

The Disengagement and Engaging Citizenship:  
The Everyday Reproduction of Jewish  
Democracy by Jewish Israeli Youth

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I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work.

No part of this thesis has been submitted for publication or for any other degree or professional qualification.

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## ***Abstract***

The apparent tension between Israel as a democracy and Israel as a specifically Jewish state has played a central role in much academic and popular debate about the region. Taking an actor-centred perspective of national subject and citizenship formation, this thesis treats Jewish nationalism and democratic citizenship not simply as abstractions, but as categories lived out in the everyday lives of Jewish Israeli youth. The ethnography focuses on secular and religious Jewish Israeli high school teens as they approach conscription age and begin to make decisions about their rights and responsibilities as Jewish Israeli citizens. This is done in a context of their school, recreational, and family life. Through the engagement of these youth with processes around the Disengagement from Gaza, which saw the radicalisation of existing conflicts between “secular” and “religious” Jews, I show how these teens reproduce Jewish democracy in their everyday lives, taking it from an abstract conundrum to an un-ambiguous way of being Israeli. What might be considered paradoxical in fact resembles what I consider the multiplexity of Jewish Israeli identity that considers the multiple ethnic, religious, and civic resources that constitute Jewish Israeli national subjectivity. The tensions between democratic citizenship and Jewish nationalism are therefore productive of a particular form of identity.

The particular focus of the thesis is how and why Jewish Israeli youth reproduce Jewish nationalism, and subsequently how people themselves construct a sense of nationhood through the shared experiences of kin and peers. This ultimately establishes the nation as not only an “imagined community” but a tangible network of shared experiences, rooting it in intimate relationships that inspire feelings of national connectedness. The vagueness of why people would want to contribute to an abstract society is partly understood in an Israeli context through looking at the intimate familial motivations behind doing military service. The fact that the majority of Israeli teens still consider military service a vital constituent of Israeli civic identity and national membership reveals the moral boundaries that continue to be derived from civic republicanism and ethno-nationalism that comprise the experience of being in the army and Jewish democracy as a whole. Through the attitudes of Jewish Israelis and the IDF towards draft avoidance and conscientious objection one is able to appreciate how the ethnic and civic forms of citizenship that constitute the experience of military service establish certain contours of national belonging. This provides a contemporary understanding of Jewish Israelis’ engagement with civic-republicanism and ethno-nationalism, showing the ways both the state and Jewish Israelis expect other Jewish nationals to show commitment to the Israeli state. My ethnography on state rituals illuminates how official state narratives converge with subjective national experiences. As well as trying to reinforce particular forms of nationalism, individuals take part in state rituals for their own reasons revealing the emotional aspect of nationalism and hence the fresh ways people interpret national discourses.

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Figure 1: Israel and the Occupied Territories in 2004 Source: Based on UN Map No.3584



# 1. Introduction: Unravelling the Jewish Democratic Conundrum

By looking at the moral and political issues that Jewish Israeli teens are confronted with both in institutions such as schools and youth groups, and also in their personal lives, it is possible to see how Jewish democracy is negotiated and experienced in the everyday lives of Jewish Israeli youth as they consider their rights and responsibilities to the state, their friends, and family. Jewish democracy has familiarly been studied in social and political science as a paradox. Whilst promoting itself as a liberal democratic state that strives to endorse a universal juridical category of citizenship that conceptually espouses the protection of collective rights of all its citizens, Israel also places great emphasis on Jewish ethnicity as the key characteristic of national membership. Despite the inherent contradictions of a democracy that favours those of a Jewish background and the discriminatory repercussions of this, my work shows that it also exists productively in terms of creating particular forms of Jewish Israeli citizenship. The ethno-national, republican, and liberal discourses that constitute Jewish democracy are appropriated in fresh and communally specific ways by Jewish Israeli youth. For the Jewish teens we will encounter in this thesis, Jewish democracy is typically not seen as a contradiction but an ideal that represents the value they place in their own Jewish national identity, and also in democracy. The teens I worked with are drawn from a selection of schools and youth groups from Haifa and its surrounding regions. At the time of my research from September 2004 to July 2006, the Jewish youth I worked with, like their contemporaries across Israel, were faced with the compulsory life stage of military service and also a period of social and political upheaval as a result of Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw Jewish settlers from Gaza that became commonly known as "The Disengagement". How these youth engaged with both of these events forms a major part of my attempts to show how Jewish Israeli youth reproduce Jewish democracy in their everyday lives, taking it from an abstract conundrum to an un-ambiguous way of being Israeli as characterised in particular forms of citizenship activity and national subject formation.

The majority of social scientific studies of citizenship in Israel and Palestine have clearly exposed the marginalising and discriminatory consequences of allocating civic rights on the basis of Jewish group affiliation (Handelman 2004; Kimmerling 2001; Kretzmer 1990; Peled 1992; Pappé 2000; Rabinowitz 1997; Smooha 1990; Yiftachel 2002). Whilst my ethnography contributes to this, its focus is on how the Jewish democratic paradigm exists productively for Jewish Israelis in terms of representing the multiple facets, or what I consider multiplexities of Jewish Israeli identity. These include the ethno-national and civic narratives incorporated by Jewish democracy. By example, the paradigm exists productively in its emphasis on Jewishness as a form of national intimacy, or as experienced by orthodox national religious Jews who invoked languages of liberal democracy as they protested against what they saw as both the unethical and illegal removal of Jewish settlers from Gaza and the West Bank in 2005.

### **Competing Forms of Citizenship and Resultant Tensions**

The dynamics of Israeli citizenship are characterised by competing liberal democratic, republican, and ethno-national citizenship discourses. Israeli sociologists Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled (2002) trace the historical trajectory of how these discourses have emerged and evolved within Israeli society. They claim that the tensions created by these competing forms of citizenship provide the major stumbling block to an egalitarian citizenship and an enduring peace in the region. I therefore begin with an examination of the forms of citizenry that these theories of citizenship set out to achieve and how Israel has incorporated these frameworks into Jewish democracy. In accordance with the theories of liberalism, claiming to be a democratic state indicates a legal commitment to the rights of all individual citizens, regardless of ethnic background or religion. John Rawls (1971) suggests the two main premises of liberalism are: freedom of the individual, and equality of opportunity. As such, a liberal conception of citizenship in accordance also with the earlier theories of Hobbes and Locke, establishes the individual as free and equal with an obligation on the state to safeguard the rights and liberties of its citizens (Held 1993). Although in principal this liberal notion of citizenship is the most inclusive, in practice it frequently struggles with the other two forms of citizenship and further exclusionary and inegalitarian civic ideologies. The

necessity of the civil rights movement in the United States exemplified how liberalism did not automatically enfranchise each individual or group (Smith 1997). In Israel, the discrimination of its Arab citizens is far reaching, from limits imposed on immigration to less funding for the Arab education system. Although there is a central Ministry of Education and a national curriculum, Arab and Jewish students generally attend separate schools. In a 2000/01 survey on investment in education carried out by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics revealed that the government spent on average NIS 534 per student for Palestinian Israelis, compared with NIS 1779 per Jewish student.

Complementing attempts at liberal citizenship in Israel is also the legacy of republicanism. The performance of military service has traditionally been a key component of republicanism where this notion of citizenship strives to establish;

...a reciprocal relationship between the state and its citizens, according to which citizens were willing to sacrifice their bodies and wealth in bearing the burden of war and preparations for it in return for civil, social, and political rights granted to them by the state (Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel 2007: 129).

This is especially pertinent to Israel because of the great value it has historically placed on military service as the prime means of contributing to the state and the Jewish nation. Historically, the reciprocal relationship between citizen and state formed the premise of western democratisation, for instance the French “civic republican” model. In France citizenship is extolled as universal and once again is not derived from group affiliations such as ethnicity or religion (Brubaker 1996). In light of this republican model one can appreciate how military service has delineated the boundaries of citizenship within the nation state, whereby citizenship is defined by sacrificing or bearing arms for the nation with contribution to the military being converted into symbolic capital which can be used in exchange for social rights (Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel 2007: 129). Central to the history of Israeli civic virtue is its republican heritage, where active participation for the “common good” has been valued in terms of one’s contribution to the Jewish collective. Kimmerling (2001) argues that this republican discourse dominated Israeli society until the late 1970s where Israeli citizenship was constructed in terms of contributing to the Zionist enterprise. However, since then it has been argued

that Israeli political culture has been driven towards individualistic liberal-democratic interpretations and ethno-national discourses of citizenship (Peri 2001; Schweid 1999; Shafir and Peled 2002).

Ethno-national citizenship uses ethnic identity as the basis of national membership, where nationality is derived from descent as opposed to “right of territory”. As Rogers Brubaker explains, ethnic citizenship as found in countries such as Germany is “particularist, organic, differentialist, and Volk-centred” (1996: 139). In the case of Israel, greater emphasis is placed on Jewish ethnic belonging over civic contribution. Shafir and Peled characterise Israel’s ethno-national discourse as:

...interested not in civil society, but in a different kind of community: the nation or ethnic group. In the ethno-nationalist, or *volkish*, approach, citizenship is not an expression of individual rights or of contribution to the common good, but of membership in a homogenous descent group. The community, in this view, is not conceived of as existing outside the state, or over against it in some way, but rather as expressed in embodied by the state (2002: 6).

The tension between democracy and Jewish ethno-nationalism in Israel has received great attention in social science literature highlighting the difficulties of maintaining an inclusive society that is representative of all its citizens whilst continuing to re-affirm its Jewish character through ethnocentric legal and symbolic practices. In democratic states citizenship is used in efforts to promote collective rights, where a state’s members are bound through equal political and social rights within a juridical framework (Turner 2000: 36). The ethno-national basis of Israeli citizenship complicates this by combining both the liberal dimensions of democratic citizenry and a pervasive Jewish ethnic constituent. There exists a more singularist model of contractual relations between the state and population where the state is an embodiment of a single and specific collective identity as opposed to a pluralist or universalist model (Butenshon 2000: 17). Butenshon argues that Israeli singularism is identified by its allocation of rights on a discriminatory basis where one’s status as an individual is dependent on group affiliation, namely Jewishness (Butenshon 2000: 17). Israeli citizenship prioritises the principle of *jus sanguinis*, Jewish blood descent, the hegemony of which is reflected in measures to retain territorial control and a Jewish majority within the state. Nira Yuval-Davis (1987) claims that the State of Israel was never meant to be “a

political expression of its civil society, of the people who reside in its territory or even of the citizens. It was meant to be the State of the Jews wherever they are” (Yuval-Davis 1987: 63). Evidence of this is in the legal measures that exclude Palestinian Israelis from equal citizenship participation. Kretzmer’s (1990) work on the legal status of Palestinian citizens of Israel discusses the restrictions the Israeli legal system places on Palestinian Israelis, excluding them from equal access to state resources. With a strong emphasis on republicanism, where citizenship is one of contribution to the state through military or national service, and where such civic value is closely associated with Jewish national goals, Palestinian Israelis are isolated from the republican nucleus of Israeli political life and therefore excluded from the “common good” of the republic (Rabinowitz 1997: 19).

Handelman (2004) argues that the sequencing of the state as Jewish and democratic is intentional with increased authority given to Jewish nationality amongst its citizenry. This was only strengthened by a Jewish collective amalgamated by the nation-in-arms ethos of Israeli state building and the continued “virtually exclusive access Jewish Israeli citizens have to the republican core of political life” (Rabinowitz 1997: 19; Ben-Eliezer 1995). Central to the history of Israeli civic virtue is its republican heritage, where active participation for the “common good” is valued in terms of one’s contribution to the Jewish collective. This was inculcated by the Labour Zionist ethos of the *Yishuv* where Ashkenazi protagonists, Jews of European descent, extolled a republican pioneering discourse. New Jewish immigrants were encouraged to settle and work the land, and the close association between civil and military virtue emerged out of the *Yishuv*’s paramilitary bodies. In the early days of the Israeli state, the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) which was forged out of such paramilitary organisations as the Haganah was seen by Israel’s first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion as a vital melting pot for the integration of many thousands of immigrants entering Israel. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 Ben Gurion attempted to weave together a collective identity of the Jewish people through a strong army representative of their own transition to empowered citizens of a Jewish State. This was in contrast to the weak, oppressed, and disenfranchised Diaspora Jew or *halutz* (exiled) Jews that had suffered pogroms in Eastern Europe and the Holocaust. The result of this civil-military

relationship was what Ben-Eliezer refers to as a “nation-in-arms” where “the soldier is a citizen and the citizen a soldier”<sup>1</sup> (1995: 274).

However, the main bearers and beneficiaries of this republican discourse were the Ashkenazi elite. Attempts to homogenise Jewish Israeli citizenship through Labour Zionist discourses meant that Mizrahi citizens of Israel, those of Middle Eastern origin, were pushed culturally, politically and territorially to the peripheries of Israeli society (Shafir and Peled 2002: 213). Although there is now greater political and cultural representation of the Mizrahi population, the effects of this marginalisation continues to have an impact on electoral voting patterns and also choices of army units on the part of Mizrahi youth. The Mizrahi religious party Shas continues to garner strong support with its platform of enforcing a strong Jewish character in Israeli social and political life, and its promises of reform for the socioeconomically disadvantaged. Regarding choices of army units, I encountered a number of youth who were still put off by for example a career in the air force that was seen as quintessentially for “*Ashkenazim*”. This was a class judgement, where prestigious units such as the air force were still associated with privileged middle class Ashkenazi youth.

The allocation of citizenship “according to specific ethnic criteria” has led to Butenschon (2000), Brubaker (1996), and Smooha (1990) labelling Israel an ethnocracy. The incorporation of the “democratic” denotes the rights given to individual citizens such as Palestinian Israelis who are able to participate in the political process and are entitled to legal protection (Kelly 2006: 13). As a result of Israel’s republican legacy that emphasises contribution to the Jewish nation specifically, Yoav Peled (1992) chooses to describe Israel as an “ethnic republic”. Both Rabinowitz (1997) and Pappé (2000) have suggested such labelling smoothes over the paradox, maintaining an illusion that Israel can juggle ethnic majoritarianism and equal citizenship. However, although such interrogation is

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<sup>1</sup> A phrase originally attributed to the time of the French revolution when in 1793 the French Republic initiated a *levee en masse* which introduced military conscription. Such rhetoric attempted to foster a new ideology of revolutionary patriotism whereby military service would become an internalised social obligation that represented the values of patriotism and republicanism (Moran 2003).

crucial in exposing some of the problems within Israeli civil society, we will see that the spectrum of ethnic and civic tropes that lie in this so-called paradox are used without ambiguity or a sense of contradiction by Jewish Israeli teens as they engage with issues of Israeli citizenship and nationhood.

The link between citizenship and Jewish nationalism is explicitly derived from the fact that the State of Israel aspired to exist as a Jewish homeland and “a framework for the existence of the Jewish community”, making Jews “national in their citizenship” (Handelman 2004: 45). Israel has attempted to retain and make compatible its emphasis on Jewish ethnicity as a core trope of national membership along with a self image as a democratic state. Israel clings on to the classical ideals of a nation-state that is supposed to embody a “distinct and delimited cultural-historical unit” (Susser and Don-Yehiya 1994: 191). Democratic liberal pluralism in ‘Western’ states has attempted to break the congruence between a national ethos and state membership with legal citizenship instead used as a criterion for belonging. Susser and Don-Yehiya (1994) argue that this has resulted in the decline of the nation-state amongst Western democracies, a process that is highlighted by Israel’s continued retention of the link between nation and state. They claim that although Israel is not unique in this, and they use the racial and cultural homogeneity of Japan as an example of this, it is at “the extreme tip” of the continuum of other states that have preserved the nation-state idea (Susser and Don-Yehiya 1994: 190). Whereas Japan is essentially a congruent nation, Susser and Don-Yehiya (1994) argue that Israel acts as if it has a homogenous population. This is belied by the fact that one in six are Arab, and most Jews in the Diaspora do not claim to be Israeli because of their Jewishness - indeed I consider myself a British national of Jewish cultural descent. However, at the same time Israeli teens I worked with also did not consider one’s Jewishness, specifically my Jewishness, as enough to confer Israeli national membership. This required the fulfilment of particular citizenship practices such as doing military service and speaking Hebrew. Although Israel’s so-called “national minorities” have legal protection of their civil rights, as their title suggests they are not considered part of the “state-constituting national community”: citizenship per se does not grant this as liberal pluralist practice should entitle (Susser and Don-Yehiya 1994: 193).

The Jewish national consciousness that inspired a sovereign state is made up of different communal visions amongst its secular and religious populations, yet despite these different factions there is a general agreement that Israel is and should be a Jewish state, a feeling echoed strongly by the majority of my Jewish Israeli teenage interlocutors. The importance of this communal solidarity is propagated by Israeli militarism and security discourses that infuse nationalist narratives. Articulations of the importance of Jewish national solidarity from the people themselves surfaced during the Disengagement as the state was condemned for evicting fellow Jewish citizens from their homes. Jewish nationalism continued to be articulated through the expectations of how the government should treat its Jewish citizens.

The seeming paradox of what Israel terms “Jewish Democracy” was not typically recognised as a conundrum of national identity amongst Jewish Israeli youth I worked with but an ethno-civic complex from which one defined one’s Israeliness. Retaining Israel’s Jewish character through marriage laws or the Law of Return was not necessarily seen as incompatible with the qualities of liberalism. Through civic responsibilities to family, communal identification as either “secular” or “religious”, and through the different contours of belonging that I reveal are established by military service it became possible to unravel how Jewish national membership is delineated by individuals. Such national belonging was strongly linked to the performance of civic duties and responsibilities such as carrying out military service, or in the case of the Disengagement the protection of Jewish settlements. As such, one of the important aspects of looking at citizenship activity amongst Jewish Israeli youth is how nationalism is done and experienced by individuals. Later in this introduction I will provide a more detailed account of how I have gone about identifying nationalising processes and how this is situated in contemporary anthropological literature.

### **Youth and Citizenship: Engaging with Jewish democracy**

I chose to work with Jewish Israeli youth in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade because it is at this age they begin to be faced with the rights and responsibilities of being an adult citizen in Israel. Forced to confront the issue of giving up two years of one’s life if



female and three years if male, to military or national service, Jewish Israeli youth are exposed to the ethno-national and republican discourses that have traditionally validated service in the IDF and other forms of civic contribution available in national service. The latter is customarily reserved for orthodox religious girls and involves voluntary community service. Although for the majority of teens going into the army is “just what you do”, the heterogeneous aspects of such participatory citizenship that includes ethno-nationalism and republicanism are revealed in my communications with them. These strands that comprise civic and national identity arose in a context of their motivations to serve in the IDF and attitudes towards draft avoidance. By engaging with Jewish Israeli youth it is possible to see the tensions or indeed non-tensions of being a Jewish democratic citizen and the paradoxes of citizenship both in Israel and in a more general theoretical way. Anthropology’s contribution has shown how citizenship must be regarded as part of a social field of heterogeneous practices where “the rhetoric of freedom, equality and autonomy is entangled everywhere with the passionate particularisms of nationalism and religiosity, and pitted against entrenched institutions of kinship and family” (Werbner 1998: 3). This is witnessed when looking at how Jewish democratic citizenship is lived out by Jewish Israeli youth where practices of inclusion and exclusion tempered by such particularisms that Pnina Werbner (1998) points out, have implications on the dynamics of national inclusion and exclusion. Citizenship as a liberal democratic concept attempts to transcend difference, “defining all subjects in abstract terms as equal before the law” whilst also encompassing a “consciousness of difference” (Werbner 1998: 11, 14). What this means in practice is identifiable in everyday social relations and in contexts such as state rituals where the multiple values that constitute a particular citizenship converge and are hierarchically organised by individuals. By organise I mean the situational moments when individuals reaffirm or enact certain civic or ethnic narratives.

The anthropological literature on Israel provides a number of contributions to the issue of Jewish Israeli subject making and the formation of Israeli collective identity. For example Virginia Dominguez (1989b) looks at the construction of Israeli peoplehood via objectification through public discourses, media, and

“storytelling events”. Dominguez’s (1989b) work stresses how Jewish Israeli identity is continually struggled over, with Jewish peoplehood not to be taken as a natural given. In particular she looks at processes of exclusion as a primary means of the ongoing construction of Jewish Israeli peoplehood. Dan Rabinowitz’s (1997) ethnography *Overlooking Nazareth* is a study of how individuals as opposed to state legal, bureaucratic, or symbolic measures employ inclusory or exclusionary practices. In Rabinowitz’s research setting of Natzerat Illit, a town in northern Israel that contains a mixed population of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, both populations come into everyday contact with each other, be it as neighbours in the same apartment block or as parents at the local kindergarten. Those families that Rabinowitz worked with speak of a friendly co-existence with a generally “live and let live” attitude. However, he found moments when one can witness expressions of a Jewish collectivist vision that conform to a traditional Zionist cosmology and a “wholesome” Israeliness that excludes Palestinians. Rabinowitz uses Nazterat Illit as an allegory for his assertion that although Israel provides a self-representation of being “liberal” and universally inclusive, in reality its idealised self-image is one that promotes a dominant Jewish culture. In his ethnography Rabinowitz provides microcosms of this through the relationships between Nazterat Illit’s Jewish and Palestinian populations. One example relates a mother’s concern that Palestinian Israeli children will be joining her child’s kindergarten. Another is of the community centre that continues to try to embody an ethos of “high culture”, namely one that represents Jewish Ashkenazi culture, which in doing so presents a message of exclusivity thus ostracising the Palestinian Israeli and indeed Mizrahi members of the community. Rabinowitz (1997) characterises the town as “political frontier” and as a “border-zone” where intergroup realities are played out. He argues that an idealised Jewish vision of Israeliness is prompted to appear during moments when it is felt to be under siege (Rabinowitz 1997: 50). The ethnography shows tangible ways Jewish democracy is strategically employed by individuals, where liberalism is pushed to the limit and at times suspended for an ethnically biased and at times racist code of action.

Rabinowitz’s work highlights the contradictions inherent in Jewish democracy and focuses on how Palestinian Israelis being aware of the symbolic violence

subsequently strategise their lives in respect of this. His informants claim that in an attempt to achieve some level of inclusion in the wider society they are willing to take part in Israeli national ceremonies or celebrate *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*, Independence Day. His study of Palestinian Israeli citizenship presents a mindful engagement with ethno-republican discourses. However, Rabinowitz (1997) does not grant such agency to Jewish Israeli subjects as they negotiate their identity. The Jewish Israeli youth we will encounter in this thesis are also calculated users of Jewish democratic discourses that highlight the fact that people do choose to engage with and reproduce certain national, religious, and political discourses. Why they do so reveals how these youth make themselves into Jewish democratic citizens without contradiction but in a subjective way that brings different forms of Jewish Israeli identity into focus.

Granting such an analytical space to Jewish Israeli youth struck me as all the more important considering that at this school age they are immersed in the dominant pedagogic authority of the state. Thus the value of working in schools was that it gave me the opportunity to understand the educational context of the teens I worked with, both religious and secular. I was able to witness how the state officially represented itself via the education system through citizenship (*ezrahut*) classes and national ceremonies such as *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day), *Yom HaZikaron* (Remembrance Day) and *Yom-Ha'atzma'ut* (Independence Day). It was of interest not just how these teens resisted particular civic and national narratives but also how they embraced many of them. In their *ezrahut* classes, Israeli youth are taught how to be a citizen in Israel and what it means to live in a Jewish democracy. The syllabus addresses the complexities and potential compromises that must be made in order for the state to represent symbolically and legally its Jewish religious and secular Jewish populations. Essentially these classes show how one can be a secular or religious Jew, or indeed a non-Jew in a Jewish liberal democratic state.

### **Educated in the Multiple Dynamics of Israeli Citizenship**

Israel's education system has facilitated and legitimised the transmission of Zionism's core values and world view (see Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983). The

efficacy of this legacy was still evident in 2004 as Israeli history and citizenship textbooks were dominated by a Jewish centric assessment of the establishment of Israeli statehood in 1948. Only in 2000 did the Ministry of Education insert some of the ramifications for Israel's Palestinian population (Pappe 2000: 40). The basic requirements of citizenship were derived from core values entrenched in Zionism and its Judaic heritage. However, Israeli citizenship has evolved into a conundrum of ethno-national, republican, and liberal values exemplified by contemporary Israeli *ezrahut* textbooks that attempt to address what it is to be Israeli, bearing in mind its divergent populations. Israel is not unique in this as is witnessed in the way the United Kingdom now grapples with how best to promote "Britishness" amongst its citizens. A lack of commitment to a national ethos and identity confusion is seen as problematic for the integrity and security of society.

Israel's Basic Law of Education established in 1953 states that the educational system must advocate and inspire the proclamation made in the declaration of independence that announced Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. The contestation for the ideological future of Israel has consistently embroiled Israeli society, and the same question preoccupied the youth I worked with. The debate materialises in government policy proposals such as the Disengagement, and in everyday dilemmas expressed by youth be they secular and wishing to go to a shopping mall on Shabbat or religious and wanting a "kosher" mobile phone<sup>2</sup>. The ideological pendulum that swings between Israel upholding its Jewish character and secular liberal democratic principles was witnessed in such everyday instances. The fact that it has been able to do so has sustained Israeli society by attempting to represent the varying collective visions within. Importantly however, the disparity between Israel's secular Jewish and religious Jewish population continues to find common ground through a common Jewish identity that at some level infuses the collective visions of most Jewish Israelis (Dominguez 1989b: 126).

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<sup>2</sup> My flatmate Clil who worked at an Orange mobile phone call centre spoke of how orthodox Jewish customers would ask for certain restrictions to be placed on their mobile accounts that would prevent them from receiving marketing text messages that contained what they deemed inappropriate content.

Although Israel allows for a number of education streams that facilitate schooling within different communal groups, there is still compulsory citizenship (*ezrahut*) education on the national curriculum. Students must attend three hours a week of such classes in one of the last two years in secondary education. They then sit a matriculation examination (*bagrut*) on the course. A pass in this is required to go on to higher education. Each school uses as a course guide the textbook *To Be Citizens in Israel: A Jewish and Democratic State* (Adan et al 2000). It draws out the duality of Israel being Jewish and democratic, highlighting this ethnic national sentiment. One of the main goals of the book is to debate how various groups within Israeli society understand Israeliness, and the different ways they may interpret citizenship within the state of Israel. For instance students are asked to consider what they think are the difficulties that confront Arab citizens in light of Israel being a state of the Jewish People (Adan et al 2000: 77). The 2002 Israel report on Israeli textbooks highlights that a main ethos of the textbook is to utilise biblical and Jewish sources to emphasise shared values and a common destiny of the Arab and Jewish peoples. An idealised form of citizenship is to “transcend difference, defining all subjects in abstract terms as equal before the law” (Werbner 1998: 11). The notion of difference is then reinstated as a higher order value encompassing communal responsibility for the other. This requires the subsumation of universal and inclusive ideas without denying them (Werbner 1998: 11). Although it would appear the *ezrahut* textbook strives to inculcate this, subjects are not just abstracted in terms of equal civic rights and responsibilities; but in terms of Judaism as well. The Jewish character of the state is reinforced as concomitant with equal citizenship, in fact more equal when analysed through the responses from my informants regarding what it is to be Israeli. Such responses reiterated Israel as the Jewish homeland and the *dugri* or “straight talking” stereotype of the Jewish Israeli character (see Katriel 1986).

According to the majority of adolescents I worked with, Israeliness was anchored in elements of Jewish ethnic identity. In this way there was a sense of a common history and destiny. In each school I visited I had students from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade write in Hebrew a few lines on what being Israeli meant to them. The

following response from Shani, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader in Irony Aleph secular high school in Haifa mirrored the perspective of many Jewish Israeli students;

An Israeli for me is a Jewish citizen who lives in the country, serves in the army and is part of everything we are going through in order to live here together.

For this respondent, Judaism and shared civic participation are central to Israeli identity. Those who lacked these criteria such as the Palestinian Israeli population were consequently excluded from these contours of belonging. In contrast, I found that as a Jew I was granted partial inclusivity by the Jewish Israeli teens of Irony Aleph, yet fell short in that I had not served in the IDF, and had not been part of “everything” people in Israel were going through. The chapters in this thesis will bring out such moments of inclusion and exclusion, illuminating the nuanced and contextually specific ways teens identify themselves as Jewish Israeli citizens. My ethnography takes it from the abstract implications of citizenship education to its implementation in the everyday lives of youth.

### **Strategising Around Israeli Ethno-Republicanism**

My work on what motivates youth to carry out or avoid military service highlights how the state continues to extol the virtues of contributing to the country through compulsory military service. Significantly for my thesis it also shows the moral boundaries of civic republicanism and ethno-nationalism that Jewish Israeli teens themselves construct through the experience of military service. I show how citizenship is constructed out of an interplay between the state and how it wishes to make its citizens through military service, and what the individual derives as meaningful through such a form of civic participation. Discussions on state-citizen relations in other regions have suggested a far more totalising and subsuming top-down culturisation process. Altinay’s (2004) example of Turkish militarism explains the lack of intra-state consciousness concerning the omnipresent militaristic essence to Turkish nationhood is a result of it being saturated within cultural practice. She describes how the myth of the Turkish nation as a military nation became state ideology in the 1920s and 1930s, claiming that Turkish history came to define state building, and military service as “cultural/national/racial characteristics” (Altinay 2004: 7). Whereas Altinay’s (2004) ethnography

emphasises the way the Turkish state has attempted to educate its citizens to feel a sense of nationhood through military service, in the Israeli case Jewish teens show that they themselves use the experiences of the Israeli military to construct their own identity in a mindful and often instrumental way. Pupils at the Rudolph Steiner School in Harduf that I worked in typified this as they criticised the Jewish exclusivity that they believed Zionism espoused, and articulated their concerns over the discriminatory implications of maintaining a state that is both Jewish and democratic. Yet they did military service as a means of self-fulfilment.

The fact that military service must be contended with and is still seen as the most valued way to contribute to the collective has meant that Israeli militarism is still ultimately reproduced. The conditions of possibility are still tailored by the expectations and social requirements associated with military service in Israel. Much like Willis' (1980) "lads" in the acclaimed study of working class youth in *Learning to Labour*, Israeli youth conform to the expectations of society yet do so in a non-"disciplined" way. Ultimately for Jewish Israeli youth one is still "made" a citizen through military service, it is a way of knowing and doing "Israeliness". However, this is most significantly the case because of the shared civic experience military service embodies, not because of the effects of military discourse. Meaningful citizenship and the motivation for civic participation derived from the participation of kin was especially relevant to national religious teens as they took part in protests against the Disengagement.

For Jewish Israeli youth, Israeli citizenship is inflected by the republican values of participating in the IDF, and the context of Israeli militarism that continues to promote a security orientation. For religious Zionist youth I worked with there is also a religious element that preaches the importance of combining the study of *Torah* with a contribution to the Land and the Jewish people. However, in conjunction with these discursive contexts, citizenship for individual youth is made meaningful as part of a shared experience of kin and friends. Israeli citizenship resonates through such relatedness. As Charrad (2000) argues, such particularist ties are essential to the different forms of citizenship which encourages us to broaden the category of citizenship to incorporate the various strands. In the case of draft avoidance and conscientious objection one is able to appreciate how these

aspects that constitute the experience of military service in Israel establish certain levels of belonging as an Israeli citizen. The attitudes of Jewish Israeli youth towards military refusal as either a political statement or self-interested evasion reveal some of the moral boundaries of belonging and the forms of commitment that are required to belong as a Jewish democratic citizen. This provides a fresh understanding of Israeli's engagement with civic-republicanism and ethno-nationalism, showing the ways both the state and Jewish Israelis expect other Jewish nationals to show commitment to the Israeli state.

### **The Disengagement and its Implications for Israeli Citizenship**

The Disengagement emerged as a key focus of my research because of the way it engaged with the multiple dynamics of Israeli citizenship. It challenged Jewish Israeli youth to reflect upon the ethno-national, republican, and democratic features that characterise Israeli citizenship. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza had implications for its Jewish character, it questioned the validity of contributing to an army that was being used against its own people, and it raised the issue of how representative was the policy of the will of the people. By the time I reached Israel in September 2004 the proposed removal of Jewish settlements from the Gaza strip was gathering momentum. The nine months or so that had passed since then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's initial announcement of the plan at the 2003 Herzliya conference had witnessed a great deal of political manoeuvring and public debate. It was reported that in advancing the plan Sharon had alienated many of his cabinet members, particularly members of the rightwing National Religious Party who made up the coalition. In their place however he had garnered support from the leftwing whose votes were vital for passing through what Sharon termed his "Disengagement Plan" or in Hebrew *Tokhnit HaHitnatkut*. Sharon's policy was highly controversial for it involved removing around 9,000 Jewish Israeli citizens from the main settlement bloc of Gush Katif in the Gaza strip, and because this was a unilateral withdrawal that sidelined the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore the Israeli settlers in these disputed areas had only recently in December 2002 been assured by Sharon of their legitimacy to take residence in Gaza. In light of these sensitivities the term "disengagement" was a well calculated expression to describe



the proposed Gaza pull out and was quickly adopted by the media and used by the public.



Figure 2: Jewish settlement blocs in Gaza

Source: BBC 2005

In his speech to the Herzliya Conference Series on the Balance of Israel’s National Security, Sharon claimed that the Disengagement plan was to “grant maximum security and minimize friction between Israelis and Palestinians” (cited in Haaretz.com 2003). It was portrayed as a military operation and sanitised as such in terms of its economic and strategic importance. It also aimed to show to the international community that Israel was willing to take “difficult steps” towards peace. Concerns from the Israeli public meant that the act could not appear a climb-down to Palestinian pressures or a submission to terrorist activities, for fear of adding momentum to growing support for Hamas.

The Hebrew word for “disengagement” is born out of the verb to separate or to cut-off and isolate. Using this terminology to describe the withdrawal from Gaza is consistent with Sharon’s wider policy regarding the Palestinians. The so-called “security fence” that runs through the West Bank is designed to do exactly that - to

extricate the Palestinian population from Israel. Sharon's most prolific justification for the Disengagement was the demographic argument that claimed such steps were necessary to maintain a Jewish majority in Israel. The idea of "land for peace" was more easily sold on such grounds, playing on remaining insecurities of Jewish identity and survival in Israel. Critics such as Oren Yiftachel identify the Disengagement as essentially motivated by the state's "Judaization project" (2005: 127). Yiftachel argues that territorial concessions on these grounds were favoured amongst the new "centrist" body in the Israeli public as would come to be embodied by Sharon's newly established *Kadima* party. Yiftachel identifies this body as those Israelis who wish to see themselves as "progressive" with regard to peace with the Palestinians (2005: 127), by which he means they will support the government's "necessary moves" or "difficult steps" for peace and wait for the Palestinians to return such a gesture.

The Disengagement strategy was to be regarded very differently from the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon in 2000. It was feared that the very term "withdrawal" would be associated with "retreat" that resulted in calls of victory from Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon. The Israeli presence in Lebanon was always based on strategic and security lines, and never universally popular amongst the Israeli public. The occupation of Gaza however occurred after a tidal wave of optimism for the survival and security of the Jewish state following victory in the 1967 Six Day War. The growth of settlements in the region also conformed to strengthening ethno-national ideology amongst the religious Zionist population who sought the redemption of the Greater Land of Israel as a religious imperative. The evacuation itself also meant the forced removal of fellow Jewish Israeli citizens by the IDF, also known as the "people's army".

The Disengagement highlighted the intimate connection between the IDF and Israeli society. At the political level it is considered important that the prime minister has military experience, Sharon's decisions on security were trusted in part on such grounds. My family in Israel and other supporters of the Disengagement felt that it was only Sharon who could have carried out this plan with such conviction and public trust. Throughout the withdrawal process the IDF's motto of "we shoot first and cry later" was never so sensitively employed in terms of the

efficiency and emotional management of the operation. The direct involvement of family and kin who could be potentially commissioned for such an operation, and the fact that some soldiers might even be forced to encounter members of their own community, heightened the national and emotional complexities of the IDF's involvement. Just as the IDF's operations during the 1982 war in Lebanon provoked leftwing conscientious objection amongst its soldiers, the Disengagement resulted in acts of military refusal on the part of rightwing religious soldiers. The public's support or rejection of these groups revealed the layers of national conscience that appeared to forgive rightwing refuseniks yet condemned leftwing refusal and its iteration of post-Zionist academic discourses. These issues are discussed in my final chapter.

Throughout this thesis I too will refer to the withdrawal from Gaza as "the Disengagement", as apart from it becoming common parlance in Israel to describe the event, it represents the imagined consequences my adolescent informants saw as following from it, namely a necessary separation from the Palestinians, and what also came to be seen as an abandonment of Jewish settlers. This sanitised terminology appeared to many of my young informants to symbolise the government's cold treatment of their fellow Jews. The phrase "disengagement" represents the paradox many of my informants faced. On one hand they saw the withdrawal from Gaza as a functional step towards peace, yet on the other it roused feelings of Jewish national solidarity with many non-religious supporters of the policy who sympathised with the settlers. For national religious youth the withdrawal symbolised a "disengagement" from Judaic elements of Israeli society and a move towards a more secularised state. Such youth I worked with regarded or feared the Disengagement as a defining moment in the history of the settlements and religious Zionism, potentially symbolising the end of the former and the weakening of the latter. This is one aspect of what motivated religious adolescents to engage so passionately in protest against it.

The Disengagement was cited in the press and by much of the public as a battle between the secular and religious forces in Israel. Because of the national religious values seemingly undermined by the evacuation of the settlements it was this section of the population that was most vocally against the Disengagement. The

national religious youth I worked with in *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* and *Ulpana Kfar Pines* lamented the fact that the secular population of Israel was seemingly happy to abandon these settlers and what it saw as Jewish land. The debate was split between the orange camp of those who were against the Disengagement and the blue camp of those who supported it, with individuals sporting these colours to show their support in the form of ribbons and wristbands. However, these camps were not as divided between “secular” and “religious” as feared by the national religious youth. The fact that so-called “secular” youth also wore orange highlighted the unfixable nature of such a category and the entanglement of secular Jewish Israeli identity with aspects of the religious. Despite the inherently religious component to Jewish Israeli identity there is still the ability to define oneself as a “secular” Jew, but such individuals did not necessarily preclude themselves from religious practices in their private lives. These might include the celebration of Jewish holidays and the incorporation of Jewish ritual customs such as during the Sabbath. My chapter on Disentangling the Secular unravels more deeply “formations of the secular” in line with Talal Asad’s (2003) work that encourages the historical contextualisation of such a concept when looking at its particular national construction. The “religious” and the “secular” do converge but such terms continue to be used by individuals to identify different communal groups and values.

Citizenship distinguishes “who are the people” and this is made explicit in Israeli society when contrasting the status of those within the Israeli state and those in the occupied territories. Kelly (2006) uses Mamdani’s (1996) distinction between “citizens” and “subjects” to highlight the different relationships residents of the West Bank have with the Israeli state. Whereas Israeli citizens are entitled to full participatory rights and accountability, Palestinian subjects in the West Bank are “subjected to the administrative and coercive power of the state”; they have “civil but not political rights” (Kelly 2006: 13). The fact that Jewish settlers in the occupied territories have full Israeli citizenship and are therefore entitled to the full protection of the Israeli government meant that the forced evacuation of them as a result of Ariel Sharon’s Disengagement policy challenged a number of the ethno-national and democratic commitments of the Israeli state.

The protests from the settlers and their sympathisers showed some of the differentiations within the apparent singularity of Jewish Israeli citizenship. The Disengagement raised the issue of whose interests within the Jewish Israeli collective should be represented. The national religious population saw it as an indication of their marginalisation within the political and social mainstream. The Disengagement was regarded as an abandonment of parts of the biblical Promised Land by some Israelis, who thereby condemned the action for its sidelining of Jewish religious national values. As Butenschon argues, “citizenship is best known by those who are denied it: the right to a passport;...the right to membership in a political community with access to decision making institutions and public welfare” (2000: 5), but it is also best invoked when there is a felt threat of exclusion or marginalisation. During the Disengagement, the national religious population I conversed with felt sidelined by the policy, seeing it as symptomatic of Israel’s increased secularisation and move away from Jewish values in the governance of Israel. Interestingly for this thesis, this perception was shared by the teens of the so-called “secular” population. These youths expressed sympathy for the fate of the Jewish settlers in Gaza, saying that the evacuated settlers were part of the national collective. As fellow citizens they expected better treatment of them when it came to their removal and re-settlement compared to what might occur with the Palestinians. Such issues that emerged during the Disengagement provoked my interest in how individuals themselves set and utilise the limits of Israeli citizenship when discussing their expectations of state protection and national belonging.

### **The Disengagement in the Context of “Post-Zionism”**

The fears of the religious population during the Disengagement are contextualised within a wider perception that Judaism in Israel is undergoing increased secularisation; a process that has been identified since the early 1990s (Ezrachi 2004; Liebman 1999; Schweid 1999, 2000, 2004). The Israeli religious scholar Eliezer Schweid (2004) suggests that the first generation of Israelis connected more with the traditions of Judaism compared to recent generations who have become complacent regarding the stability of their Jewish identity with the threat of assimilation or inter-marriage not a worry in Israel as it was in the Diaspora for these older generations. This along with mass immigration from the Soviet Union

which brought many hundreds of thousands of immigrants with little or no Jewish connection has been adjudged to have instigated a pattern of secularisation. Schweid also argues that the beginnings of a peace process in the early 1990s also relieved a degree of the existential threat that required “pan-Jewish unity at any cost” (2004: 258). These societal changes were accompanied by rapid industrialisation and trends towards greater individualism and values of personal freedom. Individuals did not want to endure further religious legislation that curtailed their personal liberties (Schweid 1999).

Such changes have been placed under the canopy of “post-Zionism”, a term introduced by the so-called “new historians” such as Benny Morris (1987, 1990) and Avi Shlaim (1995, 2001). These Israeli intellectuals confronted taboo issues such as the acquisition of land and the removal of Palestinian people by Jewish forces during the 1948 war, as well as addressing the underprivileged and marginalised status of the Mizrahi population. The sociologist Shlomo Swirski (1990) provided studies of the Mizrahim through their own voices as opposed to being represented by the Ashkenazi dominated intellectual sphere. The goal of post-Zionism is to move Israel towards being a country for all its citizens and not just a Jewish state; post-Zionist intellectuals such as the new historians and the likes of Ilan Pappé and the geographer Oren Yiftachel have argued for a depletion in the overall Jewish character of the Israeli state and “highlight the illusion of a society capable of being both ethnic and civic” (Pappé 2000: 43; Ezrachi 2004; Shafir and Peled 2002).

Using the term “post-Zionism” suggests that Zionism was, or ever could be over. Like post-colonialism it masks over the fact that systems of power and meaning continue, just with contemporary readings of it layered on top. As Aretxaga argues regarding the use of post-colonialism as an analytical concept, “like all post-somethings, while signalling a new arena of relationships, it retains and for its meaning depends on both the old colonial situation and contemporary readings of them” (1997: 12). As this thesis will reveal, Jewish Israeli youth continue to derive meaning from Zionist ethno-national discourses for defining their own identity and establishing boundaries of national membership. Although many Israeli youth do join the army for the satisfaction of individual goals or even simply because they

have to, they continue to relate to the Labour Zionist legacy of civil-military virtue through the fact it continues to be a shared national experience and one that satisfies full communal membership. The following section in this introduction discusses more fully the importance of recognising such nationalising effects of particular forms of Jewish Israeli citizenship activities.

### **Finding Nationalism**

This thesis builds on the anthropological endeavour of recognising that nationalism and citizenship are not only inventions of official state frameworks that seek to define a national consciousness where it is ingrained in the everyday lives of subjects through such effects as flags, money, and maps (Billig 1995), but that subjects themselves are also capable of producing nationalising effects. In anthropological efforts both Gellner (1964, 1983) and Anderson (1991) have identified numerous ways people “do” nationalism through such practices as singing nationally iconic songs like the Marseillaise and Waltzing Matilda, or reciting Michelet’s poetry that “exhumes” the war dead through remembrance of their national contribution. Such acts are deemed by Anderson (1991) to exemplify and realise a national imagination. Adding to this, my ethnography shows that Israeli youth do not only “imagine” themselves nationally, they feel tangibly linked through the shared experience of military service. By identifying this and other such intimacies of national membership I am able to provide some explanation as to why people are motivated to participate in a national experience or even die for their country. Neither Gellner (1964, 1983) nor Anderson (1991) have provided adequate material to show this.

In terms of feeling nationally connected, both Gellner (1964, 1983) and Anderson (1991) provide accounts for how nationalism became “awakened” and the conditions through which individuals may have come to think of themselves nationally. Both consider the vital role literacy has played in creating the conditions necessary for individuals to think nationally. In the same way that religious communities imagine themselves connected through a sacred language or written texts, Anderson suggests that with the advent of print media such as novels and newspapers national members could engage with “re-presentations” of “an

imagined community that is the nation” (1991: 25). He posits that in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe the reading of novels set in place the necessary consciousness of the idea of a “sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time” (Anderson 1991: 26). This, Anderson claims is comparable to the consciousness of imagining the nation - as a “solid community moving down (or up) history” (1991: 26). Anderson (1991) argues that this cultural development set in place a confidence that fellow nationals were in simultaneous activity, and hence a capacity for thinking nationally. He chooses to describe this concept of the nation as an “imagined community” in order to confer the sense of connectivity and mutual identification between national members. Anderson (1991) uses “imagined” because the majority of members will never meet, preferring this term in order to overcome Gellner’s (1964) emphasis on the nation as something that is invented or a “fabrication”. In Gellner’s work he explores the way the state fosters a national consciousness through the provision of equal access to education, where a centralised pedagogic framework engenders nationalism via the promotion of the nation’s “high culture” (1983: 142). As Anderson points out in his criticism of Gellner’s approach, it raises the problem of what then can be considered a “true” community (Anderson 1991: 6)? However, Anderson’s (1991) notion of an “imagined community” does not account for the related experiences individuals do have that produce a sense of nationhood.

Billig’s (1995) work on how everyday effects of “banal nationalism” such as money and passports reproduce the nation in the daily lives of citizenry has broadened what we identify as “nationalism”. He points out that it should not only be used as a means to describe “irrational” events such as wars and violence as it has been prone to, but also understood for the ways that it is entangled in everyday lives such as our own. However, he does not go as far as to delve into the way persons fashion themselves into national subjects as I show in this thesis, why they choose to reproduce nationalising effects.

My appreciation of national subject formation and the desire to be national in ones citizenship borrows from Iris Jean-Klein’s (2001) work where she argues that it is “un-useful to think of nationalism as positively or negatively charged”. In a context of Palestinian nationalism she contends that this has resulted in dismissing the



equally “hegemonic” forms of nationalism found in the practices of subaltern groups whose oppositional practices have been reduced to and indeed often valorised as acts of “resistance” (2001: 85). When I refer to “hegemonic forms” I mean to describe a set of relationships that establish the dominance of a particular group by being socially legitimated politically, economically, and ideologically. In the case of Israel, Ben-Ari and Lomsky-Feder suggest that Israeli militarism and associated security discourses espoused by the state have come to dominate “the very conceptual categories through which Israeli Jews think about the reality in which they live” (1999: 11). Jewish Israeli youth do in part reproduce these discourses defining a vision of Jewish Israeli nationhood. However, what Jean-Klein (2001) asks us also to do is recognise that those considered outside of the “hegemonic” order also produce alternative political, economic, and ideological arrangements that aspire for wider legitimacy and enforcement. Building on Swedenberg (1989, 1991, 1992), Jean-Klein identifies how in anthropological literature nationalism has emerged as a co-construction between the anthropologist and the anti-colonial struggles it describes, namely that anthropologists have been responsible for the production of nationalism in scholarly representations through its usage in categorising mainly “hegemonic and oppressive” cases vis-a-vis “positive, subaltern, and liberatory cases” which have been accommodated through terms such as “activism” and “resistance” (2001: 86). She argues that one “can no longer proclaim the innocence of everyday life in the production of nationalism” (Jean-Klein 2001: 87).

Using the term “self-nationalisation” Jean-Klein explains how “ordinary persons fashion themselves into nationalised subjects, using distinctive narrative actions and embodied practices that are woven into the practice of everyday life” (2001: 84). Her ethnography describes instances of when Palestinians have suspended everyday routines such as picnics or even weddings as a mark of their engagement in the nationalist struggle. Jean-Klein suggests it is these practices that need to be appreciated as equally hegemonic forms of nationalism as those performed by “institutional technologies and dominant discourses” (2001: 88). In the Palestinian case these instances of “self-nationalisation” render a form of nationhood where it is not yet fully institutionalised in an established State. In Israel, the State is

especially visible yet “self-nationalisation” through “knowing” and “doing” the army continues to be important for the reiteration of Israeli nationhood. My chapter on motivations to serve in the IDF allows us to see how individuals experience nationalism. For many youth, doing the army is intimately associated with feelings of responsibility to family and friends who have served before. It is an avenue through which individuals see themselves nationally, thus producing a sense of nationhood and collective membership.

For Jewish Israeli teens the IDF continues to provide the institutional context in which to experience what it is to be Israeli and this creates a sense of national membership. It becomes a personal and family orientated pursuit that ultimately has a nationalising effect. In appreciating the individual motivations to serve in the army this also allows us to differentiate between personal reasons for engaging in state institutions such as the IDF that promote a particular national image and their own interpretation of national discourses. In this regard Cohen’s (1996) concept of “personal nationalism” is useful. It encourages us to understand how national symbols and narratives are resourced by individuals in the construction of their own identities. At the same time it grants analytical space to appreciate ways individuals re-appropriate national elements in terms of what is significant to their own selfhood.

These “bottom-up” projections of nationalism allows us to witness how Israeli subjects transform the military and ethno-national discourses in which they are situated into subjective forms of social meaning. Earlier work by de Certeau (1984) and subsequently Aretxaga (1997) and most recently Allen (2006) has challenged the discursive determination in Foucault’s (1979) work. Foucault (1979) believed that subjectivities are a product of the “disciplined body”, “a subjectivity that has been created by an intersection of power practices related to dominant discourses and non-verbal practices” (Aretxaga 1997: 19). De Certeau (1984) subsequently challenged this by showing sites of transformation in what he called “oppositional practices in everyday life”. However, his theorising on resistance did not allow for the evocation of social agency in everyday practices and focused on “changing spaces of political intervention and subtle changes of meaning in dominant discourses” (Aretxaga 1997: 19). Working from this position, Aretxaga’s (1997)

ethnography on nationalist women in Northern Ireland shows how their expressions of maternal suffering under British rule were contextualised within the dominant signifying practices of Republican nationalism yet their nationalist sentiment was largely derived from their own shared understanding of the maternal predicament during the curfews at the time. This experiencing of nationalism as shared emotion is capable of producing new leases of national subjectivity outside of dominant frames. Lori Allen's (2006) work on the politics of Palestinian martyr commemoration shows how although martyr funerals are intended to inspire emotional empathy for the national struggle, such a "deluge of nationalism" also generates a feeling of ennui amongst Palestinians. However, this *zahiqa*, or feeling of being "fed up" with the inertia in the Palestinian national movement is a collective experience in itself that defines a Palestinian national body.

The following chapters embed nationalism in the subjective experiences of Jewish Israeli youth whilst contextualising them within collective practices such as military service and state ceremonies which embody the regime's ethno-national discourses. In my first chapter on the Disengagement and experiences of Jewish nationhood I show the "nation" is rendered through the direct experience of kin both in the shared experience of political participation against the withdrawal from Gaza and in doing military service. In this way I de-abstract the notion of nation from being an "imagined community" as Benedict Anderson (1991) postulates, to a tangible network of actual connectedness. Myths of common Jewish ancestry are supplemented by shared national experiences and the continued relevance of maintaining a Jewish genealogical line in Israel in order to maintain Israel as a Jewish state. My third chapter on Israeli state ceremonies and a community Independence Day celebration in the village of Yodfat where I lived, again shows the subjective and emotion driven ways individuals do nationalism, recognising how the state provides frameworks in which subjects can celebrate and enjoy experiences of togetherness through commemorations of their sacrifices for the nation.

## **A Non-Paradoxical Jewish National Subject**

Unravelling subjectivity is vital for understanding the multiple ways people make decisions about forms of national membership, where shared aspects of one's identity constitute a sense of shared belonging. My double status as both Jew and "foreigner", and thus potential "insider" or "outsider", had implications on how Jewish Israeli teens represented themselves and Israel to me. I have chosen to include the subjective experience in my analysis so as to appreciate the multiple, complex, inconsistent, and diverse aspects of the individual which drives particular relational orientations. Nigel Rapport (1997, 2003) encourages anthropologists to appreciate individuality and individual consciousness. As he points out, one's informants will have innately plotted a personal system, an "internal relation" (Winch 1970:107) between form and individual, before the researcher has. By doing so, Rapport argues that one grants the initiative to the individual in terms of determining their own directionality (2003: 175). With regards to my informants this is relevant to their motivations to serve in the army, and their desire to take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies, or protest the Disengagement. The drive to participate is derived from personal ambitions or responsibilities, and a subjectively mediated approach to ethno-national or republican discourses.

Much of this thesis reveals how individuals strategically negotiate national discourses in order to define aspects of their own identity. For instance the slogan, "Jews do not evict Jews" during the Disengagement was adopted by "religious" and "secular" Jews alike. Its use demarcated who they included in the national collective, and embodied both Jewish ethnic and religious narratives as well as capturing Jewish historical narratives of territorial dislocation. The instrumental use of nationalist discourses by individuals must be appreciated as not merely a "disciplined" product of discursive practices by a very visible state, but as an equally individuating creation of one's national subjectivity. As previously mentioned, such individual agency has often been credited to subaltern peoples and resistance movements who are seen to overtly challenge national master narratives, but we must also grant the same subjective freedom to those who choose to reproduce dominant national discourses. The subjective reasons for doing so emerge in this thesis where individuals continually move between different

languages of identification be they ethno-national or civic. As argued, a Jewish democracy is seen as contradictory in terms of its attempt to satisfy the ideals of a liberal democracy whilst also those of a specific ethnic group, yet this apparent paradox is representative of Jewish Israeli nationals. The pursuance of multiple interests by individuals is not considered paradoxical on the part of the individual but mutually constitutive of being a Jewish Israeli.

