

More media advocacy for Ocasio-Cortez, and the Progressive view on freedom and free speech

by Robert Harris



In the Yahoo Sports article '[Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responds to Fresno Grizzlies video, laments her “flood of death threats”](#)', May 29, 2019. However, Baer's article does not contain any claims that the Fresno Grizzlies video directly caused any death threats. Rather, it echoes Ocasio-Cortez's claims that such videos cause death threats, which conforms with the second quoted paragraph in Cassandra Negley's article, which may indicate an intention to sensationalise in the article's opening paragraphs.

The bias in Negley's article extends to inserting opinion within a news story, where a description of the video is claimed to be 'misleading', an assertion made without further

clarification. Whilst the use of Ocasio-Cortez's image is indeed contentious, it would appear that two inferences can be observed from the video's juxtaposition between that of two socialist dictators, Kim Jong Un and Fidel Castro, during a Ronald Reagan speech in which he mentions "enemies of freedom": (a) Ocasio-Cortez is deemed to be comparable in terms of her ambition to bring about conditions that would be at least somewhat akin to that of a undemocratic Socialist nation, and/or (b) that Ocasio-Cortez supports such leaders.

Perhaps the most notable association between Ocasio-Cortez's conduct, and the inferences within the video, would be her continued silence and [supported speech of a similar nature](#) against political opponents, which evoked violent imagery. Such one-sided restrictions are starkly redolent of the outlook of political dictatorships.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental right, whether offensive or benign, in the US Constitution. However, Ocasio-Cortez appears to see little substantive difference between the argument that the US should continue with its foundational (classical-liberal) principle that all speech should be protected, which must necessarily include opinions deemed to be objectionable, and those that seek to exploit this very principle and to make the murder of political opponents somehow legal.

Such a stance goes to the heart of America's resurgent progressive politics, which has been deeply influenced by the Marxist discipline of Critical Theory. Many of the luminaries of Critical Theory not only undervalued free speech (and free political assembly), they saw such entitlements as a destructive force that ought to be repressed. Herbert Marcuse, one of the 20th Century's most influential Critical Theorists,