

The New Profile Report on
Child Recruitment in Israel

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The *New Profile* Report on Child Recruitment in Israel

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In the final stages of work on this report we received the news of the death of Jeshu'ayahu Toma Šik, who, among many other things, was one of the pioneers of the antimilitarist movement in Israel. In his usual critical fashion, he would no doubt have been glad to see this report see light. Continuing his work is the best way in which we can honour his memory.

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Introduction – Legal, Historical and Cultural Background

The present report examines the many and varied forms in which children are being recruited by the Israeli armed forces and by Jewish militias. A parallel report has been prepared by a Palestinian human rights group – Defence for Children International in Palestine – examining the recruitment of Palestinian children. Together, we hope that these two reports will prove to be a first step in a concentrated effort, aiming to take children out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such an effort, we hope, can be joined by almost everybody on both sides, regardless of their position on the political and other issues involved.

The Israeli human rights group *B'tselem* reports that 903 Palestinian children and 109 Jewish-Israeli children have been killed in hostilities between 29 September 2000 and 30 June 2004.¹ Sadly, some of the combatants on both sides of the conflict consider children on the other side to be 'fair game'.² It is not the purpose of this report to examine the overall effects the conflict in general, and the present round of hostilities in particular, have on children in the region. Rather, we focus here on the ways in which children are made into participants of the conflict, on the various direct and indirect ways in which they are recruited.

As Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu put it,³ "Children should be playing, not being pawns in dangerous adult games". Child recruitment cynically violates the rights of children, and stopping it is a worthy cause in its own right. But we also hope that by drawing children out of the circle of present, and hopefully also future, participants in the conflict it will be possible to remove them from the circle of victims as well, and this, one could hope, would be a first step in the direction of resolving the conflict itself. We would like this report, together with its counterpart, to provide information and analysis to be used for these noble goals.

We should stress, though, that while we made an effort to present in this report a broad survey of the various forms of child recruitment for Israeli armed forces and groups, one that would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the overall situation, we could not possibly cover *all* forms of child recruitment in Israel, and there is obviously ample room for further research and study in the field.

Overview of the Report

Let us now review the structure of this report and present the main issues dealt with in it. The present introductory chapter provides background information, necessary to understand the rest of the report. This Overview is followed by a section defining and explaining the main term used in this report – *child recruitment*. The next section of the Introduction takes a look at the various armed forces and groups examined in the report. Then come two sections providing legal background on the issue of child recruitment. First, we briefly review some relevant international standards, and then we examine both the legal basis for the Israeli system of formal recruitment and some aspects of its implementation in practice. Next comes a brief history of child recruitment practices in Israel. This section provides valuable historical background to the rest of the report. Last but not least, the introductory chapter ends with presenting the most important element of cultural background necessary for a proper understanding of the phenomena recorded and discussed in what follows, namely, militarism in Israeli society and culture.

The main body of the report examines in detail the different forms in which children are recruited. It is divided into three parts, moving from the less direct to the more direct forms of children's participation in the conflict. Part one, "Israeli Children as Soldiers-to-Be", discusses the ways in which the military figures in the life and education of most Israeli children. Studying this issue allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the processes that engender the more direct forms of child recruitment, and indeed, that help perpetuate the conflict itself. Moreover, if we use a broader definition for the term 'recruitment', we might say that this part of the report deals with some of the indirect forms of child recruitment in Israel.

Chapter 1 deals with the overall subject of militarised education in Israel and introduces the notion of *symbolic recruitment*. The practices described in this chapter are present in the life of Israeli children from early on. The chapter focuses in particular on some examples of militarisation and symbolic recruitment in Israeli kindergartens. Chapter 2 examines the widespread practice of employing

soldiers – both of conscripts on duty and of retired officers – in ordinary Israeli schools. Chapter 3 then goes on to discuss educational programmes, both formal and informal, aiming to prepare children for military service. Among these programmes there is a mandatory curricular programme for high schools conducted in cooperation by the Ministry of Education and the Israeli military. Finally, chapter 4 discusses the legal status of Intended for Security Service, which gives formal expression to the status of children in Israel as soldiers-to-be.

Part two of the report, “Children in Military Functions”, looks into the more specific and direct practices of recruiting children in Israel. Chapter 5 examines high schools operated directly or indirectly by the military. Although the pupils enrolled to these schools, some as young as 13 or 14, are not formally considered soldiers, most of them wear military uniforms, live in a military environment, and are in many respects soldiers *de facto*. Chapter 6 also looks at cases in which children wear military uniforms and live in a military environment, but this time these are pupils in ordinary schools, sent to a few days of military training, either as part of the school curriculum (see the educational programmes discussed in chapter 3) or as part of a process of selecting recruits for elite combat units. A different aspect of child recruitment is discussed in chapter 7. This chapter reviews cases in which children’s work is used for military purposes, including a case in which autistic children are employed doing menial jobs at a military base. This part of the report ends with chapter 8, examining cases of children volunteering to serve in the police as part of the Civil Guard. One should bear in mind that in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the traditional distinctions between military and police activities are often blurred, or even completely effaced. The work of the young volunteers of the Civil Guard is often related to the conflict in the region, and is thus also relevant to the issue covered by the report.

Although children are often the direct victims of hostilities in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, cases in which children wilfully or by coercion take an active part in hostilities are scarcer. This, however, is not to say that such cases do not exist. Information on these cases is very difficult to obtain, at least inasmuch as recruitment by Israeli groups or forces is at issue.⁴ Part three, “Involvement in Hostilities”, is consequently quite brief and at times sketchy. Nevertheless, it contains some important findings.

Chapter 9 briefly explores the relatively widespread phenomenon of children living in some of the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories serving as armed guards in their settlements. In addition to the military, and to some extent, the police, there are also Jewish militias that take active part in hostilities against Palestinians.⁵ At least some of these militias recruit children. Very little information is available on this that is not revealed deliberately by the leaders of the militias themselves. However, we have obtained some information from one former member of the *Kahane Chai* (Kahane Lives) militia, indicating a regular pattern of recruiting children, often quite young, some of whom are directly involved in attacks on Palestinians. This information is presented in Chapter 10. Our findings in this chapter should be viewed with some caution, as many of them are based on a single testimony. Still, obtaining one such testimony is an achievement in its own right.

Chapter 11 is different than the rest in that it examines the recruitment, or one-time use, usually forced, of Palestinian children by Israeli forces acting against their own communities. One class of such cases is the recruitment of Palestinian children as collaborators by the Israel Security Authority. This issue was thoroughly researched by our Palestinian colleagues, and we felt free to restrict ourselves merely to making a few passing comments, summarizing their work and adding a bit of information on some points of interest. Our contribution to exploring the use of Palestinian children for Israeli military purposes had to do with the practice of using Palestinians, including children, as human shields for Israeli soldiers. Several cases of such use of children were documented by human rights activists and organisations and are described in the report.

The main findings of the report and our basic recommendations following it are brought together in the Summary section that appears at the end.

What Do We Mean by Child Recruitment?

According to Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. The age of majority in Israeli law is 18. In the present report we adopt this definition. Thus a child, for the present purposes, is any person below the age of 18.

Matters become less clear-cut when we come to define the term *child recruitment*. The generally accepted definitions for the terms “child soldier” and “recruitment” in this context are found in the Cape Town Principles:⁶

“Child soldier” in this document means any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.

“Recruitment” encompasses compulsory, forced and voluntary recruitment into any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group.

The great virtue of this formulation lies in its inclusiveness. There is more to being a soldier than carrying weapons and committing hostilities. An inclusive definition of the phenomenon of child recruitment and soldiering makes it possible to improve our understanding of the root causes of this phenomenon and of what makes it possible for it to take place. Using a narrow definition of child recruitment, one that would only take into account as soldiers those children fighting on the front and officially registered as members of an armed force or group, would be very convenient for many governments and political forces, but it would also necessarily render efforts to stop the use of children as soldiers, even in the narrowest sense, ineffective.

On the other hand, this definition needs some extra specification to be applicable to the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there is no such thing as a front. We do not always have clearly identifiable armed forces, conveniently separated from civilians. Both in the Occupied Territories and in the State of Israel, one is often ‘accompanying’ armed forces and groups simply by walking on the street. The confrontation between the Israeli occupying force and the various Palestinian resistance groups, some spontaneously formed, takes place wherever the army is located and acts, and that means inside Palestinian cities, towns and villages, and often inside Palestinians’ homes. Nor are Palestinian attacks restricted to army bases. Quite on the contrary, they often take place in public spaces such as busses and shopping malls. Moreover, armed soldiers in uniform can be found almost everywhere in Israel. Many military bases are located inside population centres and few Israelis ever spend a day without meeting soldiers on duty.

Thus, to make our working definition of child recruitment useful to studying this issue in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not too narrow and not too wide, we need a *functional* criterion for what it means to be recruited. Thus we propose, for the purposes of the present report, the following working definition.

A *child* is any person younger than 18 years of age. A child is considered *recruited* if *any* of the following holds true for him or her:

- She or he wears an official uniform, has an official identifying document or is in some other way *identified as member* of an armed force or group, whether or not he or she is formally considered to be such a member.
- He or she does some *work* that *intentionally* promotes or supports the actions of an armed force or group, whether or not he or she is considered a member of it. This includes active participation in hostilities, but it also includes various support functions, such as logistics (cooks, porters, etc.), collecting information (scouting, spying, etc.), maintenance of weapons or facilities, office jobs, etc., as well as providing material resources and various services (including sexual services), specifically to these armed groups and forces and their members.

- She or he undergoes practical or theoretical *training specifically designed and intended* to develop his or her ability to assist in the actions of some armed force or group, whether in the present or in the future, whether as a formal member of the armed force or group or as an informal one.

The Armed Forces and Groups Examined in the Report

As we mentioned at the very outset, within the scope of this report lie the various forms of child recruitment in Israel and in the Occupied Territories, whereby the children are recruited into one of the armed forces or groups operating on the Israeli side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The parallel report took on cases in which Palestinian children are recruited (the recruitment of Palestinian children by Israeli armed forces is the only area in which the two reports overlap). Anticipating possible criticism on this point, we wish to reiterate that it was not our business in this report to examine child recruitment by Palestinian armed groups, nor do we feel competent to make any assessments of it. Child recruitment by Palestinian groups is not mentioned in this report not because of any special bias on our part, but simply because it was within the mission and the competence of our Palestinian colleagues, rather than our own, to examine this issue. We also feel that it is our duty to critically examine problematic practices in the society we belong to and know from within, before we go on to pass judgement on others, without being equipped with such inside knowledge.

This said, let us now turn to look at the armed forces and groups, which do fall inside the scope of the present report. These include first and foremost the Israeli military, the Israeli police force, the Israel Security Authority and some Jewish militias.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) is the military force of the State of Israel. It was formed in 1948, shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel. Formal members of the IDF include conscripts, career soldiers, reservists and a small group of volunteers. Since 1967, the IDF is the occupying force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and all the Palestinians living in these Territories are officially under its military rule. Naturally, it is involved in the great majority of hostilities that take place as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Another armed force involved in hostilities in the region is the Israeli police. It may seem strange at first glance to consider the police as an armed force involved in the conflict, but when we recall the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, counting the police in would only be natural. To begin with, one of the main divisions of the Israeli police force is the Border Police. The Border Police, despite its name, is not stationed only on Israel's borders. It operates many of the military checkpoints in the Occupied Territories. Although it is part of the Israeli police, most members of the Border Police are conscripts, who perform their military service as members of the Border Police (under Articles 24 and 25 of the Security Service Law of 1986. Article 24a of the Security Service Law also makes it possible for conscripts to perform their compulsory military service in other units of Israel's police, but this is not standard practice, as it is in the case of the Border Police).

Apart from the Border Police, and some special units, whose job it is to be directly involved in hostilities, it is also one of the major tasks of the ordinary police force to take care of so-called 'internal security'. This task is also directly related to the hostilities taking place in the region. It is defined as a defensive effort to counter hostilities committed by Palestinian armed groups against Israelis. On top of that, the Israeli police was also involved in confrontations between Jewish and Palestinian citizens within Israel's official borders. Notably, in October 2000, 13 Palestinian citizens of Israel were killed by the police (some by ordinary police, and some by the Border Police or by special units) while participating in demonstrations.⁷

The Israel Security Authority (ISA) – also known as the General Security Service (GSS), *Shabak* or *Shin-Bet* – is another force involved in hostilities in the region. We examine the work of the ISA mainly in the context of recruiting Palestinian children as collaborators. The ISA's involvement in hostilities includes, among other things, collecting intelligence materials to back military action (such as the assassination or detention of Palestinian political and military leaders) and interrogating Palestinian detainees (interrogations that often include torturing them).⁸

Apart from the regular ‘security forces’ of the State of Israel, there are also several Jewish militias, based mostly in the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories and motivated by extreme nationalist ideology, which commit hostilities against Palestinians. The relationships between these militias and the Israeli official security forces are quite complex. On the one hand, their activity is generally considered illegal by the Israeli authorities, and some of their leaders have been detained and interrogated by the ISA and the police. On the other hand, and on a more day-to-day level, the Israeli military and police often backs these militias when their members harass Palestinians and international peace activists by doing nothing to stop them, and often protecting them from retaliation.⁹

In keeping with internationally developing trends, private security companies are involved, to a great and increasing extent, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Private security personnel often guard the construction sites of future military facilities, built on Palestinians’ lands (including the Separation Wall), while their colleagues inside Israel are often trusted with the job of stopping potential Palestinian attacks in public places. However, since we did not receive any information about cases in which such companies recruited children, we do not discuss these companies in this report. It is quite possible, though, that further research will reveal some important findings in this sphere in the future.

Legal Background – International Standards

Article 38, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted in 1989 and ratified by Israel in 1991), states the following:

2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.
3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

This provision corresponds to a similar provision in Article 77 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions (adopted in 1977). The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) also states that it is an international crime for any person to recruit children under 15.

Already at the time when the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted, it was apparent to many that the above provisions set in it are insufficient, and the minimum age for recruitment should be raised from 15 to 18 (the age at which one ceases to be a child as defined in Convention on the Rights of the Child itself). The first major international standard that clearly recognised 18 as the minimum age for recruitment of any kind was the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). It remains perhaps the clearest expression of the ‘straight 18’ policy (i.e. of rejecting any form of voluntary, mandatory or forced recruitment of children under 18) in any international legal document to date.

Another important legal development in the direction of raising the minimum age for recruitment to 18 was the adoption in 1999 of the International Labour Organisation Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 182. This convention did not explicitly prohibit the voluntary recruitment of children, but it makes a very clear and sharp statement regarding compulsory and forced recruitment, as it lists among the worst forms of child labour “all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery ... including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict”.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000) was the next step in the effort to raise the minimum age for recruitment allowed in international law to 18. Indeed, it prohibits states from conscripting or forcefully recruiting all children, and prohibits the voluntary recruitment of children in the case of all armed groups. As for voluntary recruitment to the armed forces of States, the Optional Protocol requires the States Parties to raise the minimum age to at least 16. Once a State declares a certain age as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment, it may raise it, but not lower it. The Optional Protocol also requires States practicing voluntary recruitment of children to install safeguards to ensure their recruitment was indeed voluntary and to set up reliable procedures for determining recruits’ age.

In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there is of course one more international legal standard, which should be taken into account. Since the West Bank and Gaza Strip – commonly referred to simply as the Occupied Territories – have been under Israeli belligerent occupation since June 1967 (as recognised e.g. in UN Security Council Resolution 242, and most recently also in an important ruling by Israel’s own High Court of Justice¹⁰), the Palestinians living in these territories, children included, are considered to be Protected Persons under the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949. For our present purposes, the 4th Geneva Convention is relevant in discussing cases of forced recruitment (or forced military use on a one-time basis) of Palestinian children by the Israeli army. Some such cases will be briefly reviewed in chapter 11.

The Israeli Conscription System

Israel has signed, but has not yet ratified, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. As already mentioned, it has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and is officially committed to the 4th Geneva Convention. All the other legal standards mentioned above have been neither signed nor ratified by Israel (although some of them may be applicable to it nevertheless, especially the Rome Statute). But even those international standards that Israel has ratified do not have automatic legal force in the Israeli legal system. The law of the land, Israel’s national legislation, takes precedence over international legal standards in the Israeli system. We thus have to examine Israel’s law, and practice, in the field of child recruitment.

The legal framework for conscription and voluntary recruitment in Israel is set by Israel’s Security Service Law (1986). This law institutes general conscription for all citizens and permanent residents of Israel. Exemption for men is possible on medical grounds (Article 5) and by the discretion of the Minister of Defence (Article 36). Women may also obtain exemption on grounds of (Jewish) religious belief and observance (Article 40), on grounds of conscientious objection or a religious family lifestyle (Article 39, paragraph 3) and if they are married, pregnant or have children (Article 39, paragraphs 1 and 2).

Male conscripts serve in the army for three years. Female conscript serve, at present, for two years. Israel is, by the way, the only country in the world, to the best of our knowledge, which practices mandatory conscription for women. After the end of their mandatory military service, Israeli citizens are liable to serve in the reserves.

Articles 1 and 13 set 18 as the minimum age for conscription. However, Article 2 of the Security Service Law institutes a specific method for calculating ages for the purposes of the law. According to this method of calculation, one is counted as being 18, when in fact she or he may be up to six months younger. Following some pressure, Article 2 was amended in 2002.¹¹ It now contains the provision that this method for calculating age is not to be used in calculating the minimum age for conscription, with two minor exceptions (enlistment to the ‘academic reserves’ and to ‘unpaid service’), and in these two special cases one has to specifically volunteer to join the relevant military frameworks, which brings us to voluntary enlistment.

Articles 14 and 17 of the Security Service Law allow children under 18 to volunteer to perform military service, or to request the army to draft them prematurely (given the consent of the child’s guardians). Articles 1 and 12 of the Security Service Regulations (Volunteering for Security Service) of 1974 set the minimum age for voluntary recruitment in Israel to 17. Israeli military officials also claimed that volunteers are not used as combatants before they turn 18.¹²

Thus, Israel’s law and practice regarding formal recruitment is in keeping with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Nevertheless, it would be better if Israel adhered to a strict straight 18 policy, not accepting children into the armed forces even as volunteers.

Indeed, in Israel in the last decade or two, the military itself has almost nothing to gain from formally recruiting children at 17, rather than at 18. The Israeli military in practice has more conscripts than it needs, and often chooses not to conscript people and groups it could conscript in theory. To begin with, conscription was never applied to the vast majority of Palestinian citizens of Israel. The letter of

the law says they are as liable for conscription as anyone else, but they are all exempted from military service by the discretion of the Minister of Defence. Within the Jewish population too, many choose not to serve in the military on various grounds, and the military seems to be condoning this as long as this is done quietly.¹³ All in all roughly 60% of the men and 46% of the women liable to be conscripted actually get enlisted to the military, and many of the conscripts obtain a discharge shortly after enlistment, thus bringing the overall figure of those completing their mandatory military service relative to those who should have completed it according to the letter of the law, below the crucial 50% line.¹⁴

Formal recruitment is by no means the only kind of child recruitment there is. As we shall see in this report, informal, or semi-formal forms of child recruitment are the more common practice in Israel, going back to a much younger age than 17. In many cases, especially those examined in Part I of the report, the rationale behind these recruitment practices is that they prepare the informally or symbolically recruited children to their future mandatory military service. As the conscription statistics above make clear, in all too many cases it is simply not true that these children will be formally recruited in the future. This fact should be taken into consideration when reading the chapters that follow.

Some Past Practices of Child Recruitment

No overview of the subject of child recruitment in Israel can be complete without an examination of the historical processes, which led to the current state of affairs. The history of using children as soldiers by the Jewish-Israeli side in the conflict can be divided, much like the history of the Jewish settlement in Palestine in general, into two major periods – before and after the establishment of the State of Israel and with it, of the IDF, in 1948.¹⁵

Child Recruitment in the Jewish Settlement in Palestine

The Zionist movement was working towards creating a Jewish state in Palestine as early as the end of the 19th Century. The plan was to get Jews to migrate to Palestine (then part of the Ottoman Empire) and have them take over lands and settle them to form the basis for the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. The beginning was quite modest but still, tensions soon arose between the new settlers, the local Palestinians and the Ottoman and later British authorities (the British took over Palestine in 1917, and governed it under a mandate from the League of Nations). Up until the 1930's there were a few attempts at organising militia forces to protect Jewish settlements from raids and serve as a basis for a future military. For example, in the course of World War I, a rather popular initiative was the establishment of the "Jewish Battalions" within the British army, in the hope that after the war is over these soldiers will be the core of a Jewish army, a plan that did not materialize. Other organisations were formed though, most notably *Bar Giora*, *Hashomer* (The Guard), and the *Haganah* (Defence). These organisations were quite small in scale but had a profound effect on the worldview of the Zionist settlers, especially on the younger generation. Sociologist Dr. Uri Ben-Eliezer describes the process:

The formative years of the younger generation produced an ethos created by local experience: guarding fields and crops, fighting with Arab children, being given a weapon at the age of bar mitzvah [bar mitzvah is a boy's 13th birthday, marking his becoming a man in Jewish tradition]. This was the childhood experience of prominent members of the young generation ... their outlook was tempered with suspicion, which frequently became hostility, and they reached maturity feeling that a confrontation between the two groups was inevitable.¹⁶

At the time the only criteria for bearing arms and participating in military activities were the volunteers' ability to carry a weapon and their willingness to do so. There was no formal minimum age and consequently very young children were allowed to take part in military activities.

During the Great Arab Revolt against British rule in 1936-1939 and later in the course of World War II, The Zionist movement gradually accepted this militaristic worldview, believing that diplomatic efforts have all but failed and only military force will allow the Zionist movement to establish a Jewish nation-state. This worldview was especially put forth by the young generation who matured into prominent roles in the Zionist movement, especially surrounding military activities.

A noteworthy point in this context is that although there is a common perception that children are forced to participate in military activities, in many cases children are willing and even eager to participate, especially if they learned that military solutions are the most valued. Children in many cases adopt their parents' militaristic views without possessing the social sensitivities and sensibilities of their elders. They often view military activities as a sort of game and are often eager to join a military unit. The case before us is outstanding because it is the younger generation, including many children, that was at the forefront of military action, while the older generation was much more hesitant. During this period several organisations were formed, including *Fosh* (a Hebrew acronym for Field Units), the *Palmach* (Striking Force), the *Irgun* ("National Military Organisation", a.k.a. *Etzel*), and *Lehi* ("Israel Freedom Fighters"). While these organisations were quite different from one another (and the *Irgun* and *Lehi* were considered radical and subversive by most of the Zionist leaders), they did share a militaristic worldview and a passion for military action. Again, no age limit was set for joining these groups and most of their members were of the younger generation, including many children. In the years to follow these organisations committed numerous hostilities, both against Palestinians and against the British authorities.

During World War II, the Zionist movement decided to make a second attempt to form a basis for an army of its own by having Jews enlist to the British army. Enlistment to the British army was not mandatory and the Zionist leadership had no authority to force people to enlist, so they decided to make enlistment into a national campaign. They set up recruitment offices of their own and mobilised all of their resources to pressure all suitable candidates to enlist, sometimes resorting to aggressive tactics such as dismissing from the workplace or terminating a Kibbutz membership, and even public humiliation¹⁷.

The relevance of this episode to the issue of child recruitment as soldiers lies not so much in the fact that the minimum age for enlistment at the time was 17, but rather in that it shows the establishment of a very important principle by which recruitment works in Israel, the "Duty to Volunteer". Since it could not legally force people to enlist, the Zionist leadership made enlistment into a realisation of a sacred commitment to the nation. Later on when the IDF was established and with it conscription, enlistment was still presented as part of the 'Duty to Volunteer'. Instead of focusing on military service as mandatory, the emphasis on volunteering turns the duty into a privilege; enlistment becomes a noble and worthy action. This concept is still commonly accepted in Israeli society, especially when discussing military service.

By treating mandatory service as a form of voluntary service¹⁸ the State of Israel has pretty much reversed the meaning of 'voluntary service'. The pressure to volunteer to different kinds of military service is much more subtle nowadays but it is still very common and it makes volunteering an intricate issue involving more than just the volunteer's free will and willingness. One of the main reasons for focusing on child recruitment is that in some respects children are not entirely ready to be independent beings making decisions on their own (or at least are not deemed fully responsible for their decisions by law). Encouraging and even driving them to volunteer for military and paramilitary activities such as the Civil Guard (chapter 8) or having them volunteer to hand out gas masks during war (chapter 7), stretches the boundaries of the definition of recruitment and blurs the distinction between voluntary and mandatory service.

Since the beginning of the 20th Century one of the largest and most important organisations involved in preparing children for military service and using them as a backup military force is the Youth Battalions (or *Gadna*). The Youth Battalions are primarily defined as a reserve unit to be used only in times of crisis, but as it turns out, there were several cases in which Youth Battalions trainees were used in combat. One of the more celebrated instances is the battle over Jerusalem in 1948, in which, according to historians' reports, the Youth Battalion trainees, children aged 16-17, were directly involved in the fighting that took place and had considerable impact on its outcome.¹⁹

Child Recruitment in the State of Israel

The UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947, which proposed to divide Palestine into two States – one Jewish and the other Palestinian – marked the end of the British Mandate over Palestine. The war that broke out between the Jewish settlement in Palestine and the Palestinian

population (later joined by several neighbouring States) in the wake of this UN decision was a key turning point in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When it ended, in early 1949, the newly established State of Israel had control over its present borders. The vast majority of Palestinians who lived on these lands became refugees, and were not allowed to return to their former places of residence ever since.

One of the first steps taken by the new State of Israel in 1948 was the establishment of a conscription army, but mandatory conscription was announced before that, in 1947, as part of the preparations for war (Ostfeld, 1994: 52-55)²⁰. At first the age of conscription was set at 17 but, by the end of 1948, it was raised to 18. By and large it is reasonable to state that the IDF has never forced children to enlist, since it set the age of conscription to 18, but that still does not mean that children were not (and are not) being recruited by the State of Israel.

This report will review several official mechanisms and several case studies that show how the State of Israel recruits children. Child recruitment in these cases does not usually mean making them full-fledged IDF soldiers. They are put in temporary and mostly voluntary positions, but, as we just mentioned, voluntary service, especially in Israel, is an intricate issue, especially when dealing with children. On top of that, as already mentioned, children are still allowed to volunteer for full-fledged military service from age 17 on.

To conclude this section, we would like to refer in passing to one historical case. In 1948, the newborn State of Israel was already at war. Many of the men were in their battle units away from their homes and as a result many settlements were left without most of the men. Many of these settlements, especially ones located in frontier zones, got reinforcement from the Youth *Aliya* Corps (*Aliyat Ha-Noar*. Literally, Youth Immigration), who worked the fields instead of the men at war and in many cases joined the fighting forces when their settlement was under attack. The historian Shlomo Bar-Gil describes some of the problematic aspects of the issue in his doctoral thesis:

The Youth Aliya allowed its trainees to go on with their training in kibbutzes which were under attack, so long as there wasn't an explicit contrary order made by the security forces. In fact, in spite of many hesitations, the Youth Aliya did not stop sending children ... to places like Ben-Shemen, in spite of the tense security situation ... it appears that the alliance with the Kibbutz movement and concerns for settlement reserves outgrew the feeling of responsibility for the children who survived the holocaust, children who came from the death camps, from the war and years of insecurity. Only when the battles intensified were the children evacuated.²¹

Aside from the horrendous disregard for the safety and health of these Holocaust refugees, this case underscores the problem with claiming recruitment is voluntary. On the one hand we are faced with a case in which the children volunteered to fight, they insisted on receiving guns and they wanted to go to frontier settlements to prove their worthiness and shake off the image of victims. On the other hand these children, as Holocaust survivors, as new immigrants, as children, are clearly in no position to make such decisions on their own and allowing them to do so is just as bad as forcing them. In this case we also see that the authorities did not enlist them but certainly exploited them, letting them fight and in some cases die, while diverting other forces elsewhere.

In the cases we will present in the report, children are not usually expected to stand in the front line and fight, but in most cases they are expected to perform military duties like assisting fighter-plane mechanics (chapter 5) or handing out gas masks (chapter 7) and thereby support the war effort and allow other soldiers to divert their efforts elsewhere. As we will see, in some cases (chapter 6) children may be considered as a backup fighting force in case there is a shortage of enlisted soldiers, much like in this case, if only as a reserve.

Militarism in Israeli Society and Culture

Militarism has many definitions. We define Militarism as a way of thinking, which promotes forceful solutions, usually military ones, as preferable and even desirable ways of solving problems. Therefore on a social level Militarism is expressed in referring to the security forces as the most important and valued institution in society whose needs and opinions come second to none.



"Towards Tomorrow". Source: Etinger, A. (1993), *A Quarter Hour to Enlistment, The 6th Quarter*. Photography editor: M. Milner. Avivim, Ramat Gan.

Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, once said of Israel: "The whole nation is an army and the whole land is a front". This saying catches well the militarist attitudes and practices prevalent in the Israeli culture and society.²² Without looking, at least at a glance, into Israeli militarism, it would be all too easy to misunderstand the findings that shall be presented in this report.

Let us begin with resources. The annual budget of Israel's Ministry of Defence for 2004 is roughly 47.2 billion NIS (that is more than 10 billion US\$, and more than \$1,500 per capita of the Israeli population). This is by far the largest budget for any government department, almost twice as large as No. 2 – the Education budget. It constitutes 23.63% of the entire regular budget for the year. To this we should also add the 7.1 billion NIS budget of the Ministry of Internal Security (in charge mainly of the police and the ISA). Together, these budgets constitute roughly 27.2% of

the regular budget for 2004.²³ The military also directly controls 48% of all public lands in Israel.²⁴

Retired senior military officers effortlessly gain access to the top echelon of the political system, the economy and public administration. For example, all three predecessors of the current Chief of Staff became senior government ministers within less than a year from their retirement. One of them – Ehud Barak – became Prime Minister three years later, only to lose the crown to another retired general – Ariel Sharon. In the following general elections, the most recent to date, Sharon won again, beating yet another retired general, who was put up as candidate for Prime Minister by the main opposition party. Those who fall short of reaching the top of the pyramid in the military may try their luck at the municipal level. Thus, following the last round of municipal elections in Israel, *Tsevet – The Journal of IDF Career Service Pensioners*, proudly published a table listing all the retired career officers (all ranking between Lieutenant Colonel and Brigadier General) who remained or became mayors, heads of municipalities or heads of regional councils in Israel. Next to each name and rank appeared the population of the relevant municipality or region. The bottom line of the table also gave the entire article its title: "19 *Tsevet* Members and Approximately One-and-a-Half Million Residents" (this total is, by the way, almost a quarter of Israel's population).²⁵ Other retired senior officers seek, and easily get, the top jobs in public administration, become the top executives or directors of the largest companies in the Israeli business sector or, if they are merely Colonels or Majors, make do with jobs of a more plain character, like becoming school principals (see chapter 2 for more information on retired officers in schools).

The unquestioned prestige enjoyed by top military officers emanates downwards, and some of it can still be enjoyed by the common soldiery. Many discriminatory practices against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and to some degree against women too, use military service as their pretext. A good example could be the so-called students' wage. This is a recommended minimum hour's wage for students, slightly higher than the State minimum, and it is differentiated according to the number of months of military service the student has completed. Thus, while a Jewish man, who completed his term of conscription would be paid 19.58 NIS per hour, a Jewish woman, who completed her term of conscription would get only 19.38 NIS, and all the rest, including Palestinians, avoiders of military service, the medically unfit to serve in the army, etc., would get 18.98 NIS per hour of doing the same work.²⁶



Two children and a machinegun, Reshef youth camp, Hertzlia. Photograph by Lotahn Raz, July 2004.

Israeli militarism does not and cannot pass unnoticed by children in Israel. The military is present everywhere. Anyone who ever

visited Israel could not help notice the great number of soldiers on the streets and in other public places. Weapons are also to be found everywhere. Old tanks, machineguns and even fighter jets are placed in public places, quite accessible, sometimes especially accessible, to children. As we will see in chapter 1, Israeli children absorb not only the mere presence of the military in their daily environment. They also receive highly militarised education. They are often put in a position of mere soldiers-to-be, or of soldiers without uniforms.

Naturally, Israeli militarism has a cultural and ideological side to it as well. The official military view dominates public discussion on central issues (first and foremost on issues connected with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Dissenting views would be heard and given media exposure if they have a military lineage of their own – if they are voiced by acting or former senior officers, for instance. Many in the Israeli society feel that only performing military service, and of the privileged kind, gives one the right to speak out on these issues.



“To be a bit of this and a bit of that. To be an Israeli”. Advertisement for Macabi Beer.

Quite apart from things directly related to military action, military service is viewed by many as the very essence of being an Israeli. Many companies use military images to sell consumer products. Many educators look up to the military for values to guide education. Some of the gravest evidence of

child recruitment presented in this report was often there for the taking. Not only did the military authorities never try to hide it; they actually used it for public relations.²⁷

Here lies perhaps the most basic root cause of the various phenomena of child recruitment in Israel, as well as the most difficult obstacle to stopping these practices. In order even to address the problem of child recruitment in Israel, it is necessary for the Israeli public first to recognise that there is a problem, not to look right through it as if it was not there. It is not enough to document child recruitment in Israel. The arguments against it – legal, psychological, social and educational – should be brought to the public arena time and time again, so that people could begin to recognise that something is wrong.

Part I: Israeli Children as Soldiers-to-Be

1. “The Little Soldiers in Kindergarten” – Militarised Education and Symbolic Recruitment of Children in Israel

When examining the direct and indirect ways in which children are recruited in Israel, it is necessary first to appreciate the overall cultural and educational context in which these forms of recruitment occur. In this chapter we would like to have a look at this context, to make clear the background for the various recruitment practices, as well as some of their root causes.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines the issue of militarised education and presents evidence for militarisation in the Israeli educational system. The second defines and examines what we call ‘symbolic recruitment’ – a particularly powerful instrument of militarisation, which, as its name hints, we consider also to be a form of recruitment in its own right. Finally, the chapter will end with a detailed examination of some militarisation and symbolic recruitment practices in kindergartens in Israel.

Militarised Education in Israel²⁸

Militarised education is a crucially important concern for anyone involved in the effort to stop the use of child soldiers. It lays the groundwork for most forms of recruitment, among children as well as among adults. It creates that cultural atmosphere, which makes attempts to demobilise children and stop their recruitment in many places in the world an uphill struggle.

This concern is explicitly taken up in the Montevideo Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers of 8 July 1999, Article 5, paragraph g:

to promote a culture of peace ... and not to allow education to be militarised.

The Kathmandu Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers of 18 May 2000, Article 11, further elaborates:

...to ensure that schools do not become sites for child recruitment, that compulsory basic military training is not integrated into the curriculum...

The Amman Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers, of 10 April 2001, addresses specifically the countries of the Middle East. In Article 15 the participants:

Encourage states to enhance preventive measures for all children, especially those at risk, by addressing the causes of child soldiering ... including by ... Ending military training programmes for children, which encourage the militarisation of society, aggressive attitudes and entrenchment of occupation

Quite apart from the indirect effects that it has on the issue of recruiting children, militarised education is in itself a direct violation of the rights of the child. The Convention on the Rights of the Child notes in its Preamble that:

... the child should be ... brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.

And again, in Article 29:

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: ... (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; ... (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

That militarised education, especially in the context of an ethnical conflict, is clearly incompatible with the right of the child to education, as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child,²⁹ barely needs arguing for. Such educational values as understanding, tolerance and “friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups”, not to mention peace, cannot possibly be promoted

by educating children to glorify military power and by encouraging them to take part in an armed conflict. Equality between the sexes hardly fares better in a culture where the male, masculine, fighter is promoted as the highest role model and educational ideal.

There is ample evidence for the militarisation of education in Israel. Some of it will be presented in this and the following chapters.

To begin with, militarised education naturally feeds on the militarism prevalent in society at large. In a country where various kinds of weaponry are permanently displayed in public places and the status of the military is used to promote anything from cheese to political candidates, militarised education comes natural. One absorbs militarism at home and on the street.

The military is physically present in schools and school activities. Soldiers in uniform are stationed in schools, many of them are actually teaching classes. Other teachers, and especially principals, are recently retired career officers, without proper teacher training (on both phenomena, see chapter 2). High schools normally have a display on one of the walls in the school building with the names and photographs of “the fallen” among their graduates (but not of other dead).³⁰ School field trips, at all ages, are often made to military memorials set up on former battlegrounds.³¹

Official curricula and textbooks also reflect the militaristic attitudes inherent in the Israeli educational system, all the way from kindergarten (see the third section of this chapter) to the last years of high school, where there is a mandatory programme for all Jewish state-run schools called “preparation for the IDF” (see chapter 3), that in most cases includes actual military training (see chapter 6). Whole curricular subjects (e.g. Arabic and physical education) are often described to the pupils, and in official documents, as having the aim of preparing pupils, or some of them, to military service (see chapter 3). Glorification of the military and military conquest, and negative or skewed representation of Palestinians, is to be found in many Israeli textbooks.³²

To illustrate the latter point, here is the beginning of an exercise from a grammar textbook for the elementary school.³³ In the following text, there were originally missing letters (in words of the same Hebrew root), which the pupils were asked to fill in:

My dear sons,

The battle was hard. I was wounded; I know my death is drawing near. I am sorry that I cannot be close to you again. After all, you are my only dear relatives, my family. The enemy soldiers are approaching.

Symbolic Recruitment

On top of the indirect effects militarisation in education and society has on children’s willingness to mobilise to military causes, as well as on adults’ willingness to recruit them, militarised practices in education and society can also be said at times to be forms of recruitment in their own right. In this section we would like to focus our attention on a group of practices that we term ‘symbolic recruitment’.

A person is recruited when she is part of the armed forces and does some sort of work (either in actual combat or in some sort of support function) to promote the war effort. A person is *symbolically recruited* when she takes part in activities aimed to make her *feel* mobilised and *feel* that she is promoting the war effort, whether or not these activities have any actual impact on it. Clearly, actual recruitment normally has in it also an element of symbolic recruitment. The same goes for many forms of ‘recruitment-light’ that will be described in detail in subsequent chapters, especially in Part II. Thus, when children are, e.g., sent to military training courses, before they officially join the army (see chapters 5 and 6), they are designed to feel that they are really in the army and are being prepared for combat (and to some degree, this is true).

But there are also forms of symbolic recruitment *per se*. A good example is provided by the LIBI Fund and by the Association for the Soldier in Israel. The Association for the Soldier is involved in such activities as building clubs and gyms in army bases.³⁴ LIBI Fund (LIBI is a Hebrew acronym that means “For Israel’s Security”) financially supports a wider range of activities, from “Ensuring that

underprivileged youths get an education in the army”, through “Funding advanced security measures research”, all the way to “Providing crucial medical care and equipment to the front line”.³⁵

Both these bodies actively campaign to collect private donations from ordinary Israeli citizens. Most notably, the Association for the Soldier organises an annual fundraising event called *Shirutrom*, in which TV channels and the military radio station (quite popular in Israel) devote an entire day, from early morning to late evening, to special broadcasts, encouraging people to donate their money and keeping track of the amount raised. A song and video-clip especially produced for the event by popular artists, is repeatedly played as well. And indeed, Israelis young and old, from all walks of life, donate money to the Association for the Soldier.

Even so, the highest amount ever raised in a *Shirutrom*, approximately 20 Million NIS,³⁶ is but a tiny fraction of Israel’s military budget. This budget provides for building facilities in military bases, for military research and development, for educational programmes for soldiers, and certainly for “medical care and equipment for the front line”. Surely, the Israeli armed forces are not in such a desperate need of money that they actually have to solicit ordinary citizens for their pennies. So what, then, is the point of all this fundraising activity?

The answer is that donating to one of these bodies gives people the feeling of personally taking part in the war effort, of personally supporting the soldiers on “the front line”, while just paying taxes usually does not make people feel this way. Thus the person making such a donation is symbolically recruited, and this symbolic recruitment is a powerful way of mobilising society at large for the war effort.

One form of symbolic recruitment to which most children in Israel are exposed is the common practice of collecting and sending gift packages to soldiers, especially on holidays. Such gift packages are collected every year in most kindergartens and elementary schools. Sometimes the initiative comes from the school itself, but more often, the practice is actively encouraged by the Ministry of Education and by various municipal authorities.³⁷

The gift packages typically contain sweets and candy, but also personal hygiene items, such as toothpaste and soap bars. The children are asked to express gratitude to the receiving soldier in a personal letter, and the soldiers’ commanding officers often send back letters or cards to the kindergartens and schools, thanking them for the gifts. Alternatively, the gift packages are given personally to soldiers visiting the school or kindergarten (as can be seen in the picture on this page) or are delivered in a central ceremony, organised by the municipality or regional council. Thus, in the Golan Regional Council:



“The children of Mina’s Kindergarten – Ramat Aviv Gimel, donate gift packages to the Armoured Corps”. **Source:** The Ministry of Education, Tel-Aviv district. http://207.232.9.131/tel-aviv/ta_toda_end.htm.

The 550 children of the kindergartens in the Golan Heights celebrated Independence Day with the soldiers of the *Saar* military base, near Kidmat Zvi. On the initiative of Varda Hershkowitz, Coordinator for the Tender Age, and with the support of the Security Department of the Golan Regional Council and the Commander of the *Saar* base, the soldiers organised a heart-warming welcoming ceremony for the children, which included greetings, song and dance.

The children toured the base, watched a weapons display and handed presents to the soldiers, which contained a personal box of candies from every kindergarten, decorated with flags of Israel. In view of the great success of the event, the Education Department expects this experience to become a tradition.³⁸

Another such ceremony will be described in greater detail in the following section.

Now, Israeli soldiers are not starving, and they surely do not experience shortages of toothpaste and soap bars. All this is supplied to them by the army. What, then, is the point in encouraging young children to make a personal contribution to military logistics? The answer, we think, is again that we have here a case of symbolic recruitment – an activity meant to make the children *feel* that they are part of the war effort, that their contribution to this effort, small as it is, is needed and appreciated.

A teachers' guide titled *When a Nation Reports for Duty*, issued by the Israeli Ministry of Education in 1974,³⁹ presents the educational rationale behind educating pupils toward enlistment thus:

The Entire people carry the burden of the war effort, and it is divided between those who wear the IDF uniform and the civilians who are not directly recruited by the IDF.

Therefore it should be understood that any civilian – even if he's not wearing a uniform, and no matter what his age is – carries the burden of the war effort.

In this atmosphere of general mobilisation, symbolic recruitment becomes a matter of importance. Symbolic recruitment is a powerful instrument of militarisation. It educates children to “carry the burden” by means of direct participation. People in general are committed to justifying the things they do much more than they are committed to what they are told is right. This is especially true in the case of young children, who have so few opportunities to influence events in ‘the real world’. It is precisely through encouraging the children to believe that they take an active part in the war effort that they are recruited into that effort, before, while and after they “wear the IDF uniform”. Symbolic recruitment is thus in our view a form of recruitment in its own right.

Symbolic recruitment educates children to become soldiers, to take the war effort for granted and to view it as desirable, to consider it a privileged form of social participation, rather than question its necessity. It also helps blur the distinction between combatants and civilians, of all ages, by making the population at large actively support and identify with the military effort.

“The Little Soldiers in Kindergarten”

In the remainder of this chapter, we would like to focus on some instances and practices of militarised education and symbolic recruitment in Israeli kindergartens. We feel that focusing on this age group can help bring home the point about the scope and depth of these phenomena in Israel.

On 22 April 2004, a few days before Israel's Independence Day, a ceremony took place in the city stadium of Hertzlia (a suburb of Tel-Aviv). All the kindergartens in town gathered to deliver their gift boxes to the soldiers of a military base ‘adopted’ by the municipality – the army's central anti-aircraft training base. This was by no means an exceptional event. Such a ceremony takes place every year in Hertzlia, and, as we already observed, similar ceremonies take place in many other places in Israel. The one difference this time was that two of New Profile's activists videotaped and documented the event.⁴⁰

Each kindergarten – children and staff – came to the stadium on a bus. A soldier approached each bus, took the big, decorated crate with the gifts in it, and led the children (who are in the meanwhile submitted to much more strict discipline by their teachers, than any of the soldiers is) to their designated area inside the stadium. The soldiers stay with the same children throughout the ceremony. Many of the adults attending this ceremony carry pistols or even semi-automatic guns. The presence of the weapons is very conspicuous. At the edge of the lawn there is a large collection of military guns, some just lying there in a pile, with one or two soldiers sitting next to it.⁴¹

The ceremony proper is opened with a military parade, performed by some of the soldiers present. Immediately following the parade, the *compère* calls the children to perform a dance, clearly imitating the movements of the soldiers in the parade:

All the children with their kindergarten teacher get up in circle, so that we can all dance together. Everybody waives the flags upwards. Everybody turns right. Please show them where is right. And to the music of the little soldiers in kindergarten everybody marches to the right.

This is followed by speeches. One of the speakers, Major Yoram Vazuz, representing the military base, uses quite unequivocal terms:

These children ... are an immense human capital for the future ... the Antiaircraft school is grateful for the adoption and the hug they are giving us, despite the great distance.

In this ceremony, children in kindergarten were strongly encouraged to envisage themselves as soldiers, to imitate and admire them. They were even addressed as soldiers (as in the quote that gives the present section and chapter their names). Nor are such ceremonies the only opportunity children in kindergarten have to walk in military parade. Here is a quote from a brief item published two years ago in the Israeli daily *Haaretz*:

Ms. A., a resident of Tel-Aviv, arrived at the graduation of the city-run kindergarten which her two daughters attended. It was all very nice until the ceremony started. To her astonishment, she watched the teacher parade the children dressed in what seemed like IDF uniform and march them to and fro as they call out "left, right left," and "attention!" or "at ease!" The



Children in a Tel-Aviv kindergarten staging a military parade at their graduation ceremony. **Source:** Aviv Lavie, "Up on the Jungle Gym, Charge!" *Haaretz*, 28 June 2002.

military parade was accompanied by children singing at the top of their lungs: "Soldiers of Israel, march on and stay on guard, both day and night."

The kindergarten A's daughters attend is not the only one to have chosen to mark the end of the school year in this manner. At another kindergarten, in a small town near Tel-Aviv, the graduation

ceremony included storming targets with (toy) swords. There too the children recited texts about their being fighters in the service of the State of Israel. A. says that she did not send her daughters to kindergarten so they will be turned into soldiers by the age of five.⁴²

The kindergarten curriculum itself, notwithstanding efforts by individual teachers, can hardly be said to be promoting peace and tolerance. Centring on the cycle of Jewish holidays, it consistently represents history as a fight between 'us' ('the Jews') and 'the bad guys' (which may be 'the Germans', 'the Greek', 'the Persians', 'the Egyptians' or 'the Arabs', depending on the holiday or commemoration day marked). Children are encouraged to accept military force and war as a natural state and a natural response to conflict situations.⁴³

The kindergarten children themselves are quick to grasp the privileges of the military and of death in battle (one wonders whether they have reached an age in which they can confront the subject of death without sustaining irreparable psychological damage). This can be well illustrated by the following two incidents. The first is reported by Haggith Gor:⁴⁴ visiting a kindergarten, she was approached by a child, who told her "My father died in World War II", and then corrected himself: "No, in the Yom Kippur War" [referring to the Arab-Israeli war of 1973]. It turned out that the child's father left the family before he was born, but the child found himself a more prestigious explanation. It's just that the dates did not work out so well. The other incident was reported by a resident of Hertzlia, whose granddaughter, then three years old, attended a memorial ceremony on Memorial Day in her kindergarten. When she came home she asked her grandfather: "Grandfather, were you a soldier once?" He said that he was. "And did you fight in wars?" He said that he did. "And have you fallen?" The child was disappointed to hear the grandfather's negative reply.⁴⁵

2. *Soldiers in Israeli Schools*

There are two kinds of soldiers' presence in Israeli schools. One is that of former soldiers and officers, who take up teaching and especially managerial positions in the education system (often precisely because of their military credentials). The other kind is uniformed soldiers on duty, stationed in schools as part of the school staff.

Former Soldiers in the Education System

Due to the large number of Israelis who have served in the IDF it is no surprise that a large portion of the staff in Israeli schools is made up of persons who performed military service and often may still be in the active reserves. However, this effect is compounded in many cases where retired high-ranking career officers are 'parachuted' into the role of school principals, usually without any former experience in the educational system.⁴⁶ The reasoning behind this rather common trend, which seems to be endorsed by the Ministry of Education and the principals' selection board, is that being a military officer qualifies for any managerial position including that of school principal, and since military service is such a central educational goal for high school pupils, who could be better than a former officer to lead the way? These officers-to-principals do not leave their military service outside the school grounds, on the contrary they are expected to use their military experience both in managing the schools and in motivating children to serve in the military, even if their educational skills are more than lacking⁴⁷.

One of the extreme examples of this trend and its effects is the case of Rami Amitai, principal of the Galili High school in Kfar-Saba. In an article published in the *Ma'ariv* daily newspaper on June 4th 2003, Amitai is quoted as saying:

In our High school the children learn about a society different from the one they know from their parents' homes. [Here they get] To hear about Combat Legacy Stories which they would never have known otherwise, like the Entebbe Operation and the Lebanon War, to learn how to fire a weapon and participate in a study day on our right to the land of Israel.⁴⁸

Amitai has formed a "Galili Strike Force" in his school, a small group of select pupils who are given special training (navigation skills, weapons combat practice, visiting army bases, and the highlight of joining an army combat unit for part of its training) to help them fit in with strike force teams in the military once they are recruited. Amitai also makes sure that the Galili School maintains one of the most well developed Preparation for Military Service programmes (on which we will elaborate in chapter 3) of any high school. He makes it a habit for himself to carry a handgun when in school and plans to have the pupils sleep in tents on their next major school field trip, so that they could get a feel of the conditions in the army.

The presence of former soldiers, especially retired high-ranking officers, in the education system is considered by many in the Israeli society, including its government, to be a positive influence on children. While they are sometimes considered a bit too rough and formalist, they are also highly regarded individuals, precisely because of their military past. They are considered men of values, willing to take on difficult tasks for the greater good of society. The blurring of distinctions between the military and the rest of society means that the transition from the military system to the school system seems reasonable to most Israelis, especially when preparation for military service is considered one of the main goals of the educational system.

Soldiers on Duty in the Education System

One of the major principles in the creation of the IDF was that it was supposed to function as 'The People's Army', an army that drafts everyone and also serves society in various capacities, which may not necessarily be military-oriented. Over the years the IDF took on such tasks as building borderline agricultural settlements, absorbing immigrants and operating various educational programmes, such as a programme to help soldiers who did not finish high school obtain a matriculation certificate.

The IDF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Defence, has been operating almost since its inception two large-scale programmes aimed at school children: the Teacher-Soldier programme and the Youth-Guide programme. The Teacher-Soldier programme is a

large-scale programme for training soldiers to become teachers, most notably as Hebrew teachers for immigrant pupils, as Knowledge of the Land guides (teaching Geography, Botany, and guiding field trips) and as Arabic Teachers. These teachers are usually supposed to complement the civilian school staff but in many cases serve as ordinary teachers, even though they are not qualified to do so, usually because of a shortage of qualified teachers in many schools. Part of the emphasis in this programme is on promoting pupils in ways that would later benefit the army, for instance incorporating Arabic literates in the Intelligence Corps.

The Youth-Guide programme is another programme promoted in collaboration between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Defence and the IDF. Youth-Guides work on several projects, some work with children in underprivileged areas, some are responsible for the Youth Battalions trainings (see chapter 6) and some serve in schools as coordinators of the Preparation for Military Service programmes (chapter 3). Both the Teacher-Soldiers and the Youth-Guides are almost always under obligation to wear military uniform, adhere to the rules of the military and report to both their civilian and military superiors.

Ronen (Pseudonym) told us about his work as a Youth-Guide:

[Q: What if someone comes along and says he does not want to go to the military because he has to support his family?]

In that case you tell him [As a Youth-Guide] that the military can help him financially, it's obvious, it's clear that you're supposed to represent the army. It's very clever, because no one has to tell me [what to say], it's clear that I'm supposed to encourage the pupils to go to the army.⁴⁹

The presence of Teacher-Soldiers and Youth-Guides in schools is a regular presence. Children learn to view the soldiers as an integral part of the education system and often turn to these readily available representatives of the military to consult them regarding military service. The Teacher-Soldiers and Youth-Guides are official uniformed representatives of the army in the schools and are often treated as such, for instance when children have questions regarding military service. The Teacher-Soldiers and especially the Youth-Guides are committed by their position to promote military service and thereby serve as *de facto* recruiting officers inside the schools. The work of the Teacher-Soldiers and Youth-Guides who support the civil educational system enhances the conception of the military as a benevolent organisation working to promote society in general. It is however also feasible to argue that besides the foothold that the military gains through the presence of these educators/soldiers in schools, it also promotes its own self image as something other than just an organisation which deals with violence and wars. The presentation of the military as an educator again helps to blur the military's violent function, its necessary involvement in hostilities, in the eyes of Israeli society in general and school children in particular, making it seem more benevolent and serene.

Conclusion

The commonplace presence of soldiers, both former and present, in the education system is part of the blurring of distinctions between the military and civilian spheres. It is a major component of the militarisation of Israeli society, which makes enlistment seem both inevitable and desirable. The contribution of former and present soldiers to the education system is debatable. However, it is clear that they mostly serve the interests of the military inside the schools, among other things by making the army a major social agent in many areas which have little if anything to do with its basic military functions and overarching military goals. Perhaps the overwhelming reason for their presence in the education system has to do with the definition of enlistment as a major goal for the education system. When so much emphasis is put on schooling as a preparation for military service it seems only reasonable that military personnel will be a major part of the education system. We will now turn to reviewing the actual programme of Preparation for Military Service.

3. *Preparation for Military Service Programmes*

In the Jewish-Israeli society military service is considered to be a natural step in life, following kindergarten and school and leading towards gaining a profession and establishing a family.⁵⁰ It therefore seems quite natural to Israelis that high schools should prepare high school pupils for their next step in life – military service. Part of the preparation is performed by the many soldiers present in the education system (see chapter 2) and a major part is conducted through pedagogical programmes. The Ministry of Education, with the support of the IDF, has created several pedagogical programmes which aim to emphasize the importance of military service, give the children information regarding the IDF, prepare them physically and mentally for the service, and give them a chance to experience military-like situations first-hand. We will elaborate extensively on the issue of first-hand experience in chapter 6.

Pedagogical Programmes over the years

The importance of preparing high school children for military service was always evident in the minds of Israeli policy-makers but it took some time for these programmes to blossom to their current size. It is beyond the scope of this report to fully delve into the history of these programmes but we would like to give a taste of some past programmes. For example, in 1974, following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (the Yom-Kippur War), The Ministry of Education issued a teachers' guide written by Hannah Harel called "When a Nation Reports for Duty" on how to explain to school children the importance of enlistment during times of emergency.⁵¹ The purpose of the guide was:

We intend to explain in this guide how each of us fulfils his role during emergency times wherever he may be assigned by the state's high command. It should be made clear that each and every one of us is a part of an overall state endeavour, and any role we perform, visible or hidden, in the frontline or in the home front, helps attain our mutual goal.

The guide goes on to explain that:

The Entire people carry the burden of the war effort, and it is divided between those who wear the IDF uniform and the civilians who are not directly recruited by the IDF.

Therefore it should be understood that any civilian – even if he's not wearing a uniform, and *no matter what his age is* – carries the burden of the war effort. [Italics added]

The guide is intended to help the children understand the meaning of the State of Emergency but it carries a clear message that they themselves are required to support the war effort, either as future soldiers or as civilians.

The actual programme to prepare school children for military service was initiated in 1984 when the IDF and the Ministry of Defence published a guide called *Towards Service in the IDF*, a complete pedagogical programme written by Avi Luski.⁵² The guide details the important aspects which teachers should convey to their pupils: The privilege of serving in the IDF; how to adapt to the military and basic training; developing physical fitness in preparation for military service; the IDF as a positive force in society including its work with underprivileged groups and the equality of women; and preparing the parents for their children's service in the IDF. The programme also offered schools visits by military officers to elaborate on these topics but it made a point of having the school's teachers teach the classes themselves:

If we agree that the preparation for life must include preparation for military service, it will not be difficult to prove that the school is the appropriate framework to do so, and the teacher (especially he who served in the IDF) is the person with whom we should entrust this assignment

We should bear in mind that up until that time preparation for military service was a very common practice, especially through the Youth Battalions, but here we see how the programmes expanded to include schools as part of the ordinary curriculum.

The *Willingness to Serve and Readiness for the IDF* Programme

Over the years the programmes for preparing school children for military service expanded exponentially. The current pedagogical programme is called *Willingness to Serve and Readiness for the IDF*. It is a three-year *mandatory* programme designed to cover the entire high school period and relate to the objectives listed earlier, emphasizing the importance of military service and making practical preparations for it. The programme's goal is defined jointly by the Ministry of Education and the IDF as:

Preparing the entire youth population to service in the IDF, while strengthening their readiness and willingness to perform a substantial and contributing service, each to his abilities, and emphasizing the importance of serving in combat units.⁵³

In a report submitted to the Israeli parliament's Education and Culture Committee, the programme is described in detail:

The 'Willingness to Serve and Readiness for the IDF' programme is operated during homeroom hours, physical education classes and Field-Nation-Society classes, as well as during the annual field trip and in special experience frameworks such as experience training camps (Youth Battalions training week), study days, the 'Soldier for a Day' programme, meetings with military units and so on.⁵⁴

The programme itself includes various lessons and activities that aim to promote the programme's objectives, such as putting an emphasis on combat legacy stories on field trips, discussing the ethics of war during homeroom teachers' hours and getting to know the different units within the army. Special attention is given to two subjects in particular: expanded Arabic studies and physical education. The military is always in search of Arabic literate draftees who can serve in the intelligence corps. For example the Aleh High School for the Sciences in Lydda uses this line to promote its Arabic Programme:

An extensive part of the programme's activities such as: Youth Battalions Training for Orientalists, study days and seminars, is held by the Intelligence Corps to promote service in varied and important roles in the Intelligence Corps.⁵⁵

The Youth Battalions Training for Orientalists is for many the highlight of the expanded Arabic programme.⁵⁶ It consists of a 5-day course in a hostel to which 10th grade Arabic pupils arrive from all schools. The course is taught by Youth Battalions Soldiers and consists of lessons about the IDF's structure and especially the Intelligence Corps and lessons on the history and current status of Israeli society, especially regarding wars and terrorism. According to the pupils, the course is highly regimented, military-style. Thus, the very first things the pupils learn are how to receive their soldiers-instructors by standing to attention and how to march in parade.

The focus on physical education training is obviously to prepare the children for the hard physical demands of serving in a combat unit, even though only a small portion of them will actually do so. It is unclear how this consideration affects the physical education training itself but it seems clear that it is a part of the framing of the classes.

The "Soldier for a Day" programme is a programme where children are taken as part of the curricular programme to a military base, usually the major induction base near Tel Aviv (the *Bakum*) and hear a series of presentations by different army units regarding what jobs they offer to conscripts and who can apply. There they can also apply to participate in elite combat unit tryouts (see chapter 6).

The children we interviewed regarding these programmes tended to belittle their significance, either saying that military service was important to them in the first place and they did not learn much from these programmes or saying that military service is not that important to them and the programmes were no more than a bother. It is debatable just how much these programmes actually prepare children for military service but it seems quite clear that their mere existence turns the issue of recruitment into a major issue for high school children whether they like it or not. Whether or not these activities are effective, they constitute a large-scale programme of preparation for military service, making full use of the services provided by the education system.

Since these programmes are mandatory they are in effect forcing children to prepare for military service during their high school years. Taking into account the growing number of young Israelis who are not being conscripted, it is arguable that these programmes are aimed to encourage enlistment, rather than just prepare for it. In this context we may again cite the Kathmandu Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers, urging “to ensure that schools do not become sites for child recruitment” (Article 11).

Extracurricular Programmes Preparing for Military Service

In addition to the programmes operated by the State education system, there are several civilian projects working to prepare children for military service. One example is that of Preparation for Combat Fitness courses. We already mentioned the emphasis on combat fitness in physical education classes in schools but for many of those who want to join special combat units this preparation appears not to be enough. The solution for many is to join a private sector-run Combat Fitness Course, said to prepare the participants for the high fitness requirements of the special combat units' induction courses. The military spotted the need for these courses and decided to open its own programme under the Youth Battalions, called *Youth Battalions Special Forces Induction*. This course is run by the Ministry of Defence through the Youth Battalions and is operated by soldiers who are employed as physical fitness trainers. These courses, both the commercial ones and the one operated by the Youth Battalions, focus on physical fitness preparation for military service but include many military-style drills, including standing in formation and standing in attention and Commander-Soldier type relations between the instructors and the instructed. It is a rather common sight to see large groups of young men run about on the public beaches, in preparation for military service.

The *Follow Me* Programme

Another major programme designed to prepare children for military service is the ‘Follow Me’ programme (*Aharai*, the stereotypical army commanders’ cry). The Follow Me programme is a civilian initiative of the Youth Leads Change Association but is mostly run by high-ranking officers and works in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, with schools and with youth centres. The *Follow Me* programme targets youth in underprivileged areas, in the belief that ‘substantial’ military service will give the participants the social mobility to reach better starting points in later civilian life, thereby rescuing them from a life in lesser conditions. The programme itself resembles Youth Battalions training, with an emphasis on military discipline, physical fitness and weapons use as its main subject matters. The organisers define the programme as a preparation for life in society in general and not just for the military, but it is also quite clear that for them, the best way to prepare for life in society is through military service. Military service is also the subject of most if not all of the classes. In essence the *Follow Me* programme is a complimentary programme to the *Willingness to Serve and Readiness for the IDF Programme*, working where the schools and pupils cannot afford the full programme's experiences, which are deemed especially important for them because they come from impoverished environments.⁵⁷

While it is true that the *Follow Me* programme is a private initiative, at least formally, it is highly endorsed by the government's agencies. Trying to solve social and economic differences by promoting recruitment is very problematic. Thus, according to the Cape Town Principles:

In programmes for children, particular attention should be paid to those most at risk of recruitment: [...] economically and socially deprived children.

Even though the programme is voluntary, its emphasis on economically and socially deprived children is problematic to say the least. What the initiators of the programme see as a way to help these children is also a way for driving them deeper into the arms of the military. While it is commonly accepted that military service is a major instrument of social mobility and it is commonly argued that this and similar programmes are meant to help these children, it is hard for us as researchers to ignore the cynical side of this programme which teaches children to solve their social and economical problems through recruitment.

The Naale programme

Another group that The Cape Town Principles take special notice of is the group of children who are separated from or without families. The *Naale* Programme (a Hebrew acronym for Youth Immigrating Before Parents) is a programme run by the Ministry of Education, designed to promote immigration to Israel by having Jewish children from other countries come to Israel for the duration of their high school years and encouraging them to stay in Israel, become citizens and also encouraging their parents to eventually follow them here. As could be expected by now, military service takes up a large portion of the programme's attention. Military service is not described here in terms of an obligation, because these children are not formally citizens of Israel, and can choose to leave without serving in the IDF. Instead, it is presented as a major socializing framework for those who wish to stay and become citizens. Special attention is given to the benefits of military service for those who enlist, such as getting a driving license paid by the military (in exchange for serving as a driver), help with getting a high school diploma and a lot of help in being absorbed by Israeli society (for instance through the IDF's many Hebrew schools).

In an interview with Raanana (pseudonym), a former participant and guide in the *Naale* programme, she raised several interesting points:

At first there's hardly any mention of the military, neither to the children nor to their parents; the activities resemble a summer-camp more than high school. Then between the 10th and 11th grades most children go back to visit their parents for the summer holiday and realize they have very much drifted apart from their families, friends and former lives. When they come back, they usually have a big crisis, in which they realize that going back isn't a good option and they decide to stay in Israel, but only then do we start talking with them about military service and what they can get out of it.⁵⁸

It is difficult to ignore the cynical side of this tactic by the operators of the project, waiting for the children to feel trapped and only then explaining about what they will have to do to stay in Israel. It can also be argued that this is done so as not to burden the children all at once, but that still does not mean the operators of the programme have no ulterior motive in wanting them to stay and join the military. According to Raanana, one of the most annoying things regarding the programme and its relation to the military is what the military actually does with them as soldiers:

They encourage the participants to take the sorting tests for the military in their native language, usually Russian, even though many are quite fluent in Hebrew as well, saying it will be easier for them.⁵⁹ But the army has a policy that if you take the tests in a language other than Hebrew you're automatically put in a lower classification, which means that many of the programme's participants who join the army can only serve in menial jobs like drivers and cooks. The army is taking advantage of a population that doesn't understand the situation in order to put high-quality personnel in menial jobs to promote the prestige and level of execution on these jobs that nobody else wants instead of allowing them to serve to the best of their abilities.

Again we see that even though participation in the programme is voluntary, when discussing marginal groups there should be extra care not to take advantage of their situation, but in Israel on the contrary, recruitment is deemed as the solution for all problems and therefore these groups in particular are encouraged to enlist.

Conclusion

While the investment in the preparation of children for military service is intended to help the children face a tough stage in their lives, it also serves to help the army get better prepared and conditioned soldiers by grooming them at an earlier age. It is easy for the authorities, when presenting these programmes to the public, to ignore the part that deals with what the army gains and highlight the presumed benefits for the children. However, we feel that even if we are not discussing recruitment itself but only preparation for recruitment, and even when enlistment is compulsory and some of these programmes are not, it is still a clear infringement by the military on the lives of children, in many ways forcing them to deal with and prepare for military service long before they are actually called up for service. When dealing with marginal groups such as underprivileged children or immigrants

without their families, it would seem that special attention is required other than forwarding them all to military service as a solution for all their wants and needs. It also seems quite cynical to use those groups' disadvantage as a leverage to promote recruitment.

4. The Legal Status of 'Intended for Security Service'

Israel's Security Service Law of 1986 provides the legal framework for conscription and for recruitment in Israel. Article 1 of this law defines the term 'Intended for Security Service' thus:

An Israeli citizen or a permanent resident who has not yet reported for security service and who is one of these:

- (1) A man aged between seventeen and fifty-four;
- (2) A woman aged between seventeen and thirty-eight.

What this means is that *all* children in Israel aged 16½-17 and above (because of the peculiar instructions for calculating ages for the purposes of this law, listed in Article 2, a person is considered to be 17 years old when in fact she or he may be younger by up to half a year), have a status under the conscription law, and are formally obliged to follow some orders given by military personnel.⁶⁰

It might be objected that we are dwelling here on a trivial formalism. After all, a person Intended for Security Service is not a conscript or soldier, nor is she or he necessarily liable for conscription.⁶¹ But still, a person Intended for Security Service is not just a civilian either.

Article 44 of the Security Service Law authorises the military to obtain information about people Intended for Security Service. Those who head educational institutions have the duty to report to the military authorities, upon demand, about people Intended for Security Service that study in their institutions, and so do employers about their employees and hospital workers about people Intended for Security Service, who are hospitalised in their hospital. The information that may be thus obtained includes their names, addresses and other identifying details, as well as information about, respectively, the training they received in the educational institution, the amount of time they are employed and the nature of work they do with the employer, and detailed medical information about them from the hospital.⁶²

According to Article 43 of the Security Service Law, a person Intended for Security Service may not travel outside Israel without a permit from the Minister of Defence.⁶³ Until recently, any child in this status had in fact to ask for a military permit from her or his local conscription bureau before going abroad. Those exempted from military service could travel without a permit, but had to present their exemption papers at the border crossing instead. Lately, the actual policy in this sphere has become more lenient. Those exempted may travel freely. Others may also travel freely, but with some restrictions, namely, they may not stay outside Israel for more than three months, they may not study at any school of higher education while abroad, and they must return to Israel no later than four days before their conscription date or the date of any military call-up prior to conscription. Otherwise, a special military permit is again necessary in order to leave Israel or to prolong one's stay abroad.⁶⁴

Finally, those Intended for Security Service must, if and when called-up by the relevant military officials, report for registration (Article 3 of the Security Service Law), report for medical examinations (Article 5) and be vaccinated against various diseases (Article 9).⁶⁵

What happens in practice is that shortly after becoming Intended for Security Service, most Israeli children receive at their home addresses a warrant,⁶⁶ ordering them to report at their Regional Conscription Bureau, to what is known as the 'first call-up'. There they will first go through a process of 'data verification',⁶⁷ medical examination, an intelligence test⁶⁸ and, for all the men and some of the women, a personal interview.⁶⁹ The vaccination takes place later on – as part of the enlistment procedure itself.



"Orange – soldiers already since the first call-up".
Advertisement for the Partner Communication cellular company (fragment).

It should be noted that the Conscription Bureaus are military units, operated by soldiers and headed by military officers. In fact, the largest among the Conscription Bureaus is located inside the military compound in Tel-Hashomer, along with the central military Induction Base, the administrative headquarters of several military divisions and other military bases. Military doctors do the medical tests. The warrants ordering children to report at the Conscription Bureau are issued by the Head of Conscription Administration in the IDF – again, a military official.

If a child fails to report to the Conscription Bureau, a new warrant is sent with a new date for reporting. If the child fails to show up again, a third warrant is sent, this time explicitly warning the child that failure to show up will lead to police intervention. This, however, is a step not often taken. Article 12 of the Security Service Law authorises the army to enlist people who have not gone through the preliminary process, provided that they pass a medical examination on the enlistment day itself. Instead of sending the police, military authorities often prefer to send a special warrant based on this authority. Still, there were also cases in which the police did arrive.⁷⁰

Thus Lital (pseudonym) received a visit at her home one night in 1997, when she was 17 years old, and after she did not report at the Conscription Bureau despite repeated call-ups. The police came at roughly 3 a.m., waking up the entire family, but did not find Lital herself, hiding under her bed. She eventually reported at the Conscription Bureau at a later date.⁷¹

After the first call-up, the Intended for Security Service are often contacted by the military for various purposes. They are usually required to fill in a questionnaire listing their preferences as to the kind of job they are to have as conscripts, they may be ordered to report at the Conscription Bureau or at another military facility later on for additional medical tests, they may be invited to take various tests for determining their fitness for particular military units (some of these tests take the form of intense military training. See chapter 6), etc. As we saw, in some of these cases, the children would be legally obliged to report as ordered. In other cases they would not be so legally obliged, but information New Profile received from youths that had contacted it over the years indicates that the military would nevertheless usually insist that taking part in these procedures is mandatory. Often, the military authorities would threaten disobedient children with empty threats regarding various measures that will allegedly be taken against them if they fail to comply.

Now, it may be objected that in reviewing the legal status of Intended for Security Service we are going beyond the scope of the report. After all, those among the Israelis who are conscripted are only conscripted after they turn 18, and are no longer defined as children. Many things have to be done in preparation to conscription, and, in order for the system to function properly, these things have to be done well in advance. The status of Intended for Security Service merely provides the legal framework for conducting these preparations.

But the status of Intended for Security Service submits children to military authority. The preparations for conscription are conducted by the military, rather than by civilian State authorities. Thus, the status of Intended for Security Service expresses that same logic that we find behind military intervention in schools – if you are supposed to be a soldier when you turn 18, why not put you under the aegis of the military already in childhood? There is, we feel, an element of recruitment in treating a child as simply a soldier-to-be. One major difference between the treatment the State must afford a child and the treatment the State may afford an adult is that all actions by the State regarding its children are supposed to be guided by one and only concern – the welfare and best interest of the child. The bureaucratic and operational needs of the military may figure, if the State so chooses, as a consideration in its treatment of adults, but not of children.

Part II: Children in Military Functions

5. Military High Schools

In addition to the military presence in most ordinary schools, especially conspicuous in secondary schools, there are also a few military high schools in Israel. Some of these schools formally belong to the military, while others maintain a semi-formal link with it. These schools also differ on other parameters – the age range of the pupils, the kinds of activity of military nature that the pupils are required to participate in, etc.

In this chapter we present four brief case studies on military high schools in Israel, followed by an analysis of the main findings.

The *Mevo'ot Yam* high school

The *Mevo'ot Yam* (the name means 'sea entrance') high school is a boarding school located in the Michmoret village, on the Mediterranean coast. It has approximately 500 pupils. Pupils can apply to the school after finishing the 8th or the 9th grade, and those accepted enter the school at the beginning of the following school year.⁷² That is, they are normally aged between 13 and 15 when first entering the school.

The school's website has the following to say about the nature of its links with the Israeli Navy:

Mevo'ot Yam is not a military boarding school, but it has military characteristics: the pupils wear military uniform, morning parades and ceremonial parades are being conducted and preparations are made for the future incorporation of the pupils in the Navy. A representative of the Navy is in charge of the professional visits at Navy bases and vessels and assists in directing the graduates to the various [Navy] units, in accordance with the training they received in *Mevo'ot Yam*.

Our pupils' acquaintance with the Navy begins already in the course of their studies. They visit "Satil" and "Dabur" Navy vessels and join Navy sailings. They learn, already before their enlistment, about the missions they are expected to take part in when in the Navy. This is a unique advantage the school gives its graduates through its close connection with the Navy.⁷³

All pupils are required to wear a Navy uniform between 7 am and 4 pm every day. A shooting range is listed among the facilities located at the dormitories, and many pupils learn to use air rifles as an afternoon class. Attempts in the past to introduce training in using firearms to the school were blocked by the local municipal authorities.⁷⁴ According to the School Mission Statement, "*Mevo'ot Yam* considers the use of military characteristics to be part of the educational process and attributes great importance to military service in general and to service in the Navy in particular".⁷⁵

The Military Boarding School of Command

The A. Biram Military Boarding School of Command is located in Haifa. It produces roughly 40 graduates every year. Registration is possible for pupils studying in the 8th or 9th grade, but tests, preparatory courses etc. aside, pupils only actually join the school at the beginning of the 10th grade,⁷⁶ that is when most of them are 15 and some 14 years old.

Unlike *Mevo'ot Yam*, the Military Boarding School of Command officially belongs to the military. Career officers make up most of the staff. The official aim of the school is to train commanding officers for the army. Indeed, pupils enrolling at the Boarding School have a military career plan ready for them, extending well beyond graduation (up to age 26 at the least):

The Boarding School's graduates choose their stationing at the various military units and are intended to become Company Commanders. The career plan offered to the graduate includes quick promotion, financial benefits and academic studies for BA in the course of military service [...] [by the time you are 26] You have been a Company Commander in the military, you have a BA, you have purchased an apartment, you have settled financially, and now ... *your entire life lies ahead, and all the doors are open!*⁷⁷

Official enlistment awaits the graduates when they are 18, but in any less formalistic sense of the term, the pupils of the Boarding School are in effect soldiers from the moment they join it. All pupils are required to wear military uniform. They are trained in the use of firearms already in the preparatory course they are required to undertake in the summer before they enter the school.⁷⁸ Once they enter the school, each pupil receives a military rifle, as most soldiers would (the difference being that soldiers are required to carry their rifles with them even when on leave, while the pupils are not allowed to do so). These weapons are used “for security tasks, drills and training only”.⁷⁹ Half of all ordinary school vacations and holidays are taken by military training, including participation in official military courses.⁸⁰ Moreover, one of the conditions for enrolment at the Boarding School is that the candidates take the standard military medical tests at their local Conscription Bureau. Only those found to be fit for military service in combatant units may enrol.⁸¹ Interestingly, none of this seems to be provided for in Israeli law or government regulations, nor is the military rank of Cadet (which is the status of pupils at the Boarding School) mentioned in any law, regulation or military standing order.

The pupils of the Boarding School do most of their actual high school studies in the usual curricular subjects in the nearby *Reali* School – one of the most prestigious and well-known schools in Israel. The *Reali* School’s principal, incidentally, is a recently retired Brigadier General and a one-time graduate of the Military Boarding School.⁸²

The Air Force Technical Schools

A small network of high schools is operated by the Israeli Air Force, with the aim of training technicians for its own technical units. The central branch of the network is located near Haifa. The other three branches are located in Beer-Sheva, Tel-Aviv and Ma’ale Edomim (the largest Jewish settlement in the West Bank, not far from Jerusalem). The network’s website also lists 8 ordinary schools, where pupils majoring in mechanics or electricity: “Acquire an esteemed military vocation in the Air Force maintenance array. Studying for the vocation is incorporated into the ordinary curriculum, and includes making tours in Air Force bases and practical work, also concentrated in some of the school vacations”.⁸³

Pupils can apply to the school after finishing the 8th or the 9th grade, and those accepted enter the school at the beginning of the following school year. That is, they are normally aged between 13 and 15 when first entering the school.⁸⁴ Candidates for enrolment must present their school report cards for the 7th and 8th grades. This is the only mechanism used, indirectly, to verify age. It is possible for an even younger child to study with a class above her or his age group, but such cases are rare, and we are not aware of any cases where children younger than 13 enrolled.

The four technical schools officially belong to the military. The schools’ staff consists of career officers and soldiers, of civilians employed by the military and of a small number of conscripts. The schools themselves are defined as Air Force units, and at least in the case of the school in Beer-Sheva, which we visited personally, the school’s territory is a military base, guarded by armed soldiers, as any other military base would be. Candidates wishing to enrol at the central branch in Haifa should register at their local Conscription Bureau.⁸⁵ All pupils must be medically fit for service in the Israeli Air Force.⁸⁶

Like the pupils of the Military Boarding School of Command, the pupils of the IAF Technical schools are cadets. The status of Cadet is, in this case, defined in an agreement signed between the Israeli Air Force and the pupils’ parents. The pupils themselves receive a military certificate (a Cadet Certificate), resembling the certificate that conscripts and other soldiers carry with them. According to the website, “In the course of their studies, the cadets enjoy many privileges, as soldiers do: free use of public transportation, subsistence fee, uniform...”⁸⁷ The pupils are required to wear an Air Force uniform while in school and during school activities after school hours. Like the cadets of the Military Boarding School of Command, the cadets of the IAF Technical Schools enter on a course that extends beyond the school years, although not that far into the future. All cadets give commitments to serve in the relevant Air Force military units as conscripts after they graduate.⁸⁸

The cadets visit other Air Force bases and units as part of their school curriculum, but, to the best of our knowledge, they do not bear arms and are not trained in using light weapons.

The *Amal* High School in Ramat David

The *Amal* High School in Ramat David is located in the northern part of Israel. It “was established in 1984, as a vocational and educational complex by the Amal 1 school network, the Israeli Air Force and the Ministry of Labour, in the Air Force base in Ramat David”.⁸⁹ The Amal 1 network is one of the largest high school networks in Israel. This school is thus not a military school, but rather a joint project between the military and an ordinary civilian school network.

Pupils can apply to the school after finishing the 8th or the 9th grade. They have to pass entry exams, one of which is a standard IAF psychometric test.⁹⁰ Those accepted enter the school at the beginning of the following school year. That is, they are normally aged between 13 and 15 when first entering the school. Unlike the pupils in the other schools examined in this chapter, the pupils of this school are not required to wear military uniform (they do have a school t-shirt, which serves as school uniform).⁹¹

As mentioned above, the school is physically located inside a military base. This is a vocational high school, and all the fields in which pupils can major have to do with military aviation mechanics. In the 11th and 12th grades, pupils spend one day every week working as mechanics in the airbase. They are officially employed by the military, and are paid for their work. Thus Moshe (pseudonym), an 18-year-old pupil, working as an F16 fighter jet mechanic:

The theory I learn in school. It gives us explanations, and the practice we learn on that day that we go out to work ... I work for a salary, it's honest, in the 11th and the 12th grade you work, and then you get a salary, so that people would say that here you are working in exchange for something, not for free ... Yes, I must work there.⁹²

Like the pupils of the IAF Technical high schools, the pupils at Amal Ramat David make a commitment to serve in the Israeli Air Force after graduation. They may only relieve themselves of this obligation if they volunteer to join another combatant military unit. Thus Moshe:

It is only the Air Force; there is no other choice... I'm already registered in the Air Force... because we are in this school... I knew a long time ago that I would be obliged to go to the Air Force automatically, as soon as I got in (the school).⁹³

Conclusion

While formal enlistment in Israel may not take place, even for volunteers, before the soldier is 17 years old, and while conscription begins no earlier than age 18, the much younger pupils studying in the military high schools surveyed in this chapter are *de facto* recruited in many ways.

To begin with, in all the schools surveyed but one, the pupils are required to wear military uniform while in school. At least in the case of the IAF Technical schools, which are not boarding schools, the pupils also wear military uniform on their way to school and back. Military uniform has always been used as a means to distinguish combatants from civilians. By obliging the pupils to wear military uniform, these schools effectively identify children – some as young as 13 years of age – as combatants. This is inconsistent with the desire to take children out of the armed conflict in the area.

In all the schools surveyed, some form of military training is incorporated into the school curriculum. In all the schools pupils visit military bases and observe the soldiers' work. In all but one of the schools the pupils must major in a distinctly military subject. In all the schools, the pupils are expected to assume specific functions in the military after they graduate, and in all but one they are formally committed to this. School is seen as the first stage of a long-term commitment to the military. In the Military Boarding School of Command, the pupils even receive guns from the military, are trained and expected to use them, and go through full military training courses while in school. In Amal Ramat David, the pupils are actually required to take part, as paid workers, in the military effort itself. One may thus safely conclude that in all the schools surveyed the pupils quite clearly fall under the accepted definition for child soldiers.

Article 77, paragraph 2, of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions (adopted in 1977) clearly prohibits the recruitment of children less than 15 years of age. This prohibition was reiterated in Article 38, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Recruiting children younger than 15 is also considered an international criminal offence according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000) requires of the States Parties to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment above 15 (Article 3, paragraph 1), however, an exception is made for “schools operated by or under the control of the armed forces of the States Parties” (Article 3, paragraph 5). While the latter provision fails to protect children aged 15 and above from being thus recruited, it also emphasises that children joining such schools are considered to be recruited according to international legal standards. It therefore follows that the prohibition of recruitment for children younger than 15 years of age applies to the case of schools operated or controlled by the military.

In all the schools surveyed in this chapter, children are regularly being recruited before they reach age 15. The Military Boarding School of Command recruits most of its cadets at the age of 15, but those born between September and December would normally be recruited when they are 14. All the other schools normally recruit children aged 14, and those born in the autumn are normally recruited when they are 13. In principle, it is possible for even younger children to join these schools, if they advance in school beyond their age group. If Israel is to conform to international law on this subject, it must make sure that children do not join any of the schools controlled by the military before they are 15. Better still would be to stop the recruitment of children through these schools altogether.

Finally, it must be noted that in none of the schools surveyed is the recruitment forced or mandatory for anyone. Most ordinary high schools in Israel have a region or quarter, the residents of which are automatically enrolled to them, unless they choose otherwise. The schools surveyed, however, are all ‘extra-regional’, i.e. all pupils, or rather their parents or guardians, have to expressly volunteer in order to join them.⁹⁴

So how do the military schools attract volunteers? As some of the passages quoted above illustrate, the military backing allows these schools to offer pupils various financial benefits, sometimes very considerable ones, either while in school, or later on, when serving in the designated function in the army. Few civilian schools in Israel, if any, can offer anything so tangible to their pupils. But above all, it is the prestige and special status that all things military enjoy in the Israeli society that makes the military schools attractive to children and their parents. The websites of all the schools surveyed emphasise, rather than downplay, the links they have with the military, because these links in themselves make these schools attractive for many. The military schools can also rely on the indirect effects of the prestige the military enjoys. The ‘right’ kind of military service ‘opens doors’ in the Israeli job market, and in life in general (as the last emphasised words in the quote from the website of the Military Boarding School of Command brought above – “*your entire life lies ahead, and all the doors are open!*” – clearly insinuate).

In this case, as in many others, we conclude that stopping the recruitment of children in Israel necessarily also involves targeting the militarism prevalent in the Israeli society.

6. Military Training for Children

One of the forms of child recruitment, which we have presented in the definition we gave this term in the Introduction, is that of children’s participation in military training. In this chapter we would like to examine in detail two examples of such child recruitment. Most of the chapter will be devoted to the Youth Battalions Training Week – a week of military training integrated into the school curriculum in most Jewish-Israeli schools. Following that, we will briefly comment on another common occasion children have to undergo military training, this time as part of a process of registering to serve in elite combat units after conscription.

The Youth Battalions Training Week

As part of the Preparation for the IDF educational programme (see chapter 3), mandatory for Jewish-Israeli high schools, pupils go through a week of training in a military base, known as the Youth Battalions Training Week.⁹⁵ It is a week of military training aiming to create a simulation of army life, for children in the 11th or 12th grade, organised by the army together with the Ministry of Education.

An official document⁹⁶ states the aims and main features of this training week thus:

The aim of the experience training is to give the pupils the opportunity to personally experience a simulation of the military system with its variety of characteristics: military routine, a tight schedule, a system of commander-subordinate relations, functioning as an individual and as a team, etc. [...]

The main features of each training are the following:

- Reception, mobilisation process, opening talks, route-march, opening ceremony and closing ceremony;
- Training with M-16 rifles: acquaintance, loading and unloading, holding and shooting, aiming, preparation for shooting range and shooting;
- Field training lessons and field training practice at day and at night;
- Battle heritage lessons;
- Preparation for the IDF lessons: military ranks, discipline, adaptation, the commitment to substantial service, purity of arms, etc.

Although the Youth Battalions Training Week is officially part of an educational programme, we know of cases in which the children were told during the training that in case of a national emergency they would be recruited. Thus, Eldad Zion reports what he was told by an officer at the training base:

As soon as there would be a situation of war and there would be a shortage of manpower, youths that were in reserve, 11th and 12th graders that passed the Youth Battalions Training, will be recruited for work at the rear ... because they already have some kind of military training, they have been shown what is an army, so now they will go by the fast track and will be inserted into the army, into the system, if there are losses and if there is need.⁹⁷

Indeed, the Youth Battalions are part of the military, and took part in actual fighting in the relatively distant past. Thus, in 1948 the approximately 3,000 members of the Youth Battalions, aged 16-17, took part in battles in the Jerusalem area.⁹⁸

The high schools that include the Youth Battalions Training Week in their Preparation for the IDF curriculum (as most Jewish-Israeli schools do) make it obligatory for their pupils to attend this week of training.⁹⁹ Usually, teachers present the Youth Battalions Training Week to the children first. Then, one or more soldiers come to the school to explain about it. It is presented as obligatory, and there is no place for a child to decide for herself whether or not she wants to go. Thus Dafna, a 16½-year-old school student from Haifa who participated in the Youth Battalions Training Week in late 2003, explained:

It was a school duty. I had doubts whether to go or not and mom told me: "it is a duty. You are going"... [Had I not gone] my parents would have been mad at me. They simply told me to go because it's a duty.¹⁰⁰

Eldad explained how the Youth Battalions Training Week was presented in his school:

A week or two earlier they talked about the Youth Battalions and things like that. They asked to bring a note from the doctor that you are healthy; that you are fit to participate ... there wasn't really an option not to. It wasn't: "don't come if you don't want to", but rather: "you must participate".

The training week is known in the Israeli society as something every pupil must go through, and the children are aware of this obligation long before they get to high school. Usually there is only a single

way to avoid taking part in the training week, and that is to prove one has a medical problem preventing her from attending.

The children spend the training week in a military base, surrounded by soldiers. Their direct commanders are soldiers on duty, and so is the rest of the staff. There are also other soldiers on base, who may not belong to the Youth Battalions at all.¹⁰¹ While the children are in the base, they are also treated as soldiers on many levels. Eldad told us that he broke his finger on the first day. He was examined at night in the base by a military doctor, and was taken to a hospital by an officer stationed at the base, in a military car driven by a soldier. Together with him was another child who fainted and injured his chin.

During this week the girls and the boys are separated. They all get military uniforms immediately after their arrival, and must wear them in the course of all official activities, i.e. at all times, except when they are sleeping and in the free hour before that. Thus Inbal, aged 16½:

[We got uniforms] on the first day, on the first hour I think we were wearing a uniform

[Q: When were you wearing them?]

All the time, till we were green in the face. I even slept with it on because in the morning they didn't give us time to get ready.¹⁰²



11th grade pupils in the Carmel-Zvulun Regional School in the north of Israel on parade in the Youth Battalions Training Week. **Source:** <http://www.carmel-zvulun.com/energy/gadnapics/default2.htm>.

The time spent studying in classrooms at the base is mostly dedicated to theoretical lessons about weapons. The children learn how to use guns, practice holding them, learn safety rules, learn about various sorts of weapons, and about so-called 'purity of arms' (basic war ethics). All these studies lead up to the shooting range, that everyone takes part in near the end of the training week. Dafna told us about the range and about the feelings that she had at that time:

On the day before last we had a shooting range. They gave us a magazine and told us to shoot 10 bullets. Some had their magazine finished after 7 bullets; some continued to 15 bullets ... I had a very big dilemma whether to shoot or not to shoot. I didn't really need to know how to shoot because I was 16; there is no reason.

Eldad told about his experience in the shooting range:

In the shooting range on the day before last, all the girls and the boys in the class came and shot, 10 bullets each. I shot. I had a broken finger. I had a big bandage on my hand. I didn't shoot that well ... It was very strange for me [to be] in this situation. I was not comfortable in it. It seemed very strange to me, I thought about it, I'm 16 and a half, what am I doing in this system? I am a child and already they recruit me into the army? Give me my two years until I will be drafted. Already now you are forcing me to be a soldier? Being a soldier is bearing arms. The weapon, the uniform, obeying a commander.

Another subject of study during the training week is 'battle heritage'. In these lessons the children learn about important battles in the history of the State, heroic stories, war tactics and important military values. The children also learn about the army's structure and its different divisions.

As part of the combat training there are rout marches, with stretchers, guns and water tanks, a day of field combat training and night survival skills. In one of the activities all the children leave the base at night. They walk or run while their commander gives out orders that must be followed in case of an attack, such as lying on the ground, jumping to the sides of the road in a certain order, freezing, crawling and hiding. Before leaving, the children must take off their watches, jewellery or anything else that might make them visible 'on enemy territory'.

Every morning and every evening there is a parade, in which everyone must gather and salute the flag. The participants are often ordered to stand in parade or to run between one place and another. The children must keep to a schedule, and if they fail to do so, they must do their tasks again and again. In the base the children are responsible for cleaning the toilets, the showers, the kitchen, their rooms and the area around their rooms, as well as washing the dishes. The children we interviewed complained about difficult conditions. For example, they did not take showers because there were not enough showers and not enough time. They barely had time to sleep or get organised in the morning. The children complained they had no time for themselves, to do anything besides the military training.

In the course of the training, the children are divided into groups of about 20. Each group has a commander, which the children must obey at all times. The children should turn to the commander with any problem that comes up, but usually do not feel there is anyone to listen to them. The commander does not always take care of the problems that come up, and appoints a child to be responsible for some of the issues. Dafna:

There was a trainee on duty that she [the commander] appointed. Every day, I think, it was someone else. She couldn't take care individually of everybody, like making sure we sit at the same table, and in case there is any problem with the showers. [This trainee] was the link between the trainees and [the commander]. Things [the commander] wanted to tell the trainees she passed through her. Not orders, but for things that were timed, she would take the times, she would tell her whether [we] made it or not.

The commanders have the authority to punish children during this week. Usually the punishments are doing sit-ups, running around the base, cancellation of the free hour before bedtime or cleaning the toilets. Since the shooting range is conceived of as the week's trophy, the commanders often threaten children that they would not let them take part in it.

The children participating in this training week are not formally recruited into the military while in high school, but the Youth Battalions Training Week has many characteristics of mandatory recruitment. The children are obliged by their school, and through social pressure as well, to join the Youth Battalions Training Week, and are never presented with an option not to take part in it. They spend a week in a military base, experiencing soldiers' daily routine. They wear uniforms, extensively train in the use of firearms, train for combat fighting, obey their commanders and are even examined by regular military doctors if something happens to them. These children are in practice soldiers for a week.

We must also remember that this week is not an isolated event in the children's life. It is an integral part of a school curriculum focusing on enlistment, which itself is placed within a context of highly militarised education, and a highly militarised culture. There is no doubt that being obliged to take part in military training affects the children on many levels.

Especially in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict it is important to note again the Amman Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers, which in 2001 recommended the countries of the Middle East:

Ending military training programmes for children, which encourage the militarisation of society, aggressive attitudes and entrenchment of occupation (Article 15).

Let us also recall the specific recommendation made in Article 11 of the Kathmandu Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers – “to ensure ... that compulsory basic military training is not integrated into the curriculum”.

Last, but by no means least, we saw that children participating in the Youth Battalions Training Week are told that they would be formally enlisted in an emergency situation. We feel it is utterly unacceptable to even consider children as a personnel reserve for the military, emergency or not.

Elite Combat Unit Tryouts

As part of the IDF's classification tests, elite combat units¹⁰³ hold tryouts for candidates who wish to join one of these units. Participation in the tryouts is voluntary and is open for boys aged 16 or older,

who pass the minimum requirements (mostly in terms of physical health). The basic tryout training lasts for two days. Those who pass may then take part in tryouts that last up to 5 days. These tryouts are all conducted in a manner very similar to these units' basic training courses. The participants wear military uniforms. Some are given real rifles while others are given rifle-shaped cement blocks. The tests themselves revolve around mental durability and physical fitness and are considered very demanding and exhausting. At the end of the tryouts those who did not quit are assigned to the different units where they will start their training once they are enlisted.

As part of what the military refers to as a 'substantial service' a strong emphasis is put on serving in Elite Combat Units. These units are considered to be the cream of the crop, the units that offer the most thorough training programmes and are involved in the most exciting fighting activities. The pressure to get accepted to these units is very strong, and since only a handful actually get to serve in them, getting accepted to one of these units is considered a big honour among those who look for a 'substantial service' and leads to an aggressive competition for the few available spots. Schools usually allow their pupils to participate in several such tryouts, and miss quite a lot of school days during the year, because they consider this to be a cause worth promoting.¹⁰⁴ Thus, as in many other cases, the voluntary nature of participation in these military training sessions should be viewed with caution.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed cases of children's participation in military training. Although it lasts for a week at most, these training sessions involve all the characteristics of recruitment – the trainees wear military uniforms, become part of the military chain of command, carry and are trained in the use of arms and are subjected to other forms of specialised military training.

The excuse for all this is that it is done in preparation for formal conscription and military service at a later age, but it is a bad excuse. If the military authorities feel that some form of training is required in order to make soldiers better physically or psychologically adapted for the daily routine of military life, or that candidates for special units need to endure some special hardships to fit special demands, they can easily include all these elements in the regular training programme devised for soldiers. What we have here is one of many cases in which the Israeli military invades civilian territory, in which civilian authorities and organisations take on military tasks to suit military needs. While such practices are problematic in general, they are utterly unacceptable when children are involved, all the more so when they are actively recruited.

7. Military Use of Child Labour

In this chapter we will examine cases in which children work directly in the military, or in support of the military effort. In many cases, their work replaces the work of soldiers who would have done the same work otherwise. In general, we may distinguish between two different types of military use of child labour. Some children are sent to work in military bases on a regular basis as part of a special arrangement with their school. On top of that there are also cases in which child labour is exploited by the State in support of the war effort in times of emergency or special military need.

Child Labour on Military Bases

In chapter 5 we have already examined the case of the *Amal* School in Ramat David. This school, operated jointly by the Amal 1 school network, the Ministry of Labour and the Israeli Air Force, gives its pupils the vocational training needed for them to become military airplane mechanics after conscription. As part of this training all 11th and 12th grade pupils in the school are employed for one day a week in the airbase where the school is located. They are officially employed as trainees in the fields they are studying, and are paid for their work. Doing this work is obligatory for the pupils, but they are employed by the military as civilians, and do not wear military uniform. They are obviously recruited, at least as we understand that term in this report, since they take active part as employees in the ordinary work performed in an ordinary military facility for military purposes.

A different case, involving a different population, is that of the Shikmim special education school in Rishon Letzion, as recently reported by the daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*:

Some 20 of the school's 60 autistic pupils have been reporting once a week for work at the Ordinance Corps' base in Zerifin camp for the last two years. Dressed in army fatigues, the youth sort out uniforms for laundry, wash dishes and set tables in the dining room, clean vehicles in the auto shop, rake leaves or file documents.¹⁰⁵

These children are a part of an official military company; they have an officer in charge of them, wear uniforms, etc. They take over the work of other soldiers who serve in that base. While the children are not there to do the work, other soldiers must do it. The news feature also mentions that the initiative for this project came from the army. Indeed, we also know of other similar projects, involving children and adults suffering from various disorders, who “all wear an IDF uniform and perform essential tasks for the Force”.¹⁰⁶

These children are not only minors, and for that do not carry legal responsibility for their actions, and should not be recruited. In the case of autistic children, there is solid ground to assume that they have never been presented with all the information necessary for them to make the decision of joining the army part-time. Moreover, in most cases these children cannot fully comprehend the meaning of joining an armed force, and the ultimate purpose of what they are required to do. Apparently, they are also under a lot of social pressure to join in.¹⁰⁷ While the *Ha'aretz* news item cited above refers to these children as volunteers, it seems hardly possible for them to have given their free and informed consent to their recruitment.

Child Labour in Support of the War Effort

The Israeli law specifies that the Minister of Labour may order every civilian aged 15½ to 16 or above, in cases of national emergency, to perform ‘Labour Service’. The service is to be performed in ‘vital works’, which are defined, first and foremost, as ones that are used, or can be used, for “protecting the State or public security or for providing vital services to the population”, including the construction of shelters and fortifications. Once recruited, they will have to do any work required of them, as long as the order is in force.¹⁰⁸

While not in emergency times, every person liable for recruitment to such service may be called up for a few days of training. He or she must also show up for tests and provide personal information, should the minister of employment order him or her to do so. This law is very rarely put to practice, but during the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 (the Yom-Kippur War), school children were among the many civilians who were recruited according to this law.¹⁰⁹

Another example of children working with the army at times of emergency occurred in 1990, a few months before the outbreak of the 1991 Gulf War. The State of Israel decided to distribute gas masks to all its citizens. This was a very extensive action, which demanded a large number of workers. The army was responsible for preparing the population for war. Many high schools throughout the State of Israel sent their students to the distribution points, to work with the soldiers in distributing the masks. Their jobs varied from guiding and instructing the people who came what masks to take and how, to stamping certificates at the end of the process. They did not wear uniforms, or receive any special military training, but they did the work soldiers are supposed to do (and which only soldiers have performed since, including in the Gulf War of 2003), and actually replaced soldiers to make them available for performing other military functions.

Sergeiy Sandler distributed gas masks when he was 15, in the 10th grade, as did his whole year class:

[We distributed the masks] in an elementary school. By the way, it is interesting that the army took over an elementary school as a distributing centre, like it does every now and then on different occasions ... The school turned into something like an entire distribution compound. There were rooms we had to do different things in. I remember my job was to stamp forms when everyone had already got their masks ... I guess it was a Ministry of Defence stamp, I don't remember anymore what was written on it ... I think it was whole days ... I don't remember teachers being there but of course there was the whole staff who ran this thing, who

were mostly military people ... [Q: Were there soldiers?] Yes, yes, yes, of course. [Q: What was their job?] To run the place, the army did the whole distribution thing, and we helped them.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

In this chapter we reviewed several cases, representing a wider trend, of child labour being put to the use of the military or of the war effort in general. It seems to us obvious that whenever a child performs some functions that are by design part of the war effort, that child is thereby recruited. This is all the more so when that child works inside a military base or wears a military uniform in the process.

Article 3, paragraph 1, of the International Labour Organisation Minimum Age Convention (ILO 138) of 1973, which was ratified by Israel in 1979, states that:

The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18 years.

It is true that the nature of such employment is determined in the end by the State authorities themselves (see paragraphs 2 and 3 of the same Article), but there is a normative point made by this provision, that goes beyond the mere letter of the law. By employing children in works requiring them to spend time inside a military base, wear military uniform or actively and directly contribute to the country's war effort, the Israeli military and educational system risk depriving them of the protection that international law affords them as civilians. In this way, we feel, their safety is indeed jeopardised (and the same might be true of their morals, but that point we leave for a discussion of a more philosophical nature, lying outside the scope of this report).

The military use of children's labour in all these cases enjoys the cooperation of the State education system and is often given educational justification. Military work is presented many times as a school activity. But this is only a cover under which many children every year participate in military action of different sorts. As we could see, sometimes the children volunteer to work for the military. In many other cases they are not presented with all the information to make a rational choice or they are given an incomplete picture of the meaning of their work and of the military itself. In more extreme situations, like the case of the autistic children, we see children being recruited without being able to give their informed consent. They also have little power to resist such recruitment. In these cases we should seriously consider viewing the use of child labour by the military as a form of *forced* recruitment.

8. Children in the Civil Guard

The Israeli Civil Guard is a community-based organisation under the authority of the police. It was founded following Arab attacks on Israeli settlements in 1974 with the aim of mobilising people to provide security to their community from military attacks by Arab militias.¹¹¹ The Civil Guard today is responsible for patrolling small areas around communities and, among other things, helps in the prevention of attacks by Palestinian armed groups, as well as in stopping robberies and in drug control. It is active in many towns and neighbourhoods, as well as in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (The special situation of children volunteering to the Civil Guard in immediate conflict areas will be discussed in chapter 9). Fifteen percent of the volunteers in the Civil Guard are youths. Children may join the Civil Guard once they reach the 11th grade in school, and in a more restricted status, when they reach the 10th grade (that is when they are 15 or sometimes even slightly younger). Civil Guard volunteers come to high schools and children's social clubs to tell the children about their work, and to mobilise them to come and volunteer.¹¹²

After deciding to join the Civil Guard the youths must write down their own and their parents' personal details. They must also bring a photo of themselves, sign papers and have their parents sign a

statement that they do not object to their children joining the Guard. Then they will receive an official certificate saying they are assistants to the police. The Civil Guard website states that:

If there are no objections as to your recruitment, the Civil Guard Base Operator will inform you that you have been accepted to the Civil Guard. On this occasion, the Civil Guard Base Operator will inform you when you will be able to sign your 'pledge'. In this pledge you guarantee in writing that the information you have given about yourself is correct and that you are willing to assume the duties and the discipline required of a member of the Civil Guard in the Israeli Police Force. The pledge will be given in a ceremony. The Civil Guard Base Operator will inform you of the time at which this ceremony will take place¹¹³

Yotam, a 16½-year-old Civil Guard volunteer from Jerusalem, told us that his school works together with the Civil Guard to mobilise children to volunteer. The school gives extra credit in the yearly report card to those who volunteer in the civil guard (or those who volunteer in a limited number of other places the school works with). The school has staff working on the connection between the school, the Civil Guard and the children. These people organise and coordinate, as well as listen to the children and help them solve problems they run into in the course of their work in the Civil Guard. The theoretical training for the Civil Guard is done inside the school, and a bus from the school is sent to some of the practical training sites. The shifts the students do are in school hours and the school allows the children to miss school for this purpose. Yotam explained that about 10% of his class goes to the Civil Guard, and he wants to go again next year, mainly in order to receive the extra credit.¹¹⁴

Once they join the guard and reach the 11th grade, the children learn how to deal with a gun, how it is constructed and how to use it. They will have one practice session at a firing range, and after that will receive a gun and will carry it with them throughout each of their shifts. Moshe, aged 18 from Haifa, explains:

I get a weapon from them every time I go out [for a shift]. [I received a weapon for the first time] a week after I had the range practice ... I did shooting practice once, once so far ... it is under the auspices of the police. You shoot into a paper, shaped like a human being.¹¹⁵

Besides this training, the youth will learn about the duties of the police and the job of the young police assistant, how to operate a checkpoint (usually inside the State of Israel) and how to approach a 'suspicious object' (i.e. an object suspected as a bomb). The children will then be allowed, as members of the Guard and while on duty, to detain people and to search them. The volunteers go out on their shift with a Civil Guard vest that they must have on all the time, their guns, tear gas, handcuffs and a walkie-talkie.

Every child has an officer bearing responsibility for her or his functioning in the Civil Guard. The officer tells the children in advance the times of their shifts. Before every shift, the officer instructs the youths as to where and when to go, divides them into groups and between vehicles and gives additional orders in the course of the shift if necessary.

On most of their shifts, the children would be accompanied only by other young volunteers, or by soldiers who serve there. When they are in a vehicle, the driver is a person older than 18. When they don't have orders as to where to go, the children decide on their own and tell the driver where to take them.¹¹⁶

During the day, the children secure public transportation – search buses and bus stations for bombs or bombers – and help put up checkpoints. They guard educational institutions, open markets and parking lots.¹¹⁷

The young volunteers we interviewed told us about their actual day-to-day work. Rotem Cohen described what happens in case of an alert:

If there is a warning about a possible terrorist attack or something, we gather in the police headquarters, one person is giving us a lecture there, and [sends] every patrol vehicle to its zone ... about a month ago there was an alert about an attack in Haifa, that a terrorist from the Islamic Jihad got in from the Hadera area if I'm not mistaken. The head officer said we had to guard around dancing clubs

Moshe talks about routine activities:

Mostly we walk around, so there wouldn't be any disturbance of the peace, like [loud] music from some house ... [there are also] many junkies ... we search them ... detain them"

Rotem:

There are those who are doing 'genuine security'. It is in the stadium, doing tours and patrols to see that there are no suspicious people.

Moshe also told us about one time he had to chase a person who broke car mirrors and ran away from the police, and Rotem talked about a time he had to chase two stolen dune buggies on the beach.

Trying to get more concrete information, we ran into the problem – these kids are not willing to give out information about their activities. Moshe:

We may tell things to each other, but we must not take it out. It is like in the army – always be with your weapon, don't tell anyone outside. So it is the same with us. Don't tell people, only to those who are on the inside.

One of the more problematic programmes in the Civil Guard with regard to military activities is the Emergency Squad programme. The programme is described on the Civil Guard's website:

This squad operates on a neighbourhood level, but the squad members take the guns home and do not deposit them at the base, as is customary for volunteers in other duties. They are on stand-by and can be called for any emergency that requires an immediate deployment of a group of people, who can assist the police in organising the neighbourhood, blocking entries, use defensive measures in life threatening situations or whenever special deployment of the police is called for.¹¹⁸

The Emergency Squads then are units whose members take their guns home and carry them for much longer periods than usual. It is more than likely that in the event of an attack on a settlement the Emergency squad will be called upon to react and its members will probably be among the first in the line of fire, as is commonly the case with Emergency Squads of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These units usually consist of adults, preferably with combat experience, but since 2002 there is an ongoing project to create Emergency Squads consisting of high school pupils.

The Border Police¹¹⁹ along with the local council in the Sharon area has been operating a summer course for children since 2002. In June 2004 a hundred and sixty girls and boys, about 16 years old, attended a month-long summer course. They wore the Border Police uniforms, drove around in Border Police jeeps, and carried with them a lot of the equipment carried by soldiers serving in the Border Police, such as battle vests and guns. As part of the course they learned how to shoot a carbine rifle, how to put up a checkpoint, how to brake into a house and search for people and explosives.

The children volunteer for this course for the fun and the action, and also, as they claim, to protect their home. They do actual military and police work, and once the course is over, they are supposed to join the mission and guard the 'seam zone' (an area surrounding the Green Line, which is Israel's pre-1967 border) and their schools, as Civil Guard volunteers.¹²⁰ One such unit that we know of was established in the Ami Assaf High school in the Sharon area¹²¹.

The organiser of the course, Erez Shur, was decorated by the police this year, among other things for setting up this "unique youth unit".¹²² In the TV feature cited above he said that the unit needs the children, since in security work there is always a shortage of labour force. The children fill in duties of second and third rank.

The Civil Guard is part of Israel's police force, and not of the military. However, as we have already explained in the Introduction, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Israeli Police can clearly be considered one of the armed forces taking part in the conflict. Moreover, military functions are part and parcel of the mandate Israeli law gives to the police. The Police Order of 1971 has an entire section (Section 8) entitled "The Israeli Police Force in Military Functions". Article 92 (a) also states that "At times of war or emergency the Minister is entitled, if the government agrees, to declare

the Israeli Police Force or a part of it is a military force, which might be employed in military functions for the protection of the State”.

