

Canada doesn't prove that populism is over: Trump's got...

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:27 am

I am well aware that Canada is not like the rest of the world. I have been there a couple of times, and really enjoyed my visits, but to pretend that its relationship with the rest of the planet is like that of any other country would be wrong: its proximity to the USA ensures that is the case.

The obvious reason for pointing that out this morning is to dampen any excessive hope that the victory of the Liberals in the Canadian election might generate.

Firstly, let's not forget that an arch-neoliberal leads the Liberals. That is Mark Carney, of course.

Second, let's note that Carney may not be able to deliver a majority government, despite the threat from Trump next door. That is quite extraordinary. The Canadian Conservatives may be down, but they are not out.

Third, the real victims in this election look to have been the minority parties, including the more progressive ones.

Fourthly, nonetheless, it does seem fair to say that the real loser of this election has been populism. That was the choice of the Canadian Conservatives. It is going exceptionally badly for them. That is obviously because of Trump: his demand that Canada prepare itself to be the 51st state of the USA has unsurprisingly not gone down well, and he repeated it, even yesterday. The possibility that Trump might be the worst thing to ever happen to populist candidates is, as a result, real.

However, I cannot see that having much impact on Farage's popularity on Thursday, and so it would be a decidedly false hope to think that this trend extrapolates well. As yet, there is little evidence to prove that it is the case.

Wait for the increase in US inflation.

Wait, too, for the increase in US unemployment.

Wait for the decline in US GDP, and especially the standards of living for most people.

Wait, even for an obvious Trump-created recession, or worse.

Then what is happening in the US might have much more impact in somewhere like the UK. So far, the absence of a direct threat seems to make that unlikely.

Canada, then, is really not like anywhere else. And now they have to put up with Carney, a man always possessed of the most enormous ego and reputedly the biggest temper in any room. Good luck with that. The last thing that he will be is in touch with the ordinary Canadian. The political bubble of indifference to real needs will, in other words, continue.