To best describe this process I have chosen to borrow Jean-Klein's term, "duplexity" which "allows the subject to pursue two discrete interests, problems, or projects at once – without it being undecided or ambiguous" (2001: 92). I believe this term is best expanded to "multiplexity" to confer the *multiple* sources of identity that constitute Jewish Israeli subjectivity. In this way analysis of subjectivity is granted the space to recognise the way individuals identify themselves via alternate and often seemingly contradictory ideological streams, without being patronised as either ambiguous or evasive in pursuing both of these interests. Recognition of this is especially important when looking at how "secular" Jewish Israelis continue to dip into aspects of Jewish religious practice in order to satisfy aspects of their own cultural identity. Individual multiplexity also emerges when looking at Israel's refuseniks, many of whom straddle both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives. Leftwing refuseniks who refuse to serve in the occupied territories claim to remain loyal to the values of Zionism and the Jewish state yet at the same time desire a greater emphasis on universal rights. Comparatively, rightwing religious refuseniks during the Disengagement campaigned for their democratic rights as they sought to use the secular machinery of the state to carry out a referendum. Such demands were made concurrently with their desire for greater protection of Jewish national religious values that prioritise Jewish ethnicity and Jewish *halacha* (religious laws). Such multiplexities establish the necessary ideological cross-associations to forge a Jewish democratic statist national philosophy that seems neither paradoxical nor necessarily a conundrum to those Jewish citizens who engage with it.

Much of the Jewish identity work done in this thesis contains within it my subjective experience as a Jew and the means by which I have and continue to construct this identity. With the journey from fieldwork to writing up near

completion I have come to recognise the extent to which this has driven my ethnography and research interests in both Israel and the ways Jewish identity constitutes one's sense of cultural and communal belonging. By looking inwards and thinking about the connections that constitute my Jewish identity, this has given me an appreciation of the contradictions that constitute Israeli identity and in fact any identity. Equally so, my experience in the field resembled a certain dualism that Rapport identifies, where as well as one's own subjectivity being able to provide an understanding of the drive in others, it is also by looking at the drive of others that one can also realise one's own "inwardness" (1997: 1). Looking at the complexity of the ethno-national and civic tensions that comprise Jewish Israeli identity provided a social projection of my own Jewish multiplexity. Although I do not believe Jewishness as an inherited archetype confers immediate intimacy with other Jews, my data confirms that it provides some closeness tempered by individual intentionality (see Rapport 2003). I describe myself as a secular Jew. Despite practicing Jewish rituals and customs infrequently I still strongly identify with my Jewish heritage. This has been inculcated by a family life infused with Jewish customs and celebrations. This Jewishness co-exists with an equal feeling of Britishness, constructed through alternative but equally determining "cultural intimacies" that produce a combined Jewish and British communal attachment. Such "cultural intimacies" are how Herzfeld (1997) describes the way national subjects produce a shared common sense based on everyday experiences and shared knowledge that come to iconically represent a feeling of nationhood. I use the term to confer those aspects of my Jewish identity that brought me closer to the identificatory experiences of those Jewish Israelis I worked with.

It was because of my Jewish background that I felt I had a degree of "intimacy" with my subject and those ethno-national discourses that comprised Jewish Israeli nation building. As a Diaspora Jew I had been encouraged by my family and synagogue to recognise Israel as the Jewish homeland, a sentiment reinforced by my participation as a teenager with the Jewish youth group Habonim. In terms of the existential importance invested in the establishment of a Jewish homeland, my late maternal Grandmother was a Holocaust survivor who had fled to Peru as a result of the Nazi occupation of Austria. In this way, although critical of certain

expressions of Jewish nationalism within Israeli society and its implications for non-Jewish residents of Israel and Palestine, I am well versed in the history of the Jewish people and have been directly exposed to the emotions and narratives that contributed to the establishment of the State of Israel. In *Veiled Sentiments* Leila Abu-Lughod (1988) describes herself as being in an “intermediate category” when it came to carrying out fieldwork with Bedouins, for she was of Arab descent but had grown up in the United States. She felt that because of her Arab background and time spent with her Arab family in Jordan she had internalised appropriate models of behaviour and would be sensitive to the cultural expectations of Bedouin society. However, Abu-Lughod (1988) states that she did not take into consideration how people would judge her for her relationship to a larger social world. She claims that without the introductions made by her father to her host Bedouin family they would have questioned why a single woman had seemingly been alienated by her family. Abu-Lughod’s (1988) intermediate category meant she was able to get intimate with the women’s world whilst her unmarried status also kept her position ambiguous.

Like Abu-Lughod (1988) my Jewishness, and the fact I had Jewish family in Israel created a set of assumptions on my part in terms of how I believed Jewish Israeli youth would consider me an “insider”. Where these assumptions were misplaced revealed some of the characteristics that made one a Jewish citizen of Israel over simply being part of a Jewish collective. Part of my willingness to always answer the question of whether I was Jewish from teenagers I worked with or other interested Jewish interlocutors revealed those assumptions about how my Jewish identity might posit me as an “insider” - how being Jewish would bring me closer to those whose experiences I was trying to understand. However, I would discover that there continued to be “a foreignness about my disposition” (Dominguez 1989a: 12). The fact I was Jewish only brought me so close to the experience of being Israeli. It meant that I could potentially be an Israeli citizen like them but in their eyes left me detached from what it was to “know” how to be Israeli. The way I was both included and othered as a Diaspora Jew came to reveal how Jewish Israeli teens subjected themselves in terms of their own sense of citizenship and the parameters of inclusion within that.

In Israel I am made constantly introspective about my identity. Israelis want to know one's religious background, one's nationality, and even one's marital status. From which, assumptions are frequently made about one's political attitudes, and also if one is "pro" Israeli or "pro" Palestinian. Why my identity should produce any such prejudices regarding these issues inspired much of my exploration into the nationalising processes and effects illuminated throughout this thesis.

## **Methods**

I decided to base myself in northern Israel, specifically Haifa and later in the village of Yodfat, a former Kibbutz and like Haifa also home to members of my family. Haifa is Israel's third largest city after Jerusalem and Tel Aviv with a population of around 270,000. I chose Haifa as it was a part of Israel I had not previously spent much time in and I also had a contact in a nearby regional high school on kibbutz Ma'agan Michael. As a former teacher at the school this contact was able to put me in touch with the English department there. It was from her that my school network blossomed. Aside from such practical considerations I was also keen to experience the north of Israel as it is demographically different from the central and southern regions I had previously lived in during earlier fieldwork. In the north, Jewish and Arab populations are in much greater contact with each other, mainly with regard to everyday commercial interactions. Haifa is also the only city where some public transport runs on the Sabbath. Out of the 270,000 residents 10% are Arab Israeli – this figure includes Muslims and Christians. The other 90% are classified as Jewish and other. A large part of this figure is also made up of former citizens of the Soviet Union. In the lower Galilee to the north east of Haifa where Yodfat is situated, Jewish towns and villages neighbour Arab ones. On the surface of it the demographics provided what Rabinowitz (1997) describes as numerous "border zones" in which identity is continually confronted, where it is potentially challenged or re-affirmed by the presence of the Other. Interactions between Jewish and Arab populations were in fact minimal with distinct social lives led by both groups. There is co-existence between the Jewish and Arab populations here but as one informant described, "they know the neighbourhoods but not inside the houses" (see also Lefkowitz 2004). By example, although 20% of Haifa



University's student population is Arab there is very little social intermingling, and the common areas are mapped by clearly distinguishable social groupings.

Haifa is built on a hill and there has evolved a significant geopolitical landscape. Typically socio-economic conditions were better the higher up one resided. Downtown Haifa where I stayed for the first two months in a youth hostel is largely comprised of Arab Israeli neighbourhoods which continue up to the mid-town area. In this mid level there is a large Russian commercial and residential area along with ultra orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods. Some of the neighbourhoods in this area have also been populated by young Jewish artisans, musicians, and writers. Continuing to the breezy top of the hill, the Carmel area is populated by and large with middle class Jewish Israelis, with some student neighbourhoods near to the Haifa university campus. It was here that I based myself from October 2004 to October 2005, where I lived with Clil a 21 year old Jewish Israeli in her final year of military service.

The first 4 months of my fieldwork were spent doing Hebrew language training at Haifa University which allowed me to achieve a reasonable level of conversational Hebrew. Growing up in a Jewish home and attending synagogue as a child meant that like many of my Jewish British contemporaries I was able to read but not understand Hebrew, I also had some foundation in modern Hebrew as a result of earlier fieldwork in 1999. A difficulty of developing one's Hebrew in Israel is that individuals are keen to practice their English with you and commonly speak it to a very high level. My flatmate Clil had to be continually reminded to speak Hebrew to me particularly as she was keen to practice English for her *psychometry* exams she was preparing for. Concerning the generation of youth I worked with they had an abundance of exposure to English from a variety of media sources such as MTV and US cable TV shows, none of these are dubbed and simply have Hebrew subtitles. Many teens had also even picked up Spanish from their addiction to Argentinean telenovellas, my cousin Adi being one such addict. The incentive to speak English amongst my teenage interlocutors came from a desire to travel outside of Israel after the army and it was also regarded as a necessary tool for job mobility.

Despite their acumen for languages, I felt that learning Hebrew was an important aspect of developing “cultural intimacy” with those I was working with (Herzfeld 1997). For the participant observation I intended to do it was essential for keeping the setting as ‘natural’ as possible (Burgess 1991). Although my Hebrew was not fluent I was able to understand conversations around me. This was essential for high school lessons I attended and for understanding the banter around me as I took part in social settings such as training sessions with teens from *Amit Lakosher* (an after school army preparation youth group) or hanging out in the pub in Yodfat. Teenage slang evolves rapidly and within a specific cultural moment that can be particular to the setting or relationship between individuals. For this reason I often took on the help of a pupil or research assistant to aid in the translation process. In the case of the pupils who assisted me I retained their services and friendship over the course of my fieldwork, consequently they became key informants. In particular Niv from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in Irony Aleph, Mor from the 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Levinson, Ben and Michael from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in Waldorf Harduf, and Ravid a member of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo’e*. Each became akin to an earpiece one might wear to receive translation in the United Nations as I sat in on their classes or break-time chats. Although a number of other students aided my integration and understanding in schools these mentioned students offered up much of their time and patience. Their fluency in English and mutual interest in what I was doing granted me greater access to the educational and social lives of them and their classmates. These individuals became my most valuable research assistants whose representations of what *they* thought I should know about what it was to be a Jewish Israeli teen became as important as my observations of doing and knowing Israeliness.

During the first four months of language training at Haifa University it became clear that my initial plans for research, whereby I would be spending time with teenagers in their first year of military service was not possible. It proved far too problematic to gain access to them and receive various permissions from the IDF. Where I was able to get access was in schools and youth groups and so it was in these environments I decided to base my fieldwork. These arenas meant I could spend a considerable amount of time with Israeli teenagers and experience the

educational and social worlds in which they were situated as they approached their national service. Because I intended to focus my research on Israeli citizenship and conceptions of nationhood largely with regard to military service I chose not to include Arab youth as they are not required to do it. I also felt that Arab youth deserved a separate and extended analysis. This minority in itself is very diverse, each with a very distinct cultural context and adolescent trajectory. I did not have the time or indeed the language skills to examine this. This separation I have made also mirrors the distinct social worlds that Jewish Israeli youth and Arab Israeli youth maintain in general. Although Arab and Jewish students both follow a national curriculum they attend separate schools and different youth groups. Another group I omitted was the ultra orthodox *Haredi* Jews. They are an insular group whose membership requires strict Jewish observance, sections of whom choose to remain detached from mainstream Israeli social and political life. The *Haredim* are also given exemptions from national service and follow a very different path of religious education.

### *Schools as a Research Setting*

In endeavouring to represent the voices of youth, schools became the most practical setting in which to gain access to and forge relationships with the cohorts I was most interested in. This thesis is not an anthropology of schools and education nor is it an analysis of pedagogical knowledge production, however, looking at “cultural production” through the interplay of individual agency and educational structures did become relevant when looking at army preparation classes and school memorial day ceremonies (Levinson and Holland 1996: 3; Froerer 2007; Kaplan 2006). Such educational settings meant I did take into consideration the pedagogical implementation of Jewish nationalism and how this was digested by the students. It also provided an opportunity to exemplify the lack of dissonance between the state and individual in terms of those national frameworks and histories with which people identify their Israeliness.

As previously identified in relation to Gellner’s (1983) work, schools and education have played a vital role in nationalist projects and nation building. Earlier works by Durkheim (1961) and Althusser (1971) focused on the disciplinary aspect of

education where the school apparatus is considered a powerful means of inculcating subjectivities and the ideologies of the state. In such a context, schools provide an apparatus for social reproduction and continuity, and as highlighted with regard to Zionist and Jewish education in Israel, schools frequently exist as sites of moral and political contestation. Ideas are tested and fought out in such a setting, with youth targeted as fertile ground for the imparting of fresh cultural and societal capital. Since Paul Willis' (1980) *Learning to Labour* far more agency has been granted to social actors in schools, appreciating students as capable of shaping their school life and not being simply subsumed by disciplined activities. Subsequent work by Bénéï (2001), Froerer (2007), and Levinson and Holland (1996) has built on this showing that as well as being culturally produced, the "educated person" also culturally produces cultural forms (Levinson and Holland 1996: 14). Bénéï's (2001) ethnography of Maharashtra schools showed that nationalist sentiment could not simply be imposed from above but was largely connected with by the pupils through more local, personal, and often regional associations with the state. Both Bénéï (2001) and Froerer (2007) argue that the pupils in their respective Indian schools have a far more utilitarian response to the discipline imposed on them as opposed to an ideological one, where according to the authors, the educational apparatus attempts to ingrain Hindu nationalism through the body (Bénéï 2001; Froerer 2007). Froerer (2007) describes how the pupils from her school associated beatings with studying properly and subsequently doing well in exams as opposed to connecting it with Hindu nationalist ideology. As we will see, this utilitarian approach to educational forms is apparent amongst Israeli youth as they endure army preparation classes for the sake of being able to succeed as individuals in society. As such, as well as being culturally produced, the "educated person" must also be examined in terms of culturally producing cultural forms, and understood in conjunction with other contexts that one becomes "knowledgeable" in (Levinson and Holland 1996). This is especially important now with multiple media resources and an increasingly global society in which youth engage. The youth I worked with have therefore been considered in terms of not only of their educational contexts, but also the youth groups in which they are involved, and their wider social, familial, and religious networks.

As a research setting the school provided the most practical way to gain access to the widest cross-section of Israeli youth and get an understanding of the different communal groups and their particularist interpretations of such issues as military or national service and the Disengagement. The schools I chose to base myself in represented a variety of streams from which Israeli youth were enlisting or indeed avoiding military/national service. By using a network of educational establishments and youth groups associated with some of the students I was able to engage with a spectrum of Israeli youth. This included not only religious and secular individuals but represented the ethnic mix of the region comprising pupils of both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi backgrounds, individuals of Ethiopian descent, and those whose parents came from former Soviet states. Traditionally these groups have been defined by specific political attitudes and communal identities which needed to be considered when looking at the dialogue between state narratives and individual subjectivities. This approach was in part a method of network analysis whereby I took into consideration the interlinkages between institutional spheres (Boissevain 1979). The systematic approach that network analysis encourages helped situate groups of teenagers where otherwise they may be widely dispersed in such an urban setting as Haifa. The relationship between institutional sites and personal histories did have consequences for some of my informants' social actions, having some bearing on the types of education they received and the army units they chose.

Having obtained permissions from the Ministry of Education in Haifa I spent time in a total of nine schools before ultimately spending the majority of my fieldwork in what became five key establishments. In Haifa I attended state high schools Irony Aleph and Irony Gimmel, as well as the prestigious private Reali School, and Wizo municipal high school for arts and design. Outside of Haifa I attended the Ma'agan Michael kibbutz regional high school, and the private Rudolph Steiner School Waldorf Harduf on kibbutz Harduf. As well as these so-called secular establishments I also worked in Levinson state-religious high school in Kiryat Yam (a neighbouring district of Haifa), and two religious seminaries, namely *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* for boys and *Ulpana Kfar Pines* for girls. My five main field sites

became Irony Aleph, Levinson, *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e*, *Ulpana Kfar Pines*, and Waldorf Harduf School.

I initially chose Irony Aleph as Sharon, a research assistant I had recruited for my initial encounters, was an ex pupil of the school and had been able to arrange with the principal a chance to meet with some of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students and discuss their thoughts on military service. As with the other schools, permission was granted on the basis that it was an opportunity for students to practice their English with a native speaker. This was a problem I had to confront when doing interviews in which I wanted students to express themselves as freely as possible. I decided to focus on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade as it is in these two year groups that students become confronted with the process of enlistment into the IDF, or for religious females the option of national service. It is in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade that individuals begin to receive their *tzav rishon*, their first call up to the army where they receive a profile assessment from which their suitability to particular units is ascertained. It is also the moment when those who do not intend to serve for political reasons or lack of motivation must state their intentions or attempt to negotiate their position. Although most of my interviews and friendships were with students in these two year groups I did also interact with some members of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, particularly during my time with youth groups. By engaging with these three grades I was able to experience the trajectory these pupils follow as they approach a key life stage in Israeli civic and national life.

Irony Aleph provided a large pool of teens from which to obtain some key informants and the opportunity to attend army preparation classes run by officers from the IDF education corps. The decision to also base myself in Levinson was to provide a comparative context for these IDF courses but also to experience the state-religious education format. The educational framework here embraces the secular values of the state whilst also integrating Jewish religious education, encouraging a Jewish way of life. The negotiation of this at the educational level provided an arena in which to experience how the state balances religious and secular loyalties. This also mirrored the secular-religious duality of the students. Students in Levinson characteristically came from “traditional” Jewish backgrounds and more “religious” homes than those in Irony Aleph. The Ethiopian immigrant

families from which many of the Levinson pupils came from hoped this education would inculcate a greater identification with the Jewish faith compared with what they might receive in the Irony high schools. The pupils themselves did not necessarily identify with this “traditional” identity in the same way as their parents did but their backgrounds constituted a section of the Israeli population not as represented in Irony Aleph.

National religious males were now populating some of the most prestigious IDF units. In 2003 they made up 30% of combat soldiers – a high figure considering the national religious sector is 15% of the total population (Glick 2006). In terms of my interest in motivation to serve in the army and understanding experiences of nationalism, this was a population I was keen to work with as intimately as with “secular” and “traditional” youth. For many, the political and ideological divisions over the Disengagement represented a widening gap between Israel’s religious and secular populations, I therefore wished to discuss the issue and the pro-active involvement of national religious youth in dissent towards the government’s policy. *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo’e and subsequently *Ulpana* Kfar Pines afforded that opportunity. Again in the *yeshiva* I was given access to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade with whom I could conduct interviews and socialise with in the dorms during the students’ free time. Access to the *yeshiva* was facilitated by my contacts in the English department who also put me in touch with the *ulpana* in Kfar Pines.

Like the *yeshiva*, the *ulpana* too was a single sex boarding school as is characteristic of Jewish orthodox education. The importance of contributing to the nation as emphasised in religious Zionism was equally important for females as it was for boys. Because military service was regarded as incompatible with female orthodoxy the route of national service was encouraged as a means to contribute to the Jewish nation. In order to ascertain a fuller picture of how national religious youth define their contours of belonging I therefore felt it important to include these students from the *ulpana*. Because I was male, access to the students was more restricted than in other institutions but aside from an initial supervised session with girls from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, I was given the opportunity to return and carry out further interviews in smaller groups with the girls. I was also invited to attend a day of workshops with students from the *ulpana* and female pupils from the Reali school

in Haifa. The *ulpana* provided one of the few arenas in which I could converse with religious females, the other was a special needs school in which a group were volunteering as part of their national service. I had access to this school through my cousin Hanna from Yodfat who ran art and drama therapy sessions with the children.

The Waldorf Harduf School on Kibbutz Harduf is based on the educational ethos of Rudolph Steiner. This form of education is characteristically more liberal than those schools that adhere solely to state curricula. It prides itself on a more holistic form of pedagogy that aspires to bring out all aspects of a child's personality, nourishing both the intellectual and creative dimensions of its students. I was initially drawn to this school for two reasons; the first being a connection to a number of its 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, the second reason being my interest in what were essentially army preparation classes run for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students that took place in a context of a weekly general studies class. Regarding the former, my cousin Boas was a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student at Harduf, and living next door to him whilst in the village of Yodfat I also came to be on good terms with many of his friends who also attended the school. Both Boas and his family informed me that if I wanted to explore a "typical" Israeli school, particularly regarding their approach to the army, then I was going to get a far from characteristic case study at Harduf. What was almost a warning was grounded on a perception that the school was uncharacteristically leftwing compared to the rest of Israel, with a less formal attitude towards education. I was told that both the students and the teachers would not give me a "general" picture of political and social attitudes in Israel. Acquaintances unconnected to the school at the Centre for Jewish Education in Haifa University also had concerns. These were based on the fact that such schooling was only available to the social elite and as such my findings would be representative of that.

Working with the students in Harduf was one of the most emotionally and anthropologically rewarding experiences of my fieldwork. Living in Yodfat with some of the students provided me with some continuity as to the life worlds of these teens, and the more informal structure of school life allowed me to work with the students in a more relaxed environment than in the other institutions.



Analytically, despite suggestions that these Harduf students were not typical of your “average” Israeli teens, they were still confronted with the same citizenship challenges pupils from the mainstream high schools faced, and in particular the melting pot of military service. They too were concerned with issues of Israeli security, and requirements to be a contributing citizen whilst at the same time desiring the freedom to pursue one’s individual goals.

All Jewish Israeli youth are still in some way constituted by the citizen-soldier dynamic and its legacy in national identity, not simply because there continues to be conscription, but also because of family histories, and its saturation in popular culture. The unavoidable nature of military service and its dissemination through Israeli society is exemplified by the fact that Harduf School needs to incorporate such education whilst also trying to actively subvert the encroachment of Israeli militarism on school life. The army is an aspect of citizenship that most directly engages Israeli youth at this age and consequently the onus falls on every school to best prepare these students for it. Working in Harduf allowed me to further witness the pervasiveness of military matters on these teenagers’ life worlds and how it continues to constitute their national subjectivity. It also allowed me to observe how Israeli militarism is ultimately reproduced.



Figure 3: Waldorf Harduf School

*Methods for Exploring Citizenship and Nationalism from the “Bottom-up”*

With my youngest informants aged 16 years old it meant there was approximately ten years of an age gap between many of the students and myself at the time of my fieldwork. As such I could not rely on the hope that Israeli teens would choose to socialise with me and thus facilitate a more informal setting in which to be a participant observer. My presence in schools and youth groups, particularly *Amit Lakosher* (Comrades in Fitness) and En Ayala youth club with regard to the latter enabled me to act as both a participant-as-observer and observer as participant (Burgess 1991). I was able to take up such a role in the army preparation classes in Irony Aleph, Levinson, and Harduf where I would sit in the classes noting and recording that which was being taught, the responses of the students, and any such asides that my assigned helper would provide. It was in such a capacity that I came to know Niv, Mor, Ravid, Ben and Michael who I mentioned earlier. As well as translating they would also provide some background as to their classmate’s questions and any heckling that might be taking place. It became a vital forum in which to gain exposure to the issues that concerned teens regarding upcoming military service, and identify some of the characters that might be interested in doing in-depth interviews with me. Importantly it also showed that I had some knowledge of what they were encountering, giving me a certain amount of credibility in their eyes. This was reinforced even further when I attended with the Irony Aleph 11<sup>th</sup> grade their *gadna*, a weeklong army preparation course that takes place on an IDF base.

Ira the IDF education officer in Irony Aleph and her counterpart Ilanit in Levinson ran the army preparation courses and gave me full access to their classes and teaching materials. Ira was 21 and in her second year of military service. Her parents were from Belarus and came over to Israel when she was two years old. Initially Ira did not want to go to the army, preferring to study instead. The decision to study was also encouraged by her parents. As a result of not doing as well in the *psychometry* exams as she had hoped, she decided to postpone her ambitions to read either chemistry or economics at university. Ira planned to re-apply to Haifa’s prestigious Technion University after re-doing the exams on



Figure 4: 12<sup>th</sup> grade class of secular-state high school Irony Aleph



Figure 5: 11<sup>th</sup> grade class of Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e

completion of her military service. Like Ira, Ilanit was also in her second year of military service and in fact knew Ira from another IDF education project they worked on together. Ilanit was from Kiryat Haim which was only a twenty minute drive from Levinson. She too planned to go on and study, hoping to read law. Her most immediate ambition was to go travelling around the United States, and it was dreams of this that kept her motivated to power on through the final months of her military service.

Both Ira and Ilanit were especially generous with their time, particularly during recess when they would have to field questions from me as well as from students wanting advice on their upcoming enlistment. Being not much older than the pupils they were working with and coming from the same region meant they could relate closely to the students they were trying to help. Consequently they were also an excellent conduit for my own inquiries. In Harduf, Yaakov with occasional help from Gilad the homeroom teacher and vice principal, ran the army preparation classes in the Rudolph Steiner school. Gilad was an acquaintance of my cousin Hanna from Yodfat and it was he who introduced me to his colleague Yaakov. They were equally open to having me sit in on their sessions, with pupils Ben and Michael guiding me through classes in between participating themselves.

As well as making field notes and recordings during my time in the classroom throughout my time in all of the schools, I also acquired with the consent of the students a number of ethnographic documents such as assignments written by the students during class, and essays they had written on topics I felt were relevant to my research. Group discussions provided the initial entry into getting to know the students, and this was especially useful in *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* and *Ulpana Kfar Pines* where there were no army preparation classes to attend. It was in-depth interviews and group discussions that provided much of my research data. During my time in schools and youth groups I carried out a number of interviews with Jewish Israeli teens. By and large this was split between students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade with some candidates from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. From each class I worked with I also tried to choose an even split of males and females. Regarding my questions on military service this allowed me to explore any such gendered roles regarding Israeli militarism. Although the IDF prides itself on its integration of

female soldiers, many of the female students I worked with still felt the roles offered were not as rewarding as those available to men, and also highlighted instances of sexual harassment.

My initial interviews with the students were directed towards understanding the familial and ethnic backgrounds of the students and also their thoughts on military or national service. This provided me with a starting point for understanding the family and social life in which the students were immersed. It also provided early material on those aspects motivating or deterring service in the IDF or national service. The benefit of working with the students over a long period meant I was able to establish some representativeness and also carry out further in-depth interviews with some of these initial candidates and explore other issues that arose during the course of my fieldwork. The Disengagement in particular became a central topic of discussion which, owing to the nature of it incorporated attitudes towards the role of the IDF and the Jewish-secular character of Israeli society. The semi-structured nature of these interviews meant that the direction of interviews often followed a path deemed relevant to the interviewee. It was the material provided here that allowed me to reflect on how the students orientated themselves with regard to my position as a foreign Other yet potential national member. How individuals chose to represent Israel and Israeliness to me in these one on one interviews provided an equally important moment in which to witness how these teens demarcate their parameters of belonging.

As I spent more time with the students I developed friendships with some of them. Obtaining the necessary permissions also meant I was able to arrange meetings outside of school and chat with them online. The latter proved to be a particularly useful tool for my research. I found my new found “cyber-buddies” to be far less reserved and considerably more frank in their online chats with me. Accompanying this cyber tool were also the teenage weblogs used by some of the students. These share the characteristics of a diary where one can divulge one’s personal emotions or opinions on any such topic, yet at the same time, they are written with knowledge of a potential audience. With a whole range of topics from army recruitment to relationship troubles, Israblog was the site I explored most. Blog categories on the site are also broken down to age groups allowing one to whittle

down those blogs that might be useful. As with any ethnographic document analysis understanding who it is written for and what the reader must know to make sense of it produced further material as to how individuals might be included or excluded from Jewish Israeli teenage national membership (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

It was in Yodfat where I lived for the last 8 months of my fieldwork that I was more able to engage socially and informally with youth, spending time with my cousin Boas and his friends. Yodfat is a small village of around 40 families with a strong sense of community that is derived from its kibbutz origins of the late 1960s, and also its restrictions on membership and property ownership. Unlike many other kibbutzim its guiding philosophy was not of Labour Zionism, although sharing many of its communal characteristics and ideals of working the land, the founders were followers of Solomon Schechter the exponent of Conservative Judaism. One is a member of Yodfat as opposed to being purely a resident, there is a communal intimacy and shared sense of identity as one would have in a club. The families all know each other, and front doors are left open for the welcoming of uninvited visitors. The kitchen in my cousin Hannah and her husband Danny's home was a social hub for her son Boas and all his friends; the fridge was a free-for-all and the tea seemingly on tap. Being immersed in this family not only enabled me to witness the relevance of friendship and kinship ties in the decision to do military service, but also being part of the community allowed me to experience why and how people do nationalism. Although I had experienced memorial days in the schools I worked at, those that took place for *Yom HaZikaron* in Yodfat conveyed the personal essence and intimate associations people feel for the national experience through direct ties of family and community. Nationalism is also something that is enjoyed and it was the Independence Day celebrations in Yodfat that provided a setting in which to appreciate the emotional aspect of nationalist sentiment.

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The following chapters will now go on to show how Jewish Israeli youth utilise Jewish democracy as a productive tension. What might be considered paradoxical

in fact resembles the multiplexity of Jewish Israeli identity. The encounters described in this thesis provide a picture of Jewish Israeli youth citizenship and specific moments when Jewish, republican, and liberal sensibilities compete or converge to produce a feeling of identity and national membership. In light of this, chapter two focuses on the Jewish part of being a Jewish democratic citizen, examining how Jewish kinship metaphorically, legally, and practically creates a sense of national intimacy for these youth. Given that secularism is a key attribute of a liberal democratic state, chapter three looks at how the state juggles this with its strong Jewish ethnic character but also then what secularism means to those who consider themselves “secular”, and those religious youth who reject it. The chapter therefore looks at both formations of “the secular” and “the religious”, bearing in mind that aspects of the latter are also in part willingly incorporated by those who identify themselves as “secular”. Chapter four looks at how nationalism is reproduced by individuals in state rituals. I examine why Jewish Israeli teens continue to choose to take part and re-affirm their ethno-national identity despite their frequent apathy and cynicism. Chapters five and six deal with the contemporary ways these teens confront civic republicanism and ethno-national discourses in relation to military service and full civic and national membership. The sixth chapter makes explicit the contours of belonging set out by military service, and the moral boundaries of belonging and commitment that are seen to be transgressed by refusing to perform it.

## 2. The Disengagement and Experiences of Jewish Israeli Nationhood

### Who is included?

In my initial encounters with Jewish Israeli high school teens, whether religious students at *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo'e or secular pupils in Irony Aleph high school, the question I was asked most frequently was, "are you Jewish?" I would be surprised to encounter such a persistent enquiry in England, my home country, but in Israel I came to expect this question and was rarely reluctant to answer it. During these first meetings with my assigned 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes, I could barely finish explaining where I came from and what I was interested in, before a student would interject and ask if I was Jewish. The question was equally important to potential landlords when flat hunting, or to interested punters I chatted to whilst having a drink in Haifa's The Bear pub. The frequency of this question gave me the initial impetus to reflect on the importance of ethnicity and how Jewish relatedness continued to be used as an inclusory or exclusory practice by individuals. The fact I was Jewish provided me with some "intimacy" and potential for belonging. At these different moments it was pertinent for different issues, but in each instance it inspired a certain relational orientation on their part in terms of legitimising a more inclusive relationship with me. In the classroom the pupils wanted to know if I was sympathetic to Israelis with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict; Shlomit, who was to become my future landlady, used it as a form of character reference and opportunity to match-make her daughter, and in the pub Charlie the barman felt it legitimised my interest in Israel as a research topic.

The inclusory practices performed here are derived from an abstract form of kinship and mutuality through common Jewish descent. Many nation building projects have used what is an abstract form of kinship and myths of common ancestry to establish a sense of ethnic nationhood. Furthermore, kinship metaphors are typically seen to promote a national sense of togetherness so that our fellow citizens are referred to as "brothers" and "sisters", or one's country as the "motherland". As well as exposing the way such myths and metaphors are invoked to create a sense



of belonging and togetherness in Israel, this chapter will also show there are legal ways in which the state of Israel reinforces Jewish kinship as the most legitimate form of national belonging, and that individuals choose to re-affirm such measures because of a desire to maintain Israel as a Jewish state. I argue that in the lives of the Jewish Israeli teens I worked with, a feeling of nationhood is most significantly derived from a practical form of kinship whereby there is an intimate form of national relatedness through direct shared experiences of kin and friends through military service and other familial experiences of national participation. Through the legal measures of the state and these shared experiences kinship's contribution to nationhood is not imagined solely as an abstraction but a tangible network of relatedness that is gladly reproduced.

The type of national intimacy that this produces is in part illuminated by Herzfeld's (1997) notion of "cultural intimacy" which describes how a sense of solidarity within a nation-state is produced through a communal process of cultural recognition. Herzfeld examines national culture as that which is built from "relational signs" that are found in social life and "reduced to timeless icons" with a sense of nationhood created out of a "metonymic extension of intimacy" (1997: 28). An Israeli example might be that of "straight-talking", referred to in Hebrew as *dugri* which has come to describe a characteristic of Israeliness as being direct or blunt in one's manner of speaking. This has been argued by Katriel (1986) as embodying the mythic New Jew of the Israeli state in contrast to the oppressed exiled Jew of the Diaspora. As Herzfeld (1997) points out, the anthropological researcher strives to achieve social intimacy during fieldwork; my Jewishness provided me with some such intimacy as reflected by those interactions described, if not full shared relatedness because of my Englishness. In this chapter I will explore the role of kinship as not only a metaphor but as pro-active in producing a sense of Jewish national intimacy in Israel. Kinship myths commonly constitute national narratives by providing a genealogical basis for membership and recruitment that is historically traceable. It is a mechanism that attempts to naturalise membership to a national community which is then "institutionalised by laws and practices of citizenship" (Joseph 2000: 108). In Israel, Jewish descent through the maternal line in accordance with Jewish *halacha* (law) confers the right

to Israeli citizenship. In this sense biological kinship is a primary characteristic of not only Jewish membership but also membership to the Israeli state which has been built on the basis of being a homeland for the Jewish people. This right of blood, or *jus sanguinis*, dominates Israel's master narrative.

Jewish nationalism became an important feature of the anti Disengagement movement with the slogan "Jews do not expel Jews" becoming a prominent expression of support for the settlers in Gaza. This also emanated from individuals who were not wholly against the Disengagement but empathised with the settlers' eviction from their homes. The ensuing support and participation in protests against the Disengagement on the part of my teenage interlocutors revealed how Jewish nationalism is not simply perceived abstractly through kinship, whereby the nation is an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983). The Jewish Israeli teens I worked with articulate a nationalism that is a product of direct relatedness with other national members and also the direct experience of known kin. The nation as an imagined community grounds an understanding of nationalism as a form of metaphoric kinship and although Jewish national narratives do create a mythology of common descent that is drawn upon during the Disengagement, there is also that aspect of kinship that is practical and de-abstracted by a feeling of relatedness to the experiences of known relatives or one's equivalents who are participating in such encounters as the Disengagement or military service. Amongst my own family in Israel the emergence of Israeli statehood is remembered in part through the experiences of Grandparents who came over to Israel as pioneers, and subsequent generations have all in some way contributed to the state through the army. Soldiers taking part in the Gaza evacuation process could potentially encounter friends or family members, and IDF casualties reported in the newspaper were not anonymous recruits in a far-flung field but old classmates or siblings. It is through such encounters that experiences of nationhood become tangible and de-abstracted from a purely imaginary collective. This chapter will focus on the importance of kinship as a definable network of shared experiences as a means of looking at nation and nationalism.

## **De-Abstracting Kinship and Nationalism**

Nationalism has classically been presented as a “*state-centred* form of collective subject formation” (my emphasis) as opposed to the people-centred approach I wish to take in this chapter which de-abstracts kinship through actual shared intimacies (Friedland 2001: 137; Herzfeld 1997). This does not negate the discursive influence of national symbols and myths in equipping individuals with a shared sense of history and identity, but as Cohen points out, how these are digested and the ultimate “construction of the nation remains in the individual’s power...symbols are a means with which to think rather than compelling us” (1996: 811-812). It is the literature on more abstract notions of nation and nationalism that I first wish to discuss before looking at experiences of nationhood through more practical forms of kinship. These practical aspects of kinship include laws of citizenship pertaining to biological descent that define national membership, and the direct experience of family members who have participated in the national project either historically or in current service to the state. The final part of this chapter will also look at the relevance of family values in Jewish cultural identity that emerged as individuals empathised with settler families being uprooted from their homes. This will lead on to a discussion of paternalism, specifically Ariel Sharon’s credentials as father figure. On one hand his political rhetoric was symbolic but his participation in wars and the nation building process also makes him intimately connected to the national members he tries to represent.

Anderson’s (1991) theoretical work on nationalism attempted to understand the strength of national identity amongst members of a nation state. He proposed a definition of nation as an “imagined political community” (Anderson 1991: 6). By “imagined” Anderson suggests members of a nation “will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (1991: 6). Amongst this he describes how citizens of the state, such as isolated Javanese fisherman imagine themselves part of a wider national community through “indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship” (1983: 6). In this sense the nation is regarded as an abstract family and as such kin based metaphors are frequently used to encourage individual members to confer the same emotional sentiment toward the state as they would towards kin. During the

Disengagement Ariel Sharon asked that Israelis “construct a dam against brotherly hatred” (Cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004). Kin terms have also been used to symbolise gender specific national roles where women are valued as “mothers of the nation” with the maternal role valorised for preservation of the nation. Jewish national religious ideology subjects women as “mothers of Zion”, and Aretxaga (1997) has described Madonna-like images of mothers of martyrs in Northern Ireland (see also Kanaaneh 2002; Swirski 2000; Yuval-Davis 1987). However, these symbolic female roles also have the potential to be translated in to actual limitations on women. Kanaaneh (2002) has shown that in the Palestinian nationalist movement the nationalisation of women’s reproductive duties limits them to a particular form of participation.

Anderson’s (1991) account shows the potential of nationalism to create a sense of relatedness and common destiny. However, he never gets to the root of what combination of relationships ultimately motivate a sense of national commitment that will inspire individuals to for instance fight and even die for their country. As mentioned in my introduction, Herzfeld (1997) has attempted to answer this and argues that such nationalism is predicated on a sense of nationhood that is derived from everyday shared cultural engagements that build up an assemblage of iconic national criteria. His analysis of the Balkan conflict which he claims draws “sustenance from highly intimate and localised values” provides the basis for why nationalism is embraced (Herzfeld 1997: 33). He believes that the fact familial metaphors are used so readily in conceptions of nationhood lends support to the idea that a sense of “nation” is constructed out of different “intimacies”, with nationalism “predicated on resemblances” (Herzfeld 1997: 13, 21). Building on Herzfeld’s work I argue that nationalism is embedded in the interests and everyday experiences of citizens. It is this that evokes a sense of nationhood through distinguishable “nets of kinship”, that includes direct experiences and felt responsibility. I will return to this and some of the work that has been done on nationhood and specific kin relationalities later in this section.

In terms of nation building, kinship terms play an important role in making the nation “natural” within official state narratives. Kinship is associated with blood ties and therefore to construct citizenship through such perceived genealogical

connectedness naturalises the relationship between nation and state (Hobsbawm 1990; Joseph 1999, 2000). The state is presented as a necessity “to order the natural nation” (Herzfeld 1997: 39). National myths of descent are institutionalised through laws of citizenship that define who can be counted as eligible for membership, doing so by defining “political purpose, assigning status, and distributing power” (Smith 1997: 30). Using Judaism as a form of common national membership was a means to band together the variety of Jewish ethnic distinctions and subcultures contained within the Diaspora. The new Israeli state was to be specifically a Jewish homeland. Israeli “nationalist biopolitics” continue to privilege Jewish blood descent (Kahn 2000; Kanaaneh 2002) as does Israel’s Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law passed on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 which attempts to maintain a Jewish demographic majority in Israel.

Israel’s policies on kinship have constructed a legal community from a mythology of common descent that privileges *jus sanguinis*. The law of return stipulates that anyone of Jewish descent through the maternal line is eligible for Israeli citizenship. The politics of blood has great strength in setting up national boundaries, discourses about it “tie us down and hold us in or out” (Kelly and Kaplan 2001: 65). When Ethiopians who identified themselves as Jews were brought over to Israel via Operation Moses in 1984 they were made to undergo orthodox conversions as it was not taken for granted that they were of genuine Jewish blood descent. Only once this was done did they achieve full national membership. Kelly and Kaplan (2001) have shown the power of blood descent in terms of symbolising particular loyalties. During the Second World War Japanese Americans were doubted for their allegiance. Only by shedding blood through service in the United States army, through “blood of sacrifice” would loyalty be proven (Kelly and Kaplan 2001). In the Israeli case my Jewish blood descent indicated the potential for communal loyalty but for the teens I worked with full Israeli membership would be achieved by “shedding” for the nation. In the case of Palestinian Israeli citizens it could be argued that their blood identity places suspicions on their capability of loyalty to the Jewish state therefore exempting them from compulsory military service.

Nationalist projects such as German nationalism have commonly used “volk” centred strategies for nation building, that emphasised an idea of nation that is an “organic cultural, linguist, racial community” a “*volksgemeinschaft*” (Brubaker 1996: 169). West Germany continues to use German descent and an ethnocultural commonality to define its membership, with shared blood as the generative category of kinship (Borneman 1992: 51). This is in contrast to East Germany where Borneman describes a “universalised membership” where national integration is through being socialist (1992: 80). French nationalism also “de-differentiates” people where nationhood is state centred. French nationhood is the result of statehood as opposed to the basis of statehood as with German nationalism (Brubaker 1996).

Israeli nationalism resembles a convergence of German and French styles of nationalism without seeing the two as necessarily opposed. Whilst prioritising an ethnic construction of nationhood Israel also promotes a participatory, republican approach to full national membership. As my chapter on motivation to serve in the IDF will show, this civic citizenship is also in part derived from kinship responsibilities. Kinship is again de-abstracted as a motivating force behind civic-mindedness as it is recognition of familial participation in the army or Jewish national struggles, be it fighting for statehood or challenging the Disengagement, that inspires contribution to the state.

Whilst kin policies in Israel have helped in the realisation and reification of a Jewish state for the Jewish people, the state’s kin strategies in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) have been described by Borneman (1992) as instrumental in codifying socialist and liberal-democratic ideologies respectively. By example Borneman discusses the FRG’s structuring of domestic life through marriage laws that are intended to symbolise an ideational framework of a “stable society with homogenous moral standards” (1992: 291). He claims that in this way the state attempts to reinforce the experience of belonging to nation. Borneman (1992) goes on to argue that the state’s kinship strategies cannot hope to standardise all the multiplicities of its members’ experiences of family or gender. This along with other pragmatic choices regarding relationships means that the state cannot cast an idealised

template of nation. Nationhood has to emerge in conjunction with the aspirations and experiences of its nationals. Borneman (1992) uses kinship here to show the interaction between state and individual in a dialogic construction of nation, but this is a very ambiguous way to evoke nationhood. I choose to show how kinship practices evoke an experience of nation in itself whilst recognising that these experiences interact with national narratives.

Regarding Palestinian nationalism Jean-Klein has shown how kinship relationships can “intimately involve wider state processes” (2000: 118). In her analysis of Palestinian nationalist movements she reveals the importance of the maternal role in constituting the heroic image of the son. Through accounts of the valiant and good humoured ways their sons served prison terms or endured beatings, mothers subject their sons and further their manly standing and moral personhood as *shebab* (activist youth). In turn, mothers and sisters also become moral persons as “mothers/sisters of heroes”. Jean-Klein (2000) calls this process “cross-subjective self-enactment”. The familial connectivity that this relies upon strengthens the practical organisation of the nationalist movement by “magnifying and empowering the relationships and subjectivities involved” (Jean-Klein 2000: 109). Jean-Klein also suggests that the kinship relationships here represent the Palestinian national movement as a whole, which like the masculinisation of sons via their mother’s accounts also attempts to shed its “collective childhood” and come of age (2000: 118).

Kinship plays multivocal roles in terms of informing different expressions of Jewish nationalism. Kinship’s role in the nationalist frameworks discussed here collectively inflect on the sentiments of Jewish nationalism witnessed in response to the Disengagement by the Jewish Israeli teenagers I worked with. The slogan “Jews do not expel Jews” embodies shared Jewish descent and Jewish historical narratives of territorial dislocation. As will be seen, Ariel Sharon played up this Jewish communality in his management of the Disengagement, his invocation of Jewish narratives and kin terms aimed to enhance the togetherness of the Jewish nation at this time. However, beyond this, Sharon is also connected to the nation through the intimate experience of participating in the national project and this resembles the experience of Jewish Israeli citizens as a whole. This fortifies the

legal frameworks put in place that attempt to secure Jewish blood descent as the defining characteristic of the Israeli state. Individuals' kinship strategies re-articulate national boundaries set up by citizenship laws that protect Jewish descent as the primary factor of membership to the state. This has implications for the inclusion or exclusion of non-Jewish citizens particularly Palestinian Israelis, as Jewish Israelis carry out their own process of national othering, or "subjectification" (Foucault 1984a). This creation of boundaries is grounded in what Herzfeld (1997) calls "iconic criteria" which taken together reinforce cultural identity. Both symbolic, legal, and actual kinship experiences contribute to such criteria of national intimacy.

Expressions of nationalism were most pertinent through the specific involvement of kin. This became most evident in response to the actual eviction process taking place in the Jewish settlements which saw families being uprooted and potential kin coming in to conflict. In the case of protesting religious youth this was done with a sense of generational connectedness to ancestors who had previously made sacrifices for the Jewish nation. These aspects of kinship together enact the nation, de-abstracting it from a sense of "false consciousness" where the nation is simply "imagined" as connected through kinship networks, and roots it in these different layers of relatedness. The particular intimacy of Jewish nationalism is through a sense of kinship that is more tangibly identified in the everyday than simply in myths of descent.

### **"Jews do not Expel Jews!"**

The drama around the Disengagement employed a host of Jewish national narratives that emphasised the connectedness of the Jewish people through descent. It also evoked the theme of common trauma that persists in Jewish historical narratives that emphasise exile and oppression in the Diaspora during the pogroms in Russia, and ultimately the Holocaust. Within a month of my arrival in Israel, on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2004 Ariel Sharon gained the necessary Knesset votes to implement his *Tokhnit HaHitnatkut*, Disengagement Plan. This meant a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip and four West Bank settlements. The Disengagement, as it became known, dominated public debate up until its implementation on 15<sup>th</sup> August



2005. Jewish settlers in the occupied territories criticised the Israeli government for abandoning them, specifically citing Sharon, the “father of the settlements” as responsible for betraying his own people, Jewish citizens of Israel. Their grievance was compounded by the fact that only a year prior to the announcement of the Disengagement Plan, Sharon was quoted in *Maariv* newspaper assuring these settlers of the legitimacy of their residence in Gaza (cited in Yiftachel 2005). The slogan that came to dominate the anti-Disengagement campaign was, “*yehudi lo migaresh yehudi!*” “Jews do not expel Jews!”

The slogan invokes images of exile and territorial dislocation that are a feature of Jewish biblical history and Jewish modern history in the Diaspora. According to Jewish biblical history, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was the third time a Jewish state had been established in this part of the world. The *Torah* states that the first Kingdom of Israel came about after God’s covenant with Moses during the Jewish peoples’ Exodus from Ancient Egypt. This Kingdom fell to the Babylonians but an autonomous Jewish state was re-established by the Hasmoneans some decades later. However, this Jewish nation was again disbanded by the Romans.

This history of cyclically repeated dislocation from the “promised Land” became part of Jewish ideology in the Diaspora and the “mainstream of Jewish historical experience” (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993: 721). Ben Gurion’s letter on the Law of Return which continues to stipulate the right of every Jew to take up Israeli citizenship, posits the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 as a “centre for the ingathering of exiles”. Its establishment was to bring to an end 2000 years of exile from land promised to the Jewish people by God as written in the *Torah*. The prominence of this spatial and temporal legacy is indicated by the State’s investment in archaeology and the Jewish historical content of Independence and Memorial Day ceremonies. Israeli national legitimacy is still dependent on this Jewish historical self image. For individual Jewish Israelis the festival of Passover and the customary *seder* feast which recounts the Exodus from Egypt is the most popularly celebrated Jewish holiday (see Guttman Institute report cited in Liebman 1999). In light of this the image of exile used by the anti-Disengagement campaign evoked a familiar narrative significant to the legacy of Jewish Israeli nationhood as

a whole, still present in the everyday lives of Jewish Israelis whether in attendance of a national ceremony or in the private performance of Jewish rituals.

A second evocative aspect of the slogan “Jews do not expel Jews” is in its attempts to invoke images of the Holocaust. The Holocaust has been used to inspire a variety of nationalist sentiments and in different ways throughout Israel’s history integrated, legitimised, and mobilised society, thereby being an integral part of Israeli civil religion. The Holocaust continues to be central to Israeli national identity with the establishment of the State celebrated as a symbol of the re-birth of the Jewish people following its near destruction. The tropes of trauma and victimhood associated with the Holocaust have been frequently employed for political purposes with the intention of arousing the emotions of the Israeli public. Former Prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak have been subjected to being burnt as effigies dressed in Nazi uniforms because of their policies regarding land for peace with the Palestinians. During the Disengagement Sharon too was subjected to this treatment. Instead of chanting “Jews do not expel Jews” the word “expel” was often interchanged with “transport”, in reference to the transfer of Jews to Nazi concentration camps. At the time of the evictions, settlers could be seen lining themselves up with their hands raised to mimic arrests during the Nazi occupation in Europe.

The most outspoken and passionate voices condemning the Disengagement came from national religious Jews. Both *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo’e* and *Ulpana Kfar Pines* are founded on national religious ideology and are associated with the religious Zionist youth organisation Bnei Akiva. The connection with Bnei Akiva was impressed upon me when one of the teachers in Kfar HaRo’e claimed that pupils here never really grow out of the youth group and by proxy remained connected to it like a family. Bnei Akiva with its Jewish religious nationalist philosophy espouses the importance of “*Am Yisrael b'Eretz Yisrael Al Pi Torat Yisrael*”, “the Nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel, according to the *Torah* of Israel”. This form of religious Zionism requires that the Jewish people (*Am Yisrael*) live according to the principles of the *Torah* whilst also settling the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*). It is *Torah* together with work, *Torah ve’ Avodah*. It is believed that only adherence to these principles will ensure that the Messiah will return and the world will be

redeemed. The Hebrew bible claims the Gaza strip and the West Bank as parts of the Promised Land of Israel, settlement of these regions following victory in the Six Day War in 1967 was seen as a redemptive step for Jewish Israel. Students in Kfar HaRo'e and Kfar Pines are brought up on these teachings and condemned the Disengagement Plan for its disregard of these divine principles. They were against the withdrawal not simply because it meant forcibly removing people from their homes but because it also contravened a covenant with God.



Figure 6: Poster in support of Jewish settlers in Gush Katif adorning entrance hall of *Ulpana* Kfar Pines. The orange text in the top-left corner of the poster reads “Katif”.

The colour orange symbolised the anti Disengagement movement. It was chosen because apart from being simply eye-catching, it was the colour of the municipal flag of Gush Katif, the largest Jewish settlement region in the Gaza strip that was to be evacuated. The settler movement also claimed it signified the lush orange groves cultivated by the settlers in Gaza. In *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo'e and *Ulpana* Kfar Pines sporting the colour orange was a means for these religious youth to show their support for the settlers and came to distinguish solidarity amongst the national religious community. Such signs of support were not limited to the religious community. So-called secular Israelis could also be found parading orange flags on

their cars or wearing orange bracelets to show their support for the settlers; this did not necessarily stretch to their political or ideological stance but was a symbol of the empathy they had for families being removed from their homes. The significance of this feeling of connectedness with Jewish families in Gaza will be elaborated on when analysing the impact of kin relationships on youth perspectives of the Disengagement.

School fashion was an important site of political expression. The rubber bracelets made fashionable by the Lance Armstrong “Livestrong” campaign which sought to raise awareness of testicular cancer, were now replaced by either orange ones or blue bracelets if one supported the Disengagement. In the case of sporting orange bands, the message of giving charitably for Livestrong was extended to giving emotionally to the Jewish settlers of Gush Katif. The blue bands that followed acted as a political counterbalance that became synonymous with leftist or *smallanim* teens. Orange and blue t-shirts, bags, and ribbons were other accessories that became part of the school body politic. In both the *Yeshiva* and the *Ulpana* orange was the only colour visible in the classrooms and corridors. A big poster made by the students of *Ulpana* Kfar Pines in support of the residents of Gush Katif dominated the entrance to the school. Letters and prayers embossed in orange spoke of their allegiance against the Disengagement, standing together with the settlers in the hope of overturning Sharon’s decision. Such signs of support emanating from these religious seminaries were complemented by the laying on of transport to ferry students to protests in Gush Katif. Similar arrangements were also made to protest against the Amona evacuation in the West Bank. In such circumstances teachers were flexible with regards to pupils getting behind in their work or missing school.

Although polls indicated the majority of Israelis supported the Disengagement policy, “orange” was winning in terms of public presence against the “blue” of the pro Disengagement supporters. Yariv Oppenheimer, Secretary General of Peace Now, the organisation responsible for distribution of the blue ribbons confirmed they were losing the “Ribbon Wars” (Barnea 2005). In an interview with *Yedioth Ahronoth* he claimed that only around half a million blue ribbons had been distributed up to the end of July 2005. This was compared to over one million

orange ribbons. Oppenheimer mentioned that owing to manufacturing problems, blue ribbon distribution had got going a lot later. He felt however, that come the Disengagement and potential settler violence, one would see a surge of blue ribbons. Neither protracted violence nor such a surge took place and orange continued to dominate roads and towns. The lack of blue ribbons was most likely because the Disengagement was supported by the silent majority who ultimately put Sharon's Kadima party in power come the 2006 elections despite him being replaced as leader because of his comatosed state.

The wearing of orange paraphernalia in support of the Jewish settlers became a very visual marker of Jewish national attachments and a symbolic mark of intimacy. For national religious supporters of the anti-Disengagement movement it was both a sign of solidarity and a statement of ideological and religious ambition. Through the sporting of orange, national religious youth provided visual representation of interrelated levels of Jewish nationalism; the symbolic aspect of Jewish relatedness and that aspect of Israeli statehood that was supposed to guarantee their protection as citizens of a Jewish state. The fact that a cross-section of Israeli society, both religious and secular could be found wearing the orange bracelets was symbolic of attempts to promote a homogenous national identity despite an apparent fracture between "secular" and "religious" Israel. The widespread embrace of orange expressed a level of shared identity through Jewish relatedness and national myths of trauma and exile that are integrated by Jewish nationalism. The orange bracelets symbolised Jewish national solidarity in an abstract way. The Disengagement evoked a more concrete communal relatedness when individuals specified their own experiences of taking part in protests and the process of evicting Israeli citizens.

### **Jewish Kinship Strategies**

The myths of Jewish nationalism and the symbolic instrumentality of Jewish descent were resourced by the orange political lobby. The Disengagement also prompted discussions on the importance of maintaining a Jewish majority that has been bolstered by a variety of legislative measures and was presented by the government as a motivating factor for relinquishing control of the Palestinian

population in Gaza. Zionism sought the restitution of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland and the framework of the state that resulted has ensured the privileging of this Jewish ethnic identity. Where Jewish Israelis abstractly associate themselves with the communal narratives of the Jewish people this connectedness is also institutionalised by the state and enacted by their own kinship strategies. Jewish nationhood was formulated in part by an emphasis on common Jewish blood ties and there is a continued “self-nationalisation” on the part of individuals as they choose to embrace Jewish marriage and citizenship laws that underline the pre-eminence given to Jewish descent (Jean-Klein 2001).

