

Bernie Sanders calls on workers and youth outraged over Gaza genocide to vote for Kamala Harris

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This past Monday, US Senator Bernie Sanders (Independent-Vermont), in his capacity as vote catcher for the Democratic Party, released a six-minute video urging workers and young people outraged over the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza to nevertheless cast a ballot for Vice President Kamala Harris. Sanders' video has been viewed over 5 million times on X and YouTube, while his comments have been reprinted in the *Guardian* and on MSNBC's website.

With the US elections less than a week away, there are enormous fears within the Democratic Party that millions of people will refuse to vote for Harris due to her central role in the daily campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing. Since Harris became the Democratic nominee a little over three months ago, anti-genocide protesters have peacefully protested at her campaign events, including this past week in Michigan, home to hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Arabs with friends and family in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Yemen and Iran.

There are concerns within the ruling class that the genocide in Gaza will lead millions not only to break with the Democratic Party but to reject the entire two-party system of capitalist rule in the US. All the more so since nearly a year of mass protests has had no impact on Washington's full support for the slaughter of civilians, including tens of thousands of women and children.

On the contrary, the Biden-Harris administration, with the full backing of the Republicans, has worked with Israel to extend the war into Lebanon and Iran. This has been accompanied by a vicious witch-hunt against anti-genocide protesters on college campuses, in the press and in the arts and entertainment sphere.

Enter Bernie Sanders. He has been tasked with deploying his tattered image as a "socialist" and critic of the "billionaire class" to channel radicalized youth and workers back behind the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street, the CIA, the Pentagon and privileged sections of the upper

middle class.

In his video, Sanders refuses to characterize the mass murder in Gaza as a genocide. Instead he says, "I understand that there are millions of Americans who disagree with President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on the terrible war in Gaza."

After claiming he also "disagrees" with Biden and Harris, the senator asserts that "Israel had a right to defend itself against the horrific Hamas terrorist attack of October 7th, which killed 1,200 innocent people and took 250 hostages."

According to the United Nations, Israel has no such right since Gaza is part of Palestinian territory illegally occupied and brutally oppressed by the Zionist regime since the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1947-1948 that accompanied the establishment of the state of Israel.

Sanders makes no mention of the fact that the Israeli military employed the Hannibal Directive, which allows the Israeli military to shoot Israeli civilians in battles with Palestinian insurgents. Nor that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had obtained and studied Hamas's plan of attack well before October 7 and responded by ordering a stand-down of Israeli troops on the border with Gaza.

Sanders' argumentation can be compared to the claim that the Nazis "had a right to defend themselves" from the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 and the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

Israel is not engaged in a "war" of "self-defense" but an extermination campaign. A July study by the British medical journal *The Lancet* estimated the real death toll from the US-backed Israeli assault to be 186,000 people, but the real figure could be much higher. Since the study was released, conditions have only worsened throughout the Gaza Strip.

With the backing of the Biden-Harris administration and both big businesses parties, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have destroyed 19 of Gaza's 36 hospitals while damaging

the rest. US-supplied bombs have destroyed over 60 percent of the buildings in a region that used to be home to some 2.3 million people.

D-9 bulldozers, tank treads and bombings have made nearly 70 percent of the roads impassable and destroyed 70 percent of the greenhouses and tree crops.

As this is being written, Israel is implementing the “Generals’ Plan” in northern Gaza, which includes the deliberate starvation of the population. Since the beginning of October, some 300,000 people in the besieged area have been without supplies of food or water.

After ignoring all of this, Sanders claims to be doing “everything I can to block US military aid and offensive weapons sales to the right-wing extremist government in Israel.”

This is another whopper from the fake socialist. In reality, when Sanders isn’t stumping for the Democrats, he is working alongside union bureaucrats like UAW President Shawn Fain to counter growing hatred among workers and youth for the Democratic Party and the union bureaucracies. None of the major unions in the US have taken up the call by the Palestinian trade unions to block the shipment of weapons to Israel.

Acknowledging the mass revulsion that exists over the genocide, Sanders states in his video, “some of you are saying: ‘How can I vote for Kamala Harris if she is supporting this terrible war?’”

His answer is essentially that under a Harris administration the genocide will be “kindler and gentler” than under a Trump presidency. He declares that “even on this issue, Donald Trump and his right-wing friends are worse.”

Sanders follows up his argument in favor of supporting the “lesser” war criminal with another lie, namely that “The president and vice president both support getting as much humanitarian aid into Gaza as soon as possible.”

In fact, the president and vice president support getting as many bombs and bullets into the hands of the Israel Defense Forces as possible. That is why the US military has deployed advanced air defense systems and hundreds of US soldiers to man them, along with aircraft carrier strike groups. It has sent multiple weapons shipments, including massive “bunker-buster” bombs that have leveled entire blocks in Gaza and Beirut.

Sanders goes on to claim that a future Harris administration could be pressured to adopt a more humane policy. He states: “We will have, in my view, a much better chance of changing US policy with Kamala than with Trump, who is extremely close to Netanyahu and sees him

as a like-minded, right-wing extremist ally.”

No matter who wins, Harris or Trump, both will continue to back Israel’s expansionist aims. This is because the genocide in Gaza is not simply a “mistaken policy” but a component part of the US imperialist-led redivision of the world, which includes the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine against Russia and the coming conflict with Iran and China.

Sanders then argues that mass murder in Gaza and expanding war in the Middle East are not the only issues in the election. There is also reproductive rights and climate change. If this sounds like “Mussolini made the trains run on time,” that is not an accident. Except that the massive costs of ever-expanding war would, under a Harris government no less than a Trump regime, be imposed on the backs of the working class in the form of brutal social cuts and heightened exploitation.

Responding to Sander’s statement, the Socialist Equality Party candidate for president of the US Joseph Kishore, wrote:

Those opposed to Harris and Trump are not “sitting out,” as you lyingly claim. Not a single step forward can be taken without a political break from both the parties of capitalist reaction. The argument of “lesser evilism” that you spout is politically bankrupt in two respects:

First, the Democratic Party is spearheading an escalation of imperialist war, including the genocide in Gaza, which threatens all of humanity.

Second, the Democratic Party, as a party of Wall Street, the military-intelligence agencies and privileged sections of the upper-middle class, is organically incapable of opposing fascism and is in fact covering up for Trump’s coup plotting.



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