

Call for Papers

Forum Wissenschaft 3/2026 – 250 years of the United States

The quarterly journal *Forum Wissenschaft* of the Bund demokratischer Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler (BdWi) will devote its third 2026 issue (publication date: 15 September 2026) to the theme **“American (Alb)Dreams: 250 years of the USA between Science, Power and Democracy.”**

The journal addresses a wide range of topics and is aimed at researchers, students and an interested public. With more than 1,200 readers, it provides a forum for critical analyses, debates and perspectives on science, politics and society.

2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence. In view of increasingly authoritarian tendencies, growing social inequality, geopolitical upheavals and intense battles over academic freedom and knowledge production, a critical examination of the United States’ role is more urgent than ever. We wish to offer a critical counter-reading of the jubilee and of the state’s self-presentation.

Forum Wissenschaft is seeking contributions that analyse the United States as a scientific-political actor, a geopolitical power and a contradictory model of democracy. Central to the call is the nexus of science and politics:

- How are knowledge, research and universities instrumentalised politically?
- How are international power relations shifting within the global order of knowledge?
- What forms of resistance, alternatives and counter-knowledge are emerging?

In addition to overarching analyses, we are explicitly interested in situated perspectives, concrete experiences and empirical case studies: how do the dynamics described above manifest in the everyday life of universities, research programmes, protest movements or migration regimes?

Possible topics and questions

Science and Power

- Science policy at the intersection of the military, Big Tech and private capital
- History of the US scientific system and its international influence (science as soft power)
- Academic capitalism and brain drain: commercialisation of universities and its consequences
- Update on academic freedom: attacks on universities, political steering of research, and curriculum disputes
- “Trump versus Harvard”? University politics, elite conflicts and new authoritarian tendencies

Democracy in Crisis

- Founding of the USA: first post-colonial democracy or colonial republic?
- Trump 2.0: on the road to fascism?
- Polarisation, anti-science sentiment and anti-intellectualism
- Racism, structural violence and knowledge production (from slavery to Black Lives Matter)
- Electoral system, representation and democratic erosion

Global Entanglements and Geopolitical Shifts

- The USA as a declining world power?
- Transformation of the global knowledge order: from US-centredness to multipolar knowledge spaces, China’s rise in patents, Nobel nominations and university rankings
- Education, exchange programmes and elite circulation
- Climate policy caught between scientific responsibility and fossil-fuel lobbying

Resistance, Alternatives and Counter-Movements

- Civil-rights movement, student protests and contemporary university conflicts
- Concrete practices of resistance (e.g. against ICE, deportation policy, surveillance)
- Alternatives and struggles: Mamdani as a model?
- Academic solidarity and trans-national protest networks

We are looking for:

- Society-critical scholarly analyses
- Interdisciplinary contributions from the social, cultural, political, natural and technological sciences
- Empirical studies as well as theoretical reflections
- Experience reports from researchers working in a trans-Atlantic context
- Papers that link global developments with local or institutional case studies
- Interviews and conversations with critical voices from the United States

We also welcome contributions that address the theme in ways that do not directly follow the questions listed above.

Submission details

- Short proposals (up to 300 words) should be sent by ****14 April 2026**** to: forum@bdwi.de.
- Enquiries regarding the call may also be addressed to the same address.
- Full papers are due by ****20 July 2026****.
- The length of a contribution must not exceed ****18 000 characters including spaces****.
- Foot- or end-notes should be limited to a maximum of ****15**** and kept concise (core literature only). Longer submissions may be asked to be shortened.
- Submissions in English are welcome.
- Regrettably, no remuneration can be offered.

Further information for authors can be found here:

<https://www.bdwi.de/forum/hinweise/96053.html>

We look forward to receiving your proposals!