

# Oppose austerity, imperialist war, Trump and “Team Canada”! Unite Canadian, US and Mexican workers in the fight for a workers’ North America!

Socialist Equality Party (Canada)

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Canada’s federal election campaign is unfolding amid the greatest crisis of world capitalism since the Great Depression, which culminated in the second imperialist world war, the Holocaust and the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The response of the American and Canadian ruling classes and their imperialist counterparts globally to capitalism’s systemic crisis is the evisceration of working people’s social and democratic rights, authoritarianism and war. That of the working class must be the development of a unified international movement for socialism.

America’s would-be dictator president, Donald Trump, has launched a global trade war that is roiling the North American and world economy, triggering job cuts and price rises that will have a ruinous impact on workers the world over.

Trump has hit Canada and Mexico, America’s ostensible continental “free trade” pact partners, with a barrage of tariffs, and he has vowed to use “economic force” to make Canada America’s 51st state.

The trade unions and the New Democratic Party (NDP), the organizations that claim to speak in the name of the working class, have responded to these developments by rallying round the ruling class’ “Team Canada.” Those now at its helm are Mark Carney, the former central banker and newly-minted Liberal Prime Minister, and Ontario Progressive Conservative Premier Doug Ford, till recently a Trump enthusiast. Under their leadership, Canada is exchanging tariff broadsides with Washington, with Ford repeatedly gushing at the pain they will inflict on American workers.

The claims, eagerly promoted by the unions and the NDP, that “Team Canada” is fighting for workers’ jobs and that “we are all in this together” are a monstrous fraud.

The Canadian ruling class opposes Trump solely from the standpoint of defending its profits and privileges. Their goal is to secure Canadian imperialism a duly recognized place as a junior partner in a Trump-led Fortress North America aimed at asserting US global hegemony.

Behind the nationalist flag-waving, the ruling class is moving to implement a massive assault on the social position of the working class. What they mean by strengthening Canada’s “economic resilience” and “sovereignty” is increased worker-exploitation and massive rearmament for war.

Workers must intervene independently in this crisis with their own socialist program and strategy to defend their class interests, which are irreconcilably opposed to those of both Canadian capital and Trump. They must not allow themselves to be dragooned into a predatory conflict of rival capitalist cliques that is being fought on the backs of the workers of North America and the world. Rather they must forge unity with workers

in the US, Mexico and beyond in the struggle to defend and secure the jobs and social and democratic rights of *all* workers.

To fight for this program, workers must build new organizations of class struggle, in political opposition to the unions and the NDP. If the next government will be led either by the servant of the oligarchs Carney or the far-right demagogue Pierre Poilievre, it is because the unions and NDP have systematically suppressed the class struggle. The labour bureaucrats’ role in “Team Canada” is a continuation and intensification of their decades-long corporatist integration with management and the state that has seen them impose round after round of contract concessions, enforce devastating job cuts in basic industry, and sabotage mass working class resistance to austerity. For the last five years, the unions and NDP propped up the Trudeau Liberal government as it waged war, broke strikes, imposed inflation-driven real wage cuts, and presided over the ruling class’ ruinous profit-before-lives COVID-19 pandemic policy.

## Trade warfare, imperialist world war and capitalist breakdown

Until only a few weeks ago, the Canadian ruling elite hailed American imperialism as its closest ally and the “leader of the rules-based world order.” Now its representatives denounce Trump for ruining the world’s closest economic and military-strategic partnership, coveting Canada’s territory and resources, and imperilling the future of the imperialist NATO alliance and global trade. But one searches in vain for any serious explanation of this abrupt change. The US president’s threats to annex Canada and launching of a global trade war are simply ascribed to his individual malevolence and ignorance.

Trump’s program is certainly mad, but it corresponds to a definite class logic. He is an authentic representative of the American financial oligarchy, which holds a vise-like dominance over socio-economic life, and is now seizing direct control of the state to ruthlessly assert Washington’s global hegemony and impose a social counter-revolution at home. The drive of the January 6, 2021 coup-plotter to establish a fascist dictatorship to prosecute global war and class war is the most advanced expression of a turn by all the imperialist ruling classes to war and authoritarianism. Germany’s ruling elite is returning to its Nazi heritage through the adoption of a huge rearmament program and the systematic promotion of the fascist Alternative for Germany. In France, the “liberal” Macron has overridden parliament and unleashed massive police violence to impose devastating pension cuts to pay for war, and connives with the

far-right National Rally in attacking immigrants and imposing austerity.

Trump's global trade war is one front in a frenzied drive of the US and all the imperialist states to redivide the world. Each is in a struggle against all, rivals and nominal "allies" alike, to seize and secure control over resources, markets, production networks and strategic territories. The collapse of Canada-US relations exemplifies this. America's closest military-strategic ally for over eight decades, Ottawa has now been targeted by Washington for annexation, as part of a new era of US territorial expansion.

As in the 1930s, the present trade war will, absent the independent political intervention of the working class, prove to be the antechamber for world war.

The conflicts between the world's imperialist and great powers are rooted in the objective contradictions of crisis-ridden capitalism—between an ever more integrated global economy and the division of the world into rival nation-states, and socialized mass production and the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a few oligarchs and megacorporations.

That this world crisis is centred in the United States reveals its intractable character. Long the chief bulwark of world capitalist stability, the United States has become the main source of global conflict and disequilibrium. To retain its position as the world's largest economy, centre of global finance, and cockpit of imperialist dominance, the American ruling class is using its overwhelming military superiority and residual economic clout to ruthlessly enforce its interests everywhere and against all. Hence its drive to secure unbridled control over its "near abroad" from Canada and Greenland to the Panama Canal, which it views as stepping stones to war with China and Russia. A key purpose of Trump's trade war, frankly spelled out in US Commerce Department documents, is to "inshore" military-industrial production chains.

Canadian imperialism is a protagonist in the repartition of the world, just as it was in the two world wars of the last century. In recent decades, under Conservative and Liberal governments alike, Canada has participated in a series of US-led wars of aggression and regime change operations, beginning with the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia in 1999 and the invasion and colonial-style occupation of Afghanistan. This culminated in Canada's major role in the US-NATO war on Russia in Ukraine, which was incited by the Western powers, and its unconditional backing for Israel's genocide of the Palestinians.

The Canadian bourgeoisie's preferred option is to continue this alliance of war and plunder by being "behind Trump's walls," as the *Globe and Mail*, the mouthpiece of Bay Street, put it during his first term. Indeed, one of the Canadian bourgeoisie's main complaints against Trump is that they should be jointly combatting China, through what Ford has dubbed a Fortress Am-Can, not fighting a trade war against each other.

Both Liberal and Conservative leaders Carney and Poilievre, under their respective "Canada Strong" and "Canada First" banners, have accepted Trump's offer to negotiate a new economic and security alliance with Washington as soon as the election is over. However, as a "hedge" and to provide leverage in these negotiations, Carney has initiated closer ties with the European powers based on their common resolve to continue the war on Russia at all costs and the prospect of corporate Canada assisting and profiting from Europe's massive rearmament drive.

The NDP, which has fully supported Canada's role in the war against Russia and its integration into the US military-strategic offensive against China, is now plumping for a "made in Canada" rearmament plan. Like Carney, it also favours increased cooperation with German, French and British imperialism.

Other factions of the ruling class, particularly in Alberta and Quebec, have dissented from "Team Canada" and are angling to cut their own deals with Trump to advance their respective mercenary interests. Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has presented Trump with a plan to put the

province's vast energy wealth at the service of his avowed aim of achieving global "energy dominance."

Workers must oppose Trump, but they can't do so by supporting the Canadian bourgeoisie or any of its rival factions as they maneuver to secure their "fair share" of the spoils of capitalist exploitation and to strike a better deal with Washington.

The only progressive answer to Trump, his America First predatory nationalism and the imperialist drive to repartition the world of which he is the most vulgar and forthright expression, is the mobilization of workers in Canada, the US and Mexico in a joint struggle for workers' political power and the building of a global working-class anti-war movement to put an end to capitalism.

- No to trade warfare, economic nationalism, and imperialist world war!
- Oppose Trump's threat to annex Canada! Down with Canadian imperialism!
- Abolish NATO and NORAD! Stop the Gaza genocide! Redirect tens of billions earmarked for militarism and war to meet the pressing social needs of the working class!
- For an international anti-war movement led by the working class, uniting workers in Canada, the US, Mexico, China, and beyond in the fight against capitalist barbarism!

### **The "Canadian values" fraud and the class war onslaught on workers' democratic and social rights**

In urging workers to rally behind the ruling class in its trade war, the country's principal union federation, the Canadian Labour Congress, declared: "What makes us Canadian is our unwavering belief in the collective—that we take care of each other, that no one gets left behind. Now more than ever, we must live those values."

The claim that Canada has a more "progressive" or "kinder, gentler" capitalism than the rapacious dollar republic to the south has always been a canard, used to politically bind workers hand-and-foot to the ruling class. This is even more true today.

Even as they fear and decry Trump, corporate Canada and its political mouthpieces view the would-be dictator in the White House as providing them with a golden opportunity to deploy their own "shock and awe" campaign to implement class war policies for which they have long been agitating. In the name of "strengthening" Canada, the corporate think tanks and media are clamouring for a raft of Trump-style measures. These include: massive tax cuts for big business and the rich; the gutting of all environmental and regulatory restraints on capital; massive social spending cuts; and, as advocated by the Business Council of Canada, the rapid rise in military spending to at least 3% of GDP or more than \$100 billion per year.

In so far as there are differences between public services and social policy in Canada and the US this is due to class struggle—not "Canadian values." In the 1960s and 70s, as the post-war boom collapsed, workers in Canada were able to wrench concessions from the comparatively weaker Canadian bourgeoisie through a wave of militant, but politically limited struggles, including numerous wildcat strikes.

Almost all of these gains have been clawed back by the ruling class over the past four decades, and in 2025, the same fundamental processes at work in the United States and internationally inexorably shape and constrain the lives of Canadian workers. Social inequality has reached unprecedented levels, with some 67 billionaires owning assets worth a combined \$299.5 billion as of March 2025, according to *Forbes*. Meanwhile, millions of workers and their families across the country struggle with the support of food banks to make ends meet. MNP's latest

survey on personal debt reported that half of all Canadians are \$200 or less away from not being able to meet their monthly financial obligations.

The vast gulf between the super-rich and the working class, and the sharpening domestic and international tensions produced by the capitalist crisis, are driving the financial oligarchy in Canada, as in the United States, to turn to authoritarian forms of rule. The normalization of the use of the “notwithstanding clause,” which allows governments to violate basic democratic rights supposedly guaranteed in Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the virtual abolition of the legal right to strike; the police-state crackdown on anti-Gaza genocide protesters; and the promotion of far-right and fascist forces—all of these developments expose the putrefaction of bourgeois democracy in Canada.

The leaders of the four federal parties officially represented in the last parliament very much embody the anti-democratic “values” of Canadian capitalism.

Liberal Prime Minister Carney has spent his entire adult life directly serving the interests of the financial oligarchy. From 2008 to 2020, he presided over massive austerity for the working class and mega-bailouts for big business, while serving, under savage right-wing Conservative governments, as the governor of the Bank of Canada and then the Bank of England. He subsequently served as a director of numerous blue-chip companies, including as chairman of Brookfield Asset Management, one of Canadian capitalism’s largest investment firms.

Poilievre emerged at the head of the Tories as the most strident supporter of the fascist-led Freedom Convoy, which with the backing of key sections of the ruling class occupied downtown Ottawa for close to a month in early 2022 to demand the scrapping of all remaining COVID public health measures. He is notorious for combining Trump-style attacks on immigrants with pledges to slash taxes, business regulations, and all other restraints on profit accumulation.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh has given full-throated support to the US-NATO war on Russia, including covering up Canadian imperialism’s decades-old alliance with Ukrainian fascism. His NDP propped up the Trudeau Liberal government for five years as it lurched ever further to the right. And it continued to do so last year as Ottawa arrogated the power to ban strikes by rail, port and postal workers based on a patently illegal, cooked-up reinterpretation of an obscure section of the Canada Labour Code.

Yves-Francois Blanchet leads the Bloc Quebecois, which together with its provincial sister party, the Parti Quebecois, has incited a vicious campaign of agitation against immigrants. The Quebec separatists want to establish an “independent” Quebec based on a far-right exclusivist nationalism—a state that would allow the corporate elite to cut a direct deal with Wall Street, and serve as a loyal US ally in NATO and NORAD.

- The working class must lead the struggle to defend democratic rights!
- Defend immigrant rights! Oppose the witch-hunting of refugees, and the promotion of Canadian and Quebec chauvinism!
- Build a mass movement to defy anti-democratic strike bans, including the arbitrary use of the Canada Labour Code’s Section 107 and the Quebec government’s impending anti-strike law, Bill 89!

### **The resurgence of the class struggle and the fight for rank-and-file committees**

In Canada, as around the world, capitalist breakdown in all its manifest forms—from war and environmental devastation, to the spread of food insecurity and homelessness—is fueling a resurgence of class struggle.

Since the fall of 2021, millions of workers from every sector of the economy and in every part of the country have taken to the picket lines, in

the largest strike wave in decades. But notwithstanding workers’ militancy and self-sacrifice, this working-class counteroffensive has manifestly failed to halt the decades-long fall in workers’ living standards, the gutting of working conditions, or the dismantling of public services.

Workers have invariably come up against two obstacles: the capitalist state, which intervenes with back-to-work orders or imminent threats of them whenever workers are in a position of strength, and the sabotage of the trade unions.

The unions systematically demobilize and divide workers, along sectional and regional lines within Canada. For decades, they have pitted Canadian workers against their international class brothers and sisters in a race to the bottom, especially in auto and other manufacturing sectors. During 2022 and 2023, the union bureaucracy on both sides of the Canada-US border did everything in their power to block joint struggles by rail workers, dockers, and autoworkers, even though contracts expired on both sides of the border simultaneously and the workers were, in some cases, members of the same union. While the unions kept Canadian and American workers divided, the Biden and Trudeau governments held cross-border consultations with employer organizations and union bureaucrats in a coordinated push to block North America-wide struggles in economic sectors key to waging war against Russia and boosting corporate profits.

The unions long ago renounced any association with class struggle. They are led by a caste of privileged bureaucrats with interests hostile to those of the workers they claim to represent. They insist that workers’ jobs, wages and—as the pandemic tragically demonstrated—lives must be subordinated to capitalist profit and a “globally competitive” rate of return for investors.

This finds legal-political expression in: 1) their insistence workers must confine their struggles within the straitjacket of the state-regulated, pro-employer collective bargaining system; 2) their subordination of workers to the capitalist political parties; and 3) their participation in myriad corporatist, tripartite—union, business, government—bodies, including those plotting corporate Canada’s strategy for the global trade war. Underscoring that this is a global phenomenon, the US unions, led by the UAW, endorse Trump’s trade war measures, while the unions in Europe are supporting the ruling elite’s drive to transition civilian industries to arms production.

The SEP fights for workers in every workplace to build rank-and-file committees, completely independent of the union apparatuses and controlled by workers themselves. Through such committees, workers can share information, counter the sabotage of the union bureaucrats, and link up their struggles across workplaces, industries and national borders so as to mobilize workers’ immense social power.

The SEP supports the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), which has been created as the means to unite workers around the world and coordinate their struggles in opposition to the poisonous nationalism of the trade union bureaucracy. With hundreds of thousands of jobs on the chopping block as the trade war intensifies, the IWA-RFC provides the means for workers in every country to defend all jobs, wages and working conditions.

