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The *Sumud* Within: Walid Daka's Abolitionist Decolonization

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Abstract

The texts of Walid Daka, a Palestinian political prisoner incarcerated since 1986, challenge the notion that colonial power ends with decolonization and expose the shortcomings of examining colonial prisons solely through the eliminatory prism of death and deprivation. Studying Daka's texts, the paper presents how the Israeli carceral system has managed to utilize prisoners' hopes and longings—in their relations with one another, their political actions such as hunger strikes or their building of internal leadership hierarchies, and their affective worlds—to further its own goals. Rather than a pessimistic account, this paper critically analyzes Daka's writings to demonstrate how a first-person study of carceral subjectification can unfold within an *activist* framework. Daka uses these observations to develop an alternative articulation of decolonization that I term 'abolitionist decolonization' as a collective and continued insistence on setting the terms of getting free. By 'abolitionist decolonization', I conjure a difficult conversation between a Fanonian project of never-ending decolonization and a Foucauldian project of never-ending abolition. As such, this critical attitude aims to counter settler-colonial carcerality in ways that will foil the administration's attempts to reproduce the dangers that the prisoners seek to elude, through the very means they deploy to elude them.

Keywords: decolonization, abolition, subjectification, incarceration, Israel–Palestine, Walid Daka

It is a strategic pessimism and since it is a strategic pessimism it is an activist one.

Michel Foucault

Introduction

The texts of Palestinian political prisoner Walid Daka, whom Israel has incarcerated since 1986, analyze modalities of productive power that invite scholars to update the study of contemporary settler colonialisms by challenging the notion that colonial power ends with decolonization. In presenting such a study, Daka not only creatively follows Foucault's definition of subjectification as the carceral attempt to influence identity, behavior, and sense of self but also takes up and expands Foucault's oft-overlooked activist framework (Foucault 1977). Through Daka's texts, this paper makes two interventions. First, Daka's prison-writing points political theorists toward the contribution that incarcerated thinkers present for theorizing practices of freedom. Second, if theoretical studies of settler colonialisms tend to stress their elimination-oriented dimensions, Daka offers a broader perspective by exposing the constructive facets of their carceral subjectifications that work in tandem with those death-inducing ones.

In my reading of his work, Daka – in defiance of Israeli attempts of carceral subjectification – lays a counter-framework of abolitionist decolonization. Abolitionist decolonization – the repurposing of the prison context's avowed aims of subjectification against broader systems of control through a continued and collective articulation of subjecthood as a practice of freedom – offers a challenge to the framing that positions independence from colonialism or freedom of movement as endpoints for liberation struggles. The paper reads Daka's political theory as an invitation to expand an incomplete vision of Israeli settler-colonial tactics solely through the prisms of necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019), thanatopolitics (Ghanim, 2008), or elimination politics (Feldman, 2019) that I refer to as 'the eliminatory lens'. Instead, reading Daka in light of Patrick

Wolfe's insistence on analyzing 'elimination' as including both death-inducing and life-sustaining practices provides a more elaborate picture (Wolfe, 2006). Daka's texts assist political theorists to grasp the limits of the eliminatory lens in that it misses how contemporary settler colonialisms reproduce their domination not only through the infliction of death. Other means include endeavoring to form subjects in ways these subjects cannot participate in determining (as individualized, apolitical, devoid of national allegiances, and divided, in the case at hand). In other words, if we only think of settler colonialisms as death-inducing, we might miss – or worse, encourage – actions open to cooptation. In response to such dangers, abolitionist decolonization conjures a difficult conversation between a Fanonian project of never-ending decolonization and a Foucauldian project of never-ending abolition. As a critical attitude, it aims to counter settler-colonial carcerality in ways that will foil the carceral dispositif's attempts to reproduce the dangers that the prisoners seek to elude, through the very means they deploy to elude them (Fanon, 1967; Foucault, 1983). Hence, while critiques leveled against Foucault's analyses of power as a 'productive network that runs through the whole social body' regard this approach as nihilist, neo-conservative, elitist, quietist, pessimistic, or totalistic, Daka's texts rather demonstrate how the identification of subjectification allows one to think and work against it (Foucault 2000, p. 119; Stone & Foucault 1983; Walzer 1986). If processes of subjectification seek to use the prisoners' actions to turn them toward their own self-development as well as against one another, practices of abolitionist decolonization seek to enable prisoners to take more control over their affective worlds and the crafting of their kinships. To begin this work, according to Daka, entails a self-determination that seizes control over prisoners' time and place, cultivates politically-aware educational experiences, and directs prisoners' attachments.

Born in Baqa el-Gharbiyye in 1961, Daka has been incarcerated in Israeli prisons since 1986 and his physical release is currently set for 2025. He was convicted of leading a People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine squad that kidnapped, and later murdered, the Israeli soldier Moshe Tamam. Daka confirmed his role in leading the squad but has denied involvement with Tamam's murder. Daka is among the longest-serving group of Palestinian prisoners, known as the 'internal prisoners' or 'captives from within' (*asra eldahl*). Unlike Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, or the diaspora, Israel has refused to include its Palestinian citizens in strategically-negotiated releases – so-called 'goodwill gestures' – or prisoner-exchange deals (although it has made some exceptions to this rule). The structural reasons for Daka's exceptionally long prison term stem from his liminal position as a Palestinian and a citizen of Israel. Once inside prison, he has become active in a political party of Palestinian citizens of Israel, Balad (The National Democratic Alliance). It was in Balad's periodical, *Fasl elMaqal*, that Daka's political writing commenced. His writing combines dissections of contemporary political issues facing Palestinians and theoretical analyses, with a heavy reliance on the socio-philosophical frames offered by Foucault and Zygmunt Bauman. Daka's texts have been collected first in Arabic (2010) and a different anthology, this time in Hebrew, was prepared for publication in 2017 but the Israeli Prison Service did not authorize its publication (cited herein as *Anthology*). Another genre of writing that this paper builds on is published fragments from the correspondence between Daka and Anat Matar, a Jewish-Israeli philosophy professor who, besides being Daka's friend, is his co-conspirator in her role as Chair of the Israeli Action Committee for the Palestinian Prisoners (Baker, 2008). Additionally, Daka has authored two books for an audience of adolescents (with the trilogy's final book on its way) and has given several interviews and speeches by way of

smuggling his responses and texts out of prison (Daka, 2017, 2019, 2021). One of these speeches contains the quote in this paper's title, 'the *sumud* within' (2018).[1]

