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MPIfG Lecture Understanding Germany in Times of Genocide: Franz Neumann and the Ongoing Question of Imperialism

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Thank you so much, Leon, for the invitation. Thank you to the Institute for having me. As you mentioned, I've been here as a visitor twice, and I have a very deep appreciation for the research culture at this institute. So I'm really glad for the first time, to be invited in this capacity and to share my current research with you. And as might have been visible from what you said, it's earlier work because for the last ten years, I've been mostly focusing on post-colonial political economy. So in the sense of how do global financial relations constrain countries in the global South, but with the Russian full scale invasion in twenty twenty two, and sort of the return of discussions about imperialism, I was sort of compelled. And then also the Hamas attack on the seventh of October twenty twenty three, compelled to look at my own country more intensively and try to understand is how our country, my country. Sort of relates with the rest of the world and sort of what I'm going. To present here today is really early work of my own sort of trajectory of trying to make sense of Germany in the current conjuncture. And I'm doing that, as I often like to do, by, by going quite far back in order to understand what has changed, what might be recurrent patterns. And in this case, I'm going back about a hundred years to the debates that started during the rise of National Socialism. And to what extent that can help us understand Germany of today. This is also embedded in research that I've started. I'm really glad to have started in Bielefeld with colleagues. So Felix Eitner, who is a specialist on Eastern Europe and Russia, he is currently researching the rearmament and military corporations. And my other co-worker, Anna Englehart, is working on ports and logistics and how they are currently featuring. And with a Tunisian student worker. I'm working on a piece on the activities of German arms corporations in the in the Middle East. Okay, so understanding Germany in times of genocide. Franz Neumann and the question of imperialism is the topic of today. And I would like to start just with some little impressionistic instances of what's happening in Germany. So as we all know, the AfD is leading in most polls, both at state and national level. And the German government is also trying to become or to host the biggest conventional army until nineteen thirty nine, which is exactly one hundred years after attacking Poland. I'm not sure whether that's by coincidence or symbolically on purpose. And at the same time attacks. We can't really say they are physical yet, but there is events where repression is taking place and people have to worry about what they say. For example, here and I'm using Ralph Michaels here explicitly and on purpose, obviously, because he's also a Max Planck director who before last weekend had sort of said that it's legitimate to block the AfD party Congress. And then Springer campaign was launched against him and he received multiple death threats, which, I mean, obviously it's a controversial topic to call for blocking party congresses, but it's just an indication of public discourse is becoming agitated and stressful in some some ways. So the question a little bit is whether violence and and discourse is increasing and becoming more prominent in our and everyday life. There's also an example of a professor in Marburg. Marburg is a city which hosts a lot of fraternities, Burschenschaften, which was quite active and has received death threats. So the question is, in this current predicament, whether these are early signs of something more dangerous to come, or whether this is just something that we can

look away from. The question of violence is very explicitly increasing with the view to our investments in the military. Our Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius, has decided to contribute five thousand troops to the so-called Brigade forty five Lithuania, which was officially launched in April twenty twenty five. But he is struggling to recruit exact the sufficient amount of of troops. But it's a very clear indication that Germany is is willing to increase its violent potential, at least over the long term and across Europe. At the same time, there is also ample evidence that across the population. There is some kind of skepticism towards this militarization drive. It's not that the whole German population supports that, but that doesn't really translate into powerful resistance to these investment decisions and new forms of debt. But you see, it's sort of in the reluctance of soldiers to go to the new called Lithuania Brigade, because if everybody was eager to actively defend Germany at its eastern front, it would be easy to fill these five thousand troops. At the same time, in the media and among the political spectrum that is governing, it's basically consensual that this needs to happen, that this kind of militarization drive is without alternative. And I would say, despite the majority of people being skeptical of that, there is a weird degree of missing debate about this issue. So that's something that has to be explained also by social scientists like us, how this disconnect can be maintained. And another instance of question of violence in Germany has become very prominent is in Gaza. So this is also one of the reasons, as I said at the very beginning, why I decided to look more closely at our own society and how it relates to the world and how it sort of has learned or has not learned question lessons of violence, because I my impression was that with the view to Gaza, we as Germans and our representatives in the government were quite unproblematically willing to support that kind of mass violence that borders or is plausible genocide according to international law and International Criminal Court and Court of Justice. And of course, there's historical reasons for that. But still, it made me think, what is it that makes us in Germany so tolerant and supportive of mass violence again, despite our history. And when we see, for example, the expressions of solidarity here, we see our Minister of Education on a visit by Israeli Foreign minister in Berlin recently, where she happily sort of sets the stage for that kind of cooperation that is not in itself a problem, because it's obvious that we are on the side of the Israelis. But at the same time, our official position towards Palestine is that we have a two state solution that we want to achieve. I don't know whether any of you has seen any pictures taken by German government officials with Palestinian Authority officials, either in Berlin or in the West Bank. So even that sort of official policy that is we all know, symbolic, because this state cannot live in that current shape, is not really pursued. So there is something about the nonchalance, I would say, and also the active support to that kind of violence. That, for me, raises the question. And also, as scholars in all kinds of scholarly association, these battles are raging just recently in the American Historical Association that debate how to deal with Gaza played out again in this is happening in most associations that are willing to stage that debate. So the question that I, I want to ask in this talk, and that is also part of this bigger project that I'm starting. So I'm trying to write a book about that, and it's really very preliminary ideas. So I'm, I'm using this opportunity also to pick your amazing brains. And I know how great your ideas are. So I'm really looking forward to that. So the question is when, how and why does Germany become violent towards the inside and the outside? So it's a very basic question. And I'm going to travel through previous theories of imperialism and fascism and more recent ones to develop some preliminary answers towards that question. The argument I'm already going to preface that is that understanding the genesis of violence, particularly in the German context, requires a thorough political economy and historical analysis. Mass violence and war become more probable under specific conditions. On the one hand, economic desperation. So the literature that I'm going to walk through shows that key economic sectors, specific capital fractions see no alternative for survival and profit beyond supporting far right parties. The economic record is quite clear on that in the works that I've studied for this argument. At the same time, that needs to be accompanied by ideological mobilization. So racist narratives today, anti-Semitic narratives at the time gain mass influence, and an expansive ideology develops for external aggression. So external violence and a military industrial complex emerges. So these three components economic desperation of specific capital fractions, ideological mobilization based on racism and or anti-Semitism, and sort of the binding together of that through a military industrial complex where the state and military corporations collaborate on longer term horizon. And what this is, it's a tentative exercise in early warning. So the argument that I'm trying to develop by learning from history and from previous conceptual work, using the past to plan for the future, to find the right moment to jump. I've put here an image by a frog in a boiling water, because that was, for me, a very powerful picture when the last heat wave

hit. Somebody said, when you throw a frog into hot water, it jumps out immediately. If a frog is already sitting in water that it's getting warmer and warmer and warmer and more slowly, it'll die. And I think that imagery is not only for the climate crisis, quite illustrative. It's also illustrative and suggestive for potentially where our society might be heading with a view to the use of violence towards the outside and towards the inside if we are not careful. So it's a tentative exercise in early warning. In the current fairy tales, you might have noticed there is a lot of debate at the moment about fascism, the fascism debate. For example, here we have the famous and rich industrialist. Cigarette companies were part of his family, and he has founded the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, and he also decided to close it recently, unfortunately, and there's a lot of responses to his texts. So he claimed in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on sixth of May. If. And it's my translation. If I try to understand the present by searching for which features it shares with past events, that is an entertaining sport, but hardly a way to better understand the present. I must examine the phenomenon, not discuss how I name it. And I would say we as social scientists who are trained in epistemology and methodology and ontology. That statement is obviously very, very naive because we cannot think and we cannot do analysis without concepts. Right? But we need to have the right sort of back and forth between the things that we observe, the details, the empirics and the terms that we use. So the point is not about looking for the right name as such. The point is to look for the right names that fit what you're observing. And he's just making the claim that fascism is obviously not it. So this kind of it's a sport. It's entertaining. We should not discuss. How I name it, I would say is something that is an effective response. It's not an intellectual response, which shows that we have the tendency, at least in that photon debate, to sort of by instinct, say, that's not we are there. We shouldn't be exaggerating. It's not fascism. And Oliver Nachtwey, who with Caroline, wrote this interesting book recently, he also says what's currently going on in Germany. We have good concepts to criticize these developments racism, dehumanization, authoritarianism, exclusion, discrimination, illegality, and so on. That's his most recent play on Jacobin. So the question that this debate raises is when and why is what we are observing so problematic and has such an inner logic? And I would say, and this is a direction where I go is become so violent along different dimensions that we need a specific term for it to name these different things as a convergence. And Oliver, in his recent reply, also said that historically, the point of no return was marked by a general inability to achieve hegemony and parts of the ruling class beginning to openly support the NSDAP. While nationalists and conservative parties no longer oppose the rupture, but de facto brought it about themselves. So at some point there will be a point of no return. And the debate actually is about how bad is the situation already, and if it's not as bad yet, how do we know when it's becoming as bad? And as I said a few slides earlier. Yeah, I'm trying to lay out some ideas based on classic and old work, how we could recognize the degree of problems that we're facing. So the structure of the talk after this brief introduction is so Germany today, instances of internal and external violence, the photon debate. I've already traveled. And then I will now go in some detail into historical antecedents. So theories of imperialism and fascism, focusing particularly on Franz Neumann's work and Alfred von Riedel's work and a little cursory tour around political economy work broadly in the Marxist tradition between the nineteen seventies and two thousand tends to come back in the last part to an application of these thoughts for the situation today and at this institute, obviously much some of that work of starting in the seventies, 80s was done themselves. So I'm really thrilled that some of the people working on this are actually in the room. So for complexity reduction purposes, I have created five Errors or five phases of political economy. Work of violence in parentheses in the German Democratic Republic in the last one hundred years, starting with the classic theories of imperialism Hobson, Luxemburg, Lenin and Kautsky, among others, in the early twentieth century. So during the First World War and before that. Then we have the Nazi era, where Neumann and Sohn-rethel did their writing and published at least Neumann sohn-rethel. Published later. Then we have an interesting short glimpse. I will only give a Marxist state and world market debates because it's relevant to understand today, I think because they were focusing a lot on concentration processes, and it's worthwhile to revisit how they did that for today. And then the Germany or Deutschland AG debates organized capitalism regulation theory in the nineteen eighties and two thousand tens. And that's sort of we can debate when that started. But since the twenty tens, debates about fascism and imperialism and militarization slowly began to reemerge. And these five steps of various ways of doing political economy of Germany, just as an overview. It's interesting that the first two phases, for obvious reasons, First and Second World War, contained a very explicit engagement with questions of violence and war and imperialism and fascism that got lost because we were in a sta-

ble European integration project under US hegemony, although also in the in the bloc confrontation. And that was particularly acute in the eighties to twenty ten. So neoliberal hegemony and the question of violence is now returning. So these questions of approaches to political economy are obviously shaped by the world that's going on around them. But it's notable that the question of violence inside as fascism or outside as imperialism, was absent in the way we in Germany and Europe tended to do political economy. That was very different in the global South. And that's one thing that Caroline Foss and I discuss in the piece that was sent around as preparation or as suggestion for this talk, where we sort of show the different traditions of anti-imperialist theorizing, where in the global north we forgot the question of violence because we thought we were not touched by it anymore while in the anti-colonial, anti-colonial areas, that was very, very present and daily routine. Okay. So the, the I will not go much into detail in the classical theories of imperialism, but the core question that these authors try to tackle is how come and what does it lead to that capital needs to cover these to conquer new economic and also national territory. And how does it relate to the onset of war? That was basically the question. And at the same time, there were differences with a view to how communist, socialist or social democratic they were, how they position themselves to reform or revolution. So on the one hand, is there an inevitability of war in the fact that we are living under capitalism, and how should we approach it? Can we approach it through parliamentarianism, or do we need revolution to overcome it? If we want to overcome the inherent expansionary tendencies that capital necessarily entails and the wars that will lead us into? So that is a question that we're obviously also asking ourselves today. Exactly the same kind of question. Where are these wars all coming from? How could we get out of these waves of returning wars? And now to Franz Neumann and Alfred Sohn-rethel? So Franz Neumann's book behemoth, *The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, was published in nineteen forty two, and Alfred Sohn-rethel book in German only in nineteen seventy three, because he was a very diligent scholar, and he actually did the writing for that book in the nineteen thirties, but always wanted to extend them, but then decided, okay, I will just publish these as, as drafts. And they are interesting nonetheless. And they were also published in English in nineteen seventy eight. Franz Neumann, It's worth sort of going a little bit, in my view, into his biography, because he is one of the founding fathers of German political science. But I have the impression maybe it's also my bias. It's rarely read, but it's, in my view, really good political science because he's a jurist. Being Jewish, he was forced to emigrate to New York City in nineteen ninety three, became a professor at Columbia University, and then died in an accident in Switzerland in nineteen fifty four. So he didn't get that old. Unfortunately, The book four hundred pages about has three parts. The first so-called the Political Pattern of Nazism. It's kind of a policy analysis, media strategy, paper analysis where I analyze the debates around Nazism, then the new society, its kind of ideology analysis where he analyzes the Lebensraum concept, uh, notions of race, etc. so it's sort of a work of political theory. And then a long section on what he calls the totalitarian monopoly economy, where he counts. How many union members were there, what were the different unions? And it's really empirical work also. So really big recommendation to delve into that book. There's three main analytical pillars apart from these three sections of the book, to say it very simply, abolishing democracy once they took power, the deployment of racism and anti-Semitism, and, crucially, the collaboration of specific sections of capital was really, really important for the Nazi state to operate. That might not be news to most of you, but I think it's very, very important because when we're talking about today, the question is always are which sectors of the ailing German economy will be turning towards the right and will be ready to support the right when push comes to shove? And in Newman's and Rachel's work, we find sort of clues how to do that analysis. And he's even sort of realizing that, I mean, he's claiming and it's been debated, obviously in, in, in the reception of that work, that Germany's imperialism is primarily the policy of industrial leadership, fully supported by the National Socialist Party. So he claims and others say differently that, um, sort of the driving force was actually capital or fraction of capital. Um, the other classes followed this leadership or even resist it is. Um, so that's often overlooked, I think because, um, that could be read as crude economic determinism, right. Structural determinism. But I think what's really worthwhile and important about this is to be really, really diligent in analyzing what is the particular sort of strategic calculus of a particular fraction of the current German economy and where this might lead and where might they be looking for alliances? That's something that we that we learn from from Neumann's work. So it's the time after the big inflation, very large conglomerates were founded. I mean, Germany was a late industrialization. So the large corporations became big quite quickly. And the inflation fueled that. Some of the famous names are. IG Far-

ben the chemical giant and and Krupp, Siemens and Deutsche Bank. And I will say a little bit more about how they were differently positioned towards the Nazi project with the help of Rachel's work. What's also interesting, I think this Marxist perspective on sort of social contradictions in a particular constellation, because he also claims there would have been other ways of getting the German economy and society out of its crisis. So there could have been concessions to the masses in the sense of some kind of social democracy with foreign assistance. So bringing in foreign capital to create investments, etc., and joining the concert of Western powers. That path was not chosen. Socialist transformation would have been another option to sort of meet the contradictions of the moment in the twenties and 30s. But that, according to Neumann, was completely unrealistic because, according to him, the Social Democratic Party at the time was socialist in name only. And then the way to deal with the problems of accumulation in the German economy of the time that was chosen was the path of imperialist expansion. So the German export capital was given space. And for a long time. There's a lot of interesting detail on that in the book as well. It was debated of how to make Mitteleuropa ripe for German capital to actually occupy Middle and Eastern Europe in order to integrate the resources also present, but also the production facilities in that in that area. And that then for the ailing parts of the German economy, was the project that they wanted to support. But not only that, it is there, this attention to, let's say, exportism and political economy, but also to ideology. So in the second part that I mentioned before of the book, There's very deep reflections on the history of anti-Semitism, also on of racism. So, for example, he describes on the one hand that racism was the basis for the for the for the contemporary anti-Semitism of the nineteenth century, but also has its own roots. So gives evidence on Luther's words about how the synagogues must burn. And so the long standing anti-Semitism present on the. In the German lands also about nationalism, how nationalism in Germany was. Had a different character, more folkish than the one of France which was linked to that notion of national superiority rooted in Herder and Fichte, and the well-known concept which is also returning now in the current geopolitical debates of Lebensraum by the geographer Friedrich Ratzel, which was extended by the Swedish lawyer Selin and Haushofer, which is basically the idea that a state society is an organism that needs sort of a natural extension and habitat and to flourish. And the German organism obviously needs a much bigger organism or space to flourish in order to live up to its, its potential. So these sort of concepts were then also used to explain the rise and power and persistence of the practice of the Nazi state in Newman's book. But let me get back, because this, this once shall be the focus of the talk to that economic expansion and question of imperialism. And that's where Alfred Sohn-rethel gives us interesting, nearly ethnographic detail. So this is