Ariel Sharon’s Disengagement plan was popularly marketed in terms of ensuring a Jewish majority. With the “security fence” it would help cut-off the Palestinian population. Establishing and then maintaining a Jewish majority has been a demographic obsession of Israeli state building since the beginning of the Zionist settlement project. The “Judaization” and “de-Arabization” of the land was deemed necessary for the achievement of nationhood (Flapan 1987; Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979). Ben Gurion emphasised the importance of transferring Arabs from Palestine if the Jewish people were to achieve their nationalist goals, claiming it was both “morally and ethically justified” (cited in Kanaaneh 2002: 30). This was initiated during the War of Independence in 1948 and then again with an equally large demographic impact after the 1967 war (Abu-Lughod 1971). A situation of Jews transferring Jews during the Disengagement was argued by those who opposed it as a blow to nationalist goals, and went against the Judaization project set in place during early statehood.

Through what some analysts have termed “nationalist biopolitics” Israel has inculcated a Jewish national vision which has contributed to the marginalisation of the Palestinian population (Kahn 2000). Israel’s population policies have attempted to counter a rapid Palestinian birth rate with policies intended to encourage Jewish population expansion, and dissuade Jewish assimilation (Kahn 2000; Kanaaneh 2002). So-called “nationalist biopolitics” has played an important part in conceptions of the nation state, where population sciences such as censuses and national registers have “reduced people to manageable entities that can allegedly be controlled for the common good” (Duden 1992:146,148). The so-called “common

good” in the Israeli case is a Jewish majority and a marginal Arab population. Recent legal measures such as Israel’s Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law passed on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 aim to restrict Palestinian population growth in Israel. This prohibits family reunification of Palestinian residents of the occupied territories and Palestinian Israeli citizens. Spouses resident in the occupied territories are prohibited from obtaining Israeli citizenship or temporary residence through marriage. Children from the territories who wish to live with a Palestinian Israeli parent are also prohibited from doing so. Whereas the Israeli government justifies these measures on grounds of national security, they continue to maintain a worrying “dichotomy between the state as a political framework for all its citizens, and the state as the particularistic nation-state of the Jewish people” (Kretzmer 1990: 44).

Aside from the Law of Return which entitles every Jew to Israeli citizenship, the state takes other proactive steps to encourage greater Jewish migration to Israel such as “Birthright Israel”. Instigated in 1998 the project entitles every Jewish boy and girl in the Diaspora to an all expenses paid trip to Israel upon reaching their thirteenth birthday (Kanaaneh 2002: 45). It is hoped this will discourage assimilation and encourage *aliyah* amongst a new generation of Jewish youth. Israel tries to recruit its members by emphasising the importance of Jewish nationhood and what this symbolises for the continuity of the Jewish people. Jewishness becomes a biologically based system of recruitment as the state institutionalises this community through its citizenship laws. Significantly for this chapter, kinship as a metaphoric ideology does not adequately confer the importance of blood descent in Jewish nationalism. As described earlier German nationalism uses “blood” as a basis for nation building but in Israel the re-assertion of this ethnic homogeneity is re-enacted through kinship strategies such as marriage and feelings towards Jewish conversion. To qualify as a Jew one must prove Jewish descent through the maternal line or undertake an orthodox Jewish conversion. Orthodox conversion was valued by some of my Israeli interlocutors as “proof that you really want it”. Like Kelly and Kaplan’s (2001) notion of “blood of sacrifice”, the right to membership is earned through showing one’s commitment to the nation that they characterise as “shedding blood”.

The family unit is regarded as an essential site for the maintenance of Jewish peoplehood and this is reflected in Israel's marriage laws. This is also replicated in the attitudes of individuals who emphasised the importance of Jewish marriage. Inter-marriage between Jews and non-Jews is illegal, with marriage under the jurisdiction of religious courts. One can only marry a non-Jew outside of Israel. Cyprus is the popularly designated destination, being Israel's closest "friendly" nation. Essentially Israel legislates for a large-scale national endogamy. It has taken a practice common to religious groups and applied it to a wider national attempt to preserve Jewish cohesion. The issue of Israel's marriage laws repeatedly came up as individuals either defended the importance of maintaining a Jewish national majority or criticised it as part of Israel not being "secular" or "liberal" enough. In the Diaspora and my own experience, whether dismissed as important or not, "marrying out" (marrying someone who is not Jewish) is a commonly recurring issue that confronts one's Jewish identity. Its relevance to the sustainability of the Jewish community as a whole and one's responsibility to Jewish ancestry is emphasised both through Jewish religious education that emphasises the importance of transmitting Jewish culture and the fact that Jewish identity is passed through the maternal line, and this is also most significantly reinforced by familial expectations of retaining the family's Jewish heritage. One is not simply marrying someone outside of the Jewish community but in the case of the male is also removing one's future children from the Jewish blood line. Assimilation is presented as the greatest threat to the continuation of the Jewish community and its historical legacy. The Jewish Agency for Israel ominously reported that over 50% of Diaspora Jews are "marrying-out" (Sacks 2004).

As well as being a state policy to regulate its citizens and "demarcate from outsiders" (Borneman 1992), marital strategies are also employed by citizens themselves to characterise their national ideals. In East and West Germany Borneman suggests that it is the interaction between the state's "marital strategies" and individuals' "marital tactics" that emerges as the space in which the state and individual "contest and cooperate over the meaning of nation" (1992: 291). In the case of West Germany, the state can legislate for an ideational framework where marriage laws symbolise a "stable society with homogenous moral standards" but



this does not account for how nationals wish to construct their lives and the pragmatics of marriage (Borneman 1992: 291).

Israeli adults can be similarly pragmatic and incongruent with the state's ideational framework but at the same time individuals can also be found to use such frameworks, in this instance kinship, to reinforce a sense of nation. Israeli teens echoed Zionist discourses in their emphasis of the importance of a strong Jewish state when they discussed the necessity of Jewish marriage laws;

Kfir: ...this is the way to survive. I mean, without it there will, there will be mixed marriage, I mean with Christians, something like that. So the Judaism will, will decrease I mean, less people will be Jewish. You know what I mean?

Those students who were not bothered about marrying a Jew, generally held this viewpoint in tandem with more liberal political opinions regarding a less ethnocentric society and aspired for greater parity of civil rights. Yon, an example of such a student, spoke rather dramatically of his friends' contempt for his apathy toward Jewish marriage when discussing his dating exploits;

I said I'm not sure I'll marry a Jewish girl, I might marry an Arab, I might marry a Christian. And they said, "what!? How can that be!? What will your parents say!? How can you live like that? What will you do? Will you be Jewish? Will you be Arab, will you be Christian or a Muslim?" And I think what's the matter, I'm not religious all my friends are not religious. What does it matter? It was very hard for them to accept that I would marry whoever, and for me to accept that they can't understand it's ok.

The fact that marriage is seen as an important means of retaining Jewish national boundaries reinforces the sense that Jewish nationhood is a product of direct relatedness, individuals wish to protect this on top of legal efforts to do so by the state. The importance of this Jewish continuity was emphasised by some of the Jewish students of Ethiopian origin I had the opportunity to work with in Levinson State-Religious High School. Their Jewish nationalism and emotive connection to Jewish nationhood was intimately linked to the experiences of their families who had made great sacrifices to come to Israel. It emerged that their feelings of Jewish national connectedness were strongly inspired by the experiences of ancestors and their sense of obligation to their history of struggle to be part of the Israeli nation.

Levinson high school has a high proportion of students of Ethiopian origin, according to Menachem the Jewish studies teacher of more than ten years, up to two thirds of the pupils in a class may be of Ethiopian origin. He says the numbers have increased considerably over the past 15 years and this is because the Israeli government placed many of the new immigrants from Ethiopia in Kiryat Yam, the town in which the high school is situated. The state-religious high school attracted so many Ethiopians because according to Mazal whose parents walked from Ethiopia to Israel in 1984, her father had dreamed of living as a Jew in Israel and wanted his children to grow up knowing their religion. Despite this, Mazal and other pupils I spoke to explained they were not religious themselves but *masorti* (traditional).

Mazal, along with her friend Batel (also a female student from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade), and Uri a male classmate told me their family stories as we discussed school life in Levinson and what they wanted to do after their *bagrut* (high school matriculation exams). As mentioned, Mazal's family had made the long journey to Israel from Ethiopia by foot via Sudan and Egypt. On this journey two of her sisters died before entering Israel. Upon arrival in Israel the family was housed, or "dumped" as she described, by the government in Kiryat Yam where she was born and was now one of four sisters and three brothers. Batel was born in Ethiopia and came over to Israel with her family a little later in 1991. They too walked the distance although Batel jokingly qualified this by saying she was carried most of the way. They were also placed in Kiryat Yam and she too had a large family made up of five other siblings. Their classmate Uri was born in Kiryat Yam and his family came over to Israel with Operation Moses in 1984. They were first housed in the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba in the West Bank and then relocated to Kiryat Yam.

Each of the students spoke of their family's "dream to come to Israel" and the responsibility they felt to honour that by seeing through the religious education they were encouraged to receive. Although only Uri described himself as "religious" they all wished to lead a life which respected Jewish traditions, particularly Jewish marriage. According to Mazal "a wedding without a *Rav* (Rabbi) isn't a wedding". This desire to lead a Jewish life was rooted in a feeling of responsibility to their

families who had endured such hardship to realise their dream of being citizens of Israel. This strong emphasis on their Jewish identity also resonated in their political opinions which included disagreeing with the Disengagement and giving up land for peace with the Palestinians. Furthermore they stressed the importance of keeping Israel a homeland strictly for Jews. The Jewish national narratives these Ethiopian students associate with are tangibly experienced through the experiences of known ancestors. Jewish narratives of exile and sacrifice are not simply myth but part of the recent experiences of family members. What was initially an imagined communal belonging on the part of their parents inspired a Jewish national feeling that motivated a desire to live out a Jewish life in Israel.

Israeli statehood was the symbolic embodiment of strong Jewish kinship in contrast to the disparate Diaspora communities, the marriage practices discussed by these teens indicates a desire to actively produce further Jewish family units. The linking of family life to Israeli national life is reinforced by the experiences of family members such as those recounted by the students from Levinson and is also evoked by recollections of generations of family members taking part in military service.

### **Feeling National through Military Service**

As something in which family members and the majority of one's peers take part in, military service continues to inform a central collective as well as personal experience for Jewish Israeli teens. It generates a feeling of generational continuity and a sense of connectedness through shared experience. Reproducing this national bond through the performance of military service is a form of "self-nationalisation", where a sense of nation is felt and built around the individual performance of a task that has a national significance such as military service (Jean-Klein 2001). Balibar (1991) has suggested that national citizens are made and remade through engagement with state institutions and practices. He argues that "homo nationalis" is created by continuous immersion within apparatuses of the state that reinforce shared histories and national vocabularies of community. The IDF provides the institutional context in which to experience Israeliness but it is the shared understanding of it that creates a sense of national belonging. It becomes a personal and family orientated pursuit that ultimately has a nationalising effect.

Niv, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student from Irony Aleph hoped to work with dogs in the IDF. My conversations with him showed that he was particularly driven by his father's career in the IDF. Niv emphasized how his father's continued involvement in IDF operations impacted on family life as he is frequently called upon last minute to fulfill his duties;

Niv: I think if my father wasn't in the army I would maybe go to the *kaban* (army psychologist) and like fool around, like act to be lazy. But because my father is in the army I can't come to him after he has been in the army for 20 years and reached higher rank and tell him I don't want to go to the army. I have a commitment to him. So I'll go to the army, I don't know exactly where, but I'll go to the army and do whatever he tells me I'm likely to get. I am already on it because my father is in the military. Sometimes in the night he gets a phone call - "come here quick" - like that. Afterwards he told me that it was because they sent soldiers to do a raid in Gaza. He tells me stories, so I understand.

Similarly, Nitzan who I trained with in the after school army preparation group *Amit Lakosher* explained the role his father played in facilitating his military career, and how family life was exposed to the military world;

**AG: So do you talk about the army much, you and your brothers?**

Nitzan: Yes my dad is involved, he can check things to know where we are going because he has friends in *tzahal* (Hebrew acronym for IDF). I also have two cousins who are in *tzahal*, one of them is a pilot still, and the other is a pilot in the *miluim* (reserves). He is now learning medicine too.

**AG: So does this help when you want to get into...**

Nitzan: No

**AG: For advice?**

Nitzan: For *protectia* (slang for "knowing the right person")...

**AG: Protectia?**

Nitzan: For getting in the army. They can help. I ask my cousin to check for me which *echida* (unit) I will be in.

Here Nitzan reveals how military service engages a number of personal relations and not simply a matter of signing up to a faceless institution. The experience of doing it is ingrained in the social lives of Israelis. It is a network that constitutes parents and their connections as well as siblings and friends of siblings. David, who was a year below Nitzan at Ma'agan Michael School highlighted how the fact

that one is surrounded by all one's peers going to the army gave one a sense of obligation to do so as well;

**AG: So your sister is going to the army now? What will she do?**

David: It's called *madrichat moran*, a trainer in the *shiryon*, the tanks and guns.

**AG: Is she looking forward to it?**

David: Yeah I mean she had a long time; 6 months after school she went to Thailand and the States. She worked in Starbucks and then all her friends went to the army.

**AG: And how do you feel about going to the army?**

David: Yeah I mean I didn't give it too much thought but it's kind of the whole experience of being in Israel everybody is talking about it.

**AG: Everybody is talking about it?**

David: I mean where you want to go, when we get the *tzav rishon* (the first call). It's part of being an Israeli, I'd feel guilty if I wouldn't go.

Military service is a contribution to the state that is specifically motivated by relationships with family and friends. The sense of community derived from this collective experience emerges as a result of these non-abstract relations. Brubaker (1996) describes a notion of "nationness" where community is constructed through shared vocabularies of the collective. The IDF represents an Israeli experience that equips individuals with the vocabulary to count oneself as a national citizen. Furthermore, this nationness is also a product of kin and friendship ties. As well as creating a sense of nationhood, military service also reproduces the state through the continued emphasis placed on the importance of fulfilling one's obligations to service in the IDF. Anthropological literature has been guilty of assuming a dichotomy between "the state" and "the people" whereby state effects are created and reproduced by technologies of "governmentality" via political authority and state-based processes such as border controls, currency, passports, and laws (Gupta 2001; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Mitchell 2001). Timothy Mitchell argues that the state is a metaphysical entity that is the sum of such structural effects, placing greater emphasis on institutional sites that are seen to maintain particular state constructions (2001: 94; 1988). I would add to this that the state is also the sum of personal effects identified in emotions such as loyalty and comradeship found in individuals' motivation to serve in the IDF. The experiences of individuals I describe in this chapter are the more intimate sites where nationalism or "politics" is done, and where the state and the nation is reproduced in the everyday.

## **Symbolic Gender Roles and their Use in Political Activism**

Through Jewish nationalist discourses and through Israel's "nationalist biopolitics" women have been valued as "mothers of soldiers" and "mothers of the nation", national religious ideology in particular has subjectified women as "mothers of Zion", whereby the maternal role is valorised for the preservation of the Jewish people (Rapoport, Penso, and Garb: 1994; Swirski 2000: 315; Kanaaneh 2002: 65). Jewish pronatal population policies that have existed since Ben Gurion's introduction of pronatal incentives in 1948 have symbolically and physically iconicised women as markers of the nation's 'natural' boundaries (Kanaaneh 2002: 65; Kahn 2000). Increasing the reproduction of Jewish women was again incentivised in 1968 when a fund was established for child allowances to families who had three or more children (Kahn 2000: 4). A process of "political arithmetic" has resulted in the state continually strategising to win the "demographic race" (Yuval-Davis 1987: 61). To this day Israel has the largest number of fertility clinics per capita (Yuval-Davis 1987: 2). The National Health Insurance Law of 1995 makes provision for unlimited in-vitro fertilization treatments up to two children but has no such benefits with regard to contraception or family planning counselling (Swirski et al 1999: 13).

The nationalisation of this maternal role and the state en-gendered reproductive duties of women have been discussed in terms of the limitations this imposes on female participation in other realms of society (Arextaga 1997; Kanaaneh 2002; vom Bruck 2005). In Yemen the seventeenth century ruling that prohibited 'Alid women marrying non-'Alid men in order to preserve 'Alid descent and access to supreme leadership, continues to inflect on contemporary Yemeni marriage practices (vom Bruck 2005). Although not illegal, few inter-marriages are contracted. Vom Bruck's ethnography on the politics of motherhood in Yemen shows how cross-status marriages were still considered to be a threat to the categories of ruler and ruled, and women themselves decided to practice this endogamous principle in order to retain their status, and re-affirm the pride in they had for their ancestry (2005: 132, 156) Arextaga's (1997) work showed how nationalist women in Northern Ireland during British rule would reject their symbolic maternal role espoused by Republican rhetoric. During the

Disengagement national religious women used their maternal role productively in concordance with their symbolic duty as “mothers of the nation”. They provide an example of how individuals choose to use hegemonic frameworks for the ability to engage in political life (Brown 1995). The presence of religious Jewish women was especially notable throughout the Gaza withdrawal protests. Female settlers clutching their babies were often the first line of defence against the evicting soldiers, and became a common image throughout the Disengagement process. This maternal image conformed to the national religious construction of religious female subjectivity as “mothers of Zion”. As an image of resistance against the government’s policies, it fitted in with dominant Jewish and Zionist categories of motherhood. In confronting the soldiers, the power of these mothers’ activism also lay in the fact that it reinforced the sense that these soldiers were violating filial ties and loyalty to the Jewish nation.

The political effectiveness of the maternal actions during the Disengagement is revealed in the frequent reference to it by my informants, both religious and secular. By making themselves so visible throughout the Disengagement protests, religious women used their position in Israeli society, as mothers of Zionism, to protest as a group the sense of marginalisation they felt national religious Jews were now subjected to in Israeli society. This kinship narrative within religious Zionism is therefore a potentially productive aspect of religious female political subjectivity. Where in this instance these mothers are using their symbolic role to political effect, these settlers were not just an “imagined political community” but thought of as potential kin who could be encountered. The shared “intimacies” of military service and historical identification with pioneering Jewish Israeli land settlement emerged as individuals empathised with the Jew on Jew confrontations that could result, and the destruction of settlers self-built homes.

### **The Implications of Shared Jewish National Intimacy on Settler Evictions**

With the Disengagement requiring both the police force and the IDF to be used against fellow Israeli citizens, it provoked those who could often be critical of the settlers for antagonising the peace process or wasting the state’s military and

economic resources on their security, to react with a greater degree of sympathy. As has been described, Jewish nationalism is derived from a myth of shared ancestry whilst also being rooted in biological blood descent. The impact of these discourses emerged in the concerns both supporters and opponents of the Disengagement voiced. When speaking of the forthcoming removal of settlers from Gush Katif individuals highlighted the devastating effects this would have on family and home. The sentiments expressed were those of an empathetic intimacy.

Students Guy and Adar had recently finished their studies in Haifa's Irony Aleph high school. They were close to being recruited into the IDF, Guy as a paramedic and Adar in to a Golani infantry unit. The issue of refusing orders to evict Jewish settlers was pertinent to the military world they were about to join and this concerned Adar in particular who imagined his unit being sent in to carry out such an operation. Adar stated he would not refuse an order but shared some concerns with the settlers;

Adar: You can understand their anger because think about them... You're at home with your family, with the ones that you love and suddenly some soldiers knock on the door and say leave, get up, we're evacuating this area, you can't be here anymore.

Guy: It's not like that. They have like 48 hours to leave...

Adar: Ok, but still, think, you would leave your home...?

Guy: Yes, you have no other option.

Adar: They really believe in this life you know?! They worked it and treasured it. It has a meaning you know. But I see it from a different angle from you. Jew shouldn't evict Jew!

In a separate discussion on the issues of refusal with one of their classmates Michael, he also mentions the difficulty in carrying out such orders against those whom he portrays as his own people, again emphasising family and home;

**AG: So what did you think about the soldiers who refuse to take part in the *Hitnatkut* (Disengagement)?**

Michael: I understand them...why they do this...this is their choice... listen, if you was in the British empire, umm army, and you have to take your parents out of your home, you will do the same thing?

**AG: Er, I don't know...**

Michael: If you had to take your friends and family out of their home, bring them to a hotel and give your home to Ireland...



Michael asks me to imagine evicting my own parents, reflecting the potential connectedness of the soldiers or policeman with the settlers they are being asked to remove. The settlers are not just other citizens, they were not “brothers and sisters” in a purely metaphorical sense but envisaged as possible kin.

The repeated referral to the settlers’ homes adds another layer of intimacy. The issue of where the settlers would be re-housed was of great concern to many of the students I discussed the Disengagement with. Many were angry that still so long after the Disengagement a number of settler families did not have permanent homes and were being put up in hotels:

Sharon, he built them (the settlements) he was the founder. He told them (the settlers) you go and sit there, you will be like a part of Israeli territory. Then 30 years after it he just pulls them out of their houses and moves them, some of them still don’t have houses. For some of them it happened like 6 months ago some of them still live in hotels. That’s not life, that’s not a government support that’s not the way it’s supposed to be.

The house is an extension of family, where the home stands for an idealised sense of familial togetherness. Houses contain within them life histories, and physically can embody the ideas and beliefs of those who inhabit them (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). Carsten and Hugh-Jones argue that if houses are constructed in one’s own image, as Bourdieu has argued, then houses can also be used to construct the self as an individual (1995: 3). In the case of the Jewish settlers, the building of homes and settlements was part of fulfilling their desire to Judaize and pioneer the Land of Israel. Constructing settlements in Gaza and the West Bank was regarded as partly fulfilling the obligation of *Torah ve avodah*, studying *Torah* and working the land, which together complete the Jewish person in national religious ideology. Ideology aside, secular individuals like Guy and Michael empathise with the fact a part of one’s self is placed in to the building of a home. It is after all, “where the heart is”, and this was being destroyed. Lévi-Strauss (1983) notes the capability of a house to “transcend” and “unify” opposing principles of social forms such as filiation and residence, and patri- and matri-lineal descent. In this case the house transcended religious and political affiliations and symbolised a feeling of relatedness and shared intimacy. Using Herzfeld’s (1997) idea of shared national criteria, settling and pioneering has an historical pedigree in Israeli state building,

for it recalls how the early Zionist pioneers are valorised for their contribution to establishing the Jewish nation in the *Yishuv*.

National religious youth in particular projected a feeling of direct relatedness with the settlers in Gush Katif; this was partly because of familial involvement but also because of their commitments to religious Zionism. As mentioned previously these youth are embedded in a religious Zionist ideology that advocates “*Am Yisrael b'Eretz Yisrael Al Pi Torat Yisrael*”, “the Nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel, according to the *Torah* of Israel”. The Hebrew “am” meaning “nation” is also the word for “people”, and in practice religious Zionist youth see contribution to the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the Jewish people as vital for the integrity of the nation and state as a whole. Religious Zionist ideology extends the virtues of familial contribution to the service of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel).

### **The Disengagement and Kin-Motivated Participatory Citizenship**

Partly for reasons of religious Zionist ideology, teens from *yeshiva* Kfar Ha Roe and *ulpana* Kfar Pines were motivated to take part in the protests in Gush Katif. During the summer holidays of 2005 thousands of religious students made their way down to the Gaza strip, often evading road blocks and cordoned off zones to protest and try and obstruct the Disengagement. Rachel a 12<sup>th</sup> grade pupil from *ulpana* Kfar Pines who had gone to Gush Katif to protest claimed,

Before Gush Katif we always loved the country and we felt some connection, but it's like fixed our umm... I feel all these things don't just happen. It's strengthened our connection to the land. And also to the Jewish people... suddenly you feel responsibility... if there are Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* that are acting like this, maybe you have a responsibility, maybe some of the responsibility is on you, that you say your truth that you believe in.

Rachel illustrates that as well as being connected to *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel she also feels a commitment to *Am Yisrael*, the People of Israel. To participate in the interests of the extended family (*Am Yisrael*) was the essential motivator for many of these adolescent religious females taking part in protests against the Disengagement. Acting in the name of the Jewish people for the Jewish people is indiscernible from national religious constructions of Statehood which posits the

Israeli state as the framework for the realisation of Jewish nationhood. Religious nationalism requires that individuals relate to the state in this way.

In *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo'e, Kobi and Uria two 12<sup>th</sup> grade students spoke of how the protests,

...made people believe that things can change, they can pray, they can come to places and resist and be with all their brothers and sisters and help them when they need. I don't know. It made people closer.

Kobi and Uria were two of the few members of their class who did not in fact travel to Gush Katif to participate. Both also found it tough to lead a religious lifestyle, particularly with regard to relationships with girls, confessing that they were not strictly "*shomer negia*", a Jewish law that forbids physical contact with the opposite sex. However, Kobi's perspective here reflects the image of familial solidarity that was invested in to the movement against the Disengagement. It was constructed as a religious national movement with familial values as a key component of community. *Am Yisrael*, the People/Nation of Israel, in this respect became actualised through these events.

This extended sense of kinship with fellow Jews also became a more direct kin based national experience. Both the parents and the students of *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo'e and *Ulpana* Kfar Pines emphasised the familial dimension of taking part in the protests in Gush Katif. It emerged not only as a family event in the sense that families took part together in such events as the 130,000 person strong human chain stretching from Gush Katif to Jerusalem, but it also showed the current generation of religious youth acting in the name of their kin. In turn, parents provided validation for the efforts of their children to uphold the values of religious Zionism. Parents such as Limor, a teacher at the *Yeshiva* proudly told me how her 17 year old daughter, a student at *Ulpana* Kfar Pines, had spent her summer holiday protesting the Disengagement in Gush Katif and then fought the police in Amona. The latter aroused great emotions as the police were seen to use force to evict many of the settlers and protestors. Pupils I spoke to showed me what they referred to as their "war wounds". Limor too mentioned how her daughter was badly bruised from her confrontations with the police and had consequently suffered nightmares about the

rioting. The impact of Amona on the pupils in Kfar HaRo'e who had protested was of enough concern as to put in place trauma counselling for the students.

Kinship and common descent has previously been discussed in terms of how it organises a common citizenry and contributes to the nation building process. Joseph (1999) has shown the mechanisms by which the Lebanese state has used kinship structures to underpin its primary identity and the character of its constitution. She argues that patrilineality has been codified within the constitution. As a priori characteristic of Lebanese society it "naturalises" the political process by making Lebanese state-making seem primordial, and in turn the legal process has essentialised this identity (Joseph 1999: 304). In contrast to Joseph's description of kinship being used by the state to penetrate its peoples, the Disengagement showed how kinship was mobilised by the people - by Jewish Israelis against the state. Jewish descent was strategically invoked to undermine the policy of removing Jewish settlers from their homes.

A lot of criticism was levelled at the parents and teachers of these adolescents for allowing and encouraging them to be in such situations. This however, did not deter the pride Limor clearly felt in her daughter's strength of faith. She recalled how her daughter said, "I think I used the faith that *saba* (grandpa) had in the Holocaust, except the enemy were Jews". She believed it was this that empowered her daughter to sacrifice her summer holiday, to camp out in the sweltering heat of Gush Katif, and to then face the riots in Amona. Such encouragement was even echoed by the new IDF Chief Rabbi Avi Ronsky who claimed he would rather his own 12 year old daughter protest in Neve Dekalim (a Gaza settlement) than she go to a rock concert (cited in Bar-Gil 2006).

Aside from the Jewish nation being rendered through a religious sense of family, kin relationships also empower the nationalist movement in a form of "cross-subjective narration" that Jean-Klein (2000) describes. Jean-Klein's (2000) explanation of how the Palestinian national movement is in part rendered through the recounting of stories by mothers of their activist sons highlights the role relatives play in re-enacting and reinforcing the actions of individual national members. Children were valorised for their commitment to religious Zionism by

their parents and the religious Zionist community. The support youth received from their parents privately and in the press enhanced the pervasiveness of the anti-Disengagement movement. Youth became the most visible symbol of the protests. Through their wearing of orange, colonisation of highway junctions with banners, and passionate and sometimes violent participation in protests they dominated much of the coverage during this time. In this sense Jewish kinship was not only symbolically instrumental in terms of rendering a sense of nation but was also a system of direct relatedness that drove forward the religious national movement and civic participation.

### **Ariel Sharon: Beyond Paternalism**

The resonance of kinship was instrumental to much of Ariel Sharon's political rhetoric during the Disengagement, but significantly for this chapter his rhetoric was also substantiated by being intimately connected to Israel's national history and was part of the same mythological, biological, and social kinship networks as other Jewish Israelis. This gave him some authority to address the nation in a paternalistic manner, where his image of father figure was grounded in his history of fighting for the nation and growing in to the position of making "mature" decisions for the nation. Ariel Sharon's television address to the nation on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005, the first day of the Disengagement, stressed the importance of maintaining national unity during this time and emphasised the difficulty of making important decisions on behalf of the nation;

Citizens of Israel, the responsibility for Israel's future is mine. I initiated the plan because I reached the conclusion that this action is essential for Israel. Believe me, the pain I feel with this act is the same as the full realisation that we must do it.

We are taking a new path that also has no small number of risks, but which also contains a ray of hope for us all. With God's help this path shall be one of unity and not division, and not animosity between brothers, of unconditional love and not hatred. I will do my utmost to ensure that it will be so.

(Cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005)

The operational name for this task was “*Yad La’achim*”, translated as “Giving a Hand to Brothers”. As has been described earlier, the metaphorical uses of kinship terms has been an important tool in making the nation “natural”, but on top of this symbolism, people also envisage the nation in terms of a kinship that is embedded in their experiences of participation in the nationalist project which in turn cannot be divorced from historical and religious narratives that contextualise Jewish nationalism as a whole. Consanguine unity in Israel is also one of the most decisive aspects of nationality, with Jewish descent not just symbolic but a matter of political boundary making and national othering. Sharon too is embedded in this kinship network which gives him some authority as he adopts a paternalistic role throughout the political process of marketing and seeing through his Disengagement Plan.

The type of paternalism evident in Sharon’s governance is very different from the totalising paternalist politics of figures such as Ceausescu or Stalin. In such authoritarian regimes the leader is an “identificatory father” “who becomes the general equivalent of his subjects, the standard of all value, but who himself operates outside measurement” (Borneman 2004: 3; Goux 1990). In the case of Ceausescu he acted as a symbolic “genitor and pater to the people” making the “new socialist man” (Kideckel 2004: 127,128). He enforced standards of behaviour, promoting himself as the embodiment of social, cultural, and biological value in Romanian society (Kideckel 2004: 127). Contrastingly Sharon was a democratically elected leader who took on a patriarchal role not in an authoritarian patricentric manner but in a way that responded to the social, cultural, and genealogical values embedded in Israeli society of which he too was part. In spite of the brutality associated with him following his acquiescence in the massacres at Sabra and Shatila during the Lebanon War in 1982, his public persona by the time of the Disengagement was softened to a Grandfather playing with his grandchildren. His image was quite the contrast to a domineering patriarch.

He was a *sabra* born to pioneering Ashkenazi parents who had settled amongst the secular and socialist community of Kfar Malal. He had soldiered for the nation, his military career stretching back to the Haganah, and was hailed as a hero of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 for his role in the Suez counterattack (Sachar 2003: 805).

Throughout the Disengagement Sharon presented himself as a symbolic father figure who had to make “grown up” decisions in the best interests of the nation. However, his connectedness to the experiences of Jewish nationhood that I have argued are in many ways rooted in kinship makes his role as *pater* embedded in shared experiences rather than being purely symbolic. The fact that Sharon was able to adopt this paternal stance with political legitimacy provides further evidence of kinship’s contribution to nation building as more than just entirely “imagined” but as derived from real relations to social, cultural, and biological experience.

The patriarchal role has historically played an important part in the transmission and preservation of Jewish culture. Since Abraham the first Jewish forefather, it has been the father’s role to pass on the Jewish faith and act as teacher to his children. As guardians of religious culture the Jewish patriarchal mandate has always been to “renew the living covenant with God through his children, especially his sons” (Fuchs 2000: 71). This became even more important in the Diaspora as without a direct relationship with the Land of Israel, Rabbis and fathers became responsible for ensuring the preservation of Jewish identity through observance and ritual (Fuchs 2000: 36). Sharon even gives a nod to this history of father-son continuity in his Knesset speech where he discusses the continued wars Israeli families have had to fight in where “as in a relay race, fathers pass the guns to their sons” (cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004).

Jewish patriarchy is rooted in such a legacy and provides some context for the paternalistic language evident amongst Israeli leadership. Prior to Sharon, Israel’s founding Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and later Yitzhak Rabin following his assassination in 1995 were the subject of paternal affection from the public. Haim Hazan describes how Rabin was portrayed as “an eternally youthful forefather whose demise could be likened to paternal abandonment” (Hazan 2001; 91). At the time, mourning practices and the attention paid to it in the media resembled a picture of familial loss throughout the nation.

The tendency to make such paternal associations continued with Ariel Sharon. Throughout his career he provoked feelings of love and respect, yet also hate and distrust, the more negative side-effects of paternalism. He was branded “father of

the settlements” for the prominent role he played in supporting settlement activity in the West Bank during Begin’s Likud government in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For this reason his turnaround in 2004 provoked so much anger from the settlers and their supporters who had been given assurances from Sharon of their right to live there. In 2002 he was quoted in *Maariv* as saying “the fate of Nezarim and Kfar Darom is the same as Tel-Aviv” (cited in Yiftachel 2005). However, as “father of the settlements” he symbolically also had the right to decide their fate.

His soldiering legacy had also evolved in tandem with defining moments in Israeli nationhood. He fought in the 1948 war, and then successfully commanded during the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. What were deemed as heroic accomplishments gave Sharon an iconic status typical of the “emergent personality cult” surrounding the successful generals of the 1967 war (Sachar 2003: 746). This military pedigree and distinguished contribution to Israeli nation building was also tempered with his ruthless and violent treatment of the Palestinians. This was no more evident than in his involvement with the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila during the 1982 Lebanon War. The callous decisions he made here as Defence Minister drew mass public criticism, requiring him to step down. He was subsequently labelled a warmonger and the “butcher of Beirut”.

His persona amongst the Israeli public was therefore a mixed one, but in terms of “growing up” with the nation he had participated in its most defining moments; its birth in 1948, its apparent redemption following victory in the Six Day War, and then self-reflection after the controversy of the Lebanon War in 1982. Sharon’s ability to portray himself as guardian of the nation come the Disengagement is contextualised by this national involvement. By 2003, through a combination of political circumstances he was elected as Israel’s most popular Prime Minister. Kimmerling (2006) explains it in part through the impotence of Labour and Sharon’s manipulation of national insecurities. This aside, Sharon was now placed to lead the nation and take responsibility for its security. In his address to the Knesset on the Disengagement Plan on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2004 he spoke of Israel’s need to act as a “mature and experienced nation”, this also resembled the image he portrayed of his own character, evolving in to this father figure (Israel Ministry of



Foreign Affairs 2004). The Israeli public were continually cynical about his character and motivations, and depending on their political leanings called him a “killer”, a “traitor”, or “corrupt”, but the majority of the electorate supported him and his Disengagement plan.

Sharon embodied the many religious, historical, and participatory aspects of Israeli nationhood and he had to negotiate these parts during the Disengagement. The different Jewish Israeli communities converged upon Sharon in the hope of looking for representation. As has been discussed, national religious Jews in particular felt betrayed by the Disengagement Plan, and although the majority of Israelis supported it, there were still those amongst this group who were concerned about the fate of the settlers. For the sake of national unity it was important for Sharon not to ostracise any of these communities from the collective. As such, the language and status that he assumed was situated in the ethnic and republican narratives that make up Israeli nationhood.

Ariel Sharon’s address to the Knesset on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2004 that sought support for his Disengagement Plan emphasised both the values of kinship and republicanism as a means of getting through this “fateful hour for Israel”:

This is a people who has courageously faced, and still faces the burden and terror of the ongoing war, which has continued from generation to generation; in which, as in a relay race, fathers pass the guns to their sons; in which the boundary between the frontline and the home front has long been erased...

...I call on the people of Israel to unite at this decisive hour. We must find a common denominator for some form of “necessary unity” which will enable us to cope with these fateful days with understanding, and through our common destiny, and which will allow us to construct a dam against brotherly hatred which pushes many over the edge.

(Cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004)

Sharon’s argument throughout the Disengagement was of the necessity to make “painful sacrifices” for peace (Hamilton 2005). Relinquishing the settlements was a prime example of such sacrifice. The language of “sacrifice” by association suggests that the one who is making the decision to sacrifice is equipped with the wisdom and judgement to do it for a greater good. As George Mosse points out

sacrifice is less about death and more about triumph, regeneration, and redemption (1990: 73). He shows this through his example of the patriotic inspiration provided by myths of fallen soldiers, namely German youth who were killed in Langemarck during the First World War. Portrayed as elite, articulate youth with strong national sentiments, Mosse claims that the myths surrounding their death were invoked to inspire a new and stronger Germany (1990: 72). Sacrifice is at the heart of Israel's self-representation where the establishment of the Jewish state is celebrated as a tribute to those Jewish lives lost in the Holocaust and in the fight for independence. Sharon's use of sacrificial rhetoric therefore fits in with Israel's Jewish national image whilst also hoping to ease the difficulties created by the Disengagement by indicating its potentially positive outcome. Such language also contains within it great religious symbolism, most famously that of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. His use of such biblical imagery not only reinstates him as this father figure but also makes it contemporaneous in a way that religious Zionism strives to do so. It thereby bridges this ordeal with others in the Jewish past.

The electorate placed their faith in Sharon to take such steps and make the difficult decisions, in keeping with the paternal image. Individuals who agreed with the Disengagement respected him for this, he was "doing what you *need* to do, not what he *wants* to do". They also praised his conviction: "Sharon was the best man that did what he really said he would, everybody else before him didn't do what they said".

However, Sharon was not successful in keeping the whole "family" happy. Those from the settler movement also linked Sharon to the patriarch Abraham but in the slightly more cynical tones of the joke; "What's the difference between Abraham and Sharon? Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son for the Jewish people and Sharon is willing to sacrifice the Jewish people for his son". This was in reference to the opinion that one of the motivations behind the timing of the Disengagement was that it allowed Sharon to deflect attentions from charges of corruption levelled at his son Omri Sharon.

Paternalism courts great love and trust but conversely it can also inspire feelings of hate and betrayal and this emanated from those who disagreed with Sharon's

withdrawal plan. The most vitriolic of this came from religious youth I spoke with at the *ulpana* and the *yeshiva*, who regarded Sharon's actions as not just a betrayal of trust but also a betrayal of a covenant with God. He was relinquishing parts of *Eretz Yisrael* and in their mind forsaking *Am Yisrael*. Talli a 12<sup>th</sup> grade pupil from the *Ulpana* professed that;

I think what they've done is a crime, it's inhuman. It's not... it's not a just political act, it's... we are talking about people that live in their homes... no one was allowed to go in or out of their house...it's so cruel. I think that if in the government there were people who loved God and the *Torah* and *Torah* rules they would not have done this...It goes against the rules and against the morals, not just of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Now, they... until now a lot of people live in the hospital, in hotels...And they don't have anywhere to live. People live under the *shamaim* (sky)...outside...outside in tents, and people that are 60 years old...The government is not taking care of these people, it's their problem.

This sense of community responsibility and abandonment motivated much of the affirmative action taken by national religious youth and inspired a complete lack of trust in the government. Similar sentiments emanated from secular supporters of the settlers:

Sharon, he built them (the settlements) he was the founder. He told them (the settlers) you go and sit there, you will be like a part of Israeli territory. Then 30 years after it he just pulls them out of their houses and moves them, some of them still don't have houses.

This betrayal was also condemned in connection with what was perceived as "selling out" to George Bush and American demands for peace with the Palestinians. In their minds the Disengagement betrayed Israel's integrity and compromised its security. The strength of Jewish sovereignty in this sense is understood directly in relation to Sharon and his actions. The protection they demand of the state is embodied in Sharon, at the same time the public also has aspirations for him to embody particular communal projections of the nation. His leadership is subjected to moments of cynicism and celebration in the same way people relate to the state and nationalism.

Like other nationalist discourses that use terms such as "mother-country" or "fatherland" kinship metaphors help symbolise a mythology of common descent in

Jewish nationalism. Sharon employed these but as has been evident throughout the chapter Jewish nationhood has been de-abstracted through different levels of kinship. Aside from the mythology of Jewish descent from the Land of Israel there is also a biological blood line that unites the nation legally. This blood descent is valued as an important basis of citizenship as individuals desire Jewish marriages and voice their concerns of maintaining a Jewish majority in Israel. The Disengagement became a moment when the strength of these ties was evoked and provoked the de-abstraction of the Jewish nation to a series of direct familial experiences that both protestors and soldiers may encounter. The imagined potential familial confrontation is derived from the fact that each generation of Israeli Jews has been intimately involved in the nationalist movement via military service, or even in fulfilling Israeli national membership such as with the Ethiopian parents of the Levinson students. The mixture of shared experiences and direct relatedness by descent and via involvement in the national project produces a tangible sense of national kinship, not purely one of metaphoric form.

### 3. Disentangling “the Secular”

The previous chapter showed how Jewish nationhood is derived from both a symbolic kinship myth and the direct experience of family members, moving the idea of “nation” away from something that is a purely “imagined” community. The assertion of a Jewish national consciousness was integral to the success of Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel. The nature of Jewish democracy is that it tries to balance a Jewish ethnic component that is intrinsically rooted in religious practice with liberal democratic values. A key component of democracy has been secularism, which in order to facilitate the inclusion and representation of all citizens, maintains that institutions and governmental practices ideally be kept separate from religion or “religious” beliefs. As such so-called democratic states disassociate certain public spaces from religion in an effort to be inclusive of all its citizens, and not exclusive to the faith of one particular community. However, as democratic states such as America, Britain, and France show, this does not mean a complete absence of religious aspects from public life. Religious symbols and practice constitute a significant part of the national character, inflecting on state rituals and reflecting the fact that many, including those who consider themselves “non-religious”, still celebrate religious festivals. With this religious presence characteristic of many so-called democratic states, Israel is not unique in its incorporation of religion but can be considered at the extreme end of the spectrum. This is unsurprising seeing as its Jewish national culture is inherently derived from Jewish religion and its associated practices.

Despite the inherently religious component to Jewish Israeli identity there is still the ability to define oneself as a “secular” Jew, exemplifying the fact that Jewishness can exist as a form of cultural as opposed to “religious” identity. Being a secular Jew does not necessarily wholly preclude aspects of “religious” rituals, customs, or beliefs in one’s private or social life. This is revealed as not so much a contradiction but consistent with the unfixable nature of “the secular” which together with secularism as a whole is deeply embedded with “the religious”. This has as much to do with how individuals define “the religious” as it does with understanding “formations of the secular” (see Asad 2003). Israelis who described

themselves to me as secular (*hiloni*) would frequently claim to identify with Judaism culturally and incorporated elements of ritual practice without necessarily having faith in God, or “belief” in Jewish religious values (Liebman 1999; Schweid 1999). But practicing Jewish ritual and desiring a Jewish state with laws that preserved its Jewish character is different from characterising oneself as a “religious” Jew. To be “religious” meant having an ethical commitment to certain beliefs which secular Judaism did not necessarily require. By looking at how “secular” and “religious” youth relate to the state one can see first of all the difficulties of living secularly in Israel and the subsequent problem this raises in terms of Israel considering itself to be a “democratic” state, and secondly the problems it raises for religious youth as Israel attempts to be democratic and reflect processes of increased “secularisation” amongst its citizenry. With secularisation as a concept so readily endorsed and condemned by these groups respectively, this chapter examines the ways in which it is significant for contemporary Jewish Israeli identity.

Zionism was born out of a Jewish enlightenment which re-affirmed Judaism as culture “rather than religion which mandates a relationship to God” (Liebman 1999: 33). This Jewish culture however does not divorce it from the “religious” history from which it is derived. Although in the early years of the *Yishuv* Jewish immigrants from the Diaspora tried to distance themselves from Judaism as religion which they associated with powerlessness and oppression, a study by the Louis Guttman Institute in 1993 in to religious beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour of Israeli Jews showed that those who described themselves as not “religious” (around 70%) still continued to observe many *mitzvot*, and claimed to have some “belief” (Liebman 1999: 34).

“Belief” is frequently identified as that which distinguishes those who are “religious”. But religious practice is not seen as dependent on belief. Secular Jewish Israelis may practice Jewish rituals or take part in Jewish festivals without any religious belief as such. This is how I practice Judaism, and it is also typical of many British people who celebrate Christmas without any “belief” in Christianity. By defining themselves as secular or non-religious Jewish Israelis they distinguish themselves from orthodox religious Jews who are differentiated by their strict

adherence to an authorising doctrine or institutional power. Individual belief can be a means of coming to terms with the pains and injustices of the world, yet to isolate it to the realms of a mental state as Geertz (1983) has done overlooks the societally specific conditions in which certain forms of belief and moral languages are authorised. It is this that Asad (1993) asks us to take in to consideration when trying to understand religious belief. In opposition to Geertz (1993) he argues that belief is not just an application of looking for meaning “standing independent of the worldly conditions that produce bafflement” (Asad 1993: 46). Belief is conscious of reality, and changes according to the societal context in which the individual is embedded. In Israel, Jewish belief amongst secular Jewish Israelis is contextualised within a society that promotes the importance of Israel for the existential survival of the Jewish people, and reinforces its Jewish character through laws and Jewish national holidays.

The incorporation of religious practices or “beliefs” in Jewish Israeli lifestyles characterised many of my interlocutors and problematised using “secular” as a conceptual category. Aware of their convergence with aspects familiarly characterised as “religious”, some individuals chose to identify themselves as *masorti*, “traditional”, which I came to consider an emic definition of secular-religious convergence. Again it was a way of doing religion without being “religious” per se. Being “traditional” emphasised a commitment to the traditions of Jewish ritual practice and belief but in a more relaxed fashion. Compared to “secular” or “traditional” Jewish Israelis, those who define themselves as religious, *dati*, understand being Jewish as a co-dependent relationship between belief and practice. The two are intertwined: practice is only made meaningful by a belief in Jewish Law, *Halacha*. In turn, ritual practice is a requirement of *halachic* observance.

These styles of Jewishness have competed over the character of Israeli society since the beginnings of Jewish statehood when Labour Zionist pioneers extolling an open cultural Judaism had to contend with a wave of religious Zionists who sought the Judaization of the Greater Land of Israel. I will describe how in 2005 the Disengagement came to represent another instance of “secular”-“religious” contestation. The controversy over the Disengagement was a re-affirmation and re-

invention of the religious-secular distinction in political and social reality. It allowed one to see the semantically plural distinction between the “secular” and the “religious” being brought into an artificial clarity of an “us” and “them” dichotomy. The Jewish state has attempted to accommodate all streams of Judaism, which impacts on how it negotiates the retention of its Jewish character whilst also trying to present itself as a liberal democracy, with the secular-religious contradiction embedded in Israeli polity. What was evident from my fieldwork was that this tension is continually debated not only nationally but also amongst individuals as they voice their definitions of what it is to be Israeli. Claiming to be “secular” or “religious” is a means of asserting a particular group identity on the part of the people themselves. It is not the way the Israeli state defines these populations.

A seminar I attended at *Ulpana* Kfar Pines in February 2006 brought together “religious” girls from the *Ulpana* and “secular” girls from the Reali school in Haifa. It was run by the organisation *Gesher* meaning “bridge” which through a series of workshops attempted to explore what it meant to be Israeli. The seminars hoped to elucidate the “secular” and “religious” tensions that can cause potential confrontation amongst a nation that wishes to retain its Jewish unity. Discussions between the two sets of students showed that although secularism has developed in close association with religious inflections in Israeli society, “the secular” and “the religious” are pulled apart by individuals as they define their own subjectivity. “Secular” and “religious” are conceptually problematic categories both because of the way individuals do not necessarily exclude aspects of the “religious” from their so-called “secular” lives, and also at the state level the two intertwine as aspects of the religious inflect on Israeli public political life (Handelman 1998, 2004; Herzfeld 1992). Israel does not define itself as secular, yet in the traditions of Western democracy the political space is idealised as “neutral” to religion. The nationally specific historical trajectories of “secular” and “religious” must be understood to contextualise “formations of the secular” as Talal Asad (2003, 2006) suggests and taken in to account when ethnographically locating “religious” and “secular” expressions. At the *Gesher* workshop, the students made distinctions between “the secular” and “the religious” by asserting a particular self-image and image of the Other. These revealed assumptions about values considered



associated with religious or secular groups, and highlighted some of the corporal elements and clothing practices that were used to separate “secular” and “religious” peoples and lifestyles.

The assumptions that these students make regarding the “secular” and “religious” other raised issues of tolerance and freedom in particular. Workshop discussions based around the allegory of Plato’s cave that examines the reality of given “truths”, and an episode from an Israeli soap opera that explores religious-secular compromise, provided moments that evoked many of the complications secularism has in guaranteeing toleration and “the right to remain an other” (Habermas 1998: 40). Secularism conceptually requires the separation of religion from the political public sphere, originally that of the state from the church. With religion kept in the realms of the private, the public space is intended to allow “freedom of conscience” defended by political values rooted in equal civic rights as opposed to a specific worldview that enforces a “comprehensive doctrine based on moral or religious beliefs” (Rawls 1993: 37-38).

However, Israel like so-called secular states such as France, Britain, and the United States has facilitated a public “space for the divine” (Baxstrom 2008; Asad 2003, 2006; Bowen 2007). The French state regards itself as a domain in which “freedom of conscience, equality between men and women, the “humanistic value” of fraternity” can exist free of religious inflection. French political philosopher Blandine Kriegel claims that such conditions are essential for the maintenance of *laïcité*, which is described as a model of particularist French republican secularism (cited in Bowen 2007). However, as Bowen (2007) points out the state continues to provide subsidies for private religious schools which would appear to encourage the communalism the French state attempts to legislate against. The public presence of “the religious” is not simply masked in state rituals but also required in varying patterns by individuals themselves as they seek societal representation of their own secular-religious convergence. As such “the secular” is not regarded as essentially anti-religious, the freedom of conscience that it strives to uphold allows for the personal exploration of Judaism.

This has resulted in an ambiguous threshold for religious toleration. The very suggestion of a threshold or limit to tolerance inherently problematises secular freedom. In Bowen's (2007) work on French *laïcité*, he identifies how specific idealised notions of it are evoked when they are seen to be challenged by religious "infections" such as the wearing of headscarves by Muslim females in public schools. Bowen (2007) finds that this becomes such an issue because of its association with wider societal fears and anxieties pertaining to such things as the rise of international Islamism and wider communalism. However, his ethnography shows how secularism can be equally hegemonic and intolerant by its very nature, requiring subjects to conform to secularisation that may force abandonment of religious beliefs, in extreme cases. This issue is brought up by the religious teens of Kfar Pines as they explain to their secular counterparts how they should respect their desire to keep the Sabbath holy. Such things as having public transport or opening shopping malls on *Shabbat* was seen as a sign of intolerance on the part of secular Jewish Israelis that "infected" their religious space. The context of religious expression is very different in Israel compared to France where the Jewish aspect of statehood has been encouraged in varying degrees. However, both show the unfixable nature of secularism and the culturally fluid ways in which it emerges as a concept. In Israel and France the limits of tolerance and freedom questioned by the raising of secularism as an issues reveals much about contemporary French and Israeli identity.

The exercising of "freedom" was an issue that repeatedly came up during the seminar, and according to Yossi the counsellor who was running the *Gesher* sessions this was typical of such meetings; "the secular say the religious aren't free, and the religious say the secular are held back by their addiction to self satisfaction". The social contexts in which they make examples of this allows us to explore ethnographically an aspect of ethics, which Laidlaw (2002) points out is lacking in the anthropological literature. Laidlaw chooses to consider the "possibilities of human freedom" as a means of revealing the complexities of ethical considerations, as opposed to collapsing them in to the realms of purely socially sanctioned moral rules as Durkheim would have it (Laidlaw 2002: 315, 321). Like Laidlaw, Signe Howell (1997) has suggested looking at different

“moralities”, a term she believes allows for the plurality of moral expressions in culturally specific contexts. She claims that moral decisions incorporate the variety of knowledge practices that emanate from individuals’ interaction with various causal systems. Foucault (1988) too felt that although conscious reflection was a practice of individual freedom, the choices about the kind of self one wishes to be reveal much about the historically contextualised discourses the individual is immersed in that has produced such choices. Laidlaw suggests that exercises of ethical freedom or “techniques of the self” that Foucault describes are visually identifiable through choices of dress as well as reflections on how one ought to live (2002: 327). Individuals make these choices in relation to the institutions and value systems to which they are subjected - a matter that was in fact pointed out by religious and secular teens as they questioned the “truth” of the other’s freedom.

To understand the circumstances of Jewish religious freedom and why this should continue to be such a pertinent issue for Israeli teens I will discuss how Israeli society has historically negotiated secular and religious aspects of its character. This is revealed as a relationship based as much on pragmatics as on ideology which was apparent up until its most recent deliberation during the Disengagement from Gaza. The fears and anxieties surrounding the Disengagement and what this meant for the Jewish character of Israeli society will provide the backdrop to the *Gesher* workshops.

### **Deciphering Secularism and Tolerance of Religious Freedom**

As a Jewish democracy Israel fundamentally blurs the realms of the “religious” and the “secular”. Its ethnic constituent is inherently derived from a religion, the practice of which is still a key constituent of “non religious” Jewish Israelis. As such there is societal pressure to represent this through state rituals and frameworks. Such a Jewish emphasis has meant that Israel’s non-Jewish populations are disconnected from the most prominent narratives and symbols of national membership. Equally so, many Palestinian Israelis do not wish to endorse the Jewish state by celebrating it. There are instances as Rabinowitz (1997) has shown of Palestinian Israelis participating for the sake of inclusion within particular local communities. In its idealised form, the liberal democratic association with

secularism is an attempt to create a public sphere that is not only tolerant of other peoples' beliefs but also makes them feel represented. This is not sufficiently the case with Israeli democracy.

