

# Australian pseudo-left seeks to channel anger over Palestine behind pro-genocide Labor government

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Tens of thousands of workers and young people in Australia have joined mass global demonstrations over the past three weeks against Israel's onslaught on the Palestinians. At the same time, the Zionist regime is intensifying its genocide, with unprecedented bombing of Gaza and a ground incursion, backed by all the imperialist powers, including the entire Australian political establishment.

The development of the protest movement, and the fact that the genocide is proceeding unabated, poses fundamental issues of political perspective and program. Growing layers of the population, above all the working class and the youth, are being politicised and are wondering what can be done to end the horrific war crimes that they are witnessing every day.

Under those conditions, the pseudo-left Socialist Alliance organisation published an article in its *Green Left Weekly* publication last week, insisting that the focus of the mass anger must be directed towards appeals to the federal Labor government. Its headline was: "Labor must support justice, not genocide, in Gaza."

The article's conclusion summed up the essential line: "Supporters of justice need to do all they can to help swell the numbers at every rally, and initiate their own. This is the most effective pressure we can collectively mount on Labor, and other parties, to support an immediate ceasefire and bring an end Israel's collective punishment of the people of Gaza—a war crime."

In other words, further rallies are the only form of political activity that is permissible or that can even be contemplated. And their sole perspective should be to issue appeals to the federal Labor government to call for a ceasefire. Even if Socialist Alliance's central demand of a ceasefire call were met, and it will not be, it would not end Australia's daily collaboration with the imperialist planners overseeing the onslaught in Gaza, in the US and Israeli states.

An obvious issue with Socialist Alliance's line, which even it is compelled to acknowledge, is that the Labor government has been vociferous in its support of the genocide. Its leaders, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong, have been as bellicose as any heads of state in their insistence on Israel's "right to defend itself," and their hostility to support for the Palestinians.

Indeed Labor administrations have sought to ban the very protests that Socialist Alliance is declaring should orient to the Labor Party! The line was set by Albanese, who as soon as the Israeli bombing began, instructed protesters to "stay home." It was implemented by New South Wales Labor Premier Chris Minns, who threatened to ban a demonstration on October 15, and who backed extraordinary police

powers to potentially search anyone who participated.

Contrary to the implication of Socialist Alliance's article, Labor's position is not an unfortunate "mistake" that can be corrected with a little public pressure. It is a particularly sharp manifestation of Labor's role as the preeminent party of Australian imperialism, and one committed to US military operations and wars in every corner of the globe.

Socialist Alliance says virtually nothing about this broader context. Its article did not mention the fact that the Labor administration is on the front lines of the US preparations for a catastrophic war with China. Albanese and the Labor government are completing the militarisation of Australia, with the explicit aim of transforming it into a hub of US-led activities directed against Beijing.

Full backing for Israel, the main beachhead of American imperialism in the Middle East, has, since its founding in 1948, been a signal of Labor and the ruling elites' complete commitment to the US-Australia alliance.

Socialist Alliance separates Labor's position on the genocide in Gaza, from its broader pro-war agenda, because to point to the link would underscore the bankruptcy of its perspective of issuing fawning pleas to the Albanese government.

The context demonstrates that the real issue is a political struggle against the Labor government, and the development of an international movement directed against imperialist war, of which the massacre in Gaza is the latest and most horrifying manifestation.

To further its argument, Socialist Alliance seeks to present the most mealy-mouthed statements of concern from a handful of Labor figures as indications of some sort of shift. It declares: "Huge pro-Palestine demonstrations across Australia and rising public awareness about the unambiguously genocidal character of Israel's assault on Gaza are starting to put Labor under pressure."

The proof of this is a single statement by the largely unknown Labor Senator Fatima Payman, which referenced "the killing of innocent Palestinians."

But the claims of some shift in Labor's stance are being refuted every day. Last week, Albanese was in Washington for meetings with President Joe Biden, where he pledged full support, not only for the genocide in Gaza, but for American imperialism's potentially catastrophic confrontations with Russia and China. This morning, as reports of mass murder intensify in Gaza, Albanese again proclaimed Israel's "right to defend itself."

The *Green Left* article also promoted a cross-party declaration in NSW, signed by around a quarter of the state Labor MPs there.

While expressing “alarm” at the “humanitarian crisis” in Gaza, that declaration did not include a single word of criticism of Israel. Instead it “called upon all actors,” including Australia and the Zionist regime, to “comply with international humanitarian law.” It did not even include a call for a ceasefire.

The Greens’ initiated statement did not condemn Israel, a militarised state committing genocide, but it denounced Hamas for “terrible acts of terror” that were “deeply inhumane.” That is the essential line of the Greens. The Palestinian uprising of October 7 is continually referred to by Greens leaders as an “act of terror” in terms far stronger than those they apply to Israel’s indiscriminate bombing of women and children.

