



# **Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons (New Directions in Critical Theory)**

*Banu Bargu*

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*Starve and Immolate* tells the story of leftist political prisoners in Turkey who waged a deadly struggle against the introduction of high security prisons by forging their lives into weapons. Weaving together contemporary and critical political theory with political ethnography, Banu Bargu analyzes the death fast struggle as an exemplary though not exceptional instance of self-destructive practices that are a consequence of, retort to, and refusal of the increasingly biopolitical forms of sovereign power deployed around the globe.

Bargu chronicles the experiences, rituals, values, beliefs, ideological self-representations, and contentions of the protestors who fought cellular confinement against the background of the history of Turkish democracy and the treatment of dissent in a country where prisons have become sites of political confrontation. A critical response to Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, *Starve and Immolate* centers on new forms of struggle that arise from the asymmetric antagonism between the state and its contestants in the contemporary prison. Bargu ultimately positions the weaponization of life as a bleak, violent, and ambivalent form of insurgent politics that seeks to wrench the power of life and death away from the modern state on corporeal grounds and in increasingly theologized forms. Drawing attention to the existential commitment, sacrificial morality, and militant martyrdom that transforms these struggles into a complex amalgam of resistance, Bargu explores the global ramifications of human weapons' practices of resistance, their possibilities and limitations.

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