Bernie Sanders stumps for Jamaal Bowman, defends Israel at sparsely attended Bronx rally with Ocasio-Cortez

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This past Saturday at a sparsely attended Bronx rally for Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member and US Representative Jamaal Bowman, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders declared that the Zionist government of Israel "has a right to defend itself" against "terrorist attack."

Sanders' defense of Israel is not a surprise; in addition to endorsing and campaigning for "Genocide Joe" Biden, Sanders himself has been pro-Zionist his entire political career. Since the outset of the US-backed Israeli extermination campaign in Gaza, he has refused to characterize it as a genocide, even as the death toll officially surpasses 38,000 with another 10,000 missing or buried under the rubble.

Drawing boos from a few dozen of the fewer than 300 people who were allowed near the stage at St. Mary's Park in the Bronx, Sanders declared that while "Bowman understands what is going on in Gaza is totally unacceptable, Israel has the right to defend itself against the terrorist attack."

The Vermont senator's defense of Israel drew a much louder response, which came from several hundred counter-protesters located hundreds of feet away behind security barriers. The counter-protesters were predominately with the group "Within Our Lifetime" (WOL), an anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian organization based in New York City.

Throughout the rally, WOL protesters denounced the "progressives" for endorsing Biden, as well as the previous support by Sanders, Bowman and Ocasio-Cortez for Israeli military funding. WOL protesters chanted, "Sanders, you can't hide; we charge you with genocide!" and "AOC, your hands are red!"

After the rally concluded WOL protesters surrounded buses for the Bowman campaign and blocked them from leaving for several minutes. Some protesters marked up the buses with pro-Palestinian slogans, while virtually all of them chanted their opposition to "Genocide Joe."

Reflecting the complete collapse in support among broad layers of the population for the phony "progressivism" and fake "socialism" offered by Sanders, AOC and their "left" sidekick, the DSA, there were nearly as many if not more counter-protesters at the rally as there were supporters for Sanders, Bowman and Ocasio-Cortez.

The complete lack of working class support for Sanders is all the more notable given that not only was this a rally for Bowman, who is currently trailing in his primary race against his Hillary Clinton-backed challenger, George Latimer, but it was for Ocasio-Cortez as well.

In October 2019, Ocasio-Cortez appeared at a rally in New York City with Sanders that drew some 20,000 people. Now, less than five years later, the pair can summon only a small fraction of that on a warm summer Saturday.

In an embarrassing attempt to hype up the small crowd, Ocasio-Cortez came bouncing out on the stage to the music of Cardi B and asked the crowd if they were "ready to take this borough back? Are you ready to win this country back? Are you ready to fight for peace on Earth and a ceasefire in Gaza?"

While the words "capitalism," "genocide," "working

class," or "socialism" never passed her lips, Ocasio-Cortez declared that "Brother Jamaal Bowman" was "under attack" from the forces of "racism, greed" and "corruption."

Ocasio-Cortez ended her comments by pointing out, "what's happening out there is connected to why our schools aren't funded here. We know that the absolute leveling of Gaza is being paid for with the funds that are being kept from our healthcare, our schools."

These words are completely empty, given her support for Biden, and the rest of the Democratic Party's unstinting support for spending billions in the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, which threatens all of humanity with nuclear annihilation.

In his brief comments, Bowman swore at the audience in a phony display of his supposed ability to relate to a working class audience. He, like his upper middle class supporters, views workers with hostility, as backward and primitive.

"We have been organizing for criminal justice reform and to get f****ng big money out of politics," Bowman bellowed.

"I am the hip hop congressman," he later declared. "We are going to show f***ing AIPAC the power of the mother f***ing south Bronx. ... We're going to show them who the f**k we are."

In between his condescending vulgarity, the former middle school principal called for a "movement" to "come together as a people, across race, across class, across background, across religion." Bowman's call for the unity of all classes is a demand that the working class subordinate itself to electoral politics, in the political graveyard known as the Democratic Party.

The truth is masses of people already came together to support Sanders, Bowman, Ocasio-Cortez and other members of "left" members of the Democratic Party, falsely believing that they represented an insurgent force that would "push" the Democrats to fight for more egalitarian and pro-worker policies.

However the elevation and election of DSA members in recent elections has not "pushed" the Democratic Party

to the left. Instead, Ocasio-Cortez and others have provided a "left" cover for the Democrats' warmongering agenda in alliance with the increasingly fascistic Republican Party, while denouncing left-wing critiques of the Democrats as "privileged" and even "antisemitic."

Masses of workers and youth are looking beyond these pseudo-left frauds and seeking an actual socialist alternative to the capitalist parties and politicians that have nothing to offer humanity but war, fascism and death. That is offered by the Socialist Equality Party, which is standing Joseph Kishore and Jerry White in the US presidential elections.

The critical task now is not voting for Democrats but building the independent, socialist, anti-war movement in the working class that will end the genocide in Gaza, the war in Ukraine, and the source of war and inequality—the capitalist system.

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