

After Democratic Party election debacle

Ocasio-Cortez defends Democrats, denounces “sectarianism” and “the narcissism of small differences”

Jacob Crosse

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Following the electoral victory of Trump last week, New York Representative and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez published a long video on her Instagram account dedicated to defending the Democratic Party and blaming the population for the outcome.

No doubt many of Ocasio-Cortez’s followers tuned in to hear not only how to fight against the growing fascist threat, but also for some explanation of the Democratic election debacle. They got nothing of the sort.

Instead, viewers were treated to a contradiction-ridden video in which Ocasio-Cortez urged viewers to reject “sectarianism,” i.e., a break with the Democratic Party, while at the same time blaming white people in general and white men more specifically for Trump’s return to the White House.

The New York lawmaker claimed that there are “a lot of different factors that have gone into this moment,” that is, the Democrats’ defeat. She continued: “I will get into some of them shortly ... it is an avalanche of different things...” Harris’ embrace of Wall Street and the Democrats’ responsibility for the genocide in Gaza were not among the “factors” listed by Ocasio-Cortez for the defeat of the Democrats and their collapse in working class support.

Then Ocasio-Cortez got to her central message: “What is going to be most important in this time is rejecting sectarianism and understanding that we have to be united as a people.”

Emphasizing the necessity of “rejecting sectarianism,” Ocasio-Cortez continued, “We have to be able to construct a culture that is productive, that is focused on growing, that is not sectarianism, and does not tear one another apart over the narcissism of small differences...”

By “sectarianism,” Ocasio-Cortez means a break with the Democratic Party, which is politically responsible for the

victory of Trump. As a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence agencies, the Democrats were incapable of and opposed to making any appeal to the social interests of the vast majority of the population, allowing Trump to capitalize on enormous social anger.

Ocasio-Cortez played a central role. Since emerging on the national scene in 2018, she has worked to trap social opposition, contain it within the Democratic Party, and block the development of an independent movement against capitalism and imperialist war.

That year, she was picked up by the Democratic Party to promote its campaign in the 2018 midterm elections. Following the election of Biden in 2020, which she supported, Ocasio-Cortez was increasingly elevated into the leadership of the Democratic Party to attack anyone criticizing the Democratic Party from the left.

In 2021, she denounced socialist critics of Biden as acting in “bad faith” and being “privileged,” while praising the DSA for rejecting “class essentialism,” that is, for promoting the politics of racial and gender identity. In 2022, Ocasio-Cortez joined Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders in voting to fund the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

During the 2024 election campaign, Ocasio-Cortez took on the role of chief defender of Biden amidst the escalating genocide in Gaza, declaring Biden a “man of tremendous empathy” as Israel slaughtered Palestinian civilians with weapons supplied by the Biden-Harris administration. She insisted that “we have to be adults about the situation,” in denouncing those opposed to supporting Biden in the elections. Indeed, Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders were among the last defenders of Biden, as calls mounted for him to drop out, and both then switched to all-out campaigning for Harris.

Following the Democratic Party debacle, Ocasio-Cortez now scolds workers and young people not to let the

“narcissism of small differences” lead them to conclude that they must break with the Democrats and build a genuine socialist movement.

Responding to Ocasio-Cortez’s statement this past Sunday at “The Election Debacle and the Fight Against Dictatorship” online event, Socialist Equality Party (US) National Committee member Eric London replied to Ocasio-Cortez:

The genocide in Gaza is not a small difference. The illegalizing of strikes is not a small difference. The escalation of a war against Russia, a war that you voted for, to give tens of billions of dollars, take them away from working people who need them, on a war that risks nuclear catastrophe. That is not a small difference.

At the same time that Ocasio-Cortez is urging workers and youth not to break with the Democrats, the Democrats are welcoming the fascist Trump back to Washington. On Wednesday, Biden brought Trump to the White House to take pictures and shake hands by the fire. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a close ally of Ocasio-Cortez, has said that it is necessary to ensure the “success” of the new administration and find “common ground” with the fascists.

Pelosi, translated into Ocasio-Cortez’s language, is saying that one should not let the “narcissism of small differences,” such as Trump’s efforts to establish a fascist dictatorship, get in the way of fruitful collaboration. After all, it is necessary to be “united as a people.”

While Ocasio-Cortez was silent on the Democrats’ embrace of Trump, she praised Harris for taking on “an assignment that no other person in American history was given.” She said nothing about Harris parading around the country with far-right warhawk Liz Cheney, or Harris’ embrace of Trump’s anti-immigrant policies and pledge to continue building the US-Mexico border wall.

After denouncing “sectarianism,” Ocasio-Cortez proceeded to blame the population for Trump’s victory, citing “misogyny” as one of the “factors” in Harris’ and the Democratic Party’s electoral wipe-out. She claimed that “this race may not have been decided by any one individual factor, but misogyny is very, very real in this country.”

She continued, saying “it is not partisan ... it transcends politics. And that’s a hard pill for a lot of people to swallow, that misogyny can exist in left spaces, in right spaces, in center spaces,” and that “[i]f Kamala Harris was Tom Harris, we may have a different result today...”

After blaming men for Harris’ loss, Ocasio-Cortez singled out the “white electorate,” stating, “We should be very clear

that people of color voted for Kamala Harris in majorities.”

In reality, the Democrats’ right-wing and militarist program led to a sharp decline in support among workers of all races and ethnicities. After voting for Obama by a 90-10 margin in 2008, an 80 percent margin, black men supported Harris by only a 56 percent margin. After the Republicans garnered a mere 30 percent margin among Latino men from 2008 to 2016, Trump won Latino men by 12 percent.

A similar collapse occurred among young people. Between 2008-2016, the margin of victory for Democrats was 40 percent among those aged 18-29. In 2024, this figure was only 11 percent.

Ignoring this reality, Ocasio-Cortez said, “... it’s really interesting to me, because when it’s time to govern, those communities get so centered and their concerns get so centered, and it’s like nothing we do sometimes can win these electorates over.” In other words, despite everything the Democratic Party and Ocasio-Cortez have allegedly done for the “white electorate,” they, and it should be said, a majority of the eligible voting population, did not vote for Harris.

After blaming everyone but herself, the candidates, and the party for their electoral defeat, Ocasio-Cortez claimed, with a straight face, that she “wanted to be fighting the corporate establishment of the Democratic Party.”

That is, after spending the better part of the last year campaigning for Biden and Harris, the embodiment of the “corporate establishment” of the Democratic Party, Ocasio-Cortez claims she is opposed to it.

In expressing concern over the “narcissism of small differences,” Ocasio-Cortez is hoping she can prevent workers and young people from drawing conclusions not only about her own role as a defender of the Democratic Party, but a whole type of politics that works to smother social opposition and facilitate the ever further shift to the right of the entire political establishment.

The development of a genuine opposition to fascism and Trump, and the fight against the genocide in Gaza and imperialist war, requires a ruthless exposure of Ocasio-Cortez, the DSA and all those tendencies that work to block the political independence of the working class and the building of a genuine socialist movement.



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