“Liberal democracy” traditionally espouses a secular rationale that strives to organise society around political values derived from human rights and political freedom that allows religious diversity for the sake of social harmony and “tolerance”. Secularism has classically required that the expression of religious belief be restricted to the private domain. The separation of religion and state is intended to ensure society’s organisation around “political” values as opposed to a specific worldview that enforces a “comprehensive doctrine based on moral or religious beliefs” (Rawls 1993: 37-38). In its earliest imaginings Voltaire asserted that only through secularism and rationality would an era of tolerance prevail. According to the philosopher Charles Taylor (1998), through the political medium of citizenship secularism is intended to be a “transcendent mediation” between “different identities built on class, gender, and religion, replacing conflicting perspectives with unifying experience” (Asad 2003: 5). Like Taylor, Rawls proposes that by providing this transcendent medium and encouraging political discourse that strives for public reason, namely that which is for the “public good”, secularism facilitates the conditions for an “overlapping consensus” and direct access to society (Rawls 1993). For both Taylor and Rawls, secularism allows for religious pluralism, and according to Rawls can even accommodate the contribution of religious values for the public good, but their role in the public sphere is ultimately governed by political principles (Asad 2003; Rawls 1993). These political principles are decided and enforced by secular rationale which as Asad points out often results in weaker parties within the “consensus” being subjugated and their principles being overlooked (2003: 6). Bowen’s (2007) discussion of Muslim headscarves is an illustration of this. The French liberal republican approach allows the public practice of organised religions through buildings and celebrations, but expressions of one’s personal religious beliefs must be kept private. The headscarf was interpreted as a symbol of the latter, and by those who were against it as an infringement on the ideals of *laïcité*. The secular state therefore does not guarantee toleration, and can often marginalise religious

communities' strongly held beliefs. Secularism like religious discourse is similarly limited in its "universalising of reason" (Asad 2003: 59). It is embedded in a doctrinal commitment to a set of political values. Canovan suggests that political values emerge in this way because like religious myth, political myth is also derived from a state's origin narratives that produce its "public and private morality" (1990: 9).

The secular myth that political discourse, as the foundation of public reason, can bring liberal redemption to society is therefore subject to the same critique as religion. Navaro-Yashin shows that secularism in Turkey is "not a neutral paradigm, but a state ideology as well as a hegemonic public discourse" (2002: 6). She shows that around the cult of Atatürk, secularism is not manifest simply in "the rational and ordered terms of an analytically reified modernity, but also the medium of excessive expression, mystical, ritualesque, and religious" (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 203). Secularist discourse through its "universalising of reason" is employed in Turkey as a means of promoting "democracy" and "modernity" to counter Islamism. Although Israel does not define itself as "secular" its desire to be a liberal democracy, and its historical aspirations of being a "nation amongst nations" as Herzl hoped, has meant the promotion of secularism throughout the nation building process through education and especially by the socialist politics of those who established the *kibbutzim*. As such, secularism continually competes with the ethno-religious discourses that also make up Israeli social and political life. The state simultaneously promotes its Jewishness through ceremonies such as those during *Yom HaZikaron* or *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* and ethnocentric state membership laws, whilst its citizenship textbooks promote liberal democracy and the importance of equal, non-ethnically biased citizenship.

Comparing liberal redemption and Christian redemption Asad notes how the latter is in many ways a restatement of sacred myths but in line with his project in *Formations of the Secular* he wants to get beyond looking at the secular as a mask for religion and understand it in terms of distinctive, histories, politics, and moralities (2003: 61). These may include elements of what we presuppose as "the religious", but with neither this nor "the secular" being fixed categories one must appreciate the different "grammars" that have produced distinctive notions of them

and practices of secularism. As Asad points out the place of religion varies in secular countries; “in Britain the state is linked to the established Church and its inhabitants are largely nonreligious, and in America the population is largely religious but the federal state is secular” (2003: 5). With such indefinite notions of “the secular” in mind one can regard the interweaving of the religious and the secular in Israeli identity as not wholly unique from other “formations of the secular”. However, although there are British atheists who might celebrate Christmas rituals and relate to Christian symbols as part of their national heritage, Britain does not promote Christianity as the basis of national membership nor as a means of attaining citizenship.

### **Israel’s History of Secular-Religious Embeddedness**

*Gesher* arranged “Encounter Seminars” that sought to help “Israelis develop a Jewish-Israeli identity that honours the plurality of expressions and strengthens Israel as a Jewish and democratic state” (*Gesher* 2006). It hoped to do this “by promoting mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance among Israelis of all backgrounds” building a “bridge” between “secular” and “religious” Jewish communities (*Gesher* 2006). *Gesher* is an educational organisation that was set up in 1970 and is partly funded by Israel’s Ministry of Culture whilst also being supported by private donations and independent foundations. It claims to have reached over one million Jews via its array of educational projects that take place in state schools and out of school settings. Through these projects the organisation hopes to promote Jewish identity as a “bond that unites, rather than a wall that divides” in the face of perceived polarisation between “secular” and “religious” Israelis (*Gesher* 2006). The seminars hoped to address any fragmentation and to avoid Israel potentially losing the Jewish character which the organisation claims the Zionist founders envisioned (*Gesher* 2006). As such the workshops provided a controlled environment in which to observe some of those issues that confront what it is to be Israeli, and embodied a culmination of “secular”-“religious” tensions I had witnessed in the media and in separate interactions with “religious” and “non-religious” teens.

The vision of the Zionist founders was far from uniform and often purely pragmatic as opposed to ideological when it came to incorporating Jewish religious elements within the public and political life of the new state. The rupture between “secular” and “religious” Jewish Israelis during the Disengagement continued a *kulturkampf* that has existed since the advent of Zionism when early debates ensued regarding the role Judaism should play in the cultural and political life of the new Israeli State. From its embryonic stages, political Zionism at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had to wrestle with the multi-faceted personality of the Jewish national consciousness that it was trying to rouse. Zionism’s founding father Theodore Herzl had to contend with religious protestations against a *Judenstaat*. An association of German rabbis suggested Zionist efforts contradicted messianic promises of Judaism (Sachar 2003: 44). They encouraged Jews to remain both patriotic to their host countries and loyal to religious sources (Sachar 2003: 44). In the early days of the *Yishuv*, leading Zionists such as Menahem Ussishkin, and religious leaders such as Rabbi Berlin feared that the wave of secular labour pioneers would lead to the abandonment of the Jewish religious character. Rabbi Berlin in particular felt this would result in a decline of family values and those qualities of *Eretz Yisrael* that set it apart from the Diaspora (Kolatt 1998: 290). It was the fear of a rupture between secular and religious groups that ultimately resulted in Ben Gurion abandoning an Israeli constitution in 1950 (Sachar 2003: 357).

Despite these tensions Zionism is *Jewish* nationalism, and Judaism has ultimately provided much of the symbolic and ideological framework on which to build Israeli identity (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983). Jewish symbols of sacrifice and redemption have been made contemporaneous with the founding of Israel after the Nazi Holocaust, and state ceremonies today continue to link Israel to a Jewish historical past. The following chapter will explain in more detail the narratives and rituals in which they are grounded and how they are overtly rooted in the Jewish religion (Handelman 1998, 2004; Herzfeld 1992). Furthermore the structuring of the Israeli calendar around Jewish holidays is an important dimension of expressing the Jewish character of the state (Kellerman 1993). Such symbolic

and institutional practices, together with the Jewish beliefs that they re-affirm show how religion inflects strongly on the public space.

Jewish religious customs continue to be part of Jewish Israelis' "non-religious" lifestyles. The Guttman Report in 1993 showed that nearly four-fifths of those who characterised themselves as "non-religious" were still partially observant of Jewish customs such as the Passover *seder* and lighting of candles during *Hannukah* (Liebman 1999: 41). When I travelled between Tel Aviv and Haifa during the festival of *Lag BaOmer*, Highway 2 would be hazed by the smoke of numerous blazing bonfires near the roadside as was the custom. Few of my Jewish Israeli friends were sure about the meaning of the festival but like much of the participation in such Jewish holidays, the importance of them to such "non-religious" individuals was not about an affirmation of faith but the practice of Jewish cultural tradition. In a similar vein, my family in Yodfat would say *Kiddush* and *Motzi*, the blessing of the wine and bread on Friday night to mark the Sabbath. They too counted themselves as "non-religious", rarely if ever going to the local synagogue, yet they dipped in to aspects of the religious, valuing the carrying out of such Jewish religious practices as a marker of their cultural identity. Amongst the Jewish Israeli teens I worked with, they too spoke of the way Judaism was part of their family lives but that this did not mean they were "religious". Students such as Tamar from Ma'agan Michael School, whose mother had in fact undergone an orthodox Jewish conversion, strongly maintained that she was "secular" despite celebrating Jewish holidays;

Tamar: We weren't raised as religious, I mean not at all, but we do the big holidays. We do go over to my grandmother's in Rishon, and over there they celebrate traditional... I mean in Passover they read the whole *hagadda*, with all the wine glasses, and they do everything by the book. So I kind of see both worlds.

**AG: So you don't go to the synagogue at all? Your family doesn't go?**

Tamar: No, it takes about half an hour to just convince my father to put a *kippa* on, but on the other hand I do have these family holidays where we really do, we go through the different Jewish customs. And yesterday actually we had a tour in Jerusalem as a part of this seminar and we went to the *kotel*, and really over there my friend felt exactly the opposite, but I really got in touch with the Jewish side of me and I didn't pray because I don't know how with the whole books and things, but I mean there's some kind of religious connection to this place and it did really just bring me closer to my family from my father's side. And



then you come back to the kibbutz and you go back to the, ok I'm Jewish by... my nationality is Jewish but I'm not exactly Jewish by religion.

**AG: You see yourself as Jewish by nationality as opposed to Israeli?**

Tamar: No, I also see myself as an Israeli but...but I mean I see myself as a Jew because I was raised by two Jewish people and the big parts of the Jewish year I celebrate as a Jew. I was raised by Jews and I also celebrate holidays as a Jew, but I was also born in Israel so I'm Israeli.

As well as holidays and Shabbat, the majority of Jewish Israelis will have had or at least attended a number of *bar* or *bat mitzvoth*, and Jewish weddings. Because of the institutionalisation of Jewish holidays in the Israeli national calendar and compulsory Jewish marriage, these religious occasions were formally marked but celebrated in family specific ways. As such, the religious "tone" of the occasion varied according to individual custom. Both because of the state and family tradition, aspects of the religious were observed in some part by the majority of Jewish Israelis. Some aspects such as transport not running on Shabbat and the closing of public places on Yom Kippur were imposed on individuals, as were religious marriage laws, but nonetheless many customs were embraced as part of family or cultural tradition.

Jewishness is also a prominent constituent of Israel's political life. The religious becomes the political where religious values are entwined with political agendas. During the 2006 election, Shas (The Association of *Torah* Observant Sephardis) campaigned as it always has, with promises of going to greater lengths to strengthen Israel's "Jewish soul" by introducing more of a Jewish character in to Israel's state laws without creating a state based on religious law. Shas' support base has been traditionally from Mizrahi Jewish Israelis who sought greater political representation amongst a dominant Ashkenazi political elite, and improved socio-economic conditions. Shas has combined religious values with stringent right wing policies regarding the peace process and Israel's security. This has been done with some success considering they came third in the 2006 election with 9.5% of the vote, muscling out Likud. Other religious parties such as the National Union - NRP, and United *Torah* Judaism (an anti-Zionist ultra-orthodox Ashkenazi party) also gained significant representation following the election. The former was a merger between the National Union and the National Religious Party (NRP). For

both previous Labour and Likud governments the support of the NRP has been essential in being able to build a government coalition.

Competing with this religious agenda was *Meretz* who campaigned with a policy of being able to provide greater social justice and human rights for all its citizens, whilst maintaining that “the State of Israel is the Jewish people’s state” but “a country of all its citizens” (*Yedioth Ahronoth* 2006a). Interestingly *Shinui* the party with the greatest “secular” emphasis essentially collapsed prior to the 2006 election, this however was most likely due to an exodus of its supporters to Ariel Sharon’s *Kadima* party. Neither *Meretz* nor *Shinui* ever distanced themselves from a Jewish platform, regarding Jewishness as compatible with the liberal democratic reforms they hoped to implement.

The demographics of support for these “secular” and “religious” parties partly reveals the ethnic and class based component of defining oneself as “secular” or “religious”. Secularism in Israel is not only a potential indicator of one’s adherence to a set of values or ideology, it also has ethnic and class based associations. The Guttman Report of 1993 showed that those who classified themselves as “non-observant” Jews, in other words those who claimed not to practice Jewish religious customs, were the best educated and overwhelmingly Ashkenazi (Liebman 1999: 41). Although according to the Report these “non-observant” Jewish Israelis constitute the minority of the Jewish Israeli population, they make up the majority of the academic, intellectual, and cultural elite (Liebman 1999: 41). This population have formed the body of support for secular leftwing parties such as *Shinui* and *Meretz*. Identifying oneself as “secular” in allegiance to such parties is also associated with more progressive attitudes towards the peace process and fairer Arab Israeli representation. However, the secular party *Yisrael Beiteinu* (Israel Our Home) during the 2006 election courted and consolidated votes of the rightwing and hawkish Russian speaking population. *Yisrael Beiteinu*’s major policy proposal is the transfer of Israel’s Arab population to a future Palestinian state in order to maintain a Jewish majority. Identifying with this secular and Jewish-centric platform is also as much about political representation of Israel’s largely unassimilated Russian speaking population. Taking these class distinctions into consideration, the majority of “secular” girls from the Reali School were Ashkenazi

and middle class, with the school itself being a private and elite educational establishment.

### **Jewish religious and secular education**

As state ceremonies and politicians debate the Jewishness of Israeli society, the educational system has also deliberated to what extent Jewish heritage should form the basis of its core values. This has partly been dealt with by having a secular state education stream and a state-religious educational stream. The Reali School and *Ulpana* Kfar Pines that took part in the *Gesher* seminar are examples of these streams respectively. The Reali School from Haifa is a prestigious private school that also houses a military boarding academy. Its alumni include former President of Israel Ezer Weizman and its current head is former IDF spokesperson Ron Kitri. Despite being part of the so-called secular educational stream, like other secular state schools there is also an emphasis on Jewish values. The Reali school charter states its fundamental values are rooted in Jewish spiritual and cultural heritage, and Zionist values that fosters love of The Land of Israel.

*Ulpana* Kfar Pines, a religious boarding seminary for girls, adheres to the state-religious educational curriculum and is part of the national religious Bnei Akiva network. It is based in a religious *moshav* (village) south of Haifa near the town of Hadera, and was founded in 1960 as the first *ulpana*. The students receive a religious Zionist education which emphasises Jewish religious teachings such as belief in God, the performance of commandments, and study of sacred texts (Gross 2003: 150). The nationalist aspect of the education is that derived from a Zionist perspective and hopes to “intensify their feeling of identification with the Land of Israel” (Gross 2003: 150). At the same time the state-religious education system has had to be pragmatic in terms of incorporating so-called “modern education”. By also incorporating the secular national curriculum this satisfies religious education’s other task of teaching its students to live in a democratic society. This facilitates participation in the political sphere which in its inherently secular nature can be in conflict with religious values. Students at the *ulpana* will get their high school diploma (*bagrut*), but compared to their Reali counterparts they will for instance take more credits in bible (*tanach*) studies and less in literature (*safroot*).

The two types of education available at these schools represent how Israel manages its “secular” and “religious” communities whilst attempting to maintain a sense of national unity. Urian and Karsh (1999) suggest Zionism had a very clear ideological agenda in terms of educating the Jewish people into a modern nation, with the education system facilitating the legitimisation and transmission of its core values and world view (see Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983). The efficacy of this legacy was still evident in 2004 as Israeli history and citizenship textbooks were dominated by a Jewish centric assessment of the establishment of Israeli statehood in 1948. Only in 2000 did the ministry of education insert some of the ramifications for Israel’s Palestinian population (Pappe 2000: 40).

Education in Israel now and in pre-State times has had to grapple with how to embrace the heterogeneity of the Jewish people it has recognised as citizens whilst at the same time instil a national ethos. Different periods have inspired different educational measures. Eliezer Schweid noted that prior to the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism had been something that guided actual actions, but once statehood had been achieved it became a form of credo (1999: 14). After Israel’s “War of Independence”, Zionism became the official ideology of the general state education system, “an ideological-emotional declaration of faith” (Schweid 1999: 14). The teaching of belonging and rootedness was centred on the history of the Jewish people but also on socialist values in terms of excelling for and through the group.

Such values were challenged as the 1960s saw a change in socio-economic policy and the advent of American mass culture (Schweid 1999: 14). Socialist policies now competed more with those required for an individualistic, capitalist, competitive ethos. The consequence of this was a perceived decline in humanistic collective sentiment being sidetracked for competitive achievement. Spiritual leaders suggested that the only way to re-instil a sense of collective responsibility, as well as the importance of maintaining the Zionist dream and indeed why to do military service, was through greater Jewish education. This was tackled by asking questions such as: “why be a Jew?” and “why live in Israel?” In dealing with such questions, the ministry of education run by the fervent Labour-Zionist Zalman Aran hoped youth would reconnect with their heritage and understand their

responsibilities for the realisation of Zionism. At the same time this would also motivate IDF service.

Schweid (1999) also highlights a similar “crisis” in the early 1990s when emigration or *yerida* (translated as descent) from Israel was high. The consequent “Shenhar Commission” proposed the teaching of further Judaic and humanistic subjects. Teaching of the Holocaust was seen as a key way to connect with students on an “emotional-existential level” (Schweid 1999: 18). It was hoped that the message of Holocaust and re-birth would build an Israeli identity motivated to continue the realisation of Zionism, one rooted in humanistic Jewish elements. However, this had to be relevant to secular Jews and therefore had to be ideologically accessible in a positive way via a “secular” life, not just through the Jewish religion it was rooted in (Schweid 1999: 22).

The changing emphasis on the importance of Jewish history and culture reflects the fluid nature of the “secular” and “religious” in the Israeli public sphere. Israel’s education system has consistently celebrated Jewishness as an integral part of Israeli identity. However, a distinction has been made between Jewish cultural values such as love of the Land and the survival of the Jewish people, and belief in Jewish religious law that mandates a relationship to God. What remains common to both secular-state education and religious-state education is that there is an ambiguity as to which of the Jewish or the democratic is prioritized. This has as much to do with the unfixability of “the religious” as it does with the unfixable nature of “the secular”. Judaism is flexible in how it is related to, and Israel’s fluctuating emphasis of it in its public life has produced a shifting notion of Israeli secularity.

### **Disengaging the Secular from the Religious**

After the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by the religious Zionist extremist Yigal Amir, the Israeli education system responded to a wider national feeling that greater understanding needed to be reached between religious and secular Jewish Israelis (Gross 2003: 156). Through greater dialogue and openness to different patterns of Jewish religious practice it was hoped that Israeli society could avoid further political crisis and instances of such an extreme manifestation of polarised

attitudes. Rabin was assassinated for making land concessions to the Palestinians as part of the Oslo Peace Accord, ten years on the Disengagement Plan was similarly about “land for peace”. The *Gesher* seminar took place at a time when tensions and divisions were high between “religious” and “secular” communities. The workshops were an opportunity to bring together opposing perspectives and “bridge the gap” between Jewish Israelis. As indicated earlier, the Disengagement became an event that radicalised the existing conflicts between “secular” and “religious” Israelis. Although the *Gesher* seminar was not a platform for students to voice their thoughts on this event in particular, the issues that the students felt separated them, mirrored many of those that were raised by the Disengagement.

Although the occupation of the Palestinian territories, as well as the decision to withdraw from it was not intrinsically driven by a theological conception, in both instances the decision had a profound religious significance. The initial settlement of the occupied territories following victory in The Six Day War in 1967 was justified as a security measure and subsequently a demographic need. However, the settlement project became an integral part of religious Zionism and was fuelled by a messianic redemptive spirit embodied by the group *Gush Emunim*. The removal of Jewish settlers in 2005 was seen by religious members of the anti-Disengagement movement as forsaking the Judaization project of the Greater Land of Israel, and symptomatic of a wider process of marginalisation of religion within Israeli public and political life.

Banners of the anti-disengagement movement often contained an Israeli flag re-appropriated on to an orange background as opposed to the traditional blue on white. Such appropriation of a national symbol intended to revamp an ideology that the actors believed was being corrupted and misdirected by secular forces. Although appropriated by all members of the anti-Disengagement camp, the Zionism this espoused remained that of the national religious, messianic wave that helped inspire the occupation of Arab territories in the aftermath of the Six Day War. This was a Zionism that the national religious felt retained that emotional and religious attachment to the land and the people they now saw forsaken by Sharon and mainstream Israeli society.

*Yedioth Ahronoth*, an Israeli newspaper, published an interview with the IDF's Chief Rabbi, Avi Ronsky who declared that the people of Israel were "drifting away from its traditional values", that secular Zionism no longer existed, and that for these people they might as well be living in Scandinavia for what he judged as their (Israel's secular mainstream) complete apathy to Israel's Jewish heritage (Bar-Gil 2006). Religious groups saw the Disengagement as a further knockback to the Judaization of the Land of Israel and their increased marginalisation in the public sphere. Jewish "traditional values" were perceived as being replaced with "secular" ones associated with greater Americanisation and lack of Jewish spiritual and historical connectedness.

Conversely "secular" Israelis chose to use the Disengagement as a moment to define themselves vis-a-vis "religious" Israelis. This was evident in the Israeli press during the Disengagement when it was argued that the national conflict that emerged as a result of it was symbolic of a deepening "cultural and spiritual conflict" between the "religious" and "secular" in Israel (Sheleg 2006). The struggle between the pro and anti Disengagement camps was often pitched as a battle between these groups - the orange wearing "religious" and the blue wearing "secular". Politicians such as Labour Candidate Tammy Molad-Hayou saw the Disengagement as the "time to define" Israel (Molad-Hayou 2005). She saw the voice of the secular mainstream pushing through the Disengagement, and believed it was this voice that must now impose its character on Israeli society (Molad-Hayou 2005).

Ruptures in the status quo such as the Disengagement bring to the surface issues that simmer beneath the profound ambiguity of Jewish democracy, and the limit of pragmatism. Despite the willingness to accept a public role for Judaism and the incorporation of aspects of Jewish religiosity in to the lifestyles of secular Israelis there were certain limits to it. Conversely, the religious community did not want what they perceived as further dilution of Jewish religious values within Israeli society, or worse still their complete marginalisation in place of a more secular Israel. The Disengagement aroused some of the fears and anxieties over the nature of Israel's political and public life.

It is true that religious expression in Israel has been subject to political machinations, evolving according to what has been deemed necessary for the Israeli public good. Many objections to the Disengagement were derived from a feeling of religious alienation by the government. Although Israeli governments justified the occupation of Palestinian territories on grounds of security and demographic necessity, religious Zionists also bolstered these claims with religious ideology that called for the settling of the Greater Land of Israel. Sharon himself had supported the messianic movement *Gush Emunim* in their drive to settle the land. Significantly, the drive for Israeli statehood was intrinsically linked to messianic rhetoric that called for a return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland (Paine 1994). However, Sharon chose to marginalise such messianic religious ideology for the “greater good” of Israel and the majority of Israelis who saw the withdrawal from Gaza as necessary for a viable future.

Although Sharon stressed the importance of maintaining unity amongst all Israeli citizens and stressed the “*kashrut*” of his “commitment to the Land of Israel”, it was a moment when democratic values were given precedence over the religious values of some sections of the population (cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004). This was in the sense that as elected representative of the country he was taking the steps he deemed necessary for Israel’s wellbeing. Sharon’s plan was reinforced by voices such as those of politician Tammy Molad-Hayou who saw the Disengagement as an opportunity to assert Israeli secularism. She called for secular Israelis to push through the Disengagement and reduce religious influence in the public domain. She encouraged secular Israelis to “demand” a Shabbat that allowed for public transport and the opening of shopping malls, a Shabbat that would “anchor the national and social priorities” ahead of religious regulations (Molad-Hayou 2005).

As referred to earlier, Bowen’s (2007) work is a useful comparison for this secular – religious contestation. Similar to Asad’s (2003) project on formations of the secular, Bowen suggests *laïcité* is only usefully understood when unravelled in terms of its representation of the relationship between, religion, state, and individual in French society (Bowen 2007: 3). He suggests it becomes useful in terms of how it is deliberated by people as a social issue, revealing those aspects of



French political and public life that are contained within it (Bowen 2007: 3). Putting aside the contestable nature of “laïcité” or “secularism” which the issue of headscarves raises, Bowen disentangles the debate as “a moment when certain anxieties and assumptions come to the surface, when people take stock of who they are and what kind of social life they want” (2007: 2). He uses it as a chance to uncover associated fears and social concerns such as the growth of communalism and further influence of international “Islamism”, whilst also exploring what the wearing of such a religious symbol reveals about French Muslim female identity. Regarding the latter, whatever the public-private distinctions *laïcité* governs regarding religious practice, Bowen’s informants claimed that French culture had provided the conditions in which to freely explore “true Islam” (2007: 72). This again emphasises the importance of understanding formations of both “the secular” and “the religious” within their public and political contexts. The secular in this case cannot be regarded as essentially anti-religious; the freedom of conscience that it strives to uphold allowed for the personal exploration of Islam. However, the wearing of headscarves was interpreted by sections of the French public as a threat to French secularism and a sign of Islamic encroachment on the public domain. The French liberal republican approach allows the public practice of organised religions through buildings and celebrations, but expressions of one’s personal religious beliefs must be kept private. The headscarf was interpreted as a symbol of the latter, and by those who were against it as an infringement on the ideals of *laïcité*. It is when religion is interpreted as infringing on beliefs that it becomes an issue for those who characterise themselves as secular and this was evident amongst Israeli youth.

Like the issue of headscarves, the Disengagement was a moment when certain anxieties and assumptions came to the surface. Despite the convergences between religious and secular Jewishness, the Disengagement provoked the articulation of those issues that are assumed to separate them. Using the structure of the *Gesher* seminar I attended I will examine topics that the students defined as representative of what separated “religious” and “secular” Jews in Israel, thus exemplifying how these categories are still rendered meaningful. One such issue was that of “freedom”. In the same way as Mollad-Hayou wanted the Disengagement to

symbolise an end to religious control over Israeli public life, the Reali students criticised the religious community for infringing what they regarded as their right to choose freely how they wished to live their lives. The religious lifestyle was condemned for curtailing individualism. It was this individual liberty and the nature of secular freedom that the religious students condemned as part of the secular lifestyle. A hedonistic Tel Aviv and a lack of collectivism symbolised by the Disengagement was argued by the Kfar Pines students as evidence for this. The students also showed visually how one could separate these “secular” and “religious” values in drawing the types of clothing stereotypical of the other. The workshops also tackled the issue of “tolerance”. The sessions attempted to challenge the students’ assumptions of the other through the allegory of Plato’s cave, an allegory that challenges us to re-think what we imagine as “truths”. In the closing discussions of the *Gesher* seminar the students were asked to reflect on how the “secular” and “religious” might coexist together. An example of how this might be achieved was shown via an episode from an Israeli soap opera. The message of the episode is that co-existence can be achieved by understanding that accommodating *practices* of the religious does not mean one has to make a commitment to a set of beliefs. It is an indicator of how Jewish secularism allows for religious practice without taking on an ethical position, and in this form it is potentially compatible.

### **“Bridging the Gap”: The Gesher Encounter Seminar, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006**

Prior to the *Gesher* seminar I had first come in to contact with the *ulpana* in Kfar Pines via a teacher at *Yeshiva* Kfar Ha Roe whose daughter studied at the *ulpana*. It was she who made the necessary introductions with one of the English teachers at the *ulpana* who arranged for my earlier visits. The *ulpana* became an important window through which to get to know 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade religious female teens as I had few opportunities to interact with religious girls both socially and in the school life I was exploring. This was facilitated through pre-arranged visits with the English teacher who after an initial supervised discussion with a group of her students allowed me to interact freely with the students. As my visits were justified on the basis of being educational visits where the pupils could practice their

English, I was limited to how many trips I could make to the school but each day there allowed me to spend some social time with the students both inside and outside the classroom. My own assumptions about “the religious” meant I initially felt I would be precluded from doing so because of *halachic* restrictions on interactions between members of the opposite sex. Although there was initially a more reserved approach to the possibility of me speaking alone with these students I was ultimately given the same freedom to carry out interviews, and socialised with them whilst on school premises.

The rather sleepy *moshav* in which the *ulpana* is located is a largely religious community, symbolic of the physical separation between “religious” and “non-religious” Israeli communities. The dusty roads and undeveloped countryside provide a serene setting for the *ulpana* and its college campus-like layout. Well maintained grounds connect the spacious main school building, the canteen, a large theatre, and the student dormitories. On each prior visit to the school the campus was filled with a buzz of activity and a cheerful tempo of student traffic as pupils made their way to class. I was greeted with the same environment as I returned to the school to observe the day of workshops run by *Gesher*.

The visiting Reali school pupils were used to a similar style campus which I had also visited on one occasion earlier in my fieldwork as I explored the variety of schools in Haifa. Although in an urban setting the Reali school was isolated in its own way amongst the well-off middle class neighbourhoods in the Carmel district. The Reali students had arrived at Kfar Pines on the back of a three day education experience on “Jewish identity”. Prior to this they had been in the Galilee discussing the difference between what it is to be Jewish, versus what it meant to be Israeli. This was further indication of the relevance in extrapolating the ways Jewish Israelis differently identify themselves with the Jewish religion, and the fact it continued to be deliberated.

Upon my arrival at the classroom where one of the workshops was taking place, the Reali and Kfar Pines students had already started to introduce themselves to each other. They were in two lines opposite each other and I was easily able to discern one group from the other by their style of clothing. The Reali pupils were all

wearing trousers with t-shirts and wore their hair down. This contrasted with the *ulpana* pupils who although wearing similar t-shirts and hoodies sported ankle length skirts and had their hair tied back. This was regular school and out of school garb for both groups of teens. The *Gesher madrich* (counsellor) running their workshop was Yossi, a *yarmulke* wearing orthodox Jew in his mid twenties who had run a number of such seminars. Although he was an orthodox Jew he said not all of the *madrichim* (counsellors) were religious.



Figure 7: The students from the Reali School (sitting in the inner circle) pair up with their *ulpana* counterparts (sitting in the outer circle).

In their lines the pupils shared tales of what they had done over the summer vacation. In a relaxed atmosphere and amongst plenty of laughter many of the Reali pupils second guessed that many of the *ulpana* girls had spent the summer protesting in Gush Katif, and in turn the *ulpana* students joked that the Reali students had probably spent their summer in Eilat, a popular and cheap holiday destination for Israeli teens. Both were largely right in their assumptions and it was a first indication of how the groups differentiated themselves. Gush Katif was characteristic of religious ideological expression and political participation, and the sunbathing and clubbing lifestyle in Eilat was emblematic of the wider picture of

Israeli secularism that was adjudged to have moved away from core religious values and followed the path of individualism. I came to understand that for the Reali teens their good times in Eilat that included drinking and romantic escapades with the opposite sex, represented how they imagined their individual freedom compared to perceived religious restraints.

As I listened in on their conversations about holidays, hobbies, favourite music and food I recognised many of the *ulpana* students I had chatted with previously, and two Reali students I had met whilst spending time with a Haifa scout troupe. From the *ulpana*, Talli whose father she claimed was always religious but her mother became so only once they were married, had lamented to me that *hiloni* Israelis did not care about being Jewish and that she was fed-up with being judged by such people as she walked down the street. She felt there was a lot of prejudice against religious Israelis on the part of her secular teenage counterparts, namely that they thought they were boring and being indoctrinated to believe in *hashem* (God). Without being specific, Talli also claimed that Jewish Israelis who did not consider themselves religious feared the religious population.

Across the room from Talli was Smedar, a girl I met whilst visiting *Meshottet BaCarmel* scout troop about a month prior to this seminar. She had painstakingly taken me through the principles of Scout guiding and the value of *Ha Tzofim* (the Scouts). Wearing a Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) t-shirt she was hurriedly explaining to her *ulpana* partner her planned trip to the US as part of a scout delegation to improve Israel's global profile. For Smedar, Israel was a democratic country and the religious had no right to stop her from going to the cinema, travelling, or for that matter anything else she wanted to do as a so-called secular citizen.

Moving on from the introductions the day was split up into five further activities which I will use to anchor my discussion on some of the themes that these students used to separate their communal groups. Despite the chasm that many of the students ultimately felt remained between them even after the day's workshops, there were aspects of their Jewish Israeli identity that did connect them and allowed for a pragmatic co-existence.

## **“Secular” Versus “Religious” Freedom**

In various guises the issue of “freedom” dominated many of the debates throughout the day. Yossi the madrich later informed me this was typical of most workshops that he had run with religious and non-religious youth. The Reali students defended Israeli secularism as a means of rebuffing what they regarded as the religious encroachment of society. In contrast to a religious lifestyle, the Reali teens identified themselves as free to go out on Shabbat, desired public transport and the opening of shops and cultural centres on this day. There was a projection of hostility towards the religious community that was blamed for this infringement on their freedom. Not only did they consider it a constrained way of living, but that it also inhibited freedom of thought. They considered it limiting to accept a single religious “truth” that would conflict with a more moral, tolerant life.

Conversely religious girls charged the Reali students with being controlled by their addiction to self-satisfaction. They argued that the freedom they thought they wielded was actually ruled by selfish instincts. The *ulpana* girls condemned the Reali girls for relating to the world with a certain lack of consciousness. The *ulpana* students indicated that a life “free” of *hashem* was also devoid of purpose or meaning, claiming that secular individuals were prone to “time-wasting” (*bizbuz zman*) and that their secular protestations regarding the importance of “free living” amounted to “meaningless arguments” (*vikuhey srak*). According to the *ulpana* students, the Jewish faith they had inspired a more selfless perspective that prioritised God and the Jewish people as a whole. This aside, in the same way the secular girls displayed some of their Judaic knowledge, the religious girls wanted to impress upon them that in contrast to stereotypes, they too were “normal” teenage girls who listened to the same music, enjoyed shopping for clothes, generally living similarly exciting and “free” social lives. The only difference as far as they were concerned, was that their existence benefited from the values and structure instilled by religious practice and belief, such as prayer and keeping kosher. They claimed it was this religious essence that provided the spiritual meaning and purpose to their lives;

They (the secular) think we don't have a life, just girls together, studying the *torah*, then home; no freedom just books and *torah*. Our lives are the same, just with *torah*. I also buy clothes, but just ones that fit to a religious way of life.

(11<sup>th</sup> grade *Ulpana* Kfar Pines student)

Whilst the *ulpana* girls see true freedom as embedded in religious guidelines incorporated within the private self, the Reali students regard the ability to make free choices as only possible with that secular protection of the private self that fends off what is understood as religious prescription. The closing of shopping malls and limitations on public transport is seen as a threat to that private self and an encroachment on personal liberties. The Reali girls also extend what they regard as religious constraints to assumptions on the freedom of religious girls to enjoy aspects of popular culture that they indulge in. As the above quotation points out, the *ulpana* students were keen to emphasise that they were at liberty to “self-fashion” as they so choose. This was not seen as at odds with a religious lifestyle.



Figure 8: The *ulpana* students with their workshop illustrations.

The debate between the two groups of pupils highlights the philosophical ambiguity of freedom yet indicates the importance it holds for individuals as they mark

differences between their lives and those who are seen as “relatively controlled” (Brown 1995: 5). Wendy Brown’s discussion of political subjectivity and machinations towards political emancipation argues that freedom is a “relational and contextual practice that takes shape in opposition to whatever is locally and ideologically conceived as unfreedom” (1995: 6). The complication of freedom in this Israeli context is that the “relational and contextual practices” in which these pupils are situated seek to share in the frameworks that are seen to cause “unfreedom” in the other. By this I refer to how many who characterise themselves as secular Israelis continue to desire something of the religious in terms of observing some Jewish customs and retaining the Jewish character of the state in terms of some symbols and laws. At the same time, religious Israelis also wish to engage within secular state frameworks in order to fully participate as Israeli citizens. Similarly Brown (1995) argues that political groups based on ethnicity or class seeking political emancipation will intentionally reproduce hegemonic frameworks so as to be able to engage in state systems.

Returning to how these students separated themselves, religious values were contrasted with “the secular” in terms of the latter’s association with individualism as derived from self-satisfaction. The consequences of secular freedom were associated with growing trends of ideological decline, materialism, and greater attention to personal care with emphasis on fashion and body beauty (Weiss 1997: 815). The surplus of gyms in Tel Aviv may be testimony to this latter point. It has been superficially blamed on the expanding Americanisation of Israeli teens and society as a whole (Schweid 2004: 263; Smootha 2004: 66). This can indeed be found in clothing trends, enthusiastic recitation of American hip hop, and the partiality to a number of US TV shows. Although on the one hand the *ulpana* pupils emphasised that they too enjoyed such popular culture it was secondary to a Jewish religious lifestyle. Americanisation alone symbolised a society bereft of collective values, corrupted by self-centred materialistic pursuits. In the same way non-religious Israelis dipped in to Jewish religious culture, religious youth saw no contradiction in partaking in American culture as long as it did not contravene their commitment to Judaism.



Tel Aviv in particular was frequently highlighted by religious teens as emblematic of what may become of an Israeli society that drifted away from Jewish religious values. It also represented the decadence of non-religious teens. A report by *Yedioth Ahronoth* on the attitudes of teenage religious settlers, typified the kind of anger and apparent divisions aroused:

I have finished with you Tel Avivians... Tel Avivians don't care about what happens to us... Those Tel Avivians, they keep going to their nightclubs as if nothing has happened.

(Cited in Lapid 2005)

Tel Aviv and its inhabitants were victim to some of the most vitriolic of abuse. It has come to be seen as a town of hedonism and the antithesis of what Israel might be if dominated by religious Zionism. Tel Aviv was a symbol of the current ills a more secularised Israel might bring. Haim Hazan's (2001) analysis of Israeli cultural documents in the form of films, theatre, and novels reveals what he describes as a Tel-Avivian symbolic type. Films such as *Late Summer Blues*, a "coming of age" film from the 1970s, and the novel *Zikhron Dvarim* (Memorandum) are said to represent Tel Aviv as a "prism of mythic struggles" (Hazan 2001: 74). Tel Aviv symbolises juxtapositions of "hedonism versus responsibility" and the "promise of the past versus the disintegration and failures of the present" (Hazan 2001: 74). As early as 1934, during the Zionist Actions Committee where they debated the relation of religion with the emerging Jewish society, the leading Zionist Menahem Ussishkin "denounced the hedonistic and frivolous bourgeoisie of Tel Aviv" (Kolatt 1998: 290).

The accusations made by the religious teens during the time of my fieldwork are therefore part of a continuum that has seen the persistent wrestling of religious and what have been grouped together as secular forces. Whereas the secular "enemy" in the *Yishuv* was identified as the labour pioneers and their antireligious ideology, the "enemy" now incorporated elements of individualism, capitalism, and Americanisation. In keeping with the importance of looking at secular formations in terms of their historical situatedness, one can see that in the time of the *Yishuv* it was a socialist form of secularism whereas now it was tied to the forces of greater industrialisation and growing individual capitalism. Secular society in

contemporary Israel was now almost completely disassociated from the communal life of the Kibbutzim.

As Foucault (1988) has claimed, exercises of freedom also reveal much about the social and historical context that he believes informs the individual's choices. Jewish labour pioneers in the *Yishuv* intentionally broke away from Jewish religious commitment and practice as a mark of their freedom from the image of the halutz Jews. The symbol of the "New Jew", one that worked the land and commanded his/her own destiny was moulded in opposition to the adjudged apathy of those in the Diaspora harshly labelled as *adishim*, lentils. The socialist and communal life provided by the Kibbutz legislated for a very different type of freedom compared to that desired by the Reali students of today. The secular students of Reali believed their individual freedom, marked by not having to conform to a set of religious beliefs, set them apart from the religious girls of Kfar Pines. As well as differing ideologically they also felt their difference was partly symbolised through their fashion choices and assumed differences in musical taste.

### **Visual Mediations of "the Secular" and "the Religious"**

Clothing and other corporal elements emerged as markers of "the secular" and "the religious" as the Reali and *Ulpana* students were asked by Yossi to draw stereotypes of themselves. The aesthetic differences provided expressions of the day-to-day mediation of the secular and the religious. I too would adjust my dress according to the school site I was visiting, namely by wearing a *yarmulke* when visiting religious schools such as the *ulpana* or the *yeshiva* in Kfar HaRo'e. Although exaggerations of "secular" and "religious" appearance and lifestyle, the pictures shown in Figures 9 and 10 embody some of those elements that these teens distinguish as typifying differences between the two. Being asked to draw how they felt they were seen in the eyes of the other, Yossi was encouraging them to challenge some of the assumptions they had of the other. Although these assumptions may not be accurate, drawing on the visual aspects of these suppositions implies that "the secular" and "the religious" are separated in this way.

### a) Distinguishing the Secular

In line with the Americanised hedonist individual described earlier, the picture drawn by the Reali students shows a *frecha* (see Figure 9 below), a term to describe what might be known in English as a bimbo. The drawing and the term portrays an image-conscious and boy-obsessed female who is sporting hot-pants, a pierced navel, and tattoos. In this instance the *frecha* has been placed in a night club, her “natural habitat” where she is listening to music, smoking, and drinking diet coke. She represents all that is supposedly hedonistic, and morally corrupt.



Figure 9: A *frecha* drawn by the Reali students.

The secular stereotype the Reali students are trying to challenge with this portrait is overwhelmingly that of sexual freedom. The drawing of a curvaceous figure with revealing clothes (*levush hasuf*) highlighted their desire to provoke a discussion in which they could convey that secular individual freedom did not necessarily produce girls like the *frecha* in the picture. Although they indulged in some of the aspects represented in this picture they emphasised it did not characterise a “non-religious” lifestyle as a whole.

### b) Distinguishing the Religious

The students of Kfar Pines similarly drew a picture of how they felt they were seen in the eyes of the Reali girls. The image they constructed stereotypes them as *dossim*. This is a derogatory term non-religious individuals sometimes use to describe orthodox Jews. The Kfar Pines students have played up to this stereotype with their drawings of Shlomileh (nickname for Shlomo) on the right with his *peyot*, *kippa*, and *tzitzit*; and Leah on the left wearing modest clothing, and a *sheitel* (the Yiddish word for ‘wig’) used to cover the hair as instructed by Jewish Law. She is also seen holding orange ribbons in one hand and a *siddur* (Jewish prayer book) in the other. The wall that dominates the picture represents the *kotel*, a section of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem that remains standing and continues to be used as a place of prayer. As one can see, the theme of the Disengagement is very evident. Aside from the orange ribbons held by Leah, which were commonly used as tags of support for the Jewish settlers, Shlomileh has “Gush Katif!” written on his t-shirt, and the majority of the picture is done in orange, the colour associated with the anti-Disengagement movement.

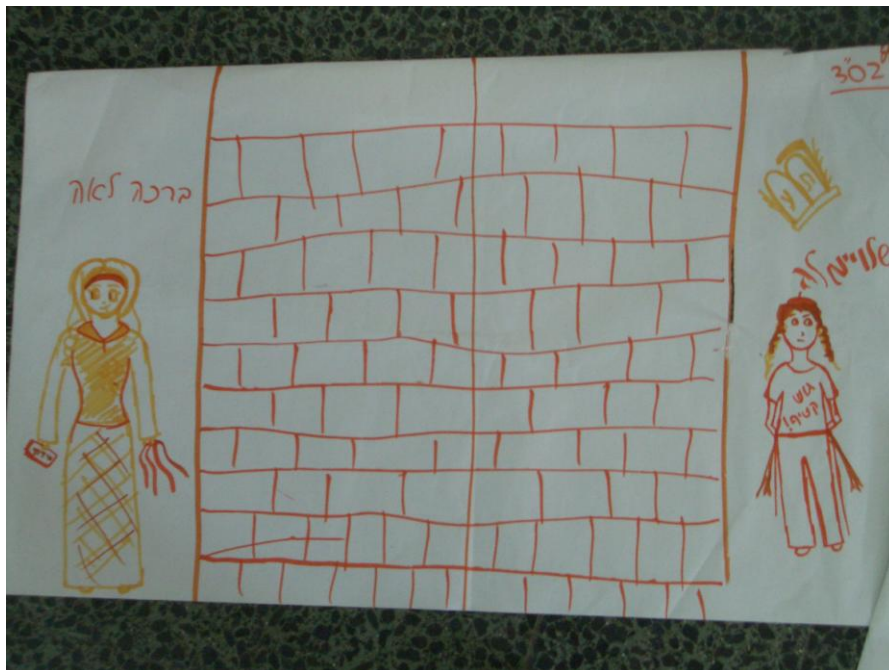


Figure 10: The *ulpana* girls' illustration of Shlomileh and a *doss* stood either side of the *kotel*.

The “religious” as presented here accentuates an ideological commitment to the Land of Israel embodied by their protests against the Disengagement. The picture

also confronts sexuality in that both Leah and Shlomileh are conservatively dressed and symbolically separated by the wall. Both the Reali and *ulpana* girls saw the issue of relationships with boys as a key component of that which separated them. The girls at the *ulpana* adhered to the *halachic* instruction to be *shomer negia* that forbids contact with the opposite sex. As such sexual freedom was reiterated as a boundary between the “secular” and “religious” for these teens.

Fashion was a medium that stood out as important in the day to day assertions of one’s “religious” or “secular” identity. This was most explicit in the Levinson religious state school in Kiryat Yam just outside of Haifa. Unlike education in the *ulpana* or *yeshiva* the school was mixed and provided a less intense religious education. Bible and *gemorrah* studies were given greater emphasis than in a secular state school, and the books chosen in literature studies often had a Jewish religious theme. There would be time put aside for prayers and the boys were expected to wear a *yarmulke* and the girls had to dress modestly. Female students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade were discouraged from attending IDF preparation lessons as the school’s policy was to encourage girls to do *sherut leumi* (national service). This was to the consternation of many of the female students who wished to carry out military service. This reflected the unorthodox background of the students who saw no contradiction to what they defined as their “traditional” Jewish identity.

Both the male and female students I worked with in Levinson claimed to be “traditional” as opposed to “religious”, in line with how they described their parents’ relationship to Judaism. Fashion, makeup and hairstyle were noticeable ways in which they distinguished themselves from “religious” students. Male students were often disciplined for not wearing their *yarmulke* in class and many would whisk it off as soon as they were out of the school gates. Like the *ulpana* students, female pupils at Levinson wore skirts but these would often be worn over leggings. However, like the boys this was regarded as a “religious” uniform which came off after the school day when they would then change in to jeans or less modest skirts. Levinson girls in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade also more readily wore makeup with their hair down. As such, Levinson school fashion did not just reflect one’s individual tastes but also the mediation of religious identity.

The depiction of the “religious” and “secular” in the pictures shows how the body exists as a cultural subject (Csordas 1990). The body is seen to existentially site the religious and the secular. Csordas (1990) has shown how the body is involved in perception and practice embodying values and emotions, the exercise of drawing stereotypes of the self allows those values that might be associated with a particular social body to be challenged. The relevance of addressing the body is made even more pertinent by the role the physical body plays in Judaism. Circumcision is a marker of religious commitment on the part of the male, and married females are expected to cover their natural hair. In the case of the picture of the *frecha*, portraying a female free of constraints on the physical body shows one way secular freedom is exercised in contrast to a religious other. This may well have been represented differently if done by male students, where male fashion has evolved in a different trajectory of sexual politics.

The fashion choices of the Levinson students show how the body is used in resistance to particular sets of values. Removing a *yalmulke* by the Levinson boys was a symbol of independence from religious controls on the physical body. Dressing “secular” as soon as they leave the school gates emphasises how one can look at corporal expressions to understand how individuals fuse a variety of moral and social influences as part of their own identity. The fashion strategies employed by these teens reflect a mindful orientation of the self by the individual. These Levinson students choose to embody a non-religious self by the sporting of clothing that would seem not to conform to a “religious” lifestyle.

### **The Right to Remain an Other: Probing the Threshold of Secular Tolerance**

By limiting the encroachment of religious values on the political order, secularism strives to create a neutral space in which to allow the inclusion of citizens of all background who have access to equal rights. Maintaining this space whilst at the same time being tolerant of individuals from all backgrounds problematises secularism’s supposed neutrality. Its claim to fostering a more tolerant society by separating particularist ethical positions and public political values is inherently problematic because of the paradoxical nature of tolerance itself. As Habermas

(2003) has pointed out, tolerance is often arbitrary and paternalistic where a sovereign party unilaterally bestows “tolerance on a tolerated party as an act of benevolence” (Thomassen 2006: 440). Furthermore, tolerance is only possible through a certain amount of intolerance. Having identified an asymmetrical relationship between the tolerating and tolerated party where the latter depends on the goodwill of the other, Habermas suggests that a more symmetrical relationship can only be achieved through “mutual perspective talking” (2003: 5). This “reciprocal recognition” that Habermas draws from Hegelian tradition was what the *Gesher* workshops hoped to achieve. However, as has been pointed out by critics of Habermas (1998, 2003) one cannot iron-out the “nonrationalisability” of the threshold of tolerance. By example, the Reali students will not tolerate the *ulpana* students compromising their “freedom” with what they perceive as restrictive religious values, and the *ulpana* students cannot accept limitations on their religious practice as it compromises their beliefs.

However, a status quo has been achieved in Israel and this owes much to the fact that as Thomassen (2006) has suggested tolerance is more symmetrical than Habermas claims. The threshold of secular-religious tolerance in Israel has been rooted in pragmatism where each group has required the recognition of the other for the wellbeing of the national collective. The tolerating party has always been subject to the acceptance of that toleration by those who are being tolerated. It was for the purpose of collective wellbeing that the *Gesher* seminar was taking place, and it was symbolic that one of the workshops was based around the allegory of Plato’s cave. The allegory is part of Plato’s *Republic* that teaches the importance of a healthy *polis* (community), as Plato suggests it is through this that one can live as a happy individual. Using Plato’s cave, Yossi hoped to expose the students to the possibility of alternate perspectives and different “truths”. Through mindfulness of this, wider acceptance or tolerance of the other might be achieved, resulting in a stronger communality.

To briefly summarise the plot of Plato’s cave, it describes a group of prisoners who have been forcibly constrained in front of a cave wall since childhood. Behind them, on a raised section are puppets whose shadows are projected on to the visible wall by the light of a fire. For these prisoners, the shadows are understood and

described as objects of reality. A book for instance is only recognised and understood in terms of the shadow that is cast. A prisoner who escapes from the cave and “sees the light” is compelled to release his/her companions from the limits of their perception. Many interpretations have been given for this allegory, my explanation reflects one aspect given to the students. The counsellor, Yossi, hoped to get them to consider who was living the “reality” or the illusion. Through this uncertainty one could try and build respect for those who are differently “enlightened”. I understood that Yossi was trying to challenge the secular students to question the idea that, just because the majority believes in something, it does not mean it is necessarily correct. In turn he hoped to emphasise that it is possible to respect each other’s customs without necessarily taking them on. He used the example of the British in India accepting the custom of cremation and not imposing alternative funeral rites. However, the discussion seemed to reach an impasse when the religious girls claimed that it was one thing for secular people to accept religious customs, but if they were to accept certain forms of secular conduct, it would make them “sinners”.

The final point exemplifies the limitations of secularism and reveals it as similarly “violent” in its “universalising of reason” (Asad 2003: 59). It was on such grounds that despite a sense of better respect for each other, there was still a feeling of great distance between the Reali and Kfar Pines students. The Reali students felt patronised by what they interpreted as a position of moral superiority emanating from the religious girls of Kfar Pines. The religious girls rejected such accusations, claiming that it was a matter of religious responsibility to educate fellow Jews with the knowledge and values of a Jewish religious life, without being forced to compromise their own beliefs.

Such intransigence highlights the difficulty in creating a threshold of tolerance. To create some form of consensus amongst Jewish Israelis it has been necessary for the secular political domain to integrate religious ethical elements. Habermas (1998) has suggested that amongst pluralist societies that have a variety of particular ethical conceptions, there is a need for a political community that safeguards inclusivity of all citizens. However, this is problematic for individuals such as those students from the *ulpana*. National religious Jewish ideology attempts to



make little distinction between the political and the ethical. The abandoning of Jewish religious principles by secular Israelis, such as breaking *Shabbat* or relinquishing the Land of Israel, is interpreted by the *ulpana* girls as an exclusionary practice that does not protect their right to otherness. Recognising an ethical-political distinction threatens their belief and their ability to be a “full” Jewish person.

Although these issues of tolerance emphasised the divide between the two groups of girls the ensuing discussion did challenge some of the assumptions evident in the prior section. The limits of tolerance on the part of each group acquired a little give. Fears of a secular Israel that resembled a wider Tel Aviv and encouraged sexual impropriety at the expense of Jewish spiritual connectedness were eased by the importance Reali students placed on aspects of Jewish culture. The Reali girls emphasised the importance of orthodox Jewish conversions for those who wished to become Israeli citizens as well as their desire to uphold Jewish holidays and ultimately retain Israel as a Jewish state. Some of the *ulpana* girls were even surprised at the Reali girls’ knowledge of Judaism and Jewish *mitzvot*.

### **Building Tolerance through the Distinction between “Belief” and “Practice”**

Smedar from the Scout troop, like other members of her Reali class valued Israel’s Jewish ethnic and cultural derivation but did not want her lifestyle limited by religious values. She complained that on weekends she wished to visit her family in Jerusalem but was unable to because of transport limitations on Shabbat. The *ulpana* girls suggested she travel on earlier buses or found private forms of transport. The activity that followed the discussion of Plato’s cave addressed how one might live in a society that allowed one to be secular yet respect religious values. There was an enduring sense of division between the *ulpana* and Reali girls but as in the past both groups pragmatically entertained ways that they may co-exist in Israel. This was explored by *Gesher* showing an episode from the popular Israeli soap opera “The Good Guys” to all the participants of the seminar in the *ulpana*’s large theatre. The relationship between “secular” and “religious” Israelis in this episode showed how “the religious” can be understood as either a commitment to a

set of beliefs or as an assemblage of practices. The “religious” is revealed as potentially co-habitable with the non-religious if it does not require taking up an ethical position. Correspondingly, to be “religious” is defined as a commitment to particular beliefs, respecting associated practices does not necessarily make one a religious person. The example that I will describe here shows how religion in Israel is often dealt with in a purely practical or instrumental way. The episode involves a young religious man who falls for a non-religious girl. They come in to conflict when the burger restaurant he works for decides to open on Shabbat. He quits his job, and protests outside against the establishment and those who choose to dine in it – not an uncommon situation in Israel. This happens to take place on the day his girlfriend’s younger brother is supposed to be celebrating his birthday there. She complains that the restaurant should be entitled to open whenever it chooses, particularly if it adds to the happiness of those who intend to use it. The boyfriend is eventually successful in persuading his girlfriend to wait until after Shabbat to celebrate the birthday by promising a magician in return for making such a compromise.