- No to the unions’ support for trade war, economic protectionism and corporatist partnerships with big business and the governments of Canadian imperialism’s federal state!

- Workers must take all their struggles, whether over their terms of employment or against trade-war job cuts and plant closures, into their own hands! Build rank-and-file committees to place power where it belongs—in the hands of workers on the shop floor!

- Place the banks and all major corporations under public ownership and the democratic control of the working class! Expropriate the fortunes of the billionaire oligarchs! The working class must control the social wealth

it produces!

## **Workers need a new party to fight for workers' power and a socialist North America**

Whichever party or combination of parties forms Canada's next government, it will be a government of crisis. It will come to power amid Trump's threat to take over the country and a raging trade war, and be committed to imperialist war and social reaction. Convulsive social struggles will rapidly ensue.

If the working class is to meet this challenge, a radical change in its political orientation is urgently required.

The pivotal question is the development of revolutionary leadership. The working class needs its own mass socialist party, independent from and opposed to all of the capitalist parties, and oriented to the fight for a socialist North America. That is the party the SEP is fighting to build. We wage this struggle in opposition to all attempts to divide the working class on nationalist, regional or ethnic grounds, including through the promotion of identity politics.

Trump is a menace to the workers of Canada and the world. But workers can't fight him and all he represents—oligarchy, dictatorship and imperialist war—by lining up with the Canadian bourgeoisie, any of its rival factions or political representatives.

Rather, they must assert their independent class interests by forging a movement for workers' power and fighting to fuse their struggles with the mass opposition to Trump now emerging within the American working class. Canadian workers must assist their American colleagues in breaking free of the Democratic Party, which no less than Trump's fascist Republicans is a party of Wall Street and the CIA, and its trade union allies.

The cross-border movement must spearhead the struggle for a united socialist North America. This framework will provide the working class with the means to utilize the vast increases in labour productivity, made possible by globalized production and the technological revolution underpinning it, to meet pressing social needs and unleash human progress. It is the basis for liberating the productive forces from the fetters of the nation-state and production for profit, and ending their misuse under capitalism to enrich the few, intensify worker-exploitation and build more lethal weapons of mass destruction.

As an essential first step, workers must repudiate the union-NDP-Liberal alliance. For decades, workers have been prevailed upon to support the so-called "progressive" parties as the only means of preventing the coming to power of rabid right-wing Tory governments. The reality is all the parties are ruthless defenders of Canadian capital. The parliamentary rivalry between them is a crucial mechanism of class rule, used to manipulate and suppress social discontent, so as to impose the dictates of big business.

Workers can find inspiration as they break politically from the union/NDP/Liberal alliance in the traditions of joint struggle of the North American working class, which stretch back to the fight for the 10-hour workday in the 19th century. All the major upheavals of the working class in North America—from the Knights of Labor through the sit-down strikes of the 1930s, and the mass social struggles of the 1960s—galvanized support on both sides of the Canada-US border, including among the French-speaking workers of Quebec. The task today is to appropriate the best elements of these traditions and infuse them with a new, higher socialist content.

As Trump's trade war has so disruptively demonstrated, Canadian, American, and Mexican workers are exploited by the same giant multinationals and are involved in the integrated production of numerous

commodities, from cars to food stuffs. Alongside the SEP US and our co-thinkers in the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the SEP fights for the objective unity of North American workers to become a conscious revolutionary strategy. To Fortress North America, and the predatory ambitions of American and Canadian imperialism, whether as partners or cut-throat rivals, we counterpose the mobilization of the working class in the struggle for workers' governments in a united socialist North America, as an integral part of a world socialist federation.

This perspective, based on the common class interests of workers around the world, is the only viable answer to capitalist breakdown. Every issue confronting humanity, from war to climate catastrophe, pandemics and the bourgeoisie's revival of fascism, is global in scope, and can only be addressed through a united movement of the international working class to put an end to capitalism.

We urge all workers and youth who want to fight for a socialist future to join the SEP, study its decades-long history of struggle for a socialist and internationalist program, and build it as the mass party of the working class.



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