The young Civil Guard volunteers interviewed in this chapter take part in ordinary police work, but much of this work is connected with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (especially guarding against possible attacks by Palestinian armed groups). They also carry weapons, have identification certificates and, in the case of the Border Police summer course mentioned in the final part of the chapter, wear an authentic Border Police uniform (which is worn mostly by conscripts and resembles an army uniform more than a police uniform).

Part III: Involvement in Hostilities

9. *Children Guarding Jewish Settlements in the West Bank*

Within the Palestinian territories that were occupied in the 1967 war, there are many Jewish settlements. Some of the settlements are populated with Jews adhering to a radical ideology, who find it important to live in those areas since they believe all the land belongs to the Jewish state and nation. Other settlers are people who live there because the government located them there (mostly immigrants) or because they were looking for cheap housing in a beautiful area. Many of these settlements suffer from the bad relationships between the Jewish settlers and their Palestinian neighbours. In past years these settlements, together with the State, founded local organisations to take care of the security work around the settlement. We found that in many of the settlements children 15-18 years old volunteer to these guarding organisations.

Gal (pseudonym) lived in many settlements as he was growing up. He explained that in the settlements where there is a high level of security risk, all children are entreated to practice the use of arms as early as possible. The army and the State train young settlers in using weapons and in guarding settlements from the age of 16 on. Different courses are held in the settlements to train the children how to protect their community. The settlements that have more security problems start training the children independently a year earlier, when they are 15.¹²³

Yishai Gesundheit of the Alon Shvut settlement was active in the guarding of his settlement since he was about 17:

In the spring of 2002 an announcement happened to reach me, inviting everybody interested in “preventing the next terrorist attack” to join the Civil Guard as a youth volunteer. Well, after a process of many long months in which we were trained using weapons in theory, and then shot at a firing range with a carbine rifle, we got a police certificate that meant we joined the ranks of the police, or to be more precise, of the Civil Guard.¹²⁴

The children work in different fields guarding the settlement. Some of them work in the operations room, or do office work in the police headquarters, while most of the work is done outside and around the settlement. The children go in pairs and do patrol and protection activities around the settlement. They carry arms, and most of the time they are accompanied only by other youngsters. Yishai explained about the activities he took part in:

The first time we ‘did something’, was at the Independence Day ceremony in Alon Shvut that we secured. Afterwards, often but not too frequently, we patrolled on a bicycle and did security work.

All of these activities are done voluntarily by the youths in the settlements. No one is physically forcing the youngsters to take part in guarding and fighting. But still, there is huge social pressure to help take care of the settlement’s security. About half of the population in many settlements is under 18 years old, and they are a critical mass for securing the community. So by the time these children reach high school they have already been educated as to how important it is to live in the conflict area and protect that land. They believe the best thing they can do is to hold a gun and protect their land and community. Thus Yishai:

I consider military activity to be completely voluntary and so do my peers ... none of us had the existential need to carry a gun. We all did our part out of necessity and due consideration.

In addition to the official security organisations, there are children involved in various violent incidents. As far as we could find out, it seems most of these children are not organised in any paramilitary movement or organisation. In some of the settlements, many of the children grow up believing they must banish the Palestinians, and act on a daily basis in accordance with the way they were taught. There is an atmosphere of violence towards Palestinians, soldiers, members of the police and peace activists. So it is a matter of daily routine for some children to go out of the settlements into Palestinian towns and villages, and harass Palestinians on the streets, beat them up, break into houses and stores and destroy them. Many times the children would also attack Israeli soldiers. Yehuda Shaul,¹²⁵ who was a soldier and a military commander in many parts of the West Bank, told us

children attacked him and his comrades, mostly in Hebron and while evacuating outposts. In Hebron, for example, there is a very delicate *status quo* between the parties. After something happens that disrupts the *status quo*, the settler youths go out to the streets and start attacking soldiers and police in order to get to the Palestinians, throwing rocks and blocks at them.

Apart from the spontaneous violent activities and forms of recruitment practiced on the individual settlement level, there are also some initiatives at organising on a wider basis. Thus, in the past few years, in many settlements in the Gaza Strip, in the northern part of the West Bank and in the Hebron area, there are summer camps held for children aged 16 and older. In these camps the children learn how to avoid checkpoints, how to cut wire fences, and how to withstand an ISA investigation. According to a press report, this year, the general aim of these summer camps is to train the children and prepare them for fighting actions to evacuate settlers and remove outposts.¹²⁶

The Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been established in violation of Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention, prohibiting the transfer of an occupying power's civilian population into an occupied territory. The settlements are also the focus of constant friction in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as their establishment, expansion and ongoing security are normally used as a pretext for the Israeli government and military authorities to gnaw at the resources, especially the land resources, available to the Palestinians. All this by no means legitimates attacks on civilians living in those settlements. But armed guards securing a settlement are not in the same position as armed guards in a town or village on non-occupied territory. The former, though not necessarily the latter, are clearly combatants involved in hostilities. We see little difference between training and assigning a child to do work as an armed guard in a settlement on one hand and training and assigning a child to become a regular soldier at the front in wartime on the other. The formalities of whether one officially belongs to the army or not are hardly relevant.

We found no evidence of forced recruitment into any of the frameworks, not to mention the spontaneous activities, discussed in this chapter. These children volunteer to do all the activities they take part in – as armed guards or as attackers. But we should also consider the social background to this volunteerism. These children are brought up in a hostile and violent environment in the middle of a confrontation area. Many of them are taught to believe that the land in conflict belongs to them and that it is their responsibility to protect it. They are taught to see the Palestinians as enemies and fight them. So, when these children join armed organisations, or take part in spontaneous violent activities, they may not be acting out of fully rational choice and intent. Rather, the environment in which they grow up, along with the huge social pressure to take part in the armed or violent action, in a way imposes these choices on them. Children are much more easily influenced and are less able to fully consider and grasp all the considerations involved than are adults.

For exactly these reasons it is a crime according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to other international legal standards mentioned in the Introduction, to recruit children under the age of 15 and mobilise them to take part in violent actions. The Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict requires raising this minimum age, for anything other than voluntary recruitment to the country's armed forces, to 18. Most children in the settlements are not officially mobilised into an armed group or force before they are 15, but many of them are definitely pressured into taking an active part in this multifaceted conflict already as younger children.

10. Child Soldiers in Jewish Militias – The Case of Kahane Chai

While, as we have seen in the previous chapter, there are many cases of spontaneous violence directed by settler children against Palestinians, there are also organised armed Jewish militias actively involved in hostilities in the region. In this chapter we would like to focus our attention on one such militia, probably the one among them that has been involved in hostilities the most – *Kahane Chai*.

Politically, *Kahane Chai* is a very extreme rightwing movement, which is active mainly, but not exclusively, in the settlements in the areas occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (the Six-Day War). It is an extreme group that split from the *Kach* movement – a once extreme rightwing political party established and headed by Rabbi Meir David Kahane – soon after Kahane was assassinated in 1990.¹²⁷ Among its goals are forming a Jewish State from the Euphrates to the Nile, deporting all non-Jews from this territory, and getting all Jews to settle in it. In the shorter term, its goals are stated as protecting Jewish lives, purifying the Jewish people, protecting Jewish racial purity, guarding settlements and forming new ones.¹²⁸

Both *Kach* and *Kahane Chai* were declared illegal terrorist organisations by the State of Israel in 1994¹²⁹ and have since been operating as underground groupings. Gathering information about these groups is no easy task. It is important to emphasize that we found only one source who was active with *Kahane Chai*. Although we tried to corroborate as much of the information provided by this source as we could with external sources, much of the information we obtained came from one person, and should therefore be viewed with some caution. Our source, Gal (pseudonym), is today 20, and was active with *Kahane Chai* when he was 12-16 years old, between the years 1996 and 2000.

According to Gal, children are accepted into the ranks of the organisation from the age of 10, after going through a special procedure. Once members, they start a 3-year training course (see below). The young members of the organisation belong to ‘leading cells’ numbering 3-5 children, studying in the same class in school. The cell members are responsible for mobilising their classmates. Once accepted as such leaders, their status among their peers changes completely. When they are in the 8th grade (i.e. might be 12½ to 14½ years old) they are already considered ‘responsible persons’. As such they are sent on their own to a religious boarding school in which there is no *Kahane Chai* cell operating yet, and are in charge of founding one. Children often move from one school to another as part of the organisation’s requirements for compartmentalisation and specialisation.

Children are not forced to join the *Kahane Chai* movement. In fact, many children want to join it but are not accepted. They stay on the margins of the organisation and only absorb its values and follow the active members of the movement. Gal told us about his childhood in Qiriat Arba (a Jewish settlement near Hebron, known to be one of the most fanatic):

I arrived at Qiriat Arba at the age of 10. For 2 years I was in the political wing, not in the organisation itself. I only took part in different things they asked [to do], I was part of the herd led by the activists.

Gal explains that school education in a number of settlements is based on the values and goals of the *Kahane Chai* movement. Children grow up longing to be accepted as members:

[In school] they are supposed to teach Zionism and things like that, but during the breaks they explain that Zionism is nonsense, it is a subversive anti-Jewish ideology, and that the real ideology is [that of] Rabbi Meir [Kahane].

In order to enter the organisation one must be recruited by one of the young members (who might be about 13 years old). He invites children for a personal interview, after which the cell members will decide whether this child should be recruited or not. Whenever they decide to recruit a child, the child would be taken in a cunning way (“let’s go for a hike”, “I want to show you something...”) to an isolated place. Gal explains what happens there:

[In] this isolated place, a few people, usually adults, come around you. They sit you down. They explain to you that they are talking about a serious matter, and if you ever mention the fact that you met these people your life and your family’s life will not be all that good. Then they ask you general questions about your political opinions ... they say: “Ok. Listen, we see you have a big potential to be a *Kahane Chai* activist and lead the Jewish revolution. Do you want to join in? It is self-discipline; discipline towards your friends; discipline towards the idea; great self sacrifice. You might die. You might be locked up in prison. You might be kidnapped. A thousand and one

things may happen". Any child in Qiriat Arba who is offered this thing, there is no doubt what his answer will be. It is a dream to be offered [that].

Afterwards there is a pledge ceremony. The children swear on a gun and a bible, to be loyal to the movement's rules, to follow the Jewish law, the law of Meir Kahane, and to be a devoted Jew. At the end, the child's thumb is cut and burned.

All new recruits go through a 3-year course, which they can join from the age of 10. In the course they learn about the ideology of the movement, and acquire practical fighting skills.

Among the skills the children learn are how to follow a person, how to escape people tracing you, how to tap on a phone and avoid being tapped, create coding and decoding systems. They learn how to manage an organisation cell and how to create an armed cell. They learn how to receive and send messages to the leadership. Additional skills learned are managing operations, putting up checkpoints in order to prevent the passage for Palestinians, laying bombs, forging documents, maintaining secrecy about attacks, organising a 'spontaneous' lynch or beating, behaviour under investigation and in prison, secret methods for writing from prison and manipulating polygraph tests. Another important thing the children learn, according to Gal, is what to do to an ethnically mixed couple: they should follow and harass them in order to split them up and protect the purity of the Jewish race.

At the course the children also learn how to use different weapons – primitive weapons like stones, catapults, guns, gathering materials for a bomb and making explosives, as well as setting cars on fire.

Usually between the ages of 13 and 15 the children must pass one or more loyalty test. Generally the tests involve doing something illegal such as stealing, or inserting laxatives into candies and giving them to young Palestinian children to cause them diarrhoea. The most common test is lighting up a car. Gal:

The final test is going alone to an Arab neighbourhood, in Hebron. They give you a license number, a picture of the car. You must set it on fire.

Another kind of loyalty test involves a staged secret police investigation. A few people would kidnap the child, tie him up in a dark room and threaten him. The child is always convinced this is a true investigation.

Once in the organisation, the children practice total discipline and do everything their superior tells them to do. The children take part in many regular activities, and there are also special duties for them. Children are used as spies to follow different people, like heads of city councils, activists of different organisations or international peace volunteers. The goal is to prepare attacks. Children are hardly ever suspected of anything and it is easier for them to sneak through army defence lines. Gal told us about a week he spent in a Mission House with another young member of the organisation, dressed as Russian Orthodox Christians pretending to be school children. They followed the movements of one of the missionaries and reported to their officers every day.

Children are also used to threaten people, like reporters or leftwing activists. Because the secret police does not know them yet, does not recognize their voices or keep their fingerprints, they can threaten people by mail using letters cut from a newspaper, or make phone threats using a voice mixer.

Gal told us about times in Hebron when he went with other children active in *Kahane Chai* and kidnapped little Palestinian girls. About ten of them would go into the Palestinian neighbourhoods in the middle of the night and kidnap a girl. They would hold her for about 3 days, in order to frighten her family, and then send her back.

Members of the movement would enter Palestinian villages for revenge, and as a way to maintain the *status quo* in the Hebron area. To the question whether he ever entered Palestinian villages Gal answered:

Yes, of course, many times. [Entering] Palestinian villages is one of the most important things to get into ... to clarify important things about life: who is allowed [to approach] the spring, who is allowed to wash in the spring. Where are the horses you

stole? You stole a car; we'll cut your electricity. You stole a sheep; we take back the water. You killed someone, then we go in and do concentrated shooting inside the village.

The children throw torches into Palestinian houses and set them on fire. They set fire to cars, and put bombs under cars. Turn over market stalls and draw the Star of David on them, as well as on the faces of Palestinians. Pee in wells, torture Palestinian children until they cry, and stone vehicles and Palestinian neighbourhoods.

We queried human rights groups¹³⁰ about these activities, and received confirmation that in Hebron there have been cases of setting fire to Palestinian cars and houses, and destruction of buildings. Bassam Eid of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group also told us that there have been unconfirmed rumours about the kidnapping of little Palestinian girls.

Yehuda Shaul served as a soldier and a commander in Hebron during the *Al Aqsa Intifada*. He told us of many incidents in which Palestinian property was set on fire, Palestinian stores and buildings were broken into and destroyed and Palestinians were beaten by young settlers.

Kahane Chai was also reported in the Israeli press to have organised summer camps in the settlements for children. Itamar Ben-Gvir, one of the leaders of the movement in Jerusalem, told a reporter from *Tel-Aviv Newspaper* in July 2001:

We have 5 camp sessions. In the first, which took place this week, there were 30 participants ... We ask children under 16 who want to take part in the camp to bring a permission note from their parents ... [the cost] includes meals, lectures, ideological lessons and assemblies. There is also a route march with stretchers.¹³¹

Loyalty to the organisation is one of the most important things in *Kahane Chai*. They are very strict about this issue from a very young age. If a member is caught working as a secret police agent, an expulsion ceremony takes place. His house would be burned and his life would be threatened. Gal describes the hardest moments for him as a child in the *Kahane Chai* organisation:

The hardest thing was when we found a spy [for the secret police] who was a friend of ours. He was 17 years old. We were his friends ... Then comes a guy from the movement and says: "listen, there is a ruling, we have to put so and so in the hospital". The treason is the most problematic thing ... the older guys went and beat him up, and we cut different things, veins in his hands, made burns on his cheeks ... the intensity of the anger at a really close friend who all of the sudden turns out to be someone from the other side ... it is really, really, really a problem.

As we explained at the beginning of this chapter, most of the findings come from a single source. Our own impression is that this source is reliable, and we were able to indirectly corroborate some of the information we got from him with external sources, but nevertheless, there is room for caution and further investigation into our findings here is required. Still, if indeed the information we obtained is correct, the findings regarding *Kahane Chai* are especially alarming. This militia has been systematically recruiting child soldiers, some as young as 10, for many years. It regularly sends children as young as 13 to perform hostilities and attack civilians. Moreover, these practices date back at least to the mid-1990s, that is long before the *Al Aqsa Intifada* began. This indicates highly developed political organisation and military initiative; the ability to shape political events, rather than just follow them.

Our findings in this chapter are limited to the *Kahane Chai* militia, but it is highly plausible that other militias, such as *Kach*, exhibit similar activity patterns. While it is quite obvious that the Israeli State authorities are aware, at least to a considerable extent, of the fact that child soldiers are regularly used by these outlawed militias, we are not aware of any effort by the State to specifically address the issue of child recruitment by them, not to mention any effort for the demobilisation, rehabilitation and integration of these child soldiers into civilian society.

11. The Use of Palestinian Children for Military Purposes

It lies within the scope of this report to examine cases in which children have been recruited by Israeli armed forces or groups. Naturally, so far we have looked into cases in which the recruited children were themselves Israeli. However, there are also cases, quite different in nature from those discussed so far, in which Israeli armed forces recruit Palestinian children. In this last chapter, we would like to review briefly some such cases, based on the relatively little amount of information we have been able to obtain. This subject falls also within the scope of the research conducted by our Palestinian colleagues from Defence for Children International – Palestine, who have analysed it in much greater detail. We happily direct readers interested in more information on the phenomena involved to their parallel report.

The chapter will comment on two ways in which Palestinian children are recruited by Israeli armed forces. One is the use of Palestinian children as collaborators, which was also at the focus of the DCI – Palestine report. Here we limit ourselves to very cursory remarks, adding some context and emphasis to the information contained in the parallel report. The other is the use of Palestinian children as human shields for Israeli soldiers and Border Police personnel.

Palestinian Children as Collaborators

One of the most concerning aspects of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the high level of children's involvement, both as victims of the violence and as recruited soldiers and agents. One of the more active parties in this regard is the ISA (Israel Security Authority), Israel's interior security agency, responsible, among other things, for getting intelligence from the Palestinian Occupied Territories. One of the main tactics that the ISA uses to get information is recruiting Palestinian Informants, better known as Collaborators, and using them as field agents.

The subject of collaborators is very sensitive to all parties involved and it is very hard to get concrete information on the matter: the ISA is not willing to disclose information regarding its activities and in the Palestinian society collaborators are considered traitors worthy of death. In light of that, we are extremely impressed with the report by our colleagues from DCI – Palestine on the use of Palestinian children as soldiers, which includes a detailed account of this phenomenon. The report details the process used to recruit Palestinian children and brings an unusually large number of case studies. The report also brings a survey conducted by the researchers according to which 63% of children detained by Israeli security forces were asked or pressured to work as ISA collaborators.

Israel has a long history of using local collaborators to get its way. A historical if rather recent example is the case of South Lebanon. Following the 1982 invasion and eventual retreat from Lebanon, Israel continued to occupy a large part of South Lebanon and formed the SLA (South Lebanon Army) to help it fight against Lebanese resistance groups. The SLA was an army comprised of Lebanese citizens and worked under the direct supervision of the IDF and the ISA. The SLA routinely recruited Lebanese children by force, some of them as young as 12.¹³² The ISA also used children recruited by the SLA as collaborators, having them gather information and perform different tasks that the ISA required. The fact that Israel controlled the area and controlled the SLA means that it is responsible for these cases of forced recruitment.

The Use of Torture on Palestinian Children as a Recruitment Method

One of the issues arising from the case studies in the report produced by DCI – Palestine is the use of torture as part of the ISA's tactic for recruiting child collaborators. One such case is the case of Raed from Gaza. Raed states:

I was arrested on 12 January 2004, while I was crossing the Green Line into Israel to seek work ... In seconds, I found myself surrounded by Israeli soldiers who arrested me. I was detained for two months. I was under investigation for ten days, for nearly five hours daily. I was beaten, tortured, threatened, cuffed and sworn at. During interrogation, I lost my strength day by day. After ten days, I was surprised by the good treatment from the investigators. They took off my handcuffs and the investigator started to talk to me in a gentle way. He told me that they know about my family's bad economic situation and they are going to help me. Then he said that he only wants me to help them in return.¹³³

Raed then ends his statement by telling how he was finally recruited using sexual extortion. DCI – Palestine's report includes several accounts of Palestinian children who were tortured as a means to weaken their resistance to a proposal of collaboration. Reports by several other Human Rights organisations, confirm that although Israel has stopped using some of its former methods for torturing Palestinians, torture is still commonly used and children are not afforded preferential treatment. Methods of torture still in use include beatings, painful shackling and detention in inhuman conditions, e.g. deprivation of sleep, exposure to extreme heat and cold and to continuous artificial light.¹³⁴ The clinching factor usually includes some form of long-term pressure, for example issuing a work permit or sexually blackmailing the detainee into collaborating, but surely the torturing serves to weaken whatever power one may have to resist this potentially life-endangering offer.

The Israeli human rights group *B'tselem* has also documented cases dating from the first months of the *Al Aqsa Intifada* (October 2000 to January 2001) of Palestinian children aged 14-17 being tortured by members of the Israeli police, among other things in order to obtain information about actions by other youths (although no mention was made in this report of attempts to recruit them for long-term collaboration).¹³⁵

The use of torture against anyone is a crime against humanity, as stated in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998). It seems that using torture on children is an extremely heinous crime, especially when the purpose of the torture is to force that child to serve an occupying state's security system against the interests of his or her own people.

Palestinian Children Used as Human Shields

One of the disturbing developments in the tactics used by the Israeli military in the course of the *El-Aqsa Intifada* was the use of Palestinians as human shields by the IDF. In some cases soldiers would hide behind a Palestinian as they walk through the streets or go into a house. In other cases they would have a randomly picked Palestinian move a package which they suspect as containing a bomb away from them so they would not have to wait for a bomb squad or have to risk themselves.

Children too are not immune to being used as human shields by the IDF. In a petition to stop the use of Palestinians as human shields submitted in 2002 by *Adalah: The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel* and six other human rights organisations to the Israeli High Court of Justice,¹³⁶ we find descriptions of two cases in which children were used as human shields. In one case soldiers got hold of a Palestinian man and his 14-year-old son and hid behind their backs on their balcony while engaging in a shootout with Palestinian combatants. The second case is that of a 12-year-old Palestinian who was held at gunpoint and forced to open all the doors of his house while the soldiers searched the house. A third case is described in detail in a 2002 report by Human Rights Watch.¹³⁷ A 14-year-old child by the name of Yusuf A. was taken by soldiers and forced to go into three houses, where they suspected Palestinian combatants were staying.

A slightly different case occurred during a demonstration against the Separation Wall in the Palestinian town of Biddo near Jerusalem on 15 April 2004, when Border Police soldiers used as a human shield a 13-year-old boy:



Around noon, following the launch of sound bombs and teargas canisters by the soldiers, some nearby youth started

13-year old Muhammad Badwan from the Palestinian town Biddo near Jerusalem tied to a Border Police jeep to serve as human shield against stone throwing. 15 April 2004. **Source:** IMC Israel (http://israel.indymedia.org/zope/channels/imc_open_hebrew/111).

throwing stones. At this point, two Israeli Border Guards arrested Mohammed, beat him and forced him to sit on the hood of their jeep, tying his arm to the windshield screen and then using him as a human shield. Attempts by Mohammed's father and others to obtain the child's release only resulted in further threats by the soldiers who dispersed them at gunpoint. Moreover, Rabbi Arik Ascherman, who heads the organisation Rabbis for Human Rights, was present and tried to intervene for the release of the child but was instead arrested and beaten.¹³⁸

The boy remained tied to the armoured front window of the Border Police jeep for 4 hours, and then was detained and interrogated until the evening of that day.

Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have the status of Protected Persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, according to UN Security Council resolution 1325,¹³⁹ extra care should be taken to protect women and children in areas of war. These cases show that the IDF is doing quite the opposite – placing Palestinian children in the line of fire, using them as live shields and forcing them to perform tasks endangering their lives – to suit the operational needs of the Israeli forces.

Conclusion

The issues discussed in this chapter all relate to the forced recruitment or exploitation of children as part of a military campaign against their people. In most cases there seems to be indifference to the possibility of harm being caused to the Palestinian children who are being used as collaborators or human shields. The use of torture to pressure Palestinian children to serve as ISA informants seems particularly heinous and should be examined more thoroughly.

Summary of Main Findings and Recommendations

In this chapter we shall briefly review the main findings of the report and make our recommendations to the Israeli authorities as to these findings. However, before we begin, we find it is important to emphasise three points:

First, the report often cites international conventions and other legal standards. Many of these standards have been especially set up with the aim of protecting children in situations of conflict and war. The need to observe the provisions of international law does not wither away at times of war or national emergency. Quite on the contrary, it is especially important for protecting ourselves and our children at times of violent strife. The child recruitment phenomena surveyed in this report endanger the well-being of children here and now. If, out of disregard for international law, we also disregard these dangers, we will thereby betray the responsibility we have as a society for the well-being of our children.

Secondly, this report deals with the recruitment of children by the State of Israel, its several armed forces and the armed organisations and militias made up of its (Jewish) citizens. Another report, written by the Palestine section of Defence for Children International, deals with phenomena of child recruitment in the Palestinian society. This parallel report is due to be published in the coming days. Our report does not examine child recruitment by Palestinian groups, nor does it examine the ways in which children on both sides have been affected directly as victims by the hostilities. All this is not the result of some bias on our part, but rather of our desire to remain focused on the subject at hand. In particular, it was not our purpose to encourage the making of mutual accusations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides. We rather wanted each side to focus on the responsibility of its own society for what takes place within it and for effecting change from within.

Finally, before moving to the findings themselves, we would like to make clear once again that there is more to recruitment than formal enlistment. In this report we used a broad definition of child recruitment. Let us repeat the main features of this definition:

- A child is any person younger than 18 years of age.
- Children can be recruited into an armed force or group by being identified as members of that group, e.g. through wearing its uniform, even if they are not members of it in some formal sense.
- Alternatively, children can be recruited by undergoing some sort of training aimed specifically to prepare them for functions they will assume within an armed force or group.
- Children will also be considered recruited into an armed force or group when they perform some function within that force or group, whether or not they are formally members of it.

Let us now move on to review the main findings and recommendations of the report.

First of all, we would like to welcome the fact that, at least in issues concerning formal conscription and recruitment, it seems that the State of Israel now makes a greater effort than before to adhere to recognised international standards. In 2002 Israel made a significant step in this direction when it amended its Security Service Law so that people are now formally conscripted only after they reach the age of 18. We recommend Israel to continue going along that path by abolishing all forms of recruitment, voluntary recruitment included, for children less than 18 years of age.

This commitment for the protection of children from formal recruitment should also be reflected in international commitments Israel would assume. For example, Israel has already signed the 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. It is also recommended that Israel will ratify this Protocol, stating 18 as the minimum age for recruitment of any kind.

However, as we already said, not all forms of recruitment are formal, and in matters pertaining to informal recruitment, the situation in Israel is very far from satisfactory.

Children in Israel take part in securing settlements, mostly as volunteers in the Civil Guard. Many children are recruited into the Civil Guard already at the age of 15. The educational system often encourages children to become part of the armed security array, and in at least one case a school has designated staff to coordinate activities with the Civil Guard and gives pupils extra credit in their report cards for volunteering. Children train in a shooting range and may receive a gun within days from joining the Civil Guard (this, by the way, seems to contradict the written orders on that issue), or, if they joined at a younger age, they may receive a gun once they reach the 11th grade in school. They conduct patrols, in most cases without adults to accompany them; they have extensive authority in dealing with the civilian population and are also doing security work when there are specific alerts about a possible terror attack.

This becomes even more problematic when the security work is done by residents of West Bank Jewish settlements in their communities. Here the children are used as armed guards in settlements, which are at the very focus of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and are constantly under threat. What is the difference in status between an armed child-volunteer of the Civil Guard securing a settlement and an armed conscript securing some nearby military facility (or indeed the same settlement)? These children are not formally members of the military and do not wear military uniform, but this does not alter the fact that they perform a clearly military function when they are 16 or 17 years old. The use of children to secure settlements, especially where their safety is tangibly at risk, is immoral. Moreover, children's judgement is often easy to influence. A firearm is a responsibility that should not be entrusted to them. These children should be immediately withdrawn from armed forces of all kinds.

Military high schools, found in many places in Israel, commit their pupils to a military lifestyle and daily routine. The pupils wear military uniform, carry military identification papers, undergo military training, most of them practice in a shooting range and some are obliged at times to bear arms. These children are not sent to the battlefield, but they are identified as soldiers, if not for any other reason than the fact that they wear uniform. Military uniform is meant to distinguish combatants from civilians and those identified as combatants may often become legitimate targets for attack at times of war. A State that chooses to dress children up in authentic military uniform acts irresponsibly and simply gambles on the children's safety.

Moreover, military high schools recruit pupils before they reach age 15. In some cases a pupil would first wear military uniform at age 13. These pupils' adherence to a military way of life and the tasks they are required to perform indicate that they are recruited *de facto*, even if not formally so. Recruiting children younger than 15 years of age in any manner whatsoever explicitly contradicts Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is considered an international crime under the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The recruitment of children less than 15 years of age to military high schools and boarding schools should be terminated at once. This is a flagrant violation of the law. But even when older than 15, the pupils are nevertheless recruited children. We recommend discontinuing the practices identifying the pupils as soldiers – to stop dressing them in military uniform, to stop giving them weapons, etc. The Ministry of Education and other government authorities should stop encouraging children to join these frameworks. In fact, the best thing would be simply to close these schools down, thus avoiding this form of child recruitment altogether. The military can easily supply its own need of specially qualified soldiers by training adult soldiers.

Israeli children may take part in military training within several frameworks. Some of these are voluntary, while others are incorporated into the school curriculum and considered to be school duties. In all these training frameworks the children must wear military uniform. In all of them the children bear arms and/or practice shooting, as well as other forms of military or combat training. In all these frameworks the children spend time living in military conditions, compelled to follow orders by their commanders, who are all soldiers. Children in the 11th and 12th grade are sent as part of many schools' mandatory curriculum to a military base for a week of training in preparation for military service (this is the so-called Youth Battalions Training Week). Schools make it mandatory for pupils to attend this training week. In some of the cases we know of the children were told by their military

commanders that the training they undergo will allow the military to call them up prematurely for military service in the rear in case of military emergency.

Other situations in which children undergo military training include tryouts for children wishing to join elite combat units as conscripts, and various local and private initiatives. An example of the latter is a summer course operated by the Border Police in a district of the Sharon region, intended for 16-year-old children. In this course the pupils learned much of the military work performed by soldiers in the Border Police. After finishing the course, the children perform, as Civil Guard volunteers, security work in the so-called seam-zone (i.e. in the vicinity of the Green Line, separating the State of Israel from the West Bank). In all the forms of military training discussed, the children become *de facto* soldiers for at least a few days.

The State of Israel would suffer no security damage if the military were to sort out and train its soldiers only once they have reached majority and officially joined its ranks, rather than recruiting children to conduct such training. We call upon the IDF and the State of Israel, first and foremost to stop immediately compelling children to join such military training programmes. It will also be an important change for the better if the all forms of military training for children are abolished.

The Israeli military makes use of the work of high school pupils, especially as maintenance workers. Some high schools working with the military send their pupils to military bases to do practical work as part of their vocational training in school, but in fact these pupils also become cheap labour force to be used by the military. In the military base these children perform military tasks, and in at least one case we know of, are paid for their work by the military. They are officially employed by the military; they belong to the military system and work to support it. At least in some of the cases, their school vocational training is in fact a form of military training as well, because they acquire a distinctly military vocation, rather than a civilian one.

Especially outrageous is the case, documented in a recent newspaper feature (and it is by no means an isolated case), where the military makes use of the labour of children suffering from autism. These children are sent by their special education school to work inside a military base, where they mainly perform simple maintenance jobs dressed in military uniform. Although formally the autistic children do not go through a process of enlistment, they perform a military function, and do the work that would otherwise be performed by ordinary conscripts. Autistic children have a very faint idea of the nature of the organisation that they serve or its aims. In fact, we can quite safely assume that they have never been consulted and given the opportunity to contemplate the various meanings of their involvement in military work. These children cannot be said to have rationally decided to work for the military, nor can they seriously resist being sent to work in a military base, and thus it would hardly be appropriate to say they work there voluntarily.

The children sent to work in military facilities usually belong to disadvantaged groups in society. The military is perceived in this context as a factor fostering social mobility, but in fact, having these children move around boxes in a military base is simply exploiting them. We believe that all forms of child labour inside the army should stop, whatever the nature of their work. Schools wishing to train their pupils in technical vocations should do so within a civilian framework, where children's work is not exploited for the ultimate goal of combat action. On top of that, civilian social mechanisms should be available for empowering disadvantaged social groups. Attempts to create social mobility through military service should be stopped. This is a purpose no army was ever made to serve, nor can it serve it, nor does it in fact foster social mobility.

There is a law in Israel – the Emergency Labour Service Law – according to which every person aged 16, or even 15½, and above has the duty to be recruited for works in support of the war effort if so ordered by those given the legal authority to give such orders. It already happened in the past that children were called upon to work in service of the fighting nation, whether under the provisions set out in this law or not. Such mobilisation was ordered during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (the Yom Kippur War), and again in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War, when children were sent to distribute gas masks to the population in distribution centres operated by the military. These cases indicate that children, at least from a certain age on, are viewed by some decision-making bodies in Israel as a labour force reserve that might be put at the disposal of the military. To the best of our knowledge, the

Emergency Labour Service Law has not been enforced on children for many years now. Raising the minimum age for recruitment under this law, or alternatively the cancellation of the law itself, can be a symbolic but worthy action.

Militarised education in Israel starts already in kindergarten, and reveals itself in a wide variety of phenomena. We have focused on the phenomenon of symbolic recruitment – the way children are made to feel that they too have the duty to take part in the war effort. We examined the effects of the relatively high level of presence of soldiers in the education system, as well as of the mandatory curricular programmes in preparation for military service, operated by the Ministry of Education, the IDF and the Ministry of Defence in high schools, and have dwelled on the legal issues arising from the unique or almost unique status that the Israeli law gives children – the status of Intended for Security Service.

In our view, the education system is so committed to the promotion of recruitment to military service that it never takes time to consider the possible benefits and the possible harm that such a vast investment of educational resources in this subject might cause the children. We believe the emphasis on military service in the education system should be reconsidered and significantly reduced, if not totally abolished. The heavy engagement of the education system in the military subject is mostly aimed at recruiting pupils' minds at an age when motivation to serve in the army often gives way to motivation for attaining the varied possibilities offered by civilian life. This engagement seems exaggerated at an age when many children in Israel, about half of them, eventually do not enlist. We maintain that the various educational programmes for preparation to military service operated in high schools express the education system's commitment to provide the military with high-quality and highly motivated labour force. The essential commitment the education system has to the welfare of its pupils – one that should have guided its functioning at all times – is often set aside in favour of the requirements of the military system.

We have been able to obtain concrete information regarding the recruitment of children into armed Jewish militias only in the case of *Kahane Chai*, although it is likely that the situation is not much different in other militias. On the other hand, most of our information regarding *Kahane Chai* comes from a single source (whom we judge to be reliable), and thus the validity of our findings should be viewed with the necessary caution. According to the information we have obtained, *Kahane Chai*, an outlawed extreme rightwing movement, has been recruiting to its ranks children from the age of 10. These children perform special functions in the organisation, as they are not known to the Secret Service and to the police. On top of that, these children take part in the organisation's regular activities, including hostilities against Palestinians. They are also in charge of setting up additional cells for the organisation. The children take a 3-year course where they are trained in making bombs, using various weapons, spying, forging papers, etc. While on this training course and at its end the children must pass various initiation ceremonies and loyalty tests. While the children volunteer to join the ranks of *Kahane Chai*, one must bear in mind the level of awareness and independent thinking most children in their early teens are capable of. In effect, these children are being exploited by *Kahane Chai* in the most sinister manner. This militia pulls children so young into the realm of hostilities, and there they are likely to remain for many years to come.

We find it quite unbelievable that the information we have been able to obtain about *Kahane Chai* while preparing this report would be new to the relevant State authorities. On the other hand, we are aware of no serious effort by these authorities or other factors to take care of the problem of child recruitment by this militia, or to annihilate the factors motivating children to recruit, not to mention efforts to demobilise, rehabilitate and reintegrate these child soldiers back into the civilian society. This lack of action speaks for itself. Our recommendation to State authorities on this issue is to commence a massive preventive effort in order to stop, or at first at least to significantly reduce the phenomenon of child recruitment by these Jewish militias, and to act for the rehabilitation of those recruited in the past.

In addition to the children taking part in the actions of organised militias, there are also children in many Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza involved in hostile and violent actions against Palestinians, against Israeli soldiers and police and against peace activists. Most of these activities are

probably not organised by any group or body. These are children of various ages initiating smaller and greater attacks. Sometimes these are spontaneous attacks against passers-by, while on other occasions the activities are organised in advance, as in the cases of the struggles over the evacuation of outposts or of violently rampaging Palestinian villages. On the face of it, we do not have here a case of these children being recruited into some organisation, but we also think the phenomenon of children independently organising to act violently and aggressively within the overall context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a serious problem that should concern us as well. One should bear in mind that these children's behaviour and decisions are strongly influenced by the militant environment in which they grew up and by the education they received from their elders. In many of their communities there is significant pressure to take part in activities aiming to dispossess or harm Palestinians, and the children are very much affected by this pressure, to the point that they decide to act accordingly. On top of this, there are also cases of military-type activity for settler youths organised from above. An example could be the summer courses held in many settlements, training children aged 16 or older in how to resist the evacuation of outposts by the military. These children learn how to cut fences, avoid roadblocks and withstand interrogation by the secret police.

Finally, it was also within our mandate for this report to examine cases in which Palestinian children are recruited or forced to serve military purposes by Israeli armed forces or groups.

The IDF forces Palestinian children to serve its operational needs during combat action in the territories where it is the occupying power since 1967. These children are the most vulnerable group, which the IDF is committed to protect under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Instead of protecting these children, the army uses them as human shields when fighting on urban terrain, as well as in the course of demonstrations. The army also uses Palestinian children to perform potentially dangerous tasks, such as entering buildings that are suspected to be trapped, before sending its own soldiers in. All these are examples of the way the IDF forcefully exploits for its own needs Palestinian children – the group that is the most vulnerable, and therefore also the most easy to exploit.

One last issue mentioned in our report was the use that the Israel Security Authority makes of Palestinian children as collaborators, forced to act against their own communities and put in danger of being killed by Palestinian militants if caught. The issue was covered in the parallel report prepared by our Palestinian colleagues of DCI – Palestine, and we had very little to add to the findings of their extraordinarily extensive research on the matter. We emphasised, and provided additional evidence originating from other human rights organisations specialising in this field to support this claim, that among the documented methods that the ISA used to recruit children as collaborators were forms of torture. This, we feel, is particularly heinous. The State of Israel must stop these practices immediately, and install powerful mechanisms that would prevent them from ever being used in the future.

There is no possible justification for exploiting the children of an occupied people for the operational needs of the occupying force. The State of Israel, we should recall, has a responsibility to protect Palestinian children just as it has a responsibility to protect its own. We should make a special effort to keep the children on both sides out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Using them for military purposes while jeopardising their lives only attains the opposite goal. As was wisely remarked in the Cape Town Principles:

To reduce volunteerism into opposing armed forces, avoid harassment of or attacks on children, their homes and families

Above all, let us recall, that, in the words of Desmond Tutu, “There is simply no excuse, no acceptable argument for arming children”.¹⁴⁰ Child recruitment is a crime, whatever excuses and justifications are given to support it. All forms of child recruitment must stop.

Endnotes

- ¹ See http://www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Al_Aqsa_Fatalities.asp.
- ² Thus, an Israeli sharpshooter reported in an interview for the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* that according to the orders he received, it was legitimate under some circumstances to shoot children as young as 12. See Hass, Amira, "Don't Shoot Till You Can See They're Over the Age of 12", *Ha'aretz*, 12 November 2000.

Hebrew terms and titles in this report will generally appear in English translation. The Hebrew version of this report contains the original references.
- ³ In his brief Preface to Brett, Rachel and McCallin, Margaret (1998), *Children: The Invisible Soldiers*, Rädda Barnen, Sweden, p. 7.
- ⁴ As already mentioned, recruitment of children by Palestinian armed groups falls outside the scope of our report, and is taken up by the parallel report from DCI-Palestine.
- ⁵ The data published by *B'tselem* (http://www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Al_Aqsa_Fatalities.asp) mention that 32 of the Palestinians killed in the Al-Aqsa Intifada, three of them children, were killed by Jewish civilians. In many of the cases these civilians are in fact members of such Jewish militias.
- ⁶ *Cape Town Annotated Principles and Best Practice on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa*, adopted by the participants in the Symposium on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa, organised by UNICEF in cooperation with the NGO Sub-group of the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Cape Town, 30 April 1997. This document shall be referred to henceforth as 'The Cape Town Principles'.
- ⁷ For further details, see the report of the Orr Committee, set up by the Israeli government to investigate these events. The report is available online at http://or.barak.net.il/inside_index.htm.
- ⁸ See e.g. information presented on the *B'tselem* website <http://www.btselem.org/english/torture>.
- ⁹ Several incidents of such nature in the Hebron area were documented by the Christian Peacemakers Team in Hebron, and can be found on their website, <http://www.cpt.org>.
- ¹⁰ See High Court of Justice case 2056/04, paragraph 23.
- ¹¹ See: Defense for Children International – Israel Section, *A Mixed Bag: Lawmaking to Promote Children's Rights, Ongoing Discrimination, and Many Serious Violations*, Prepared for the Pre-sessional Working Group UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – 31st Session, April 2002, pp. 219-220. Available online at: http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.31/IsraelCoal_ngo_report.pdf.
- ¹² *Ibid.* DCI-Israel expresses in this context the concern that the young volunteers might be in danger of being attacked on the way to their training bases and back, if these bases are located in the Occupied Territories.
- ¹³ For brevity's sake, we are presenting here a rather complex situation very simplistically. Thus, people who quietly avoid conscription are often allowed to do so with relative ease, although this too depends on many factors, not least among which is the personal position on this issue of the individual military officials one is facing. On the other hand, people who make a public act of refusal to serve in the military (most notably conscientious objectors) are treated very roughly and often imprisoned (especially in the case of men refusing to enlist as conscripts). Still, overall numbers talk.
- ¹⁴ The latest information about conscription data (for 2002/3) was made public recently by the retiring Deputy Chief of Staff, Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. See: Marsiano, Ilan and Grinberg, Hannan, "The Deputy Chief of Staff: Many Girls are not Enlisting Due to 'Lack of Challenge'", *Ynet*, 13 July 2004, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-2946559,00.html>. For an analysis of the somewhat misleading statistical data presented by the military authorities on various occasions, estimating the actual figures, see <http://www.newprofile.org/showdata.asp?pid=416>.
- ¹⁵ For a succinct review of the history of military organisations in the Zionist movement see Pa'il, Me'ir (2003), *From Hashomer to the Israel Defence Forces - Armed Jewish Defence in Palestine*, available online at <http://www.israel.org/mfa/go.asp?MFAH027z0> and also Levy, Yagil (2003) *Another Army for Israel*, Tel-Aviv: Yedioth Aharonoth.

- ¹⁶ Ben-Eliezer, Uri (1998), *The Making of Israeli Militarism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 22-23.
- ¹⁷ See Rivlin, Gershon (ed.) (1992), *Olive Leaves and Sword*, Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defence, p. 139.
- ¹⁸ Israelis are well aware that conscription is mandatory and still mainly refer to it in terms more related to voluntary service such as ‘contribution’ and ‘sacrifice for the greater good’. Another factor to mention in this respect is that elite combat units in the army (see chapter 6) are voluntary, in the sense that one has to volunteer to serve specifically in these units.
- ¹⁹ See Dromi, Uri, "The Youth Battalions Saved Jerusalem", *Ha'Aretz Books Supplement*, 5 May 2004.
- ²⁰ Ostfeld, Zahava (1994), *An Army is Born – Main Stages in the building of the Army Under the Leadership of David Ben-Gurion*, Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defence.
- ²¹ Bar-Gil, Shlomo (1995), *The Youth Aliya: Its Policy and Activity in Rehabilitating and Absorbing the Holocaust Refugees 1945-1955*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University, pp. 247-248.
- ²² The academic *locus classicus* for discussing militarism in Israeli society is Kimmerling, Baruch (1993), “Militarism in Israeli Society”, *Theoria U’Bikoret*, 4, pp. 123-141. See also: Lomsky-Feder, Edna and Ben-Ari, Eyal (eds.) (1999), *The military and militarism in Israeli society*, Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- ²³ See the Ministry of Finance website: <http://www.mof.gov.il/budget2004/t-226.pdf>.
- ²⁴ See Efrati, Danielle, “We Are All Subjects of the Army”, *Ha'aretz*, 20 April 2003.
- ²⁵ “19 Tsevet Members and Approximately One-and-a-Half Million Residents”, *Tsevet – The Journal of IDF Career Service Pensioners*, No. 67 (December 2003 – January 2004). We are grateful to Eddie Saar for bringing this item to our attention.
- ²⁶ See Meron, Hannan, “And the Term of Service Goes On”, *Kol Ha-Negev*, 15 April 2004.
- ²⁷ A case in point is the exploitation by the military of autistic children’s labour, discussed in chapter 7.
- ²⁸ The Israeli educational system is generally divided into four so-called ‘streams’: the State Education Stream, serving mainly the secular Jewish population, the Religious State Education Stream, serving mainly the religiously-observant Jewish population, the Religious Education Stream, serving mainly the ultra-orthodox Jewish population, and the Arab Education Stream, serving mainly the Palestinian ethnic minority in Israel. Here, and throughout the report, we address the situation in the State Education Stream, which is by far the largest of the four, and most of our observations hold true all the more so for the Religious State Education Stream. The situation is, however, significantly different in the Religious and the Arab Education Streams, especially because these Streams serve population groups that are not conscripted. In the absence of evidence to suggest a phenomenon of child recruitment exists in these communities, we decided to leave them generally outside the scope of the report.
- ²⁹ See also Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights.
- ³⁰ This common practice was specifically mentioned as a militarising factor in: Haramat, Gal, “‘They Appeared to Me to Be Charming People, Those Who Were Killed’ or Young People’s Stories on Experiences of Education and the Military”, paper delivered at the conference: *Militarism and Education: A Critical Perspective*, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 29-31 May 2001.
- ³¹ Ibid. New Profile activist Ruth Hiller reports (also in a lecture delivered together with Debby Birenbaum, Vered Shomron and Razia Meron at the conference *Militarism and Education: A Critical Perspective*, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 29-31 May 2001, titled “Parents’ Activity against Militarism in Their Children’s Schools”) successfully intervening in summer 1999 to change a three-year plan in her son’s school to conduct all field trips to former battlegrounds, under the title: “Following Israel’s Wars”. Her son was 12 years old at the time. The plan was initiated by the teacher in charge of geography studies in the school – a retired military officer turned teacher.
- ³² Although different textbooks may differ quite sharply on this parameter. Thus, Galia Zalmanson Levi (“Teaching the Book of Joshua and Conquest or: Homage to George Tamarin”, paper delivered at the conference: *Militarism and Education: A Critical Perspective*, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 29-31 May 2001) analysed two different textbooks for the 4th grade on the Book of Joshua, where Joshua’s army was

- repeatedly identified with the IDF, and the atrocities (at least by modern standards) reported in the biblical narrative were condoned. On the other hand, another recent study (Perlstein, M., Ben Giat, R. and Ohad-Karni, Y., *Examination of Israeli Textbooks In Elementary Schools of The State Educational System*, Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), April 2004) examined a different textbook, and found no identification made between the Book of Joshua and present-day military conquests. In this textbook, pupils are in fact encouraged to view the biblical narrative critically. One-sidedness in history textbooks seems to be a more uniform feature. Here, the IPCRI study mentioned above is basically in agreement with the findings of Esther Yogev, "History Textbooks and Curricula – Between the Demands of Heritage and the Horizons of History", paper delivered at the conference: *Militarism and Education: A Critical Perspective*, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 29-31 May 2001.
- ³³ Korach-Segev, Dalia, Tal, Lea and Alon, Emanuel, *On The Tip of the Tongue 4*, Modan Publishers, 1989. We are grateful to Shani Werner for bringing this example to our attention.
- ³⁴ <http://www.yoter.co.il/>
- ³⁵ <http://www.libi-fund.org.il/index.html>
- ³⁶ <http://glz.msn.co.il/glz/news/nachon/062BB49E2D9F43958D5DFACF5264B681.htm>
- ³⁷ Here are links to a few reports on such initiatives posted on the Internet – by the Ministry of Education (http://207.232.9.131/merkaz/archion_yton13.htm; http://207.232.9.131/tel-aviv/ta_toda_end_2.htm), by municipalities (<http://www.mycity.co.il/main/ramat-gan/article.asp?id=1233>; http://merom.kibbutz.org.il/data_public1/GeneralPublic/moaza-dalia.htm), by schools (<http://www.rothberg.org.il/tikva.htm>; http://ramat-aviv-gimel.tlv.k12.il/projects/pro_hitnad.html) and by school or municipal student and youth councils (http://mail.edu-negev.gov.il/shlomytp/sites/bialik/moetzet_talmidim.htm; http://www.geocities.com/carmelsea_2000/hevra/moatza.htm; http://dev.asaf.kfar-olami.org.il/pedagogical/moezet_talmidim/moezet_peilut.htm; http://www.pardesia.muni.il/kids_noar_sport/activ/moatza.htm).
- ³⁸ http://merom.kibbutz.org.il/data_public1/GeneralPublic/moaza-dalia.htm
- ³⁹ Harel, Hannah (1974), *When a Nation Reports for Duty – A Teachers' Guide*, The Ministry of Education. This guide forms part of Israel's first special official 'preparation for the IDF' curriculum. The quote below is brought again in chapter 3, dealing with these educational programmes.
- ⁴⁰ Mazali, Rela and Saggie Pundak, Michal (unpublished), *The Independence Day Ceremony for All Kindergartens in Hertzlia – 22 April 2004*. We have also greatly benefited from the preliminary analysis of the event, appearing in this document.
- ⁴¹ In Israel, all this weaponry is usually interpreted as a sign of increased security, rather than as a safety hazard.
- ⁴² Lavie, Aviv, "Up on the Jungle Gym, Charge!" *Haaretz*, 28 June 2002.
- ⁴³ See e.g. Gor, Haggith (2003), "Education for War in Israel, Preparing Children to Accept War as a Natural Factor of Life", in: Saltman, K. and Gabbard, D. (eds.) *Education as Enforcement: The Militarization and Corporatization of Schools*, Routledge.
- ⁴⁴ Gor, Haggith, "Militarism in Education for the Tender Age", paper delivered at the conference: *Militarism and Education: A Critical Perspective*, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 29-31 May 2001.
- ⁴⁵ Eitan Bronstein, e-mail message to New Profile activists, 24 April 2004.
- ⁴⁶ See Aronisreinhertz, Caroline, "To Receive the Principal, the Teachers will Stand to Attention", *Ma'ariv Internet Edition*, 14 November 2002, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/archive/ART/380/165.html>. See also Kadosh, Ruth, "I Didn't Do My Homework, Sir!" *Ma'ariv Internet Edition*, 2 July 2003, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/archive/ART/503/193.html>.
- ⁴⁷ For a detailed account of the officers' educational skills, see Dahan-Kalev, Henriette "Generals in Education: Military Personnel as School Principles", paper delivered at the conference: *Militarism and Education: A Critical Perspective*, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 29-31 May 2001.
- ⁴⁸ Aronisreinhertz, Caroline, "Homeland Lesson", *Ma'ariv Internet Edition*, 4 June 2003, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/archive/ART/488/629.html>.

- ⁴⁹ Interview with Ronnen (pseudonym), Youth-Guide in a high school in the Tel-Aviv area, Hertzlia, 10 April 2004.
- ⁵⁰ Despite the fact, presented in the Introduction, that most young Israelis nowadays avoid military service.
- ⁵¹ Harel, H., *Op. Cit.*
- ⁵² Luski, Avi (1984), *Towards Service in the IDF – Methodical Materials for the Officer and the Educator*, Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defence.
- ⁵³ Circular of the General Manager of the Ministry of Education, No. 4(a) of December 1999, Permanent directive 7.
- ⁵⁴ Van Gelder, Elad, *Background Document for Discussion on the Subject of: The ‘Willingness to Serve and Readiness for the IDF’ Programme*, submitted to the Education and Culture Committee, 17 March 2003. Published by the Knesset Research and Information Centre. Available online at <http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/doc.asp?doc=m00657&type=rtf>.
- ⁵⁵ <http://www.alehlod.co.il/aravit.html>.
- ⁵⁶ For a Detailed description by some of the participants see: http://dev.asaf.kfar-olami.org.il/pedagogical/aravit/aravit_m_gadna.htm. For a description of the programme from the point of view of the IDF see: http://www1.idf.il/aman/Site/EnterTelem/EnterTelem.asp?folder_id=40025.
- ⁵⁷ See the *Follow Me* programme’s website at <http://www.aharai.org.il>. Pictures taken by participants, documenting the programme and illustrating the sort of activities engaged in, can be seen on: http://community.walla.co.il/ts.cgi?tsscript=f/boards/file_board&forum_id=1272&group_id=1&b=1&cat_id=503&board=5.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Raanana (pseudonym), Former *Naale* participant and instructor, Haifa, 24 June 2004.
- ⁵⁹ Incidentally, being officially considered tourists, the participants of the *Naale* programme are not under the jurisdiction of the Security Service Law, and therefore are not legally obliged to report to these tests at all – a fact that is usually not revealed to them.
- ⁶⁰ Incidentally, even people exempted from military service retain the status of Intended for Security Service, as can be seen in Articles 5(d) and 41.
- ⁶¹ The latter group is referred to in the law by the somewhat confusing term *Yotze Tzava*, which literally means, “coming out of the military”. This term’s definition is similar to that of Intended for Security Service, but the minimum age for both men and women is 18.
- ⁶² See the Security Service Regulations of 1967, Regulation 4.
- ⁶³ This restriction is also in force for soldiers and reservists. Below we limit our description only to the ways in which this restriction is implemented in practice as regards children.
- ⁶⁴ See the IDF Manpower Division website: at <http://www.aka.idf.il/giyus/general/default.asp?CatID=23101&DocID=25063>, <http://www.aka.idf.il/giyus/general/default.asp?CatID=25916>.
- ⁶⁵ Indeed, according to Article 10 of the same law, any injury, damage or disability caused as a result of such medical examinations or vaccinations is considered to be, for legal purposes, sustained when performing military service. Those who sustain such injuries are entitled to the same benefits as those wounded in action or otherwise injured in the course of their military service.
- ⁶⁶ There is also a public warrant, issued twice a year, and signed by the Head of Conscription Administration in the IDF. This warrant applies to anyone who, for whatever reason, did not receive a personal warrant by mail. It is published on public billboards, as well as on the Internet (at <http://www.aka.idf.il/giyus/general/default.asp?CatID=26426&DocID=26433>), and lists the exact date of reporting at the Conscription Bureau according to birth date and gender. Incidentally, this public warrant seems to apply also to people, to whom the draft is not applied (most notably Muslim and Christian Palestinian citizens of Israel). Article 36 of the Security Service Law only allows for their exemption from military service one year after they acquire the status of Intended for Security Service.
- ⁶⁷ “[I]t includes verifying your level of mastery of Hebrew, verifying your personal details, family information and biography, as well as verifying various data pertaining to education and vocation” – see <http://www.aka.idf.il/giyus/general/default.asp?CatID=23064&DocID=26180>.

- 68 Originally the intelligence test was held at a later date, which was known as the ‘second call-up’. This is how the ‘first call-up’ got its name.
- 69 See: <http://aka.idf.il/giyus/general/default.asp?CatID=23063>.
- 70 It is possible that the practice of sending the police to children who failed to show up at the Conscription Bureau has been abandoned. Apart from one unconfirmed report received by New Profile, all the cases of such police visits that we know of date back to the late 1990s.
- 71 Interview with Lital (pseudonym), Haifa, 11 May 2004.
- 72 <http://mevoot-yam.org.il>
- 73 http://mevoot-yam.org.il/category.asp?category_id=5
- 74 <http://mevoot-yam.org.il>
- 75 http://mevoot-yam.org.il/category.asp?category_id=2
- 76 <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=8>
- 77 <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=4>
- 78 <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=2>
- 79 <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=11>
- 80 Such as a full military parachuting course taken while in the 11th grade, at the end of which the pupils receive an official paratroopers’ badge. See: <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=2>.
- 81 <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=11>
- 82 <http://www.panmaz.co.il/index.php?section=1&menuitem=3>
- 83 <http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Techni/html/1.1.5.1.1.html>
- 84 <http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Techni/>. The website states correctly that the pupils enter school in the 9th, and sometimes the 10th grade. It is, however, inconsistent and incorrect as to the age at which this happens. At one point it says they are 14, and at another – that they are 14½-16½ years old. The actual normal range of ages for pupils beginning studies in the 9th or 10th grade is 13½-15½.
- 85 <http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Techni/html/1.1.5.1.3.html>
- 86 <http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Techni/html/1.1.5.1.4.html>
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 <http://www.amalnet.k12.il/schools/rdavid/ramdi002.htm>
- 90 <http://www.amalnet.k12.il/schools/rdavid/ramdi001.htm>
- 91 Interview with Moshe (pseudonym), pupil at *Amal* Ramat David and volunteer with the Civil Guard, Haifa, 20 May 2004.
- 92 Ibid. The issue of children working for the military will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7, where we will also return briefly to the case of the *Amal* Ramat David, and to this particular interview.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 It is also true that some pupils living near one of these schools may choose to study in it because of the convenience of a nearby school and of the inconvenience of studying elsewhere. The IAF Technical School in Beer-Sheva, for instance, is the only high school in a quite remote quarter of the town. Even so, the local residents too have to actively volunteer to join the school.
- 95 While the curricular programme itself is mandatory, the training is not a mandatory component of it. It is, however, a “highly recommended” part of the programme, and in fact most schools include it in it. See: The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Society and Youth Administration, Field-Nation-Society and Knowledge of the Land Disciplinary Area (1999), *Readiness and Willingness for Substantial service in the IDF – An Overall Conception*, Appendix 1.

- ⁹⁶ Van Gelder, *Op. Cit.* (<http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/doc.asp?doc=m00657&type=rtf>), p. 5.
- ⁹⁷ Interview with Eldad Zion, a school student who participated in the Youth Battalion Training Week, Yavne, 15 June 2004. All further references to Eldad are made to this interview.
- ⁹⁸ Dromi, Uri, "The Youth Battalions Saved Jerusalem", *Ha'aretz*, 5 May 2004.
- ⁹⁹ The document quoted above (Van Gelder, *Op. Cit.*) estimates that the number of children taking part in this training week ranges between 20,000 and 28,000 per school year.
- ¹⁰⁰ Interview with Dafna Engel, a school student who participated in the Youth Battalion Training Week, Haifa, 15 May 2004. All further references to Dafna are made to this interview.
- ¹⁰¹ According to Van Gelder, *Op. Cit.*, the Training Week takes place in one of four military bases in Israel. Three are Youth Battalions bases, while the fourth (and smallest) is an ordinary training base for the Artillery Corps.
- ¹⁰² Interview with Inbal Yodfat, a school student who participated in the Youth Battalion Training Week, Haifa, 31 May 2004.
- ¹⁰³ An Elite Combat Unit, comparable to the American military's Green Berets or Navy Seals, is called *Sayeret* (Reconnaissance Company) in Hebrew. We wanted the translation to clearly relate the nature of these units.
- ¹⁰⁴ Interview with Oren (pseudonym), a child who participated in elite combat unit tryouts, Jerusalem 19 May 2004, interview with Eyal (pseudonym), a child who participated in elite combat unit tryouts, Jerusalem 19 May 2004.
- ¹⁰⁵ Khromchenko, Yulie, "Autistic youth find their place in the IDF", *Ha'aretz*, 24 June 2004.
- ¹⁰⁶ Finkelstein, Nahum, "An army with a heart", *Israel21c* (<http://www.israel21c.org>), 14 March 2004.
- ¹⁰⁷ The Shikmim school's principal mentions the following anecdote: "The mother of one of the pupils who graduated with us told me that every day she would wash her son's uniform and hang it out on the balcony so that the neighbours see that her son was also serving in the army" (Khromchenko, *Op. Cit.*). Notably, the only people mentioned in the feature who sometimes express apprehension, or even dissatisfaction, rather than enthusiasm, are the children themselves.
- ¹⁰⁸ The Labour Service at Times of Emergency Law, 1967. See Articles 1-3, 19.
- ¹⁰⁹ Levin, Elazar, "The Ministry of Labour Recruited Most of the Workers in Vital Works", *Ha'aretz*, 8 October 1973.
- ¹¹⁰ Interview with Sergeiy Sandler Yogev, Beer Sheva, 11 June 2004.
- ¹¹¹ See: http://www.police.gov.il/al_hamishtara/history/01jbd_hist.asp.
- ¹¹² http://www.police.gov.il/al_hamishtara/hitztarfoo_elenu/04bd_hitz.asp.
- ¹¹³ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁴ Interview with Yotam Yogev, child volunteering with the Civil Guard, Jerusalem, 19 June 2004.
- ¹¹⁵ Interview with Moshe (pseudonym), pupil at *Amal* Ramat David and volunteer with the Civil Guard, Haifa, 20 May 2004. All further references to Moshe are made to this interview.
- ¹¹⁶ Interview with Rotem Cohen, child volunteering with the Civil Guard, Haifa, 30 May 2004. All further references to Rotem are made to this interview.
- ¹¹⁷ See: *Acamol – The Journal of the Community and Civil Guard Department*, November 2003. http://www.police.gov.il/pdf/akamol/akam_1003.pdf
- ¹¹⁸ http://www.police.gov.il/al_hamishtara/hitztarfoo_elenu/04_bbd_hitz.asp
- ¹¹⁹ As we explained in the Introduction, the Border Police is a branch of the police actively involved in hostilities, especially in operating checkpoints in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Most of its members are conscripts.
- ¹²⁰ "This Morning", Israeli TV Channel 10, 20 June 2004, around 8 a.m.
- ¹²¹ Trabelsi-Hadad, Tamar, "School Bag on Back, Rifle in Hand", *Yedioth Aharonoth*, 26 August 2002, P. 15.

- ¹²² See: <http://www.police.gov.il/pdf/iturim-2004/iturim37.pdf>.
- ¹²³ Interview with Gal (pseudonym), former member of Kahane Chai, Jerusalem area, 13 May 2004. All further references to Gal are made to this interview.
- ¹²⁴ Yishai Gesundheit, Resident of Alon Shvut, Gush Etzion, 17 June 2004. All further references to Yishai are made to this interview.
- ¹²⁵ Interview with Yehuda Shaul, formerly a conscript stationed in the West Bank, Tel-Aviv, 16 June 2004. All further references to Yehuda are made to this interview.
- ¹²⁶ Weiss, Ephrat, “The Learning Material in the Summer Camp: Blocking Roads and Withstanding Investigations”, *Yedioth Aharonoth*, 12 July 2004.
- ¹²⁷ The two movements seem to have been reunited in recent years. While most of the findings presented below date back to the late 1990s, when the groups were still separate, all the information we have indicates that these findings probably hold, on the whole, for the situation at present as well.
- ¹²⁸ For further information about their politics, see the Kahane website at <http://www.kahane.org>.
- ¹²⁹ State of Israel Official Gazette (*Yalkut Ha-Pirsumim*) for 1993/4, p. 2786.
- ¹³⁰ For this purpose we were in contact with the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group and *Hamoked* – Centre for the Defence of the Individual.
- ¹³¹ Bloom, Gadi, “Kahane Lives in Tel-Aviv”, *Tel-Aviv Newspaper*, 27 July 2001.
- ¹³² Lein, Yehezkel (January 2000) *Human Rights Violations of Lebanese Citizens made by Israel*, Report by *B'tselem*, pp. 37-39.
- ¹³³ Defence for Children International – Palestine Section, Documentation Unit.
- ¹³⁴ PCATI, LAW & OMCT (2002) *Comments on Issues Relating to Palestinian Detainees in the Third Periodic Report of the State of Israel Concerning the Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, pp. 4-5. See also: Ginbar, Yuval (2003) *Back to a Routine of Torture*, report by PCATI.
- ¹³⁵ See: <http://www.btselem.org/english/torture>.
- ¹³⁶ Petition 3799/02, available online at <http://www.adalah.org/eng/features/humshields/3799petition-eng.pdf>. See also the *Adallah* website: <http://www.adalah.org/eng/humanshields.php>, for updated information on the issue.
- ¹³⁷ Human Rights Watch, *In A Dark Hour: The Use of Civilians During IDF Arrest Operations*, report released on 18 April 2002, p. 10. Available online at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/israel2>.
- ¹³⁸ OMCT Urgent Appeal Case ISR 290404.CC, “Israel / OPT: 13-year old boy used as human shield and seven children killed by Israeli forces”, released 29 April 2004. Available online at <http://www.omct.org/base.cfm?page=article&num=4845&consol=close&kwrd=OMCT&cfid=1129636&cftoken=15721017>. This case was well documented, photographed and even reported in the media. See e.g. Reuters and Ha’aretz Service “Activists say Border Police Held Boy, 13, as Human Shield”, *Ha’aretz*, 22 April 2004; Kalman, Mathew, “The Day Israel Used a Boy Aged 13 as a Human Shield”, *Daily Mail*, 23 April 2004, p. 27.
- ¹³⁹ See: <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Op. Cit.*, p. 7.