the book as one of these classic books from the sixties and 70s. They are sadly quite expensive if you buy them individually. But sometimes there's this whole libraries in people. So if you know people who have their entire camp at home sent them to young PhD students of political economy. I think they they love it. So he, in nineteen thirty one to nineteen thirty six was employed by the middle Europaischer tag, which was a really small lobby institution. And his boss was very, very well connected. And the people from the army, from different parties, from the Foreign Office and other ministry went and came into the middle position and he just took notes. He took notes, what they discussed, and he took notes. So what their strategic differences were, and these are basically the chapters of this book. And here I think it's worthwhile. It's a bit less about I mean, the book is called economy and. Forward from Johannes Agnoli, Bernard Blanc, and famous Marxist political scientists of the of the early seventies. It's more about fascism, right. And I think it's. I find it productive because we're. I'm investigating here the different meanings of imperialism and fascism in that tradition of the last one hundred years, how Agnoli Blanca and sort of in this very classic seventies Marxist way, capture fascism. So they say on page twenty three, the social function of fascism can be summarized as imperialist expansion by militarist means on the basis of a double guarantee for the capitalist system, the guarantee of its economic reproduction under optimal conditions for capital, and the guarantee of its political reproduction by smashing the labor movement and making its revolutionary struggle against the whole system of surplus value production preventively impossible by terrorist means. So I'm quoting that because I think it's useful to to have this very clear understanding of fascism as one potential understanding of it, which refers to the need for capital accumulation to start working again. So the economic reproduction function, the guarantee that it goes on. So you need to find new outlays to invest capital and make a profit in the in the process and at the same time to smash resistance to, for example, like Newman said before, to prevent the socialist alternative, for example, by weakening what they call here, the labor movement and its revolutionary struggle. And what we see today is, I

mean, we are obviously not at all in a situation of a strong labor movement or in a revolutionary situation, but still, what is going on is a further weakening of what is left of the labor movement. And it's an intensification of the work day on many fronts. But I will come back to that a little bit later. Interesting for our political economy, discussions in our discussions about exports and growth models as we're having them at the moment in political economy and an interesting specification of Neumann's work. So the export industry. Camp, Siemens, Krupp, for example. They were quite resistant to support the Nazis because they didn't need them. Siemens was dependent on government contracts, big government contracts globally. They relied on good relationships with different countries. And they couldn't. I mean, an expansionist military force like the Nazis would destroy these relationships. So they actually weren't interested. And in the beginning, neither. But he joined them later. What he claims is that there was, uh, the molten steel industry, Borsig, Thyssen, etc., the front of retina debtors, as it's called here. They had sort of done the industrialization of Germany and they were in decline, and they were the supporters of the Nazis. Early on in the fireside conversations, again, observations that Sohn-rethel Was able to make because he was working in this lobby group. They were chatting about how the war, when the war should be started and which kind of resources they could then incorporate into their sort of return to economic growth or capital accumulation, with the help of sort of strategic potentials of the Central European space. Mitteleuropa was a big thing at the time. Krupp interesting details. Finance already then in the thirties, sort of secessionist movements in former Yugoslavia. So that not only happened in the nineties, but also already in the thirties. So there's also a long duration, a return of these kinds of policies, but interestingly, directly financed by business groups, according to Sohn-rethel, in that time group and for the military Keynesianism debate that we have today, it's just important to state, and it's obvious that the rearmament that was then done by or expanded by by the Nazis, Sixty percent of all that demand. The newly instigated production was then met by the state, so the state inserted itself as a massive boost to that decaying industry by militarising so massively. And it's important to to say also that and it's just a little detail, but I found it really telling the intensification of work and how sort of more surplus value extraction was able to be done. So the way farms could be hereditary was changed. So it was no longer possible that different members of the family were able to inherit that farm, but only one person. So the others had to leave the farm, which in a very classic way, sort of increases the labor supply and makes it possible for capital to have better supply of workers and makes labor cheaper. So that's now the phase. And the I think the interesting insights from Sohn-rethel and and Newman, where we have a combination of the solution to expand across German borders. So imperialist tendencies. At the same time, the important role of capital fractions and military Keynesianism, but also the intensification of work, which can only work through compulsion in a certain tense. And here these are legal means that force people to work the debate. And I think I have to be a little bit quicker about who Schmidt and the Germany ink. I think it's just interesting, not relevant, I think, for