

Growing support for far right and targeting of Trudeau within Canada's military

James Clayton, Keith Jones
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Two recent events expose the growing threat to the working class posed by far-right elements within the Canadian Armed Forces: a fascistic rant given by one of Canada's top generals, and threats made by disgruntled military veterans against the life of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Both incidents reflect the increasing self-confidence of fascistic forces in Canada, which lack a broad base of popular support, but enjoy backing from powerful elements within the ruling elite and state apparatus.

On November 9, at arguably the most important military social event of the year, retired Lt. General Michel Maisonneuve received the "Vimy Award," which the Conference of Defence Industries Institute bestows annually on a "Canadian who has made a significant and outstanding contribution to the defence and security of Canada and the preservation of (its) democratic values."

In the form of his acceptance speech—and before Trudeau's national security adviser, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and much of the top ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the arms industry—General Maisonneuve delivered a fascistic "Make Canada Great Again" diatribe.

Even more significant was the audience reaction. Maisonneuve's denunciations of the elected government and the working class, were, from all reports, greeted with a standing ovation by the assembled CAF officer corps.

Maisonneuve denounced the social elements which allegedly stand in the way of Canada's renewed "greatness"—"first-year graduates of woke journalism schools" and workers relying on "endless subsidies and handouts," who are not "taking personal responsibility for" their "actions."

The General decried "the toppling of statues," referring to the removal of statues of Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, who directed a genocidal campaign to dispossess First Nations people of their lands so as to open them up for capitalist development.

Other than "our troops," the only recent figures for whom Maisonneuve had praise were Margaret Thatcher, Queen Elizabeth II, and Ukraine's President and NATO puppet war leader Volodymyr Zelensky. Canada, bemoaned Maisonneuve, lacks a "great leader" such as Zelensky. To him, Maisonneuve offered up the fascist salute, "Slava Ukraini!" or "Glory to Ukraine," crafted and championed by the Nazi collaborationist Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

In the manner of a typical fascist "stab in the back" speech, Maisonneuve accused the Trudeau government, if not the civilian population as a whole, of betraying the military. He declared that the Canadian Armed Forces are under-resourced and lack "state-of-the-art tools" for "taking to the world stage" and "seeking alliances." This is

coded language for providing military support to US imperialism's wars and strategic offensives around the world, which are raising an ever growing danger of a global conflagration with Russia and China.

Maisonneuve's claim that civilian authorities are letting down the military and thereby putting the country at risk is one of the most notorious leitmotifs of far-right and fascist movements throughout history, including Hitler's Nazis.

Intimating that the public fails to properly appreciate the "sacrifices" the military makes on its behalf, Maisonneuve lamented, "The idea of serving in our armed forces is getting little traction."

The officer corps' enthusiastic response to Maisonneuve's speech underscores that he articulated the sentiments of broad sections of the military-security establishment.

Much of the military top brass regard the Trudeau government's domestic, military and foreign policies with disdain. They believe it is insufficiently politically and financially committed to the projection of imperialist power abroad; view its identity-politics-based "diversity" agenda and promotion of the myth of Canada as a "peacekeeping" nation as threats to military discipline and morale; and are angered by its pursuit of sexual assault and misconduct allegations against more than a dozen top-rank officers. They would like to see the establishment of a more explicitly right-wing and authoritarian regime to more ruthlessly defend Canadian imperialist interests against its geopolitical rivals abroad and the working class at home.

The support broad sections of the political elite, state security services and corporate media gave the far-right "Freedom" Convoy as it menacingly occupied downtown Ottawa last year underscored that Canada's ruling class, like its counterparts internationally, is breaking with traditional democratic forms of rule. If the Convoy, which was instigated and led by far-right and fascist activists, many of them "independent" truckers and other small business people or military veterans and retired police, could come to play such a prominent role in national political life, it was because it was built up and incited by the official opposition Conservatives, the hard-right premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, and right-wing media outlets like the *National Post* and *Toronto Sun*. They used the Convoy as a battering ram to overcome the widespread public support for anti-COVID-19 public health measures. By whipping up a far-right extra-parliamentary movement they also sought to push the Trudeau government further right, destabilize it and if possible precipitate its collapse.

Ultimately, under mounting pressure from the Biden administration, international investors and big business to end the Convoy supporters' blockading of critical cross-border trade routes, the Trudeau government invoked the never-before-used Emergencies Act, thereby

granting the state and its police and security agencies sweeping powers of repression. While these powers were initially turned against the far-right occupiers of downtown Ottawa, they can and will be used in the future against working class opposition to the ruling elite's class-war agenda of military aggression abroad and attacks on wages and public spending at home.

In his acceptance speech, Maisonneuve gave vent to his outrage over the Trudeau government's dispersal of the Convoy. Saying perhaps more than he intended, Maisonneuve commented, "Can you imagine a military leader labelling half of his command as deplorables, fringe radicals or less-thans and then expect them to fight as one?" The insinuation is that large parts of the Canadian military supported the Convoy.