As the WSWS has repeatedly explained, the events of October 7 had a tragic character, including in the substantial civilian casualties in Israel. But what occurred, was, nevertheless, a popular uprising against 75 years of occupation and intensifying repression by Israel. The Zionist regime, which has transformed Gaza into a concentration camp, bore responsibility for the violence resulting from what was, in effect, a prison outbreak by the Palestinians. Socialists and genuine opponents of war, moreover, never draw an equal sign between the often explosive violence of the oppressed, and the invariably far greater violence inflicted by their oppressors.

But Socialist Alliance has made substantial concessions to the position of the Greens, blaming “both sides,” which itself echoes the line of a corporate media that is fully complicit in the unfolding genocide.

While noting the inflated and often false character of media assertions, Socialist Alliance declared: “If these allegations turn out to be true Hamas—the elected government of Gaza—would also be guilty of war crimes.” Later it called on the Labor government to “support calls for a forensic, independent international investigation of the allegations of war crimes, on both sides, and for the prosecution of those found guilty.”

Our opposition to Hamas is political. It is because it is a bourgeois-nationalist movement, incapable of uniting workers throughout the Middle East in opposition to the imperialist imposed state boundaries. It is, moreover, dependent on the patronage of various Middle Eastern governments, which have obstructed the liberation struggle of the Palestinians.

The call by Socialist Alliance for an “international investigation” of Hamas has nothing to do with these principled socialist positions. It is, rather, preemptive justification for Palestinian leaders to be abducted by the imperialist powers and brought before a kangaroo court. Every politically critical individual knows that such “international investigations” are dictated by the US and its allies and that the imperialist perpetrators are absolved of any crimes. Such an investigation, moreover, targeting the Hamas leadership, would occur as part of the genocide and the advanced plans to clear the Palestinian populations of Gaza and the West Bank.

Socialist Alliance’s positions demonstrate that there is very little that separates the pseudo-left from the Greens, bar vestigial phraseology. Like the Greens, Socialist Alliance is a pro-capitalist party of the affluent upper middle class, hostile to the fight for a revolutionary movement of the working class directed against the political establishment. Its entire function is to prevent the development of such a movement by shackling workers and young people to Labor, the unions and the Greens.

The pseudo-left, like the Greens, is a pro-imperialist tendency. Socialist Alliance’s predecessor organisation, Democratic Socialist

Perspective, led the 1999 “troops in” demonstrations, demanding the deployment of the Australian military to East Timor. It repeated the government and media lies that this would be aimed at protecting East Timorese civilians from Indonesian army massacres, which had already taken place. Instead, as is now widely acknowledged, the purpose of the deployment was to secure East Timor’s oil and gas resources for Australian corporations.

More recently, Socialist Alliance has stridently backed the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. This has included republishing calls for the major powers to increase their arms shipments to the right-wing, fascist-infested regime in Ukraine. The entire conflict is aimed at furthering a decades-long drive by the US against Russia and threatens world war.

With their latest call for pressure on Labor over Gaza, Socialist Alliance is seeking to replicate the role that it played in the 2003 protests against the invasion of Iraq. In the lead-up to that criminal war, a mass global protest movement developed, seeking to halt the impending onslaught. Socialist Alliance, which was very prominent in the Australian protests, did everything it could to divert that movement behind the Labor Party, then in opposition, as well as illusions in the United Nations and various European powers. The result was that the movement failed, and the invasion went ahead.

Those lessons must be learned. As the WSWS has insisted, the mass protests against the genocide must be continued and expanded to encompass ever broader sections of workers and young people.

But above all, they must turn to the working class. The struggle against imperialism, with all its resources and power, can only be waged by mobilising an even more powerful social force, the international working class. In every workplace, preparations must be made for industrial action, including strikes, aimed at crippling the US, Israeli and allied war machines and obstructing the slaughter in Gaza.

Socialist Alliance is bitterly hostile to such a perspective, instead functioning as a chief apologist of the trade union bureaucracy, which is working to ensure that workers take no action whatsoever against the mass murder in Palestine.

Above all, the genocide raises the necessity for a socialist and revolutionary perspective. What is unfolding in Gaza is the real face of capitalism and imperialism. The onslaught there, moreover, is part of a developing global war, which includes the US proxy conflict against Russia, its preparations for an attack on Iran and its war drive against China. The alternative to this descent into barbarism is the socialist reorganisation of society on a world scale, the perspective advanced by the International Committee of the Fourth International and its affiliated Socialist Equality Parties.



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