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Debate exposes two enemies of the people

WW COMMENTARY

By John Catalinotto

If there were any doubts left, the June 27 debate between #45 and #46 showed that neither big capitalist party, Democrat or Republican, has anything positive to offer the working class within the United States, least of all anyone facing special oppression or discrimination. And the two candidates are both poisonous for the Global South.

The debate's outcome has thrown the Democratic Party into a quandary as Joe Biden's shaky performance has unleashed a discussion about replacing him as the Democratic candidate. It has also shone a spotlight on a political crisis at the apex of imperialism.

These are the two top competitors for the job of president of the United States, the chief executive officer of world imperialism. The president, whichever party they belong to, serves the imperialist



Atlanta protest outside the presidential candidates' debate, June 27, 2024.

ruling class. They only pretend to serve the rest of the U.S. population. Neither before nor after the debate was there any

reason that workers in the U.S. should rally behind either candidate. They are both enemies of the working class. That the debate showed neither candidate to be even minimally competent is a sign of the utter decadence of the capitalist system.

Biden's value to the Democratic Party establishment is that he seemed capable of defeating Trump without arousing a mass struggle that might challenge the imperialist war drive or awaken a general working-class struggle for rights and benefits. In the debate, however, he was incapable of filling his allotted speaking time with coherent sentences.

Donald Trump, while he filled the time the debate rules allowed, answered none of the questions asked him. He simply attacked, insulted and vilified immigrants at every opportunity and declared life in the U.S. terrible since he left office. He said nothing even resembling the truth, lying every time he opened his mouth. His program could be summed up in his snarl.

One of CNN's rules of the debate was that the moderators would do no fact-checking. Both candidates and

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Shut down Elbit! No military tech for Israel!

By Will Hodgkinson
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Over 100 activists, including members of Workers World Party Boston, gathered on June 29 at Harvard Square to shut down Elbit Systems. Organized by the Palestinian Youth Movement and BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement) Boston, Saturday's action expands the campaign targeting the Israeli-owned arms maker, which continues to supply the weapons and surveillance tech Zionist occupation forces are using in their ongoing genocide of Palestine.

Since these actions began, Elbit stock

has fallen by over 30%. JPMorgan Chase, a major shareholder, has reduced its investment by 70%, from \$54 million to \$16 million. Asset management giant Scotiabank, another major investor, has halved its stake. (tinyurl.com/466jc3k3)

As speakers at Saturday's action stressed, not only does Elbit provide almost 90% of the Zionist army's ordnance, the company also supplies the surveillance towers used by the U.S. settler state to terrorize migrants at the Mexico border. Elbit continues to arm other U.S. client regimes, including the Philippines.

At the rally an organizer called for further direct action in the U.S. imperial core: "We

are here, because we absolutely have to be, because this genocide is being carried out with our dollars, in our name, by entities, by companies that we do not have to let keep operating, that we can close down."

As the speaker emphasized, this campaign is no humanitarian "rescue mission," but rather praxis in support of the Palestinian resistance, which has galvanized the global struggle against imperialism and settler colonialism. He said: "We are not here to free Palestine. The Palestinian people are freeing themselves, and more than that, the Palestinian people are freeing all of us. ... They are making revolution irresistible!"

Another organizer gave an update on the ongoing genocide in Gaza, where Zionist forces have killed over 40,000 Palestinians and decimated the health care infrastructure: "To manufacture an environment of death and starvation and then subsequently and deliberately deny health care to a population with the intention of ethnically cleansing this population is the textbook definition of genocide. ... Stay informed, stay motivated, stay steadfast and free Palestine!"

From Harvard Square, protesters marched through Cambridge's gentrified suburbs to the home of Peter Palandjian, the billionaire CEO of Intercontinental



Demonstrators march against Elbit Systems, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 29, 2024. WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

Real Estate Corporation — the landlord for KMC Systems, Elbit's Cambridge subsidiary. Taking over the street in front of Palandjian's mansion, the demonstrators condemned his complicity in the Zionist genocide and demanded he evict Elbit from Intercontinental's property.

Organizers led the crowd in chants, including "From Gaza to the Rio Grande, No Elbit Towers on Stolen Land!" "Peter, Peter you can't hide! We charge you with genocide!" and "Elbit, Elbit your hands are red! 40,000 people dead!"

