

Ocasio-Cortez promotes “economic populism” led by CIA Democrat Jared Golden as future of Democratic Party

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1 April 2025

On March 30, the *New York Times* published a revealing interview featuring New York Representative and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez headlined, “What Ocasio-Cortez Wants for the Democrats.”

The article, by *Times* columnist Michelle Cottle, notes that Ocasio-Cortez has been appearing alongside Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders at a series of campaign-style events titled, “Fighting Oligarchy.” As the *World Socialist Web Site* has previously analyzed, these events are aimed at rebuilding the shattered credibility of the Democratic Party. This party is widely, and rightly, despised by large sections of the working class for facilitating the return of Donald Trump and collaborating with him and the Republicans in carrying out their shared agenda of further enriching the financial oligarchy through global war and social counterrevolution.

Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez are not fighting oligarchy. Rather, they are fighting to preserve the Democratic Party and the capitalist system. They are safety valves deployed by the ruling class to block the development of an independent socialist movement in the working class aimed at abolishing oligarchy and its source, the capitalist system.

To this end, Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez, speaking on behalf of a ruling class terrified of socialism and turning to fascism in anticipation of immense class battles, are shedding any talk of “socialism” and instead adopting the language of “populism” to mask the right-wing nationalist and pro-war agenda of the Democratic Party.

“I believe economic populism is the path forward,” Ocasio-Cortez told Cottle. As an example of someone embodying this orientation, Ocasio-Cortez named CIA Democrat and Maine Congressman Jared Golden.

“Look at a front-liner like Jared Golden, who is on Medicare for all,” she told the newspaper.

Ocasio-Cortez’s promotion of Golden is highly significant. Last month, Golden was the only House Democrat to vote for the Trump-backed Republican continuing resolution that continues funding for Trump’s fascist administration and its assault on Democratic rights, federal jobs and bedrock social programs, and its erection of a presidential dictatorship. The bill, which the WSWWS has compared to Hitler’s Enabling Act passed by the German parliament in 1933, was pushed through the Senate by Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and nine other Senate Democrats.

In a press release, Golden noted that the spending bill included “\$7.951 billion for DDG-51 funding ... slated to be built at [Maine’s] Bath Iron Works.” The DDG-51 is an Aegis guided missile destroyer.

The statement also noted that the bill “increased funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement” and that “[o]verall, the CR [continuing resolution] increases overall defense spending by \$6 billion while cutting nondefense spending by \$13 billion, relative to current spending levels.”

Golden is one of 30 former military, intelligence or State Department operatives nominated as Democratic Party congressional candidates in the 2018 election. As Patrick Martin of the WSWWS noted at the time:

Golden enlisted in the Marines after 9/11 and spent four years as an infantryman, deploying to Afghanistan in 2004 and to Iraq in 2005-2006. He is the only rank-and-file soldier among the 30 military-intelligence Democrats, and the only one to acknowledge the negative impact of the war on American troops, revealing his own diagnosis with post-traumatic stress disorder. He was clearly committed to the US wars, however, returning to Afghanistan as a volunteer schoolteacher, and then going to work as a staff member for the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, where he worked for Maine’s Republican Senator Susan Collins. Golden began his own political career in 2014, winning a seat, as a Democrat, in the Maine House of Representatives, rising to Democratic whip in 2016, and winning the nomination for Congress with the support of the party establishment this year.

Since winning his election, Golden has served as a reliable supporter of the military-intelligence-industrial complex, the border Gestapo and police apparatus and “fiscal responsibility,” i.e., spending cuts for social programs.

After initially supporting the Medicare for All Act of 2019, Golden has ceased public support for the proposal and did not co-sponsor a 2023 version of the bill. He has, however, repeatedly voted in favor of global war.

After voting for last summer’s \$95 billion supplementary military package, which provided over \$60 billion to the Ukraine government and US war profiteers to further the proxy war against Russia, with the remainder allocated to furthering the genocide in Gaza and preparing for war with China, Golden released a statement declaring:

The defense of Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan is the defense of America. Putin's Russia, Iran-backed terrorists and Chinese communist autocrats are testing the boundaries of democracy and violating the sovereignty of our democratic allies in a way we haven't seen in generations.

