

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ISRAEL AND VIOLENCE



BEYOĞLU KİTABEVİ

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ISRAEL AND VIOLENCE

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INTRODUCTION

SELMAN EMRE GÜRBÜZ

The title of this book, *The Zionist Movement, Israel and Violence*, initially indicates that we witness a brutal regime of unjust power that is ontologically against the peaceful and social co-existence of people. As this study demonstrates in detail, the Zionist structure of the state of Israel renews itself with political, cultural, and discursive violence by producing various myths to gain vindication and validation in the global spectrum. Especially from Nakba (1948) to this day, the historical stage is an explicit testing ground or laboratory of Zionist terror.

Zionism is supported by the so-called “international society,” reflecting the imperial domination in global politics. Thus, it is vital to comprehend that any kind of opposition to Zionism should be moral duty of humans vis-à-vis its genocidal tendencies and practices in Palestine. This highlights the importance of theoretical and ethical reflexivity for individuals engaged in any form

of social-scientific research. In conjunction with the basic power and knowledge nexus, the first one is mainly about “critically” focusing on the meta-theoretical dimension to comprehend how real-life “experiences” are disseminated into knowledge production. As its name signifies, the second one (ethical reflexivity) is the pursuit of critical self-awareness about the power asymmetries and inequalities on scientific research.

Regarding this, our aim in this study is to critically evaluate Zionism in *theoretical* and *practical* manners. In particular, theory without practice cannot engage with reality. Practice without theory cannot grasp the overarching framework of reality and knowledge. Thus, the book is divided into two interconnected parts, indicating theoretical and practical investigation on Zionist violence in global¹ politics. Herewith, the overarching aim of this collective study is to dismantle Zionist violence to reach decolonial praxis. That is why the praxis can be interpreted as the combination of theoretical and ethical reflexivity as mentioned above.

In the beginning, Berdal Aral’s chapter on Zionist violence in Palestine provides a historical overview, ranging from the origins of Zionism and its political formation to recent developments. Particularly, Aral delves into different versions of Zionist violence, including its physical, psychological, and epistemic forms as a serious threat to international peace. In this manner, Aral’s study illustrates that violence is a central operational code for Zionist strategies against the Palestinian people throughout history.

Quraysha Ismail Sooliman’s piece on Palestine’s lament critically explores how the Zionist forms of physical, structural, discursive, and cultural violence are directly intertwined with the

1. The term “global” is intentionally used due to Zionism’s outreach beyond the international level.

significant concept of *settler colonialism*. Sooliman illustrates that it is crucial to make an analogy between Zionism and the other historical examples of settler colonialism, such as the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. Hence, she argues that the resistance against Zionist settler colonialism is a vital part of decolonial praxis to reach global solidarity.

In combination with the criticism of the key concepts, Zionism and settler colonialism, Fadi Zatarí's chapter focuses on the issue that terrorism is an integral feature and instrument of Zionist illegitimate violence. Initially, Zatarí introduces the ontological and epistemological foundations of terrorism as a political concept within the context of Zionist violence, including sabotage, ethnic cleansing, genocide, or forced displacement. With regard to the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, Zatarí also elaborates how and why Zionism manipulates the discourse of terrorism in order to sustain political legitimacy.

Indicating the overlap between theology and politics, Omar Fili introduces the concept of theopolitics. He focuses on theopolitics of Zionist violence, demonstrated from the foundation of the state of Israel. Fili's chapter indicates how the secularized mentality of Zionist violence has been intertwined with theological characteristics. To put it differently, Fili emphasizes that the rhetoric of Zionist violence transcends the labels of fascism or colonialism. At its core lies a theologized form of secularism—an idealized modern nation sanctified through its alignment with ancient history, pursuing goals that resemble a secularized vision of eschatological destiny. By this means, Fili's study reflects the necessity to conduct a genealogical inquiry of the theological foundations of "modern" day politics.

As the last chapter of the theory-based analyses in the book, Selman Emre Gürbüz conducts a critical inquiry on Zionism

within the context of postcolonial approaches in the International Relations (IR) discipline. Gürbüz firstly introduces postcolonial theory as a suitable candidate to problematize Zionism with the criticism on Eurocentrism and racist foundations of global politics. Later, he problematizes postcolonial perspectives in IR due to the general tendency of “colonial erasure of Palestine” in significant studies of knowledge production. Thus, he indicates that a truly decolonial turn in IR should give both theoretical and practical proportion to the subject of Zionist violence in the academy.

Following these theory-based inquiries, the book proceeds to explore the more practical aspects of Zionist violence in global politics. In this manner, Shady Ibrahim presents a detailed elaboration about the Dahiya doctrine of Israel (as the overall military strategy of the Israel Defense Forces). After explaining the IDF’s strategical evolution, his technical discussions articulates that Israel’s military has five main applied standards to occupy the Palestinian territories. Respectively, (1) the use of asymmetrical aerial force, (2) targeting civilians, (3) the destruction of large number of civilian residential buildings, (4) targeting the city’s infrastructure, and (5) forcing the population to flee are exemplified by the author. By indicating the Battle of Jenin as a microcosm of the Dahiya Doctrine of IDF, Ibrahim explores how this doctrine constructs a triangle of political, military, and security sectors as the violation of human rights and international law.

Continuing with the practical indicators of Zionist violence, Sundus Aladra elaborates the discursive aspects of Zionist violence as the fabrications of legitimacy or justification. Focusing on the post-7th October 2023 atmosphere, Aladra proceeds with a discourse analysis of three significant fabricated claims that shape the media representations. In particular, she deconstructs the claims of (1) decapitation of infants, (2) systematic rape, and

(3) hospitals used for military purposes as the current base for Zionist genocide and occupation. Additionally, Aladra emphasizes how these fabrications of mainstream media representations are accompanied by academic silence (in the form of scholasticide) in the aftermath of October 7th. Overall, her study demonstrates the necessity of raising critical awareness about the circulation of both theoretical and practical knowledge while resisting Zionism in global politics.

In the last chapter, Sami Al-Arian deconstructs Zionist settler colonialism as a structural violation of human rights and international law. By applying the resolutions and reports of the United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Criminal Court, and the International Court of Justice, Al-Arian elaborates on the illegal characteristics of Zionist violence throughout history. Also, he critically examines several myths, such as the selling of Palestinian lands, voluntarily giving up the 1948 Arab borders, the moral and democratic characteristics of Israel, etc. Regarding these, he proposes several legal, economic, cultural, and strategic actions to reach global activism in the form of a transnational movement (including states, parties, unions, universities, NGOs, faith-based organizations, and individuals) against Zionism. He exemplifies the required actions such as arms embargoes, jurisdiction, divestments, conditional trade and boycott, and city diplomacy.

In conclusion, this collaborative book decolonizes ontological and epistemological foundations of Zionist violence and terror in global politics. By giving equal proportions to theory and practice, the study reveals an evolving structure of violence that increasingly endangers the global sphere with each passing day. The examination of Zionism shows us that colonialism and imperialism are not historical events or periods in world history. Quite

the contrary, we inhabit a colonial present where Zionism continues to be legitimized despite recurring acts of genocide, politicide, epistemicide, ecocide, and scholasticide. Speaking on behalf of all contributors to this volume, one can assert that criticizing Zionism is a moral imperative for those who uphold the sanctity of life, human dignity, and global solidarity. It is hoped that this book, with its valuable commentaries, will make a modest contribution to the elimination of Zionist violence from history.