

Imperialism and Genocide. Reflections on Israel and Palestine

Helmut Krieger (University of Vienna)

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4.15–5.45 pm

ÖFSE Alois Wagner-Saal, Sensengasse 3, 1090 Vienna

Chair: Antonia Birnbaum (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

South Africa's submission of a complaint against Israel with the International Court of Justice in The Hague in December 2023 at the latest further introduced the term of genocide into debates on Israel's war on Gaza, though primarily in its legal conception having its foundation in the UN Genocide Convention. Social science perspectives on genocidal warfare have meanwhile been missing almost entirely. What would it mean if debates led in primarily legal and political terms were brought into an exchange with critical social science perspectives?

Starting from this central question, Helmut Krieger will be discussing how critical debates on imperialism could be adapted in order to embed current Israeli war strategies in colonial and imperial asymmetric warfare of the last two centuries. The question as to whether and to what extent colonial and imperial counterinsurgencies of Western states are being adapted by Israel and as to why imperial rule fundamentally enables Israeli settler colonialism constitutes the centerpiece of this presentation. Accordingly, this talk explores how current debates on international law as well as the genocide convention can be fruitfully connected with critical analyses of colonial and imperial warfare.

