

The People's Army? Orthodox Soldiers and Religious Dilemmas in the IDF

Alongside the public debate regarding Israel's social and economic divisions, which emerged along with a wave of protests last summer, another discursive strand has also surfaced. It focuses on the impact of religion on Israeli society, with the IDF—as a manifestation of Israel's complex human mosaic—right in the eye of the storm.

In late spring 2011, Chief of Staff Benny Gantz approved a standard version of the *Yizkor* (Remembrance) prayer in military commemoration ceremonies. His decision generated great controversy (and was later revised at the recommendation of a special committee Gantz himself appointed). This was the latest in a long-standing debate about which form of the prayer should be used in official IDF memorial ceremonies. Should it be the official version stipulated in General Staff Orders and based on Berl Katzenelson's eulogy in memory of the fallen in the Battle of Tel-Hai ("Yizkor Am Israel," i.e., "May the Nation of Israel Remember"), or the version proposed by Rabbi Goren ("Yizkor Elohim," i.e., "May God Remember") the traditional religious version, which has gradually crept into military texts, and has been in use since the official

ceremony of the state's 53rd Independence Day (more than a decade ago!).¹

About a month after the *Yizkor* controversy broke in the media, fuel was added by two further events. The first, the farewell letter of General Avi Zamir, outgoing IDF head of human resources, in which he urged the curbing of religious radicalization in the IDF triggering a flare-up among both secular and religious groups. The second was a study by Dr. Neri Horowitz, commissioned by the chief of staff's women's issues adviser, which also warned against accepting rabbinic demands and further religious radicalization in the IDF. In September 2011, the issue was once again a top news story when four religious officers' course cadets were discharged—and five more disciplined—after walking out of an event commemorating Operation Cast Lead, in defiance of orders, when women soldiers went on stage to sing.

The four were expelled from the officers' course for refusing orders, failing to return to the hall, and for expressing no remorse for their actions. Subsequently, other cases have surfaced, some involving local frictions and others of a more ideological-political nature, including street

rallies and protests, speeches in the Knesset and discussions in the Office of the Chief of Staff. All of this illustrates the extreme tension that attends the integration and growing involvement of religious soldiers in the IDF.

This is not the first time charges of religious takeover or IDF radicalization have been raised. The causes and headlines that had fueled previous episodes are quite similar to this most recent eruption. In 2008, three religious soldiers were jailed after refusing to attend a course taught by a female instructor.² In

A primary objective of the new pre-military preparatory colleges is to provide religious young people a way to integrate into regular IDF tracks

2005, a headline shouted “IDF Presents: Modesty Guards.” And there was a public outcry in 2002 when Yoel Marshak, the Kibbutz Movement’s head of the Department of Projects urged kibbutz youth to aspire to and strive for officer roles in the army, “in order to prevent a situation in which a few years from now the majority of the junior

officer echelon would be manned by ‘skullcap wearers,’ [Orthodox men,]” a phenomenon that he called inconceivable in a secular country.³ These stories and many similar ones in the last decade have captured headlines and provoked agitated responses. Several recent events—their severity, intensity, and the sentiment manifest in reactions to them—have been noteworthy.

The historical relationship between religion and the military has largely been influenced by the “Army of

the People” model advanced by David Ben-Gurion, who maintained that the military was an apolitical state body for which the obligation to serve must apply to every segment of the population in order to achieve equality. Instead of creating closed units for religious youth, basic mechanisms should be instituted to enable religious soldiers to integrate in the army and serve without jeopardizing their faith and lifestyle.⁴ Ben-Gurion, however, consented to the request of Agudat Israel’s leaders, and already in 1948 had agreed to postpone the draft for yeshiva students defined under *Toratam Omanutam* (full-time Torah Study as Vocation). At the time, only a few hundred students were classified as such. In 1977, with the ascent of Likud and the establishment of a new coalition led by Menachem Begin, the Haredi Agudat Israel party was approached to join the new coalition, and as part of those negotiations it was agreed that the quota restricting the number of military service *Toratam Omanutam* deferrals would be lifted. Because of these political agreements, and despite special arrangements introduced into the IDF at its establishment (such as keeping kosher and observing the Sabbath), in the early years of the state, the recruitment rate among the National-Religious was lower than their share of the general population. This was primarily due to their anxiety that military service would lead to the corruption of religious youth through their exposure to an undesirable environment of cultural and social influences they perceived as negative.

After the War of Independence, the Nahal battalion served as the primary framework for the integration of religious-Zionist youth in the army, thanks to

the program's unique features, a combination of military training, agricultural training, and settlement. Although Kerem B'Yavneh Yeshiva was established in 1953, it was only in 1965, following protracted negotiations between National-Religious faction rabbis and army commanders, a historic compromise was reached, which granted the yeshiva recognition as a *Hesder* (arrangement) *Yeshiva*.⁵ As part of the compromise, the army committed to assign religious recruits designated Hesder students to closed, homogenous units and shorten the active duty period of their service, in a scheme similar to the Nahal. In return, the rabbis agreed to table their demands for exempting all yeshiva students from military duty.⁶

The establishment of the Hesder Yeshivot was not the only factor leading to increased recruitment rates among religious Zionists. The Yom Kippur War, which led to the negotiations over the terms of a ceasefire—including the possibility of Israeli demobilization from the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights, thereby threatening the territorial integrity of “the Greater Land of Israel,” was the catalyst for the founding of the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) movement in 1974. Gush Emunim's ideology was based on the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook and his son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. They believed that the establishment of the Jewish state contained a messianic, redemptive meaning that had evinced their key tenets, divinely inspired commandments to settle, annex and safeguard “Greater Israel.”⁷ Gush Emunim members saw themselves as the vanguard with a mission to point the right way to other Zionists, arouse the Jewish People of Israel and snap them out of their weakness.

