

Canada's prime minister-in-waiting Pierre Poilievre outlines anti-worker agenda in interview with far-right huckster Jordan Peterson

Niles Niemuth
7 January 2025

Conservative Party of Canada leader Pierre Poilievre outlined his anti-worker and pro-corporate agenda in a nearly two-hour interview with far-right internet personality and political huckster Jordan Peterson posted online on January 2. The interview has just over 2.8 million views on YouTube and received over 42 million views on X, having been reposted by the platform's owner and world's richest person, Elon Musk, amid his ongoing rampage of posts promoting fascist forces in the US, UK, Germany and France.

It is no coincidence that Poilievre, who generally shuns media interviews, chose to sit down for an extensive discussion with Peterson. In fact, that was his second interview with him in two-and-a-half years.

Peterson, a psychologist by training, is more well known for his deep ties to the international far right, most critically to incoming US President Donald Trump and his backers in the American right-wing media and ruling class circles. He has made a name for himself and a swelling fortune by promoting self-help quackery, vicious anti-communism and anti-egalitarianism and other forms of political reaction and Christian obscurantism—all with the aim of building up far-right and fascist forces. Among the sponsors of the program on which Poilievre appeared were an anti-abortion organization and a vitamin supplement company. Significantly, the interview with Poilievre was followed up by the repost of an interview Peterson did with Tommy Robinson, Britain's most notorious fascist, who has recently become a cause celebre of Musk.

In November 2022, Peterson was ordered by the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee of the College of Psychologists of Ontario to complete a continuing education course in professionalism in relation to public statements. The ICRC found that statements he had made in that year, “may be reasonably regarded by members of the profession as disgraceful, dishonourable and/or unprofessional” and that they “posed moderate risk of harm to the public” by “undermining public trust in the profession of psychology.” Peterson has rejected these claims and resisted taking the course, challenging the ICRC all the way to the Canadian Supreme Court, which rejected his appeal in August 2024.

The far-right populist Poilievre came to the leadership of the Conservative Party in 2022 as the most strident advocate and defender of the “Freedom” Convoy, a mob of far-right elements influenced by the likes of Peterson, who menacingly occupied downtown Ottawa for a month demanding the final elimination of all COVID-19 mitigations. The 45-year-old Poilievre has been a member of parliament for 20 years, having won election to the Ottawa regional riding of Nepean-Carleton in 2004 for the Conservatives after years of activism in its principal predecessor, the right-wing populist Reform Party. He cut his teeth as one of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's leading attack dogs, serving in his

cabinet between 2013 and 2015.

Poilievre's recent rise to prominence with the backing of big business and the mainstream media has been based largely on populist agitation against the “elitist” Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He absurdly denounces Trudeau as a socialist and Marxist, blames “Justinflation” for the surging cost of living, and as in the case of COVID-mitigation measures and vaccine mandates attacks the Liberals in far-right libertarian terms for taking away “people's rights.” He has promised to remove regulatory restraints on resource industries, especially the oil and gas sector, and to “axe the tax,” meaning he would eliminate the carbon tax implemented by the Liberals with the promise of using market forces to combat climate change in 2019.

Amid ongoing agitation by incoming US President Donald Trump threatening punishing tariffs and referring to Canada as the 51st State and Trudeau as “governor,” the Prime Minister announced his resignation on Monday. Trudeau's resignation sets the stage for an election in the spring, which polling shows Poilievre and the Conservatives are set to win in a landslide under the country's “first past the post” system.

Recorded on December 21 and posted under the title “Canada's Next Prime Minister,” Peterson gave Poilievre the opportunity to rehash much of his tried and true rhetoric to his base in Canada and the far right internationally. Poilievre promised that a government under his leadership would “unleash free enterprise” by slashing taxes, federal social spending and regulations, while dramatically expanding funding for the military and carrying out “the biggest crackdown on crime in Canadian history.”

He struck a decidedly Trumpian pose throughout, denouncing the Liberals and NDP as “socialists,” declaring, “[W]hat they try to do is change their names and move on and try to forget, have everyone forget their past. And when I say that he had, socialists changed their names, I mean, you know, they first, they were communists, and then they became socialists, and then they became social democrats, and then they became, they stole the word liberal, and then they ruined that word, so they changed their name to progressives, and then they changed their name to woke, and now they claim they don't want to be called woke anymore. The socialists always try to disown the things they've done because it's manifestly disastrous.”

Poilievre also reiterated his determination to put “Canada first” by offering the Canadian working class up for deeper exploitation, remarking, “Let's bring it back. Let's make this the best place to get a return on your investment. Let's make this the best place in the world to do business. To bring hundreds of billions of dollars of investment to dig mines, build pipelines, business centers, new tech companies, drill, high tech enterprises that you not only invent here, but you actually keep here

because it's not just a great place to lose money, but a great place to make money." Among the countries he held up as economic models for Canada were the autocratic-governed Singapore, and Israel, which is ruled by the genocidal far-right Netanyahu regime.

This was combined with a call for a crackdown on immigration that would go far beyond the Trudeau government's recently announced plans to force temporary residents to leave in such numbers that Canada will experience its first-ever decline in population. "We have to slow down the numbers," declared Poilievre. "There's no doubt about it. We have to end the fraud and the international student and the temporary foreign worker program. Canada historically had a very effective immigration policy. We just have to get back to the best system in the world, which we had for 150 years." He clarified, however, that he remained supportive of programs which bring in migrant workers, especially in agriculture, who are routinely abused by employers without any of the rights conferred by residency or citizenship, and that a UN Special Rapporteur has criticized for promoting "modern slavery."

Combined with new limits on immigrations, Poilievre also promised to suppress opposition to Canada's imperialist foreign policy, which most recently has taken the form of protests by hundreds of thousands of Canadians across the country against the Liberal government's support for Israel's genocide in Gaza. The Conservatives, for their part, have repeatedly attacked the Trudeau government for not being still more stridently supportive of Israel's rampage across the Middle East.

"Foreign conflicts are now spilling onto our streets. I want to put an end to that," Poilievre blustered. "I want to say, look, we're not interested in the world's ethno-cultural conflicts. We welcome people who come from places that have been afflicted by war as long as they leave the war behind. And frankly, most people come here to get away from those things. So by getting back to a common sense of values and identity and reminding people that they are, when they get here, they are Canadian first, Canada first. Leave the hyphens. We don't need to be a hyphenated society."

When asked by Peterson to outline who would be key players in his government, he pointed to MP Andrew Scheer, a former Conservative leader known for his strident social conservative views who now serves as Opposition House leader in Parliament; MP Leslyn Lewis, one of the most staunchly anti-abortion and pro-Israel MPs who came to prominence after she met with a member of the fascist Alternative for Germany in 2023; MP Jamil Jivani, a close friend of US Vice President-elect JD Vance when they both attended Yale Law School; and MP Melissa Lantsman, one of the most vociferous Zionist defenders of Israel and its genocide against the Palestinian people in Parliament.

Poilievre also highlighted the far-right premiers of Alberta and Saskatchewan, Danielle Smith, an open Trump supporter, and Scott Moe as key backers of his reactionary political agenda. They have both overseen extreme austerity in their provinces, including attacks on public healthcare and education, and were vocal advocates of the scrapping of all anti-COVID mitigation measures. In 2019, Moe supported the use of far-right thugs to intimidate the locked-out Coop Refinery workers in Regina.

Poilievre and the Conservatives' ability to make a demagogic populist appeal to rising social anger amid a surging cost of living and a deepening housing crisis has been made possible above all by the union apparatus and the New Democratic Party, which have combined to suppress the class struggle. Through the union/NDP, Liberal alliance, they have ensured that Trudeau could implement his ruling-class agenda of massive bailouts for corporate Canada during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, huge increases in military spending, war against Russia in Ukraine, and the systematic breaking of strikes. This has been especially true since 2019, with the NDP keeping the minority Liberal government in power. In 2022, the NDP signed a "supply and confidence agreement," which NDP leader Jagmeet Singh justified as being necessary to ensure

"political stability."

The union bureaucracies, in conjunction with the strikebreaking Liberal government, meanwhile have fought might and main to suppress a powerful and growing strike wave across Canada since late 2021. The unions have endeavoured to keep every strike confined to the pro-employer "collective bargaining" system. Union bureaucrats also blocked all attempts by workers in Canada to unite with their class brothers and sisters in the US, even as the Trudeau government connived with the Biden administration to smash strikes by rail workers and dockers in the interests of the ruling elites on both sides of the border.

The rise of the far-right Poilievre and his Conservatives with the backing of key sections of big business must serve as a warning. While, as polls show, many are ready to send the hated Liberals and their NDP associates to the curb, the increasingly openly fascistic Conservatives are a looming threat to the working class. The ruling elites are preparing even more draconian measures to increase exploitation, eviscerate what remains of social services and environmental and other regulatory restraints on capital, and suppress the class struggle.

The only way forward is through the fight to wrest control of society from the hands of the capitalist oligarchs who stand behind these parties and the expropriation of their wealth for the benefit of all of society. This must involve a decisive political break with the union/NDP/Liberal alliance and repudiation of its fraudulent claim that the far right can be stopped by a "progressive" coalition of capitalist parties. This can only be accomplished through the building of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood in association with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees to mobilize the independent industrial and political power of the working class. The fight to unify the workers across North America and internationally in opposition to the ruling elite's savage class war agenda requires the training of a Marxist revolutionary leadership through the building of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada) and the International Committee of the Fourth International.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact