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WAR IN GAZA AND THE DISCOURSE OF POPULATION TRANSFER

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Abstract. The paper explores and analyzes Israel's war in Gaza and the roots of the discourse of 'population transfer' in the Zionist thinking and its current application in Israeli society.

Drawing upon the relevant literature and primary sources and using discourse analysis, the paper examines how the discourse of 'population transfer' or 'ethnic cleansing' have played a central role in the policy of the Israeli regime towards the Palestinian people since 1948. The study builds on the concept of elimination of the native and the discourse of 'population transfer' to get a deeper understanding of the roots of Zionist endeavor to eliminate and erase the indigenous people and society to build a Jewish state in historic Palestine.

The key argument the study puts forth is that the elimination of the native of Palestine has always been central to the Zionist Israeli colonial project and annihilation of the Palestinian society and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians constitute the driving force behind Israel's current military onslaught in Gaza.

The results of the study have shown that the ongoing Israel's war in Gaza since October 2023 and its attempts to expel Palestinian population from the area are not accidental; rather, they are the continuation of the conventional Zionist discourse of ethnic cleansing. The specific feature of the current Israeli endeavor to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Gaza is that this policy is fully supported by the United States and other Western countries.

Keywords: Palestine, Israel, Gaza, Palestinians, population transfer, ethnic cleansing, war, Trump plan

Introduction

The goal and objectives of the paper are to explore the roots of the Zionist colonial project and ongoing Israel's annihilation and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Gaza. The main purpose of the paper is to look into the Zionist discourse of 'population transfer' or 'ethnic cleansing' against the backdrop of Israel's aggression in historic Palestine. The study builds on the concept of elimination of the native by Wolfe [1, p. 387-388], the paradigm of 'population transfer' and 'ethnic cleansing' theorized by Palestinian and Israeli scholars Masalha and Pappe [2, 3]. The key argument the study puts forth is that the elimination of the native of Palestine has always been central to the Zionist Israeli colonial project and annihilation of the Palestinian society and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians constitute the driving force of Israel's current military onslaught

in Gaza. Brésillon, Loewenstein, Massad and many other leading scholars highlight how the question of ‘transfer of the Palestinian people’ in Israeli society, ominously referred to as “voluntary transfer”, is not a new idea rather it has always occupied the minds of the Zionists and is much older than the Israeli regime itself [4, 5, 6]. The relevance of the discourse of ‘population transfer’ in Israeli society has increasingly become against the backdrop of Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza. This is reflected in numerous polls conducted by different organizations in Israel. A recent survey conducted by Penn State University shows that 82 percent of Israelis support the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza [7, 8, 9].

Oppressing, dehumanizing, stigmatizing, killing and displacing the native Palestinian people have become thoroughly rationalized and normalized in Israeli society. Without the racial oppression and apartheid, settler colonialism and systematic oppression of the native people of Palestine, the Zionist Israeli regime could neither survive nor be sustained. Referring to the 1948 Deir Yasin massacre, Yisrael Eldad, the ideologue of Lehi, noted that “without Der Yasin the state of Israel could never have been established [10, p. 59-60]. The professor at Haifa University, Arnon Soffer in his piece in “The Jerusalem Post” on 10 May 2004 wrote that “if we want to remain alive, we have to kill and kill. All day, every day... If we don’t kill, we will cease to exist... Unilateral separation doesn’t guarantee ‘peace’ – it guarantees a Zionist-Jewish state with an overwhelming majority Jews” [3, p. 248]. In this sense, as Zionist Israeli narratives and discourses tend to dominate media, social networks and scholarship, this considerably hinders gaining an accurate, objective and proper understanding of this pivotal issue. In this regard, this study seeks to explain Israel’s colonial oppression and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people drawing upon relevant literature and other pertinent sources.

Description of Materials and Methods

The study aims to explore the discourse of ‘population transfer’ or ‘ethnic cleansing’ within the Zionist circles and the Israeli regime and how this concept is guiding the regime’s extermination campaign in Gaza and its attempts to expel its 2,3 million residents. In this regard, the study employs a variety of research methods to achieve its goal, notably discourse analysis and a review of relevant literature and primary sources. Discourse analysis is a powerful research method that allows for understanding and explaining how certain types of language and rhetoric are used by certain individuals and groups to make meaning and affect society, decision making and policy implementation. This method is essential in terms of understanding how and why certain political discourse and narratives are produced, reproduced, reinforced and perpetuated in society. In this case, the study specifically intends to look into the Zionist discourses about ‘population transfer’ from the advent of Zionism up to now. A review of literature is also instrumental in getting fresh insights into the research problem and its various dimensions. Relevant literature and primary sources provide up-to-date and in-

depth data and theoretical underpinnings of the problem under consideration. Moreover, the study builds on Wolf's elimination of the native and the concept of 'population transfer' expanded by Masalha and Pappe. Wolf's elimination of the native is pivotal in understanding how and why settler colonial projects tend to exclude and erase the native populations. In this sense, the Zionist Israeli settler colonial regime is no exception, rather it is guided by this logic of elimination of the native, namely elimination of the indigenous people of historic Palestine to make way for a settler colonial society.

Literature review

The ongoing Israeli war in Gaza pursues one clear goal, notably ethnic cleansing of the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza, conquest of the area, incorporation of Gaza into the state of Israel and population of the Strip with Jewish settlers [11, p. 38; 12, p. 153; 13, p. 78]. Although many scholars increasingly question the validity of the claim that it is a war, considering it as an attempt to exterminate and ethnically cleanse Palestinians residing in Gaza. A prominent Israeli historian Pappe claims that as a nation state Israel has been constructed upon myths, historical distortions and fabrications with the intent to promote oppression of the indigenous Palestinian people and morally, historically and even religiously justify a regime of colonization, racial apartheid and inhumane occupation [14, p. 7; 15, p. 110]. Pappe argues that the policies and practices of disinformation, fabrications and distortions of the historical and current events by the Israeli regime have been ongoing since its establishment, which play a central role in perpetuating Zionist colonization, the regime of apartheid and occupation [14, p. 7]. Constructed myths and fallacies about the historical past as well as the present in today's Israel-Palestine have become a serious impediment to gaining an accurate and proper understanding of the genesis of the Israeli-Zionist ethnocentric and racial regime and its oppression of the native people of historic Palestine. Moreover, the Zionist regime has skillfully manipulated the historical facts and religious scriptures to legitimize and entrench its colonial expansion and further oppress the victims of Zionism [14, p. 7].

Scholars have drawn attention to several underlying elements and dimensions inherent to Zionism and the Israeli regime such as 'an empty land', 'denial of the existence of the distinct Palestinian people and identity', 'relocation or transfer of Palestinians' or 'ethnic cleansing' and so on [16, p. 13; 2, p. 5; 14, 7; 3, p. 6]. One of the powerful myths that has been weaponized by the Zionist regime is "Palestine was an empty land" or "Palestine is a country without a people; the Jews are a people without a country" [2, p. 5; 17, p. 165]. The myth of an empty land has consistently been invoked by the Zionists to claim the land of Palestine, entirely disregarding or paying little attention to the fact that this land was populated by other people [2, p. 5]. The myth of an empty land suggests that since Palestine was purportedly void of a people when early Zionists came to this area, European Ashkenazi Jews had the right to own this land, and the original inhabitants ought to leave Palestine.

It is evident that from the beginning, the Zionists did not view the native people of Palestine as human beings. Even if they came to eventually see them as such, they systematically dehumanized the natives. This view is deeply embedded in the psych of the Zionist settlers. Unlike other forms of European colonialism, Zionist Jewish colonialism in Palestine has never pursued the goal of accommodating the indigenous people or assimilating them culturally; instead, the Zionists have always sought an ethnocratic racialized nation state dominated by the Jews [18, p. 54; 19, p. 206]. Another conspicuous element of the Zionist regime is the concept of ‘relocation of people’, ‘population transfer’ or ‘ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people of Palestine to make room for Jewish settlers’ [2, p. 5; 3, p. 7]. In Masalha’s view, the discourse of population transfer is in fact a euphemism for violent expulsion and ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people of Palestine from their land to build an exclusively Jewish Zionist settler state [2, p. 192; 11, p. 39]. The Zionist concept of population transfer is conceptualized by Masalha as “the organized removal of the indigenous population of Palestine to neighboring countries” [2, p. 1]. The concept of ‘population transfer’ or ethnic cleansing of the native Palestinians has been at the core of the Zionist strategic thinking [2, p. 1], and soon has become the dominant discourse in Israeli society.

Studies highlight the pivotal role and significance of the Hebrew Bible and ancient religious scriptures in carrying out the Zionist settler colonial project in historic Palestine and racial oppression of the indigenous Palestinian people [20; 21, p. 2-3; 22, p. 1; 23, p. 9; 24, p. vii; 25]. A prominent Israeli historian Shahak calls attention to the fact that territorial claims and expansion of Israel from its advent have been guided by the Bible and the Talmud [23, p. 9]. In a similar vein, Masalha stresses the decisive and instrumental role of the Bible in Israel’s policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians, including the ancient religious texts of Judaism have been invoked by the Zionist regime to oppress, mistreat and displace the indigenous population [22, p. 1]. Moreover, the Bible has also been central to Euro-American support for the Zionist regime [22, p. 1].

Results and Discussion

The myth of an empty land and Zionist colonization of Palestine

Studies point out that historic Palestine has in fact been a country since Roman times and it was tightly connected to the Arab-Islam world from the mid-7th century [14, p. 13]. When the Ottomans conquered Palestine, the Turks encountered a local society and population with Sunni Muslim identity, speaking Arabic, living both in rural and urban areas. Besides a majority Sunni Muslim population, Palestine was inhabited by a minority Christian (roughly 5-10 percent) and Jewish (less than 5 percent) populations [14, p. 13-14]. The results of the census conducted by the Ottoman administration in 1882 show that the total population of Palestine stood at roughly 462,465, of which Muslims constituted 87 percent of the population, Christians – 9 percent, Mizrahi Jews – 3 percent and European Ashkenazi Jews – 1 percent [26, p. 10]. Of the Palestinian population

the Mizrahi Jews were in fact culturally quite similar to their fellow Muslim and Christian Palestinians, with whom they lived side by side quite comfortably [27, p. 23]. These Mizrahi Jews were predominantly ultra-Orthodox and non-Zionist eastern, speaking mostly Arabic and Turkish. Despite a conspicuous difference in their religious affiliation, these Mizrahi Jews were not foreigners, rather they were indigenous to the land as much Muslim and Christian Palestinians were [27, p. 23]. Even after World War II, Palestine remained an overwhelmingly Arab Muslim country where over 94 percent of land was under the control of the native population, while Zionist Jews possessed roughly 6 percent of land [3, p. 30]. As the share of European Ashkenazi population stood at 30 percent, it was not enough to transform Palestine into a Zionist Jewish country, the Zionist leadership had long concluded that as incessant immigration of European Jews to Palestine was not enough to demographically overwhelm Palestine, immigration had to be reinforced by other means. Specifically, the early Zionists seriously contemplated forced removal of the native people of Palestine to pave the groundwork for a Zionist state dominated by Ashkenazi settlers [3; 11, p. 45].

At the end of the 19th century a new alien ethnocultural group started to arrive in Palestine, specifically European Jews, known as Ashkenazi, gradually settled in Palestine, who were a tiny minority, culturally alien and non-indigenous to Palestine. However, these European Ashkenazi settlers were Jewish Zionist nationalists who pursued the goal of a Jewish state and coveted Palestine for themselves. Khalidi mentions David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (the former later became first prime minister of the state of Israel and the latter the president), despite being ardent Zionists, initially sought to integrate themselves with the local Palestinian society, getting citizenship of the Ottoman empire [27, p. 23]. Yet these Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe were numerically too insignificant to initiate their Zionist project. Moreover, the Ottoman authorities were not in favor of the Zionist cause. Therefore, as Khalidi points out, the Zionist movement needed a great-power patron and sponsor [27, p. 28].

By issuing the Balfour Declaration in November 1917, the British Empire extended its full support to Zionism and sanctioned Zionist colonization of Palestine. In this regard, Khalidi draws attention to the assurance made by Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour and Winston Churchill to Chaim Weizmann, a Zionist leader, that the British government meant by the term “Jewish national home” an eventual Jewish state [27, p. 29]. The Zionist settler colonial project backed by the iron fist of the British Empire embarked upon the path of demographic, cultural, ethnic and confessional transformation of historic Palestine from the indigenous Muslim-Christian-Mizrahi Palestinian into a Zionist ethnocentric and racial entity.

Indeed, it was and continues to be a project of cultural erasure and replacement of the indigenous people with Ashkenazi settlers. In this case, Khalidi argues that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and subsequent British sponsorship of the Zionist colonization project was in fact a declaration of war

on the native Palestinian population [27, p. 29]. Echoing Khalidi, Pappe stresses that by promising Palestine to the Zionists, the British Empire “opened the door to the endless conflict” as pro-Zionist policy of Britain has a potentially violent essence and core [3, p. 13]. The decision of Britain to sponsor Zionism and Zionist colonization in Palestine were rooted in the religious concept of the return of the Jews to Palestine would precipitate the second coming of Jesus Christ, the strategic interests of Britain to establish its geopolitical footprint in the Middle East and cultural disdain of British political establishment towards the indigenous Palestinians as Muslims and culturally Oriental ‘others’ [3, p. 12]. In this sense, not only the British, but also other European Christians wished to drive the Ottomans out of Palestine and transform it into a “Christian Palestine” [3, p. 12].

Immigration of Ashkenazi Jews to Palestine and their colonization were guided by and rooted in Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. Even if Zionism was founded by European secular Jews, it has drawn its historical and ideological basis and its claim to historic Palestine from Judaism. For this reason, it is erroneous to argue that Judaism has nothing to do with Zionism. Quite the contrary, Judaism feeds into Zionism and its narratives. To bring their settler colonial project to fruition, the early Zionists claimed the biblical territory of Canaan and reinvented it as the cradle of Zionist nationalist ideology and movement [3, p. 11]. The early Zionists constructed the image of those culturally, ethnically and religiously different populations in biblical terms, likening them to the biblical Canaanites, who ought to be removed to pave the way for implementation of the Zionist project. An Israeli historian Pappe notes that many early Zionists who encountered the native people of Palestine at the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries, considered the land not as ‘occupied’ by another people, but rather “an empty land” [3, p. 11]. The reason why the early Zionist perceived Palestine as “an empty land” was rooted in their ethnocentric belief that the indigenous people were not fully human, rather they were likened to natural barriers like rocks, which needed to be removed. In this regard, Pappe writes “Nothing, neither rocks nor Palestinians, was to stand in the way of national ‘redemption’ of the land the Zionist coveted” [3, p. 11].

The Zionist discourse of ‘population transfer’

The discourse of ‘population transfer’ has always been at the core of Zionism. This is because Zionism as a nationalist political ideology is rooted in the concepts of ethnocracy, theocracy and purity of blood. Although certain early Zionists such as Ahad Ha’am (Asher Zvi Ginzberg, Yitzhak Epstein) highlighted the ethnocentricity of political Zionism founded by Theodor Herzl and its far-reaching detrimental effects on both the indigenous Palestinians and European Jewish settlers. Both Ginzberg and Epstein warned of the dangers of the deeply hostile and hateful attitudes of Zionist settlers towards the native Palestinians. They were deeply resented by Zionist settlers’ racist contempt and mistreatment of the indigenous people of Palestine, arguing that Palestine was

not an empty land. However, throughout the history of Zionism those Zionists who have tried to coexist with the Palestinian people have always been a tiny minority. Besides considering Palestine as their ‘ancient homeland’, the early Zionists armed with Eurocentric nationalist and racist ideologies, exhibited open contempt and prejudices for the indigenous people. Positioning themselves as the representatives of superior European civilization, the early Zionists devised exclusivist and eliminationist approaches vis-à-vis the native population of Palestine. Rooted in Judaism and European concepts of nationalism and race, Zionism pursued the goal of an exclusivist ethnocratic and racial Jewish state in Palestine by driving the indigenous people out of the land [28; 2; 18].

In this regard, Wolfe draws attention to the racial exclusivist and eliminationist essence and character of Zionism and Zionist settler colonial enterprise [1, p. 395]. According to Wolfe, settler colonialism is guided by the logic of elimination of the native [1, p. 395]. Removal or elimination of the indigenous peoples by colonizers are rooted in settler colonialism [29, p. 4]. From this standpoint, Zionist settler colonialism has been inherently exclusivist, eliminationist and designed to remove the indigenous people of Palestine to replace them with European Ashkenazi settlers. Positioning themselves as culturally far superior, the early Zionists constructed the racist image of the native people of Palestine as primitive savages and enemies of civilization [3, p. 20; 18, p. xiv]. Therefore, the Zionists had no intention to share the land with its rightful owners, seriously contemplating forced removal of the native people. The founder of political Zionism Theodor Herzl in his 1897 diary highlighted the need to drive the natives out of Palestine and transform it into a Jewish country [11, p. 43]. The discourse of elimination or ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people of Palestine theorized by Theodor Herzl and other early Zionists has shaped and guided attitudes, policies and practices of Zionism and the Zionist Israeli regime vis-a-vis the indigenous people of Palestine. Masalha provides numerous examples of the discourse of transfer within the Zionist circles. Even before political Zionism was engineered by Herzl, early European Ashkenazi settlers known Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) in Palestine in the 1880s-1890s contemplated the displacement of the native people of Palestine by constantly harassing them “until they get out... as soon as we have a big settlement here, we’ll seize the land, we’ll become strong, and then we’ll take care of the Left Bank [of the Jordan River]. We’ll expel them from there too. Let them go back to the Arab counties” [2, 9]. As can be seen, the Zionists coveted not only historic Palestine, but also Transjordan, which is today Jordan.

One of the prominent leaders of early Zionism Israel Zangwill was an ardent advocate for the removal of the native people of Palestine and in 1905 he wrote: “We must be prepared to drive out by the sword the [Arab] tribes in possession as our forefathers did or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us” [2, p. 9]. Later during his conversation with Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder

of Revisionist Zionism, Zangwill replied to Jabotinsky's warning that the native population would not give up their land voluntarily by saying that the settlement of European Jews in Palestine and removal of the indigenous people were an essential precondition for the fulfillment of Zionism and thereby there should not be any place for sentimental arguments, "If we wish to give a country to a people without a country, it is utter foolishness to allow it to be the country of two peoples. This can only cause trouble. The Jews will suffer and so will their neighbors. One of the two: a different place must be found either for the Jews or for their neighbors" [2, p. 10].

Alongside Herzl, Zangwill, and other prominent early Zionists, Vladimir Jabotinsky (the founder of Revisionist Zionism in the 1920s and the progenitor of Likud party led by current prime minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu) was a fervent advocate for settlement of European Jews on both banks of the Jordan River and the ideologue of the concept of the "Iron Wall" [13, p. 77]. Jabotinsky argued that to achieve a Jewish majority in Palestine, Zionists had to resort to violence against the indigenous people, which he defined as the "Iron Wall" [13, p. 77]. A Jewish majority in Palestine, which constituted a tiny minority in the pre-1948 period, could be achieved with state-orchestrated large-scale violence and mass terror against the native people who were unwilling to give up their homeland and resist Zionist colonization [3; 18]. Besides Revisionist Zionists led by Jabotinsky, Labor Zionists led by David Ben-Gurion (the first prime minister of Israel) and others likewise not only contemplated the forced displacement of the indigenous people of Palestine, but also, they carried out their plan right after WWII. Although the UN resolution 181 of November 1947 partitioned historic Palestine into a Jewish and Arab segments and gave the Zionists roughly 56 percent of land (even if they constituted only 30 percent of the population), Ben-Gurion was certain that the UN partition did not satisfy the Zionist dream of a Jewish state with a Jewish demographic majority. Moreover, even mass Jewish immigration to Palestine with British support was not enough to transform Palestine into a Jewish dominated country. Therefore, in 1947-1949, Zionists violently expelled roughly 800,000 Palestinians from their land through mass terror [3, p. xiii]. As a result of mass violence and terror against the indigenous people, the Zionists managed to capture 80 percent of historic Palestine, simultaneously driving its original inhabitants [11, p. 46].

Israel's ongoing onslaught in Gaza and implementation of Trump Plan

However, forced expulsion and extermination of the indigenous people of Palestine by the Zionist Israeli regime were not confined to the 1947-1949 period. Oppression and ethnic cleansing have become an integral part of Israeli policy, which sustains this ethnocentric and racial regime. 'Population transfer' or ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians is actually a continuous and durable pattern in Zionist Israeli society. It became highly pertinent when Israel conquered and occupied Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. It has become especially relevant since the Hamas attack on 23 October 2023. Besides the government and

political establishment of Israel, ordinary Israelis and civil society have ardently advocated the expulsion of 2,3 million people in Gaza since October 2023. Right after the Hamas attack on Israel, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel's military incursion in Gaza was a war between "civilization and barbarism" [30]. Hostility and hatred for the Palestinians in Gaza and beyond have manifested in all segments of Israeli society. There has been a consistent call for the removal of Gazans to Egypt. In the aftermath of the Hamas attack, the Ministry of Intelligence of Israel devised a plan intended to occupy Gaza and expel the residents of the Strip to Egypt's Sinai [31].

Right after the proposal of the Ministry of Intelligence of Israel to forcibly expel the Palestinians from Gaza, two leading Israeli politicians Danon and Ben-Barak published an op-ed in "The Wall Street Journal", in which they urged Western nations and other countries to take in the Palestinians from Gaza, referring to this plan as a 'voluntary transfer' [32]. They were soon joined by the two far-right fascist members of the Israeli government Smotrich and Ben-Gvir who not only called for the expulsion of the Palestinians from Gaza, but also from West Bank and East Jerusalem [33]. Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the leader of Likud party (the heir of Vladimir Jabotinsky's Irgun) has repeatedly called for the removal and annihilation of the Palestinians of Gaza and West Bank. In his statement on 28 October 2023, Netanyahu explicitly called for the extermination of Gazans by referring to the Amalekites in Deuteronomy 25:17 (1 Samuel 15:3) of the Hebrew Bible, in which God orders to kill all the Amalekites by putting "to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys" [34, p. 257-258; 35]. According to leading international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, since October 2023, the Israeli regime has deliberately destroyed Gaza, killing thousands of innocent people, forcing them to flee their homes and making forced displacement permanent [34; 36]. Both institutions and other organizations have highlighted that the Israeli regime has systematically committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Israel's wanton destruction of Gaza, mass terror, mass extermination campaign and violent displacement of the Palestinians would not have been feasible and sustainable without widespread diplomatic, economic, and military support by the United States, European countries and other nations around the globe. Moreover, Western nations fully back and facilitate the policy of the Israeli regime to annihilate Gaza and expel the Palestinians. After his election as US president, Donald Trump has repeatedly highlighted the need to deport the Palestinians from Gaza [37]. In the presence of Israeli prime minister Netanyahu (the main architect of destruction of Gaza and suffering of Palestinians) in February 2025, Donald Trump stated that the US takeover of Gaza and relocation of its residents elsewhere is his intention with the ultimate plan for redeveloping the area as "the Rivera of the Mideast" [38]. It should be noted that the so-called relocation, or to be precise, ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian people from their

homeland is not Trump's idea. Trump's plan of relocation of Gazans is echoing and continuation of the old Zionist plan of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. The Israeli regime's key objective is to get Trump to do this dirty job and materialize the forced removal of the residents of Gaza. In fact, one of the prominent Zionists within Trump's inner circle is Jared Kushner, his son-in-law, former adviser and a close person to the president. Jared Kushner is vigorously advancing Zionist Israeli interests within the Trump administration. In this regard, Kushner has officially highlighted the urgency of moving the people out [from Gaza] and then "clean it up." In this case, it can be argued that Trump's plan of relocation was spearheaded by Kushner, Bibi Netanyahu and other leading Zionists. Despite warnings from the UN and other international bodies that such a plan constitutes genocide and crime against humanity the US has never reversed its policy and waived its unconditional and uncritical support for Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and West Bank [37; 38]. Since then, Netanyahu and the wider Israeli public have praised Trump for his 'bold' plan for ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

Netanyahu has been particularly thrilled about Trump's plan for possible US takeover of Gaza and forced deportation of its residents. Since Trump's announcement, Netanyahu has referred to it as a "revolutionary", "brilliant" and "correct" [39; 40]. Netanyahu has recently announced that implementation of Trump's plan for transfer of Palestinians from Gaza to other countries is a crucial precondition for terminating Israel's war in the Strip [41; 39]. In his speech, Netanyahu has referred to Trump's plan for Gaza as a force that would change the face of the Mideast and would ensure that Gaza never poses a threat to Israel's security [39]. Netanyahu and its far-right allies pursue one clear goal, notably under the guise of implementing Trump's plan, the Israeli regime is seeking ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians of Gaza, build Jewish settlements in the area and establish full Israeli control over the Strip [42]. Echoing Trump and Netanyahu, rejoiced by the idea of transfer of Gazans to other countries, Israel's Interior Minister Moshe Arbel emphasized that in cooperation with the United States, Israel intended to transform the area into "a paradise" [42].

Studies draw attention to how the Zionist regime systematically leverages a cluster of myths to lay its claim to the land of historic Palestine, and at the same time, deny the right of the indigenous Palestinian people to the land [14, p. 7]. Denial of the Palestinian identity and history is part and parcel of the Zionist settler colonial project [20, p. 255]. In this regard, Masalha points out that denial has always been central to the Zionist discourse and remains vital for the success of the Zionist colonial project [20, p. 255]. One of the most powerful dimensions of the Zionist ideology is the discourse of 'population transfer' or 'ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian' [2, p. 5; 3, p. 7], especially against the backdrop of Israel's ongoing annihilation of the population of Gaza. To say nothing of the Israeli political establishment, the Israeli public has been consistent in their advocacy for the expulsion of the Palestinians not only in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem, but also those Palestinians who are Israeli citizens. For instance, a long before 7

