

Australian Greens offer no way forward in fight against Gaza genocide

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10 December 2023

As Israel escalates its genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza with the full support of the major imperialist governments, the question of how to stop the mass murder is posed more acutely than ever.

In Australia, as internationally, the Labor government has made no concession whatsoever to the mass protests over the past two months. It has affirmed its support for Israel's "right to defend itself," including by announcing a trip to Israel in early January by Foreign Minister Penny Wong. Local Zionist leaders have said Wong will receive "red carpet treatment" as she meets with those leading the slaughter.

There is considerable shock and intense anger over Labor's role. In that context, the Greens have come to greater prominence as the only parliamentary party to have condemned Israel's war crimes and called for an end to the bombardment. They are pitching particularly to young people, broad layers of whom are being politicised by the genocide.

The Greens, however, present no way forward. Instead, the primary function of their posturing over Gaza is to peddle the illusion that there is some way to oppose the mass killing within the framework of parliament and the political establishment, when there is not.

While at times passionately denouncing Israel's crimes, to the extent that the Greens have outlined any concrete course of action, it is simply to appeal to the Labor government to change course. In parliament and at multiple protests, they have begged Labor to call for a ceasefire.

This not having occurred, the Greens have simply repeated their appeals. To the extent that they have provided any explanation of Labor's support for the genocide, it has been to brand the party's leadership, particularly Wong and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, as "spineless" and "cowardly." Greens representatives have, accordingly, called upon Labor's leaders to "grow a backbone," "stand up for justice," etc.

Such statements are a cover for Labor, obscuring what its backing for the genocide has revealed.

In the first instance, the Greens' accusations, presenting Labor's support for Israel as an aberration, are entirely false. Labor has defended the Zionist regime since its establishment in 1948, and even before then signalled support for the pogroms and terror that displaced the Palestinians. Unconditional

support for Israel has, for 75 years, been a touchstone in Labor Party politics of support for imperialist war and oppression, especially as led by the US.

Labor's current leaders are greenlighting the genocide while deepening the US-Australia alliance. That includes completing Australia's transformation into a frontline base of operations for war with China, which is viewed as the chief threat to American imperialism.

As Labor is intimately involved in plans for such a conflict, which would kill millions and could trigger a nuclear annihilation of humanity, no politically-literate individuals would be surprised by Labor's indifference to the fate of Palestinian civilians.

By separating the Gaza genocide from the broader eruption of imperialist militarism, the Greens present the issue in isolated terms and as a moral question. Their representatives may occasionally reference "colonialism" and "racism" in relation to Gaza, but of course "capitalism" and the fact that it is in its deepest crisis since the 1930s does not pass their lips. That is because the Greens are fully committed to the profit system.

The emotive references to Albanese, Wong and others, and the appeals to them, are aimed at legitimising the Greens' entire perspective, which is to collaborate with Labor governments. For decades, the Greens have made plain that their political aspiration is to hold a balance of power in parliament in order to "pressure" Labor governments to adopt "progressive" policies. In practice, this amounts to collaborating with right-wing big business Labor administrations and providing them with a left cover.

It is notable that while the Greens have staged occasional parliamentary stunts during the Gaza genocide and have questioned Labor ministers, they have continued to work with the government on other issues. Labor's backing for a genocide, as it is taking place, is clearly not a deal breaker for the Greens.

That underscores the element of charade behind the Greens' whole posture of pressuring Labor to call for a ceasefire. The perspective is a bankrupt one. But were it implemented consistently, one of the most obvious tactics would be to refuse to pass Labor's legislation or to collaborate with the government until it explicitly opposes the mass murder.

One of the Greens' most high-profile MPs, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, has issued no statement on her website related to Gaza. Instead, the latest three items all hail collaboration between Labor and the Greens on environmental legislation.

Hanson-Young even held a joint press conference with Labor's Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek late last month, touting the new laws. Of course, Hanson-Young did not mention Gaza while standing alongside one of the Labor government's senior leaders.

The concessions secured by the Greens are desultory. For instance, Greens leader Adam Bandt declared: "These changes now give the Environment Minister the power to halt new gas mines, so I hope she stops the Beetaloo and Burrup Hub climate bombs from going ahead." Labor, however, has made plain its support for new coal and gas projects.

Hanson-Young stated: "The Bill enables private investment on private land to stop extinction and destruction in line with the Global Biodiversity Framework to protect at least 30 percent of land, freshwater and ocean ecosystems by 2030." She concluded: "I want to thank Minister Tanya Plibersek for working constructively with the Greens on these significant outcomes that will make a difference in protecting our planet."

The Greens are promoting these new measures, just as they promoted the Labor government's so-called environmental Safeguard Mechanisms in March. The Greens have asserted the laws will stop, or substantially limit, the number of new coal and gas developments without seeking to square the contradiction between raising the same point twice in nine months in relation to two separate pieces of legislation.

In fact, the Safeguard Mechanisms are a sham, allowing companies to continue their carbon emissions through offsets.

In September, the Greens similarly swung behind Labor's housing legislation, having previously denounced it as grossly inadequate and a boon to property developers and other financial interests responsible for the housing crisis. As with the environmental measures, the Greens used token concessions to justify backing Labor's right-wing, pro-business policies.

The Greens' whole orientation to parliament and Labor has seen it support militarism ever more explicitly. The Greens were in a de facto coalition with the minority Gillard Labor government between 2010 and 2013. That administration, in addition to backing Israel, oversaw an Australian troop surge in Afghanistan and signed on to the US pivot to Asia, the vast military build-up in the region in preparation for war against China.

The Greens openly supported the US-led regime-change operations against Libya and Syria in the 2010s, as did Israel. More recently, the Greens have given their full support to the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine which has been orchestrated and driven by the same militarists in Washington who are currently engaged in the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.

The role of the Greens in relation to Gaza recalls the function

they performed in 2003. In opposition to the plans for an illegal invasion of Iraq, millions of people, including in Australia, took to the streets in the largest international demonstrations to that point in history. The mass movement, however, failed to halt the war.

That was a consequence of the political perspective peddled by the Greens and similar organisations. They subordinated the movement to appeals to the United Nations and the European powers and peddled the fraud that official opposition parties, such as Labor in Australia and the Democrats in the US, represented an alternative, or at least a "lesser evil." As a consequence, that movement was dissipated and defeated.

The experience of 2003 is crucially relevant, though the conditions today are even more advanced. Workers and young people must make a break with the politics peddled by the Greens, based on appeals to governments and futile attempts to place pressure on them.

Instead, the independent strength of the working class must be mobilised, including through strikes and other industrial action, to halt military supplies to Israel. That requires a political struggle against the Labor-aligned trade union bureaucracy with which the Greens work closely.

What is posed is the need for a revolutionary and socialist movement of the working class internationally. The Gaza genocide is a crime of capitalism, presaging even greater atrocities on a global scale. The only alternative is the reorganisation of society from top to bottom to meet social need, not profit, and the unification of the global working class to put an end to the anachronistic nation-state system and establish a world of peace.



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