Conscientious Objectors in Israel

Citizenship, Sacrifice, Trials of Fealty

Erica Weiss

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THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

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CONTENTS

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Introduction

Conscience twinges. It pinches, tugs, stabs and pricks. It must be wrestled with, when one is not plagued by it. It calls and dictates. It is a worm, and a court. Conscience is articulated in these ways as the most solitary, individual, and idiosyncratic of faculties. Yet, as both a personal ethical experience and a potent public discourse, conscience also dramatically reshapes the social terrain. Conscience can make the illegal legal and the offensive admirable, or have the opposite effect. Beliefs regarding the inviolability of conscience in Western ethical traditions persist in close relation to idea that religious beliefs need to be protected and privileged above other social obligations. Despite these claims to precedence, conscience does not displace other social obligations, loyalties, responsibilities, and sacrifices that refuse to be slighted without consequence. The following ethnography of the social life of conscientious objection from military service in Israel exposes the tension between the liberal protections of individual rights the state provides and an idea of citizenship that requires great and specific sacrifices. The links between citizenship and sacrifice shape the politics of both consent and dissent. Although conscience is a strong cultural claim, carrying the weight of its long and exalted philosophical genealogy through Socrates, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant, military refusal challenges Israeli state sovereignty in a fundamental way. It questions the state's moral authority and challenges the state's coercive capabilities. Yet conscience sits precariously and partially outside the jurisdictional bounds of state power. The war of position described in what follows, over the ideal relationship between the ethics of the individual, the community, and the state,[1] has many guises, sometimes strategic, sometimes visceral, and often agonizingly played out in the most intimate of spaces.

Conscientious objection forces a number of difficult questions to the fore. What do religious and ethnic belonging entail? Why is it legitimate for the state to require you to risk your life in war, but illegitimate to ask you to risk your conscience? Refusal of military service in Israel reflects more than

ethical qualms over violence: it also reflects the central ontology of the Israeli state and its notions of community, loyalty, obligation, and betrayal always tied to the question of Palestine. The social negotiation of conscientious objection takes place with a constant eye to the Palestinian other, who is the ethical object of refusal. This dissent is with regard not only to the occupation, but also to broader beliefs on ethical responsibility to others and the limits of such responsibility. Many who have investigated zones of conflict are familiar with the ideological and discursive processes that can lead an individual to take part in violence, such as dehumanization and the cultivation of fear. On the contrary, conscientious objection investigates whether an individual is allowed—ethically, socially, legally, or politically—to refuse participation in sanctioned violence.

Conscientious objection in Israel unearths fundamental tensions regarding social relationships and obligations in modern rights-oriented democracies. Claims of conscience expose a different side of the individual's responsibility to the group than accounts of modern politics usually consider. Many anthropological accounts focus on the centrality of rights-centered individualism to Western conceptions of personhood. Their point is well taken that supposedly neutral secular liberalism in fact harbors a cultural specificity that privileges the individual and establishes separate realms for the private and the public, thus creating an uninhabitable space for those whose cultural traditions do not lend themselves to such divisions. Yet conscientious objection reveals the ways the individual in a liberal democracy is still deeply bound by communal obligations. The demand for great sacrifice in the nation state is strong and insistent. The flag of conscience offers some uneven and fragmentary protection, but claims are certainly not taken at face value. Soldiers who claim conscience may not be immediately sent to jail, but they often pay a heavy price. Much of their fate lies in their ability to defend their actions as they are called to appear in trials of conscience, which take place variably in the courts, in the media, and often in the home.

Yossi recalls the moment he decided to refuse to serve in the military as one of epiphany and profound humiliation. As a combat soldier serving in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, he had a visceral experience that crystallized previous qualms and apprehensions about his activities in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Following security protocols led him to aim a gun at a young boy who had frozen in fear. Struck in the moment by the scene he was involved in provoked a sense of disgrace, fundamentally at odds with

how he had pictured himself until that point, as an elite and self-sacrificing soldier. His understanding of the world, the Jewish experience, and his role in it, began to crumble beneath him and he experienced a period of existential unease that culminated with his decision to refuse to continue military service. Yossi describes coming to this decision like arrival on dry land, as a resolution to a period of confusion.

Aya's final clash with her high school principal resulted in her expulsion from the school. Located in Tel Aviv, and specializing in fine arts education, her school had gained some notoriety for the high number of students who did not serve in the military. The media had deemed this evidence of systematic shirking of military duty and had cast the school and the city of Tel Aviv itself as self-indulgent and unwilling to sacrifice. Her principal, relatively new to the school, was determined to change this impression, and to make sure that his students would not dodge their military service. He introduced a special curricular emphasis on the connections between Jewish peoplehood, nationalism, and military service. Because Aya was determined to avoid military service for reasons of conscience, she had frequent run-ins with the principal over her objections to these activities. For example, with other students she protested the visitation of military representatives to the school and student trips to military bases, both intended to inform and excite students about their upcoming service. It was a trip to Jerusalem focused on "our Jewish heritage" that ultimately led to her expulsion. Feeling that the trip supported ethnic nationalism, she stayed home. When she refused to do a make-up assignment about what her Jewish heritage meant to her, she was expelled.

Amos insisted that the worst moment of his life was when he sat in his family's living room and told his father that, after many years serving in the military, he planned to sign the letter of refusal to serve. "Sitting there, I would have preferred to tell him a thousand times that I am gay, rather than have to tell him even once that I was signing that letter." In becoming a combat soldier, Amos had followed in the footsteps of his father, who had served in the Six-Day War. He struggled to find a way to explain to his father that he believed things were different than when his father had served, that the occupation had turned soldiers from defenders into aggressors. He knew that his father would never be able to accept that Amos truly believed this was the right thing to do. His father's generation, for whom Jewish self-defense was a radical revelation and a new lease on life after the Holocaust, would never be able to see his refusal as anything but a dangerous step backward.

After that encounter, it was more than a year before he spoke with his father again. Amos's wife and her family were supportive, but the rift was very difficult for Amos, who had enjoyed his tight-knit family and their emotional and material support.

Growing up in the United States, I was like many of my compatriots, ignorant of and quite indifferent to my own mixed-up family history. As such, I was struck by the public and private significance of familial, cultural, and ethnic genealogy in Israel. I was also struck by the central role of the military in Israeli life, which is what drew me to this topic (for a vivid account of how military force acquired so much legitimacy and centrality in Israeli society, see Ben-Eliezer 1998). My hometown, a village of six thousand in the northeast United States, still has multiple stores specializing in 1960s-style tie-dye T-shirts, and the local political culture of nonviolence and antiestablishment sentiment made military service seem quite remote from my life. My religious education made it even more so. When I met my Israeli boyfriend (now husband) and visited Israel for the first time, I became fascinated by this cultural difference, not only the prominent problems of militarism, but also the ethos of volunteerism, cooperation, and communal sacrifice. I also met those who refused to serve in the military, and discovered the life complications they faced as a result.

After spending several summers in Israel, I conducted extended fieldwork there from 2007 to 2009 with the two main groups currently associated with conscientious objection. One organization is Combatants for Peace (CFP), whose members are former elite officers in the Israeli Defense Forces. Based on their experiences as soldiers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, these ex-soldiers have come to the conclusion that the occupation is morally wrong, and have decided to refuse to perform their reserve military service until this unjust situation is rectified. This group is made up of mostly men in their thirties. The other group is composed of young women and men in their early twenties who have never served in the military. It includes many pacifists and is loosely associated with the organization New Profile, a feminist organization that favors demilitarizing Israeli society. These two groups are associated with far left-wing politics in Israel, and are uniformly against the occupation or de facto control of Palestinian territories, the Gaza Strip on Israel's west, and the West Bank on Israel's east.

During my fieldwork, I lived in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv is the economic center of the country; it is the second largest city in Israel and considered the more

secular and liberal counterpart to Jerusalem, the capital. Many conscientious objectors from both groups were from Tel Aviv or its suburbs.[2] I traveled to Jerusalem to meet with refusers there, and occasionally to more peripheral areas. Over time, I got to know members of Combatants for Peace and younger conscientious objectors. I conducted interviews and also met people informally and socially. I spent time with them at home and met their families and friends. I participated in the meetings of both groups. These included meetings for members conducted in Israel and in the West Bank, as well as organized presentations that invited Israeli audiences. I also attended solidarity events in support of Palestinian communities that my interlocutors participated in. Requesting contact information from friends and acquaintances in this group, I was also able to meet other conscientious objectors not formally involved with any activist organization, as well as people who considered refusal but ultimately decided against it. I worked with a New Profile youth group in Tel Aviv for young people considering refusal. When the leaders of the group were looking for a new meeting spot, I offered to host the group at my apartment. I followed a number of these young people as they appealed for exemption from service on the basis of pacifism. That process entailed going before what is popularly known as the military Conscience Committee, which evaluates the appellant's pacifist conscience for authenticity and sincerity. I also conducted interviews with members of the Conscience Committee, the Israeli military prosecutor, lawyers representing conscientious objectors, and legal scholars writing on the issue.

Conscientious objection in Israel (*sarvanoot le'sibot matzpooniot*) relies on the premise that conscience is a privileged status requiring protection, even above physical well-being. The military can require all manner of physical sacrifice from soldiers, including missions with a high probability of death, but it does not have the right to require moral compromise. Indeed, many cultural norms govern the physical risk to which the state can expose a soldier. The limits of such risk are often in dispute and concern serious cultural matters such as how to define *necessary risk*, the appropriate ratio between risk and monetary expense, and the value of an individual life. For example, recent public debates in Israel have centered on whether all soldiers need bulletproof vests, and whether the defensive materials used on transportation vehicles need to be of the best quality available. How high a price to pay for the return of a captured soldier is another controversial deliberation. Yet conscience and moral good are not negotiated in the same

way. Conscience is thought of in absolute terms. The state cannot directly ask a citizen, even a soldier, to do something they have already concluded is wrong. Likewise, although giving one's life for the state is considered the ultimate sacrifice, going against one's conscience for the state is not similarly esteemed.

How did conscience come to acquire such protections against the normative expectations requiring sacrifice? Some anthropologists have recently suggested ethics as a productive anthropological category. They note that, worldwide, people have varied ethical traditions concerning how to do the "right thing," that is, on the rules and norms that govern social interactions. Conscience is an ethical idea that developed and became important in Europe and in the Western tradition. It came to be considered one of the truest and most authentic forms through which an individual could take a stance in society. Conscience is the idea of an internal faculty that judges our actions and informs us of its conclusions through feelings of guilt, shame, purity, and innocence. The modern meaning of conscience incorporates a sense of an individual ethical regulator, and that the dictates of conscience require the individual to privilege these imperatives above other social obligations. As a result, when someone testifies or witnesses to their conscience, there is public recognition that it is authentic and compulsory, despite the lack of other evidence. Conscience has become a powerful idea that is simultaneously a way through which some people experience and understand their ethical encounters, and a cultural symbol and rationality through which people explain their actions to their community. A long-term interaction of intellectual thought and popular culture has contributed to the high cultural reverence for conscience. From Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* to the film *Blade Runner*, to dramatic acts of political protest, conscience has been reinforced as a cultural value with new idioms in each generation. Jewish thinkers, steeped in European philosophical traditions, have contributed greatly to this tradition as well. Among those who developed the idea of conscience and contributed to its current importance are Baruch Spinoza, Hannah Arendt, Michael Walzer, Emmanuel Levinas, and Judith Butler. The value of conscience followed Israel's European founders into the state's institutions and laws. However, not everyone in Israel is equally steeped in this European tradition; we will see that influence of conscience is uneven.[3]

Wendy Brown (2008) cites liberal tolerance as an outcome of early European religious wars that ultimately separated political and religious authority

in the West. When the idea of universal rights emerged in the human rights framework, conscience was a category thought worthy of protection. Ideas of human rights were formalized after World War II in the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With this declaration, conscience evolved from a peculiar Western European belief about the relationship between consciousness and ethics to a sanctified and universal human attribute requiring protection. Human rights discourse has gained hegemonic status, and its verdicts on a given state's protections for conscience (most often concerning political prisoners) can contribute to that state's global reputation as a liberal democracy or an oppressive regime. Despite Israel's sometimes-contentious relationship with the United Nations, and the not-infrequent claims of human rights violations lodged against the state, human rights remain of great importance in Israel. The significance of human rights is part of the historical and institutional legacy of being a somewhat deviant branch of the European colonial project, as well as Israel's self-understanding as a rights-oriented democracy. This understanding is used to make claims about the legitimacy of the state, and to offer a favorable comparison vis-à-vis the other countries in the Middle East, which receive worse human rights reports, especially regarding women, homosexuality, and political dissent.

Conscientious objectors find themselves neither here nor there. Having balked at the entailments of religious and ethnic affiliation, their dissent is considered a betrayal by most of Jewish Israeli society. Yet they are not at home, in security or culture, with Palestinians. Their attempts to do the right thing are often frustrated in the midst of social encounters not with a single other, but with many others (Jewish others as well as Palestinian), all of whom make incompatible demands. They find that responsiveness to one responsibility often means the betrayal of another. We will see that they also cannot rest in the satisfaction that their decision was correct. Rather, they are constantly pulled to "give account" (Keane 2010) of their actions and gain the acceptance of their society through public confessions and testimonies and through appeals to military and government institutions for recognition.

The task of giving account is made especially difficult by forces and intellectual genealogies beyond their control. Their claims that conscience motivates their actions sometimes make their acts of dissent somewhat palatable in Israeli society. Yet the historical process through which conscience acquired its protected status prevents conscientious objectors from fully

translating this conscience into political activism. Conscience once meant shared knowledge, making you an ideal witness in court. The genealogy of conscience has been traced to older understandings of conscience in Greek literature, such as *syneidesis*, which is the awareness of something. The Latin *conscientia* had similar connotations. Scholars in the Middle Ages used both nearly interchangeably for some time. Historian Anders Schinkel has meticulously traced the slow separation, during which conscience took on connotations of being a private inner ethical faculty as opposed to a form of public knowledge (2007).

The move to "witnessing" to conscience in the way we now understand it, as an inner belief, began to take place in the life and times of Thomas Hobbes, some four hundred years ago. Hobbes was less than smitten with this transformation in the meaning and found numerous problems in its application. He claimed that the new meaning of conscience was only self-witnessing, and as such unreliable, yet it maintained the old connotation of witnessing to a fact, and the inviolability that goes along with knowledge that is shared and verifiable. Hobbes suggested that the term *opinion* was more appropriate to such subjective positions (Andrew 2001: 69).

> And last of all, men, vehemently in love with their own new opinions, though never so absurd, and obstinately bent to maintain them, gave those opinions also that reverenced the name of conscience as if they would have it seem unlawful, to change or speak against them; and so pretend to know that they are true, when they know at most, but that they think so . . . for one man calleth wisdom, what another calleth fear; and one cruelty, what another justice. (Hobbes 1985: 53, 29)

This detachment of individual conscience from collective ethical norms has remained an issue ever since and infuses current human rights claims of freedom of conscience. In many ways, the demise of the public, factual nature of conscience and the eventual dominance of inspirational authority over verifiable evidence is fundamental to the conflict surrounding conscientious objection in Israel today. For one, claims of conscientious objection face evidentiary challenges in the social realm of law. Though conscience is articulated as an utterly personal phenomenon (which cannot be judged by others), such an expectation is socially futile. Policy cannot be structured without normative cultural limits. So, even with the concerted efforts of the

Israeli state to offer protection of conscience, those seeking to refuse military service must still convince Israeli society that their refusal is a legitimate matter of conscience. But how can one prove one's conscience to society? This is the question faced by Israeli pacifists who apply for exemption from military service through the Israeli military Conscience Committee. Departure from ethical norms raises questions about the limits of conscientious claims, which are still subject to social negotiation despite the relativist discourse of conscience. Emile Durkheim recognized that the moral is social, and that the construction of moral orders is mediated by collectives and by individuals engaged in their social worlds. As such, the private and public meanings of conscience are always mutually implicated. As one Israeli military prosecutor told me regarding cases of conscientious objection, "No one wants to give rights to a truly perverse conscience." In their testimony, conscientious objectors must walk the fine line of asserting a conscientious dissent from the dominant moral consensus, but not going so far as to exceed the bounds of reasonableness. Because conscience is considered a natural faculty, it is entirely subjective. It is also why attempts to change cultural norms on the basis of claims to conscience are taken as such an affront. People frequently perceive these attempts as trying to have one's cake and eat it too, and accuse conscientious objectors who conduct activism of hypocrisy or question the authenticity of their conscience. As a result, conscientious objectors are often torn between self-protection and public influence on ethical-political matters. Conscientious objectors often end up replicating state forms of power and dominance, including military patterns of obedience and heroism.

The word for conscience in Hebrew, *matzpoon,* is etymologically related to the word for compass, *matzpen*. The word thus invokes the image of a personal moral compass. Despite a vocabulary that focuses inwardly, on self-interrogation and revelation, the social life of conscience involves a relationship between the individual and the community. We can see the sleight of hand at work in conscience's sui generis vocabulary in writing of Emile Durkheim. For Durkheim, moral rules are social because they arise through collective sentiments, and manifest in a way that is not only coercive, but also compelling to the individual (1995: 223, 438). His use of the French *conscience* combines the English meanings of conscience and consciousness, implying that the moral is inseparable from awareness. The normative order, then, is expressed in the *conscience collective,* a shared moral awareness or consensus (1984: 319). As such, despite its articulation and legal status

as a solitary exercise, conscience cannot escape its social underpinnings in morality. However, the conceptualization of conscience as a radically inward activity, in Israeli law and policy and often for my interlocutors, creates unique challenges and contradictions when the legitimacy and authenticity of this faculty are contested in military refusal.

The belief in an inward conscience is especially difficult because the refusal of military service violates central Israeli norms and values, including democracy, shared sacrifice, and a general ethos of Jewish self-protection. The military has a special significance in Israel and structures many parts of Israeli life (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 1999; Kimmerling 2001). The centrality of self-defense in Zionist thought temporally precedes the the mass arrival of Jews in Palestine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even when Uganda was being considered as a possible site for a Jewish homeland, self-protection was central to the vision of the project. The basis of this emphasis is the Zionist perception of a continual history of European persecution, expulsion, and pogroms against the Jews for centuries. Fighting against racist stereotypes of Jews as weak, vulnerable, and avoiding physical activity or conflict, mainstream Zionism sought to create a New Jew, who was physically active, strong, and not dependent on non-Jews for safety (Weiss 2005). Palestinian resistance to Jewish settlement, and increasingly antagonistic interactions with the British colonial government ruling Palestine, translated this ethos into a literal military force that subscribed to a Realpolitik worldview. This focus on political power and expediency would come to define much of Israeli policy, and would displace other forms of Zionism, such the visions of Brit Shalom, Martin Buber, or Yeshayahu Leibowitz (Buber 2005; Leibowitz 1992).

The Israeli Defense Forces was formed from the various Jewish defense and anti-British fighters present in Palestine before 1948: the Haganah, the Irgun, the Lehi, and the Palmach. After the 1948 war, during which Israel gained its independence and Palestinians lost their homeland, the national defense laws were drafted. Many of these laws would crystallize what would become dominant features in Israeli culture, such as the military draft of both men and women, reserve duty, and the exemption from service of Palestinian citizens and the ultra-Orthodox Jews. It was decided that men would serve three years in the IDF, and women two years. Women who sign up for combat roles (a more recent phenomenon), or other roles involving extensive training, serve three years. Women who serve in combat roles can be called for reserve duty. Exemptions are given to women if they are mar-

ried or have children, and to anyone for certain medical conditions, including psychological problems. Israeli government policy divides the Palestinians of the region into Druze, Bedouin, and Arab, and encourages the naturalization of such categories. Druze are required to perform military service (except Syrian Druze communities), and Bedouins are often encouraged to do so. Arabs, who may be Christian or Muslim, can volunteer for service, though few do so, and they cause great controversy within their communities when they do (Kanaaneh 2009). At the end of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Israel gained control Egyptian territories of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, the Jordanian territories on the West Bank of the Jordan River, and Syrian territory in the Golan Heights. Though it was claimed that the intention was to trade back this land for political recognition and stability, only the Sinai Peninsula left Israeli control.[4]

The occupation is the most tangible catalyst for many young Israelis to refuse military service for reasons of conscience. As we will see, however, the occupation is not a single policy issue, but instead a proxy for broader disputes in Israeli society regarding ethical responsibility and its limits. Much military refusal goes undetected because people can be released from their service obligations under certain conditions, real or feigned. Conscientious objection has always been present in Israel, but not always organized as a movement. In the early years, evasion was highly individual and private. When someone did not want to fight, they would often self-inflict injury or even desert. Anat Stern has investigated legal cases in the aftermath of the 1948 war, in which the parents of draft evaders were held legally responsible for their children's actions (2008). Joseph Abileah and Amnon Zichroni were lonely pacifists when they were tried for evasion in 1948 and 1954, respectively.

After the occupation had carried on for years, and the promise of land for peace had faded, a number of small movements against service were established. One of the first was that of Gadi Algazi, who went to jail for conscientious objection in 1979 to demonstrate solidarity with Palestinians beyond mere words by sacrificing something valuable. The conscientious objector organization Yesh Gvul was founded in 1982 by combat soldiers refusing to serve in the Lebanon War. This group challenged the popular image of sensitive Israeli soldiers who "shoot and cry," a state propaganda construct meant to demonstrate the compassion of Israeli soldiers and the practice of purity of arms (*tohar ha'neshek*), the humanitarian clause of IDF ethical doctrine.[5] Cheekily, Yesh Gvul's slogan claimed, "We don't shoot, we

don't cry, and we don't serve in the occupied territories." This was the first time that refusal was organized as a movement and had a major impact on public awareness. Yesh Gvul still operates and provides support for refusers, though it is no longer the only or the most active organization.

The refusal movement has always defined military refusal as a question of conscience. Some have referred to themselves as soldiers of conscience (*chialey matzpoon*) playing on the two possible meanings of the term: military soldiers who have a conscience (as opposed to those who do not), or the militarized image of soldiers fighting to defend conscience. Refusal organizations have published philosophical texts by noted thinkers such as Slavoj Zizek and Susan Sontag, defending the acts of Israeli conscientious objectors on moral, ethical, legal, and democratic grounds. The military has even extended partial recognition of refusers' claims by allowing conscientious exemption from military service for pacifists who can prove their status. The reason for the focus on conscience is clear: as controversial as military refusal is in Israel, conscience is a strong enough defense that it gives pause to those who would condemn the refusers, including the military.

A major wave of refusals surfaced in 2002 and 2003, during Operation Defensive Shield (Mivtza Homat Magen), in which several military units—including elite pilots and commandos—submitted letters to the military announcing their refusal.[6] Some of these refusers formed the group Courage to Refuse, but the group disintegrated over time, due to widely varied political positions with regard to Zionism and the ideal relationship with Palestinians. Some leaders of the failing group made contacts with Palestinian groups in the West Bank and formed the joint Israeli and Palestinian organization, Combatants for Peace. The Palestinian side of the organization is made up of ex-fighters against Israel or the IDF, many of whom spent time in Israeli prisons before deciding on a path of nonviolence to end the occupation. It is in this later incarnation that I encountered this group during my fieldwork.

Rather different is the organization New Profile, formed in 1998, a feminist organization in favor of the demilitarization and "civilization and civilianization" of Israeli society. This group supports all conscientious objectors, but is most intimately involved with the Shministim group, high school seniors who refuse to go to the military before they perform service. New Profile includes a large number of pacifists and a majority of women. It organizes protests, organizes support for refusers, and holds youth groups, called Think Before You Enlist, that are meant to expose young people to a

greater variety of ideas about military service than are available in mainstream society. Through my work I also interacted with members of Tay'ush, Women in Black, Anarchists Against the Fence, Breaking the Silence, and Machsom Watch.

The vast majority of self-identified conscientious objectors came from upper crust of Israeli society. They were often highly educated. All those I met had finished high school or were about to, and some were working on advanced degrees or were even professors at universities. A majority lived in the economic center of Israel, the Tel Aviv area or Jerusalem, though a few came from the north or Beer Sheva in the south. Their centralized location provided additional educational opportunities, but also more dissident information. Most of my informants were Ashkenazi (Jews of European origin), especially among those who had already been in the army. Being from the more dominant and privileged of the Jewish groups tied my interlocutors to the symbolic capital of the state's Ashkenazi pioneers, who take credit for the creation and implementation of the Zionist project. Mizrahis (Jews from the Middle East) and other minority Jewish groups arrived later on and are not credited with this foundational history, are often in more peripheral areas (as a result of government policy), and bear—as people from Arab countries—the added pressure not to appear as Arab sympathizers. Many Mizrahis reject military service for a variety of ethical and principled reasons, though they often do not invoke the language of conscience, and thus are usually punished for disobedience in a routine way and receive no media attention (see Amor 2010). These other "refusers" do come into my account.[7] They go to the same jails as self-declared conscientious objectors, with whom they have interesting points of resonance and discord. Questions of the army, national defense, Jewish-Arab relations, and relationships between men and women are among the many topics they discuss in their shared time of incarceration.

Baruch Kimmerling notes that the dominance of the secular Ashkenazi upper middle class has been under threat for years, targeted by demands for social justice and equality from oppressed groups, and suggests that their hegemony broke following the 1967 war (2001).[8] Yet this group maintains a great deal of economic privilege, bureaucratic competence, and symbolic capital derived from associations with an idealized Europe, as well as the sacrifices of the Holocaust and Israel's War of Independence. The ethnography here shows that this privilege contributes greatly to their ability to publicly refuse military service. They conceptualize and discuss themselves

in the vocabulary of conscience. They approach and attract the media with articulate and compelling statements that are repeated and reproduced. They organize their representation in groups. Unlike ethnographies of marginality that have appeared in recent years, I attempt to do anthropology in the center, close to the bone of state power (for compelling examples of the ethnography of marginality, see Tsing 1993; Das and Poole 2004). In doing so, I follow Ann Stoler's lead in researching "along the archival grain" (2010). This approach suggests that there is no need to read the state against itself. Rather, Stoler explains, in reading that is in line with the state's intentions, contradictions and anxieties emerge on their own. My interlocutors' experiences are to a large extent manifestations of such contradictions and anxieties, their dissent not being a foreign influence, but the result of contradictory political and ethical messages they have received from official and hegemonic sources. At the same time, the following chapters make plain that this group's status and abilities are in many senses a double-edged sword. The social understanding of conscience in Israel and elsewhere considers an authentic conscience instinctual, unstudied, and visceral. The rhetorical and analytical abilities of conscientious objectors are frequently judged to be scripted and pretentious, however, and fail to convince their audience of their sincerity. Israeli conscientious objectors try to persuasively perform what they believe, but they often create skepticism by appearing too smooth, too educated, and too self-conscious of their interests. This lack of control has implications for questions of hegemony, specifically, the limits of typically hegemonic identities and characteristics.

The dynamics of liberalism play a significant role in this account. An extended discussion of liberalism might surprise anyone familiar with the Israeli state, and it should. As many, notably Uri Ben-Eliezer, have pointed out, Israel is not liberal (1993). It has many characteristics of European Republicanism in being centered on civic participation as the basis for citizenship, mostly through military service. Oren Yiftachel has correctly noted that Israel is in fact an ethnocracy, which distributes both rights and privileges based on ethnic membership and policies of Judaization of the public space (2002). Moreover, commentators have noted that recent moves to legally incorporate the Occupied Territories, combined with increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, make the Israeli regime look less liberal and less democratic. We should nonetheless give careful consideration to the implications of conscientious objection on liberalism for a number of reasons.

One is that conscience, the reason for military refusal and the basis of the public claims for protection made by conscientious objectors, is deeply bound in the history of liberalism. Specifically, conscience and liberalism emerged hand in hand as part of European political philosophy that proffered the self-defining morally autonomous individual. Such an individual is ultimately responsible for his or her acts and behaviors, and conscience is a key concept to ensure that accountability falls on the individual and nowhere else. Wendy Brown shows that tolerance for a dissenting conscience follows from the "moral autonomy of the individual at the heart of liberal tolerance discourse" (2006: 7). Whereas Ottoman tolerance divided societies into communities based on religion, Western tolerance put an "emphasis on individual conscience" (9). This political tradition has clearly been influential in forming the subjectivities of conscientious objectors who invoke these discourses in their demands for political recognition. It is also represented in the political and institutional culture of the Israeli state.

Liberalism and tolerance reflect a significant part of the intellectual genealogy of the state's European founders, and as such made their way into Israeli law and policy. Israel's declaration of independence promises "complete equality of social and political rights to all inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex," showing that, among other concerns, liberal values played a part in the early efforts to define the state. This stream of thought conflicted with the desire for an ethnically homogeneous society, and the tension of a self-defined Jewish and democratic state has never been resolved. In a moment, I discuss how these liberal values held by early legislators were manifested in partial protections for conscientious objection. The second reason we should consider liberalism is that the state represents itself as a Western-style liberal democracy. At various times, right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that "Israel is unique in the Middle East for having a vibrant, liberal democracy, where women are equal, minorities are free and where all are subjects to the rule of law" (Benari 2012); and that "Israel is a Western liberal democracy and as such its public space is open and safe for all, men and women" (Ravid 2011). My account is less concerned with whether we should accept these claims and more with the meanings they try to convey, what they serve to legitimate, and what political possibilities they open and foreclose.

The final and probably most important reason that we should pay close attention to dynamics of liberalism is that the experience of a liberal social order is the dominant experience of my interlocutors and greatly shapes

their subjectivities. Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir have shown in their book *This Regime Which Is Not One* that the occupation regime that governs the Palestinian territories, clearly neither liberal nor democratic, should be thought of as part and parcel of the Israeli regime, which claims to be liberal and democratic. While keeping this entwinement in our minds, we at the same time must address the ways in which different groups are exposed to different faces of the regime. As we see in the ethnography, my interlocutors were encultured into liberal bureaucratic systems dependent on principles of self-regulation and upright self-conduct (Foucault 1991b: 87–104; Rose 1998). Until their refusal, their conformity with expectations was based on the internalization of hegemonic values and ambitious pursuit of their fulfillment. Others—like Palestinians, but also to some extent, Mizrahis and other Jewish others—face a more directly disciplining state. The state found little point in exposing its ideal citizens, beneficiaries of its ethnic hierarchy—Jewish, economically productive, European, and ideologically convicted—to the strong arm of the state.

As such, my interlocutors' main exposures at home, in school, and in their social circles were to liberal values. Thus, with state encouragement, my interlocutors have largely liberal subjectivities. By this, I mean that the liberal understandings of the individual, autonomy, and responsibility are fundamental to their worldviews and to their conscientious refusals to serve. Elizabeth Povinelli uses the term *autological subject* to refer to the discourses and practices that invoke such an autonomous and self-determining subject (2006). Of course, such a subject cannot actually exist, but the expectations and ideal of being such a subject frequently weighed on my interlocutors, especially in their conscious reflections on their ethical responsibility. It was only in later stages of adulthood that they began to discover, and more deeply understand, the ethnocratic aspects of the state and the very different experiences of others with the regime. It was at this point that they reacted strongly and refused military service. This trajectory is significant in its production of righteous indignation, in that other groups, not similarly sheltered, grow cynical about state ideology and are more invested in evading state surveillance than seeking accountability within the state. This suggests that among the factors that contribute to the emergence of viable counterpublics are ideological piety, hegemony, and privilege.

My interlocutors are also highly invested in the state and in seeking state recognition for their acts. Theirs is not the dissent that avoids and evades state power, quite the opposite. At times almost naively, they directly appeal

to the state and to Israeli society for approval. The state does not chase them down, in fact, their appeal is often far more direct than the state would like. Facing potentially explosive claims of ethical wrongdoing and conscientious dissent, the state in most cases would actually prefer to leave matters of refusal unclear and out of the public eye, and is often willing to provide strong incentives to this discrete path by being quite loose with exemptions for other reasons. Getting released from military service is not difficult. Getting released from military service for reasons of conscience is quite difficult, but the path my interlocutors pursue nonetheless.

When conscientious objectors turn to the state with their dissent, they are faced with a highly conflicted social order. Liberal protections for conscience in the military contexts were a major concern for the first legislatures when drafting the first defense laws of the state that would require universal conscription for Jews.[9] Before the state was established, Jewish underground defense organizations, such as the Palmach and Etzel, were volunteer, and the change to making military service mandatory for all was not taken lightly. Initially, the ad hoc military service laws explicitly recognized conscience, allowing judges to suspend punishment for acts (or the failure to act) if done (or not done) for reasons of conscience. In 1949, a year after the state was established, talks began in the Israeli parliament regarding the new defense laws. Freedom of conscience, the right to conscientious objection, and the necessity to maintain human dignity were brought up repeatedly in the context of international law and humanist discourse. Legislatures had come to Israel from places such as Poland, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Germany. They brought with them not only European ethical traditions, but also a memory of the pacifist traditions during the world wars and also in pre-state Israel. Brit Shalom, a peace movement that claimed such prominent members as Martin Buber, Hugo Bergmann, Gershom Scholem, and Henrietta Szold, was mentioned explicitly in defense of inserting a conscience clause in the law.

The religious parties often showed the most concern for the protections of conscience. Binyamin Mintz of the United Religious Front (Hazit Datit Meuhedet) argued against the idea of having "discipline of a dog" as the ethical mode of the Israeli military. "We don't want our soldiers to be machines without souls and without a heart. We do not want that upon the enlistment a person of Israel to our military, that he will seal off the source of his soul and his conscience, cease to think and be accountable to himself for his actions, and turn into a tool devoid of thought and feeling in the

hands of commanders" (Algazi 2004: 16). With these words, Mintz preempts the later narrative of robotic obedience, the "cog in the machine" that would emerge from the prosecution of Nazi Adolf Eichmann in Israel, and would inspire many of my interlocutors to refuse service. Parliament member Moshe Unna, also of the United Religious Front, noted that freedom of conscience needed special protection because it was meaningless if it applied only to what was already legal. "The principle of freedom of conscience is emphasized, and I ask: when is it possible to realize this principle if not when the conscience is opposed to the law" (Algazi 2004: 16). In contrast, the minister of defense preferred leniencies for conscience to be at his discretion, arguing that creating a category of conscience within the law was not necessary. Clearly, there were concerns beyond that of freedom of conscience, such as discipline and the need for a consistent fighting force.

The debate was hashed out over years. In the end, only women were given the full right to exemption from military service for reasons of conscience. This was a compromise between those who were against exemption, and the religious parties, who were both concerned with conscience and opposed to the enlistment of women into the military. Parliament member Rachel Cohen objected to the limited scope of this right: "I cannot not accept reasons of conscience, and not necessarily religious. Men also have reasons of conscience that do not allow them to serve combat duty. This law is not just for Jews" (Algazi 2004: 15). Thus, an absolute right to conscientious objection was never legally enshrined. The minister of defense was given broad discretionary powers of exemption for a variety of reasons, and this latitude has been used both to exempt and to deny exemption for conscientious objectors at various times. Implementation of policy for conscientious objection is largely a question of public perception and strategic appeasement and suppression, what Ariel Dloomy calls the "strategy of not having a strategy" (2005: 708). The military does not want to be seen to be denying freedom of conscience, still a value in wider society, and thus creating martyrs of conscientious objectors. It also does not want to be seen to be cowing to pressure or as implicitly acknowledging conscientious objectors' political claims against military service.

Liberalism does not find much aid and comfort in this account. I do not believe that the problem at the center of the controversy of conscientious objection is a failure of the state to fully and consistently live up to the liberal promise. In fact, the liberal promise is highly misleading. Although liberalism presumes to offer an escape from the binds of culture and shared

responsibilities, such a promise can never be fulfilled within the social sphere. For our case, the promise of moral autonomy is especially deceptive. This ethnography will consistently show that conscience and culture are deeply entwined, and that ideas such as belonging and loyalty depend deeply on shared notions of the ethical good. Even those who defend freedom of conscience tooth and nail cannot escape the collective meanings of conscience. This can be seen in the words of one of the most adamant defendants of the right to conscientious objection in the parliamentary debates, Zerach Warhaftig. He argued a soldier should not be judged guilty "if the deed he did, is an offense done because of justifiable reasons of conscience (*ta'amey matzpoon mootzdakim*)" (Algazi 2004: 17). *Justifiable reasons* is a phrase at the same time obvious and revealing of the communal expectations embedded in conscience. Even if society does not agree with the reasons, it must agree to their justifiability, a requirement that embeds them deeply within the collective consciousness and culture. If anything, I argue, liberalism's denial of the binds of culture creates a dysfunctional situation, setting up false promises, inevitable betrayals, and social turmoil.

Given the centrality of the state and sovereignty to this issue, I try to approach these categories carefully and with intention. The state is a foil for my conscientious objectors both symbolically and in practice. In his article *Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State*, Philip Abrams observes that the state is a slippery object and difficult to observe and theorize (2006). He suggests an analytical distinction between the state system, which is the system of institutional practices that constitute the state, and the state idea, which is the symbolic identity of the state, often the way people imagine it almost anthropomorphically. Timothy Mitchell warns that "The network of institutional arrangement and political practice that forms the material substance of the state is diffuse and ambiguously defined at its edges, whereas public imagery of the state as an ideological construct is more coherent. The scholarly analysis of the state is liable to reproduce in its own analytical tidiness this imaginary coherence and misrepresent the incoherence of state practice" (2006: 169). For example, as we see in the parliamentary discussions, the state is embodied by different politicians and bureaucrats who carry out its functions and understand its purpose differently. I agree, however, with Mitchell's conclusions that the problem is not solved by trying to hermetically separate the material forms of the state from the ideological forms. Rather, he suggests, "the state-idea and the state-system are better seen as two aspects of the same process" (2006: 170). I try to take up both

and their intersections. The Jewish state carries immense symbolic importance for my interlocutors, who both react against it and participate in the state system as soldiers. The acts of the state can be seen to have consistent and predictable appetites, for power, for sovereignty, for territory, but those who carry out these goals—including soldiers, military personnel, state bureaucrats, and the prime minister—each have their own understanding of these intentions and their role in them (for an excellent account of bureaucracy and its rationalities in Israel, see Handelman 2004).

A central organizing idea of this book is my interlocutors' varied participation in the economy of sacrifice in Israel. When I talk about the economy of sacrifice I am referring to the ways that sacrifice can be exchanged for honor and authority in society. Sacrifice is a public demonstration of investment in society and its welfare. The basic principle of sacrifice is substitution, giving something valuable that represents the person making the sacrifice, the *sacrificer*.[10] In an economy of sacrifice there is an expectation of return. Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss explain the principle of substitution: "The sacrificer gives up something of himself, the victim, but does not give himself. Prudently he sets himself aside. This is because if he gives, it is partly in order to receive" (1981: 100). What is returned is the transformation of moral and social status. As in a gift economy, sacrifice is not purely an economic exchange. Sacrifices, like gifts, are considered unique, and decorum prevents direct quantification of worth. Thus the economy of sacrifice always maintains some ambiguity as to the worth of the sacrifice and the appropriateness of the social rewards. In my understanding of sacrificial economy, I build on a number of insights of other theorists of sacrifice, and three are especially prominent. The first is Michael Lambek's assertion that sacrifice is ethical. He argues that sacrifice is made for a life-giving purpose, and sacrifice must be understood by its practitioners as good and productive. At the same time, however, a tradition of sacrifice carries specific ethical values, which we cannot refuse or reinterpret as individual participants. To participate in the economy of sacrifice, one must accept the ethical framework of the sacrifice and the effects produced by it. Sacrifices "are performative acts that sanctify the conventional and moral states they initiate" (2007: 30). In Israel, the dominant economy of sacrifice is the military, by which people gain social status and moral authority through service as soldiers for the state. The ethics of service in the IDF are problematic to some, among them my interlocutors. In Chapter 1, we see that though many try for a time to both serve and reinterpret the moral meaning of their service,

they are unable to control the ethical effects of service as individuals in a larger system. When engaging with the sacrificial economy, people face a tradition whose meaning, though not unchangeable or unchanging, is not open to broad individual interpretation. This is an important point when addressing issue of conscience and the expectations of moral autonomy that accompany it.

The second theoretical commitment I want to make follows Abdellah Hammoudi, who shows that sacrifice is fundamentally social. Some recent treatments of issues of sacrifice have examined sacrifice from a textual perspective. Such accounts mine theoretical accounts to extract an inherent symbolic architecture of a sacrificial tradition. Actual social phenomena are then presented as the inevitable manifestation of logics originating in philosophical structures. Following Hammoudi's approach in *The Victim and Its Masks* (1993), I reverse the order, looking first and foremost at the social practice of sacrifice, and in doing so also make a claim about anthropological priorities. Texts are far from irrelevant, but they do not determine the social. The personal and social ambitions of individuals and groups who engage with sacrificial traditions drive the interpretations, understandings, and deployments of sacrificial tradition. This is abundantly clear in this case, wherein the myth of Abraham's binding of Isaac, the guiding metaphor of military service in Israel, does not manifest any clear social organization based on the inherent structure of relationships. Rather, the myth is publicly manipulated, pushed and pulled and torn asunder in a struggle to determine the legitimacy of the sacrificial economy of military service, a thoroughly contextual tug of war.

The last insight I want to bring into my theoretical discussion of the economy of sacrifice concerns one of the most painful aspects of this ethnographic exploration, which is the rejection of sacrifice. Moshe Halbertal examines the biblical story of Cain and Abel, who both brought offerings to God. God accepted Abel's offering of meat, and rejected Cain's offering of fruit of the soil. There is no reason given for this rejection, and this upsets Cain greatly, ultimately driving him to kill his brother out of jealousy. Halbertal concludes that "the story stresses the expectation of the giver that his sacrifice be accepted, and the utter devastation that results from its rejection" (2012: 8). Likewise, "the exclusion from the possibility of giving is a deeper source of violence than the depravation that results from not getting" (2012: 20). What characterizes my interlocutors as a group is their struggle for efficacy in the Israeli sacrificial economy, but they have highly

varying degrees of success. Military service does not value all sacrifices equally, thus does not value all sacrificers equally. Although sacrifice is a central way of accruing social capital, not everyone is able to sacrifice or have his or her sacrifice recognized or accepted as such. Throughout this ethnography we will see attempts at sacrifice rebuffed, either because the offering is not considered valuable, or the person is not able to give what is desired, or is not trusted to enter the economy. This rejection excludes individuals and groups from influence and authority. Indeed, an alternative way to measure marginality might be to consider whether someone is in the position to make a valued sacrifice. Palestinian Israelis are for the most part outside the sacrificial economy in Israel and suffer greatly for the loss in social capital. Likewise, we will see how women, who have less to offer the military than men, are similarly excluded despite desperate attempts to sacrifice publicly (Chapter 3).

I consider sacrifice to be fundamental to society. I take a critical look at the sacrificial economy of military service, but do not call for the end of sacrifice or sacrificial politics, which some recent philosophical accounts do. A cross-cultural look at sacrificial traditions reveals how sacrifice is often part of the cycle of cultural life, how it conveys meaning to the group, and how it allows people to invest in their societies and form relationships much in the same way that gift economies function. Sacrifice moderates the relationship between the individual and the collective, creating and circumscribing mutual obligations. In the liberal imagination, such obligations are often seen as communal constraint and limitations on self-authorized freedom. However, the denial of such obligations reflects a liberal impasse and is neither possible nor desirable. If sacrifice is not the problem and liberalism is problematic, where does this leave military service as the sacrificial economy? I believe the dilemma lies in the relationship of the sacrificial economy to the state. The ethnography that follows suggests that sacrifice organized in relation to the state, as military service clearly is, is extremely problematic for a number of reasons. Michael Lambek has shown that sacrifice is ethical. It is guided by ethical values and suggests that the goal of the sacrifice is its ethical effects. The military, however, serves state interests, which are not guided by ethical values, though they can be ethical. State interests are guided by a concern for sovereignty, and often by the logic of Realpolitik. Realpolitik is state-level politics based on power and practical considerations and is explicitly not guided by ethical premises. Thus the ethical intentions of the sacrificers and the effects of their engagement in the sacrificial

economy are mismatched, because the priorities and loyalties of the military, the institution that organizes and supervises the sacrifice, are ultimately to the state. Thus, although individuals try to engage in an ethical practice, they are deployed for goals that are often indifferent to ethics.

This produces a number of disturbing distortions of the sacrificial economy. One is that the worth of someone's offering is evaluated on utilitarian principles of military fitness. This sets out a hierarchy that carries over into nonmilitary social life, in which strong is preferred over weak (Almog 2000), male over female (Sasson-Levy 2003), able-bodied over disabled (Weiss 2005), Jewish over Arab (Kanaaneh 2009), Ashkenazi over Mizrahi (Amor 2010), and those who adhere to certain cultural codes of hegemonic Israeliness over those who deviate (Katriel 1986; Yair 2011). This hierarchy is not based on ethical distinctions but on pragmatic ones. However, perhaps the most disturbing aspect of military's place in facilitating the central sacrificial economy is the elimination of the fundamental component of substitution. In sacrifice, something of value is offered in place of the sacrificer, it represents the sacrificer. It can be an animal, an object, food, a stone. The sacrificer does not offer himself or herself. One gives in part because one expects to receive. If everything is given, the sacrificial economy cannot continue. In military service, the life of the sacrificer is offered, at least potentially. Because of the basic realities of combat and warfare, the state cannot be content with lesser substitutions and tries to cultivate willingness to undertake the ultimate sacrifice. A classic example is the myth of Joseph Trumpeldor, an early Zionist from Russia who died defending the Tel Hai settlement and became a national hero. According to legend, his dying words were "Never mind, it is good to die for our country." This legend has been used to inspire young people with nationalist sentiment and sacrificial willingness. Yet the Realpolitik ambitions of military actions, and the suspicion that soldiers are more pawns of the state than its heroes, as the state claims, manifests in cynical suspicion of state motives.

I argue that even while people participate in this economy of sacrifice through military service in Israel, there is a great deal of ambivalence and apprehension with regard to the problematic distortions I discuss. Throughout this ethnography, I seek to show that this unease not only is manifest in the crisis of conscience of my interlocutors, but also bubbles to the surface frequently in popular culture in ways that challenge the official narrative and mock the call for self-sacrifice in the military as cynical and manipulative. Thus there are many jokes about Trumpeldor. Many are sexual. One

claims that his last words were not nationalist sentiment, and not in Hebrew, but rather *yob tvoyu mat* (fuck your mother) in Russian. Such jokes and public slights discussed in this ethnography go beyond the slaying of sacred cows. Often they reveal the nature of the unease that people have with the sacrificial economy and its cynical nature. As mentioned, the myth most commonly used both for and against the sacrificial economy has been the biblical story of the binding of Isaac. It is used to both promote and disparage the continued call for sacrifice for the nation-state. Odes to self-sacrifice have been written through this metaphor, but it has also become a locus for the festering anxiety of society with military service. The following poem by the well-known Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai reminds us that the biblical myth of sacrifice was based on substitution. Even in the original myth, God did not allow human sacrifice to take place. Both Abraham and Isaac went home, unlike modern Isaacs. It immediately raises a question: if God did not allow human sacrifice for himself, is the state a greater God for demanding it, or merely a false idol?

The Real Hero

Yehuda Amichai

The real hero of the Isaac story was the ram,
who didn't know about the conspiracy between the others.
As if he had volunteered to die instead of Isaac.
I want to sing a song in his memory—
about his curly wool and his human eyes,
about the horns that were silent on his living head,
and how they made those horns into shofars when he was slaughtered
to sound their battle cries
or to blare out their obscene joy.
I want to remember the last frame
like a photo in an elegant fashion magazine:
the young man tanned and manicured in his jazzy suit
and beside him the angel, dressed for a party
in a long silk gown,
both of them empty-eyed, looking
at two empty places,
and behind them, like a colored backdrop, the ram,
caught in the thicket before the slaughter.

The thicket was his last friend.
The angel went home.
Isaac went home.
Abraham and God had gone long before.
But the real hero of the Isaac story
was the ram.[11] (Amichai 1996: 156–157)

Both the politics of the state, as well as those of resistance to the state, are organized by the sacrificial economy in their rationalities of legitimation and justification. Just as a soldier giving his or her life for the state is sanctified in the national politics of martyrdom, so the sacrifices of the resistance are measured in the negative economy. Those who sit in jail or lose their employment receive the most social respect for their commitment to the cause. That political intervention can be made only through sacrifice has strong implications regarding the expectations of modern citizenship. It is commonly thought that voting and civic engagement are key to political influence in modern democracies. Moreover, citizenship in rights-oriented societies is often promoted by such states as protection from the cultural and thick kinship ties that hold those in nonliberal societies (Povinelli 2006). Military service and its refusal reveal the communal obligations that remain hidden at the heart of modern citizenship, however. Such sacrificial obligations assumed to be limited to simpler kinship-based societies are in fact very much part of modern reality. I suggest that modern states can often demand more than face-to-face societies. Although religion, which regulates sacrifice in ritual, often sets clear limits to the personal cost of sacrifice, there is no limit to the self-sacrifice possible through military service. In the imagined community of the nation state, sacrifice has lost all moderation, blurring the expectations and limits of responsibility, as well as the object of responsibility, be it the family, the co-ethnic, the coreligionist, the fellow citizen, the fellow human.

In the first two chapters, I describe my fieldwork with the older generation of conscientious objectors who refused after serving in the military for a number of years. In the first chapter, I consider their path to the ethical and ontological crisis that ended in their refusal, and, in the second chapter, I consider the ways this group of refusers try to give account for their controversial acts to Israeli society, as well as to change the norms that prevent their reintegration. Chapter 1 discusses why the most elite and dedicated soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces were the ones who ultimately became

conscientious objectors. The cultural idiom of sacrifice, the binding of Isaac, casts the Israeli soldier as sacrificial victim. However, conscientious objectors' experiences with their own violence against Palestinians contradicted this conviction and shook their understanding of their actions as soldiers. This contradiction precipitated a crisis of conscience. I argue that because the hegemonic inculcation of these young people was with respect to the sacrificial moral economy, and not to the state as supersubject, resistance was possible. This case prompts a reconsideration of understandings of the relationship between hegemonic inculcation and resistance. Specifically, I claim that the seeds of resistance are often found within hegemonic inculcation, especially when power is used cynically.

Chapter 2 takes up the public spectacle of confession, as performed by the conscientious objector group Combatants for Peace. Having abandoned the mainstream sacrificial economy of military service, my interlocutors struggle for moral influence on their own terms, still governed by the logics of sacrifice. This chapter explores the prospects and pitfalls of persuasion in activism for moral change. During these public events, former soldiers confess to violent encounters with Palestinian civilians. They describe their moments of epiphany in which "military logic" was broken and they saw themselves as the aggressor through the eyes of the Palestinian other. I analyze the structural, linguistic, and rhetorical techniques and characteristics of these confessions, which, like many forms of public confession, are constructed for the purpose of persuasion and moral conversion. In these confessions, the narrators use specific language and examples to upset and restructure assumptions of innocence and guilt to their Israeli audience. As a result, their confessions are in essence an accusation against both audience members who still serve in the military and the state. Through this clandestine substitution of meaning, the ex-soldiers exploit one of the greatest vulnerabilities of the state: its dependence on voluntary sacrifice to maintain its coercive force.

The third and fourth chapters move to consider the younger group of conscientious objectors who decide to refuse service before ever enlisting. The third chapter considers their path to refusal and the social sanctions they experience, the fourth how they attempt to explain and defend their acts as a matter of conscience, this time in the legal setting. Chapter 3 describes how from an early age, this group lived with the expectation of their military service, the expectation of their self-sacrifice. This star-crossed birthright was described by the poet Haim Gouri as being "born with a knife

in their hearts." Although this group questions the legitimacy of such demands, the society in which their daily interactions and primary relationships take place is deeply embedded with these logics. Alienation from close relatives and expulsion from school are a few of the social consequences my interlocutors faced during this period. The older generation of refusers mobilizes both the respect they won as elite soldiers and the social respect for their sacrifice of incarceration for refusal. This younger group, including many women, finds itself paradoxically unable to produce the kinds of narratives that are compelling to Israeli audience, or to mobilize social capital in the same way. This chapter highlights the desperate attempts of my interlocutors to find relevance in the sacrificial economy, and the distress of their exclusion.

Chapter 4 considers the legal adjudication of the question of conscience by the Israeli military. The Israeli military's Conscience Committee evaluates and exempts pacifists from obligatory military service, based explicitly on concern for liberal tolerance. However, I find that pacifist refusal based on principled objections to violence challenges the legitimacy of the state and the hegemonic moral order. As such, applicants who articulate their refusal in these terms are rejected by the military review board. By contrast, pacifist conscientious objection based in embodied visceral revulsion to violence does not challenge the state's existential basis and moral order; cases framed in these terms are granted exemption. Understanding pacifist as a physical incapacity depoliticizes pacifism by making it incommensurable with public moral debate concerning military service and preventing the military from having to engage or recognize pacifist moral claims against violence, including state violence. This creates a dilemma for pacifist applicants who wish not only to be exempted from service, but also to engage politically on questions of military service and violence and to endow their pacifism with political meaning and relevance. The pathologization of pacifism demonstrates the way in which the discursive production involved in adjudicating rights can negatively shape the social and political meaning of the minority identity, and the rationality of attributing rights.

Chapter 5 addresses the conflicting obligations and responsibilities that conscientious objectors face. Although my interlocutors expect to be able to bracket their dissent from daily life, they find that the matter is much more deeply entwined in the social than they had previously realized. This misrecognition sets off a series of mutual betrayals between family, friends, community, and the state that uncover existing tensions and Oedipal anxieties. The

expectations of my interlocutors for the liberal promise are contrasted with those for whom marginality is not a new experience. This comparison leads me to conclude that commonly held ideas of hegemony as a tool deployed by the dominant class to confuse and subjugate the lower class are highly misleading in the case of liberalism. Rather, I suggest, the contradictions and violence of the political system are often pushed to the social margins, the burdens of such contradictions falling on the lower classes. Thus, the dominant class, protected from the violence of its ideology, is far more hegemonically inculcated than those who have long encountered the strong arm of the state.

Finally, I take up the broader implications of conscientious objection and consider how this phenomenon exposes a number of false promises made by state. One is the promise of autonomous conscience. Rather than a resolute act of unambiguous conscience, military refusal is shown to be messy and compromising. Israeli objectors struggle deeply with the tensions of obligation to conscience and citizenship obligations, but do so under a misleading expectation of dissent without social sanction. Many conscientious objectors have become disillusioned with the promise of Zionism as a solution to the "Jewish question"—a false promise of permanent security, absolute belonging, and cultural fulfillment. This is the heroic promise of the nation-state, offered in exchange for sacrifice, an economy of negation. That military service can be an ethical system of sacrifice is yet another false promise. It is a case of the fox guarding the chicken coop. The state is driven by realism combined with a desire for power and territory as opposed to ethical principles, and as such cannot protect or facilitate an ethical tradition. Ultimately, I hope in what follows engage the entailments of national citizenship, the shuffling of yokes and burdens between consent and dissent, and the possible openings these obligations engender.

1

The Interrupted Sacrifice

On the route to the Palestinian West Bank village of Susiya, the mood in the bus was excited and jovial. I was traveling with a group of Israeli conscientious objectors from Combatants for Peace (CFP) to meet with Palestinian ex-fighters, members of the same activist organization. At their meetings, Israelis and Palestinians tell their life stories and how they came to reject a militarized solution to the conflict between their two peoples. As we made our way out of southern Jerusalem and crossed into the Palestinian West Bank, the trip turned into a macabre guided tour of the memory sites of the Israelis' experiences as soldiers. "You see over there," Avi said, jumping up from his seat and jabbing his finger vigorously at the window, "behind the wall, you can see through the gap. Now! That one! We demolished the house there like two or three times." Those who had served in the region between Jerusalem and our destination in the South Hebron hills pointed out the locations of incidents that had contributed to their refusal to continue military service. They told each other war stories in military vernacular, as many Israeli men enjoy doing; however, their disclosure of violent encounters in blunt terms gave their stories an uncanny twist.[1] As many of their peers were waking up for a leisurely Saturday morning, these former elite combat soldiers, for whom the military had been a central part of their lives, were now en route to a solidarity event in a small Palestinian village.

I met Avi early in my fieldwork. He was an active member of Combatants for Peace and was often present at the events. When I would meet with him alone, outside CFP activities, he would express ambivalence about whether he would be attending the next event, saying he wanted to spend time with his young daughter. In the end, however, almost every time, he

would be there, giving me a guilty grin and joking that he couldn't stay away. These events were very important to the people I worked with, all of whom invested considerable amounts of their time in these activities. On that weekend and others, I had arrived early in the morning at the Tel Aviv central train station with a thermos of coffee and a few candy bars for the trip through Jerusalem and into "the territories" (*ha'shetachim*). I would go with them on their trips to the West Bank for meetings with their Palestinian counterparts in the organization or on solidarity events. Nearly all the Jewish members of the group had refused their service in years previous, especially during the wave of refusals in 2002 and 2003. Refusal by qualified individuals to perform military service is illegal, and all of my interlocutors among the former soldiers on the bus had spent time in military prison for their decision, their terms ranging from a few weeks to a year. They also had been dismissed from the military. Many felt, however, that their biggest punishment was social, harsh rejections by loved ones and strangers alike who could not accept what they had done. Despite this, they persisted in their activist activities, and in doing so calling often negative attention to themselves.

Heavy sacrifices are demanded of those who live in the region of Israel and Palestine, a site of struggle over land as well as over notions of community, belonging, and citizenship. In Israel, the main sacrificial economy is conducted through military service, in which the risk and time of service is exchanged for more complete citizenship (Peled and Shafir 1996, 1998) and moral capital (Klein 1999). Military service plays a central and much-discussed role in Israeli society, and the performance of this duty is foundational to the Israeli understanding of national community and belonging. However, as Antonio Gramsci (1971) noted, all hegemonic ideals are fragile, and thus the demand for sacrifice is renewed, resubstantialized, defended, and modified with each new generation.

There has been a long engagement in anthropology, as well as among some extradisciplinary predecessors and contributors, with research that implicitly and explicitly questions the legitimacy of state power. This questioning comes to a large extent in revealing, in full view, the strategies and techniques of state self-legitimization, methods of legitimizing power and violence, and, most damaging of all, the sleight of hand in making state power seem natural and pointing out the metaphorical man behind the curtain. Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony and its mechanisms has had long-lasting impact in the field. Other scholars have revealed state tech-

niques of inclusion and exclusion on grounds of ethnicity, gender, and language as well as the suffering and paradoxes of agency that result from marginalization (see Appadurai 2003; Brown 1995; Das and Poole 2004; Guha and Spivak 1988). Meanwhile, several anthropologists have been explicit in their attempts to break the "spell" that the state seems to assert (see Appadurai 1993; Mbembé 1992; Taussig 1992). For example, James Scott has questioned the legitimacy of state power by considering the everyday methods by which people evade its governance and control over their lives (see Scott 1987, 1990, 2009). This work has dovetailed with and inspired much anthropological work on resistance by indigenous and marginalized communities. By and large, within this ongoing dialogue, scholars share a perspective that hegemonic inculcation is a more or less effective tool of state power and that resistance to state power comes either from those who are beyond the hegemonic reach of the state, from alternative or oppositional traditions, or who break the spell of state hegemony, whether in terms of older ideas of class consciousness or more modern conceptions that do not posit an a priori political form of consciousness.

In this chapter, I try to explain the context and process by which elite, dedicated soldiers came to resist the state through military refusal. Contrary to the social expectation that these soldiers would be the last to publicly refuse, I show why they were, in fact, the most likely to do so by virtue of their state-encouraged investment in the national narrative and the state-sponsored sacrificial economy of military service. This case prompts a reconsideration of anthropological understandings of the relationship between hegemonic inculcation and resistance. Resistance to the state and its authority is generally considered to come either from those outside its hegemonic or disciplining sphere or from those who fall short of state expectations of the ideal subjectivity for good citizenship. However, this case demonstrates that accepting and identifying with the state-supported hegemonic ideal does not preclude resisting the state. As scholars, we cannot ask only to what degree subjects subscribe to hegemonic values or about the extent of nationalist inculcation; we must also ask about the ideals to which, specifically, this identification and loyalty are directed. I find that inculcation does not imply loyalty to the state as super-subject but, rather, loyalty to the sacrificial moral economy, which, though emphasized through national initiatives as a cornerstone of good citizenship, engenders a turn of events that the state neither anticipated nor desired. Rather, the sacrificial economy acts as a golem, taking on a life of its own against the state that nurtured it in so many ways.

The 2002 and 2003 waves of refusals to perform military service surprised and beleaguered the Israeli Defense Forces. The refusals were distinguished by their occurrence in the higher ranks of the military, for example, by Brigadier General Yiftah Spector and many other officers. These conscientious objectors, including my interlocutors, were mostly elite combat soldiers, reservists in their twenties and thirties sent to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. *Elite,* here, refers to soldiers selected for volunteer special forces combat units, which hold a great deal of prestige for the difficulty and responsibility of the jobs. Their conscientious refusal to serve was, for most of society, unexpected because all indications had been that these soldiers were the most enthusiastic and the most dedicated among their peers to the sacrificial act of military service. They had been elevated to ideal types of soldiering, praised, iconized, and entrusted with the highest levels of responsibility. They were, as a military prosecutor told me, the face of the Israeli Defense Forces. Although the military and most politicians tried to limit the political fallout of their unexpected refusals, they were caught off guard. The refusals dealt a blow to mainstream confidence in the moral soundness of the nation's elite soldiers, in the sense of collective conscience regarding military service and the military's claims of purity of arms (*tohar ha'neshek*), as asserted in the Israeli Defense Forces doctrine of ethics.

The Sacrificial Idiom in Israeli Society

The idiom of sacrifice in Israeli society posits the soldier as sacrificial victim. The biblical story of *akedat Yitzhak*, or the binding of Isaac, is the dominant metaphor for discussing military service in Israel, with the soldier imagined as Isaac. This metaphor is found extensively in public discourse as well as the arts. Some scholars go so far as to claim that it is primarily through this myth that Israeli society speaks to itself (Sagi 1998; Weiss 1991). In the story, told in Genesis 22, God calls on Abraham to bring his beloved son Isaac to Mount Moriah, bind him, and sacrifice him. Abraham obeys, but at the last moment, he is interrupted by an angel of God, who tells him not to kill Isaac. Abraham, instead, finds a ram, which he sacrifices in substitution. God informs Abraham that, because he has demonstrated his faith and obedience, "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations

on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me" (Genesis 22:17–18). Abraham then founds a community in Beer Sheva.[2] The significance of this story for the metaphor of Jewish redemption in Israel through sacrifice is readily apparent. The theme of sacrifice leading to redemption and the foundation of a blessed and invulnerable nation clearly resonated with the Zionist ideology of redeeming the land of Israel and with Zionist leaders calling for difficult sacrifices from the new citizens of the fledgling nation engaged in near-constant wars (Sagi 1998; Zerubavel 2006).

However, what is not immediately obvious is how this myth overlaps with modern military service or how, exactly, this idiom of sacrifice structures contemporary reciprocity between violence and redemption. The Isaac of the biblical story was an unknowing child, hardly the ideal soldier or a galvanizing image of heroism. Isaac's image has therefore undergone modification in Israeli public culture (in literature, theater, and art) from that of an unknowing child to an exemplar of a whole generation of youths willing to sacrifice themselves for national redemption (Feldman 1998, 2010; Sagi 1998). Poems and literature of the early settler generation venerate this image of Isaac in unqualified terms. Such efforts received and continue to receive state patronage and promotion. A poem of the settler period, by Uri Zevi Greenberg, which is still read publicly on Israeli Memorial Day, invites,

> Let that day come . . .
> when my father will rise from his grave with the resurrection of the dead
> and God will command him as the people commanded Abraham.
> To bind his only son: to be an offering—
> . . . let that day come in my life! I believe it will (1972: 145–147).

Sacrifice here leans heavily toward self-sacrifice; the soldier is both the sacrificial victim and the sacrificer, the one who makes the sacrifice, is responsible for the act, and accrues the moral benefits of it. The move toward self-sacrifice in return for redemption has, unsurprisingly, produced some slippage in the idioms of sacrifice, and many scholars have noted Christian imagery in this secular nationalist articulation of sacrifice (Feldman 2007). One of the clearest examples of this slippage is a well-known photograph by Adi Nes, which sold for more than a quarter million dollars at auction, the highest price ever paid for an Israeli photograph. The piece is untitled but commonly referred to as the Last Supper (see Figure 1). It formally replicates

Figure 1. Untitled (commonly called *The Last Supper*), 1999. Color photograph by Adi Nes. Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Leonardo da Vinci's painting of that name, showing Jesus in his final evening with his twelve apostles, but substitutes male Israeli soldiers for Jesus and the apostles. The scene is set in a boisterous mess hall at mealtime, and the central soldier, replacing Christ, abstains from the fraternizing around him and bears a look of melancholy and premonition.

This photograph is not an unproblematized celebration of sacrifice. Using the Christian metaphor, it suggests inauthenticity for Jewish culture and plays with the dichotomy of voluntary self-sacrifice and communal betrayal of the individual. Criticism of sacrifice through military service began in earnest in the 1970s. Iconic authors such as Amos Oz, Yehuda Amihai, Yitzhak Laor, and A. B. Yehoshua have all used the idiom of *akedat Yitzhak* to criticize the nation's demand for sacrifice from its youth, pathologizing the intergenerational relations it implies as well as pointing out the impossibility of normalization (a high Zionist goal) under conditions of continual self-sacrifice. Literary scholars understand this criticism as representative of larger shifts in the ethos of Israeli society away from a veneration of sacrifice. Despite forty years of intermittent critique, sacrifice through military

service continues. Likewise, despite the increased critical awareness that class, ethnic, and gender boundaries are created through the hierarchy of sacrifice in the military, these are far from being overturned. There are, then, many relationships to, and investments in, the Israeli state's framing of good citizenship through the national sacrificial economy.

Living the Nation

Avi grew up in a middle-class family in a suburb of Tel Aviv, where he still lives with his wife and daughter. He is the grandchild of Holocaust survivors, Jews from central Europe. He had been a commando and refused in 2002, together with many of his fellow commandos. Avi was very active in the Combatants for Peace organization. In 1990, at age seventeen, his heroic ambitions were informed by a romantic attitude toward the idea of communal sacrifice. This was partly because he had been exposed almost exclusively to the sincere veneration of military sacrifice as presented in public and educational events and activities of commemoration, had not yet encountered critical literature, and was relatively unaffected by the ongoing disenchantment with sacrifice in the arts. But he also recognized that joining the military was his rite of passage into full participation in Israeli society, and he pursued it with vigor. Avi recognized that he would accumulate both tangible and intangible benefits through military service. He spoke to me at length about the ways in which he saw his masculinity and citizenship as dependent on service. He knew that his service would endow him with moral worth and respect and transform his moral status in society, as Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1981) insist sacrifice is meant to do. Iris Jean-Klein (2000, 2001) demonstrated how the domestically based nationalist initiatives of ordinary persons, everyday and self-motivated forms of inculcation with nationalistic ideals in Palestine, are often more significant than organized initiatives. Considering the eternal question of why people would agree to kill or die for the nation-state, Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer (1985: 386) suggest that such willingness is partly due to strategies of substantialization by which the obligatory is converted into the desirable. Though Avi's service was legally required, he pursued it with vigor because of the many benefits of participation.

In joining an elite unit, Avi was also signaling high ambitions vis-à-vis a hierarchy of substitutions in military sacrifice. Not all service is the same,

and therefore not all endows the same degree of transformation in moral status. Military service entails hierarchies of sacrificial value, as is common to organized sacrificial practice (Lambek 2007; Willerslev 2009). In making great sacrifice in the Israeli military, one does not seek out death or injury; however, the sacrifice is greater with greater loss in an economy of negation. Taking on what is socially recognized as additional risk, physical and mental agony, discomfort, and time contributes to the sacrificial hierarchy of military positions. Avi could have taken an office job close to home, which would have involved little danger and hardly any responsibility and would have allowed him to go home at the end of each day, but he told me he never considered such a position. Intelligence work carried somewhat more cachet, but the real elite choice was combat duty. Likewise, not all combat duty is equal; jobs such as pilot and commando carry far more prestige and a greater sense of exclusivity than rank-and-file positions do because they are more physically and intellectually challenging, a hierarchy well recognized throughout society (Kimmerling 2009).

Avi went through an excruciating selection process and subsequent training to become a commando. He would often in conversation bring up his mindset when he joined the army as a teenager, sometimes sarcastically referencing his naïveté, though sometimes with chastened esteem for his intentions (for further discussion of the role of the military in society, see Helman 2000; Ben-Eliezer 1998). On one of the latter occasions, during a conversation over a cup of instant coffee, he told me,

> I wanted to give the most. . . . I felt like I needed to do the most that I was capable of. I believed that I should give the most, because that was like . . . an investment, that would carry through the rest of my life. So I only saw the possibility of giving 100 or 110 percent. But also, in my family there was a very big emphasis on volunteerism, trying to do the most you can without counting points, which you know, is big in the Israeli ethos as well. I would volunteer with my mother a lot, helping poor families or new immigrants [*olim chadashim*]. I really got from my parents, and also my teachers, that, because this is a new country, that everyone needs to give up a lot, put in a lot of effort for the experiment to work. I thought if I did something *really hard,* then my generation could set the country straight, make it stable and like . . . permanent or something. And I could be a hero in the process, so I saw no downside at all.

His words resonate with Jean-Klein's (2001) claims that nationalization often allows people to realize their fantasies as well as fulfill their political-moral commitment, which are often intertwined. Avi and other refusers found in the hegemonic demand for military service a coincidence of their fantasies, their cultural values, and a chance to advance their moral worth.

Such sacrifice is a kind of mediated self-sacrifice. The "mere" and "voluntary" acceptance of this risk is a sacrifice in and of itself, a precondition for the amplified possibility of injury or death. This sacrifice is not selfless as much as it is overdetermined by what I call a *coincidence of the good* in society around military service as communal sacrifice. For the individual, the sacrificial economy involves benefits to material and moral worth from participation. Hubert and Mauss note that abnegation in sacrifice and its rhetoric are not without their rewards: "The sacrificer gives up something of himself, the victim, but does not give himself. Prudently he sets himself aside. This is because if he gives, it is partly in order to receive" (1981: 100). As Foucault's (1991) descriptions of the self-disciplining associated with good citizenship practices make clear, however, there are likewise benefits to the state's ability to govern. In the Israeli case, the performance of military service is encouraged by state educational initiatives and widespread social pressure to do the most to serve society, an ethic of volunteerism, the moral virtue of difficult service, and benefits to masculinity as well as personal career ambition and the social respectability that accompanies service in Israeli society.

Avi would often refer to combat soldiering as though it were coterminous with Israeli citizenship, referring to his service in an elite unit as the universal Israeli experience, as most Israelis do whether they have had this experience. In fact, combat roles are taken by only some 10 percent of Israelis, and even fewer serve in elite units. The ideal combat soldier and, thus the Israeli ideal as described by Meira Weiss (2005), is Ashkenazi, male, physically able, and attractive. Tamar Katriel describes the demographic group of soldiers like my interlocutors as "elite pioneers from Eastern and Central Europe for whom the official tale of Zionist settlement has served as a powerful self-defining and self-legitimizing social discourse" (1997: 150). Reciprocally, Danny Kaplan (2008: 418) demonstrates the national emotional investment in the welfare of this hegemonic group of Ashkenazi men, especially when engaged in the sacrificial economy of military service.[3] Many Israelis, and many combat soldiers, do not fit this description, but nearly all of my interlocutors conformed to this mythic ideal, though they avoided

discussion of their demographic homogeneity. Their uncomplicated relationship to the national ideal of sacrifice allows them to relate to this ideal without self-doubt. This means that their inculcation was very deep and enmeshed with their sense of identity. The official narrative of the state, with its European past and New Jew present, is also their personal narrative. For those who are not part of the hegemonic group, the experience of personal divergence from the ideal—be it a family history in the Middle East, a disability, not being Jewish, or being an immigrant—is noticeable from an early age and will always be an inherent obstacle to complete identification with the national ideal. Despite demonstrations that combat casualties are increasingly from peripheral social groups (Levy 2006), such groups remain peripheral. All military positions are open to all, and acceptance is meritocratic; however, as is the case in U.S. universities, admission often goes to those who were raised with opportunities and is granted with an eye to satisfying institutional ideals.[4]

Refusers most often described their intentions in joining the army as "wanting to be a hero," and, in fact, two documentary films that take up Israeli conscientious objection, *I Wanted to Be a Hero* (a 2004 Israeli film by Shiri Tzur) and *Raised to Be Heroes* (a 2006 Canadian film by Jack Silberman),[5] are named according to this refrain. It is worth considering the subjectivity that informs an understanding of one's actions as heroic. It is, I believe, best described by what Gayatri Spivak (2004) calls the ability to *metonymize* the self, to imagine the self in an active relationship with the state, the opposite of subalternity. The ability to engage in sacrifice, then, is not compatible with the subaltern subject position, because it involves an understanding of the self as hero and citizen and of self-sacrifice as a contribution to the (appreciative) community.

Many who would become refusers initially saw their military service as a personal intervention in the arc of Jewish history. When I asked Avi about his parents' military experiences, he told me,

> The truth is, my father had a very traumatic military experience. He was in war and he was traumatized by it, and for me this fact was always kind of embarrassing. Well, not really embarrassing exactly. I knew it wasn't his fault. I guess I just saw it as his being too close to exile [*galut*], which made him kind of soft. You know Woody Allen? Not that extreme, but a little in that direction, with the glasses. (I got contacts.) Anyway, I felt like I was much stronger and with self-

> confidence, and I was jumping at military service as a chance to correct for my father's service.

This idea of correcting the past, the personal past being deeply entwined with the national past, was very common. Many talked about feeling as if their service was a penance or even an atonement for their relatives who died in the Holocaust.

Dan was a pilot before he refused. Like Avi, he was Ashkenazi and from a middle-class family living in the suburbs of Tel Aviv. He also described his ethical intervention:

> They teach you in school that since the Jews left Israel it has been one pogrom after another, only anti-Semitism everywhere. And then in the most shameful moment, the Holocaust [Shoah], only a few Jews in Warsaw even put up a fight, but it is too little too late. To me, I couldn't understand why no one thought about fighting back a few thousand years ago! Only now do we have the self-respect to defend ourselves?!

Such statements clearly illustrate Spivak's observations regarding metonymizing the self and the identification with history. They also resonate with Claudio Lomnitz-Adler's (2003: 142) observation that national sacrifice is often imagined as an attempt to place oneself in the national narrative. The state is likewise invested in this project. Because military service is understood as sacrifice, the state must legitimize it in ethical terms. State discourse encouraging this identification is conveyed through a number of channels. Dan mentions schools and indeed education is one of the prime sites of inculcation. Learning that "since the Jews left Israel it has been one pogrom after another" is an example of the Zionist periodization of Jewish history that romanticized the early Israelites while belittling the two thousand years of Jewish life outside Israel. This narrative characterizes both ancient and modern Israel as authentic, strong, and secure, in contrast to Jewish life outside of Israel, which is stereotyped as adulterated, weak, and vulnerable. As we can see in Dan's statement, this historicization legitimizes the state and gives ethical purchase to military service. History class, along with Bible studies, motherland studies (*moledet*), and geography, have since the beginning of the state been culled by educators to convey the Zionist worldview. One of the central concepts of this worldview is the idea of peoplehood or nation, called *am* in Hebrew. This concept groups people by ethnicity rather

than geography or ideology, and attributes a common destiny and collective intentional to the group. It is used most commonly to describe the Jewish people, *am yisrael* (for an excellent exploration of this concept, see Dominguez 1989). It is central to Zionist education as a conceptual tool through which not only to explain Jews as a naturally cohesive national group, a difficult task considering the far-flung cultural backgrounds of Israelis, but also to naturalize its enemies into opposing groups.[6] *Am* is part of a political discourse of peoplehood that regulates individual and collective experiences to be understood through the ethnic category. Thus, it is common for people in Israel to attribute collective intention, as in "the Arabs rejected the deal," "the Jews demanded a period of calm," "they do not value life," or "Israel wants peace."

In speaking with other conscientious objectors about the sources of their strong identification with the state and willingness to sacrifice, many referred to their children. Many had difficulty remembering the details of their early childhood educational experiences, but their political conscientiousness as refusers made them attuned to the role of the state in their children's lives. On three occasions, refusers noted their distress when their children brought home pictures of smiling wholesome soldiers, either a handout or drawn by the child with the encouragement of the teachers. Others mentioned their discomfort that they lost domestic control over the meaning of Jewishness because of the way the state seemed to insert itself into Jewish holidays in school. Uri Ram similarly notes that "Israeli state ceremonies are imbued with Jewish religious symbols and Jewish religious holidays are today imbued with nation-state symbols" (2011: 21; see also Handelman 2004).

Discussing their teenage years, my interlocutors described the confluence of state and private influence that acted in harmony. Military officers were brought into the schools, and teachers brought students to military bases for exposure and training. Classes observed national commemorations celebrating military sacrifice and wrote letters and poem to personalize the experience. Nearly everyone participated in the Israeli Scouts (Ha'Tzofim), a Zionist youth movement that promoted a sense of volunteerism, leadership, a love of the land of Israel, and a strong sense of identification with their Jewish heritage understood in a secular way. For example, Dan recalled climbing to Masada with this group. Masada is a rock plateau near the Dead Sea, and was the site where the Jewish rebels resisted the Roman Empire after the destruction of the second temple. Understanding that they could

no longer resist the Romans, the Jews committed mass suicide. Masada has become a site of pilgrimage for modern Israelis, who read in the plight of the rebels their own desires for freedom and political sovereignty (for more on Masada as an Israeli pilgrimage site, see Zerubavel 1997). Dan said,

> We climbed all the way up there, and it was so hot, but the physical aspect of it only added to it. In that moment we were heroes, we were pioneers in the completely innocent and sincere (*chen*) in a way you cannot access as an adult. And when we got to the top they [the scouts leaders] told us to say "Masada will not fall again," and we yelled it off the edge into the desert. They do it at exactly the right age, when you are so intense and sincere and you are looking for meaning. And even today that I would never bring my kids to Masada, it's like, not an interpretation I can support, it still makes me emotional to remember it and how I felt.

Dan's words indicate a strong identification with the hegemonic narrative of history and the need for an aggressive posture of self-defense, as taught through public education and fleshed out at home. In Israel, much of this emotional agency is developed at home, through family stories and losses. There could be no substitute for military service to fulfill what these soldiers believed was their authentic realization as post-Holocaust, native-born Israeli men. Using Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony as intellectual and moral leadership, or determining what is obvious and right, one sees that the historical imagining and subjectivity vis-à-vis sacrifice encouraged by the state is very much what these soldiers identified with and saw as building blocks of their self-worth.

The Interruption of the Sacrifice

These conscientious objectors all completed their basic three-year service and did reserve duty for several years before they ultimately decided to refuse, even though their disillusionment with their military service had begun soon after enlistment. For Avi, it began even before he was deployed.

> I remember one of the very first days, they were handing out equipment, and they handed everyone a nightstick. It really surprised me,

> with the gun I had all these images of using it like in movies I had seen, but I couldn't imagine using this nightstick. It seemed so barbaric! I thought about what it would be like to hit someone with it, and I pictured bones cracking under its force. I hated the thing and I decided I would never use it. Of course, later I did use it because often it is the appropriate weapon for a situation.

Refusers narrated the various ways in which their service did not fit their preconceptions about who the aggressor would be in the situations they encountered as well as about who would pay the price of their service. Uri's experience did not match his expectations. Uri had Israeli parents but grew up partly in California, where he befriended many other children of Israeli parents, a small group of whom went to Israel to join the military instead of going to college. We spoke in English.

> When I joined I expected missions to make sense, that we would go to find a specific terrorist, and deal with him professionally, effectively and surgically. But at some point, I began to realize that so many of the missions were arbitrary, and so messy. I remember going to this house looking for someone with a name given to us by intelligence. We got there and of course there were only women, kids, and old people there, because that's what happened every time. We had to order the men and women apart, the kids were screaming, people crying, always the same. The next week we were given another name, but were dropped off at the same fucking house! There we are again with the same women, ordering them around all over again, in the same absurd ritual, like some choreographed dance. And I knew they recognized us. It was embarrassing! To be both incompetent and cruel . . . maybe one or the other [laughs]. . . . I really began to understand what was going on when my commander told me that it wasn't a good thing if things were "too quiet." I began to see in everything we did that the army was instigating conflict, not just responding defensively.

The distinction between instigation and response is a matter of moral significance for the Israeli military, which self-identifies and self-legitimates as an exclusively defensive force. Other refusers described being disturbed to discover that they had developed a slowly grown addiction to power.

For a long time, the refusers generally did not talk about such things with their fellow soldiers and would push their doubts out of their minds. Avi told himself, "You shouldn't change your beliefs about everything all at once" and "It's not always the time for soul-searching." Even with his doubts, Avi believed for a time that he was helping by being in the Occupied Territories, that he was keeping some of the excesses of other soldiers in check. This sense faded, however.

> One day we were told to evacuate a house that was going to be demolished. We got there and told the family that they had one hour to leave. There was, of course, rushing around and crying and begging us to change our minds (as if I made that decision). After everyone was out, and they were going to knock it down, one of the women came running to me and begged me to go back inside because her daughter had forgotten her school backpack, which had all of her school supplies inside. My commander would not allow it—for him it was just a school bag. So, I had to tell her no. . . . But what does it mean "I had to"? From her point of view, and from any perspective that matters, I told her no. There I was trying to be the "good soldier," and there I told her no, and that's how the little girl will remember me, and if I am really honest, she's right about me, or she was. And I thought to myself—this is me sacrificing for my country? It can't be. I was the schmuck standing there on this ridiculous premise, when even a child can see that is not the truth.

Avi had conceptualized himself as Isaac until he found himself with the knife in his hand, until he saw himself as Abraham. His commentary indicated that, being part of a chain of command, his dissatisfaction with the situation at hand did not matter; he had not allowed the girl to retrieve her backpack, not because he did not want to or because he hated her, but because he was only a single, notorious, and maligned cog in the machine. He stopped seeing his service as a sacrifice, however. Before this encounter, he had felt great doubt and ambivalence about his service, and furthermore attributed moral value to his ambivalence, to being a good soldier, but in the moment of crisis realized the irrelevance of his sense of ethics to his actions and their consequences. He realized that he had unintentionally sacrificed ethics. It was a moment in which the alignment of moral good and what was good for the state split, and Avi found himself, in Gramscian terms, no longer

consenting but coerced with regard to his ethics. He was prevented from taking action by fear and an inability to conceptualize what dissent would look like within that physical space; that is, he could not imagine the possible actions that he could have taken.

Avi found himself in a situation in which, through military logic of self-preservation, he was not the victim of sacrifice, as he had imagined, but, rather, that the most of the loss in his daily experience was Palestinian loss. This does not mean he was not frequently in mortal danger; he was. Despite being prepared for self-sacrifice, he felt that he was demanding more from Palestinians than was ethical under the everyday moral code with which he had been raised regarding respect and dignity in human relationships. Whereas the discourse concerning just causes for military sacrifice in Israel concerned strong and clear beliefs regarding war, national boundaries, and the enemy, the policing missions of occupation violated them.

Others echoed similar sentiments. I heard such thoughts voiced, for instance, toward the end of an olive-picking solidarity event in the West Bank organized by Combatants for Peace. My hands had grown sore from plucking clumsily at the small bitter green olives that grow in that region. I stepped aside to stare pointlessly at them and found myself next to Dan, who had come away from the trees to get some water. As we stood there, an army jeep drove by carrying young soldiers who were monitoring our activities. They waved and chuckled at us, I supposed because they were amused by what are often described as the naive efforts of leftists. Ironically returning their wave, Dan told me,

> You get into the mode of military logic, the way you are trained to protect yourself and your soldiers, and there is no choice but to follow it; if not, their lives are on your hands. But then you catch yourself doing things which are just not OK, and certainly not up to the standards I had when I enlisted. That is what happens with the whole human shield thing, which I saw some guys do. When you see it in the newspaper it looks awful, but when you are there and you get deep into the military logic, it makes perfect sense to you. When I realized that there was no way to be there and not follow that logic, I knew I couldn't be there anymore.

