

Kamala Harris picks right-wing governor as Democratic running mate

Patrick Martin
6 August 2024

The selection of Minnesota Governor Tim Walz as the running mate for Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris has become the occasion for a full-scale propaganda campaign.

The corporate media, backed by Senator Bernie Sanders, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and pseudo-left groups like the Democratic Socialists of America, are portraying Walz as a “progressive,” even “left-wing” figure, in an attempt to bolster support for the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence agencies.

Walz was one of six on Harris’s shortlist of potential vice presidential choices. These included Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, and three other governors: Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, Andy Beshear of Kentucky and J.B. Pritzker of Illinois. Those in the group were politically interchangeable, all trusted servants of the ruling class, all supporters of US imperialism’s war against Russia in Ukraine and its preparations for war against Iran and China.

Walz has already demonstrated his dedication to the defense of American imperialism. Before embarking on a political career, he spent 24 years in the Army National Guard (enlisting at age 17), rising to the top level for a non-commissioned officer, command sergeant major, specializing in field artillery.

In the course of 12 years in Congress and six as governor, Walz has compiled an absolutely conventional record as a right-wing capitalist politician. He served the agribusiness interests which dominated his rural southern Minnesota district—including giants like Cargill and Hormel. As governor, he did the bidding of the billion-dollar corporations headquartered in the Twin Cities, such as Target, 3M, General Mills, Best Buy, US Bancorp, Xcel Energy and United Health

Care. When protests broke out in Minneapolis in 2020, after the police murder of George Floyd shocked the world, Walz sent in the National Guard.

His supposed “progressive” measures, such as making school breakfasts and lunches free, enacted last year after the Democrats gained control of both houses of the state legislature, were similar to the legislation pursued by the Biden administration during 2021–2022, when the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress. The reforms were entirely inadequate, a drop in the bucket compared to actual social needs, and pushed through only to buy time while the administration pursued its real priority, instigating and waging the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine.

When Harris’s short list emerged publicly, however, the trade union apparatus immediately embraced Walz as their favorite. Shawn Fain of the UAW declared that Walz and Beshear were his top choices, while most other AFL-CIO unions endorsed Walz as the continuation of Biden’s “pro-union” posturing. The union executives regarded Walz, a former public school teacher and member of the National Education Association, with close relations with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), United Steelworkers (USW) and Teamsters, as the vice presidential hopeful most likely to provide them a “seat at the table” in deciding how to implement policies that will reduce the living standards, jobs and social benefits of the working class.

The supposed “left” of the Democratic Party likewise hailed the selection of Walz. Senator Bernie Sanders tweeted, “Tim Walz is a great asset to Kamala Harris’ winning campaign & administration... As governor, he delivered for working families in MN.” In 2018, however, when Walz was running for governor, Sanders backed a candidate who attacked Walz as the

most conservative Democrat in the three-way primary contest.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, called the selection of Walz “a watershed moment.” The Democratic Party was moving back to “its actual roots of a populist working class party,” she claimed.

Ocasio-Cortez said that by picking Walz, Harris had united the entire Democratic Party, citing support for Walz from right-wing West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin. “That really is no small feat,” she claimed. “I am trying to think about the last time Senator Manchin and I were on the same side of an issue, and it’s not common or often that you see that.”

It is actually not hard to discover the last time Ocasio-Cortez and Manchin—a right-wing multimillionaire coal executive—were on the same side. Both voted for the \$90 billion supplemental military spending bill passed by Congress in April, the sole significant legislation passed in 2024. The bill provided nearly \$60 billion for the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine and more than \$10 billion for the Israeli genocide in Gaza, as well as more money for the US military buildup against China.

The Democratic Socialists of America, in a rare public statement, boasted of the Walz selection as a great achievement for its purported—but hitherto invisible—campaign against genocide in Gaza. The statement claimed:

Harris choosing Walz as a running mate has shown the world that DSA and our allies on the left are a force that cannot be ignored. Through collective action, DSA and the US left more broadly have made it clear that change is needed. DSA members organized in our workplaces and unions to realign the labor movement to support Palestinian liberation.

The statement merely demonstrates that the DSA is nothing but a faction of the Democratic Party, the “left wing” of imperialism and genocide. The Democratic Party, like the Republican Party, is unalterably committed to upholding the worldwide interests of American imperialism, which includes the use of Israel

as its attack-dog in the Middle East.

But through such desperate pretenses, the DSA hopes to block working people and young people horrified by the genocide in Gaza from breaking with the Democratic Party and taking up a real fight against imperialist war and ethnic slaughter.

Far from representing any restriction on Israeli genocide in Gaza, the selection of Walz puts a second ferocious defender of Zionism on the Democratic presidential ticket. While in Congress, Walz served on the House Armed Services Committee, where he was privy to US war plans from 2007 through 2018, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and elsewhere. He routinely voted to approve the massive US military subsidies to Israel, and visited Israel as part of a congressional delegation which met with Netanyahu.

There is one other aspect of the pro-Walz propaganda blitz which deserves mention: his characterization of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and his running mate, Senator J. D. Vance of Ohio, as “weird,” a description that has been embraced by virtually every prominent Democrat.

Walz explained, in an interview on CNN’s “State of the Union,” that he chose the word to downplay the seriousness of the Trump-Vance threat to democracy. It was better, he said, to “just ratchet down some of the, you know the scariness or whatever, and just name it what it is.”

This is an effort to cover up the very real threat posed by Trump and the Republican Party, in line with the entire response of the Democratic Party to the January 6 fascistic coup. Opposition to the danger of fascism and authoritarianism cannot be waged through support for this right-wing party of Wall Street and imperialism, but only through the mobilization of the working class in opposition to both parties and the entire capitalist system.



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