

The Republican National Convention opens: A carnival of fascistic demagogues

Joseph Kishore, David North
15 July 2024

The Republican National Convention opened in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Monday, two days after the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump. The event was a carnival of fascistic politics that epitomizes all that is reactionary and backward in the American ruling class.

Exactly 60 years ago, in July 1964, the Republican Party nominated Senator Barry Goldwater. The right-wing rampage at the convention site, appropriately named the “Cow Palace,” revolted much of the country and led to Goldwater’s landslide defeat in the November election. But the proceedings at the Cow Palace were a model of political correctness compared to what is unfolding at the Milwaukee pigsty that formally nominated Trump on its first day.

The opening of the convention was preceded by Trump’s announcement Monday afternoon that he had selected Ohio Senator J.D. Vance as his vice presidential running mate.

Vance embodies the fusion of fascistic pseudo-populism and the oligarchs of Silicon Valley. He made his millions as a venture capitalist in the Silicon Valley firm Mithril Capital Management, founded by former PayPal CEO Peter Thiel.

Vance is the author of *Hillbilly Elegy*—a self-serving rags-to-riches autobiography that celebrates the capitalist ethos of individualism and free enterprise. His social philosophy is summed up with the declaration that poverty is a condition “not created by governments or corporations or anyone else.” Poverty is the fault of the poor.

Politically, Vance transformed himself from a Republican critic of Trump in 2016 (when he correctly referred to Trump as a possible “American Hitler”) to his lapdog-like defender. He backed Trump’s January 6, 2021 fascistic coup and has held fundraisers for the

fascists who were arrested as part of the insurrection. He was also among those who responded to the attempted assassination of Trump at a rally in Pennsylvania over the weekend by declaring the Democratic Party responsible.

Vance was heavily promoted as a vice presidential pick by prominent fascists within the Republican Party, including former Trump advisor Steven Bannon, Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk and former Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

The selection of Vance sets the tone for the Republican convention. A prominent spot was reserved for Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, who delivered a rant against immigrants and “globalists” (a code word for Jews). The prime time speech was delivered by Kirk, a Christian fundamentalist, antisemite, racist and promoter of the fascistic “great replacement theory.” He has called the separation of church and state a “fabrication” that does not exist in the Constitution.

The assemblage of fascists and demagogues postured as defenders of “working people” in an effort to exploit popular disgust with the policies of the Democratic Party. The first day concluded with the appearance of Trump, bandage on his wounded ear, who was presented as the personification of the Christian God’s glory and “divine providence.”

The convention and the selection of Vance is Trump’s response to the homilies and appeals for “unity” from Democrats following the assassination attempt. As always, the Republicans react to the cowardice of the Democrats by kicking them in the teeth.

The Democrats’ attempts at accommodation continued on Monday. Vice President Kamala Harris called Vance personally to congratulate him on being

chosen, according to *Politico*, and to express “her hope that the two can meet in the vice presidential debate proposed by CBS News.”

The immediate response of the Democrats to the attempted assassination has been to put a halt to their presidential campaign. Biden has indefinitely suspended advertisements attacking Trump, in line with his plea Sunday night to “lower the temperature in our politics.”

With the Biden campaign taking on the character of a death watch, the sections of the American ruling class backing the Democratic Party are reconciling themselves to the likelihood of a second Trump presidency. The signal was given by an editorial in the *Washington Post*, published on Monday under the headline, “Turn down the heat, let in the light.”

The *Post* goes out of its way to praise Trump’s own response to the assassination attempt. “Most importantly, including during an extraordinary conversation with President Biden,” the editors write, “[Trump] called for national unity. In the immediate aftermath of this traumatic event, Mr. Trump’s words tended to de-escalate rather than inflame—even if some of his allies and advisers regrettably indulged in the opposite impulse.”

The *Post* went on to declare that “this brush with individual mortality and national calamity is an unsought, but golden, opportunity for Mr. Trump to help cool the nation’s political fevers and set a new direction.”

If the *Post* actually believes these pious wishes, it is delusional. Hitler survived many assassination attempts, but there is no evidence that the experiences inspired humanitarian sentiments.

The central concern of the Democrats in establishing “unity” with Trump, however, is not his fascist politics but his foreign policy, and in particular the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine. Behind the scenes, there are ongoing discussions between Democratic and Republican leaders on ensuring that the escalation of the war continues in the event of a change in the presidency.

Significantly, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a puppet of the NATO powers, stated in a press conference over the weekend, “I think if Donald Trump becomes president, we will work together. I’m not worried about this.”

Trump is not an aberration. As the *Web Site* noted at the time of his initial rise to the presidency in 2016, he is not an interloper in the Garden of Eden of American democracy. The turn of the ruling class toward fascism and dictatorship is the political expression of the escalating global war and the extreme growth of social inequality.

The 2024 elections is a contest between the Democratic Party, thoroughly implicated in the genocide in Gaza and escalating the war against Russia to the point of nuclear confrontation, and the Republican Party, which is resurrecting a new brand of American fascism. Moreover, as the calls for “unity” make clear, the differences between the two parties are of an entirely tactical character. They are different expressions of the interests of a thoroughly rotten capitalist ruling elite.

The fate of democracy in the United States and internationally is entirely bound up with the development of a movement in the working class against the corporate and financial oligarchy and the capitalist profit system.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact