

Trump claims Trudeau's political scalp, paving way for far-right regime in Canada

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Justin Trudeau announced Monday that he will step down as Canada's prime minister just as soon as his Liberal Party chooses a successor.

Trudeau's resignation is part of a violent lurch of bourgeois politics to the right around the world. The rival imperialist ruling classes are restructuring politics in accordance with the oligarchical character of contemporary capitalist society and their drive to repartition the world through global war.

The return of the fascist and failed January 6, 2021 coup plotter Donald Trump both epitomizes this process and is serving to accelerate it.

Trudeau's resignation comes on the heels of the collapse of governments in Germany, France and now Austria. The European bourgeoisie has responded to Trump's election by rushing to heed his demand that Europe assume more of the burden of the NATO-instigated war with Russia and by pressing for a massive intensification of the assault on the working class.

Trump's trade war threats, his repeated mocking of Trudeau as a "governor"—the title of the chief executive of a US state—and his repeated suggestions that Canada should become the 51st state have massively destabilized Canadian imperialism and now sealed the political fate of Trudeau.

Trudeau responded to Trump's threat to impose 25 percent tariffs on Canada and Mexico from "Day One," unless they integrate themselves more fully into his war on immigrants and plans to militarize the external and internal borders of North America, by rushing to Mar-a-Lago.

However, his spineless genuflection before the fascist would-be dictator failed to appease Trump. Yesterday he eagerly claimed Trudeau's political scalp and repeated his effective call for Canada's annexation. This, moreover, he cast within the context of US imperialism's strategic conflict with Russia and China and his drive for a Fortress North America.

"Many people in Canada," proclaimed Trump on his Truth Media social media platform, "LOVE being the 51st State. The United States can no longer suffer the massive Trade Deficits and Subsidies that Canada needs to stay afloat. Justin Trudeau knew this, and resigned.

"If Canada merged with the U.S., there would be no Tariffs, taxes would go way down, and they would be TOTALLY SECURE from the threat of the Russian and Chinese Ships that are constantly surrounding them. Together, what a great Nation it would be!!!"

Paving the way for a far-right Conservative government

The immediate consequence of Trudeau's departure is that it clears the path for an early election and the coming to power in Ottawa of a Trump-like Conservative government, led by the far-right demagogue Pierre Poilievre—a government that will be ready to employ authoritarian methods and mobilize fascist, extra-parliamentary forces against the

working class.

Although Trudeau had repeatedly vowed to lead his party into the next election, his resignation at the beginning of the tenth year of his premiership surprised no one.

He had lost the support of decisive sections of Canada's corporate elite, which with increasing vehemence have been pressing for a far more aggressive pursuit of their predatory interests abroad and assault on the working class at home. And in recent months his support among the Liberals' parliamentary caucus disintegrated in the face of a string of by-election defeats and opinion polls that presaged an impending historic election wipeout.

Trudeau's position became untenable after Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland quit the government last month, on the very day she was scheduled to present its fall economic update. To ensure her resignation caused the maximum damage to Trudeau, she announced it through a public letter to the prime minister in which she chastised him for failing to properly gird Canadian imperialism to meet the challenge of Trump's America First agenda.

Canada's financial oligarchy is baying for a government that will secure Canada's favour in Washington by assuming a still greater role in three fronts of its global war—against Russia, China and Iran and its allies in the Middle East—and add hundreds of billions more to the massive military spending increases already implemented under Trudeau. They also are pressing for Ottawa to match Trump's tax cuts and eviscerate social spending so as to ensure the "competitiveness" of Canadian capitalism.

Poilievre has been groomed to carry out this agenda. The leader of the official opposition Conservatives, he came to political prominence first as the attack dog of Canada's neo-conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper and then by serving as the most strident advocate of the fascist-instigated "Freedom" Convoy, which menacingly occupied downtown Ottawa for more than a month in early 2022 with the backing of substantial sections of the ruling class.

The Liberals, for their part, are scrambling to demonstrate that they are the best instrument for imposing the ruling class's agenda. According to the corporate media, the frontrunners to replace Trudeau as Liberal leader are Chrystia Freeland and Mark Carney. The principal anti-Russia war hawk in the Trudeau government until her resignation last month, Freeland personifies the decades-long alliance between Canadian imperialism and Ukrainian fascism. As the head of first the Bank of Canada and then the Bank of England, Carney's name is synonymous with austerity for the working class and "cheap money" in the form of record low interest rates and quantitative easing for the financial elite.

That the ruling class has a free hand to fashion a class war government and Poilievre to make a demagogic social appeal to mass working class anger over falling real wages, the collapse of public services and an epidemic of homelessness is entirely due to the suppression of the class struggle by the trade unions, the social democratic NDP (New Democratic Party) and their pseudo-left hangers-on.

The union-sponsored NDP has propped up the minority Liberal government in parliament for the past five years, including for much of that time through a formal “confidence and supply agreement” that stopped just short of a coalition government.

Since the fall of 2021, Canada has been engulfed by a strike wave involving all sections of the working class, but the unions have striven might and main to divide workers’ struggles, confining them within the pro-employer collective bargaining system, imposing sell-out contracts and above all, blocking a working class political challenge to the Trudeau government as it broke strikes and lurched ever further to the right.

On December 16, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) unilaterally ordered the 55,000 Canada Post workers, among whom there was mass support for defiance, to bow to a patently illegal government strikebreaking order and did so even as the government was brought to the point of collapse by Freeland’s resignation.

CUPW’s surrender not only short-circuited the postal workers’ struggle, it ensured that it did not become the catalyst for a broader mobilization of the working class that could have swept Trudeau from office and created the best conditions to derail the ruling class’s plans to bring Poilievre and his Conservatives to power.

Is Canada for Trump what Austria was to Hitler?

There is no question Trump would welcome the coming to power in Ottawa of a kindred far-right spirit in the form of Poilievre—at least in the short term.

However, his provocative assertions that a country long touted by Washington as its “closest ally” should be absorbed by the US should not be dismissed as a negotiating ploy or even a mere manifestation of American imperialism’s appetite for domination.

Trump’s calls for Canada to become America’s 51st state have been voiced in the same breath as he demands Denmark sell Greenland to Washington and threatens to seize the Panama Canal.

The Canadian ruling class, as manifested in its embrace of Poilievre, largely shares Trump’s agenda. It favours a social policy along US lines. That is, the destruction of public healthcare and what else remains of the welfare state, further massive tax cuts for big business and the rich, and the elimination of all environmental and other regulatory restraints on capital. It also wants to restore US imperialist hegemony, which for more than three-quarters of a century has provided the framework for advancing its own predatory interests and to share in global plunder.

To be sure, at this point the dominant faction of the Canadian bourgeoisie wants to keep its federal state, dominion over the world’s second largest country and its vast resource wealth, so as to provide itself the most leverage in negotiating its place in a US imperialist-led Fortress North America.

But Trump’s tariff war threat and other demands are exacerbating the deep-rooted regional conflicts within the Canadian bourgeoisie, as different factions of the ruling class based in regions that play different roles in the US-dominated continental economy vie to defend their respective interests.

When Trudeau and Ontario Premier Doug Ford raised the possibility of responding to Trump’s tariff threats by imposing an export tax on Canadian oil, natural gas and uranium exports to the US, the far-right premiers of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the provinces where these resources are centred, immediately warned such action would provoke a “national unity” crisis. Danielle Smith, the premier of Alberta, whose exports account for more than 20 percent of US daily oil consumption, has now invited herself to Trump’s inauguration.

Trump, as is his wont, will try to exploit these divisions.

Given all this and the incoming fascist president’s now oft-repeated call for Canada’s “merger” with the US, a critical question logically follows: Is Canada for Trump what Austria was for Hitler? In March 1938, in the name of *Anschluss* (joining) of Austria and as part of his preparations for World War II, Hitler invaded Austria, overthrew that country’s far-right government and made it an integral part of the German Third Reich.

Whatever transpires in the coming months, Trump’s treatment of US imperialism’s Canadian junior partners underscores that as the most powerful imperialist states seek to resolve the contradiction between an ever more integrated world economy and its division into competing nation-states vying for global hegemony, the map of the world will be redrawn.

The question is will the world be united through a third imperialist world war—which would drag humanity into the abyss—or from below, by the united action of the working class to put an end to the domination of the capitalist oligarchy, exploitation and war.

In mobilizing the working class against the predatory agenda of the ruling class, its trade and shooting wars, the trade unions and the establishment left parties are worse than useless. They serve only as the recruiting sergeants for their respective bourgeoisies.

The unions on both sides of the Canada-US border and NDP work systematically to divide Canadian, US and Mexican workers, while supporting the war agenda of US and Canadian imperialism. The flag-waving Canadian union bureaucracy argues against Trump’s tariffs and for Canadian imperialism to have a privileged position within a Fortress North America on the basis that Canadian exports of steel and aluminum and its rare earth reserves are essential to US war production.

Workers in Canada can only oppose the Liberal government, Poilievre, the various right-wing representatives of the competing regional factions of the bourgeoisie from Quebec’s Legault to Alberta’s Smith, and last but not least Trump, by intensifying the class struggle against the Canadian bourgeoisie and by forging unity with workers in the US and Mexico in the fight for a socialist North America as part of a world socialist federation of states.



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