The students were generally quite cynical about the video but could relate to both protagonists. The *ulpana* girls were cynical about a “religious” guy going out with a “non-religious” girl and both groups of girls were cynical about the neat resolution to the complications in the relationship of the onscreen couple. The *Gesher* intention was to show that compromise and co-existence was a possibility, not necessarily through taking on each other’s ethical positions but as a matter of finding a practical and respectful solution to living with the differences between them. The ability to live with elements of religious practice reflects the desire of self-identified non-religious Israelis to incorporate aspects of Jewish culture whilst distinguishing this from being religious per se. A secularism that wholly limited religion to the private sphere would run contrary to the national aspirations of many secular Jewish Israelis.

The distinction between belief and practice allows us to understand the multiplicity of the secular Jewish subject here. The subjectivity of Jewish Israelis puts in place the numerous necessary ideological cross-associations to forge a Jewish democratic statist national philosophy. In the same way as the state tries to merge ethnic

characteristics with an ethos of liberal democracy, secular individuals wish to retain parts of their Jewishness. At the same time, they expect the state to uphold such a desire. It is when the state is seen to be not protecting one's ability to pursue these interests that ruptures develop and we are able to see ways in which the religious and secular are separated. For religious Israelis such as the *ulpana* Kfar Pines students, the Disengagement represented a reduction of that space afforded to the divine and Jewish religious belief. For the Reali students, "the religious" was evoked as and when it was seen to encroach on their personal autonomy.

Antagonism at the interpersonal level between "religious" and "secular" Jews has been largely avoided in Israeli society. The state's tolerance of Jewish religiosity has as described been somewhat pragmatic, and this has been transposed to a policy of avoidance on the part of religious and non-religious youth (Tabory 1993). According to research by Tabory, national religious communities imagine a greater sense of closeness between themselves and non-religious Israelis than perceived by non-religious individuals (1993: 160). Tabory (1993) claims that although they live in closed communities, the religious sectors of society do not feel separate from Israeli society as a whole. He explains this connectivity through a "revolving door orientation", whereby religious individuals and groups are able to enter and leave mainstream society as they wish, in a desire to be part of a future Israel (Tabory 1993: 160). I would add to this that non-religious Israelis have a similarly flexible and "revolving" orientation towards Judaism, encouraged within so-called Israeli secularism. The evidence for this is shown in my discussion of teen reflections on the character of a Jewish state, and the importance of *Am Yisrael* (the People or Nation of Israel). Aside from political subjectivity, Jewish heritage is also embraced each Jewish holiday, of which there are many. Be it dressing up for the festival of *Purim* or lighting a bonfire for *Lag BaOmer*, the nationalisation of these religious holidays engages all of Jewish secular society. As fashion was a means of separating the "religious" and the "secular" it was also a means of showing their convergence in Israeli society as non-religious Jewish Israelis also wore the orange bracelets supporting the anti-Disengagement movement. An issue that supposedly separated religious and secular Israel was a platform on which to also parade one's connection to the values embodied by religious Israelis.

#### **4. Holocaust Remembrance and National Ceremonies: Celebrating Israeliness and Sites of Communal Conscience**

A little over two weeks before Holocaust Memorial Day (*Yom HaShoah*), I was sitting with about twenty other young and old members of my Yodfat community in a makeshift tarpaulin tent readying to tuck into our *seder* feast. The *seder* is the ritual meal associated with the festival of Passover which recounts God's deliverance of the Children of Israel from enslavement in Egypt. As mentioned in the previous chapter this is one of the most popularly celebrated Jewish rituals even amongst so-called non-religious or "secular" Jews such as myself and my family in Yodfat. The starlit setting in the lower Galilean fields of Yodfat, complete with camel tied up outside, successfully recreated a sense of spiritual connectedness with Moses and his band of Israelites that wandered the desert following their escape from Egypt. Like me, the majority of families and individuals at the *seder* were not frequently practicing Jews, but Passover was considered an opportunity to celebrate one's Jewish heritage. The previous year, the same group of friends chose to do the *seder* in the Negev desert, an even more 'authentic' setting in which to revisit the Exodus. The religious questions posed by the *hagadah* (the service book for the *seder*) discussed aspects ranging from the symbolism of the various dishes consumed, to the nature of the relationship between the Jewish people and God. Such musings fit well with the spiritually and philosophically inquisitive Yodfat residents sat inside the tent. Elishever, a friend of my family, posited that aside from a purely physical liberation of the Jews it was also a spiritual liberation where they nurtured a faith in God during their forty years of wandering in the desert. Reading the *hagadah* cover to cover was something I had not previously done in my family *seders* back in England. It was considered boring and unnecessary, rebellious voices noting that we did it every year and that the story never changed. However, in this Yodfat *seder*, ritual and religious aspects were given thorough exploration. Despite waning synagogue attendance during the higher holy days of *Yom Kippur* and *Rosh Hashanah*, *Pesach* was regarded differently by my family and many of their like-minded friends who embraced it as an important cultural practice. This affection for the festival is near to universal amongst Jewish Israelis.

The resonance of this message of exile and rebirth, celebrated so warmly amongst both Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews, illustrates the person and community derived connectedness evident also in subsequent rituals associated with *Yom HaShoa*, *Yom HaZikaron*, and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*, all falling within two weeks of each other. *Yom HaShoa* (Holocaust Day) that remembers the attempted destruction of the Jewish people falls five days after the last day of Passover. This is followed a week later by *Yom HaZikaron*, a day of mourning for Israel's fallen. This is followed the next day by Israeli Independence Day, *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*, the ultimate restitution or redemption of the Jewish people in the Land they had historically celebrated as home. Just as the *seder* evokes a message of spiritual renewal for the Jewish people as the story of the exodus and final redemption is recalled, Israeli nationalism as rooted in Zionism, is promoted during these days of state ceremonial activity as "the physical and spiritual unification of the people" as well as the renewal of the Jewish people in modern times (Handelman 1998: 224). Much of this national cosmology endorsed during the state ceremonies of these days is part of the individual cosmologies that Jewish Israelis draw upon for their own sense of identity, as witnessed in the celebration of Passover.

However, just as many Yodfatniks disagreed with the ethnic bias of the lessons contained in these narratives of national rebirth, Israeli youth engaged with national performances in fresh ways often being cynical of having to take part in them at all. This chapter examines why these rituals are however ultimately performed by individuals, and what implications this has for how individuals reproduce nationalism. Despite any cynicism regarding the quantity and message of state rituals, individuals still felt able to relate in subjectively and communally specific ways. The competing strands of the Jewish democratic paradigm are again revealed as reflective of the multiple aspects of Jewish Israeli identity, providing a scope of ways to relate to the state. Consequently by engaging with these rituals, Jewish democracy is also reproduced, and again revealed as a productive tension.

The pervasiveness of the historical identification with the Jewish people, in particular the themes of annihilation and rebirth, is evoked most strongly during Holocaust remembrance. This history of persecution and survival, and the subsequent importance of a strong Israeli homeland is continually fortified by the

lessons learnt from the Jewish past. They are lessons that were continually invoked by both religious and non-religious Jewish Israeli youth when questioned about the significance of these days of national remembrance. In the same way the seder meal is enjoyed by Jewish Israelis, the heritage espoused on *Yom HaShoah*, *Yom HaZikaron*, and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* is celebrated as an important affirmation of how and why Israel continues to exist for this next generation of Israeli youth. At the same time, these “lessons” from the Jewish past are taken on board with respect to issues that today’s teens see as effecting their own lives such as the Disengagement, terrorist threats and a critical foreign media. Their parents’ and grandparents’ generations were more directly associated with the actual events of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. Although many of their children/grandchildren displayed a certain distance from the Holocaust, it remained close to their identification as Israelis. The cycle of *Yom HaZikaron*, and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* ceremonies reflect the communal identification with this and the importance of continuing to assert this for the benefit of Jewish national unity.

State rituals offer an opportunity to see how official state ideologies that attempt to emphasise a shared identity converge with individuals’ subjective national experiences. The rituals surrounding the trauma of the Holocaust and the joy of Israeli independence reveal the emotive nature of nationalism. This emotive character is not simply rooted in discourse; individuals experience nationalism as emotion in “suffering” (Aretxaga 1997), “ennui” (Allen 2006), and also “enjoyment” as my ethnography on *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* celebrations in this chapter will show. In the same way that previous studies of mortuary rituals and other so-called religious ceremonies have been analysed in terms of how they “organise and orchestrate private emotions” (Bloch and Parry 1999: 3), studies of state rituals have been approached in terms of how they too mask an underlying order, or the reality of “politics proper” (Spencer 2007: 77). Spencer’s ethnography on elections in Sri Lanka argues that instead, one must appreciate how such rituals are “particular forms of life that are productive in their own right in terms of producing and reproducing the political” (2007: 78). Bloch and Parry (1999) highlight the importance of recognising the productive and generative dimension of rituals as opposed to them being purely symptomatic of the social order. However, they

continue to count this societal effect as an external force as opposed to recognising the production of the political within the very performance of ritual (Spencer 2007: 79). In light of this, when looking at how Israelis engage with state ceremonies one can appreciate the emergence of subjective forms of nationalism.

Israeli State ceremonies attempt to reinforce a hegemonic nationalism and affirm a collective moral identification, presenting the ideals of national unity. The importance of rituals to have a “recognisable form, script, and culturally validated social function” is no different with state rituals (Allen 2006: 109). In Israeli ceremonies the combination of Jewish symbolism and religious ritual performance connects this contemporary performance with an historical past and private religious practice in the home. Memorial ceremonies in Israel provide an opportunity for national subjects to receive recognition for the sacrifices made to the nation and evoke the intimate connectedness of the nation through the shared experience of national service. The militarised nature of the *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* ceremonies reflects the prominent way in which Israelis do nationalism through military service.

Much of the work on Israeli state rituals such as that done by Don-Yehiya (1984), Ben Amos and Bet-El (1999), and Handelman (1998) focuses analytically on the cosmological visions that these ceremonies attempt to promote and legitimise. The rituals are deciphered as a “mask” of some underlying narrative vision. In this chapter I supplement this work by looking at how rituals associated with *Yom HaZikaron*, *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*, and *Yom HaShoah* are both productive in creating new forms of relating nationally, and that they are also mindfully reappropriated in terms of their subjective meaning for the individual. In Handelman's (1998) discussion of *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* ceremonies he highlights the temporal importance of holding the two ceremonies close together. He argues that this “deliberate design” is a “semiotic set” in that the rituals make meaning together specifically in terms of the temporal vision “essential to Zionist cosmology and Judaism” (Handelman 1998: 194). By this, Handelman (1998) is referring to the importance of Jewish historical continuity and its legitimisation of Jewish claims to the Land of Israel. As I will go on to explain at greater length, the sequencing of mourning and jubilation that the ordering of the ceremonies represents,

encapsulates the national vision of Zionist ideology that extols the importance of a Jewish homeland and the re-birth of the Jewish people in the State of Israel after their attempted annihilation during the Holocaust. Ben-Amos and Bet-El conclude that in this way such contemporary ceremonies are symbolic of the “metamorphosis from a religious community to a modern national one” (1999: 276). These rituals allow the community to gather around the memory of the fallen and celebrate the existence and the re-birth of the Jewish people annually. Handelman (1998) details the significance of various symbols during the State *Yom-Ha'atzma'ut* ceremony in front of the *kotel* (the Western Wall) in Jerusalem. In this ritual the *kotel* symbolises the historical connectedness of the Israeli people to the Jewish people/nation, and the sacrifices of the citizen-soldier generated by the Jewish nation-state is commemorated by a lit flame (Handelman 1998: 208). Such ritual symbolism is discussed by Handelman (1998) in terms of what it is supposed to evoke. However, individuals will derive their own connections and indeed do not necessarily need to have such associations pointed out because of the embeddedness of these narratives within their own subjective national identity.

Together with *Yom HaShoa* (Holocaust Day) rituals, this chapter also situates the ways individuals derive their own meanings and interpretations from national discourses contained within formal Holocaust education received at school. By looking at both the rituals and education associated with the Holocaust in Israel one gains a wider picture of the pervasiveness of the Holocaust in the educational world of Jewish Israeli teens. Ben-Amos and Bet-El argue that with the establishment of the state of Israel it was felt that sentiments of nationalism could be best inspired through loyalty to the body-politic, and this could most effectively be achieved through formal education and memorial ceremonies (1999: 264). As with national ceremonies, Holocaust education, particularly in terms of the March of the Living where Jewish Israeli schoolchildren are afforded the opportunity to visit the concentration camps in Poland, promotes a particular nationalist vision. As this chapter shows, individuals “will derive their own meanings and interpretations that can provide alternative forms of nationalism” (Allen 2006: 127).

This chapter shows that (a) rituals have a productive capacity in terms of forming new types of national associations, and (b) that people will appropriate rituals in



their own way. Lori Allen (2006) reveals both such instances in her ethnography of Palestinians who have become “fed up” with martyr funerals and what they have come to regard as superficial displays of nationalism. Such intifada rituals have been important arenas in which individuals have participated for personal commitments to family and friends as opposed to religious or political reasons. Such public displays did provide a rare opportunity to behave as a national collective yet at the same time these gatherings were also made up of competing factions where individuals partook for the opportunity to protest against the governing PLO. Allen (2006) argues that the cynicism and ennui now surrounding these martyr funerals are emotions around which Palestinians are experiencing nationalism. It represents a feeling of disenchantment and frustration at the stasis of the political situation. As such, although such rituals represent common practices around which a consciousness of one’s national membership is sustained along with the “historical events and hopes tied to it” (Allen 2006: 128), new and personal forms of nationalism also emerge within such formal state structures.

Israeli youth also choose to engage with such national frameworks in order to satisfy aspects of their collective identity. State rituals and national holidays allow individuals to celebrate a feeling of community through such activities as family picnics and group games, as witnessed in Yodfat. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) suggest the “symbolic violence” of education systems, in that they reproduce “dispositions and habits” of the hegemonic group (Rabinowits 1997: 94). In contrast to this Rabinowitz argues that the dominant pedagogic authority one would associate with Israeli Remembrance services does not in fact necessarily mean individuals unwittingly take part in this “domination” (1997: 100). He points out that whilst the inclusion of Palestinian Israeli pupils in school *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonies in the Israeli town of Natzerat Ilit reflects the continued subordination of their incongruent narratives, their participation is mindful of this and done for the purpose of enjoying a more inclusive and viable lifestyle (Rabinowits 1997: 98). It represents one way in which the national subject “plots appropriate strategies to democratise political life” where subject formation occurs in areas that Wendy Brown describes as “sites and zones of ‘unfreedom’” (1995: xi). Whereas these national rituals have been identified as sites of “domination” and “symbolic

violence” I will also present how they are reappropriated as sites of individual and communal celebration where there is a desire to perform nationalism through a subjective digestion of national discourses.

### **The Holocaust: Redoing History**

We study about it a lot, too much...we've got it in history classes, literature class, and those Poland meetings that we're, well many of us go to Poland this year, and it comes up, like, too much, like, we're sick of it already!

This was a frequent response I got to the amount of Holocaust education school pupils received. In this instance Shira, a female pupil from a regional kibbutz school refers to the presence of the Holocaust in her literature classes where poetry and other readings would commonly relate to private experiences of the Holocaust. This varied from school to school according to the teacher's selection and the type of educational stream. The Poland trip Shira refers to was an experience many 11<sup>th</sup> grade pupils can choose to be part of, in fact over 100,000 teenagers had done so since the program's launch in 1987 (Feldman 2002). Those who go on the so-called “March of the Living” to the concentration camps, attend a course of educational classes in preparation for the experience in addition to their regular curriculum. Despite many of the students' cynicism regarding the amount of education on the Holocaust, none would deny its importance and all would return moved by the experience. Their willingness to express their frustration regarding the teaching of something as sensitive and taboo as the Holocaust is an indication of its prominence in their education.

Shira, and students like her, encounter a form of Holocaust education that has continually evolved in tandem with the enactment and recreation of different elements in Israeli collective memory. This has also varied according to the educational stream in which it is situated. In his extensive fieldwork throughout a variety of Israeli schools that looked specifically at Holocaust education, Hazan concluded that it was inculcated according to competing narratives: state-secular education appeared to emphasise identification with a strong, independent Israeli state, and state-religious schools appropriated the Holocaust in terms of reconnecting with Jewish heritage (2001: 51). Hazan's work with a secular kibbutz

school revealed emphasis on ghetto uprisings which were then appropriated as belonging to the legacy of socialist youth movements such as *Hashomer Hatzair* (2001: 51). One must not negate the very personal and emotive ways the Holocaust resonates with Israeli youth, despite being used as a discursive tool. It is an event that continues to be part of the familial worlds of these teens. Those of an Ashkenazi background in particular will be connected to the Holocaust through grandparents or other relatives of that generation. It is where individual genealogical identity meets with collective historical heritage. Their experiences of this means one cannot simply package public knowledge into the affects of state discourse.

Current Holocaust education is now in tandem with Holocaust Day and the ceremonies surrounding it. In this way commemoration of it has re-affirmed it as a central rite within Israeli “civil religion”. Liebman and Don-Yehiya have defined civil religion as, “the ceremonials, myths and creeds which legitimate the social order, unite the population, and mobilise the society’s members in pursuit of its dominant political goals” (1983: ix). As will be seen however, individuals choose whether to appropriate such an order and will invest their own meanings into it. The Poland trip in particular has become a potent pedagogical tool in terms of more powerfully connecting with the messages of the Holocaust. Zevulun Orlev (2007), leader of Israel’s National Religious party emotively proclaimed that,

A boy that steps on the cursed Polish soil and a girl that smells the ashes of her burned ancestors will forever remember that the Jewish people is an eternal people and that "never again."

The Holocaust has been used to inspire a variety of nationalist sentiments and in different ways throughout Israel’s history integrated, legitimised, and mobilised society – three by-products of civil religion (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983). As was seen, its efficacy was used throughout the Disengagement in its ties to exile and trauma of the Jewish people.

However, it was these sentiments and the plight of Jews in the Diaspora and throughout history that encouraged many Israelis to distance themselves from the memory of the Holocaust in the first decade or so of the state. Zionism and Israeli

nation building was attempting to build a “new Jew” one that would not resemble “lambs to the slaughter” as harshly imagined of Diaspora Jewry. Ben-Gurion (1957) emphasised the Holocaust as part of “events from foreign history and sad memories of Diaspora Jews, but not a spiritual experience nor life facts of instructive value”. In the coming decades the Holocaust would become of great instructive value. This change began in the 1960s following the trial of Adolph Eichmann, a very public and emotional spectacle that took place in Jerusalem in 1961. According to Hazan (2001) this reintroduced the Holocaust into the public agenda and demonstrated Israel’s power. Holocaust survivors testified on national television and reinstated themselves in the public psyche. By 1963 the ministry of education declared Holocaust and heroism as a special education subject and the requirement for a school ceremony. This was coupled with a national memorial day for the Holocaust that had been in place since 1959. At this stage Ben-Amos and Bet-El point out that the public only immortalised elements in the Holocaust it could identify with, namely resistance fighters as embodied by members of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (1999: 220). As with Mosse’s (1990) German youth killed at Langemarck, those Jews who died during the ghetto uprising fit with the message of sacrifice and re-birth so central to the Jewish national image. Thus the Holocaust to this point provided a source of Jewish emboldenment still very much in line with the citizen-soldier of the new Jewish state, not necessarily in terms of a wider link to the Jewish people.

A wider connection to the Jewish people regarding the Holocaust was really mobilised after the Six Day War in 1967 and then particularly after the near defeat of Israeli forces in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The 1967 war and the Holocaust were regarded as two expressions of the Gentile hatred of the Jewish people and a reminder of “what happened and could happen anew” (Hazan 2001: 39). This and particularly the Yom Kippur War “undermined Israeli society’s self-confidence and narrowed the mental gap with diaspora Jews” (Ben-Amos and Bet-El 1999: 220). Consequently the Holocaust became an important symbol of Jewish solidarity and national collectivity. Contemporary high school ceremonies have now built on this sentiment of survival in the face of oppression and reified Israel’s national image as one of re-birth. The annual cycle of such ceremonies attempts to reinforce this

image of rebirth and connectivity to a Jewish history that in turn attempts to legitimise statehood and mobilise citizenship and national service.

### **Existential and National Security through Historical Connectedness**

Teaching of the Holocaust is rationalised at one level to contribute to lessons of pluralism and moral education regarding universal citizenry, yet its effect on Jewish Israeli youth at the individual level is one of re-affirming the need for a strong Jewish-centric state. Today's formal education on the Holocaust, including the ceremonies and trip to Poland aims to reinforce a sense of compatibility between Israel's liberal democratic ambitions and inculcation of its Jewish character. In the build up to *Yom HaShoah* I used my time in Irony Aleph (the secular-state high school), Levinson (the state-religious high school), and the two religious seminaries *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* and *Ulpana Kfar Pines* to ask students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade about the significance of the Holocaust in their education. However, it also frequently came up in discussions of Israeli security, statehood and the significance of Judaism to this. That lesson which most strongly resonated with the students was of how the Holocaust showed the vulnerability of the Jewish people, and the importance of having a strong secure homeland for all Jews to prevent any future catastrophe. I was often asked where I as a Jew would be able to go if kicked out of England. As Kfir, a student from Irony Aleph put it, having a Jewish state was important,

Cos, we kind'a had it bad all over the world so we should stay together in our country, so the Holocaust won't come again, won't happen again...

Having a secure Israel was therefore not just important for Israelis who lived there but it also had a responsibility to exist for the sake of Jews around the world. Thus the memory of the Holocaust remained essential to the integrity of the present and the promise of a future for Jews everywhere. Doing the *seder* that I described earlier is another component in the ritualised remembrance of how important it is to re-affirm and celebrate the survival of Jewish nationhood.

Revisiting the pogroms and persecutions of Eastern Europe also provided an element of historical "proof" that there was the potential for Jewish extinction. By fore-fronting these memories, those students who spoke most vociferously about

the justification of Israeli military force, connected threats from Iran and Hamas that called for the destruction of Israel to the historical persecutions of the Jewish people. This state of existential threat is formally re-enacted during *Yom HaShoah* and the school trip to Poland but it is also inherently part of the family lives of many of these teens. At the start of any interview I would ask the students their family backgrounds - where their parents came from, where both sets of grandparents came from, how they met and how they ended up in Israel. The majority of those that had some Ashkenazi background still recalled at least one grandparent who was *nitzol shoah*, a Holocaust survivor, and all recounted their family's arrival in Israel as a means of starting a new life. Whether this be a spiritual journey, one of survival, or an economic decision, this personal history was nourished by its connectedness to the history of the Jewish people and the narratives of exile and renewal propagated in the messages of the Holocaust and its relevance to modern Israeli society.

The Mizrahi population's relationship to the Holocaust has undergone a number of transformations during Israel's history, the reinterpretations this has involved provides further evidence of how state narratives are reappropriated by the people and become subjectively productive. In the first years of Israeli statehood, Mizrahi organisations such as the League of Former Moroccans in Israel and the Organisation of Immigrants from Babylonia, researched the impact of "the Holocaust in Arab Lands" (Shalom-Chetrit 2000: 52). This was in an attempt to "re-shape Mizrahi history in the context of the Zionist revolution" that was dominated by the Ashkenazi elite who used the Shoa as the focus of the Zionist enterprise (Shalom-Chetrit 2000: 52; Arad 2003: 16). The Holocaust became a further site of political manipulation as orthodox Mizrahim politically represented by Shas used it to improve their political standing (Arad 2003: 20). The secular Zionist's use of the Shoah was presented as another way in which the establishment was trying to exclude the Mizrahi population. Consequently Mizrahi representatives such as their spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef suggested the secular Ashkenazi establishment's take on it was insufficient, blaming the Zionist movement for "playing their part in turning European Jews into victims" (Arad 2003: 23). Following on from this, Shas hoped to set up its own Yad Vashem to

commemorate Jewish suffering in Arab countries. In light of this political tug of war over the Shoah, Arad argues that it “permeates party and sectarian-ethnic politics” throughout Israel (2003: 19).

For those Mizrahim outside of party politics there have been recent attempts to integrate Mizrahi culture within memorial ceremonies and emphasise victims of all genocides, making it more universalistic and less about national interests and political capital (Arad 2003: 25). Such efforts have been part of a wider programme to instigate a more balanced educational curriculum that includes Mizrahi narratives (Shalom-Chetrit 2000: 61). Kedma schools in Mizrahi neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv were ultimately unsuccessful in achieving this, and their alternative ceremonies in 2003 received criticism from government officials such as Limor Livnat. For Mizrahi youth I worked with, the outcome of this Holocaust politics has meant that it is relevant to their political and national identification but the trajectory of this identification is different from that of Ashkenazim. As with nationalism as a whole, the Holocaust provides for both populations a “common material and meaningful framework” with which to characterise one’s national identity (Roseberry 1994: 361).

For my religious informants at Kfar HaRo’e and Kfar Pines, and the mixture of traditional and religious students at Levinson religious high school, the physical security of the Jewish people was an important aspect to come out of the lessons of the Holocaust, but more so was the necessity to uphold Jewish unity. This became particularly pertinent during the Disengagement and the removal of Jewish settlers from their homes. The most widely shouted slogans during this time were “Jews do not evict Jews!” or “Jews do not transport Jews!”. As pointed out, the anti-Disengagement movement, including those students who supported the protests, attacked the policy by connecting it to the history of Jewish persecution in Nazi Europe. The emotion of the Holocaust and the fracture of the Jewish people that this represented was drawn upon to substantiate their concerns at the withdrawal from Gaza. In this respect the Holocaust was used as a lesson in the importance of Jewish togetherness and kinship. With regard to this, I recall a conversation with Mor a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student from Levinson I became friendly with, largely on grounds of our mutual love of football and mockery of the other’s national team. During the

build up to the 2006 general election Mor spoke of his disdain for the secular party Shinui. His main gripe was that,

Their leader is a Holocaust survivor, ok!?! All his family were killed in the Holocaust and he says he wants a completely non-religious country. He hates the *Haredim* (ultra orthodox Jews), hates them! Every opportunity he curses them!

Mor was almost incredulous as to how someone so closely associated with Judaism's greatest tragedy could be so opposed to that heritage for which his family died. For Mor, the Holocaust was central to the Jewish experience and should continue to be relevant in the politics of Jewish Israeli identity. Mor's response is also an indication of the strength of the Holocaust's symbolic capital even with Mizrahi Jews such as himself.

Mor was similarly reverent of Jewish ancestral memory during the *Yom HaZikaron* ceremony. Such respect of history is consistent with the education received in a religious high school and religious seminaries that emphasises the centrality of Jewish narratives in Israeli nation building and links the fate of *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel) with religious folklore. The central body of knowledge within the religious school system is the transmission of religious heritage, "the teaching of religious values is seen as the only and exclusive message of cultural identity" (Urian and Karsh 1999: 19). For these teenagers, being Israeli meant feeling connected to this Jewish heritage and the Holocaust was an important part of that.

### **Relating to the Holocaust Affect**

As has been described, Israeli teens connect with the aspects of death and redemption espoused in the teachings of the Holocaust, producing a form of patriotism that is anchored by family experiences and continued hostility towards the State of Israel. The importance of Holocaust education was never questioned by the students I worked with but this did not stop them from trying to interpret in their own ways the affect of the Holocaust in national discourse. The status of the Holocaust within the national psyche has been tapped into and manipulated for the purposes of nation building both within official state discourse and by individuals as they assert a particular vision of Israeliness. Its manipulation by the state has been criticised by writers such as Norman Finkelstein (2000, 2005) who terms the



marketing of its symbolic capital as the “Holocaust Industry”. He examines how the Holocaust has been “fashioned into an ideological weapon to immunise Israel from legitimate criticism” (2005: 16). Finkelstein’s argument is that extolling the “uniqueness” of the crime allows Israel to claim unique moral dispensation for its acts of aggression. He argues that the Holocaust Industry dogma is that, “animus against Jews can never spring from wrongs committed by Jews”, it is an extension of the irrationality of the Final Solution to any contemporary manifestations that are construed as anti-Semitic (Finkelstein 2005: 78).

Although in a slightly less cynical way, students reflected on this “Holocaust industry” as they were bombarded with Holocaust education. Aside from the general complaints about the frequency with which the Holocaust came up in school, where “they take it in every single direction possible. In English we do it in poetry, in *safroot* (literature) we take a famous author who wrote about it (the Holocaust)...” In instances where I was able to discuss it at greater length, the students unpacked some of the implications of this. Because many of my interviews involved discussions about the Disengagement, students used some of the issues surrounding it, such as the settlement of the occupied territories, as a frame of reference for answering my questions on issues that had or continued to impact on their sense of Israeliness, and the social and political factors that inflected on this. Students at the Rudolph Steiner School on Kibbutz Harduf, Ma’agan Michael Regional High School, and the Wizo arts school in Haifa tended to explore more extensively the nature of Zionism, Israeli nationalism, and other state narratives such as those pertaining to the Holocaust. The smaller class sizes and the more elitist selection processes for these schools perhaps forged greater educational space to encourage the pupils to do so, as opposed to the larger state schools in Haifa. On the subject of the Holocaust, Kobi a Wizo student pointedly told me,

I think the Holocaust trauma has a lot to do with the fact that we are in the *shtachim* (Jewish settlements) in the first place. It’s this fear that a lot of Israelis have from being destroyed, eliminated. It’s this fear that we got from the Holocaust and that’s why we can’t... we feel the need to be in control.

Kobi's own assessment of the impact of the Holocaust is similar to that which I have described. His understanding is that the "trauma" of the Holocaust has produced the conditions that have resulted in the occupation. The "fear" derived from historical attempts to destroy the Jewish people is considered as the catalyst for the present situation in Israel and Palestine. Kobi disagreed strongly with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip but he explores the possible motivators and state histories that inspired it. This is an example of how youth citizenship is not subsumed by narratives of statehood, voices such as Kobi's display how the state is forged and reconstituted at the individual level by a constant negotiation with discourses that fortify it. The Holocaust resonates with individuals such as Kobi. This may be in a cynical, questioning way but the efficacy of such narratives as they are expressed in this way is equally important in how individuals construct an image of statehood.

Holocaust memory and memory in general, is not only mobilised for political purposes, something that Boyarin refers to as the "politics of memory", but is also effective in the present for cultural actors (1994: 2). Lambek encourages us to look at memory as a form of moral practice - one that must be considered a human cultural practice rather than a natural object or process, and one that is not "simply technical, intellectual, or instrumental (1996: 235). He argues that memory is an engaged experience which must be situated in time and be appreciated for its function in social relations. Bloch too, suggests we must consider the subject/person when looking at memory, and define it in relation time; hierarchically, temporally, and spatially (1996: 229). Lambek posits that such an analytical approach must be done without "the extremes of excessive subjectivity and excessive objectivity" (1996: 238). In highlighting this latter point Lambek illuminates the fact that memory is frequently considered an objective marker of a given moment in the past, often giving it primacy and authority over "history". At the same time memory is also recognised for being a subjective experience rooted in the desires and motivations of the self. Whilst this might be true, Lambek asks us to also recognise that this subjective experience is also subject to the influence of desired moral ends and contextualised within a given social and cultural milieu. It is a "mediated gaze" (1996: 239).

The intimate relationship many Ashkenazi Israelis have with the Holocaust in terms of families affected by it, whilst also having a collective ethnic association to the existential threat it posed, constitutes Israeli national narratives. At the same time official national narratives substantiate the experience by legitimising these personal connections to moments in Jewish history. When students I worked with spoke of the importance of “reconnecting” with their history through Holocaust education this was in terms of both personal experience and as a means of legitimising Israeli nationhood. The memory of the Holocaust is something that continues to inform personal histories but it is also related to via public narratives that Lambek refers to as a “collective memorial” (1996: 241). The ongoing engagement between subjective experiences and narrations of the collective experience through state rituals and educational frameworks constitutes the collective subject, where the private and the public mutually inform each other.

The ever-presentness of the Holocaust and its continued contemporisation in Israeli political life is facilitated by Israel’s intimate connection with experiences of it but its politicisation is effective because of the way it has been constructed as a “political allegory” (Paine 1994). As an incident in the Jewish past it is continually used as a moral lesson for the future, lending it a timelessness and ahistoricity. The trauma and threat of annihilation has been anchored within Israeli national identity leaving it available as a resource from which individuals and groups can derive a subjective identification, as was witnessed during the Disengagement as those protesting it compared it to the actions of the Nazis. In Paine’s paper on the Masada myth he points to how its memory has been manipulated and transformed from a message of capitulation in the face of besiegement to endurance and the “ultimate expression of active struggle” (1994: 348). Paine argues that its association with different moments of Israeli nation building such as re-birth and self-sacrifice provided a mirror through which individual Israelis could see themselves (1994: 400). And even as its iconicity changes and fades it still acts as a site of memory. The Holocaust is emphasised as having a self-referential capacity in terms of Israeli nationalism, the efficacy of which is appropriated in subjective moralistic ways.

## **Creating and Enacting Statehood: *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonial activities**

Prior to my visiting Irony Aleph and Levinson for their *Yom HaZikaron* (Remembrance Day) ceremonies my only other experience of the day had been via a short film I had watched at the Jerusalem film festival. It was a film only about five minutes long that was a single shot looking down from a flyover bridge over Tel Aviv's Ayalon highway. As is generally the case, the road is brimming with traffic, herds of cars muscling towards their destinations. This constant stream of individuals getting on with their daily routine is brought to an abrupt halt by the sound of the *Yom HaZikaron* siren. The image of life standing still, coupled with an almost apocalyptic sounding siren makes for a very eerie two minutes of reflection. As purposeful as the stillness is, so too is the decisiveness of getting back on the road. Played in continual loop the film was very effective and captured the reverence for the occasion. All public places are closed and public broadcasting is made up of tributes to fallen soldiers and lives taken by terrorist attacks. Consequently it is also a day when all the videos and dvds are checked out of the Blockbuster store. This is potentially symptomatic of many teens' general apathy to state occasions, and preference to treat the day like any other. Such dismissiveness was not apparent though as these same teenagers took part in their school ceremony. For the best part even the most rebellious of students from the classes I had attended maintained absolute silence and respect for the ceremony. My cousin Boas noted that *Yom HaShoa* was "like part of history but this (Remembrance) was ongoing". Whereas there was some element of detachment from the Holocaust, most Jewish Israeli teens had an intimate association with *Yom HaZikaron*. Their peers were being killed as a result of the present situation.

Since 1948 Israel has observed Memorial Day followed by the celebration of Independence Day, neatly symbolising the dynamic of sacrifice and rebirth. Both incorporate religious and military elements that together provide continuity with a Jewish past and the formation of a modern nation state. The association of military victory in 1948 to divine intervention such as that witnessed in the Exodus from Egypt in Jewish history, contributes to the arousal of a collective consciousness and also the socialisation of militaristic values (Ben-Ari and Lomsky-Feder 1999: 16).

Ceremonies commemorating *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day) and also *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Day), contribute considerably to the construction of historical consciousness. Their inclusion in Israel's teaching program provides great pedagogical efficacy. For this reason the Ministry of Education included the commemoration of Memorial Day from the very beginnings of statehood. Following the establishment of the Israeli state, Zionist education had to expand itself to include lessons on citizenship, which meant affirming ideas of democracy and nationhood. Those in government at the time felt sentiments of nationalism could be best inspired through loyalty to the body-politic. It was felt this could most effectively be achieved through formal education and memorial ceremonies (Ben-Amos and Bet-El 1999: 264). Connerton (1989) argues that embodied acts and rituals are more effective than material objects in perpetuating a society's memory. In a similar vein Boyarin suggests that the nation needs to construct itself culturally both spatially and temporally and thus fastens and secures itself through monuments and memorial days (1994: 20).

Again the state frameworks at work here cannot be distanced from how the state is constructed at the individual level. Memorial services are another important means by which to legitimise the state in the eyes of its citizens. Legitimacy, normalcy, and recognition on the global stage of Israeli sovereignty were aspirations that surfaced amongst both my adolescent and adult acquaintances in Israel. Allegiance to the stories of loss and heroism that make up the ceremonies on *Yom HaZikaron* and *YomHashoa*, cannot simply be diminished to the level of state fed discourse. The remembering of family members killed in Israel's wars, or more recently by terrorist attacks, is an individual contribution to state making. There is a deep sense of emotion that connects with all who participate in the day. I recall my cousin in Yodfat sharing tearfully in the mourning of other Yodfat families as they remembered relatives killed in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. This is not a veteran's parade that one might witness up London's Mall during VE day that is largely unparticipated in by British youth, but a memorial that is personalised from community to community, annually reinvigorated by the close association of sacrifice and renewal in the form of a strong independent Jewish homeland. The unofficial and differing *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonies that are performed from

community to community creates a unifying patriotism, one that is rooted in a common sense of loss. The ceremonies have adapted to include not just soldiers who have died in Israel's wars but also victims of terrorist attacks, connecting the present situation to Israel's other wars.

One element that is consistent within all versions of Holocaust memorial and education is the centrality of the Jewish people and the heroism they displayed. This is also true of *Yom HaZikaron*, where death and catastrophe are able to inspire rebirth and in turn patriotism. This is achieved specifically through Jewish narratives of heroism, victory, and redemption (Kimmerling 2005: 1). Therefore despite the attempts of citizenship education to encourage a pluralist society, the emotional performance of such rituals acutely anchors citizenship in a Jewish framework. Lemish argues that such emphasis on Jewish particularist principles maintains the rule of the dominant group (2003: 69). Dominance aside, this Jewish character clearly still resonated with adolescent Jewish Israelis and has major bearing on their constructions of the other, namely "those who paid the price and those who did not" (Lomsky-Feder 2005). To use Kimmerling's (2005) phrase, this "culture of martyrdom" also resonates throughout the Disengagement. As described in an earlier chapter, settlers represented themselves as Holocaust like victims being deported from their homes, and Ariel Sharon used the language of sacrifice to emphasise the emotional upheaval his policy aroused.

These discourses of martyrdom are negotiated by individuals for their own subject formation. In choosing to use such discourses and engage with the structures that maintain them, Wendy Brown (1995) argues that subjects are able to achieve political freedom and engage in political life. She identifies how political movements and emancipatory projects mirror the mechanisms and configurations of power of which they are an effect and which they purport to oppose, as opposed to the Foucauldian argument that sees resistance as figured by and within the regimes of power it contests (1995: 3). Brown suggests that people engage in power structures and reproduce them to be able to participate in shaping the conditions of political life, "and share in the power rather than be protected from its excesses; to generate futures together rather than navigate or survive them" (Brown 1995.). She makes this claim in relation to "wounded identities" such as those

discriminated against because of race or gender, but this description of how subjects navigate such fields of discourse is also relevant to why Israeli continue to identify with discourses of trauma and victimhood, for it continues to legitimise Israeli nationhood and a militarily strong state.

At a national level, Israel has constructed itself as an injured party entitled to moral dispensations regarding the maintenance of its security. Like Nietzsche's politics of resentment this has justified a "righteous critique of power" (Brown 1995: 27); this "delimits a specific site of blame for suffering by constituting sovereign subjects and events as responsible for "the injury" of social subordination" (Brown 1995: 27). Regarding Israel, "the injury" is portrayed as potential national destruction, the blame for which has been placed on any subject that has denied Israel's right to protect itself in any which way it sees fit. The state has also constructed itself as the arbitrator of "justice" for its Jewish subjects.

### **People and State Entwined: Yom HaZikaron Ceremonies in Irony Aleph High School and Levinson Religious High School**

In May 2005 I was accompanied to the *Yom HaZikaron* ceremony at Irony Aleph by Sharon, a former pupil who had also helped me with some Hebrew interpreting. Sharon informed me that a further eight members of her class of 1996 were also in attendance. It was not uncommon for former pupils to maintain their link with the school in this way. They were joined by a number of more recent alumni currently performing their obligatory military service. The ceremony takes place in the central playground of the school which has been adorned with Israeli flags. These flags provide the celebratory character of the build up to Independence Day. Amongst this almost carnival type décor the *Yom HaZikaron* ceremony is staged far more like a mourning service than a memorial ceremony. Parents of Irony Aleph students who have lost their children in conflict or as a result of terrorist attacks sit at the centre of the audience directly in front of the stage. Prior to the ceremony, these families and the 11<sup>th</sup> grade go to the soldier's cemetery in Haifa and lay wreathes. Red flowers garnish the ceremonial platform and traditionally symbolise the blossoming of youth and the blood spilled. The phrase "when they died they gave us life", is painted on a decorated board at the back of the stage. The stage

itself sits beneath a colossal Israeli flag painted on the wall behind. This was painted by pupils especially for the occasion.



Figure 11: *Yom HaZikaron* ceremony in Irony Aleph School.

As is customary the ceremony begins with an address from the President of the State of Israel. In 2005 this was Moshe Katszav and he emphasised that dying for your country has always been valued by Israeli soldiers. This is a theme continued throughout the ceremony and links back to the iconic and still lingering dying words of Joseph Trumpeldor, a hero of the pre-state Jewish resistance who re-appropriated Horace's phrase; "good it is to die for your country". A subsequent speech by the school principal connects the memory of fallen soldiers to the current conflict with the Palestinians, seeing the occasion as "a reminder of reality, and the struggle that we have". By "reality" she is highlighting the security concerns still seen to trouble Israel now as they have throughout its history. The names of Irony Aleph students to have lost their lives are read out as many tearful current students solemnly listen. The selection of poems and songs that follow exalt the bravery of those who serve the country and marks this occasion as a time to remember their bravery. As is common in *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonies across the country, the song



“I have no other country” by Ehud Manor is recited. He had died just weeks before this year’s Memorial Day and so a further selection of his poems was recited. The ceremony was brought to a close with parting words of a desire for unity, social justice, equality and the continual search for peace. A rendition of the Israeli national anthem, *Ha-Tikva* was then sung, infused with the emotion that characterised the ceremony as a whole.

Apart from the messages of sacrifice that one might expect from a memorial service, there were a number of biblical references and also I felt more strikingly, the repeated image of a child being separated from its mother. This was a sentiment I recalled from my visit to the IDF recruitment base in Tel Aviv which had paintings of birds leaving the nest. These images conveyed an image of transition from dependence to independence whilst recognising the importance of the familial bond. The lyrics sung in Irony Aleph, “a few days without your mother you become a warrior and the one that shouts *acharai* (follow me)!” echoed such feelings. The message of family and peoplehood, situated amongst Jewish biblical history, conforms to the sense of nationalism that Jewish Israeli youth express. It is these elements that inspire military service, communal allegiances during the Disengagement, and accusations of betrayal towards conscientious objectors. The symbolic elements of the ceremony such as the flag, the bereaved parents, and the readings are only legitimised by the fact they are relevant to the lives of these teens.

The format in Levinson religious high school that I attended the following year in April 2006 (the date of commemoration follows the Hebrew calendar, further fortifying its connection to Jewish historical time) was very similar to that of Irony Aleph except in this case the ceremony was held in a theatre shared by other schools in the Kiryat Yam region. Here too were visiting alumni in their army fatigues received warmly and respectfully by current students. Mor, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student at Levinson who I mentioned earlier, helped explain to me the order of service in-between telling younger pupils to “shut up” and to “have some respect”. He also pointed out the frequent theme of child-parent separation. This was begun with an address by the junior high school principal who spoke of a mother who lost her son. She described her need to start a new life, a different one. The association with the rebirth of the Israeli nation was emphasised, and the fragility of life was

articulated through her words of, “one moment you exist, one moment you don’t. This is the way we exist”.

Through a selection of poems and dramatisations by the students the ceremony is very emotional. I experienced it as more emotional than Irony Aleph’s commemoration. There was great efficacy in representing loss at such an individual and personal level via the selection of readings and dramatisations. This may indeed contribute to the feeling of rebirth at the national level as Kimmerling (2005) suggests, but more directly this was how youth at this moment felt the state as something that recognised their sense of loss. It was in these emotions that individuals also experienced the nation, as a shared embodiment of the loss and need to move on. Both Aretxaga (1997) and Allen (2006) have shown how nationalism can be experienced as emotion. These writers identify the importance of taking into consideration politics as emotion and the role of sentiment in evoking structures that are typically seen to be reproduced in official discourses or state ritual.

Amongst nationalist women in Northern Ireland, Aretxaga (1997) argues that it was not so much political ideology that inspired their collective street protests against British rule. Many in fact resented the republican gendered role of grieving mother that nationalist symbolism encouraged them to perform. Aretxaga’s research reveals that the solidarity shown was a result of shared understandings of the hardships of the maternal predicament during the curfew of 1970 (2007: 59). During this time women felt impotent in their ability to provide for their children in the face of violence. These inward emotions are identified as producing feelings of nationalism (Aretxaga 1997: 59). The politicisation of maternal roles was central to republican rhetoric where the suffering of mothers was used as “a symbol of nationalist dispossession” (Aretxaga 1997: 117). This maternal suffering was characterised by feelings of guilt and pain as their sons sat in prison, and was dutifully enacted through prison visits. Such emotions help constitute a collective national experience. Jewish Israelis’ engagement with state rituals show that people *enjoy* partaking in these activities that connect at the personal level. The state provides the framework in which to emotionally engage with the nation and

have recognition for those sacrifices made for the nation. This will be discussed at greater lengths in the final section of this chapter

Kinship and generational responsibility resonated throughout both these ceremonies as it did in the political rhetoric and historical narratives espoused during the course of the Disengagement. Collective sensibilities in Israel are commonly mobilised by association with Jewish narratives, be it the Passover exile or the story of Jewish rebels who conquered the Roman fortress of Masada then sacrificed themselves. Jewish biblical history is particularly emphasised during these national memorial ceremonies. In the case of Levinson's memorial service, psalms of David are recited that laud the death and heroism of Saul and Jonathan, all ancient kings of Israel. Saul and Jonathan are praised as Israel's "slain beauty" and mighty men who had fallen in battle. The emotional invocation of this Judaic heritage promotes a particular ethnic dimension to Israeli citizenship but it also conforms to the communal and cultural sensibilities of these Jewish Israeli teens.

### **Victimhood and the Projection of Nationhood**

The collective trauma that is remembered on Holocaust Day and the national mourning on *Yom HaZikaron* are communicated in a more individual way, especially in ceremonies for the latter. The readings and music that I have described in Irony Aleph and Levinson have a personal flavour to them in their familial examples of loss and grief. Lomsky-Feder (2005) suggests that more individualistic aspects of trauma are utilised to inspire the Israeli youth collective. This is now more easily propagated with the experience of the second *intifada* to which youth can connect more closely with stories of death and sacrifice. On one occasion Niv from Irony Aleph rather honestly confessed that he would be scared to fight in a combat unit when everyday he opens the newspaper to reports of soldiers being killed in the occupied territories or at the checkpoints whilst attempting to foil the infiltration of terrorists. Maariv frequently publishes a picture and profile of soldiers who have performed these heroic acts. Such images inhabit the life worlds of these teens. The militaristic aspect of the remembrance rituals fits into this militarised experience of citizenship in Israel. In other settings such as military parades in Japan where there is a strong antimilitarist culture, this

ritualisation of violence has been described as the domestication of it, where the spectacle repackages the potential for violence in a more acceptable medium for society (Ben-Ari and Frühstück 2003: 542). In Israel such ceremonies supplement the militarisation of society but the way it is packaged is similar to that which constitutes the identity of Jewish Israelis in its balancing of Jewish ethnic and religious narratives with the military experience that constructs community and a specific knowledge of being Israeli.

Lomsky-Feder (2005) believes that the re-organisation of *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonies to place more emphasis on the individual is symptomatic of the ambivalence and pessimism of Israeli youth. She postulates that current rituals within *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonies are intended to fill these youth with a sense of activism and may be taken in conjunction with other drives within schools to increase military service motivation. Despite an apparent ambivalence on the part of these youth regarding their contribution to the state, the feeling of victimhood that Lomsky-Feder (2005) suggests is mobilised by “traumatic nationalism” is readily employed in their defence of Israel’s use of military force against the Palestinians, and also when they encounter criticism of Israel amongst international press. In this way victimhood is also used as a means of projecting the nation.

Regarding the use of military force, those teens that were keen to fulfil their military service were commonly motivated by their belief that without a strong army the surrounding Arab countries would destroy Israel. They regarded Israel as continuing to teeter on the brink of annihilation, thus re-evoking the history of potential Jewish destruction remembered during Holocaust Day. Aside from victimhood in terms of national security, there was also a sense that Israel was constantly misrepresented abroad, that they were victims of unfair reporting and intentional image defamation by the world’s press. This concern occupied Israeli national consciousness to such an extent that in 2005 Israel’s Channel 2 broadcast a reality television show called *Ha-Shagrir*, the Ambassador. It soon became one of the most popular shows in Israel as it set out to find the most suitable person to represent and market Israel to the world. The selection involved rounds of gruelling tasks to whittle down the initial group of contestants to one person who would be The Ambassador. When carrying out group discussions in the school

classrooms I would ask the pupils what kinds of things they would re-address if placed in The Ambassador's position. This resulted in frustrated outbursts of how the BBC in particular was guilty of continually portraying Israeli soldiers as callous child killers, going to such lengths as to doctor the incidents they were reporting. The following exchange with a group of 12<sup>th</sup> graders from Irony Aleph shows the extent of their complaint,

**AG: There is this program Ha Shagrir. How do you think Israel should be represented?**

Ben: Situations (in the occupied territories) are very provocative and they are not necessarily as they look, people get the wrong impression...they (the press) take one situation and they flip it, it's just not right!

Yossi: Like this picture they showed with a Palestinian boy and behind him was a (Israeli) soldier with a gun. It could mean that the soldier is shooting the kid but it is just a moment that the camera caught.

Tamar: Yeah, like there was this picture that they fabricated. A picture they took of a (Palestinian) kid and made it as if he was bleeding. They showed it again after several weeks...

Yossi (interrupts): They showed a little kid that was suffering and several weeks later they showed him in a different way. The cameraman said I got (photographed) him, and then the kid got up. He was supposed to be dead! (Laughs incredulously)

Their 12<sup>th</sup> grade counterparts from Irony Gimmel echoed this feeling of misrepresentation, focusing on Israel's war torn image;

Eti: People from the outside don't know what's going on...

**AG: So what's going on?**

Eti: Nothing, we live our life...we don't wear *shachpatz* (a bullet proof vest). But they (foreigners) think that because we have an army and the Palestinians don't we try to kill them...it's not true!

Uria: The media kind of takes it and turns it around because they see a big army and a small country... it's not a country yet but...

**AG: Are you talking about the Palestinians?**

Uria: The Palestinians yes... and they see them as small and helpless people that are attacked by the big army and they think that we are bad and they are good because they... they didn't do anything and they see people shoot them. So I think that we should show more things that reflect...Israel. Like they take one side and show it, not the two sides. They have to show like... show how they harm us, and to show...ok, that's why we don't have mercy on them.

Such accusations construct a national solidarity amongst these teens. The suggestion that Israel is misunderstood and continually contrived against acts as a unifying factor for these students. The theme of victimhood has been recycled into a more contemporary media context. This becomes even more of a unifying factor when one considers that the soldier who has been misrepresented in the photo discussed by the students of Irony Aleph is as identifiable to these teenagers as the son in the *Yom HaZikaron* poem who is sent off to war by his mother.

### **Independence Day: How to Celebrate the Nation**

Following the genocide of the Holocaust and the sacrifices subsequently made to re-establish the Jewish people physically and spiritually in the Land of Israel, *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* (Independence Day) commemorates the rebirth of the Jewish people in the form of a nation-state. As night falls on *Yom-HaZikaron*, so ushering in the next lunar cycle, the solemnity of the day is literally blown away by the sound of fireworks as people come together to celebrate the establishment of the State of Israel. Israeli Independence was declared on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1948, which corresponds to the 5<sup>th</sup> Iyyar in the Hebrew Calendar and it is this date that is marked. *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* is commemorated with an official State ceremony on the Mount Herzl plaza in Jerusalem. In May 2006 the theme of the ceremony and torch lighting parade was the development of the Negev desert and the Galilee region in Northern Israel; “making the desert bloom” has historically been a proud achievement of Israeli nation building. Aside from reinforcing the sentiment of renewal inspired by the return of the Jewish people, it also perpetuated the image of an unpopulated and unpopulated piece of land. The event generally includes a speech by a senior Israeli official, often the Speaker of the Knesset who reflects on the year that has passed. In 2006 Shimon Peres spoke of his hope that Palestinians and surrounding Arab countries would lay down their weapons and sign peace treaties with Israel, emphasising that “there are still existential dangers” that Israel faces (cited in *Yedioth Ahronoth* 2006b). Although there are not the same military parades as there used to be, there is still a selection of marches performed by soldiers to accompany the official ceremonies where the Israeli flag is paraded. Navy bases in Haifa and Eilat are also opened to the public.

The torch lighting event is particularly iconic, where a collection of twelve beacons representing the biblical tribes of Israel are lit. This is intended to symbolise “the ingathering of exiles”, tying the ‘becoming’ of Israel to Jewish history (Handelman 1998: 218). As Don-Yehiya has pointed out, this lighting of the beacons can be interpreted by individuals as either the re-awakening of a “romantic nationalism”, or as the continuance of the Jewish custom from the Second Temple in ancient Jerusalem (1984: 14). Dominguez (1989b) has suggested that this ambivalence runs throughout Israel’s celebration of Independence Day as its character remains unresolved. The mixed symbolism allows for “competing objectifications” (Dominguez 1989b: 69). In her discussion of how Israel has celebrated this day she discusses efforts by the Israeli government to establish some sense of ritual around the holiday. This has included special prayers and even a godless *Hagadah* like that used for *Pesach*. Dominguez suggests that these efforts are almost as if Israel is trying to figure out how to celebrate secular holidays (1989b: 50). The practice of various guises of Israeliness during Independence Day, both secular and Jewish, has created a space that has become essentially “Israeli” for today’s youth. The commemoration of Independence Day alone has come to also represent how one participates in the construction of Israeliness for many teens.

### **The Ritual Enjoyment of Israeliness**

Talking to the school pupils and observing how Israel was celebrating Independence Day, there was a great sense of enjoyment in the occasion. There was also a definite collection of activities that symbolised this national holiday. One of the most important and widely enjoyed of these activities was the family barbecue, or *mangal* as it is known. Every spare patch of public grass in Haifa was populated by Jewish Israeli and Arab Israeli families setting up their portable barbecues. Highways were awash with smoke and the smell of cooked meat as even the central reservations overlooking the coastline were used as a picnic site. This along with the parading of the Israeli flag was recognised by my informants as one of the small things you could do to perform your Israeliness. For many this was another aspect of being a good citizen. It was good citizenship to do the *mangal*, and to get into the spirit of the occasion. This enjoyment was complemented by the swathes of Israeli flags that adorned windows and balconies

of homes across Israel. One was hard pressed to find a car that did not fly the Israeli flag, the second hand car I bought even included a bundle of them in the boot. It was amazing to think that thousands more could be sold each year. This was in fact the only really visible sign of allegiance to the flag by Arab Israelis, as many enterprising children and teenagers sold them at roadsides and junctions.

“Doing” Israeliness through this performance of flags and food mirrored many aspects of a Jewish religious holiday. So well versed are Jewish Israelis in the rituals surrounding Jewish holidays, it left them well disposed to the ritualisation of non-religious holidays. The *mangal* was an able substitute for the traditional dishes of Jewish holidays, the flags and Jewish bible quiz that is shown annually on television connected it to the ethnic Jewish elements that define Israeli nationhood. This pool of characteristics embodies the ethnic and republican aspects of Israel, but what is also symbolic is the very *practice* of celebration. My family in Yodfat, as with many other secular Jewish Israelis, often claimed that Israelis were the “laziest” Jews. By this they meant that they had become complacent about practicing Judaism because they were surrounded by it in Israel. They suggested that by “living here (in Israel) you are doing enough”, and that by taking up residence in Israel you are fulfilling the ultimate goal of Jewish existence. Therefore it was important that they upheld this national dimension to their Jewish identity or they would be negating even this commitment. Although it was a secular holiday, like any aspect of Israeli nationhood or statehood it cannot be divorced from Jewish religious elements.

Celebrating the nation seemed even more pertinent following ceremonial speeches that reminded the country of the existential threat it faced, and the continued prominence of Jewish destruction in the national psyche during the preceding period of remembrance. The gusto with which individuals embraced *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* paraded and affirmed Israel's existence. Partaking in these celebrations, and doing “the little things” like sporting the flag was a means of doing good Israeli citizenship and sustaining Zionism in its celebration of the land and the Jewish people's revival of it – as espoused by Zionist ideology. It was another means by which to legitimise Israel's existence in the face of criticism of it. Rituals on *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* provide an opportunity for individuals to enjoy



themselves. In these instances nationalism is fun, it is as Slavoj Zizek suggests “an eruption of enjoyment into the social field” (1993: 202). Zizek (1993) uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to explain that it is through “enjoyment” that individuals identify with the nation; the reinforcing of that enjoyment through rituals and ceremonies re-affirms communal identification and one’s belief that others believe in the thing called “nation”. Zizek (1993) argues that the nation is an effect not simply of discursive practices but also “enjoyment”, explaining this association as part of an unconscious desire through which the subject can construct itself or fill that which it feels is lacking in itself. The realms of the subconscious aside, the nation effect is also produced and performed because it is fun. The barbecues, the fireworks and games all constitute an enjoyable experience. Performing *Yom Ha’atzma’ut* rituals is an enjoyable outlet that at the same time celebrates togetherness.



Figure 12: Game playing in Yodfat on *Yom Ha’atzma’ut*.

*Yom Ha’atzma’ut* in Yodfat gave its residents the opportunity to celebrate Israel and celebrate their community in particular. There is a range of activities and games that go on throughout the day, including of course the Yodfat *mangal* that

took place on a nearby hillside. The day kicks off with the much anticipated game, catch the flag. According to my cousin Boas this is what the children of Yodfat look forward to the most, mainly because of the outdoor team action and the throwing of raw eggs at each other. The game is an explicit recreation of Israel's struggle for Independence, where the children split up into two teams: the Arabs and the Jews. Both battle to find and capture the flag then bring it to the "UN" based on another hill. The flag is defended by the British, made up of more senior Yodfat youth looking to pulverise the younger ones with eggs. It is an explicit performance of Israeli state-making, bringing to life themes of bravery and survival that are contained within the nation building spirit of *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*. Playing such games not only remembers the history of the occasion but it also reinforces the sense of community that it is intended to inspire. The togetherness and festive spirit that fills the day was also magnified as a result of the previous day's remembrance of Yodfat members who had given their lives for the Independence they now enjoyed.

The *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* celebrations are a conscious enactment of the many narratives that construct the Israeli state. Just as *Yom HaShoah* and *Yom HaZikaron* resonate with individuals in their common historical experience of being both Jewish and Israeli, *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* takes the affects of this heritage such as sacrifice and renewal, and facilitates a medium through which Israelis can celebrate the community that has been born out of these Jewish Israeli histories. Navaro-Yashin (2002) argues that the state is reproduced in Turkish public life through critique and cynicism, where "fantasies" for the state continue to work in terms of a state minded framework, thus perpetuating it. A national celebration such as *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* is only embraced if it represents those characteristics which resonate with the public's own construction of identity. In light of this one must appreciate participation in such days as an act of nation building on the part of individuals, and a performance of intersubjective national celebration between the state and people. The personal ways in which individuals engage with these state rituals produce new subjective forms of nationalist sentiment which reflect the private experiences of national subjects and more local associations with one's community. Therefore, although certain nationalist discourses will resonate with individuals they are also

subjectively re-appropriated. The following chapter shows how Jewish Israeli teens also negotiate Israeli militarism as a means of “doing” Israeliness. Again such state frameworks have the ability to be productive in terms of facilitating new forms of relating to the nation.

## 5. An Educated Choice: Israeli Youth as Discerning Customers of State Militarism

It is late afternoon in the middle of May 2006 and I am lying prostrate on the grass outside Merav community centre, just up the road from Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael. For the past hour I have been running up hills, sharing the load of a stretcher weighted with sand bags in an attempt to capture some quality participant observation with a group of 16 to 18 year old males all keen to be recruited to the best units of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). For six months I have been training with *Amit Lakosher* (Comrades in Fitness), an organisation that offers a twice weekly after school course that hopes to mentally and physically prepare its participants for military service. Erez, the instructor and also *miluim* (reserves) officer, feels that the gruelling fitness regime he puts these teens through will ease their transition in to the army. As for me, the hour or so of training generally left me incapacitated and unsurprisingly unable to perform a style of jogging and semi-structured interviews with the boys that I imagined might be possible. Nitzan, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student from Ma'agan Michael School hopeful of becoming a pilot calls out in a friendly mocking manner; “Andy! *Shavuz?*” Over the weeks he and the others had been trying to clue me into the army slang that most Jewish Israeli teens were familiar with even before recruitment. They would frequently wield its expletive phrases, particularly in an environment such as this where they are trying to embrace the military experience. The phrase “*shavuz*” is a succinct yet highly descriptive abbreviation for “*nishbar ha-zi'in*” meaning “one’s dick has broken down”. In a rather graphic and andocentric fashion fitting to the military environment (Helman 1999b; Kaplan 2000; Kimmerling 1993; Sasson-Levy 2007) it refers to the complete loss of strength, and the desire to “chuck it in” and go home. Usually heard in an army training camp, this still did a good job of summing up my physical exhaustion from trying to keep up with a group of highly motivated and disciplined teens.

Attending these *Amit Lakosher* sessions became an important part of my research in that it allowed me to spend some time outside of the formal school setting with teens approaching their military service. As my Hebrew improved and the number

of lifts home I offered grew, I was able to form friendships with some of my fellow trainees and get more involved in, or at least eavesdrop more efficiently on the banter they would have amongst each other whilst doing shuttle runs or hiding behind bushes as Erez had them re-enact roadside ambushes. It was fun, and many of the younger 10<sup>th</sup> grade members of the group were there at least initially because of that and the social aspect of it. By the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, students took it more seriously. Conscription in Israel means that Jewish Israeli teens receive their *tzav rishon* (first call up) from the IDF shortly after their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, a year before they are to be recruited in to the IDF. Men will do around three years military service, and women up to two years. Depending on when they are born, individuals can receive their *tzav rishon* during 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade of high school. Consequently this is when Jewish Israeli teens begin to think about what type of army service they want. They had to decide whether they want to be *jobnikim*, a term used cynically to describe those who wish to serve in a desk job, or *kravi* (combat), a more prestigious and socially valued way to contribute to the country. For women there was a desire in particular not to be shunted into a secretarial type role which was considered an empty form of contribution and one symbolic of an inferior female gender role. Some would also attempt to avoid military service altogether.

Those who attended *Amit Lakosher* did not necessarily want to be in combat units but wanted to be in equally prestigious units linked with the air force, navy, or military intelligence. This included girls; however, the two female students from Ma'agan Michael who began the programme with me stopped attending after the first few sessions. To be selected for the top *echidot* (units), individuals had to undergo a series of selection weekends called *gibushim* specific to each unit, where through a series of tough physical tests the army would identify those suitable for recruitment. Although there are combat roles available for women as pilots, border police or in light infantry, they are still barred from the infantry, armoured section, and reconnaissance units. Because these latter roles constitute the core combat roles it was mostly men who took part in such courses. *Amit Lakosher* enabled the male students to get themselves in top physical condition in preparation for the

*gibushim*. However, many said that to get in to where you want, ultimately came down to *protectia*, “who you know”.

For young male and female Jewish Israelis the army was a major part of the “whole experience of being Israeli” as one individual put it to me. Particularly in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade the army permeated much of the social and educational worlds of these teens even if they were not as enthused by it as those in *Amit Lakosher*. Individuals discussed amongst themselves and their parents which units they would be applying to, words of wisdom were shared by siblings over the dinner table. The vision of this military experience often differed according to gender in terms of the type of personal fulfilment males and females could gain from service in the IDF. Some sought advice as to how to get out of the military experience, an issue I will address at greater length in the next chapter; however, for most it was a life stage that simply had to be contended with. My cousin Boas in Yodfat who had been rather nonchalant about his upcoming military service, once in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade soon became caught up in the cycle of call ups, unit fliers through the post and *gibushim*. His suitability for a tank unit like his brother Yair, or whether he was of the right mentality for the paratroopers, were discussed around cups of tea after school. On top of these discussions, decisions and guidance also came with the help of army preparation classes that students received from IDF education officers.

The military has always been central to the civic lives of Jewish Israeli youth and inhabits all aspects of Israeli society. Conscripting both men and women was an attempt to promote an egalitarian ethos in the new Jewish state, a society that was supposed to be a “new and model society founded on principles of justice and equality” (Berkovitch 1997: 608). Sasson-Levy (2007) argues it was more because of the republican ethos than equal rights that women were included, and that ultimately the gendered roles in the military produced a discriminatory division of labour, marginalising women from the societal discourse of national security (Kimmerling 1993). However, as this chapter will emphasise, doing military service in whatever role, grants one the “freedom” to pursue individual goals in Israeli civil life. It is something that must be contended with for instrumental reasons as well as being a way of “knowing” and “doing” Israeliness. The extent of the pervasiveness of the IDF in Israeli school life was shown in my discussion of

memorial services. The further militarisation of the educational worlds of Israeli youth will be discussed in relation to the army preparation classes. The IDF continues to be promoted as a means of achieving social mobility. By example, as well as running after school army preparation courses like *Amit Lakosher*, the organisation *Acharay* also provides extra-curricular remedial maths and English classes. Funded by Bank Leumi and endorsed by the IDF it promotes the army as leverage for a better life. Although the maths classes have nothing to do with military preparation the teachers' t-shirts continue to promote its association with the IDF with the slogans, "youth leads change", "preparation course for IDF", and "training young leadership". In civil life a good military career is also beneficial for high level jobs in banking and high-tech firms (Levy 2004). In conversation, Boas' father, who worked in the industrial sector, claimed that given two academically or experience matched candidates, those in charge of recruitment in his firm would most likely favour the candidate who had performed a significant military service.

Israeli youth of today have been largely condemned for their lack of motivation to serve and apparent "ideological decline", valuing "self fulfilment and personal success" over ideological, Zionist commitments (Ben Eliezer 2004: 57; O'Sullivan 2005; Greenberg 2006; Van Creveld 2002). This has been linked to a larger generational pattern the Israeli writer Gadi Taub (1997) identifies where youngsters are trying to move away from the nation building of the old generation, and escape the political. He terms this the "dispirited rebellion" (Taub 1997). Yet I found that even those who appeared apathetic or cynical about military service (the majority in fact) still identified serving in the IDF as the defining aspect of being Israeli and being a good Israeli citizen. After working with female secretaries in the IDF, Sasson-Levy felt that it was only because it is such a normative experience that these women could account for the unfulfilling nature of their military service and justify their time in it (2007: 501).

Helman suggests the fact that "everybody does it" reinforces individuals' sense of community constructed around conscription (1999a: 396). It is a "club", a way of being Israeli which has its implications on those who do not serve such as Arab/Palestinian Israelis. As this chapter will discuss there is also a shared

collective sense through defending the institution of the IDF when faced with criticism of it from those considered outside of the “club” such as the foreign press. There are those that are cynical and critical of the military experience but they choose to engage in the military experience as a means of satisfying individual goals. Because the military is so profoundly in the lives of Israelis it needs to be contended with; in light of this, individuals continue to reproduce Israeli militarism. In the same way that Willis (1980) describes how his student interlocutors actively appropriate ideologies yet continue to reproduce their working class position and ultimately learn to be working class, a comparison can be made with the continued militarisation of Israeli society where the students in a sense learn to be militaristic. Even those critical of Israeli militarism recognise the importance of doing it so that they are free to participate and progress in civil society. The army preparation classes the students receive presents a form of bargaining with the situation where the students are seen to fulfil the militaristic aspect of Israeli nationalism, and the IDF satisfies the personal ambitions of its future conscripts.

Looking at the issues surrounding why Israeli youth participate in military service allows us to see how individuals experience nationalism. Doing military service is an avenue through which individuals see themselves nationally through a culmination of associations that makes individuals choose to identify with the nation. Cohen’s (1996) concept of “personal nationalism” and Jean-Klein’s (2001) positing of the process she terms “self-nationalisation” are useful for my argument in this regard. The former asks us to “differentiate between the regime’s representation of the nation and individuals’ interpretation of those representations” (Cohen 1996: 804). “Personal nationalism” allows one to appreciate how national symbols and narratives are used as a resource by individuals for their own sense of identity whilst allowing for individual re-appropriation of these elements in terms of what is significant to their own selfhood. As a result of this “mutual implication” Cohen argues that “when I ‘see’ the nation, I am looking at myself” (1996: 805). Similarly Israeli youth see their national identity through the IDF as a result of shared experience, and its embodiment of Jewish and Israeli historical identity that they see as part of their own.



The pursuit of military service is a means of doing Israeliness. In reference to processes of bottom-up Palestinian nationalism, Jean-Klein uses the term “self-nationalisation” to explain the nationalising effects of people’s daily interests (2001: 83). She argues that people are knowingly capable of producing effects of nationalism through everyday practice and uses the example of Palestinians suspending daily social practices such as picnics and weddings as a means of contributing to the national movement. The Israeli case allows us to observe a similarly bottom-up display of nationalisation, where national subjectivity is evoked through doing military service and how this then constitutes “knowing” what it is to be Israeli. In the Palestinian case “self-nationalisation” is an important evocation of nationhood where it is not yet fully institutionalised in the form of an established State. In Israel, the State is especially visible, yet “self-nationalisation” through “knowing” and “doing” the army continues to be important for the reiteration of Israeli nationhood. The fact that Israeli militarism is embedded in the institutions of the state that individuals must pass through, makes it impossible to escape and thus must be contended with.

As identified previously, as opposed to an “imagined community”, nationhood in this regard is derived from the fact that everyone partakes in it including family and friends to whom Jewish Israeli youth feel a responsibility. Thus when there is talk of “paying one’s debt” to society, as military service is often framed as constituting, this is de-abstracted to being one’s debt to members of the family who have served, or friends who are about to do so. Building on my discussion of kinship and nationhood earlier, the shared experience of family members in the IDF is an example of how kinship has a direct impact on notions of nationhood as opposed to a purely symbolic or metaphorical role (cf. Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1990; Joseph 1999, 2000). Furthermore the fact that carrying out military service symbolises full membership in Israeli nationhood emphasises that it is a combination of both ethnic and civic practices that makes one Israeli. One must also “sacrifice” for the nation (Kelly and Kaplan 2001).

Much of this chapter will focus on motivations to serve in the IDF. I found that this was largely orientated around the satisfaction of individual goals and the freedom to pursue a successful civic life which doing the army allows. The sort of freedom

that this engagement with the national experience facilitates provides an answer as to why people choose to do nationalism. One might call it “self-fulfilment nationalism” that relies on contribution to collective agency. By giving something to the collective, one is rewarded with opportunities for “self-realisation” (Hage 2003: 16). Ghassan Hage (2003) argues that people seek the “embrace” and “protection” of the state but in a moderated fashion that is not seen to stifle possibility and the capacity to achieve personal goals. If this balance is correct then “the national ‘we’ enables the ‘I’ of the national to do things it can never hope to be able to do as an individual ‘I’”, and in this way “‘we’ is transformed into an aspiration” (Hage 2003: 13). In light of this the army preparation classes represent a national embrace whilst also recognising the importance of instilling a sense of mobility within the state’s military framework.



Figure 13: Queuing up to be inducted into the IDF at Tel HaShomer Army Recruitment Base.

### **Living with Israeli Militarism**

The interrelation between civic and military virtue has a long history in Israeli nation building. A “people’s army” was seen by Ben Gurion as a means to forge

together the new Jewish nation, a ‘melting pot’ for new Jewish immigrants (Ben-Eliezer 2004: 264). Ben-Eliezer argues that the “nation-in-arms” was a necessary means of acquiring the absolute loyalty of citizens to the newly formed nation state where “the soldier is a citizen and the citizen a soldier” (1995: 266, 274). *Acharay’s* involvement in education continues a long heritage of the IDF’s participation in the civilian sphere. An IDF journal in 1950 stated, “the IDF will teach the new immigrant that the army and the uniform he sees are in fact his” (cited in Ben-Eliezer 1995: 272). The soldier and the citizen were to be seen as one and the same where the soldier is the “right hand of the civilian” (Ben-Eliezer 1995: 272). As such, the IDF provisioned food and medicinal support as well as teaching assistance in the refugee camps of the early Israeli state. Ben-Eliezer (1995) argues that such participation helped produce a feeling of mutual responsibility for the security of Israel. The IDF established itself as the guardian of Israel, a symbol of the “new Jew” in charge of his/her destiny after the devastation of the Holocaust (Van Creveld 2002). Kimmerling argues that institutionally and cognitively a security orientation exists and refers to this as “civilian militarism” (1993: 206). This has often meant that society and the state have played second fiddle to military and national security considerations (Kimmerling 1993: 210).

The successful integration of Israeli citizens continues to be complicated by the fact that the image of civic virtue was moulded in terms of the Ashkenazi fighter, thereby extenuating the social and cultural marginalisation of Mizrahi Israelis (Helman 1999a; Peri 2001). Certain units of the IDF such as the air-force continue to be associated with “*Ashkenazim*” and this impacted on the choices of military service my Mizrahi informants made. Mor from Levinson religious high school did not want to be in the pilots because it was “too full of *Ashkenazim*”. The cultural marginalisation of the Mizrahi population is also complemented by the IDF’s further alienation of Israel’s non-Jewish population. Its values are derived from Jewish values symbolising continuity between the civic experience of military service and the history of the Jewish people. Therefore to participate in it is characterised as an endorsement of this heritage. Because of these associations this both dissuades and distances the non-Jewish Israeli population from participation in the main arena of Israeli republican life. Although around 5,000 Palestinian Israelis

serve in the IDF they are not legally obliged to do so and largely do not wish to (Kanaaneh 2003). Rhoda Kanaaneh explains that those who have chosen to serve have based their decision on a variety of reasons that include attempts to “upgrade their citizenship” and protect other Palestinians (2003: 14). The IDF and service to it has been primarily grounded in Jewish nationalism and embodies both the ethnic and republican dimensions of the Israeli state. As Kanaaneh (2003) argues, to serve in the IDF is to show one’s willingness to serve the Jewish nation as opposed to a ‘neutral’ state. The instrumentalist reasons for Palestinians taking part in military service reveal the central role the IDF continues to play in facilitating ‘full’ citizenship/membership. Kanaaneh’s (2003) work shows the “messiness” of identity, where Palestinians mobilise different identities at different times, which in the case of military service creates an escape from their marginality. This instrumentality must equally be recognised in the relationship Jewish Israeli teens have with the army and their use of it as a means to satisfy aspects of their identity.

The IDF is central to Israeli political and cultural life, situated in a complex of social, institutional, and industrial structures. Ben-Ari and Lomsky-Feder (1999) have explored the social construction of life worlds of Israeli soldiers in terms of these structures. They postulate that by the time Israeli youths reach the army they have internalised the knowledge, motivation and comfortableness to act within a military scenario (Ben-Ari and Lomsky-Feder 1999: 17). Ben-Ari and Lomsky-Feder (1999) suggest that a process of naturalisation has occurred since primary school giving new recruits “a priori” text. This provides the militarised context in which Israeli youth are immersed. My work reveals how instead of being potentially subsumed by these national discourses, they are continuous with individuals’ sense of national identity whilst at the same time susceptible to scrutiny and manipulation by these same individuals as and when it is relevant to their lives. Danny Kaplan (2000) argues that military service in Israel is a prerequisite for entering adult life in the same way the Bar Mitzvah is for a Jewish male. He argues that military service produces a commitment to the state and its institutions in the same way as a Bar Mitzvah affirms one’s commitment to the Jewish tradition. Although Kaplan’s (2000) argument makes the assumption that a hegemonic masculinity is played out it is useful in conveying military service as

part of the “normalised” stage in the life world of Jewish Israeli teens. In addition to the institutional engagement with Israeli militarism the security situation in Israel means that these youth continue to assess their environment as one in perpetual conflict and under existential threat. They also have family members who have served and continue to serve in its ranks. Whether a brother or sister is on leave and sits again around the dinner table, or someone gets asked, “*shavuz?*”, the military inhabits the life worlds of these teens.

In concordance with its function in Israeli society, military service in general has been conceived by the likes of Janowitz (1983) as “an integrative mechanism and as a medium for the expression of commitment toward collective goals” (Helman 1999b: 192). For a broader understanding of multivocal experiences of nationalism one must also take in to consideration those who choose not to partake in this arena such as the refuseniks who I will discuss in the next chapter. For the purposes of this chapter I will show how the military experience provides a national experience both through shared participation and criticism of it. Ultimately Israeli teens continue to “reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation, and a partial penetration of those structures” (Willis 1980: 175). However, the military experience is not simply one of disciplined subjugation as the likes of Foucault (1979, 1988), Giddens (1985) and Mitchell (1988, 2001) would have it; as an “extension of the administrative apparatus of the state” that contributes to disciplinary control and subjugation of its population (Helman 1999b: 192). I will describe the ways Israeli teens engage with Israeli militarism as a means of achieving individual freedoms that allows them to fulfil their own ambitions.

Foucault (1979) argues that military service is a domain within which state discipline works. He posits that in the modern state disciplinary power works through institutions such as schools and the military and that the efficacy of these technologies is due to the fact individuals have already internalised such power relations. According to Foucault (1979) disciplinary power works from within the individual and therefore the military is geared towards constituting its subjects through an array of disciplinary practices that seek to attain uniformity and “normalisation”. At the same time Foucault argues that normalisation also individualises by allowing subjects to “measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix

specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another” (1979: 184). In accordance with this, Helman (1999b) suggests that the workings of the military institution replicate wider mechanisms of the state that strive to inculcate a feeling that the individual is “somehow relevant for the reinforcement of the state’s strength” (Foucault 1988: 152). As we will see this subjugated approach of so-called “docile bodies” is challenged by the cynicism Israeli youth have towards the military and how these power relations are used productively in the attainment of personal ambitions.

Building on Foucault’s theory of disciplinary power Timothy Mitchell (2001) argues that an effect of the internalisation of power relations has been that frameworks such as the military become more than the sum of their parts and come to manifest external entities in themselves. He argues that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the military apparatus became like an artificial machine “with an existence independent of the men who composed it” (Mitchell 2001: 93). The army became something that was two dimensional; that part which is made up of individual conscripts and that of the military machine of which they were part. Mitchell uses this conception of the army as external structure to posit an image of the state as structural effect where as well as being of the subjects that compose it, it is also an apparatus “that stands apart from the social world” (2001: 94). Mitchell’s (1988, 2001) description of military service as a disciplinary process and the army as structural effect of such power relations falls short of the way Israeli teens engage with the military. The fact that military service is seen instrumentally explains in part why individuals “do” militarism and ultimately reproduce it. The military institution and the state discourses contained within it must be recognised for the way Israelis choose to be represented by this militarism. Recognising how these teens appropriate dominant discourses and choose to identify with the state allows for a more complete grasp of the ways Israeli youth define and experience their national identity. Whilst embracing Israeli military discourses individuals are also able to be critical of military service and resist its reaches, engaging with it as and when it suits instrumentally and ideologically. Unlike other comparative contexts such as Gill’s (1997) work on the conscription of powerless peasant communities or Altinay’s (2004) discussion on state-fed militarism in Turkish society, the Israeli

case reveals people who are neither victims nor automatons of state discourse but subjects who routinely choose to be represented by their state, and dialogue with it accordingly. As seen by many of my informants, the Israeli context is also distinguished by being situated in an environment of perpetual war, and the routine fulfilment of a life stage.

### **The Gendering of Military Roles**

The female teens encountered during my fieldwork were generally more cynical about their contribution towards the state through military service. They expressed fears of being stuck in an office making coffee for two years and being a “maid” to their senior officer. More sinister worries included sexual harassment and discrimination purely on the grounds of gender. Despite this, the majority continued to serve, and thus military service still exists as a collective national experience for female Jewish Israeli teens. However, the national subject formation occurring here is one that also reproduces a gendered divide of inequality (Israeli 1997). Kimmerling asserts that despite the inclusion of female soldiers, the Israeli military is a “machoistic” and “male-oriented subculture” (1993: 217). Female teens I worked with believed that there were now more opportunities for women in the IDF but they still felt it was a masculine environment where they were excluded from the more exciting and interesting combat roles. In 2006, women composed 32% of the regular military, with 2.5% of women soldiers serving in combat roles such as pilots, border police, and anti-aircraft personnel (Sasson-Levy 2007: 485). As mentioned, they were still barred from core combat roles and were thus far less likely to achieve a top military rank (Cohen 1997).

Historically, armies have embodied a sexual division of labour where men have been stationed at the “front” and women at the “rear” in clerical support roles (Yuval-Davis 1987). The IDF has a declared ideology of gender equality traced back to its historical origins in the militias of the Palmach and Hagana. The history of these militias hails the presence of women fighters, when in fact most specialised in first aid and administration (Yuval-Davis 1985: 656). The placement of women into clerical positions was re-affirmed when the Hagana withdrew all women soldiers from the battlefields after a woman was killed in the battle of Sheikh Jarrah

in 1948 (Bloom 1982: 151). From the first decades of Israeli statehood, Sasson-Levy points out that the term “secretary” became synonymous with women soldiers, with 70% occupying such a position (2007: 488). She suggests that the qualities of a good woman became encapsulated in a secretary, where the role was seen to express feminine characteristics and therefore something all women could do (Sasson-Levy 2007: 486). The secretarial role is one that concretises a particular “gender regime” where the relationship between the male boss and secretary is patrimonial in that the secretary’s status is contingent on that of the boss (Connell 1987; Kanter 1977). The secretarial role in the IDF has no content of its own, nor any training or possibility of promotion (Sasson-Levy 2007: 489). The number of women soldiers as secretaries declined to 40% during the 1980s (Jerbi 1996) with a greater proportion of women being allocated to intelligence and training roles to free-up more men for combat. The Yom Kippur War in 1973 had highlighted a deficiency in manpower and so this along with pressure from lobbies provided some catalyst for the diversification of female roles in the IDF (Sasson-Levy 2007: 488). The number fell again to 20% in 2002 but this number is a diluted value in that it did not include those who still essentially performed secretarial duties but held an alternative job title such as “manpower coordinator” (Yohalan 2006). In 2006, the period of my research, the adviser on women’s issues to the Chief of Staff began a campaign to reduce the number of secretaries and improve the status of women in the IDF (Yohalan 2006). However, the State Comptrollers Report of December 2006 showed that little improvement had been achieved.

This legacy of female soldiering in the IDF impacted strongly on the motivations of female Jewish teens I worked with as they approached military service. The clerical fate most of them were destined to endure contained the stigma and sense of inferiority constructed by the history of soldier secretaries in the IDF. These female students did not want to become “office wives”, performing domestic chores (Sasson-Levy 2007: 493). Because such a role was still stigmatised by the Israeli public, Sasson-Levy argues that women can lose social capital by being in the army (2007: 489). Thus the nationalising effect of this shared female experience in the army is one of a community built around a potentially vacuous form of contribution. The role of the army preparation classes that I will now go on to



discuss attempted to challenge this, with the officers of the IDF education corps emphasising the importance of every cog in the military machine. With females making up the majority of these education officers they provided an example of a potentially more fulfilling military avenue.

### **“The Next Generation”: Mobilising National Identity amongst Future Recruits to the IDF**

During the period of my fieldwork in Israel from October 2004 until June 2006 the IDF was particularly concerned at the seeming lack of motivation to serve in its ranks. Data published by the IDF personnel directorate in 2005 showed that only 65% of those eligible to be inducted actually did so (Rapoport 2006). The figures showed that approximately 25% of men were eluding military service as well as around 40% of women (Rapoport 2006). The Ministry of Defence suggested these figures pointed to an ideological crisis in Israeli society and decided to target secular high school students for their lack of motivation. In contrast, during this period national religious men made up approximately 30% of combat units, the toughest and most competitive sector. The high motivation of national religious men was confirmed in my own experience with national religious male students at *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* where as many as 20 in a 12<sup>th</sup> grade class of around 30 were training for *gibushim*. This is compared to 3 or 4 students of a similarly sized class in Irony Aleph.

To tackle this, the IDF Education Corps developed new initiatives to engage with their target audience, those pupils approaching their *tzav rishon*, and encourage them “to believe in the path” of military service (IDF Education Corps cited in Rapoport 2006). An officer from the Education Corps appraised the situation accordingly;

We have discovered that there is a population with whom we have no problem, they want to be drafted. But in every class, everywhere, without any relation to socioeconomic status, there are kids on whom we have to work harder. We have decided to focus on those who have poor motivation to serve or those who don't want to be drafted at all. We decided that we are going to start preparation for the IDF for people who need us more.

(Rapoport 2006)

This statement was made at the end of 2006 in response to a number of questionnaires that the IDF was distributing around schools to gauge youth attitudes to army induction. The army had in fact taken measures to address this more than two years earlier when they were armed with precise draft figures from each school. In this way they were able to assess which high schools required the most attention in terms of tackling motivation. One of these schools was Irony Aleph in Haifa where I worked. The level of attention given to the school was in accordance with these figures. I was unable to receive a precise answer as to the extent of the problem in Irony Aleph but was told by the homeroom teacher that there were more visits by veterans and officers than in previous years.

The Education Corps called the program “The Next Generation”. I had the opportunity to witness it in action at Irony Aleph and Levinson religious high school, where a *medanit* (female army education officer) ran a series of sessions based partly on the program’s handbook. Because of timetable restrictions, Ira and Ilanit, the officers I worked with at Irony Aleph and Levinson respectively, had to select those topics of army recruitment deemed most important. Depending on the numbers being recruited from a particular state high school, such army preparation might begin in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and continue up until 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In Irony Aleph School and Levinson Religious High School, students would attend these classes once or twice a month. This enabled me to attend twelve such lessons during the course of an academic year, and observe the educational process of equipping both male and female students with the information they required to fulfil their army service. This included the necessary actions that needed to be taken upon receiving their *tzav rishon*, up to what they can expect when arriving at the recruitment base and begin their basic training.

The “Next Generation” program was approved by the Education ministry, one of whose members, Riki Laufer, the director of social community education, was quoted saying that,

The willingness of the young people to serve in the IDF is the fulfillment of a major goal of the education system.

(Cited in Rapoport 2006)

The fact that military service is considered to be essential to the education of Israeli youth is indicative of the central role the army plays in the civic lives of Jewish Israelis. There were a number of voices who disagreed with what was considered a further step to increase the militarisation of Israeli Education. Israeli academics and the activist organisation New Profile, who amongst other issues campaigned against the militarisation of Israeli society, were the most notable of these voices. Tamar Katriel, an anthropologist based at Haifa University was a signatory to a petition against such steps by the IDF. Together with her academic colleagues she condemned what she saw as the government's attempt to increase recruitment through the mobilisation of Israeli youths' emotions (Katriel personal communication). She criticised the program's handbook for tapping in to Israeli youths' existential fears with regard to the history of the Jewish people, and the continued naturalisation of the interrelation of civilian and military spheres. It was this latter point that also concerned New Profile. A report they published in July 2004 called "Child Recruitment in Israel" criticised the placement of more IDF officers in schools as yet another layer of militarisation that "makes enlistment seem both inevitable and desirable" (Givol, Rotem, and Sandler 2004: 22).

With this criticism in mind I was interested to hear the position of *Yesh Gvul* (There's a Limit), an Israeli peace group that campaigns against the occupation of Palestinian territories and supports the refusal movement. The organisation wishes to educate future soldiers to be conscious of the situation in the occupied territories. I therefore felt it worthwhile to hear their position on the placement of more officers in schools, namely, what they felt were the ramifications of this type of military education. In December 2004 I spoke with Ram, an original member of *Yesh Gvul* who whilst on active service refused to take part in the IDF's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. He felt that the proposal to place more officers in schools was a "worrying modification" but a strong military presence in the schools had always been there. When I mentioned the petition against the "New Generation" program he significantly pointed out that it was a waste of time. Ram believed there was no point sending letters to officials complaining about soldier mentors, if the people you are trying to help (i.e. Israeli youth) are not aware or conscious of there being a problem. He described the students and their parents as being so "ingrained,

socialised, and naturalised to the army predicament” (personal communication) that a petition would fall contrary to the continued appetite and value felt for the IDF. Ram felt that the only way to instigate change was by raising consciousness at the grass-roots level. As far as my students were concerned, they were only too keen to have more officers visit their school and find out more about a potentially daunting and lengthy spell in the army. In Irony Aleph and Levinson very few students were aware of this debate surrounding their education, and had not heard of organisations such as New Profile.

Rams’ assessment encapsulates the prominence of Israeli militarism, and highlights the potential impact of living in a society that forefronts military and security issues. Althusser (1971) saw the school as a potent state apparatus that served to exacerbate social inequalities (Levinson and Holland 1996: 5). His social reproduction theory was succeeded by Bourdieu’s (1974) theory of cultural reproduction which was also a doctrinal and deterministic model of education that perpetuated an image of individuals as passive recipients. He suggests that schools validate and distribute a particular valued symbolic capital and it is therefore this “cultural capital” that individuals seek to accumulate in order to better their standing in society (Bourdieu 1974). With regard to IDF preparation, the “cultural capital” pertains to Israeli ethnic and military discourses. The military is indeed ingrained in the life of Israeli teens but how they choose to “augment” themselves with this cultural capital also depends on the specific ways that it might benefit their own identity or self-realisation. Because it is profoundly part of their family life and seen to be potentially beneficial to their future civic lives it still forms part of their “personal nationalism” that they choose to experience. However, as both Ram and Katriel suggest this perpetuates and reproduces Israeli militarism. Activist groups such as New Profile and the *Shministim* that I discuss at greater lengths in the next chapter attempt to promote alternative ways of ‘doing’ Israeliness that does not require contribution in the form of military service. Their lack of impact on teens of army age is an indication of this population’s continued unwillingness to separate Jewish Israeli national identity from the republican and Zionist discourses embodied in the IDF.

The military preparation classes promoted the importance of the ethno-national values embodied in military service. In the IDF course manual that was so criticised, Ilan Harari the head of education in the IDF, states the goal of the program is to increase national identity and motivation. It is hoped this will be achieved through three aspects of military education:

- 1) In 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, students need an understanding in the idea of an army of the people in a land that's Jewish and democratic.
- 2) By the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade they must have been exposed to the values of the army, its capabilities and missions. This is done through the use of case studies such as operations in Entebbe and the Six Day War.
- 3) By the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade students will say the programme has increased motivation, and parents will cheer them in to significant combat units in the army.

These three goals highlight key elements of Israeli civic and national identity. The programme requires that in the first instance the army must be presented as emblematic of the Jewish people in a Jewish land, whilst at the same time be democratically representative. In the 11<sup>th</sup> grade the IDF advertises the national security it offers, exemplified by two of its most famous encounters. The first was the 1976 hijack rescue in Entebbe airport Uganda where participating soldiers were remembered as heroes for rescuing hostages of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The second operation, the 1967 Six Day War, became the most iconic symbol of Israeli military achievement against the odds. The third and final ambition of the course recognises the value in parental endorsement for military service. In emphasising this, the IDF reveals its awareness of how this familial element continues to be a key constituent (or pressure) towards the motivation of its recruits. The IDF began to nurture this familial link during the first *intifada* when parents began to worry about the physical and moral welfare of their serving children (Van Creveld 2002: 353). Katriel suggests that, by having family picnics and taking other measures for familial involvement, the IDF hoped to make a “shift in sentimental focus from the peer group to the parental home as a source of emotional sustenance” (1991: 72). She claims that it is also in this way that parents became implicated in the politics of consensus regarding the military presence in their children’s lives (Katriel 1991: 82).

Ilanit the *medanit* at Levinson Religious High School informed me that aside from perhaps greater emphasis on the values and heritage of the IDF this was a very similar course to that taught over the last ten or fifteen years. Her understanding of the reason such steps were taken to more formally organise these lessons through teaching aids was that it averted the common situation of educators such as herself just sitting aimlessly in a class with little to do. However, this greater emphasis on “values” and “heritage” did come at a time of wider criticism of the IDF and its operation in the occupied territories, and diminishing numbers of recruits.



Figure 14: Ilanit working with the boys from Levinson state-religious high school.

Lessons I attended touched on all three of the goals, particularly in one session that is set aside for the discussion of “*Ruach Tzahal*”, “The Spirit of the IDF”. This is derived from four sources;

1. The I.D.F tradition and warfare heritage as the Israel Defence Forces.
2. The State tradition with its democratic principles, laws and institutions.
3. The tradition of the Jewish people throughout the generations.
4. Universal moral values based on human value and dignity.

(The Human Beings Doctrine of the IDF. IDF Ombudsman, Soldiers’ Rights Commissioner)

Each new recruit is equipped with a leaflet that contains these sources, along with a full list of values pertaining to the IDF. In the army preparation classes at schools, these values are addressed in relation to five defining elements of the State of Israel; tradition, Holocaust, heritage, values, and revival of the state. These are collectively known in Hebrew under the acronym *mashmaot*. Ilanit and Ira, the instructors from Levinson and Irony Aleph respectively, discussed these topics through a range of activities and illustrative stories. Such stories included ethical dilemmas when faced with potential terrorists masquerading as pregnant women. Even though the majority of students will not face combat situations, the IDF's recognition of these ethical dilemmas was an important component of its marketing drive with the students and public persona in terms of its "total quality management" (Ben-Ari 2006). The value of human life was emphasised with regard to the principle of *tohar ha-neshek* (purity of arms), where weapons will not be used against non-combatants. One of the most repeated stories that I also heard at the weeklong boot camp that 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have the opportunity to attend called *gadna*, is that of IDF pilot Ron Arad who has been missing in action since 1986 after being shot down in Lebanon. He is believed to have been captured by Hezbollah and according to popular opinion in the classroom is now most probably dead. Israel's refusal to forget about Arad is symbolic of the IDF's image as an army of the people. Car bumper stickers continue to celebrate his name; "Ron Arad was born to be free!"

Those who attended the classes run by army education officer Ira in Irony Aleph and her counterpart Ilanit in Levinson were well versed in the heritage of the IDF, a number of them able to specify the number of years Ron Arad had been missing and even what plane he was flying. Aside from contemporary representations of the army in popular soap operas such as *Tironut*, their knowledge of the IDF's origins in the Haganah and other pre-state militias, together with famous operations such as Entebbe and the Six Day War was evident. Furthermore, these are not just moments in history but events in which family members participated and also lost their lives. As discussed in the previous chapter, *Yom HaZikaron* ceremonies not just in the schools but also in *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* continue to reinforce this collective memory.



Figure 15: Irony Aleph students being role-called on *gadna*.



Figure 16: Downtime during *gadna*.



Students were aware of the motivational impact these lessons were supposed to have; “they’re so un-subtle, it makes you want to question it more” one student claimed. Shlomi a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student from Levinson, joked during the *Ruach tzahal* class that “all this spirit (of the IDF) stuff is so romantic”. He and his friend Liav complained to me that although they appreciated the army preparation, they felt they should be better informed by the IDF as to what it was like to be in a combat unit. Ultimately however, they felt Ilanit was not best placed to do this as she did not know what it was like to be in *kravi*;

Liav: They (IDF education officers) try to teach us about the army but I don’t think they do a very good job.

**AG: Why?**

Liav: Because they talk about crap. Things that are gonna be in the army they don’t talk about like helping us to get over the fear of being shot. You know you go to the *shtachim* (settlements) and there are people on the other side with guns like, and they can shoot you and they can kill you. Soldiers are dying...

**AG: But you said no one is going to *kravi*...?**

Liav: Yes but they don’t know that! She (the *medanit*) comes and she says wow its *magniv* (wonderful), you can go to communications unit, but she doesn’t help us to go to war, to feel that...I told you earlier I think if they come here to help us deal with the intimidation we have from the army; like when you open the newspapers and see 3 soldiers killed or injured...I don’t think she can teach us because she’s not *kravi* she’s doesn’t know what it’s like to be in the field in the night between all the terrorists in Gaza and things like that. I think they should bring someone who is *kravi* and they will tell us how it is, and tell us not to be afraid and give us *mur’al*<sup>3</sup> to go there. They don’t make us want to go there, no one is coming to say “hey, hey it’s good to go to *kravi* it will be good for you because of that, that, and that”. No one said that, so how are we going to get the motivation? No one tells us! All we know is people that are going to *kravi* are getting injured getting killed every day, or every few days. For this reason I don’t want to go to *kravi*, I don’t care about almost 3 years not seeing your family, 3 years living in the field, I care about myself I want at the age of 21 when I get out the army to be fit!

Liav’s tirade against the army preparation course iterates the matter-of-fact attitude Israeli teens have towards military service. Their desire for army education is grounded in practical and legitimate concerns over their welfare, and so long as

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<sup>3</sup> This is slang derived from the Hebrew word for “poison”, used to suggest someone is highly driven/motivated.

they are expected to perform military service they want to be best informed about it. For this reason, the army lessons they most appreciated were those that gave them practical advice, such as: their rights and duties, what their army profile meant in terms of what units were available to them, and how they could delay their recruitment if it was near school graduation. Lessons were receptive to this and also covered what the army could do for you as an individual and best prepare you for the future. The more ideological themes as relating to *mashmaot* were not the issues that most engaged the students in these classes, but as will be seen, the values and heritage espoused in these lessons were continually referenced in their articulations of national identity and national responsibility when discussing the overall significance of military service. The embeddedness of the military in family experiences meant for many that they were already exposed to the heritage of the IDF and its involvement in Israel's wars in a more intimate way.

### **Motivations to Serve**

There's a kind of fantasy at a certain time when looking forward to the army. It's because it's the time of my life I will grow up, you meet friends for life, and I do want to give to my country. I want a combat unit... and also I have a pressure from my brother (to do that), like there is a social respect for it too. But apart from that, I feel I just need to do this.

Guy, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Student at Ma'agan Michael Regional High School

In terms of Israeli teenage IDF recruitment, Guy, an Ashkenazi non-religious Jew from Caesarea was especially motivated to join a good army unit. I met him first whilst working in Ma'agan Michael regional high school and then trained with him in *Amit Lakosher*. The *Amit Lakosher* group was in fact made up largely of Guy's school colleagues, reflecting a continuing enthusiasm amongst many male Ma'agan Michael school pupils to perform military service. The kibbutz roots of the school continued to foster a culture of prestige around military service, and the value of contributing to the nation remained an important aspect of the school's ethos. Despite varying levels of motivation to serve in the IDF, Guy's thoughts on military service capture the scope of motivators that contribute to Israeli teens' assessment of conscription. These motivators meaningfully drive an active participation in state making from the individual level within a military context. How Guy understands his responsibilities to the state and how it might facilitate his

opportunities for self development exemplify the potentiality of a mindful and positive engagement with the IDF. Guy's anticipation of military service has five aspects to it; two relate to his personal development where he feels it is a period of maturation and a chance to bond with new friends (see Dar and Kimhi 2001). Guy also points out the pressure he has from his brother, demonstrating a feeling of generational responsibility characteristic of many of his contemporaries. Guy in fact had two brothers in the army, one in *orev nahal* (an elite infantry unit), and the other in military intelligence. He spoke of how the fact they were both in prestigious units impacted on his sense of duty. The other two factors show Guy's societal sensibilities. He feels a sense of duty to contribute to his country, and also indicates there is a degree of social value in carrying out army service.

Despite the fact that the majority of Jewish Israeli teens I encountered were not as driven to be in combat units in the same way as Guy and his friends from *Amit Lakosher*, the motivations he highlights shows the range of aspects Israeli teens currently weighed up in their approach to military service. Thoughts of comradeship and family have characteristically motivated soldiers to continue fighting in wars as opposed to "discipline, idealism, or self-preservation" (Bourke 2000: 142). Bourke's review of soldier biographies and military surveys during the Second World War and more recent conflicts highlight how it was "friendships that made the horrors of war endurable" (2000: 142). Recognising the importance of familial motivations, particularly the role of the biological father in motivating sons to enlist, the army sought to create a leadership structure that evoked the symbolic parent (Bourke 2000: 144). Although these teens were not yet at war the desire to enlist was motivated on a similarly personal level. Their sense of obligation to serve was often rooted in their loyalty to friends and family. My cousin Boas from Yodfat wanted to go to the army mainly because he would see his other friends going, and would "feel bad just sitting around while they protect the country".

This next section will show how the IDF is "bargained" with in order to achieve self-betterment which includes intellectual and physical goals as well as career opportunities. The negotiation involves the desire of the state to have its subjects participate in civic life whilst these subjects recognise a need to fulfil this life stage in order to freely engage in society. Furthermore, civic and national mindedness is

also derived from the actual ties represented by the involvement of family and peers in military service. It is to these people and not an abstract ‘society’ that they are “paying their debt”.

### *Bargaining with the Military*

The business-client relationship between the IDF and its potential recruits emerged at a time of a perceived decline in the prestige of the IDF (Ben-Eliezer 2004; Kimmerling 1993, 2001; Levy 1998, 2004; Shafir and Peled 2002). It has been argued that previous republican virtue in serving in its ranks has been replaced with “individualistic, ethno nationalist and religious motivations” (Shafir and Peled 2002: 237). Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel (2007) have proposed that Ashkenazi secular Israeli youth that have traditionally dominated the military and its elite units now weigh up the utility of military service against the utility of civilian spheres. Consequently, they suggest that these teens are more utilitarian in their decision as to what form of military service to carry out, with many choosing to serve in prestigious *jobnik* roles such as military intelligence, or computer and technology based units (Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel 2007: 138). Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel (2007) identify this as a move from “obligatory militarism” to “contractual militarism” indicating a more liberal as opposed to republican form of citizenship. As this process is taking place amongst the Ashkenazi stratum of society, more marginal groups such as the *Mizrahim* and Palestinian Israelis are using recruitment to traditional combat units for increased social mobility and the attainment of civil rights (Kanaaneh 2003; Levy 1998; Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel 2007; Peri 2001). With regard to Palestinian Israelis, Kanaaneh (2003) suggests that those that are signing up for military service do so as a means to escape their marginality, believing that doing military service puts them on level footing with their Jewish citizen counterparts in terms of “earning” civic rights. Kanaaneh’s (2003) ethnography which I will elaborate on further, emphasises the importance of doing military service to fully and equally participate as a citizen in Israel.

The army preparation classes have responded to these “contractual patterns of exchange”, providing students with the information to act on their instrumentalist participation in the IDF (Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel 2007). However,

participation in the IDF has always in a sense been contractual. It was always the premise on which one was to establish oneself as a “new Jew” in the state of Israel. It affirmed membership civically and ideologically whilst practically speaking it also entitled one to bank loans and a driver’s licence. In using the term “contract”, Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel (2007) suggest that both parties, namely the IDF and the recruits, are privy to sets of assumptions that would indicate the existence of mutuality between the military and soldiers as opposed to being wholly deterministic or “disciplinary” (cf. Foucault 1979; Mitchell 2001). A key aspect of value contracts is the principal of consideration - essentially that you will get something back (Atiyah 1983). The contractual obligations inferred by the agreement between Israeli teens and the IDF reveal an understanding of the pervasiveness of Israeli militarism on the part of individuals, and the necessity for the IDF to satisfy the “self-realisation” and social mobility requirements of its recruits. David Hume’s utilitarian account of contracts argues their importance in facilitating the individual’s capacity to improve their lot in the world that they would otherwise not be able to achieve alone (Atiyah 1983: 30). In the same way, military service exemplifies how the needs of the individual are often only satisfied by the collective. As with a contract this relies on good faith and trust in the other party’s ability to fulfil their obligations. Although this “contractual militarism” would indicate a more utilitarian and indeed negotiable approach to military service if in fact participation is “contractual” then the assumptions rooted in this agreement continue to assert “obligations”. The IDF continues to ask its subjects to identify militaristically with the nation and in fact must do so in order to be a fully functioning Israeli citizen. This suggests that Israel has not moved so far beyond “obligatory militarism” as Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel (2007) argue. The consequence of this is the continued reproduction of Israeli militarism.

It was evident in the army preparation classes I attended that the IDF was trying to market itself in terms of not only what these individuals could do for their country but what the IDF could do for them. The students were largely negative about what they could get out of their time in the army. As highlighted earlier, the girls especially were not enamoured with the possibility of making sandwiches and carrying out further domestic chores for a male officer as a secretary. Many of the

female students would voice their frustration and cynicism towards the IDF because of the perceived limits on the quality of their military service. Ira, the *medanit* at Irony Aleph would frequently emphasise that there were valuable roles for females to play in the army. Issues of value aside, for most of these secular teenagers at Irony Aleph, going in to the army is “just what you have to do” and so their level of motivation is “*kacha-kacha*” (“so-so”). Because of the inevitability of conscription, whatever the level of their motivation they wanted to know what to expect, otherwise as one of the pupils said, “it’s like a blind date”.

A theme that dominated the army preparation course was “getting the most out of military service”. This was formally discussed both through a lesson entitled “Meaningful Service”, and also in the case of Irony Aleph through a talk given by a visiting officer from the combat engineering corps. Both sessions were directed towards 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in Irony Aleph. The latter seemed to capture the attention of the students somewhat more, perhaps because of the rather intimidating M16 adorning the officer. In the “Meaningful Service” lesson, Ira got the pupils to rank different army jobs in order of importance. She informed me that pilots are always placed at the top, and the uniform makers ranked bottom. The class I attended closely conformed to this, but in place of the uniform makers they put those who end up working in the army base Shekem store (an Israeli department store chain) as the least valued role in the IDF. Ira explained how whatever job you have in the army you must do to the best of your ability and get the most out of military service. Each role is emphasised as an equally important cog in the machine. However, she made the point that there is the danger of being stationed somewhere you do not want to be if you do not put some thought as to where you feel your skills will be put to best use.

The officer from the combat engineering corps was sent as part of the IDF’s initiative to increase motivation through the placement of senior personnel in schools. A fully uniformed, decorated, and armed soldier was a powerful marketing tool, and he was able to command the respect of the class. His talk to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade discussed the types of skills they could acquire in the IDF, such as computing and engineering expertise. They were also informed as to the option of doing a *ceva*, where having acquired technical skills one is paid to stay on in the

army for an extra two years on top of compulsory service. This was promoted as beneficial for a career both in the army and in the civilian sphere. Some of the students were interested in the opportunity to combine military service with a university education in the form of *atudaim*. This involves an army sponsored place at an Israeli university followed by an extended period of military service in a field that utilises their qualifications. This can amount to six or seven years of military service. At the end of the session the pupils asked a number of questions. One girl asked how to get in to the *shabak* (military intelligence), another was interested in encrypting codes. Questions from the boys included how one gets to be a *krav maga* (IDF martial arts discipline) instructor, and how much extra you get paid if you are in a combat division compared to being a *jobnik*. The officer played a number of roles in this instance. He was there to assert the legal importance of military service, stating that “if you don’t do it you’ll be put in jail”, thus also emphasising the negative effects on one’s future of not going. He was also there to advertise the IDF in all its regalia and associated prestige. However, his talk was also a sales pitch to these students, to respond to their ambitions for self enhancement and present what the army could do for them.

Amongst the group of students I worked with in Irony Aleph this self fulfilment was imagined in a variety of ways depending on the types of military service individuals hoped for. Rachel, Tom, and Niv, all secular Jews from the 12<sup>th</sup> grade derived different understandings of what it meant to carry out a “meaningful service”. Each was based on their own personal goals. Rachel intended to do an *atuda*, hoping this would give her financial security by setting her up for a career in computers:

Rachel: The army pays a lot you know, for all the studies, and it’s really what I want to do...It’s important that I know after I finish (the army) that I’ll be able to continue with the learning and be able to work. I get a good salary you know. If I just do the army for two years or *Sherut Leumi* (national service) then I have to start learning again anyway and I don’t know if I’ll get a job where I get paid. So I think about the future.

In this instance military service is seen as the most pragmatic means to fulfil her career ambitions. Although later in the discussion she claims that it is also

important for her to contribute to the country through military service, this is weighed against what is best for her personal development.

Tom felt his personal development would be best achieved serving in an elite combat unit called “669” that specialised in airborne search and rescue. The unit famously managed to rescue Ron Arad’s pilot whilst arriving too late to airlift Arad before he was captured. The tough training and highly competitive selection procedure for this unit was seen as a fulfilling challenge to Tom:

Tom: 669 is a challenge I put in front of myself, and I want to go through it. I think if you go to the army, really do something. If you’re already going, why do something that is less significant...I’m not doing it for the country. It’s not patriotism, nothing like that. I do it for myself, something *I* want to go through. It’s also that I want to give my service as everyone else gives their service, but it’s not the main reason.

Tom is quite explicit about the lack of ideological inspiration that drives him towards a meaningful service, but the IDF is still perceived as a valuable environment for self-betterment. Students like Tom and Rachel are aware of how the IDF is ideologically constructed as an icon of Israeli nationalism, and are conscious of the violence it performs. Niv in an earlier chapter spoke of how he is surrounded by deaths and injuries suffered by IDF soldiers every time he opens the newspaper. Publicity is given to each terrorist attack and there is regular coverage of exchanges of violence at the checkpoints and in the occupied territories. Partly for these reasons, Niv’s idea of a “meaningful service” was one where he returns home with all of his limbs intact. Like Tom, he felt going to the army was what you had to do, and wanted to make it as comfortable as possible for himself. Niv was a dog lover, and so with the help of his father who was a professional soldier in the IDF, hoped that he would be stationed with the dog unit that helps patrol borders and army base perimeter fences. Another aspect he considered was the number of hours he might have to work. He was committed to doing his duty but did not want to be woken up at all hours to be called to an operation in Gaza as frequently happened to his father who was an officer in the *Shayetet*, the naval commando unit.

