

The far-right are a threat to tax justice

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The Observer will accurately reflect the concerns of many this morning. Post Brexit and Trump, the risk of far-right governments in France and the Netherlands is very real. Italy looks precarious. Poland and Hungary already look like one party far-right states. Turkey is. The threat from globalisation is looking to sweep the foundations of liberal democracy away.

A decade ago when John Christensen and I were pretty rare tax justice campaigners I remember us appraising the challenges to the changes we wanted to promote. We agreed fascism was the most likely to eventually stand in our way. I think it still is.

There is no room for tax justice in a far-right state because there is no appropriate concept of justice in far-right thinking on which to base it. There is only preference, discrimination, favour and subjugation. The nuance of ensuring that the right amount of tax is paid at the right rate, in the right place and at the right time by the right person will begin to look pretty irrelevant if there is isolationism in play from a government that will more openly favour some groups in society than those now alive have ever been used to.

Tax justice is dependent upon a concept of social justice that promotes equality for all before the law having widespread support. For the last few years that has very obviously existed. But will that ideal survive amongst sufficient people to secure political backing for tax justice for much longer? I do not know. I will keep working for it, even if the hope becomes forlorn, but the threat John and I always recognised has to be appreciated to be real now.