October 2023, the results of the survey conducted by Pew Research Center from October 2014 to May 2015 show that roughly half of Israeli Jews responded that Israeli Arabs should be expelled from Israel [43]. The poll conducted by the Israeli newspaper “Maariv” in October 2015 indicated that 58 percent of Israeli Jews were in favor of ‘a voluntary transfer of Palestinians from Judea and Samaria’ [43]. Here ‘Judea and Samaria’ means West Bank, and ‘a voluntary transfer’ is a euphemism for forced displacement and ethnic cleansing. According to a poll conducted by Penn State University, 82 percent of the respondents of Israeli Jews have displayed their support for the Israeli government’s endeavor to expel Palestinians from Gaza [7; 8; 9].

Previous studies have provided conclusive evidence of the fact that the idea of transfer of Palestinians or in other words, their forced removal is deeply rooted in the Zionist ideology (45, p. 9). Therefore, what is unfolding today, specifically the Israeli regime’s deliberate and wanton destruction of the Palestinian society in Gaza and extermination of its residents is in fact materialization of that idea. To force Palestinians out of Gaza, the Israeli regime has deliberately flattened civil infrastructure and all objects indispensable to survival of the civilian population, even cemeteries across Gaza have not been spared. The wanton destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza has been well documented by leading international humanitarian and human rights organizations as well as UN bodies. Amnesty International notes that “There is consensus among UN agencies and experts and humanitarian organizations that the level and speed of damage and destruction caused to Palestinian homes and life-sustaining infrastructure across all sectors of economic activity has been uniquely catastrophic, and researchers specializing in monitoring conflicts have found that the level and speed of damage and destruction in Gaza has not been seen in any other conflict in the 21st century” [34, p. 124]. At the same time, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has highlighted the destruction of “residential buildings and blocks taking place” in Gaza, warning the Israeli regime “that forcible transfer of civilians may constitute a war crime” [36, p. 113]. Moreover, Volker Türk stresses that the deliberate destruction of vital civilian infrastructure “appears to be aimed at ... rendering the return of civilians to these areas impossible” [36, p. 113].

Although such conclusions made by international bodies have been accurate, the Israeli regime has systematically denied the validity of such allegations. Yet recently the Israeli regime has explicitly acknowledged that the rationale behind the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza is to compel Palestinians to leave Gaza for good. Specifically, Netanyahu has lately stated that the reason why the Israeli Defense Forces are destroying more and more homes is to “encourage emigration [of Palestinians] from the Strip as its population “have nowhere to return” [44]. To make Gaza unlivable, the Israeli regime is systematically bombing and flattening hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, kindergartens, administrative buildings, UN compounds and other life-sustaining infrastructure under the pretext of fighting terror and that these

premises are used by Hamas as command-and-control centers. Yet the falseness of these allegations by the Israeli regime has increasingly been proven. All this propaganda and disinformation is intentionally spread by the Israeli regime to mislead the international community and achieve its ultimate goal of annihilation and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza.

Conclusion

The study has explored the roots of the Zionist settler colonial project and current Israeli aggression and ethnic cleansing in Gaza. Building on Wolfe's elimination of the native and concepts of 'population transfer' outlined by Masalha and Pappé, the study has sought to examine the Zionist discourse of 'population transfer' or 'ethnic cleansing.' The key argument of the study is extermination and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians have always occupied the minds of the Zionists and are currently guiding an ongoing annihilation campaign of the Israeli regime in Gaza. The study has discussed the myth of an empty land and the roots of Zionist settler colonialism in historic Palestine, the Zionist discourse of 'population transfer', the current Israeli aggression in Gaza and efforts by the Israeli regime to implement the so-called Trump Plan on ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza.

Exploring the historical roots of the Zionist discourse of 'population transfer', the study has established the continuities of the Zionist Israeli practice and policy of ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population of historic Palestine. It has been established that the current policy of the Israeli regime to exterminate and expel Palestinians from Gaza is not an isolated case, rather it is rooted in the very historical and ideological foundation of Zionism at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Even before Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, other European Ashkenazi settlers known as the Lovers of Zion (Hovevei Zion) in Palestine had raised the issue of driving out the indigenous people of the land to make room for European Zionist settlers. The British Empire sponsored the Zionist cause in Palestine in the 1920s-1940s, during which there was a huge influx of Ashkenazi colonization of Palestine. This in turn drastically changed the demographic and ethnic balance in historic Palestine. Yet after WWII, pursuing the goal of transforming Palestine into a Jewish dominated society and creating a Jewish Zionist state, the Zionist carried out mass extermination and ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people. The Zionist policy of racial oppression and ethnic cleansing has since been continuous and persistent. It is clearly reflected in the ongoing policy of the Israeli regime to exterminate and expel 2,3 million Palestinian residents of Gaza. As the results of the study have demonstrated, the Israeli regime is no longer concealing its intention and plan to drive Palestinians out of Gaza and permanently occupy the Strip. It has been revealed that the Israeli regime is not alone in its endeavor to annihilate and ethnically cleanse the Palestinians, the regime has systematically been assisted by the United States and other nations in carrying out this genocidal and murderous campaign.

