The Rise of the Authoritarian Right

The avalanche of protests at the accession of Donald Trump as 45th President of the United States is unprecedented in modern times. He is a reactionary, racist, sexist bully who peddles hatred and loathing. He responded to every criti-

ment failed in the 1970s they turned world capitalism’s leaders have came to an end. Ever since then the post-war boom and Kaczynski all control authori-
nominally democratic regimes has. But he is not alone around the world. decisions.

Opposing Trump or the System that Spawned Him?

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Trump: The Problem is Still Capitalism

What We Stand For

Aurora is published by the Communist Workers Organisation (CWO).

We stand for a global society in which production is for need and not profit (and is therefore sustainable), where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished, where power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. It is a society which can only be created through the activity of millions of human beings. Only such a society can rid us of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war. We call it communism but it has nothing in common with the Stalinist state capitalism of the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working to create a world proletarian political organisation: a ‘party’ for want of a better word. This organisation is not a government in waiting. It does not rule but it leads and guide the struggle for a new world. We by no means claim to be that party but only one of the elements which will need to come together in its formation.

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The roots go back a long way. In the early 1870s the post-war boom came to an end. Ever since then world capitalism’s leaders have scrambled around to try to find a way of restoring the growth rates of the past. After the Keynesian experi-

ment failed in the 1970s they turned to ‘neo-liberalism’, deregulation and globalisation. Capital now went to where labour power was cheapest.

This devastated manufacturing in the richer capitalist countries. With mainly lower paid service jobs to replace them, workers earnings in the capital-rich states are today less in real terms than they were in 1979. Workers’ solidarity has been eroded as communities have been destroyed. With little working class resistance globalisation has ruled. States have increasingly competed in a race to the bottom to make invest-
mation attractive (tax holidays for example) for big money. However the post-war boom has not gone away, so the capitalist system turned to deregulation of the financial sector, opening it up to speculation. Debts suddenly became “assets”. Into their network of debt the finan-
ciers dragged those who could not cope with the mortgage etc. The consequence was a massive speculative bubble which burst in 2007-2008.

Everywhere states bailed out the banks and imposed austerity on the working class. In UK small towns, in the rust belt of the USA, a layer of workers who had not shared in the dubious benefits of globalisation had now more misery to contend with. Many were thus too ready to vote for anyone who spoke up against the damage “globalisa-
tion” had done.

We should not forget that anti-
globalisation began as a movement of the left of the “no-global” and Occupy Movements. They were the first to oppose trading blocs like TTIP but as we warned in 2011, the real problem is not one trend (globalisation) in capitalism. What we need to oppose is the entire system of exploi-
tation. If you don’t see this then the opposite of globalisation becomes defence of the nation. The radical right just had to add nationalism and racism to anti-globalisation to make it the toxic mix of today. In isolated places, with few if any migrants, many are too ready to believe that if it was not migrants stealing jobs then it must be that jobs went to foreigners abroad.

The social consequences of the capitalist crisis have thus enabled Trump to unite all the right wing groups around the Republican Party from the Tea Party anti-big govern-

ment types, evangelical Christians to the Alt-Right of neo-Nazis. Add to that the votes of workers, in key states left behind by globalisation, who buy into Trump’s aggressive rhetoric against “them” (foreigners, migrants and “the Washington establishment”).

Handing “the Swamp” to the Crocodiles

Trump’s penchant for “alternative facts” is well known but his most transparent lie was that he was going to Washington to “drain the swamp”. Instead he has nomi-
nated a swamp of Goldman Sachs bankers like Garry Cohn (head of the National Economic Council) and Steve Mnuchin (then describing Clinton’s being close to them) as his Cabinet has three billionaires and is the wealthiest, with more ties to business, than any previous admin-
istration in US history. No surprise then that Congress has already rescinded the law that compels companies to reveal payments to foreign powers (such as Secretary of State Tillerson’s former company Exxon Mobil). Or that Trump, in the presence of the chief executives of major U.S. corporations, including Dow Chemical Co, Lockheed Martin Corp, and U.S. Steel Corp, signed an executive order to place “regulatory reform” task forces within federal agencies to cut “regulations” on business. State regulations on everything from environmental protection to laws intended to prevent speculation will be shreded. As David Pilling in the Financial Times (22 February) noted “a Donald Trump presidency means not so much draining the swamp as handing over the swamp to the crocodiles.”

Workers who voted for Trump still live in the forlorn hope that jobs will return. Even if some do, they will not be paid like the old ones or in the same numbers. Ford’s high profile abandonment of investing in a factory in Mexico might cheer them. However, Mexico’s auto factory offered 3000 jobs whilst the replacement in the US will be more robotised with only a few hundred jobs on offer. If Trump carries out his threat to impose 45% tariffs on Chinese imports it is not going to lead to widespread import substitution but will lead only to a higher cost of living for the working class. Workers will go on paying for the crisis just as they have done for the last 40 years.

