

Oppose the US-Canada trade war! Unite the workers of the Americas against tariffs, war and dictatorship!

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The trade war between the United States and Canada has entered a new stage. On Monday, President Trump announced that US tariffs on Canadian cars, trucks and auto parts—imposed last year in flagrant violation of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)—will be doubled from 25 to 50 percent on January 1, 2027, with steel, already tariffed at 50 percent, included in the order.

The threat, posted on Truth Social, came just two days after Washington imposed 50 percent tariffs on more than \$20 billion in other Canadian goods. “Canada has been ripping off the United States of America for years,” Trump wrote. “Not sustainable, and NOT ANYMORE!” Prime Minister Mark Carney responded by declaring Canada at “war.” On Tuesday, his Liberal government finalized retaliatory tariffs on nearly \$20 billion in US goods—at rates of 15, 25 and 50 percent, matching Washington “dollar for dollar, rate for rate”—to come into force September 8.

The global trade war Trump has unleashed since returning to the White House has hit Canada especially hard. But it is one front in Washington’s drive to secure control of the world’s markets, resources and strategic chokepoints through a violent redivision of the globe.

Trump, the would-be fascist dictator, is determined to crash the Canadian economy in order to reduce the country to a vassal state or annex it outright as the 51st state.

This is the content of the publicly proclaimed “Donroe Doctrine,” asserting unchallenged US dominance over the Western Hemisphere: plans to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal, the January invasion of Venezuela and abduction of its president, Nicolás Maduro, the bullying of Mexico, the strangling of Cuba. In this way American imperialism is laying the groundwork for a third world war, with China its main target. That war is, in fact,

already underway: the US-NATO war against Russia and the war against Iran are its opening fronts.

To impose the new tariffs, Trump invoked Section 338 of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, the law that fueled the protectionist trade blocs leading to the Second World War. That provision had never before been used by any president.

The terms Washington demanded before talks collapsed included restrictions on Canada’s right to negotiate trade agreements with countries outside North America and the gutting of cultural and sovereignty protections. In essence, Trump demanded that Canada surrender the attributes of an independent state. He has said as much, sneering that Canada wants “the benefits of being a State, without being one,” and declaring, “WE DON’T NEED CANADA, THEY NEED US! They do 95% of their business with the U.S., with us, the exact opposite!”

The costs are already being paid by workers on both sides of the border. A tariff is a tax on imports passed on to consumers in higher prices. The 500-plus products covered by the latest round—plywood, cement, dairy, clothing, appliances, etc.—feed directly into American workers’ housing, grocery and utility bills. When steel tariffs were imposed in 2018, they created an estimated 1,000 jobs in steel and destroyed 75,000 in industries that use it.

The doubling of auto tariffs threatens a bloodbath in an industry whose parts cross the border multiple times before a vehicle is finished. Some 861,000 vehicles built in Canada were sold in the US last year. Trump’s post spelled out the blackmail: “Build in the U.S. and there are ZERO TARIFFS.” The aim is the wholesale transfer of production south of the border—the deindustrialization of Ontario and Quebec—with the whip of unemployment used to drive down wages in both countries.

Canadian workers have already borne years of this: 3,200 Stellantis workers in Brampton on layoff since early 2024, more than 1,000 jobs destroyed at GM's CAMI plant in Ingersoll, and up to 90,000 jobs now at risk. American workers will be hit from the other side: Ottawa's C\$27.6 billion retaliation list—steel, dairy, appliances, farm equipment, pulp and paper, electronics—targets jobs in US industry and agriculture.

The Canadian bourgeoisie opposes Trump only insofar as his “America First” agenda cuts across its own imperialist interests. Using Trump as a foil, the Liberal governments of Justin Trudeau and Carney have shifted official politics sharply to the right—rearmament, ruthless austerity, and the gutting of workers’ democratic and social rights, including the right to strike.

Canada’s ruling class is no less vicious in its persecution of immigrants, going so far as to have its border guards hand people over to Trump’s fascistic ICE thugs. All Ottawa asks is recognition of its first “right” to the profits from exploiting Canada’s workers and resources, and a place as junior partner in a “Fortress North America” trade and military bloc.

Hence the entire political establishment has closed ranks behind the trade war. Carney, the former central banker, declares, “You’re at war when you get attacked.” At this year’s Davos summit, he vowed to keep Canadian imperialism at the “table” of imperialist plunder so as not to end up on “the menu.” One could hardly state more bluntly Canada’s role as a predator in the redivision of the world.

In the United States, the Democrats object to Trump’s trade war only as mismanagement. Senator Chuck Schumer complains that “chaotic trade wars are bleeding the American people dry,” while House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries met privately with Jared Kushner days before the tariffs took effect to discuss “common ground” with the administration—underlining the class unity of the two corporate parties. The Democrats fully support economic warfare and militarism in defense of US hegemony, and mount no genuine opposition to Trump’s drive toward dictatorship.

For its part, the union apparatus has embraced the trade war on both sides of the border. UAW President Shawn Fain hailed Stellantis for “bringing good jobs back to America” as Brampton workers sat on layoff. Unifor and the Canadian Labour Congress answer not by opposing tariffs but by demanding Canada’s own. Marty Warren, Canadian national director of the United Steelworkers—a union that purports to speak for workers in both

countries—declared: “This isn’t a war as in guns and boots on the ground, but this is an economic war. It’s up to our generation to... not lose control of our sovereignty and our Canadian economy.”

This foul nationalism goes hand in hand with the bureaucracy’s support for rearmament and war preparations against China. It seeks to divert widespread popular hostility to Trump—to oligarchy, dictatorship and war—into reactionary channels. But workers cannot fight American imperialism by lining up behind Canada’s imperialist bourgeoisie or any of its factions.

Millions of workers across the continent are being radicalized and entering into struggle. This includes the ongoing strike by 1,400 workers at National Steel Car plant in Hamilton, Ontario, while 10,000 John Deere workers across Iowa, Illinois and Kansas just overwhelmingly rejected a two-year contract extension proposed by the company.

We call on autoworkers, steelworkers, and all workers in the US, Canada and Mexico to build rank-and-file committees, unified through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. By mobilizing the industrial and political power of the continent’s working class, this movement will fight to: oppose every layoff and closure carried out in the name of the trade war; stop war and dictatorship; defend immigrant and refugee workers; and to link their struggles with workers throughout Latin America confronting the same imperialist violence.

The integrated economy of the Americas, built by the working class of every country in the hemisphere, must be taken out of private hands and reorganized on socialist foundations: the banks and major corporations transformed into public utilities under democratic workers’ control, production directed to social need rather than private profit and imperialist war. This requires the fight for workers’ power—for workers’ governments in the United States, Canada and throughout the hemisphere, and for the United Socialist States of the Americas.



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