While many incarcerated writers use the word 'within' to denote the particular aspects of being 'inside', Daka's incarceration is only one aspect of his focus on 'the inside'. Whereas 750,000 Palestinians were expelled beyond Israel's forming borders in the 1948 Nakba or prevented from returning, Daka is a descendent of the 150,000 Palestinians who remained 'inside'. In the face of Israel's continued settler-colonial policies to reduce the number of Palestinians present in the territory it controls while increasing its hold on the land – a process known as 'the ongoing Nakba' – Palestinians have developed the practice of *sumud* (Sheikh and Weizman, 2015). Enacting an anti-colonial principle, *sumud* is usually related to land – clinging to one's land, defiantly maintaining relations with it, and combating dispossession (Meari, 2014). It is in this context that this paper analyzes Daka's work and its innovative concept of 'the *sumud* within' (*elsumud eldahli*). In Daka's case, *sumud* is interlayered with other expressions of 'insideness', not least because he remains between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (unlike the Palestinians whom Israel has exiled) while also being inside prison.

The third layer of Daka's 'insideness' is concerned with questions of subjectivity. Zionism, itself a political project with a strong emphasis on subjectivity – turning the 'feeble European Jew' into the 'muscular Jew' (while, at best, ignoring Jews of the Muslim world, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia) – has a long history of attempting to affect Palestinian subjectivity. Early examples include the attempt to reduce Palestinian resistance to Zionism by strengthening a village-oriented subjectivity over a nationalist-oriented subjectivity (Cohen, 2008). Israeli settler-colonial drives in pursuit of 'capturing hearts and minds' focus on the endeavor to shape prisoners' identifications away from collective and nationalist identifications into regional and self-centered perceptions that

Daka discusses as ‘a state of exile’ (2011, p. 248). Daka shows how the Israeli *carceral dispositif* – a term I use to indicate the assemblage of the Israeli Prison Service, the General Security Services, government officials, and, more importantly, Israeli public opinion and the Zionist psyche – has employed prisoners’ self-identification and their collective organization to better control them. It does so by encouraging regional identifications over national ones, by dividing the prisoners, and by encouraging a self-interested comportment. Presenting his Foucauldian analysis of such questions of subjectivity, Daka writes:

> If the segregated areas Israel demarcated for Palestinians in the occupied territories are akin to bigger prisons, and its practices towards Palestinians in the smaller prisons are a continuation of its policy in the larger ones, then it is useful to first apply theoretical tools to study the smaller prisons. The panopticon is the fundamental form of this control and surveillance that Israel conducts not only to enhance security but to re-shape people.
>
> (*Anthology*., p. 10)

To obstinately cling to one’s self, the *sumud* within, means to encourage others to resist such attempts by educational means and to develop new ways of thinking. In Daka’s words, it is a collective and continued struggle against the ‘dungeon between one’s shoulders’ both inside and outside prisons and that, moreover, is useful not merely for people in Palestine (Daka, 2018).

Hence, this paper offers a two-fold argument. First, it establishes that Daka identifies carceral subjectification as the settler-colonial supremacist encouragement of prisoners’ actions according to molds they cannot affect – the molds of geography-based relationships, controlled

leadership, and depoliticizing comfort. Second, it argues that this identification opens up a conceptualization of abolitionist practices of freedom as those democratic actions that promote people's self-determination in the face of carceral-supremacist limitations.

Beyond elimination

I read Daka's abolitionist analysis of Israel's twenty-first-century carceral politics as cautioning political theorists from viewing settler colonial practices solely through the eliminatory lens. While killing is always part of such practices, disregarding the accompanying life-sustaining politics might lead to an over appreciation of a variants of productive power that entrench domination. In his articulation of collective resistance in terms of subjectivity, Daka joins a shift in the scholarship of settler colonialism in Israel–Palestine and other colonial contexts to analyze subject formation as a form of productive power. Nonetheless, Daka traverses beyond these analyses in stressing the twenty-first-century mechanics of Palestinians' carceral subjectification. The baseline for scholarship on Israeli settler-colonial logics is the understanding of settler colonialism, following Patrick Wolfe's articulation, not exclusively as an event but also as a structure (2006). As Robert Nichols notes, while Wolfe's work on settler colonialism spans over twenty years, his article "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" 'is a particularly succinct condensation of his project as a whole' (2019, p. 183). Thus, as Wolfe is considered by many to be the founder of settler-colonial studies, conceptualizations of elimination are central not only to Wolfe's analyses but to the very foundation of such scholarship. Many readers, however, take up the death-inducing practices described in this seminal work while paying less attention to the life sustaining politics analyzed within. In describing 'settler colonialism [a]s inherently eliminatory', Wolfe's analysis offers a ground-breaking differentiation of settler-

colonial modalities of power. ‘Settler colonialism’, Wolfe states, ‘has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base’ (2006, pp. 387–388). Within the positive dimensions of the new colonial society, Wolfe includes institutions of subjectification such as boarding schools and missions where a second education is intended to completely alter the subjectivity of the native person by means of language replacement, spiritual and cultural substitution, and individualization (ibid.). Other examples of productive power Wolfe discusses are ‘the breaking-down of native title into alienable individual freeholds’ and the US’ influence on tribal constitutions (ibid., pp. 388, 400) For Wolfe, to lose your Indigenous soul ‘is a kind of death’ and yet in these instances his focus is on the productive aspects of power (ibid., 397). Daka’s texts expand Wolfe’s theorization in adding an analysis where subjectification is not geared towards ‘assimilation’: Zionist politics that bow before the golden principle of a Jewish majority in *Eretz Israel* have never been assimilative. Instead, the reading of Daka herein delineates a subjectification process that is meant to serve settler colonial interests via separation.

