

## THREE CONTEXTS in SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK: JUDAISM, ANTI-SEMITISM and ISRAEL

Samet ZENGİNOĞLU<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Slavoj Žižek, who is regarded as one of the popular names of the last quarter century, writes his works and expresses his thoughts in a wide range of fields including philosophy, psychoanalysis, cinema, politics and culture. His interconnection of these fields in his works and speeches, as well as his unique style, has resulted in his reaching a wide audience on a global scale in the field of philosophy/thought. In addition to his distance from religion, Žižek's analyses in the theo-political field also reveal remarkable approaches and arguments with the interrelation of the mentioned fields. This study focuses on Žižek's analyses of the issue (or question) of Judaism in direct connection with this field. In addition to this issue, his unique perspective and position on anti-Semitism and Israel represent the other main topics of the study. Although it may be difficult to establish a direct connection between the field of philosophy/thought and the theo-political field, it would not be wrong to say that Žižek has overcome this difficulty as in many subjects and texts. Therefore, this study is an attempt to understand Žižek in these three contexts in which thoughts and opinions emerge in the light of theoretical and actual developments. Thus, it is aimed to make contribution to the literature by analyzing Žižek's views in the relevant contexts within the scope of a single study.

*Keywords: Žižek, Judaism, Anti-semitism, Objet Petit a, Israel.*

## SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK'TE ÜÇ BAĞLAM: YAHUDİLİK, ANTI-SEMITİZM ve İSRAİL

### ÖZET

Son çeyrek yüzyılın popüler isimlerinden birisi olarak kabul edilen Slavoj Žižek, felsefe, psikanaliz, sinema, politika, kültür üst başlıkları dâhilinde çok geniş bir skalada çalışmalarını kaleme almakta ve düşüncelerini dile getirmektedir. Eserlerinde ve konuşmalarında bu alanları birbirine ilintilendirmesi ve aynı zamanda özgün üslubu, felsefe/düşünce alanında onun küresel ölçekte geniş kitlelere ulaşması sonucunu beraberinde getirmiştir. Dine olan mesafesinin yanı sıra Žižek'in teo-politik alandaki analizleri ve

<sup>1</sup> Samet ZENGİNOĞLU, Assoc. Prof. Adıyaman University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Economics, sametzenginoğlu@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-6061-8388.

çözümlemeleri de yine bahsedilen alanların birbiriyle ilişkilendirilmesiyle birlikte dikkat çekici yaklaşımlar ve argümanlar ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu çalışmada da bu alanla doğrudan bağlantılı olarak Žižek'in Yahudilik konusuna (ya da sorununa) dair analizlerine ve çözümlemelerine odaklanılmaktadır. Yine bu konunun yanında anti-semitizm ve İsrail konusundaki özgün perspektifi ve konumu çalışmanın diğer temel başlıklarını temsil etmektedirler. Her ne kadar felsefe/düşünce alanıyla teo-politik alanın doğrudan arasında bir bağlantı kurmanın güç olabileceği düşünülse de Žižek birçok konuda ve metinde olduğu gibi bu güçlüğü de aşmıştır demek yanlış olmayacaktır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmada, bir yandan teorik diğer yandan ise bizatihi güncel gelişmeler ışığında düşüncelerin ve görüşlerin ortaya çıktığı bu üç bağlamda Žižek'i anlama girişimi söz konusu edilmektedir. Böylece Žižek'in ilgili bağlamlardaki görüşlerinin tek bir çalışma kapsamında incelenmesi suretiyle literatüre bir katkı sunmak amaçlanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Žižek, Yahudilik, Anti-semitizm, *Objet Petit a*, İsrail.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'Judaism' has a content that includes theological, political, economic and socio-cultural elements. The dimensions of these elements, which have remained constant and changed in history, have caused the concept to become much more intricate. Therefore, this situation has led to the concept being discussed and analyzed in many different disciplines (history, theology, anthropology, sociology, sociology, psychoanalysis, politics and economics, among others) in terms of both theoretical and practical perspectives. This study is constructed with the aim of presenting a theo-political discussion and analysis outside of these disciplines. It should be noted that theology has of course had direct political reflections from past to present. However, it would not be wrong to state that the theo-political aspect of Judaism is more dominant.

At the outset, of course, it is useful to make a distinction with the following question: 'Does Judaism specifically represent a field based on philosophy, or is the subject of Judaism more within a field that some philosophers themselves focus on?' It is thought that it is possible to give more than one answer to this question. However, it should be emphasized that this study is closer to the context of Judaism in the focus of philosophers/thinkers rather than Judaism in the focus of philosophy. This context also has a controversial area. Especially from Marx's (2021) *On the Jewish Question*, it is possible to encounter the basic clues of the relevant field. In the 20th century, the approaches of Sartre (1965) and Levinas (2007) represent other dimensions of the contested field (see also

Judaken 2006; Peperzak 1996). In terms of the developments in the period between the two world wars, the thoughts and discourses of names such as Heidegger (Herskowitz 2021) and Bauman (1989), for example, have again provided remarkable trajectories. Even one step further, approaches such as ‘post-modern Jewish philosophy’ (Alıcı 2021: 64) can be considered as reflections that essentially confirm the intricate discourse mentioned.

In the light of these reflections, in order to offer a new perspective, attention is drawn to the question (or problematic) of how Žižek constructs a discourse and evaluation of three concepts -Judaism, anti-Semitism and Israel. Because there is no study in the literature that focuses on Žižek’s thoughts on these three concepts. This difference is important for the thesis of originality of the study. Here, both Žižek’s theological and everyday political thoughts on the three concepts are included and the method of textual analysis is preferred. Within this general framework, the study is organized into four sections. The first chapter, titled ‘Catching Žižek’, briefly includes a ‘warning’ rather than an ‘introduction’ to Žižek and Žižek’s texts. As a matter of fact, it should be emphasized that without a basic knowledge of Žižek’s basic paradigms and the way in which his works are constructed, one cannot get very far with Žižek. Therefore, it is thought that the act of ‘catching’ in the title should be read in this respect. In the second chapter titled ‘Judaism or Objet petit a’, both Žižek’s perspective on the concept and the Jewish figure/conspiracy are analyzed with reference to Lacan. The third chapter, titled ‘Anti-Semitism and the Invention of Paradoxes’, mainly aims to draw attention to two points. The first is related to the transformation of the concept of anti-Semitism. The second one is related to the paradoxes emerging within the framework of the conceptualization of ‘Zionist anti-Semitism’. Finally, in the fourth section, titled ‘The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and a Proposal for a Solution’, approaches to a more concrete and current issue/problem are presented.

## 2. CATCHING ŽIŽEK

In the discipline of social sciences, some names can be difficult to define conceptually. For example, if the name in question is Slavoj Žižek, it is possible to encounter many arguments to confirm this view. Born in 1949 in Slovenia, Žižek’s visit to Paris in the 1980s (Myers 2014: 22) can be considered as one of the main stages. In 1989, with the publication of his first work in English, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, it is possible to speak of another stage in terms of his influence in the literary world (for his life, see also Wright and Wright 1999: 1-2). In

essence, from a macro perspective, three main disciplines and three names with which Žižek interacted should be mentioned: Psychoanalysis (Lacan), philosophy (Hegel) and politics (Marx) (Uzel 2022: 10). It is important to draw attention to this context. Because, especially in terms of the Lacan-Hegel relation, Žižek has explicitly stated that he uses Lacan as a tool to reinterpret Hegel (Steinbauer and Žižek 2018: 10). Similarly, it should be added that for Žižek, the discussions of Lacan and Hegel are considered as a breathing space (Žižek 2012: 5). In addition to Hegel, Žižek characterizes Plato and Descartes as the three great philosophers, ‘each of whom defined their generation’ (Steinbauer and Žižek 2018: 14).

Apart from the names mentioned in the macro context, in the context of Žižek’s work there are comparisons with the biggest names of French post-structuralist theory such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze (Sharpe and Boucher 2010; Buchanan 2005). In addition to these comparisons, it is also possible to share comparisons with Alan Badiou (Vighi and Feldner 2007) and Immanuel Kant (Johnston 2008). According to Eagleton (2003: 209), Žižek is the greatest representative of psychoanalysis and cultural theory in general to emerge from Europe in the last quarter century or so. He has even been described as the ‘Elvis of cultural theory’ or an ‘intellectual superstar’ (Türk 2010: 7). No doubt such statements are directly related to the fact that Žižek is an intriguing thinker. Perhaps in this respect philosophy has rarely been so interesting (Dean 2006: xxvi). Žižek’s style and method in both writing and speaking can be seen as effective factors in this sense.

