



In this issue:

The Rise of Authoritarianism and the Fight Against it by Shawn Hattingh

Patriarchy, Fascism and Capitalism by Dilar Dirik

Right-Wing Rising: A Comprehensive Look at What's Happening in Brazil by Bruno L. Rocha

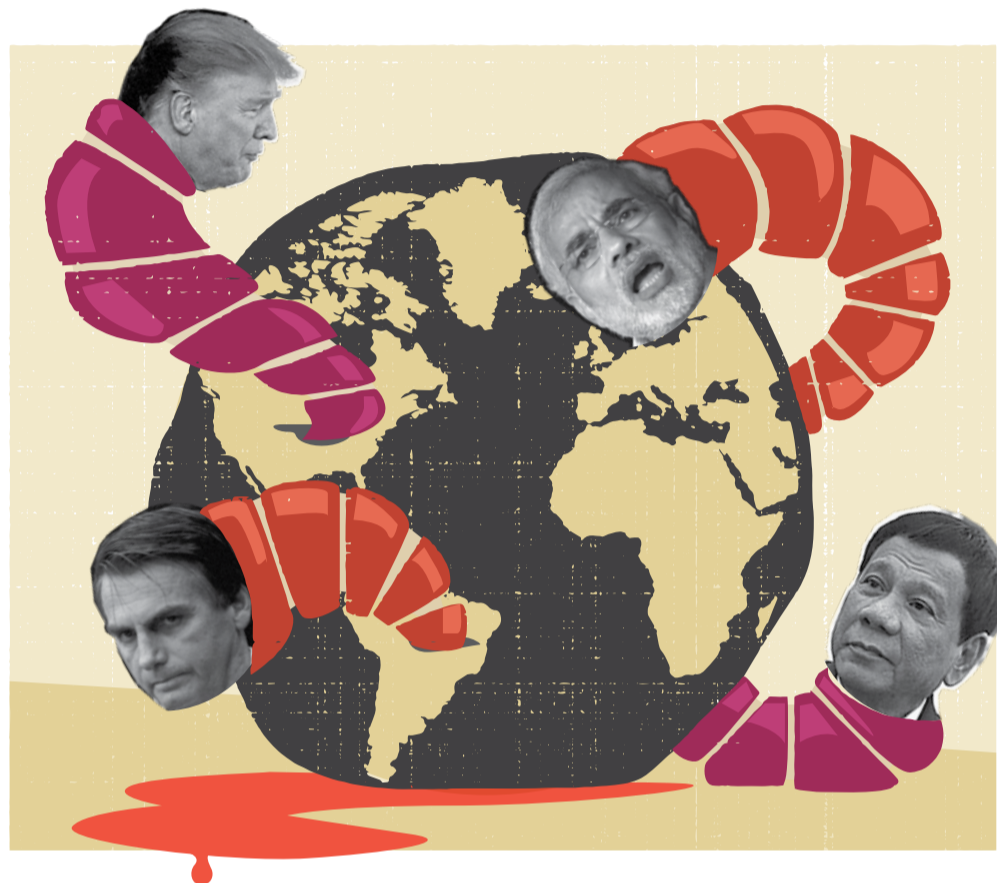
Class Struggle, the Left and Power by Jonathan Payn

Hostile hosts and a forgotten history by Abigail Dawson, Cormsa

The people, the party and the state: a critical left perspective on the Venezuelan crisis by Dale T. McKinley

ILRIG Statement in support of the Rojava Revolution and a call to end the isolation of jailed Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan.

THE RISE OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE FIGHT AGAINST IT



Like maggots crawling out of a decaying carcass, authoritarian parties and politicians have emerged in many parts of the world. All of these parties and politicians practice a vile form of politics based on hatred; crass stereotypes; bigotry; anti-democracy; misogyny; racism; and militarism.

This brew of toxic politics has then been served up as 'anti-establishment' and in the interest of the common people by the strongmen/women that are at the heart of these authoritarian movements. In reality such politics are anti-human and profoundly frightening – it points to the possibility of a future not of hope and greater egalitarianism; but decay, enforced inequality through extreme violence and ethnic cleansing.

Prime examples of hatred

The prime examples of such authoritarian politicians, and who often overtly claim far right credentials, in Europe and North America include the likes of Donald Trump; Front Nationale; Geert Wilders; Danish People's Party; Alternative for Germany; Jobbik; Golden Dawn and the League. All of these parties and politicians share a platform of white supremacy and they are Islamophobic. Their 'anti-establishment' goes no further than blaming immigrants or minority groups for any and all problems. They also claim to oppose the unfairness of free trade, yet deny that internal class rule lies at the heart of economic inequalities that are driving discontent in European countries and the United States (US). Likewise, few of these right-wing fanatics identify capitalism as the cause of people's misery. Given their deliberately shallow and crude analyses, for these politicians the solution is the ridiculous and racist notion of keeping immigrants out, and for many the return to a mythological past – which never existed – of a purely white Europe or North America in which prosperity reigns under capitalism.