Achille Mbembe is also instructive about the relationship between coloniality as violent or death-inducing and colonial constructions of subjectivity and yet the distinctions Wolfe deploys in discussing the cohabitation of life-sustaining and violent aspects of elimination become less central in Mbembe’s work (2019, pp. 45–46). While Mbembe’s analyses are well-known for the centrality with which they situate the colonial infliction of death as ‘necropolitics’, he remind us that colonial systems do, indeed, aim at subject formation, both in the contemporary context of Israel–Palestine and more broadly. For Mbembe, ‘the Palestinian case illustrates [that] late modern colonial occupation is a concatenation of multiple powers: disciplinary, biopolitical, and necropolitical’ (ibid., p. 82). In the extended context of colonialism, too, Mbembe’s approach is

quite nuanced. He writes, for example: ‘Colonialism was, to a large extent, a way of disciplining bodies with the aim of making better use of them, docility and productivity going hand in hand’ (2001, p. 113). These nuanced readings of the colonial *technê* of subject formation notwithstanding, Daka’s texts invite us to rethink the overshadowing of death and violence in the Mbembian project that is evident, for example, in how this last quote continues: ‘The whip and the cane … served to force upon the African a concocted identity, an identity that allowed her/him to move in the spaces where she/he was always being ordered around, and where she/he had unconditionally to show submissiveness’ (ibid.). Daka’s texts invite scholars to extend our gaze beyond the whip and the cane: ‘In Israeli prisons, you face a harder form of torture, because it is “civilized”; it turns your own senses and mind into tools of daily torture, quietly creeping without any club, without making any noise’ (2011, p. 235). In contrast, even when Mbembe turns to the concoction of colonized subjectivities, he focuses on violence and thus loses sight of how colonial regimes make more and more use of sophisticated modalities of power. This approach is heightened in Mbembe’s analysis of Israeli settler-colonial tactics, which he regards as ‘the most accomplished form of necropower’ (2019, pp. 82, 80). Keeping in mind Anuja Bose’s suggestion that the Mbembian project of necropolitics ‘is unfinished’ and could therefore be updated, Daka’s texts urge us to expand our view beyond the centrality of death and violence in Mbembe’s study of settler colonialism (Bose, 2020). Mbembe’s focus on elimination occludes a more comprehensive understanding of the workings of settler colonialism in the twenty-first century. To expand scholarly analysis of colonization beyond ‘the whip and the cane’ – and of settler colonialism in Israel–Palestine, in particular, beyond ‘necropower’ – requires closer scrutiny of contemporary settler-colonial modes of operation.

While Mbembe's analyses place elimination *qua* death and violence central-stage, Daka joins several commentators that have already begun to bring scholarly attention to questions of productive power in Israel–Palestine.[2] Neve Gordon proposes that Israel's policies in the years following the expansion of Israeli settler-colonialism in 1967 into the West Bank and Gaza Strip were a form of disciplinary power and biopolitics meant to ensure obedience. While Gordon argues that Israel mostly abandoned these modalities of power in subsequent years, he nevertheless offers several pillars for understanding Israel's 'politics of life' (2008, p. 19). Such practices included control of school curricula, surveillance of 'recalcitrant' individuals, establishing vocational schools, and designating special plots of land for farmer training (ibid., p. 9). Gordon reads these policies as an expression of sophisticated settler-colonial control that combines the maintenance of 'correct behavior' with concern for the population's welfare in order to produce 'docile but economically useful subjects' (ibid., p. 68). Gordon, however, argues that sovereign power and a 'politics of death' became the dominant form of Israel's occupation in later years and particularly during the second intifada of 2000 (ibid., p. 206). Daka's texts propose a more comprehensive reading in which sovereign power makes use of disciplinary modalities of subject formation through the twenty-first century as well.

Daka's analysis is more in line with Hagar Kotef and Merav Amir's articulation of subject formation where, in contrast to Gordon's conceptualization, productive power is a central modality for settler-colonial control even in the twenty-first century (Kotef & Amir 2011, pp. 76–77). In their critique of Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank, Kotef and Amir suggest that 'the checkpoint operates not only in an attempt to *read* identities, but also to *produce* them' (ibid., p. 77). The checkpoints, they argue, produce Palestinian subjects as *always already failing* subjects, in order to justify continued colonial rule. As Jewish–Israeli citizens, Kotef and Amir rightly refrain from

any attempt at framing a Palestinian story but rather focus on Israel's fabrication of Palestinian subjectivity in its own eyes: they view the construction of the Palestinian subject as 'undisciplinable' as an inner-Israeli justificatory mechanism.[3] In juxtaposition with Kotef and Amir's readings, Daka's texts open a view into more complicated carceral relations where the goal of the carceral dispositif is to form docile, moderate, geography-based subjectivities – not only in its own eyes but also in practice. In achieving this broader vantage point, Daka's account enables an analysis of how even resistance to Israel's carceral archipelago, be it the checkpoints or prisons, might be coopted.

This paper's reading of Daka – which aligns with the analysis of Samera Esmeir, who locates dangers not only in processes of dehumanization but also in those of humanization – suggests that the settler-colonial utilization of productive facets of power has hitherto received insufficient attention (2006). The analysis of Daka's texts presented herein does not seek to discard Ilana Feldman's understanding of the Israeli incarceration of Palestinian political prisoners as 'elimination politics' or Honaida Ghanim's understanding of Israeli tactics as 'thanatopolitics' and as a biopolitical formation of 'the management of death and destruction' (Feldman 2019; Ghanim 2008, p. 67). Instead, my reading of Daka sustains that, while elimination, death, and destruction do take place and should be theorized, the twenty-first century demands a broader and more comprehensive outlook. For example. if Ghanim understands the Israeli response to the second intifada that commenced in 2000 as 'thanatopolitics', Daka's broadening of the lens regards this violent intensification of killings as only the first step of what (deploying Naomi Klein's concept) he calls the Israeli 'shock doctrine' meant to 'mold Palestinian consciousness' (2011). Yes, death is inseparable from settler-colonial tactics. Yet, applying a broader analytical frame that understands killing as part of a complex project of subject formation, where violence and

subjectification work hand in hand, advances our understanding of contemporary settler-colonial politics. Daka's texts thus update an understanding of settler-colonial relations that relies solely on the lens of 'elimination' to include attempts of carceral subjectification as well.

Settler-colonial politics of carceral subjectification

How, then, does the Israeli carceral dispositif's use of prisoners' social relations, political actions, and affective worlds alter the way political theorists think about settler-colonial politics? If one conceives of settler colonialisms as operating solely through death and deprivation, then a logical inference would be an aspiration toward colonized people's relations with others, self-organized leadership structures, and more comfortable living conditions. However, as Glen Coulthard reminds us, such hopes can serve as the basis of cooptation. Following Taiaiake Alfred and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Coulthard understands settler-colonial rule as 'a relatively defuse set of governing relations that operate through a circumscribed mode of recognition that structurally ensures continued access to Indigenous peoples' lands and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that coopt Indigenous people into becoming instruments of their own dispossession' (Coulthard 2014, p. 156). Corresponding to Coulthard's more complex understanding of settler-colonial production of subjectivity, Daka offers an invaluable first-person account of how the eliminatory lens can be nuanced. Daka's account of carceral subjectification shows how the Israeli carceral dispositif exploits prisoners' hopes – in the relations they form, the leadership structures they organize, and the affective worlds they trust – to further its own interests.

Daka's book for adolescents, *The Tale of the Oil's Secret* (2017), illustrates his critique of settler-colonial politics of carceral subjectification within and beyond prisons. The protagonist, Jud, is a Palestinian boy who, on his way to meet his incarcerated father, encounters several figures

whose decolonial aspirations lead them astray. One of these figures is a dog, Abu Nab, who exemplifies the pitfall of what Foucault calls ‘a political circle which reintroduces in your hopes and through your hopes the things you want to avoid by these hopes’ (1983). Through this figure, an allegory of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its security forces, I read Daka as criticizing settler-colonial subjectification politics that take place through the use of proxies for a reintroduction of settler-colonial rule. Abu Nab is a defeated dog who was sent to the US to undergo training in how not only to ‘sniff hazardous substances, but also hazardous thoughts’ (Daka 2017, p. 30). The Israeli precondition for Abu Nab’s training was that his American trainers break all but one of his fangs, to limit the political dangers he might pose. Daka’s critique here is in line with Foucault’s articulation – one on which Mbembe builds to discuss colonial subjectification, and which Gordon applies in reference to Palestinians employed as workers in Israel – where ‘disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination’ (Foucault 1977, p. 138; Gordon 2008, p. 206; Mbembe 2001, p. 113). However, Daka’s insights also expand the Foucauldian project by focusing on Israeli disciplinary aspirations toward the struggle’s elite, both inside prisons and in the PA, alerting us to a dimension of racism that Foucault’s reading of ‘colonizing genocide’ under-explores: colonized subjectivities (Daka 2011, p. 238; Foucault 2003, p. 257). As an allegory for colonized subjects, Abu Nab’s hopes of liberation were manipulated by stronger forces, not only Israeli but from the US as well, to create a mostly docile force for inner-rule. Daka’s dangerousness in the eyes of the carceral dispositif, arguably, lies not in his role in the squad that kidnapped and murdered Moshe Tamam. Rather, it arises from the combination of this critique of the PA as a product of Israel’s exploitation of misguided liberation tactics and Daka’s subject position as a revered political prisoner. In other words, it stems from the danger that a prisoner well-acquainted

with subjectification politics can pose to settler-colonial attempts to implement such politics outside prison walls.

Daka's critique of carceral subjectification emanates from his unique articulation of the political value of writing from within prison. In *A Letter to an Unborn Child*, Daka beautifully presents both the painful reasons for writing from prison and the possibilities it opens up:

> Today I finish my twenty-fifth year in prison, nine-thousand one-hundred thirty-one days and a quarter. That's an endless number. That's the length of my days of incarceration, which continue to pile up. I've reached fifty and my days divide in two: prison and life. My prison days grab my other days by the neck. Every day I've lived in prison jumps on his brother that I've lived outside like a bag trying to empty itself from the memory that remains. Prison is like a fire that consumes the shattered remains of memory, and my memory, unfortunately, is withering away and its trunk is drying out. I've smuggled it on a piece of paper, so that it wouldn't burn in the fires of prison and forgetfulness. And you, from all I've smuggled out from my memory, you are the most beautiful. You are my message to the future, after the months have sucked the essence of their brother-months and the years have equaled their sister-years.
>
> (*Anthology*, p. 76)

Daka's words make clear that he holds no romantic vision of either incarceration or prison-writing. Nevertheless, nor does he regard his incarceration with the critical attitude of what the

incarcerated thinker Antonio Gramsci described in terms that gesture toward lofty isolation or along the lines of Rosa Luxemburg's understanding of her incarceration as a break from 'World History' (Gramsci 1994, p. 82; Luxemburg 2011, p. 392). Instead, Daka uses his first-person experience and witnessing of incarceration to theorize carcerality both within and beyond places of detention. Daka writes, 'we speak to you in a present tense *so that we don't become your future'* (*Anthology*, p. 72). His 'message to the future' is to move beyond the current social, political, and affective limits placed on Palestinian agency. Without romanticizing his imprisonment, Daka presents it as an opportunity to expose the conditions of unfreedom among the unincarcerated as well. To do so, he analyzes three central examples of settler-colonial carceral subjectification, which I examine next.

Geography-based relationships and felt allegiances

First, the carceral dispositif sought to orchestrate prisoners' social relations to promote a pre-nationalistic subjectivity, one where the center of one's sense of self is the place of origin or blood relations (Daka 2011, p. 250). In encouraging forms of allegiance based on original belonging, the carceral dispositif created an atmosphere of competition between Israel–Palestine's different regions (ibid., p. 238). This process is not one of individualization and the eradication of any sort of relations between prisoners but rather a fabrication of specific relations – those of enmity. Beyond the age-old colonial tactic of *devide et impera*, carceral subjectification here operates through active encouragement of the formation of specific relations. The prisoners' movement (the national organization that unites prisoners from different parties and prisons) itself advocated that the Israeli authorities incarcerate Palestinians close to their places of origin so as to better facilitate family visits. However, this effort was put to use against the prisoners' movement, in that placing

prisoners from one given geographical area in the same prison (for example, Palestinians from the Northern West Bank in Gilboa Prison and Palestinians from the Southern West Bank in Be'er Sheva Prison) would lead them to form connections with other prisoners from their geographical area of origin rather than on a national level. The loss of cross-national relations hurt the prisoners' movement's goals. According to Daka, the PA strengthens this process as it 'gives power to the representatives of this local thinking, by turning them into the channel through which financial and social support flows' (ibid., p. 250). Daka explores this 'Bantuization' process as the major threat to national subjectivity.

Controlled leadership

Second, Daka discusses the political action of prisoners' self-organization into internal leadership structures as another prominent example of subjectification even within nationalistic politics. Here, too, analyses of prisons usually present Palestinian political prisoners' practices of self-management as a self-evident good (Nashif, 2008; Abdo, 2014). For Daka, in contrast, even creating communal management, a process he experienced as a senior prisoner representative, might become a possible source of concern. The heart of the matter is the carceral dispositif's ability to shape the structures in which the prisoners' leadership operates. During the zenith of the prisoners' movement in the 1970s and 1980s, leaders would make demands to the prison administrations on behalf of the entire prisoner body. By the 2000s, however, the prisoners' representatives were only allowed to make demands that pertained to their own wings. In addition, the carceral dispositif's structuring of the prisoners' leadership hierarchies according to its own needs, for example by transferring 'recalcitrant' leaders to other prisons, set clear limitations on the leaders' roles. Thus, while the Janus-faced structure of passing down the administrations'

orders to the prisoners remained intact, the opposite function of representing the prisoners was manipulated by the carceral dispositif to serve its own desired goals as well.

Depoliticizing comfort (the affective trap)

Third, Daka understands social and political relations as intertwined with affective ones, and here, too, the carceral dispositif attempts to influence subjectivity – in this case, into developing post-national self-interests by both relational and material means. Daka contends that the carceral dispositif targets the social entity of the prisoners even more than it targets their political subjectivity:

> It is this essence that the prison targets during the hours, days, and years. Not you as a subversive political subject, not you as a religious subject, or as a consumer whose earthly pleasures are deprived. You can possess any political stand you wish, worship any way you want, obtain many consumer goods but, first and foremost, the target is the social entity, the person in you. The target is any relation outside the subject, any relation you can have with people or nature, even your relation with the guard as a fellow human being. They will do anything to make us hate them.
>
> (*Anthology*, p. 75)

Daka identifies carceral subjectification as the construction of an indifferent Palestinian subjectivity that places its own individual fate (he gives the examples of working, getting married,

acquiring material goods) above the political cause. The 'social entity' Daka refers to here is not only the maintenance of affective relations but the principle of determining the content of such relations. The goal is not only to maintain relations, as relations of hatred 'with the guard' are still relations, but also to set the tone and direction of these affective links.

In addition to these relational–affective dimensions of productive power, Daka also analyzes the material–affective influence of the relative improvement of imprisonment conditions over the years. Daka argues that prisoners' collective organization, manifested most prominently in hunger strikes, resulted in relative material abundance (2011, p. 235). It is Daka's specific subject position as one of the longest-serving prisoners that enables him to make this bold claim that unabashedly contradicts the prevailing Palestinian discourse that describes the prisoners as constantly malnourished. Daka argues that prisoners' strikes, usually considered the paragon of prisoners' actions, were coopted by the carceral dispositif to serve its own shifting interests, such as the discouragement of political engagement. He writes, 'the current situation is described by older prisoners as "materially high" but "morally low"' (ibid., p. 239). The relative material abundance, for which the prisoners sacrificed so much during various hunger strikes, improved some of the prisoners' conditions but these were then turned against them. These conditions, defined by the carceral dispositif as 'privileges', could be rescinded should the prisoners transgress the carceral dispositif's norms. This was not only a tactical device, however: the relative abundance of food, along with other hard-won 'privileges' such as access to televisions, were put in place to undermine the ability of the prisoners to organize collectively. Daka clarifies, 'it is as if they tell the Palestinian prisoner: eat, drink, stay busy with such needs as long as you don't become a subject who understands and interprets his reality and thinks of his own destiny as well as that of his comrades' (ibid., p. 246). Daka describes the prisoners' relatively reasonable material life as an

affective trap that was brought about by their own actions. Even though these improvements were initiated by the prisoners and were gained only through many hardships, the carceral dispositif used the material improvements to encourage the constitution of subjectivities in ‘a state of exile’ (ibid., p. 248).

With these three examples, Daka’s analysis of subjectification stands in tension with narratives of imprisonment that focus mainly on repression and with the aforementioned ‘eliminatory lens’. As opposed to a dichotomous analysis, of subjection versus liberation, where the prisoners are either fettered or free, Daka meticulously describes a more complicated modality of power. Daka reveals that the prisoners were, indeed, able to relate, act, and feel but that the carceral dispositif was able to both build-on and fabricate these relations, actions, and feelings to further its own interests (for a differentiation between 'subjection' and 'subjectification', see Gortler, forthcoming). Daka cites Foucault in this regard:

> Foucault determines that the prison cell in a surveillance regime keeps only the dungeon’s first role, that of enclosure, whereas the functions of light-deprivation and hiding are eliminated. He describes light and visibility as a trap. For us, in Israeli prisons, this light symbolizes the relatively comfortable material life that has become a trap. This trap requires analysis and demands that we uncover its mechanisms. Material comfort is both a torture device and a means for Israel to present itself to public opinion as an enlightened occupation that adheres to human rights discourse.
>
> (*Anthology*, p. 24)

For Daka, the mechanisms of this trap include the prisoners’ relationships with each other, their hard-won campaigns to have their self-leadership recognized, and their struggles to improve prison conditions that were used to accrue even more forms of control over them.

Daka reliance on Foucault's articulation of subjectification challenges the deluge of criticism this conceptualization attracts. In one example of the critique, historian Lawrence Stone understands Foucault's account of subjectification to mean that every possible action by the subject would necessarily increase their domination. Stone argues that 'it is [Foucault's] recurrent emphasis on control, domination, and punishment as the only mediating qualities possible in personal and social relationships that I find one-sided' (Stone and Foucault, 1983). Yet, Foucault locates the historical moment when subjectification became a prominent political technology precisely to open a path beyond it. Daka, in placing colonized and incarcerated subjectivities center-stage, offers an illustration of the Foucauldian critical attitude that is easier to grasp. The fact that the carceral dispositif is able to utilize and manufacture prisoners' affinities, movements, and sensibilities to promote its own goals does not imply that every action is open to manipulation. The purpose of Daka's more complex description of settler-colonial and carceral power relations – whose successful attempts he describes as 'a state of exile' of the prisoner even when their imprisonment conditions improve – is to encourage a politically-oriented and creative *sumud* to relations, actions, and feelings that are conscious of the dangers of cooptation. Daka's awareness of how hierarchies can be further entrenched, even while material conditions improve and some liberties are ostensibly granted, situates his analysis in a long and transnational line of abolitionist thinking.

Abolitionist decolonization

Analyzing shifts in American power relations after the Civil War, W. E. B. Du Bois defined 'Abolition Democracy' as the aspiration toward not only the nominal end to slavery but the building and sustainment of institutions that uphold equality (1935, p. 186). Without the positive

endeavor to invest in educational, material, and political resources for African Americans, Du Bois contends, the formal end of slavery simply concurred with a functional transformation of the unequal power relations of slavery into other realms such as criminal justice. Angela Davis' configuration, which she also refers to as 'comprehensive abolition', opens a line of inquiry beyond Du Bois that studies not only which sites the functionality of slavery has transformed into but also what modalities of power, no longer identifiable as slavery, unequal power relations have manifested within (2005, p. 95). Therefore, we can understand abolition democracy as a methodology, one that Daka deploys as well, for identifying those difficult moments when alleged liberations serve to strengthen the forces that limit freedom. In contrast to the subjectification logic that Daka locates in the PA, to forming bonds of original belonging, or to affective attachments to individualistic self-development or physical comfort, the *sumud* within seeks to limit the dangers of cooptation. The first steps toward the exercise of freedom, for Daka, are to seize control over temporality and space, develop politically-oriented educational practices, and set the content of prisoners' relations with others.

Daka's aspiration to avoid the further entrenchment of hierarchies through people's hopes that is the foundation of his abolitionist thinking takes form within an avowed Foucauldian frame. Foucault uses the word 'abolition' not only to signify the possible demise of the prison but also the termination of those very practices that signaled the birth of the prison: scaffolds, public executions, the pillory, indeterminate detention, the chain-gang, or branding (1977). In other words, when theorizing abolitionist practices, one needs to keep in mind the uncomfortable fact that, without the previous abolitions, there would have been no prisons. Andrew Dilts takes up this Foucauldian line of inquiry to suggest the following positive formulation of abolition: 'As a political and theoretical project, abolition identifies specific institutions (such as the police or the

prison) and traces out their constitutive practices and ways of thinking, marking these practices and epistemes as the objects to be dismantled and transformed' (2019, p. 233). Following such formulations, I read Daka's approach as a counter-measure against the very logics that serve as the basis for carcerality: the undemocratic attempts to produce a subject according to norms that subject could never participate in setting. In this counter-measure, people set the terms and determine the content of their relations with others, their collective political endeavors, and their feelings.

Daka's abolitionist decolonization warrants decarceration – yet, a decarceration that does not simply entail the physical closing-down of prisons and the granting of freedom of movement for prisoners. Following Rose Braz's definition of abolition as 'both the end goal we seek and the way we do our work today', Dilts reminds us that 'Abolition Democracy names an ongoing, dialectical, and fugitive project of mutual liberation. It escapes our grasp, yes, but it does so by pointing toward a democratically conceived horizon in which, as abolitionists frequently insist, no one is disposable' (ibid., pp. 237, 239). For Daka, too, abolitionist decolonization means, alongside the actual liberation of all political prisoners, to decolonize more deeply one's mind from the fettering social structures that make prisons possible in the first place. High among these is the understanding of the human as *homo calculus*: a being with a fixed and stable nature that strives to avoid pain and gain pleasure. Daka's abolitionist decolonization stresses that it is not enough to abolish subjection *qua* limitation since, as the previous section demonstrated, inequalities continue and even worsen through subjectification's relational, active, and emotional operations. To recapitulate, what is needed is a collective and continued insistence on setting the terms of getting free.

Daka's critical attitude of 'the *sumud* within' that centers his project of abolitionist decolonization originates from his unique positionality of being 'thrice inside'. Daka's articulation resonates with Coulthard's concept of 'grounded normativity' as an Indigenous normativity centering a place-based understanding that contrasts with the time-based Western epistemology (Coulthard, 2014). *Sumud*, as a Palestinian concept of steadfastness in clinging to the land, assumes a power relation between Israeli attempts to dispossess Palestinians, on the one hand, and subjects who cling to their land, on the other. As a current prisoner, Daka builds on a Palestinian *sumud* and a return to the land; and yet, at the same time, in opposition to the danger of carceral subjectification as 'a state of exile', Daka insists on 'the *sumud* within' as a practical project of decolonization that attempts to limit the dangers of reproducing existing hierarchies. The nuanced understanding of power relations I locate in Daka's texts reverberates Coulthard's Fanonian-inspired analysis of decolonization. Coulthard discusses native insurgence as 'a self-reflective program of culturally grounded desubjectification that aims to undercut the interplay between subjectivity and structural domination that help maintain settler-colonial relationships in contexts absent pure force' (Coulthard 2014, p. 155). Similar to Coulthard's understanding of desubjectification through the entwinement of land and self-determination, Daka's concept of 'the *sumud* within' weaves together the practice of clinging to land with a collective endeavor to counter carceral subjectification by clinging to one's always-fugitive abolitionist self.

Daka's texts invite political theorists to look more closely at the contribution of incarcerated thinkers to the theorization of practices of freedom, especially as they stress the possibility of exercising freedom in unlikely places. As part of his motivation for writing *Oil's Secret* (2017), his first book for adolescents, Daka says that, during his long prison-term, he has met inside 'the grandfather, the father, and the son' (2018). This is not a metaphor. Daka met

specific people who represent three generations of the same family. It is this Palestinian carceral genealogy that Daka wishes to transform. When he writes, on the protagonist of *Oil's Secret*, 'I wanted Jud to take a way out of this path both predetermined for us and predetermined by us, a way out from prison', Daka is signaling that the work of getting free requires attention to settler-colonial projects of subject formation that might reproduce themselves even through hopes for liberation (ibid.). The articulation of subjecthood as a practice of freedom is the core exercise, for Daka, that renders it possible to reduce such dangers of carceral subjectification.

While Daka's position 'inside' is not of his choosing, he does choose to use his positionality to write about these settler-colonial structures and, specifically, to theorize carceral subjectification. The different carceral tempo does not lead Daka to long for a normal unified tempo. Instead, Daka's texts invite a different abolitionist frame: that people do not only 'do time' and are shaped by the time they 'do' but can also make their own time. According to Daka, 'prison is a terrible man-made place. But the prison of the mind is even worse. Therefore, it is easy to suffer solitary confinement if it helps defeat them both – prison as a place and prison as a disposition' (2018). Insisting on one's agency is geared towards reworking both relations of place and one's disposition; and, as such, it calls forth a different political reality.