When we look at Žižek’s texts, it is thought that the reader should make a serious effort to ‘catch’ him, so to speak, in terms of intersubjective relations/transitions and the methodology followed. For one, there is a very wide field of study in the triangle of psychoanalysis, philosophy and politics, from cinema to global capitalism (Žižek 2000), from theology (Žižek 2011; Žižek and Milbank 2016) to pandemic (Žižek, 2020c), from ‘imaginary, symbolic, real’ debates (Žižek 1992) to the European Union (Žižek and Horvat 2015). The second point is related to the content of the texts. Žižek is both frighteningly prolific and dizzyingly versatile, jumping from Hegel to Jurassic Park, from Kafka to the Ku Klux Klan in a single paragraph (Eagleton 2003: 205). Žižek, who is never far from current events, has been a figure who has declared his views on many key developments such as Julien Assange, the Arab Spring, the Norwegian terrorist attack, the Wall Street events, and Trump’s election as the US president. Therefore, it can be difficult to

portray his views and opinions within a general framework in such a broad field.

Kay (2006: 13) takes a similar perspective. According to him, reading Žižek is like taking an exhilarating roller-coaster ride through the twists and turns of Hegelian dialectics and Lacanian theory, from popular cinema to science, religion to Marx, opera to current affairs, modern art to Derrida, political correctness to canonical literature and cyberspace (for an outstanding addition to Kay's reading of Žižek, see Sharpe 2004). In addition to all these titles, Žižek occupies a unique place in contemporary Christian theological discourse. Instead of ignoring, minimizing, or denigrating the theological layers of intellectual history, Žižek engages them directly with the same intellectual and philosophical rigor. Žižek's treatment of religion and theology therefore offers another way in which he challenges expectations and, more importantly, demonstrates the relevance of religious discourse in an age when the gap between the religious and the non-religious is widening (Mills 2016: 1; see also Kart and Altunya 2019: 128). Another reflection of this theological dimension can be found in the keywords Judaism, anti-Semitism and Israel.

### 3. JUDAISM *or* *OBJET PETIT A*

As stated in the introduction, the concept of the Jew has a content that many disciplines are directly or indirectly related to, try to understand and explain. This has also been the case in the intellectual field. In a much more specific context, Morris-Reich (2004) pointed to three paradigms in the transformation of Jewish identity construction: Georg Simmel, Jean-Paul Sartre and Slavoj Žižek. Therefore, Žižek is included as the last perpetrator of this transformation. It should be noted that Jews are everywhere in Žižek. Jewish jokes are among his most vivid textual examples, anti-Semitism is one of his most persistent themes, a tendency that he himself is sometimes even accused of. Žižek's passionate engagement with both Jewish (Marx, Freud, Benjamin, Levinas, Arendt, Eric Santner) and anti-Semitic (Hegel, Nietzsche, Carl Schmitt, Heidegger) theorists foregrounds issues of identity (Komisaruk 2022: 156). In addition to Marx's statement in *On the Jewish Question* that the emancipation of Judaism is also the emancipation of Judaism from the position assigned to it by capitalism, Žižek focuses towards the analysis of Judaism itself (Parker 2004: 100-101).

In sharing Žižek's views on his approach to 'Judaism', it is perhaps worth mentioning his initial diagnoses and determinations. According to Žižek (2019a: 132), the basic position of a Jewish believer

is in fact similar to that of Job: 'Not so much lamentation as incomprehension, perplexity, even horror at what the Other (God) wants with the series of calamities that are being inflicted upon him. This horrified perplexity marks the initial, founding relationship of the Jewish believer to God, the pact that God concluded with the Jewish people.' Because of this diagnosis, the fact that Jews see themselves as the 'chosen people' has nothing to do with a belief in their own superiority. In fact, the Jews do not possess any special qualities. Rather, they are a people like all other peoples who, prior to their covenant with God, were no more or less corrupt than any other, and even lived ordinary and commonplace lives. What is perhaps most significant here is that suddenly, 'like a traumatic flash of lightning', they learn through Moses that the Other has 'chosen' them.