Addressing the Cambridge cops who guarded Palandjian's front gate and his irate neighbors who had come outside to gawk at the commotion, the activists promised to return and continue to shame Palandjian for taking Elbit's blood money.

The march ended back at Harvard Square, where organizers pledged more actions to shut down Elbit in solidarity with the movements for Palestinian liberation worldwide. □



Nearly every sign and chant in the Queer Liberation March, held in New York City on June 30, was in support of Palestine and against Israel's genocide in Gaza.

The march, organized by Reclaim Pride Coalition NYC since 2019 to reclaim the spirit of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion, is held at the same time as the New York City Pride March. It rejects corporate sponsorship and police involvement and advocates for justice and an end to systemic oppression.

Workers World Party and the Bronx Anti-War Coalition had a militant contingent, chanting "Stonewall was an intifada!" and "Resistance is justified when people are occupied!" WWP had a large foam board sign proclaiming: "No Pinkwashing of Genocide! Victory to Palestine! Shut Down Anti-Trans Legislation! Hands Off LGBTQIA2S+ Communities! Stonewall Means Fightback!" Many people stopped to take photos of it.

— Photo and report by Brenda Ryan

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Debate exposes two enemies of the people

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both their parties accepted this rule. Yet despite a solid week of preparation with his team, Biden barely challenged Trump's lies. It was excruciating to hear Trump slander migrants and get away with it.

Trump was never called the racist xenophobe he is, and if he was called a liar, it was not often enough.

Both candidates are militarists

It was telling, however, that for one issue Biden forcefully defended his foreign policy against Trump's. That exception concerned NATO and the proxy war in Ukraine against Russia, which Biden backed 100%.

It was the only time in the debate that Biden seemed present, living in the moment. He defended the U.S. and the European powers' role in prolonging the war. He attacked Vladimir Putin and Russia.

Biden skewered Trump for breaking with the European NATO powers and defended the hundreds of billions of dollars the U.S. — and the rest of NATO — has already spent in its aggressive war against Russia.

In other words, the one arena where Biden got energized and coherent was defending militarism. He pointed out that NATO countries were spending more for weapons. He even boasted that U.S. funds were not donated to Ukraine, but handed to U.S. arms manufacturers, spurring U.S. business and providing jobs.

Trump claimed credit for bullying the European NATO powers into spending more on war. And he bragged that the Pentagon generals loved him. He knows that U.S.

intervention in the Ukraine war is unpopular among voters. That's why he claimed, with no explanation, that under his administration there would have been no war in Ukraine.

Neither U.S.-dominated NATO nor a Pentagon superpower serves the interest of the working class — in the U.S. or worldwide. The Biden administration's policies regarding NATO and Ukraine are based on strategies for maintaining U.S. hegemony globally. This means keeping the imperialist banks, trading currency, transportation and telecommunications under U.S. leadership — and profitable.

While Trump appeared more isolationist regarding Europe and Russia, there is no reason to believe his policies will be less aggressive. His goal is the same: U.S. domination.

Trump's belligerence is more obvious regarding China, where he threatens 60% tariffs on imports, even though that would create a spike in inflation in the U.S. Remember, though, that the Biden administration has sought a military alliance with Australia, the Philippines, South Korea and Japan directed at China, something like a Pacific version of NATO.

Trump outdoes 'Genocide Joe'

Concerning Palestine, Trump even outdid Biden's rhetoric, attacking Biden for withholding the 2,000-pound superbombs from Israel. Trump chided Biden for hesitating to annihilate Hamas, while labeling Biden as being "Palestinian," which Trump meant as a racist slur.

Fact check: There has been no break in the strategic alliance of the Israeli settler state with U.S. imperialism, whatever differences have

appeared in rhetoric and diplomacy between Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

There is a good reason that the movement to end the slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza calls the president "Genocide Joe," even if Trump calls him weak. Biden's administration has continued to arm Israel despite the Israeli war crimes in the Gaza Strip.

There is no reason to believe a Trump presidency would alter Washington's alliance with the Israeli state. Both candidates and their parties can be expected to pursue the aggressive stance of U.S. imperialism in West Asia and worldwide.

A new candidate?

