



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 20, 2019

Ocasio-Cortez Unapologetic About Comparing Border Detention Centers to Nazi Concentration Camps

“I will never apologize for calling these camps what they are. If that makes you uncomfortable, fight the camps — not the nomenclature,” Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) said Wednesday after receiving a barrage of criticism over her comparison of border detention centers to Nazi concentration camps. She dismissed those who did not like her remarks as “shrieking.”



Criticism of the avowed democratic socialist Ocasio-Cortez is to be expected from Republicans, but she has also encountered negative reaction from some fellow Democrats, including New York City’s Mayor Bill de Blasio, a very left-wing Democrat himself, who said, “I feel very close to her in terms of philosophy.”

Soon after the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (Nazi for short) came to power in 1933, they established their first concentration camp at Dachau as a place for what Heinrich Himmler, then Munich’s chief of police, described as a place to put “political prisoners.” Several more were established during the National Socialist dictatorship of Adolf Hitler.

“Of course she was wrong,” de Blasio told MSNBC on Wednesday afternoon. “You cannot compare. What the Nazis did in the concentration camps unfortunately is without any historical [parallel]. It’s a horrible moment. There’s now way to compare it.” Actually, similar prisons for thousands of political prisoners had been created during the days of the Soviet Union, in Cuba, and in other Communist countries such as China.

Some have attempted to defend Ocasio-Cortez’s intemperate remarks, noting that concentration camps and extermination camps were two different places during World War II. It is estimated that more than three and a half million Germans were interned in thousands of concentration camps as political prisoners. While not technically “extermination camps” where an estimated six million Jews and millions of others were murdered in the notorious Holocaust, it is not true that there were no executions in the concentration camps — about 77,000 Germans were put to death in the camps.

In the concentration camps, ordinary people were often starved to death, tortured, and killed. For example, the Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller was interned in a concentration camp before finally being executed in April 1945.

The Nazi regime referred to these unfortunates as “undesirables,” which is similar to what Hillary Clinton has called supporters of President Donald Trump — “deplorables” — yet no one has suggested that Clinton would like to see these “deplorables” placed in concentration camps.

“This administration has established concentration camps on the southern border of the United States for immigrants, where they are being brutalized with dehumanizing conditions and dying,” Ocasio-Cortez said on social media. While it is not uncommon on the Left and the Right for some to make



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hyperbolic statements, comparing political opponents to Hitler, Ocasio-Cortez insisted, “This is not hyperbole. It is the conclusion of expert analysis.”

She referenced an article in the leftist *Esquire* magazine that quoted an historian at the University of Virginia, Waitman Wade Beorn, who said, “Things can be concentration camps without being Dachau or Auschwitz.”

Such extremist rhetoric is unbecoming from a professional historian, and it should be for a member of Congress, and Ocasio-Cortez’s comments elicited reaction from several individuals, in an out of government. Representative Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), who chairs the House Republican Conference, retorted, “Please @AOC do us all a favor and spend just a few minutes learning some actual history. Six million Jews were exterminated in the Holocaust. You demean their memory and disgrace your self with comments like this.”

Similarly, Representative Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.) said that Ocasio-Cortez should “stop trying to draw these crayon parallels between POTUS & Hitler.” Zeldin is Jewish.

The non-partisan Jewish Communities Relations Council also took offense at the incendiary remarks, saying, “The regrettable use of Holocaust terminology to describe these contemporary concerns diminishes the evil intent of the Nazis to eradicate the Jewish people.”

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) agreed. “There is no comparison ... and to actually say that is embarrassing. To take somewhere in history where millions of Jews died ... and equate that to something happening on the border ... she owes this nation an apology.”

The comparison of Hitler’s concentration camps to detention centers for persons entering the United States illegally is ludicrous. It would be like saying that a person arrested for armed robbery and placed in a jail cell, awaiting adjudication of their case, was being held in a concentration camp. Detainees on the border are not being starved to death, or being tortured. They certainly are not facing possible execution. Instead, they are receiving food and shelter, and medical care.

It is highly unlikely that any Jew or Gypsy, for example, was sent to a concentration camp for entering Germany illegally, and it can be safely assumed that virtually every person so interned was previously living in their own homes in countries such as Poland or Germany where their families had resided for centuries. A Jewish person would have been insane to sneak into Germany in the 1930s.

In sharp contrast, the people detained on the border are there because they want to enter the United States, which cannot be fairly compared to National Socialist Germany of the 1930s and 1940s. Ocasio-Cortez’s charge, “This administration has established concentration camps on the southern border of the United States for immigrants, where they are being brutalized with dehumanizing conditions,” is not hyperbole — it is libelous.

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