

Bankrupt perspective of Abandon Harris leads to endorsement of Jill Stein for president

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10 October 2024

In a sparsely attended press conference held Tuesday in Dearborn, Michigan, leaders of “Abandon Harris,” formerly “Abandon Biden,” announced they were formally supporting the Green Party candidate for US president, Jill Stein.

Abandon Harris is a Dearborn-based pressure group that formed in October 2023 after protests and appeals to the Biden-Harris administration for a ceasefire in Gaza failed. Its stated aim is to “punish” the Democratic Party in the election, with the hope that this will somehow pressure both the Democrats and the Republicans to oppose the genocide in Gaza. This perspective is in line with the perspective of Stein and the Green Party.

In the spring, the group announced they would be holding a presidential forum to hear from third party candidates opposed to the genocide in Gaza.

While Stein, Cornel West (independent) and Claudia De la Cruz (Party for Socialism and Liberation-PSL) were invited to participate, the Socialist Equality Party candidate for president, Joseph Kishore, was not. This is despite the SEP’s intransigent opposition to the formation of the state of Israel, Zionism, and the capitalist system, the source of all imperialist wars.

At the time, Abandon Biden relayed to the SEP campaign that they were planning to hold another town hall in which Kishore and other anti-war candidates would be invited. This did not occur. The decision not to invite Kishore reflects the upper-middle class and Democratic Party politics of the group as a whole.

In the group’s endorsement of Stein, co-chair Dr. Hassan Abdel Salam stated that defending “human rights” means “punishing, punishing the vice president.” He called for supporting Stein as an example of “leaders who embody humanity, morality,” and “integrity.”

Presaging their endorsement of Stein, on Sunday Abandon Harris and Kshama Sawant of Workers Strike Back, and formerly of Socialist Alternative, groups oriented to the Democratic Party, held a rally in support of Stein at the Bint Jebail Cultural Center, also in Dearborn, which drew less than 200 people.

The small turnout for both of these events does not reflect an absence of opposition among workers and youth to the genocide.

On the same day Stein and Sawant held their joint rally in Dearborn, thousands of people attended the funeral of Hajj Kamel Ahmad Jawad, a Dearborn resident killed in an Israeli airstrike with US-supplied bombs in Lebanon on October 1.

In announcing their endorsement of the Green Party candidate, leaders of Abandon Harris touted Stein’s opposition to the ongoing slaughter in Gaza, in contrast to the Democratic Party’s steadfast support and refusal to heed the group’s demands for a ceasefire last October.

Speaking before Stein on Tuesday, Dr. Abdel Salam acknowledged that “we voted in droves for the Democratic Party in 2020” but now the group is going to “punish the president, now the vice president” by “taking the blame for their loss on November 5th.”

Salam claimed this would “send a signal to the political landscape,” that is the Democratic and Republican Parties, that you can never “engage in genocide and win.” Salam added that lodging a protest vote for the Green Party was part of a “struggle of accountability” that would “bring a reckoning to the Democratic Party” and a “reorientation to the Republicans.”

In her remarks on Tuesday, Stein thanked the group for giving “new life to our ailing democracy by claiming the power of your vote and by holding political elites accountable.”

Stein promised if elected she would end the “genocide... with a simple phone call.”

While Stein admitted that she was not “holding her breath” that she would be elected, she claimed a vote for her was part of a “long-term process” which “will require our continued action, our continued mobilization, and our continued insistence that we demand that the laws, the international law be applied, that the rulings of the International Court of Justice be applied, and that human rights be applied and that this be solved through diplomacy.”

In a brief question and answer period, Stein offered advice to Harris and the Democrats, saying they “can fix this.” She continued, “They can win this election right now. All they have to do is implement that weapons embargo now. And you will win the election. They need to have their feet held to the fire.”

This summed up the perspective of the Stein campaign, that it is necessary to hold the Democrats’ “feet to the fire” to get them to change their policies.

In neither the Abandon Harris press conference nor in the previous event with Stein and Sawant was there any mention of the US-NATO war against Russia or the broader imperialist war.

In an online event held on October 9, “The Gaza Genocide, World War, and Imperialist Geopolitics,” SEP presidential candidate Kishore said that the Gaza genocide was a “component part” of the global war that includes the attacks on Iran, Lebanon and Syria, as well as the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine.

About the genocide in Gaza, the normalization of mass death from war, the pandemic, and the normalization of fascism, Kishore stated,

One cannot really understand what is happening as simply the expression of individuals... they express a social class and a social system that has reached a historical dead end and has to be overthrown.

Kishore emphasized that while the first step for workers and youth was to reject the Democratic and Republican Parties, he also cautioned against the program and perspective advanced by third-party candidates such as Stein and West.

“The issue,” Kishore stated, “is what type of movement is

going to be built? You have those, Stein and West, who promise change by tinkering around the edges; they are going to be elected, or get a [percentage] of the vote and somehow they are going to pressure the Democratic Party to the left. No.

“Genocide is not a mistake. World war is not a mistake. Dictatorship is not a mistake. It’s an expression of the class interests of the ruling elite.”

“They seek, as Trotsky put it,” Kishore said, referring to *The Priests of Half-Truth* (1938), “half-truths... that is to say, the worst form of falsehood.”

Referring to the Green Party campaign and similar campaigns, Kishore continued:

They offer really nothing to address... the root of the problem. The source of the problem, that is capitalism. And how do you do that? By building a movement in the working class... a movement based on history, an assimilation of the lessons of the 21st century.

There is a real theoretical and political struggle that has to be waged to educate the working class in an understanding of what happened in the 20th century. What was Stalinism? Trotskyism? The real legacy of the socialist movement? What is socialism? Internationalism?

These are fundamental political questions that have to be fought for and clarified in the working class, and that is the purpose of our election campaign, to develop within the working class a socialist consciousnesses. Not somehow wishing for change within the existing political system.



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