Daka's positionality offers a deep understanding of how both Zionist and carceral models of rehabilitation produce disastrous results and, in so doing, buttresses his suggestions for a different time. He seeks to seize a condition of being outside of time to draw timely – even urgent – connections between prisons and the outside world. Nancy Luxon contends that Foucault takes 'pedagogy and politics as the consistent point of departure for [his] work on the constitution of subjects' (2013, p. 177). Luxon's analysis builds on Anthony Long's discussion of Herodotus where 'the human being is entirely *sumphora* – which one could translate weakly by "a creature

of chance" but more tellingly by "a disaster"' (ibid.). If the Palestinian Nakba (disaster) since 1948 is, indeed, a forceful condition of Palestinian subjectivity, Daka's untimeliness recognizes the fraught conditions that make him who he is and yet insists on making a place for what Zohar Weiman-Kelman calls 'queer expectations', an alternative genealogy that would open up a future that is otherwise (2018). Luxon discusses Foucauldian practices of *parrēsia* – frank or free speech – as a person's attempt to call forth their own tempo in practices of pacing – for example, in the self-mastery over 'forgetting, uncertainty, [and] longing' that Luxon discusses as a 'disposition to steadiness' (2013, p. 191). Daka's disposition to steadiness, his *sumud* within, insists not only on self-mastery but also on the possibility of calling forth a different time for others.

Daka's abolitionist decolonization is grounded in a specific place while searching for an exit into a different power relation. Edward Said cites Auerbach citing Hugo of St. Victor to say that 'the man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land' (Said 1978, p. 259). To this distinguished procession of refugees citing one another, Daka responds by insisting on the value of place for one's writing. The importance of Said as a forerunner to Palestinian legibility in Western academia cannot be overstated and yet Daka writes from within the ongoing Nakba, from within prison, and from the pain of the body precisely to write freedom where one is. It is from this triple location of the ongoing Nakba that Daka's texts invite us to update an eliminatory lens solely focused on death and violence. If we are to follow Wolfe in thinking of settler colonialism as a structure rather than purely an event and as a site where violence and subject formation work side by side, we can no longer think Israel–Palestine solely through the prism of the forced exiles of 1948. Daka's texts invite us to pay attention not only to Israel's

continuing use of actual acts of banishment but also to broaden our analysis to include contemporary settler-colonial practices of subject formation that create a 'state of exile'.

In contradistinction from a theory of liberation (*tahrir*) that described itself more prominently as the freedom of movement, Daka's fictional book *Oil's Secret* (2017) rather understands freedom (*huria*) as attainable even when one is inside prison. The counterintuitive possibility of being a free prisoner is a leitmotif in Daka's writing that he uses to question whether or not the person on the 'outside' is, indeed, free. In one especially illustrative example he mentions that carceral mentality 'can easily turn into a cell that imprisons its owner, even though her body is free. How many mobile cells our Arab world contains' (Daka, 2019). *Oil's Secret* expands this counterintuitive articulation of freedom, one that does not diminish the importance of processes of liberation but rather complicates our understanding of freedom by adding further layers to it (2018). To prevent the impression that liberation should be abandoned for inner-self work, this point is worth reiterating: For Foucault, Daka, and this paper the point is not that liberation should be discarded, only that it is not enough. The decolonization I locate in Daka's texts is abolitionist precisely because, following Du Bois, it suggests that the nominal transition to a stage of alleged liberation is insufficient when unaccompanied by more profound processes.

The main means for exercising freedom, for Daka, revolve around educational practices. Similar to Fanon and Coulthard, Daka sees the question of the colonized person's subjectivity as central to decolonization. Nonetheless, in tension with Fanon, he raises questions about the role of violence in twentieth-century decolonial thought as a political action that encourages a desired change in one's subjectivity. The protagonist of the aforementioned story, Jud, came into this world as a manifestation of the freedom of movement against the carceral dispositif's anti-reproductive practices: Jud's father smuggles his semen out of prison to Jud's mother. Yet, *Oil's*

Secret narrates Jud's attempt to sneak *into* the prison so that he could visit his father. Jud accomplishes his goal after he has an encounter with an ancient olive tree that produces magic oil that allows those pure of heart to become invisible. Once inside the prison, Jud meets his father. However, instead of using the remainder of the oil to free his father and the other prisoners, Jud decides to use it for other purposes. A prisoner nicknamed Kalashnikov (AK-47, a direct reference to armed struggle) suggests the following in response to Jud's decision: 'What? Don't you want to become free? We must use the oil to hide weapons and all that we need to flee from prison' (ibid., p. 85). A fellow prisoner, Nader, responds to Kalashnikov: 'Were you jailed to be liberated or to liberate others?' Nader's response is in line with Daka's approach that there are substances of freedom even more worthy than liberation, and the most significant of these can be developed through politically-oriented educational and scholarly practices. For Daka, as is often the case, the alleged postcolonial society that would come after the use of violence could be designed to serve imperial interests.[4] Moreover, Daka suggests that subjectification can, counterintuitively, manifest itself through violence: Israel's encouragement of Palestinian violence through its persecution of all other forms of resistance enables it to deflect international public opinion. In other words, Daka's Foucauldian rejoinder to Fanon is that even the weapon can be a tool of subjectification.

Oil's Secret Illustrates these more complicated contours of decolonization. Jud chooses to remain in prison while letting the future generation of Palestinians use some of the oil to move beyond Israel's separation wall (thus representing the freedom of movement). Yet, the more significant portion of the oil is dedicated to research. Jud narrates a conversation he had with the olive tree that stresses the importance of educational practices: 'The loss of freedom, prisons, the wall, checkpoints … these are the visible features of the epidemic, but the substantial illness is the loss of the mind … [an illness] more dangerous than prisons' (ibid., p. 97). In response to

Kalashnikov's desire to use the oil to raise a violent vanguard, Jud's father asks: 'Who should enjoy this right? A group of prisoners to be freed from incarceration, or a group of students to reach their university?' (ibid., p. 86) Daka's conclusion from the twentieth century is that the latter encompasses a greater hope. 'The future', he concludes, 'is the prisoner worthiest of liberation' (ibid., p. 97). Daka's suggestion to tether processes of liberation to abolitionist decolonization is manifested in practices of freedom that do not focus solely on freedom of movement or liberation from direct colonialism but also on politically-oriented and collective transformations in subjectivity. Jud refuses Kalashnikov's proposal for the prisoners to free themselves precisely because this kind of liberation might be coopted by structures of domination. In other words, Daka's protagonist refuses a subjectification that might manifest itself in an ostensible liberation that is not accompanied by freedom but instead is a functional continuation of the hierarchical relation in different terms. Practices of abolitionist decolonization based on politically-oriented education are less prone to cooptation. Daka's epigraph for the book offers a self-reflexive account of prison-writing that gestures toward such intentions: 'I write to be released from prison, hoping to release it out of me!' (ibid., p. 7). The agent in this epigraph is the prisoner himself; and, with Braz and Dilts, it charts a political process that tackles carceral ways of thinking and stresses the freedom to craft the political subjectivity of one's self.

Daka's abolitionist decolonization is based on a deliberate attempt to take responsibility for oneself and others especially when this sense of self is threatened. Performing *sumud* on one's feelings is another form of exercising this critical attitude. Daka writes:

> To stop feeling the shock and trauma. To stop feeling people's sadness, anyone's, dullness towards horror, any horror, is like a nightmare to me. It is my

> measure for not surrendering and for my will. To feel the people, to feel the pain of people, that's the essence of civilization.
>
> (*Anthology*, p. 75)

Daka does not attempt to avoid the unpleasant sensations of either colonial conditions or prison. Instead, he endeavors to keep the sensation of feeling the other's pain meaningful and to turn to it as a resource for political change. In other words, for Daka, it is not enough to end the prison. His struggle is aimed at the carceral logics of viewing the subject as a self-centered *homo calculus* that, 'in a state of exile', becomes indifferent to the pain of others. Daka demonstrates that agents can, even in unlikely circumstances, collectively intervene in power structures toward equality with whatever means they have at their disposal. Daka's projects of abolitionist decolonization – in prison-writing, educating other prisoners, or instigating affective interventions with prison guards – *exercise* a world with social relations, political actions, and affective compositions that could be otherwise (Baker, 2008, pp. 4–5).

The affective interventions of Daka's abolitionist decolonization are evident also with the community outside. Daka met Sana Salame through her involvement in prisoners' rights activism and they married in 1999. Their wedding was an exceptional event: it was the first – and thus far the only – wedding of a person classified by Israel as a 'security prisoner' to be held inside a prison. In contrast to carceral attempts to either isolate the prisoner or to constitute their relations with others, Daka and Salame's wedding was a unique manifestation of the possibility for the prisoners to try to determine the content of their own relations. That the institution of marriage is, in many cases, what Foucault would call 'dangerous' does not disqualify it from becoming a practice of freedom in a different context (Foucault 1983). Daka's account is thus especially

helpful for reassessing the arguments of those, such as Lawrence Stone, who understand analyses of subjectification as totalizing. Daka's hopefulness in describing an undeniably harsh reality lends substance to Foucault's insistence that 'hope and suspicion are two close figures' (ibid.). This hope led to another manifestation of Salame and Daka determining their kinship despite of racist anti-reproductive politics that consider even children as threats to its security: As in Daka's fictional book *Oil's Secret*, one of Salame and Daka's subversive acts of abolitionist decolonization included the smuggling of Daka's semen out of prison. In another step towards kinship justice, Salame gave birth to their daughter, Milad, in February 2019.

Conclusion

Daka does not offer an analytically tight definition of freedom - such definition would be antithetical to the critical attitude of never-ending abolitionist decolonization presented herein. Neither is his discussion of freedom and subjectivity geared toward stoic-inner-work that is distant both from collective endeavors or politics nor can Daka be read as a humanist in the sense of a fixed, stable, and unchanging definition of what it means to be human. Instead, this paper argued that Daka stresses how prisons and other carceral realities are dangerous in more ways than the physical pain they inflict or their restriction of the prisoner's ability to act. Their danger also lies in how they construct a subject, give voice, or empower. Daka does not stop at having a voice but insists to resist cooptation even while he acts within a space and a tempo not of his choosing.

Daka's subject position enables him to understand up-close the subtleties of subjectification and therefore to conceive of a pathway beyond it. Offering to broaden and nuance what this paper called 'the eliminatory lens', Daka witnesses from close proximity how the carceral

dispositif attempts to build on prisoners' actions to serve its own interests, and this experience helps us to understand how carceral subjectification could be countered. The context of Foucault's quote in the epigraph above provides the background for this analysis: 'I think that there is a direct implication from this pessimistic view to this activist attitude. I think that this suspicion has to be relative to the situation, the main problem, the main dangers, and so on. So, it is a strategic pessimism and since it is a strategic pessimism it is an activist one' (ibid.). As pessimistic as Daka's descriptions may be – of how even traits often perceived as self-evidently 'good', such as people's relations, actions, and feelings can be used to further control over them – his identification of practices of subjectification fuels the search for a modality of power beyond them. For Daka, the main resources for doing so in the carceral context are the counter-seizure of time and place, educational practices, and an insistence on determining the content of one's relations with others, be they with the community on the outside, significant others, or even a prison guard.

In his books, articles, and letters, Daka reckons with the carceral reality of the ever-present possibility of changing oneself; yet, instead of turning docile, he proposes that prisoners can attempt to set the standards of change themselves. The implications for Palestinian society are self-explanatory: limitations on Palestinians' movement are only the most visible with the wall, the checkpoints, and borders, but there are many other shared characteristics between the Palestinians in the 'small prison and the large one' (*Anthology*, p. 4). And such limitations exist outside of Israel–Palestine too. Daka's texts warn of how the structuring of relations, actions, and feelings with material improvements can be used to wield even greater control while suggesting how one can nevertheless resist such realities.

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[1] My exegesis builds on Daka's published and unpublished texts. All the translations from the anthology are my own. I have obtained these texts with Daka's approval and with the help of Sana Salame Daka, Walid's wife, As'ad Daka, Walid's brother, and Anat Matar.

[2] I focus here on scholarship within political theory's investigation of subject formation in Israel-Palestine. For works that deal specifically with Israeli incarceration of Palestinian political prisoners see (Nashif, 2008; Abdo, 2014; Latte Abdallah, 2021).

[3] Similar to Kotef and Amir's analysis, the focus of my own research trajectory, as Jewish-Israeli, is on the Israeli side. That is, I focus on the carceral dispositif's attempt to shape Palestinian political prisoners' subjectivity. Such an

investigation, however, cannot take place without a deep engagement with prisoners' own analyses of carceral subjectivity. Thus, acknowledging my positionality, and especially my mandatory conscription as a prison guard for Palestinian political prisoners in the Israeli military, I refuse the frame of 'giving prisoners a voice'. Instead, this paper discusses Daka's texts as illuminating the different directionalities at work in Israeli prisons.

[4] The possibilities of the neo-colonial dangers of decolonial processes are explored, among other works, in the writings of Walter Rodney and Thomas Sankara (Sankara, 2007; Rodney, 2020).