

In Face the Nation interview, UAW President Fain stumps for Kamala Harris' election campaign

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The appearance of United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain on CBS television's Face the Nation program Sunday further illustrates the integration of the union apparatus with corporate politics, especially in the election campaign of Kamala Harris.

The brief interview hosted by moderator Ed O'Keefe focused on Fain's endorsement of Harris and his preference for her vice presidential running mate. Harris is expected to announce her choice Tuesday at a rally in Philadelphia and will appear at a UAW event in Metro Detroit Wednesday along with her VP pick.

The Face the Nation interview was only the most prominent of a series of interviews in the past week in which the UAW president boosted Harris and provided advice to her campaign, including a recent interview by the *Detroit News*.

For the last year, Fain has been among the foremost supporters of Biden's re-election continuing this support even after the president's disastrous debate performance. Fain ominously pledged to go "to war" for Biden and regularly promotes US auto plants as the "arsenal of democracy," a propaganda phrase from World War II.

Fain and the UAW bureaucracy have combined support for "Genocide Joe" with bogus support for a ceasefire in Gaza, which they have issued only to get out in front of opposition to the US-backed war crime before it escapes the control of the pro-war Democratic Party.

He is not only a surrogate for the Democrats' election campaign, but for US imperialism. Biden appointed him to the Export Council, a trade-war body, and invited him to a state reception for the Prime Minister of Japan, who visited the US to discuss plans for war against China. He was also an invited guest at Biden's State of the Union address to Congress earlier this year.

The UAW president speaks for Biden's capitalist, pro-war government, not for workers. He was "elected" union president in 2022 as a result of massive ballot fraud in a vote

overseen by the Department of Labor. Meanwhile, Fain and the bureaucracy are hated by workers for imposing huge sellouts, are under investigation by a federal monitor for corruption, and demands are growing for a new UAW election, overseen by the rank-and-file.

In his Face the Nation interview Fain was effusive in his praise for Harris, a former prosecutor, presenting her as a friend of the working class and the last line of defense for American democracy against Trump. "We look at the body of work between the candidates. And when you put Kamala Harris and Donald Trump side by side, there's a very telling difference in who stands with working class people, and who left working class people behind."

When asked to explain why workers should support the Democratic ticket, Fain provided a string of vague generalities and banalities, "Wages are being suppressed. We don't have adequate health care. People want retirement security, and they want their lives back. They don't have to work seven days a week or two and three jobs. Kamala Harris gets that."

The claim that Harris is pro-worker is completely absurd. One of the top priorities of the Biden White House has been to curb demands for better wages and to suppress the growing class struggle, in order to deal with domestic dissent and free up resources for Wall Street and for war.

He is seeking to build on the bureaucracy's close connections with the government, which he relied upon in 2009 as part of the Obama White House to slash starting wages in the auto industry by half as part of a federal bailout deal. This alliance with the union bureaucracy is such a key element of Biden's foreign and domestic policies that last month he described them as his "domestic NATO" in a visit to the AFL-CIO headquarters.

The conditions of poverty and overwork Fain describes are those the UAW, as well as the Biden/Harris administration, have helped to impose in the auto industry. Thousands of autoworkers have lost their jobs since Fain and the

bureaucracy imposed a sellout contract last year, following a limited “standup strike” which did not seriously impact production. Many of those who still have their jobs have been forced to work massive overtime.

That deal was enthusiastically endorsed by Biden himself, who spoke alongside Fain at a pro-contract rally opposite thousands of genocide protesters.

Not able to cite any actual pro-worker accomplishments of the Biden-Harris administration, Fain grasped at straws. At one point he ventured, “And you want to know what Kamala Harris and the Biden administration did and their team did? They went to work when they took over the White House. And they actually put a path forward, they located a new battery plant in Lordstown, Ohio.”

Fain here referenced the new Ultium Cells LLC plant built by General Motors in alliance with South Korean-based LG Energy Solution. The facility provided only 1,600 jobs, a fraction of the workers employed at the former Lordstown Assembly that closed in 2019. Earlier this year, the UAW signed a contract that allows Ultium Cells to set a standard for low wages at other battery plants slated to open in the near future.

As for the claim that Harris’ election is the only thing standing in the way of dictatorship, Trump and the fascist movement around him are able to capitalize on the deep distrust and hatred of the Democratic Party for its role in bipartisan attacks on the working class and its open warmongering. The immense danger of fascism—which Fain in fact downplayed, presenting Trump only as an unstable and selfish individual—arises from the suppression of independent working class politics, in which the bureaucracy itself has played a key role.

The appearance of Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien at last month’s Republican National Convention is a sign that there is no hard dividing line between the program of fascism and the nationalist, pro-war, anti-socialist outlook of the union bureaucracy. To the extent that O’Brien’s speech has been criticized by other union bureaucrats, it was not for his ultra-nationalist “Buy America” rhetoric but his choice of venue at the RNC rather than the DNC.

The words “Gaza,” “genocide,” “Ukraine” or “war” never passed Fain’s lips in his interview. Nor did the UAW president mention that most Democratic members of the US House and Senate gave a standing ovation July 24 to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the butcher of Gaza, who spoke before a joint session of Congress.

Fain also neglected to mention that Harris, the so-called “friend of workers,” personally met with Netanyahu to pledge continued US support to the Gaza genocide, including expanding Israeli aggression against Lebanon and

Iran that are bringing the Middle East to the brink of a catastrophic war.

The UAW responded to the visit, which triggered significant anger, by co-signing a statement with six other unions calling for the Biden administration to halt arms shipments to Israel. The purpose of this statement is only to present the Biden White House as an innocent bystander and potential moderating force in the genocide, even as it has armed its Israeli proxy to the teeth.

The moderator then asked Fain to discuss his preferences for Harris’ vice presidential running mate. Fain named Democratic Governor Andy Beshear of Kentucky, the multi-millionaire son of former Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear (2007 to 2015) as well as Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, who mobilized national guard troops against anti-police violence protests and has starved funding for public education.

Fain mildly criticized leading vice presidential possibility Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro for his support for school vouchers, a right-wing scheme aimed at defunding public education.

Fain effused, a “Harris and Beshear ticket would be unbeatable. I believe both of them would just be such dynamic candidates. But we really like Tim Walz from Minnesota also, (I) think he’s an awesome guy for labor. One hundred percent behind labor. And those would be our top two if we had to pick any. But ultimately ... Vice President Harris has to pick who she’s most comfortable with...”

The truth is that whether Trump or Harris wins in November, workers face an all-out fight in defense of their jobs, living standards and democratic rights amid the threat of global war.

This situation underscores the urgent need of the working class to intervene in the political crisis against both parties, on the basis of an independent, anti-capitalist and socialist program.



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