The Trudeau government, which relies on backing from the social democrats of the New Democratic Party to retain power, responded to Maisonneuve's tirade with an embarrassed silence. Defence Minister Anita Anand offered only a single critical comment, which was buried in the press.

The fact that the fascistic filth spewed forth by Maisonneuve has a growing constituency within Canada's military, including its officer corps, is a damning indictment of the policies pursued by successive governments, the Trudeau Liberals included, in support of Canadian imperialism's global predatory ambitions. Three decades of wars and military interventions, including in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Haiti, Libya, Syria, Iraq and now Ukraine, have created a substantial pool of bloodied, battle-hardened and disgruntled soldiers and officers. In the regular performance of their duties, many of these will have participated in war crimes, including torture and civilian killings. The most disoriented have been primed to throw in their lot with a fascist movement.

More significantly, as the entire political establishment rallies behind the US-NATO war with Russia, there is a growing recognition throughout the ruling elite that more authoritarian forms of rule will be required to squeeze the financial resources out of the working class that Canadian imperialism needs to fund its war machine. Already, the Liberal government has committed to spending over half a trillion dollars over the next two decades to fund new weapons and weapons systems, including new fleets of F-35 fighter jets, warships and armed drones. Meanwhile, health care is collapsing across the country, as a growing number of patients die while waiting for care in overwhelmed emergency rooms, and public education is subject to brutal austerity.

In Ukraine, Canada and the Trudeau government have been openly allied with fascists for years. As part of its Ukraine military training mission, "Operation UNIFIER," the CAF helped supervise the integration of the Azov battalion and other fascist paramilitary units into the Ukrainian Armed Forces and National Guard. This campaign to create a powerful Ukrainian army, based on celebrating the fascist political tradition of the OUN, which participated in the Nazi Holocaust in Ukraine, was crucial to preparing NATO's war against Russia.

Canadian imperialism has long been instrumental in promoting the Ukrainian far-right. It provided a safe haven for thousands of OUN fighters following World War II, whitewashed their crimes and assisted them in disseminating their nationalist-fascist ideology. The alliance between the Ukrainian far-right and the Canadian state is documented in last year's WSWs series "Canadian imperialism's fascist friends."

These imperialist operations have fostered growing support within the military for far-right politics. One group expressing this

development is the misnamed "Veterans for Freedom" (V4F), which agitated against anti-COVID public health measures. Last month it hosted a "Veterans' Round-Table: Coping Strategies for a Canadian Commie Christmas" in which participants chatted about the need to "take-out" Trudeau.

In the YouTube video, Retired Naval Officer Andrew McGillivray described secret insubordination by members of Canadian Armed Forces' elite Special Forces unit JTF2, who are assigned to protect Trudeau. They allegedly keep an enlarged photo of themselves posing with Trudeau in their ready room, which shows Trudeau smiling and the two soldiers with "shitty looks." This prompted Afghan veteran Shaun Arntsen to muse: "Makes me wonder what's going through their heads. I mean, why aren't they fucking doing anything? They see everything through the back door, They're the 'Praetorian Guard'... it's how Caesar got taken out." Arntsen's suggestion that the troops should either assassinate Trudeau or carry out a military coup was met with approval by other round-table participants.

There is ample precedent and reason to fear an attempt on the prime minister's life from the military. On July 2, 2020, CAF reservist Corey Hurren crashed a truck laden with heavy weapons through the gates of Rideau Hall, where Trudeau was temporarily residing, in an assassination attempt. The Liberal government and Canadian state covered up the attack. They refused to even characterize it as a failed attack on Trudeau's life, dismissing it as an "isolated incident" perpetrated by a disoriented individual. In fact, Hurren was a long-standing proponent of far-right conspiracy theories and was on active duty when he was detained.

The Ontario Provincial Police has alleged that Daniel Bulford, an RCMP sniper and intelligence officer who served on Trudeau's security detail, leaked the Prime Minister's schedule to his far-right allies, before resigning from the force in late 2021 to protest the federal government's COVID vaccine mandate. Bulford was subsequently a leading figure in the "Freedom" Convoy's security operations.

The increasing assertiveness of fascistic elements within the military and state apparatus in Canada is part of an international phenomenon rooted in the global capitalist crisis. In the United States, ex-President Donald Trump and key collaborators within the Republican Party and state apparatus remain free more than two years after attempting a fascist coup on January 6, 2021, to prevent president-elect Biden from assuming office. Last week, a copycat operation was attempted by the supporters of far-right Brazilian ex-president Jair Bolsonaro in Brasilia. Military generals in France and Spain have openly speculated about launching military coups and massacring large portions of the population, while in Germany numerous far-right terrorist networks have intimate ties with the armed forces and state intelligence agencies.



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