

No time for parrots and praise



By Nate Smelle

Every time we are faced with an election in Canada, we are told to 'get out and vote, because this election is the most important one in our nation's history.' Most of the time whoever it is uttering this statement is telling the truth; because, as the Canadian archaeologist and author Ronald Wright declared in his book *A Short History of Progress*, 'Each time history repeats itself, the cost goes up.'

However, as every Canadian knows, this time around our federal election is nowhere near so called 'business as usual.' This time, unlike ever before, it is not about electing whoever it is at the top of your favourite team's ticket. This time, it is about electing a sensible leader who we can rely on to defend our interests, and stand up to the deranged dictator destroying democracy down south, and the bewildered, bouncing billionaire fascist Elon Musk pulling his strings.

It is no secret that in 2018 I ran on behalf of the Ontario New Democrats in Hastings-Lennox and Addington-Tyendinaga as part of a team vying to keep Doug Ford—or Trump Lite as he came to be known on the campaign trail back then—out of the Premier's office. Although I was not then, nor ever had been a member of the NDP or at political party, having shared my views as a proud democratic socialist in this column for almost half a decade at the time, there was no question about where I stood politically.

Now, almost seven years later, I still stand on the side that believes we the people benefit far more from a robust public health-care system, top-notch education, strong environmental protections, and a well-functioning democracy than we do from the billions of taxpayers dollars we hand over to fossil fuel companies already raking in record profits. But, unlike in 2018, in 2025 Donald Trump—the President of the United States of America both then and now—is openly threatening to takeover Canada by attempting to destroy our economy.

I am sure most of us, no matter how we typically vote in each election, would agree that the stakes feel a hell of a lot higher this time around. That is why after seeing Poilievre cozy up with the white supremacist, Maple MAGA organizers of the 'freedom' convoy—a group proudly carrying Trump 2020 and swastika flags like The Donald's mob of insurrectionists that broke into the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. on Jan, 6, 2021—I started to pay closer attention to how the Leader of the Official Opposition has been 'let me pause for a moment to enjoy a bite of this apple' following Trump's MAGA playbook since he took power away from former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole.

What caught my attention was that Poilievre not only supported the convoy—he visited the protesters, pandered to them, and even helped to spread their misinformation and conspiracy theories. Recognizing how he decided to hitch his wagon to the Maple MAGA

wagon, despite the fact that the protest had already morphed into an illegal occupation of the nation's capital, it became clear to me then, as it is now, that like Trump, Poilievre has no qualms with prioritizing his personal agenda?in this case his thirst for power?over what is best for Canadians.

While navigating our way through a political era defined by a polarizing sea of misinformation and populist politics, Canada has still managed to establish a reputation for being a bastion of stability and civility compared to the political chaos south of the border. But, ever since Poilievre began steering the Conservatives' ship, we have watched him pull the party further and further to the right. Going through the countless reels online of Poilievre telling us about how ?Canada is broken? and ?radical left lunatics? are coming to eat our children on the next full moon, there is no denying that he has fully embraced the same divisive rhetoric and tactics of Donald Trump's ?Make America Great Again? movement. Coming across several images and videos of Poilievre spewing his ?Made in the U.S.A.? message from a behind a podium bearing the words, ?Canada First?, it hit me how he has even adopted the aesthetics of MAGA's Ku Klux Klan-inspired ?America First? agenda.

From his dramatic disdain for the mainstream media to his obsession with catchy slogans like ?Axe the tax,? Poilievre is clearly playing from Trump's playbook page by page. Furthermore, his dismissal and mockery of journalists, as well as his use of a schoolyard bully's nicknames to demean political opponents, mirror the same strategies that have empowered and accelerated Trump's efforts to dismantle the American government and lower the quality of life of hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

So, now, as we once again prepare to elect our next Prime Minister we must first ask ourselves this question: can we really trust a man who has repeatedly shown us through both his words and actions how much he admires and supports Trump and his Make America Great Again agenda, to defend our interests and values as Canadians?

Deep down, I'm sure the overwhelming majority of us agree that the only correct answer is no, he cannot be trusted. Having spoken with a few of my friends who happen to be lifelong Conservatives, I can tell you that each of them have expressed reservations when it comes to voting for the Tories in 2025 due to Poilievre's longstanding alignment with Trump and MAGA.

Don't get me wrong, I am still willing to bet any amount of money on the Conservatives getting re-elected in Hastings?Lennox and Addington?Tyendinaga. Not that I would ever support a party that shares the same values as the Musk/Trump regime, no matter how friendly the local representative may be. But I learned my lesson in 2018; and, as I was advised by one Conservative voter when knocking on doors in Madoc back then, ?You could paint a skunk blue and people here will vote for it.?

For these reasons, when it comes to casting a progressive, dare I say anti-fascist vote on April 28, there is but one option: Mark Carney and the Liberals. If someone told me I would be throwing my support behind the man former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed as Governor of the Bank of Canada during the economic crisis of 2008, I would have had two words for them, and they wouldn't have been ?Merry Christmas? or ?Happy Easter.?

But we are living in different times now, and I see no point in voting for a party that will help put a Maple MAGA parrot in the Prime Minister's office.

So, for our Conservative friends who are considering voting for Mark Carney later this month, I will leave you with the words of the man who once had the audacity to tell the CBC's Peter Mansbridge that Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls were not on his radar:

?The selection of Mr. Carney as chair of the Financial Stability Board is testament to his skills and to the strength of Canada's financial system,? said Prime Minister Harper. ?This is the right appointment at the right time as the world works to strengthen the global financial system and sustain the fragile global economic recovery.?

For once, and I can't believe that I am about to write these words, I agree with something former Prime Minister Harper said.