

Australian Greens back Royal Commission witch-hunting opposition to Gaza genocide

Oscar Grenfell
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Shortly after Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced a Royal Commission last Thursday, ostensibly into the December 14 attack in Bondi, the move was effusively welcomed by the Australian Greens. The inquiry, the Greens claimed, was a “chance to learn hard lessons” from the terrorist atrocity.

In reality, the Commission, as its terms of reference and the ruling-class campaign for its establishment make clear, has nothing to do with uncovering how the Bondi terror attack occurred. Instead, the horrific murder of 15 people is being exploited to establish what will be a witch-hunting body, aimed at suppressing mass opposition to the genocide in Gaza, based on the slander that it is antisemitic, the label falsely applied to all criticism of Israel’s actions.

The Greens’ immediate support for such an operation is highly revealing. Throughout the more than two years of Israel’s bombardment, the party has condemned the war crimes, seeking to win support on that basis from workers and particularly young people.

But, amid a sharp shift in the situation and an escalation of the protracted campaign to outlaw mass opposition, the Greens are falling into line, demonstrating that their previous criticisms were phoney posturing.

The statement, issued in the name of acting party leader Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, was an exercise in cynical double-speak. Hanson-Young presented the Commission as a bona fide examination of the circumstances of the Bondi attack, aimed at preventing another such tragedy.

In doing so, the Greens leader said nothing at all about the circumstances of Albanese’s announcement. He called the inquiry, after a campaign spanning weeks by the corporate media, the Liberal-National Coalition, far-right parties, business groups and Zionist supporters of Israel.

All of them had insisted that a Royal Commission was urgently necessary, not to examine how the intelligence

agencies failed to prevent the attack, but to crack down on hostility to the genocide, including by banning protests and vilifying pro-Palestinians as antisemites.

Labor governments have led the campaign to shift responsibility for the December 14 shootings on those who protest the Israeli genocide in Gaza, which all the Labor governments, state and federal, have defended and justified.

The Royal Commission has been tasked with formally determining that fact.

Hanson-Young issued the statement after Albanese had made clear he was giving these reactionary forces exactly what they wanted. Three of the four terms of reference for the Commission centre on vilifying opposition to the genocide and boosting the powers of the state, with just one of them directly relating to the circumstances of the attack itself.

In his remarks announcing the Commission, Albanese had presented pro-Palestinian protests as an unacceptable threat to public safety. He had declared that his government accepted a definition of antisemitism that outlaws strident criticism of Israel. And he reiterated that Labor was committed to implementing the recommendations of a report prepared by its Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism Jillian Segal, for the defunding of public institutions that fail to stamp out such criticism, Zionist censorship of the entire press and pro-Israeli propaganda throughout the education system.

Hanson-Young and the Greens were aware of all of this. They chose not to mention it, because it thoroughly exposed their duplicitous presentation of the Commission as an impartial fact-finding mission.

Indeed, Hanson-Young went further, presenting the Royal Commission as some sort of exercise in national healing. It was a “chance to learn hard lessons while minimising divisive politics in crafting a national response to the anti-Semitic Bondi mass shooting.” This

could contribute to “bringing together multicultural Australia to reinforce our values of tolerance, democracy and respect.”

All of which is the most cynical of political double-speak.

The Greens should explain to the millions of people who oppose the genocide how defaming them as antisemitic and blaming them for a terrorist attack will “reinforce” the values of “tolerance” and “respect.”

They might also tell Muslims and immigrants how the government’s racist dog-whistling will “bring together multicultural Australia.” The terms of reference include suggestions of tightening the already racist and draconian border control regime, including with Trumpian interrogations of immigrants about their political beliefs.

The statement concluded with a declaration of complete support for the government. “The Greens will continue to work constructively with the Government to ensure our communities are safe and free of hate and prejudice,” Hanson-Young stated.

This is the same government that the Greens were correctly accusing of complicity in a genocide not so long ago, and of fuelling prejudice and division by attacking opponents of it.

The Greens’ response will no doubt come as a surprise to layers of workers and youth, who have supported its condemnations of the genocide. But the statement is not an aberration. It flows from the entire character of the Greens as a party of the capitalist state, committed to defending the existing order.

In the first instance, there is the question of the Greens’ previous condemnations of the genocide. Such condemnations were not connected to any political fight against the Labor government but to bolstering illusions in it. At protest after protest, and in statement after statement, the Greens appealed to Albanese and other Labor leaders to end their support for Israel and to oppose the genocide.

That line obscured the reality that Labor has backed the atrocities because it is a party of imperialist war. In practice, it has served to politically-neuter the mass opposition and subordinate it to the very government that is complicit in the genocide.

For the Greens, moreover, the genocide has always been a single issue. It has not prevented Greens’ parliamentary representatives from collaborating with the Labor government on other questions, including backing its pro-business environmental legislation late last year, and earlier supporting elements of its pro-developer housing

policies.

In the lead-up to the May, 2025 federal election, the Greens largely shelved their posturing over Gaza. Then party leader Adam Bandt did not raise the issue in his public appearances. In an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, he refused to repeat previous condemnations of Labor as complicit in the genocide.

Instead, the entire thrust of the Greens’ campaign was to obtain the balance of power in parliament and form a coalition with Labor. As part of this right-wing orientation, the Greens outlined their first costed military policy, including \$4 billion for the production of missiles and drones. That was a signal that the Greens would collaborate with Labor in the drive to war, not only against Palestine, but also in Australia’s frontline role in US-led preparations for war against China in the Indo-Pacific.

The Greens election campaign was a disaster, with the party losing three of its four lower house seats and its vote static amid widespread political disaffection. With the Greens running on the policy of forming a coalition with Labor, there was little reason for people to vote for it, rather than for Labor itself. Labor’s victory, in turn, was not an expression of support for that party, but of opposition to the Liberal-National Coalition and its association with the fascistic US President Donald Trump.

The Coalition was routed and remains mired in crisis. Under those conditions, the Greens are seeking to position themselves as the new second party of capitalist rule, “mature” enough to collaborate with the government and with the agencies of the capitalist state.

This open turn to the right is an indictment of pseudo-left parties, such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance, which presented the posturing of the Greens over Gaza as good coin and repeatedly gave their leaders a platform to sound off at pro-Palestinian protests.

Those seeking to fight war and the lurch towards authoritarianism must fight not only the Labor government, but also the Greens and their pseudo-left backers. What is required is an independent, socialist movement of the working class directed against the entire parliamentary set-up and a capitalist system that is hurtling towards barbarism.



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