imperialism and fascism debates. But this entire book apparently very, very influential in the sixties and 70s was really about the concentration of capital and income and wealth inequality in Germany in the nineteen sixties. And it's really interesting to see a book. I mean, Piketty did some of that a few years ago, you know, with his focus on inequality. But what this book does is it traces empirically who earns what, how wealth relations change, what are the role of the big corporations, and how dependent are the small corporations on these big dominant corporations? And the subtext obviously is, since it's already so concentrated, it will be really easy to just transform it into a socialist economy. That obviously never happened. But that was the sort of the hubris and exuberance of the day. But the interesting is this very clear focus on income, wealth and inequality and corporate concentration, which I think your work, for example, with your group really directly speaks to. And sort of it's kind of outdated. But I think the empirical work and the approach and the passion are inspiring for today. Interesting. Also, the very clear declaration at the beginning, it is the declared intention of the system supporting forces of our society to eliminate the fundamental contradiction between social production and private Appropriation by turning the propertyless wage dependent masses into owners. If only small owners. So, a little aside on what it means to become a small equity holder, you know that this buys you into the production of the capitalist system. I mean, this the way of talking about the social reality is just so completely different. But I think refreshing for, for today because we're returning sort of to this situation of crisis today. And at the same time, his goal was and he says that very openly to show the continuity of the capitalist class system, despite comprehensive changes in its steering mechanisms. So very clearly, Hubschmid who died not, I think, only twenty years ago, there's a price in his in his name, given an-

nually. He worked at the University of Bremen for a long time in economics, clearly believed that within the capitalist system, the same problems would always remain. There will be different forms of steering and managing it. But for him and these people. At the time, the solution was to, to, to look for something else. I think that kind of focus on alternatives was a bit lost in my view. And correct me if I'm wrong in the organized capitalism and Germany Inc. debate, I think there was something of affirmative turn, I would say, in capturing the German political economy, because it was seen, especially in Germany, in literature, that Martin Hauptmann, Wolfgang Streek, for example, published a lot on that. This kind of capitalism was performed well and was actually pursuing, and I quote you here directly, profitability was only one goal among several. And that was probably true because it was also about stability and keeping jobs and, and maintaining that network, which we all know started to disassemble with sort of the liberalization of the capital account in several ways, and the influx of foreign capital into all kinds of corporations in the German. German system, but I think this problematization at the very basic level. Of the way we organize capitalism was slightly lost. That has been changing. And that's the last phase, at least since the last big financial crisis, two thousand and seven and two thousand and eight, which reintroduced a generation of students to Marxist analysis. And now, with the rise of the AfD and right wing parties all across Europe, and now the war waged by Russia and Ukraine and also in Gaza, questions of imperialism and fascism are coming back. So before getting to the last part on current temporary Germany, this is just. And I think it's too small. It's an attempt of mapping these different understandings of imperialism and fascism. I won't go into detail here, but it's basically a summary of what I said in the talk before. Okay, so part two lessons from the past. So to summarize, look for corporate economic losers in emerging military industrial complex and the deployment of racism. That would be, if I had to say it very briefly. These are the three components that the study of these one hundred very, very cursory years of broadly Marxist, neo-Marxist political economy taught me and maybe would teach you as well. And I'm sure many of you have read some of this work. So now I'm trying to apply that to the situation today. So first of all, I think two ideological and obviously also political, economic mega themes are migration and rearmament with a view to migration. It's hard to sort of explain the Folkish character of the AfD Economically, just as it's hard to explain the Holocaust economically, right? Because, I mean, the Jewish population was extremely important on so many levels for the German society economically also. And getting rid I mean, the capital is already complaining about scarcity of labor. So getting rid of even more migrants re migrating them doesn't make sense economically. But it's clearly a re instantiation of the racist ideological components that we need for a fascist project. So in Trump we've seen ICE deportations have picked up massively. A couple of people dead. Now they're scaling back a little bit and they've turned to imperialism outside. The question would be now, since we have the AfD does not have a Lebensraum concept. So very clearly it does have a racism, but it does not have an expansionary geographical extension project. But we could say that Trump, the Trump regime and MAGA didn't have that either. They were isolationists. They claimed to be only focusing on their home turf once they were in power. For some reason, they decided to do just the opposite and become full on imperialists. So no consolation there. But if we think back to Newman, we don't have a long standing organic Lebensraum discussion with the view to the role of Middle