Nearly all the corporate media, even those that have been pro-Biden or who consider Trump a train wreck waiting to happen, faulted Biden for his overall incoherence and inability to counter Trump's lies. Many editorialists — for example, a half-dozen veteran New York Times writers and its editorial board — are urging the Democratic Party to somehow find and nominate a new and younger candidate.

They want someone who can arouse enough enthusiasm to beat Trump without arousing a mass struggle that can defend the rights of migrants, win back the right to abortion, challenge U.S. militarism, battle against U.S. aggression aimed at Russia and China and stop arming the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Whether or not the Democratic Party finds such a candidate, and Biden agrees to step down, there will still be reason for workers to withhold support from both capitalist parties' selections. □



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Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the

streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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FOTO: ZOOM AFRICA

Protesta en Nairobi, Kenia, 27 de junio de 2024

Reparaciones para el pueblo de Kenia, ¡no deuda!

Mundo Obrero se solidariza plenamente con el pueblo de Kenia, que lleva a cabo una rebelión popular desde hace casi una semana. Protestan contra un proyecto de ley aprobado por el parlamento para aumentar los impuestos sobre las necesidades básicas de la vida, como los alimentos, el gas, la atención sanitaria y la educación. Los kenianos exigen un recorte del gasto, no mayores impuestos.

Miles de personas salieron a la calle el 25 de junio -tras las protestas contra la austeridad de la semana anterior- en los "7 días de rabia", después de que la policía matara a decenas de manifestantes desarmados e hiriera a cientos más. Parte del edificio del Parlamento fue incendiado.

¿Qué desencadenó esta revuelta? La respuesta: la creciente crisis de la

deuda impuesta por el Fondo Monetario Internacional y el Banco Mundial a Kenia y al resto de África. Antiguas colonias y ahora países en desarrollo, como Kenia, pagan un precio muy alto por miles de millones de dólares en préstamos que supuestamente sirven para construir infraestructuras, pero que en realidad exigen el pago de elevados intereses que no pueden devolverse ni siquiera a lo largo de muchas vidas.

Para cubrir los pagos de intereses, los gobiernos locales se ven obligados a imponer devastadoras subidas de impuestos o de precios a las masas, que luchan a diario por tener comida en la mesa y un techo bajo el que cobijarse. Son los bancos imperialistas los que acaban destruyendo las economías locales, que se ven obligadas a sucumbir a la naturaleza

despiadada, competitiva y ávida de beneficios del mercado mundial capitalista.

Según un informe de la Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre Comercio y Desarrollo, la deuda pública interna y externa de Kenia asciende a la alucinante cifra de 80.000 millones de dólares, casi tres cuartas partes de toda la producción económica del país. Sólo el pago de intereses se come el 27% de los ingresos recaudados. Estas cifras se dan a pesar de que, según los informes, Kenia tiene la economía de más rápido crecimiento del continente africano. (tinyurl.com/42nc939p)

El heroico levantamiento ha impulsado al Presidente keniano, William Ruto, aliado de la administración del Presidente Joe Biden, a no firmar el polémico proyecto de ley, al menos de forma temporal.

Muchos kenianos exigen ahora la dimisión de su presidente.

El Partido Comunista de Kenia declaró: "La sangre derramada en las calles de Kenia está directamente en manos del FMI, el Banco Mundial y sus marionetas locales dirigidas por el presidente Ruto en Nairobi. Ruto: dimite o serás derrocado". (communistpartyofkenya.org, 26 de junio)

Esta deuda inimaginable debe cancelarse de una vez por todas. Se deben reparaciones al pueblo de Kenia junto con todo el continente africano por cientos de años de recursos robados y mano de obra supe-rexplotada, primero por parte de la clase dominante imperialista de Gran Bretaña, Francia, Alemania y otros países ricos europeos y actualmente por los bancos imperialistas dominados por Estados Unidos. □

New York City Solidarity with Kenyan, Haitian masses

Protesters rallied in front of the Kenya Consulate at U.N. Plaza in New York City on June 28 to oppose Kenya's role in the occupation of Haiti. Chanting "Genocide in Haiti, Made in the USA. Genocide in Gaza, Made in the USA," they called for the resignation of President William Ruto of Kenya and an end to the country's military occupation of Haiti.

