

II. United States

AIPAC Emerges from the Shadows

by Our Special Correspondent

April 27—The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) was founded 61 years ago, and grew in influence to become the most feared lobbying group in the U.S. Congress. It presents itself as a “pro-Israel lobby,” but it were more correct to call it a “pro-Likud lobby.” The Likud party is the dominant component of Israel’s current ruling coalition, and is the party of Benjamin Netanyahu. It is also the heir to the “revisionist Zionism” current of the 20th century fascist Vladimir Jabotinsky, the current which incubated the assassins of Israel’s Nobel Prize-winning Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, which is decidedly not pro-Likud, published a commentary one year ago titled “AIPAC Is the pro-Netanyahu, anti-Israel Lobby.”

Circumventing Campaign Finance Rules

Much of AIPAC’s power was initially derived from its unusual legal structure, which was designed to circumvent campaign finance laws. The Federal Election Commission sets limits on how much a Political Action Committee (PAC) can contribute to a candidate. Despite the “PAC” in its acronym, AIPAC is not a Political Action Committee. Instead, it is an agency which has coordinated the contributions of a horde of like-minded PACs who all contribute to the same candidates, enabling AIPAC to organize contributions in any given election campaign that vastly exceed the legal limits.

A study conducted in 1987 found that AIPAC controlled 40 individual PACs that all swam in the same direction, like a school of fish (see “[AIPAC,](#)

[the drug lobby, and the ayatollahs in Congress,”](#) *EIR*, Aug. 28, 1987.) In 1989, a group of retired diplomats and elected officials filed a complaint with the FEC, charging that AIPAC was functioning as an unregistered political action committee. When the FEC declined to take action, they sued the FEC ([James E. Akins et al v. FEC](#)). What ensued was a protracted legal battle that was finally decided in 2010, when the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia found that the FEC “has broad discretionary power in determining whether to investigate a claim,” and that the Commission was therefore within its rights to decide that AIPAC was not “organized primarily for the purpose of influencing” elections.

2010 was the year in which “Super PACs” became legal, making AIPAC’s army of conventional PACs unnecessary. A Super PAC may raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions, associations and individuals. A recent [article](#) in the London *Guardian* reports on the blandly titled

United Democracy Project, a Super PAC which was created by AIPAC but “avoids mention of its creation by Aipac and seeks to decide elections by funding campaign messages about issues other than Israel.”

Super PACs have no spending limits because they do not contribute directly to candidates’ campaign committees, but can spend money instead to “advocate for or against political candidates,” often by purchasing “attack ads” which target the candidate’s opponent. In California, a Democratic California state senator named Dave Min is running for Congress. He is generally pro-Israel and does not support a Gaza cease-



Benjamin Netanyahu Facebook page

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attacks student protests against genocide in Palestine.

fire. But after criticizing Netanyahu's leadership and Israeli settlement expansion during private talks with AIPAC operatives, he suddenly became the target of \$4.5 million worth of attack ads funded by United Democracy Project. True to form, the ads did not focus on Israel, instead calling attention to Min's drunk driving arrest from a year ago.

Show Me the Money

Although well known and widely feared among members of Congress, AIPAC has not necessarily been a household word in the U.S.. The organization had pursued a hugely successful strategy of "speak softly, and write a big check." For example, when Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez ("AOC") was first elected to Congress in 2018, she had activated AIPAC's radar by tweeting about the killing of 37 unarmed protestors by IDF snipers during the "Great March of Return" demonstrations which had taken place in Gaza earlier that year. In her tweet, she said: "This is a massacre. I hope my peers have the moral courage to call it such."

AIPAC's response was remarkable. Ryan Grim [reported](#) in *The Intercept* that AOC's communications director Corbin Trent got a call from a man saying he represented AIPAC donors:

A representative of AIPAC called Corbin Trent and told him there was \$100,000 ready to be handed over to Ocasio-Cortez to "start the conversation" with the organization, with much more than that to come. [Saikat] Chakrabarti [then AOC's chief of staff] and AOC both told me they were shocked at the offer. The campaign was flush with cash and it was rejected out of hand. "I was expecting the corruption to be much more subtle," Trent recalled. "This was basically a bag filled with cash."