They encouraged National-Religious youth to stand at the forefront of the national project, to settle and protect the land, and to defend the territories already liberated.⁸ The establishment of the Hesder Yeshivot was a great boost in logistical and technical terms, and the founding of Gush Emunim provided the spiritual motivation and drive behind the increase in the number of yeshiva student IDF recruits. Nevertheless, in the early 1980s, despite a substantial increase in the number of National-Religious yeshiva recruits, both sides remained frustrated. The army leadership complained that most religious inductees did not enroll in officer courses, were not prepared to assume command responsibilities, and, in general, served much shorter terms than required in the regular training program. Conversely, religious inductees expressed an eagerness to join combat units and to become officers, but their abbreviated program made these positions difficult to achieve. At the time, many of the graduates of National-Religious educational institutions (more than 70%) who chose to join the army as general recruits, took off their skullcaps during their military service, which alarmed their parents and teachers.

A desire to change the situation led to reinvigorated thinking about integration strategies, and in 1987, the first religious pre-military preparatory college

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(*Mechina*) was established in the Shomron region settlement of Eli.⁹ The primary objective of these new colleges was to prepare religious soldiers to assume leadership positions in the IDF by providing a robust religious-ideological program designed to orient them to cope with secular influences. At the same time, high-level IDF officers engaged in discussions with the Hesder Yeshiva leaders to extend the scope of Hesder programs, so that the length of religious soldiers' military service could be extended to approximate the length of the regular service period. Today, according to Ministry of Education figures, there are 17 religious and 18 secular pre-military colleges recognized and accredited by the IDF and other state authorities.¹⁰ These new frameworks have contributed to a substantial increase in the

number of religious-Zionist IDF recruits in general, and into combat units and command positions in particular. Although the social composition of the IDF is a well-kept secret, partial data indicate that, in 1990, the share of religious combat soldiers among graduates of advanced infantry officer training courses was 2.5%, by the end of the 1990s it was around 15%, in 2008 it reached 26%, and in the latest infantry officers course it was 42%. (According to the 2010 Israeli Statistics Abstract, in 2009 the share of non-Haredi Orthodox aged over 20 in the general population was 11.7%).¹¹ Other data suggest that more than a quarter of company and regiment commanding officers are religious, and about a third of officers course graduates, in the last decade, have worn skullcaps.¹²

Share of Combat Soldiers out of Preparatory Pre-Military Colleges and among General IDF Recruits 2001-2004 (males only)

Year	Framework	Combat Soldiers	Support Troops	Did not Serve
2001	Preparatory	82.8%	16.1%	1.1%
	IDF General	38.4%	61.6%	-
2002	Preparatory	76.7%	21.4%	1.9%
	IDF General	39.3%	60.7%	-
2003	Preparatory	80.0%	16.9%	3.1%
	IDF General	40.2%	59.8%	-
2004	Preparatory	80.1%	18.2%	1.7%
	IDF General	40.8%	59.2%	-

Share of Officers out of Preparatory Pre-Military Colleges and among General IDF Recruits 2001-2004 (males only)

Year	Framework	Officers	Non-Officers	Did not Serve
2001	Preparatory	25.9%	73.0%	1.1%
	IDF General	9.3%	90.7%	-
2002	Preparatory	22.3%	75.8%	1.9%
	IDF General	8.6%	91.4%	-
2003	Preparatory	23.0%	73.9%	3.1%
	IDF General	8.2%	91.8%	-
2004	Preparatory	20.5%	77.9%	1.7%
	IDF General	7.1%	92.9%	-

Data taken from B. (2010). The place of skullcap wearers in IDF's tactical command. *Maarachot*, 432, p. 55.

Combined, the substantial increase in the number of observant recruits and their integration in command roles, along with a concomitant decline in other sectors, have forced the military to make certain compromises designed to reduce tensions and to ensure the continued recruitment of highly motivated youth who regard their military duty as a mission to fulfill their ideals.

