

Techniques of Resistance through Weaponization of the Body During Palestinian Hunger Strikes

Ashjan Ajour, *Brown University*

Abstract

This article conceptualises the techniques of resistance developed by Palestinian hunger strikers. Through the weaponization of the body they seek to disrupt the techniques of power exercised over their starving bodies by the Israel Prison Authorities (IPA), as well as the Israeli intelligence services responsible for administrative detention. It shows that hunger strike is a site of creativity of resistance and human agency. From the hunger strikers' view, it demonstrates their ability to claim agency over their bodies and the power of life and death which rests in the hands of those who resist. This mode of resistance not only reflects the relationship between Palestinian political prisoners and the IPA but also illustrates the complexity of settler-colonialism and the dynamics of anti-colonial resistance.

The article approaches the techniques of power and resistance between the IPA and political prisoners chronologically, from the initial phase of the hunger, the peak of the struggle, and the advanced stage which is marked by negotiations between the prisoners and the IPA. The trajectory of hunger strikes varies according to the decomposition of the starving body, and at each stage the prison authorities change the emphasis of their techniques in order to break the hunger strike, whilst the prisoners invent new techniques to sustain the hunger strike. Subjectivity formation during the hunger strike arises from the protracted battle between the resistant subjects and colonial power.

This article traces how power and resistance operate during the hunger strike in the context of occupied Palestine. It identifies the techniques of resistance deployed by Palestinian political prisoners in their relation to the techniques of colonial power employed by (IPA) by focusing on their own narratives of hunger striking in the Israeli Prisons. The prison resistance must

be understood in the larger context of the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle resisting settler colonialism. This is manifested in a particularly intense form in the prison struggle. Captivity is an integral part of the Israeli system of colonial repression (Nashif 2008). Palestinians are subjected to political incarceration in order to suppress their political activism in the national struggle for anti-colonial liberation. The political prisoners' resistance and their experience of hunger strike in the Israeli prison system exemplifies the nature of the colonial settler regime. The accounts of former hunger strikers stress the fact that the dispossession experienced in the Israeli prison system goes beyond the incarceration of the captive body, which functions to painfully strip Palestinian detainees of their humanity.

The struggle of Palestinians does not end with their imprisonment, for a new stage of steadfastness (*Sumud*) and resistance begins through the practice of the hunger strike. Hunger strike in Palestine is a relatively contemporary phenomenon and reflects the ongoing conflict between settler-colonialism and anti-colonial resistance. For example at the time of writing (October 26, 2020), the political prisoner Maher Al-Akhras has been on an open-ended hunger strike for 92 days since his arrest in late July 2020. He was placed in administrative detention and immediately went on hunger strike; he is currently at Kaplan Hospital on the brink of death, refusing food and medical treatment and entering a critical phase.

The article is based on 85¹ in-depth interviews conducted between 2015 and 2018 with Palestinian ex-prisoner hunger strikers from Israeli prisons,² who recounted their lived experience after their release. Their actions were in protest against their administrative detention. The experiences of individuals are situated within the Palestinian national struggle against settler colonialism and in relation to their collective movement in the post-Oslo period, following the decline and fragmentation of the national struggle. The Palestinian hunger strikers' commitment to a form of decolonisation and liberation politics takes distance from the post-Oslo agreement politics, which are characterised by the replacing of resistance with a neoliberal

¹ The interviews consisted of five groups of people in Palestine: former prisoners and hunger strikers; lawyers representing prisoners; families of prisoners and ex-prisoners; leaders and activists from the prisoners' rights movement, as well as representatives of political parties.

² Addameer and the Prisoner Club in the West Bank facilitated access to the former hunger strikers.

rationality state building (Dana 2017; Ganim 2009; Khalidi 2007; Massad 2006; Said 2002; Sayigh 1999). The interviewees regard the research as bearing witness to their suffering and was a key reason for them agreeing to be interviewed. Most of them were proud of their hunger strike and aware of the popularity and support they had achieved. They were keen to have their stories disseminated using their real names, in order that their engagement and their history be acknowledged.

Though contemporary Palestinian hunger strikes initially appear as individual acts, the hunger strikers' discourse reveals a form of collective subjectivity driven by Palestinian revolutionary politics. Their actions which are about as singular and solitary an act as can be imagined, are in fact viewed by the interviewees as the bearer of renewal of the collective political struggle and a way to maintain Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation. The individual hunger strike was the prominent form of resistance when I started my interviews (2015–2018), their frequency increasing from 2012 to this day and sometimes coinciding with collective hunger strikes in 2014, 2016 and 2017. In most cases, the prisoners managed to achieve their release by reaching individual agreements with the IPA. These individual hunger strikes gradually developed into a collective form, and in 2016 led to a factional hunger strike by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)³ in solidarity with their member Bilal Deyab. Subsequently, in April 2017, 1500 Palestinian prisoners began an open-ended hunger strike, the 'dignity hunger strike', which had organisational support from all political parties. These collective hunger strikes are very important events and demonstrate how individual hunger strikes embody and enable enduring structural forms of social and political transformation. They always remain a possibility and should not be artificially separated from individual hunger strikers. The Palestinian prisoners refer to the hunger strike as 'the captive revolution' and also 'the battle of the empty stomach', during which they choose to transform their bodies into a site of revolution. The body here becomes more than the material body, for the singularity of hunger strike becomes an emblem of Palestinian self-determination and the body of the hunger striker a symbol of a communally-shared body politics. They lead and revive the struggle in the light of the decline of the collective struggle, and are the pulse that emphasises that Palestinians exist. Their freedom is connected to Palestinian collective freedom and struggle for self-determination. From their singular

³ The PFLP is a Palestinian secular revolutionary socialist organization which combines Arab nationalism with Marxist-Leninist ideology.

encounter with colonial power, they constitute an intersubjective political consciousness of Palestinian self-determination at the collective level.

1. The weaponization of the body and technologies of resistance

The hunger strikers' techniques of resistance need to be understood in terms of the overall process of weaponization of the body, which the hunger strikers regard as a means of reclaiming dignity and humanity. The techniques of resistance are the way in which they innovate specific practices in their hunger strike. These techniques are the particular individual practices that are communicated, learned, and taught, while the technologies are the broader processes of weaponization of the body in which these techniques are assembled together and developed.

Feldman (1991) was the first study of Irish Republican hunger strikes to use the term the 'body as weapon', to describe how IRA prisoners struck back at the British authorities. One of the hunger strikers reported: 'from the moment we hit the H-Block we had used our bodies as a protest weapon' (179). Yuill (2007) reviewed different theoretical analysis of the sociology of the body and its embodiment within violent political conflicts. He concludes that the body can be one of the resources for resistance, especially when others are denied or limited, as in the case of Irish Republican prisoners. Prisoners reframed their bodies as a modality of resistance in order to assert their identity as Republican soldiers rather than criminals. Bargu (2014) conceptualises self-destructive practices as a weaponization of life tactics in which the body is utilised as the means of political intervention. Bargu builds on Foucauldian perspectives of power relations and the conjoined working of disciplinary and biopolitical discourses and practices. In her engagement with theorists of biopolitics, she argues against certain aspects of Foucault and Agamben and claims that her study makes a case theoretically and empirically for what she calls 'biosovereignty'. Bargu argues that biosovereignty continues to produce new forms of resistance, contrary to accounts of resistance by some theorists of biopolitics according to whom power penetrates every aspect of life and limits the potential for resistance. Thus, Bargu conceptualises the self-destructive practices that transform life into a weapon as a specific modality of resistance.

In this article I focus more on techniques of resistance which are under-theorised in relation to technologies of power. Lilja and Vinthagen (2014)

discuss this relationship between power and resistance, and utilise Foucault in order to understand resistance and its relation to different power techniques drawing on empirical examples from resistance studies. They argue that the particularities of power decide how resistance can be conducted:

If resistance is a reaction to power, then the characteristics of the power strategy/relation affect the kinds of resistance that subsequently prevail. And if resistance is a response and thereby shaped by relations of power, it becomes interesting to discuss what kinds of resistance are linked to or emanate from what kinds of power (107).

The weaponization of the body, which is the overall technology of resistance, is key in the hunger strikers' techniques of resistance which are explored as they emerge during the practice of the hunger strike. The starving rebellious body becomes the infrastructure and battleground for the practice of power subjection and resistant subjectivation. Foucault's concept of technologies of the self, which refers to practices through which subjectivity constitutes itself (Foucault, Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988), is helpful in conceptualising technologies of resistance that are mainly ways of instrumentalising the body and producing techniques of resistance such as refusal of medical examinations, refusal of vitamins and supplements, water strikes, refusal to speak and so forth.

In a forthcoming article, Ajour (2021) argues that power does not constitute subjectivity but rather, subjectivity is constituted through its interaction with the technologies of power. This comes about through the hunger strikers' response to the efforts of the Israeli Prison Authorities (IPA) to overcome, confine and constrain resistance, as well as the technologies of resistance associated with it. The technologies of resistance employed by the hunger strikers operate through the duality they create between the physical body and the immaterial *rouh* (soul) acquired by instrumentalising their bodies through transforming them into 'weapons'. Their subjectivity derives from the seemingly contradictory weakness of the physical body and the immaterial strength of the mind and soul emerging from the collapse of the body, which is what enables them to sustain their hunger strike.

Walid Daqqa (2010; see also Al Shaikh, 2019) investigates the technologies used by the IPA to mould prisoners' consciousness and their collective resistance values. Daqqa develops a theoretical framework via Foucault (1977) and Klein (2007) to offer his own analysis of the modern

forms of torture that occur in Israeli prisons. Daqqa (2010) argues that Israel has created a system based on the most updated modern theories of human engineering and social psychology, in order to mould Palestinian consciousness by shattering its collective values: “The occupier derives his ideas, theories and tools of repression from a postmodern civilized reality or as what Bauman terms ‘Liquid Modernity’” (22). He posits that modern oppression techniques are hidden and masked, being a compilation of small fragmented procedures which are hard to define separately as tools of torture. Modernist repression is disguised and hidden, and in his book he attempts to ‘realize the overall framework and logic behind this system [...] The prisoners body is no longer the direct target: the spirit and the mind are’ (21). Daqqa uses the collective hunger strike in 2004 as an example of the shock doctrine that moulds the prisoners’ consciousness and strikes at the moral infrastructure of the prisoners. The IPA used the hunger strike as a second shock after the shock of invasions and arrests, followed by a process of brain washing and reformation of consciousness:

We were facing a system of repressive measures that are frightening in their logic and science. The Israeli government supported them (the IPA) politically at the highest levels, and the Israeli minister of prisons stated that the prisoners on hunger strike can die, as he does not intend to respond to their demands (51).

However, Daqqa emphasises the possibility of resistance and sheds light on the agency and resistance subjectivity of the political prisoners:

The Israeli targeting of the moral infrastructure of the Palestinians with the aim to mold their consciousness expresses a psychological and moral structure that makes *Sumud* (steadfastness) under the oppression of the Israeli military machine possible, and even made the passive steadfastness possible, as well as the positive and proactive steadfastness (28).

Despite the Israeli state attempts to erase Palestinian national consciousness, the Palestinian prisoners exercise *Sumud* to transform the colonial system into a generative Palestinian site for constructing national resistant consciousness. He adds, ‘The measures taken by Israel prison authorities indicate extraordinary and intolerable torture and constitute a force of psychological pressure, but the most prominent scene is *Sumud*, defiance and resilience’ (5).

The article delineates the techniques of power and resistance between the IPA and political prisoners, and illuminates how resistance and *Sumud* is possible despite the intensity of technologies of power. It contributes to the conceptualization of the techniques of resistance developed through the weaponization of the body. Although theoretically-informed literature on hunger strikes in Northern Ireland and Turkey exists, there is an absence of such literature about hunger strikes in Palestine, therefore this article contributes towards filling this gap. By developing an in-depth account of the dynamics and experience of the Palestinian hunger strikes it offers a contribution to the weaponization of the body in hunger striking as a site of creativity of resistance and human agency.

2. Techniques of power and resistance in Palestinian hunger strike

The techniques of resistance develop across three stages: the initial phase of the hunger strike, the peak of the struggle, and the advanced stage of negotiation and agreement. In the first stage, the critical question is whether the prisoners can sustain the hunger strike despite the punitive measures and strategy of neglect and indifference imposed by the IPA. The latter, according to the accounts of former hunger strikers, is aimed at assessing the mental state of each prisoner and the extent to which they are seriously willing to die. The peak of the struggle revolves mainly around the use of vitamins and supplements. The hunger strikers resort to these in order to shorten their suffering, and the shared orientation towards the avoidance of death leads both sides to negotiate. This is the final stage of the conflict and the techniques used by both IPA and hunger strikers determine the dynamics of the negotiations.

2.1 The initial phase of the hunger strike

In the first phase, usually between the 20th to 30th day of the strike, before the prisoners are transferred to hospital, they are subjected to punitive measures such as raids on prison cells, transfers to isolation cells, threats of indefinite detention (see B⁷Tselem and Hamakoked, 2009; Pelley-Sryck, 2011), bans on family visits, and reduction of money spent in the canteen.⁴ Adel Hiribat:

⁴ For sources on the IPA's strategy and techniques of power see (Langer, 1975, 1979). Also Amnesty International (2021) and Addameer Prisoner Support

From the beginning, one felt that the jailor wanted to break us. They made us feel that they would not do anything to respond to our demands and we were just tiring ourselves out, that everything we do will be in vain. The jailor ignores us completely and doesn't talk to us or ask why we are on hunger strike until we entered more than 20 to 30 days striking when they started taking information.

These measures were referred to by all the ex-hunger strikers, and included solitary confinement, humiliating strip searches, confiscation of all the prisoner's belongings, prevention of family visits, denial of visits, sleep deprivation, and physical and psychological violence. Moamar Banat:

The first day I announced my hunger strike I was isolated in a cell measuring 2.5m by 1.5m and was watched by two surveillance cameras. It was very cold and the bed was rough and made of stones and the mattress was wet. Although they confiscated everything, even my clothes, they kept searching the cell every couple of hours even at midnight. They banned the family and lawyers' visits, made barbeques next to the cell, to put pressure on me thinking that I would break my strike.

Hashlamoun's account reveals some of the Israeli repression techniques applied against female prisoners, which rely on stereotypes about Palestinian culture.

Solitary confinement is like the grave. There was no seat in the toilet, it was very dirty and the floor was covered in broken pieces of glass which stuck to my feet [...] On the 12th day of the strike they told me: 'we are going to take you to the hospital' [...] the doctor asked me 'have you thought of committing suicide?' I told him 'now I understand the reason for the broken glass on the floor of my cell. You are trying to destroy my reputation [...] He was a psychiatrist trying to draw information about my life, so he can write a report stating that I am insane or unstable. I told him 'you are not a doctor but *'Mukhabarat'* (intelligence) [...] We Palestinians don't think about committing suicide at all'.

The Israeli Prison Authorities operationalised stereotypes based on orientalist assumptions stemming from misconceived ideas about Palestinian

and Human Right Association (2016).

patriarchal culture. These racist stereotypes were to encode women's bodies and sexuality to symbolise ideas surrounding honour (*Sharaf*). Abdo (2011, 2014) challenged the orientalist assumptions that encoded the Palestinian female political prisoners.

The IPA also used physical torture through beatings and the transfer of prisoners by '*Bosta*' – a military car called a torturer's car by the prisoners. The repeated transfer of hunger strikers is a means of adding pressure by completely ignoring the fatigue and the weak condition of the detainees. Ahmed Remawi:

They keep transferring us from a prison to another. I was transferred to three prisons during my hunger strike. The *bosta* is extremely exhausting. Everything is tiring in this car, its sound, its shaking movement, its chair, the black glass windows hurt the eyes. They left us in the *bosta* long hours. The body's position is unbearable, our hands and legs are shackled sometimes for more than seven hours, without toilet or water. The guards were not able to take me out of the car because I could not stand up as I was dizzy. I fell down after nine hours without water.⁵

Throughout the transfer, the hunger strikers were subjected to violent beatings and verbal humiliation which resulted in clashes and confrontations with the guards. Hasan Safadi reported that:

During my transfer the guard [...] hit and pushed me violently and I fell to the ground [...] I was exposed to all kinds of psychological and physical assault and I struggled with the pain of hunger and starvation, and on top of that their abusive insults did not stop.⁶

Raed Abu-Hanoud described Israeli repression as 'dirty' practices:

I was on hunger strike in solitary confinement and then they took off all my clothes, even my underwear and brought their Israeli females from the prison service to watch me while I was completely naked [...] Every

⁵ These points are also supported by the affidavits I consulted in the prisoners' club. I accessed some of the prisoners' sworn affidavits which I had collected during my ethnographic work in 2015.

⁶ Addameer's report (2014) documented the incessant abuse of Hasan Al-Safadi as punishment for his hunger strike.

ten minutes they entered and searched while I was naked.

Abd Al-Jaber Fuqaha:

They exercised over our bodies a set of barbaric methods [...] The Naqab experience was different because it was a desert, and hunger strikers were placed eight hours in the heat of the sun [...] in Ofer we suffered severely from bugs [...] after sunset, the bugs spread on the cells' walls and on our beds [...] in addition to our suffering of starvation, the bugs sucked our blood and the bites caused allergies and swellings on our body.

Exposing striking prisoners to food was another technique used to break the prisoners. The affidavit of Fadi Ghanim affirms that 'the jailers threw food through the door slot and then announced via speakers that a certain prisoner from this room broke the strike'. Mohamad Alan reported:

Once [...] they brought to my cell *Makluba*⁷ and it remained with me the whole night [...] I realised that it was a psychological war and I had to stay resilient and steadfast. They made barbeque parties beside my cell's windows and the smell of the barbeque invaded my cell.

Israeli punitive techniques led the hunger strikers to create their techniques of resistance. In the initial stage of the conflict this is more to do with the prisoners' own bodies than with the jailors' actions. Most of the prisoners I interviewed emphasised that the first 20 to 30 days of hunger strike is the hardest in terms of struggling with starvation. During this conflict, they persist in and sustain their strike by strengthening their will. This is produced through the clash with the IPA. As Hiribat put it: 'They make you understand that the Israel State won't be broken by someone like you. However their behaviour and words give me the determination and pushed me to be more persistent in my resistance'.

The bodies of striking prisoners that were used to resist power were punished, which, as Khader Adnan's account indicates, entailed the irony of punishing a body that has already punished itself:

One of the Israeli military officers came and informed me that I was to be punished by depriving me from family visits. I told him: 'What a contradiction! How can you punish me while I am the one who is punishing myself. So you can't control me'.

⁷ A traditional Palestinian dish.

In the initial phase then, before the hunger strikers were hospitalised, the punitive and degrading violent measures alongside a strategy of deliberate neglect—combining physical with psychological pressure—are the main tactics to make the prisoners understand that the Israeli state would not be defeated by hunger strikes.

2.2 The peak of the hunger strike

After 25 to 30 days the jailors see that the hunger strikers are serious about their decision to continue. Knowing that the prisoners have entered a critical stage of starvation, the prison authorities start to have concerns about the bodies of hunger strikers, and the prisoners are then transferred to hospital for medical examination and treatment. Bilal Diyab:

They are inhuman in their treatment. After 30 days of my strike I was taken by *Nahshoun* (those who are responsible for prisoners' transfer). I was sitting in the wheelchair entering the hospital and they just let my wheelchair roll down on purpose and I fell out. They didn't care about my health and fatigue from starvation.

Khadar Adnan describes their situation in the hospital:

The camera is watching me 24 hours a day; the hospital room is turned into a prison, I'm chained in what is called a 'civilian hospital', my right hand opposite my left leg. I even took my bath while chained. So why am I in a hospital? They should have taken me back to the prison. I told the hospital administration my room is an operational room not a medical room. It is full of jailors and Israeli officers.

In the hospital, the hunger strikers remained continuously shackled by their right hand and left foot to the bed. Even when they went to the bathroom, the prison guard refused to unshackle them. Sometimes they were denied all access to the bathroom, and they were watched by cameras and provoked by the jailors to put them under pressure. Salem Badi:

Once I had a clash with them when they refused to take me to the toilet. I stood up and said I will pee here. When the doctor heard me shouting he made a deal with the jailor that I go to toilet.

Some prisoners reported that the bathroom door remained open and they were denied any privacy.

Most of the sworn affidavits by the former hunger strikers I had consulted from the prisoners' club describe in detail the painful symptoms of the chained body in the hospital bed. Fadi Ghanim stated that from the beginning of the hunger strike they were not allowed to cut their nails or shave their hair and beards. Like in the prison, the Israeli authorities left food near the striking prisoners in the hospital, and deliberately ate in front of them. Irony and sarcasm were used by the striking prisoners to irritate the jailor. Yunis Hroub:

They left the food around me to break me, the guards ate in front of me. I remember an incident when the jailors expected to receive special dinner because they had a Jewish Holiday [...] but they were surprised that the food was normal, therefore I was in my turn laughing and teasing them [...] then the responsible officer called and I heard him saying 'What is this food you sent us, there is a striking prisoner who is sarcastic about us and is making fun of our food'.

The hunger strikers reported that the things that irritated the jailors most was their continuing high spirits and equanimity.

The techniques employed by the striking prisoners are decisive because they determine the nature of the negotiation process, the length of the strike, and the agreement reached at the end. Some achieved a good result but others could not reach satisfactory agreements in such a short time due to the efficiency of the IPA's techniques. External factors such as the role of lawyers, solidarity activities and public opinion further affected the dynamics of success. The role of the political party with which the strikers were affiliated also played a part, in that some political parties did not support their members and this was used by the IPA to break their resistance.⁸

New techniques of resistance are produced at the peak of the struggle when the prisoner's body gets habituated to starvation. In response, the prison authorities develop new techniques of oppression, such as prolonging the hunger strike through the use of forced feeding and in the process deterring new hunger strikes. As Adel Hiribat commented: 'The Israelis allowed us to prolong our strike before they negotiated with us because they thought that the long period of the strike would terrify any prisoner who thinks of engaging in a hunger strike'. The hunger strike is prolonged further by using

⁸ See my discussion later of the negotiation stage.

vitamins and supplements, although the hunger strikers want to shorten it by refusing them and thus putting pressure on the IPA.

Momar Banat's account graphically describes how the techniques of resistance operate, as well as how persuading the IPA of their willingness to die leads the two parties to the negotiation point:

After forty days, I began to vomit blood, tough days. I was unable even to drink a little amount of water [...] I did not take vitamins because they strengthen the body and prolong the period of the strike and I wanted to put them under pressure and shorten the duration. I wanted either to finish quickly and live or finish quickly and die. I have two options, I did not want to choose the middle solution and compromise because it would have prolonged my path, and this option is exhausting for me and for my family [...] Therefore, I ended my hunger strike after only 70 days, and I got an excellent result. There are other hunger strikers who took the longest way and reached over 100 days and achieved less. Those who took the vitamins got weak deals with the Israelis at the end [...Mine] was one of the best deals and the main reason was that the prison administration was convinced I was not afraid of death.

The hunger strikers invented these techniques linked to their starving body to continue and accelerate its deterioration and decomposition—as Ahmed Remawi put it, 'If we don't endanger our health and nothing happens to our bodies there would be no pressure on the Israeli side'.

The deliberate acceleration of their bodies' disintegration demonstrates the link between the political temporality of the conflict and negotiation on the one hand, and the temporality of the body and its decomposition on the other. The hunger strikers use the relationship between these temporalities, in the sense that the more the body collapses the more they put pressure on the state to negotiate. However, the IPA succeeded in constraining some of the hunger strikers' techniques of resistance by subjecting them to forced feeding, i.e. the forcible injection of fluids into their stomach.

Despite this, a number of prisoners continued their strike, which sometimes reached over 100 days. Others accepted supplements because they were sick and had chronic diseases, therefore their bodies could not tolerate starvation without vitamins and supplements. A number took large amounts of supplements over a long period. For example, Samer Isawai survived a

266-day hunger strike, the longest hunger strike in Palestine, during which time he received only liquids with vitamins. Some strikers accepted the supplements in exchange for meeting their demands. For example, Bilal Diyab asked to speak with his family on the phone in exchange for being injected with supplements, particularly because his family had not received any news after he had gone into a coma and suspected that he had died. Khadar Adnan in his first strike also agreed to use the supplements after an ‘ethical committee’⁹ was formed in exchange for conditions, one of which was to speak with his family.

In Khadar Adnan’s first hunger strike he demanded either his freedom or a trial to put an end to his administrative detention. In his second hunger strike he developed new techniques of resistance and completely boycotted the military courts, refusing to recognise them.¹⁰ He asked the lawyers not to defend him, thus aiming to destabilise the logic of administrative detention. During the administrative detention, the prisoner does not know what the accusation against him or her is. There is a ‘secret file’ but neither the prisoner nor his lawyer can see it. Therefore, appearing before a military court without knowing the accusation is, in Mohamad Alan’s words, ‘a piece of theatre’. Alan became experienced and knowledgeable about Israeli techniques of repression, and this knowledge, communicated and learned from one hunger strike to another, helped him to develop and advance his techniques. ‘Treat me as a human being and then you can subject me to medical examination’, declared Khadar Adnan when he refused to undergo medical examinations while confined in handcuffs. He was removed to the hospital after his health deteriorated, and the hospital administration called on an ethical committee to force him to undergo a medical examination when his life became in real danger. Adnan did not permit his lawyer or doctors to visit him unless his chains were removed; after an intervention and communication with the prison authorities, the handcuffs were removed. It was these ‘tiny victories’ that led in the end to their freedom.

Another example was Yunis Hroub, who refused to bathe whilst chained, saying ‘I told the jailors that I will not have my bath while I am

⁹ See the discussion below on the role of the ‘ethical committee’ in forced treatment and feeding in Israeli hospitals.

¹⁰ Boycotting Israeli law has a very long history in Palestinian resistance. On boycotting Israeli courts see: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/prisoners-held-charge-boycott-israeli-courts-180214160954608.html>

chained and if I have diseases you are responsible for that. After four days I got approval to have a bath without chains.’ Since the body was their only weapon or instrument in resistance, the hunger strikers also refused to reveal what was going on in their starving body to the Israeli authorities. Moamar Banat:

I refused the medical check, so they would not know my heart rate during my hunger strike. I don’t want them to know because if they knew that everything was okay in my body they would relax. Since the beginning of my strike they examined me only once but in the advanced stages of the strike I refused. Once the doctor tried to catch my hand to check my pulses but I pulled my hand away [...] I told him: ‘You should not force me to do anything’.

Some prisoners stopped drinking water in protest against the harsh conditions; sometimes this is used to shorten the hunger strike by increasing the pressure on the IPA. Ahmed Remawi refused water in protest against the painful effects of the handcuffs:

I embarked on a water strike to protest against handcuffs as they hurt me very much [...] When I stopped taking the water my health deteriorated seriously to the extent that when the doctors tried to take my blood there was no blood coming out in the needle. I had a severe infection in the kidneys after 40 days of striking and after 50 days I had a problem with my eyes and could not see further than one meter and a half.

Ahmed Remawi protested against the surveillance cameras by going on water strike:

If I moved anywhere the camera was watching me even if I go to the bathroom. We could not sleep or sit or do anything. Once the lawyers came to see us and we requested that they take the camera away because we were not in the prison but rather in the hospital and it should not be allowed in the hospital. They told me ‘We have got the hospital’s agreement’ [...] then I used the bottle I used for drinking water and hit the camera. It was broken and fell to pieces [...] then they came back and shackled my two hands (before it was one hand). I had embarked on the first water strike because one hand was shackled and now they punished

me and shackled two hands because I broke the camera. I told them this time I will die if you don't free me from the chains. The situation ended when the doctor came to take blood when I was on the water strike and it did not come out and couldn't take any blood. They removed the chains after two days of water striking. After my hunger strike they punished me with solitary confinement for six days.

The water strike and refusal of supplements caused critical health problems. In the midst of the battle and confrontation the hunger strikers were sometimes unaware of the side effects, but after the hunger strike they suffered badly.

A number of hunger strikers reported that some doctors clashed with the Israeli authorities, refusing to implement the inhuman treatment directed at the hunger strikers and working in an ethical way. But in most cases, they acted as tools of Israeli power, failing to manage the hunger strike according to ethical health standards, which endangered the life of the hunger strikers and violated their bodily and mental condition. Moamar Banat:

The doctors threatened that if I didn't take the vitamins and supplements they would not give me salt and water. Doctors in the hospital did not treat us as doctors, abiding by medical ethics. They are not doctors but rather *Mukhabarat* (intelligences agents). The responsible doctor in the hospital came and told me 'You must take vitamins otherwise I will not give you water' [...] It caused bleeding in my stomach and later I could not even drink the water.

When the health conditions of hunger strikers worsened, the doctors forcibly inserted a tube into their stomachs. In these cases, resistance could not work, especially when the hunger strikers had lost consciousness. Bilal Deyab, who had embarked on a hunger strike with his friend Thaer, said:

When we took the supplements, we wasted our time. If we had not taken these liquids we would have saved two weeks of our suffering and our family's suffering, but we were deceived. They told us Khader Adnan took these vitamins and didn't break the strike. Even the lawyer told us it is not like the 'insure' (liquid given to strikers), but when we took the glucose liquid we felt that they were happy, it was obvious in their faces, they became relaxed. I told Thaer that I felt my health was better after

the liquid and then we decided to refuse it. When we lost consciousness, we were injected by tube and when I woke up, I took it away from my body. Some prisoners, for example Hassan Safdi, were force-fed. He was tied and given the glucose forcibly in Ramleh hospital.

From the 40th to the 60th day of the strike, after the hunger strikers have insisted on refusing supplements, and when the bodies of the hunger strikers are falling apart and enter the danger zone, the Israeli doctors set up an 'ethical committee' to decide on the urgency of supplement intake. The decision of the ethical committee to forcibly treat the strikers who, with a clear head, unequivocally refused such treatment, is one form of violation of medical ethics and professional health standards (PHR 2013). The ethical committee generally decided, particularly when the hunger strikers fell into a coma, that they should be injected with supplements. While the prisoners were in a coma the doctors could examine and force feed them against their will. At this moment the Israeli authorities no longer worried about the danger to their health and felt relaxed because the striking prisoners, in a forced coma, could not manage their hunger strike and make any decision either to continue or to break it.

Mohamad al-Kik was forcibly given fluids after rejecting the forced treatment ordered by the ethical committee, and clashed with the doctors when they injected him. When he lost consciousness, he was force-fed and placed in a forced coma:

On the 60th day, I was forcibly exposed to treatment and given fluid. They could do this easily to a prisoner who is chained to his bed, shackled hand and foot for 24 hours. According to Israeli law, doctors can't give me treatment while I am conscious but when I lose my consciousness they have the right to give me treatment. I refused the supplements and medical treatment but the problem was that in the 60th day of my hunger strike they chained my free left hand and then the doctor forcibly made the blood test, then they injected me with fluids.

Hiribat also found himself with a needle and a tube in his chained hand when he woke up after he lost his consciousness:

I fainted. When I woke up and found out that I had been injected with mineral, my hands tied, I took it off by my mouth and this caused

bleeding. I did so because I swore to God if I went on strike I will not take any vitamins or supplements.

In 2015, the Prisoners' Club expressed its concern about keeping Mohamad Alan in a coma under the effect of drugs.¹¹ They considered this to be a violation of Alan's rights and emphasised his right to decide the fate of the hunger strike himself without any influence from any party. Some of the human rights advocates are against forced feeding, even if it is by injecting in the stomach rather than a tube in the mouth. Mohamad al-Kik, Hasan Asafadi, Mohammed Alan and Adel Hiribat were force-fed and given fluids, and this was the main reason for their long strike (over 90 days). This tactic is designed to cause their strike to fail and to put pressure on the hunger strikers during the negotiations.

Even when the IPA constrains the techniques of resistance, using doctors in the name of the 'ethical committee', it does not mean that the conflict has ended. Some striking prisoners dealt with the decisions of the ethical committee by using minerals, vitamins or supplements in crucial moments and stopped taking them later when their health improved. This was the case with Banat:

In the beginning my strategy was to refuse anything from the hospital, but when I vomited blood and could not drink even water, then the doctors formed a committee called 'ethics committee' that forced the patient to pursue treatment and take liquids and minerals. The doctor was surprised at my wasting body. I asked him about a possible consensus. 'What I want is to be able to drink water, because without water it looks like I want to commit suicide – if I don't drink water, I will die in one week. Of course, the result of my strike will not be achieved in one week and my goal is not death but life. I was thinking of anything that would help me to get my result successfully. I asked the doctor how he could help me to drink water and to stop the bleeding. 'I agreed to have [the supplement] because the cause of the bleeding in my stomach was the deficiency in vitamin K [...] I was able to drink the water successfully then I stopped the liquid and continued the remaining 30 days of my hunger strike with only water. I had this treatment only to stop the

¹¹ In a press release from 08/16/2015 by the Prisoners' Club

bleeding and to be able to drink water. Therefore, there was some change in my strategy because I didn't want to die.

A report published by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) states:

During the hunger strikes, PHR-Israel witnessed various human rights violations, among others, violation of the right to health of hunger striking prisoners and detainees, and violations of medical ethics and of professional health standards. Measures which amounted to medical, ethical and human rights violation endangered the lives of hunger striking prisoners almost to the point of death and prevented prisoners' access to independent medical advices and consultation [...] There is a strong suspicion that by blatantly violating the rights of the striking detainees to access adequate medical care and by flagrantly ignoring medical ethical standards and professional norms, the IPS [Israeli Prison Service] utilised its medical system to pressure the Palestinian prisoners and detainees on hunger strike causing unnecessary and illegitimate danger to their health and lives (2013: 4 and 23).

In this stage of the peak of the struggle, we have seen that the techniques of resistance include boycotting the Israelis courts, refusal of medical examinations, refusal of vitamins and intake of supplements, water striking and protesting against surveillance cameras. They vary from one hunger striker to another and shape individual trajectories of the struggle. Israeli hospitals are experienced by hunger strikers as spaces of violence and subjection. Amongst their strategies, some hunger strikers launched a speaking strike and refused to talk with Israeli negotiators, while others refused to meet Israeli intelligence officers whilst they were handcuffed or chained.

2.3 The advanced stage: The dynamics of negotiation

The techniques used by both IPA and hunger strikers during the critical stage of the hunger strike determine the dynamics of the negotiations. In the dynamics of the negotiation process, the resistant subjects and the IPA employ their techniques in the struggle to achieve their objectives, both parties acting to avoid defeat and surrender. The negotiation process starts at the point when the prisoners' health seriously declines and enters the danger zone and the IPA surrenders to the fact that hunger strikers are determined to accept death in order to achieve their freedom. The lawyer Jawad Bolous,

who mediated between the IPA and hunger strikers, noted during our interview that when ‘the Israeli military officers start asking me about the health situation of the striking prisoners it means [...] they are looking for a solution because they don’t want the death of the strikers. At this point the negotiation starts’. Neither party wants the other to be seen as the winner, although the hunger strikers regard the mere fact of negotiations as a victory. The desire for freedom, not suicide, makes the prisoner consider the offers of the prison authorities. At the same time, concern about the fallout from the prisoner’s death leads the IPA to consider the prisoners’ demands and change their strategies. Moamar Banat recorded that:

In the beginning, they pretend that they didn’t care. The Israeli military officers told me ‘you want to die, I don’t care’. They were testing the pulse but they didn’t speak directly to us. They didn’t want to negotiate [...] They meant to show neglect and carelessness about our situation.

The prisoners are also aware of the ethical and material burden of the strike on the Israeli authorities. Adel Hiribat:

The individual strike is very exhausting to the prison authorities in terms of the cost of guards as every hunger striker need three to five jailors, in addition to security guys. They were unstable and scared that we would escape from the hospital. Security forces spread inside and outside the hospital. We were five individuals striking in the hospital and each needed five jailors to guard them in their hospital room, and around 30 guards outside the hospital.

Moamar Banat also commented on the IPA’s material burden:

They pay 2000 NIS to reserve a bed in a hospital [...] 70 days multiplied by 2000 NIS a day. Sometimes we were three strikers at the same time. In 2014 it was a collective strike for around 100 striking detainees. Here we are talking about the hospital cost. In addition, they need three jailors with us 24-7 in three shifts. They need salaries and food, they live in hospital with us and are very tired and unhappy.

Amongst the solutions initially offered by the IPA after the deterioration of the strikers’ health is deportation, which is generally rejected. Hasan Safadi remarked, ‘They said just choose any country rather than Israel and after five hours you will be there. I said: I choose Nablus in Palestine’. Bilal Deyab

‘refused because the exile is so hard and even harder than the hunger strike’. Younis Hroub rejected the offer but achieved a solution in the end:

On the 35th day, intelligence officers offered to exile me to Gaza. I told them my family in the West Bank and I don’t have any relatives in Gaza, no reason to go there [...] This was the first suggestion and then between 40–45 days when my health deteriorated they spoke with me [...] and they suggested to free me after I end my detention period – after 6 months [...] In 62nd day of strike the lawyer visited me and informed me the Israeli offer to finish the remaining period of my detention and go home. I told him this is my demand and I accepted.

However, some prisoners, such as Hana Shalabi and Ayman Shawana, accepted the deportation offer.

When the Israeli authorities insist on their offers during the negotiations and ignore the threat of the hunger strikers’ deaths, the hunger strikers begin to question themselves about whether to continue to death or consider the offer. Some continue to insist on their terms whilst others accept the IPA deal. Jawad Bolous, the mediator between the Israeli authorities and hunger strikers, explained how the negotiations operate:

There are two assumptions I work with as a mediator. Regarding the hunger strikers, they love life and do not want to die but they protest for freedom. However, they welcome the martyrdom. As for the Israelis, they prefer them not to die in prison [...] Thus, the common ground between the two parties is that they want to avoid death, so there must be a solution that satisfies the two sides and guarantees that the reached agreement does not involve a defeat of one side at the price of other. The role of mediator is to merge the different perspectives and to find common assumptions.

Thus, the lawyer tries to avoid a shameful defeat for one side or the other. The conflict in the negotiation mainly revolves around the form of the agreement and the day of release. In response to the prisoners insisting on their date of release, the IPA tries to make them believe that they do not care about their death.

At the end of the negotiations the techniques used in the final stage are similar to those used in the initial stage, in which the strategy of neglect was

employed to put pressure on the dying prisoners. However, the two parties' fear of death, originating in opposed rationales, pushes them to reach an agreement. Every hunger striker has his own specific approach to techniques of resistance and these determine the agreement reached between the two sides. Sometimes the IPA is able to constrain their resistance and force the conflict to a crisis point. For example, Mohamad al-Kik ended his strike after 94 days by accepting the same conditions offered by the IPA on the 45th day of the strike. When he refused the initial offer, the IPA introduced new techniques to make his strike fail, such as forced feeding from the 60th onwards.

The hunger strikers are not the only ones engaged in their battle. All the parties involved in the conflict become partners in the negotiations, including the hunger strikers' families, lawyers, jailors, the wider public, political parties, and the media. Although the most decisive factor is the prisoner and their body, these partners influence them and the Israeli authorities often use them to put hunger strikers under pressure to negotiate. The jailors are used to confuse and provoke the prisoners since they are the ones who spend the most time with them. The research participants reported that the IPA transmitted news through the jailors about the situation of their families, especially mothers and wives hunger-striking in solidarity with them, to make them understand that they are causing suffering to their loved ones. Emotional abuse and family exploitation are among the IPA's techniques in the negotiation. Hassan reported that they brought pictures of his mother to influence him emotionally: 'The news about my striking mother make me understand that my mother went on hunger strike and she was dying'. Sometimes families are brought to persuade them to end their strike. Mohamad al-Kik recalled that:

When I asked them to allow my family to visit me, they refused but at some point they offered to bring my family in the hunger strike as a sort of human manipulation to put pressure on me. I refused because I know it was a psychological war against us.

Many strikers resist this manipulation by refusing to accept the visits. For example Hasan Safadi:

Before my situation became difficult, they refused my mother's visit but when my health deteriorated they issued 11 permits for my family member but I refused. I said I don't want to see anyone. They were

surprised that I didn't even want to see my mother. I said 'I don't have any kinship relation with my mother'.

Diyab denied his relationship with his brother:

After 55 days of my strike they came to threaten me and said we will bring your brother to talk to you - my brother was sentenced to 15 years. I said 'he is not my brother', I don't want to give them any opportunity to make me surrender. I said I will end my strike only if I am released.

Religious figures are also brought in to convince the strikers to stop their strike. Hashlamoun:

They brought me an Imam to talk [to] me and I was told that the strike is forbidden in our religion. I convinced the Imam who came to convince me. I told him God does not accept to live in humiliation and this is the only way to get rid of the inhuman treatment and oppression.

Another way the striking prisoners resist the emotional manipulation is by temporarily transferring the love of their families to their struggle. The suffering of their families increased their determination and fed their resistance. Diyab commented, 'my mother spent two weeks in the hospital and when I knew about this my determination increased more and more. When my mother knew about my victory she was healed and was extremely happy for me achieving my freedom'.

The role of solidarity movements at the local and international level also impacted on the negotiations. According to Mohamad al-Kik: 'Israel negotiated because there were demonstrations across Palestine and sometimes it led to clashes with Israeli forces at military checkpoints'. Bilal Deyab reported that the IPA put pressure on the hunger strikers to break their strike before the Nakba Day of Memory (15 May) because they were expecting violent confrontations would take place at the Israeli border. In some cases, the aim of hunger strikers is not only to end the detention but also to achieve personal advantage alongside their political victories. For example, some of them benefited by presenting themselves as heroes who had endured long hunger strikes, and some former hunger strikers become famous and popular which led to criticism by some Palestinians in the post-hunger strike stage. On the other hand, others did not seek fame or gain and chose to remain faithful to their political cause away from the limelight.

3. Conceptualisation of techniques of resistance and technologies of resistance.

3.1 Techniques of resistance

In the context of this case study, techniques of resistance are understood as the instruments produced through the hunger strikers' practices which contribute to structuring and transforming their resistant subjectivity. The physical body is the main instrument of resistance, and other techniques related to the body are developed through its instrumentalization. In the hunger strikers' process of subjectivation the body is understood as something external, yet also something that they cannot separate themselves from, making its instrumentalization particularly complex. The body is the only weapon they can use but it is insufficient to win their battle. It is a necessary weapon, although in their view it betrays them in the end and hence their need to rely on their internal immaterial and spiritual strength. Techniques can be both internal and external. Hunger strikers depend primarily on internal techniques related to the self but also require support from factors outside themselves. Internal techniques can be divided into material ones linked to the physical body (for example refusal of supplements, stopping water and so forth), as well as immaterial techniques related to nonmaterial faculties such as mind, soul and will. The latter revolve around the internal strength required to endure and sustain the hunger strike (for instance, belief in the cause, revolutionary consciousness, ideologies, and affect – love, hope, anger, and so on).

External techniques usually relate to a third party in the conflict other than the prisoners and the IPA (such as political parties, family, lawyers, public support, human rights organizations and so forth) which affect the prisoner's internal techniques. I focus on the subjective internal techniques (material and immaterial) linked to the prisoner's body and explore how these techniques are produced and enacted in the practice of hunger strike. I also explore the interrelationship between the internal and external techniques and how the external can serve either to strengthen or, on occasion, disrupt the internal. I use the term 'instrument' to represent their practice as something situated outside the self. This corresponds with the hunger strikers' practice of instrumentalising the body, which can also translate into a kind of disembodiment understood as a technology of resistance. The body-as-instrument should not be taken as something static or external but

can be considered in terms of categories of political practice like technique, repertoire or recourse that give us with a sense of the dynamic character of resistance. Charles Tilly's work (2008) offers a helpful framework because it allows us to move from the notion of external instruments to practices that transform with the subject. For example, immaterial techniques can be understood as decisive weapons that allow hunger strikers to master the physical body in this process of subjectivation. They appear as actions of some sort and this is why Foucault talks of techniques, technologies, or tactics, since they are practices/actions not objects/things (Foucault et al., 1988: 18). The term instrument, particularly the material instrument such as the body, needs to be thought of as embedded in practices and acts which transform the subject; a material technique like the refusal of food is a practice or an act of resistance that contributes to the constitution of the hunger strikers' subjectivity and not just to the confrontation with colonial power.

3.2 Techniques of resistance vs. technologies of resistance

I differentiate between techniques and technologies. The former are the methods enacted by resistant subjects to efficiently use, manage, develop, and recreate the existing techniques of resistance—for example, the material techniques related to the body that aims to pressure the IPA into initiating negotiations. In this case, the technique relates to how and when to refuse supplements. Technologies are concerned with how and when to use and develop the existing techniques or invent a new technique. Hence technologies can be grasped as the creative art of resistance in which the self, in its enactment of its techniques, resembles both the artist and the work of art. This understanding of technologies is close to Foucault's conceptualisation of the practice of the self in terms of an 'art of life' and aesthetic of existence (Huijter, 1999).

In contrast to the IPA, the individual striking prisoners do not have the advantage of a systematic apparatus of power behind them. The prisoners invent and manufacture their techniques of resistance, though they do not do so in isolation. The hunger strikers produce instruments of resistance out of the body and 'soul' during the conflict, tools that are relationally embedded in the national and political collective to which they belong. Prisoners are part of political movements and are aware of other prisoners' strategies. Techniques are thus objects of sharing, communication and adaptation.

This demonstrates that the hunger strike is a site of collective political subjectivation. In the beginning the techniques are not predetermined or predictable but are created in the face-to-face confrontation with the jailors or Israeli military officers. The hunger strikers then use them systemically in ways that advance their resistance practice. The participants who embarked on individual hunger strikes emphasised that the individual hunger strike is harder to undertake than the collective. They think that there are objective and subjective conditions that contribute to its success and that not all prisoners have the ability to engage in it. The distinctiveness of the individual hunger strike phenomenon in the political setting after the failure of the Oslo Accord is that they are revolutionary subjects in a wider non-revolutionary context. The prisoners turn to individual resources when collective ones fail. At the beginning of the individual hunger strike, everyone develops their own techniques of resistance, although later they generate a collective political dimension. Some hunger strikers had been imprisoned before, had participated in collective hunger strikes and were aware of and used existing techniques, but they created new techniques in response to the Israel authorities' repression and manipulation. For example, Khadar Adnan, who initiated the phenomenon of the protracted individual hunger strike, developed new techniques in his second hunger strike. The intensification of his resistance was developed to meet the increase of oppression. Using these and other techniques of resistance, such as boycotting the military courts and refusing supplements, he aimed to challenge the IPA's manipulation of the hunger strike to create a method of hunger strike that other prisoners could emulate. The process I have just analysed is neatly captured by Charles Tilly's observation that: 'humans develop their personalities and practices through interchanges with other humans, and that the interchanges themselves always involve a degree of negotiation and creativity' (2003: 5).

After Adnan's hunger strike in 2012, waves of individual hunger strikes were launched over the next five years. The research participants viewed Khadar Adnan as successful because he managed his struggle with efficient techniques, motivating them to follow his example. Yonis Hroub said:

We notice that there is a new mode of resistance in the Israeli prisons – the individual hunger strike - invented by Adnan, and we wanted to follow such success [...] In his second strike, Khader wanted to continue the revolution that was triggered by his first strike in 2012, and it was in this strike that he succeeded in inventing new techniques.

Contrary to the collective hunger strike, where the leadership committee of the hunger strike guides the striking prisoners, individual hunger strikers struggle with the systematic technologies of power by drawing from techniques developed by prior hunger strikers. These techniques are employed to create a moment of crisis in the conflict in order to reach the negotiation stage and agreement with IPA for their release. The hunger strikers manage and control their battle singularly, but the individual draws on the embodied memory of political practices. They are already resistant subjects, they do not become revolutionary out of nothing. We need to factor in the impact of previous collective processes of subjectivation and political movements, to be sensitive to the importance of historical practices in the constitution and conception of subjectivity. The transformation process which accompanies the ordeal of the hunger strike requires creative techniques. While the context I am dealing with is one of extreme domination, there is also a dynamism involved in the potential for negotiations which influences the technology and techniques. By focusing on their techniques and technologies, we can see how the horizon of emancipation and victory that informs the prisoners' anti-colonial resistance is already present in their practice of resistance.

3.3 Technologies of self and practices of resistance

The research participants are able to illuminate how technologies of self operate and how they emerge from a kind of latent energy in the extreme moments of starvation. Mazen Natcheh:

The hunger strike enhanced our self-confidence. We learnt that the human being should trust his abilities and potential even if it is against nature, even if it transgresses nature. Willpower can result in an explosion of the self [...] a human being with a strong will can do a lot of things [...] Our God has given us a great mind and huge strength. The human being can release this latent energy which comes from the mind. For those who wonder whether it is possible that a human can endure the hardship and tolerate giving up food for 63 days, I say 'yes, it is possible'. Even the greatest genius uses only 7% of their potential [...] the energy of the mind distinguishes humans from animals and reveals a tremendous potential. A human being can reveal an energy for creativity and self-discovery.

This reflection shows how research participants see themselves

as developing a knowledge about the self which is revealed in extreme moments. This practice of the self does not reveal an authentic self but rather shows the creative transformation of the self. The hunger strikers become resistant subjects as a result of the networks of relationships in their struggle, one of which is the relationship with the self. Natcheh's observation tries to account for what allows the technologies of the resistant self to manage and employ the techniques of resistance at different points in the conflict, for instance by stopping the intake of water to put more pressure on the IPA. The material technique (water strike) is conceived as being under the guidance of the immaterial faculty of one's psyche (will). For the hunger strikers, the powerful weapon is the will and in this sense the body is not the only weapon. The critical and decisive techniques in their resistance that gives them the strength are immaterial spiritual faculties—will, soul, mind or consciousness.

Following Foucault, I have traced out how technologies of resistance are produced and enacted during the struggle. Grasping the technologies of the resistant self illuminates how specific techniques are created and applied. They are related to how the hunger strikers understand themselves, and how they deal with themselves in order to deal with the other, the coloniser. Technologies are concerned with self-knowledge, which in turn determines the use and management of existing techniques of resistance, as well as the creation of new techniques. For example, the participants are aware of the importance of disembodiment and the weaponization of the body in their practice and can explain why they construct the binary of body/mind or body/soul as framing their practice of resistance. Ajour (2021) illuminates that the technologies of resistance used by the hunger strikers operate through creating the duality they created between the body and the immaterial strength of mind and '*rouh*' (soul). This is enacted through weaponizing their bodies, whereby these immaterial resources evolving from the collapse of the body empower them to maintain their hunger strike to the end. She also reveals the hunger strikers' philosophy of freedom and the meaning they give 'victory'. The hunger strikers constitute themselves as political subjects and their hunger strike offers a powerful illustration of how the body may be experienced and used as a political instrument/weapon.

Conclusion

This article traces out techniques of power and resistance in the hunger strike viewed as a protracted battle between the resistant subjects and the colonial power. It illustrates the operation of power and resistance in the trajectory of the hunger strike which is registered chronologically in three stages over the life of the conflict. In every stage techniques of both power and resistance vary and fluctuate according to the decline of the body. The article examines the nature of the resistant subjectivity that is performed and produced in interrelationships with colonial power and its strategies of repression via technologies of the self associated with resistance. It conceptualises the techniques of resistance as instruments developed through the weaponization of the body.

Hunger strikers produce their own techniques of resistance during each stage of the hunger strike. The aim of these is to disrupt the functioning of the technologies of power and achieve freedom. The techniques employed by the striking prisoners are crucial because they determine the path of the struggle, such as the nature of the negotiation process, the length of the strike and the agreement reached at the end. The outcome of a hunger strike depends on the interaction with the IPA. Despite their radical resistance some hunger strikers could not reach the agreements they sought due to the efficiency of the techniques of power. The role of the Palestinian political parties, lawyers, the street and public opinion affected the dynamics of the hunger strike and sometimes the IPA was able to thwart the hunger strikers' techniques by manipulating external factors. However, repressive power and its intensity often created new techniques of resistance. As Mohamad Alan put it: 'When they subjected us to manipulation and humiliation, the striking human has two options, either surrender and submit or invent new methods to deal with them'. But, in turn, this resistance can lead the IPA to invent new technologies, such as offering the temporary 'suspension' of detention with the aim of prolonging the hunger strike, thus precipitating its end due to the pain and suffering caused. Despite the objective asymmetry of power, the hunger strikers feel that they can challenge the state of Israel with their starving bodies, or as they put it, with their 'empty stomachs', and if the Israeli authorities negotiate with them it is regarded as a victory by them, even if, as is true in some cases, they suffer serious and lasting

physical and psychological consequences.¹² The meaning of victory in the eyes of the hunger strikers is linked to the dignity of the soul, as embodied in their liberation and the end of their detention, and this is the ultimate goal of their hunger strike (Ajour 2021). The hunger strikers give victory a meaning related to the collective Palestinian idea of resistance, in which bodies are seen to succumb while ideas survive. This meaning necessitates risking the body in the process of reclaiming their humanity, and affirming self-determination against the domination of colonial power. In their view, they develop a control over their bodies that can disrupt the operation of the IPA's power and claim agency over their bodies.

The hunger strikers' accounts contribute to contemporary literature on the body and embodiment, and provide a critique of mind-body dualism (Butler 2011; Feldman 1991; Fournier 2002; Hammers 2014; Hartman 1997; Spillers 1987). Although the physical body is the hunger strikers' main instrument of resistance, they do not consider it as the decisive factor in attaining their goal. Indeed, they regard it more as an external agent that works against them in that it weakens and, in their words, 'betrays' them. Instead they count on the immaterial strength that develops with the deterioration of the body. Thus the hunger strikers regard their body as both subjective, in the sense of their way of being in the world from the phenomenological perspective developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1996), and objective in the sense of something that they can treat as a weapon of resistance. In this process they accept material starvation and disintegration of the body while accentuating the immaterial power of human will, consciousness, and soul. This split between body and mind is different from the phenomenological concept of the body as both subjective and objective, and the hunger strikers reconcile these contradictory perspectives of the body in their philosophy of freedom. The body is regarded as an instrument for liberation and is conceptualised as part of the collective culture of anti-colonial resistance. For example, the way they conceive the body as 'a bridge of return' reflects the meaning of the body in the Palestinian landscape, and the 'bridge' is symbolic of both a path and method for liberation (Ajour 2021). This discourse shapes their consciousness in that they do not see the martyr's body as an object of loss but rather as a vector of Palestinian

¹² For example Mohamad Ataj lost part of his lungs, Khadar Adnan subsequently had five operations on his intestines and others suffer from heart or memory problems.

freedom and self-determination. Butler discusses Merleau-Ponty's accounts of bodily experience, which defines the body as 'an historical idea' rather than 'a natural species' and is understood as embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities (Butler 1988: 403). The meanings of the bodies in the discourse of hunger strikers, in which bodies are seen to succumb while ideas survive, relates to the collective Palestinian idea of resistance, and necessitates risking the body in the process of affirming self-determination against the domination of colonial power.

Bibliography

Abdo, Nahla. 2014. *Captive Revolution: Palestinian Women's Anti-Colonial Struggle within the Israeli Prison System*. London: Pluto Press.

Abdo, Nahla. 2011. 'Palestinian Women Political Prisoners and the Israeli State', in A. Baker and A. Matar, eds. *Threat: Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel*. London: Pluto Press.

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. 2008. *Administrative Detention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: A Legal Analysis Report*. November 2008, updated July 2010. www.addameer.org/sites/default/files/publications/administrative_detention_analysis_report_2016.pdf.

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Right Association .2016. *Palestinians Hunger Strikes: Get the Facts*. August 2016. <https://www.addameer.org/news/get-facts-palestinian-hunger-strikes>

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. 2014. *Aggressions by Special Units of the Israeli Prison Service against Prisoners and Detainees during Transfers and Raids*. <https://www.addameer.org/index.php/publications/aggressions-special-units-israeli-prison-service-against-prisoners-and-detainees-during>

Ajour, Ashjan. 2021. 'The Spiritualisation of Politics and the Technologies of Resistant Body: Conceptualising Hunger Striking Subjectivity.' *Cultural Politics* 17, no. 2.

Al-Shaikh, Abdul-Rahim, 2019. 'Walid Daqqa: Philosophy in Captivity.' *This Week in Palestine* Issue 258: 24-30.

Amnesty International.2012. *Starved of Justice: Palestinians Detained Without Trial by Israel*. Report June 2012. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/24000/mde150262012en.pdf>

- Baker, Abeer, and Anat Matar (eds). 2011. *Threat: Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel*. London: Pluto Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2010. *44 Letters From the Liquid Modern World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bargu, Banu. 2014. *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- B'tselem and Hamakoked. 2009. Without Trial: Administrative Detention of Palestinians by Israel and the Interment of Unlawful Combatants Law. October 2009. https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/200910_without_trial
- Butler, Judith. 1988. 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.' *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4: 519–31.
- Butler, Judith. 2011. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex.'* New York: Routledge.
- Dana, Tariq. 2017. 'The Prolonged Decay of the Palestinian National Movement.' *National Identities* 21, no. 1: 39–55. doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2017.1343813.
- Daqqa, Walid. 2010. *Consciousness Molded: or the Re-Identification of Palestinian Torture*. Doha: Aljazeera Center for Studies. Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc.
- Feldman, Allen. 1991. *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, Michel, Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton. 1988. *Technologies of the Self: a Seminar With Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin.
- Fournier, Pierre F. 2002. 'The Lorenz Theory of Beauty.' *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology* 1, no 1: 131–36.
- Ganim, As'ad. 2009. *Palestinian Politics after Arafat: A Failed National Movement*. Indiana Series in Middle East Studies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hammers, Corie. 2014. 'Corporeality, Sadomasochism, and Sexual Trauma.' *Body and Society* 20, no. 2: 68–90.

- Hartman, Saidiya V. 1997. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Huijer, Marli. 1999. 'The Aesthetics of Existence in the Work of Michel Foucault.' *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 25, no. 2: 61–85.
- Khalidi, Rashid. 2007. *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Boston: Beacon.
- Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada.
- Massad, Joseph. 2006. *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians*. New York: Routledge.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1996. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Motilal Banarsidass. Delhi.
- Nashif, Esmail. 2008. *Palestinian Political Prisoners: Identity and Community*. London: Routledge.
- Lilja, Mona, & Stellan Vinthagen. 2014. 'Sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower: resisting what power with what resistance?' *Journal of Political Power* 7(1), 107-126.
- Langer, Felicia. 1975. *Israel and the Occupied Territories: With My Own Eyes, 1967-73* London: Ithaca Press.
- Langer, Felicia. 1979. *These Are My Brothers: Israel & the Occupied Territories, Part II*. London: Ithaca. Available at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/30724484> (accessed 16 October 2018).
- Pelley–Sryck, Tamar. 2011. 'The mysteries of Administrative Detention', In A. Baker, and A. Mater, eds. *Threat: Palestinian political prisoners in Israel*. London: Pluto Press.
- Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). 2013. *Political, Moral, Medical and Ethical Challenges Encountered while Treating Palestinian Prisoners on Hunger Strike in Israeli Prisons*. January 2013.
- Said, Edward W. 2002. *The End of the Peace Process*. Penguin UK. London.
- Sayigh, Yezid. 1999. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spillers, Hortense J. 1987. 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book.' *Diacritics* 17, no. 2: 65–81.

Tilly, Charles. 2008. *Contentious Performances*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

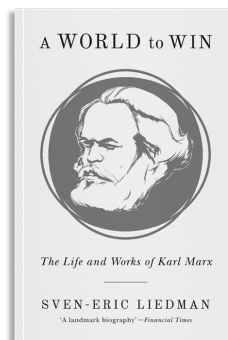
Yuill, Chris. 2007. 'The Body as Weapon: Bobby Sands and the Republican Hunger Strikes.' *Sociological Research Online* 2, no 12: 1-11. doi:10.5153/sro.1348

Verso Book Club

Join the Verso Book Club to receive ALL of our new ebooks every month as well as one or more new books in the mail.

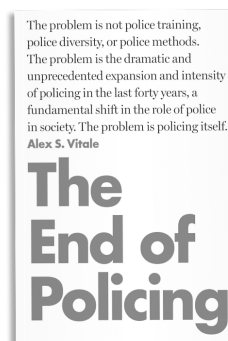
Get 50% off ALL our books as a Book Club member.

Join now for 50% off!
versobooks.com/bookclub



A World to Win
by Sven-Eric Liedman

"A lucid, scholarly
guide."
- Wall Street Journal



The End of Policing
by Alex S. Vitale

Los Angeles Times
Bestseller