

Canada's Greens shill for "Anybody but Harper" fraud

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Canada's Green Party—an ambitious but second-tier capitalist party that claims to represent a check or brake on big business—has advanced a thoroughly conventional agenda, beginning with its signature “market-based” solutions to climate change, while stumping for votes in the October 19 federal election.

The Greens are led by Elizabeth May, a former Sierra Club executive who regularly boasts of her close personal ties to former US President Bill Clinton. In the 2011 federal election, May became the first Green ever to be elected to Parliament.

May has gained a thoroughly unjustified reputation, via favourable coverage from much of the corporate media, as a “progressive” and “outsider” who routinely takes the other party leaders to task for their pro-big business orientation. The Greens' left posturing has been facilitated by the dramatic lurch to the right of the trade union-backed New Democratic Party (NDP), which has mounted a “Harper lite” election campaign that has seen it line up to the right of the Liberals on several key issues.

Although May never misses an opportunity to grandstand as an opponent of the other establishment parties, this is nothing more than political theatre. The Greens are, in fact, quite content to play the role of powerbroker within the political establishment.

May herself has reprised the role she played during the 2008 and 2011 elections, energetically championing a possible Liberal-NDP coalition in the event that no party wins a majority mandate and even offering to act as a mediator between the two larger opposition parties.

May is one of the most outspoken proponents of the “Anyone But Conservative” campaign. Spearheaded by the trade union bureaucracy and pseudo-left, this campaign is aimed at bringing to power a purportedly “progressive” government based on some combination of the Liberals, the Canadian ruling elite's traditional party of government, and the NDP, which long ago abandoned its timid plans to reform capitalism and embraced austerity and war.

During the 2008 elections, the Greens enjoyed an alliance with the Liberals, then under the leadership of Stéphane Dion. The two parties chose not to challenge each other's leaders in their respective ridings. Though largely a symbolic gesture, it

underscored the Greens' readiness to work with the political establishment. Dion was himself a prominent member of the Chretien and Martin Liberal governments that imposed the greatest social spending cuts in Canadian history, led Canada to war in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, and passed draconian antiterrorism legislation.

May was one of the most effusive supporters of the subsequent attempt by Dion's Liberals and Jack Layton's NDP to form a coalition government in December 2008 committed to “fiscal responsibility,” a huge corporate tax cut, and waging war in Afghanistan through 2011. The coalition proved abortive when Harper, in what amounted to a constitutional coup, used the arbitrary powers of the unelected Governor-General to shut down parliament, thereby preventing the opposition from defeating his government.

The Greens represent the economic and social interests of a section of the Canadian ruling class and privileged upper-middle class, whose fortunes and lifestyles are bound up with “green” industries, small business, and environmental conservation. Insofar as the party feigns concern for the broader working population, this is limited to lukewarm appeals for “social justice” that are somehow to be implemented through the capitalist profit system.

Ultimately, Canada's Greens seeks to emulate the political success of their counterparts in Germany, who have ruled as part of the big-business political setup in that country for almost two decades.

Beginning in 1980 as a middle-class protest party espousing pacifism and social reform, the German Greens entered into a governing coalition with the Social Democratic Party in 1998, going on to jointly implement the devastating “Agenda 2010” austerity cuts. They quickly jettisoned their reformist trappings and became enthusiastic promoters of German militarism and capitalist austerity.

On fiscal policy, the Canadian Greens have long referred to themselves as “small-c” conservatives. They routinely employ the language of the Harper Conservatives, pledging to “balance the budget” and “pay down debt” once in office—euphemisms for the savage austerity measures implemented by governments across the country.

In a recent interview with the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, May

extolled the virtues of the Greens' "fully-costed" election platform, which would "pay down debt faster than the Conservatives" while managing to "bring forward a lot of substantial new [social] programs."

Canadian workers, seniors and youth have been sold such bunk for years. Under the guise of "fiscal responsibility", austerity policies have been implemented by all of the major parties at every level of government to disastrous effect, ravaging public health care, education, unemployment insurance, and other vital services. This, even as the corporations and the rich are hauling in record profits hand over fist.