On another point, Žižek refers primarily to Sisyphus' paradox in *Looking Awry*. For Sisyphus, once he reaches his goal, realizes that the real goal is the road itself - going up and down. He then points to Zeno's paradox and adds: 'Where do we encounter the same paradoxical experience of an increase in the libidinal impact of an object whenever attempts are made to diminish and destroy it?' One step after this stage, we reach the 'Jewish figure' and Žižek wants to address how the Jewish figure functions in the Nazi discourse and at this point he constructs the approach that 'the more they were exterminated, eliminated, the fewer their numbers, the more dangerous their remainder became, as if their threat grew in proportion to their diminution in reality.' According to him, this is a remarkable example of the subject's relationship with the 'horrifying object' that embodies/concretizes surplus/excess pleasure. According to this context, 'the more we fight against it, the more its power over us grows.' (Žižek 2005: 18-19).

Here, the distinction between subject and object should be emphasized. Because Žižek's approach at this point is that 'the Jew is within you, but you, you are in the Jew'. This means that Jews are the *objet petit a* of non-Jews (Žižek 2021a: 181). This term is a point that Žižek constructs under the direct influence of Lacan. Žižek himself explains this point as follows: Lacan began the eleventh week of his seminar in 1937 with a question he posed to himself. The question is as follows: 'What has Lacan invented?' The answer to this question was as follows: *Objet petit a*. *Objet petit a* is a concept that Lacan insisted on preserving in French in translations into other languages. The letter 'a' in this concept is the initial letter of the French word 'autre', which means

‘other’. It is not a real object, it is essentially an object of fantasy, and this object does not exist (Žižek and Inel 2021: 16).

In this framework, Jews are the objet petit a of non-Jews: ‘that which is more in the non-Jews than in the non-Jews themselves’ (Badiou et al. 2014: 71). This once again points to the ‘horrifying object’ pointed out above. Because for the fascist, the Jew is sacrificed as an object of desire and the logic of this sacrifice is this: ‘I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you - the objet petit a – I mutilate you.’ (Žižek 2020b: 118).

#### **4. ANTI-SEMITISM and the INVENTION of PARADOXES**

It can be stated that the historical existence of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism has a long history. However, especially the developments in Germany between the two world wars directly affected the intensity of the phenomenon/concept in the literature. As a matter of fact, most of the names mentioned in the introduction evaluated their works/thoughts on ‘Judaism’ on the axis of this period. Žižek emphasizes economic relations as the emergence of anti-Semitism in European history. According to Žižek, anti-Semitism emerged not in Rome, but in Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as it began to recover from the inertia of the ‘dark ages’ when market exchange accelerated and the role of money increased. In this sense, the turning point in the history of anti-Semitism in Europe was the political emancipation of the Jews immediately after the French Revolution, that is, the granting of citizenship rights to them (Žižek 2021a: 186-187).

According to Žižek (2021a: 182), anti-Semitism is an ideology and even the mother of all ideologies: ‘It embodies the zero-level (or the pure form) of ideology, providing its elementary coordinates: social antagonism (class struggle) is mystified/displaced so that its cause is projected onto the external intruder.’ In the period between the two world wars, anti-Semitism underwent a transformation and shifted from theology to race (Žižek 2021a: 187). With this period, Nazism also covered up the real problematic by shifting the class struggle to the racial struggle (Žižek 2020b: 164). Indeed, Žižek considers anti-Semitism as a paradigm for understanding racism (Frosh 2011: 98).

In another perspective, Žižek draws attention to the discourse of ‘Jewish conspiracy’ in the focus of anti-Semitism. According to the anti-Semitic approach, the Jew is someone who is never sure about what he really wants. Because there are always suspicions of ulterior motives in

his actions -to dominate the world, to corrupt the morals of non-Jews, etc. So here, the answer to the question ‘What does the Jew want?’ is a fantasy of a ‘Jewish conspiracy’. In other words, there is a mysterious power of the Jews that allows them to manipulate events and pull the strings behind the scenes (Žižek 2019a: 131). A different aspect of the same view is encountered in a contemporary context. According to Žižek (2021b: 114), the ‘migrant-free zones’ of today’s Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Nazis’ attempt to create ‘Jew-free zones’ are of course contiguous. Orbán’s talk of Europe’s ‘dark side’ and ‘mysterious financial power’ points in exactly this direction, namely to the fascist view of a plutocratic-Jewish conspiracy. This is how populist far-right tendencies today explain the ‘threat’ of Muslim migrants. Although on anti-Semitic grounds the ‘Jew’ is secretly considered to be the ‘invisible Master pulling the strings’, perhaps this is why Muslim immigrants cannot be considered today’s Jews. Because Muslims are highly visible, let alone invisible, and no one would argue that they are secretly pulling the strings. However, Žižek nevertheless emphasizes the paradox that if their ‘invasion of Europe’ is thought to be a secret plan, then Jews must surely be behind it.

It is also possible to encounter the *Objet petit a* on anti-Semitism, just like in the title of Judaism. Here Žižek expresses a perception of threat. So much so that the places where anti-Semitism was the strongest in Nazi Germany were also the places where Jews were the least. Because their invisibility has made them a terrible ghost (Žižek 2020c: 108). Moving one step further from here, Žižek makes a direct transition from the paradox of wealth to the paradox of anti-Semitism. It is possible to analyze the relevant transition as follows:

*If there is a surplus (excessive wealth) on the one side, and a lack (poverty) on the other side, why can’t we reestablish the balance by simple redistribution (taking the wealth from the excessively rich and giving it to the poor)? The formal answer: because lack and surplus are not located within the same space where they are just unequally distributed (some people lack things, others have too much). The paradox of wealth resides in the fact that the more you have, the more you feel the lack—it is again the superego paradox (the more you follow the injunction, the more guilty you are), discernible also in the paradox of anti-Semitism (the more Jews are destroyed, the more powerful are those who remain). (Žižek 2019b: 234).*



This begs the question of whether both the perception of threat and the paradox of anti-Semitism confirm a shift towards the *Objet petit a* and what this gaze has to say about the present. This answer is linked to an anecdote Žižek shares from 1937. According to the prediction that was planned to be realized at that time, both the Germans and the Zionists wanted as many Jews as possible to move to Palestine. It is seen that a common denominator has been built here. Because there was a common interest. The Germans wanted to get the Jews out of Western Europe and the Zionists wanted the number of Jews in Palestine to outnumber the Arabs as quickly as possible. So, even today, is it not the *Objet petit a* Palestinians who are a kind of obstacle to peace, situated at the intersection of two clusters of Israelis and Arabs (Žižek 2014: 256).

The context of Zionism has evolved into a very different conceptual dimension with Žižek. Especially the concept of 'Zionist anti-Semitism' perhaps has the most original content. Žižek offers the following anecdote: In a cartoon that appeared in the Vienna newspaper *Die Presse* in July 2008, two Austrians who look like Nazis are sitting at a table. One of the men looks at his newspaper and says to his friend: 'Here you can see again how a totally justified anti-Semitism is being misused as a cheap critique of Israel!' This cartoon subverts and reverses the standard Zionist argument against those who criticize the policies of the State of Israel (Žižek 2021b: 146). This great detail offers important clues. Because from here it is possible to move towards the aforementioned concept. Žižek asks a question: 'How is it that US Christian fundamentalists, who are anti-Semitic by nature, can now fervently support the Zionist policies of the State of Israel?' According to Žižek, this paradoxical conundrum can only be answered through a term: Zionist anti-Semitism. In other words, 'it's that Zionism itself, in its hatred of Jews who do not fully identify with the politics of the State of Israel, paradoxically became anti-Semitic, and constructed the figure of the Jew who doubts the Zionist project along anti-Semitic lines.' (Žižek 2021a: 189). The example of the Norwegian anti-immigrant Anders Breivik provides important clues regarding this conceptual approach. Breivik is an anti-Semitic but pro-Israel figure. Because Israel represents the first line of defense against Muslim expansion. Breivik wrote in his Manifesto: 'There is no Jewish problem in Western Europe (with the exception of the UK and France), as we only have 1 million in Western Europe, whereas 800,000 out of these 1 million live in France and the UK. The US, on the other hand, with more than 6 million Jews (600 per cent more than Europe) actually has a considerable Jewish problem.'

Breivik thus exhibits the ultimate paradox of a Zionist anti-Semite (Žižek 2020a: 161).

When it comes to the US and anti-Semitism, Žižek raises another question. For the Neo-cons, there is a fundamental question, which, although obvious, is riddled with riddles: ‘why are they not anti-Semitic?’ Žižek raises this question because he thinks that the Neo-cons must be anti-Semites by virtue of their ideological position. The only consistent answer to this is this: ‘Because today’s Zionism itself, as embodied in the State of Israel’s predominant politics, is already anti-Semitic, that is to say, it relies on anti-Semitic ideological mapping.’ (Žižek 2014: 256). The emphasis on the State of Israel is important here. Because after anti-Semitism shifted from theology to race in the period between the two world wars, Žižek states that the focus of anti-Semitism today has become the State of Israel rather than the Jews (Žižek 2014: 253-254).

##### **5. THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT and a PROPOSAL for a SOLUTION**

Since the second half of the 20th century, the topic of Israel, and more specifically the ‘Arab-Israeli conflict’, has represented an area in which the whole world has been following developments almost continuously. In the case of Žižek, it would be a big mistake to expect that the topic of Israel has been ignored in addition to the thoughts and analyses developed on Judaism and anti-Semitism. In general terms, Žižek has resorted to psychoanalytic evaluation as to why the conflicts of different nations and ethnic groups cannot be resolved. Accordingly, nationalism appeals to both cognitive and impulsive aspects of the subject. In addition, national and ethnic groups, which differ from each other, produce different linguistic/cultural structures, and as a handicap, these produced structures are not organized and transparent enough to include each other (Kuru 2020: 164).

To begin with, Žižek makes a comparison between history and the present (in the case of Israel and Palestine). The crucial point here is the ‘legitimization of racist treatment’ (Žižek 2016: 91). In terms of comparing (and even competing) victimizations, so to speak, the idea that, for example, a Holocaust survivor has the right to ignore the minor injustices committed by the State of Israel against the Palestinians is thought to be used to legitimize racist treatment. However, this ignores the following dimension: On the Zionist side, the inconceivable horror of the Holocaust is reduced to a tool of local politics and thus an insult to the millions of victims. The ethical position here is therefore one of

universal solidarity: ‘We should support the Palestinian fight for autonomy, not in spite of occasional Arab anti-Semitism but for the same reason we should remember the Holocaust’ (Žižek 2021b: 146-147; Žižek 2008). However, it should be noted that this critical situation is valid for both sides in terms of actors and that Žižek is positioned in the middle of the issue. As a matter of fact, following the above-mentioned criticism, Žižek also shares that during a visit to Israel, he was sarcastically asked: ‘Aren't you ashamed to be here, in Israel, in this illegal, criminal state? Aren't you afraid that your being here will contaminate your leftist credentials and make you an accomplice in crime?’ (Žižek 2008: 116-117).

What kind of a solution does Žižek propose in such a field of conflict? It is possible to answer this question from two perspectives. The first one emerges rather on a theoretical ground. According to this, just as there is a ‘Jewish question’, there is also an ‘Arab question’. This tension between Jewish ‘cosmopolitanism’ on the one hand and Muslims who reject modernity on the other is, in a way, the ultimate proof of the ongoing ‘class struggle’ in a post-political form. In other words, what if, in today’s globalized world, the recurrence of anti-Semitism provides the ultimate truth of the old Marxist insight that the only real solution to this problem is socialism (Žižek 2002: 134). The second suggestion is more concrete and political, and has been articulated in more than one of Žižek’s works. Žižek puts forward the idea of two separate states for the final resolution of this conflict (Žižek 2021a: 196). Of course, it cannot be said that such a proposal has a very new/unique context for disciplines such as International Relations in terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has been observed for more than half a century. However, the fact that a prominent name with his works in the intellectual field expresses this suggestion can position him in a different context. Along with this idea of two separate states, Žižek also opens a separate parenthesis for Jerusalem. Here, it is pointed out that for a solution, both Israelis and Arabs should give up control of Jerusalem. Thus, Jerusalem could be controlled by a neutral international power and transformed into a supranational worship site (Žižek and Inel 2021: 44).

In the case of Jerusalem, Žižek states that his dream is to declare Old Jerusalem a kind of holy place for religious rituals only. It is important to note here that neither side should be seen as compromising or surrendering themselves/policy. The most important factor is that if each side gives up something, everyone gains a lot (Žižek et al. 2009: 53). As important as it is for Žižek to diagnose and identify a problem, it

