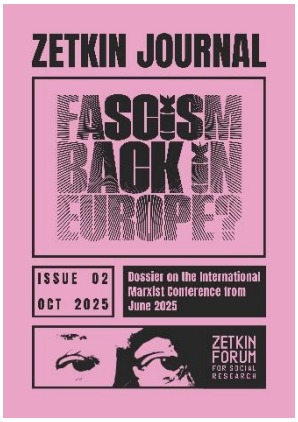
Dear friends,

In the past weeks, reactionism once again reared its ugly head in Germany. Chancellor Friedrich Merz celebrated his government's accelerated deportation of migrants but complained that Germany's "cityscapes" were still "problematic" and thus demanded the interior minister to "carry out deportation on a very large scale". At the same time, leading members of the Chancellor's CDU party are openly promoting a cooperation with the far-right AfD.

In light of these developments, we are returning this week to the question of fascism and its role in Europe and the world today.

The new issue of the ZETKIN JOURNAL!



The latest edition of our Zetkin Journal guides readers through **the international Marxist conference "Fascism Back in Europe?"**, which was held in June 2025 in Berlin. The dossier provides an overview of the current debate amongst left-wing and progressive forces on the issues of fascism and anti-fascism today. The aim of the conference was to **analyse the reactionary tendencies in Europe** and the rise of far-right parties in the context of today's militarization programmes and the economic and social crisis experienced by the working class. Several important conclusions crystalized out of the presentations and discussions at the conference:

1. Fascism does not present itself as something distinct from capitalism, nor as the opposite of liberal democracy, but rather as a specific instrument of rule and a means of enforcing the interests of monopoly capital by different, repressive means. Neoliberal and austerity policies were and are an integral part of capitalism and have been and continue to be pursued by both liberal and fascist states.

2. Meloni, Trump, Le Pen, Weidel, and others are considered figureheads of the modern right in the West, but they are firmly entrenched in the neoliberal politics of the economically integrated transatlantic system. They differ from the regimes of open terror that represented fascism in the first half of the 20th century. While "classical

fascism” emerged as a counterrevolutionary force against the rise of the workers' and peasants' movements in Europe in the context of the October Revolution and was an expression of the imperial claims of Germany and Italy as latecomers to colonial land grabbing, the “extreme right of a special type” is emerging at a time when there is no mass movement of the working class and peasants against capitalism.

3. While right-wing parties in both Western and Eastern Europe use the rhetoric of national sovereignty (their respective variations on “America First”) to build a voter base, none of these forces are actually breaking with the Western alliance orientation, neither with NATO nor with the EU. The far-right parties of Western Europe are turning out to be instruments and representatives of the interests of Europe's transatlantic-oriented bourgeoisie. The boundaries between liberal and conservative forces are becoming blurred. In Eastern Europe, however, it is precisely liberal forces that most consistently support a policy of open markets in the interests of the largest monopoly groups from Western Europe and the US. Right-wing parties that strengthen the interests of their national bourgeoisie to a limited extent provoke opposition from the economically dominant countries of the EU, as the example of the Orbán government in Hungary illustrates.

4. The political shift to the right goes hand in hand with overt historical revisionism. Even though the form, content, and speed of the rehabilitation of fascism depend heavily on the history and conditions of each country, the distortion of history is a widespread phenomenon with significant commonalities. While anti-communism is the central connecting element between liberals, conservatives, and fascists, the doctrine of totalitarianism serves as the ideological narrative for the entire bourgeois spectrum. It is clear that those who rewrite the role of the Soviet Union, the anti-fascist popular front and partisan movements, also rewrite the role and history of fascism and its collaborators. It is not uncommon for liberal forces to play the role of chauvinistic whips, making fascist language socially acceptable in times of rearmament and militarization in Europe.

5. Today, neoliberal bourgeois centrists propagandize against far-right parties in their countries by hypocritically appropriating and hollowing out the tradition of anti-fascism. Progressive forces must defend anti-fascism and define it on the basis of international solidarity and sharp opposition to NATO's war policy. Self-defense against fascist attacks, the formation of a progressive counterculture against a comprehensive culture of brutalization, and the defense of democratic rights remain a broad reference point for progressive anti-fascist politics. Reclaiming this social field goes hand in hand with pushing back the bourgeois deceivers of an anti-fascism emptied of content.

6. In Eastern Europe, the struggle for liberation from fascist occupation has historically merged with the struggle for socialism. The legacy and experience of socialism remain as present in the current crises and conflicts as the experience of neoliberal shock therapy and neocolonial integration into the Western-dominated division of labor after 1990. The moment of political and economic crisis here contains two

possibilities: the reorganization of socialist forces or the path to the enforcement of fascism.

Read **the complete dossier online**, share and discuss the conclusions, and send us your feedback, criticism, and suggestions!

“Fascism never left” – Debates in Africa

*In **Zetkin Journal #1**, we compiled articles on the danger and presence of fascism in North and South America, Africa, and Asia. We recently received **an additional contribution** from the Communist Party Marxist – Kenya (CPMK), which discusses the connection between neocolonialism and fascism in Africa using the example of the Ruto regime. Here is an excerpt from the CPMK’s analysis:*

[…] For the oppressed peoples of Africa, fascism has never disappeared; it was the fundamental logic of colonial rule, and it continues in the postcolonial period as a modality of imperialist domination and bourgeois comprador rule. European fascism was merely a late and intensified form of the colonial violence that Africa endured for centuries.

In Kenya, British settler colonialism was marked by racial terror, land dispossession, forced labour, mass internment (e.g. the detention camps during the Mau Mau War), and legalised white supremacy. This system bore all the features of classical fascism: a racist ideology of national superiority, a reactionary mass base among settler-colonialists, political repression through emergency laws, and the fusion of monopoly capital with the coercive state.

Post-independence, this system was not dismantled; it was Africanised. The comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, under the leadership of Kenyatta and Moi, inherited and sustained

a repressive neocolonial state machine. Today, fascist features persist in the Kenyan polity and across Africa: Militarised police repression of workers, students, and peasants; Surveillance, assassinations, and detention without trial; Extreme inequality and the violent protection of capitalist property relations; Patriarchal, ethnic-chauvinist and moral-religious reaction. Thus, in Africa, fascism is not returning; it is evolving in new neocolonial forms, as a reactionary defence mechanism of global capitalism in decay. […]

Read the full analysis **here**.

Interview: “Thomas Geggel on the GDR, anti-Semitism, and solidarity with Palestine”

Thomas Geggel (born 1949) is the son of Heinz Geggel, who was persecuted in Hitler’s Germany as a Jew and interned in the Gurs concentration camp. Most of Thomas's family was murdered in Auschwitz. As an anti-fascist and communist, Thomas is now particularly committed to solidarity with the Palestinian people against genocide, ongoing occupation, and expulsion by Israel.

We had the honour to sit down with Thomas and discuss the GDR's support for the struggle of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Through the lens of his family history, Thomas explained to us the significance of the anti-fascist and democratic upheaval in East Germany (1945-1949) and addressed the accusations of anti-Semitism against the GDR.

Watch the full interview **here**!

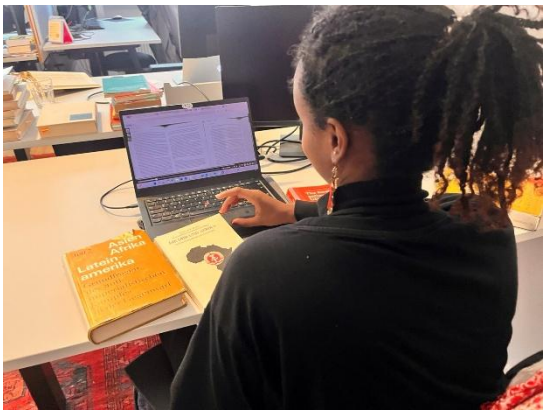
A new member of our team!

Hello everyone!

I recently started working at the Zetkin Forum and IF DDR as part of the Federal Volunteer Service programme (“Bufdi”). I will be working with the team for a year as part of this programme, so I would like to briefly introduce myself. I am 22 years old, recently completed my bachelor's degree in international law and politics, and want to spend my gap year learning something meaningful and deepening my knowledge of anti-imperialism and the history of the global class struggle, especially in Germany and Ethiopia.

As the daughter of a former Ethiopian student in the GDR, I have always questioned the portrayals of GDR history in liberal media and in the German education system. The stories about my father's time in the GDR—the stability he experienced there, the lack of racism compared to today, the vibrant international student community he belonged to, and the wonderful university life he often told me about—made it difficult for me to believe the one-sided, negative image of GDR history that was otherwise conveyed to me everywhere else.

Now, as part of my volunteer service here, I finally have the opportunity to examine this history in greater detail. This year, I will not only be supporting the Zetkin Forum with social media work and with eyewitness interviews, but also working on my own research project. In this project (the parameters of which I still have to define!), I will examine the Ethiopian student movement in the period before the 1974 revolution, the relations between the GDR and socialist Ethiopia (1974–1991), and the internal discourse within the GDR about the Ethiopian state during this period.



I am looking forward to working with the Zetkin Forum this year, learning a lot about anti-imperialist history and theory, and developing my own research project.

Warm greetings,
Your team at the IFDDR and the Zetkin Forum

Feedback? Questions? Write to us via **contact@zetkin-forum.org**!