

After fatal shooting of UnitedHealthcare CEO

Jacobin promotes Bernie Sanders to peddle illusions in the Democrats and “Medicare for All”

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The gunning down of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson on a New York City sidewalk on December 4 by shooter Luigi Mangione—and the reaction of both the public and the ruling establishment to it—have exposed important truths about life in the US.

The public response to the shooting has revealed widespread anger and hostility to the health insurance corporations and hatred of the oligarchic capitalist system more generally. A flood of public commentary on social media has expressed sympathy for the shooter, celebrated the death of Thompson and denounced private health insurance companies like UnitedHealthcare for profiting off of the suffering and deaths of those who have been denied insurance claims.

At the same time, the corporate and billionaire elite have reacted fearfully to the shooting death of Thompson and the public response. Security measures are being put in place to protect the corporate elite from an increasingly hostile public, while the profit-gouging goes on and the billionaires grow even wealthier.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has made clear that acts of vigilante violence against individual representatives of the ruling class will not bring an end to corporate control of the healthcare industry or advance the struggle against capitalism. The actions of Mangione play into the hands of the ruling class and in no way advance the building of an independent and revolutionary political movement of the working class aimed at establishing socialism.

It is within this context that *Jacobin*, the magazine of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), published on December 11 an interview with the “independent” Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, with the aim of sowing illusions in and resuscitating the crisis-ridden Democratic Party.

Under the headline, “Bernie Sanders: A Mass Movement Can Beat Health CEO Greed,” *Jacobin* puts forward the

pathetic lie that capitalist-based health care in the US can be “reformed,” stating, “without a mass movement around Medicare for All helmed by strong political leadership, it is difficult to imagine how people’s rage and despair can be channeled into lasting change.”

Jacobin brings forward the increasingly discredited imposter Sanders as a means of diverting the mass hatred of the parasitic health insurance industry into support for the Democrats.

The absurdity of *Jacobin*’s claim that Sanders will lead a “mass movement” and provide “strong political leadership” against the healthcare corporations is exposed by the senator’s recent public statements regarding the incoming administration of the fascist Donald Trump.

Appearing on NBC’s “Meet the Press” on December 15, Sanders said he was looking forward to working with Trump, “when he has ideas that can help the working class.” Specifically on the issue of healthcare, Sanders said he was looking forward to “sitting down and talking” with Trump’s anti-vaxxer nominee for Health and Human Services director, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Sanders did not rule out supporting confirmation of the anti-science conspiracy theorist, saying that to do so would be “premature.”

Sanders, along with the entire Democratic Party establishment, has dropped any reference to the fact that Trump is a fascist who is busy preparing—along with billionaire Elon Musk and the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)—a massive attack on all federal funding, including for healthcare programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare. Under these conditions, *Jacobin*’s references to “Medicare for All” are a blatant fraud.

The interview with Sanders was conducted by Chandler Dandridge, who is identified by *Jacobin* as “an American psychotherapist and educator” interested in “exploring

creative ways to improve public mental health.” Like all *Jacobin* writers and DSA associates, Dandridge has no connection to socialist revolution or the struggles of the working class. He is part of the middle-class “left” that is steeped in identity politics and tied to the Democratic Party.

Dandridge begins by covering up the role of Barack Obama and the Democrats in the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010, which laid the foundation for the emergence of UnitedHealthcare, the most profitable health insurance provider in the US, with a reported \$372 billion in revenue and \$273 billion in total assets in 2023.

Dandridge asks Sanders why the ACA “failed to fix our health care system,” as though Obamacare was not created to benefit the health insurance and drug companies. Sanders replies by saying the purpose of ACA is “to make as much money as possible” for the healthcare corporations without mentioning that the Democrats and the Obama administration came up with the scheme in the first place.

Sanders himself reveals the bankruptcy of turning to the Democrats for a solution to the healthcare crisis when they are preoccupied with defending the ACA. He says, “[i]t saddens me that not only do Republicans have nothing to say on it—or, I guess, Trump is still ‘working on a plan’—but Democrats can’t go much beyond trying to protect the Affordable Care Act.”

Sanders points out that the corporate-controlled healthcare system means that 60,000 people die each year in the US because they do not get to a doctor in time to be medically treated. He adds that people in the US pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Twice as much is spent per capita on healthcare in the US than in any other country in the world.

Reviving the language he used during his aborted campaigns for the Democratic nomination for president in 2016 and 2020, Sanders claims, “It will take a political revolution in this country to get Congress to say, ‘You know what, we’re here to represent ordinary people, to provide quality care to ordinary people as a human right,’ and not to worry about the profits of insurance and drug companies.” In other words, the answer of *Jacobin* and Sanders is to pressure the Democratic Party, which just suffered an electoral debacle because of its policies of war, support for genocide and austerity, and is lurching further to the right and groveling before the fascist Trump.

At the end of the interview, responding to a question from Dandridge about criticisms that Medicare for All is “pie in the sky,” Sanders makes clear that he is not opposed to capitalism and agrees with Elon Musk that the US healthcare system is “wasting hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars” because of money spent “in bureaucracy, billing, and compensation costs for CEOs” that make it inefficient

and not cost effective.

What is called for in the aftermath of the mass support for the shooter who gunned down UnitedHealthcare CEO Thompson is the advancement of a political program aimed at abolishing the privately owned healthcare corporations and establishing socialized medicine under the control of a workers’ government.

The anger and hostility of the public to the corporate healthcare industry must be galvanized and united behind a movement of the working class that connects the right to healthcare with the fight against poverty, low wages, homelessness, unemployment, inflation, attacks on democratic rights, and imperialist war and genocide that are all the products of the capitalist system.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained on December 10:

The basic rights of the population include the right to free preventive care, prescription drugs, mental healthcare and every advanced test and procedure, and, of critical importance, the right to an abortion, one of a woman’s most important civil, political and cultural rights. Existing personal debt accumulated through exorbitant and outrageous healthcare expenses must be abolished.

All of this can and must be accomplished by a politically conscious working class, putting an end to the capitalist system and its irrational, destructive subordination of human life to profit.



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