

An Open Letter to 'Socialists' Who Might be Fronting for the Democratic Party

First, a confession. When I learned of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's primary victory against incumbent dinosaur Joe Crowley, I was, as embarrassing as it is to admit, moved to tears. I'm the emotional type, take after my mom. I'm also a Xicanx, a life-long socialist, and was overwhelmed to see a young brown woman step up and raise the socialist banner. Now, however, as weeks have passed since her primary victory, as she has made the rounds of the talk show circuit, been feted by progressive circles, interviewed by corporate and "Left" media, and skilled for Democratic Party candidates, she has said enough (and sometimes more disturbingly not said enough) to make one wonder if she's making up this whole socialism thing as she goes along.

A further confession. I donated to her campaign. So I receive emails and will share her message, the same message she articulated at the recent Democratic Party love fest, NetRoots Nation. Ocasio-Cortez reassures us that she wants to bring back the Democratic Party of old. Okay, maybe not the Democratic Party of slavery, but you know what I mean, the *real* Democratic Party. The Democratic Party of the New Deal and FDR, of the Great Society, the War on Poverty and Lyndon B. Johnson (and Dr. King too because we all know how much the Democratic Party and LBJ loved Dr. King). Yeah, *that* Democratic Party. Ocasio-Cortez wants us to "come home." **Ocasio-Cortez is messaging the Blue version of "Make America Great Again."**

The progressive ideas and programs of the New Deal were not, as Ocasio-Cortez claims, bestowed upon the nation in 1940 by the Democratic Party and FDR; these ideas and programs were the sour medicine co-opted from the decades-long struggle of socialist, communist, and anarchist organizations and swallowed by FDR and the Democratic Party as a life-preserving measure to counter the threat of capitalism's demise.

The New Deal was, in FDR's own estimation, what saved the capitalist system— although one might argue WWII played just as crucial a role. Notwithstanding the positive gains of the New Deal, it was still in form and substance racist. It gave a pass to Jim Crow and lynchings, and ignored large sectors of Black, Mexican, Native, Puerto Rican, and women workers. In the 1930s, hundreds of thousands of Mexican adults and children (some estimate well over a million) were rounded up and ethnically cleansed from the U.S. For plenty of marginalized people, the New Deal was a shitty deal.

Even the 'best' of the Johnson Administration, the so-called War on Poverty, has received undeserved praise. As Harvard historian Elizabeth Hinton reveals in *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*, Johnson's War on Poverty laid down some of the important ground work for the eventual War on Crime and War on Drugs. The War on Poverty also served as a siphoning mechanism for the co-optation of potential young radicals and leaders of color (sound vaguely familiar?) into "anti-poverty" programs, the non-profit industrial complex, and the Democratic Party machine.

In the 90s, Democrat Bill Clinton would ultimately take the criminalization of poor people to even



greater heights, skyrocketing the prison population with Hillary's "super predators," disproportionately of course Black and Brown. Obama kept the ball and chain rolling, while offering Black men the sage advice to pull their pants up.

Dr. King got it right in 1967 when he called out the U.S. as the greatest purveyor of violence on the planet, when he made the inescapable connection between that violence over there and the violence over here— the common roots of killing, racism and poverty at home and abroad. Johnson could not have been more displeased with King. He hated King. As anyone who reads more than Democratic Party mythology knows, King was a pariah during his last year of life, ostracized by the Democratic Party machine, as well as by other liberal institutional appendages of the Democratic Party.

The problem, of course, is not this or that Democratic or Republican politician or administration. The problem is capitalism. One is self-delusional and disingenuous to view a party's very questionable 'greatest hits' separate from its otherwise pathetic body of work within a sick, parasitic system.

But somehow, self-avowed socialists would have us believe that the *actual* Democratic Party— the war and pillage party of the Indian killer Andrew Jackson, the party of slavery, of President Wilson and the resurgence of the KKK, of Jim Crow, of lynchings, of those who enabled the triumph of fascism in 1930s Spain, of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans in concentration camps, of the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of the post-WWII decimation of the Left in Italy and Greece, of the leveling of half of Korea and the deaths of millions, of the Bay of Pigs, of the horror of millions slaughtered in Vietnam, of the expansion of the prison-industrial complex, of the use of depleted uranium in the former Yugoslavia, of the devastation caused by NAFTA, of the half million dead Iraqi children due to sanctions, of the expansion of the police surveillance state, of the deportation of millions of migrants, of drone targeted assassinations, of regime change complete with mayhem and 21st century slavery in Libya, of the nod and wink to the coup in Honduras— the Democratic Party of all this and much, much more is somehow not supposed to be the *real* Democratic Party.

It's truly Orwellian. The *real* Democratic Party is supposed to be something akin to a grade school civics project and its *real* history might be found in a textbook on U.S. mythology titled something asinine like The Great Democratic Pageant.

When Sanders ran in the primary in California, I requested what's called a cross-over ballot to give him my vote. And I did this knowing what was likely to happen— that he would get the shaft from the Democratic Party, tell his supporters to vote for a war criminal, and sheepdog his followers over the cliff and into that murky space where, as others have written, movements go to die. **Obama did this by actually winning his election.**

But when Bernie lost, something else happened. Everyone didn't dutifully follow him over the cliff. Oh no, some people got downright pissed off. Some people woke up and had a *come-to-Jesus* moment. Some folks got a very clear vision of the real Democratic Party and got the hell out of there. Okay, so perhaps Ocasio-Cortez doesn't quite understand the relationship between capitalism and its corporate parties, and doesn't have a very good grasp of history or the meaning of socialism— but what does the braintrust of DSA leadership and the editors of sites like Jacobin with their considerable collective academic coursework and erudition in all things Left— well, what do they have to say about all this? Some, like Seth Ackerman of Jacobin, have written nebulously/theoretically of an organization that isn't quite a socialist party but that has some aspects of a party (DSA?), an organization that can run its own socialist candidates, as well as lend support to others who are at least very progressive.

Here's my message to shiny new socialists: Beware of the Democratic Party, as well as all of its institutions and fronts. **You will never take over the Democratic Party.** It will co-opt you first, or it will self destruct rather than become a party of the people. Its history and *raison d'être* are antithetical to our values. The Democratic Party might give you some reforms at home, but it will always, like the Republican Party, further its agenda of imperialist war and domination abroad. This is what late capitalism is all about. And whatever reforms the Democratic Party grants will always be precarious, always fair game for the chopping block. War, however, will be permanent.

If this truth is too much to handle, then put on your Blue hats and go forth— make America great *again*. But please stop calling yourselves socialists.

-Quetzal Cáceres
a Xicanx educator and socialist living in Yanga (Los Angeles), land of the indigenous Tongva People



SOLAR SUITES

Redway



- Massage / Body work
- Dance Studio
- Hypnotherapy
- Watershed Restoration
- Web Design
- Solar Supply
- Family Counseling

Suites for the Sweet
 1155 Redway Drive



Wood fired Pizza, Paninis
 Juices & Smoothies
 Fresh, Organic & Local
 (707) 923-2030
Call in orders
 3350 Redwood Drive Redway, Ca
COME GET LOST





**KEEP CALM
 AND LET THE
 PARALEGAL
 HANDLE IT**



Lamport Legal Documents

(707) 923-4372
 867 B Redwood Drive Garberville, CA 95542
 Humboldt County Legal Document Assistant Reg. #99-001

Wills- Living Wills- Power of Attorney-
 - Name Change- Contracts-
 -Social Security Applications- Partnerships-
 -Freedom of Information Act Requests-
 -Guardianship- Forms of all Kinds-
& Notary Service.