

HOW POWER IS OBTAINED

PATH 2: CONTROLLING HUMANITY

Populism: a political approach that pits "the elite" against "the people" or "us versus them".

Hedeloft (2021) found populism emerges due to:

- Lack of trust between leaders and populace.
- Rising social and economic inequality
- Dissolution of national sovereignty
- Individual or collective marginalization and victimization (both real and perceived)

Populism has had both positive and negative impacts historically including improving working conditions and expanding rights for minoritarian groups. However, it often leads to [anti]-performativity when all hope is placed upon a single figure leading to:

- Demagoguery, figure worship, or saviorism;
- Formation of authoritarian regimes;
- Autocracy and if aligned with fascism dictators

Authoritarianism: a form of government centered on a single person or small group that attempts to control information, attitudes, and limit freedoms through legitimate or illegitimate means.

In their study of Authoritarianism, Federico, Fisher, and Deason (2017) found:

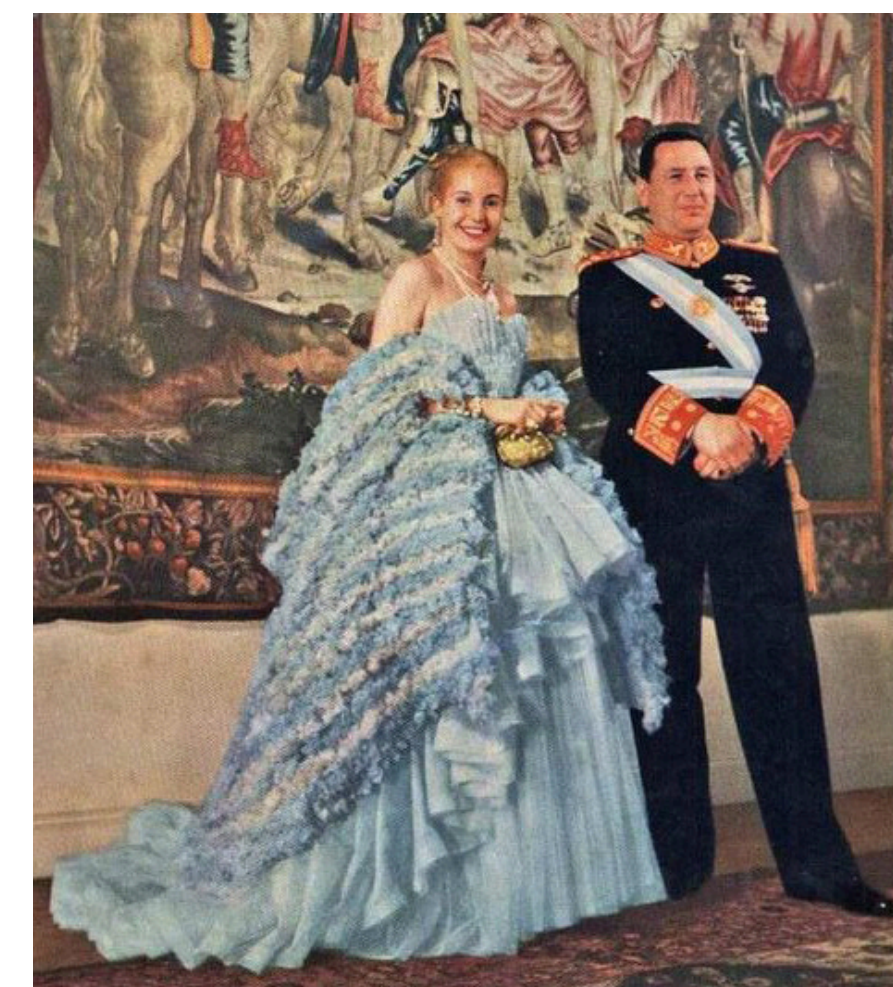
- Right-wing followers tend to engage more with Authoritarianism leading to higher participation.
- Left-wing followers tend to disengage from politics when holding authoritarian views.
- All authoritarian figures cause harm, regardless of political alignment, but right-wing figures tend to cause more long-term damage.

Our playwright Mikhail Kuzmin saw these patterns after Lenin's death and the rise of Stalin in 1924:

"After the funeral, the bad weather calmed and softened: all the demons settled down. What lies and charlatanism all these speeches are. It is not just 'typical madness' but outright fraud, taking on such proportions that it passes for madness. Is the proportion itself not affirmation? The whole world passes through drunken vomit [. . .] I thought to write *The Death of Nero*."



