

At latest convention, New York City DSA chapter backs vote for Harris in battleground states

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On October 19, the New York City chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the home chapter of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, held a one-day, eight-hour convention, apparently the first in two years, to “deliberate and vote on proposals submitted by members across the city, and elect the new Officers of the Chapter.”

As of this writing, the NYC-DSA has yet to release a public statement on all the measures that were agreed to, or rejected, at the convention. However, shortly after it concluded at 5 p.m., several members of the chapter took to social media to register their disagreement with several of the proposals. The most revealing initiative agreed to by the delegates at the convention was a proposal to encourage members in swing states to “tactically vote” for the Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris.

In virtually every campaign and media appearance since being named the nominee, Harris has boasted of her role, alongside Biden, in overseeing military operations in Israel and Gaza. She has repeatedly reiterated her support for the “Butcher of Gaza,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Israel’s ethnic cleansing campaign.

An organization claiming to be “socialist” that vows to “tactically” support a capitalist politician who has armed, supported and promised to continue the ethnic cleansing of workers in Palestine, is a threat to the working class, both in Gaza and in America.

The NYC-DSA’s bankrupt resolution follows in the footsteps of a similar resolution agreed to by leaders of the “Uncommitted movement.” Last month the group issued a similar statement, encouraging followers to “vote against” Trump and “avoid third-party candidates.” While it does not appear that the NYC-DSA’s resolution

explicitly calls for a vote for Harris, like the Uncommitted statement, it instead calls on members to “block Trump’s election.”

An image shared by a DSA member on social media of the resolution reads that the NYC-DSA “encourages tactical voting in the 2024 general election to block Trump’s election and the election of other fascist candidates in swing states and swing districts.”

Since New York is hardly a swing state (recent polling conducted in New York shows Harris with a double-digit lead and the last time the state’s electoral votes were awarded to a Republican was in 1988) the purpose of the resolution becomes clear. DSA members in New York are expected to stump for Harris outside of New York and encourage members in “swing states” to vote for Democrats.

To this end, the same resolution encouraging “tactical voting” states that the DSA’s plan to “build the left” and “fight the right” includes “phone-banking, door-knocking, and fundraising to support ballot measure fights and down-ballot DSA campaigns, especially in swing states.”

The adoption of the resolution has exacerbated an already existing crisis within the organization. In an October 19 tweet thread that has been viewed over 293,000 times, Gerald Dalbon, a member of the chapter, wrote that there was a “Significant rightward turn at the NYC-DSA convention today with delegates voting to endorse ‘tactically voting’ for Kamala while voting down accountability standards for electeds on Palestine and gutting community organizing work while not even considering the stop cop city campaign.”

The adoption of the resolution is hardly a surprise. The DSA presents itself as a “big tent” socialist organization, but is in reality a faction of the capitalist Democratic

Party. The purpose of the DSA is to block the development of an independent socialist movement in the working class and instead ensnare left-ward moving workers and youth into the orbit of the Democratic Party and electoral politics. The DSA presents no threat to the existing social and economic order because it has nothing to do with socialism or Marxism.

This was exemplified at the convention in the choice of speakers. Among them was Waleed Shahid, a veteran political strategist for the Democratic Party, former director for communication for the Justice Democrats and senior adviser for the Uncommitted campaign. Following the convention, Shahid published the demoralized remarks he delivered at the event on his substack.

Prior to calling on members to “build step by step, election by election” an “infrastructure the Democratic Party cannot ignore: voters, donors, and institutions,” Shahid admitted that in addition to failing to procure a ceasefire or re-elect DSA Democrats such as Representatives Jamaal Bowman and Cori Bush, the DSA “failed to shift the overall direction of Biden, Harris, or Democratic Party leadership.”

Shahid did not once mention the working class as an independent, much less, revolutionary social force in his remarks. Instead he lamented on the failures of the DSA to build a “Tea Party of the Left,” a force “strong enough to topple a few corporate-backed incumbents and shift the Democratic Party on a range of issues, including foreign policy.”

The reality of the last six years, since the emergence of Ocasio-Cortez, has exploded any claims that the Democrats could be “pushed to the left” if only DSA members were elected. With Biden-Harris in the White House and “the Squad” in Congress, the Gaza genocide has continued for over a year, leading to as many as 200,000 dead. Throughout the US-backed Zionist slaughter, Ocasio-Cortez has dropped opposition to funding for the Iron Dome and slandered anti-genocide protesters as “antisemitic.”

As the Biden-Harris administration provides Israel all the weapons and political support it needs to expand the conflict into Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Iran, Ocasio-Cortez has seamlessly transitioned from urging supporters to be “adults” and vote for Joe Biden, to selling illusions that under a Harris administration, while there might be genocide abroad, democratic rights can be defended at home.

In a video published to her account on October 21,

Ocasio-Cortez, stumping for Harris in Pennsylvania, said nothing about the expanding war. Instead, she boasted, “Kamala Harris will be the first woman president of the United States. She is a Black woman who will be a powerful leader for this country. And she comes from a middle class and working class background.”

The DSA saw a spike in membership in 2016 through the Bernie Sanders campaign and again in 2018 after the election of Ocasio-Cortez to Congress. In both campaigns, the DSA encouraged and supported members to back self-proclaimed socialists who would change the Democratic Party into a progressive working class party.

In reality, the rise of Ocasio-Cortez within the Democratic Party has not opened up new avenues for social reform. The Democratic Party remains an imperialist party engaged in massive crimes against the working class in the US and internationally. Instead of pushing the Democrats to “the left,” Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders have provided a “left gloss” to the increasingly right-wing program of the Democrats.

While Ocasio-Cortez hails Harris, the vice president is also being embraced by right-wing figures such as Liz Cheney, who has joined Harris on the campaign trail. Campaigning together at a town hall-style event in Waukesha, Wisconsin with Cheney and conservative commentator Charlie Sykes, Harris doubled down on her support for continuing the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

During the event, Daniel Marans, senior politics reporter at the *Huffington Post*, reported that someone asked, “What about Gaza?” Marans reported that attendees “applauded to overwhelm the sole protester and it looks like he’s now being thrown out by security.”



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