In the case of Rachel, Tom, and Niv, having the military preparation classes gives these students greater access to information that will allow them to make better use



of their time in compulsory service. They are willing to negotiate the military experience for their own benefit. The IDF is perceived as something that can be bargained with and as with contracts, “for people to bargain out their relationship with each other it must begin with a broadly shared recognition that the situation they are placed in is one in which negotiation is appropriate, possible, or necessary” (Rosen 1984: 181). The format of the army preparation classes in Irony Aleph and Levinson indicates that the IDF recognises the need to adapt to the requirements of its subjects and this is in response to a changing relationship between the citizen soldier dynamic. In the early years of Israeli statehood the IDF tried to promote itself as “the right hand of the civilian” performing an almost pastoral function (cited in Ben-Eliezer 1995; 272). At the same time it was and continues to be a ticket for civil and social freedom as well as national membership. Consequently whatever “bargaining” is done with the IDF continues to be heavily favoured on the side of the IDF so long as the capital it offers continues to carry weight in Israeli society. The IDF is the strongly favoured party in the negotiation, particularly as to not agree to its terms potentially means imprisonment as well as the infringement of one’s social mobility.

In light of such negotiations, motivations behind military service reveal a specific context in which we can observe the multifariousness of ethical considerations. Going to the army combines a prescriptive element with desires for self betterment and “freedom”. Added to this is the role of family, which will be examined in the next section. Laidlaw (2002) encourages anthropologists to look at such specific contexts to observe deliberations of human freedom that reveal the complexity of ethical choices. Rhoda Kanaaneh’s (2003) ethnography on Palestinian soldiers in the IDF provided an intricate ethical setting in which to do this. Her Palestinian informants reveal that their motivations to serve in the IDF are a combination of feelings of moral responsibility to protect other Palestinians and a desire to attain equality (Kanaaneh 2003: 14). In regard to the latter, Palestinian soldiers she interviewed believed that doing military service would provide the social capital to legitimise protests against the state (Kanaaneh 2003: 15). Such a sentiment was echoed by Jewish refuseniks who felt that having served in the IDF lent them the authority to speak out against its abuses. In both cases it indicates the centrality of

military service in terms of gaining full citizenship and being regarded as a “full” member of Israeli society. Kanaaneh’s informants argue that doing military service in the IDF was a means of “upgrading” their citizenship, granting them access to jobs, state land, educational subsidies, and low-interest loans (2003: 14). The benefits of having served in the IDF and of being on the reserves list currently include having priority in the Israel Lands Administration which bids on land where one can build homes. Reservists also receive reductions from the Transportation Ministry, as well as priority in civil service appointments. To get a student or housing loan, one also requires a military service number. Unlike orthodox Jews who are exempt from the army, Palestinian Israelis cannot apply for such a number without carrying out military service. In day to day life it is not uncommon to see advertisements for job vacancies that stipulate the position is open only to candidates “after military service”, essentially excluding Palestinian Israelis from applying. Such indirect discrimination associated with military service also extended as far as Haifa University’s student residency policy where a primary condition for being eligible for residence in the student dorms was that one had performed military or national service. In October 2005 a number of the students and Adalah, the Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, filed a petition with the Haifa District Court on behalf of three Arab students who claimed to be the victims of racial discrimination (Traubman 2005). In light of this, Palestinian soldiers in the IDF used military service as a means of attaining certain freedoms despite creating conflicted loyalties to the Palestinian community from whom they faced accusations of treachery.

Such “embattled identities” reveal the complexities of freedom. Foucault postulates that the ethical subject makes his or her choices within an historically contextualised system of power relations. In the context of Israeli society the IDF and working within Israeli militarism is needed to attain individual “freedom”. As Foucault explains in his “techniques of the self” freedom can still exist in such a context as he believes it is located in the individual’s ability to choose the kind of self he or she wishes to be. In their projects of self-betterment, both Jewish Israeli teens and Palestinian recruits in the IDF exercise their ethical freedom within a context of discursive militarism.

*A Debt to Family: De-abstracting Kinship and its Motivatory Implications for Participatory Citizenship*

Idealised notions of civil society emphasise the capacity for civility amongst citizens and the desire for mutual association that will help develop a healthy public sphere of democratic participation and civic mindedness (Habermas 1998; Verba et al 1995). The vagueness of why people would want to contribute to this abstract 'society' is partly understood in an Israeli context through looking at the familial motivations behind doing military service. Military service and civic participation in this instance is promoted in Israel as "paying one's debt to society". Jewish Israeli youth commonly highlighted a feeling of responsibility to family and friends as key in motivating their participation in the IDF that overrode feelings of cynicism towards it. In terms of understanding Israeli citizenship the implications of this are that neither ethnic nor civic mindedness are alone responsible for a sense of citizenship or national membership for Israelis. In a previous chapter I discussed the importance of *jus sanguinis* in denoting citizenship rights in Israel and how common ethnicity formed the basis of Jewish nationhood. Blood ties and common ancestry have been used in nationalist projects to make the nation "natural", and give it a sense of organic continuity (Brubaker 1996; Joseph 1999). In Israel this biological kinship has been institutionalised, and legalistically delineates those who are included or excluded from the nation. As an important component of how Israelis define their Israeliness, military service shows how this ethnic connectedness alone is not enough to "be" Israeli - one has to "do" it as well. The fact that Israelis do the army because of kin reveals that a sense of citizenship is not only created through symbolic kinship but through actual bonds of kinship.

In Suad Joseph's examination of kinship in Lebanon she argues that kinship structures have produced legal statuses and societal forms, with kinship at the heart of the Lebanese constitution (1999: 296). Joseph (1999) argues that kinship saturates both the public political and economic sphere as well as being a primary means by which individuals identify themselves. Joseph states that "persons are defined and define themselves in terms of specific kin relationalities" (1999: 299). Just as kinship is used to situate oneself in relation to other citizens in Lebanon, it is equally productive in Israel in terms of providing Israelis with a reason to serve in

the army and identify themselves nationally through a commonly shared experience. As we will see, the IDF promotes a sense of generational continuity in some of its preparation classes. It attempts to foster Jewish national citizenship through a sense of obligation to family and those who have served before. Actual familial and friendship networks are a more pertinent influence on individuals' sense of national responsibility than discourses emanating from state apparatuses.

During the period of my fieldwork the IDF felt that motivation could be enhanced by the potential resonance of reiterating how Jewish Israeli youth of today belong to a national heritage whose future lies in their hands. In line with Ilan Hariri's first goal of the "New Generation" program where he states that in the 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, "students need an understanding in the idea of an army of the people in a land that's Jewish and democratic", in January 2006 Irony Aleph were sent a veteran paratrooper called Gadi Moran. Although now professionally a mathematician at Haifa University, he also belonged to an organisation of veterans that were called upon by the IDF to give talks in schools. The teacher of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade class he was assigned to was not sure of the purpose of Gadi's visit but the homeroom teacher Tsurit informed me it was to increase motivation. They had not previously had such a senior officer visit this class. Gadi's 45 minute presentation was intended to convey to these 15 and 16 year old male and female students that by carrying out military service they were part of a "great history" and a "well trodden path". Reinforcing their connection to this heritage was the main theme of his talk. He discussed an IDF operation he was part of in Suez in 1956 but one of the main focuses of his talk was the IDF officer Yair Peled. Peled was shot dead by a group of Bedouins in 1959, the result of which was that Israel expelled a number of Bedouin tribes to Egypt and Jordan. His history is remembered a number of times on Israeli weblogs in relation to evidence of a history of terrorist attacks on the Jewish people. The sacrifice Peled made was linked to the continuing sacrifice young IDF soldiers make for their country. In the case of Yair Peled, Gadi enthusiastically recounted Peled's contribution to the country, his building of roads in the Negev desert, and involvement in Jewish youth groups such as *Noar Ha-oved* that exists today. As an Ashkenazi kibbutznik, Peled also symbolised the idealised image of the Israeli warrior.

The only question Gadi received at the end of the talk was from a boy who wanted to know if he could identify a soldier's beret he had recently acquired. The class had listened intently but upon hearing the bell most of the pupils rapidly left the classroom, making it difficult to get any immediate feedback from them. Speaking to some of these students at a later time, this "well trodden path" resonated more directly in relation to the experiences of their friends and family who had given their service to Israel. They were not particularly inspired by tales of pioneering youth groups who many teens now associated with "*frikhim*" (geeks) and "brainwashing". Their allegiance to the state was more through individual responsibilities to friendship and family networks. The legacy of Yair Peled added some context of historical continuity. The evocation of these factors was an important motivator and a reason to simply "get on" with military service.

I was able to speak in more detail about these issues with some of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students from Irony Aleph. In one of my first meetings with the pupils in August 2005, Tzurit the homeroom teacher felt I would find it easiest to interact with those students who were the most competent at English. I was therefore given a group of students in the top streamed English class. In future sessions I intentionally interacted with a cross section of pupils for fear of being given access to only the best students, although this did not necessarily correspond to army motivation. This initial session with a mixture of around 30 male and female students was aimed at getting a first impression of what sort of issues concerned these teens regarding military service, including what it meant not to do it. I also hoped to get some willing volunteers with whom I could do some more in depth interviews. One of these volunteers was Baruch who I got to know better over the course of the year during my weekly visits to the school. However, most of our chatting was done over MSN messenger on the computer. He appreciated the English practice and the novelty of talking to someone from England. Through Baruch I also got to know his classmate and friend Ofir; both became an important source of information with regard to military service. Not only did I learn about their experiences but also the concerns of their girlfriends. For example the difficulties of long periods of time apart once they are all recruited, and the lack of opportunities for girls. Baruch especially, poured out his relationship angst on me

but was quite proud of the fact that his girlfriend was a year older and already serving in the IDF working as a receptionist in a military hospital.

As their *manila* approached (that part of the recruitment process when they have to state their unit preferences) I spoke with Baruch and Ofir whilst they were making the most of their Passover school holiday time down by the beach. Both reiterated the importance of “paying their debt” through military service. Baruch hoped to be in the navy and Ofir in the air force. The importance of defending their family made serving in the army a meaningful experience and one that they owed to their parents;

Baruch: When my father was in the army he participated in some wars you know, so it will be different for me...He actually fought for the country and risked his life. In my service I don't see me fighting you know, and shooting missiles at Arab countries or something like that, because the situation is more relaxed than before. Because before we were a new country, and everybody was mad at us. But he protected us and now I need to do the same. I despise people that just don't do nothing, you know, don't serve the army, don't do *shnat sherut* (year of voluntary service), don't do all the other stuff that in some way contributes to the country. If you do nothing it's like using the country, you need to give something back.

**AG: Do you agree with that Ofir?**

Ofir: Yes, 100%. You have to do something otherwise you take advantage of the country. Why should I protect you when you do nothing?

This feeling of collective responsibility was strongly driven by family histories. Baruch and Ofir, along with other classmates claimed how angry their parents would be if they refused to perform their military service, giving similar reasons to those articulated by Baruch. With brothers and sisters also doing their time in the IDF, this added further peer pressure. For these reasons, along with the punitive measures that may be suffered, it made for a much more comfortable future life to endure military service. The skills acquired may also facilitate a rewarding civilian career, like Baruch's hope of using his skippering skills to charter yachts.

In terms of familial pressure, 11<sup>th</sup> grade student Tamar felt this from grandparents, parents, and siblings;

Tamar: When I was younger I really wanted to go to the intelligence unit, that always seemed nice, to go there. But really after my brother joined the navy, and he serves in a base really close to home, and I don't know, it just seemed fun to go to the navy. I don't know, I

got some... He talks about it so much, or he used to talk about it so much, so I got a really good impression about the navy, so... My sister however, she wants me to go to the air force because she was on the land forces, because she was in the land forces, my brother's in the navy and...

**AG: Now you need someone in the air...**

Tamar: Yes, she thinks it's only right that I should go to the air force.

**AG: Would you consider it or...?**

Tamar: Yes, I would. There's actually, errr, there's a lot of pressure about what I should do in the army anyway because my father also wants me to go to study, so you have a degree that is paid for by the army, and then you go and serve in what you've learnt. So if I'd go and study medicine then I'd be a doctor in the army. So, I don't know, a lot of options are open to me right now and we'll just see how it goes.

**AG: So why is the army so important? I mean it seems very important in the family.**

**Why? Is it from your mother's side as well or mainly from your father?**

Tamar: Yes, also from my mother because my grandfather fought in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in France and she, like, when you're in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade you have to write a project about your roots. And when I wrote his story, it really impressed me. So, he also fought in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and he also came and fought in Israel in the British army. So, it seems like, even when I go to my grandmother's house in Rishon, there are so many photos of my uncles in uniforms and all the nice diplomas for being an excellent soldier and stuff. It's always been part of our family... I don't know it's also when you live in a country like Israel. It's very important to have an army.

Tamar's family history was particularly permeated by military participation that evidently inflects on her approach to upcoming service in the IDF. Talks by veterans such as Gadi Moran tap into a legacy many of the students are familiar with and indeed directly exposed to. Those teens whose families had not previously participated in the IDF, such as many of the Russian speaking pupils, still articulated a sense of obligation towards siblings and classmates who had or intended to serve. As we saw in the first chapter, the direct involvement of kin created a tangible feeling of nationhood through mutual participation and shared history through the institution of the IDF. Kinship in this instance de-abstracts that expression of "paying one's debt" to society, with part of the motivation to serve for these teens being roused by the participation of kin and friends. As with those religious students who took part in the protests against the Disengagement, civic contribution is greatly driven by constructing that "society" to which one is contributing in terms of known kin.



Figure 17: New recruits being waved off by family and friends at Tel HaShomer Recruitment Base.

### **A Shared Collective Sense in Defence of the IDF**

In February 2005 the IDF appointed former Israeli Air Force commander Dan Halutz as Chief of Staff. The choice of Halutz triggered a public debate on his moral suitability for the role. This was in reference to a bombing operation he authorised in Gaza on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2002 that killed senior Hamas commander Salah Shahade along with his family and other civilians. Media attention focused on the proportionality of such a strike, questioning the necessity to use a one ton bomb to carry out the assassination of a single target. Halutz's moral sensitivity was called in to question when upon being asked how it made him or any pilot feel to drop a bomb he is quoted as retorting that all he felt was "a light bump to the plane as a result of the bomb's release. A second later it's gone, and that's all" (Levy-Barzilai 2002; see also Harel 2005). This detached response resulted in the organisation *Yesh Gvul* petitioning the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice to prevent even his prior appointment as Deputy Chief Of Staff in July 2004.



When the debate resurfaced in 2005 with Halutz's promotion to Chief of Staff, I wanted to address the issue with some of the students in Irony Aleph. As they neared conscription, how did they feel about such ethical issues? Most of the students would not be serving in a unit that would place them in a situation that provoked such moral consternation but their opinions on how the IDF handled such matters was discussed quite defensively. When questioned about incidents involving the deaths of innocent civilians such as with the Gaza bombing they were critical of this ever happening gratuitously but remained defensive of the security reasons that made such operations necessary. In the open discussion I had with the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, students claimed that "the army only does what it has to do" and that the nature of the current conflict which included guerrilla tactics and urban operations made the loss of life a sad inevitability.

In these initial discussions with the students, there was a feeling of solidarity behind often effusive praise and defence of the IDF. In these early encounters, despite the cynicism I would come to discover they had for military service, there was a repeated showing of togetherness for this the most national of institutions. As an outsider, my questioning of the IDF's activities was viewed as allied to what they judged as unfair and misinformed foreign criticisms of the Israeli State in relation to its operations against Israel's enemies. A member of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade class I had the same discussion with claimed;

Newspapers umm *magzimim* (exaggerate). They make out like we don't care, it's not good. We are doing what we need to do to protect ourselves and it's, and... you see, there is... there are times that soldiers don't do right, and doing things that, like murder, you know? It's not alright, it's very not alright, they need to go to jail but it's like umm, not in other places, in most of the places they are fine. And the legacy of the army, the idea of the army, is not to kill Arabs, just because they're Arabs. You know? In my brother's base, they don't do things like that.

The legacy of the IDF that this student refers to echoes IDF values of "purity of arms" which states that its soldiers will never use weapons against non combatants. Using such vocabularies is an example of "personal nationalism" where individuals will choose which discourses or narratives to relate to in order to express a personal feeling of nationalist sentiment (Cohen 1996). The frequent expression by Israeli youth of this feeling of continual censure against Israel defined them collectively.

In such circumstances the IDF remained an “army of the people”. It was a symbol of the “us and them” mentality that emanated in these classroom discussions. The following discussion that ensued whilst in Baruch and Ofir’s class displays the scepticism they had towards the foreign media;

**AG: What do you feel about the media coverage the army gets? In for instance England where I come from?**

Girl 1: They don’t understand us. I work in a Jewish organisation and they deal with American press. I discovered that the press, CNN the big network, they put stories that aren’t accurate...

Boy 3: You can see that the stories are not the same. Like they say a soldier killed a person, a boy, an innocent. And the Israeli press say that the boy threw a stone and all that. Everyone presents a different story.

Boy 4: It’s not only if it’s true or not. They mostly put only the pictures of who soldiers shoot but if there’s a bomb attack they don’t show it. If a soldier shoots accidentally...

Boy 5: Accidentally? Right ha ha ha I mean - keilul! (as if!)  
(everybody is laughing)

Boy 4: We don’t show bodies but they show everything...

Boy 2: It’s propaganda...

Boy 3: We have more morals.

Boy 4: The Arabs use the bodies as a weapon, and in Israel they ask for permission to show it... and we show all sides of the stories.

Boy 3: Are you working with Arab kids?

I understood this final question from Boy 3 as a means of sussing me out as to which side I belong. They knew I was Jewish - it was the first question they asked me. They now hoped I would represent their side of the story, their experiences of the Arab-Israeli conflict, one that was not like the foreign media coverage they had encountered. In this instance, “knowing” what it was to be Israeli referred particularly to being able to recognise the “true” nature of the conflict, and a means of defining themselves nationally vis-a-vis the Arab other. Not only is military service a way of ‘knowing’ what it is to be Israeli, but defending its integrity is also an important means of defining themselves nationally in relation to foreign attitudes and as a means of excluding others when it comes to defining national membership.

National security was used as a justification for the use of force employed by the IDF, and the perceived precariousness of this security was a re-occurring reason

that was given for continued compulsory conscription. Although motivation to serve in the IDF was dropping, individuals continued to highlight the importance of having military service. Kimmerling has suggested that Israeli militarism has resulted in a cognitive security orientation amongst its citizens, resulting in what he refers to as “civilian militarism” (1993: 206). Concerns over security are judged as a result of militarism becoming universally shared through the citizen-soldier dynamic. This security orientation added to the ‘siege’ mentality reflected in their media scepticism. Teens like Baruch felt the army was vital:

Because our environment, it’s more hostile. We’re surrounded by Arab countries that are not very fond of us. I’m sure if they had the chance they would all destroy us. They would do so if they had the chance.

His classmate Niv also echoed these sentiments when it came to the issue of soldiers commonly seen walking around with their rifles:

In our country it is necessary to have weapons because you need to defend yourself. I mean people go and bomb our buses and stuff like that, you need to defend yourself.

These were not the ultimate motivators for Baruch or Niv to serve in the army but the IDF was still valued for its contribution to the Jewish national collective and subsequently embraced in this way. So long as this security orientation remains, the faith put in to the IDF will continue, and the value of having representatives of it in schools will remain unchallenged. With the army experience being defined in part by the involvement of friends and kin, the resonance of security, and potential existential threats is very pertinent as it could mean that these associates could directly suffer as a result. Because of the large network of participation in the IDF, the majority of students knew someone who had been wounded or killed in service to the IDF.

Jewish Israeli teens’ claims of having a truer understanding of the predicament of the IDF and Israel’s security situation surfaces as an important projection of national identification on their part. The Israeli case allows us to observe a bottom-up display of nationalism, where national subjectivity is evoked through expressions of ‘insider’ knowledge and shared understandings of the protective role the IDF plays. Jean-Klein’s (2001) description of self-nationalisation amongst

Palestinians is an important evocation of nationhood where it is not yet fully institutionalised in the form of an established State. The lack of governing coherence and total control over state apparatuses that is a result both of the Israeli occupation and divided authority between Fatah and Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively, has meant there has not been the same stable state frameworks in place to disseminate a nationalist culture in the way Israel has (Swedenberg 1991: 158, 166). In Israel, the State is especially visible through a strong institutional presence, particularly in the form of the IDF, yet “self-nationalisation” through “knowing” and “doing” the army continues to be important for the reiteration of Israeli nationhood. The result of institutional pervasiveness of the IDF has meant that Israeli militarism is impossible to avoid for Jewish Israeli teens. The following section will show the implications of this.

### **Conscientious Soldiering in Waldorf Harduf School and the continued reproduction of Israeli militarism**

Although out of all the schools this has got a far more sort of humanist, reflective, umm, you know a conscience, education with a conscience about the army, about the Arabs, about the country...Like it's far more open to being critical of the actions of the army, about the country, but also umm it's like we see the positive sides of it but. Yeah, out of all the schools the guys in Harduf really, really want to do the army but want to do it properly, do it really well.

This was a claim made by Tar, a student in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade who was keen on getting in to a tough combat unit. He was motivated by the challenge and the fact he was surrounded by classmates who were also keen on getting in to good units. Tar presents the high level of motivation amongst Harduf student to perform military service as in contradiction with the critique of Israeli militarism that education in the school also explores. The fact that he highlights this is an indication of how the students in Waldorf Harduf felt their schooling was somewhat different from the mainstream curriculum of state high schools. By the time I first visited the school in Harduf I had already experienced mainstream state education in Haifa and witnessed some of the army preparation classes and officer talks taking place in Irony Aleph. Dvora, the Principal of Waldorf Harduf emphasised how the school and its anthroposophic philosophy strived to keep such concerns of the State out of

the educational sphere. One of the most important elements of this was to keep the school a completely “demilitarised zone”.

Their *ezrahut* (citizenship) classes discussed Baruch Kimmerling’s theories of “civil militarism” and the problematic qualities of a Jewish democracy. The style of army preparation classes they received from their drama and philosophy teacher Yaakov was very different from the IDF run army education in Irony Aleph and Levinson. Yaakov’s previous experience as a soldier in the prestigious combat unit Sayeret Matkal gave him both experience and the legitimacy to discuss some of the ethical, social, and physical problems one might face during military service. He emphasised that it was important to do military service with a “conscience” and to look to it as an opportunity for self-fulfilment. He claimed that only through choosing to do military service could you be mindful enough to act morally once in its ranks. Those who disagreed with military service were encouraged to perform national service and contribute to the community in other ways. There were only a handful of students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade who planned to refuse military service outright on ideological grounds. They were neither encouraged nor disapproved of. The lessons I attended dealt with potential moral dilemmas concerning authority and combat, where one must take responsibility for one’s actions. However, after ten classes dealing with more philosophical questions as to how to carry out a moral service, popular demand from the students called for more practical elements of military preparation to be discussed. Consequently the course eventually included a visit from officers of the IDF educational corps. They were there to run through the stages of recruitment and the application process.

Students from the Rudolph Steiner School on Kibbutz Harduf highlighted the inevitability of engaging with Israeli militarism as a teenager growing up in Israel. They were mindful and critical of its perpetuation of a “security orientation” and the ethno-republican principles that continued to marginalise sectors of Israeli society. At the same time they felt the need to engage with Israeli militarism for utilitarian reasons but also because they embraced military service as a means of knowing and doing Israeliness in the same way that those students we encountered earlier revealed. The motivations behind doing military service in Harduf reveal how Israeli militarism is susceptible to scrutiny and manipulation by individuals as

and when it is relevant to their lives. They exemplify the multiple ways individuals will pursue a variety of interests in a way that is not ambiguous. The fact that the social and state structures through which they live their lives are saturated with the military means Israeli militarism is ultimately reproduced despite their mindful and often cynical approach towards it.

Although students in Harduf are not wholly subsumed by Israeli militarism, and they are encouraged to be “soldiers with a conscience”, students’ own desires to work within the structures of the state means the continuation of the military ethos that they attempt to refashion. Willis (1980) comes to a similar conclusion when working with working class youth in an English state school. Their rejection of middle class ideology through an embrace of manual labour, drinking, and other perceived displays of masculinity served only to reinforce their status and class position. In Willis’ school their social status is re-affirmed by a “top-down” confirmation of their vocational potential which “outcomes into pervasive naturalism” (1980: 162). In Harduf the education attempts to de-stabilise the naturalisation of Israeli militarism from the “top-down”. But like the students, the school too has to work within structures of the state.

Willis’ work is perhaps more analogous to the relationship between Israeli students and the official army preparation classes of Irony Aleph and Levinson high school. Amongst these pupils many were highly cynical towards military service in terms of it being a “waste of time” where as stated previously, many females in particular continued to see it as an opportunity simply for making lots of coffee. My cousin Rya (sister of Boas) had left the army over a decade ago and she continued to lament the fatuousness of military service. Her description of having to occasionally press a button to open a gate resembled a script from some absurdist drama. The comically inane function she performed that was considered nothing more than a waste of time was akin to Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*. Despite such cynical attitudes towards military service there was a sense that it had to be performed and state high schools confirmed the importance of the military framework. Despite greater flexibility in terms of “bargaining” with the students, the aim continued to be the reproduction of state ideologies through the performance of military service. Israeli state institutions essentially force one to

participate in military service and as a result students require knowledge of how to do so effectively. Consequently the IDF facilitates the means of doing so. The students at Harduf and the other schools I worked in are learning how to be soldiers. The horizons of possibility as an Israeli citizen continue to be framed in terms of having performed military or national service.

The interaction between values inculcated by the military in schools and manipulation of the military experience by pupils exposes a conscious negotiation between forces of the state and individual agency. Maurer's (2000) idea of the state as a machine that is universally useful and capable of being used by people is helpful in this respect. Israeli youth are mindful of the collectivist and nationalist values that are promoted by the IDF and digest them in terms of legitimising its role in society. At the same time it is an apparatus which they can use to fulfil their own ambition and feel part of a national experience. This latter point refers to the fact that family and peers will have been through the military experience, and also how this has therefore contributed to the saturation of the military in to the social experiences of Israelis, where it inspires slang, humour, and even the structuring of corporate strategies. The army provides the very vocabulary of what Brubaker (1996) calls "nationness" as it manifests a sense of community. As an experience of nationness, the military and militarism in Israeli schools animated students as potent carriers of both nation and state. Sasson-Levy suggests that because of the lack of faith and distrust many females have in the IDF because of their discriminatory treatment, it does not necessarily enhance a sense of national belonging (2007: 502). However, negative or not it continues to be an experience around which they and the majority of Jewish Israelis construct their national subjectivity.

## 6. Contours of Belonging and Acts of “Betrayal”

The previous chapter established how military service continues to be an experience around which Jewish Israeli teens construct their national subjectivity. Despite cases of extreme cynicism towards the military experience and the fact that many choose to do it for individual reasons, Israeli militarism and its associated civic-republican and ethno-national discourses continue to be reproduced. By looking at attitudes towards those who refuse to serve in the military one can see how civic-republicanism and ethno-nationalism constitute some of the moral boundaries of national belonging in Israel. Military service is an essential component of showing one’s commitment to the state, and the condemnation of those who do not perform it reveals how both the state and Jewish Israelis still regard it as an avenue of membership. By focusing on those who do not serve in the army, which includes legitimate exemptions for Arab Israelis and the *Haredim* (ultra-orthodox Jews), and rightwing and leftwing conscientious objectors, one can see the implications of Jewish democracy in terms of how it scales Israeli citizens as “insiders” or “outsiders”. The lack of expectation on Palestinian Israelis to serve, from both the state and Jewish Israeli teens, is an indication of their marginal status. This is contrasted with attitudes towards leftwing conscientious objectors who are at times treated like traitors, and the *Haredim* who are criticised for being “freeloaders” by certain teens. It is an indication of how these latter two groups are included in the Jewish ethno-national framework. For as will be discussed, in the case of leftwing conscientious objectors, to be a “traitor” one must indeed first belong. I begin this chapter with a description of an encounter I had with a group of Jewish Israeli teens who chose to challenge the ethno-republican contours of belonging by poignantly burning their draft cards in front of an IDF induction centre. The Israeli identity this “betrays” is contrasted with those identificatory aspects challenged by religious refusal to serve during the Disengagement.

It is the middle of July 2005 and the schools are on their summer break, but at 8.15am instead of having a lie-in or catching the surf on the beaches of Haifa many of the students who I have been working with in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade are queuing up outside the IDF’s offices in Tel Hashomer waiting to be enlisted. They are joined



by hundreds of families who have travelled to the base on the outskirts of Tel Aviv to see off their sons and daughters as they embark on their period of compulsory military service. I have come along too partly in support and partly out of interest as a few days earlier I had also received a group email invitation from the organisation *Yesh Gvul* to join in a demonstration by “The Committee for Solidarity with Imprisoned Refusers” (a temporary name for a subsidiary of *Yesh Gvul*) and other refusal groups, namely Courage to Refuse, the *Shministim* (High School Seniors), the Parent’s Forum, the Pilots’ Letter, and New Profile, declaring a continued refusal of the occupation, and to “re-raise consciousness, both about the occupation and about the young Israeli citizens who are refusing to cooperate with it and paying a heavy price”. That “heavy price” referred to the continued imprisonment of individuals refusing mandatory service in the IDF. This particular demonstration was also a show of solidarity for Shaul Morgrabi-Berger who planned to announce his refusal whilst presenting himself at the induction office, and Alex Kohn who faced a sixth term of 21 days imprisonment for continually refusing to serve in the army.



Figure 18: Members of the Shministim burning their draft cards outside Tel HaShomer IDF Recruitment Base.

Both Shaul and Alex were members of the *Shministim*, a group of high school seniors that together with around 350 of their contemporaries petitioned against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, and were not willing “to serve in an army that continued to be an occupying force” (Michal, a member of the *Shministim*). Outside the gates of Tel Ha-shomer they were supported by fellow *Shministim* and other friends carrying placards stating “contributing to society, refusing the occupation!” and “explore your conscience, don’t subjugate!”. Some members were dressed in army uniforms and staged a parody of the military oath of allegiance ceremony whilst also burning their conscription orders. Amongst chants in support of Shaul and Alex, there were also shouts of, “hell no, we won’t go!” that mimicked conscientious objectors in the United States during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s.

Shaul and Alex were found guilty of “selective refusal” in a military court and sentenced to 21 days in prison. The charge of “selective refusal” is differentiated from “conscientious objection” by the IDF. A committee of “conscience experts” decides whether their objection to military service is based on ‘true’ beliefs such as pacifism or religious devotion as opposed to merely an act of subversion. The recognition and legitimacy of specific “consciences” as decided by the state and as judged by teens as they condemned or supported acts of military refusal is indicative of various contours of belonging in Israel. The varying degrees of legitimacy granted to the different forms of military refusal is influenced by the ways in which it is seen to either challenge or conform to the moral boundaries set out by civic-republicanism and ethno-nationalism. I will be prising apart such boundaries through the discussion of different refusal groups and the reactions to them.

The politics of conscience became further complicated in the months of July and August 2005 when rightwing religious soldiers began to refuse eviction orders up to and during the Disengagement. As a result, Shaul and Alex were joined in military prison by the likes of Corporal Avi Bieber a 20 year old religious soldier from the Combat Engineer Corps. He was sentenced to 28 days in prison for refusing to carry out an eviction order, and a further 28 days for insulting and threatening a commanding officer. In an interview with Haaretz magazine Bieber explained the

situation became “crazy” in the Jewish settlement of Shirat Hayam in Gush Katif (the Jewish settlement bloc in Gaza) as IDF bulldozers demolished houses, and settlers were being restrained (Ahronovitz 2005). Bieber refused to take part and claimed that he only shouted at his brigade commander as a result of feeling that he was being “pushed in to a corner” (Ahronovitz 2005).

The term “Refusenik”, although originally used to describe those Soviet Jews who had been denied the right to emigrate, had been co-opted by leftwing conscientious objectors to describe their individual protest. It too was also used by these religious refusers, or refuseniks. They defended their actions on grounds of being true to their “Jewish conscience” and thus were not prepared to use force against fellow Jews. Many also claimed the land they were uprooting these settlers from was God given and therefore its fate was not up to a secular Government. Their position gained further legitimacy through the backing of a number of spiritual leaders encouraging soldiers to refuse eviction orders. Figures such as Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi and spiritual leader of the national religious community, fervently denounced Sharon’s Disengagement policy. Bieber, the first religious refusenik, became quite a pin-up and symbol of the anti-Disengagement movement. Most soldiers who felt the same way as Bieber were stationed elsewhere to avoid similar situations; the IDF did not wish to alienate or challenge the loyalty of a number of its troops, particularly with an increasing amount of national religious youth filling combat units.

While the IDF was imprisoning the likes of Shaul, Alex, and Avi for evading military service and refusing orders, figures in 2001 indicated that around 25% of eligible men were not being conscripted and around 20% were being discharged before completion of their service (Peri 2001: 125). This together with the increasing number of medical exemptions suggested the IDF was taking a more flexible approach to conscription, and it was generally felt amongst the teens I worked with that if you wanted to get out of military service you could. At the same time the IDF also provides mandatory conscription exemptions to the Palestinian Israeli population and also in practice to the *Haredi* community.

The acts of the *Shministim* and the religious refuseniks of the Disengagement were treated by the IDF as public acts of subversion in contrast to the acceptance of draft avoidance on the part of Palestinians and the *Haredim*. Israel, like many other states does not mind its citizens holding disloyal beliefs but they must act ‘as if’ they believe in the regime (Wedeen 1999). Burning draft cards and refusing orders represented an undermining of the IDF, and hence the state itself owing to the central role the IDF has played in Israeli nation building. As Peri argues, in the Israeli case, “dissociation from the army means dissociation from the state, the embodiment of the very collective that continues to be threatened by external military forces” (1993: 56). Where the state ideally expects its citizens to reproduce the values of the nation, acts are considered subversive when they are seen to betray a particular code of belonging.

What is judged as ‘betrayal’ illuminates some of the moral boundaries that make up the collective. The generally negative public treatment of leftwing refuseniks compared to the more sympathetic treatment of religious refuseniks during the Disengagement illuminated the different loyalties that construct a national “we” - that mixture of shared symbols, discourses, and experiences that produce a sense of togetherness and shared intimacy (Turnaturi 2007; Herzfeld 1997). Jewish Israeli teens condemned their compatriots for draft avoidance or objection because they felt such acts transgressed the contours of belonging derived from these aspects of national identity. Condemnation differed according to the particular group of youth I was working with. National religious youth found themselves caught between their republican and Jewish ethno-national loyalties, teens in Harduf were torn between the civic virtue they still derived from military service and their desire to recognise acts of “conscience”. Students from Irony Aleph, although the least motivated to serve, were the most critical of conscientious objectors because of the perceived danger they believed it would mean to Israel’s security. A critique that was common amongst all groups was however, the belief that it was simply not fair that these fellow citizens should “get away” with not doing “their bit” and making a sacrifice for the nation. This was not necessarily ideological but a self-interested criticism derived from the fact they were willing to give up a part of their life, and out of fairness everyone should be made to.

For any act to be considered one of betrayal is indicative of a prior belonging. Despite members of the *Shministim* representing a number of causes that included anti-Zionism many of the refuseniks that were associated with them like Alex and Shaul did not consider their humanist philosophy as incompatible with Zionism or military service. Likewise the religious refuseniks did not see their loyalties to Jewish nationhood as inconsistent with Israeli statehood. Both groups of refuseniks in fact felt betrayed by the government and no longer trusted it to represent them. These are some of the mixed allegiances that emerge when looking at military refusal in Israel. They not only challenge the collective identity of the state but also those contours of belonging that Israeli teens identify as part of being Israeli. Military service in particular is an integral part of knowing and doing Israeliness despite the apparent fall in motivation to be conscripted. This chapter will show how both the Israeli state and Jewish Israeli youth delineate levels of inclusion within the Israeli collective through critiques of refusal. The differing approaches to leftwing and religious refusal, and also “gray” areas of refusal where draft avoidance is more murky, provides further indication of how Israeli society continues to reproduce ethnic and republican forms of nationalism whilst also accommodating greater individualism and processes of liberalisation. Doing military service still provides a moral sense of belonging that motivates those teens who do it to condemn those who do not. From the perspective of the refuseniks who have served, it also legitimises their protests against the activities of the IDF and the state.

### **Regulating Obedience and Belonging: Treacherous Acts versus Treacherous Thoughts**

As well as accommodating more medical excuses, the military exemptions granted to Palestinian Israelis and the *Haredim* compared with the treatment of leftist and rightist refuseniks reflect the different ways in which the state regulates obedience and loyalty. The Israeli state demands that its citizens to behave loyally in public, and visible acts of rebellion displayed by both sets of refuseniks were unacceptable. As opposed to merely subversive thoughts these are concrete acts which the state punishes as a means of reigning in the loyalty of its citizens. Although the refuseniks present their public act of not serving as a matter of conscience, the IDF

does not consider it as such. “Conscience” is an internal form of politics, an objective set of moral rules to which the individual abides. It is framed as that which is externally “un-judgeable”, a position that is morally independent and supersedes external considerations. Individuals who claim to act on their conscience often present such actions as not a matter of choice but a course of unavoidable internal moral conviction. Talal Asad (1983) argues that such internal conviction is historically traceable when looking at the change in medieval Christian religious devotion. Asad shows how the church moved away from relying on intellectual and social discipline to an emphasis on the internal convictions of its followers (1983: 39). This meant less emphasis needed to be placed on the importance of ritual practice. As such, religious allegiance became more a matter of faith and conscience, with practice a means of re-affirming one’s belief. Comparatively, Israeli refuseniks are acting on their internal beliefs/conscience, which in their mind means objecting to military service. In this case such conscientious objection, which requires obedience to one’s internal convictions, conflicts with one’s loyalty to the nation. It is when this becomes a seemingly public act of betrayal that it is punished by law and deemed an act of “treachery”. Kelly and Thiranagama’s (2009 in press) work on treachery deals with this issue of “internal subversion” and makes the distinction between “treasonous acts” and “treasonous beliefs”. The former in this case is the act of military refusal which is only specifically condemned when conjoined with the *public* expression of beliefs that are seen to conflict with the regime. Because of the seeming moral objectivity of claiming to act in the name of one’s “conscience” the IDF does not associate refusal with this but reduces the internal politics of such objectors to subversive thoughts. Where the practice of military avoidance is deemed by individuals as an act of “conscience”, it becomes a legitimate act. This is indicated through the articulations of individuals we will encounter in this chapter.

In Israel it is not an immediate “betrayal” of the nation to avoid military service. As mentioned, the government does grant deferrals to certain individuals and groups. How this is decided is indicative of their status and belonging within Israeli society. Footballers and celebrities are frequently afforded more lenient spells in the IDF or given exemptions altogether because of the interruption it

would mean to their careers. The IDF states that because of their “national contribution” to the state of Israel through their sporting or musical excellence such celebrities are often afforded cushier jobs within the IDF if they do serve (Hazan 2006). The issue of contribution has great social consequences in terms of how these celebrities are received by the public. Although the IDF grants official acceptance of their deferrals, young Israelis often react negatively to individual celebrities who avoid conscription. This can have a negative effect on their reputation and careers. By and large Israeli teens were highly critical of celebrity peers who were seen to shirk their responsibilities to the nation and “not doing their bit”. When I was in Israel in 2005 Roni “superstar” Duani (“superstar” was the title of her first hit) an Israeli teen pop idol received a bout of bad press for allegedly getting preferential treatment in her army unit (Levinson and Weiss 2005). Even though she had been drafted, her fellow recruits complained that she was allowed to shower alone and avoid kitchen and guard duties (Levinson and Weiss 2005). Shai Gabso, another teen pop idol echoed the sentiments of many Israeli teenagers when he claimed that “going to the army is part of being an 18-year-old in Israel” (Hazan 2006). The strength of this sentiment and the potentially negative backlash for avoiding this part of the Israeli experience acted as a form of social regulation that meant many celebrity teens chose to be drafted. Whereas these pop icons would receive a punishment of bad publicity and tarnished reputations for not doing army service those with less public personas had to contend with purely bureaucratic repercussions which in themselves were quite a deterrent. My flatmate Clil was in her last year of mandatory service and I asked her if she ever considered getting out of army service;

Clil: I thought about this but this screws your life after.

**AG: Really?**

Clil: Yes, but it depends on how you get out...

**AG: So how does it screw your life?**

Clil: Because there is one way to get out because of something medical that also you can fake, and there's the other way that is I'm afraid of the army, I can't sleep at night here, I'm crying and stuff like this... and then you're getting out. But then it's harder to get into a job, and I don't think it still exists, but in the past it was hard to get your (driving) license if you need to...

Although Clil was not sure of the precise legal consequences of not going to the army there was a belief that it could be detrimental to your future. With the exception of the *Haredim* one has to be a veteran to receive child support and other such social benefits (Aronoff 1999). Going to the army also opened doors in later civilian life, those with ambitions to become bankers or senior-level managers in business were often fast-tracked in to such roles on the back of a successful military career (Kalev 2006: 268; Levy 2004). Therefore the negative consequences of “dodging” the army let alone being a refusenik continued to deter the majority. In essence these regulations indicated that if one showed loyalty to the state one would be rewarded, and as Sasson-Levy has argued, it continued to define “the hierarchy of belonging to the state” (2002: 360).

As with their attitudes towards celebrity pandering, secular Jewish Israeli youth were particularly critical of the state’s facilitation of *Haredim* draft deferral. They were considered “parasites” who were taking a “free ride” on the backs of serving citizens whose taxes paid for their orthodox religious lifestyle. Their military avoidance contravened the ethno-republican sensibilities of serving Jewish Israeli teens. The *Haredim* were not meeting these teens’ expectations of commitment to the Jewish national collective. As such this was the main point of contention between the secular and ultra orthodox communities and compounded the fact that the *Haredim* also did not contribute to the state’s economic life. Figures in 1993 estimated the cost of this non-participation at one billion dollars in lost production per year (Shafir and Peled 2002: 144). The *Haredim* are in fact only exempt from the army after the age of 41 but are not called up whilst in full time *Yeshiva* education. The majority tend to continue their study until this age. The passing of the Tal Law in 2002 hoped to encourage more *Haredim* to join the workforce or the IDF by introducing a “year of decision” at 22 years of age. This however has had very little impact, with *yeshiva* draft deferrals surpassing 50,000 in 2006 (Ilan 2007).

The *Haredim* are a heterogeneous group, some accommodate Zionism others completely reject it but in general they disagree with the post-Enlightenment separation of religion and politics (Aronoff 1999: 46). Their critique of IDF service is part of their wider rejection of Zionism; this aside many justify their non-



participation on grounds that they see their contribution to society as defending the Jewish conscience of Israel through the study of *Torah*. As discussed previously the Jewish state has had to make pragmatic decisions regarding the accommodation of its religious population for the purpose of government coalitions and the maintenance of a status quo. The fact that *Haredi* objection is accommodated is an indication of Jewish inclusivity, and allows the government to avoid mass dissent. As Kimmerling has argued Israel's boundaries have been "drawn in such a way that 'dissonant' voices were excluded or rewarded with partial inclusion in exchange for conformity with hegemonic values" (1999: 66-67).

Whereas the government has taken measures to try and reinforce *Haredi* inclusivity and encourage their participation in Israeli republican life this has not been the case with the Palestinian Israeli population. Where some Jewish Israeli teens would condemn "draft dodging" of any sort by their Jewish contemporaries, the same vilification was never made of Palestinian Israelis. The fact it is not considered a subversion of the state or the Jewish nation is an indication of their exclusion from the same ethno-national boundaries. As with any act of "internal subversion" it is the fact that treachery is internal and of the people that makes it so potentially menacing. It is an undermining of the collective from the very people that are supposed to constitute it. Although individuals would not necessarily go as far as calling celebrity draft dodgers or refuseniks "traitors" the strength of that criticism is an indication of their inclusivity. For one to be a 'traitor' one must be considered a member of the group one betrays, the act of betrayal must violate the trust and loyalty of that group (Ben-Yehuda 2001). This trust and loyalty is based on a respect of shared social and moral values, in this case as derived from Jewish nationalism, an ideology not shared by Palestinian Israelis. It is an indication of their external status that Palestinian Israelis are not required for military service whilst potentially implying they are not trusted to identify with the ethnocentric interests of the Jewish nation. As such they are prejudiced against as not being capable of loyalty to the Israeli state. For these reasons the state does not necessarily encourage their participation in the army and Israeli youth had no desire for them serve in the same way they did of the *Haredim*.

As identified, this matter of boundary making through belonging and loyalty shares a similar language to that of treachery and betrayal. Traitors are an “enemy within” and as Kelly and Thiranagama argue, just as it is important for nationhood to develop vis-a-vis an enemy other, “it is joined by the importance of defining itself through delineation of an internal other” (2009 in press). In many ways it is more essential to the particular vision of a nation or peoples to demarcate those in the collective who do not conform to the same vision. The term “traitor” symbolises to society “that which it fears”, with accusations of treachery being a means to map out a state’s political identity and “boundaries of acceptable behaviour” (Kelly and Tharinagam 2009 in press). Israeli high school students approaching their military service similarly mapped out what they considered delineations of belonging through the internal othering of individuals avoiding mandatory conscription.

As the next section will argue, as far as the IDF and groups of Jewish Israeli teens were concerned, both leftwing and rightwing refuseniks were judged to have transgressed such boundaries of acceptable behaviour, their show of multiple loyalties was considered a threat to Israel’s unity and strength. The IDF’s non-recognition of particular acts of conscience reflects the potentially destabilising impact on the collective of accommodating multiple expressions of individual conscience. Leftwing refusal in particular consists of manifold moral and political positions ranging from absolute pacifism to selective conscientious objection to the treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories. The *Shministim* group from which many refuseniks from 2002 onwards have emerged has been labelled more “radical” in its politics, with some members’ complete rejection of Zionism and Israeli militarism. This is in contrast with earlier groups such as *Yesh Gvul* and Courage to Refuse who have often embraced Israeli civil-military discourse to legitimise their protest (Zelminskaya 2008). The introduction of religious refuseniks during the Disengagement provided another domain in which one could observe how the IDF and individuals delineate boundaries of belonging. For although their public acts of refusal were punished in the same way, their treatment in the press and by members of the public was considerably less ruthless than with leftwing refuseniks. After all, as opposed to the *Shministim* who refused to be

conscripted because of their position regarding an external population, these were serving soldiers who did not want to carry out operations against fellow Jews.

### **Acting on Conscience and Splitting Loyalties**

There are parts of Israeli society that have not yet internalized the boundary between expressing an opinion, and incitement and defiance of the foundations of the government and of democracy...The phenomenon of refusal is dangerous to us as an army, as a society and as a state...It is illegitimate and inappropriate. Refusal is a danger to Zionism.

(Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon cited in Schiff 2004)

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter refuseniks from the *Shministim* were not recognised or shown lenience as “conscientious objectors”; both their acts and those of the religious refuseniks during the Disengagement were condemned as crimes of “selective refusal”. In the above statement Ya’alon refers to their actions as “refusal” rather than conscientious objection, undermining the fact that their protests could be out of conscience. As identified earlier, “conscience” refers to one’s internal beliefs, a code of seemingly objective rules that stand apart from an external subjective moral universe. To recognise the acts of the refuseniks as a matter of conscience would render impotent the disciplining external voice of the IDF. Consequently their beliefs are stripped down to simple acts of “incitement and defiance” thereby reducing their protests to punishable moments of rebellion, and critically, not a moral act of conscience. Ya’alon echoes that distinction between practice and belief, in essence communicating that one can hold critical thoughts without undermining the regime. In practice the IDF goes as far as to accommodate what is known as “gray refusal” where those who do object to activities within their army service are re-assigned after making agreements within their units as opposed to taking cases to trial (Peri 1993: 154). Yoram Peri suggests that this practice of avoiding public awareness “was the antithesis of de Gaulle’s famous statement (made during deliberations over the possible legalisation of conscientious objection in France), “I will accept conscientious objection, but not conscientious objectors.” In Israel, objectors were tolerated; objection was not” (1993: 151).

Refuseniks are distinguished from the *Haredim* or others with draft deferrals in that their public acts of defiance are highlighted, in this case by Ya'alon, as a danger to society and Zionism as a whole. Conscientious objection has historically been characterised by a conflict of loyalties, be it religious pacifists during the First and Second World War who refused to bear arms yet felt obligated to assist their country in war time, or American conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War who opposed only this particular conflict on moral and political grounds (Brock 2006; Hagan 2001; Moskos and Chambers 1993). Moskos and Chambers' (1993) comprehensive study of conscientious objection argues that the fact there are increasing instances of it is a consequence of the emphasis contemporary political culture places on the individual and individual rights. They in fact claim that conscientious objection is now more about favouring individualism over engagement with community, or conflicted loyalties or duties to one's conscience or the state (Moskos and Chambers 1993; see also Haltiner 1993: 142-143). However, religious conscientious objection during the Disengagement was done as part of a collective vision of religious Zionism. It was driven by a collective commitment rather than individual attitudes or grievances in terms of wishing to make a stand against a policy that was seen as detrimental to the collective religious Zionist vision of the Judaization of the Greater Land of Israel. Their refusal was also aimed at rallying all Jewish Israelis around the Jewish settlers in Gaza.

Peri (2001) argues that the rise of conscientious objection in Israel is indeed associated with growing trends of individualism, with a greater emphasis on democracy and civil values. Selective refusal during the Lebanon War in 1982 symbolised the first most visible challenge to the authority of the IDF and the "nation-in-arms" ethos that was so important to knitting together the diverse Jewish nation (Ben-Eliezer 1995). In a country where the army has been central to nation building, and civic virtue has been derived from military virtue, to undermine the army was also to undermine the state (Helman 1999a; Peri 2001). The refuseniks during this time refused to take part in what was seen as a "war of choice" where it satisfied only the government's imperialistic ambitions, a political instrument that did nothing to serve Israel's security. It was construed as the moral, political, and military other of Israel's wars (Helman 1999a: 404). For the first time refuseniks

who formed the *Yesh Gvul* movement were querying the relationship between civic and military virtue. Their undermining of the civil-military discourse demanded “to allow each individual the leeway to decide where, when and under what circumstances he will fulfil his military duties” (Helman 1999c: 60). This was a severe undermining of the authority and the institutional stability of the IDF and hence tough measures of imprisonment were enforced.

The advent of the first *intifada* in 1987 triggered further refusal with over 100 soldiers eventually being tried and imprisoned by the end of its second year (Peri 1993: 154). Conscientious objection during the Lebanon War in 1982 came from soldiers who had returned from the front but selective refusal during the *intifada* came from soldiers before they were stationed. This was on the grounds that they were not willing to take part in IDF operations outside of the Green Line, and contribute to ongoing abuses of the Palestinian population as a result of the occupation.

Significantly the social background of these refuseniks was that of the Ashkenazi elite of society; they were made up of *kibbutzniks*, officers, and many were university graduates (Peri 1993: 154). They therefore belonged to the mainstream of Israeli political life and had traditionally performed in the most prestigious units. The ‘stature’ of conscientious objectors became only greater during the second *intifada* that broke out in September 2000. This time it was no longer predominantly reservists that were carrying out acts of refusal but serving soldiers in combat units. In 2002 a group of 51 reserve officers and soldiers formed the organisation Courage to Refuse. To great publicity they published in *Haaretz* what came to be known as the Combatants Letter which mapped out their reasons for refusing to take part in IDF operations beyond the 1967 borders:

- We, reserve combat officers and soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces, who were raised upon the principles of Zionism, sacrifice and giving to the people of Israel and to the State of Israel, who have always served in the front lines, and who were the first to carry out any mission, light or heavy, in order to protect the State of Israel and strengthen it.
- We, combat officers and soldiers who have served the State of Israel for long weeks every year, in spite of the dear cost to our personal lives, have been on reserve duty all over the Occupied Territories, and were issued commands and directives that had nothing to do with

the security of our country, and that had the sole purpose of perpetuating our control over the Palestinian people. We, whose eyes have seen the bloody toll this Occupation exacts from both sides.

- We, who sensed how the commands issued to us in the Territories, destroy all the values we had absorbed while growing up in this country.
- We, who understand now that the price of Occupation is the loss of IDF's human character and the corruption of the entire Israeli society.
- We, who know that the Territories are not Israel, and that all settlements are bound to be evacuated in the end.
- We hereby declare that we shall not continue to fight this War of the Settlements.
- We shall not continue to fight beyond the 1967 borders in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people.
- We hereby declare that we shall continue serving in the Israel Defence Forces in any mission that serves Israel's defence.
- The missions of occupation and oppression do not serve this purpose – and we shall take no part in them.

(Quoted on Courage to Refuse 2003)

In 2003 this letter was followed by similar statements of conscientious objection first by a group of IDF pilots that became known as “the Pilots’ letter”, and subsequently another letter of objection was published by members of the elite commando unit *Sayeret Matkal*. Both the air force and *Sayeret Matkal* were the most prestigious of IDF units and so conscientious objection from these sectors of the military was highly embarrassing and corrosive for the reputation of the IDF.

Like conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War these soldiers felt compelled to act out of their conscience and hoped to inspire moral action. However, unlike the US government that extended grounds for conscientious objection to include ethical and moral beliefs as well as religious convictions, the Israeli government was not willing to publicly recognise and accommodate the objections of these refuseniks (Moskos and Chambers 2003: 14). Military refusal in Israel did not just undermine a particular administration but the institutional embodiment of Israeli ethno-nationalism and the main avenue for civic virtue and citizenship contribution. Because of Israel's security orientation towards war preparation, and a belief from the Israeli public that the *intifada* did represent an act of war against the state, the Israeli refuseniks did not receive widespread support. Their actions were

considered to be a threat to Israel's security during a time when the majority of citizens desired a harsh military response against the Palestinians (Peri 1993: 155). Contrastingly for American conscientious objectors, the Vietnam War was hugely unpopular and had provoked race and social class divisions throughout society (Moskos and Chamber 1993: 15; see also Hagan 2001; Farrell 1997).

The refuseniks of *Yesh Gvul* and Courage to Refuse made use of the ethno-nationalist and republican discourses in which their debate was situated. As the Combatant Letter shows, they used their service in the IDF as a means to legitimise their objections to its activities. As contributing citizens who had proved their loyalty to the state they felt they had the right to criticise it. Both sets of conscientious objectors emphasised their belonging and loyalty to the state reproducing the "hegemonic codes derived from Israeli militaristic culture" (Zelminskaya 2008: 21). The letter reinforces their allegiance to the "principles of Zionism" and their experiences of soldiering. In 2006 I travelled to a conference on military ethics with Chen, a former major in a combat unit and current member of Courage to Refuse, he emphatically claimed that what he was doing was out of loyalty and patriotism. It was the strength of association with the state that motivated his desire to change it. By further example Ronit Chacham's (2004) book *Breaking Ranks: Refusing to Serve in the West Bank and Gaza Strip* is an account of reservists who are unwilling to serve in the occupied territories. She refers to one soldier who claims that "many Jews have lost their Jewish souls" as a result of the orders they were made to carry out. For these soldiers, upholding society is also upholding their sense of ethno-national belonging.

Zelminskaya argues that the emergence of the *Shministim* in 2001 produced a different form of non-conformism that often rejected the "manipulation of symbolic meanings of nationalist and militarist discourses" frequently employed by preceding refuseniks movements like *Yesh Gvul* and Courage to Refuse (2008: 26). Where refuseniks in the past have emphasised their feelings of loyalty and belonging through the reproduction of ethno-nationalist and republican discourses, the *Shministim* also map out their boundaries of belonging but in more civic and universalistic forms of citizenship.

## The *Shministim* and Counter-Currents of Belonging

For most Israeli teens the path from adolescence to adulthood was via national service, it was what made them Israeli and it still embodied the ultimate form of civic contribution. Apart from legal and societal pressures to be conscripted there was also the high level of expectation from parents and peers to perform military service. The *Shministim* offered a drastically different life path, members were not simply attempting to evade military service but make a public political protest against it and the state for which some were prepared to go to prison. Because of their age and station the *Shministim* provide the most relevant internal other to the Jewish Israeli teenagers I engaged with. These refuseniks were not just asking soldiers to stop serving but demanded that fellow students not enlist. They challenged Israeli militarist discourse and presented a vision of citizen duty in civil terms. Unlike refuseniks from *Yesh Gvul* and Courage to Refuse, the *Shministim*'s condemnation of Israeli policy in the occupied territories "did not attempt to justify their criticism in the eyes of the mainstream by emphasising their patriotism, loyalty, and contribution" (Zelminskaya 2008: 26). Because they had not and were not willing to serve in the IDF and voiced an anti-Zionist message that condemned the state for racist policies against the Palestinians, they offered a different stance to previous protest movements. The *Shministim*'s dismissal of ethno-nationalist and republican discourses provides a striking contrast to the religious refuseniks of the Disengagement who shared many of the same discourses as *Yesh Gvul* and Courage to Refuse. Reactions from Jewish Israeli teens to the *Shministim* and Disengagement refuseniks revealed that the 'mainstream' continues to make ethno-national and republican demands on its citizens which provides contrary evidence to an era of "post-Zionism".

Although there had been previous *Shministim* groups such as during the War of Attrition with Egypt from 1969-1970, when 58 high school students composed a letter to Prime Minister Golda Meir protesting the status quo of the war (Linn 1996b: 216), this more "radical" trend of high school refuseniks first emerged in 2001 during the second *intifada*. They were a group of high school students from the Tel Aviv area who decided to come together to protest against the occupation and what they regarded as Israeli war crimes. They sent an open letter to then



Prime Minister Ariel Sharon which condemned the state's "aggressive and racist policy" which resulted in the "pounding of human rights" and "did not even achieve their stated goal of increasing the citizens' personal safety". As Zelminskaya (2008) argues, this letter tapped in to the "security discourse" by claiming the occupation harms Israel's security. Amongst youth I interviewed, security was voiced as the most valid justification for continuing to have a conscripted army and for carrying out tough measures against the Palestinians.

In October 2004 a new group of high school refuseniks emerged again from the Tel Aviv area. No such organised movements were evident in the Haifa schools in which I was based and only a small minority of seniors in secular-state high schools such as Irony Aleph and Irony Gimmel had ever heard of refusenik organisations like the *Shministim* or New Profile. I had the opportunity to speak with members of the *Shministim* at different "activist" events, the first of which was at the 2005 Activism Festival in Lod just outside of Tel Aviv. One of their members Michal emphasised that this new group of refuseniks was "trying to assert its own type of energy from other movements, one with gender equality, and a balance of Ashkenazi and Mizrahi members". He was comparing this to previous refusenik groups during the first intifada when 92% of refusers were Ashkenazi (Linn 1996b: 88).

In 2005 the *Shministim* formalised their calls for military refusal in a letter addressed to the then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the Minister of Defence Lt. General Shaul Mofaz, the Chief of Staff Lt. General Moshe Ya'alon, and the Minister of Education Limor Livnat. Michal recalled the difficulty they had composing their letter to the government that protested the occupation. Some wanted to include references to Zionism and Judaism as a means of making the government more accountable, others rejected such values as the very cause of the inequalities they hoped to dispel. Approximately 300 Jewish Israeli high school students were signatories of the letter in 2005, with the *Shministim* now claiming to have over 3000 members (Kidron 2004: 73; *Shministim* 2005). The number of signatories in 2005 that went on to actually refuse military service and face prison terms is unknown. The final letter stated that as they were bound by their "conscience and as citizens of Israel" to defend the rights of "humanism and

pluralism...by refusing to participate in the occupation and repression policy” (*Shministim* 2005). They referred to the destruction of Palestinian homes, arrests and killings without trial, and the expansion of Jewish settlements as all contributing to the violation of human rights. Like their refusenik predecessors they felt obligated to act as “loyal citizens” (Linn 1996b: 207). The letter, published on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2005, ends with their ambitions for Israeli society and the direct action they feel should be taken:

We wish to live in a society which pursues justice, upholding equal rights to every single citizen. The occupation and repression policy is an obstacle to the realization of this vision, therefore we shall refuse to take part in it. We wish to contribute to society in an alternative way, which does not involve harming other human beings.

We call on all young people facing mobilization and on all members of the Israeli army to weigh again whether to risk their lives in the service of this repressive and destructive policy.

We believe that there is another way.

(*Shministim* 2005)

This final part of the letter promotes their aspirations for a more civic and universalistic style of citizenship, where belonging is based on humanistic rather than ethno-national terms. Again it is “conscience” that inspires their protest as if somehow it is external to the subjective loyalties of Israeli statehood. Their loyalties are not rooted in the same ethnic-republican sensibilities of the refuseniks from *Yesh Gvul* or Courage to Refuse but more liberal narratives. Whilst these earlier refuseniks legitimised their right to protest through serving in the IDF, the *Shministim* claimed legitimacy purely through their rights as citizens. They wished to contribute to society but also expected the state to facilitate alternative forms of citizenship participation. It is potentially because the *Shministim* do not draw from the same nationalist and militarist codes their message does not resonate in the same way with the Israeli consensus.

The alternative moral universe presented by the *Shministim* did represent growing trends of liberalism within Israeli society, as was evident from the type of education received at the Rudolph Steiner school on Kibbutz Harduf and will once again be

reflected in the attitudes of some of the students from there in this chapter. Rudolph Steiner students often challenged mainstream Israeli society and the ethno-republican discourses contained within the education curriculum. However, although a number of the pupils expressed that their conscience often conflicted with the requirement to do military service they still regarded it as an essential component of belonging as an Israeli. Amongst teens from secular-state high schools, their approach to refuseniks did not differentiate between Zionist and post-Zionist narratives, simply whether these teens did or did not contribute either by way of military or national service.

### **The Disengagement and A Jewish Conscience to Refuse**

The emergence of rightwing refusal during the Disengagement offered a brand of conscientious objection that claimed to speak for Israel's Jewish conscience. It was selective conscientious objection to a policy that affected Jewish citizens as opposed to an external population. This "Jewish conscience" emanated from the heterogeneous sects within religious Zionism. This included ultra-orthodox national religious extremists who believed in what has been termed messianic Zionism that preaches settlement of the Land of Israel is "part of a divine plan and the ultimate redemption" (Ben Meir 2005). Although this ultra-orthodox group identified with symbols of the state and served in the army, their ultimate allegiance was to religious authorities.

The Disengagement undermined this ideological perspective and as such during the build up to it both ultra-orthodox national religious Rabbis and their followers threatened a complete withdrawal from Israeli society and detachment from state authority. Yehuda Ben Meir (2005) contrasts this with mainstream religious Zionists who were not prepared to ultimately disassociate themselves with the state but used the threat of civil disobedience and conscientious objection as a "tactical" way to put pressure on the government to rescind its plan. Kimmerling (1979) argues that historically the *Yeshivot* (religious seminaries) have wished to be included within the military service framework and within the boundaries of the collective so as to be able to influence it. Indeed like the leftwing refuseniks, religious refuseniks used their service history to legitimise their speaking out.

As the Disengagement neared there was increasing publicity about threatened mass conscientious objection on the part of religious soldiers. Public political pressure came from the Yesha (Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria, and Gaza) Council, the institutional body that represented the settlers and received large amounts of state funding to support the settlement of lands in the occupied territories. The most outspoken voices came from the Yesha Rabbis. Their position was often more extreme, for as Ben Meir claims they had no need to negotiate the political arena in the same way the Yesha Council did (Ben Meir 2005). They echoed the words of the iconic national religious Rabbi and former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren who after the Oslo agreements of 1993 and 1994 called upon students and followers to disobey any orders to dismantle settlements (Cohen 2000: 257-258). Rabbi Goren claimed it would be a “violation of Divine command” to withdraw from the territories of the Greater Land of Israel (Cohen 2000: 257). During this time there was a concern that this would tear apart the IDF because of the predominance of National Religious soldiers who were the products of the cohesive influences of the *Yeshivot* and Bnei Akiva youth groups.

Because this was emanating from the national religious population it was the students at *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo’e and *Ulpana* Kfar Pines that were most immersed in the arguments for refusing orders to evacuate settlements. Whereas many students had not been exposed to leftist conscientious objector movements, in the *yeshiva* itself Rabbi Avraham Zuckerman called on his students to,

Explain to your commanders that because of your love for the nation and the land, you are absolutely unable to take part in this terrible process, and that you therefore demand and request that they not charge you with this mission (cited in Harel 2005).

Rabbi Zuckerman’s request did not demand outright refusal but suggested re-assignment. He articulates the dilemma felt by national religious soldiers. Religious Zionism incorporated the idea of *Ha-gshama* which is “the realisation of Zionist goals through conquest and contribution to the national collective” (Rapoport, Penso, and Garb 1994: 375). For religious Zionist youth, civic and religious virtue is in part derived from military service in the name of *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish nation/people. As one student described, “it is not a *mitzvah* for

yourself, but for your people. It touches all *Am Yisrael*". The requirement to serve in the IDF faced being usurped by religious loyalties.

The "Jews do not expel Jews" campaign stoked the fires of dissent, and movements such as The Defensive Shield Organisation began to gather signatures of reserve soldiers who planned not to participate in the "expulsion of Jews from *Eretz Yisrael*". Their petition encapsulates the dual loyalties many of these potential refuseniks felt;

We, the undersigned, are Jewish citizens of the state of Israel who serve as reserve soldiers in the IDF. We proudly fulfil our military service with recognition of the duty and honour of taking part in the defence of the Jewish people and our land and to wage war against our enemies. We identify with the words of the rabbis and public figures who view the 'Disengagement Plan' of destruction and expulsion as a national tragedy and violation of Jewish law in which it is forbidden to participate. We are declaring that we will refuse to lend a hand in the execution of this plan.

As with the leftwing refuseniks of *Yesh Gvul* and Courage to Refuse they emphasise their loyalty to the state, "the duty and honour of taking part in the defence of the Jewish people", thereby reproducing republican, ethno-nationalist and security discourses. Like the leftwing refuseniks they were combat soldiers serving in prestigious units. A growing number of officers now came from the national religious population that most of these Disengagement refuseniks represented. Consequently military service again legitimises their right to speak in the name of the state. Theirs too was selective conscientious objection as opposed to absolutist or pacifist and manipulated Jewish nationalism and Israeli militarism. This was therefore more akin to earlier refusenik groups, as opposed to the liberal, universalist beliefs of the *Shministim*. Kimmerling has described how the religious counterculture in Israel has often borrowed from the secular experience but ordering it in a way that is "expanded and transubstantiated to the sacred sphere" (1999: 55). The Disengagement was constructed by the religious and those against it as a crisis for Jewish Israel. In light of this, rightwing selective refusal was presented as a matter of Jewish duty. The military ethic of "purity of arms" which stipulates the protection of non-combatants was now employed as an ethical obligation not to use force against fellow Jews. In the same way that refuseniks

during the Lebanon War in 1982 decried it as an “unjust war”, so too was the IDF’s evacuation of Jewish settlements.

Both left and rightwing refuseniks sought a situation in which soldiers will have the right to decide which army orders not to obey, and this undermined the institution of the IDF. At bus stations in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem anti-Disengagement activists were distributing leaflets that explained alternatives for “how to act when the deportation order is issued”. Other pamphlets claimed “this order is patently illegal. It must not be given and must not be obeyed”. Religious refusal was ultimately regulated by the IDF in a similar fashion. Those who were considered likely to refuse were not asked to carry out the evacuations and those like Avi Bieber who publicly refused orders were tried and imprisoned for 28 days. IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz also set in place a number of harsh disciplinary deterrents. Any soldier who refused orders would be barred from serving again as a combat soldier. Any refuseniks from *Hesder Yeshivot* would lose their right to alternate service and *Yeshiva* study.

Ultimately however, there were only 63 reported cases of refusal, 24 of which were from *Hesder Yeshivot* (Marciano 2005). Widespread dissent did not take place with the maintenance of national unity outweighing particularist religious Zionist loyalties. Figures such as Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi and spiritual leader of the national religious community, had fervently denounced Sharon’s Disengagement policy. However, come the time of the withdrawal he asked for the co-operation of the settlers, telling them not to resist the soldiers. His message to recruits softened from one demanding outright refusal to one of compliance, whereby the soldier was told to carry out his or her duty “with a broken heart and tear in eye” (cited in *Yedioth Aharonoth* 2005). Despite these calls for compliance he suggested they “fight (the Disengagement) with the best weapon the Jewish people has ever had: *Torah, Torah, and more Torah*” (cited in *Yedioth Aharonoth* 2005). Subversion was therefore kept in the private realm of religious belief, retaining their loyalty to the state as obedient citizens whilst also being faithful to their conscience.

## **Being Jewish and Democratic: Religious Refusal and Competing Loyalties**

Despite the relatively small instances of religious refusal and eventual compliance on the part of the settlers and the religious Zionist population, religious refuseniks like their secular leftwing counterparts, undermined the military institution and displayed competing moral values. Both groups of refuseniks show a collective allegiance to another form of nationalism but at the same time believe in their loyalty to the state. Leftwing refuseniks against the occupation did not necessarily consider themselves anti-Zionist, and rightwing religious refuseniks against the Disengagement felt their loyalty was ultimately to the Jewish nation. Parts of the *Shministim* however, represented a more radical withdrawal from Zionism. The fact that they garnered a harsher public reaction than the religious refuseniks is an indication of how the ethno-nationalist narratives that the religious refuseniks used, granted them more inclusivity. This was evident from both official spokespeople of the state and youth in schools. Religious refuseniks were objecting to policies that were not directed towards the enemy but “brothers in arms” as then IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz emphasised;

We have not become accustomed to such missions, we were not built for this, however we will implement it (the Disengagement) with sensitivity and determination through great understanding and responsibility...The military has a responsibility to complete the task and a responsibility to Israel and its democratic values...The enemy is not standing before us, our brothers in arms are...We are not looking for a struggle, but rather understanding and cooperation. (Cited in Greenberg 2005)

Halutz highlights the state’s responsibility to democratic values and the dilemma of being loyal to these at the expense of coming in to confrontation with a group of one’s own people. As detailed in my chapter on Israeli secularism, as well as accommodating religious Jews ideologically the state has also done so for pragmatic reasons. Halutz’s rhetoric here is part of the government’s effort to not alienate the religious population who were against the withdrawal. The considerable endorsements the religious refuseniks had from a number of Rabbis, notably IDF Chief Rabbi Avi Ronsky, and the growing influence of the religious political lobby meant the government had to approach the matter in a more tactful

way. Elections during the 1990s had established religious parties such as Shas and Mafdal (National Union – National Religious Party) as important allies in any government coalition. This continued up to the 2006 elections when they received a combined 16.6% of the vote (*Yedioth Aharonoth* 2006c).

The government's treatment of religious refusal indicates how acts of internal subversion can instigate the production of national boundaries and contours of belonging. The Disengagement was a signal of the state's withdrawal from some of the principles of religious Zionism that placed much emphasis on religious territorial attachment, in favour of secular Zionism and the liberal democratic process. By carrying out a unilateral withdrawal from the Jewish settlements the government was forcing the population into making a show of loyalty to the state. This produced a tension of ethical conflicts and illuminated a number of competing loyalties. Kelly and Thiranagama argue that claims of treason delineate 'the people' and "stakes a claim to ultimate authority" (2009 in press). By declaring and enforcing the illegality of rightwing religious refusal, the state asserted its vision of nationhood whilst juggling the loyalty of some of its religious population.

The ethical conflict here between enforcing that which is perceived to be for the national good and that which respects national kin, kin that as the previous chapter has shown are de-abstracted from simple metaphorical relatedness, resembles the tensions of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The tragedy describes Creon, The King of Thebes' unwillingness to grant burial rights to Antigone's brother Polynices on account of him being condemned a traitor of the city. Martha Nussbaum (2001) argues that Creon places civic virtue above all, believing what is "good" or "bad" is that which is "good" or "bad" for the city. Antigone derives her sense of "friend" or "enemy" from familial relationships and demands a burial for her brother in the city. With this denied and unaware that Creon has come to change his mind Antigone commits suicide. Nussbaum (2001) argues that Antigone's recognition that her religious beliefs require the city to fulfil them is a statement of how the individual requires something of the collective. As the individual needs the state the state too is constituted by the values of the people and it is this lesson that Nussbaum (2001) believes Creon learns. During the Disengagement the state attempts to balance civic virtue with the recognition of the religious Zionist



population that is a primary part of its national identity. With refuseniks from the right and left, the state is exposed to the multiple ethical allegiances of its citizens.

As much as the state demands the loyalty of its citizens the people also have expectations of the state to represent them. Sharon was explicitly targeted for violating the trust and loyalty of the settler community. He had indeed once been the “father of the settlements”. Following the jubilation following victory in the Six Day War, the Jewish settlers were celebrated as pioneers of the Greater Land of Israel (Lustick 1988; Sprinzak 1986). The government placed its ideological and financial support behind the national religious population for settlement building but now this did not fit in with Israel’s current social and security priorities. As Ben Yehuda suggests “loyalties are stratified according to prevailing cultural moralities” which are specific to individuals or groups, and at this moment the prevailing regime placed less emphasis on religious territorial attachment (2001: 16). Sharon was now seen to be betraying the trust the settlers and the religious Zionist community had placed in him;

Sharon, the government, they put them there! They wanted to set facts on the ground, they put them there, they wanted to...Like, they dreamed of the greater Israel, to work in the land, to build cities. Now they take it from them, they have nothing, nothing!

(Mor, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade student from Levinson State-Religious High School)

Ben-Yehuda (2001) describes how Yitzhak Rabin came to be branded a ‘traitor’ by extreme segments of the religious Zionist community following the territorial concessions he was willing to make at the Oslo Accords. His critics felt he could no longer “be trusted to identify with the interests of a specific ethnic or religious group in a way the group see as legitimate” (Ben-Yehuda 2001: 299). Rabin was tragically assassinated because of his acts of ‘betrayal’ and the same fears were had for Sharon. Sharon’s actions were compared to those of the Nazis and he was described as a poodle to America; “Sharon’s opinion is America’s opinion” the *Yeshiva* students would tell me. With an erosion of trust between the religious Zionist community and Sharon, a sense of loyalty declined with it, thus producing acts of refusal. Seligman (1997) argues that trust erodes when a sense of belonging declines. At the moment of the Disengagement the religious community felt

marginalised from the centre of political life. However, the relative ease with which the withdrawal took place and lack of severe uprisings was an indication of a retained sense of loyalty to the state as a whole.

The Israeli government feared that the split loyalty both the national religious settlers and the religious Zionists had between their Jewish faith and the state of Israel might unsettle national unity as happened following Rabin's assassination by Yigal Amir who was also a religious Zionist. Amir represented the extreme scenario of fracture within Israeli society and thus served as an important mirror to society should the Disengagement result in a similar path. For such reasons Kelly and Thiranagama (2009) argue that "treachery can be at the productive and contradictory core of political life" as members of the collective are used to state build as well as external others. As well as the state using those inside society to define itself, such practices were also evident amongst individual nationals. As the following section reveals, religious Zionist pupils at *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* delineated their political identity through their understanding of religious refusal.

### **Conscientious Belonging: A Jewish National Commitment to the State**

Religious refusal added a different complexion to teenage attitudes of conscientious objection. Those who had not previously agreed with the right to object on grounds of conscience, in many cases felt it was a different situation regarding those who refused to carry out evictions. Students from the religious Zionist *Yeshiva Kfar HaRo'e* were beginning to contemplate refusal or how to avoid being placed in a position of ethical conflict as they approached their *tzav rishon*, first call up. For these individuals it was a different form of "conscience" that resembled their own ethno-nationalist and religious republican sensibilities which they considered more legitimate than secular leftwing refusal.

Military service was in the forefront of these *yeshiva* students' minds. Their boarding school lifestyle in Kfar HaRo'e was a good prelude to bunking down in army barracks where you train, sleep, and eat with your unit. Students like Ravid from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade certainly felt because they spent so much time together they learnt to "appreciate and respect each other" which was good for society and set

them apart from those who received a secular education. Many of these students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade would go on to serve together via the *hesder yeshiva* or *mehina* system and were competitive about getting in to good units. Ravid whose dorm room was covered in Israeli air force stickers had recently had his *tsuv rishon* where he told them of his enthusiasm to serve in the IDF. He repeated to me what he had said to the officers in the recruitment centre about the importance of military service;

Well, you live in a country and you need to respect her and you need to serve her, help her and volunteer to help. It's like something that you have to do. In your mind you're born with the idea that you need to serve the country that you live in. It's not the kind of power, but you know, like I'm in the army so I'm powerful. It's just, you want to do it because you like your country, you love your country and you want to serve and help. It's like you're part of the same big country. You share yourself with the country.

Ravid's enthusiasm was mirrored by many of his classmates. Together with a group of them he was in charge of organising the *yeshiva* Purim party that was to take place in a few weeks in mid March. It was up to these representatives of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to come up with a theme. Last year had been the film *Shrek* but this year they had decided on an army theme. According to Ravid the next couple of weeks would be spent manically building tanks and bunkers, and desperately trying to get hold of army uniforms from family members that they could wear to complete the look.

The army was a central component of both their sense of civic and religious virtue as well as being an experience embraced for its significance as the transition from schoolboy adolescent to adult. In light of this one can understand the consternation these students felt at the thought of a military service that could put them in confrontation with their religious values. They wished to serve the country but not if it meant the defilement of their Jewish values. Many like Ravid said they,

...won't fight with a weapon against another Jew. There is a limit. I don't think I would refuse, maybe I would just, stand in the corner. But I don't think I could even stand there when the *mitnachlim* (settlers) were crying and screaming for help and stuff. It's very, very hard.

His friend Matanel reckoned that despite what happened in the Disengagement, he felt that,

...people should go to the army, it's your country and you should serve your country. But there needs to be a limit if they don't do good things. Don't follow them. I believe that I will go to the army but if I will see that during the, the, time that I am there, during my service there are things like that (evictions) going on, I won't do it.

Students like Ravid and Matanel were keen to point out that this did not legitimise leftwing refusal. Ruth Linn has suggested that the threat of withdrawal from the occupied territories after Oslo helped rightwing refuseniks better understand the “emotional drive” of leftwing refusal (1996b: 218). For religious youth at Kfar HaRo'e they made clear distinctions between their “emotional drive” and conscientious objection compared to the conscience of the *Shministim*. Pupils at Kfar HaRo'e stressed that their conscience was derived from a love of *Eretz Yisrael* as opposed to what were seen as individualistic drives of secular refuseniks who were putting the country in danger by not serving. Unlike secular leftwing refuseniks these pupils claimed they would protest but in a legal way, “we (national religious) go by the law” and suggested they would get their commanding officers to station them elsewhere. In this way they were in a sense criminalising the secular conscience and defining their own moral status.

That national religious ‘we’ is derived from a shared religious orthodoxy and belief in religious Zionism. Military service and contributing to the nation is a central mandate of the shared national religious experience whereby that ‘we’ is “produced through the production and reproduction of itself through shared values” (Turnaturi 2007: 11). These values are also constantly recreated and this is evident regarding approaches to religious refusal during the Disengagement. Jean-Klein (2008) argues morality should not be taken simply as a framework but something that is continuously enacted and recreated. In the case of these *Yeshiva* students they recreate a sense of their own moral identity by contrasting their actions and motivations to those of secular leftwing refuseniks. The Disengagement placed these religious teens in a position of ethical conflict that forced them to reappraise the morality of refusal. Religious refusal was in keeping with the reproduction of

national religious values pertaining to the protection of Jewish people. However, it meant potentially forsaking a foremost avenue for civic contribution.

### **Contravening Israeliness through Military Refusal: The Civic-Republican and Ethno-National Moral Boundaries of Secular Youth**

For “secular” youth the military experience satisfied a number of motives that included a sense of obligation to family and friends, and was largely carried out for utilitarian purposes where it was not only what they could do for the army in the classic republican sense but also what the army could do for them. However, as identified, mandatory service continued to be a shared national experience, an icon of “cultural intimacy” that was integral to “being Israeli”, a way of knowing and doing Israeliness. Those who did not do military service were betraying a still widely accepted code of belonging. This was judged according to the transgression of three main criteria: republicanism, national security, and personal sacrifice. Although the fall in motivation to serve in the IDF has been interpreted as signalling a move from a republican and collectivist ethos to a more liberal and individualistic form of citizenship, Israeli youth reprimanded those who were not going to the army in terms of their lack of contribution to the state. They were thereby othering them in terms of an idealised Israeliness grounded in republican discourses. This necessity to contribute was often qualified according to the second criteria regarding the importance of maintaining a strong army for the sake of Israel’s security.

The reiteration of these republican and security discourses was however superseded by a feeling that if they were “breaking their teeth” doing military service then so should these refuseniks. They were part of the same moral and social universe and hence their violation of the collective subject is lambasted more than Palestinian Israeli military avoidance which has been made permissible by the state. In light of this desire for ethical reciprocity, apart from ideological differences between the *Shministim* and those refusing orders during the Disengagement, they were differentiated mainly because they were seen to be not willing to carry out military service. This contrasted with religious refuseniks who by serving, had shown their willingness to contribute and sacrifice for the nation. This differentiation is

indicative of the prevailing attitude that it is still only through military service that one can truly contribute to society.

Irony Aleph school and the Rudolph Steiner school on Kibbutz Harduf provided groups of students with contrasting attitudes to the issue of both outright refusal as witnessed with the *Shministim*, and selective refusal on the part of both leftwing and rightwing refuseniks. The students from the secular state high school Irony Aleph represented a more conservative and rightwing approach to leftwing refusal than those in Harduf. The backgrounds of these students differed considerably, with those from Irony Aleph of a generally lower socio-economic level, a large proportion of which came from immigrant families of the former Soviet Union who traditionally are more right wing. The Rudolph Steiner school in Harduf is a fee paying school with a more holistic and liberal approach to education which reflected the backgrounds of the parents who sent their children there. The students were mostly of an Ashkenazi middle class background, although unlike secular-state high schools like Irony Aleph, it also attracted some middle class Palestinian Arabs from the region. Students from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade here believed it was legitimate to refuse on grounds of conscience but at the same time they felt a strong compulsion to contribute to the collective. Consequently they were highly critical of those who were seen to be shirking some form of national service. Classes I attended in Harduf afforded the opportunity to see these students deliberate what they regarded “legitimate conscience” regarding refusal, versus one’s obligations to the collective.

The belief that leftwing refuseniks were undermining Israel’s security was most commonly articulated by my interlocutors in Irony Aleph. Peri argues that conscientious objection will no time soon become a civil right in Israel (1993:156). For he believes that military service will continue to be an ultimate symbol of civic virtue so long as there is a feeling of the nation fighting in wars (Peri 1993: 156). Echoing this, those students who claimed leftwing refusal was “dangerous” qualified this with the belief that Israel continued to be surrounded by enemies who wished to destroy it. As Hanna from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade described;

Hanna: I’ve been thinking about it a lot. I think it’s very easy to be left wing and pro-Arab, but I don’t know, it’s very easy to take that stand when you have people guarding you, very

very easy when you have people in the *machsom* (checkpoint) stopping thousands of bombs and things like that. I think the moment they will not be there, there will be a lot of suicide bombing. It's very umm, a lot of conflicts, you don't really know. It's a very confusing situation.

**AG: So you think there is still as much a need for the army now?**

Hanna: I think there is always a need for someone to guard you. You can't just stand here in the middle of the Middle East where everyone err, like I'm not blind. Some people are. I'm a realist, they want to harm us. People want to live here, people want us to not be here. So you do need some security.

Understanding this security situation was frequently highlighted as that which distinguishes those who "know" how to be Israeli and those who did not; namely foreigners. Suggesting these refuseniks are "blind" to this security situation sets them apart from the collective. Being Israeli they are supposed to "know" which makes their "betrayal" even worse.

The transgression of this security "understanding" provides the main reason some teens would brand leftwing refuseniks as "traitors". Ben-Yehuda argues that for the term "traitor" to be invoked "trust and loyalty are usually violated" (2001: 23). In the case of refuseniks they are judged to have violated the trust that has been placed in them to protect the checkpoints; placing Israel's security at risk also called into question their loyalty. The social climate also bolstered public opinion against leftwing refuseniks with ministers such as Limor Livnat describing them as "an embarrassment to the State of Israel and the Jewish people" and "conscientious objectors without any conscience" (*60 Minutes* 2002). These refuseniks are condemned for lacking a "security conscience" as opposed to the conscience of religious refuseniks whose conscience is valued in terms of an ethical ethnocentrism.

This was in contrast to their attitudes towards religious refuseniks' refusal to evict Jewish settlers who as far as they were concerned were guilty only of being too loyal to the Jewish people. I have described elsewhere how the process of carrying out Jewish evictions in Gaza was empathised with in terms of the potential relatedness between the soldiers and evictees. This relatedness is symbolic of how as a shared experience between friends and family military service constructs a feeling of nationhood. Because of the national intimacy between soldiering and

“the people”, individuals who were typically against refusal better understood the reasons for religious refusal during the Disengagement. The less ethno-national and anti-militarist message of the *Shministim* refuseniks did not permeate in the same way Jewish nationalism continued to do so.

The educational setting was very different in Harduf, it was more open and often embraced aspects beyond the limitations of the national curriculum with the intention of providing a wider context for intellectual exploration. In a series of general studies classes that also concentrated on preparing the 11<sup>th</sup> grade pupils for the choices they would be faced in their impending first call up. Their teacher Yaakov wanted to educate them to be soldiers with a conscience, to give them the ethical tools to deal with any moral conflicts upon being in the army. He did not want his pupils to go in to the army just because “that’s the way it is” but wanted it to be a choice. He believed they would act more morally if it was an individual choice. The “conscience” he was trying to educate them with challenged many of the military discourses that groups such as *Yesh Gvul*, Courage to Refuse, and the *Shministim* did. However, at no time did he suggest they should not go to the army. Yaakov himself was a veteran of *sayeret matkal* who had a distinguished military career. At a time during his military service he felt no longer mentally able to fulfil his combat duties and had an army psychologist facilitate his transferral to another section. He subsequently helped develop an ethics training program for officers in the IDF which he continues to advise. His experiences in the military made him well placed to understand and discuss the ethical conflicts that he and his students highlighted regarding military service. As with the *Shministim* they challenged the idea of civic virtue being only derived from military service and explored other means of contributing to society such as *sherut leumi* or *shnat sherut*. Only one boy Daniel out of about 25-30 pupils in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade class wished to avoid military service. The majority of male pupils wanted to get in to good units. In my cousin’s class in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade around 15 of his male classmates were planning to attend a *yom sayarot*, a selection day for elite units. Therefore the majority of boys and girls felt obligated to carry out military service and wished to do it with the most amount of “*agshaa-atzmit*” (self-fulfilment). Yaakov argued it was this that



would make the difference in the quality of their army service, something they should really think about in terms of getting the most out of their time there.

It was in recognition of the fact that most of the students would be doing military service that Yaakov wanted to make them “soldiers with a conscience”. As such they discussed the nature of “authority” (*sumchut*) and the dilemmas it could pose when faced with orders that were deemed illegal. Yaakov got the students to reflect on the importance of questioning their actions and taking responsibility for them by showing them a documentary of the Adolf Eichmann Trial where he persistently shirks any responsibility for the Nazi killings during the Holocaust. He enforced the fact that even if,

...you are stuck in a situation you can choose how to behave. You can fight against the situation and make what you will of it.

The lessons essentially taught these students how to belong (in doing military service) with a conscience without being subversive. This satisfied the majority of these students who as I will now detail were highly critical of those who contributed in no way to the state but saw the legitimacy in conscientious objection. The juxtaposition created by draft avoidance was the belief that everyone has to contribute but at the same time should have the right to follow their conscience.

Tar, Ori, and Amir were all in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and hoped to get in to a good army unit. They each intended to attend one of the elite unit selection days also known as *gibushim*. Both Tar and Ori had ambitions of getting in to the elite unit “669” that specialised in airborne rescue and evacuation. Amir was not yet sure what he wanted to specialise in but knew that he wanted to get in to a good combat unit. Conscientious objection in any form was seen as legitimate in the minds of these three students. “Conscience” was identified as one’s internal principles that should be outside of the rule of politics or the principles of army. I asked Tar if he thought any differently about the refuseniks during the Disengagement;

Tar: No, I think it’s the same if someone, if he can’t do it, maybe he shouldn’t. He’s not the perfect soldier but he’s a man and shouldn’t do something that is against his principles.

Fellow 669 hopeful Ori argued a similar case for those who were “pacifist”, emphasising it was one’s right to obey one’s conscience and that in any case it was

not conducive to the army to have those who did not want to be there. This was an attitude increasingly adopted by the IDF itself;

Ori: I can't argue with them, that's what they feel. They decided they're pacifist they don't want to hold guns, they don't want to go to the army, that's their right. Personally, I don't want to be in the army with someone that feels that he doesn't want to shoot at someone. He'd shoot at us and then I'm dead! So I don't see any need to force them and I don't think we need such a huge army any way.

When I raised the issue with Amir he was quite in touch with the issue of refusal as opposed to many of the teens I had worked with in the Haifa area who were largely unexposed to conscientious objectors of their own or similar age;

Amir: This, you can write everything about my brother's friend. He refused to go to the army, he thinks that it's not our country so why should we serve? The *seruvnik* (refuser) ideology is that we shouldn't be umm...they're against what we do to the others (Arabs). I have sympathy to (for) them, we need them. I will try to go and look for another solution but this is our reality.

**AG: Why is it good to have these people?**

Amir: Because, first of all it gives you another perspective about what the army is doing and I'm sure that in a 100, 200 years these people will be written as heroes and the people that did the right thing... They're serving us.

It is Amir's final comment of "they're serving us" that distinguishes the "conscience" of refuseniks from those who they believe are avoiding any sort of contribution to the state. It was felt that the sacrifices they were making should be expected from all. Where Ori was happy to exempt pacifists from military service he was not so understanding of those with more individualistic motivations;

...But the people like in my class, like, this guy who's a body builder and he doesn't want it (military service) to interfere with his training that's just rude...I can't understand something like that... he doesn't want to do anything! He doesn't mind that we are going next year. He keeps his training, keeps his muscles more puffer while we're breaking our teeth for him...

Another classmate Michael who lived in Yodfat was not particularly enthused by the thought of military service but throughout Yaakov's classes, at least the ones he attended when he was not travelling around Spain with his father, he was firmly of the belief that one must do one's bit for the collective and "pay your debt". This republican side of Michael erupted in a class debate that pitted the values of Joseph

Trumpeldor, a Jewish Russian war hero who uttered the phrase, “it is good to die for our country”, against those of the iconic refusenik rock star Aviv Geffen who believed it was “better to die for yourself”. Michael weighed up the issue of refusal as follows;

Michael: Let’s say there’s someone who won’t go to the army because he’s afraid ...

**AG: Afraid?**

Michael: Because he’s afraid, because he’s gentle and he really, really doesn’t want to. He has a good reason, its good but then he says arhhh I don’t want to go to the army I want to sit and smoke drugs! Then you have the *datiim* (religious, referring to *Haredim*); they do something not good... because they say, “I will not go to the army but I will sit in the *heder* (classroom)”, you know what is *heder*? And study *tanach* (bible)?

**AG: That’s not acceptable?**

Michael: Fuck off!

**AG: Why?**

Michael: Why? Why, that I will run in the mountains and ‘you’ will sit and read the bible?

**AG: But they see it as protecting Israel’s spiritual welfare?**

Michael: So what?

**AG: That angers you then?**

Michael: (sarcastically) OK, this is their choice, I respect it...it’s ok if I’m sitting here, and I will take your *hasseem* (tax)?!

**AG: Your...?**

Michael: When your mum pays money to the country...

**AG: Tax**

Michael: Tax, *biduch* (exactly). I will take your tax, learn the bible and you will go and run...

Michael’s diatribe of this non-participation reflects a common sentiment amongst most Israeli teens on the issue of military service. There is a demand for ethical reciprocity that is not rooted in ethno-republican discourses but personal expectations of a shared aspect of belonging. The fact that everyone takes part in military service is a process of shared communal engagement that makes it more than a discursive outcome or merely “the average to be respected” (Foucault 1979: 183 cited in Helman 1999b: 201). Not doing one’s bit is a betrayal of that shared practice of belonging, a violation of the trust that everyone will do it. These expectations demarcate the boundaries of the collective and for this reason Michael is angered by the fact that individuals are willing to transgress this shared moral

code. Ben Yehuda argues that it is because “trust and loyalty are constructed as deep and profound” that betrayals of them are felt so emotionally (2001: 8).

### **Implications for Personal Nationalism and Jewish Democratic Subjectivity**

Refusal and reactions to it illuminate a politics of identity that negotiates multiple allegiances and balances competing demands on loyalty. This multiplexity is again served by the Jewish democratic paradigm that not only sets out contours of belonging from the state but also Jewish Israelis themselves. Loyalty to either a religious or secular form of Zionism on the part of the Israeli refuseniks is derived from a shared Jewish democratic framework. Although the *Shministim* attempted to disassociate themselves from many aspects of this framework their aspirations were equally hegemonic to a particular form of nationalism. These particular nationalisms challenged in different ways the national subjectivity and contours of belonging Israeli teens identified with or counted as essentially Israeli. By looking at how these teens included or excluded those who challenged military service allows one to observe those experiences and narratives that individuals choose to associate with. The army continues to be at the heart of self-nationalisation and Israeliness. To not do it is therefore felt as a betrayal of the people not simply the state. Like feelings of victimhood or enjoyment that characterise the national experience, having a particular national conscience is also used as a marker of national solidarity.

## **Conclusions: Jewish Democracy as a Productive Tension that Constitutes the Multiplexity of the Jewish National Self**

The Israeli anthropologist Moshe Shokeid claims that as well as being “a venture into the story of another (informant or people)”, understanding an ethnography is also as much of a journey “into the story of the writer himself” (1989: 23). Understanding how Jewish Israeli teens identify with the Jewish part of their identity and the implications of it on their feelings of peoplehood, was as much an opportunity to reflect on how being Jewish inflects on my own subjectivity and feelings of group membership. Although being Jewish was only one part of these teens’ national identity, the connection of their national subjectivity to a number of intimately related to streams echoed my own multiplexity in terms of why and when Jewishness becomes important to me. For me, I connect to Judaism not spiritually but through its association with the family history of which I am part and the numerous moments of Jewish ritual practice that have cemented and re-affirmed close family ties. The strength of this has motivated my own desires for a Jewish family home despite not being “religious”. Sentiments of Jewish Israeli nationhood contain within them some of these identificatory building blocks without necessarily relating to Judaism in the same way I do. Many of my Jewish Israeli friends in fact found it strange that I could be tucking in to all manner of un-kosher foods yet still occasionally attend synagogue and fast on *Yom Kippur*. Some of them even went as far as to claim they could not understand why us Diaspora Jews felt we had something innately in common with Jewish Israelis based purely on the fact we were Jewish.

Such attitudes were an indication of an evolving relationship the Jewish Israeli public had with Judaism. For individuals who made such a claim, Judaism was part of their cultural identity but being a Jewish Israeli was so much more. The religious traditions of Judaism that I espoused were associated with “the religious” sections of society whose attitudes were considered out of tune with their visions of a more “secular” Israel. However, my Jewishness did bring me closer to my subject of study and impacted strongly on how Israelis related to me in terms of being included as a potential member of the Jewish Israeli collective. It was an

indication of how people invoke different identificatory strands depending on the audience and context of interaction. As well as showing how I might be included because of my Jewishness, that which set me apart from Jewish Israelis was that other part that creates a national ‘we’; those shared experiences and “intimacies” that are quintessential to what Jewish Israelis consider necessary for full membership.

The Jewish democratic paradigm gives Israelis the space to perform a multivocal Jewish Israeli national identity that represents the different “grammars” of both secular and religious identification. At the same time however, the retention of its inherent paradoxes has inhibited Israel’s progress to being a more inclusive society for those who are not Jewish or choose not to identify with Jewish culture and descent as a component of national membership. Regarding Jewish nationalism and sentiments of nationalism in general, one must decipher the contextualised invocations of such grammars in tandem with subjective relating processes that de-abstract broad concepts such as “Jewish democracy”, “nation” and “society” to the intimate experiences of individuals and fellow nationals. In this way we can ascertain how people feel driven to identify with the nation and why the state is able to reproduce itself through its national members. Jewish nationalism has consistently juggled competing cultural and religious Jewish identities, exemplified by the continual angst over what the character of Israel should be. By addressing issues of identity and peoplehood via the articulations of Jewish Israeli teens I have shown how as well as a very visible state delineating the parameters and character of Israeli nationhood, people themselves map out various levels of belonging and national inclusivity that characterise Israeli society. The sentiments expressed by Jewish Israeli teens in this thesis reproduce official national discourses but also reflect how people re-appropriate such discourses in line with their own intimate national experiences, be this in relation to a familial history of service in the IDF or the practice of Judaism in respect for one’s family history.

The fact that Jews relate to Judaism in a multiplexity of ways and this inflects on the type of vision they have for the state of Israel, makes it particularly difficult to unravel Jewish national subject formation in a way that is representative of this multivocality. For instance the national religious Jews encountered in this thesis

desire the Judaization of Israel that includes territories of the biblical Land of Israel. At the same time Israel is made up of numerous “non-religious” perspectives that have subjectively different approaches to how and when Judaism should constitute Israeli and Israeliness. By seeing how Jewish Israeli youth engage with different civic arenas I have provided opportunities to witness the personal and communal ways Jewish Israelis express their Jewishness and in what ways it is important or influences their civic and national identity. In terms of representation I have also had to contend with the communally specific contexts in which my informants are embedded, namely the Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, Ethiopian, and Soviet histories of which they are part. Each of these groups has a different relationship with the state in terms of being represented or included as Jews. All would in fact be served well by having their own study of the specific civic and national trajectory taken by their youth. However, by tackling a cross-section of Jewish Israeli youth I have attempted to represent the ways these different communities are intermingled in the social and educational lives of youth. This is especially so in contemporary Israel where the generation of youth I worked with included second generation immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia who were now reaching adulthood and making decisions about the types of rights and responsibilities they have to the state of Israel. The difficulty of being representative of the multivocal character of Jewish Israeliness mirrors what the Israeli state attempts to resolve with its Jewish democratic ideals, yet the complications of this are compounded even further by the inclusion of Israeli citizens who do not identify with Jewish heritage at all.

My opening chapter on kinship and nationhood showed the different ways Jewishness inflects on the subjective construction of the national character, and how being Jewish motivates certain civic practices. My informants wanted to retain Israel as a Jewish state, and Jewish democracy allowed scope for this despite its inherent contradictions. This chapter revealed how Israeli nationhood built on the myths of Jewish descent and connection to the Land of Israel are complemented by a sense of nationhood built on tangible networks of known kin and contemporaries who have participated in the IDF. This mutual participation is also what set me apart from being a full member. I had not as it were “sacrificed” for

the nation and lived through the terrorist attacks and wars Israelis had engaged with. Herzfeld (1997) describes how “cultural intimacy” is what we as anthropologists strive to achieve with our subject, I had this with my Jewishness but needed this supplemented with lived experience in Israel, speaking Hebrew, and as far as the Jewish Israeli teens I worked with ideally felt, time in the IDF. Over my 18 months in the field I reduced this gap somewhat but was frequently tested by my teenage interlocutors to see if I “knew” what it was to be Israeli. This would be in the form of asking my opinion on what they felt was a critical foreign press or the importance of a Jewish majority in Israel. These experiences of what it is to be Israeli, produces a collective sense that in part contributed to the majority of Israelis entrusting Ariel Sharon to carry out his Disengagement policy. His experiences of Israeli citizenship resembled those he governed.

As well as producing a sense of nationhood, kinship also inspired civic participation both for “secular” youth joining the army, and national religious youth who participated in protests against the Disengagement. Regarding the former, although largely motivated by instrumental reasons to join various units, service in the IDF was also frequently driven by the fact family members had also taken part. Concerning national religious youth such as those from *Yeshiva* Kfar HaRo’e and *Ulpana* Kfar Pines, their belief in religious Zionism inspired their anger against the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from Gaza but once again they also connected their participation to ancestral acts of fighting or surviving for the Jewish nation. My chapter on kinship also showed that as well as the state using kinship strategies to delineate national membership, people also make use of Jewish national kinship discourses to assert a particular vision of Israel. During the Gaza withdrawals female religious Jewish settlers used their status as “Mothers of Zion” to court the sympathy of the Israeli public, and the anti-Disengagement movement as a whole emphasised the connectedness of the Jewish people, of *Am Yisrael*, to deter the government from removing the settlements. In comparison to Joseph’s (1999) discussion of how kinship is used by the state to penetrate the people in terms of codifying a particular national identity, these examples show how national subjects mindfully use kinship against the state. By re-appropriating such narratives the people themselves assert a particular national vision. The Jewish democratic



paradigm provides a wide ideological scope that allows Jewish Israelis to identify with and highlight when wishing to emphasise a particular communal vision of Israel.

Concerns over family and home from both religious and non-religious youth during the Disengagement embodies an “institutional site” of the state (Friedland 2001), and specifically, with discourses of exile and sacrifice. The state organises practices of (religious) nationalism, but these are then echoed by its citizens. I argue that social and institutional knowledge are part of a continuum that places the person and the state on the same conceptual field, where previously social science literature has often spoken as if the two are mutually exclusive. These sites are jointly representative; as individuals construct an idea of “nation” through languages of kinship this also satisfies the logic of the state which requires its logics to be made material in order to signify a particular form of statehood. Both the nation and the state are validated and “enjoyed” as such, “enjoyed” in the sense that they provide the scope for Jewish Israelis of different subjective and communal backgrounds to celebrate the state and their experiences as national subjects. Subjective national experiences interact with national narratives. State rituals such as those during *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* exemplify how individuals choose to converge their identity with the hegemonic nationalism of the state. Such nationalism can only resonate if it is legitimised in the experiences of national subjects and this is the case with the individuals and families encountered in my chapter on state ceremonies as they connect to the messages of sacrifice and re-birth contained within these ceremonies.

Both my chapters on state rituals and motivations to serve in the IDF exemplify how people choose to do nationalism as opposed to it being simply a product of discursive practices and institutional “disciplining”. The former looks at the emotive nature of nationalism and the latter shows how nationalism is reproduced because of both the instrumental benefits of doing military service and because of feelings of responsibility to family and friends. As Jean-Klein (2001) has argued, nationalism is often negatively charged in contrast to positively written about subaltern acts of resistance which can be equally hegemonic in terms of promoting a particular national vision. The demonising of nationalism and its negative

connotations has been readily discussed in the case of Israel because of the suppressive consequences it has had for the Palestinian people. Whilst it has been vital to bring this to light it has also meant little analytical attention has been paid to the ways Jewish Israelis legitimately celebrate parts of their own national identity that is intrinsically linked to Jewish state-building. By allowing such a perspective it encourages a bottom-up approach to nationhood that takes in to consideration the “self-nationalisation” processes discussed with regard to serving in the IDF and Jewish marriage “strategies” that create a feeling of togetherness. In this respect the ethno-national dimension of Jewish democracy is a productive tension for the construction of Jewish national subjects.

By paying close analytical attention to individual agency in the production of nationhood, I have also been able to show that amongst a strong institutional presence of the state, as witnessed in Israel, where ethno-national and military discourses are promoted, individuals are still able to be cynical about the ideologies of the state, for instance Zionism and Israeli militarism, yet still embrace the state for providing the ideological framework to celebrate certain aspects of national identification. Individuals tactically engage with state frameworks such as the IDF to satisfy their individual career goals and in the case of military service develop a means of bargaining with the state that allows them to achieve certain civic “freedoms” such as housing benefits, in return for showing some service/loyalty to the state. When this form of “contract” is broken the consequences are observable in the punishments dealt out to the refuseniks.

Ghassan Hage’s (2003) notion of the “national embrace” has provided a useful notion to help illuminate the relationship Jewish Israeli teens have with the IDF. For teens from Irony Aleph who represented mainstream secular Jewish Israeli youth such as Baruch who hoped to charter his own yacht one day, and Niv who wanted to work in the dogs unit, the IDF had to be contended with but offered the chance for “self-realisation”. The existential threat that they felt Israel still faced was also assuaged somewhat by the thought of a strong army whose existence they considered essential for the Jewish nation’s protection. Partly because of this “embrace”, individuals reiterated aspects of Jewish Israeli nationalism but also they were essentially forced legally and institutionally to work with and ultimately

reproduce Israeli militarism. The understanding inherent in the almost contractual interplay between state and citizen, works as a result of the mutuality between top-down and bottom-up national processes.

It was with the issue of refusing to serve in the military that one could observe how people themselves delineate patterns of national identification and the parameters of belonging as opposed to the state. By unravelling the politics of conscience in terms of “legitimate” or “illegitimate” forms of national conscience, Jewish Israeli teens explicitly mapped out markers of national membership and the type of commitment they expected to be shown to the state in order to be recognised as “full” citizens. With the Disengagement provoking a further avenue of religious refusal one could examine different forms of Jewish Israeli national belonging through the types of betrayal different military refusers were condemned for performing. The high school refusers, the *Shministim*, represented most strikingly the internal other for Jewish Israeli teens I worked with. They were condemned for rejecting the moral boundaries of belonging set out by military service. As established, service in the IDF represented generational continuity and also the means of attaining civil freedom on top of contributing to the essential issues of national security. The acts of the *Shministim* contravened all of these things in the eyes of critical teens, and they also represented a further disassociation from ideologies of Zionism. Although most secular Jewish Israeli teens did not claim to be Zionist, their belief in Israel as a Jewish homeland and their support for ethnocentric national biopolitics upheld some of its central tenets. Contrastingly, whereas Jewish Israeli youth were more openly condemning of the “post-Zionist” conscience of the *Shministim*, they had greater sympathy for the rightwing religious settlers during the Disengagement. At this moment, that stream of national identity associated with the importance of the Jewish collective, of *Am Yisrael*, resonated with secular Jewish Israeli youth and produced great empathy for their situation of competing loyalties to the Jewish people and the state. Secular Jewish Israeli teens as a whole showed less motivation to serve in the IDF, and it was more acceptable to desire an alternative to military service, yet the public act of subversion displayed by leftwing refuseniks was considered malignant for Israeli society. The

majority of teens still performed some form of military service and thus also felt it was only fair that all partook whatever their conscience.

### **The Future of Jewish Democracy**

Whether Israel is in a “post-Zionist” phase has been largely judged on the attitudes and forms of identification associated with Israel’s so-called “secular” population. The falling motivation to serve in the IDF has been linked to further ideological decline in terms of Israeli youths’ lack of identification with the Labour Zionist communal spirit of old, substituted for greater individualism. However, as this thesis has shown, such youth continue to invoke ethno-republican Jewish national components, and in fact their deliberation over the character of Israel continues a history within the Jewish democratic state to maintain a status quo between its secular and religious elements. What is significant, as the *Gesher* workshop in *Ulpana* Kfar Pines showed, is that although not necessarily claiming to be a statement about being “post-Zionist”, individuals do use being “secular” as a way of saying something about their identity. It is a way of being Israeli in contrast to former qualities of Israeliness and contemporary religious Israeli groups. The “secular” Reali girls, like their counterparts in Irony Aleph, labelled membership in traditional Zionist youth groups such as *Noar Ha-Oved* as “geeky” and “brainwashing”, and in contrast to “religious” youth they were “liberated” both spiritually and physically as evidenced by what they felt were more encompassing attitudes and liberal clothing styles. However, they emphasised that this did not contradict their love for Israel and recognition and desire for it to be a Jewish state. The national religious youth of *Ulpana* Kfar Pines, considered the “secular” life they understood, as detrimental to the Jewish future of Israel, removing it too far from the Judaization they sought for the whole of Israel. Such anxieties emerged nationally amongst much of the religious population in Israel, regarding the Disengagement as symptomatic of a growing process of secularisation.

Looking at different ways secular Jews relate to religiosity revealed that being religious was considered by such individuals as a commitment to a set of beliefs as opposed to practices, which could be valued as cultural or “traditional”. In the same way that many of Israel’s so-called secular or non-religious populations

celebrate their own Jewish heritage through various ritual practices, the state, in recognition of this, also practices elements of Jewishness. Jewish orthodoxy requires ritual practice to re-affirm belief and in a similar way the Israeli state and the majority of Jewish Israeli citizens encountered in this thesis feel it necessary to re-affirm Israel's Jewish character through certain state practices. This satisfies their own ethno-national heritage but I believe it is also driven by a continued sense of existential insecurity and societal anxiety. Although perpetuated by genuine security threats, this is heightened and distorted to a siege mentality through state militarism and the regular reiteration of Jewish trauma and victimhood in national narratives. Such narratives have even more potency because the centrality of existential survival is continually reproduced through the close association Jewish Israelis continue to have with the military. For large sections of Jewish Israeli youth, this destructive logic embedded in war defines the enemy as the Palestinians. The continued orientation towards war and survival, as also remembered in state ceremonies, has made it difficult for Jewish Israeli society to move on from this security orientation. That is, the desire for security both militarily and ethnically. So long as this continues, the non-Jewish population, Palestinian Israelis in particular, will continue to feel marginalised and unrepresented, producing further discrimination that results in frustration and anger. One fears that the measures Israel takes to attain "security" do more to divide it from these populations, creating further tensions and insecurity. Israeli citizenship education attempts to foster a greater understanding of the tensions within the Jewish democratic state, identifying the problems for non Jewish citizens in terms of feeling part of Israeli citizenship activity. However, it does not go far enough in terms of emphasising the legitimacy of other communal visions and the right of other people to their distinctiveness. Morally speaking, how can one legitimately practice and celebrate the uniqueness of one's identity, whilst denying "the otherness" of others.

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