However, if an elected official persisted on making public statements which were critical of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, and the carrot of financial support didn't do the trick, then there was always the stick, the whispered allegations of antisemitism from

AIPAC's partner organization, the ironically named Anti-Defamation League. AIPAC could content itself with a behind-the-scenes role.

The Likud's Assault on Gaza

Following the October 2023 attacks by Hamas, and the subsequent onslaught against the civilian population of Gaza by the current Israeli regime, all that has changed. The devastation and astronomical casualty counts, particularly among women and children, overwhelmed the usual reticence of the corporate media, and coverage began to appear on the nightly news. Anti-war activism on college campuses reemerged after a twenty year hiatus.

AIPAC wasted no time in launching a hyperactive social media campaign in support of the invasion, posting messages on Facebook and Twitter/X that alternate between praise of congresspeople who have accepted their money and endorsed the genocide, denunciations of those who have not, and lurid, evidence-free allegations of sexual abuse of the hostages by Hamas which echo the "hasbara" press releases of the Israel Defense Forces.



X/AIPAC

AIPAC propaganda.

As always, any criticism of Israeli policy is depicted as a form of antisemitism. Zionist fanatics such as Texas Governor Greg Abbott are aggressively expanding the definition of "antisemitic speech" to punish any criticism of the Likud's genocide, as in Abbott's recent [executive order](#) regarding activities on college campuses.

AIPAC's 'Naughty' List

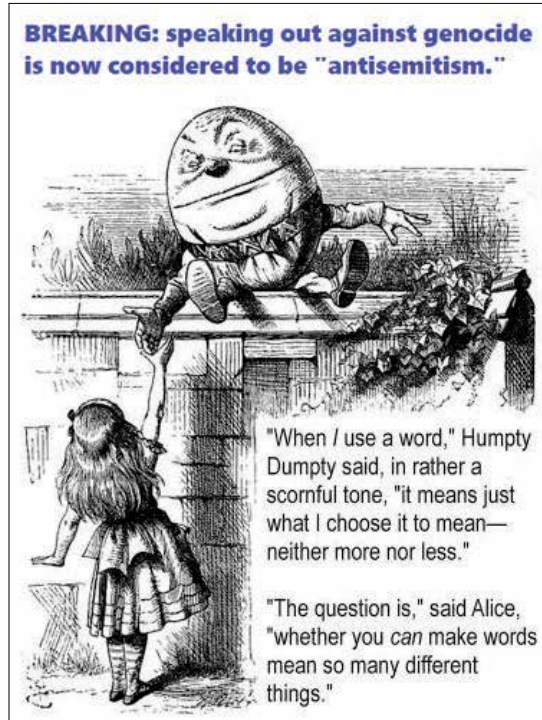
According to an article in the March 3, 2024 *Politico*, "AIPAC is expected to spend \$100 million across its political entities in 2024, taking aim at candidates they

deem insufficiently supportive of Israel, according to three people with direct knowledge of the figure, who were granted anonymity to discuss private meetings.” Major targets are expected to include members of the “squad,” such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cori Bush, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, and Summer Lee, who have been stirred by the appalling spectacle in Gaza to depart from their normally docile conformity to the Biden administration’s foreign policy line. These five Congresswomen have all engaged in heated Twitter battles with AIPAC.

A particularly egregious case is that of Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY). In a departure from their normal practice, AIPAC went so far, in this case, as to seek out an opponent to challenge an incumbent Congressperson in the primary election. According to *The Intercept*, AIPAC recruited Westchester County Executive George Latimer for this mission, and raised \$600,000 to thrust him into the limelight. Latimer, who is clearly not the brightest crayon in the box, has charged that Bowman has accepted money from Hamas, and provided the press with this gem: “Genocide is when you create gas chambers and you force people into them to kill them.... You cannot put that on an equal equivalent [sic] with the military action [in Gaza].” In response to being targeted by AIPAC, Bowman tweeted, “Imagine a world where PACs spend \$100M to stop gun violence, maternal mortality or childhood hunger. Instead, we have AIPAC dropping \$100M against members calling for peace and ceasefire.”