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It is no accident that Trump’s first target is migrant workers. Building the wall and deporting migrants is not new. Bill Clinton started the wall, Obama continued it, and Obama quietly deported 250,000 migrants last year. What is new is that Trump has loudly targeted Mexicans and Muslims. In making them his victims he is not just playing on widespread fear and loathing, he is orchestrating it. There are currently over 40 million migrants in the US of which only about a quarter are illegal. Non-white migrants can now expect nothing but harassment both from officials and racists. Trump is defining US nationalism against this “other”

In this regard Trump is like Erdogan or Putin. Their pronouncements on foreign affairs are designed for domestic consumption only and what they actually do is often at variance with their idle boasts. This is not to say that a capitalism in crisis is any more likely now to involve us all in a new configuration than before. Trump’s rhetoric may sound more aggressive but his policies are in continuity with what has gone before. “Fake news” began long ago with such myths as the pres-

For too long the world working class has been the passive victim of everything that the system has thrown at it. It is now time for us to begin to fight back. The question is how? Trump is so odious that the temptation is to support the imme-
diast campaigns of the capitalist left (social democrats of all stripes but mainly in the Democratic Party) against him. For the last thirty years this left have accepted the logic of neo-liberal capitalism and culminated with the lowering of living stand-

ard. And their one palliative, of offering more welfare to buy social peace, collapsed with the end of the speculative bubble. With their distracting and misleading talk of “fascism” they only exist to get the working class to support the system on the grounds that the alternative is worse. They offer us nothing.

After years of fragmentation and restructuring there are small signs that at grassroots level, in work-

places and communities working class resistance has begun to revive, but it will be a long, slow process. We have to organise for ourselves. Revolutionary have to be part of this revival by encouraging every struggle that goes beyond the control of those who want to keep it inside the system. We have to agitate for autonomous bodies, controlled by workers, which cannot be manipulated by the capi-
lateralists to make them conform to what the system can tolerate. Even more, revolutionaries also have to work towards the creation of a unified political organisation in order to point out “the line of march” towards an alternative to capitalist exploitation, to environ-

mental degradation, to oppression of minorities and to imperialist war.

We have a world to save and a world to win.
February 1917

International Women’s Day 100 Years On

On International Women’s Day (February 23 old style/March 8 today) organised women in Petrograd, St Petersburg and factory took to the streets of Petrograd. Five days of strikes, demonstrations and over 1,300 dead. The Tsar, had abdicated. In these events, hundreds of thousands of men also took part but... It was the women who initiated the action in most cases, primarily working women from the textile and fur industries.

The final straw for the women workers had come with the breakdown in the bread supply at the start of February when half the food ordered for Petrograd arrived.

“Long lines stretched in front of shops and bakeries. A winter unprecedented in severity had set in... Shivering from cold, poorly dressed, women and children stood in lines waiting hours for bread and often went home empty-handed. Food shortages provoked an even greater ferocity on the part of the masses... owing to the same force as revolutionary movements and tens of thousands of revolutionary leaflets. The strike spread..."

The war had brought 250,000 more women into the factories until the summer of 1915. The pressure brought the women’s out from behind the veil of housework. Conditions were particularly exciting for them. Many had to work long hours in war industries after their men were conscripted for the front, as well as look after children, and spend what little free time they had in long lines queuing for bread and kerosene. Prior to International Women’s Day bakeries had been sacked and bread shops stoned but when they demonstrated nothing more was made of it. It was only after Wheat had been strictly rationed that the mothers of the Tsarist army, organized by the women of the Working Women’s Strike, began the first waves of the organized masses against the Tsarist regime of Nicholas II."

With parliamentary devolution in 1999 the NHS ‘devolved’ into four national constituencies, making for a host of different types of service. Of each they are run in the medical services and a whole host of regional issues, including some of the most notable of which were the cases of “bed blockers” and “tarditari”. They were opposed throughout by the Tsarist regime of tsar Nicholas II that was made up of all grades of the working class. Let’s say it clearly: a healthy system run by the capitalist state is neither socialist nor anti-capitalist. Moreover, when capitalism itself is in terminal crisis now is not the best time for the post-war welfare state is immune. The fact is that Labour is just as responsible as the Tories for the shape of the NHS today. When Tony Blair first came to power in 1997 after telling voters they had “only 24 hours to save the NHS”, his government encouraged Thatcher’s self-managed hospital trusts and partnerships of GPs to saddle themselves with more debt via the so-called Private Finance Initiative scheme. The Blair government concentrated on headline news success stories, such as reduction in waiting times for hospital appointments as it injected more funds into the NHS to try and create a story on the 13,681 hospital beds that have been eliminated over the past year. Some may no longer have no ‘bed blockers’ would do well to bear these stats in mind."

Like capitalism as a whole, NHS medical treatment is a contradic- tory and mixed bag. State of the art equipment and advanced treatments for some conditional exist side by side with overcrowded waiting rooms where anonymous patients are called for a brief encounter with an anonymous doctor. In fact the British NHS is best described as a story on the 13,681 hospital beds that have been eliminated over the past year. Some may no longer have no ‘bed blockers’ would do well to bear these stats in mind.

Unlike during last year’s junior doctors’ strike, which Jeremy Corbyn (Labour Party leader) and other Labour Party members in the government had set in motion in the first Soviet. The working class revolution had only just begun..."

* Women’s Day started in American 1908: Pansy women workers’ strike became “international” after 1912 under Lucie Zeto and Carla Zeto petitioned it at the 1911 Second International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen. Women workers had first established on 8 March 1913 (i.e. the first women’s health police arrested the organisers to prevent a repeat). It became a festival of the Russian women’s health movement May Day and January 9 (Bloody Sunday 1960).