An ardent supporter of the genocide in Gaza, Golden was one of 42 House Democrats who voted in favor of the "Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act." The bill called for sanctioning the International Criminal Court for issuing arrest warrants against war criminals Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant.

In the *New York Times* interview, after vouching for Golden's "populist" credentials, Ocasio-Cortez called for rejecting the political categories of "left" versus "right" so that "folks can lean into certain issues."

As an example, she pointed to immigration, calling it a political "third rail" and declared, "Sure, there are third rails like immigration that are not going to fly in every single district."

Indeed, in the "Fight Oligarchy" rallies, which have secured large turnouts of enraged opponents of Trump and the Democratic Party leadership, neither Sanders nor Ocasio-Cortez has made an issue of the mass deportation of migrants in violation of due process rights, and their disappearance to concentration camps in El Salvador, Guantanamo and for-profit prisons in the US. Nor have they demanded the release of pro-Palestinian international students abducted by federal police and disappeared to prisons.

Ocasio-Cortez previously gained popularity and credibility for calling to "abolish ICE," including weeping in front of a migrant detention facility. As she has continued her career in Washington, she has shed this call and any tears for immigrants. Instead, she slanders socialists who oppose the bipartisan war on immigrants as making "privileged" critiques of the Democratic Party.

Notably, the New York representative has refused to speak in defense of Momodou Taal, a Cornell University Ph.D. student, resident of her home state and outspoken opponent of the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza, who has been targeted by the Trump administration for deportation. Taal, in light of the fact that the Trump administration is violating court orders to facilitate its deportation operation, left New York and the United States on his own accord this week.

Instead of defending Taal, Ocasio-Cortez is promoting Golden, a self-described "progressive conservative," who campaigned on the fact that he "voted to fund 22,000 border patrol agents—the largest such workforce in history," and voted to "significantly increase funding for local law enforcement and border patrol, voting for more than \$78 billion in border security funding during his time in Congress."

Golden, like Pennsylvania Senator John Fetterman, is a pace-setter for the Democratic Party as it races to the right to accommodate Trump's fascist agenda. Prior to last year's election, Golden penned an op-ed headlined, "Donald Trump is Going to Win the Election and Democracy Will Be Just Fine."

He wrote:

Democrats' post-debate hand-wringing is based on the idea that a Trump victory is not just a political loss, but a unique

threat to our democracy. I reject the premise.

Downplaying Trump's January 6, 2021 coup and the fact that its main conspirators in the White House, Congress, Pentagon and Supreme Court remain free and in positions of power, Golden wrote:

Jan. 6, 2021 was a dark day. But Americans stood strong. Hundreds of police officers protected the democratic process against thousands who tried to use violence to upend it.

In his op-ed, Golden promised to work with a future Trump regime, writing:

In 2025, I believe Trump is going to be in the White House. Maine's representatives will need to work with him when it benefits Mainers, hold him accountable when it does not and work independently across the aisle no matter what.

Ocasio-Cortez's promotion of Golden is not a mistake or aberration. In 2021, Ocasio-Cortez provided Golden and other "centrist" Democrats thousands of dollars in donations that had been given to her by supporters. While some "moderate" Democrats rejected the donation, Golden accepted it, telling *Bangor Daily News* that he also received donations from Harlan Crow.

Crow, co-founder of the Club for Growth, is a billionaire and major Republican donor. He is also a major benefactor of arch-reactionary Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas and a Nazi artifact collector, who has said his greatest fear is "Marxism."

That Ocasio-Cortez named Golden as the future of the Democratic Party reveals the thoroughly pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist and anti-communist politics of not only these individuals, but of the Democratic Socialists of America.

The DSA and all those fake-left political groups that advance reforming the Democratic Party have nothing to do with socialism. They are, in fact, paving the way for a further lurch to the right of this party of the financial oligarchy and military-intelligence apparatus and working to block the emergence of an independent and socialist political movement of the working class, which is the sole basis for defeating fascism and defending democracy.



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