

ABOLITIONISM, SETTLER COLONIALISM AND STATE CRIME

Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Stephen Sheehi

The lives and struggles of political prisoners such as Chippewa Leonard Peltier and Palestinian-Arab Walid Duqqa accentuate the contradictions of how the very sovereignty and governance of settler-colonial nations rely on killability and carcerality as a state logic. Imprisoned by American and Israeli settler legal systems for expressed political resistance against their respective colonial regimes, the inhumane detention, medical malfeasance, legal improprieties, and basic violation of human rights of these two liberation militants illustrate important legal lessons that Natsu Saito and Noura Erakat teach us. If the imprisonment of Gaza itself since 2007 and the Apartheid system that divide Jerusalem and the West Bank into an archipelago of encircled enclaves shows us anything, it teaches us that carcerality and erasability (embedded in the logic of elimination) in the settler state extends beyond the prison system, to include other racialized and gendered systems of carcerality/erasure, as Nadim Rouhana, Joy James, Sherene Razack, Noura Erakat, Sunera Thoubani, Sarah Ihmoud and Otman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian's contributions to this special issue indicate. The coloniality of power operationalized by the state's ideological structure and legal system, and the racialization of the colonized subject should always be questioned, as Angela Davis and her colleagues advised us (Davis et al. 2022: xiii–xiv), as well as what Rouhana, and Qutami suggest in this special issue. Settler-colonial states do not only criminalize the repression of indigenous resistance to settler sovereignty. Rather, their own juridical systems formalize legal structures, processes and procedures (a whole system of governance that naturalizes settler sovereignty over indigenous peoples) that themselves violate international laws and conventions to which these states are signatories (Saito 2020; Erakat 2019). This special issue grew out of this

Lawrence D. Biele Chair in Law at the Faculty of Law-Institute of Criminology and the School of Social Work and Public Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Global Chair in Law, Queen Mary University of London.

Sultan Qaboos Professor of Middle East Studies, William & Mary, Virginia USA.

contradiction; namely, a critique of settler colonialism as itself a state crime, and hence the need to abolish it.

If the cases of Peltier and Duqqa exemplify the legalized abuse and naturalized criminalization of indigenous resistance to colonial oppression, the case of the slow death of Ahmad Manasra, as Otman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian in this issue show, compels us to think through settler colonialism as a state crime through an abolitionist perspective. At 13 years old, Ahmad, who was run over by a settler's car and beaten by Israeli settlers when with his cousin Hassan who was shot dead, was accused of a knife attack in the illegal settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev. In violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, this settlement was named after right-wing Zionist and Hebrew-nationalist Ze'ev Jabotinsky and built through and on illegally stolen and annexed Palestinian land after the 1967 occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank, including land from villages of Shu'afat and Beit Hanina, which the settlement now surrounds. Suffering from a traumatic brain injury, Ahmad was systematically abused by the Israeli security and judicial apparatuses. At 13, he was tried as an adult, denied proper medical and psychological treatment, visits from his family and attorneys, and has been kept in solitary confinement to this day. His incarceration, deprivation of medical intervention and slow death, authorized by law, was confronted with Ahmad's acts of refusal amidst torturous imprisonment.

Like Duqqa and Peltier, Ahmad's case, as tragic and unfortunate as it is, illustrates how settler-colonial states commit state crimes by the very nature of the state's structure and its legal system, while managing, repressing and extinguishing indigenous lives. This process of state criminality is defined by Green and Ward (2004: 2) "as state organisational deviance involving the violation of human rights." When we speak, of course, of "organizational deviance," we are not arguing for a "good version" of state power, nor are we arguing for or against what are taken as social forms of "deviance" (from transgressive sexual acts to what can be identified as "criminal behaviour" by the state). As we will discuss below, we understand the very concept of sovereignty as a system of regulation and legitimacy that hides the criminality of the settler-colonial state. The wages of criminal sovereignty and the violence of inclusion/exclusion, entitlement and interdiction become amplified by and within the conditions of settler colonialism as indigenous scholars have shown (e.g., Simpson 2014; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Kauanui 2018; Nabulsi 2023). Indeed, the very constitution and legitimacy of settler-colonial sovereignty, the process of licensing settler state jurisprudence, can only be established through the criminalization, disenfranchisement and gendered differentiation (Ihmoud) of indigenous life itself (Ford 2010). But, moreover, we are arguing that settler-colonial societies institutionalize mechanisms of control, violence, debility, exclusion, biopolitics and conscription—as Thobani (in this

volume) and Coulthard (2014) show us are about killability and the erasure of the colonized. In this way, they “deviate” from even established exercises of coercive state power over citizens and non-citizens. In fact, following Joy James (2016 and in this issue), we call attention to the “Captive Maternal” capacity as constituent of settler colonialism itself, both preying on, exploiting, consuming and holding captive the racialized and gendered bodies upon which settler-colonial productivity, reproduction, order and normalcy (2016: 256) are built but also generate legitimacy and justification for the settler state’s very existence. More to the direction of this special issue, the complete violation of Ahmad Manasra’s rights, the systematic, legal-sanctioned state abuse of him as a minor and victim of state torture, compels us to recognize the interlinking and multidimensional state (and non-state) functions, institutions, discourses (including “democratic” and liberal discourse on crime, punishment, legality, citizenship, and state security) and procedures that all mark the necro-carceral nature of settler state governance and sovereignty (Otman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud, Rouhana, Allan, and Thobani).

As this issue goes to press, the State of Israel brutally bombs Gaza, starves, and suffocates its population violating international laws and human rights conventions to which it is necessary signatory to have gained a seat at the United Nations (Robinson 2013). The internationally sanctioned violation of rules of war and international law is specifically justified through Israel’s claim to sovereignty and “right to defend itself.” The genocidal attacks on Gaza that started in October 2023 demonstrate the most extreme necro-carcerality of the settler-colonial state. This necro-carcerality—as is known by indigenous peoples of North America and Australasia—is a structural, state system that perpetuates genocide of its marginal and indigenous communities with impunity through legal, governmental, legislative, social and military arms of the state. October 2023 (and leading into November) in Gaza, Jerusalem, the West Bank and even inside the state now known as Israel illustrates killability and death as a *modus operandi* of the settler state *not a collateral effect*. If settler colonialism is a structure not an event, there is an infrastructure of the necro-carceral criminal settler state by which slow death and genocide are perpetuated. This special issue demonstrates what is happening in the current moment; that is, when settler states (whether putatively “democratic”, monarchical or authoritarian) are unable to rely on the valance provided by legal, social and cultural discourses and state and non-state mechanisms, they readily rely on undisguised state violence (whether, police brutality, incarceration and the death penalty, or invasion) legitimized by arguments of sovereignty. The mass bombing, demolition, and eradication of civilian lives, the annihilation of entire families from the official registry, denying Gazans food, water, fuel and medicine, the bombing of schools, hospitals, and Israeli-designated evacuation

routes are part of a large necro-carceral system of settler colonialism that incarcerated 2.2 million Gazans but also permits mass arrests in occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank (and even arrests of Palestinian Israeli citizens), the torture (to death) of political prisoners, the absolute lockdown of the whole West Bank, the sanctioned sniping of innocent civilians, to the banning of political expressions, signs, and symbols of self-determination and opposition to oppression are integrated parts of the infrastructure of necro-carcerality that transpires with no accountability precisely because of the accepted killability of Palestinians.

Global and local relationships between governance, governmentality and sovereignty are apparent in Biden's explicit acceptance that more than 7,000 dead (2,000 missing—at the time of writing) is “a price of war,” or Blinken's statement that “the United States has Israel's back. We will stand with it today, tomorrow, and every day, and we're doing that in word and also in deed” (US Embassy) empowers settler-colonial states' necro-carcerality with juridical legitimacy to distinguish between racial and ethnic hierarchies of citizens and also of non-citizens, or perhaps better, the human and “human animal,” in Defence Minister Yoav Gallant's words referring to Palestinians. Settler colonialism's claim to sovereignty naturalizes the settler-citizen within the universalized “ethno-class of Man,” (Wynter 2003) which erases or holds indigenous, Black, Brown, queer and disabled subjects invisible, less than, or “human-animals,” subordinate in subjectivity (including to whiteness, cisheteronormativity, ability or national citizenry). While marked by different national discourses and degrees of scale and intensity, this special issue asserts that settler-colonial states, whether they are Israel, United States, Canada or Morocco (as are discussed in this volume) or Australia, New Zealand, Britain (Northern Ireland) or Turkey (Northern Cyprus) are criminal states in that their sovereignty is established, not at the expense of, but specifically through the elimination of native populations.

Sovereignty determines legal rights not only to land, property, services and social space but also how indigenous and settler bodies and communities move through space, through the law, in and out of institutions, and are surveilled or roam “free,” as Bruyneel (2007), Kauanui, (2018) and Moreton-Robinson (2015) remind us. Sovereignty claims dominion over land, resources, and bodies, what rights they are entitled to, the right of the state to violate, and even, as Razack and Thobani show in this issue, who has the right to define their own experience, choose their own language to describe that experience, to name if they are an object of hate or empathy, including limitations to accept or reject apologies, inclusion and conscription by the state. While this special issue was planned well before the October 7 revolt and Israel's subsequent brutalization, which has to date reached more than 1.4 million refugees, 19,275 injured, and several thousand Palestinians (half under the age of 18; i.e., children) killed by US-made munitions, the framing, theme, and analysis is relevant and timely precisely because, if settler

colonialism is a structure not an event (Wolfe 2006), state criminality, including genocide, has an infrastructure. That infrastructure is institutional, ideological, state, cultural and social, political and economic, cooperating and synchronizing with other global sovereignties of power to extend its reach. The contributors to this issue speak of this infrastructure. They speak to the ways global and local social institutions mobilize political institutions, how political institutions are manifested in culture, and how economic formations naturalize the ideology of necro-carcerality and the security state. Yet, the contributors also focus on the struggle for liberation and resistance to settler-colonial state regimes and their non-state apparatuses mobilize counter-hegemonic notions of indigenous sovereignty and refusals of the structural and condoned settler state necro-capitalist (Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Wahab 2021). logics, discourses, and institutions that usurp communal, land, and bodily sovereignty.

In thinking of sovereignty in relation to the state and the ways in which this naturalizes and codifies settler state legitimacy over indigenous and racialized communities, we then draw attention to the comprehensiveness in managing, regulating and, indeed, eliminating indigeneity. We also want to call attention to how the legitimacies and intimacies of sovereignty are not only a matter of the state but also ideological formations built into settler societies' reproduction. This includes liberalism, as Qutami, Razack, and Thobani show us in this issue. We highlight that the relation of liberalism, state and non-state formations (especially higher education) work for what Dylan Rodriguez has called "the White Reconstruction"; that is, the on-going process that whiteness racial ideology functions, expands, and calibrates itself through the state, media, popular discourse and culture to perpetuate white supremacist racial hierarchies especially essential to the settler colony. In Rodriguez's words,

the invasive premises of the liberal extension of politicality (and full sociality) permanently delineate, disrupt, and redefine the structures and discursive regimes of citizenship, freedom, bodily integrity, and personhood as they are contingently accessed by the non-normative (non-) subjects and targets of the anti-Black, racial colonial settler state. (2020: 18)

Therefore, our call for decolonial, abolitionist perspectives draw us to inevitably recognize how settler colonialism itself, in its necro-capitalist and necro-carceral logic, is a state crime that solicits the consent and support of all of its settler citizens (Shalhoub-Kevorkian & Wahab 2021). In other words, putting together state crime, settler colonialism, abolitionism and sovereignty (including who is a non-citizen) aims to condemn the existential reality of the colonized.

In *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon writes:

There is, first of all, the fact that the colonized person, who in this respect is like men in underdeveloped countries or the disinherited in all parts of the world, perceives life not as a flowering or a development of an essential productiveness, but as a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death... the existence of the colonized tends to make of life something resembling an incomplete death. (1965: 128)

Fanon specifically describes the effect of the colonial apparatus on those like Peltier, Duqqa and Manasra, Mumia Abu Jamal about whom Joy James writes in this issue, but also Gazans in the past 17 years, and more so today during the genocidal war. Indeed, this issue's abolitionist organization locates settler colonialism within the necro-carceral logics of the state and, inversely, the settler state naturalizes its legitimacy through the asphyxiating (Li 2006) logics inherent in sovereignty itself. Therefore, we seek to denaturalize and destabilize the "reality bending" at the core of a settler-colonial state (Sheehi and Sheehi 2022). If Fanon shows us both psychic and material structures of colonialism and indigenous resistance to it, we adopt abolitionist frameworks to highlight how the struggle of incarcerated people in the open prison of Gaza, and political prisoners tracks alongside and within the logic of resistance of indigenous communities, insisting that the praxis of decolonization is a struggle inspired by the history and present of dispossessive multiple necro-carceralities of human, the land/stone, and the tree or رجشلاو، رجحلا، رجشبل.

As Dylan Rodriguez (2006) and Lena Meari (2022) have shown us, political prisoners themselves and their political and intellectual work form a critical, social formation struggling with and within, naming, resisting and defying the militarized and carceral logics of the prison that they clearly see as produced by and is an extension of the state, state power and state sovereignty. These struggles are always psychically, socially, economically, and inter-subjectively in engagement with the political-epistemic existence of the colonized; an existence that is considered the normative of [the ethno-class of] the human. If the normativity of racial, ethnic and gendered hierarchies is the ontological and epistemic condition of colonial modernity (Quijano 2000; Maldonado Torres 2007), the naturalness of state sovereignty occludes the state criminality of settler colonialism even as indigenous, Black, Brown, queer and disabled communities struggle to contest it.

Abolitionism as decolonization and de-necro-carceralization centres state violence in its various mechanisms that maintain colonial power. Abolitionist perspectives are not only a theory of governance but they offer material analysis to a variety of structures, mechanisms, relationships and discourses that are uplifted and circulated at the level of civil society; enacted, specifically, by the state. Scholar-activists such as Angela Davis (2011), Mark Neocleous (2021), Mariame

Kaba (2021) and Geo Maher (2021) show us that social and ideological systems protect white supremacist racial hierarchy, state power, the ruling classes, and capital accumulation and private property. These scholars show us that these systems work to conscript the consent, indeed active approval and support, of civil society as well as state and non-state apparatuses. Within this same context then, the security state (militarization of local police, mass federal and local surveillance, the National Defense Authorization Act, Patriot Act, etc.) grew with full support of the mainstream political establishment, organizing itself around the ever-present domestic and global terror threat of political Islam (which itself is entwined with global and local anti-Black and anti-Arab racial politics). Indeed, Heike Schotten (2018) has shown us how US settler-colonial society, both at the level of governance and political discourses, produces then manages racial, sexual and “cultural” difference as primary to the legitimacy and futurity of settler sovereignty. The industrial-military-education-prison complex maintains this sovereignty. This is why abolitionist calls for abolishing prisons are not limited to just dismantling prisons and decarcerating those in them. Rather, abolitionist politics trace the connection and reliance on the very existence of the prison to the military (Meari 2012), police and the judiciary but also the global and local logic of policing, to private property, to public space, to public and private institutions (from schools to parks to churches to restaurants) and to relationality.

Prisons are related to schools, where students (most often young Black males in what is now known as North America) with foreclosed futures will be funnelled into the juvenile system, taking these youth out of their homes, their communities, their support groups and, yes, their schools. Prisons are connected to economics, international, national and local. They are employment hubs for poor, usually white rural communities. The incarcerated themselves have been accepted as a long-time source of cheap manual labour (from *corvée* labour on highways to agricultural work in the South to building furniture for state institutions including state universities, to fighting climate catastrophe-induced fires). The formerly incarcerated, monitored by an army of probation officers, often unemployable because of a criminal record, themselves are forced into the most exploitative employment. Essential to the United States Empire, prisons (like federal, state and municipal “law enforcement”) become an employment source for mostly low-level, rank-and-file ex-military personnel. Of course, the question of abolition circulates around municipal, state and federal police not as discrete formations but as linked to larger political and economic institutions. Apart from the fact that the militarization of police forces arose in response to the militant Black Power Movement (e.g., the creation of SWAT in Los Angeles to mobilize against the Black Panther Party), the intensification of the militarization of local and state police since 9/11 is driven at the federal and legislative levels, with the

codification of the national security state. This involves not only well-known congressional and local legislation such as the Patriot Act and the Defence Authorization Act but also how this legislation established the 1033 Program (also known as Law Enforcement Support Office or LESO) to militarize local, state, and other law enforcement offices with heavily tactical, armament and military equipment under the aegis of “homeland security” but used for quotidian police action and violence (1033 Program; Barret 2020). Within this context, Noura Erekat in this special issue, draws attention to the “deadly exchange” between US “law enforcement” and Israeli security services, pointing to the connection between global and local politics. Within this context, we must also note the central role of US military support in training and arming Morocco, underwriting the brutal occupation of the Western Sahara. These are just a few connections. However, their effects are further exacerbated when we understand their necro-carcerality and killability as they fall even more significantly on racialized communities, especially Black, Latinx and Indigenous.

Abolitionist thinking inevitably forces us to acknowledge settler colonialism as a necro-carceral state crime. The abolitionist framework—which must always be pointed to political and social action, organization, and mobilizations (as we see in many of the contributions in this special issue)—requires both micro and macro theorizations of settler colonialism in relation to its state form, claims to sovereignty, juridical and discursive structures that regulate assumed settler legitimacy, and its global context of empire and racial capitalism. That is, on the micro and contextual levels, each contributor rigorously roots their analysis in one particular locality, historical moment, ideological formation, and/or governance and policing structure. Consequently, we come to understand macro-logics of power, racial supremacy and ideological management through the sum-total of these close localized readings and research. This dual theorizing (of the micro- and macro-logics of settler-colonial governance and, indeed, settler identity and how they seek to derive legitimacy through established norms of sovereignty) compels us to locate abolitionist paradigms as both antagonistic to the modern state form itself and as belonging within a larger project of decolonization, which is essential to all liberationist movements especially those within settler-colonial contexts.

On the one hand, marking the dynamic juridical, governmental, discursive and ideological relationship between settler colonialism and state crime through an abolitionist prism—that is to say, a perspective that understands the Westphalian modern state itself, let alone the post-colonial or settler-colonial state, as an effect of colonial modernity—requires that we interrogate the necro-epistemologies of racial domination and modern state governmentality. On the other hand, the hegemonic epistemology of colonial modernity is always confronted by counter-hegemonic knowledge production, political practice and sociability of indigenous peoples,

which the coloniality of state power perpetually seeks to manage, control, regulate, suppress or eliminate (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). This critique of settler colonialism as a state crime is not pedantic or an over-exaggeration considering how settler-colonial-state structures operate to demonize, pathologize, marginalize, erase, appropriate and/or coopt not only these epistemologies but the communities that are empowered and organized by them. In this regard, we do not seek to minimize or “airbrush” abolition as Joy James (2020) suggests. Following Heynen and Ybarra (2020), this issue and its contributors argue that abolition is not just about a vision. Rather, abolition is about everyday practices that expose all modes of maintaining the coloniality of power. The various case studies in this special edition, then, detail the intricate systems, policies, thinking and decision-making that went into *naturalizing* the creation, justification and promotion of state criminal ideologies, legalities, and affective politics, sanctioning them under the legitimacies that state sovereignty bestows. Within the contexts of what is now known as the United States and Canada, or in Palestine and the Western Sahara, the authors unpack through their abolitionist prisms, the deliberate, orchestrated, historically bound and ideologically-structured discourses and systems of governance and “governmentality” along settler-colonial logics that naturalizes the racialization, marginalization and displacement of indigenous and otherized lives. In doing so, this special issue reveals that the logic of settler-colonial governance effectively operates under the valiance of violent state sovereignty and necro-carcerality, a guise for what is otherwise state crime.

Abolition is Refusing State-Sanctioned Criminality

As editors of this special issue, we want to make clear that our choice of offering an abolitionist platform is that its critique rejects the necro-carceral logic of the state (and its global allies) and understands carceral systems as themselves criminal and oppressive. In this time when Gaza-as-a-prison of 2.2 million stateless people are being militarily brutalized and starved to death, we stress that the analytic of abolition in this special issue denaturalizes the military-industrial-prison complex that undergirds the criminal settler-colonial state. But also, as we have seen with the shameless collusion of mainstream media in Europe and North America, we call attention to the ideologies and discourses of racial capitalism that give form to the state itself and guise its criminality under claims of sovereignty and social order. More pertinent to this issue, abolitionism perceives the settler-colonial condition as a condition of state-sanctioned theft, pillage, sexual violence, dispossession and genocide. For this reason, several contributions (Rouhana, Razack, Thobani and Qutami) in this special issue focus on framings, movements, shifts and tacks within particular ideological formations (state and non-state) that

demonstrate how liberalism manages the sanctioned ways in which the objectification and grievances of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people may be articulated (or not). Within every contribution to this issue, the revelation of exposing matrixes of state power within the context of settler-colonial state and non-state practices and processes, in turn, elevates indigenous resistance to these naturalized structures of state violence. If settler colonialism in its state form is not new, neither is the struggle for its abolition and the thriving of indigenous lives despite its Janus-face necropolitical and liberal veneers, as Sunera Thobani suggests. W.E.B. Du Bois' (2008) "abolition democracy" emphasizes the solidarities of oppressed peoples who have refused the fates offered to them in structures of settler colonialism and racial capitalism. This refusal, defiance, and solidarity within and between indigenous communities is a central component of what Ruth Gilmore (2022) calls "abolition geography." Thinking both socially, globally, structurally and within embodied forms of struggle, Gilmore focuses on a politics of scale and intensities in relation to "bodies as places" where, as, in this issue, Ihmoud and Otman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian show how communities build life-making practices through filial and gendered relations and chosen kin where care and struggle can continue, flourish and give defiant joy.

The destruction, cutting off of electricity, water, food and medicine, and mass displacement of the Palestinian population of Gaza could be carried out with impunity by a criminal settler state because the state's dehumanizing them as "animals," "cockroaches," "savages" and "barbarians" is disseminated and naturalized by international media, corporatist actors, and their state sponsors is literally the process by which criminalization of individuals occurs tout court. Criminalization transforms individuals into tiny territories primed for extractive activity to unfold—in particular, extractive activities that eliminate time from the territories of selves. This process opens a hole in a life, furthering the annihilation of space by time (Li 2006). If carceral geographies and spaces of detention and incarceration are not exceptional but rather everyday spaces where the oppressed struggle to live as Gilmore suggests, the embodied and social conditions of indigenous communities under settler-colonial regimes of control and governance, whether in Palestine, the Western Sahara, Cyprus, or the states now known as Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the United States, intensifies relationships of unfreedom, economic coercion, and ideological and political conscription. Within this multi-tiered matrix of control (from gender norms to sexual politics, to carceral logics of public safety, to neoliberal capitalist developmental discourses), Gilmore highlights how radical consciousness thrives in oppositional and defiant action resolved into liberated lifeways (2022: 227). For Gilmore, as for all of us involved in this special issue, the abolitionist struggle works for alternatives to the sense of despair normalized by

settler-colonial sovereignty, learning from people, space/land, and other resources of social capacity organized to disrupt race, class, and empire, which undergird and legitimize settler-colonial sovereignty.

In thinking of radical consciousness against penal colonialism (Saleh-Hanna 2008) and the colonial/penal complex (Cunneen et al. 2013), we do not gesture to the hackneyed conception of the ways in which ideology produces “false consciousness.” Rather, we learn from those such as Gilmore but also Chela Sandoval (2000) who speak about how theories and methods of “oppositional consciousness” form an “apparatus” that “cuts through grammars of supremacy” in order to “transform into a methodology of emancipation.” (2) In other words, “the methodology of the oppressed,” she states, “is a set of processes, procedures, and technologies for decolonizing the imagination.” (68) Abolitionist perspectives operationalized these methodologies. Whether in challenging how academic discourse captures and domesticates anti-colonial programmes (Qutami), or the “captive maternal” of political prisoners (James), or the ways liberalism regulates “hate speech,” (Razack) or how kinship and intimacies bind indigenous communities in diaspora to occupied lands (Ihmoud) or how the Sahrawiyin struggle against state-cultural appropriation (Allen), this special issue roots itself in what Sandoval’s psyche of the oppressed makes explicit and visible of the intimacies, socialities, forces and violence between *material objects*, social processes, governmental and non-governmental institutions, and ideological formations, national discourses.

By delving into historical and contemporary events, discourses and systems that uphold and perpetuate the state-sanctioned violence of settler colonialism, this volume hopes to offer a rare group of scholars who ethically and politically engage the colonial matrix of power and the current condition of modernity/coloniality within settler societies. The volume hopes to deepen our understanding of the governance of the colonial state, exposing its systematic abuse through/against its “justice” institutions (Agozino 2003). In tracking, marking and prying at the contradictions within settler-colonial sovereignty, discourses, policing and governance, they mark how criminality and necro-carcerality (and killability of the “native”) are *constitutive*, not derivative, of settler colonialism, and hence speak to the urgent need to reimagine it. Through the network of articles, we note how these structures, infrastructures, discourses and logic are interlocked and therefore call for comprehensive abolition. That is to say, there is no settler colonialism without state crime, and hence the need to push considerations of how abolitionism undoes, disobeys, and defies this interlocking, matrix of power; constructing new paths and praxis toward thinking, visibilizing, acting, living, believing, and sensing otherwise. Abolition as Ruth Wilson Gilmore explains, “is about presence, not absence.”

By bringing the various contributions together we are not prioritizing “state crime” (that is, the combination of brutal necropolitical forces of the state such as saturation bombing innocent civilians, policing, incarceration, brutal occupation and conscriptive, ideological and discursive formations of settler liberalism, cultural appropriation and reformism) over centring the lives, struggles, defiance and resistance of indigenous and racialized subjects within the contexts of settler-colonial regimes (including carceral institutions, logics, and systems). Rather, we hope that this special issue of *State Crime* holds all equally. In doing so, we agree fully with Tomkins (2015) that revealing, tracking and witnessing oppression (and resistance) does not only confront but also denaturalizes the epistemological hegemony and “normalcy” of settler state sovereignty. The articles herein call attention not only to the violence and resistance to it, but contractions and antagonisms with settler-colonial reality bending that fuel anti-colonial abolitionist programmes and liberationist projects. The question can never be what kind of carcerality can work, or how can the police or prison work best for Mumia, Duqqa or Manasra. The articles in this special issue understand abolition as a world complex and multi-tiered vision of, as Otman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian tell us, dreaming liberation and working to new liberated worlds; nothing short of a long-term, comprehensive and collective revolutionary political project. *This issue makes clear the relationship between abolitionism and anti-colonial liberation.* Individually and together, these articles challenge the epistemological privilege of settler-colonial understandings and discourses and accompanying state structures, apparatuses, and functions that naturalize the elimination and/or conscription of “the native.” But at the same time, the abolitionist and anti-colonial state project is about disrupting state violence, mobilizing toward challenging the social, political, economic, and legal processes through which race and racism are maintained. It is about elevating and creating spaces of life, love, sociability, political efficacy and power for those who live under the state’s necro-carcerality, yet continue to defy crimes of settler colonialism.

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