



## The New Trudeau “Mania”

First off, let me just say that I am not a card carrying Liberal. Historically, my family, myself included, have always leaned a wee bit further left of what we always referred to as the “Bay Street Boys,” even during the first Trudeumania.

But while I’m not a Liberal party member, I am a cautious fan of what their minority government has managed to accomplish over the past four years. Now, one could argue that the social good they’ve achieved – childcare, pharmacare, dentalcare - is largely the result of a forced alliance with the NDP, but I think that’s too simplistic an analysis.

After all, do you think a minority Conservative government would have struck those deals with the NDP?

Not in a million years.

And what about the Liberals record on climate change and the environment? Well, if all those people shouting “Axe the Tax” took a closer look at their bank accounts, they’d know that 90% of the tax they’re charged at the pump comes back to them in federal cheques directly deposited into their accounts, not once, but *four times* a year.

One might argue that the dumbest thing the Liberals ever did was direct deposit the carbon tax rebate. They should have ripped a page out of the Trump playbook and sent out cheques to every Canadian with “This is Justin Trudeau’s carbon tax rebate” written across it in big bold letters.

Moreover, it’s thanks to the Liberals and their 2 Billion Trees program that Winnipeg got the money to replant its ailing urban forest, and cities like ours now have direct access to

federal funds to address climate change, by using urban ecosystems to mitigate extreme weather, improve climate resiliency and enhance biodiversity.

And yes, I know - a carbon tax countered with more money for the oil and gas industry for everything from pipelines to pipe-dream carbon storage schemes doesn't make for a great look on the climate change front. But come on. Do you actually think a Poilievre government wouldn't do a whole lot more to keep the frackers fracking and the tar sands rolling? Do you actually believe Poilievre will maintain, let alone increase funding for environmental and social programs?

Fat chance.

Yet despite that, the media sharks continue to circle, churning up a new, more negative style of Trudeau "mania," by dredging up every single personal and political gaff Trudeau has made. Now, don't get me wrong. The fact that he dressed-up in black face hugely offends me and I'm not impressed with his free holidays or his handling of the SNC Lavalin affair, which was a classic case of Liberal pandering, in a very long history of pandering.

But if that's the sum total of his sins, perhaps we should take a closer look at the sins of Mr. Poilievre, a man who supported the trucker convoy, flirts with extreme right wing fringe groups and was recently endorsed by Alex Jones, the shock jock radio host best known for his attacks on the parents of children killed in the Sandy Hook mass shooting.



In fact, if you look closely at Poilievre's history and the policies he's promoting, it seems to me that every ordinary family in the country should be more than a little nervous.

Take his stated preference for the so-called "Right to Work" laws styled by the American Republican party, which allow companies to pay workers less in wages and benefits and inhibit unionizing. Or the fact that he's repeatedly refused to state his position on the Paris

Climate Agreement and won't commit to new social programs like pharmacare, childcare and dentalcare.

So, given that, why are so many Canadians falling for Poilievre's Trump-style populism? And why are they blaming a coalition government and specifically, Justin Trudeau, for everything from global inflation to inflated house prices as if greed and real estate speculators didn't have hand in that?

I don't have the answer, but what I do know is this – while Trudeau may be flawed, the alternative is deeply worrying. Because if we do wind up with a Poilievre government, we may find ourselves living in a country we don't much like.

A country that abandons the next generation by accelerating, rather than reducing, the impacts of climate change. One that no longer cares about the most vulnerable among us: people like your elderly Mom on a fixed income, or your neighbour's sick child, whose monthly drug costs run into the thousands of dollars.

So, maybe we need think about them - not to mention our grandchildren - before heading to the polls, rather than bashing a leader and a coalition government that's far from perfect but may also be the only democratic game in town.

Erna Buffie is a writer and filmmaker. For more go to <https://www.ernabuffie.com/>