Europe, central Europe, Europe for Germany today. So I personally think there's a difference and that could give us some hope. The racism doesn't. And also the economic and military industrial complex issue is problematic. So we see here. And that's now just a very brief overview. Very recent data here on the left from Zukunft. You see on the left it's in German unfortunately. But I think you will understand the gist. It's overall payment in yellow. It's the share of defense spending, and on the right hand side you have credit. So the amount of debt that will be used. And there we have a massive overhang of defense spending. Then we have on this graph here we have a recent study by the Ifo which sort of assesses which sectors and how, which share of the German economy sees promise in the value chains of the new military investments. And it's seventeen percent at this stage. It's not really big, but it's something that can be growing. And here we have a picture at the bottom right on the negotiations between the land of Berlin and Israeli military company, which is also taking place in Osnabrück in the former Volkswagen Camp camp. So there is a problematic confluence between military spending, also with a view to support to Israeli violence and a shift of substantial sectors of the German economy towards trust in that military Keynesianism that will only intensify in the coming years. Here are some data. So until twenty thirty, we are aiming for one hundred and eighty billion in annual defense spending. That will then be twenty percent of the overall budget. And as I mentioned in the beginning

twenty thirty nine, we want to have the largest conventional army in all of Europe. Trade unions are relatively quiet on this. This mirrors analysis of the thirties that the working class and its representatives did not protest massively against sort of rearmament drive. The economic dimensions of the Gaza genocide to come back to that initial hook, why, I was beginning to look more closely at the question of violence in Germany. It's unclear to me how important and prominent this has to be, but it's also part of that logic of shifting and sort of orienting our investments, how we change our economy, what we produce with who and for what we produce it. That sort of points into a problematic direction, apart from the military complicity of international law violations. It also has a useful function from the point of view of the government or the parts of the government that want to support that kind of militarization drive, of making criticism of the government and of government policies harder. So the alliance with the Israeli government is sort of doubly useful. It is a political economic investment. And at the same time it can be used to weaken internal criticism and defense. Okay. Who offers maybe explanations of who profits from the current constellation in his work sometimes is very interesting. So he mentions six pillars that profit from this militarization the foreign policy establishment, the Berlin blob, as it's called, privileged working class that will be now working for housing instead of for the decaying Volkswagen. The municipalities deprived through years of austerity get more if arms corporations get built there, the arms corporations themselves, obviously. And as in his own time, the massive state contracts that are stable, profitable opportunities for those companies producing in the arms sector. To return to the climate analogy and the boiling frog that dies, I don't know how hot the water already is, but I think that the historical and conceptual discussion of that previous work indicates that, you know, the water is real and is heating. To repeat the argument very briefly, to understand the genesis of violence and to understand when it might become more towards the outside and towards the inside. We have to look for economic desperation and those sectors of capital that suffer, and that would be ready to support a right wing project. And of the different ways ideological racist narratives gain influence. Yes. And I would just say the core lesson, and it's very banal in a way, right from Sohn-rethel and Newman, is that as soon as profits are called sustainably into questions, large corporations look around quite value free for ways of surviving and re and jumps jump starting the the profit process and from today a recent Brandenburg Stellt die Brandmeier zu r.f.d. offiziell in Frage der CDU Mittelstand Union hat ihren Amtrak in Bezug auf die AfD n Schaft aufruhr in der AfD. So. All that, however you want to position yourself towards the brand mower. The crucial question is will we find a way of organizing our ailing economy in a way that does not increase violence, threats to professors, racist violence in the streets like Ice under Trump? Or will we? With the election of the AfD, for example, in Saxony-Anhalt, very soon and quite probable without any more, because they will have the absolute majority. It's quite certain that violence, however constructed, will increase. So the conclusion. Last slide political economy, violence and the road ahead. I think this very brief and very cursory trip through one hundred years of trying to make sense of violence in Germany sensitizes us to the need for accumulation processes to be sort of restarted, and the role of austerity in it. And austerity makes Labour coerces Labour more effectively. Intensification of labour is taking place. You know, very obvious example, the recent abolishment of you only have to run to the doctor after the third day. And the theoretical task that I think before us is, is to take serious this conglomeration of racist ideologies, state capital, collaboration with a view to the military and the acceptance and support of violence. It's a dark picture, but I think it's the reality. And we are all, I think, invited to think about ways out of that conundrum. And I thank you very much for your attention and look forward to your questions and criticisms.