Jason Cohen of Friends of Swazi Freedom noted that the Kenyan police killed at least 20 people on the day they stormed parliament in Nairobi protesting the anti-worker finance bill and that on June 27 they

reportedly killed 250 people as they left a protest.

Cohen said: "Ruto is acting as a puppet to protect U.S. and U.N. interests in Haiti by aiding the occupation. We are here to be in solidarity with the Kenyan protesters and further call on the Haitian masses to get the police out."

The demonstration was called by Friends of Swazi Freedom, Black Alliance for Peace NY/NJ, Bronx Anti-War Coalition, Workers World Party and Komokoda, among others.

— Photo and caption by Brenda Ryan



Imperialism, AIPAC and Bowman's loss

On June 25, an amalgam of right-wing forces, most notably the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, secured the defeat of Rep. Jamaal Bowman in New York's 16th Congressional District's Democratic Party primary election.

This was the most expensive Congressional primary election in U.S. history!

Despite strong ties to the Republican Party, AIPAC and its super Political Action Committee (PAC), United Democracy Project, spent some \$14.5 million for anti-Bowman ads and to support his opponent in the primary, pro-Israel Westchester County Executive George Latimer. Wealthy conservative donors contributed another \$10 million to defeat Bowman. (tinyurl.com/yqs7ruf3)

A super PAC is differentiated from a PAC in that it can raise unlimited amounts

of money but can't donate funds directly to a candidate. However, it can share "information" — or perhaps misinformation — on an opponent's record.

According to an investigation by *In These Times*, of "the individuals behind AIPAC's election war chest: nearly 60% are CEOs and other top executives at the country's largest corporations." (June 3) Thanks to the largesse of these capitalists, UDP is expected to spend over \$100 million on primary races, with a particular goal of defeating members of "The Squad," which Rep. Bowman joined after his election in 2020.

The other Squad members are Reps. Cori Bush (Missouri), Greg Casar (Texas), Summer Lee (Pennsylvania), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York), Ilhan Omar (Minnesota), Ayanna Pressley (Massachusetts), Delia Ramirez (Illinois)

and Rashida Tlaib (Michigan). These nine Democratic members of Congress, all Black or Brown and seven of them women, are behind a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

AIPAC's campaign against the Squad is a right-wing, racist attack aiming to crush any congressional opposition to Israel.

No criticism of Zionist genocide permitted

The Squad includes members of the Democratic Socialists of America. Its nine members are generally allied with Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and are considered "progressive" or even "left-wing."

But the Squad members are not revolutionaries and most have been inconsistent on Palestine. In 2021, Bowman voted in favor of sending \$3.3 billion in military aid to Israel. On Oct. 9, 2023, Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) stated: "I condemn Hamas' attack in the strongest possible terms." No one

in the Squad has quit the Democratic Party, voiced solidarity with the Resistance or made a clean break with U.S. imperialism.

Nevertheless, Bowman did vote against U.S. funds to Israel last fall and this spring, as did many members of the Squad, and spoke out in public and the media, which angered AIPAC.

The Squad has been criminalized for simply refusing to be hard-line supporters of the genocidal Zionist state.

AIPAC's effort to oust Bowman even involved getting Republicans to register as Democrats so they could vote against him. The message sent to any aspiring politician is that no criticism of Israel will go unpunished.

The drive to squelch any pro-Palestine voice in elected office is much broader than AIPAC or even Israel itself. Rep. Tlaib was censured — which is one step away from expulsion — by Congress in November for attending demonstrations that raised the slogan, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." Tlaib, the only Palestinian member of Congress, has been subjected to multiple, bipartisan attacks.

It would be a mistake to simply blame "the Zionist lobby" and let the U.S. political establishment off the hook for Bowman's loss. Zionism is a tool of Western imperialism to maintain its domination of oil-rich West Asia and North Africa (the Middle East). That's why so many of AIPAC's donors come from the ruling class.

Going back to the partition of Palestine in 1948, nearly every member of Congress has taken a pro-Israel position — even without pressure from AIPAC.

What has changed is that the Palestinian Resistance is making Israeli apartheid unsustainable. □



Jewish Voice for Peace demonstrates outside AIPAC offices, New York City, Feb. 22, 2024. PHOTO: JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE