

Subject, Subjugation, and Subjectivity

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Raef Zreik,

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Special Issue **On Complicity and Dissent. Ed. Nitzan Lebovic**

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the ways in which complicity and dissent feed and subvert one another, or the ways in which the subjugated self becomes a political subject. The formative event of Palestinian collective identity is the loss of home and homeland in the aftermath of the *Nakba* of 1948. "The Catastrophe" divided the Palestinian community to two: Those who remained within the borders of the Israeli state and became Israeli citizens, and the Palestinian refugees, who came to establish the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and led an armed struggle. While examining the two narratives, I also explore two communal modes of resistance: Palestinians who struggled with a psychology of defeat, and came to challenge the authority of the state; and PLO supporters who began as members of a militant liberation movement, and ended up signing the Oslo Accords and contributing to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA). In short, complicity brought with it resistance, and resistance ended in complicity. If resistance ends in complicity, and complicity could turn into resistance, then the Palestinian is the example for where this interplay—between subjectivity and subjugation—takes place.

Raef ZREIK

Subject, Subjugation, and Subjectivity

Introduction

This paper is about complicity and resistance, and the ways they feed into and subvert one another. It proceeds not through a theoretical approach, but rather via a close reading of the story of the Palestinian people, including the loss of home and homeland in the aftermath of the *Nakba* of 1948 and the different ways in which Palestinians coped with this formative event. The two main groups of Palestinians that the paper discusses are the Palestinians who remained within Israel and became Israeli citizens, and the Palestinian refugees who would later establish the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and lead an armed struggle against Israel. The paper traces two modes through which Palestinians confronted Israel: Palestinians in Israel, from within the walls of citizenship, started out with a psychology of defeat, but went on to escalate their demands and intensify their resistance. The PLO, meanwhile, began as a liberation movement willing to struggle until death against Israel, and ended up signing the Oslo Accords and establishing the Palestinian Authority (PA) as an administrative body that is complicit in perpetuating the occupation and rewriting Palestinian history. Thus, for these two groups, complicity brought with it resistance, and resistance ended in complicity, respectively.

The paper, through a reading of the case of Palestine and the Palestinians, argues that things could be different than what they are: resistance ends in complicity, and complicity can turn into resistance, regardless of intentions, ideas or ideals. The paper is not about the death or rebirth of the (historio-political) subject, but rather the interplay between subjectivity and subjugation that becomes evident through examining the case of Palestine. The paper is inspired by the works of Hegel, Althusser, Foucault and Butler and their writings on the formation of the subject and the relation between subject and subjugation, complicity and resistance, power and counter power. But instead of starting with theory, the paper would rather start with a story, and then I will move from there to theorize the case at hand.

1. The Birth of the (New?) Subject

The time is 1948. The place used to be called Palestine, but now it has been assigned a new political identity: Israel. The war—which Zionists refer to as the War of Independence—is over. The State of Israel has been established. For the Palestinians, it is the *Nakba*, the Arabic word for "catastrophe." About 700,000 Palestinians were deported or fled (Masalha; Morris; Pappé). No matter how we look at it, the fact of the matter is that those refugees were not allowed to return to the entity now known as Israel. Within Israel remained some 150,000 Palestinians, who were granted Israeli citizenship.

Within less than a year, those Palestinians who remained in Israel, who were an integral part of the Palestinian people and had constituted a majority within Palestine, had become a tiny minority within the newborn Jewish state of Israel, having lost their cities, their leadership, and their national institutions. They were granted citizenship by the very state that had been established on the ruins of their homeland. At the same time, their compatriots had become refugees and were now over the borders, not permitted to return; those refugees who dared to try returning risked death at the hands of the Israeli army (Korn 163; Manna). It is the birth of this subject, the subject of this newly-forged citizenship, that I first wish to ponder. This is the Palestinian citizen of Israel who emerged from the ruins, who was subjugated, and who was re-born of this subjugation as a citizen-subject (Zreik, "Has" 180). In this sense, the category of citizenship makes visible a moment of mediation between the subjugation of the Palestinian and his reemergence as a political subject within the nascent Israeli polity.

The story of the birth of this subject-citizen-subject will progress in two threads. One thread tells of how the new state facilitated the emergence of the new Palestinian subject, and the other recounts how Palestinians in Israel dealt with the nascent state and took their subjectivity seriously.

1.1 The production of Palestinian subjects: The Palestinian as the author of his own life

In 1948, Israel managed not only to crush the Arab armies, but also to destroy the very fabric of Palestinian society. The control it exerted was near absolute. The Palestinians were subjected to military rule, and a system of permits was imposed on them that controlled and constrained their movement. The military regime penetrated most aspects of their life: education, health, culture,

education and economic affairs (Jiryis 9-74; Lustik; Sa'di). But clearly it was not absolute, and from these holes and pockets the Palestinian subject will emerge as the story progresses.

However, it is not this subjugation that is of interest to me at this point, but rather the attempt to brush aside the constitutive violence that accompanied the establishment of the state and its aftermath. I therefore focus on the way the state purposely contributed to the emergence of, Palestinians subjects via, *inter alia*, the act of granting Palestinian citizens the right to vote. Palestinians who were allowed to vote and survived the first census (Leibler and Breslau) participated in the first general elections in Israel in 1949, and a number of Palestinian Knesset members were elected to the first Knesset (Gelber 219; Manna 348-57). I additionally examine the rhetoric of the Supreme Court during the early-1950s, and on its role in the manufacture of these new citizen-subjects. The paradigmatic case that I discuss is that of *El-Ghabsiya* (HC 220/51 PD (5)1480). This case was not unique, but rather represents an example that reveals the structure of the discourse (Zreik, "When Winners"), as I show below.

The facts of the case are as follows: The petitioners in the case were the residents of the village of El-Ghabsiya in the Galilee. They were expelled from their village during military operations in October 1949. Most of them became refugees in Lebanon, but a minority managed to avoid this fate. They then returned to the village for a short time, only to be expelled once again in 1950. Following the second expulsion, they lived in a neighboring village. They made several more attempts to return to their village, but were expelled each time, and after about a year, the Military Commander declared the area a closed military zone. The petitioners brought their case before the Supreme Court of Israel. They argued that the order issued by the Military Commander was invalid since it had not been published in the official state Gazette, a prerequisite of legal validity. Much of the court's reasoning dealt with the question of whether or not there was a legal obligation for the Military Commander/state to publish the order. The court responded to that question in the positive, and thus declared the order invalid in a decision delivered on November 30th, 1951 (hereafter: the first decision).

Arguably, the petitioners and other residents of the village were now permitted to return to their village. Matters were, however, to become more complicated. A week after the first decision was delivered, the Military Commander issued a new military order and formally published it on December 6th. The new order declared the village a closed military zone and forbade anyone to enter or leave it (but did not stipulate the deportation of anyone present in the village). During this week it was legal for the villagers to return and resettle the village (I refer to this week as "justice week"). During justice week, a number of people did indeed resettle the village. Afterwards, it once again became illegal to return to the village.

Two groups of people brought a new petition to the Supreme Court (hereafter: *El-Ghabsiya 2*) (HC 288/51 and 33/52, PD (9)689). The first petitioning group claimed that, since they had returned to the village during justice week, they were consequently entitled to remain. The second group was comprised of people who had not managed to return within justice week. They argued that they had been trying to return for almost two years but had been blocked by the military. Moreover, since the original military order was invalid, and given that their attempts to return to the village had been denied illegally, they should hence be dealt with as if they had returned; the Military Commander could not be allowed to benefit from his own illegal actions. While rejecting this line of argument, the court concluded:

In our opinion there is no way that the petitioners can base their right to settle back in their village on the events that took place prior to the court's decision in case 220/51: following that decision one week passed until the publication in the official gazette. During this week (from November 30th till December 6th), *the villagers were free to return to their village. Some of them took advantage of this fact, but others did not. Since during those days they were free to move and to act, there is no reason to go back to prior events, as if they were forced to remain outside the village. Even if the petitioners were right in that the facts of their story entitled them from the start to the right to go back to the village, they could have realized their right within and during that week, and the right of he who did not do so expires.*" (*Ghabsiya 2*: 693; emphasis added)

The court conducted an individual inquiry of the first group to verify precisely who had returned and when, treating this information as if it were forensic evidence, and reached the conclusion that of 35 people who claimed to have returned, only three had proven their case and were allowed to return.

What is common to both decisions is the court's erasure of the traces of constitutive violence. The court employed the language of legality to discuss the rule of law and the legal rights of the petitioners. Thus, if the villagers lost, it was because they had chosen to act in such a manner as to

waive their rights. They were in this predicament as a result of their own free choice. They were the authors of their own lives and fate as legal and political subjects. They were not subjugated, but rather subjects.

Following their defeat in the war and the ensuing dispersal, many Palestinians found themselves on the other side of the border from their families and homes. As a result, hundreds of cases were brought before the Supreme Court dealing with issues of family reunification, citizenship and residency status, and other cases through which Palestinians claimed the right to remain within the borders of Israel. The court could not deny or accept these petitions *en bloc*, and therefore attempted to establish a normative order for processing them, one that was not based on force. For that it needed two things: to establish normative classifications, and to create a Palestinian subject capable of exercising choice.

The main distinction that the court established during those years was one between those Palestinians who left the country "voluntarily" and those who were "forced to leave." Within this framework, those who "chose" to leave had simply decided not to be part of the State of Israel. By this logic, suddenly the Palestinians found themselves the authors of their own destinies, and the court was merely executing their will.

In all cases, whether the court accepted or rejected the petition, it deployed the same distinction between those who left voluntarily and those who left non-voluntarily. The court downplayed the arbitrary nature of the violence that accompanied the establishment of the State of Israel, and instead foregrounded the language of law/normativity. At the same time as it downplayed the role of Israel and its military, it exaggerated beyond all proportion the subjectivity of the Palestinian. Hence after the destruction of Palestinian society, Israel in general and the legal system in particular created a legal order and discourse capable of digesting the fragmented Palestinian subject and erasing the complex history of their displacement. Thus Israel spoke with more than one voice, the voice of the military commander and the voice of the Supreme Court, though both were part of the same settler project.

1.2 The Palestinian's belief in himself as a subject

For their part, the Palestinians also attempted by various means to brush this constitutive violence aside in order to survive, and to fit themselves into the Israeli political and legal system. One can detect barely any trace of a serious public discussion among Palestinians in Israel about whether or not to participate in the first Knesset elections and to become part of the state that had just been established on the ruins of their villages and cities. It seemed as if both parties – the State of Israel and Palestinian citizens of Israel – had an agreement to put aside the events of the Nakba. Israel wanted to do that for good, to clean up the scene of the crime, to forget and to come to peace with their existence. The state of Israel was relatively content that it had managed to expel the vast majority of Palestinians and that only few remained, though the attempts to continue deportation lasted through the 1950s. For the Palestinians who remained, the fact that they had managed to remain was in itself *almost* a miracle. "Almost" for the simple reason that the fact of remaining in their land at that stage was so fragile, it was not a finished matter. These Palestinians needed to "put on hold" their defeat if they were to be able to continue with their lives, dynamics that have been expressed effectively in works of literature (Habibi; Khoury).

No wonder, then, that in the early years of the state, one finds that some of the Palestinian leaders adopted the language of citizenship and used it to claim equal rights in the new state of Israel, as if it were their state. Tawfiq Toubi, for example, a member of the Israeli Communist Party in the Knesset, made a speech on the occasion of the first anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel (while the threat of deportation was still hovering above their heads) in which he stated the following:

There is good reason to assume...that the imperialist powers will encourage the Arab states to engage in a new war [against Israel], a second round. Some might ask rightly, what will be the position of the Arab minority in the state of Israel, in such situation? Some will accuse them of being fifth column that must be terminated before such a war erupts....The Arab democratic forces within the state of Israel view any attack by reactionary Arab countries against the independence of Israel as a new imperialist intervention, and it is ready to fight and struggle against it alongside the Jewish masses...and like all upright citizens in this state, we will fight for the independence and sovereignty of the state of Israel. We will fight without reservation.
(2)

In another speech in the Knesset, Tawfiq Toubi claimed that the state of Israel discriminated against its Arab citizens, even in the matter of conscription to the army, as the state closed the door to those Arab youth who were willing to sign up (Knesset Protocol).

The Palestinian communists also publicly recognized the right of Israel to exist, a move which followed from their support for the UN Partition Plan. Notably, they were also the first to deploy the political and legal discourse of rights and equality, basing it on the discourse of citizenship. And they were the first to use this discourse against the State of Israel in order to make demands of the state, and to deploy the language and discourse of rights and equality. However, not all Palestinians—and not even all Palestinian communists—took this approach or used this language. The language and the demands were mixed. The role of communists in the early years of organizing the Palestinian community and fighting the military regime has been documented (Cohen 39-64; Kaufman; Robinson). Some distinguished between the official political discourse of the communists which mainly focused on citizenship discourse, as compared to cultural production (poetry, novels, literature) produced by communist authors and that adopted the language of the natives to confront and oppose the Zionist settler project (Ghanim *Levnot*). Just to give one symbolic example, one case resulted in one of the communist leaders spending a few months in jail for disrespecting the Israeli flag ("Cruel Sentence"). Thus, it is not the case that only the state of Israel spoke in more than one voice at the same time, but so did the Palestinians and the communists. The national and the civic discourse where there but the discourse of citizenship dominated the scene for clear reasons.

Thus was born the Israeli citizenship of Palestinians within Israel. They accepted the existence of the state, while contesting some aspects of its character. But it is worth asking what citizenship meant in this context, when it presented victors and vanquished, state-builders and stateless as equal. Here is a situation of *differend*, in Lyotard's terms (Lyotard xi; Zreik, "The Wheel" 185), wherein the two groups in conflict have almost nothing in common and lack a common denominator from which to adjudicate their conflicts. Moreover, the two groups are in fact a negation of one another, not simply one of difference or inequality. It is pointless, even pathetic, to demand and expect equality from the entity that established itself on the ruins of your homeland. Arguably, however, this was the only option left open to the Palestinians in Israel, and no group embodied this approach more clearly than the Communist Party. It clung to a deformed, paralyzed concept of citizenship, and no matter how thin and hollow this concept was, the communists decided to inhabit this conceptual space and to make it the cornerstone of their struggle, and later on the struggle of almost all Palestinian citizens of Israel. Thus, from the wreckage of defeat, a citizen was born.

Slowly, but steadily the Palestinian citizens become more visible and organized. The late 1960s were critical in this regard. First, the beginning of slow lifting (it did not simply end in one day) of the military regime imposed on Palestinians in Israel allowed them to become further integrated into Israeli society in general, and to pour content into the concept of Israeli citizenship (Degani 98). Second, Israel occupied the remainder of Palestine during the 1967 War, and it was clear to all that Israel was here to stay, and what had been seen as the Armistice borders now became known as the Green Line, and recognized as political borders. Israel as a political entity was truly born in 1967, and UN Resolutions 242 and 338 only testified to the new logic: by prohibiting the seizure of land by force only in those territories occupied in 1967, they recognized Israel within the borders of 1949 as a fact. Moreover, the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel became relatively more meaningful in contrast to the new group of Palestinians under occupation, who were denied basic rights, including the right to vote from 1967 onwards. Lastly, the renewed interaction between the Palestinians in Israel and their compatriots in the West Bank served to unify large parts of the nation once more and consolidated Palestinian and Arab identity, and contributed to the rise of PLO during the 1960s.

These combined factors produced a rise in both civic discourse and in the national discourse of identity at the same time by the same people. The 1970s witnessed a more confident nationalistic discourse led by the communists themselves, which culminated in the protests of Land Day in 1976. However, the language was beginning to shift and the focus on national identity was gaining momentum. In this regard, the planned congress for the Arabs in Israel that had been banned in 1980 is an important landmark in the history of the Palestinian minority and its self-organization on a national basis (Committee; Matspen). It was during this period that other political groups began to compete with the communists to represent the Palestinians within Israel. The first was the movement known as Al-Ard (The Land), which viewed itself as part of the broader Arab nationalist movement (Qahwaji). It attempted to run in the Knesset elections of 1965, but was disqualified (Harris).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the progressive movement—influenced by El-Ard—ran in Knesset elections, before it vanished and was incorporated into the Balad (National Democratic Assembly) party (Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab* 158-171).

The other group influenced by El-Ard was the Sons of the Village (*Abna al-Balad*), established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For years, Sons of the Village was committed to the issue of boycotting Knesset elections, until the mid-1990s, when some of its members joined Balad and ran for

seats themselves. In 1996, the Islamic Movement split into a northern and a southern branch, and the latter declared its intention to participate in the elections of that year (Aburaiya; Ghanem & Mustafa, "Explaining"). The northern branch of the Islamic Movement remained outside the Knesset, before being outlawed in 2015 (Nasara).

During the 1990s, Balad—led by KM Azmi Bishara—introduced its slogan of "a state of all its citizens", as a challenge to the character of the state of Israel as an exclusively Jewish national state. At the same time, Balad began to make demands for cultural autonomy, thus taking the discourse of identity to its extreme. In fact, Balad invested the term equality with new meaning by disrupting the discourse of citizenship from within. It used the discourse of citizenship and liberal rights to challenge the structure of the Israeli state as a settler state that seeks to dominate Palestinian citizens structurally (Jamal; Zreik, "The Palestinian. Part II").

These efforts culminated in the 2000s in what came to be known as the "Vision Documents" (Ghanem & Mustafa, "Coping"; Ozacky-Lazar & Kabha). This set of documents bring into convergence the two separate aspects of the Palestinian existence in Israel, namely identity and citizenship, homeland and statehood. The authors of these documents viewed Israel as a state that was established out of a settler-colonial project, and yet recognized the right of the Israeli-Jewish people to self-determination in Palestine, while demanding what some might consider to be a bi-national state (but the "Vision Documents" did not demand that), based on equal citizenship (Adalah; Jabareen Y.; Mada al-Carmel; National Committee).

2. The Counter-Story: From the PLO to the PA

The other thread of this story is the rise and fall of the PLO, of its transformation from a liberation movement that was established to oppose the existence of the state of Israel and to liberate Palestine from the Zionist state, into an organization that seeks to emulate the Jewish state by establishing a Palestinian national state alongside and separate from Israel. It is the story of how the PLO *de facto* established the Palestinian Authority (PA) as an entity not separate from Israel, but to a certain extent "within" Israel and in its service. If the first story was one of a shift from complicity to resistance, this story is one of a shift from resistance to complicity. But as the story will show, the seeds of resistance were already there when the surface was complicity, and the seeds of complicity were there when the surface was only resistance.

2.1 From refugees to the PLO

Fatah, the main faction within the PLO, was founded during the 1960s. The major impetus for its establishment was the sense of disappointment felt by a new generation of Palestinians who had been active for some time within the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Arab nationalism in either its Nasserite or its Baathist versions. It became clear with the passage of time that, despite the many passion-filled and heated slogans, neither Egypt nor Syria had any serious plans to attack Israel for the liberation of Palestine (Baumgarten 30). The same holds true for the Muslim Brotherhood: Palestine was not at the top of their agenda, and they prioritized the task of Islamizing society and culture before embarking on the liberation of Palestine. In this respect, Fatah sat at the confluence of two main themes. The first was a Palestinian patriotism that was independent to a large degree from any more general movement, whether nationalist, Islamist or Marxist, and focused on the question of Palestine *per se*. The second theme was Fatah's armed struggle and its emphasis on the *bunduqiya* (rifle) as its symbol, and the image of the *fida'i*, the Palestinian freedom fighter who sacrifices his life for the struggle against the Zionist entity.

The PLO was officially established in 1965 by the Arab League, almost as a puppet by the Egyptian regime, but soon came to be dominated by Fatah, which was later joined by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) headed by Habbash, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) headed by Hawatmeh (Hamid, "What is the PLO?" 98). These latter two factions reflected the growing strength of leftist and Marxist influences on liberation movements throughout the 1960s.

What is most important to me here is the transformation of the discourse of the PLO between the 1960s to the 1980s from a discourse centered on the desire to replace Israel and to absorb Jewish Israelis within a Palestinian state on the whole of historical Palestine, into a discourse focused on the goal of establishing a Palestinian state that exists alongside Israel. The PLO Charter of 1964 scarcely mentions Jewish Israelis, but was amended in the late 1960s to incorporate them within the envisaged liberated Palestinian state, without, however, recognizing them as a nation deserving collective self-rule or national rights (Farsakh 57; Ghanim 342, "Between"; Zreik, "A one-State").

As many commentators have noted, a significant shift started to take place in the 1970s, following the defeat of the PLO in Jordan, followed by the October War of 1973 ending with the Rabat Summit in 1974. It is ironic that the defeat of the 1967 War led to the October War, while the October War (which some in the Arab world viewed as a victory) resulted in resignation and specifically brought about the Camp David Agreement signed between Israel and Egypt in 1978. However, the winds that propelled these powers toward Camp David had started already to blow early in 1974, when the PLO was recognized in Rabat as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people (born as a political subject), and at the same time accepted the idea of a Palestinian state on any part of historical Palestine that could be liberated: in other words, a Palestinian state to exist alongside Israel (Ajami 8; Taylor 77). Those were the best years of the PLO as well, when it gained Arab and international recognition, a process which culminated in Yassir Arafat's speech at the UN in 1974.

The outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada in the Occupied Territories in 1987—following the Lebanon war and the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon—signaled a further shift in Palestinian politics and in the geography of the struggle. The struggle now moved from without, from those territories external to Israel's control, to the occupied Palestinian territories themselves, which is to say within post-1967 Israel itself. The future Palestinian state—the Occupied Territories—became the primary site of resistance to the occupation. The struggle changed from a struggle in opposition to Israel to a struggle within Israel, within the greater Israel that includes the West Bank and Gaza. It became a struggle against occupation first and foremost.

2.2 From the PLO to the PA

The Oslo process and thereafter the creation of the PA signaled this shift. The question of Palestine became internal, and the PLO was slowly, though steadily, to merge with the PA, despite the fact that officially these are two separate bodies, but as we know, first Arafat and subsequently Abu Mazen have served both as the heads of the PLO and the PA. However, of most significance was the transition from opposition to coordination, which became tantamount—in the eyes of some—to collaboration. It is only a body that enjoys a glorious revolutionary past that can allow itself to make major concessions. And it is those concessions, and the way in which Israel successfully deployed the symbolic capital of the PLO as a resistance movement and a liberation movement in order to achieve its own ends, that I turn to next.

One major concession made by the PLO relates to the past, and was made through three major gestures: its recognition of Israel, renunciation of terror, and the amendment of the Palestinian National Charter. Together, the three gestures amount to a re-writing of history that only an entity that had played a part in making that history could permit itself to undertake.

An exchange of letters between the PLO and the Israeli government laid the basis for Oslo and provided a veneer of symmetry between the groups. Yet the exchanges were emphatically not symmetrical. The PLO recognized Israel's right to exist, without stipulation of its borders. In return, Israel merely recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people—though clearly Palestinians in Israel were not included in this representation ("Exchange of Letters").

Here it is crucial to note the nature of the representation in question: Israel recognized the representative nature of the PLO that recognized Israel. Israel recognized the representative nature of the PLO, and Israel was keen for this representation to be as broad and comprehensive as possible, since such recognition was meaningless if the PLO did not actually represent the Palestinian people. Israel was not interested in gaining recognition from a marginal organization, only from a truly representative body with symbolic revolutionary capital (Zreik, "The Palestinian. Part I" 41). Israel used the symbolic capital of the PLO in order to obtain full recognition of its existence.

The other major statement in the exchange of letters was the renunciation (but, significantly, not denunciation) of terror by the PLO. The PLO, with its hallowed name and reputation as a revolutionary body, was recruited by Israel to designate its own struggle as "terror." The PLO thus gave a name to its own resistance, to its revolutionary acts and practices, and to its own history ("Letter").

Finally, amid this framing and naming of the past, the PLO had to amend its charter accordingly, to invalidate all articles that contradicted the existence of the state of Israel (*The Amendment*). The amendment of the PLO Charter—a historic document—was not, however, matched by amendments made by Israel to its maps, or by any recognition of a future Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories. The Palestinians limited their aspirations to the 1967 Occupied Territories and restricted their tools to negotiations, having declared their former struggle "terrorism." What the PLO got in return for this concession was negotiations. While Israel did withdraw from the centers of Palestinian cities and pulled back its army to the outskirts, the main gain made by the PLO was its standing at the international level, which in turn gave it the ability to negotiate with Israel and the US.

Hence the PA—the body that inherited and replaced the PLO—found itself caught in a trap, wherein it was obliged to make an ongoing apology to Israel. It had to constantly demonstrate its commitment to the Oslo framework, and it was to that end that it signed several coordination protocols with the Israeli military, i.e. with the occupying power. Thus the PA was co-opted as a sub-contractor for the security of the occupation and of Israel generally (Dana, Amrov and Tartir). It found itself pursuing Palestinians for carrying out acts of resistance against the occupation, assuming the role of Israeli soldiers. Stuck in a trap of its own making, the PA was no longer a revolutionary movement, but had also failed to attain the status of a sovereign state. It could not revert to the logic of revolution, but nor was it able to move towards statehood. Its role is increasingly restricted to keeping the peace; however, peace-keeping in a situation of prolonged, ongoing occupation equates to maintaining the status quo, i.e. to resisting resistance itself. It is a revolution that opted to commit suicide, and has used its symbolic capital against its own national project.

It is indeed one of the ironies of history that many of the criticisms leveled against the Oslo Accords originated from Palestinians inside Israel, not to mention those Palestinians in refugee camps and exile. While Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are subject to the constraints of living against the backdrop of a balance of power between states and armies (as if the PA was a state) without being subject to a normative/legal order (apart from laws of war), relations between Palestinians in Israel and the Israeli government are articulated mainly—though of course not exclusively—through the discourse of citizenship, which sets limits to the imbalance of power between the two parties: citizens and state. Although the discourse of citizenship has remained within the same illusory normative order of the early 1950s, it does seem to have afforded Palestinian citizens of Israel a certain critical edge.

3. Thoughts on Resistance, Complicity and Discourse

An important point for this discussion is Althusser's concept of interpellation, according to which the concept of subject has a dual meaning. There is both a subject that acts in the world—as opposed to being a mere object—as a free subject capable of choice, and there is a subject that is subjugated, or interpellated. He writes:

The whole mystery of this effect lies in the first two moments of the quadruple system I have just discussed, or, if you prefer, in the ambiguity of the term subject. In the ordinary use of the term, subject in fact means: 1) a free subjectivity, a center of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; 2) a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission. (Althusser 269)

Thus, the subjugated self thinks of itself, via ideology, as a subject and author, and experiences this subjectivity in the moment of interpellation. Judith Butler takes Althusser's insights, depoliticizes them, and generalizes them at the same time. She questions the subjectivity of this abstract "I" by arguing that:

There is no "I" that stands behind discourse and executes its volition or will through discourse. On the contrary, the "I" only comes into being through being called, named, interpellated ... indeed I can only say "I" to the extent that I have been first addressed ... recognition is not conferred on a subject, but forms that subject. (Butler, *Bodies* 225-26)

Alternatively, Roland Barthes questions this subjectivity by connecting and relating the subject not to an Ideological State Apparatus, but to discourse in general, arguing that "the subject is not anterior to language; he becomes a subject insofar as he speaks; in short, there is no "subject" (and consequently no "subjectivity"), there are only locutors" (Barthes 166). Discourse, ideology and language are not "things" in the world that stand in total separation from the "subject" that "deploys" them: we do not "have" language in the same way as we have cars; rather, we are the products of language, power, and discourse. They "have" us, as we "have" them.

One finds a similar notion in Foucault's early treatment of power. Just as for Althusser there is no one outside ideology, nothing outside discourse for Butler, and nothing outside language for Barthes, Foucault seems to argue that there is nothing outside power, which *might* amount to saying there is no possibility of resistance. He states that "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power," and that there "is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellion" (Foucault, *History* 95). For Foucault, the subject does not stand in opposition to power: "The individual, that is, is not the *vis-a-vis* of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects" ("Two Lectures" 98).

However, to argue that there is no "single locus of great Refusal" does not amount to claiming that resistance is impossible. Resistance is possible, just not against power. Resistance deploys power in its resisting, which is how one can understand Foucault's assertions that "where there is power there is resistance" (*History* 95). I take these statements to mean that since power and resistance are mutually constitutive, resistance cannot be thought as standing completely outside the web of power relations. For resistance to be able to "speak" to power, the two must share a medium, be it a discourse or language, or a set of relations. Resistance is ubiquitous, just as power is ubiquitous. In this sense, Foucault deploys the term "power" to mean a totality, or a network of relations within which domination and resistance are in dialogue, struggle, competition, or conversation with each other. In this sense, power is fate, in the same manner that language is fate. However, domination is not fate, but rather a position within power. One may resist domination, and moreover it is meaningful to resist domination. The difference becomes clear in Foucault's later work, in the clear distinctions he draws between domination and power (*Ethics* 283). Thus he creates a conceptual space between domination and power. This fissure between power and domination allows us to think of the possibility that always exists of being at once inside the web of power but liberated from domination. Given that power is omnipresent, resistance can also therefore exist everywhere: "These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network" (Foucault, *History* 95).

I am fully aware that this is a generous reading of Foucault regarding the possibility of resistance, and in fact the kind of resistance that Foucault is offering here is rather aesthetic/individual and less collective/political, and the space that he opens remains thin and under-theorized. By trying to bring Foucault to my side, I do not aim to refute the argument made by Althusser, Butler, and Barthes that questions the existence of the subject, arguing that it is always caught in the web of language, ideology and power. Instead, I develop their argument to its ultimate conclusion, and dare to ask them to be dialectical and dialogical. I take one of their major insights (the mutual constitution of subject and power, subjectivity and language, subject and subjugation) in order to claim that there is an open channel between what appears to be a subject and her own subjugation, between the image of authorship and the fact of surrendering to discourse. Thus, while they insist that subjectivity begets subjugation, I suggest how subjugation may enable subjectivity. There is no theoretical or practical reason to view the system as being closed and fully determined or structured. One need not make a return to humanism like Edward Said did in order to be able to recognize openness, holes, or contradictions in the system itself that allows political actions. Whatever power there is in the shape of empire, state, or corporation, it can hardly know what it really wants, and there are always many different ways to attain this end. The US wanted to conquer Iraq but ended up delivering it to the hands of its enemy: Iran. Against this structuralist closed reading, I find it necessary to bring into the picture a history that escapes closed systems and allows more dynamic relations between structure and subjects (Thompson 6). It is true that the agent's actions are bounded by the context within which he acts, but the context itself is never one, but multiple, and as such is boundless. It is this discrepancy and contradictions of contexts that allows the subject to emerge.

Returning to the Palestinians in Israel, one can make two opposite arguments to two different audiences. To those who like to think of themselves as citizens/subjects and who are proud of their citizenship as an achievement, one may say that this citizenship—the subject as bearer of rights—was achieved only at the price of fragmentation of the Palestinian citizens and severing him from their broader community. Put differently, one becomes a citizen when he accepts the loss. The Palestinian citizen and the dismembering of his communal relations were born together. They did not merely coincide, but are two sides of the same coin.

On the other hand, to those who accuse the communists of being complicit, one can argue that complicity can be a precondition of establishing a language, which requires a certain relative surrender to discourse and to a prevailing normative order and physical violence. However, this complicity has the potential to alter the discourse. In order for the discourse to incorporate its other, it needs to make certain accommodations. The process of incorporation and adjustment does not promise much, though, and guarantees nothing. Some even argue that you can never dismantle the master's house with the master's tools (Lorde). The outcome depends on the balance of power within the new regime of discourse, its normative order, and the active forces within it. It has a potential, and sometimes it opens a horizon for resistance, while on others occasions this surrender might hinder and eclipse many other venues and paths for resistance.

The Palestinians in Israel wished to think of themselves as subjects/citizens, and so did the new state (at least the supreme court), which treated them as if they were the subjects and authors of their own lives, and consequently responsible for their own fate. Both sides were, however, bracketing the constitutive violence of the 1948 and the deportation of hundreds of thousands of their fellow

Palestinians. Both were for their own reasons "conspiring" to replace subjugation with a discourse of subjectivity, and order based on arbitrary violence with order based on normative rules and codes. What resulted was a normative order governed by the laws of citizenship, which, at least on the surface, brackets aspects of the imbalance of power. Though this citizenship discourse has a clear ceiling and aims to create relations of subordination (Masri; Sultany) it can also allow space for resistance, though limited one.

The story of the PLO and its transformation into the PA takes a different tack. The PLO was a subject that over the years accrued a significant amount of symbolic capital. It resisted and acted against Israel militarily and politically as well. However, in order to be included in the conversation with Israel and the US, it was compelled to enter the formal discourse. For the Palestinians, the Madrid conference first and Oslo later on were about entering this discourse, about getting a seat at the negotiating table. However, before entering into the talks with Israel, the PLO spoke through its actions of armed struggle and resistance; this resistance, though, was never fully outside power relations, but aimed to create the conditions for a conversation, and has been political and military as well. Thus the seeds of Madrid and Oslo have always been there.

Although the PLO did not accept the Israeli-American terminology in its entirety, it accepted much of it. There are many reasons that can explain this shift: The PLO was losing its main allies with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the eastern bloc as a whole, not to mention the war on Iraq, and the demise of the Intifada. If one has no power to alter a discourse's rules, the process of entering a new discourse can render one mute. In such a case, the party in question must simply comply with the rules in order to continue to be a part of the game. To do so can constitute political suicide if there remains no justification for the existence of this party other than those roles assigned to it by its enemies: the illusion of the old subject remains, but its role is now assigned to it from without, not from within. Thus the suicidal aspect of Oslo for the PLO does not lie in the mere fact of its recognition of Israel, or in its relinquishment of some assets, powers, or rights, for it is in the nature of historic compromises that one gives up something in return for something else. The problem in the PLO's case is that the exchange was not mutual. The Palestinians—through the PLO—recognized Israel's right to exist, and in return Israel only recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, not the right of the Palestinians to statehood or independence. In fact, as the representative of the Palestinians, the PLO could waive this right; if it does so, then the Palestinians will be the first to argue that the PLO is not their true representative, while Israel will argue the reverse.

The successor to the PLO, the PA, frequently finds itself under interrogation by Israel, being asked to denounce any resistance to the occupation, and called on to justify the content of its school curriculum, its maps, the financial support it provides to the families of Palestinian prisoners, its naming of streets in Palestinian towns after Palestinian *shahids*, etc. ("Netanyahu"; Staff). It has to justify what is unjustifiable within the frame of discourse, and must answer questions that it is unable to answer.

The PLO's entry into the discourse with Israel thus led to the opposite outcome to that at which the Palestinians in Israel arrived, and its complicity got it nowhere, so far. However, no position is privileged, and there is no global theory about resistance. I do not claim that the experience of the Palestinians in Israel represents an ideal story of resistance, or that its limited success is generalizable. Yet it is a story that nevertheless complicates how we understand the relations between subject, subjectivity, and subjugation.

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