

I find Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, newly elected to Congress, bright, daring to think the big picture, and with certainties that characterize the young. Demonizing her, as so many on the Right do, makes more of her significance than the reality. Her Green New Deal is not a program; rather, it is a grand roadmap which we must try to reach in the next 20 years. This is no pie in the sky either; our country, and many others in the world, are already heading in the direction of a fossil-energy-free future. She and her enthusiastic followers have not put a price tag on it because there is no set plan yet, but the Petroleum lobbyists are spinning numbers out of thin air to convince us not to even try.

Where I quarrel with Ms. Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) is her dismissal of "moderation" as a "meh" (shrug of indifference). Of course the young (me, long ago) are impatient and have no taste for compromise, the better end product of the democratic process. I want to make a case to her, and all the impatient radicals of the left and the right: the middle is not a wobbly shrug. It is the product of critical thinking, combining the best that both parties have to offer.

Electoral College. Democrats are tired of having a handful of low-population states control so much of presidential elections. Republicans are happy to leave it alone, since what they lack in numbers can be made up in kingmaking. What to do?

The radical position would be to get rid of it, which would take a Constitutional amendment, a slow process. The Centrist position is already happening among a growing number of states, a solution that can simply be passed by each state. The Electoral College recognizes the power of the individual states. The winner of the election would have won the majority votes of each state. But unlike the present system, all votes would be counted, so that in a state like Florida (51% to 49%), the votes of the 51% would be added to each other state's numbers, but the minority votes would add up too, and together, they could comprise a popular vote. Today, the minority, no matter how large, is eliminated in the Electoral count.

Reparations. It is obvious that the descendants of former slaves, although today legally equal, are not enjoying the benefits of the majority. They have been penalized by red-line real estate practices from buying housing in neighborhoods with good schools and good amenities. Without access to good houses, they do not have the personal wealth that White Americans have had since the G.I. Bills after World War II. We also need to address funding schools equally, not by real estate values..

Our society has changed for the better in many cases today. Those Black citizens who have somehow managed to get university education are now succeeding in every aspect of American society: doctors, lawyers, congressmen and women, TV announcers, military officers, astronauts, and even one astrophysicist.

However, for those left behind in inner-cities that are short on jobs, education, and middle-class expectations, help is needed. There is no need for "reparations for all people who are black." Block grants should be made available for establishing boarding schools that can help Black youngsters catch up with not only the content but the behaviors that produce success. Impoverished households run by women who are barely surviving in low-paying jobs cannot rear children who can succeed. Middle class parenting produces this, and in its absence, boarding schools can bridge the gap.

Supreme Court Reform. Life expectancy in 1789 was 50. Today, we have justices in their 80s. Reduce the term to 20 years, staggered, so that every president can nominate one Justice per term. We would have a much better court then, with more swing votes possible.

Next week: Foreign Policy, College for All, Voting, Election Reforms, Universal Medical Care, Growing Inequality.

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