is equally important for him to propose alternative solutions. This approach is not unusual from Žižek's perspective. For example, Kepenek (2019: 236), analyzing Žižek's critique of human rights, points to a similar picture: What stands out in Žižek's views on human rights is that it is not the existence of human rights that is criticized, but rather the intended use of rhetoric. Although Žižek's views on human rights and law may seem radical, harsh and uncompromising at times, this judgment is overcome as we delve deeper into the texts, and the effort towards an alternative to the existing pathological order becomes evident.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is known that there are controversial areas and problematics with a multidimensional scope within the disciplines of social sciences. Undoubtedly, the concept of Judaism with its theological, political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions can be considered as one of these fields. As a matter of fact, it is witnessed that there are discussions and studies on Judaism in conceptual and theoretical dimensions. In the case of anti-Semitism, it would not be wrong to state that the developments in the first half of the 20th century also had a global impact. This situation can also be considered as a break in consciousness. In the following stage, it is possible to talk about a new phase with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Because with this stage, both the Middle East and world politics were positioned on a new axis. Therefore, although these three concepts have a very comprehensive content, this study aims to evaluate how this scope is reflected from Žižek's perspective rather than an analysis of this scope within the main or secondary paradigms.

Slavoj Žižek, who is considered one of the most popular figures of the last quarter century, is a thinker who basically constructs his work in the triangle of Marx, Hegel and Lacan. Within these three names, the disciplines of politics, philosophy and psychoanalysis constitute the three pillars of his work. However, Žižek has also written works on cinema, global capitalism, theology and even pandemics. Žižek, whose intensive pace of work is evident in the quantitative density of his works, can also be considered a challenging thinker in terms of the method and style of his texts.

This study has emerged as a result of the fact that Žižek has expressed his views and opinions on Judaism, anti-Semitism and Israel many times in the process of following/reading/analyzing Žižek's works. Although there have been previous studies in the political and philosophical fields in the context of these three concepts, the reasons for

Žižek's different position have been related to his original conceptualization and approaches on the theo-political ground. As a matter of fact, in addition to conceptualizations such as *Objet petit a* and 'Zionist anti-Semitism' based on Lacan, his direct concrete solution proposal(s) to the Israeli-Palestinian problem this time can also be read in terms of the concept-real political distinction.

Within this general framework, the study reaches three conclusions. First, Žižek's explanations and evaluations in the field of theo-politics have a unique conceptual/theoretical ground in the triangle of Marx, Hegel and Lacan. Secondly, as a thinker, Žižek, as in many contemporary issues, proposes concrete solutions to the issue of Israel in a way that is far from the conceptual/theoretical dimension -which can be encountered in the discussions on the US elections or the EU's economic crisis. Thirdly, it is thought that Žižek's views and sharing on the three contexts have a content that offers an alternative to the main paradigm. Therefore, in line with these conclusions, this study aims to make a contribution to Žižek readings.

#### REFERENCES

- Alicı, M. (2021). Ana hatlarıyla postmodern yahudi felsefesi. *Akra Kültür Sanat ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, 9 (2), 63-91.
- Badiou, A. Hazan, E. and Žižek, S. (2014). *Anti-semitizm üzerine*. (trans. by O. Bülbül and E. Ünal). Encore.
- Bauman, Z. (1989). *Modernity and the holocaust*. Polity Press.
- Buchanan, I. (2005). Žižek and Deleuze. *Traversing the Fantasy, Critical Responses to Slavoj Žižek*. (ed. G. Boucher, J. Glynnos and M. Sharpe, pp. 69-85). Ashgate.
- Dean, J. (2006). *Žižek's politics*. Routledge.
- Eagleton, T. (2003). *Aykırı simalar*. (trans. by A. Ş. Okyayuz). Epos Yayınları.
- Frosh, S. (2011). Psychoanalysis, anti-semitism and the miser. *New Formations*, (72), 94-106.
- Herskowitz, D. M. (2021). *Heidegger and his jewish reception*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnston, A. (2008). *Žižek's ontology a transcendental materialist theory of subjectivity*. Northwestern University Press.

