

Democrats deploy Bernie Sanders to con workers and youth into supporting Harris-Walz campaign

Jacob Crosse
25 August 2024

In an attempt to corral left-leaning workers and youth outraged over unending war and widening inequality into supporting the right-wing campaign of Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, in the last week the Democratic Party has repeatedly deployed Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders to provide a left fig leaf for the ticket.

Playing a similar function as New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the nominally independent, and sometimes “democratic socialist” senator from Vermont, is attempting to block the emergence of a genuinely independent socialist movement in the working class against both political parties by using what little “progressive” credibility he still retains to hoodwink his dwindling pool of supporters into supporting the Harris-Walz campaign.

This is becoming an increasingly difficult prospect as Harris has long since shed all the “left” and “progressive” positions she briefly touted while running for president in 2019. As Harris reiterates her devotion to the military aggression of American imperialism and her support for capitalism, she continues to pile up campaign cash, garnering over half a billion dollars in the last month.

Seeking to paper over this reality, in an extended interview Sunday with Jonathan Karl on ABC’s “This Week,” Sanders touted all the alleged “achievements” of the Biden-Harris administration, while deflecting from the genocide in Gaza, and Harris’ backtracking of all her 2020 policy proposals.

Karl started the interview noting that in Harris’ convention speech she declared that the US military needed to be the “most lethal” in the world and talked “tough on Iran and China.” Karl noted that Harris did not support an arms embargo to Israel and instead pledged to give the Zionist state “everything” it needs to wage war,

i.e., continue the genocide in Gaza and extend the slaughter elsewhere.

Asked to comment, Sanders said he agreed “with the vice president, we want the strongest defense in the world.” Asked by Karl if he saw any “daylight” between Biden and Harris on the genocide in Gaza, Sanders replied: “Well, I hope so.”

He added that, “in all fairness to the vice president, you know, she’s been the candidate for all of one month... So, they are still working through their policies.”

Sanders’ disdain for viewers and his supporters is palpable. To claim that Harris is “too busy” to have articulated a policy on the genocide in Gaza is an obvious lie. The reality is, the Harris war policy will be the same, if not even more aggressive, than Biden’s. This is the reason why not a single Palestinian was allowed to speak at the Democratic National Convention, while dozens of Republicans, “former” military-intelligence officials and corporate CEOs were given ample opportunity to tout their support for Israel/Harris.

Neither Sanders nor Karl deigned to raise the war against Russia and the continued incursion by Ukraine in Kursk, which threatens all of humanity with a nuclear catastrophe.

After papering over Harris’s pledges to wage global war, on the domestic front Karl noted that Harris had touted her “law and order” credentials and promised to sign the anti-immigrant border bill that greatly expands the border police and wall. It also provides no pathway to citizenship for “Dreamers,” over 2 million immigrants brought into the United States as children.

“When Harris ran for the Democratic nomination

against you and others in 2020, she said she favored decriminalizing illegal border crossings,” Karl observed. “She even suggested... she would be in favor of abolishing ICE.”

Asked to comment on Harris’s “transformation,” Sanders metaphorically put on his red MAGA hat. “We have a crisis at the border,” he replied. “We’ve got to make sure that fentanyl does not get into this country. We have to crack down on illegal immigration.”

Sanders’ role as a key agent of the Democratic Party was on display at the convention in Chicago last week. In his remarks, Sanders touted the fantasy that the Biden-Harris administration has been a boon for workers, while papering over his and the administration’s role in blocking railroad workers from striking in 2022, which led directly to the toxic train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio two months later.

In an interview with *Politico* prior to giving his speech, Sanders claimed that Biden was the “most progressive” president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Then in his speech, Sanders, like virtually every Democrat, thanked Biden and claimed that in the last “3 1/2 years working together we have accomplished more than any government since FDR.”

Using the same lines from his 2016 campaign, Sanders called for getting “big money out of our political process.”

In his quick reference to the Gaza genocide, Sanders declared, “We must summon the courage to stand up to wealth and power and deliver justice for people at home and abroad,” which included ending “this horrific war in Gaza.” Sanders did not call for a permanent ceasefire, only that the “hostages” be brought home and an “immediate ceasefire”—which Israel, with the support of the US government, will break whenever it pleases—be implemented.

More important than Sanders’ stale and hollow political rhetoric is the context it was given in, which exposes all of Sanders’ rhetoric as completely phony.

Sanders spoke after New York Senator Chuck Schumer, commonly known as the ‘Senator from Wall Street’ due to his subservience and connections to the financial oligarchy. In his remarks, Schumer called for a vote for Harris because she will deliver on building an “opportunity economy.”

After Sanders mildly critiqued the ultra-wealthy, Illinois Democratic Governor and billionaire hotel-chain heir, J.B.

Pritzker took the stage to boast of his immense, unearned wealth.

“Donald Trump thinks that we should trust him on the economy because he claims to be very rich,” said Pritzker, “But take it from an actual billionaire, Trump is rich in only one thing, stupidity.” Pritzker’s billionaire brag received a larger applause than anything Sanders said at the convention.

After Pritzker spoke, multi-millionaire Kenneth Chenault, the former chair and CEO of American Express and current managing director of Catalyst Venture, took the stage to tout American capitalism and Harris’s record in defense of it.

Chenault claimed Harris understood, “it’s possible, in fact necessary, for a president to be both pro-business and pro-worker.”

“She knows that a market-based economy needs a strong and effective government,” he added, noting that “Kamala Harris understands that we need to help entrepreneurs turn good ideas into thriving companies.”

Chenault has an estimated net worth of \$200 million, due in large part to his obscene compensation packages as CEO. In 2007, Chenault was paid over \$50 million, while in 2008 he collected a nearly \$25 million bonus, bringing his yearly compensation that year alone to \$42,752,461.

In addition to being a member of the Council of Foreign Relations, Chenault sits on several major corporate boards, including Bilt Rewards, a rental payment processor, Airbnb, Berkshire Hathaway and the Harvard Corporation. He was also a member of former President Barack Obama’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact