

[\[https://gegen-kapital-und-nation.org/en/thesis-swing-right-europe/\]](https://gegen-kapital-und-nation.org/en/thesis-swing-right-europe/)

Thesis on the swing to the right in Europe

On the occasion of an [international antifascist conference](#) in Berlin we would like to present a few brief points on the recent rise of fascism in Europe.

In every democratic nation there are fascist political parties. Sometimes, they don't have a lot of impact for a long time, but they do exist nevertheless. Fascists are people who are politically organised on the common ground that they see their own nation sold out by their own government. Sold out, because that very government allegedly governed their people in a wrong way, meaning they would admit "the wrong" people and would govern "our own" too laxly, which would undermine motivation and decency. Wherever governments strengthen the dependency on other countries by making trade agreements or forming political alliances because they count on a positive outcome for their nation, it's the fascists who smell a sellout of the homeland.

This standpoint of fascists is kept alive and even strengthened by democratic parties. Every democratic party finds it reasonable to be sceptical about „foreigners“. Even where some might aim for a liberalisation of immigration law or for making naturalisation easier, it would still be stressed that this process should definitely depend on successful "integration" of these foreigners. It is taken for granted that foreigners always lack real patriotism – the one natives know before they are out of diapers. Every democratic party finds a lack of morale in the people, no matter if the occasion is a debate over fiscal evasion or on benefit scroungers. Every democratic party stresses that it only acts for the national common good when it, for example, signs an international treaty. Stressing that also means to hint at the other side of the medal: in any international business one's own national interests are at risk of being undermined by other nation-states. This is a prime subject of debate in parliamentary democracy: each party blames the others to have failed with regard to furthering the national interest or to even have thrown back the whole country by misgovernment. All those standpoints exist in every democracy. Fascists seize and radicalise them.

The EU and the Eurozone are associations of states each of which wants to advance its own power by joining together. Germany, for example, wanted to expand its already strong power in the world. Other nations, especially those in the south of Europe, wanted to get away from their agrarian economies and turn them into real capitalist ones. Both calculations seemed to have worked – until 2007.

The financial and sovereign debt crisis thwarted all of their plans. The countries in the European South had to subject themselves to a national scrapping programme simply for continued access to credit in Euro and without any perspective for further development. Germany does not want to pay a lot for those nation-states struck hardest by the crisis as they do not contribute to the German project of becoming a world power within and through a successful Europe.

In the public sphere it is the democratic parties which, at first, cast doubt whether everything worked according to plan in the past – in particular when they say: "carry on" regardless of the crisis. In contrast, fascist parties radicalised this doubt to the certainty that the whole EU and the Eurozone are one big sellout of the national interest.

The political elites have arrived at the conclusion that central political strategies have failed so far. This is one foundation of fascist success.

Secondly, for fascists parties to be successful it needs the people. Most people have no idea what the point of the Euro and its financial markets has been and continues to be. For the population it is patriotically obvious that painful cuts are required in the interest of the success of the nation when they think it is plausible that their own restrictions help the nation to achieve the greatness promised by politicians. For the same reason some countries saw mass protests because people do not accept that structural adjustment programmes lead the nation to greatness – as in their view those are merely imposed on them from abroad.

When large parts of the population now find it plausible to vote for fascist parties then this is not because they realised that nationally organised capitalism only means trouble for the satisfaction of needs and desires. But what they consider an inalienable right is the success of the nation itself. If that is threatened then they – as loyal subjects – become demanding and put their trust in parties which promise to stand for ruthless moralistic terror and systematic tightening of the figurative belt – without any concessions to foreign powers.

Antifascist activists remain helpless if they attempt to work with bourgeois parties and if they ignore their “arguments” (e.g. “foreigners and the EU are useful for the nation”) in coalitions – or even support these arguments. This bourgeois “invitation” not to follow the fascists contains the whole breeding ground for exactly these fascists. Instead what is needed is critique of those who judge the world around them – in good and bad times – as to how successful the nation is, instead of asking: what is my place, if others rule over me.