Dan was expressing, especially with the example of the human shield (the use of civilians as cover, forbidden by military policy), how, through the

structure of military training, the sacrificing soldiers were replaced as victims by unwilling Palestinians. To say that the soldiers expected to be victims sounds extreme, but it does not mean they expected death. Rather, it refers to the mediated self-sacrifice I have described, to exactly what is meant by the English phrase often used to describe soldiering: as individuals "putting themselves in harm's way" for the greater good. For Dan, the realization that the heaviest price was not being extracted from him interrupted his understanding of his military service as sacrifice. These soldiers were certainly exposed to grave danger and could have been killed many times, but, for them, this danger did not characterize their service. The logic of military service stresses the avoidance of loss, whereas the logic of the sacrificial economy demands negation and loss. After a long pause, Dan added, "When I understood there was no good coming out of it, that we weren't helping anything, in fact the opposite, I wasn't willing to risk my life for that anymore. After that, I was basically paranoid about getting injured or something, because if I lost a leg, I wouldn't be able to see myself as a war hero, I'd just be a cripple." In his consideration of voluntary death among the Siberian Chukchi, Rane Willerslev (2009: 701) differentiates voluntary death from suicide, with voluntary death (in proper context) conforming to the sacrificial requirement of furthering life through the taking of life. After Dan no longer saw his service as sacrifice, he feared any loss would be suicide-like, pure loss with no redeeming value. He was, in Lomnitz-Adler's words, haunted by the "specter of meaningless death" (2003: 18), of a meaningless killing.[7]

Avi's and Dan's accounts had many elements in common with other stories of refusal I collected. Doubt was followed by the persistent belief that one could make a positive contribution, be the "good soldier" and prevent aggression. This period of ambivalence was very often followed by a crisis triggered by an encounter, often with a child or a woman read by the soldier as undoubtedly innocent (as opposed to young men, who are always suspect).[8] Seeing themselves otherwise and fantasizing about the Palestinian gaze was universally a gut-wrenching experience for Israeli military refusers. The intersubjective experience is not a comfortable space to inhabit, and as Michael Jackson notes, is rarely achieved willingly but instead involves a painful epiphany of seeing one's own stance invalidated in the face of another (2009: 239). This invalidation was especially devastating for these soldiers, who invested so much of their moral worth in their willingness to sacrifice in the culturally sanctioned method of military service. The moral crisis caused a realization of a hiatus in their understanding of themselves as

self-sacrificing and of the reality of soldiering, which, afterward, they interpreted politically to mean that service was unethical and that they must refuse it. Retrospectively, they described their years of service and efforts to maintain faith in the sacrificial meaning of this service as spent in denial.

Members of Combatants for Peace recall their epiphany, seeing themselves as the emperor with no clothes, as the high point of their story (though the low point of their ethical engagement) and the moment in which refusal became inevitable. No one did refuse, and that moment was a hegemonic manifestation in its own right. Avi did nothing. The girl's backpack was inside the house when the house was destroyed. One should not conflate hegemony or its rupture with personal power: even after an epiphany of consciousness and even with a gun in his hands, Avi felt powerless to act. Something else had to give way before he and others in like circumstances could overcome their hegemonic subjectivity. This is reflected in the fact that their moral crisis did not align with the social crisis that their refusal engendered. For them, the moral epiphany was central, and their moral change often found sympathy among fellow soldiers and commanders. However, their announcement of their refusal was received as betrayal and resulted in rupture, alienation, and jail. The decision to refuse created greatly asymmetrical effects socially with respect to the moral process.

Refusers like Avi and Dan realized the failure of the sacrificial idiom to account for their service only after many years during which they continued to serve. Their combat experiences were not exceptional, and many others describe similar and often worse events. Anthropologist Eyal Ben-Ari describes, from his experience, the way soldiers don masks during their service in the territories, which allows them to be vulgar and engage in violent behavior without feeling as though they are violating ethical norms. He quotes a company commander to express his own experience: "As a soldier I am at peace with myself regarding my actions. As a human being I am not at peace with myself" (Ben-Ari 1989: 384). Likewise, in the mainstream media, Israeli cinema has produced a series of popular films—*Beaufort* (Cedar 2007), *Waltz with Bashir* (Folman 2008), and *Lebanon* (Maoz 2009)—that share both a hyperrealist aesthetic of modern warfare and the theme that survival in war comes through obedience and preemptive violence, but at the cost of moral confusion and deadly error. However, this realization, although widely held or appreciated, does not dictate refusal, even among the small minority who are disillusioned with military service, because there are additional ethical dimensions. Kaplan describes the way that Israeli na-

tional solidarity is built on an idiom of friendship and fraternity that draws on "gendered aspects . . . and is central to the hegemonic arrangements that connect male bonding to militarism and sacrifice" (2008: 424), which itself entails ethical responsibility. Nowhere is this responsibility more evident than in the military unit, where the notions of mutual dependence are at their most literal. Likewise, the timing of refusal and the age of refusers should not be thought of as coincidental. Many of Avi's and Dan's peers expressed amazement at conscientious objectors who refuse before entering the military for basic service. At the time of their enlistment, they were far too invested in military service as the building block for their future to refuse, understanding service as self-actualization that would catalyze a metamorphosis into citizenship and manhood.

In the dominant idiom of sacrifice in Israeli society, the Isaac soldier is a victim or almost victim, and his sacrifice is rewarded. The refusers' experience as aggressors in the military served as a limit to or an aporia in this sacrificial metaphor. For Avi and others, the realization of this limit and the decision to refuse their displacement provided a kind of moral resolution to long periods of angst, confusion, and vacillations of conscience. Avi described feelings of depression turning into elation as he organized with soldiers to refuse en masse in a realignment of conscience and action. One can question the degree to which this decision is truly the moral transformation that it appears and it appeared to most of Israeli society. The critique presented by the refusers differs from that of literary critics who take a liberal approach, criticizing the need for sacrifice and the link implied between the staging of violence and redemption. These conscientious objectors generally do not critique the need for sacrifice or self-sacrifice but instead their substitution as victim. These ex-soldiers are not pacifists, and they do not generally criticize universal conscription into the military. Nearly all I met said they would gladly serve in the same positions if they thought the Israeli army would act defensively and for good causes.[9] This can mean different things for different refusers but definitely includes an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories.

Hegemony and Resistance

The scholarship concerned with nationalist inculcation, hegemonic culture, and subjectivities generally emphasizes the indigenous or subaltern response

to state efforts at producing cooperative subjectivities and citizens. Literature on this topic often considers the conditions under which subalterns can resist hegemonic inculcation or pure force. It often focuses on resistance to the state and movements of withdrawal as motivated by resistance to control, assimilation, or incorporation. Scott's latest offering, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009), manifests this focus. His study characterizes the transnational marginal minority of Zomia as a community fugitive from state control. He describes their strategic choices to avoid state control, including even strategic illiteracy to avoid accountability. Scott attributes this resistance to evasion of such burdens as taxes and conscription (apt for my case) as well as to political and religious dissent. This work assumes a strong link between resistance to the state and lack of hegemonic influence or intentional avoidance of hegemonic influence, a focus reflected in many other studies.

The idea that alternative and oppositional traditions dispute both hegemonic articulations and state power is reflected in most of the current anthropological work (see Brown 1990; Malkki 1990; Dominguez 1989). Ana María Alonso (1994) maintains an understanding that state control hinges on the persuasiveness of hegemonic narratives and the extent of their distribution. Studies of indigenous resistance to hegemonic cultures take on a similar theoretical framework (see Kearney 1991, 1998, 2001; Lyons 2005; Smith 1990; Warren and Jackson 2002). Many of these studies provide nuanced accounts, which, in K. Sivaramakrishnan's words, break "the dyadic relationship between domination and resistance" (2005: 349), challenging ideas of false consciousness and presenting multiple modes of intentionalities and loyalties and excavate the ambiguities between coercion and consent. Though the best accounts acknowledge that hegemony is never a unified or coherent system of beliefs, they remain set in the idea that inculcation is bound to consent and that counterhegemony can be associated with resistance. Likewise, the assumption remains that resistance comes from the subaltern group, not the hegemonic one. Carol Greenhouse (2005) breaks the exclusive focus on the subaltern by locating Scott's "hidden texts" in the halls of power, deployed by those who represent the state. However, in the case of Israeli military refusal, though the soldiers are part of the hegemonic group, their identification is not with the desires of the state but, rather, with their moral correctness (as encouraged by the state in the hope it would support its objectives). I suggest that identification with hegemonic forms and narratives as well as state-encouraged political subjectivities

can also lead to resistance to the state. It is not enough to examine to what extent inculcation occurs; scholars must also ask specifically about the ideals with which people are inculcated and how they alter agency and its object.

I have argued that because resisters like my interlocutors had the most uncompromising identification with the idea of mythic or heroic sacrifice, the discrepancy between the ideal and their experience caused a moral crisis. Members of this group, then, who were expected to be the least likely to refuse, as evidenced by the military investment in them and their image, were actually the most likely to refuse. The state encouraged a historical narrative that required sacrifice, a subjectivity through which a young person could imagine his or her self-sacrifice as heroic, and a conception of citizenship that required intervention. The sacrificial moral economy and not the state as super-subject, or state policy as such, is the ideal inculcated in these young people. Asked to participate in activities that they saw violated this moral economy, they experienced a moral crisis resulting in their retrenchment into their understanding of the moral economy according to rules derived from the Akedah, the hegemonic idiom of national sacrifice.

The case of Israeli conscientious objectors demonstrates that the binary of inculcation and resistance predicated by many scholars does not characterize all paths by which people come to dissent and resist the state. Likewise, this counterexample reveals that, although we may legitimately describe such evasive groups as avoiding state control, we cannot characterize them in reciprocal terms, that is, seeking to be controlled. Rather, their identification with the national narrative provides a sense of place and belonging. Likewise, metonymizing the self allows certain types of agency to be imagined. When the state promotes more diffuse hegemonic values, such as sacrifice, equality, and volunteerism, and not only loyalty to the state, there is always potential for reinterpretation. Resistance from those who are inculcated with hegemonic values is thus completely possible. Moreover, this type of resistance is problematic for the state, because people who are deeply invested in their relationship with it are dedicated to changing a state they see as wrong, as opposed to avoiding it altogether.

Hegemonic subjectivity that can resist state power certainly does not preclude dynamics of subalternity and state power. Not all groups are inculcated with the idea of national sacrifice to the same extent as the hegemonic group, just as not all can identify with the ideal of the elite soldier, as

described. There are those who see military service as a contractual obligation, one that they may pay with service directly for benefits in an economic exchange. Some jobs in the military offer more direct translation into practical job opportunities. For example, Ethiopian immigrants are often streamlined into the difficult and unglamorous border police unit (M'Gav), service that often translates into regular police jobs and for this reason has been favored among this immigrant group. Some see military service as a hardship to be endured, which also does not fit the sacrificial logic that elite-soldier refusers held. Refusers met many of these resisters in jail. These other soldiers often hated the army with a passion because of the financial burden of service, exclusion, and bad treatment. However, these other soldiers, instead of going to the press or working on public statements and articulate and compelling letters of refusal, deserted, were insubordinate, or did drugs. Although desertions have always occurred, before the first conscientious refusals during the First Lebanon War, they were not articulated as conscientious and often involved marginal members of the military service, such as office workers or combat soldiers filling "blue-collar" rank-and-file jobs. Such desertions are not thought of in Israeli society as conscientious but rather as personal failures to adjust to the responsibility and discipline demanded by the military system or as an antisocial unwillingness to sacrifice. By contrast, the refusal of elite soldiers, who have already demonstrated their ability and willingness to enthusiastically participate in the sacrificial economy, is not taken as a personal inadequacy but as a moral critique. Orna Sasson-Levy (2002) and Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport (2003) explore how nonhegemonic and immigrant groups in Israel—those whose refusal is more likely to be viewed negatively—navigate complicated identities regarding the relationship between masculinity, the military, and citizenship.

For many refusers of this generation, who had served enthusiastically and had been convinced of the moral worth of their service, the disillusionment that made them doubt these values came as a severe crisis and period of upheaval in their lives. One of the refusers I became close to over the course of my fieldwork, Amos, recalled what he described as the low point of his crisis. He had already refused military service, but he told me that that had actually been the easy part.

> After I made that breakthrough, I felt like I lost control over where these realizations would lead me. One conclusion would lead to another, and suddenly everything was falling apart. I was like, OK, I

> know that my activities in the military were doing more bad than good in the world. So I refused. It seemed complicated at the time, but after it was simple. But then I was asking, do I think Arabs need to serve in the military? . . . And I thought, no, because it's a Jewish state and the army doesn't really represent them, even the founders understood that, which is why they don't have to serve. So then I was asking, but is it OK for the army not to be for everyone, and out of that, for the state to represent only part of its citizens? And the answer to that was obviously no, because it was totally against my liberal humanist upbringing. And then I was asking myself is there any way for the state to be Jewish that means it is not putting citizens on different levels? And I realized that [the answer was] no. At that point, I think I knew someplace in the back of my mind that meant that I was no longer a Zionist in any mainstream meaning of the term, but I tried to push those specific words, that phrasing out of my mind.

I asked him what Zionism meant to him. He said he wasn't an expert in the history of Zionism, but he knew that at a minimum that it called for Israel to be defined as a Jewish state, and he was increasingly unable to reconcile with that idea. He said that if I were asking him what it meant to him, then he must also say that it meant his mother and the sacrifices of his parents, and that for a long time he credited his life and a life free of abuse and anti-Semitism to the state as well. Amos described a period in which the idea that he was not a Zionist, something that had been so central to his identity, festered and smoldered in the recesses of his mind, arriving to the forefront only as dreams or during moments of distraction.

He recalled a dream in which a friend asked him if he were a Zionist. He said yes, but the friend saw through his lie, and suddenly everyone in his life knew the truth and was against him. At some point, Amos had come to terms with the fact that he had broken with this fundamental ideology on an irreparable level. He told me about the day he decided he needed to say it aloud.

> I made sure that there was no one at home, that no one would be around to hear me. I poured some water and didn't drink it. I went into my bedroom and locked the door. I sat down, then stood up. I noticed that I was dripping sweat and I felt my heart pounding in my chest and my ears. I felt dizzy and I knew I had to get it over with as

> soon as possible. "I am not a Zionist." I said it, aloud, I sat down, drank the water, and went to bed. Now I can say it easily. Now I see it as just an ideology created by some Europeans who were very misled. But at the time, it was sacred. I've talked to some people who were very religious and became secular. I can relate to what they went through. One guy told me a very similar story about how he said God does not exist aloud, and what that did to him. I understood how he felt driven to say it even though it was torture.

I suggest that because these elite soldiers were inculcated with the state-encouraged sacrificial moral economy, and not with the state as super-subject, resistance was possible for them. In this case, the soldiers did not become disillusioned with the sacrificial economy or their commitment to intervention, which they continued to uphold through difficult activism; rather, they were disillusioned with the state and its policies. This reaction certainly cannot describe all cases. Michel-Rolphe Trouillot (1990) describes situations of loyalty to the state as paterfamilias, which entails a different kind of attachment, one with less focus on self-disciplining. However, the distinction between the possible objects of inculcation is relevant to cases in which the citizen is encouraged to self-govern in a certain moral economy.

The separation of hegemonic moral inculcation from political consent, and, equally, from the dyadic focus on the opposition between the subaltern and the state, has implications for anthropological thinking concerning the object of moral loyalties. An explanation of this case that presented refusal as a kind of disillusionment with hegemonic values would have to ignore much of the ethnographic data, which points to experiences of disillusionment on enlistment, moral resolution at the time of refusal, and a continued enthusiasm for national sacrifice. These observations have implications for studies concerning public ideological initiatives, through education or other forms of governmentality, by imputing a degree of fragility to inculcation of values (both political and economic) rather than of loyalty to the state. In fact, in many places, it is diffuse values and forms of governmentality that are promoted by public policy rather than loyalty to the state or a specific leader, which in many contexts appears undemocratic and authoritarian.

Gramsci emphasizes the fragility of hegemony, in terms not only of its reach but also of its potential for going awry. His idea of hegemony is not of "a finished and monolithic ideological formation" but "a problematic,

contested political process of domination and struggle" (Gramsci 1971: 102). Likewise, Alonso (1994: 381) notes the risk of polysemy in articulations of hegemony. This prompts asking how scholars should address the question of political consciousness, specifically in social movements of withdrawal. I suggest that certain forms need to be decoupled—specifically, that the moral crisis or crisis of consciousness should be distinguished from the social crisis, here illustrated by the distinction between elite soldiers' moral epiphany and the uproar at their decision to refuse. To account for the powerlessness felt by Avi, an elite, armed soldier, to intervene in a situation he sees as unjust, we must distinguish between hegemony and personal power. Finally, we should recognize that resistance to the state arises not only from marginal or subaltern spheres but also, and often more threateningly, from those who are highly inculcated with hegemonic and state-fostered values.

Disillusionment of the Secular Left

Part of the disillusionment these conscientious objectors experience is a loss of influence felt by many among the secular left in Israel. My interlocutors were disillusioned with the official interpretation of sacrifice, but their worldview was also being challenged by those who threatened their social dominance as well as their values. Israel, like many places, is the product of several partially completed and competing national projects. The national project that conscientious objectors held so strongly to, the national vision they tried to live through their military service, has been shrinking in influence and in the political consensus for years. Secular Ashkenazi Jews, whose original vision of Zionism imagined being able to balance between Jewish and liberal democratic, has slowly found its world shrinking and closing in on them, from non-Jews to nonliberal political philosophies. Most of the members of Combatants for Peace grew up with the image of the Israeli project as a progression toward increasing liberalization. If the beginning, they believed, a Jewish state required the active Judaization of the land, settlements of pioneers Hebraizing the land. But, they thought it would be temporary. Several secular Israelis told me that they believed as young adults that the active process of Judaization would end, that Israel would be a Jewish country "naturally," the way—as they perceived it—that the United States is Christian. It would be secular, democratic, and modern. There was a strong veneration of the military and an ethos of self-defense,

they rationalized this veneration as sober and vigilantly ethical, not as bloodthirsty or cruel.

A number of demographic and political developments prevented this secular national project from coming to fruition, not the least of which are the internal contradictions and patronizing assumptions in the project itself. One issue is that Palestinians have never been few enough in numbers to secure this vision of a de facto Jewish country, necessitating the prolonging of active Judaization efforts, for example in pronatalist policies and official discourse regarding the "demographic problem," which refers to Palestinians. Also, ultra-Orthodox Jews were thought by secular Israelis to be a relic of old world, diaspora Jewry, in contrast with the modern Israeli type. When driving in a car, my interlocutors would rarely refrain from commenting on an ultra-Orthodox pedestrian. Their heavy fur hats, stockings, and long coats seemed to them frustratingly disengaged from their natural surroundings of Israel and its blistering hot summers. Such comments would range from "He's probably sweating like crazy" to a commentary on the lack of educational value in ultra-Orthodox schools. Their parents' generation had imagined that the ultra-orthodox population would disappear, but it is impossible for this generation to ignore that in fact their numbers have grown exponentially since the beginning of the state, and the religious education system is expanding far more rapidly than the secular system. Many secular Jews I spoke with took a defensive sense, arguing that there was unfair recruitment tactics among the Orthodox, who ever encroach on areas of secular dominance. Ultra-Orthodox Jews view Israel's geography and the purpose of the state quite differently than my secular interlocutors. They strongly desire proximity to the holy sites in Jerusalem and in the Occupied Territories. They therefore often support the expansion of settlements, such as those in East Jerusalem.

The Eurocentric secular vision that many conscientious objectors were raised with had the clear upper hand in the early years of the state, in part because Zionism's architects were from Europe and also because they held a majority. Jews from Middle Eastern countries arrived after Zionism established itself in Palestine, and many of them in the 1950s after Israel was already a state. The immigrants from the Middle East did not have the same strict cultural divisions between secularism and orthodoxy as their European counterparts did, and generally maintained a kind of religiosity, less stringent than European orthodoxy, that came to be referred to as "traditional" in Israel. Many Europeans also believed that through active policies

of Westernization such undesirable cultural characteristics would fade. Since that time, however, the European Labor party lost its hegemonic status, and since 1984 the Shas party has gained influence representing religious Sephardic Jews and advocating that Jewish law and state policy overlap (for example, in prohibiting activities on the Sabbath, or opposing any public legitimation of homosexuality), something anathema to the sensibilities of my interlocutors, who favor the separation of religion from state practice. Yet, unlike their parents' generation, my interlocutors were brought up after major social movements of Middle Eastern Jews for equality and cultural respect, and were wary to cast the same patronizing judgments publicly, regardless of their frustration with the direction of the country.

The sometimes suppressed, sometimes expressed hope among liberal seculars that their cultural vision would be bolstered by the arrival of a million new Russian immigrants in the 1990s proved misplaced. Though the immigrants were secular, they were perceived by many of my interlocutors and their families as lacking in the qualities of Western liberalism and political correctitude in which my interlocutors took pride. My interlocutors looked askew at Russian militarism, which came out in side comments on the latest headlines and national happenings. Militarism is hardly absent in Israel—streets and natural features are named after Jewish military organizations and soldiers—and yet Russians were perceived to violate its decorum and good taste. They were frequently called out for violating rules of etiquette that military acts should be discussed euphemistically and with gravitas. Likewise offensive to my interlocutors' sensibilities was the explicit comfort with policies of exclusion among some Russian-born politicians, policies that among the old guard would have been discussed with more tact and bureaucratized to hide its real effects.[10] In short, Russians were seen to embrace ethno-nationalism too enthusiastically. My interlocutors perceived these infringements on liberalism and democracy as the effects of not having a democratic tradition and feared what a few called the "Putinization of Israel."

These representations are stereotypes that greatly flatten these communities and their diversity. But they reflect the stance of many of my interlocutors who had very strong normative views regarding the national project, and limited interaction with these other Jewish groups. For conscientious objectors, some of these issues were resolved in the act of military refusal. Their refusal often coincided with a political transformation to the radical left which also brought a rejection of the concern about a Jewish majority, and an acceptance of a community that would include large numbers of

Palestinians. But their issues with their Jewish others often remained unresolved and frustrating. If these groups would not likewise embrace Palestinians and liberalism, it was impossible for them to find common ground. This has been recognized in scholarly work as a common limit of liberalism's claims to inclusivity.

Sacrifice and the Nation-State

Abraham fathered two sons: the older was Ishmael, whose mother was Hagar, and the younger was Isaac, whose mother was Sarah. Abraham bound his son for sacrifice at God's command. This much is common to the religious texts. Which son Abraham brought, however, is divergent in the Jewish and Muslim traditions. In the Jewish tradition, it is Isaac, the progenitor of the Jewish people, who is brought by Abraham to Mount Moriah, and bound to be sacrificed on God's command. In the Muslim tradition, it is Ishmael, the progenitor of the Arab people, who is brought. The metaphorical significance of the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael has not escaped those wishing to draw significance to the violence between Jews and Arabs in its current manifestation as a struggle for land and ethnic nationalism. Jacques Derrida notes that the site believed to be Mount Moriah is currently the site of intense dispute where many are continually sacrificed (1996: 69). Israeli authors have sown the seeds of new political interpretation to blunt such violence, for example, in Israeli poet Yitzhak Laor's extortion to Isaac and Ishmael to see their father Abraham (the state) as a homicidal monster rather than a pious exemplar (1985: 70). Other commentators would attack Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son as an example of the excesses of masculine violence, claiming that Sarah would never have permitted such an absurd act (Frucht 2000).

These deployments in popular culture mock the official veneration of the narrative. I argue that this reflects a recognition of the ulterior motives of the state: embedded in the satire are accusations of an insincere and cynical use of the myth for Realpolitik goals. The state interpretation of sacrifice involves extremes of violence and abnegation, unlike religious ritual sacrifice, which is often more circumscribed. Religious ritual sacrifice often requires a particular offering, a sheep, a reindeer, or an inanimate representation of an animal or meat. Excess is not often encouraged. If ritual sacrifice requires the slaughter of a sheep, it is not twice as good to slaughter two

sheep, and not five times as good to slaughter five sheep. Fulfilling sacrificial obligations does not have such an exponential economy of moral good. When sacrifice is interpreted as military service, however, there is no limit to what one can give up, it is a economy of pure negation: the more one loses, the more one has given to the country. The state will even accept or demand one's life as a sacrifice, and has developed elaborate ways to ritualize the giving of human life through state memorials and commemorations. The state removes all moderation, all regulation, and valorizes the extreme. It does not seek to create social harmony, but to sustain sovereignty. It plays a high stakes game of risk, where a life is not too large a unit of loss. When I spoke with conscientious objectors, I was struck by how little the modern conditions of warfare they describe fit with the structure of sacrifice. Whereas ritual sacrifice is performed seasonally, and often to much ceremonial fanfare, soldiering goes on for years and involves fatigue, sensory overload, and the obsessive compulsive habitus of soldiering.

Animal sacrifice was practiced in Israel until the destruction of the Second Temple, when it was stopped for the lack of a central temple. With the Zionist project, military service is rethought through military service to be part of the authentic condition of neo-Israelite sacrifice. However, despite nationalist claims to continuity, this manifestation is wholly modern and its ideological underpinnings are shared by many states. These national ideologies flatten sacrificial traditions and drain them of their ambiguity. Historically, the binding of Isaac generated multiple and competing interpretations about the nature of faith, filial responsibility, prophecy, and the intentions of God and Abraham. Some rabbis thought that, in his desire to continue blood sacrifice rituals, Abraham misunderstood God's request (Spiegel 1993). Others argued that the demand was a punishment for Abraham's mistreatment of Ishmael his older son. The Zionist interpretation, however, leaves no room for such politically ambiguous discussions. This flattening and crystalizing is challenged in Yehuda Amichai's poem "The Real Hero" (see the Introduction), which needles the supposed soldier hero by reminding us that in the biblical story, the sacrifice involved not only Abraham and Isaac, but also the ram. With pith, he makes fun of the arrogance of surety, and the sanctimony the myth has taken on in the nationalist interpretation. He reminds us that the biblical story is triangulated; there is a third term that serves to prevent stale dichotomies and dualisms, like citizen and state. Also unlike the national story, traditional interpretations include God, an entirely unpredictable element to the story. Abraham does not know that

God will prevent the sacrifice, or that God will reward his faith. Meanwhile, the national ideology insists on articulating both the plot and the meaning in advance. It promises that military sacrifice will bring about the redemption of the nation, absolution for past failures, and protection from future catastrophe. Nationalist ideology has no use for anything unarticulated in the world. The unarticulated is a point of vulnerability. We see this lack of malleability in the experience of ex-combatants. What they have been taught is incapable of accommodating the political reality they face, thus they experience a kind of breakdown from the contradiction.

Palestinian Sacrifice

Those in academia who write about Palestinian oppression, though generally implicitly pacifist in their normative values, are often disturbed by the way Israeli and Palestinian violence are portrayed in the media as disparate phenomena. These representations are bolstered by the proactive and robust dissemination of explanatory frameworks by the Israeli state and military, which advocates calls public relations or explanation (*hasbara*) and dissenters call propaganda. The violence of the Israeli military is often rationalized in these frameworks, and the explanatory categories of the military are deployed as fact, but Palestinian violence is often represented as terrorism, setting up a contrast of legitimate and illegitimate violence (see Bornstein 2002; Ochs 2010). This fits with the broader observations of people such as Michael Warner (2003), Carol Greenhouse (2008), and Catherine Lutz (2002), who explore the discursive and metadiscursive strategies of legitimizing of state violence. These observations are important to understanding the techniques of state power. I would like to draw attention, however, not to how violence is perceived as legitimate or not after the fact, but rather to how it is experienced by those who participate in it. Here, I claim that the state structure shapes the experience of participation in violence.

Combatants for Peace explicitly draws a kind of equivalence between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian ex-militants. This itself is a radical political statement in the Israeli context, implying a moral equivalence between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian fighters, when the Israeli state goes to great lengths to differentiate the moral perception of these two groups.[11] This equivalence, however, also obscures certain differences the state has managed to accomplish even before the question of political and legal legitimacy. The

representation of two peoples caught in conflict flattens some of the distinctive experience between state violence and nonstate violence. In describing the Israeli soldiers military service, I use the term *coincidence of the good* to describe the ways in which the young men I worked with found themselves in a situation in which their personal ambitions, the state's desires, and the social moral good aligned in military service. Palestinians face a decidedly different social, economic, and moral topography. Israeli soldiers were able to experience their military service as wholesome, and participated in an institutionalized and highly routinized and protected way. The spaces of Palestinian heroism are far more contested and dangerous.

A key aspect of this Palestinian predicament is the ways the Israeli state has intervened to make sure that, contrary to the situation for Israeli soldiers, the moral good and personal good do not align for Palestinians wishing to fight against the state. In a stagnant economy, much of which is due to Israeli restrictions and expropriations, many of the only remaining economic opportunities involve complicity with the occupation or settlement project. Young men often can only find work as inexpensive labor for Israeli building and construction, much of which is in Israeli settlements in the region slated for the Palestinian state. Another somewhat lucrative alternative is collaboration with the Israeli intelligence services. Toby Kelly has described the ways rumor and suspicion of collaboration with Israeli intelligence is a constant presence in Palestinian villages, not only because of how morally despicable people find such activities, but also because they see this route as a temptation for themselves and all those who have little choice: "Collaboration was seen as a tragic outcome of the wider recognition that personal desire, family obligations, and national aspirations could often not be fitted into a seamless whole" (2011a: 182). In this way, the personal good is often at odds with the moral good, in a way that results in constant suspicion. Whereas in Israel economic success is generally assumed to be evidence of legitimate work, in the Occupied Territories it is evidence of moral corruption.

Violence is likewise controversial. In some ways martyrdom, the voluntary giving up of one's life, is seen by many Palestinians to be heroic, but they do not have the same consensus for it as military service has in Israel. In Israel, the violence that military service entails is often obscured by the view of military service as a coming of age ritual and social experience. In Palestine, however, the violence of the suicide bomber is not deflected in the same way. Although the politics of justice and liberation that call for such

sacrifice is present, in many areas it has been replaced by other political projects that highlight Palestinian victimhood and trauma to elicit compassion from international parties (Fassin 2008; Allen 2009). Israeli conscientious objectors are trying to rethink a moral consensus and state institution, surely not an easy task, but the moral terrain is even more difficult for Palestinian would-be activists. Unlike their Israeli counterparts, Palestinian members of Combatants for Peace had not reached the highest levels of sacrificial honor in Palestinian society through their fight against Israel, nor did they economically benefit from their years in jail, which were much longer than the Israeli sentences. Julie Peteet (1994) has shown that Palestinians can build moral self-hood through abuse at the hands of soldiers, but this ability is fragile, and even something like jail time is hard to translate directly into sacrificial honor because of the suspicion that Palestinians might become informants in jail or after any extended contact with Israelis (Kelly 2011a). In refusal, Israeli ex-soldiers faced public condemnation, but Palestinian ex-combatants a far more dangerous and precarious situation. Financial difficulty and the risk of being perceived to work with Israelis led to disputes over organizational recompensation, as well as to rumors of collaboration among the Palestinian members, a potentially deadly accusation.

Israeli conscientious objectors went from being mainstream heroes to counterculture heroes, though ones that frankly the Israeli security services did not seem too concerned with because of how publicly and self-righteously they lodged their grievances: it was clear that their enthusiasm originated in their investment in Israeli society. The Palestinian members faced a much murkier moral terrain, and one largely made so by Israeli state actions, which, through control of economic resources, discursive techniques, and the mechanisms of broadcasting them, puts the Palestinian personal good at odds with the collective good. Israeli sacrifice through military service creates respect and social currency that continues to be relevant even in the lives of refusers. Palestinian sacrifice, on the other hand, is more difficult to achieve, and even sacrifice such as serving years of jail time cannot earn honor unambiguously because it cannot be completely purged of the suspicion of complicity.

2

Every Tongue's Got to Confess

One late Wednesday afternoon, I met up with Meir. Over the previous months, he had introduced me to other members of Combatants for Peace (CFP) and was very helpful in actively including me in key conversations. I had noticed that a few people were growing weary of my questions after realizing that I wanted more from them than the journalists who requested public relations materials and sound bites on specific incidents. Meir, though, was an enthusiastic supporter of my peculiar interest and tried to help me as much as possible. This time he was bringing me to a house meeting, which is an event open to anyone who is interested in hearing about Combatants for Peace. He had come from Jerusalem that day. The meeting was in Ramat Aviv, north of Tel Aviv, but Meir stopped in Tel Aviv to give me and a few other folks a ride. We met at an old-fashioned European pastry café near the train station, where we sat and chatted, waiting for the others to arrive. We drove to the house where the meeting would take place and Meir dropped us all off outside. "It's in there. I'll be back soon, I've got to pick up some more people." The four of us, strangers to one another, walked toward the house he indicated, a large white house (called a villa in Israel) in a posh neighborhood. As we approached, a man in military uniform came out carrying the garbage. We all stopped in our tracks, thinking we must have the wrong house. Could a military officer be hosting a conscientious objector meeting? As he slung the garbage into a bin, he smirked at us and said, "Yeah, you have the right place, come on in."

This was my first house meeting. I was told that these were similar to the meetings in the West Bank that I had attended, at which Israelis and Palestinians would tell each other about their experiences as combatants, but were held for Israeli audiences. With that in mind, I had brought a bottle of

water and some oatmeal raison cookies to share. In the West Bank, food is often arranged by the Palestinians, who are remunerated by the Israeli guests, but cookies are always appreciated. Already doubting my initial understanding of the event on seeing the house, I found my suspicions confirmed when we entered to find a fully catered event and rows of folding chairs already set up in the large living room. I slipped my cookies into my bag, I hoped inconspicuously. The extensive catered buffet included savory and sweet finger foods as well as fruit juices and mint lemonade. This meeting was set up more like an upper-class soiree than any refuser event that I had ever been to with either group. As people arrived, I stood with Combatants for Peace members as they excitedly planned who was going to speak in which order. About seventy to ninety people, all Jewish Israelis, arrived, most of them older than forty. The atmosphere was jovial, people happily greeting each other from across the room and chatting and catching up in small groups. I found that most people had been invited by friends who had told them about the event, rather than any publicity materials, reflecting the word of mouth character of Israeli social life.

About fifteen minutes after the official start time, Avi settled the audience down and Meir, who had returned by then, introduced Combatants for Peace, describing how it was established and its mission to the audience. He told the audience that they would be hearing the personal stories of Israelis and Palestinians, and how they came to choose peace over violence. The first to speak was Uri. After being introduced, Uri told the audience,

> I grew up, like all of you, all of us, in a very Zionist household. My grandparents were in the Holocaust, where most of the family died. They came to Israel as refugees. My father served in the military, as a combatant during two wars, and I remember him most clearly in his uniform. He had a distinguished service, and my parents raised me with the belief that we should always try to give the most. So, when I was going into the army I knew I was going into a combat position, it wasn't even a question. From a very young age, I wanted to be a war hero. I was accepted to the Commandos unit. I was assigned to the West Bank. We were given all sorts of assignments, raids, guarding, and so on. No one was asking any questions about the assignments.

I noticed that, in contrast to West Bank testimonies, Uri was focusing more on his family's Zionist background, but the differences only grew from

there. What followed featured far more self-abjection that I was used to hearing.

> But that wasn't even the main problem, the orders. It was that we were encouraged to exercise our power, to detain people, to make everything random and drive people crazy, to bring them to the edge. And I began to like that, and get addicted to that power. I started to really enjoy when I got the chance to give arbitrary orders, and have the absolute 100 percent certainty that the guy was going to do exactly what I said, no matter what I said. . . . It started to affect my home life. I would get really mad at my wife because she would question me, and argue with me. Then one night there was a unit that was sent out instead of us to get a target, and I was jealous. I was jealous because they got to go kill. . . . (audible gasp from the audience) Let's be honest, that's what it was, killing, and I was jealous. At some point, I began to recognize this in myself, these changes in myself, and it made me sick. I began to question the purposes of the missions and many times I found that there wasn't any! Or that there was actually no intelligence whatsoever for the mission. Or that the purpose of the mission was just to reassert authority in some area that they were worrying was getting too complacent. There was one night that changed my life and made me realize I had to refuse. I was out with my unit, in trucks on a mission, and we approached an address, looking for someone whose name they had been given to arrest. We drove there to the house, and we got out and suddenly I hear a noise to my right. So instinctively (Uri slows down his speech and raises his hands near his face), instinctively I turned my gun towards the sound and I saw a boy, about five years old, on the other side of the gun. The young boy froze in absolute fear, that's the only thing on his face, and put up his hands.

His voice full of emotion, Uri told the audience,

> I felt sick, sick! That I had done this, sick that a boy of this age would know that he should put his hands up, and sick that he knew what a gun is, and what a soldier is. . . . After this, I refused, and I was kicked out of the army. And really, that took more courage than anything I had done in the army. I began more and more to realize the injustice of the occupation. Zionism teaches humanism and equality,

> but those ideals don't apply to Palestinian lives, only to our home lives. How did we get into a situation where we are clearly violating these basic principles, all the time, every day? How did we become so hypocritical without anyone pointing it out? The values I was raised on, by my community, are values that are based on the Jewish experience, and it teaches us clearly that we should never underestimate a people's desire to live freely. And that is the lesson that it seems we have forgotten once we received our own state.

The mood of the audience had shifted dramatically at this point. There was absolute silence. Then a few whispers. A man asked him, "You pretend like being a soldier is such a big crime, but I'd like to know what you think is the alternative? What choices are there?" Another man jumped in, "I don't know what you want us to think. You didn't shoot the boy. You followed army procedure and the boy didn't get hurt. I'm sure it was not a pleasant experience, but is it pleasant for the children in the south right now? [The south of Israel was being hit by Katusha rockets.] No, we live in a shitty neighborhood, not in Europe!" A woman shouted to defend Uri saying, "Just because we are in the Middle East doesn't mean we have to behave like it." Another person shouted, "I don't know what you think you are revealing here, or what you think you are telling us, but I was a soldier, and we did the things you are saying, and I want to know, when you joined the army, at what point they told you that it was going to be easy, or clean?" Another said, "Why are you trying to trick us with this fake confession, acting like being a soldier is such a crime?" An old woman with white hair and a wooden cane said, "I am eighty-seven years old. I survived the Shoah [Holocaust]. And I taught my children never to behave like that." It seemed as if the whole room, including Uri, held its collective breath. No one quite knew how to address these comments, which were received as authoritative but also disorienting, apparently oblique to the political debate. The feeling was very much of a public trial with Uri as the defendant. The room devolved into shouting among the audience. Uri was able to bring the conversation back to order eventually, but the atmosphere was very tense.

The two other speakers for the night, one Jewish and one Palestinian, arrived late because of difficulty getting across the Green Line. The Jewish member gave an account similar to Uri's, which likewise caused controversy and was met with similar emotional intensity. The Palestinian speaker was a young man I did not remember from previous meetings. He relayed a short

narrative about how he had been engaged in rock throwing against Israeli soldiers and outposts as a teenager, and as a result had been sent to jail for several years. He said that when he was released he decided that for the sake of his children he would commit himself to a peaceful solution to the conflict. He got little reaction from the audience, who seemed uninterested in arguing with him. I noticed that many of the audience members sat with arms crossed and did not look at him directly. When I mentioned this to Meir he said, "Yeah, when they start cursing him to his face, then I will feel like we made real progress. But the walls are already up before he gets to the stage. They watch him like a TV."

On the way back to Tel Aviv, I got a ride with a brother and sister, Yuval and Aya. They came to the event because Yuval was thinking about refusal. When I asked him about the upset at the meeting, he shrugged it off. He came away with a positive impression of the group.

> A lot of those people, they have no idea what they are talking about, either they were never combatants, or they were in real wars. Anyone who has been a soldier in the occupation in the last ten twenty years cannot be offended by what they say. It's just the reality. They have lots of courage for going out in public and admitting their part, drawing fire to themselves personally, but anyone who has been there recognizes what they are saying.

These public testimonies to Israeli audiences were a major component of the activities of Combatants for Peace during my fieldwork. They are advertised in all the publicity materials of the organization as personal stories. When I asked group members about these testimonies, they would frequently be described as a kind of confession. I was told, "It's a confession." "It's like a confession." "It's sort of a confession." A conscious objector who was a PhD student in the humanities said, "They are confession in narrative form but not speech acts." (I discuss this distinction later.) In fact, Combatants for Peace members perform two types of confessions. One is meant for the Jewish and Palestinian members of the group, take place in the West Bank, and are translated back and forth into Hebrew and Arabic. It was explained to me that the purpose of these meetings is to build trust and allow for forgiveness within the group. The other type is performed for Jewish Israeli audiences within Israel, often feature a majority of Israeli ex-soldiers as speakers, and are conducted only in Hebrew. Another group, called Breaking

the Silence, also collects similar testimonies of soldiers, but does so anonymously. The purpose of the Combatants for Peace meetings is an intervention to effect ethical and political change among Israelis. The group holds no meetings with Palestinian audiences, because of its belief that, because Israel has overwhelming force and resources, change lies mainly in Israeli hands. These testimonies are staged and scripted events, a performative intervention, meant to convey the speaker's process of moral revelation to persuade the audience to ethical conclusions.[1]

In the remainder of this chapter, I explore motivations behind Combatants for Peace performances as well as their effects. First, I examine the rhetorical strategies of these public confessions. Doing so helps delineate the character and social function of these events in the context of other public testimonies and confessions. These testimonies employ a high level of doublespeak, the clandestine reversal of meaning, to convey a concealed accusation against the Israeli military and society under the guise of a personal confession. I then look at the way these events, by strategically deploying the ambiguous status of the soldier, seek to exploit the vulnerabilities of state sovereignty, especially the dependence on voluntary sacrifice for coercive force. I find that the state's discursive response is restricted because of this vulnerability, and thus its reaction is limited to auxiliary attack. These confessions also shed light on a fundamental weakness of sovereignty and remind us that the exercise of sovereign violence cannot be taken for granted. State violence is social, because soldiers have ethics and must be convinced to carry out their activities. Finally, I seek to nuance this picture by showing that the movement my interlocutors are trying to build is frequently at risk of coming undone. Actual Palestinians often fit into the Israeli conversation with difficulty, but at the same time these conscientious objectors are playing with fire they can't quite control in their attempts to change society.

Rhetorical Strategies of Combatants for Peace

Combatants for Peace members deploy multiple cultural messages to position themselves as authoritative and to strengthen their claims. Uri's oratory, like all the confessions I heard from Combatants for Peace, began by emphasizing his Zionist upbringing. Even though many members of Combatants for Peace are ambivalent about Zionism, contextualizing oneself within it is a central feature of the confession. Doing so communicates to the audience not only a

reminder of the formal political tenants of state ideology, but also and even more important a credibility, their solid family connection to mainstream Israeli values. Their revelation of personal connection to Holocaust has a similar effect, and the personal history in Israel they describe places them as part of the hegemonic and idealized Israeli demographic of Ashkenazi pioneers. Direct, masculine speech characterizes the tone of these testimonies and fits within Israeli cultural linguistic norms.[2] Combatants for Peace confessors invoke traditional Israeli values and common understandings, such as the virtue and necessity of volunteerism, collective responsibility, and military service.

The violations confessed are such things as collective punishments, such as curfews on a city with little or no notice, demolition of houses of the families of wanted men, and closures of towns and urban centers. They confess to arbitrary detentions and decisions at checkpoints, to the protection of violent settlers, and often to nighttime raids on private homes. They confess to acts that most Israelis are uncomfortable with ethically. There are, for example, Jewish prohibitions against collective punishment (Deuteronomy 24:16, Jeremiah 31:29–31, Ezekiel 18:20), but secular people like my interlocutors also have an ethical norm of individual guilt. Even within the military, collective punishment is only justified as a pragmatic solution to difficult security problems, not as in and of itself good (in contrast to guarding or defensive wars). Although these acts are not usually confessed as crimes, they fit into the genre because, outside the threat of Palestinian violence, they do not align with Israeli ethical principles.[3] Combatants for Peace testimonies then narrate a short story that also clearly violates these Israeli ethical sensibilities, such as Uri's encounter with the young boy. Such stories almost always feature encounters with children, which symbolize innocence and sincerity in Israel, as they do in many other places. Bringing their story to an emotional climax, soldiers narrate their experiences of epiphany and overwhelming truth they are unable to ignore, as represented in the boy's gaze. Even audience critiques, such as the one against Uri that claimed military service cannot be "clean," do not attempt to justify the actions ethically, but rather to contextualize them as a matter of necessity.

Having confessed to unethical acts, testimonies then narrate the speaker's redemption in military refusal, which, in true evangelical tradition, is offered to all. This final post-refusal position is meant to be understood not as a conversion, in which one belief is abandoned for another, but rather as a resolution, a return to authenticity of traditional values and beliefs. It is a change to more exacting attitudes and rigor toward the shared beliefs of

society. It claims that refusal, as opposed to military service (with policies of occupation), more authentically reflects a life in accordance with the values of Israeli society. As such, Combatants for Peace confessions do not challenge the authority of the idea of traditional Israeli values. Judith Irvine has shown the ways argumentative language has both conflictual and cooperative dimensions; it is a constant dialectic of agreeing to certain points and then leveraging them to make a controversial argument (2010). Combatants for Peace speakers use this technique extensively, agreeing to Israeli norms, and then making controversial claims based on these common beliefs. They mobilize their authority gained through sacrifice in military service to lead the audience to untraditional conclusions. Doing so often involves rebranding masculine tropes, such as the name of the group Combatants for Peace, or the group's predecessor Courage to Refuse.

Michael Bernstein observes that critiques implied in affectations of abjection, as here in the staging the confession of crimes, often depend on the skilled use of mainstream criteria of judgment and values. The speaker may ultimately intend to throw the mainstream criteria into doubt, but first must register them accurately so the reader recognizes that his or her culture's values are implicated in the dialogue (1992: 21). In their staged confession of crimes, Combatants for Peace speakers are required to use mastery of Israeliness and Israeli values (for a pithy exposition on key tropes of Israeliness, see Yair 2011). Conceptions of justice are only legible within the entire system of beliefs and values by which a culture understands itself (MacIntyre 1988). Having activist objectives, Combatants for Peace works in these registers to create the maximum effect. Yet, in using their social capital and rhetorical competence to justify themselves and their ethical stance on military service, Combatants for Peace speakers challenge some conventions while reinstating other dynamics of power. As we explored, their critique depends heavily on establishing a strong vision of the traditional within which their heroism emerges. In fact, the traditional picture they paint, which does in many ways reflect their experiences, is usually far more stereotypically Israeli than most of Israeli society. As we saw in the last chapter, the Ashkenazi combat soldier is collectively imagined to be coextensive with the military, which in turn is imagined to be coextensive with Israeli society, despite the fact that only a small minority of Israeli citizens (but a large majority of Combatants for Peace members) fall into this category. Some conscientious objectors—for example, some of the pacifists I worked with in New Profile—accuse Combatants for Peace confessions of relying too greatly on the centrality of the military in Israeli society,

claiming that this technique does nothing for the demilitarization of Israeli society and excludes women from critical authority.[4] Indeed, Wendy Brown warns that some critiques of power may reinscribe configurations and effects of forms of power (1995). Among Combatants for Peace members, there seemed to be a spectrum of political consciousness to the exclusionary effects of their reliance on the 'warrior' ethos. Even with awareness, however, there is a tension between the persuasive potential of their status and the reinstatement of certain exclusions, forcing them to prioritize claims to justice.

Drawing the ire of the audience, members of the group are making a sacrifice for their ethical intervention. Many have told me that continuing military service would be much easier than their refusal and activism. They cite the difficulty of repeatedly confessing over and over to what they are most embarrassed about in their lives to people they feel are even guiltier than they are. They cite the difficulty of repeatedly enduring the aggressive and emotionally raw encounters like the one Uri had. Despite the difficulty of this new sacrifice, they do not let the audience forget their previous, mainstream sacrifice, which allows them to maintain authority and respect. They have sacrificed first through their military service, which was dangerous and difficult by Israeli standards. This sacrifice is still working; it is still potent. The audience still respects it. It is a persuasive device, but not only that; it is also an asset in their lives.

Combatants for Peace testimonies are performances for an audience. They are a self-conscious objectification of the soldier's actions that immediately make apparent the gap between the performance and the actor, as well as the rhetorical nature of the event. Leigh Payne, in her analysis of confessions of war crimes in different parts of the world, describes the sensation of witnessing such events as watching "perpetrators as actors, acting as perpetrators" (Payne 2008: 15), reflecting a level of removal, even in the performance of truth. Combatants for Peace speakers not only are strategic with the content of their rhetoric, but also perform their guilt and angst on stage, as we saw in Uri's testimony. That it is performed does not make it inauthentic. Avi told me that speakers are at their best, their most persuasive, when they first refuse, because they are still filled with the agony of their decision. After many repetitions of their testimonies, they lose effectiveness and are "retired" by the group. Many variables indicate the cultural meaning of a staged public confession, including who tells the story (the actor), what they say (the script), how they say it (the acting), where they say it (the stage), and when they say it (the timing) (Payne 2008: 4). All of these factors

communicate the social intentions of a confession, which can vary widely across cultural contexts. For example, David Akin considers women's confession of violations of the menstrual cycle taboo (2008); Corinne Kratz describes young men's confessions of public debt and wrongdoing before initiation ceremonies (1991); and several anthropological studies examine the confessions of Christian converts (see Robbins 1998, 2008; Rumsey 2008; Badstuebner 2003; Meyer 1995). These confessions are all performative, but seek to accomplish very different social goals, such as manipulating gender dynamics, purification, social admission into a community, and so on.

Combatants for Peace confessions, by contrast, seek to persuade their politically influential audience to their moral claims. These testimonies are best understood as the social practice Webb Keane refers to as "giving reasons" (2010: 78). In this, one tries to, or is called to, explain one's actions, to offer justifications for one's behavior to the community. Keane notes that this is very often done as a response to ethical differences within a community.

> Among other things, the practice of giving reasons can enter into those of making moral claims—and of ethical self-formation. This kind of talk characteristically responds to the demands posed by social distance and moral or ideological differences. But the differences are not absolute, since they separate one from others who must be persuaded or to whom one owes self-justification. I don't owe an accounting of myself to just anyone. And I don't try to persuade people whom I consider utterly alien to me. As in a gift exchange, explanations involve differences that constitute certain possible kinds of relationship. (2010: 78)

I believe this also helps explain why the audience reacts so much more assertively toward Jewish Combatants for Peace speakers. The audience feels that they are owed an explanation, and that they are responsible for these speakers as insiders in its community. This reflects the strong sense of collective responsibility among Jewish Israelis.

Hijacked Sovereignty

The message Combatants for Peace sends in the public confessions is clear, but not explicitly articulated. Rather, the message relies on the audience's

knowledge of Israeli context, linguistic and social norms, and values. CFP speakers confess only to their personal action and behaviors, asserting a theory of individual guilt. But the way that they say it, about the acts that they choose to confess to, and models of responsibility that they appeal to, make this individual confession a collective accusation.[5] Through doublespeak, the performance of guilt is meant to drive the audience to other conclusions than that the confessors avow regarding their personal responsibility. When I asked what it was like for Combatants for Peace members to confess to a group of Israelis who had not refused the army, Noam told me that it was not a real confession. A PhD student in the humanities, he cast his explanation in theoretical terms. "These confessions are narrative form, not speech events. They aren't real in that they don't actually transform anything. Real confessions must be made to a moral authority, but we consider Israelis who still go to the army as our moral inferiors, so there is no possibility of making real confessions to them, unlike with the Palestinians." This message, though not spelled out precisely this way, is also not withheld from the audience.

I was curious about the group's aggrandizement of the acts of everyday soldiering, things not considered illegal, into confessable crimes, when, based on stories I had heard from interlocutors in the group, serious legal violations which could have been reported. Several members told me that it was very important for them not to discuss activities considered that were considered illegal. They wanted to confess things that "everyone in the audience had done themselves," as Noam said. "We don't want them to think that something especially traumatic happened to us, or that we saw something really horrific, we want them to recognize their own actions when we confess. We don't want them to leave thinking that this implicates us and not themselves as well." The speaker confesses, not only the sins of Combatants for Peace, but also the sins of the audience. The 'cheat' is that the audience never intended to confess anything, and they are unwillingly repentant. Combatants for Peace creates a coded transcript in which they are confessing the deeds of their audience, without its consent. They confess what is understood to be the highest form of Israeli citizenship, military service itself. While the performance employs a theory of responsibility based on individual accountability for individual action. However, because of the context and the nature of the confessions, the performance is not the effective moral model of responsibility the audience is meant to understand.

When Noam explained the intentional implication of the audience in their confessions, I asked how he felt about carrying out such a ruse on and audience that had come with other expectations, expectations that Combatants for Peace played a role in creating. He displayed no regret. "Two things," he told me, holding out two fingers.

> At least two things. . . . First thing, we aren't lying to them. We did those things and we now see them as crimes. That may not be how most people see them, and I know that they don't see it that way, but that is *our* truth. Second thing, the military is playing a much worse trick on them than we are. The difference is that the military is tricking them into risking their lives for some crappy piece of desert and we are tricking them because we care about society.

Alexandra Jaffe's edited collection *Stance* elaborates on the many ways speakers can align themselves to their own utterances in affectively, epistemologically, and morally (2009). How conscientious objectors align themselves to their testimonies is interesting in light of their repeated performance and partial scripting. That the confession has a clearly manipulative intent is recognized, but so is the belief that the intent ultimately reflects a deeper truth. Noam also suggests that the deception is also ethically justifiable because its ultimate aim is ethical, in contrast with what he sees as the state's parallel but Machiavellian deception for power and territory.

The clandestine message starts with the confessional practice. At each meeting, one Israeli and one Palestinian perform, confessing their personal acts and responsibilities. Speakers rotate among the group. Taken as a whole, this routine challenges ideas about the individuality of confession. In each confession, an "I" steps forward, but the interchangeability of the speakers is significant. In their interchangeability, they represent both the group and all soldiers. The confessions are performed as if on behalf of the individual, but the elephant in the room is that these men were soldiers at the time of their deeds, and their acts are the same as those of all Israeli soldiers every day. One prominent feature of Combatant for Peace confessions is that the acts confessed are not illegal. Speakers confess not to individual violent excesses, but to military activities given under orders. In this way, the audience is informed that military service generally is implicated in the confessions. This is important because, as I learned from talking with many audience members during my fieldwork, they often expected to hear the speakers tell sto-

ries about traumatic and exceptional experiences that would have forced them to retreat from military service.

In confessing only to acts ordered by the chain of command, the ex-soldiers do not come across as rogue agents, as American soldiers at Abu Ghraib were made to appear after the fact, and thus are able to implicate the military in their confession.[6] CFP testimonies take on individual responsibility and guilt for actions the speakers took under orders. However, because of awkward posturing vis-à-vis all other unrepentant soldiers, the subtext of the confession is also an accusation. It is a collective confession for the military, though the military is an unwilling participant. The confession of crimes is also an accusation of criminal activity where the military claims there is none. The confession is an accusation of arbitrary oppression by the military that claims there are only logical security concerns. The confession is an accusation that the army, which calls itself "the most moral in the world," of moral degeneration. It is an accusation of the betrayal of authentic Israeli values.

The right to confess has been hijacked successfully because, as ex-soldiers, Combatants for Peace speakers embody the state and its sovereignty. The hijacking is possible because of the ambiguity of the status of the soldier. The state endows soldiers with exceptional permission to carry out its will, because only through volunteers does the state have coercive powers. At the same time, however, soldiers remain responsible for their individual actions, sometimes legally and always ethically. CFP confessions thus highlight a significant weak spot of the state. Ex-soldiers are of course able to speak about their actions as soldiers; they have the social authority to assume accountability for them. In casting their actions as unethical, they are able to accuse the state of unethical behavior. The state, for its part, cannot reject Combatants for Peace claims because of the ambiguity of the soldier between individual and state, as well as the understanding of conscience. It cannot deny the guilt of the individual by saying either "you do not feel guilty" or "you have no right to feel guilty." These statements are nonsensical to beliefs about the nature of conscience. The testimonies put the state in a double bind: they offer conflicting messages and the state cannot successfully respond to both simultaneously.[7] Ultimately, the conscience of the soldier has serious implications for the ethical status of the state. Soldiers exist in a peculiar domain. Compared with public employees, soldiers pledge more of themselves, submit to more discipline, risk more, and are more limited in their freedoms. In the process of submission and discipline, a soldier soldiering becomes the manifestation of the sovereign will and an embodiment

of state power. In this position, soldiers are simultaneously completely subject to orders, which puts the ultimate responsibility on the state, and able to force the ethical interpretation of state actions by judging their own, which are also the state's.

Public confessions challenge the state's attempts at discursive control over its violence. Michael Warner has described the rhetorical process of distinction of violence into legitimized, state force that is no longer called violence, and the remaining other-than-state-sanctioned violence, which is the violence of another (2003: 44). The terminology of violence is increasingly used only in contrast to a notion of legitimate force, making violence invisible when it is carried out by the state (45). The state thus benefits from a strict linguistic separation of state violence and nonstate violence. Combatants for Peace testimonies, however, discuss soldiering violence as though it were private violence, by framing the desire for violence, the physical experience of it, the physical contact with the victim, in the context of their personal responsibility guilt. All of this is rhetorically taboo for the state, which tries to cast such actions in clinical euphemism. By highlighting the personal experience of the soldier in carrying out state violence, Combatants for Peace testimonies question the distinction between state violence and the violence of one individual against another by ignoring the state (and their legal immunity as soldiers) in their descriptions of violence. This approach makes clear that state force is carried out by individuals who inflict this violence and at least to some extent experience it as personal violence. Warner writes, "The scandal of terrorism is not just that it is violent, but that the terrorist sees no scandal in the violence and does not respect its delegation to a special subclass of legitimately violent and violatable persons such as the army or the police" (2003: 46). Combatants for Peace confessions create a similar scandal by showing that the "special subclass of legitimately violent and violatable persons" experience violence and the conscientious effects as would anyone else. This essential vulnerability of the state on the issue of violence is only rarely theoretically addressed. However, it does emerge in Walter Benjamin's critique of violence when he portrays the state's struggle to maintain control over the use of violence (1978). This violence is the key to the state's legal constitution and preservation, and thus cannot be shared with individuals.

Carl Schmitt famously said that the "sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (2005: 5). Anya Bernstein and Elizabeth Mertz, however, warn against an asocial notion of sovereignty. "Rather," they say, "there is an on-

going linguistic and social process whereby exceptions are negotiated on the ground" (2011: 6). The state's use of soldiers to deploy force is an effort to make an exception, to use violence that is forbidden to others. The soldier's rhetorical authority to decry state violence from the inside is a strong pushback against sovereign exception. When soldiers recast the sovereign acts as crimes, their sacrificial and personal authority leaves the state's response constricted by its inability to shed its dependence on soldiers. Sovereignty is not only vulnerable, but also permeable to intentional or unintentional infiltration. A soldier is a citizen on the inside of sovereignty.

Recently, anthropologists have begun to question the idea of sovereignty as self-evident, and to challenge the "the obviousness of the state-territory-sovereignty link" (Hansen and Stepputat 2006: 2). Thomas Hansen and Finn Stepputat note that all over the world "local strongmen occupy positions between state institutions and the population. . . . They have at times been tamed and incorporated into government structures and have at other times been nodes of opposition to the state" (2006: 306). Likewise, Danilyn Rutherford has shown that sovereignty can be thwarted by its audience, citizens, groups, or the international community (2012). These observations are an important recognition of the social negotiation of state sovereignty. Conscientious objectors make it clear, however, that their challenge is not only external (to state authority), but internal as well. Soldiers are an internal threat to sovereignty because they always decide whether they will carry out orders. My interlocutors refused and soldiers have always refused. As a result, the state cannot act with impunity, no matter how strong discipline is, but will always be vulnerable to the ethical lives of soldiers. The ethnography presented here shows that the state is vulnerable to both the refusal to act and the public recasting of sovereign acts within the domain of soldiers' everyday ethics. When soldiers take responsibility for their acts as soldiers within the framework of everyday ethics, they are denying the sovereign exception.

In recent years, some anthropologists have shown interest in Giorgio Agamben's ideas about sovereignty, and specifically those about sovereign exception and the category of "bare life" (1998). This theoretical construct implies that people or groups can be relegated to a realm in which they are stripped of their political and social existence and can be killed with impunity. Several of the contributing authors to *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World* turn to this understanding of sovereign exception and bare life to understand the state's "exercise of violence over bodies" (Hansen and Stepputat 2006: 2). Likewise, Achille Mbembé

begins his article *Necropolitics* by declaring, "This essay assumes that the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (2003: 11). He is influenced by Agamben's suggestion that the sovereign can wield absolute power over life and death. The implementation and exercise of "the subjugation of life to the power of death," however, remains self-evident in this account (2003: 39). These accounts fit with scholarship that presents state violence as a golem (see Foucault 1991; Agamben 2005; Spencer 2007; Friedman 2003; Beck 1992). They present the state as a kind of activated machinery with ambiguous consciousness that can easily run amok, given that state ambitions are literal, rigid, and unswayed by context and suffering. The ethnography of conscientious objectors engages these representations by showing the ethical struggles of the soldier-bureaucrat. This vulnerability of sovereignty is often overlooked in accounts critiquing state violence. Combatants for Peace testimonies, however, suggest other questions that make the connection between sovereign intent and sovereign ability to inflict violence less certain. Can people find protected zones from which to wrestle with sovereignty? Here sovereignty's vulnerability to its soldiers and the protected sphere of individual conscience let conscientious objectors stab at the state from behind a partial shield.

The confessions of conscientious objectors suggest that Schmitt's exception is never complete. The soldier remains social and ethical. The ethical call to the individual soldier can always interrupt the state's intention. In this case, my interlocutors were driven by humanitarian ethical traditions that emphasized empathy and implications for conscience. In another case, it might have been a religious prohibition or a deontological ethical tradition. The state may have decreed someone to be "bare life," but the soldier can still respond ethically to the target of state violence. Thus, the state of exception is never a fait accompli and no life is truly bare. If we are to understand state violence, the ethical mediation of the enforcers is an indispensable component. This does not mean that soldiers will always act in accordance with their ethical judgment, but does mean that their doing so is always a possibility. Sovereignty therefore depends to some extent on convincing soldiers of the ethical good of its acts, which is distinct from Carl Schmitt's or Giorgio Agamben's ideas of sovereign exception.

The vulnerability of the state is reflected in the response of the military to conscientious objection. When I spoke with those involved in Israel Defense Forces policy and enforcement, it was no secret that the military's ap-

proach, a combination of selective lenience and punishment, was designed primarily with the goal of limiting the spread of refusal so that it did not become an operational challenge. Privately and anonymously, members of the military—themselves volunteers—expressed strong feelings against Combatants for Peace testimonies. They repeatedly doubted the sincerity of the confessions, saying that the soldiers had willingly participated for years, and thus their claims of finding their actions unethical are suspect. When I spoke with a military lawyer, he was extremely distressed by their confessional practices but struggled with how to articulate his objections. He said these confessions were the "ultimate chutzpah" (gumption) because they are unauthorized. He said he thought it was hypocritical for these soldiers to take the honor that the military had given them and then use it in their activism against the military. In public, however, representatives of the state have made few direct denunciations. Speaking of the testimonies that emerged from Operation Cast Lead (2008–2009) and were collected by the group Breaking the Silence, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is reported to have said angrily, "There is no silence to break. What are they talking about?" and "Why don't they break the silence over what is happening in some of the regimes in the Middle East?" (Ravid 2009b). Instead, most of the state's efforts take the form of nondiscursive attempts to suppress these groups. For example, the Israeli government specifically asked the Dutch Foreign Ministry to cut off funds to Breaking the Silence (Ravid 2009a). It also made efforts to pass new and complex legislation on funding for nongovernmental organizations that would disproportionately affect whistler-blower groups like Combatants for Peace by limiting their foreign funding. Likud Knesset member Zeev Elkin said that the bill would "protect Israelis from foreign influence that is not compatible with national needs and interests" (Lis 2010).

Playing a Dangerous Game

Lest I represent Combatants for Peace as a skillful master of war of position, it is worth not only noting the ways in which it is able to outmaneuver the state, but also the degree to which its project is improvised and often feels unstable. One example is something I became aware of the day after the house meeting described. I was sitting with Amos discussing the meeting, which he had not attended, telling him that I had met a brother and sister

there. He asked what they had thought of the event, it being their first. I related what they had told me, that the talks of the Israelis had resonated with them, but that when the Palestinians spoke, it had sounded like whining (*la'asot mis'ken*) and complaining. Amos was visibly shocked. He responded, "[It's] surprising to hear you say that, because we spent a very long time working with them on how to talk to Israeli audiences, to present their stories, and to not be defensive. You should know that among only Palestinians they are much more self-critical." "What do you mean you worked with them on how to present their stories?" I asked. Amos heard the accusation in my voice. He did not, however, seem fazed by my surprise: he simply rolled his eyes and reacted to my naiveté as though I were trying his patience. "Listen," he said, "with the house meetings there is a goal, a message to pass to Israelis, and the last thing we want to do is be counterproductive. We are trying to deliver the message in a way people can absorb it, not start fights." I pressed him for specifics about exactly what they told the Palestinians to say and not say. "You already know these things," he replied, "people do not want to hear accusations from a Palestinian. They don't want to hear them discuss the treatment by soldiers because they don't believe it even when we [the Israeli soldiers] have just said, 'Yes, we did that.' Instead, we tell them to focus on the fact that the occupation means that most Palestinians today have never met a kind Israeli who is not a soldier." These guidelines seemed pragmatic with regard to my experiences witnessing Jewish Israelis reacting to these types of issues. I can see how ignoring the guidelines could make for an unpleasant meeting and leave a bad impression.

One of the founders of the group, Shahar, also told me about these efforts to shape Palestinian narratives to Israeli audiences. "We didn't need to tell the Israeli speakers what to say to Israeli audiences because it is their culture, they know how to convince them, what kind of things bring out the emotions. But the Palestinians were saying all the wrong things. The Israelis thought they were whining, so we told them what to say." In fact, one of the defining features of the stories of Palestinians from Combatants for Peace who testify before Israelis is their emphasis on their feelings of responsibility to their children to reject violence in order to be there for them as they grow up. When I asked Shahar what he thought about politics of representation with regard to these testimonies, he said this:

> If I was writing about it academically I would tear the group apart. But, what do you want me to do? This isn't theory; this is my real life.

> Should I send Mohammed out in front of the audience to tell them what he really thinks of them? First, they would eat him alive, and, second, it would be our last event. I know what he really thinks, and I understand it, but they aren't at that point. The same is true for me: if he had told me the day after my refusal what Arabs really thought, I would have reenlisted again. You need to meet Israelis where they are, where they are able to engage. The mountain won't come to Mohammed, Mohammed has to go to the mountain.

Laughing at his own joke, which, he correctly pointed out, worked on multiple levels, I had to sympathize. I, like other researchers I have spoken with who have worked in Israel, have found myself in arguments using rationalities that I would be far more nuanced with in an academic setting, such as human rights, international law, or even universal human values, because these arguments have persuasive appeal.

Although Combatants for Peace is a joint Jewish Israeli and Palestinian organization, its activities are often very much oriented toward an intra-Jewish ethical conversation. The logic of this orientation, that most of the power and legal prerogative lies in Jewish hands, certainly reflects physical and political realities of the occupation and the physical and symbolic hegemony of Israel. Yet, because of this belief actual Palestinians often fall somewhat awkwardly within this Israeli conversation, though they represent the enduring core of the ethical dilemma. Although CFP members find exchanges with Palestinians productive and necessary, they also struggle with the alterity they find in Palestinians with whom they come face to face. Sometimes the ethical call of the other exceeds or eschews the readiness of the recipient of the call. Palestinian demands and historical claims sometimes seem unreasonable to Jewish members of the group. In the group, however, is a desire to persuade across the alterity, for example, through joint trips to the Holocaust museum. At the same time, for activism within Jewish Israeli society, the alterity of the unscripted Palestinian is a potential setback for the group's mission. This might emerge in the obvious political fields such as historical narrative and collective memory, or in the less obvious but still repellent cultural difference. Thus, a rather classic paradox of persuasion emerges: whether to script a more palatable Palestinian who might be more effective in alleviating a great deal of Palestinian suffering, or to demand the acceptance of Palestinians in all of their alterity in a willful suspension of cultural knowledge and competence. Although Slavoj Zizek

has encouraged those concerned with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to "demand the impossible" as a "radical ethico-political act" (2006), it is difficult for those living there to pursue such an unpromising path.

Another instance verging on undoneness occurred at another house meeting that featured three Jewish speakers and one Palestinian speaker. One of the Jewish ex-soldiers, giving his story for the first time, was discussing his duties at a checkpoint and the way that they would treat Palestinians who wanted to pass. Suddenly, the Palestinian speaker, who had not yet met the new member personally, interrupted. "I remember you," he said. "I remember I was there with my wife and my child trying to get through, I remember you." The Jewish speaker looked shocked. At first, he only managed to mutter, in symmetry with the man's words: "I don't remember you." He then fell silent, and at some point, which felt like an eternity, remembered his audience. "I don't remember him, but there were so many like him." Later I asked him about the incident. "I felt really shocked and defensive," he explained. "But, I was trying to remember, like, through the defensiveness that the meetings are meant to bring these types of things into the open. . . . But, I didn't expect this to be so intimate, to have to look him in the face." He had come to confess to the audience, to be the willing sacrifice for the night, but did not expect to face his victim; this was more than he was prepared for. The performance went quickly from constructed to undone, becoming suddenly very personal and far less scripted (scripting being an element of the testimonies that gives the speakers some protective distance). The presence of this particular Palestinian erased the acting of the event, the conscientious objector as actor, the acting as conscientious objector. These moments of failure perhaps mitigate the image of these confessional events as machinations by demonstrating that Combatants for Peace does not entirely control the events, rather that the events are an ongoing experiment. In the next chapter, these efforts are juxtaposed with the efforts of an entirely different group of conscientious objectors.

3

Confronting Sacrifice

My interactions with the younger generation of conscientious objectors began at a party, a launch party for a new youth group sponsored by the feminist antimilitarism organization New Profile. I went early to meet up with my friend Enon, whom I had met earlier my fieldwork. A member of New Profile, he had invited me to the gathering. I took the bus to the address he had given me, on a badly lit street in Tel Aviv. When I arrived, the building seemed dark and abandoned. A large piece of plywood leaned against the front of the building. I called Enon, who assured me that I had the right place; he was already inside, he said, and I should go through the side door and up to the second floor. I had to use my sweatshirt sleeve to avoid cutting my hand as I wrestled vigorously with the large rusty bolt that held the metal door shut. Upstairs, Enon told me that the building was the Tel Aviv headquarters of the political party Hadash,[1] a far Left communist party, and one of the only parties to draw both Jewish and Arab members. The floor we were on was the base of operations for the youth branch of the organization, called Banki.[2] The posters of Che Guevara pasted on the wall seemed to have been placed askew with careful aesthetic intent. Various posters condemning the occupation and urging ethnic equality also conveyed an anti-establishment punk youth style. The symbol for anarchy had been painted on the wall in red.

As I helped Enon slice carrots and arrange the vegan snacks, hummus, vegetables, and pita, as well as waffle cookies and juice, he told me that the party was to attract young people to a new youth group called Think Before You Enlist that New Profile was starting in Tel Aviv. It would meet weekly for activities, readings, and discussions to help young people consider whether

joining the military was the right decision for them, and to expose them to the alternatives to military service. I pointed out that New Profile is clearly against military service and that surely Think Before You Enlist would encourage refusal. He responded that the goal was to present alternatives to the overwhelming hegemony of military service, and that, unlike the military, Think Before You Enlist would accept whatever the person decided, and not send them to jail if they don't like the decision. When people started to arrive, Enon introduced me to the two leaders of the group. Shai, who was twenty-six and a student of gender studies at Tel Aviv University, had originally joined the military but then refused. Lior was twenty-three and had been released as a pacifist through the military's Conscience Committee. She participated in the voluntary national service (*shirut leumi*), volunteering in an impoverished development town on Israel's periphery. The Think Before You Enlist group had been run successfully in Jerusalem and Haifa; the group in Tel Aviv had faded out some years earlier. Enon told me of plans to start another Think Before You Enlist group in Beer Sheva.

About 150 young people arrived for the event. Many came in small groups, and, talking to different groups, I found that nearly all were from the Tel Aviv area, though a few had made a special bus trip from nearby areas. The dress code ranged from Sex Pistols punk to Nirvana grunge. Ripped flannel shirts were held together with oversized safety pins, monochrome black was prominent, as well as hair dreaded to highly varying degrees of success. The music system played a mix of Rage Against the Machine and other thrash classics over large speakers that shook the floor while people stood with friends nodding to the music. After some time, a high school band took up the instruments piled in the corner with the music system and continued the musical theme live. The aesthetic of the party and its antiauthoritarian message are shared by a transnational European youth culture, and scenes are similar in Los Angeles, London, Naples, and Athens. These Israeli youth, however, take this aesthetic stance in a particularly high-consequence environment. I recognized one young man from an activity of the group Anarchists Against the Fence, where I had done participant observation; he introduced me to several others there that night who also went to the Occupied Territories with the group. Anarchists Against the Fence has characterized its strategy as a rejection of discursive forms of persuasion in favor of direct action struggle. In practice, this meant that these young people would throw themselves against the separation fence in Palestine, subjecting themselves to arrests, teargas, concussion grenades, rubber-coated

bullets, and live ammunition directed at them by the Israeli military. Months later, I would sit in horror as I recognized one of the young men I had met that evening in an online video from Bilin, screaming in pain from tear gas and physical blows as both Palestinian activists and the soldiers who had injured him scrambled to get him to a medic. Toward the end of the evening, Enon spoke to those assembled about the new youth group being started. He told them the army didn't want them to know that it was their decision whether to serve. He told them their conscience was more important than the law, and impressed on them that civil disobedience had both a long and exalted global history and presence in the Jewish tradition.

This chapter explores the experience of conscientious objection for the younger generation of refusers. I describe their journey to military refusal, which follows a different road than the older generation's. Yet, if we are attentive, we can see that they are interacting with the same state, with the same messages about citizenship and hierarchies of value. First I describe my experiences with this group and the process I witnessed that brought several of them to conscientious objection. This process challenged my notions of what ethical responsibility looks like and how it can be taken up. I then explore another prominent distinction of this generation, the presence of women. In contrast to the all-male older generation, the new one has many young women who find out very quickly that gender matters in conscientious objection. It matters in the state's wide discretionary application of flexibility and rigidity on military exemption, and it matters to the ways social policing of gender roles works in concert with state power. Their experiences, described in the next section, show that exclusion from sacrifice is often far worse than the abnegation made in sacrifice. In the final section, I look at the upheaval that occurs when this younger generation comes face to face with state power: having developed their dissenting positions in relatively protected environments, they find the ethical assurance of private thought destabilized by the coercive powers of the state.

Thinking Ethics

After the launch party, the next few meetings of the youth group with Shai and Lior were held in the same building in an unheated room filled with classroom desks arranged in a circle. Things were going well, but the new members complained that the space lacked intimacy. When group leaders

were unable to find other options, I volunteered my apartment as a space for our weekly meetings, which typically lasted several hours. I had some hesitations about whether in taking this move I crossed a line as a researcher, a doubt I often had about classical participant observation with activists. After thinking about the kinds of reciprocity my mentors had described to compensate and build relationships with their interlocutors, from baking bread to manual labor and even fundraising, I decided that meeting space in the tight real estate of Tel Aviv was what my interlocutors needed that I could give. I would also sometimes provide juice, tea, and vegan snacks. Members gathered in a circle, sitting on my couch, on chairs, and often on cushions on the floor. The center of the circle was often crowded with pots of tea, food, and various papers and books, often highlighted, marked, dog-eared, and food stained. These gatherings often felt as though they approached the platonic ideal of a salon gathering. It was all about ideas. The eight to ten who eventually formed the core group all attended very good Tel Aviv high schools, and academic interest in philosophy and the arts was strong. Members came from well-off families, and though they were extremely self-restrictive in their consumption patterns, they often had upper-class tastes, even ascetic tastes, such as veganism and ripped clothing.

In our sessions, students would often raise classical arguments of moral philosophy, complete with references. Throughout the meetings, these young people would question the conventional frameworks they had been taught, experimenting with new politics to see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as something that could not be disentangled from the problems of capitalist consumption, nationalism, meat-eating, violence, propaganda, chauvinism and racism. Their political explorations were in direct and antagonistic conversation with the explicitly Zionist education they were receiving, and the school and classroom were mentioned often in our conversations. As the official ideology of the state, Zionism is taught intentionally and explicitly in Israeli schools. As an outsider, I was surprised early on by the degree to which the methods of producing solidarity and indoctrination of Zionist ideology were discussed in the public sphere. The state would launch frequent initiatives for which the goal of the affectively manipulating young people toward Zionism was frankly stated, as though seeing how the sausage is made does not dampen its appeal. For example, in response to a recently announced initiative to teach Zionist values, high school principal Aviva Bloch was quoted in the newspaper approving the effort: "In order to make kids want to enlist in the army when they get their first draft summons

at age 17, we must start teaching them about social solidarity in kindergarten. Even kids must be familiar with the state and its symbols, and not only through history class but also through music and travel" (Velmer 2012). The unease of my interlocutors with this orientation did not come out of the blue, but rather emerges from a well-known tension within Zionism. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled describe this tension as a contradiction between a particularist commitment to a Jewish state and a universalist commitment to Western democracy (2002). The Jewish identity of members of the group was often a source of ambivalence and discomfort. The public references to *am yisrael* were difficult for the young people who had also been encouraged to adopt liberal subjectivities, through which they expected to be judged individually, and not according to ethnic origin.

All this is not to suggest that students had not also received instruction in Jewish particularism. Children are introduced early on to the symbols of the state, the Israeli flag, the national emblem, and the national anthem. Such instruction is common in most states, but a unifying characteristic of these icons in Israel is that they are all explicitly Jewish: the flag features the Star of David, the national emblem is the menorah, and the anthem speaks of the yearning of the Jewish soul. The members of the youth group had not always been troubled by these features. As teens, though, a vague unease with the exclusions of this orientation against non-Jews drove them to seek out alternative and dissident literature to give a language to their ethical discontent. As residents of Tel Aviv, they had access to a vast supply of literature in Hebrew and English as well as a vibrant atmosphere of lectures and talks that exposed them to new political ideas and many theories about ethics and responsibility.[3] Some tried to find evidence for their political beliefs in Jewish sources, but others rejected the approach as not universal or cosmopolitan, and thus an illegitimate basis for ethical strategy. Students brought in other religious traditions as sources as well. Buddhism was explored as a resource for pacifism, and even Christian themes occasionally entered the conversation. Once during a discussion regarding the use of force in self-defense, Ya'ara, one of the young women in the group, said, "Well, you know what I think: one must 'turn the other cheek,'" a well-known theme from the Christian tradition. Western philosophy, a subject they studied in school, was always the most popular ethical resource, however.

One of the places I would meet people outside the weekly group was at Salon Mazal, a self-described infoshop near several of Tel Aviv's theaters,

museums, and an independent cinema.[4] The shop had a lending library full of literature on politics, gender, consumerism, human and animal rights, permaculture, and many other topics. Like New Profile, it had a nonhierarchical structure. It also hosted events, lectures, and films, an anarchist reading group, and Arabic lessons, all of which my interlocutors attended quite frequently. The infoshop also sold fair trade products, T-shirts, and ecologically responsible products from Palestinian farmers. There were fun days, like Salon Mazal's "Buy Nothing Day," an anticonsumerist event that offered many social activities including mingling and music. Other times, we would meet for coffee or an herbal infusion, maybe sage and lemon verbena, and read quietly, and share interesting ideas we came across. During the time I spent with the group, I witnessed many of the members pick up new ideas and discourse and turn more definitively against the ethics of military service. Each person had a different particular cosmology of reasons, but ethical responsibility to the Palestinians was a strong common denominator.

Several members went to the same high school for the arts in Tel Aviv, where they were engaged in an ongoing battle with their school principal, who demanded adherence to the Zionist line in academic and extracurricular school activities. The school had gotten some negative attention in the media because a relatively high percentage of its graduates were not enlisting in the military. The principal was trying to crack down on this trend and reform the public image of the school. One incident captured the group's attention for weeks and culminated in the expulsion from school of one of its members, Aya, about whom we heard briefly in the introduction. Students were meant to go on a field trip to Jerusalem, which the school stated was part of a Jewish heritage theme. Because Jerusalem is a highly disputed area, students were worried about where they would visit, whether it would be occupied land, and what representation of ownership they would be asked to implicitly consent to along the way. One of the students, Oren, described his discomfort. "When they bring students through these areas, past the Sharon house, through the Western Wall tunnel [Minheret Hakotel], and through those streets, they are saying, 'this is ours.' And I don't want to be used in that way. I don't want . . . my body to send that message." He refers here to places where Israel has aggressively asserted sovereignty over controversial territory. The Sharon house is a heavily guarded one in the heart of Jerusalem's Muslim Quarter, draped with Israeli flags and belonging to Ariel Sharon; the Western Wall tunnel is part of the excavations of the continuation of the Jewish Western Wall, which has caused structural damage

to the Muslim Quarter above and to Islamic antiquities. Oren feared that his presence at these sites would further the state's aggressive territorial ambitions.

Discussions in the group often focused on the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories as well as on the inequality that Palestinian Israelis face within the country. Not having served in combat positions in the military, these young people by and large had encountered few Palestinians in their lives. Their engagements with the issues were therefore largely cerebral, though no less strong in conviction because of it. Even at events such as those of Anarchists Against the Fence in the West Bank, interactions with Palestinians was brief, and always traveling with their own (vegan) food made common techniques of hospitality, such as sharing meals or drinking tea (refined sugar is not vegan), unlikely. Palestinian gender politics, specifically, the status of women and homosexuals, are another source of discomfort in their political stance in defense of Palestinians. Yet this did not diminish their moral outrage or their feeling of ethical responsibility to Palestinians. That it did not I found interesting and challenging. Clearly, these young people had received an "ethical call" of the Other. They heard Palestinian demands for justice, took them as personal obligations, and felt responsible to Palestinians as neighbors. What is interesting is that this happened without much exposure to Palestinians. In many ways, the older generation of conscientious objectors had a more classical humanist experience of receiving an ethical call. In their experiences as soldiers, members of the older generation saw the harm they were causing Palestinians and responded to individuals. They often had deep experiences of empathy, when—for example—the gaze of a child would be experienced as a literal ethical demand. Their experiences were much like the metaphors used to describe such ethical demands, such as Emmanual Levinas's imagery of the face of the Other that conveys the epiphany of the ethical demand. In contrast, the younger generation received the ethical demand in a reading salon and had very little contact with Palestinians, either personal or virtual. Even their reading materials were mostly written by Euro American and Jewish Israeli authors.

At the same time, it could not be said that members of the younger generation lacked conviction or affective attachment to their ethical stance because of this distance. The lack of contact raised several questions: What does an ethical demand look like? What forms can it take? Where can it come from? Can a young woman receive an ethical demand from a Palestinian

while sitting in a café reading eighteenth-century European philosophy? I saw, after my experiences with this group, that she can. I saw it happen. Moreover, I began to see that the politics surrounding this question, of who has the social authority to claim ethical responsibility, is fraught with hierarchy. Whereas the older generation had a strong personal encounter that triggered an ethical epiphany, many in this younger group thought their way into their ethical convictions, and only later "fleshed these out" in contact with actual Palestinians at different events organized expressly for such exposure. Though it cannot be said that their convictions were less strong, their intellectual path to conscientious objection had other social effects. Not being combat soldiers, and not having direct interaction with Palestinians, they were less compelling in Israeli society than the older generation in their accounts and attempts at self-explanation. They would therefore never have the opportunity to stage public confessions such as those we saw in the last chapter. When they did try to have public events, few people attended, most from the radical Left community. This issue extends to gender and the fact that most young women will never be combat soldiers and thus never have these publicly compelling narratives. This issue emerges repeatedly for women who try to define their conscientious positions in relation to ex-combat soldiers who continue to use the language of heroism and military sacrifice. As we continue to see in the next section, this issue places women in the position of having indirect ancillary relationships to ethical responsibility.

The Embarrassment of Spurned Sacrifice

I met Liat at a conference sponsored by New Profile and War Resisters International in Neve Shalom, a village explicitly dedicated to Jewish Arab coexistence. On the second day of the two-day event, Liat and I had both volunteered to take our turn in the kitchen, preparing a vegan lunch for the two hundred or so participants. We were assigned to chop cabbage that would be cooked and mixed with rice noodles and a dressing of soy sauce and sesame oil. I looked on nervously at her unwieldy use of the sharp knife, but nevertheless risked distracting her by striking up a conversation. I asked her what had brought her to the conference. She dodged the question. Just then, one of the other volunteers dumped a massive quantity of cabbages on our station. Taking a look at the pile, Liat, as if realizing that we would be spending some time together so we might as well have a substantial conver-

sation, told me that she had refused to do her military service. She explained that when she was in high school she had formed a group with fellow students at her and two other schools, and that together they decided that they would all refuse together. The first time a group of high schoolers organized to refuse military service was in 1987. Periodically since then, groups of seniors (Shministim) have also joined to submit collective letters of refusal. Liat recalled her senior year, during which she decided to refuse, as one of intense and exciting activity. The group drafted the letters, debated the content, periodically questioned the whole enterprise, and recruited new signatories. It sounded very much the way refusers of the older generation discussed their preparation for refusal, the nerves and the excitement that they were doing something both good and important.

Something quite different happened after Liat and her cohort submitted their letters of refusal, however. Liat told me that for a time, there was confusion. Members of the group had different enlistment dates, and no uniform or official procedure was in place, leaving each young person to have an entirely different experience of dealing with the military's disciplinary mechanisms. When the dust settled, the young men of the group found themselves in jail, and the young women found themselves exempted from military service. Liat said that once they recognized this, the dynamic changed.

> Before, we were all the same, we didn't see this difference. But after, they were the heroes who had sacrificed their freedom, and the press wanted to talk to them and hear what they had to say. They all got profiles in the newspapers. At first they felt weird about it, and tried to point the attention back at us too, but it didn't help. We weren't a good story, and eventually they accepted their fame. We wanted to support them. All the girls of the group organized a candle vigil outside the prison where they were being held, and we realized that what we were doing was no different than what the rest of society was doing, instead of being little women worrying and fretting and waiting at home for our hero men to come home from war, we were little women worrying and waiting for our men to come home from jail. We were even making cookies to send to them just like war mothers.

Liat's comments resonate with studies suggesting that, in Israel, even more than in countries where women do not regularly serve in the military, the military is a locus for the differentiation of the genders and reinforces

hegemonic masculinity. For example, Hanna Herzog writes, "In Israel, security, the army, and soldiering dominate the public sphere and are bastions of male discourse. Family and familism are perceived as the pillars of Israeli communal and private lives and are the woman's castle" (1998: 61; see also Weiss 2005; Sasson-Levy 2008).

The members of Parliament writing the defense laws felt free to give women the right to exemption from service for reasons of conscience but to deny it to men. Since then, women have had a much easier time securing exemption, as Liat experienced. Though one might think it a privilege that these young women are not asked to pay for their disobedience, they are, in the process, relieved of their public responsibility. Insofar as responsibility is linked to authority, they are likewise relieved of the ability to have any kind of public impact. James Laidlaw even suggests that social efficacy should not be evaluated by the questionable category of agency, but rather by the distribution and attribution of responsibility. Responsibility, he argues, is where we find public efficacy (2010). For Combatants for Peace members, responsibility is placed on them as ex-combat soldiers. They had "been there" and claimed responsibility for the violence they committed with their own hands. The young women I worked with struggled to articulate a source of their ethics that would be considered publicly compelling.

Shai, one of the coleaders of the group, noted that the gendering function of the military extended to the refusal movement. He pointed out that Combatants for Peace speakers were using their military combat service as the basis for their critique. He remarked that he did not feel, though he had served in the military, that this experience should give him any more right to speak authoritatively than someone who had not served. If anything, he added, it should be the opposite. "I know which side I choose," he said referring to his choice of throwing his lot with the feminist organization New Profile rather than Combatants for Peace. Shai lived this choice in more ways than one. He started a feminist group for men at his college, though he reported laughingly that it wasn't going very well, and that the dynamic would probably have benefited from having a few women members. In our group, he made concerted efforts not to dominate conversation and to be soft-spoken. His goal, he admitted privately, was to not intimidate the young women or prevent them from offering their contributions or disagreeing with him. He also tried to speak in gender-neutral terms, which in Hebrew means double-conjugating pronouns and verbs to masculine and feminine, which is difficult in conversation. It was not only these efforts, however, that

required significant attentiveness. Part of Shai's living that choice meant that he was relatively sidelined from public attention, and attended demonstrations with ten people and no media in attendance, despite the fact that, as a former soldier, he could have access to much more of a public audience for his dissent if he had chosen to present himself in another way.

One day in the group, this frustration seemed to erupt from a long-term quest to find the words to describe the issue. One girl said, "It really annoys me that I never picked up a gun and went to the territories; I never used violence against anyone; I understood already in high school that it is wrong, but they get all the credit for their epiphany. But I guess you have to carry a gun first to have a conscience and be able to talk about the occupation." This echoed the sentiments of a young woman I met at the Combatants for Peace meeting. She had attended the event out of curiosity, but she was intimidated by the predominance of men, despite the explicit efforts of members to include everyone, she stuck by my side all day. She told me at the end that she would not go to another meeting. "Well, maybe I didn't serve in a combat unit, so I don't know the faces of the people I've affected, but I did lots of work that had to have an impact. Can I stand up and say, I figured out that I am responsible for the deaths of three point eight, eh . . . six Palestinians and I feel very guilty about that and I want to explain to you why I refused?" The entree to publicly recognized responsibility is less clear for these women than it was for their male counterparts, who claimed that ethical responsibility derived from the gaze of Palestinian children.

The expectations of masculine and feminine roles for men and women of their age in the military context often emerged as a point of frustration for women I met. Many noticed the ways they were encouraged to worry about men and chastised if they failed to do so. One of the young women in the youth group, Leev, went through a period when she was trying to figure out whether there were any role in the military she felt she could fulfill and still reconcile her activities with her conscience. When she spoke with military representatives regarding her concerns and her options, she was offered a number of positions that involved teaching soldiers or being assigned to a combat unit to make sure the soldiers had what they needed and were not having psychological trouble, what she called being a "soldiers' nanny." "It was ridiculous!" she told the group one week:

> They were going to go out and kill people and then come back and be pampered like children. I would be expected to run around making

> sure these Rambos had dry socks and enough chocolate bars. To reassure them that, what? That they are still good boys regardless of what violence they may have just committed? To hold them to my bosom and make them feel secure? To be some kind of perverted mix of mother and girlfriend that will turn every scratch into a national emergency, regardless of the ethics of how they got that scratch? When they suggested that, I was so angry, I realized I cannot work within the system. It will change you, not the other way around.

More than anything, the voices of the young women in the group conveyed embarrassment. They were surprised and insulted to find that they had nothing of value to withhold.

At the New Profile conference, I also met Ofra, an older woman I stayed in touch with long afterward. Ofra was very dedicated to her antimilitarism activities and was a member of Women in Black, an international antiwar organization. One day, she told me that her sons had served in the military.[5] Ofra struggled with the role of "worrying mother" she was expected to play to her sons, referring to the militarization of society as "at least as much fault of the worrier as the warrior." Fifty-six years old when I met her, she had immigrated to Israel about thirty years earlier from the United States. We spoke in English. She said she was always against the occupation and protested against the military. When her son graduated from high school, she discouraged him from joining the military. He insisted. She then told him that she could not support him in the decision. "At first he said that he was fine with it. He said he understood my position and respected it, but he didn't understand all of the consequences of this. He was shocked when I refused to wash his uniform when he came back on the weekend." She wouldn't let him keep his gun in the house, which caused him considerable trouble with military protocol. She also refused to participate in the rituals of motherly nervousness and worry.

> I wasn't calling his commanders like the other mothers, complaining about the conditions at the base or what he was being asked to do. When he complained about the cold or came home with cuts or blisters, I refused to start flailing and shrieking the way I saw other mothers do all the time. He was very hurt. My husband thought I had crossed a line and wouldn't speak to me. He moved out of the bedroom, and then out of the house. I said "I'm the one who doesn't

> want to lend a hand to my son getting killed or killing anyone else. You're the one sending him out of the house with a gun saying he has to defend you. How did I become the unsupportive one here?!" But there was no use arguing, this idea of what a mother should do to show that she cares is so set in stone . . . worry and bake . . . and maybe mourn eventually. Actually trying to protect him was not appreciated. I was going to a lot of protests in the West Bank, and there would always be soldiers stopping us, harassing us. I was terrified that one time one of those soldiers holding their gun at me would be my son. I was very grateful that never happened.

Ofra told me that I might be interested in the activities of Women in Black. Although its members were not conscientious objectors, I was interested in the ways they as women were articulating their ethical stance. So when Ofra invited me to a Women in Black protest in Jerusalem, I accepted. Women in Black met in Hagar Square, also called Paris Square, and stood in the central median of the large traffic circle. Sometimes they went every week, but when I went I was told that they were protesting less frequently. I came by myself and planned to meet Ofra there. As I approached, I saw the women protesting, dressed in black, but the scene made me stop and watch from afar. The women were standing silently with their signs and staring straight forward as a man yelled in their faces. He was screaming the most vulgar and violent sexual insults I had ever heard. I felt myself go pale and noticed cars circling the women in the intersection from which men were also shouting violent and graphic insults. I stood and watched for a few minutes as passersby and drivers by flung insults at the stone-faced women.[6] I then turned away and left, getting only a few blocks before I started crying. When Ofra telephoned a few minutes later, I didn't answer. I don't know whether she saw me. I honestly could not understand the point of it. The feeling was so different from that at the meetings of Combatants for Peace, which, though confrontational, was respectful, and speakers felt as if their self-exposure was productive sacrifice. In comparison, I cannot think of Combatants for Peace members as being on the same scale of abnegation, and yet these women seemed to be having little impact. When I finally talked to Ofra again, I told her how upset I had been by what I had seen. "What else can we do?" she said. "We have to try something." Moshe Halbertal reminds us of the agony of spurned sacrifice. Abnegation for a cause is intended to establish a relationship of reciprocity. When sacrifice is rejected, the relationship

is likewise rejected. The violence these women endure is pure abnegation without sacrifice. It goes unrecognized, yet, because they have nothing else to offer, they continue in the hopes that their actions will become effective.

In contrast, if women are willing to embrace the role of mothers of soldiers, they may have more access to public critique than their antimilitary counterparts. During the first Lebanon War, a group called the Four Mothers' Movement was established to protest the war. It was started by four women—Rachel Ben-Dor, Miri Sela, Ronit Nachmias, and Zahara Antavi—who had sons serving in the Lebanon war, and who came from kibbutzim and towns in the north of Israel. They protested that the war in Lebanon was an unnecessary one and was risking the lives of their children for no clear national goal. This group quickly became visible in the media and a household name, gathering broad support from many sectors of society. Their activities were covered and reported internationally. There was, of course, criticism of them, but several military figures who made disparaging remarks about them were compelled to apologize because of the consequent negative publicity (Frucht 2000), which is very different than the experiences of Women in Black. Four Mothers was a maternalist movement, defining itself and deriving its authority and social power from the fact of motherhood. However, these women found access to social authority by virtue of having sent their sons to the army, and risking their lives. Joan Scott has discussed the ways in which maternity can consolidate feminist identification and in fact has been used to oppose war based on maternal fantasy of maternal love, through which mothers emerge as responsible for life, in contrast to men, who wage war and cause death (2001). Scott also notes that this often takes place in contexts of pronatalist political pressure (2001: 297). Israeli politics and public discourse have been constantly concerned with the so-called demographic threat that Jews might soon be the minority given high Palestinian birth rates. One of the mothers told the press, "If God had asked Sarah to sacrifice Isaac, the answer would have been very different! God must have known that, so he didn't ask her" (Frucht 2000). In this statement, the woman is appealing to the way the sacrifice through military service is understood as parents sacrificing their children. One must not forget, however, that this maternalist appeal is based on these mothers having sent their sons, but their supportive role is more socially fragile and conditional than the real hero of the narrative, who is the soldier. When one of the women's sons from an elite unit objected to her activities in the group, she withdrew from the movement.

What keeps women from gaining authority in their own right is the economy of sacrificial value determined by the needs of sovereign politics. The state needs bodies that can absorb bullets, kill, and die a principled death. The purpose of the soldier is to receive and dispense violence for the state. Though the young people I worked with were socially ambitious and disturbed by the threat of being marginalized by what they saw as their obligations of conscience, they were doubtful as to whether they wanted to compete in this economy of sacrifice. Certainly some young women have chosen this route, to advance feminism by showing women equal to men in all military tasks, fighting legal battles to be allowed to take on the most dangerous combat positions (Rimalt 2007). These bipolar paths reveal the double bind that women face between socially imposed gender expectations and the ambition to excel in the more prestigious sphere of military service (on how militarism can have other toxic effects on gender inequalities in another cultural context, see Lutz 2002). The grievance of my interlocutors was also related to a new social hierarchy they had never faced before that diminished their worth. In the military, they encountered a social framework that unabashedly valued male over female, strong over weak, able-bodied over disabled, aggression over humility, and hierarchy over the acelphalous equality espoused by New Profile and Salon Mazal. In the interactions of the youth group, it seemed as if these military social valuations, suddenly inescapable, were thought to be not only wrong, but also personally insulting. The young women, the feminist men, found the things they valued in themselves summarily dismissed in the name of security and national survival, which made claims to supreme importance.

Also, many of the young women found that what they had to offer the army in sacrifice was less valuable than their male counterparts, and as such withholding their sacrifice was not as subversive as they had wished. In general, the young people from this group received far less public attention than the conscientious objectors who had previously served in the military. The difference in social impact of this group of young people from that of Combatants for Peace is not a matter of cultural knowledge or skill. Rather, these young people are not in a position to offer personal narratives that are persuasive of authority in society, regardless of their skill in articulation. Povinelli has observed that counterdiscourses are strongly tethered to a compatible imagery (2009: 95). Combatants for Peace speakers are able to redeploy culturally resonant imagery of heroism and soldiering for their new cause. In the relative public success of Combatants for Peace, we can see that the soldier's

narrative has far more cultural force because of its symmetry with mainstream narrative of military service than anything the young people in New Profile group had to offer.

After the first year of the group, two of the female members did not enlist, but they also did not draw political attention to themselves and were not sent to jail. The following autumn, some high school students refused to enter the army, and, as in the past, published a letter stating their refusal. For the first time, most of the refusers were women, and several were sent to prison. In January 2009, the group invited Or, one of the women who refused. She arrived wearing a T-shirt that featured a shopping cart in a circle with a red line through it. When I asked Or about it and how it connected to her refusal, she said, "You know that it is connected, the anticonsumption and also the veganism.[7] The same way I feel that an animal has the right not to suffer, I feel a Palestinian has the right not to suffer." I had grown accustomed to this kind of logic, so at the time was not shocked by the analogy. This configuration of moral responsibility, though, is quite different from the opposition of Combatants for Peace to the occupation. It says a great deal about how this younger group are reconsidering the boundaries of what is traditionally thought to be the limits of ethics and politics. It is jarring because the comparison of Palestinians to animals is usually done to dehumanize them as opposed to including animals in one's moral sphere.

The young people were keenly interested in how Or was planning to get out of the army and which of the available methods was best. Their questions were largely practical; they were thinking about their options. Or said that she will probably get out on psychiatric release. She said she had four marriage proposals, marriage being another way to get out, but said she doesn't really feel like dealing with the religious authority to do that. "You could just get divorced after," one of the girls said. "There is no need for divorce, what do I care?" Or retorted, taking the opportunity to express her rejection of the cultural norms that unite law, family structure, and religion. They asked her whether it bothers her that she would be going out on psychiatric release. She said that really it did not, and then commented on the older generation of refusers, many of whom she knew personally. It was very important for them, she pointed out, to be heroes. "They went from being soldier heroes to being refuser heroes. They wanted to sit in jail and sacrifice to show how committed they are. But our group, we are from the posthero generation." She said that her group realized that they weren't accomplishing anything by sitting in jail except stroking their egos. "Our group is more

feminist, we don't need to prove anything to the military." Another young woman told me that she decided to refuse indirectly, in her case with a psychological release. She said that after going to jail once, she understood that going back and forth to jail was simply replicating one military pattern with another. Instead of being a brave and courageous soldier and sacrificing her life, like the army wanted, she would have become a brave and courageous resister who sacrifices her freedom. (In reality, though, the military never really wanted her life, and in adopting the theoretical subject position of an elite combat soldier, she was greatly exaggerating what she had to offer from the military's perspective.) Although jail was the only way to get media attention for her cause, it wasn't worth the effort. Refusers who avoid or are excluded from heroic sacrifice are thus stalked by social illegibility. Their activities and protests, when taken out of the radical Left community, are either ignored or the subject of violence, neither of which convey their message nor acknowledge their abnegation. Likewise, opting out of sacrifice forgoes their opportunity to effect change.

Or's statement that she is from the post-heroic generation reflects a moment of radical potential. Her reference to the heroic is shorthand for the entire sacrificial economy that excludes her in both consent and dissent. She is ruminating on a completely different way of judging ethical action. By separating ethics from the hegemonic expectation of heroic sacrifice, she is creating a space in which she and her cohort can compete for ethical authority on the same level as Combatants for Peace. Naisargi Dave has argued that the task of radical activism is to "not only reverse existing moral codes, but to invent an ethical language more closely approximating the hope for social justice" (2010: 373). What Or suggests is only a kernel, an embryo of a new ethical language that would separate an ethical act from the sacrificial economy that excludes her. She is aware that popular adjudication and recognition is still based on the "heroic" standards, in which she is not favorably compared with the older generation. But, she is suggesting the possibility of an alternative standard of adjudication. For a moment, with a specific audience, she is able to reject the label of shirker, which would be applied to someone leaving through an illegitimate exemption.

Public discourse sharply distinguishes between conscientious objectors in the heroic tradition and conscientious objectors outside it, referring to the former as refusers (*sarbanim*) and the later as shirkers (*mishtamtim*). State discourse refers to as many conscientious objectors as possible as shirkers, given that it reframes the issue away from protected conscience

and into a question of will. However, it is not apathy that drives Or toward grey refusal, but instead exhaustion over the lack of recognition she manages to achieve.[8] When these young women step out into the public sphere, they struggle to make their ethical position intelligible, but they do not have a public language to testify to their conscience. Michael Warner, working on the intersection of theories of queerness and theories of the public sphere, has addressed the challenges of countercultures facing at length (2005). He shows that the cards are stacked against a potential counterculture, not only in the content of the ideology they oppose, but also in the assumptions that define the public. Specifically, the meaning of a public refers implicitly to its dominant values, and so the counterculture is not only at odds with the dominant discourse, but also with the norms that constitute the dominant culture as a public. Insofar as these women have less value in the economy of sacrifice, they are at odds not only with militarism, as is Combatants for Peace, but also with the hierarchies that grant Combatants for Peace members the authority to continue to speak as heroic combatants. Judith Butler's work inspired many anthropologists to document people's struggle for legibility and public recognition, despite their failure to conform to liberal humanist ontologies. Here, we see that one of the risks of seeking legibility is misrecognition that can bring severe sanction.

States of Unease: Dissent and Repercussions

One day, after about six months after the Think Before You Enlist group in Tel Aviv was established, the leaders decided that it was finally time to discuss whether the members of the group would enlist in the military. The idea behind avoiding this discussion until that point had been that the group should explore the possibilities before members felt pressure to decide. During the weekly meetings over the previous months, the group had been moving collectively from tentative doubt about military service to more confident opposition to the military and to the ethics of military service. Speaking with me before the meeting began, Lior and Shai said they expected many had decided to refuse. They ran through the names of the members, evaluating each case and concluding that most would not go to military service. Once members arrived and the conversation began, however, what became obvious was that though many had decided that they were ethically firmly against military service, whether to refuse was a much

more difficult question. Many were overwhelmed by the significance of how much this decision and any misstep in this area would affect the rest of their lives. A young man in the group, Avi, was the first asked about his current plans. He said, "What I am really afraid of afterwards is the career. If I am asked at job interviews what I did in the army, what will I say? And especially since I am thinking that I might want to be in politics, the army is the absolute base for any political career. There is a lot of discrimination against those who don't do the army, even if it isn't in the law." Avi said he was thinking about trying to find something that didn't contribute directly to the occupation. He acknowledged that this plan contradicted his strong objections to the military generally, and his political stance as an active member of Banki.

Another young man said that he was afraid because he wanted to be a musician, and reminded the group of recent events in which musicians in all spheres in Israel were coming under attack and being investigated and—if it was discovered that they had not served in the military—were boycotted. A young woman told the group that she had heard that it was not possible to become a doctor or a psychologist without first serving in the military, which Shai grudgingly conceded he had also heard was the case. Leev said she was not only afraid to refuse publicly, but also even afraid to seek a different kind of exemption. She brought up a proposed law being considered to deny driver's licenses to people who had received specific exemptions from military service in an effort to combat shirking. The exemptions targeted were those most often used by covert refusers, such as mental unfitness. Leev also said, "Look what they did to Tali Fahima," referring to a Jewish Israeli citizen who was placed under administrative detention and later convicted of aiding the enemy, charges considered dubious by many on the Left. Many in these circles were surprised to see a Jewish Israeli receive such treatment, specifically at the use of security categories and techniques such as interrogation and administrative detention, which are usually used only on Palestinians. It was a greater flexing of state muscle than usual, and one that seemed to threaten democratic liberties. Also on the group's mind this night were the five conscientious objectors, who just out of high school had been convicted of military refusal in a very public trial, making the five notorious throughout the country. Each was sent to military prison for a year. The anxious conversation also included several incidents from the older generation of conscientious objectors losing jobs and being publicly disgraced. Group leaders could not in good faith deny that these fears were

well founded. This meeting was a dramatic break with previous discussions, which had been characterized by a strong consensus against military service. It was stressful for Lior and Shai, who uncharacteristically expressed their dismay at the reluctance of group members. The meeting proved, however, that state power in concert with active social sanction made it clear that military service was still a social reality.

In one of his poems, Haim Gouri describes the star-crossed birthright of Jews born after Abraham's binding of his son Isaac as "born with a knife in their hearts" (Gouri 1981: 565). The young people in the youth group felt the burden of this inheritance deeply, from the legacy of their grandparents, who were in several cases Holocaust survivors, to being born in an ontologically fraught state in the midst of occupation, to the demand for their sacrifice to the state that claims a right to their lives. As the group members approached the end of the school year, they began to realize that direct encounter with the state was unavoidable. In the sanctuary of the group, they entertained the notion of demanding that the interaction take place on their terms, to insist that the state recognize their conscience. At the same time, they began also to recognize the overwhelming disciplinary force of the military to mobilize social sanction well beyond its legal jurisdiction. Although conscience may somewhat bind the hands of direct state punishment, it also has great influence in the social sphere, where no such protections are on the books. Around that time, Defense Minister Ehud Barak made statements that were repeated across the media and discussed in the youth group with great urgency. "The time has come to return to the days when serving in the military was perceived as a privilege and an honor, and shirkers were branded with the mark of Cain" (Marcus 2007). Statements like these began to turn the young people's moral indignation into fear.

An example of this consonance between the state and social sanction was the launch of a privately financed and state-guided advertising campaign against draft evasion that came in response to the official position that grey refusal was increasing, which the military referred to as a "motivational crisis." The campaign was ubiquitous and was greeted with near panic in the youth group. The military had released statistics showing that 48 percent of Israeli youths do not enlist in the Israeli Defense Forces (Pfeffer 2010). Some are automatically exempt, but approximately 25 percent actively evade service (Rosenfeld 2009). In response, a local advertising executive, Rami Yehoshua of Yehoshua/TBWA advertising agency, initiated a massive campaign to aimed to shame and morally degrade draft evasion.

This Real Israeli campaign was ubiquitous, appearing on buses, television, and the Internet. It aimed to impress on young people that serving in the military was a duty of every citizen and that not serving can lead to social alienation and rejection. In actuality, it appealed only to young men, both in grammar, only using masculine forms, and in content, by referring to combat duty jobs and appealing to heterosexual male desire to encourage service. The main theme of the campaign, which ended each commercial and was painted on the sides of buses across the country, was "A real Israeli doesn't shirk" (*yisraeli amiti lo mishtamet*, which is grammatically the masculine singular). One television commercial referenced the national tradition of postmilitary exotic travel, and suggested that combat service would prove a great boon in attracting women, whereas not serving in the military would result in humiliation and emasculation. Group members saw in this commercial a confirmation of their suspicions of the resonance between militarism, normative masculinities, and the degradation of the value of women in military service. They joined other young people to produce a number of video parodies of the state commercials, in which the motto "A real Israeli doesn't shirk" was replaced with "A real Israeli doesn't ask questions" or "A real Israeli doesn't shirk from the truth." In one such parody, a character says to approving nods, "I didn't even enlist. I went there and I told them that I prefer to go to jail than to the army when my little brothers don't have money for school books. You don't have to prove to anyone that you are a real Israeli." Their response was not on any television network, but was circulated through various new media, including YouTube and Facebook.

The campaign was unsettling to a number of young people in the group. Until this point, they had been nurtured and instructed into a subjectivity that celebrated their expressions of individuality and dissent. They had been encouraged by parents and teachers to challenge hierarchies, to explore their conscience, and to value themselves through self-expression. Regardless of a person's upbringing in individual affirmation and liberal subject formation of Israeli youth, however, the expectation of military service remains the hard core of state sovereignty. Their parents are not able, and are often also unwilling, to extend this liberal experience to their encounter with the state, where the law gives the state a right to these young peoples' bodies and social realities. The state has the right to impose the risk of death on these young people, a very disturbing thought for them, who, unlike the older generation of conscientious objectors, did not metonymize their lives with the state project. They questioned the national narrative far earlier than

the older group had, their self-formation was created largely in opposition to the Zionist project and the normative values and expectations that accompanied it. On the one hand, this meant that their moral crisis was not as inwardly traumatic. On the other hand, their run-in with the state comes at a vulnerable stage in their life, before they have established themselves either in moral authority or reciprocity with the state, or in adult networks and relationships. The effects of their refusal can therefore be more all-consuming.

This fateful meeting, in which the group discussed the concrete intentions of the each of the members, made it much more explicit that each member would ultimately have to decide on a course of action and cope with the outcomes of that decision. In seeking to make a decision, my interlocutors were forced to face many of the social constraints that had not weighed on their earlier theoretical explorations. Unlike those publicly presented as shirkers and self-absorbed, my interlocutors began with a strong desire to make an ethical renunciation for society. However, like the older generation, they wanted both to have a positive ethical impact and to be socially rewarded for their sacrifice. They were forced to confront the reality that they cannot control the terms of their sacrifice, and in fact have much to lose from trying to do so. Born with many social advantages, they were accustomed to a high level of cultural competence and had experienced near constant success in institutional settings. The potential marginalization and persecution they faced was a new threat. Thus they were forced to confront their limited agency, and their limited options within the hegemonic social imaginary. They could not do what they wanted to be able to do for themselves, nor for Palestinians.

Pacifism had always been part of group discussions. It was mentioned frequently in early theoretical discussions, during which students introduced ideas about Gandhi and Buddhism. At its core, pacifism was always understood in the group as absolute nonviolence. The different philosophical origins brought different nuances and rationalities that appealed to members differently. Most also read Tolstoy and discussed the pacifist messages in his books and his life. The group also read about an Israeli pacifist in the early years of the state, Joseph Abileah. Some were interested in pacifism philosophy, but many other ideas were also considered. After the meeting in which members were asked about their plans, and meetings became more pragmatic, that pacifists were officially exempted from military service became significant. What was going to be given recognition was significant. Many of the ideas these young people considered had neither a language

within mainstream Israeli political discourse nor recognized status within the laws governing military service.

Conscientious objection does not have to take the form of pacifism. Pacifism's emergence in the group as a prominent option is partially in response to its legal status within Israeli military policy. The content is also enormously significant, however. The one form of conscientious objection recognized by the military also happens to be the most radical. There are many reasons for this, such as the historical protected status that pacifism brings with it, as well as the possibility for categorical circumscription possible with such an absolute position. Pacifism, though, is a radical philosophy and directly challenges state power. It denies the relevance of sovereign politics and stands in direct opposition to any notion of Realpolitik, rejecting the significance of pragmatic concerns. Ya'ara was one of the members who considered applying for pacifist exemption. She told the group,

> It's like . . . eh, it's like I don't think that they value it really, the pacifism. Like, obviously they don't. They are the military; they don't think that pacifism is correct. The existence of the military is against that idea. But, they are forced to pretend that they value pacifism, maybe so Europe won't think we are barbaric. So maybe it sends a message. It's the only place that they don't control the entire discussion. If you do anything else, no matter what it is, they know how to say the right words to get you to look like an idiot. *Am yisrael*, security, terrorism, Holocaust. Pacifism doesn't make any sense to them, but they can't say anything about it because it's their law.

Here, Ya'ara was locating in pacifism the ability to sneak the politically unspeakable into the Israeli national conversation in an area in which the state was constrained. Pacifism enables conscientious objectors to introduce an unintelligible and incoherent social imaginary into the political landscape under a protected status. Whatever position they arrived at with their free-form ethical thinking, pacifism is the only way for them to bring their ideas into the political public sphere.

After about a year and a half, the stress level within the group in Tel Aviv increased. One day, Shai and Lior arrived at my place before the meeting, as usual. I asked them how things were going. Lior exclaimed, "Really badly!" Shai flashed her a look. "Oh, come on!" she answered. "It isn't her!" "No, of course not," Shai said, looking guilty. "We're just going crazy with paranoia

now." New Profile, the organization that sponsored the group, had begun to come under heat from the Israeli intelligence services, the Shabak. Shai and Lior had both been brought in for questioning about their involvement with the organization and their activities with the group. The Shabak had accused them of trying to influence young people to break the law by not enlisting. They told me that the Shabak had photographs of themselves around town and in the company of other members of the youth group. They also had photographs of my apartment building that showed members of the group coming and going. They knew about the activities of the group and the other political activities of Shai and Lior outside the group and with New Profile. One of the women serving in an administrative role in the organization asked whether they thought it possible that I was either a mole or an informant. They told me they had insisted that this was not a possibility, that they knew me well, and that I would not do something like that. Lior confessed, however, that after the encounter they had searched for me on the Internet to make sure that I appeared on the Princeton University website. She called it a "moment of paranoid weakness" and apologized for her momentary doubt in me. I was not offended and told her so, saying I thought their paranoia probably appropriate. It is alarming and unsettling to be detained and questioned by state security services. The incident with Tali Fahima had driven home for everyone among the activist Left, that the social and legal life of their actions may become totally out of proportion from what was previously thought under their assumption that they lived in a liberal democracy.

Shortly after, five central members of New Profile were formally arrested by the police on the charges of inciting evasion of military service. Their homes and offices were raided simultaneously, and their computers and other materials confiscated. Despite the recent political turn to the right of the country, and despite a number of encroachments on civil liberties and the journalistic protections of free speech, these arrests came as a shock. This was in part because the organization had declared its intentions in the strongest possible terms and been practicing its antimilitary activities for years. "Surely it is legal to say you are against the army! How can it be illegal to speak against the military in a democracy!" Lior exclaimed just after the events. Shai shrugged, more jaded than Lior. The incident also puzzled me. It was clear that New Profile activities encouraged people to reconsider military service and offered support for those who evaded the draft. Thinking about these arrests reminded me of clip from a film on my interlocutors

from Combatants for Peace that had appeared on state television a number of times. There the former combat soldiers stood protesting near a group of young soldiers and chanted at them, "*Tisarvu! Tisarvu!*" (Refuse! Refuse!). This hardly seemed less of an incitement to refusing military service than the activities of New Profile. However, not only were they not arrested, but they were frequently brought on news programs and interviewed in the media regarding their opposition to service. It seemed that the state and military found something more threatening in the efforts of this feminist organization, and in the practices of the youth group and in their activities online giving advice to would be draft evaders, than in the activities of the ex-combat soldiers also openly giving talks to young people about refusal. I wondered whether it was their elite military service that gave them a shield of protection, or that their critique of the occupation did not seem to subvert society's basic hierarchies the way the demands of New Profile did. Whereas Combatants for Peace members continually expressed their loyalty to the social values endorsed by the state, such as national sacrifice, courage, and heroism, New Profile questioned whether these values were inherently problematic. In fact, when speaking with other researchers and activists working in the region, Combatants for Peace did not seem to be high on the list of groups the Shabak was concerned about. Or's comments that she is part of the post-heroic generation resonated on this point. She emphasized that she did not need to play the game of one-upsmanship she saw the other generation playing with the military, as Or called them "refuser heroes."

As the enlistment dates of members of the group drew closer, the dynamic changed. People began to be more secretive about their personal plans, situations, and strategies. After someone's enlistment date, many of the interactions took place behind the scenes between individual draftees and leaders of the group or other advisers for New Profile, who gave practical advice and assistance in real time. Avi said he was afraid of judgment from the group, and Leev that she wanted to secure her exemption before sharing the details of her strategy lest her chances be jeopardized by too many people taking the same approach. In the end, all but one of the young men who attended the group and one woman joined the military. A few of the young women applied for pacifist exemption from the military's Conscience Committee under the guidance of Lior. Other members were able to get exemptions from service based on medical and mental health conditions. One of the young women essentially disappeared, becoming quite difficult to contact and equally vague when we managed to do so. This inspired some speculation of

her involvement with the state investigations, but no one had any evidence of this. After all was said and done, there was a great deal of frustration and dissatisfaction with how these events unfolded, in contrast to the firm moral indignation that had characterized early meetings.

After spending such a long time with this group and following the paths and struggles of its members, I found this scattering disconcerting. When I began working with the group, I believed I was witnessing the process leading to public acts of conscientious objection. What the group members were experiencing was quite similar to what members of Combatants for Peace had described. Although many did not enlist, their dissent was less clear, less circumscribed, and less resolute as an act of conscience. This was a challenge for me to think about. Members of this group had convictions as strong as the older group's, yet did not manage to rise to the level of a counterpublic in quite the same way. Elizabeth Povinelli warns against making assumptions ascribing a lack of "will." This has long been the explanation of neoliberalism, and is evident in the local distinction between refuser and shirker. Povinelli says, "First, immanent critique will have to abandon any gesture to the difference of the will when answering why some people persist in striving to be and others do not, or why certain potentialities achieve the miraculous state of counterpublics and others do not" (2011: 33). She suggests that under conditions in which recognition is withheld by the hegemonic society, expectations that a group should be able to generate an alternative world in which their potential finds correlate expression and recognition can be "naïve at best and sadistic at worst" (44). Think of the difference between Combatants for Peace testimonies, in which audience criticisms were launched at the speakers' ethical interpretations, and the Women in Black rally, in which ethical arguments were ignored and replaced with sexual violence. We can see the distinction between productive and impotent abnegation. While I deeply respect the courage it took for my older interlocutors to refuse and serve jail time, I still understand why some of my other interlocutors would ultimately choose illegibility.

4

Pacifist? Prove It! The Adjudication of Conscience

According to military policy, an individual will be exempted from service if he or she can demonstrate pacifist belief. This pacifism must be demonstrated before a military body—the Conscience Committee—using testimony, witnesses, and additional evidence. Some of the members of the New Profile youth group sought pacifist exemptions because the only possible exemption from military service is based on principled objection to military service. Becoming keenly interested in this encounter between conscientious objectors and the military, I sought out many other applicants for this exemption to learn more about their pacifist beliefs and their experiences with the exemption process. Pacifist exemption speaks to the ideology and practices of liberalism. The Israeli military has allowed pacifists to be exempted from military service based on liberal principles of tolerance, asserting that on matters of religion and conscience, consent is required to maintain human dignity. Although the military, by commission, does not accept pacifism as morally correct, exemption on the basis of pacifism, it acknowledges that protections of conscience must be neutral with regard to content, that is, relativist. The applicants I met were interested in pacifist exemption because they felt that it would force the state to grant recognition to the legitimacy of their principled objections to service. However, pacifist refusal, which is based on principled objection to violence, challenges the legitimacy of state's use of force and the hegemonic moral order, and applicants who articulated their refusal in these terms were rejected by the military review board. By contrast, pacifist conscientious objection, which is based in embodied visceral revulsion to violence, does not challenge the state, and such cases were granted exemption. Objections based in understanding

pacifist as a physical incapacity depoliticize pacifism by making it incommensurable with the public moral debate on military service and preventing the military from having to engage or recognize pacifist moral claims. This creates a dilemma for pacifist applicants, who wish not only to be exempted from service, but also to engage politically on questions of military service and violence, and for their pacifism to have political meaning.

As a dynamic set of principles and rationalities of governance, liberalism espouses individual autonomy in economic, political, moral, and religious matters. A central component of this ideology is the centrality of the concept of rights and a tolerance for difference. However, many scholars have drawn attention to the internal contradictions of liberal tolerance, and its potential to suppress nonliberal cultural difference deemed undesirable or dangerous.[1] The ideology of liberal tolerance posits a relativist position toward cultural difference, but liberal policies often sanitize cultural elements that threaten either the hegemonic moral order or liberal values (Kowal 2008: 344–345). Traditions at the "limits of liberalism"—such as polygamy, genital modification, and headscarves—have been singled out as being ineligible for liberal accommodation, as have beliefs such as witchcraft (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004: 188–189).[2]

The case presented here reveals a different dynamic. Rather than being encouraged to stress their similarities and become more liberal, pacifist applicants are encouraged to exaggerate their alterity and disavow their liberal principles in order to protect the state from their challenge. Drawing on Wendy Brown, anthropological studies have shown that contrary to its ideology of neutrality, liberalism is embedded in Western individualism and moral norms. Here, the pathologization of pacifism also demonstrates the interior limits of liberalism. Though liberalism claims to be committed to public debate, rationality, and democracy, it deploys its mechanisms of exclusion against pacifism not because it is illiberal, but because it threatens the state, revealing the collaboration of liberal governance with sovereignty.

I take as its starting point that law is deeply entwined in the business of public morality.[3] More recently, attention has been drawn to the fact that even law based explicitly on principles of moral and cultural relativism is not in any way exempt from the moral judgment present in positivist legal practices (Barzilai 2008). This observation is essential to our understanding that though the oxymoron of military exemption of pacifists is necessarily based on relativist principles, it is still engaged in moral production. I begin by examining, in detail, the exemption hearing of one pacifist applicant and

situate pacifist exemption as liberal policy in the Israeli context. I then delve into the conceptualization of pacifism by young applicants for exemption to contrast this understanding with the standards of proof for pacifism in the Conscience Committee. Finally, I explore the implications for our understanding of liberal governance.

Maya's Exemption Hearing

Maya spoke with me often about her Conscience Committee experience. I also had the opportunity to interview her family and study the transcript of her hearing. When she received her first order to report (*tzav rishon*), she had already decided that she would apply for pacifist exemption. This exemption is not advertised; when recruits receive their enlistment packets, pacifist exemption is not listed among the options. However, Maya knew about the exemption from her activist social circle. According to procedure, she should have sent a letter to the Enlistment Bureau requesting a hearing with the Conscience Committee to evaluate her pacifism. However, Maya, like nearly all the other applicants I met in her situation, ignored the order, keeping it and subsequent ones stuffed between books on her shelf, hoping in vain that the problem would disappear. This is partly a response to the fact that the consequences of refusal can be severe. Depending on the outcome of one's hearing, one can face military incarceration, fewer social benefits, difficulty acquiring a driver's license, as well as social estrangement, career difficulties, and even in some cases, public infamy. Eventually, Maya received a warning that a warrant for her arrest would imminently be issued. It read as follows:

> Warning before issuing arrest warrant
>
> Regarding: Your not reporting to a summons
>
> 1. As you know military service is required according to the national defense law.
> 2. Since you did not report to orders of summons that were sent to you until now, an arrest warrant will be issued against you that will be carried out by the Israeli police.
> 3. If you report immediately to the Tel Ha'shomer area enlistment bureau, room 9 at 8:00, the arrest warrant *will not* be issued against you.

4. For your benefit, in order to avoid arrest and additional unpleasantness, we are calling you to report as soon as possible.

Officer of the Enlistment Bureau

Tel Ha'shomer

Maya sent her letter. It was more than five handwritten pages and systematically outlined her objections to all military service and the elements she could not reconcile with her conscience, including sections on individual responsibility to think and act, the legitimation of violence through its institutionalization, the occupation of Palestine, gender, human dignity, and animal rights. She began, "I hereby proclaim that my values, my beliefs and worldview stand in complete opposition to service in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. I believe that each person needs to think for themselves, and he is free to choose his deeds and his desires." She quoted Tolstoy and presented a reading of Lysistrata from Aristophanes' *The Peloponnesian War*—who convinced Greek women to withhold sex from their husbands and lovers to force peace—as a proto-feminist peace activist. In response, the military sent a bulleted letter informing her that her arrest warrant had been put on hold, and that she was granted a hearing with the Conscience Committee.

Created in 1995, the Conscience Committee consists of the head of the draft authority, the head of the movement and placement section at the central absorption and classification base, a psychologist from the behavioral sciences department of the manpower division, and a lawyer from the Military Advocate General's office. Since 2002, on the advice of the Supreme Court, the committee has also included a civilian member. This person, however, is chosen by the military. The committee does not include an expert on pacifism, members receive no instruction regarding pacifism, and no definition or canon of pacifism has been established. This committee is part of the military rather than an external body. This, and the very low rate of granting exemption, situate Israel as being quite restrictive compared with other countries. This is hardly surprising, however, given the small size of the state, its constant involvement in military action, and the centrality of military service to civic life.

Maya prepared an oral statement that focused on the same themes as the letter and practiced it repeatedly in front of her parents and friends. When she arrived for her hearing, she faced a panel of several men and one woman.

She was asked by one of the men to give her reasons for requesting exemption. Maya nervously began to read her statement. But, she recalled, "after two sentences, another man interrupted, waving his hand and telling me in an aggravated voice: 'We have heard all of that stuff before! Every time it's same thing!' " Maya said that the woman added more gently, "We are looking for you to speak from your heart, to tell us how you feel and why you can't go to the army." Maya was silent as they stared at her, thinking how to translate her statement the way they wanted, but all she came up with was "I feel . . . like a pacifist." She recounted being asked when she first began to understand that she was a pacifist. Later she said this confused her and complained, "I wasn't a pacifist earlier; I became a pacifist. I even have issues with the word *pacifist*, not that I would tell them that, but I went through a really complicated, intense process to decide I am a pacifist." But in answering the question she told them, "a few years ago." Maya recalled that they asked her more questions about how she felt when she was around violence ("Not nice"), and whether, if she were on a crowded bus and there were a suicide bomber, she would use violence to stop the individual from killing innocent people and children. She told them she didn't know how she would react because she had never been in that situation, but that she hoped she would not be violent.

The committee called in her witnesses. Maya had brought her father and a friend with her to testify. Her father told me the committee asked him whether Maya was a recluse, whether Maya was stubborn, how she would react if she would be asked to carry a weapon, and whether he thought she would have a mental breakdown. To these questions, he told me he muttered answers because he didn't know what they meant or what answer would help or hurt his daughter. They asked him how she might react in different noncombat positions. He told them that Maya had decided she would not enlist. The committee called Maya back into the room. She told me they asked her if she was a vegetarian. This seemed out of the blue, but she was, so she said yes. They asked whether, if released, she would participate in the alternative civil service program for those exempted from military duty. She again said yes. She was sent home. The transcript of the proceedings confirmed her account of these interactions, though she disputed some of the details. Shortly afterward, she received notification in the mail that her application had been denied. No reason was given. Maya's family made a few contacts through friends in the military and found out that the committee believed that her objections to service were political and thus not pacifist.

The family friends provided her with some coaching as to the type of things the committee wanted to hear, primarily that she cannot tolerate violence and to say nothing that could be interpreted as ideological. Maya appealed the rejection, presented her case in a different light, and was released.

Maya's story was one among many I heard from pacifist applicants who were surprised by the committee's refusal to hear their prepared explanation for their pacifism and by its fixation on the way applicants feel physically around violence. I conducted interviews with ten other applicants, all of whom experienced the same approach from the committee, including an interest to hear about their physical reactions around violence, their vegetarianism, and their social maladjustment. I read many more accounts posted to online forums meant to allow applicants to share information and to dispense advice on applying to the Conscience Committee and appearing before it. The advice is clear and consistent. Do not make a principled argument. Do not argue with the committee. Do not discuss soldiers or the military generally. Do keep it personal. Do say that you are a vegetarian. Do explain that you cannot stand being around violence, that you would panic if confronted with it.

Yonatan Ben-Artzi's application to the committee gained some notoriety because he is the nephew of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He was rejected in part because he did not hesitate to argue with the committee. His lawyer commented in frustration, "Mahatma Gandhi would not be released by them. They would say to him: 'Mr. Mahatma, you're not solid [in your pacifism], come back next year.' And the next year they'd say, 'You're always arguing, making demands, you are not a pacifist'" (Hassin 2003).

Pacifism as a Matter of Liberal Tolerance

As we saw in the introduction, the decisions regarding exemptions from the national sacrifice of military service are complex and fraught. Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel as well as ultra-Orthodox Jews were granted exemption.[4] Religious parties argued for and won the right for women to be released based on "family status" (marriage, having children, or being pregnant) and "for reasons of conscience or for reasons of the family's religious way of life" (Algazi 2004: 15). Through this clause, many women were released whose objections were "selective," that is, their objections were to Israeli military policies specifically. In contrast, eligible men were exempted only at the dis-

cretion of the minister of defense "for reasons of the size of the regular forces or reserve forces of the IDF or for reasons connected with the requirements of education, security, settlement or the national economy or for family or other reasons" (Defense Services Law Section 36). This clause does not constitute a right, though the policy that emerged released men if they could demonstrate absolute pacifism, understood as a refusal to fight in any military under any circumstances, which is a common requirement for pacifist exemption worldwide.

However, perhaps in part due to the limited historic tradition of pacifism in Israel, no formal definition or standards for pacifism have been established, leaving much to the interpretation of the Conscience Committee. In 2004, on the heels of waves of selective refusal by combat soldiers, the application for exemption of a woman, Laura Milo, who objected to the occupation of Palestine, was rejected on the grounds that because her objection was political it was not conscientious (Barak-Erez 2006: 547). From this point on, the policy for exemption of women has likewise been based on proving absolute pacifism. Application and exemption statistics are not released; however, bits of information have been revealed during Supreme Court proceedings, showing that applicants number a few hundred persons yearly. Even under the equalized law, women have both a higher rate of application and a higher rate of release than men, who face more pressure to perform service (Aviram 2006; Rimalt 2007). As we have seen, military refusal in Israel is highly controversial, and thus the actions of pacifists and the military take place to a great extent in the public eye.

Those governed by the Israeli state have incredibly diverse experiences as citizens and subjects in terms of freedoms and rights. Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line do not experience liberal governance, but instead martial and authoritarian rule.[5] Israeli Jews, on the other hand, generally experience a far more liberal state, legal system, and bureaucracy that protect their rights and encourage them to deploy them. The applicants for pacifist exemption, most of whom are of Ashkenazi (European) ethnicity and have upper-class affiliations, are further ensured of experiencing the liberal face of the state. They did not, by and large, experience the disadvantaged conditions—such as poverty, poor education, recent immigration, or intra-Jewish ethnic discrimination—that might prevent them from accessing their rights. Recently, the state has shown willingness—political detention and firing at protestors—to suspend democratic measures for even this group. Yet, because pacifist applicants act within the military legal system,

they are, in the context of their exemption proceedings, subject to liberal legalism. An obvious exception to the generally liberal experience is compulsory military service, which remains the hard core of Israeli sovereignty, and which they have not encountered directly until this point.

In Israel, pacifist exemption is established within the tradition of liberal tolerance. According to the military court, the basis of exemption of pacifist conscience is connected with the human rights awarded to religion, the commonality being that both rights and religion are thought to be "deeply held belief systems," similarly inviolable. The military court explained that the origin of the right of a pacifist to not serve in the army is derived from freedom of conscience, which in turn is derived from the right to dignity (Sfard 2003: 8). "Pacifism is a matter of (almost religious) belief" (Sfard 2003: 28). In these legal opinions, the court is referencing Israel's semiconstitutional 1992 Basic Law Concerning Human Dignity and Liberty, which contains Israel's most explicit protections of human rights interests. According to the Israeli Supreme Court, respect for conscience in the case of pacifism "follows from the respect given to the individuality of the person. . . . It is derived from the humanist approach and tolerance" as the basis of a democratic regime (2002: 935). "Human dignity is the space in which the decree of the freedom of conscience is able to gain expression, along with the freedom which traditionally accompanies it, that of religion" (Israeli Supreme Court 1993: 282). These legal opinions follow the assemblage of conscience and religion in Western philosophical tradition, as found in Article 18 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, that "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (United Nations 1948). These explanations of the protections of pacifism clearly reference liberal understandings of tolerance. Wendy Brown demonstrates that these ideas are fundamentally linked to the individual, issuing from and respecting moral autonomy, and moreover placing an emphasis on the sanctity of individual conscience (2008: 8–9). These protections invoke liberal tolerance in which the concern with dignity of the individual is theoretically content neutral, that is, does not exclude religion or conscience from protection.

Pacifism Among Israeli Youth

The pacifists I worked with, both in and outside the youth group, became involved in this social movement because of their dissatisfaction in the wake

of a political awakening to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories and their sense of social injustice. I found that other applicants to the Conscience Committee, like many of members of the youth group, were often concerned about the status of women in Israeli society and especially the military, ethnic discrimination, and cultural and economic imperialism. Those who eventually applied to the committee had long histories of social engagements in which they explored different avenues, such as political movements, literature, philosophy, and music, to address this dissatisfaction. In this exploration, some come to commit themselves to pacifist ideology. They come to oppose the use of force and violence as a solution to conflict. Also, because they see pacifism as a general principle against violence, not only do they forbid violence for themselves, they generally come to see violence as an unethical practice for all, including states.

In the last chapter, I described the subjectivities and rationalities of these young people as liberal. In doing so, I followed Gabriella Coleman and Alex Golub, who reject framing liberalism as a coherent body of philosophic, economic, and legal thought. Rather, they focus on liberalism as a cultural sensibility under constant negotiation and reformulation, replete with points of contention (Coleman and Golub 2008: 256). In this case, I used liberal sensibilities to refer to the faith these young people put in public debate and the public sphere, the value put on open discussion free of coercion, a sense of individual responsibility for actions and conscience, expressive self-fulfillment, and a belief in ethical manifestation through legal recognition. Their rationalities depended on a configuration of educational exposure, class, and cultural practices in Israeli society. These young people found themselves in a context that encouraged them to develop their own ethical stances and to describe their actions in the terminology of conscience, which Nikolas Rose (2006: 147) notes is typical of liberalism. For example, Michal, a pacifist applicant I interviewed a number of times, recalled that even though her father was still an officer in the military, he told her she should "listen to her conscience." Generally, the applicants I met were characterized by how they eagerly took up the components of ethical subjecthood and active responsibility. Young pacifists I met during my fieldwork deployed concepts and values of both human rights and civic rights and duties with ease and consensus. They exemplified an ethical commitment to an idea of moral autonomy and individual responsibility for conscience.

Applicants put faith in the value of rational debate and expected the committee to be a forum for such a debate. For example, debates in the New

Profile meetings were a way to exercise arguments and test rationales to deploy these claims and commitments of responsibility more publicly. Public deployments were often class debates, activism, and public demonstrations. In these forums, their ethical claims were respected and protected by teachers, police, and authorities, developing their sense of a public sphere and public reason. They also displayed faith in rational debate and deliberation to result in moral truths and consensus when they engaged in such exchanges. This liberal subjectivity is also important when the time comes to appear before the Conscience Committee, where they exhibited what Jurgen Habermas (1989) called an "audience-oriented subjectivity" central to democratic public debate. Applicants gather with friends and family to rehearse their arguments and work to articulate them in compelling ways. In these statements, they highlight the philosophical and rational foundations for their pacifism.

In applying officially for exemption, pacifists express themselves publicly and acknowledge the law as an important forum through which they can not only express themselves, but also manifest their conscience and receive a measure of social recognition. Charles Taylor refers to this satisfaction through individual public display as expressive self-fulfillment and identifies it as a characteristic of the modern age (1992). That is, individual self-expression is central to full realization and offers a fundamental satisfaction. In addition, observers of liberalism note that in fact liberal law establishes itself as a forum for negotiating expressions of identity (Rose 1999; Passavant 2003) and for making claims of difference against the state (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). Likewise, Jane Collier and her colleagues observe that law and liberal legality play a role in encouraging people to find and express their inner qualities that distinguish them from others, and to claim equal rights that are denied on the basis of difference (Collier, Mauer, and Suárez-Navaz 1997). The exemption of pacifism seems to speak to this norm by which pacifists would be unfairly burdened by military service, and thus are encouraged to seek this sanctioned status as appropriate. To the young pacifists I worked with, pacifist exemption represents a recognition by the state. Pacifist's orientation to the state is one of active engagement, demonstrating their production as the type of social subjects the liberal state hails. This imagined relationship with the state is in contrast to that of many in Israeli society, including many new immigrants, who, faced with unwanted state demands, would seek to avoid the state rather than to seek legal recognition. Far more people evade military service using "weap-

ons of the weak" rather than pacifist exemption, for example, by making themselves seem unattractive to the military either socially or physically. Securing a release from military service through evasion is generally far easier than through pacifist exemption, and as such applicants for this exemption demonstrate their commitment to this type of recognition.

It is clear that the moral stance of pacifists is not that of the state or of mainstream Jewish Israeli society. Typically, such a group would attract educational reform and government intervention. This is the case with immigrant groups who arrive in Israel with similarly antimilitary cultural dispositions. Reformatory intervention is also used with soldiers who have difficulty with institutionalization, such as following orders, obeying, and being disciplined. Nikolas Rose identifies these reformatory strategies as central technologies of the liberal state (2006: 148). However, in appealing to conscience, which is sanctioned as legally inviolable, pacifists mark themselves as unavailable to reformatory intervention and reject state technologies of control. Thus, they assert a conscience that is incompatible with service and appeal to the law to facilitate their rights in a neutral way. Their desire for their pacifism to have political meaning is based on their perception that public debate considers only more and less violent solutions to political problems. They believe that recognition from the state that nonviolence also has legitimate ethical basis, as it seems to them the exemption does, would prevent the nonviolent position from being reflexively dismissed when raised in debate.

Despite their self-production as liberal subjects, pacifists present a severe challenge to the Israeli state and consensus that posits military service as a necessity. Militarism has been far more theorized than pacifism, perhaps legitimately, given that militarism is a far more widespread organizational rationality, and pacifism is often only a fringe ideology without institutional or bureaucratic roots. Yet I would argue that pacifism by its nature challenges sovereign power by delegitimizing its violence. Unlike governmentality, pacifism seeks not only to rationalize the arbitrary expression of sovereign violence, but also to eliminate it. In his article "An Anthropological Analysis of War," Bronislaw Malinowski notes that the institution of worldwide pacifism would mean the surrender of state sovereignty (1941: 522). Pacifism condemns state use of force and the deployment of violence. If the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence (Weber 1997), then pacifism challenges the state by claiming all violence to be illegitimate. It also challenges the mainstream Israeli ideology that its military engagements are

involuntary. Claims of pacifism assert that, within the frame of liberal democracy, recognition must be extended to radical nonviolence as a legitimate and livable option. Pacifism thus tests the limits of the hard core of Israeli sovereignty. It challenges the state's ability to impose law, in this case of universal conscription. Despite the liberal exemption that provides an ostensibly neutral medium for freedom of conscience, the claims of pacifism, despite arising from liberal practices, challenge the legitimacy of the state's fundamental capabilities. That pacifism in Israel is not necessarily attached to a religious, ethnic, or cultural sector makes it all the more dangerous for its potential to spread.

Adjudication of Pacifist Exemption

I would like to unpack Maya's encounter in light of the information I gathered from interviews with committee members and military personnel during multiple in-depth and recorded interviews concerning their understanding of pacifist belief and the evidence believed to demonstrate it. The committee asked several questions that confused Maya and her father, specifically, her pacifism feels and how she reacts physically to violence. Tamir, a lawyer from the Military Advocate General's office who has been involved in the prosecution of several applicants rejected by the Conscience Committee, almost fell into my lap. An Israeli friend who was not involved in my research knew Tamir in his civilian life as a lawyer and that he served as an army prosecutor. When he offered me Tamir's contact information, I eagerly took it. I interviewed Tamir in the offices of his civilian practice. He was extremely gracious with his time and spent hours with me. When I first interviewed him, I had spent long periods of fieldwork with conscientious objectors and was accustomed to their framing of the dilemmas of refusal. He told me this, however: "The basis of the military exemption is concern for the mental state of the pacifist. Really, we try to have compassion for the pacifists because, from the army's perspective, it is like they have a condition. Being a pacifist is like having a mental illness. Of course, they are not actually mentally ill, but they have a condition that is thought of in the same way, in their inability to fulfill their responsibilities." He elaborated, "Pacifists are considered by the army to have a disability that prevents them from service, a mental disability rather than a physical one." The members of the Conscience Committee echoed the understanding of authentic pacifism as

an involuntary physical phenomenon. Tamir referred me to a few members, as did a university professor who had formerly served on the committee.

Committee members describe pacifism physically. Throughout my conversations, Conscience Committee members strongly emphasized the visceral character of what they thought was an authentic belief in pacifism. Michael, for example, told me that "a real pacifist would wince at any violence"—a distinctly physical reaction. I met Yael, one of the civilian members who serves on the committee, several times, both in her offices and in a café over several hours. She told me, "The applicants need to show that they are repulsed by violence in a physical way, and for us this demonstration is more important than any philosophical justification, because it's not fair to expect that from them." Tamir, when speaking to me about Yonatan Ben-Artzi, explained, "For him it wasn't real. If you are a real pacifist the reaction to violence is physical, from the gut!" Gesturing emphatically to his stomach, he said, "It is something that makes you literally vomit. Conscience is when there is something that you cannot do, you vomit otherwise, like maybe some people get at a checkpoint." In a myriad of ways, committee members told me that ideally applicants would describe their intolerance for violence and narrate specific circumstances in which they encountered violence and were repelled by it, or were otherwise unable to cope, essentially the questions they prompted Maya to elaborate on.

The committee's concern with a physical manifestation of pacifism is the basis of their expectation of vegetarianism. Yael explained, "For us, this [vegetarianism] demonstrates that the person recoils from violence and that they are sensitive kids who can't stand violence." Vegetarianism is not a feature of many streams of pacifism in the world, yet for the committee it is requisite. A theory of vegetarianism as revulsion further frames pacifism (and vegetarianism) as a matter of incapacity rather than as obligation. As mentioned, veganism is often a component of the ethical commitments of young pacifists, but is rarely a matter of repulsion. In fact, many of the young people who participated in the youth group, including Maya, occasionally succumbed to indulgence in the presence of a particularly aromatic steak. This discrepancy greatly frustrated the mother of one of the applicants who spoke publicly about the committee's understanding of pacifism. She expressed dismay that, to be exempt, successful candidates must show that they cannot cope with military service, that they must be excessively "delicate, sensitive, emotional vegans that pardon cockroaches." "That is the style of the committee," she said.

> But what is the connection? If you step on ants and eat meat then you are not a pacifist? The fact that veganism has become a criterion in the eyes of the committee shows a basic lack of understanding. The committee's understanding of conscience, if you want to give it a philosophical anchor and obviously there isn't, is conscience as disease. Something instinctive, visceral, connected to emotion and not to rational reason. It erupts. Like vomiting after smelling a foul smell. In their perception conscience cannot be social, political, collective; there is no communal disgust. And that goes as well for their preference for mellow people, confused people in hippie pants, a bit sick, and no ideological connection with pacifism. (Hassin 2003)

The physical understanding of pacifism produced through committee sessions demonstrates Naomi Mezey's claim that the law is discursive and productive as well as coercive (2001: 47). The legal setting typically appreciates rhetorical ability and demands liberal subjectivities, rationalities, self-organization, and standardized narrativization. Here, the subject who is required is a physical, embodied one who relies little on testimonial or rhetorical skill.[6] This difference reflects a gap in the understanding of pacifism between the applicant and a committee concerned with protecting the state. Whereas applicants are trying to present pacifism as an obligation, the committee is interested in producing the pacifist as a recognizable object. Framing pacifism as physical is not necessarily inconsistent with liberal legalism. Speaking of identities based on economic interests, Collier and her colleagues maintain that liberal law validates and requires identities that appear natural and innate, "even for people involved in overt struggles stressing identities based on social constructed interests" (Collier, Maurer, and Suárez-Navaz 1997: 5). Tim Murphy notes the tendency of the law to turn obligations into things, citing the example of patents and copyrights (2004: 128).

Michael asserted that pacifism is an unnatural disposition historically because it is indifferent to survival, and thus is contrary to human nature. Psychology has emerged as the dominant legal technology the committee uses to authenticate pacifists, with the psychologist playing the most prominent role in committee decisions. Psychology has long been a leading tool of the Israeli military to accomplish organizational efficiency through normative psychological and behavioral sciences (Ben-Shalom and Fox 2009). Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari observe that psychological discourse

in Israel is used to routinize war and violence in social life (2007). Maya's philosophical justification was rejected in favor of her emotional and physical response to violence, about which the psychologist's insights are highly valued. This dynamic greatly frustrated one civilian member of the committee, Avi Sagi, who went public with his criticism after finishing his service. Speaking of the Yonatan Ben-Artzi case, he said, "The logic of the committee is one failure on top of another, and the reasons that led to their decision is quite annoying. For example, the statement that he could not adapt to the system. Who authorized them? If they think he needs a mental health officer, send him to one. Are they all psychologists? They diagnosed him? Do they have the tools at all? It's an outrage" (Hassin 2003). Foucault identified psychology as a technique for the control and discipline of essentially moral issues, with alleged scientific neutrality masking required conformity to bourgeois morality (1990); more recent studies have addressed this ethnographically (Kleinman 1988, 1999; Lakoff 2005). Here, exemption rights emerge from diagnosis, and the pathologization of pacifism as disability effectively individualizes pacifism, thus depoliticizing its moral claims.

Indeed, the representation of pacifism in the Israeli media reflects essential elements of the military's position on the nature of pacifism, even when it tries to be neutral or even sympathetic to pacifists. This is especially true with regard to the incompatibility of pacifism and political ideology (Galilee 2003; Mizrahi 2005). The media essentially ignores pacifist applicants who accept the military's requirements, but pays a great deal of attention to those who are politically active, focusing on the suspicion with regard to their authenticity. Israeli online news outlets also offer a popular feature in which readers can respond to news stories and give their opinions. Articles about controversies involving pacifist applicants often elicit as many as fifty or a hundred comments, which often express strong anger at what many see as the hypocrisy of the pacifist's political stance, as well as those which express support or sympathy. Everyday commentary on the issue often expressed suspicion that applicants were using pacifism as a cover for political motivations, and that if anything the military was being too compassionate. Several people asserted that they were not pacifists, but rather "simply" (*pashoot*) against the occupation.

Considering this case within the broader context of liberalisms claims and practices offers interesting insights. Liberalism claims to be cultureless, a platform through which individuals can seek neutral protection (Brown 2008: 21). Yet individualism and a bias toward certain bourgeois Protestant

social norms reveal liberalism to have culture (Brown 2008: 7). It also becomes clear that external limits to liberalism exist in the form of beliefs and practices that cannot be accommodated. At these limits, subjects who exceed the boundaries of the hegemonic morality struggle for recognition of their alterity. Several scholars have identified, as internal contradiction, the way liberal law solicits expressions of difference while simultaneously requiring people to stress their similarities to other abstract bearers of legal rights (Collier, Maurer, and Suárez-Navaz 1997). John and Jean Comaroff, for example, show that when matters arising from alterity, such as the killing of witches, come through the liberal legal system, they must be distilled into conventional judicial categories and evaluated by one standard of individual guilt (2004: 194). Emma Kowal demonstrates how liberal multiculturalism encourages indigenous Australians to embrace a sanitized alterity congruent with liberal morality (songs, dances) and to disavow unsanitized alterity that offends liberal morality (fighting, drinking) (2008: 344). Elizabeth Povinelli's study of Australian multiculturalism describes a situation in which indigenous people are offered limited benefits if they can demonstrate their authenticity to standards of authentic traditional culture as idealized by liberal European bureaucrats (2002). Charles Hale shows a similar dynamic in Guatemala, in which minority subjects are lead to invest their energies in demonstrating their authenticity for what he calls the "minimum package of cultural rights" rather than demanding rights for more fundamental cultural differences (2002: 485). These examples are similar to pacifist exemption in that the states uses a standard of recognition strategically to minimize the danger perceived.

In these examples, the official state ideology of multiculturalism denies the existence of alterity that cannot be overcome or made commensurate within the mechanisms of democracy and its legal systems, which anthropologists point out glosses over or regulates unpasteurized difference. These cases recognize that rights law is an arena where nonliberal difference can be quelled. Pacifist applicants are liberal subjects, however, and have a liberal orientation to their pacifist beliefs. One would expect them to be competent practitioners in liberal legal encounter. Encouraged by society and state institutions in their practice of conscientious and ethical judgment, their testimony regarding refusal to perform military service is commensurable with the framing of the military's demand for this service. However, alterity is created and exaggerated by the institutional power, framing claims of pacifism as incommensurable with the public conversation on military

service. Theories of governmentality and liberal citizenship assert that subjects are expected to self-regulate and exercise active responsible citizenship, and that if they fail to do so despite normative pressure, they are encouraged, through various reformatory interventions, to fall in line (Foucault 1990; Rose 2000: 1398). Here, rather than coopting alterity or reformatory intervention, pacifists are encouraged to disavow the liberal foundations of their claims. The physicalization of pacifist belief makes it incommensurable with the political and the ethical, and as such, this type of conscience takes on very specific meaning, one for which the potential to play a public role is undercut. In her 2001 annual review, *Radical Worlds*, Elizabeth Povinelli prompts us to investigate how "the incommensurateness of liberal ideology and practice is made to appear commensurate" (327–328). Here we explore how liberal refusal based on principled conscience and liberal exemption based on freedom of conscience are made to appear incommensurate.

Whereas other cases have illustrated the exterior limits of liberalism, this one demonstrates liberalism's interior limits at the point of threat to sovereignty. The accounts that show liberalism's exclusion of the other, the "organicist, non-Western, and nonliberal" (Brown 2008: 166), confirm Foucault's claims that liberal subjectivities are created in normalizing certain behaviors and pathologizing others (Foucault 1977). In these accounts, the authors do not dispute that the alterity of the other is incommensurable with liberal values. In Israeli pacifist exemption, however, we see the potential of liberal mechanisms to also exclude the products of their fabrication should these subjects go awry. Ideologies cannot predict or control all the manifestations of the seeds they sow. Also, their rationalities are not perfectly crafted or hermetically sealed. Although they frequently produce a preferred and governable subject, these same rationalities can be used to defend positions that are unfavorable to the state.

In this case, pacifism's threat to state sovereignty is more significant than the liberal conditions of its emergence and articulation. This serves to remind us that liberalism is not an end in and of itself, but a form of governance that serves the state. Foucault argues that later forms of power and governance do not make sovereignty irrelevant: "Sovereignty is far from being eliminated by the emergence of a new art of government, even by one which has passed the threshold of political science; on the contrary, the problem of sovereignty is made more acute than ever" (1991: 101). Liberalism claims to be a system of values unencumbered by concern for state

power. The practices presented, however, here reveal it to be complicit. Liberal claims regarding rationality and public debate contradict the pathologization of pacifism for the protection of the state. This observation resonates with Foucault's argument that "we need to see things not in terms of the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security" (102). Other considerations demonstrate the way liberalism is laden with cultural values. I show the collaboration between the organizational rationalities of liberalism and state sovereignty. This case reveals collaboration by highlighting a location where the two do not align. Other cases demonstrate the exterior limits of liberalism. However, they may also implicitly give the impression that the basis of the exclusions is only the incompatibility of certain practices with liberal values, and therefore that liberalism as a system of values is an end in and of itself. Producing liberal subjectivities is not enough, however; the state also wants the anticipated effects that make for cooperative subjects, which pacifists are decidedly not. In the case of pathologizing pacifism, we see that liberal values are a means of power rather than a self-contained objective.

The misunderstanding between Maya and the committee reveal how the incommensurable ontologies of pacifist belief manifest themselves, often frustrating the members of the Conscience Committee. One focus of this disparity between a principled understanding and a physical one manifests in the meaning of intention, or conscious choice, which is deeply implicated in the Western understanding of conscience. Michael told me, "Sincerity of the applicant is really not enough because it is a matter of complex psychology." To clarify this statement, he argued, "Applicants often convince themselves that they believe something that they do not, or that their aversion to violence is stronger than it really is." Likewise, Shlomi Simchi, head of the Advisory Committee on Matters of Conscience, said during the trial of conscientious objector Yonatan Ben-Artzi after he was rejected from the Conscience Committee, "I have no doubt that Yoni genuinely believes he is a pacifist and acts accordingly. Nevertheless, he is not a real pacifist" and the motivations for his actions lay "elsewhere" (Izenberg 2003). These statements are strong assertions with regard to the possibility for self-deception in pacifist belief. An epistemological understanding of pacifist belief that asserts that you can believe that you believe, but in fact you are mistaken if

your pacifism is not embodied as physical revulsion, and is certainly not one that emphasizes conscious commitment.

It is therefore problematic when applicants display that they are choosing pacifism as a worldview. The fear is that the belief is not within the applicants but in their ideas, indicating that their identity as pacifists came after rather than before political and social forces, and implying they could change with appropriate intervention. Members of the committee say, as with Maya, that applicants' statements sound studied, "like a broken record." Not only do they implore them to speak from the heart, they also finesse a technique in which they metaphorically "take [applicants] into unknown territory" by giving them situational examples for which they have not prepared so that the committee can see their instinctive responses. In Maya's case, this was the hypothetical situation about the terrorist on the bus. The technique is used to force applicants to answer instinctively, without reflection, a kind of Rorschach test. Likewise, the conversational structure of questioning Maya, without knowing the significance of her statements, establishes the committee as the authority as in a relationship that analyzes an unaware applicant.

Pathology as Agency? The Applicant's Dilemma

That pacifist exemption depends on the satisfactory demonstration of physical, rather than principled pacifism creates a paradoxical dilemma as to how and the extent to which an applicant's compliance or noncompliance with self-pathologization can be considered agentive. To tease out these issues further, I briefly address two more pacifist applicants. Maya was fairly naïve with regard to the Conscience Committee's criteria. Some applicants, however, are informed and prepared to perform to expectations in order to receive exemption. Liat was from a town in northern Israel and had joined the New Profile youth group in Haifa. Liat heard there that the committee intended to release psychologically fragile people, so, in addition to telling them that she freezes and feels nauseous around violence and meat, she tried to physically demonstrate her fragility. After Liat moved to Tel Aviv to work in her aunt's shop, she sometimes stopped by my apartment after work. One evening, she reenacted for me her physical performance in front of the committee. She turned her chair away from the table and hunched her shoulders forward, she pointed her toes inward toward each other and

looked to the floor in front of her. "I tried to make myself seem very very small," she told me. "And I lost weight before I went, so I was very skinny. I thought that this would show my distress." Liat saw this corporeal performance as unrelated to her pacifism, but felt ethically justified in the ruse because she considered herself truly pacifist. She was released by the committee.

However, accepting an exemption based on pacifism as disability is a dilemma for many who hope to influence public discussions on military service. This is especially true for women, who apply for and receive exemptions for pacifism more frequently and easily than men. Women worldwide face a similar dilemma with regard to military service, whether to advance female equality by proving women to be equal to men in all military tasks (Gusterson 1999), or emphasizing difference and invoking a tradition of women's opposition to war and tropes of female pacifism. In Israel, given the centrality of the military to political and often economic advancement, this dilemma is central for feminists, some fighting for increased combat privileges and others—like Maya and the organization New Profile—rejecting the compatibility between militarism and feminism (Sasson-Levy 2003 Barak-Erez 2006; Rimalt 2007). However, many women who refuse military service on the basis of their feminist and moral objections to service are surprised at the lack of efficacy of their critique in comparison with that of their male counterparts. Because women were released until 2004 for any conscientious objection, and de facto continue to be released more easily than men under the same policy, women often find themselves excused from service for depoliticized pacifism, whereas their male counterparts are imprisoned and debated in the media. Although unabashedly political refusals are condemned by the mainstream, they are engaged with in debates on military service, which can be seen as an acknowledgment of full social accountability on the part of refusers.

I met Ronit after she served two terms in military prison after being rejected by the Conscience Committee. She came from a politically leftist family and was aware of the committee's criteria for conscience from this context. Her testimony before the committee could be considered more as a protest against this understanding than as an attempt to be exempted. She intentionally sabotaged her hearing to make a point, knowing she would not be released on her terms. When I asked her about her rationale for doing this, she explained it was a conscientious act to represent her pacifism in her terms and to not accept their assumptions. In her session with the Con-

science Committee, she stated that she is against the occupation, that it is a moral issue, that all soldiers should refuse, and that no state needs a military. I believe that Benjamin Arditi's understanding of agitation in *Politics on the Edges of Liberalism* illuminates Ronit's intervention. For him, agitation is an assertion of something impossible as possible, livable, rational, and desirable in order to partition the sensible and offer an alternative (Arditi 2009: 98). Ronit knew that her assertion of undomesticated political pacifism would read as transgressive and ruin her chances of release without jail time, but she feigned belief in the possibility of success for the spectacle of protest.

Ronit's objection was to the committee:

> [It's] trying to force us to say that the inability to serve is our own problem. To them, it is fine if you go there and say, "Yes, I just can't stand violence, but I'm not judging you, go kill whoever you want." But the second you say, "I'm against violence and I think no one else should be violent either," then suddenly you are political and not a real pacifist. So I wasn't really surprised that I didn't get released.

Her protest, though a pedagogical move meant to correct the committee on pacifism, failed. She tried to overturn their logic and invoke a position not available to her. She was trying to accuse the state of not offering or presenting all of the possibilities, which was a constant complaint about mainstream media and politics in the youth group I hosted. After Ronit went twice to prison, she decided that going to jail over and over again was, like enlistment, institutionalizing her into the military experience. Ronit plans to be released under Profile 21, a medical release.

The depoliticization of pacifism has, until now, been presented mainly from the political and moral perspective of pacifists. However, from the perspective of the dominant moral order, the depoliticization of their actions is a generous interpretation, in that it prevents their moral condemnation, a perspective voiced by the military prosecutor Tamir. Just as the physicalization of mental illness or homosexuality are often applauded for removing the moral and social stigma once attached to them, pacifism could likewise be seen as being destigmatized from other types of military refusal that carry heavier moral and social burdens in Israeli society. Pacifism is a cultural practice deemed dangerous to the safety of Jews as a people and to the survival of Israel as a state. The applicants make their claims on the basis

of conscience, but the content of the conscience proposed is a threat to the existence of the imagined moral community. The military is considered essential to the Israeli "good life" and is credited with contributing to equality, strong character, and male friendship (Kaplan 2006). The compromise of pacifism as incapacity allows the state to extend tolerance without threat to its sovereignty and without criminalizing the practice. Ultimately, the disparity between understandings of pacifism reveals a radical difference in the pacifist social imaginary of the fundamental meaning of the military in society. In all the discussion of violence in committee hearings, agreement has not even been reached on whose violence is being discussed. Pacifist applicants often talk about their refusal to participate in the violence of the military, whereas the committee focuses on the possibility that they will panic when faced with the violence of the enemy. When Ronit told the committee that she refuses to participate in violence, a woman on the committee burst out, "But what does the military have to do with violence?" Tamir was angered by the hypocrisy he saw in political pacifists trying to have it both ways, that is, not sacrificing yet entering the political debate, which for him was untenable and reflected an unsustainable hedonism.

At the same time, however, the military's position is not universally hegemonic, and the subjectivity that disadvantages applicants in the exemption process serves as valuable cultural capital in other aspects of their lives. Although the youth networks are rather small and have little mainstream influence, they are part of a counter-public (Warner 2002) of dissenting Israelis with regard to military service, which is a relatively recent development. This new social imaginary is cultivated among a number of organizations, including New Profile, which sponsors the youth groups, and the political party Hadash, which holds four seats in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) of 120 members. Also, these young people have ideological support from refuser support networks such as Yesh Gvul and other leftist activist organizations. These organizations maintain a public and online presence, which young people can access and join in communities of like-minded people. This is in contrast to the situation in which previous generations of ideological dissenters to military service found themselves, which was isolated and generally unaware of other refusers. Because no public discussions of refusal were held, these conscientious objectors often found self-harm, such as shooting themselves, necessary to avoid military duty.

The military makes every effort to make military service a sensible and attractive option for young people so that they will approach it as a civic

responsibility rather than sovereign coercion. However, Israeli sovereignty continues to depend on military service for its existence. Pacifist conscientious objection is felt to be dangerous not only because it might affect enlistment numbers, but also because it is thought by extension to undermine the state by marking state violence as violence, and critiquing the legitimacy of its deployment. When Maya applied for exemption from military service, she had come to the conclusion, after much thought, that her conscience prevented her from participating in military service given her commitment to nonviolence as a foundational principle for human society and interactions. She was ready to go to jail for this belief, but because the military allows pacifist exemption, she applied for it. In her Conscience Committee hearing, she was surprised to encounter an institution interested in producing and releasing pacifist subjects more in need of a fainting couch than a pulpit.

The military's recasting of pacifism as a matter of psychology has implications for ethics in military settings more generally. I have demonstrated that this use of psychology depoliticizes the ethical claims levied against the state. It is not only in the Conscience Committee that psychology is authoritative, but in and throughout the military as well. It is deployed to enable the military to function smoothly on an organizational level, optimizing unit performance and morale, and to enable young people to succeed as soldiers.[7] Lack of compatibility with military culture and life—failure to thrive within the military's institutional environment—is considered a psychological concern and is treated within this framework. Although young soldiers are informed of their ethical responsibility for their actions and instructed not to obey clearly illegal orders, the hegemony of psychology to understand resistance to military norms has significant implications for the epistemology of personal hesitations that arise while soldiering. Whether these hesitations are assumed to be ethical objections or psychological deficiencies determines the extent to which ethics can be circumscribed within military service. Even the "recoiling from violence" that the Conscience Committee sought, because its physical imagery fit within the discourse of psychology, could be reinterpreted as ethical dissent if this framework were hegemonic. Because of psychology's dominance, however, personal hesitations are encouraged to be understood as psychological shortcomings, and ethical interpretations are increasingly circumscribed to fewer and more extreme cases of wrongdoing.

This depoliticization presents pacifist applicants with another moral dilemma. In pacifism, both the moral consensus and state sovereignty are seen

to be at stake. Pacifist exemption is based, historically and legally, on principles of liberal tolerance. The exemption concerns conscience and the human dignity attached to it. Despite a dedication to relativism, the discursive production of the pacifist subject that occurs during the adjudication of the exemption application has profound political meaning and consequence. Applicants for this exemption have liberal subjectivities, which is why they seek to manifest their ethical feelings through the language of conscience and legal rights, as opposed to alternative forms of refusal such as disobedience, desertion, or suicide (Sasson Levy 2003; Arieli 1996). Yet, to receive exemption, applicants must exaggerate their alterity and present their pacifism as physical revulsion. This depoliticizes the claims of pacifist applicants and prevents the military from having either to violate their understanding of equality through universal military service, or to engage with the claims of the applicants on matters of morality. In understanding pacifism as pathology, pacifist exemption can be rationalized, not as a recognition of conscientious difference, but as a compassionate gesture.

Anthropological work suggests that liberal multiculturalism and tolerance claim to incorporate alterity, in the process regulating, pasteurizing, and coopting groups to eliminate cultural elements they find distasteful or dangerous. This case suggests that liberalism also has interior limits beyond which state sovereignty is at stake. Although applicants for pacifist exemption are oriented liberally toward the state, their beliefs, and other citizens, their pacifism challenges the state, and the potential spread of such beliefs threatens the state's ability to enact its sovereign power. The pathologization of pacifism and its exclusion reveal the complicity of liberal governance and sovereignty, despite its ideology as unconcerned with power. Just as different methods of rule (coercion, discipline, liberalism) are targeted at different populations in the interests of the state, the practices of liberalism remain accountable to these same interests. The relationship of Jewish Israelis governed by liberalism to the state is thus not any less about sovereignty than that of West Bank Palestinians, who experience a much harsher form of rule, though clearly the benefits of sovereignty fall very unequally. Here, liberal legal policy and even the process of adjudication are deployed to protect the moral consensus and the hard core of Israeli sovereignty. The state thus both protects its sovereignty and avoids the need to use direct coercion, a governing technique of last resort.

5

The Yoke of Conscience and the Binds of Community

> Circumcision makes it clear as can be that you are here and not there, that you are out and not in—also that you're mine and not theirs. . . . Quite convincingly, circumcision gives the lie to the womb-dream of life in the beautiful state of innocent prehistory, the appealing idyll of living "naturally," unencumbered by man-made ritual. To be born is to lose all that. The heavy hand of human values falls upon you right at the start, marking your genitals as its own.
>
> —Philip Roth, *The Counterlife*

This chapter is about responsibility to conscience and to community. Like circumcision, the binds of community are about the violent demarcation of the here from the there, the rending of the mine from the theirs that takes place on the body and mind of an individual. This chapter is also about the faith my interlocutors put in the liberal promise of freedom from communal constraint, and their discovery that the "heavy hand of human values" has set limits in their lives from the beginning. In breaching the limits of the tolerable in refusal, they almost accidentally tear away much of the social pretense that camouflages these limits and reveal the underlying contradictions in the liberal promise. Their acts also draw attention to a deep-seated unease in modern citizenship brought on by the suspicion of ulterior motives and the risk of betrayal of loyalty between the family, the community, the state, and the cultural other. Ethical philosophy has long framed conscience as a universal and individual faculty, yet conscience cannot escape

its social underpinnings. The obligation to conscience is not hermetically circumscribed, an island apart from social life, but rather enters a field already ripe with other obligations. The experiences of my interlocutors show that social understandings of conscience are bound to demands for sacrifice and the expectations for community loyalty. Conscientious objectors feel they must answer to their conscience even as they try to change the moral order on a fundamental level, redrawing the borders of the Israeli community, the entailments of religious and ethnic affiliation, and the responsibilities towards religious and ethnic difference. I show that conscientious objectors are on unsteady ground in their region. Refusing military service, the basis of civic participation and a foundational moral good, puts them outside the accepted range of opinions and behaviors in Israeli society. However, pragmatically, complete identification with Israel's other, Palestinian society, is neither possible nor culturally fulfilling for my interlocutors. They are trying to achieve dissent without social and cultural alienation. They find, though, as the Roth excerpt makes clear, that they are not free in the sense they imagine, but rather marked from birth with human allegiances and the demarcations of insiders and outsiders.

First, I explore the process by which the liberal limitations for individual dissent are revealed to my interlocutors as they move through the process of refusing military service. Such limitations often come as something of a surprise given my interlocutors' particular social experiences within Israeli society. These include the discursive glossing of the obligatory nature of their consent to the sacrificial economy, which results in their belief in the voluntary nature of their engagement in it. The nature of their obligation, violent, physically dangerous, and ethically fraught, was obscured throughout the social field as a point of ideological discomfort, and one difficult to articulate in the discourse of modern liberal citizenship. This ethnography emphasizes the inevitable entwining of conscience and communal obligation. In that sense, it is not a critique of the inadequate implementation of liberalism, but rather an exploration of its contradictions. Here we can see most clearly what has been pointed to throughout the book, that the liberal promise does not cancel enduring communal obligations, but instead distorts them in its promise to do so.

In the second part of this chapter, I examine the deep tension in Israeli society between parents and children over their respective roles in the sacrificial economy. Although military refusal often causes family turmoil, I argue that it often taps into an existing rift between parents and children. It

does not interrupt a cultural consensus about the divisions of loyalties in society. Rather, it aggravates a tension that continually bubbles to the surface in different cultural manifestations, especially through the metaphor of the binding of Isaac. These cultural articulations and the experiences of my interlocutors reveal the troubled ontology of the Israeli state and its notions of community, loyalty, obligation, and betrayal. The orientation of sacrifice to the state creates a grotesque misappropriation of sacrificial intentionality. It does so because, as we have seen, the engine of the sacrificial economy are the a-ethical Realpolitik desires of the state, such as politics, power, sovereignty, and territorial expansion. Finally, I show that the faith of conscientious objectors in the ability to bracket ethical aspects of life from social sanction to be indivorceable from material and symbolic capital. I illustrate that for others in Israeli society the entailments of ethnic belonging and protection, as defined by Zionism, are not obscured by liberal and humanist ideologies.

The limits of ethical dissent come sharply into focus at the moment of refusal. Some conscientious objectors found that what they had assumed to be deep wells of support during their periods of ethical doubt quickly evaporated once they decided to refuse. I encountered such a before-and-after contrast at a West Bank Combatants for Peace event. Many such events fall somewhere between public and private. Although ostensibly organized for intragroup purposes, many events are advertised and new attendees are welcomed and gently recruited. Members of the organization are ambassadors at such events, outgoing and generous with their time and energy. They are perfectly willing to recap their personal experiences in long and short format, explain their position and that of the organization, and provide bureaucratic and legal information about refusal as requested. My first few times at events, I was also the recipient of such attention, and a few people expressed their hope that I would help bring some positive international attention to the organization. Being apt at making myself inconspicuous, I soon became more of a tolerated presence, neither guest nor host. At times, my detached demeanor seemed to make me attractive to visitors, who were eager to find someone who knew what was going on (the flow of events can be somewhat disorienting), but were wary of feeling recruited. Being a woman was read automatically as at least somewhat exterior to the group. When I understood the potential this offered to speak with people who were deliberating whether to refuse, I cultivated the position. At one event in the West Bank, I was approached by Roi with a line I often heard, "It looks to me

like you've been to these events before." I explained a bit about what was probably going to happen and warned him that things take a while to get going given all the different moving pieces. Roi was funny and laid back. He told me that he had just returned from reserve duty. He said that for years he had considered refusing, and that every year he would come back from reserve duty upset and determined not to do it again. Then he would go back to daily life and forget about it until he was called up again. I nodded and sipped water as he spoke.

From across the tent set up to provide much-needed shade, Avi spotted me talking with someone he didn't know and made an inconspicuous beeline for us, greeting me as a way to be introduced to Roi. Roi filled Avi in on his situation, and told him he was at the meeting to find out other people's experiences refusing, but also, he admitted, to put himself in a position where he would be peer pressured to refuse. He told Avi and me that he had been spreading rumors among his friends in the army that he was thinking about refusing in order to force himself to actually go through with it. Avi asked him whom he had been talking to about it.

> Actually, a lot of my guys from my unit, because a lot of them are my friends in real life as well. They have been really supportive. They have always known that I am leftist, and they respect it. And lately I have been talking to them about my objections to what we are doing, and that I'm really dissatisfied and that I am thinking about leaving. They talk with me, and they really accept what I am saying even if they don't agree.

"That's really good." Avi said with an uncharacteristically insincere smile that made me wonder what he was thinking. "I want to introduce you to Guy. He just refused a couple of months ago. It will be interesting for you to talk to someone who just went through it—he can tell you what to expect. Erica, do you mind if I steal him?" "Sure. We'll talk later, Roi." Avi whisked Roi across the tent and joined a group of men. Later I saw Roi sitting with Guy in the back, talking intensely.

A couple hours later, my attention had switched to balancing the need to stay hydrated with the lack of bathrooms. The constant attention of Palestinian children, for whom safe (that is, not military) Israelis and unfamiliar women were an entertaining novelty, prevented the few female attendees from seeking out open-air alternatives, though I had seen a number of the

men resort to this solution. The children teased me about my reddening skin and, giggling, applied my sunblock on themselves. Avi plopped down in the seat next to me.

> That was hard! I just couldn't tell him. When he was talking about how the guys in his unit were supporting him and being so understanding, I was only thinking "yeah, you and everybody else." It was exactly what happened with me, and also many of these guys. When I was still in the unit, everyone was super nice to me. They would sit with me and talk about everything, and act worried and concerned. Hours! In the middle of the night when we only had a few hours to sleep! I can't tell you how many hours of talking. Then when I decided to actually refuse, that was it. I was dead to them. They wouldn't see me, wouldn't talk to me, I didn't exist. They said I betrayed them, and that was it. It was a shock because I wasn't saying anything different than I had before, I just acted on those convictions.

Other members of the group confirmed these experiences of finding a warm and supportive environment for their anxieties before their refusal, only to find it suddenly evaporate after they refused. Together, these cases of severe social sanction reflect the entwining of individual conscience and collective consciousness, and the hard limits that this imposes. Individual conscience is an explicit value and is not denied. No one tried to discourage Avi from exploring or expressing his ethical doubt. Space for ethical diversity is created, in the form of personal conscience and individual dissent, and attributed with cultural value. Refusal of military service, though, crosses a line that reveals the limits of this tolerance. Scholars have shown that liberal multicultural states explicitly make efforts to create space for cultural diversity, but do so within clear limits regarding what is legitimate cultural difference (see, for example, Povinelli 2002; Brown 2006). These limits exclude forms of cultural alterity that threaten liberalism or that liberal subjects consider repugnant. The experiences of conscientious objectors suggest similar limits to ethical alterity in liberalism. We have seen throughout that conscientious objectors are not cultural others, that they are drawn from the core of the hegemonic group until their actions put them beyond the pale. Thus, whereas for many cultural others in liberal states, the message that one's difference must fall within certain nonthreatening parameters is conveyed and reinforced throughout their lives, for conscientious

objectors this face of governance (coercion rather than governmentality) often comes into clear focus only after refusal. Most expect their decisions to be controversial, but many are surprised to find how much the effects of their refusal extend beyond their idea of the rational public sphere, where they imagined such acts were contained.

These expectations of a certain experiences of freedom illustrate the stakes of theoretical formations of citizenship. Michael Sandel has criticized John Rawls for his positing of an "unencumbered self," an idea of political neutrality in which the individual can be theoretically separated from her sense of moral good and attachments (Sandel 1998). In Rawls's model, the individual has certain inalienable rights that precede any political and moral views the person may choose to take up (Rawls 1999). It is this idea of citizenship that informs conscientious objectors' expectations that their moral and political attachments will affect neither their citizenship nor their personal binds to the collective. Here, we see that the stakes of this distinction go beyond the parameters in which citizenship theory is usually discussed. Typically, such theories are evaluated by either the accuracy of their description or the degree to which their theory has potential to produce ideal social relations, both of which assume a barrier between the theory and the personal ambitions of individuals in society. In the example of my interlocutors, we see that ordinary citizens internalize and are shaped by the normative expectations of such theories in ways that can cause great distress and frustration when they fail to live up to their promise and political agency does not work as expected.

Back at the West Bank meeting, I continued to sit with Avi. After a pause of about fifteen minutes, during which we observed the goings on and drank water, Avi continued discussing his fellow soldiers.

> At first I believed them, that I had betrayed them. But I realized that they benefited from me being there. They liked that there was a leftist there with them. They had an invested interest (*interes*) in my "suffering." They stayed up late with me for their own good. Having someone there who was an Arab-lover, who was agonizing over all of the stuff we were doing, made them feel like someone was taking care of the conscience aspect. As long as I was doing the same as them, it gave them ethical permission not to worry about it. But I refused because of Eichmann. After I read Hannah Arendt's "The Banality of Evil," every time the guys would try and tell me that serv-

ing was inconsequential, that it didn't matter what I do as one person, all I could think of was being a "cog in the machine" (*boreg b'ma'arechet*).[1]

Avi's statements suggest something rather interesting. Not only was his conscientious dissent given recognition while he was serving, but his dissent within the boundaries of continuing service also reinforced the legitimacy of their actions. That is, the exercise of tolerance toward conscientious dissent within nonthreatening limits reinforced the value of extending such tolerance and justified the ultimate limits imposed on him. In other words, Avi suggests that hand wringing has politically legitimizing effects. It is not only in the private encounters that Avi and others described their experience, however. They also do so in a well-known cultural format. The soldier's story that narrates the trauma and moral torment of the Israeli soldier is well known in Israel. Such narratives have been attributed the nomer "shooting and crying" narratives, a critical term that marks a perceived hypocrisy in the opposition of the terms. The phrase refers to popular and official representations of Israeli soldiers as psychologically tormented by their acts and sympathetic to the pain their actions have caused.

Less than a month after the end of the Six-Day War in 1967, the Israeli government requested Avraham Shapira and renowned Israeli author Amos Oz to produce an edited volume of interviews with demobilized soldiers speaking about their experiences in war (Piterberg 2009). *Siah Lohamim* was published in English as *The Seventh Day: Soldiers' Talk about the Six-Day War* (Shapira and Oz 1971). In it, soldiers describe their empathy for the enemy and their wrestling with moral quandaries, among other things. The book was frequently referenced and lauded by Israeli leaders such as Yitzhak Rabin and Golda Meir, who said, "We are fortunate to have been blessed with such sons" (Piterberg 2009). The assertion is that conscientious soldiers maintain a higher level of ethical standards in the violence of war. This has become the hegemonic interpretation of the Israeli military. The shooting and crying image was, and is, a mainstream and widely held view of Israel's youth and soldiers, to great political effect. Michael Taussig laments the appearance of "lengthy Sunday magazine articles depicting the psychic pain of Israeli elite commando snipers" (2006: 7). These stories represent the soldier not only as humane, but also as somberly attuned to the ethical meaning of his acts and the necessity of such measures. This is not inaccurate. I observed, as Virginia Dominguez noted (1989), that Israelis are very attentive

to the ethical legitimacy of their actions. However, such representations also reinforce the idea of soldier as victim, which contributes to the implication that, as regrettable as it may be, their sacrifice is necessary for the survival of the nation-state.

The entwining of individual conscience and collective consciousness also often manifests in complicated family dynamics, which challenge any simplistic notion of freedom and social constraint. One illustration of this can be found in an exchange I was privy to at a social event theoretically unrelated to my research. I found myself talking to an elegantly dressed middle-aged woman and her teenage daughter. As is the custom among the upwardly mobile professional classes, I was soon asked about my occupation and my research topic. I generally tried to avoid discussing my research on conscientious objectors because the topic tended to arouse much stronger emotions than are considered acceptable at social events.[2] My vagueness was summarily rebuffed, however, so I told them about my research. "Oh, that's very nice," the mother said, "that you are doing the research, not that they refused." The daughter smirked. "Well, it's complicated," I offered, adding a little provocation, "they have some serious conscientious issues with what they are asked to do." "Oh, it's not conscience. They are just very spoiled and selfish." "Mom! Of course it is conscience; you are also against the occupation." "Yes, but I know that the Arabs would kill us without an army, and I can't ask others to send their children to the army if I am not willing to send mine." "Well, maybe going to defend the settlers in Hebron is not exactly helping the situation. In any case I am thinking about not going, and doing national service instead." "Excuse me?!" her mother shouted, turning heads. Almost immediately, her face settled into the expression of a parent who recognizes a crucial and delicate parenting moment that might be of enormous consequence, a discussion that could affect both the parent-child relationship and the life course of the child. She paused and chose her words carefully. "Well, of course you need to do what you think is right. And we are not going to force you to do something you don't believe in. But it is something we really need to talk about because it is the kind of thing that impacts the rest of your life, and you might really regret a decision that you make." Her daughter seemed to be letting out some pent-up anxieties and upped the ante, both asserting a classic right to conscience and challenging her mother's loyalties. "Well, maybe I don't want to be sent to war." Her mother was clearly dismayed by the escalation. "No one is suggesting that you go to war; you are not going to be in a combat unit. But the army is *the*

Israeli experience. If you miss this, you won't have this in common with anyone else, you won't know what everyone is talking about. You will hardly be Israeli. And for those years, what will you do? There is no framework, no place for someone like that. It is impossible to go to university yet. Will you sit on the couch as your big statement?" "Well, it's better than shooting Palestinian children. I don't think it's right, and why should anyone care?" "Oh come on. (*Noo be'emet.*) You won't even have a gun. No one is asking you to do something unethical. The occupation isn't everything. You can help catch terrorists." The daughter shrugged and glared at the floor. "We'll talk to your father."

Despite the mother's intimations that the girl's father would be harsher, her earlier statements show that it is often mothers who patrol the lines of social conformity. What we see, however, is not a matter of prioritizing state ideology above her daughter's conscience, but instead a jumble of the mother's ideological convictions and her concern for her daughter's social well-being. The word choices of both mother and daughter manifest some of the tensions of the liberal promise to freedom of conscience. Mother and daughter agree on the right to conscientious dissent as a value. Each time the daughter claims an ethical objection, the mother actively affirms the protections for this position. But the mother is also attuned to the ways refusal would lead to her daughter's social marginalization. She worried that her daughter would miss out on the shared experiences that are the backbone of what it means to be Israeli. She also says that people who do not go to the army find themselves without a place in society. Although some groups do not serve in the military, such as the ultra-Orthodox or Palestinians, her daughter, as a secular Jewish Israeli, would not be protected by those alternative social norms and community ties. She would fall between the cracks of social identity. In contrast, the daughter's assertions of her right to conscience and demand for privacy—"why should anyone care?"—make clear her belief that she should be able to bracket her conscientious dissent from the rest of her social life. She resents her mother's resistance to her asserting her beliefs and she believes she should not have to pay social sanction for her dissent. She is trying to take liberalism up on its promise that she should be morally unencumbered by social obligation. She did not invent the idea that one can bracket conscience. This idea is part of liberalism's misleading promise to free the individual from oppressive social constraint. Ethics, the responsibility of which is privatized to the (autonomous and self-determining) individual, largely under the auspices of conscience, is meant to find expression

in the liberal civil order. Protections for conscience are meant to prevent the individual from paying social sanction for what is understood as a basic individual freedom. Her mother recognizes that this is not the social reality.

In this short conversation, we also see clear evidence of the competing theories of responsibility that operate simultaneously in Israeli daily life. Although these divisions of loyalty do sometimes correspond to political differences, in most cases people hold multiple ideas of where the limits of our responsibility lie, and these ideas compete in a necessarily muddled ethical space for dominance. When the daughter expresses a commitment to universalism by saying she would rather refuse service than "shoot Palestinian children," her mother does not object to the sentiment because she taught her daughter these values. When the mother says that "the Arabs would kill us without an army," she is asserting her ethnic affiliation and loyalty, and her daughter does not dispute the underlying premise of ethnic divisions; to do so would be seem absurd to her as well. When the mother switches her concern to her daughter's chances at success and well-being in society, she is focusing on family-based loyalty, which is also a significant part of her allegiance. Among the topics the mother and daughter are negotiating is who will be considered "in" (family, ethnic, human) and who will be "out," that is, outside the sphere of responsibility.

Love and Suspicion: The Angst of Sacrificial Fealty

I attended a Combatants for Peace event held in a private house. Before the meeting started, I sat with Omry in the back of the room. Across the room, Eyal was laughing with his mother. After Eyal refused, his whole family became his enthusiastic supporters. Omry gestured toward Eyal and his mother with a smirk and said, "They look so happy, no?" "Why do you say so?" I asked. "Let's just say that you would not see my parents here. Eyal is very lucky. Like an American TV family." "Your family is not happy about your activities?" "You could say that." I was not surprised to hear that Omry's family had objections to his refusal, this was very common, so I let the issue drop. Afterward, in my apartment, I thought that perhaps Omry had been trying to start a conversation about his family life, because he did not often say much about it. I decided to ask him. I called and we arranged to meet at a café near his house.

When we met, he barely gave me time to get my tape recorder out before he started talking about his family, in what sounded like a cathartic purge. "It's been really difficult," he told me.

> I struggled with what to do for so long! For years! I went back and forth, talked to people, got advice, did meditation, everything! When I finally made the decision to refuse, it was such a relief. It was a feeling that I finally got to where I needed to be, that I made a really difficult decision, but that it was . . . real. What I really believed. So I went to tell my parents, and I waited until Friday dinner. And I had this picture in my mind of what was going to happen. I was going to announce it, and everyone was going to be completely quiet, and my father would wait a few minutes, and then slowly nod and tell me "Ok Omry, if you really believe this is the right thing to do, then we support you."
>
> "I guess that is not what happened," I said.
>
> Not even close. As soon as I said it, they asked me if I was serious. Once they understood that I was, everyone started yelling different things at me, I could not even respond to one person without another yelling something else. I expected this serious event, and it was a complete circus. We wound up arguing about everything, the military, the Arabs, Zionism, the Holocaust, human nature, the meaning of life until something like two in the morning. I went home with the worst feeling and just stared at the ceiling in the dark all night. Later I told myself: No, it's just the shock. They will at least accept it eventually. But it wasn't true!" he laughed. "I was really shocked that my father was refusing to recognize that I believed this is right. I wanted permission, for him to say that I shouldn't go to the army because of my conscience, but he kept saying "you should go to the army." I felt like a gay kid who is completely sure that his parents are going to be the type that accept him and say that they love him no matter what, and then when he tells them they disown him. I was shocked and I didn't know what to do."

Many conscientious objectors favor the metaphor of homosexuality to describe conscience.[3] It conveys something they find particularly apt to suggest the more suspect characteristics of conscience, among them that it is not a choice, that it is more than a political position, and that it is something

that may not be immediately clear and can be discovered later on in life. The metaphor offers them a way to explain how it is that they did not always know they were against military service, and yet claim that their refusal is not a whim, but instead a more authentic and enduring reality that deserves social recognition, acceptance, and even rights. It also returns us to the question of whether the conscience behind refusal is mutable or immutable. Liberalism's bread and butter is regulating the presence of the other. Because it does that, conscientious objectors—as insiders par excellence—pose a particular challenge. Where did this rogue orientation originate and what does it say about the refuser as a subject? Were they always the inherent other, who by stealth found their way undetected into the inner circle?

The idea that the social trauma conscientious objectors undergo is self-inflicted is seductive. I heard the accusation more than once in the course of my efforts to provincialize conscience as attached to European ethical-political traditions and linked to a certain class in Israel. However, we should not confuse such contextualization with choice. To do so would reflect a misunderstanding of the conscience as a system of personal ethics linked to a worldview, and the painful trials and tribulations that conscientious objectors face in trying to reconcile their social obligations with their inner convictions. Although the experience of conscience as such cannot be said to be universal, which its philosophy claims, it is experienced no less deeply by those educated in its tradition. Refusal is not a choice; it is an obligation that seems to the refuser to exist whether they act on it or not. The imagery of conscience, which describes it as a yoke, illustrates that conscience cannot be set aside. Thus, refusal is an attempt to manifest ethical authenticity. Omry's story illustrates the angst of this commitment.

> I was sure that eventually my father would accept it. But at some point it became really awful. He kept saying that I should go to the army, and it felt like a complete betrayal. He was choosing the ideology, the state, over me, his son! I was sure that they would want to change society for me, that loyalty would put me first. When it wasn't like that, I was shocked. Then I got angry and felt like it wasn't his right to ask me to risk my life. It felt like he was sacrificing me to something he saw as bigger, but I was surprised that the nation (*ha'am*) came before our relationship. Now I see them on holidays, but they don't support me anymore.

The support Omry was referring to was both emotional and financial, and he made it clear that his standard of living is not what it once was, nor the same as his siblings. Omry was surprised to find that his father did not share his understanding of how these obligations should be privileged and that his father would have been offended by this even if he did not refuse. Moreover, these sets of obligations were never stable before military refusal upset them, but rather bubbling just below the surface. It is no coincidence that the most upsetting betrayal Omry experienced was by his father, and that the daughter's first external expression of dissent was to her mother. Military service is a fraught issue between parents and children. On the one hand, Juliana Ochs has demonstrated that showing support for one's children is often culturally required to take the form of supporting their military service, often in practical ways, such as washing military uniforms, and that neglect of this care can feel like betrayal to the child (2011). At the same time, cleaning and fussing over the very uniform that legitimates one's child as a target of violence, and legitimates their violence against others, cannot escape secondary interpretations and ambivalences for both parent and child. How one nurtures in the midst of such ambivalence of intentions is shadowed by the specter of betrayal. Such suspicion of intentionality between generations is possible in any sacrifice as rite of passage, but especially so in military service. The lack of substitution, which raises the stakes to a matter of life and death, adds charge to the inherent tension. Literary critic Dan Miron describes Israeli military sacrifice as the "horror of the encounter with secularized sacredness, the dread of an *akedah* with no heavenly rescue as closure. Abraham indeed sacrificed his son here, not, however, in obedience to God's will but in order to save himself" (Miron 1992: 79, quoted in Feldman 2010: 136). An intergenerational consensus on military service is implied by rituals of care that are culturally institutionalized and actively renewed (including new rituals of cell phone calls to children and their commanders as signs of affection), but is never complete. Once a child dissents from military service, acts encouraging military service, once considered supportive, are then seen through a more threatening, even Oedipal, lens.

We have seen that the binding of Isaac is often used as a metaphor to describe military service in Israel, and especially to describe the relationship between generations. It is widely accepted that in the early years of the state the enthusiasm to sacrifice was quite high and consensus on the need to risk one's life for the greater community was intergenerational. It is similarly

accepted that more recently sacrificial motivation has waned and many youth feel betrayed by their parents' generation, which they see as sacrificing them against their will. The shift in the use of the binding of Isaac from reverential to ironic and critical in the 1970s is part and parcel of this story. Articulated dissent to the Zionist self-sacrificial interpretations of this myth also emerged in these later years. Yael Feldman, however, has shown that these tensions over the issue of intergenerational sacrifice and victimization have been present in literary interpretations of the myth since the beginning of the state, played out repeatedly in Oedipal themes (2011: 132). Likewise, some have always evaded the sacrificial economy, and before the refusal movements some deserted or injured themselves, stories of which have emerged in recent years, even from the mythologized War of Independence. The prosecution of parents for the desertion of their children after this war certainly encouraged the entwinement of family obligations and military service. In a country that year after year sends its young into danger to protect the majority, the question of parental motivations and loyalty is inevitable. The fixation on the sacrificial myth of Abraham and Isaac in Israeli arts and literature gives us clues to a definite disquiet surrounding the generational component of sacrifice in modern Israel. The literary deployments of the myth most often take the opportunity to explore the different intentions of the parent and child figures, mostly father and son, in a modern light. Yet identification is always with Isaac and not Abraham, understanding the self as the sacrifice. Often the works offer advice to the Isaac figure, as in the following excerpt from *Days of Ziklag* by S. Yizhar, a prominent work in Israeli literature (1958). The novel uses stream of consciousness to narrate the experience of a unit of soldiers in the desert during the War of Independence. It discusses the desire to evade the sacrificial economy despite feeling unable to escape it.

> Run, kid, fast! Not too late yet, don't tarry, sneak away and disappear! Oh no. Empty talk. No way. I won't escape, I won't disappear, I won't run away. No way. No way to sidestep the aqedah [binding of Isaac]. . . . I hate our Father Abraham for going to bind Isaac. What right does he have over Isaac. Let him bind himself. I hate the God that sent him to bind and closed off all routes—except the way to the aqedah. I hate it that Isaac is nothing but an object of a test, an experiment between Abraham and his God. I hate this proof of love, this demand for proof of love, this sanctification of God through the

> binding of Isaac. I hate the slaughter of sons as a test of love! . . . and I hate the world that kept silent and didn't get up and scream: Scoundrels, why do the sons have to die? . . . and most of all I hate to fight. This is the most despicable. (Quoted in Feldman 2011: 174)

The last line juxtaposes death and the soldier's violence in violation of the dominant euphemism. The text laments the extreme price of this modern manifestation of sacrifice without substitution. "I hate the slaughter of sons as a test of love!" The entailments of religious and familial affiliation are constantly suspect. The need to die, the need to kill, are these somber necessities of desperate circumstance, or the manipulation of cynical old men? Is all the violence toward a purpose, or is it a test of loyalty? Are the motivations of those guiding the sacrifice wholesome, or perverse and homicidal? As Abraham is taken from sacred to sinister, the cynical nature of the modern sacrificial economy is suggested. The distortions of the foundational myth reflect the distortions of installing military service for the state as a communal sacrifice. A poem by Yitzhak Laor seems to suggest a fusing of a grotesque father figure with the older idolized generation and, in his invocation of Ishmael as a code for Palestinians, the state itself.[4]

> This Fool Isaac
>
> To pity the burnt offering? As a commandment? On an ass?
> With much obedience? From the Negev to Moriah to be sacrificed?
> To trust such a father who will rise up early to kill him? Let him
> imprison his father.
> His only father, Abraham,
> in a jail, in an almshouse, in a cellar at home, so
> that he will not slay.
> Isaac, Isaac, remember what thy father has done to thy brother
> Ishmael. (1985: 70)

It is no coincidence that modern critiques go straight to the question of good faith or bad faith, and to the true motivations of those who send youth into the battlefields. Just as it is no coincidence that the first major refusal movement (Yesh Gvul) came with Israel's first self-declared war of choice (Lebanon). As it becomes clear that the use of the military, and thus the sacrifice of life, is used for various Realpolitik political machinations, it becomes

clear that the organizers of the sacrifice are concerned with more than the welfare of the participants in the sacrificial economy and the ethical outcomes. This political question manifests strongly as a personal betrayal between parents and children. Wendy Brown suggests that the personalization of political matters is a function of liberalism's depoliticizing focus on individual autonomy: "Liberalism's excessive freighting of the individual subject with self-making, agency, and a relentless responsibility for itself also contributes to the personalization of politically contoured conflicts and inequalities" (2006: 17). In the eyes of both Omry and his father, Omry is absolutely responsible for his (conscientious) refusal and his father is absolutely responsible for his (conscientious) unwillingness to give recognition to his son. The structures of power, the systems of discipline, and the mechanisms of governance are all invisible to them in their conflict. Often the question of who profits from this sacrifice goes unarticulated in personal disputes.

That the question is not articulated, however, does not mean that it is not important. The tension over the sacrificial relationship between parents, children, and the state does spill into the public sphere on a regular basis, as it did recently in the case of Gilad Shalit. Gilad Shalit was an Israeli soldier when he was abducted by Hamas in 2006. Over the next five years, the country was fixated on his safe return in a way that had no parallel in my American experience. His family, father Noam and mother Aviva, became fixtures in Israeli households as they fought the government to do more to recover their son. Negotiations started and were suspended, and the situation dragged on.

Kidnapped soldiers bring out tension regarding the sacrificial relationships between the soldier, the family, and the state, often to a greater degree than for a soldier killed in combat. A kidnapped soldier, unlike a kidnapped civilian, invokes the discourse of heroic sacrifice. Because of this association with the sacrificial economy, the hierarchy of the "right to worry" is unclear. Although it is clear that the emotional wound of a kidnapped civilian falls primarily on the family, a kidnapped soldier is a wound shared by the family, the community, and the state. Danny Kaplan observes, "Whereas civilians are most likely to be missed first and foremost by close family or friends, a soldier is missed first by his military unit, a formal entity operating on behalf of the nation-state" (2008: 417). At the same time, the blurring between the military and civilian spheres in Israel complicates beliefs about responsibility and complicity, making direct demands and accusations difficult.

Kaplan notes that in such cases of missing soldiers, this blurring stifles public contention between the families, the public, and the state, despite high levels of identification with the kidnapped soldiers (2008: 414–415). However, Gilad's parents pushed the boundaries of these norms of solidarity, accusing the prime minister of not doing enough to free their son and erecting a protest tent outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. The parents' suspension of their usual daily lives, the physical and emotion discomfort of spending all their days in a tent, was seen as a symbolic adjunct sacrifice to the greater sacrifice of the loss of their son and his sacrifice of the torment of captivity, and perhaps also his life.

In October 2011, it was announced that an agreement had been reached between Hamas and Israel for Gilad's release in Egypt. Gilad would be released in return for a thousand Palestinians then held in Israeli custody. I was in Israel at the time. A week later, I and the rest of Israel sat glued to the television from the early hours of the morning of Gilad's release. The national mood was tense and the events unfolded like an action movie. For a long time, it was only questions. Who had him? Hamas? The Egyptians? At some point, it seemed that the Israelis had seen him but were not yet in control of him. It was announced that before his release he would have to give a surprise interview with the Egyptian media. The interview was bizarre and painful to watch. Gilad, who presumably had spent the previous five years in a hole in the ground, seemed to be hyperventilating and perhaps struggling to keep from fainting as the Egyptian interviewer, Shahira Amin, asked him questions such as "You have known what it is like to be in captivity. There are more than four thousand Palestinians languishing in Israeli jails. Will you help campaign for their release?" I sat mouth agape. The Israelis in the room were not surprised, however.

When Gilad was finally put into Israeli hands, he was quickly whisked away to the Tel Nof Air Force Base. When he was released in Egypt, he wore a checkered blue and white button-down shirt. When he arrived in Israel, he wore a military uniform. There, shortly after noon, he met his family and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The moments of his arrival were highly choreographed and the pictures released, which would inevitably be iconically linked to the episode, can be understood as official representations, reflecting how the state wanted his release to be witnessed and understood. One of the first photos released is the top one of Figure 2.

The picture portrays Gilad saluting the prime minister as he descends from the aircraft into Tel Nof Air Force Base. A number of people around

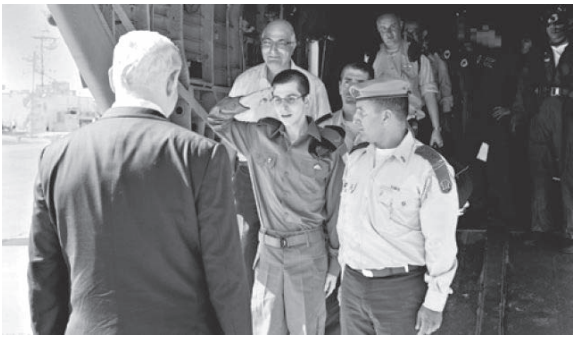

Figure 2. Gilad Shalit's release (*top*). Photograph by IDF Spokesman's Office. Printed in Pfeffer et al. 2011. Gilad Shalit with his father and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (*middle*). Photograph by IDF Spokesman's Office. Printed in Yaron 2011. Internet meme by Amihai Yacobbi (*bottom*). Reprinted in Ghert-Zand 2011.

me remarked on Gilad's gaunt and frail appearance being out of sync with the military pageantry. The picture that received even more attention was the middle one of Figure 2.

In this photo, the iconic one of his release, Gilad hugs his father as the prime minister looks on. It is ironic that only his father and the prime minister's faces are visible. What the public found most significant, however, was the inappropriateness of the prime minister's dominant presence in a moment of family intimacy. It was suggested that the prime minister had inserted himself where he did not belong. In the days that followed, Internet memes mocking the prime minister appeared everywhere. His image was superimposed onto important moments in Israeli and international history and popular culture, and he was mockingly referred to as the Israeli Forrest Gump. He was even superimposed onto Gilad's (supposed) X-ray images that were part of his medical examination on return, reflecting a discomfort with the apparent overreach of the state's domain. Some of the most interesting and popular memes, however, spoke to a tension in the structural roles taken by these three figures. In one, the bottom photo of Figure 2, the prime minister and Gilad are switched, giving the impression that the prime minister and Gilad's father are embracing as Gilad looks on.

The manipulated photos imply that the true desires, the true emotional and ethical commitments, of the figures in the photograph were not expressed in reality because decorum required the embrace to be between father and son. The manipulated photo plays with the idea that the deeper relationship is between the father and the state, and that in some ways Gilad is incidental to this fundamental bond or pact. The caption that accompanied the meme—"Gilad Shalit, what are you doing in this picture?!"—reinforces this message. Although the critical reaction to the prime minister's presence indicated that he did not belong in such proximity to the bond of family, with the intimacy, obligation, and loyalty that implies, this meme takes the critique further still by suggesting that the deeper obligation exists between the parents and the state in a way that betrays the soldier.

Still another meme that appeared switched the prime minister and Gilad's father, so that Gilad and the prime minister appear to be embracing as Gilad's father looks on. This image also plays with the idea of intimate bonds and the rearrangement of loyalties to provocatively suggest that something is not quite right about the cultural situation and the hierarchy of loyalties between the soldier, parents, and the state. In this example, it is Gilad's father who is cut out of the primary relationship depicted as existing

between the soldier and the state. Like the first meme, however, it uses cynical expression to convey an unease that the state sacrifice is intruding on the family bond, and that something about this phenomenon is unwholesome.

Conscientious Objectors and "Veteran" Outsiders

As we have seen, for many conscientious objectors of both generations, the social sanction comes as an unwelcome surprise and is received as a betrayal of personal autonomy, a value into which they were socialized. However, that such limits were not clear to them, that such limits had not been a major force in their lives earlier, is undeniably a function of class and the ethnic privilege they enjoy in Israel but is often transparent to them. For other groups of Israelis, being coercively governed (not by governmentality techniques of subject production) by the state and social norms is not a foreign experience but part of the everyday reality of their citizenship. Among both generations I worked with, the great majority of the conscientious objectors were Israeli-born Ashkenazi Jews, though this was slightly more apparent among the older generation than the younger. When I asked conscientious objectors whether they could explain why most refusers were from a narrow demographic, they were often unable to offer hypotheses. Occasionally, I heard either directly or indirectly that "Mizrahis hate Arabs." Their interactions with Israel's Jewish others who have more tenure in the margins than they do, not only Mizrahis but also Russian and recent Ethiopian immigrants, took place almost exclusively when they were incarcerated in military prison and brought together by force. "They say the army is a melting pot," joked one of my young female interlocutors. Some were surprised by these encounters. Both generations felt out of place among the military prison populations. As conscientious objectors and as middle-class Ashkenazis, they were a tiny minority. The young women met many Mizrahis and immigrants from Russia and from Ethiopia, who they sometimes referred to as the Russian and Ethiopian mafias, revealing more about their feelings about lower-class legal disobedience than about any evidence of organized crime. These other groups did not define their disobedience in terms of conscience, leaving my interlocutors to struggle with what to make of these young women and their very different lives. Although they shared a hatred of the army, their fellow prisoners were often aggressive with regard to Palestinians and Arabs generally, citing their own suffering and hardship in

their refusal to extend sympathy. Shortly after returning from a twenty-one-day stay in prison, Aviv told me, "We all hated the army, so we had that in common. But they didn't understand how we could care about the Arabs. They would say, 'They will kill us if they have the chance' and 'You forget which side you're on.'" Uri, who had served prison time in 2002, said that the men would tell him that he wouldn't be so brave in embracing the Arabs if the army weren't standing behind him keeping the Arabs from killing him. Both groups report that other prisoners would dismiss the conscientious objectors' invocation of conscience as self-indulgent.

Many in jail had been put there for violations such as drug use, desertion (not showing up at their base for some time), and insubordination. Most were sentenced by their commanding officers in a matter of minutes, in contrast to conscientious objectors, who often went through extensive due process in which they involved lawyers and invoked rights and protections. Although conscientious objectors were often frustrated with the politics of their cellmates, they were also often surprised and sympathetic to the cases they heard, and to the lack of bureaucratic and institutional competence of their fellow inmates. Noa, a few months after her last of three stints in jail, told me this:

> My roommate was telling me about how she got into jail. Her commanding officer was really sexually harassing her. But she didn't even know the term! She didn't want it, so yelled at him and left the base and didn't come back. It's unbelievable. Because she didn't know that she was not the one doing something wrong, or who to go to or how to proceed, she's the one in trouble. If it were me, it would be him sitting in jail now and not me. I would have made him pay, big time (*ve'od eich*)! I would have been rational and calculating and he would have never forgotten my name, but she was just like "screw you," and got herself into jail.

Many reported giving out legal advice to young inmates. Noa said, "They couldn't figure out how I knew exactly how to get out of the army without any punishment, which was like magical knowledge for them, why it was that I was sitting in jail with them. I tried to explain about making a statement and sacrificing, but they thought I was crazy."

This distinct difference in perspective between conscientious objectors and veteran outsiders on both Arabs and the general orientation to the state

has a great deal to do with different historical experiences and experiences of marginality in particular. Most Mizrahi Jews arrived in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, after the War of Independence. They were seen by the European establishment as reaping the benefits of the formative sacrifices in war and the pioneering efforts of European settlers. When they arrived, the government sent the Mizrahi communities to the physical and economic periphery of the country into "development towns" to secure borders and put human facts on the ground, but without the credit for the pioneer ethos that the founders received. These communities are part of the colonial structure between European Jews and the Palestinians, subject to colonial discourses of progress, advancement, "lifting up," and cultural stunting, but in actuality have been neglected by the government. Many Mizrahi intellectuals blame Zionization for the cultivation of animosity toward Arabs in their communities and for the unsubtle pressure to distance themselves from their culturally Arab backgrounds. Some Mizrahi intellectuals point to a hypocrisy they identify in Ashkenazi accusations of Arab hating. That is, Ashkenazis traditionally hold elite combat jobs and are thus responsible for most of the violence against Palestinians. That they do it in through the institution of the military and maintain a political correctness, sober decorum, and euphemistic and professionalized lingo is a cover for the more violent treatment. Under this discursive whitewashing, Ashkenazis then accuse Mizrahis of hating Arabs because, for example, they yell racist language in soccer matches, which is hardly the same scale of violence (Rimon-Or 2004). Others point out how the Zionist establishment has used the Mizrahis to do the "dirty work" to keep its hands clean (Shenhav 2006). Such critiques imply that the cost of the liberal space created for the elite is borne by liberalism's others, the Mizrahis and other nonhegemonic groups. They also are blamed for the ultimate failure of Israel as a secular humanist project. All the while, the dominant class is not required to face the contradictions and violence of this project because the work is outsourced to the margins.

As discussed at length in previous chapters, Zionism as an ideology is based on the naturalization of the idea of the world as divided into nations (*ha'ameem*), that safety and protection are found within one's nation (*am*), and that other nations represent a threat. Among Jewish Israelis, this means a complete equivalence of Jewishness and the ethnic and political nation (Kimmerling 1999: 340). This worldview reflects the Ashkenazi Jewish European experience, though it takes on an entirely new meaning when it informs state policy. For Mizrahis, sent to far-flung areas of the country to

Judaize the landscape and encouraged to shed their Arab culture, the terms of their inclusion and protection were made very clear (Yiftachel and Tzfadia 2004). It can be argued that the price of belonging was made even clearer to them than to the creators of the Zionist ideology, who often used liberalism and universalism to smooth the "rough edges," not only to the world but also to themselves. Interestingly, the Mizrahi experience suggests it is easier to recognize the metaphorical "man behind the curtain" from the margins of society. Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia argue that entrapment within these delimitations of the Zionist project is central to Mizrahi identity. They show that, when offered choices of self-identification, residents of Mizrahi dominant development towns prefer the term Jewish Israeli, whereas Ashkenazi middle classes preferred Israeli (Yiftachel and Tzfadia 2004: 218, 220). The choice of the universal term over the particularist cannot be seen only as a question of partisan or cultural politics. It also reflects an understanding of the stakes of citizenship in the state and the personal risk involved in identification. It reflects different experiences with the state regarding whether it seems reasonable to believe that a universal category of Israeli citizenship is possible, and whether it is possible for everyone or just a privileged few.

Not all groups are inculcated to the idea of national sacrifice to the same extent as the dominant group, from which conscientious objectors are drawn. For example, some marginalized groups see military service as a contractual obligation, one that they may pay with service directly for the protections and benefits of belonging (as created by Zionism) in an economic exchange. Some jobs in the military offer more direct translation into practical job opportunities; for example, the border police unit (M'Gav) often translates into regular police jobs, and this unit has been popular among new Ethiopian immigrants for whom it is a very good economic opportunity. Some see military service simply as a hardship put upon them to be endured, which also does not fit the sacrificial logic that conscientious objectors held. However, the experience of conscientious objectors does not imply that identification with heroic sacrifice is a prerequisite for rejecting military service. As one might expect, resistance among those who feel the military is burdening them unduly is substantial. However, these other soldiers, instead of going to the press or working on public statements and articulate, compelling letters of refusal, deserted, or were insubordinate, or did drugs. Orna Sasson-Levy has explored how these nonhegemonic groups in Israel navigate complicated identities regarding the relationship

between masculinity, the military, and citizenship (2002). In another example, Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport describe how Russian immigrants (a million strong in a country of seven million) negotiate the demands for military service when their cultural formulations of masculinity, unlike those of mainstream Israeli society, are not compatible with soldiering (Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport 2003). The elite combat refusers had, until their service, not only an uncomplicated identification with the ideal soldier, but also the protections against ethical compromises that are often the burden of those with limited resources.

Many conscientious objectors, by virtue of their Ashkenazi background, bear the symbolic privilege of the original pioneers and sacrificers for the state as well as a perceived natural distance from the Arabs they are defending, thus their critiques are read as humanitarian and universalist, and the risk of their being seen as aligning with the enemy is minimal. Likewise, many have the economic resources to serve long terms both in the military and in jail, during which they do not receive an income, a choice that is impossible for the lower classes. At the same time, however, these examples bring the paradox of conscientious objection into sharper focus. In Chapter 1, we explored how those who are most invested in the sacrificial economy are most likely to challenge it. The Mizrahi critique gives us a renewed opportunity to consider the relationships between social dominance and hegemony. Conscientious objectors were on the one hand part of the dominant group, yet on the other were blind to structures of power, the conditionality of inclusion and belonging, and the unequal distributions of burdens and privileges, which were all always quite visible to other groups for whom this arrangement had been made much more explicit in daily life. These experiences include a front row seat to policies of active Judaization and de-Arabization (Yiftachel 2002); closer proximity to Palestinians, where the zero sum logic of state ontology was apparent in competition for resources and jobs; and through geographic exposure to violence, in that rockets from Gaza, Egypt, and Lebanon fall on Israel's periphery.

Military participation does not have to be the result of the spell of ideology; it can also—though the state views this as the second-best choice—be a calculated decision in an economy of rewards and punishments. One of the major critical concepts invoked by conscientious objectors and the philosophy they turn to for support of their position is obedience. They frequently frame their discussion as an exploration of the limits of obedience (*gvul ha'tziut*) (see Yesh Gvul and War Resisters International publications). Their

deployment of the term, however, is teleological. Objectors began to use it only after they became disillusioned with the hegemonic ideal of military service. The limit of obedience is therefore and unsurprisingly often found to be set by conscience. Before they were disillusioned, objectors saw their actions as self-discipline and professionalism. Understanding that they had been obedient was a discovery. Many soldiers, however, understand their interactions with the military to be obedience from the start. They do not feel that they are indebted to a society that has not served them; they are not inculcated to the ideology of service. They do understand the requirements of ethnic protection under Zionism, however, and make their decisions based on whether they see service as cost-effective. Their service is an economic exchange, not a gift. At the same time, not buying into the system limits the ability to function within it, and challenge it. We only have to look to Noa's encounter with her sexually harassed cellmate to see that many also lack the cultural capital to navigate the hegemonic bureaucracy fluently. In terms of activism, it is perhaps better to be demystified than unmystified.

This dynamic signals an extension of the paradoxical situation we examined in Chapter 1, that investment in the sacrificial economy is necessary for dissenting political action. Here we see that, on the one hand, those close to the halls of power have difficulty recognizing the mechanisms and structures of power, and that, on the other hand, fluency in the logos and metaphors of power (not to mention membership in the elite) are perhaps necessary to create an effective counterpublic. This notion has interesting implications for our understandings of the relationship between hegemony and class, and the question of who practices hegemony. Common understanding of hegemony follows the thought of Gramsci, who saw it as the machinations of the landowning classes practiced on the lower classes.[5] Such a view carries with it the belief that the dominant class has "a certain awareness" of "its power and its mission," or a clearer view of the dynamics of power than the oppressed classes have (Gramsci 1994: 56). However, we see throughout this ethnography that this is not the case, that, if anything, the dominant group is the deeper believer in state ideology, partly because its members are the benefactors of this system of power and are generally not privy to its violence. Here, the limitations of inclusion are pushed to the social margins, though in the case of conscientious objection, brought into the heart of the dominant class, causing a bigger stir than it otherwise would.

We have seen that conscientious objectors, because of how they were raised in line with hegemonic ideals and values, articulate their ethical objections in a way that resonates with the state's discourse, sometimes appealing to it and sometimes antagonizing it, but in either case working within the same logics. In many ways, this—working within the same logics—is what is most threatening about them, because the center has gone rogue. Nevertheless, other ethical claims are articulated in ways that go unrecognized or without legal consequence because they originate from marginalized cultural traditions. Dissent against the military can be for many ethical reasons, such as inadequate economic support for one's family, discrimination in the IDF (an issue for the Mizrahi Black Panther party), cultural insensitivity, or the failure of the state to properly protect the far-flung communities where Mizrahis were assigned to live, like Sderot, a Mizrahi border zone town bombarded by Qassam missiles for years. The resistance is unlikely to be articulated as liberal conscience, or pursued within the state's systems of recognition, and more likely to take many other forms, such as desertion, disobedience, serving with indifference, or refusal of ideological enthusiasm. Conscientious objection is resistance to a large degree within the bounds of the state. These other forms of resistance are quite outside it. Meir Amor calls this "social refusal," in contrast to political refusal, and points to the military prison populations as evidence of widespread Mizrahi resistance (2010). Unlike conscientious objection, Mizrahi resistance is muted and does not seek the approval of the establishment, but instead avoids it. Mizrahi activists express dismay that the Israeli Left sympathizes only with the Palestinians and denies the oppression of the other victims of Zionism's colonial discourse, that is, the Mizrahis, whose oppression is closer to home and thus not only more embarrassing but also possibly a more radical threat to the Israeli Left's values and ideology and the social hierarchy that currently benefits Ashkenazi Jews. The Mizrahi critique of conscientious objectors helps shed more light on the way conscience is a culturally specific discourse, but also one that depends on certain symbolic and material privileges that are often invisible to those who hold them.

The case of Tali Fahima, mentioned briefly in Chapter 3, is an excellent example of how the question of ethnicity and class interact with questions of loyalty, belonging, and conscience. Tali Fahima is a Mizrahi woman of Moroccan descent who grew up with her mother in a poor town with high unemployment, Qiriyat Gat, on the periphery of Israel. Politically she had supported the Right until her political understanding changed dramati-

cally. During her political transformation, she contacted a Palestinian wanted by the Israeli security services, Zakaria Zubeidi, and went to meet him several times in the West Bank city of Jenin. She was persuaded by his message and expressed her desire to live with him in order to serve as a human shield against possible Israeli attack. She also began describing her nationality as Palestinian. She was arrested by the Israeli security services and kept in administrative detention and solitary confinement without trial for months. She was then tried and convicted of contact with the enemy and passing security information, though no one claimed that the documents she had were of much security importance. She was sentenced to three years in prison. On her release, she is still banned from leaving the country or traveling to the West Bank.

Tali Fahima was the subject of immense ambivalence for my interlocutors. During my fieldwork, she was discussed often and with great interest and skepticism. Everyone agreed that the state's response to her so-called crimes were overblown and extreme. Consensus was weaker, however, as to whether she was an ideological ally or pathological. She was certainly admired for her display of independent thought and for her brave conscientious acts. She was unknown, however, to the Israeli leftist networks in which most conscientious objectors circulate. She was Mizrahi, from far away, with a political background leaning to the Right. Why the sudden switch? "It's weird because most Mizrahis hate the Arabs," I would often hear. By far the most disturbing aspect for my interlocutors was her complete affiliation with Palestinians. Her statements about serving as a human shield for a Palestinian were often referenced as evidence that she was likely disturbed and unbalanced. Israeli military service, in contrast, though also a risk to life, was referred to as politically mistaken, but not pathological. Something about Fahima's willingness to risk her life for a Palestinian seemed to be excessive identification, as was her reference to herself as Palestinian. It was considered delusional, and she was frequently referred to as unstable. Theories were put forth about the significance of her Mizrahi background, all of which seemed to find her self-proclaimed alliance with Arabness to be rather twisted.

I have never met Tali Fahima and cannot speak to her experiences or the process she went through. I can only address the response of my interlocutors to the challenge she posed and consider the ways this throws their self-understanding into sharper relief. We have seen the ways in which conscientious objectors have been placed beyond the pale of tolerable ethical alterity,

their refusals bringing down harsh social sanction and condemnation. Although they can no longer feel completely part of the Jewish Israeli fold, the case of Tali Fahima shows that they also cannot feel fully affiliated with the Israeli other, Palestinians. Their culture, values, and loyalties still keep them tied to their original community, and making sacrifice for, or identification with, Palestinians seems pathological. Neither here nor there, they are caught in between.

CONCLUSION

False Promises

In the preceding pages, we have seen the drama of conscientious objection play out in the encounter of personal and public ethics, dilemmas of responsibility and sacrifice, and struggles for inclusion. At the base of this turmoil are a number of guarantees promised by the state that ultimately cannot be fulfilled. This ethnography has highlighted several guarantees for ethical fulfillment that the state claims to be in the position to provide but is not. I focus on three such promises. One is the liberal promise of moral autonomy, the idea that one's conscience can be circumscribed both by collective understandings of the good and the just and by social responsibilities. The second claims that military service can be an ethical sacrifice. Sacrificial violence must be ethical violence, life-giving violence. Military violence is not necessarily unethical, but, in Israel as in all countries, more often than not the military is used to accomplish a-ethical goals of sovereign ambition, such as the acquisition of territory and the establishment of power for its own sake. Thus, it fails as a sacrificial system. The final false promise is that the state represents narrative closure and can be a permanent and stable solution to the Jewish question. This issue has smoldered in the background, both for my interlocutors and in this ethnography, only occasionally seeping into explicit articulation. Because Jewish self-segregation and self-defense are the essence of Zionism's promise, however, rejection of both in military refusal inevitably orbits this issue. These themes are some of the dominant ones emerging from this ethnography, and I revisit these questions here in light of the previous chapters.

Whether these promises are offered in good or bad faith must be left ambiguous. This ethnography has highlighted the ways that hegemony

operates in the halls of power, from the parliamentary discussions, to the earnest deliberations of Conscience Committee members, to the inculcation of elite combat soldiers. At the same time, we have seen evidence of the cynical deployment of ideology to encourage the self-sacrifice of Israeli youth. Thus, I am satisfied that the phrase *false promises* will both maintain the uncertainty of its intentionality and assert that these promises are impossible to fulfill.

The Collective Conscience

The social and collective foundations of conscience were evident throughout the experiences of conscientious objectors, but became overwhelmingly clear to me in one particular encounter. I was interested in conscientious objection in all its dimensions, and though most of my opportunities to examine this issue came on the political Left, I had a brief opportunity to examine the issue on the political Right. In August 2007, Jewish settlers who had been squatting in the Hebron wholesale market were evacuated by the military. The hope was that by creating "facts on the ground," it would eventually be possible to legally absorb this area into the Jewish settlement in Hebron. This strategy is often successful, but the wholesale market was an especially sensitive area. After the American-born doctor Baruch Goldstein massacred twenty-nine Muslim worshipers at the nearby Cave of the Patriarchs, the army closed down the market and forbade the area to Palestinians. Settlers had occupied the area intermittently since, but the Civil Administration decided that the army's closing the area did not cancel the rights of the tenants, who were Palestinian, to the stores. The settlers who were evacuated in 2007 had been squatting there for two years, though nothing was done to remove them until the Israeli organization Peace Now filed motions on behalf of the Palestinian tenants. The army decided to evacuate the squatters, and several soldiers decided they would refuse to obey orders for reasons of conscience.

When a friend informed me about an event in Jerusalem that would honor these soldiers and reward them with a monetary prize for their acts, I decided to attend. I wore a long-sleeved knit shirt and a below-the-knee skirt, a style common to young women from the settler community. I didn't expect to pass as one of them but didn't want to stand out too much either. I made similar calculations when dressing to meet with my other inter-

locutors as well. I took the bus to Jerusalem and finally managed to find the event hall, located in a religious neighborhood. As I approached, I noticed a van parked just outside, plastered with posters of Meir Kahane. Kahane was an ultranationalist politician whose party, Kach, was banned from parliament and whose inflammatory rhetoric was said to have inspired Baruch Goldstein's Hebron massacre. I thought that perhaps I had gotten in over my head, but went in anyway. The hall was divided by a screen barrier separating the men from the women. I sat with the women, who included many children and young women of all ages. Many were dressed as I was, and some in a style associated with the ultra-Orthodox. Some seemed to know each other. I didn't know anyone but received many friendly smiles and did not seem to stand out. On the men's side there was a lot of movement around important rabbis who had come for the event.

The event featured rabbis from Hebron and other settlements, as well as the well-known Israeli singer Ariel Zilber. The first speaker was the rabbi of Hebron. He told the audience that in his yeshiva, he tells his students who will soon be soldiers that they must follow orders and not argue even if they disagree with an order. He said that his soldiers have a reputation for obedience to the chain of command. "But," he said, "if they ask us to do something against our religion, we know that the Torah is above everything. There can be no such things as giving orders in the army against the Torah." He said it is a mitzvah to conquer the land, to settle the tribes, and to have the sovereignty of the nation of Israel over all of the land in order to establish the state. He made an analogy between the conscience of the refusing soldiers and a story from the Torah. Knowing that his audience was familiar with the story, he jumped to the punch line. The rabbi said that the refusal of the young men should remind us of the book of Samuel, when King Saul pursued David in the city of Nob, and David escaped. Saul told his guards to kill the priests, but it is written that they refused to do so. He said, "They knew that it was an illegal order; they knew it was against their holy Torah. They didn't need the Supreme Court [Bagatz] to tell them," making cheeky use of anachronism. Later speakers lamented the government's privileging of Arab interests over Jewish ones. "What is this 'Israeli Defense Forces?" one speaker bellowed. "Who is it defending? Ishmael? What is happening here?!" using the biblical progenitor of Arabs to refer to modern-day Palestinians.

I wanted deeper insight into what was expressed at the event, which, being an activist event, relied heavily on polemic. I arranged to interview a

prominent rabbi who had publicly supported the refusal of these soldiers to evacuate Jewish settlers from both Hebron and Gaza. He told me that the state left the soldiers no choice but to refuse by asking them to do something that contradicted the Torah. The rabbi said that he does not encourage his students to disobey, but that to order violence against Jews was an affront to the conscience. "They [his students] know it is wrong, that it is against the Torah. So, what can I tell them?" Eventually, I asked him about the refusal of secular leftists. "If their refusal is based on conscience, then of course they have the right," he told me, almost surprised that I was asking, adding, "this is why pacifists are excused from the army." Affirming the right of every individual to conscientious refusal, he went on to re-embed conscience in the social. "The problem is that most secular people are not people of conscience; they do not have integrity. What they call conscience is not really conscience. . . . There are exceptions, of course, but from personal experience with them most secular people are not people of integrity." I asked him to explain why religious people have this integrity.

> In order to deal with ethical problems, my students study the ethical problems and opinions that arose throughout the generations from the days of the Tanach until today. When always dealing with Jewish law (halacha), you develop a sensitivity to ethical problems, a sensitivity that you take with yourself in dealing with ethical problems. But the secular people, they have not developed this sensitivity. This is the reason behind the disasters of communism. It was good intentions without any sensitivity. Or like Hamas, people for whom their definition of conscience is unacceptable to the mind. People come up with many strange definitions.

The rabbi went on add nuance to the idea of the cultivation of conscience by discussing the role of divine illumination.

> Conscience is received from the Creator, and in ethical decisions a religious man always turns to the Holy for help, illumination, and reinforcement to be able to stand with his decision. This is why religious soldiers pray before they go into battle; in battle there are difficult ethical problems. It is possible to have ethical feelings without belief, but there is no moderation to these feelings when it is without trepidation before God (yirat shamayim). The Rambam[1] told us that

> one recoils and watches, wondering at the wisdom of the creator, at how much is revealed to us, and how much is hidden from us. Without this trepidation and study of the Torah, the conscience of a secular person is unrooted and can easily be led astray.

The rabbi outlined a specific prescription for the cultivation of conscience, one that focuses on constant learning combined with divine inspiration. We can understand why he would doubt the ability of someone who does not make use of either of these to arrive at ethical decisions. My interlocutors likewise had strong ideas about ethical cultivation, which were not homogeneous, but featured empathetic practices, philosophical contemplation, many forms of self-discipline and ascetic practices, and intentional interpersonal engagement. Ultimately, no one can really accept conscience apart from cultural understandings of a justifiable conscience, as Zerach Warhaftig unwittingly noted in the early parliamentary debates about military service. Most people who interact with conscientious objectors are skeptical of the authenticity of a conscience that differs so much from their ethical understanding of the situation. Even conscientious objectors, however, are not satisfied with leaving conscience as a question of individual autonomy. Among the older generation, personal refusal was just the first step to years of activism and painful personal exposure, which we saw in the Combatants for Peace confessions meant to convince others of the truth of their insights achieved through conscience. With the Conscience Committee, we see that though the younger generation often appealed for personal exemption from military service because of the exemptions granted for pacifism, they were never really satisfied with the personalization of conscience, and struggled to make their conscience political in a way that makes ethical claims on society at large.

Conscience used to be understood as a mutual understanding with ethical meaning. Four hundred years ago, Thomas Hobbes noted a problematic implication in the internalization of conscience. It would cease to be verifiable or have any anchor for subjective positions. Wisdom, fear, cruelty, and justice were put in the eyes of the beholder. This tendency toward internalization was given fullest articulation in the policies of European liberalism, specifically, in its focus on individual autonomy and the privatization of ethics and responsibility to the individual. This supposed detachment of conscience from ethical norms poisons claims to freedom of conscience and is nowhere more visible than in conscientious objection from military service,

where the stakes are extremely high and so many in society are already ethically implicated. Thus, determining whether the refuser's conscience is perverse or reasonable also renders judgment on the ethical responsibility of those Israelis who participate in the military, who are the majority. Ethical judgment is social, directed both at the self and at others. This painful clash of the liberal promise and ethical life is brought to bear in the experiences of conscientious objectors.

Isaac Unbound

The instillation of military service as the central sacrificial economy in Israel is at the heart of this account. We are faced with the paradox that, on the one hand, sacrifice is inherently ethical and, on the other hand, military goals are often not driven by ethical consideration. This is not to suggest that all violence, or even all military violence, is necessarily unethical. However, pragmatism and concerns of sovereign power, rather than ethical concerns, are often at the base of decisions to deploy military force. We see the effects of this throughout this ethnography. The disillusionment with the sacrificial economy is something both generations of conscientious objectors have in common. Among the conscientious objectors who served in the military, the high level of inculcation to the sacrificial economy as an ethical investment was eventually worn away by the daily realities of the occupation and its utilitarian logics. Collective punishments such as road blocks, curfews, and house demolitions were policies based on power and material considerations. No one claimed otherwise. Commanders explained them as being pragmatic, not as inherently good. Young Israelis enlisted in the military with the idea that they were making a sacrifice for a higher good, but came to understand that they were sacrificing Palestinians for the state's pursuit of power and territory.

My interlocutors had a variety of experiences that drove them into a crisis of conscience regarding their military service. Many of these experiences were brought about during their activities as soldiers. Conducting raids, demolishing houses, and enforcing curfews struck them as problematic and as violations of their values. When they participated in missions in the Occupied Territories that were arbitrary or involved collective punishment, these actions seemed out of line with their ideas of justice and individual responsibility. They questions the state's framing of these activities as

vital to the survival of the nation. They experienced moments of deep empathy with individual Palestinians whose lives they were negatively affecting. Often, as I described earlier, the gaze of a Palestinian child brought about such guilt and shame that it raised fundamental questions about self-identification as heroes, and the soldiers began to see themselves in a much darker light. After they came to understand their actions as soldiers as unethical, and not life-giving, service no longer became worthy of their abnegation.

It took a long time for my heavily invested interlocutors to radically change their understanding of the situation. This can be attributed in part to the disorienting effects of the "fog of war," combined with continuous state dissemination of official narratives of events in real time (*hasbara*). Moshe Halbertal's consideration of sacrifice, especially self-sacrifice in war, demonstrates that in military circumstances a number of ethically consequential slippages are likely. One is between giving life for a cause and taking life for a cause. Halbertal points out that those who sacrifice for the state are prone to backward causality, thinking that because the good deserves sacrifice, sacrifice makes something good (2012: 69). The path my interlocutors took was made difficult due to the many social benefits that depend on their participation in the established sacrificial economy—such as social respect and credibility, masculinity, and financial rewards. This path was made more even more difficult due to beliefs about loyalty that often made family relationships and friendships dependent on military service.

My younger interlocutors became disillusioned with other aspects of the utilitarian valuing of a supposedly ethical system. Many of the young women I worked with were disheartened to discover that they did not have as much value in the sacrificial economy as their male counterparts, due not to any ethical lack but instead to a utilitarian logic that privileged certain endowments, aptitudes, and life experiences over others in accordance with military exigencies. Young women in Think Before You Enlist debated whether they should enlist. Investigating the options they would have in the military, they were frustrated to find that the roles available to them were often stereotypical ones like secretarial work or highly gendered ones that required them to play a mother-like or girlfriend-like role. To them, this showed that what the military valued in them was not what they valued in themselves and that military values were not compatible with their own. A few of my other women interlocutors had been part of the Shministim movement, in which groups of high school seniors submit joint letters declaring their conscientious refusal to serve. The young signatories were aware of the

possibility that they would be imprisoned, but many of the young women were surprised to find themselves released. Meanwhile the male signatories were jailed and also received all the attention and credit for their conscientious sacrifice. It made them feel that the power of the military's gender hierarchy extended even to the dissent movement against it. Likewise, far more women were released by the Conscience Committee than men in a depoliticizing maneuver that granted recognition to conscience while foreclosing the opportunity to make political change. Other women I met also had the experience of their sacrifice not being accepted as such, no matter how violent their abnegation. Women who would protest for the rights of Palestinians or, later, African refugees found themselves subjected to violent verbal assault, often of a sexual nature, though they gained no social status in society for having done so.[2]

The struggles of these women reveal part of the hierarchy of sacrificial value that the military establishes. This hierarchy privileged male over female, able bodied over disabled, strong over weak, aggression over peacefulness, Ashkenazi over other Jewishness, secular over religious, well-educated over undereducated, wealthy over poor. Some of these preferences may seem reasonable for a military body to desire in order to be effective. Insofar as military service is established as the central sacrificial economy, however, and is one of the major ways in which Israelis are able to gain moral authority and inclusion into the society, these preferences ultimately become established as social hierarchies in Israeli society. In doing so, military service betrays its mission as an ethical sacrifice by replacing ethical hierarchies, which favor those willing to give of themselves,[3] with utilitarian hierarchies, which favor those who will make the most effective soldier.

It might seem odd to some that any military would be attributed the expectation that its actions and outcomes be guided by ethical principles, given that it is the main enforcement tool of the state, and necessarily concerned with sovereignty. Nevertheless, in many states the military is cast in ethical terms, and military sacrifice, while perhaps not as dominant a socially organizing institution as in Israel, is respected and publicly celebrated in much the same way. Like Israel's, many militaries are granted the label of "defense forces," in an effort to name and manifest a public perception of ethical essence, prior to and discrete from the actual deployments of the military and those ethical effects.[4] Yet the expectation that Israeli state institutions will be guided by ethical rather than pragmatic principles is perhaps

especially high. This is related to the expectation that, as the first Jewish state, Israel would manifest a Jewish ethic in its institutions and behaviors, a kind of Israeli exceptionalism. At the same time, that implementing such values as organizing principles of a state might tie Israel's hands and ultimately put it in danger from those not so ethically constrained was always a concern. We saw this tension play out in the parliamentary debates on whether to allow conscientious objection. Some parties, especially the United Religious Front, argued that the Israeli military had an ethical obligation to allow conscientious objection. In contrast, some from more secular parties argued that such protections would weaken the ability of the military to maintain discipline and endanger the state. This high level of tension between Jewish political ethics and pragmatic state policy is found repeatedly in the Israeli experience, conceptualized as a dilemma between a State of David or a State of Caesar, Jerusalem, or Rome, a "light unto the nations" or a "nation among nations."

For many, the 1982 Lebanon War was a turning point that revealed the discrepancy between ethical sacrifice and Realpolitik sovereignty. Realpolitik concerns can easily be found in the leadership discussions and military strategy of Israel's earlier wars, but these wars had always been justified to the wider public in ethical and existential terms. At the beginning of the war, the government acknowledged that the decision to go to war was one of choice. But on August 8, 1982, Prime Minister Menachem Begin gave an explicitly Realpolitik lecture to the IDF Academy on the topic of wars of no choice and wars of choice. He stated that the 1982 Lebanon War was a war of choice designed to achieve certain national and sovereign objectives. He said further:

> The conclusion, both on the basis of the relations between states and on the basis of our national experience, is that there is no divine mandate to go to war only if there is no alternative. There is no moral imperative that a nation must, or is entitled to, fight only when its back is to the sea, or to the abyss. Such a war may avert tragedy, if not a Holocaust, for any nation; but it causes it terrible loss of life. Quite the opposite. A free, sovereign nation, which hates war and loves peace, and which is concerned about its security, must create the conditions under which war, if there is a need for it, will not be for lack of alternative. The conditions much be such—and their creation

> depends upon man's reason and his actions—that the price of victory will be few casualties, not many. (Begin 1982)

Although Begin attempted to preemptively justify his statements ethically with reference to minimizing casualties, his statements flew in the face of the ethical rationality that justified the military sacrifices exacted from the Israeli population until that day. The public reacted very negatively to the idea of a "war of choice," and public support for the war dropped quickly. Much of the resistance to the unpopular war focused on the fact that it had no moral objectives, only national strategic ones. The Four Mothers Movement, started by mothers of Israeli soldiers, objected to risking their sons' lives for mere strategic advantage. It is no coincidence that organized conscientious objection emerged in the public consciousness and popular culture during this war. The recognition of the use of the ethical national sacrifice for a-ethical objectives of statecraft allowed conscientious objectors to make ethical claims against the military in ways that had previously been impossible. Many soldiers who had been willing to sacrifice for an ethical cause were not willing to do so for a Machiavellian game of thrones. The awareness of this dissonance is by now common, and even if soldiers do not refuse, because of loyalty or even agreement with the pragmatic reasoning, the idea that military service is an ethical sacrificial enterprise is widely suspect. This is especially the case among reserve soldiers, who, having more exposure to cynical military logics and functioning, are more likely to refer to themselves as a "sucker" (*freier*) of the state than as heroes.[5]

As a tool of sovereignty to exercise power, the military creates values and hierarchies based on pragmatic expediency rather than ethics. As a result, its promise to serve as an ethical sacrifice for society is a false promise. This critique is not limited to Israel, but has great implications there, because of the extent to which military sacrifice orders society and its hierarchies. I suggest that the state, necessarily guided by Realpolitik, should not be the object or organizer of sacrifice, because its creation of value will not be guided by ethical principles. I concur with Moshe Halbertal that "Citizens' commitment to sacrifice their interests for the sake of their fellow citizens is an admirable aspect of political association. . . . When the state becomes the sole locus of self-transcendence, however, it turns into a false idol" (2012: 112). Sacrifice, rather, should be organized by an institution without ulterior sovereign motives. Adi Nes's photograph of the Israeli soldiers at the so-

called Last Supper is a cultural manifestation of the suspicion toward the redemptive promises of military service and the state.

Zionism, Post-Zionism, and the End of History

The disillusionment my interlocutors of both generations experienced with military service went hand in hand with a growing disillusionment in Zionism. Both generations were explicitly and intentionally socialized into Zionist presuppositions and ideological assertions in school, in youth organizations, in the public political discourse, and at home. They were also taught values, however, many from classic liberalism, that corroded much of their commitment to some of the basic elements of Zionism. The first part of this book focused on the older generation of conscientious objectors, whose inculcation to the state and Zionist ideology was central to their volunteering for dangerous combat units in the military. Over time, this generation was exposed to a number of wrongdoings and breaches in ethical behavior. In other circumstances, this disillusionment with military conduct could have remained quite circumscribed. However, because of how entwined the military is with Israeli society and Zionist ideology, and because the military ethos was central to their self-understanding, these limited qualms set off a chain reaction that led to a much broader crisis of faith in Zionism generally. The crisis involved the ethics of state and personal violence and the reversal of victim and aggressor. It also involved a shift in political consciousness that concerned day-to-day life and political subjectivity. Conscientious objectors became aware of circumstances around them, inside Israel, that did not fit the national narrative, such as the legal and de facto segregation between Jews and Palestinians in Israel, the ruined Palestinian villages that dot the Israeli landscape, the active Hebraization of places that previously bore Arabic names. This awareness caused them to question the value of ethnic solidarity and the Jewish people's inherent role as victims. In their public testimonies, they tried to destroy this narrative of Jewish victimhood by describing themselves as aggressors who committed war crimes. Their depiction of a Jewish aggressor is by itself radical, as it is a figure not meant to exist in the Zionist worldview.

In the second part of the book, we see that the disillusionment of the younger generation of conscientious happens in somewhat of a reverse gesture. Whereas the older generation's personal interactions as soldiers with

Palestinians led to a wider critique of Zionism, for the younger generation, exposure to critiques of Zionism only later became personalized in relationships. It is no less strongly felt, however. Brought up, like the older generation, in an intentionally Zionist milieu, members of the younger generation began to identify hypocrisies in their education, between equality and exclusion, democracy and ethnic nationalism. They discovered the inherent gender discrimination of pronatalism and militarism, not only theoretically, but in social and legal expectations placed on them by those closest to them.

The severity of my interlocutors' disillusionment was a result of their deep belief in the Israeli state as the solution to the Jewish question. The experiences of close relatives, often in the Holocaust, reinforced the belief that Israel offered a safe haven for Jews in a world of widespread anti-Semitism. Israel, like all nation-states, puts forward a teleological narrative suggesting that, rather than a coincidence of history, the state is the natural and inevitable outcome of history. It inserts the state into history (Israel is referred to as the Jewish "return to history") and claims a reason for its existence. These national narratives also position the state as the ultimate expression of historical flow, not a way-stop of history but the final destination of the journey of a people. In this sense, it claims "narrative closure," Noel Carroll's term for the feeling of finality generated when narrative questions are resolved (2007). National narratives position the state as the solution to the historical problems of a people. Nowhere is this more the case than Israel, where the national narrative claims to solve the inscrutable Jewish question.[6] The state's promise of belonging and permanent security is not offered for nothing. It is offered in return for the sacrifice of its citizens, primarily through military service. Zionism tries to replace the historical involuntary sacrifice of Jews (Levinas 1990: 225), with the voluntary sacrifice in return for narrative closure. Yet, for my interlocutors, the promises of closure, security, belonging, and justice cannot block out the ethical demands manifested by the presence of Palestinians, of Jewish others, of African refugees, all of whom ask for a response. The state fails them in its attempt to provide a solution to the Jewish question because the question is not a specific one, but an archetypical question about how one should respond to eradicable and incommensurable alterity. As Primo Levi said, "Everybody is somebody's Jew"(Acocella 2013). The ethical negotiation of insiderness and outsiderness is inevitably ongoing.

The main intellectual movement that challenging mainstream Zionist ideology has been post-Zionism, which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in

Israel. Post-Zionism claims that the Zionist movement has essentially fulfilled its purpose in creating a homeland for the Jewish people. Thus, it argues, the privileging of Jewish interests should be put aside in an effort to make Israel a liberal democratic state with universalistic citizenship (Shafir and Peled 2002). Like Francis Fukuyama's claims about the global triumph of liberal democracy, post-Zionism proclaims the permanence of the Jewish state project. Many historians and other academics have contributed to this movement, which has even found some expression in popular culture. Those called the New Historians have challenged Zionist historiography, reexamined these celebratory accounts of Israeli history produced in the first fifty years of the state, and exposed unacknowledged social and political injustices and wrongs committed, especially against Palestinians. Post-Zionism is not misled in its analysis of power politics and Palestinian oppression. However, the claim that Zionism has fulfilled its purpose likewise relies on narrative closure and the illusion of permanence.

Conscientious objection, especially right-wing conscientious objection, reveals some of the limitations that post-Zionism has in common with the state's liberal promise to the right to conscience. Post-Zionism proposes a model of citizenship based on secular universalism and a strict separation of the church and the state. Because of this insistence on the secular and the universal, post-Zionist liberalism cannot accept many aspects of the Orthodox religious conscience. I had the opportunity to speak with a few of the soldiers who refused to carry evacuations in Hebron just after these events occurred. Their descriptions of their decisions to refuse were uncannily familiar. They spoke about deliberating with themselves and their friends about questions of justice. They described witnessing events, such as soldiers roughly handling Jewish civilians, that brought them to the epiphany that they could not, with good conscience, participate in these activities. Many described hesitations similar to those of left-wing conscientious objectors, such as not wanting to abandon their comrades, being afraid to step forward alone, and fearing that their conscience might be misleading them. Many spent agonizing periods considering and praying about what they should do. Ultimately, they said, they could not ethically justify the violent uprooting of Jewish families from their homes and the land and locations to which Jews have had a spiritual connection for thousands of years.

Whereas left-wing conscientious objectors, being secular and universalist in orientation, had asked themselves what the human and humane thing to do would be, right-wing conscientious objectors were asking themselves

what the Jewish thing to do would be. "What is the Jewish thing to do?" is an uncomfortable and illegitimate question for post-Zionism, which insists on the secular universalism that informs left-wing refusers. The metaphysical connection of Jews to the Holy Land is likewise undigestable. Post-Zionism is blind to the violence of these denials, making the common secular assumption that such concerns are insincere excuses for political goals. However, this account of conscience and the experience of conscience suggests that the struggle to do the right thing will often result in crossed ideological boundaries, be those the norms of Zionism or of post-Zionism. Likewise, ethical calls for responsibility can arrive from unsanctioned individuals, be those Palestinians in the mainstream public or Jewish settlers in the counterpublic. Conscientious objection, regardless of political orientation, testifies to the ongoing nature of the struggle to do what is right and to answer calls of responsibility. Zionism and post-Zionism alike fail to address the inevitably continuous nature of this issue by positing an end to history, and by assuming the meaning of safety, of peoplehood, of equality, of harm, and of justice. For conscientious objectors, walking away from military service was, in a sense, walking away from the alluring promise of closure. They walk toward an inextricable quagmire of obligation, but in doing so they also open the door to other possibilities for justice that these obligations engender.

NOTES

Introduction

1. These high levels of identification with the state are more reminiscent of the kind of attachments to the state in Turkey as described by Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) opposed to the situation described by Lisa Wedeen in Syria (1999), where affection for the state is largely feigned and state power is disciplinary.

2. I use *conscientious objectors* to refer to all those who object to military service for reasons of conscience, including selective or politically contingent objections.

3. Here we are talking about conscience as one among many possible ethical articulations. Efforts are taken here to cast it as a European tradition in order to provincialize it against its universal rhetoric. For our analytic purposes, it should be clarified that those who do not experience conscience as imagined by its cultural tradition do not lack conscience. Even though rhetorical deployment of the language of conscience can often imply a lack of conscience (e.g., the refusers' self-descriptor "soldiers of conscience" implies a lack among other soldiers), this cannot be reconciled with the analytic framework I use here.

4. The Occupation generally refers to the military governance of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Although Israel formally withdrew its settlers from Gaza, it maintains military control over the area and its borders.

5. From The Spirit of the IDF: "Purity of Arms (Morality in Warfare)—The soldier shall make use of his weaponry and power only for the fulfillment of the mission and solely to the extent required; he will maintain his humanity even in combat. The soldier shall not employ his weaponry and power in order to harm non-combatants or prisoners of war, and shall do all he can to avoid harming their lives, body, honor and property." Http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/about/doctrine/ethics.htm

6. This generation of conscientious objectors, refusing in the early part of the twenty-first century, should be thought of as a different generation than those who refused before the second Intifada. For example, previous conscientious objectors had a greater tendency to phrase their refusal in deontological terms rather than as a empathetic response to an ethical call from Palestinians (for accounts of these earlier refusers, see Helman 1999; Linn 1996).

7. I use quotes because this is not a self-definition, but my designation following Meir Amor.

8. Kimmerling divides Israeli society into seven subcultures: secular Ashkenazi upper-middle class, national religious, traditionalist Mizrahi, Orthodox religious, Arabs, Russian immigrants, and Ethiopians.

9. This is discussed extensively in Gadi Algazi's 2004 article "Listening to the Voice That Says No."

10. Some accounts distinguish between the *sacrificer* as the technician of the sacrifice, for example, the one who performs the ritual slaughter, and the *sacrifier*, the one who sponsors the sacrifice and accrues the moral benefit. This is often a helpful distinction, but I have not found it necessary because of the dominance of self-sacrifice in this situation.

11. Courtesy of the University of California Press.

Chapter 1

1. The description of military actions as violence is taboo except in the radical Left of Israeli society. As Michael Warner (2003) asserts, the terminology of violence is increasingly used only in contrast to legitimate force.

2. The hermeneutic significance of the essential connection between sacrifice and community has been explored in the work of Abdellah Hammoudi (1993).

3. This characteristic differentiates this group's inculcation from the subjectivity created through patronage, as described by Daniel Linger in *The Hegemony of Discontent* (1993).

4. There are always exceptions to the rule, what Orna Sasson- Levy calls "limited inclusion" (2002: 377–378).

5. Tzur's film was released in the United States with the title *On the Objection Front*.

6. In this worldview, "the Arabs" have a unified origin and intention.

7. Michael Lambek (2007: 31) also stresses that sacrifice is not just dying or killing but must involve converting this loss into life.

8. This gendered aspect of the "already guilty" condition is related to the privileges and burdens attached to the category of "women and children." I think it is worth pointing out that the "already guilty" category, for soldiers, is their own mirror image in Palestinian society, and yet it is with this group—young Palestinian men—that they are least able to empathize.

9. Following Michael Mann's idea of civil militarism, Sara Helman (1999) has termed this commitment Israeli "civil militarism."

10. Today this is even more fully articulated in the Yisrael Beiteinu party.

11. It does this through expensive state propaganda efforts called *hasbara* (see Lowstedt and Madhoun 2003).

Chapter 2

1. Another organization that offers similar testimonies is called Breaking the Silence. Founded by soldiers who served in the West Bank city of Hebron, the organization is dedicated to collecting and distributing personal reports of violence and abuses that take place against Palestinians, of much the same nature as those reported by Combatants for Peace, such as arbitrary collective punishment and detention (for an excellent analysis of the cultural linguistic patterns of producing counter-discourse in Breaking the Silence testimonies, see Shavit and Katriel 2009).

2. Tamar Katriel and Nimrod Shavit find this to be a prominent feature in their examination of Breaking the Silence testimonies (2009: 61).

3. In his consideration of torture, Toby Kelly shows that accusations of war crimes raise complicated evidentiary problems of legal recognition and the legal assignment of responsibility while strongly invoking our understandings of moral wrong (2011).

4. Combatants for Peace membership now includes several women. However, not having experience as combat soldiers, they do not offer the compelling narratives that are the foundation of the organizational practices, do not testify, and are not combatants in any straightforward sense.

5. Individual guilt is the secular Western cultural norm. The Jewish confessional tradition, however, seen in the Yom Kippur *kol nidre* prayer, often asserts collective responsibility. These confessions play with the distinction in their clandestine messages.

6. Breaking the Silence testimonies sometimes confess to illegal activities that can be attributed to the individual by the military.

7. The concept of the double-bind was developed by Gregory Bateson and his research team in *Towards a Theory of Schizophrenia* (1956).

Chapter 3

1. *Hadash* means new, but it is also an acronym for the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (HaHazit HaDemokratit LeShalom VeLeShivion).

2. *Banki* is an acronym for the Israeli Communist Youth Alliance (Brit HaNoar HaCommunisti HaIsraeli).

3. It is expensive to live in Tel Aviv and their abilities in academic-level English reflects a very high level of educational exposure.

4. The infoshop is now closed, their resistance to monetizing their offerings having run up against an expensive real estate market.

5. Juliana Ochs (2011) shows how the military and the hegemonic security orientation insert themselves into everyday and intimate relations.

6. Afterward I read articles about these protests by Sara Helman and Tamar Rapoport (1997), as well as Erella Shadmi (2000). The articles mention the harassment I witnessed, and had I read the articles first, perhaps I would have been more prepared.

7. Rebecca Stein (2008) shows how tourism as acts of cultural consumption reflect political commitments, desires, and fantasies. Anticonsumption is similarly revealing of these motivations.

8. I borrow the term *exhaustion* from Elizabeth Povinelli.

Chapter 4

1. For example, Shannon Speed has cautioned that "human rights and multiculturalism, particularly as state discourses, may manifest themselves in regressive politics, disempowerment, and regulation" (2005: 29).

2. Additionally, Jane Collier and her colleagues point out that liberal legalism simultaneously demands and disclaims difference, requiring people to emphasize their similarities to other abstract hearers of legal rights if they seek special rights (Collier, Mauer, and Suárez-Navaz 1997: 21).

3. Law reflects (Foucault 1977) and produces (Sarat and Kearns 2000; Geertz 1983: 203) public morality in an ongoing, unstable interchange.

4. That some Palestinian Arab Israelis do in fact volunteer for military service in the Israeli Defense Forces, though it is a decidedly controversial action in their communities, is a testament to the importance of military service to Israeli belonging (Kananneh 2009).

5. Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir have persuasively argued that we should not think of the state's manifestations as a liberal democracy and occupying force as separate regimes, but that its governance in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are interdependent (2008). Israeli bureaucracy and military restrict Palestinian noncitizens' ability to move freely, own property, be employed, study, love and start families, and organize socially and politically (Kelly 2006; Gabiam 2006). Dan Rabinowitz refers to Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel as a "trapped minority" because they face not only ethnic discrimination, but also constant dilemmas (selling property, segregated education, personal hospitality) of not being Jewish in a Jewish state that looks at them as inherently dangerous (Rabinowitz 1997).

6. Yael recalled to me a case in which the applicant was essentially unable to say anything and was in a complete panic. However, she said that the committee could feel that she was genuine and simply could not articulate herself, and they released her.

7. The literature on this topic is huge, but see, for example, the work of Micha Popper, Dov Eden, and Raanan Lipshitz.

Chapter 5

1. Adolf Eichmann was cited by a number of conscientious objectors as the personification of the ethical pitfalls of obedience, complacency, and conformity. Hannah Arendt's writing on Eichmann (1994) is the main vehicle through which my interlocutors became familiar with this reading of his legacy. Arendt is also closely associated

with Israel's liberal Left. She has served as a proxy war for conscientious objection. Adi Ophir and academic and conscientious objectors have written favorably about Arendt, whereas Elhanan Yakira, who vocally opposes conscientious objection, has written against her philosophy (Ophir 1996; Yakira 2006). Eichmann argued that he was a cog in the machine of the Nazi regime. Arendt picked up on this to formulate her theories of ethical responsibility.

2. Though for my own purposes, these encounters would demonstrate the effectiveness of the antishirking campaigns and the fact that such campaigns offered a potent language to an already inflamed audience.

3. That is, homosexuality as it is understood and experienced among secular Jewish Israelis, as a biological fact requiring liberal tolerance.

4. The poem challenges the structure of naturalized loyalties established by Zionism by referring to Ishmael, here a metaphor for Palestinians, as brother. This is contrasted with the typical familiar designation of Palestinians by Jewish Israelis of cousin, which is frequently used in a tongue-in-cheek and derogatory fashion.

5. Though Gramsci's ideas of class have since been rejected by many as essentialist (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 69), we can see that even if we do not use a materialist definition of social groups, social hierarchy is linked to hegemony.

Conclusion

1. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, or Maimonides, a medieval Jewish philosopher from Cordoba.

2. See Gurevitz 2012.

3. I suggest willing or another ethical category that does not evaluate the body or identity or previous privileges.

4. The official patrolling of this rhetorical effect is especially strong in Israel, where critiques of state action, or critiques of Zionism, are reinterpreted as anti-Semitic calls for the violent elimination of the state (Butler 2012).

5. Luis Roniger and Feige Michael describe how, in the early 1970s, the term *Golda's Freier* would refer to someone who enthusiastically responded to the government call for volunteerism and military sacrifice, which at that point, under the leadership of Golda Meir, was heavily suspected of ideological manipulation (1992: 260).

6. The *Jewish question* refers to the issues of Jewish difference, exclusion, and oppression in Europe.

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INDEX

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