

Australian Labor government exploits Trump assassination bid to intensify witch hunt against anti-genocide protests

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Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his key ministers have malevolently associated the attempted assassination of former US President Donald Trump with the ongoing demonstrations in Australia against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza—declaring the protests to be an attack on democracy.

Even as many unanswered questions remained about the circumstances behind the Trump shooting, Albanese called a media conference in Canberra to proclaim it was an attack on the “democratic values that Australians and Americans share.” He then declared that demonstrations against members of his government for its complicity in the intensifying Gaza onslaught had likewise “crossed the line.”

This was coupled with an expression of solidarity with the fascist ex-president. Echoing the US President Joe Biden’s concern for “Donald,” Albanese stated: “I’m relieved by the news that the former president is safe and doing fine, and I wish him and his family well.”

Albanese’s comments were in the same vein as those of Peter Dutton, the Liberal-National Coalition opposition leader, who posted on X/Twitter: “I send my best wishes to former president Trump after this shocking attempt on his life.”

Like Biden and the US Democrats, Albanese made no mention of the real threat to democracy presented by Trump himself.

Trump has not only repeatedly incited or backed violence by right-wing forces, including armed attacks on state capitols by militia groups. On January 6, 2021, he summoned a mob to Washington, seeking to kill or capture members of the US Congress, attempting to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election and instal Trump as a dictator-president.

Like Biden, Albanese presented a fairy-tale image of the political situation. “In Australia, as in the US, the essence and the purpose of our democracies is that we can express

our views, debate our disagreements, and resolve our differences peacefully,” he said.

These are governments that have threatened and attacked peaceful protests against the Gaza genocide. They have slandered participants as “antisemitic” and purveyors of “hate speech” for opposing a monumental war crime that has already killed nearly 200,000 Palestinians according to estimations published in the respected medical journal, *The Lancet*.

These are governments that also have combined their support for, and assistance of, the Israeli genocide with dramatically escalating the war against Russia in Ukraine and stepping up the related confrontation with China. This a drive for US global hegemony even at the potential expense of millions of lives in a nuclear conflagration.

Declaring that the temperature of the political debate had to be lowered, Albanese said: “There is nothing to be served by some of the escalation of rhetoric that we see in some of our political debates, political discourse, around the democratic world.”

Albanese then identified his target. Answering a journalist’s question about right-wing extremism and “election-related violence” in the US and Australia, he turned his fire directly at anti-genocide protests, not the far-right. He ramped-up his repeated denunciations of protests outside Labor members of parliament’s electorate offices.

While claiming to accept “peaceful demonstrations” as “fine,” Albanese declared: “I’ve expressed my concern that people [who] just dismiss actions outside electorate offices. These things can escalate, which is why they need to be called out unequivocally and opposed. The sort of incidents that we’ve seen outside some electorate offices are inappropriate... They’ve crossed the line.”

In a speech on Monday, Home Affairs Minister Clare O’Neil was even more explicit and ominous in accusing anti-genocide protesters of threatening democracy. She charged them with “terrorising politicians” and adopting the methods

of “despots.”

Speaking at the Museum of Australian Democracy in Canberra, O’Neil said “denying access to government services, terrorising politicians and their staff, painting symbols of terrorism in public spaces, smashing windows, setting buildings alight—these are the measures of autocrats, despots and tyrants.”

Threateningly, as the minister in charge of “national security” and the domestic spy agency, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), O’Neil declared: “They have no place in our democracy.”

Her charges of “terrorism,” combined with unsubstantiated and inflammatory allegations, such as denying access to services and “setting buildings alight,” stink of preparations for political frame-ups and arrests.

O’Neil could not point to any concrete instances of violence resulting from pro-Palestinian protests, because there have been none. Labor governments, however, have repeatedly threatened the demonstrations while directing major police mobilisations against them, some of which have involved groundless arrests and acts of police brutality.

Although ostensibly directed at events at electorate offices, O’Neil’s accusations have a wider logic, directed against the continuing far-larger demonstrations and marches across the country over the past nine months. Their slogans and banners, such as “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” have been similarly demonised by the Labor governments and Zionist groups as advocating terrorism.

The real terrorism is being perpetrated daily by the Israeli regime, armed and defended by the US and all the imperialist governments, including Albanese’s. The massacres in homes, schools, hospitals, refugee camps and aid facilities are taking to a new barbaric level decades of Zionist terrorism against the Palestinian population.

O’Neil did not stop there. She insisted that the anti-genocide protests are part of a wider threat to democracy by the spread of misinformation, rise of new media platforms and “foreign interference.”

In keeping with the increasingly unpopular government’s ever-more provocative scare campaign against Russia and China, O’Neil said the government knew the nation’s adversaries were using “information warfare and psychological methods to sow discontent and disunity in our community.”

Even as she threatened the right to protest, O’Neil claimed that Australia was becoming an “island of democracy in a sea of autocracy.”

Seeking to bolster her accusations, O’Neil tried to draw a connection to last week’s still-unexplained sudden arrests of a Russian-Australian couple of vague charges of “preparing for an act of espionage,” supposedly on behalf of Moscow.

“Just last Friday, two Russian-born Australian citizens were accused of obtaining Australian Defence Force material to share with Russian authorities,” she said. “This was the first time an espionage-related offence has been laid in Australia since new laws were introduced in 2018.”

As the WSWS has pointed out, from what has been reported, this is a threadbare and politically manufactured case, apparently seeking to cultivate a wartime atmosphere against Russia.

Moreover, by insinuating the guilt of Kira and Igor Korolev, as Albanese did immediately last week, O’Neil has further prejudiced any chance of a fair trial.

Writing in the Murdoch media’s *Australian* on Monday, Albanese continued his pitch. He declared that “bringing people together” was important at a time of polarisation. “That has always been a driving force of my government, and in a moment like this, the project of coming together—of bridging our divides with respect and care—feels more vital than ever,” he wrote.

As with Biden’s pleas for “unity” in the US—which Trump has also raised—this is a political fraud. It is driven by a common fear of rising working-class disaffection with the bipartisan program of genocide, war, deteriorating living conditions and authoritarian rule. There can be no “unity” by workers and youth with this brutal ruling class.

In fact, the witch-hunting offensive by Albanese, O’Neil and the Labor government, which threatens basic democratic rights, demonstrates the necessity for a decisive working-class break from the entire political establishment. This means turning to a revolutionary socialist program to overturn the increasingly war-mongering, crisis-ridden and dictatorial capitalist order itself.

That is the perspective of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP). We urge all our readers to use the form below to sign up as electoral members of the SEP so that we can ensure that our party’s name is on the ballot for the coming federal election.



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