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ГАЗАДАҒЫ СОҒЫС ЖӘНЕ ТҰРҒЫНДАРДЫ КӨШІРУ ДИСКУРСЫ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Израильдің Газадағы соғысы және сионизмнің «тұрғындарды көшіру» дискурсының тамырлары және оның Израиль қоғамындағы қазіргі уақытта қолданылуы зерттеліп, талданады.

Зерттеу еңбектері мен дереккөздерге сүйене отырып және дискурстық талдау әдісін пайдалана отырып, бұл мақалада «тұрғындарды көшіру» немесе «этникалық тазарту» дискурсы Израиль режимінің 1948 жылдан бері Палестина халқына қатысты саясатында қалай қолданғанын қарастырады. Бұл мақала байырғы халықты құрылымдық шеттету концепциясы мен «тұрғындарды көшіру» дискурсына сүйене отырып сионистердің тарихи Палестинада еврей мемлекетін құру үшін бұл аймақтың байырғы халқын шеттету және ығыстыру саясатының мәнін тереңірек түсінуді көздейді.

Зерттеу Палестинаның байырғы тұрғындарын қуып жіберу әрқашан сионистік израильдік отарлау жобасының ажырамас бөлігі болған және палестин қоғамын жою мен палестиналықтарды өз елінен ығыстырып шығару Израильдің Газадағы қазіргі әскери агрессиясының қозғаушы күші болып табылады деген тұжырымды алға тартады.

Зерттеудің нәтижелері 2023 жылдың қазанынан бері Израильдің Газадағы әскери агрессиясы мен оның жергілікті халықты қуып жіберу әрекеттері кездейсоқтық емес, керісінше сионистердің дәстүрлі этникалық тазалау дискурсының айқын белгісі екенін көрсетті. Қазіргі кезеңдегі Израильдің Газадағы палестиндіктерді бұл өңірден қуып жіберу саясатын АҚШ пен өзге Батыс елдері жан-жақты қолдап отыруы да бұл зерттеудің ерекшелігі мен маңызын көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: Палестина, Израиль, Газа, палестиналықтар, тұрғындарды көшіру, этникалық тазарту, соғыс, Трамп жоспары

ВОЙНА В ГАЗЕ И ДИСКУРС О ПЕРЕМЕЩЕНИИ НАСЕЛЕНИЯ

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Аннотация. В статье исследуются и анализируются война Израиля в Газе и корни дискурса «перемещения населения» в сионистском мышлении и его современное применение в израильском обществе.

Опираясь на литературу и первоисточники и используя анализ дискурса, в статье рассматривается, как дискурс «перемещения населения» или «этнической чистки» играл центральную роль в политике израильского режима по отношению к палестинскому народу с 1948 года. Исследование строится на концепции устранения коренного населения и дискурсе «перемещения населения», чтобы глубже понять корни сионистских усилий по устранению и стиранию коренного народа и общества для построения еврейского государства в исторической Палестине.

Ключевой аргумент, выдвигаемый в исследовании, заключается в том, что устранение коренного населения Палестины всегда было неотъемлемой частью сионистского израильского колониального проекта, а уничтожение палестинского общества и этническая чистка палестинцев составляют движущую силу нынешнего военного наступления Израиля в Газе.

Результаты исследования показали, что продолжающаяся с октября 2023 года война Израиля в секторе Газа и его попытки изгнать палестинское население из региона не случайны, а являются продолжением и проявлением традиционного сионистского дискурса этнической чистки. Особенностью нынешних израильских усилий по этнической чистке палестинцев в секторе Газа является то, что эта политика полностью поддерживается США и другими западными странами.

Ключевые слова: Палестина, Израиль, Газа, палестинцы, перемещение населения, этническая чистка, война, план Трампа

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