

RADICAL SOCIALISM OR CLEAR-EYED REALISM?

[Check the byline – this is Rayne.]

A new commenter wrote that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez' "rhetoric is pretty radical." Ocasio's the recent Democratic Party primary winner for House seat NY-14, unseating long-time incumbent Joe Crowley in the Bronx-Queens district.

But is Ocasio really radical? Is her Democratic Socialist platform all that far left? Looking at Ted Kennedy's concession speech from 1980 and the points around which he'd wish to rally Democratic voters 38 years ago, probably not given the changes to our society and economy. Unlike 1980, before Ronald Reagan broke down PATCO – the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Union which went on strike in 1981 – we no longer have a thriving middle class based on employment with adequate job security and living wages. We have instead handfuls of billionaires who have amassed their record-breaking fortunes rapidly on the backs of half the country which can't scrape together \$400 cash for an emergency, whose real wages haven't budged since the 1980s.

Two points that seem to be of particular concern to our new commenter in Ocasio-Cortez' platform are the Universal Jobs Guarantee and Housing as a Human Right.

Is a Universal Jobs Guarantee more or less radical than Universal Basic Income? How are we going to deal with an economy in which tens of millions of jobs have been completely displaced by automation – like autonomous transportation, expected over time to replace millions of truck, hired cars, train drivers and ships' pilots?

You might want to catch up, then. Save the "But capitalism!" and "But taxes!" rebuttal because

- 1) we live in a mixed economy already;
- 2) the socialist portions have been cut too

far back and proven capitalism to be grossly inefficient in wealth distribution; and
3) leaders, particularly Democratic ones, already grasp the problem.

Housing as a Human Right is already embedded in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the U.S. voted in 1948. Yet in the U.S. there is no place a full-time minimum wage worker can afford basic housing (as if there are full-time minimum wage jobs since nearly all are structured as part-time to avoid unemployment tax). How can we expect to deal with this on a long-term basis when the Federal Reserve and other entities continue the decades-long suppression of wages?

Again, leaders (particularly Democratic/liberal ones) have already recognized this problem and encourage solutions. It may be far more radical to stick one's head in the sand and ignore the mounting housing crisis.

Perhaps the real problem isn't that a platform like the one Ocasio-Cortez has built her campaign upon is labeled Democratic Socialist.

Perhaps the real problem is the decades-long right-wing propaganda which denigrates reasonable, achievable political solutions to real problems average Americans face as radical and socialism as something we haven't already accepted and relied upon within our existing social safety nets like Social Security and Medicare.

Perhaps the real problem is the same absolutist propaganda which has uniformly characterized any and all Democrats, even moderates, as "hippies", "liberal bigots" and worse rather than see them as fellow Americans who believe in the Constitution and also believe the U.S. can do more for the common man through reasonable and distributive economic justice.

Is it really all that radical to want to form a more perfect union by establishing economic and social justice, insure domestic tranquility by ensuring every American has food and shelter,

provide for the country's common defense by promoting American's general welfare?

Treat this as an open thread.