While sharing racism, nationalism and a commitment to some form of capitalism, not all of the authoritarian parties and politicians in Europe

and North America share exactly the same economic policies, at least on the surface. While all rile against the 'establishment' and claim to be for the 'common' people and even 'anti-globalisation', some like Trump on a domestic front follow a rabid form of neoliberalism that has involved huge tax cuts for corporations, which he falsely sells as a stimulus to encourage investment in production and create jobs, along with slashing welfare for the working class and increasing the state's coercive powers. Yet others on the far right, like the openly fascist and neo-Nazi Golden Dawn in Greece (who are not in power), rhetorically are proponents of bringing back the welfare state for ethnic Greeks under a racialized Keynesian form of capitalism.

Such politicians and parties are not just present in the heartlands of imperialism, they are also to be found in parts of Asia and Latin America.

In India there is Narendra Modi. He harks back to a mythical golden age in India when only Hindus were supposedly citizens and seeks to ultimately ethnically cleanse India of people that are part of religious minorities – such as Christians and Muslims – who he blames for the country's ills. He also has no opposition to keeping India's caste system and patriarchy in place. In Brazil, the far right misogynist Bolsonaro has vowed to kill progressive activists in formations such as the Landless People's Movement (MST). He is also fanatically anti-immigrant having called people from Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean coming to Brazil the "the scum of humanity".

During his rise to power, Recep Erdogan in Turkey – an authoritarian Muslim fundamentalist

and right-wing nationalist – he riled against the Kurdish minority in that country blaming them for all tribulations in Turkey; while claiming that he would provide social welfare for all ethnic Turks should he become president. Once in power, however, he imposed further neoliberalism on the Turkish working class; but the one frightening promise he did keep was to ethnically cleanse hundreds of Kurdish villages. As the economy declined, far from moving away from neoliberal policies that were driving the crisis, he began to blame unnamed foreign powers for Turkey's economic woes.

Why the rise of authoritarianism globally

The reality is that the rise of authoritarian politicians can largely be traced back to the worldwide crisis of capitalism that erupted in 2008. In the prelude to the crisis, established political parties around the world had imposed neoliberal policies that set the stage for the crisis. In European countries it was mostly the established social democratic parties, which had often governed for decades, which had imposed these policies; in the US it was both the Republicans and Democrats; and in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America it was former liberation movements.

It is these policies that freed up financial capital, due to the deregulation of the sector at the heart of neoliberalism, which set the crisis off: unregulated financial institutions speculated on debt derivatives on a massive scale and these turned out to be worthless. Along with this, in most countries, neoliberal policies that allowed corporations to shift to regions of the globe where wages were lower gutted manufacturing jobs. Adding to the working class's misery,

...the rise of authoritarian politicians can largely be traced back to the worldwide crisis of capitalism that erupted in 2008.

established parties then bailed out the very same corporations that were central to the crisis and made the poorest pay for it by ransacking social benefits. Since then, such established parties have been unable to resolve the capitalist crisis – all they have done is to protect the interests of their class: the ruling class.

The attack of neoliberalism has also re-structured the working class. There has been a breaking down and weakening of the traditional organisations of the working class, such as trade unions. The working class has become more fragmented. Permanent lifelong jobs have largely disappeared, and there has been a rise in low paid, precarious, casual and contract jobs. In many countries unemployment has grown and the share of wages to GDP has declined. Coupled to this, the ruling classes around the world have pushed the ideology of individualism and large sections of the working class have inculcated this dominant notion. The consequences have been that progressive working class struggles have been weakened and it is in this context that authoritarianism has been arising.

EDITORIAL

The global economic crisis continues to deepen, making global capitalism increasingly unstable. The ruling class globally has responded by attacking the working class and making it pay for the crisis by transferring the costs and burden of the crisis onto the working class and poor – leading to increased poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In this issue of Workers Worlds News Shawn Hattingh looks at how, in diverse countries around the world the ruling class has also responded to the instability by turning to authoritarianism in order to maintain its power and access to opportunities to accumulate and control wealth. Often by tapping into legitimate demands and grievances and exploiting people's dissatisfaction both with the status quo and the failure of the institutional left either to effectively resist neoliberalism and austerity or build an alternative. As the Pink Tide in Latin America turns a darker shade of brown with the election of extreme right wing president Jair Bolsonaro, our guest writer Bruno Lima Rocha takes a comprehensive look at what is happening in Brazil.

While the ruling class internationally has been united in its attack on the working class and poor, the crisis has also precipitated increased conflict between different sections of the ruling class both globally and domestically. Globally this has taken the form of intensified intra-imperialist rivalry and increased competition between rival factions of domestic ruling classes over declining opportunities to accumulate wealth both through the state and private sector. Dale McKinley offers a critical left perspective of the Venezuelan crisis, arguing that it is not only the result of, "imperialist geopolitics and right-wing capitalist rule" prior to the rise to power of the late Hugo Chavez in 1998 but also, "the ways in which political power has been pursued and wielded by the post-1998 Bolivarian state and the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela".

In South Africa the effects of the global crisis of neoliberal capitalism have been deepening poverty, higher unemployment and increased inequality as the ruling class has sought to transfer the costs of the crisis onto the black working class majority. Intensified competition over declining opportunities to accumulate wealth both through the state and the resources within its borders helped set the stage for a major battle between the two main sections of the ruling class in South Africa: old white capital and the new BEE elite, each represented by a rival faction within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and its government. While the crisis this precipitated within the ANC led to a slight loss of support in the national elections, the ANC retains its grip – with Cyril Ramaphosa, bedfellow of old white capital, at the helm. With this, as has already begun, we can expect more austerity and neoliberal attacks on the working class.

