

Canada's Trudeau postures as opponent of Trump following US president's fascist outburst

By Roger Jordan
20 July 2019

In a display of cynical hypocrisy, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded to Donald Trump's recent fascist tirades by posing as a staunch critic of the US President. Trudeau combined hollow criticisms of Trump, whom he routinely hails as the leader of Canada's "closest ally," with smug Canadian nationalism.

"It's not how we do things in Canada," Trudeau declared at a joint press conference Monday with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. "A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian."

Trudeau was responding to Trump's attack Sunday on four Democratic Party congresswomen, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Ayanna Pressley. Trump tweeted that they should "go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came," and denounced them as subversive socialists and communists.

Trump's statements were openly fascist, attacking opponents based on their racial and national origins, denouncing socialism as a mortal threat, and effectively labeling all opponents of his administration's policies as disloyal to the US and un-American.

While the initial butt of Trump's vicious tirade were the four congresswomen, his real target is the working class, which is being radicalized by the capitalist crisis and entering ever more openly into militant and revolutionary struggle.

At a campaign rally Wednesday, Trump launched a further attack on Omar, prompting his supporters to chant "Send her back." Omar is a US citizen who was born in Somalia and came to North America as a refugee.

Trudeau also commented on Wednesday's events, after political opponents and media outlets complained that his previous remarks were half-hearted. The Prime Minister told a press conference in Montreal Thursday, "I think the comments made were hurtful, wrong, and completely unacceptable. I want everyone in Canada to know these comments are completely unacceptable and should not be allowed or encouraged in Canada."

Trudeau's comments are pure political theatre. A major factor motivating them is the approach of Canada's fall federal election. With campaigning under way in all but name,

Trudeau is scrambling to refurbish his tattered "progressive" credentials after four years in which he presided over austerity, military spending hikes, and attacks on workers' right to strike, refugees' right to asylum and other basic democratic rights.

However, no amount of verbal posturing can conceal the fact that the Trudeau Liberal government has developed a close working relationship with Trump, and is acting as an enthusiastic accomplice in implementing some of his administration's most provocative, reactionary and belligerent policies.

While Trudeau may assert that Trump's threat to "send her back" is unacceptable, under his watch Canada's immigration authorities have sent thousands of impoverished Caribbean, Latin American, and African refugees back to their home countries each year, including many who fled to Canada in the false belief that Ottawa would offer them protection from Trump's fascist squads of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol officers.

In April, the Liberal government smuggled a provision through parliament in its omnibus budget bill to spend an additional \$1 billion on security measures along the US-Canada border during the next five years.

Moreover, the Trudeau government has rewritten the law so as to deny asylum seekers the right to a full hearing if they have already made a claim in a country with which Canada has an intelligence information-sharing agreement. The countries in question are the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* noted when this reactionary amendment was introduced, "Given that the US is the only one of these four partners with which Canada shares a border, the practical effect of the legislation is to empower authorities to summarily deport refugee claimants crossing the US-Canada border to escape Trump's anti-immigrant witch hunt."

The Canadian bourgeoisie is even profiting financially from Trump's refugee crackdown. Last October, it was revealed that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, which manages Canada's largest pension fund, had invested close to \$6 million in Geo Group and CoreCivic. These two companies are the

principal administrators of the concentration camps that the Trump administration has set up to imprison immigrants crossing the Mexican border, including children.

The Trudeau government is also a key partner in Trump's protectionist economic and trade policy, which is directed first and foremost against China. The Liberal government, with the backing of the trade union bureaucracy, negotiated a revised North American Free Trade Agreement aimed at consolidating North America as a protectionist trade bloc under US dominance to combat China's economic rise and prepare for all-out military conflict with Beijing.

Last December, Canadian authorities acted as an extended arm of Trump's Justice Department by detaining Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Chinese tech giant Huawei, on bogus charges of evading US sanctions against Iran. Trudeau was informed days ahead of the police operation, which occurred the same day as Trump met Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G-20 summit in a bid to force the Chinese leader to bow to US trade demands.

The Trudeau government's commitment to hike Canadian military spending by more than 70 percent by 2026 is premised on even closer integration of the Canadian Armed Forces with the US military and intelligence apparatus. The Liberals' plans for rearmament and expanded military-security cooperation with the US enjoy quasi-unanimous support within the ruling class, because Canadian imperialism relies on its partnership with Washington to pursue its predatory geopolitical and economic interests around the world.

Trudeau has no qualms about collaborating with Trump in pursuit of a common imperialist agenda, and working closely with far-right political forces in the process. Through the Lima Group, Canada has lent support to the US-sponsored military coup bid in Venezuela led by Juan Guaido, while at the same time providing top Trump administration officials with a platform to issue bellicose threats of military action against that country's elected president, Nicolás Maduro.

Canadian and US troops are deployed side-by-side in Ukraine to support the right-wing nationalist Kiev government and confront Russia. Trudeau has openly backed Ukrainian territorial claims on Crimea, saying Canadian military personnel are training Ukrainian soldiers to "liberate" the majority Russian-speaking peninsula, and his government has supported the activities of far-right nationalists to arm the country's volunteer militias, which venerate Stepan Bandera and other Nazi collaborators.

Trudeau's efforts to portray Canada's ruling elite as protagonists of "peace" and "democracy" in contrast to Trump's racist remarks, summed up in his smug remark that "It's not how we do things in Canada," are no less credible.

The march of the bourgeoisie to the right, which is epitomized by Trump's rise to power, is a global process rooted in capitalist breakdown and the reemergence of mass working-class struggle.

French President Emmanuel Macron has hailed the head of the Nazi collaborationist Vichy regime, Marshall Philippe Pétain, as a national hero and ordered vicious police and military crackdowns against Yellow Vest protests. Meanwhile in Germany, the ruling elite promotes the neo-fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD) and enables the formation of far-right terrorist organizations within the state apparatus.

The Trudeau government's anti-worker and militarist policies are giving succor to the most right-wing and reactionary forces. In Quebec, a right-wing populist, xenophobic Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government victimizes Muslims, imposes bans on wearing the headscarf and other non-Christian religious symbols, and threatens to deport immigrants who fail French language and "Quebec values" tests.

In Ontario, the Trump-wannabe Doug Ford is slashing public spending and offering massive cash handouts to big business, while demonizing refugees for the dilapidated social services produced by decades of cuts. As working class protests mount, the Ford government has sought to label demonstrators as violent extremists who pose a threat to state security, recalling nothing so much as Trump's fascistic rants.

Workers in Canada and internationally must realize that the Trump administration's attempts to develop a fascist movement and the associated turn of ruling elites all over the world to authoritarian methods of rule cannot be stopped by supporting or placing confidence in any section of the political establishment, let alone pro-corporate, pro-war politicians like Trudeau and Macron or Germany's Angela Merkel.

Rather, the very real danger posed by the reemergence of the fascist far-right must be met by the mobilization of the working class on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program and the unification of its struggles across state and national borders and continents.

To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>