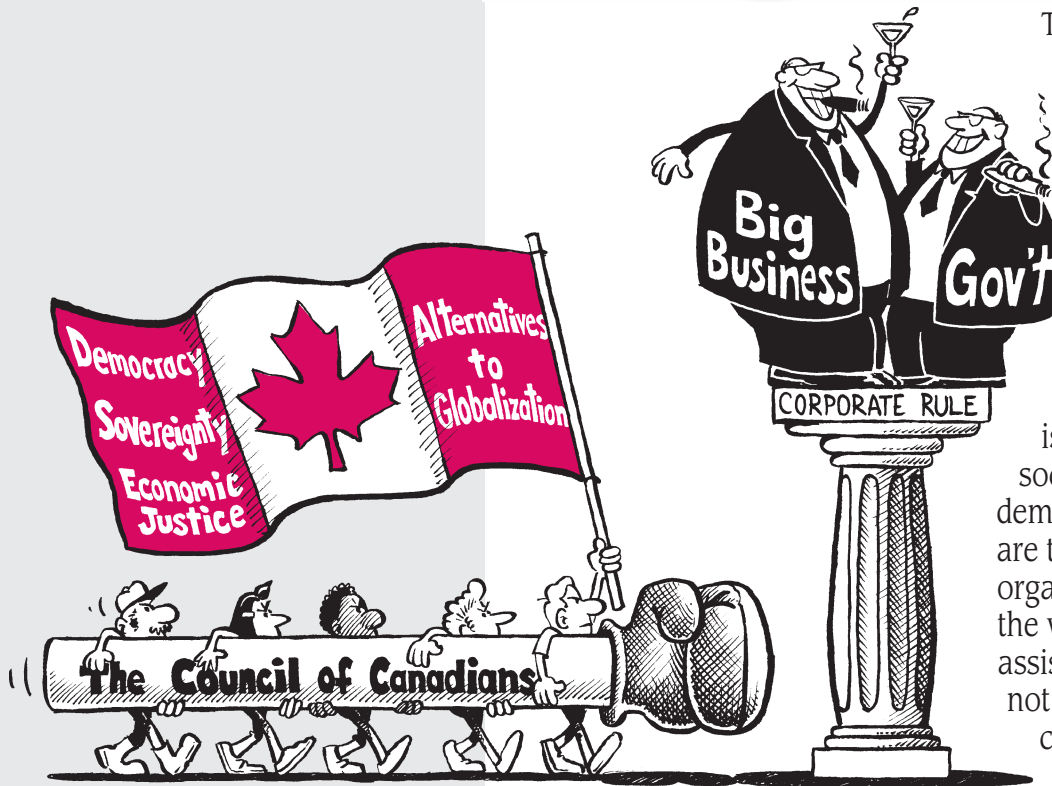


Council backgrounder



The Council of Canadians is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit, public interest organization committed to building a stronger civil society through its research, educational work and campaigns. As a government and corporate watchdog, the Council offers a critical voice on key national issues. Protecting Canada's social programs and identifying democratic economic alternatives are the Council's top priorities. The organization is sustained entirely by the volunteer energy and financial assistance of its members—it does not accept money from either corporations or governments.

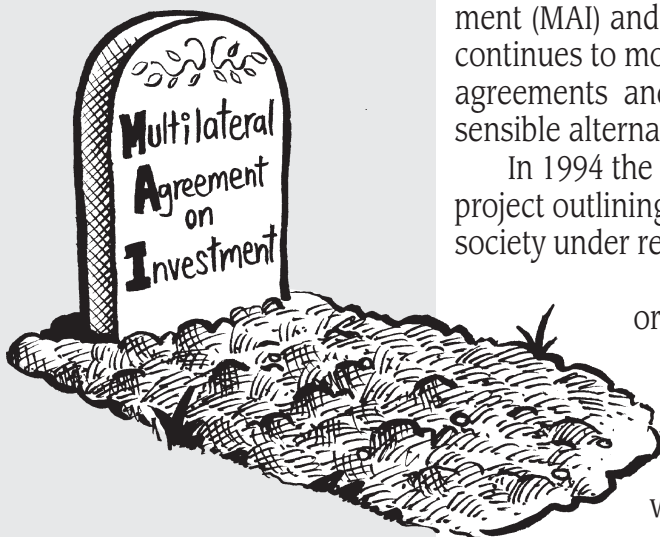
History of the Council of Canadians

The Council of Canadians was established in 1985 to protect sovereignty and promote democratic development.

Over the past two decades the Council has played a leading role in the fight against the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Council continues to monitor the harsh fallout of NAFTA and other trade agreements and to collaborate with groups internationally in promoting sensible alternatives to corporate-style free trade.