The Greens fully intend to continue this process. To provide some left-wing cover for their right-wing designs, the party has squeezed a few tepid reforms into its platform, including a paltry \$15 minimum wage, the abolition of post-secondary tuition, and a national pharmacare plan.

These will allegedly be paid for by raising the federal corporate tax rate to a measly 19 percent—still lower than when the Harper Conservatives first came into office in 2006.

The Carbon Fee and Dividend Plan, a signature Green initiative, would ostensibly fight climate change and generate revenues for public spending through carbon taxation and the prioritization of green industry. Like all of the Greens' proposals, however, this leaves intact the entire free-market economic framework and the reactionary nation-state system in which it is rooted.

Furthermore, the party's targeting of the oil and resource-extraction industries makes clear its true orientation. The Greens have earmarked ample subsidies for privately owned "green" enterprises and manufacturing, while vowing to eliminate government "red tape" for small businesses, which they celebrate as the "central drivers" of the economy.

In other words, the Green Party is not opposed to the reaping of massive profits and the exploitation of workers by Canadian business. Their complaint is that their own corporate and small-business backers have yet to assume a dominant role in the economy.

May has been at the forefront of efforts to stir up anti-Chinese chauvinism, which dovetails with Canada's support for the US's anti-China "Pivot to Asia." Her frenzied denunciations of the Canada-China Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA), an investment treaty negotiated by the Conservatives and the Beijing oligarchy, have been striking for their xenophobia and steadfast defence of Canadian business interests.

At the *Maclean's* National Leaders Debate in August, May attacked Harper for having "sold us down the river" to China by way of FIPA, warning that Beijing would perpetually "be looking over our shoulder and telling us what laws we're allowed to pass."

Likewise, the Greens oppose the recently ratified, US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) from a right-wing nationalist

standpoint, calling it an "attack on our sovereignty" that would weaken sections of Canadian business. The party has remained silent, however, on the fact that the TPP, a predatory "free-trade" agreement that heavily favours the US against the smaller signatory countries, and which excludes China, constitutes the economic component of Washington's war plans against its biggest rival.

While criticizing some of Canada's foreign military interventions, the Greens endorse the core aims of Canadian imperialism and systematically promote the lie that the Canadian state can be a democratizing and altruistic force in world affairs.

When the Conservatives ordered the Canadian military to join the US war in Iraq and Syria in the fall of 2014, the two Green MPs were divided. While May joined the Liberals and NDP in voting against, Bruce Hyer, a renegade NDP MP who joined the Greens in 2013, backed the government.

Though now outwardly opposed to Canada's participation in the air strikes in Iraq and Syria, the Greens are merely critical of the focus on bombing ISIS, arguing that the US and Canada's chief objective should be the removal of Bashar al-Assad as Syria's president.

In conflict after conflict, the Greens have stood on the side of imperialist aggression. They promote the lie that the US-backed, fascist-led coup in the Ukraine was a popular revolution, instead of another grisly regime-change operation orchestrated by Washington as part of its drive to militarily-strategically encircle Russia.

During the brutal Israeli massacre of Gaza in 2014, May pinned the blame on Hamas for provoking a conflict that was deliberately fomented by the right-wing Netanyahu government in Israel. And in 2011, May initially supported the NATO rape of Libya, which killed thousands of civilians and led to the lynching of the country's leader Muammar Gaddafi, leaving the country in ruins and racked by bloody sectarian infighting.

The Green platform makes explicit its staunch support for the Canadian military, vowing to keep them "fully-resourced, well-trained, and equipped to fulfill their mission", and criticizing the Conservatives as "guided by little long-term national interest, principle or purpose." In a comment to the military magazine *Esprit de Corps*, May touted her party's endorsement of the United Nations' "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) doctrine. R2P, whose adoption by the UN was spearheaded by the Chretien Liberal government, is the elaboration of a "humanitarian" justification and pretext for imperialist intervention. It was invoked by the Obama administration as the political cover for its 2011 regime-change war in Libya.



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