

Australian Greens slandered as anti-Semitic for condemning bombing of Gaza

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In a perverse and intimidatory campaign, sections of the Australian political and media establishment are slandering the Greens as anti-Semitic solely because they have condemned Israel's bombardment of Gaza and called for it to end.

The denunciations have only intensified since Israel bombed the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, killing more than 500 civilians, in one of the worst war crimes of the century. That underscores the sinister and fraudulent character of the official campaign. It is not directed against anti-Semitism but is in support of Israel's genocidal war, which recalls nothing so much as the horrors of the Nazi regime.

An editorial this morning in the *Australian*, the Murdoch media's national flagship, thundered: "The Greens' anti-Semitism in federal parliament must be condemned."

This was coupled with a tortured defence of the Israeli military and a repetition of its absurd lies that Palestinian rockets, not an Israeli bomb, had hit the Gaza hospital. No Palestinian group has ever possessed a bomb with the power of that which ripped through the hospital. Israel has been bombing medical and humanitarian facilities in Gaza for the past week. Its leaders have denounced Gazans as "animals" deserving of collective punishment.

The *Australian* ignored all of this, instead claiming that Israel had a stake in minimising civilian casualties lest they be used as "propaganda fodder" by "enemies" of the Zionist regime. Every aspect of the argument is obscene. Its authors are signalling that there is no crime by Israel they will not support and cover for.

The editorial went on to denounce Israel's "enemies in Australia, especially the Greens, whose vile anti-Semitism has surfaced since Hamas attacked Israeli civilians on October 7."

It said: "Greens Tasmanian senator Nick McKim made the absurd claim that Israel was not acting in self-defence in response to Hamas."

McKim had stated: "It is unconscionable that the Senate would vote to stand with Israel while innocent Palestinians are being slaughtered by the state of Israel." Greens deputy

leader Mehreen Faruqi told the Senate: "Remove your colonial blinkers for one minute and have a look at the truth."

On Monday, Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition came together to pass a frothing motion in the House of Representatives, giving Israel carte blanche to proceed with its levelling of Gaza. There, and in the Senate yesterday, Greens amendments condemning the Israeli bombardment and labelling it as a war crime were voted down by overwhelming margins.

The line advanced most starkly by the *Australian* was set by Labor's Defence Minister Richard Marles, who branded the Greens' amendment on Monday as "despicable."

The atmosphere being whipped up is that of a police state. Condemning Israel's war crimes is being declared impermissible. Even democratically-elected parliamentary representatives are branded as "enemies" of Israel.

In the context of the Israeli state's murderous rampage and its well-documented history of dirty tricks against political opponents, including assassinations abroad, the "enemy" designation has the most sinister connotations. What, exactly, is the *Australian* calling for? At the very least, there is a clear suggestion that the Greens should somehow be drummed out of parliament.

While the Greens may be in the immediate firing line, the more fundamental target is the massive opposition among ordinary people, who are horrified by what is being perpetrated in Gaza.

To the extent that the Greens have made statements condemning Israel, they have been a response to this groundswell of sentiment from below. Given the genocidal character of what Israel is perpetrating, perhaps the most striking feature of the Greens' comments is their tepid and limited character.

The Greens, as the *Australian* and the political establishment know, are hardly militant anti-war activists or revolutionary opponents of the status quo. They are a centre-left party whose primary aspiration is to hold the balance of power in parliament so as to collaborate more closely with

the big business Labor Party. That has included a growing support for Australian militarism under conditions in which the Labor government is playing a frontline role in US-led plans for war with China.

The accusation that the Greens and all opponents of Israel are anti-Semitic is an obscenity aimed at shutting down any criticism of Israel's bombardment.

Anti-Semitism has been associated throughout the current epoch with the far-right and its attempts to crush the resistance of the working class to imperialist war and capitalist oppression. Nazism was the creation of German capitalism and its ruling elites, not the oppressed Arab and Palestinian masses.

It is hardly a leap of the imagination to suggest that if they were transported back to the 1930s, those currently cheering on the genocidal decimation of Gaza would have similarly supported the fascist slaughter of oppressed Jews. Indeed, in the context of the fraudulent "war on terror" and a relentless official demonisation of Muslims over the past 20 years, contemporary neo-Nazi and fascist groups combine their traditional anti-Semitism with virulent Islamophobia.

The very outlets now railing against anti-Semitism in the context of the Israeli state's actions have supported the US-NATO proxy war against Russia, the ground troops of which are substantially composed of Ukrainian neo-Nazis. That was epitomised last month by the standing ovation given by the Canadian parliament to a 98-year-old Ukrainian war criminal who fought with the Waffen-SS. Anyone who has pointed to the Ukrainian state's deep ties to Nazism has been slandered as a "Russian stooge."

The campaign around anti-Semitism has nothing to do with defending the Jewish people or opposing prejudice against them. What could be more calculated to whip up anti-Jewish sentiment than to assert that opposing the bombing of a hospital is "anti-Semitic?" In fact, tens of thousands of Jewish people have taken to the streets worldwide to oppose Israel's bombardment, with many pointedly demanding that their own tragic history not be exploited and misappropriated to justify another genocide.

What is underway in the pages of the *Australian* and elsewhere is a particularly cynical effort at political reframing. The legitimate struggle of the Palestinians against imperialist oppression and occupation is being falsely depicted as a religiously-grounded conflict between Muslims and Jews. The clear aim is to whip up a poisonous atmosphere of communalism, whatever the consequences for ordinary Jews, in order to blackguard the Palestinian struggle.

The fraudulent character of this campaign was underlined by the remarks of Ed Husic, Labor's Minister for Industry and Science, in an Australian Broadcasting Corporation

interview this morning.

Husic branded Israel's bombing and its blockade of essential supplies to Gaza as "collective punishment" of the Palestinian people. Under international law, that is a war crime. He noted that Australian landmarks, such as the Opera House, were not being lit up with the Palestinian colours, as they were with the Israeli flag after the Hamas military operation.

Questioned by the interviewer, Husic insisted that his comments did not mark a deviation from the government's line of full support for Israel. He repeated the denunciations of the Palestinian uprising, branding it as "terrorism."

Husic's comments are nevertheless noteworthy. A senior minister has, in effect, admitted that his government is supporting unfolding war crimes.

Husic is a careerist politician who has been in the pro-war Labor Party for decades. His remarks reflect a fear of the mounting opposition and anger over the Israeli onslaught, including in his own seat in the working-class western suburbs of Sydney.

That opposition, however, will find no way forward through the Labor Party, the Greens or the political establishment as a whole. The support of the political and media set-up for Israel's genocidal actions is a warning to the working class that there are no lines the Australian ruling elite will not cross, both in its support for US-led military operations, including the preparations for war with China, and in the suppression of growing domestic opposition.

Workers must oppose the vicious slander campaigns and defend all those who come under attack as part of the fight to build a powerful international mobilisation that can halt the destruction of Gaza. Above all, the situation points to the urgency of building a revolutionary movement of the working class against the capitalist order, which is tobogganing toward war and barbarism.



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