

Canada's ruling class doubles down on support for Gaza genocide amid federal election campaign

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Amid the campaign for the April 28 federal election, Canada's ruling class and its political representatives are doubling down on their full support for Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza, and the Zionist regime's drive to expel Palestinians en masse from both Gaza and the West Bank. This is evidenced by an escalating cross-Canada crack-down on any expression of political opposition to the genocide.

Israel has prevented all food, water, and other aid from entering Gaza since the beginning of March, leaving the population to starve to death amid Israel's resumption of daily air bombardments and ground operations in the enclave.

In the face of the Israeli military's daily slaughter of Palestinian men, women and children, Canadian imperialism remains entirely deaf to all demands for a change in its policy of staunch support for Israel. In fact, that policy is hardening.

It is now considered intolerable even for members of the political establishment to acknowledge the basic reality of Israel's illegal occupation of the lands it conquered in 1967 and the ongoing genocide. For workers, it may soon become a crime.

In remarks to electors at a Milton, Ontario mosque on April 11, Liberal Party candidate Adam van Koeverden called Israel's campaign of murder in Gaza by its rightful name— genocide. Stumping for votes, he claimed he would make sure that “your voices would be strong in Ottawa, to condemn the genocide, to end the genocide in Gaza, to continue to make sure that Palestinian voices would continue to be heard by our leaders.”

This of course is an outright lie. The Justin Trudeau-Mark Carney Liberal government, in which van Koeverden has served as a parliamentary secretary, has provided Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right regime with unstinting support as it has waged its genocidal onslaught on Gaza for the past 20 months.

This has included smearing opposition to the genocide as “antisemitism” and approving substantial exports of military equipment to Israel. When Van Koeverden was predictably condemned by the right and far right for his remarks, it came as no surprise that nobody in the Liberal Party came to his defense.

Earlier last week, Liberal Prime Minister Carney had walked back remarks in which he obliquely appeared to acknowledge the reality of Israel's genocidal onslaught. During an April 7 Calgary, Alberta election campaign event, a lone protester exclaimed that “Mr. Carney, there's a genocide in Palestine!” Carney replied:

“I'm aware. That's why we have an arms embargo.” Liberal supporters then drowned out any further embarrassing questions by chanting Carney's name.

In fact, there is no meaningful “arms embargo” against Israel. The federal government-owned Canadian Commercial Corporation is helping supply Israel with rocket propellant. A dozen activists attempted to shame the government into ending this contract over the weekend, when they occupied the campaign office of Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, Melanie Joly.

Carney's comments immediately drew fire from Netanyahu, who has been charged by the International Criminal Court with war crimes. He re-tweeted a politically dishonest X post by the far-right *Toronto Sun* journalist Bryan Pasifume, which falsely presented Liberal supporters' chants of “Carney! Carney!” as evidence of the party's support for Carney's supposed acknowledgement of a genocide taking place in Gaza.

Backed by the Canadian ruling class and the capitalist press, Netanyahu demanded, “Mr. Carney, backtrack your irresponsible statement!” and Carney did exactly that. On April 9, the newly-minted Liberal prime minister claimed that he did not hear the protester's shouted remarks correctly, and was only stating that “I was aware of the situation in Gaza.”

Karen Stintz, Conservative Party candidate for Eglington-Lawrence in Toronto and a former city councillor, slammed any accusation of genocide against “our ally Israel” as “both wrong and dangerous.” She claimed absurdly that the Liberal leader “perpetuates hate.”

Carney's capitulation to the demands of Netanyahu and the Conservatives is part of a process the *World Socialist Web Site* has identified as akin to the Nazis' push for *Gleichschaltung* (synchronization)—the enforced “falling into line” with state policy and ideology of all political and other institutions, with all opposing points of view essentially criminalized. This is expressed most clearly in the United States, where the fascistic Trump regime has declared that any opposition whatsoever—even in the form of thought—to Israel's genocidal policies, and to “American foreign policy objectives” by non-citizens is grounds for imprisonment and deportation.

This process is international, and is now finding clear expression in British, German, Australian and Canadian politics, as the ruling class responds to the spiralling crisis of world capitalism with a

policy of economic nationalism and preparations for world war. The crimes which their client state Israel is committing today, the imperialist countries conspire to commit tomorrow, on an infinitely vaster scale. The imperialist powers, first and foremost the United States, are backing Israel's genocide because they view it as an essential component of a policy of redrawing the map of the Middle East to consolidate Washington's hegemony against its major rivals, China and Russia.

