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INTERVIEWER: Welcome to this Trending Globally. I'm sitting with Professor Jim Greene who knows more about Brazil than practically anyone else we could find. We're going to talk about the Brazilian elections. The last time we spoke, we were about to go through the first round of voting in the Brazilian elections. I'm going to pick up the story from there. Jim, what's been going on?

JIM GREENE: Well, the campaign is really hot, and the elections are Sunday. We should know the results by 7:00 or 8:00 PM Eastern Standard time because the Brazilians have a very effective way of counting votes. And at this point, the two final candidates the candidates in the are Jair Bolsonaro, who was leading with about 57% of the votes, against Fernando Haddad, who is trailing with 43% of the votes.

INTERVIEWER: All right, so for those who aren't following that closely, just to clarify, we've had the first round of voting, right?

JIM GREENE: Correct.

INTERVIEWER: What happened in the first round of voting?

JIM GREENE: In the first round, there were 13 candidates and the top two who come to the runoff are the far-right candidate, Jair Bolsonaro and Fernando Haddad, representing the workers party.

INTERVIEWER: All right, so tell us a bit about both of those candidates.

JIM GREENE: So Jair Bolsonaro his father was a dentist, he grew up in a small town in the interior of the state of Sao Paulo. He joined the army, was a paratrooper, and was tried and convicted of insubordination for being involved in a campaign to increase the wages of non-commissioned officers. And then he was involved in a second campaign that allegedly, he was going to be planting bombs in places in the army training school in order to dramatize the needs of the rank and file soldiers.

INTERVIEWER: So this makes him sound like some kind of leftist soldier a trade union soldier?

JIM GREENE: So no, I think you could characterize him as a right-wing nationalist who feels very strong about the army and the importance of the Army and the decreasing wages of and budget for

the army. And so one of the things he will be doing if he were elected president--

INTERVIEWER: How does the army feel about him?

JIM GREENE: Well, so he was tried the second time and it was indecisive, so he's basically placed into the reserves, and basically retired from the army. And he had already started, based on this campaign, a political career. He was elected to the city council of Rio de Janeiro, and then from there he eventually became a federal congressman. And since then, he's carried out a very vicious, hate-filled campaign against the left. Against President Lula and also President Rousseff. Defending torture, saying misogynist, racist, homophobic comments many times, it's not just one. Defending the use of torture, and defending also the military dictatorship.

INTERVIEWER: So why is someone who is in that sense is beyond the pale of what we normally consider acceptable and democratic politics riding ahead in the polls?

JIM GREENE: So this has to do with the complexities of what's been happening in the last 15 years in Brazil. The workers party came to power 2003 led by Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a former metalworker union leader who came from the impoverished Northeast Sao Paulo when he was a child and became very, very popular in Brazil because he really spoke the language of the poor. And when he was elected president, carried out a series of social reforms and social programs that really changed the living conditions of ordinary people and poor people.

Programs such as a monthly cash transfer that really elevated many, many, many people out of poverty. He was accused of being involved in corruption schemes that people linked to the worker's party and other political parties were involved in. Partially, one part of this corruption was siphoning off money from the state oil company. He personally was accused of having received a small beach side apartment in exchange for alleged favors, and was convicted for nine years in an appeal to 12 years. He is currently in jail although, the United Nations Human Rights Commission has declared that he should have been allowed to candidate for president.

And it's speculated that if he were a candidate for president, he would have tremendous popular support and would possibly have won in the first round. Now, Bolsonaro has built his campaign against the left, against the worker's party, and most effectively carried out WhatsApp campaign, sending millions and millions of messages with very fake news. False allegations about Haddad, about the left. And has actually allegedly, now received money from businessmen to finance this campaign, which is illegal under Brazilian campaign law.

The other candidate, candidate Fernando Haddad, was a law student, going to the best law school in the country in Sao Paulo. Getting a master's degree in political science and a PhD in philosophy, was a professor at the University of South Paulo, which at one point was the most prestigious school in the country. Was the Minister of education under Lula, and then was the mayor of the city of Sao Paulo. And he was the kind of mayor that received criticism because he, for example, set up a bike path in the commercial district, and some people felt annoyed that this disrupted car traffic for people who are used to traveling the city with their cars, with their chauffeur driven cars, or just with their cars.

So he has tried to build a broad, democratic front against Bolsonaro, but the tide seems to be against him at this point, and a lot of people are disillusioned with the workers party and frustrated with the rounds of alleged corruption throughout the government. So not only did the workers party fall behind in this race, but the traditional political parties of the center right also lost significant numbers of members of the House of Representatives, the Chamber of Deputies in Brazil, as the electorate punish them as well.

INTERVIEWER: So this sounds very familiar. You've got a right-wing populist who's not afraid to say things which many people regard as being out of bounds. You've got a collapsing center block, you have a left-wing party, which used to be a bulwark, which is now becoming an echo of itself. We see this being repeated everywhere. Why is Brazil, in a sense, it's unique to Brazil because of the corruption scandals, et cetera. Why does it seem so redolent of what's going on and so many other places?

JIM GREENE: Well, I mean, this has to do with your analysis of what has been the crisis of all of Europe, Western Europe, or the United States or other parts of the world. And part of that I think has to do with the project, the post-World War II project of social democracy, the government writing basic social welfare for people and standard of living has been crumbling under several pressures.

One pressure of the transfer of capital to other parts of the world where people can find cheaper labor. The crisis in the global south, which is bringing many, many people to wish to travel to Europe or to the United States to find jobs, economic, physical security, and it's causing anxiety among middle classes, lower middle classes, which then right-wing populist can fuel with fear and hate to build a base of support.

The left is weak in this regard, and it needs to rethink itself I think. If Bolsonaro wins the

election, one expects that there's going to be a strong attack against not only the left-wing political party, and Bolsonaro has very overtly said he was going to do this. On Sunday, he gave a speech stating that he would persecute all of the leaders of the Workers Party and hope to see Haddad in jail, along with Lula for alleged corruption. Though, I don't think he will find anything. There'll be nothing found on Haddad.

INTERVIEWER: Well, arguably, there was nothing on Lula.

JIM GREENE: Right.

INTERVIEWER: He didn't actually own the apartment that he was convicted of owning.

JIM GREENE: Exactly. He never owned it, it was shown to him. The person who wanted to sell it to him made improvements in it, and Lula never took it, and there's been no linkage between this person wishing to sell this apartment to Lula, and in fact, any influence that it had on policies that favor this constructor who is doing it.

INTERVIEWER: So let's go let's go a little bit deeper for a minute. One of the things that the PT did was this program you alluded to called Bolsa Familia, which a cash transfer program. Inequality in Brazil actually went down for a 10 year period, for the first time in its modern history. There was a narrative that went around at the time when there were the [? B ?] in the bricks that things had changed, the economy was strong, there was in a sense a cross-class alliance. It was no longer the elites vs. everybody else, but that seems to have been what's come back. How did that disappear? Was it always a chimera? Or was it true and then it broke?

JIM GREENE: So I think there two elements here. One is the vulnerability of countries like Brazil in the world economy, and when the world economy is doing well, Brazil can do well because its exports a lot of commodities. And in this case, Brazil was exporting a lot of commodities to China. When the US economy collapsed, demand for finished goods from China dropped and therefore, the demand for real goods from Brazil to China also dropped.

I think there were perhaps some mistakes made in the economic response to the world crisis. I think Brazil thought they would avoid really suffering the major consequences, and in fact, they did tremendously. And so there's a significant amount of unemployment, which is also fueling the far-right populist candidates favorability. On the other hand, there has been a huge amount of push-back by the middle classes of these basic reforms in the society. I'll give you two or three examples.

First was that maids, which were ubiquitous, any middle class family had at least one maid. These were poor people, mostly people of color coming from the rural areas to the cities to eke out existence earning the minimum wage or less than minimum wage, and had no labor protections. So under the Lula, Temer, Rousseff governments, they got the wage protections that all their workers had in the country, requiring having specific pension, protection, and health protection. And people can no longer get cheap labor to have a maid to make your bed in the morning, to cook your food, and to wash your clothes.

And the middle class, I think, is very resentful of these kinds of changes because it means that their standard of living has somewhat dropped, and their privilege and their notion of elite status is dropped. Another example is the fact that Lula, under the Ministry of Education of Haddad expanded dramatically. Universities, public universities in Brazil. And through pressure from social movements, affirmative action programs were implemented, which meant that for the first time in the history of the country, a country that is majority of people of color with a large ex-slave population and its descendants were able to go to the universities, and so the color of the universities changed.

And rich kids who assumed that they could automatically get into a public school where they would pay no tuition, and in fact, their parents put them in private high schools in order to pass the college entrance exam, they suddenly had to rub shoulders with the daughters and sons of their maids or the night watchman in their luxury buildings. And this really was very upsetting too because it seemed that social order was crumbling.

And the third was during the economic expansion, for the first time in the history of the country, poor people in this continent sized country, could actually get on planes and go back and visit their family, bring gifts to their family, and suddenly, people complained from the middle classes that the airports seemed like bus stations. And that this was a comment made quite regularly. And it meant basically that the poor people are now occupying our space, and this really upset a lot of people.

So Bolsonaro represents, not only push-back and all the social problems that the workers party has proposed and implemented over the years, but it's actually a nostalgic return to the period of the dictatorship. And Bolsonaro says, I want to return the country to 40 or 50 years ago. So Brazil had a dictatorship from 1964 to '85, in which the opposition was arrested, tortured, exiled, and he has said very explicitly he wants to return to a period where that might be the rule.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. We're going to vote in a dictatorship.

JIM GREENE: A dictatorship will be voted in. Their historical precedents for people being elected to office by plurality. In the case of Germany, when Hitler was elected, he created a situation once in power, a crisis to justify extreme powers, and then becoming virtually a dictator, and then carrying out the policies that Hitler carried out. I'm not drawing a direct analogy, but I think the situation is such that, should Bolsonaro be elected, should he carry out his most vicious changes and reforms, and is if there is large mobilization against them and push back, a polarization could justify the military coming to power to ease social tensions.

And because both tonight it was an ex-captain, and was pretty insubordinate while he was in the military, and the Brazilian military has a very strong notion of hierarchy, I could see a situation where the generals could get fed up with him if he really loses control and does too many erratic things. And therefore, sweep him aside, his vice presidential candidate is a general, and so if he were swept aside, the Vice President would become the president, and become a general--

INTERVIEWER: And then the general would rule--

JIM GREENE: And rule with a democratic legitimacy, different from 1964, when the military came to power through [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Keep us updated. We'll talk one more time. Thank you.

JIM GREENE: Thank you.

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