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Canadian imperialism: predator, not prey, in global war

Keith Jones
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This speech was delivered by Keith Jones, Socialist Equality Party (Canada) national secretary, at the 2026 May Day Online Rally, organized by the WSWS and the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Canada's Liberal government stood out at the outset of the Iran war by giving full-throated support to US imperialism's illegal, unprovoked attack. Within hours of the first bombs raining down on Iran, Prime Minister Mark Carney rushed to repeat Trump's lying justifications and labeled Iran a threat to peace across the Middle East.

Canadian imperialism's complicity in this criminal war has only grown in the nine weeks since. Ottawa has long sought to cloak its predatory actions and ambitions behind the rhetoric of human rights and international law. But it has remained conspicuously silent on the rampage of war crimes the US and its Israeli attack-dog have perpetrated—Trump's threats to eliminate Iranian civilization, the Gaza-style bombardment of hospitals and residential neighbourhoods—while it condemns every action Iran has taken to defend itself.

Like the European imperialist powers, Canada backs Washington's drive to return Iran to the type of neo-colonial subjugation it endured under the Shah. What reservations Ottawa has concern only the manner of the war's conduct—beginning with Washington's exclusion of its NATO allies from its planning and prosecution.

Even as the war causes global economic havoc, the Carney government is working with Germany, France and Britain to intensify the NATO-instigated war with Russia over Ukraine. Canada—which views Russia as a rival for the resource wealth of the Arctic and has a three-quarter-century-long partnership with the

Ukrainian far right—has provided more per capita to Ukraine in arms and money since 2022 than any other G7 state. It is a leading member of the “coalition of the willing” stitched together by Berlin, London and Paris to prevent Trump from making a deal with Putin at the expense of the other NATO powers.

The Canadian ruling class has been staggered by Trump's frenzied drive, under the banner of America First, to resurrect US global imperialist hegemony, including by refashioning America's economic and geostrategic relations with its erstwhile imperialist allies.

It has responded to the fascist US president's barrage of tariffs and threats to use economic force to make Canada America's 51st state, by dramatically accelerating its preparations for global war and intensifying its class-war assault on workers' social and democratic rights.

Under Carney, the former central banker and blue-chip executive who replaced Justin Trudeau as prime minister in March 2025, the federal Liberal government has been reorganized to spearhead a dramatic lurch to the right. The centrepiece of this shift is the reorganization of Canadian capitalism for world war.

Within weeks of taking office, Carney increased military spending in 2025-26 by 17 percent. The government has since committed to triple the defence budget to more than \$150 billion per year by 2035, greenlighted a plan to create a new 300,000-strong reserve, and placed the building of the country's military-industrial base at the centre of its economic strategy.

Rearmament and war are to be financed by eviscerating what remains of public services and social

supports. To enforce these attacks, the ruling class is turning to authoritarian methods of rule—systematically rolling back the right to strike and cultivating far-right forces, including through the normalization of anti-immigrant incitement.

In January, Carney gave a speech at the Davos World Economic Forum that has been much celebrated in ruling class circles internationally. In this address, he acknowledged that the US-led global capitalist order has collapsed and called for an alliance of the lesser imperialist powers to push back against Trump. Glossed over in the gushing media coverage was Carney’s vow that Canadian imperialism will not—to use his words—be “on the menu” and will instead secure a seat at the table in the new era of global strategic conflict.

In effect, Carney proclaimed that the Canadian ruling class is determined to be a predator, not prey, in the new imperialist drive to redivide the world, just as it was in the two imperialist world wars of the last century. The seat of which Carney speaks—and that has been repeatedly invoked by the leading representatives and strategists of the Canadian ruling class—is a place at the imperialist high table where the spoils of aggression and war are to be divvied up.

As the Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* have alone explained, insofar as the Canadian ruling class opposes Trump, it is solely from the standpoint of defending its “sovereign” right to the lion’s share of the profits derived from exploiting Canada’s workers and abundant resources.

Workers in Canada have every reason to oppose Trump and all he represents—war, oligarchy, dictatorship. But they can do so only by opposing all the rival factions of the Canadian bourgeoisie and all their political representatives—from the pro-MAGA Alberta separatists and the ethno-chauvinists of the Parti Québécois to the Carney government and the flag-waving and increasingly vocally pro-war union bureaucrats—and by uniting their struggles with workers in the United States, Mexico and internationally in an offensive for workers’ power and socialism.

The fight for the working class to make socialist internationalism the axis of its struggles is first and foremost a fight against the corporatist trade union apparatuses, their allies in the social democratic NDP and their pseudo-left advocates and defenders. For

years, these forces propped up right-wing minority Liberal governments, claiming they were a progressive alternative to the Conservatives, while systematically suppressing working class struggles, including a massive strike wave from 2022 through 2024.

Now they are agitating for “national unity” in the tariff war and the developing world war, and whipping up Canadian and Quebec nationalism. They thus systematically divide Canadian workers from their class brothers and sisters across North America and around the world, while providing the ruling class with the political cover and support it needs to pursue its agenda of austerity and war.

Recognizing that the working class is on a collision course with the Carney government, sections of the labour bureaucracy and pseudo-left are now seeking to rebrand the NDP under its new federal leader, the self-avowed “left populist” and fervent Canadian nationalist Avi Lewis. This is a miserable fraud aimed at keeping the working class trapped within the confines of establishment politics. Lewis postures as antiwar, but he hailed Carney’s Davos speech and supports Canada’s leading role in the war on Russia. He condemns the Iran war, yet works with the trade union bureaucracy to block the mobilization of the working class against the war and promotes the lie that Canadian imperialism can be a force for peace in world affairs.

On this May Day 2026, the socialist internationalist battle cry “Workers of the World, Unite” must resound across the world as never before. Only the united revolutionary action of the international working class can halt the developing world war, defeat the fascist threat and place society’s wealth at the service of all humanity.



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