- Judaken, J. (2006). *Jean-Paul Sartre and the jewish question*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Kart, O. and Altunya, H. (2019). Žižek'in özne anlayışı ve etik. *FLSF Felsefe ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (27), 117-129.
- Kay, S. (2006). *Žižek eleştirel bir giriş*. (trans. by Z. Kuyumcu). Encore.
- Kepenek, I. (2019). Slavoj Žižek'in insan hakları eleştirisi. *Galatasaray Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2019 (1), 217-240.
- Komisaruk, A. (2022). Žižek's jews. *The Comparatist*, (46), 156-175.
- Kuru, N. O. (2020). Slavoj Žižek ve uluslararası ilişkiler teorisi. *Spectrum: Journal of Global Studies*, 9 (1), 143-167.
- Levinas, E. (2007). Being jewish. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 40 (3), 205-210.
- Marx, K. (2021). *Yahudi sorunu*. Sol Yayınları.
- Mills, D. (2016). Slavoj Žižek and religion. *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*. (ed. D. Leeming). Springer.
- Morris-Reich, A. (2004). Three paradigms of 'the negative jew': identity from Simmel to Žižek. *Jewish Social Studies*, 10 (2), 179-214.
- Myers, T. (2014). *Slavoj Žižek*. (trans. by A. Aydın). Phoenix Yayınevi.
- Parker, I. (2004). *Slavoj Žižek a critical introduction*. Pluto Press.
- Peperzak, A. T. (1996). Judaism and philosophy in Levinas. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, (40), 125-145.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1965). *Yahudilik sorunu*. (trans. by E. T. Eliçin). Ataç Kitabevi.
- Sharpe, M. (2004). *Slavoj Žižek a little piece of the real*. Ashgate.
- Sharpe, M. and Boucher, G. (2010). *Žižek and politics a critical introduction*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Steinbauer, A. (2018). Slavoj Žižek ile söyleşi: seni öldürmemi istemiyorsan eğer, bana profesör deme. *Düşünbil*, (73), 9-14.
- Türk, H. B. (2010). Slavoj Žižek düşüncesinde liberalizm ve özgürlük sorunu. *Toplum ve Bilim*, (119), 5-32.
- Uzel, Ö. (2022). *Slavoj Žižek 21. yüzyıl iletişim çağının en radikal düşünürü*. Karakarga Yayınları.

- Vighi, F. and Feldner, H. (2007). *Žižek beyond Foucault*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wright, E. and Wright, E. (1999). *The Žižek reader*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Žižek, S. (2021a). *Ahir zamanlarda yaşarken*. (trans. by E. Ünal). Metis Yayınları.
- Žižek, S. (2021b). *Güpegündüz hırsız gibi insan sonrası kapitalizm çağında iktidar*. (trans. by I. Yıldız). Eksik Parça Yayınları.
- Žižek, S. (2020a). *Umutsuz olma cesareti*. (trans. by I. Yıldız). Eksik Parça Yayınları.
- Žižek, S. (2020b). *Evrensel istisna radikal siyaset okumaları*. (trans. by B. E. Aksoy). Monokl.
- Žižek, S. (2020c). *Pandemic! COVID-19 shakes the world*. OR Books.
- Žižek, S. (2019a). *İdeolojinin yüce nesnesi*. (trans. by T. Birkan). Metis Yayınları.
- Žižek, S. (2019b). *Kendini tutamayan boşluk iktisadi-felsefi köşelikler*. (trans. by B. E. Aksoy). Metis Yayınları.
- Žižek, S. (2016). *Hiçten az Hegel ve diyalektik materyalizmin gölgesinde*. (trans. by E. Ünal). Encore.
- Žižek, S. (2014). *Paralaks*. (trans. by S. Gürses). Encore.
- Žižek, S. (2012). *Kıyametin versiyonları*. (trans. by M. Budak). Encore.
- Žižek, S. (2011). Materyalist bir teolojiye doğru. (trans. by S. C. Birdal). *Felsefe Yazın*, 6 (17), 28-33.
- Žižek, S. (2008). *Violence*. Picador.
- Žižek, S. (2005). *Yamuk bakmak popüler kültürden Jaques Lacan'a giriş*. (trans. by T. Birkan). Metis Yayınları.
- Žižek, S. (2002). *Welcome to the desert of the real! five essays on september 11 and related days*. Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2000). *The Ticklish subject the absent centre of political ontology*. Verso.
- Žižek, S. (1992). *Enjoy your symptom! Jaques Lacan in hollywood and out*. Routledge.
- Žižek, S. Badiou, A. Butler, J. and Aloni, U. (2009). *Bir Yahudi ne ister?* (trans. by B. Turan and Ö. Tuna). Encore.

Žižek, S. and Horvat, S. (2015). *What does europe want? The union and its discontents*, Columbia University Press.

Žižek, S. and İnel, O. (2021). *Zaten yoktular*. Metis Yayınları.

Žižek, S. and Milbank, J. (2016). *Mesih garabeti paradoks mu diyalektik mi?* (trans. by S. Salman). Ayrıntı Yayınları.