AIPAC’s Darlings

The fact that AIPAC’s top targets are all Black, Hispanic or Muslim Americans creates a bit of a problem for them with “optics”, so when they can find an elected Person



A page from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (Lewis Carroll, 1865) is put to good use in this posting on X.

of Color who is willing to collaborate with them in boosting the Likud, they can scarcely contain their joy. One example of such a “trophy Congressman” is New York Democrat Ritchie Torres, who is an unusually obsequious booster of the Netanyahu regime. Torres is a first-term Congressman; in his campaign, AIPAC was his number one contributor with \$141,008—despite the fact that his district is one of the most overwhelmingly Democratic in the country, and his Republican opponent never had a prayer of winning. And he has gone the extra mile in appreciation of their largesse. He has resigned his membership in the House Progressive Caucus. Earlier this month, he made the obligatory trip to Israel, leading a small delegation from the Bronx. According to the *Forward*, “he denies that Israel is committing genocide and blames the humanitarian crisis in Gaza on Hamas stealing aid meant for civilians. Both arguments hew closely to the Israeli government line.” He called accusations that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip a “blood libel.”

According to the campaign finance watchdog organization [Open Secrets](#), Torres has received



Rep. Ritchie Torres X page
U.S. Congressman Ritchie Torres, a major recipient of AIPAC funding.

\$367,994 through AIPAC for the upcoming election. Whether Torres' services to AIPAC are appreciated by the Bronx residents whom he is supposed to represent, remains to be seen. He is facing an election challenge from the intrepid LaRouche activist Jose Vega, who is unlikely to treat him gently on the campaign trail.

Only one member of Congress has received more money from AIPAC than Torres, and that is Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. Even before October 2023, Jeffries was industriously demonstrating his fealty to AIPAC. In August 2023, at a time when huge demonstrations against Netanyahu were erupting in Israel due to Bibi's proposed "judicial reform," Jeffries made a trip to Israel funded by an AIPAC front group, the American Israel Education Foundation, during which he met with Netanyahu to bolster him against the rising tide of opposition. Back home, Jeffries' office was occupied in early March of this year by members of Jewish Voice for Peace, who called upon him to reject AIPAC funding.

The 'Reject AIPAC' Coalition

A group of 25 organizations—including Justice Democrats, the Working Families Party, Democratic Socialists of America, Our Revolution, Gen-Z for Change, the Green New Deal Network, the Sunrise Movement, the IfNotNow Movement, and Jewish Voice for Peace Action—have launched the "Reject AIPAC" coalition.

The organization's website calls upon candidates for federal office to take the following pledge:

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is a hawkish force in U.S. politics, advocating for a U.S. foreign policy that supports the Israeli government's violations of Palestin-



Courtesy of Nathan S.

Independent congressional candidate Jose Vega (above and right) collects signatures to get on the ballot in his Bronx, New York district, the poorest in the U.S.



Courtesy of Nathan S.

ian rights, including the unconditional flow of U.S. military funding and weapons to the Israeli government. Domestically, AIPAC supports and amplifies far-right politicians and candidates, including insurrectionists, putting our very democracy at risk.

Therefore, I pledge not to take endorsements or contributions from AIPAC and/or any aligned PACs.



jeffries.house.gov

Congressional Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, the largest recipient of AIPAC funding.

The coalition unfortunately frames its campaign in a partisan context as a fight to "reject the destructive influence of the Republican megadonor-backed AIPAC on the Democratic primary process and our government's policy towards Palestine and Israel." While it is true that AIPAC has generally preferred Republican candidates, the top recipients of AIPAC funding are Democrats.

The impunity with which AIPAC purchases the loyalty of elected officials is indicative of the way in which American politics has been corrupted by "dark money" and the wildly disproportionate influence of a wealthy oligarchy. Yet, the public opposition to the crimes of the Israeli regime continues to grow.