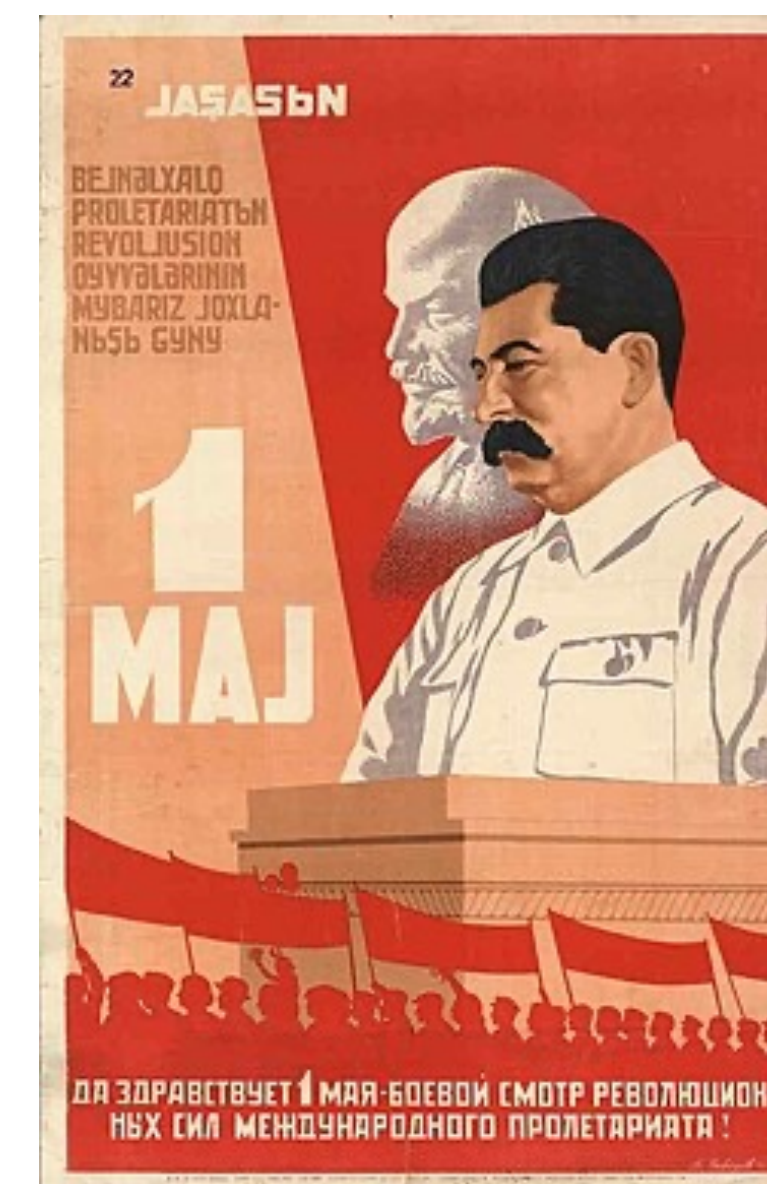
Emperor Nero
(Rome -1st Century CE)



Juan and Eva Perón
(Argentina – 1940-1970s)



Adolf Hitler
(Germany – 1930s-1940s)



Joseph Stalin
(The Soviet Union – 1924-1950s)



Augusto Pinochet
(Chile – 1970s-1990s)



Pol Pot
(Cambodia
Democratic Kampuchea – 1970s)



Mao Zedong
(China – 1940-1970s)



John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy
(United States – 1950s-1960s)

Authoritarian regimes often form around a singular popular figure and create a sense of belonging associated with identification with the personality of such a figure.

Historically, leaders have created their cult using:

- Propaganda and control of the arts
- Mass spectacles
- Attire to identify followers
- Patriotism and Nationalism
- Apotheosis (likening them to a god or God's chosen)

Jan Plamper (2012) found that contemporary cults have some distinct traits:

- Secular; though might use religious imagery
- Consolidation and use mass-media for propaganda, silencing of rivals, spreading disinformation and the creation of merchandise.
- Address all classes equally, but target primarily men and male-presenting people

WORLD LEADERS WITH A CULT OF PERSONALITY

WHICH HAD AUTHORITARIAN TRAITS? HOW ARE THEY PORTRAYED IN ART?

WHO ARE THE AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS TODAY? WHO HAS CREATED THEIR OWN CULT OF PERSONALITY?