In Canada, this process relates directly to the trade war with the United States. Canada's ruling class wants to obtain favourable trade terms from the Trump regime in a proposed "Fortress Can-Am" against China. It knows that a much closer alignment of Canadian domestic policy with Trump's attack on basic democratic rights in the US will be on the table when negotiations for a "new relationship" between the two countries begin immediately after the April 28 election.

Carney's apparent slip-up provided his chief electoral opponent, Pierre Poilievre, the far-right leader of the Conservatives, the opportunity to re-state his intention to follow the policy of the fascist US president and expel foreign students who protest against the genocide. "Anyone who is here on a visitor visa who carries out law-breaking will be deported from this country," he bellowed. Given that the very act of protesting the genocide has been labelled by the Conservatives as an antisemitic hate-crime, if not support for "terrorism," Poilievre's invocation of "law-breaking" is effectively a threat to expel all those who join a pro-Palestinian demonstration or encampment.

The Conservative leader has repeatedly smeared demonstrations against Israel's genocide as "antisemitic" "hate marches," even though many of the movement leaders and participants are anti-Zionist Jews. Poilievre has also labelled the anti-genocide protests as "violent"—effectively urging the police to crack heads—and tied his claim that "violence" from "foreign political developments" has "spilled over into our streets" to a more general incitement of hostility to immigrants.

As for the New Democrats, whose candidates have taken to criticizing Israel's genocide for electoral purposes, they were decisive in propping up Trudeau's Liberal government until the former prime minister stepped down in March and his successor, Carney, moved to call an early election. The NDP thereby enabled the Liberal government's backing for the genocide for a year and a half, during which time officially over 50,000 Palestinians died, and unofficially many more. The NDP, it need be added, played a key role in whipping up the intimidatory atmosphere targeting anti-genocide protesters. This was exemplified by its decision to throw Sarah Jama out of the Ontario NDP parliamentary caucus after she came under fire from Ontario Tory Premier Doug Ford and the corporate media for comments in solidarity with the Palestinian victims of Zionist state terror.

No matter who wins the election on April 28, the ruling class attack on free speech will continue. As in the United States, Canadian university administrations have begun to attack the basic democratic rights of their students. The administration of Montreal's McGill University has moved to de-recognize and cut off all funding for the Student Society of McGill University, (SSMU), which is officially recognized by the Quebec government

as the students' representative body, after a three-day student strike that demanded the university divest from corporations with ties to Israel and its military.

The fundamental hostility of the Canadian ruling class to basic democratic rights was also exposed with the exoneration of the so-called "Peace 11" protesters on a series of entirely concocted charges of "hate motivated criminal mischief" and "criminal harassment."

The activists, including several anti-Zionist Jews, faced up to 10 years in prison for splashing the front doors of an Indigo book store with washable red paint and putting up posters exposing the financial support of Indigo's owner, the billionaire Heather Reisman, for the IDF and its genocidal assault on the Gaza Palestinians. Reisman's Heseg Foundation provides financial support to so-called "lone soldiers," IDF veterans without family in Israel.

In November 2023, police raided the homes of the activists in the middle of the night. Using tactics recalling nothing so much as those of the Nazi Gestapo, the police broke down doors, and even handcuffed the parents of one of the accused.

The activists' arrest and prosecution now stands exposed as legal harassment and intimidation.

In fits and starts, the Crown gradually dropped all charges against seven of the accused. Two others were given an "absolute discharge" when their cases went to trial.

The remaining two have pled guilty. However, the judge in their cases has reserved his judgement. This has prompted many to conclude that they too will receive an "absolute discharge"—meaning that the Crown and police will have failed to secure a single criminal conviction despite spending hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of dollars on a baseless political prosecution.

The exoneration of the "Peace 11" has outraged defenders of Israeli genocide such as the *Toronto Sun*'s Warren Kinsella. The former Liberal Party strategist turned journalist and "crisis communications consultant" maintained in an April 14 column that the actions of the "Peace 11" were a "hate crime," even after the courts found, and the Crown has had to essentially admit, no crimes of any sort were committed.



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