

Rise of the far right in Europe: A product of the anti-working class and pro-war policies of the established parties

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The results of the latest elections across Europe underscore a dangerous and accelerating trend: the rise of far-right and fascistic forces and their growing integration into the heart of official politics.

In Portugal, the neo-fascist Chega Party surged to 22.6 percent of the vote, securing 58 seats in parliament. In Poland, the first round of presidential elections saw three far-right candidates—Karol Nawrocki (PiS), Sławomir Mentzen (Konfederacja) and Grzegorz Braun—collectively win over 50 percent of the vote. In Romania, George Simion, the candidate of the fascist Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), received 46 percent in the second-round presidential vote.

These developments mark a menacing historic shift. In Portugal, the far right has gained a decisive foothold in national politics for the first time since the fall of the fascist Estado Novo regime in 1974. In Poland and Romania—countries where “democracy” was supposedly established after the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc—fascistic and ultra-nationalist forces now dominate political life.

This phenomenon is not the product of a mass revival of fascist ideology from below but the result of a deliberate shift to the right by the entire political establishment, which has spearheaded relentless attacks on the social conditions and democratic rights of the working class.

Confronting rising opposition from below, the ruling class is increasingly resorting to authoritarian and fascistic methods to defend the power of a tiny capitalist oligarchy, implementing genocidal policies and preparing for world war. The media and political elites consciously normalize far-right forces, give them

platforms, adopt their rhetoric and bring them into government—most prominently in the US with Trump, in Argentina with Milei and in Italy with Meloni.

Above all, responsibility lies with the so-called “left” parties and trade unions, which have paved the way for the far right. The parties of the pseudo-left have played an instrumental role in politically disarming the working class.

In Portugal, the path to Chega’s rise has been paved by the political betrayals of the Socialist Party (PS) and its left cover, the Left Bloc (BE). During the previous PS-led governments, the Left Bloc supported austerity budgets and helped implement social cuts dictated by the European Union. Rather than mobilizing the working class against these measures, the BE channeled opposition back into the capitalist state.

This mirrored the disastrous experience of Greece, where the pseudo-left Syriza government not only imposed the dictates of the EU and IMF, destroying wages, pensions and public services, but did so in coalition with the far-right Independent Greeks (ANEL).

The same patterns are being repeated across the continent.

In France, Emmanuel Macron has relied on the betrayals of Jean Luc Mélenchon’s France Insoumise and his New Popular Front (NFP) alliance with the Socialist Party (PS) and French Communist Party (PCF) to carry out a brutal austerity agenda, anti-immigrant laws and police repression.

The refusal of France Insoumise to mobilize the working class—above all, during the mass strikes against pension reform in 2023—paved the way for the rise of Marine Le Pen’s far right. When Macron’s

government teetered on collapse, the New Popular Front (NFP) propped it up by backing his Renaissance Party against Le Pen's National Rally. This allowed Macron to continue dictating policy, while the NFP came first in the general election but on a reduced majority, handing Le Pen the ability to posture as the only real opposition to the "establishment."

In Germany, the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) is a direct product of the total complicity of the mainstream parties. The new government, led by the right-wing ex-banker Friedrich Merz of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), is overseeing the most extensive remilitarization of Germany since the fall of Hitler's Third Reich, with massive military spending increases and an aggressive war drive against Russia.

Merz's coalition includes the Social Democrats and is backed by both the Greens and the Left Party. Far from opposing militarism and austerity, these parties have become their chief enforcers. Their abandonment of any pretense of social reform and their embrace of imperialist war have created the political vacuum now occupied by the AfD.

So extreme is the established parties' war-mongering that even the thoroughly militarist AfD can posture as an "anti-war" party, criticizing NATO's aggression against Russia from the standpoint of German national economic and energy interests.

In Britain, Labour Party leader and Prime Minister Keir Starmer heads a government that embraces Thatcherite austerity, echoes the xenophobia of Nigel Farage, champions military spending and threatens imperialist war with Russia.

Starmer was handed the leadership by former leader Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour "left," who, despite the support of millions of workers and youth, including half a million new members, refused to drive out the right wing. Promoted by Britain's pseudo-left groups as transforming Labour into a genuine workers' party, they instead have served to strengthen its right-wing and pro-imperialist policies.

Crucial and urgent lessons must be drawn: The fight against the far right cannot be waged through alliances with any faction of the bourgeois political establishment. The official "left" parties have shown themselves to be ruthless enemies of the working class. Pseudo-left and Stalinist formations such as Syriza in

Greece, the Left Bloc in Portugal, Die Linke in Germany, France Insoumise, and the Corbynite milieu in Britain have functioned to subordinate the working class to the trade union bureaucracy and the capitalist state.

These betrayals are not accidental but rather the reflection of the privileged middle class social layer these parties represent, whose material interests are tied to the preservation of the capitalist profit system.

What is urgently necessary is the building of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement, in every country. Only the ICFI fights to unify the international working class in a common struggle against social inequality, war, dictatorship and the capitalist profit system.

Only through the development of a socialist and internationalist movement can a relapse into fascism and war be prevented and a real future for humanity be secured.



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