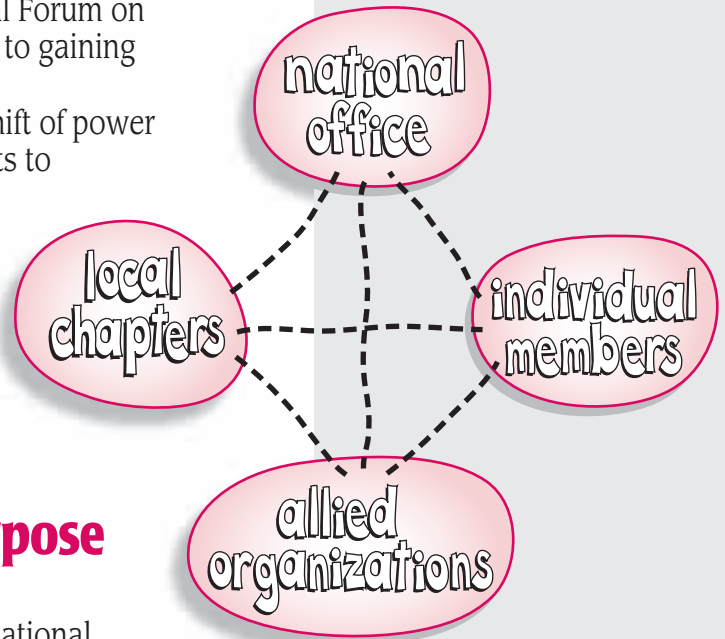
In 1994 the Council launched its **Citizens' Agenda**—a long-term project outlining a vision and action plan to bring our economy and society under real public control while protecting the environment.

The Council has worked in alliance with progressive organizations throughout the country, across the hemisphere and around the world. From 1997 to 1998 it was instrumental in forming a national anti-MAI coalition of hundreds of organizations, representing farmers, nurses, teachers, environmentalists, workers, artists, as well as anti-poverty, church and women's groups.



In 1994 the Council co-founded the International Forum on Globalization—an international network committed to gaining democratic control over the global economy.

Today, the Council continues to challenge the shift of power from people and democratically elected governments to transnational corporations. Many of the Council's 100,000 members across Canada are working either in local Council chapters, on their own, or with other organizations to take on corporate crime, challenge undemocratic governments, and build a better Canada.



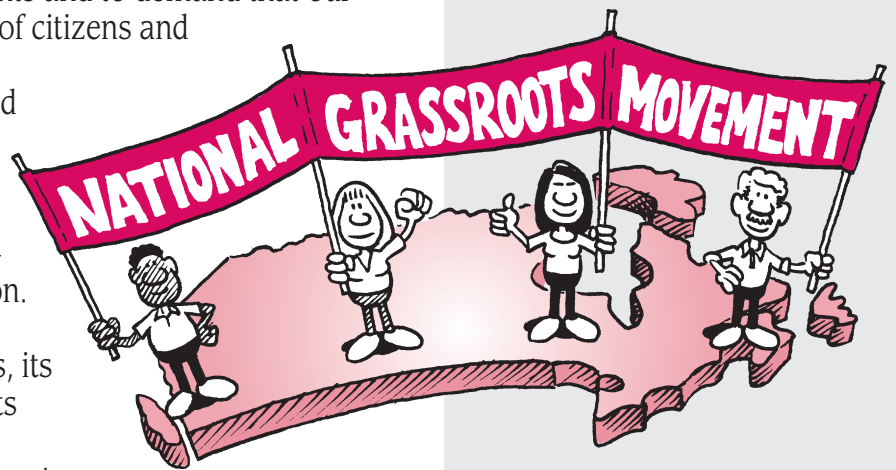
The Council's Statement of Purpose

“ The Council of Canadians is an independent national citizens' organization committed to safeguarding our social programs, promoting economic justice, renewing our democracy, strengthening Canadian sovereignty, promoting alternatives to economic globalization and corporate-style free trade, and preserving our environment. Through its strong national leadership, individual members, and its local chapters, The Council of Canadians defends the right of Canadians and citizens of all countries to assert their democratic rights and to demand that our governments make policy in the interests of citizens and communities, not big business.

The Council of Canadians is committed to a campaign style that encourages constituency development, builds grassroots citizen groups for action, and encompasses both centralized and decentralized forms of planning and participation.

The Council is creating a citizens' movement through its national campaigns, its networks of members and chapters, and its alliances with like-minded organizations. We promote a citizens' agenda in opposition to corporate-driven economic globalization by identifying fundamental issues, providing information and analysis, and creating opportunities for political action. As Canada's largest public advocacy group, we are committed to effecting transformational social change, political and economic literacy, and developing a Citizens' Agenda that will set the political and social agenda for the 21st century.

We are non-partisan but work to compel all political parties and governments to address the key issues of democracy, sovereignty, and social justice. We are committed to building an organization with the broadest possible diversity reflective of Canadian society and culture. ”



—Passed at the Council of Canadians
Annual General Meeting, 1999

The Council's Guiding Values & Principles

“ In our role as Council of Canadians members, activists, staff and Board members, we:

- ➔ give thoughtful consideration to the best interests of Canadians and their communities;
- ➔ ensure that there are opportunities for everyone involved in the Council's work to participate in defining the purpose, direction and culture of the Council;
- ➔ ensure clear and frequent communication and positive interaction among all those who are involved in our work;
- ➔ provide opportunities for people to develop their knowledge, skills and activism in order to further the Council's goals;
- ➔ expect that the primary commitment of each person involved in our work is to the goals of the Council;
- ➔ aim for open and honest discussion with relevant issues clearly on the table;
- ➔ allow for disagreement—each person may not always get what (s)he wants but all opinions will be heard;
- ➔ maintain commitment and engagement without insisting on control;
- ➔ hold ourselves and each other accountable for positive performance and effective working relationships;
- ➔ maintain dignity, integrity and respect for one another; and
- ➔ maintain high standards of work.



Furthermore....

We do not tolerate racism or discrimination of any kind. We believe in the uniqueness, equality and potential of each culture, race and gender. Accordingly, we seek to include all Canadians who share the organization's values: No one shall be refused membership or be otherwise subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or ability. ”

—Passed at the Council of Canadians
Annual General Meeting, 1999

