-Cortez justified this omission by pointing to a speech she made in Congress "months ago."

When it comes to disseminating "disinformation" and "nefarious stuff," over the last 10 months of slaughter, Ocasio-Cortez has played a leading role. Less than three months ago she invited high-level Zionist lobbyists onto her social media to propagate the slander that anti-genocide protests on college campuses and high schools are expressions of "antisemitism" in progressive spaces, thus justifying further police repression of student protests and attacks on their democratic rights.

Ocasio-Cortez ended her defensive statement claiming it is

"easier to be pissed off on the internet than actually build community and power around a just cause. But if we actually want to change things, we need to get real about building power."

Ocasio-Cortez is very interested in building the "power" of the Democratic Party and herself, not in replacing them. Furthermore, if hoodwinking her followers into supporting Harris and the ongoing genocide in Gaza is a "just cause," what other "just causes" do Ocasio-Cortez and the Democrats, have in store for the working class?

Harris has taken up Trump's anti-immigrant policies as her own. What other *good ideas* does the aspiring Hitler have that Ocasio-Cortez and the Democrats could embrace? Nuclear war with China? Deporting "antisemitic" student protesters?

That Ocasio-Cortez is making these arguments is a testament to the immense crisis within the ruling class. Less than 96 hours after declaring at the Democratic National Convention that Harris was working "tirelessly" towards a ceasefire in Gaza, Ocasio-Cortez is now arguing that workers and youth must vote for Democrats to protect democratic rights at home, while advancing a "kindler, gentler" ethnic cleansing campaign abroad compared to their "Republican colleagues."

Under conditions of mounting global war in Ukraine, Russia, Lebanon and soon Iran and China, Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA are being elevated as a last line of ideological defense for the Democratic Party. The reformist arguments she advances have been completely demolished in reality time and time again, creating a disaster for the oppressed in America, and around the world.

For the working class, the only solution is to build the independent socialist movement in opposition to the capitalist parties and their historically rotten system which has nothing to offer humanity except war, fascism and death.



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