

Congressman Jamaal Bowman, DSA member, facing AIPAC-backed George Latimer in primary election on June 25

Fred Mazelis
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In one of this year's most expensive and heavily publicized US primary contests to choose candidates for the November elections, Westchester County Executive George Latimer is attempting to unseat two-term Congressman and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Jamaal Bowman in the June 25 election. Early voting has begun in New York's 16th Congressional District, which includes Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Yonkers and a small portion of the Bronx.

The district is considered a safe Democratic seat, meaning that the victor in next week's vote is almost certain to take office next January.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the right-wing Zionist lobby that supports the fascist Netanyahu regime in Israel, has already spent over \$12 million to defeat Bowman. Through its affiliated political action committee, the United Democracy Project, which allows it to raise unlimited amounts from individuals and corporations, it plans to spend up to \$100 million this year in this and other election races.

Unlimited spending by the ruling elite is usually decisive, especially in elections in which a majority—the poor, the working class, the angry, disaffected and alienated—don't vote. Indeed, polls in the Latimer-Bowman contest in the wake of heavy television and social media spending by AIPAC and others show the challenger with a 48-to-31 percent lead over Bowman, with the balance undecided.

AIPAC knows that both the Democrats and the Republicans support Israel and its genocide in Gaza. However, it is targeting those Democrats who have expressed criticism of Israel's actions, while fully

backing the Biden administration. Special attention is being focused on the "Squad," the five DSA members and supporters in Congress.

Even though the DSA has made clear its support for Israel—Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez recently hosted two Zionist lobbyists on her Congressional X site for a friendly discussion on their version of the threat of antisemitism—AIPAC and the billionaires and other ruling class layers it speaks for consider the Democratic "lefts" insufficiently loyal.

The New York contest is not the only one in which AIPAC is intervening aggressively. It was unable to defeat Congresswoman Summer Lee in Pittsburgh earlier this year, but it has targeted Cori Bush in Missouri and Ilhan Omar in Minneapolis, who both face August primary contests.

Support for the Gaza genocide is an overriding issue for the Zionist lobby, but it is undoubtedly getting huge sums for its campaign from billionaires who also want to ensure that they continue to pay little or nothing in taxes. The same elements want to unleash the police against protesters and against the working class as a whole. AIPAC is backed by major Republican funders like Bernard Marcus, the founder of Home Depot.

Latimer is being touted as a supposed "centrist" or even a "progressive" Democrat, a politician whose record on major Democratic Party issues is unchallengeable. The so-called progressive Latimer has, however, labeled the DSA "extremist," a description along the lines of Trump's regular fascist attacks on Biden and the Democrats as "Marxists" and "communists."

The White House has remained silent on the primary contest, but the Democratic establishment's support for

Latimer was signaled by the announcement that Hillary Clinton, former First Lady, presidential candidate and Secretary of State, was backing his campaign.

Bowman, a former middle-school principal from the Bronx, has been endorsed by Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. He also has support from a number of elected officials, including House Majority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who succeeded Nancy Pelosi last year. The support of Jeffries and others, however, is reported to be pro forma for sitting incumbents.

Bowman has been on the defensive on the issue of antisemitism. Like the DSA as a whole, he has concentrated on denying the charges of antisemitism, rather than showing that it is his Zionist opponents who are among the main allies of antisemites around the world, and are also responsible for stoking antisemitism because of their decades-long campaign to equate Judaism with the crimes of Israel.

Bowman finally raised the issue of genocide in recent months, after the Netanyahu regime had been charged with war crimes in the International Criminal Court, and after human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International had adopted that term. Recently, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories released a report declaring, “there are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the crime of genocide ... has been met.”

Bowman’s own criticisms of Israel are thoroughly insincere and hypocritical. A few years ago he voted for US funding of the Iron Dome, the air defense system employed by Israel. So great was the outcry against this within the DSA that Bowman stopped paying dues to the organization, and it was reported that he had let his membership lapse or that he had left the DSA. Now, however, a few weeks before the primary vote, the *New York Times* reports that Bowman and the DSA had declared that it had all been a misunderstanding—that Bowman had never really left, and that he could and did make up his lapsed payments. The DSA is going all out to reelect the Congressman.

Moreover, Bowman, like the rest of the DSA and the entire Democratic Party, fully supports the US-NATO war against Russia over Ukraine. He has repeatedly voted to finance the escalation of the proxy war, which threatens to develop into a nuclear conflict.

It is perhaps not surprising that the issue of race has

been injected into the Bowman-Latimer campaign. Rather than focusing on the fundamental issues, including the role of Zionism and the drive towards world war being led by Biden, Bowman has emphasized the alleged racism of his opponent’s supporters. Latimer has been even more crude, claiming that Bowman “[doesn’t] mention people who are not Black and brown.” Openly appealing to Islamophobia, Latimer claimed in a recent debate that Bowman’s true “constituency is Dearborn, Michigan,” referring to that city’s large Arab-American population.

Perhaps the most significant reply by Bowman to the attempt to unseat him is the full-page advertisements in some local newspapers just before the beginning of early voting. The ads do not mention Gaza or the US-NATO war against Russia over Ukraine. They make no mention of the danger of a third world war, or the growing threat of fascism.

The main headline instead declares, “My Agenda is Biden’s Agenda.” Thus, the DSA and its member-Congressman solidarize themselves with the White House, which is responsible for the proxy war in Europe and the massacres, starvation and unspeakable suffering in the Middle East. Of course, the fact that Bowman is endorsing Biden is not news, but the conscious decision to headline it is his way of spelling out his loyalty to US imperialism.

The right-wing Zionist attack on Bowman has only served to further expose the role of his DSA backers. They are a faction of the Democratic Party, and their main job is to block the path to the political independence of the working class, to keep the Democrats and the capitalist two-party system alive. They stand with this party of imperialism against the Palestinian people and against the international working class as a whole.



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