

Australian Greens leader fraudulently claims Labor shifting to the left on Gaza

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29 December 2024

For the past month, the Australian Greens have been campaigning for a power-sharing arrangement with Labor in the event that the next federal election, which must be held by May, results in a hung parliament. Under conditions of consistently dire polling for the Labor government, a fragile minority government is a likely scenario.

Last month, on the final sitting day of the parliamentary year, the Greens joined with Labor to help push through a barrage of government legislation.

That included the Greens directly voting for pro-business housing policies that will benefit the property developers. While voting against bills for mass deportations of immigrants and a social media ban for children under 16, the Greens facilitated votes on those draconian laws, knowing they would pass with bipartisan Labor and Liberal-National support.

Prominent Greens figures have given a series of interviews, emphasising their willingness to collaborate with a Labor government in the next parliament.

The Israeli genocide in Gaza highlights the rotten character of these overtures and is a potential source of awkwardness for the Greens. While Labor has stood four-square behind the mass slaughter, the Greens have correctly labelled the Israeli invasion a genocide. They have denounced Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and other government ministers for having “blood on their hands.”

In their interviews on a power-sharing arrangement, leading Greens have simply not mentioned the genocide. That changed with comments from Greens leader Adam Bandt.

The venue he chose was significant. Bandt gave the interview to the Murdoch-owned *Australian*, which, even amid the universal support of the corporate media for the Israeli offensive, has been the most frothing in its defence of the atrocities and attacks on those within Australia who oppose them.

The purpose of Bandt’s interview was obvious. It was a signal to Labor and the corporate elite that the Greens would not let the genocide get in the way of their determination to prop up a big business Labor government. And, from a public relations standpoint, it was a cynical attempt to square ongoing posturing over the plight of the Palestinians with attempts to collaborate with a government complicit in some of the worst

war crimes since the Holocaust.

The headline of the article summed up the essential point of the interview: “Adam Bandt says Labor ‘slowly moving’ towards Greens’ position on Israel-Hamas war.”

Bandt noted that the Greens had “called for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire a year ago.” Labor and the Coalition “then spent the best part of a year attacking us and people who pushed for peace but now Labor is being forced to admit the Greens were right all along. Labor is now slowly moving towards our position we’ve held now for a number of months. They attacked us at the time for it but now they are voting that way in the United Nations.”

Those comments can only be described as an attempt to con opponents of the genocide and to promote a government that remains involved in the mass slaughter.

The only concrete indication Bandt could give of Labor’s supposed shift was a handful of votes in the United Nations general assembly. But all honest supporters of the Palestinians know that such votes, always highly conditional and committing governments to nothing, are meaningless. Their sole purpose is to distance the imperialist powers responsible for the mass killing from the consequences of their support for Israel.

When Labor has voted for supposed ceasefire resolutions, it has done so alongside other close US allies such as Britain and Canada. That makes clear that the votes have been coordinated with Washington. While the US votes with Israel against ceasefire motions, some of its “partners” vote for them, to try to bolster illusions that peace can be established through the UN and the “international community.”

The votes do not signify a shift in Labor’s position one iota. As a Labor spokesperson noted in response to the interview, the government has voted for “ceasefire” motions since November last year. In that time, it has aggressively defended Israel, politically and diplomatically, insisting on the Zionist regime’s supposed “right to defend itself.”

The Labor government has also provided direct material support to the genocide, including through active defence export permits, and likely intelligence for the targeting of strikes provided by the joint US-Australian Pine Gap spy base.

Labor’s role has been most evident in its vehement attacks on

opposition to the genocide. Albanese and other senior ministers have slandered protesters as “antisemites.” State Labor governments have unsuccessfully sought at times to ban demonstrations altogether.

Aware that he was on thin ice, as far as the truth is concerned, Bandt added that while Labor was shifting, “they’re not yet prepared to put any real pressure on the extremist Netanyahu government to give effect to it and we continue to push for that.” That is no comfort for the two million Palestinians in Gaza subjected to the more than a year-long offensive, which by some estimates has killed 200,000 people.

Bandt’s comments, as cynical as they were, did not mark a fundamental deviation from the positions advanced by the Greens throughout the genocide. They have consistently presented Labor’s support for the atrocities as just a moral failing, and called on Albanese, Foreign Minister Penny Wong and others to “step up” and “do the right thing.”

That is in line with the bankrupt perspective of pressure politics that has dominated the protest movement against the slaughter. The Greens, the middle-class pseudo-left and Palestinian nationalists have insisted that all that is required is to pressure Labor to end its support for Israel.

This position, which has so manifestly failed, covers up the connection between the genocide and the broader eruption of imperialist militarism. The genocide is part of a broader war front throughout the Middle East, expressed in the US-backed Israeli attacks on Lebanon, Yemen and Iran, as well as the recent regime-change operation in Syria.

That, in turn, is a component of a developing global war. As it has backed Israel, so too has Labor supported the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine, aimed at inflicting a defeat on Russia, and Washington’s advanced preparations for a catastrophic conflict with China. Indeed, the signature policy of the Labor government has been to complete Australia’s transformation into a frontline state for such a war, through the vast expansion of the military and unprecedented US basing arrangements.

The Greens have buried this broader context, because they themselves are a pro-imperialist party. In parliament, they have been the most vociferous supporters of Washington’s war against Russia, promoting all the lies that it is a conflict for Ukrainian “freedom” and “democracy.” In doing so, they have whitewashed the fascistic character of the Ukrainian regime and the fact that the war was deliberately provoked by the US, through its relentless expansion of NATO. In the Middle East, the Greens backed the US regime-change operations in Syria and Libya.

Two other elements of the Bandt interview should be noted. He was asked about a new “antisemitism taskforce” that has been established by the Labor government. The *Australian* noted that Bandt did not explicitly support the initiative, but neither did he denounce it.

In fact, the taskforce is the latest stage in Labor’s offensive against anti-genocide sentiment, establishing a permanent body

of spies, federal and state police and other government agencies to investigate, monitor and harass supporters of the Palestinians, based on a fraudulent conflation of opposition to the genocide with antisemitism. Bandt’s refusal to condemn this initiative shows that a Greens-backed Labor government would continue the assault on democratic rights.

Secondly, Bandt was asked about claims that the Greens had abandoned their support for a “two-state solution.” He rejected this, declaring: “Our position is to support both Israelis’ and Palestinians’ rights to self-determination under international law and ensure there’s a just and lasting peace where they both have the security they’re entitled to.”

That is, the Greens support the continued existence of Israel, a state based on imperialist colonialism and racial apartheid. The past 75 years, as well as the genocide itself, have demonstrated that the “two-state solution” is a dead letter. Even if it came to fruition, it would mean a Palestinian Bantustan, ruled over by the corrupt puppets of the US and Israel in the Palestinian Authority, and subject to attacks by the inherently expansionary Zionist regime.

In other interviews, Bandt has hailed the experience of the Gillard Labor government as the model to be emulated. From 2010 to 2013, the Greens were in a formal alliance with that minority government, ensuring supply and confidence. The Gillard administration supported Israel, began Australia’s alignment with the US preparations for war against China, persecuted refugees and took the axe to healthcare, education and welfare.

Conclusions must be drawn. The Greens are a right-wing capitalist party that offers no way forward against the genocide or any of the other pressing issues facing working people. They are bitterly opposed to the socialist and revolutionary perspective that is the only way to end war, inequality and increasing authoritarianism.



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