

Australian election: A complicit silence on the Gaza genocide

Mike Head, SEP candidate for the seat of Oxley
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One of the most striking and revealing features of the official campaign for the May 3 Australian election is the almost complete blackout on the horrific and intensifying US-backed Israeli massacres and ethnic cleansing in Palestine.

All the parties of the political establishment, including the Greens, are doing everything they can, with the assistance of the complicit corporate media, to bury all mention of the historic crimes being committed by the government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Despite mass opposition in Australia and internationally to the blatant genocide, the Zionist regime has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, and thousands of Lebanese residents, combined with extermination by starvation, denial of medical services and forced relocation.

Armed by the fascistic Trump administration, and supported by all the capitalist powers, including Australia, Netanyahu openly stated at his White House meeting with Trump this month that the two were “working on” Trump’s “bold vision” of expelling the Palestinians from Gaza.

Even when Israel launched airstrikes across Gaza on Palm Sunday, killing 21 people—including children—and striking part of the last fully functional hospital in Gaza City, there was not a word of condemnation from the Albanese Labor government. Footage showed people pushing hospital patients in their beds out into the street to escape the destruction.

The latest stage of the US-Israeli ethnic cleansing operation involves expanding ground operations deep into Gaza and establishing a large buffer zone along the border with Israel. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians are being forced into an increasingly confined area along the Mediterranean coast.

Yet the Australian election campaign is dominated by paltry promises and a desperate attempt to conceal from the population the enormous social, political, economic

and military shocks that are to come, whichever party cobbles together the next government, as the Trump regime plunges the world into trade war.

There was one rare mention of Gaza when, during the first televised debate between Albanese and Dutton last week, a young woman in the audience asked each of them what they would do to stop the Israeli genocide of innocent people, in which her loved ones had been victims, as well as the use of Australian weaponry in the mass killing.

Albanese avoided the question. Instead, he absurdly restated his token support for a “ceasefire,” after Israel had just flagrantly violated one, and for a “two-state solution,” when Israel and the US are completing the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

Moreover, Albanese flat-out lied in denying that Australia supplies weapons to the Israel Defense Forces, even as footage emerged of an Australian-made “lethal” remote weapons system being used in Israel.

Dutton was more blunt. After proclaiming his support for Albanese’s supposed wish for “peace,” he defended Israel’s violence, saying that an Australian government would do the same.

As the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), our sister parties internationally and the *World Socialist Web Site* warned from the outset of the genocide in October 2023, the Israeli state seized upon the Hamas-led incursion into Israel, triggered by decades of occupation and oppression since the violent creation of Israel in 1948, to launch its “final solution” for Gaza.

Netanyahu’s far-right regime could only do so with the support of every major capitalist government, including Australia’s. They all proclaimed that Israel had the “right to defend itself,” despite it being an occupying power under international law.

In the SEP election statement, we warn: “Like its counterparts around the world, the Australian ruling class

has demonstrated there are no ‘red lines’ it will not cross in the drive to war... Labor’s support for the genocide in Gaza cannot be understood outside of its backing for US-led imperialist wars globally.”

We explain that the onslaught on the Palestinians cannot be separated from the wider decades-long record and agenda of Washington and its allies, which regard total control over the Middle East as essential for a war against China to regain the global hegemony that the US asserted after World War II.

Labor has transformed Australia into a platform, complete with bases and ports, for a US-led war against China, and taken Australia’s contribution to the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine to more than \$1.5 billion, aiding Kiev’s fascistic regime.

In supporting the Gaza genocide, Australia’s political establishment, led by the Albanese government, has joined a global campaign to demonise and outlaw dissent, adopting the big lie that opposition to the Israeli regime’s war crimes is antisemitic.

In fact, Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza demonstrates the reactionary essence of Zionism. A capitalist state that claimed to provide a safe haven for Jews has instead produced decades of death, ethnic cleansing and dispossession of the Palestinians, setting Israeli Jews against their Arab brothers and sisters.

Under the false banner of “antisemitism,” academics, artists, students, health workers and many others—including anti-Zionist Jews—have been vilified and threatened. Hate speech and anti-protest laws have been rushed through the parliaments. These not only potentially criminalise condemnations of Israel and Zionism, but also set precedents for use more broadly against all anti-war and socialist opposition.

This repression goes far beyond the immediate question of Gaza. It attempts to create a wartime atmosphere in which all elements of society, including the schools and universities, are being subordinated to the military build-up and the development of a war economy.

Critical conclusions need to be drawn from the failure of the mass anti-genocide protests to stop the slaughter. Our election statement explains that none of this will be halted through appeals to, or efforts to place pressure on, the capitalist political establishment:

That has been demonstrated by the mass movement that developed in opposition to the Gaza genocide. Despite some of the largest and

most sustained anti-war protests in this country and globally, the slaughter in Palestine continues. Responsibility lies with the Greens and fake-left parties such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance, which have subordinated all opposition to moral pleas to the very Labor government that is participating in the war crimes.

In fact, the Greens’ entire election pitch is to form a coalition government with Labor, which would only continue Australia’s support for the Gaza genocide and accelerate the war drive against China. The pseudo-left groups are backing this fraud by peddling support for the Greens and Labor, as a so-called “lesser evil” to the Coalition.

Nor can the genocide be ended by trying to get a few Islamic representatives into parliament, as advocated by the Muslim Votes Matter organisation. It is supporting candidates in electorates with significant immigrant populations, trying to divert the hostility to Labor MPs back behind the parliamentary façade.

The SEP alone fights for the only perspective that can prevent the descent into another catastrophic world war: developing the expanding working-class struggle throughout the world into a conscious political movement for socialism globally, including throughout the Middle East to unite workers, Jewish and Arab alike, to overturn the capitalist profit system.

That is why we say in the SEP election statement:

- End the genocide in Gaza, and the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine!

- No more spending on militarism! The billions squandered on war must immediately be redirected to the public hospitals, schools and other social services.

- Close the military bases that are transforming Australia into a launching pad for war!

- Build a socialist anti-war movement that unites workers worldwide against the source of conflict, the capitalist system!

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