A Number of Factors May Explain the Worsening Crisis in Religious-Secular Relations in the IDF:

1. Numeric Disparity in Recruitment and Sharing the Defense Burden: Between 1985 and 1996 the rate of participation in combat forces and command programs declined from around 90% willingness to enlist to about 70%. This phenomenon is known as the "motivation crisis." A key manifestation of the crisis was the drop in the rate of volunteering for combat service in IDF select units by members of the "old elites," including kibbutzim and top high school graduates in urban centers.¹³ Religious-Zionist youth who, in that period secured extensive accommodations facilitating their IDF service, comprised the primary demographic to fill this vacuum, and today the number of combat soldiers, commanders and officers from religious Zionist circles far exceeds their share of the population. At least for the short term, the deal has paid off for all concerned: Israeli society and the IDF benefit from a greater reservoir of highly motivated, capable recruits, while religious-Zionist voices more fully participate in the national consensus. In the long run, however, this could have far-reaching implications for the "Army of the People" model.¹⁴

2. Social and Cultural Gaps: Fundamental differences between the secular and religious communities and the difficulties in bridging the gaps between them in inherently rigid and demanding frameworks such as the military and observant Jewish religious practice have led to perceptions that the religious pose a threat—the "other" who attempts to impose his ideology on the military and Israeli society writ large. In this context, one must bear in mind that religious Zionism is a legitimate stream of Israeli society that attempts to integrate and exercise influence in Israeli society in general and the IDF in particular (as do other groups, such as women who advocate full gender equality in the military). Religious Zionists are not trying to rebel against state structures, but to instill them with more of their own conceptions and beliefs. Another important distinction must be made between different views and trends within religious Zionism itself, which is hardly monolithic and is composed of several distinct sub-groups. At one end of the spectrum are the Haredi-nationalists (Hardalim), whose more extremist members are drawn as negative caricatures of religion in the mainstream Israeli consciousness. At the other end are the "Modern Orthodox" who actively oppose the Hardalim, and advocate liberalism, openness, and moderation.

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The majority of the religious-Zionist public is somewhere in the middle, blending characteristics from both poles.¹⁵

3. Political and Ideological Gaps: Many Israelis associate the religious-Zionist camp with Gush Emunim and the right wing. This gains currency when the army is faced with difficult concrete tasks such as dismantling settlements and policing the West Bank. The main concern in this context is that, to quote Yoram Perry, “under controversial

The Gaza disengagement showed that collaboration between IDF commanders and religious-Zionist leaders prevented disobedience within IDF ranks

political and military circumstances, the gap between one's military and ideological stances could be blurred.”¹⁶ The execution of the Gaza disengagement in the summer of 2005 showed that, in reality, collaboration between IDF commanders and religious-Zionist leaders could yield solutions that prevent mass public

outcry and disobedience within IDF ranks. As the Gaza evacuation was being prepared, the IDF High Command issued explicit orders not to compel religious soldiers to take part in the operation. At the same time, considerable efforts were made in the civic and religious arenas to create and encourage dialogue. Bleak predictions about the disengagement proved false thanks to the caution shown by the IDF, along with the patience and reserve exhibited by many religious-Zionist leaders. There was no

mass civil disobedience, let alone extreme violence. The religious leadership accepted IDF involvement, and the number of religious officers has continued to grow since.

Disagreements and predictions regarding the future conduct of religious-Zionist youth continue to concern Israeli decision makers and IDF leaders, and academics and political scientists who study the subject are looking for solutions. There are still pressing concerns and gloomy predictions that future settlement dismantling will not be tolerated quietly in religious-Zionist quarters. Some argue that the lesson religious-Zionist youth took from the Gaza disengagement is that quiet struggle fails, and that, in the event of future evacuations, they must be much louder and consider more violent forms of resistance. As mentioned above, religious Zionism is not a monolith but a broad collection of people, attitudes and beliefs, and in attempting to imagine scenarios and create forecasts, we must take the silent (and moderate) religious-Zionist majority into account.¹⁷

4. The Dual-Hierarchy Mechanism: In the process of shaping the historical relationship between religion and the military, a dual system was created, with IDF encouragement, in which religious soldiers are subject to both military commands and the wishes of their rabbis. This poses significant difficulty—first and foremost—to individual soldiers, as they try to navigate this dual-management model and figure out where their loyalties lie—whether they should obey the military framework of which they are a part, or the rabbis who sent them to the IDF and continue to support them during their military duty. A

recent example of this dilemma can be found in statements by Rabbi Elyakim Levanon, head of the Alon Moreh Hesder Yeshiva, regarding the controversy over women singing at IDF events and ceremonies: “[IDF rabbis] are bringing us close to a situation in which we will have to tell [male] soldiers, ‘You have to leave such events even if a firing squad is set up outside, and you will be shot to death.’”¹⁸ This dual authority is problematic for the army as well, since the present framework gives inordinate power to yeshiva heads, who maintain an ongoing dialogue with the army over the terms and nature of their constituents’ service and have free access to army bases where they are stationed.¹⁹ The yeshiva heads’ bargaining power and suasion with the IDF increase proportionately with the rising rate of recruitment and volunteering for combat duty among religious youth.

5. Increase in the Number of Female Soldiers and their Incorporation into Combat Units: As pointed out by the sociologist Yagil Levi,²⁰ the clash between women and religious soldiers is multi-dimensional. Some prominent dimensions involve the desire within each group to instill its cultural values in the other to create an environment more suitable to its side. Other dimensions are less obvious, such as the desire to set the national agenda and maximize influence, and the perception of military duty—by both liberal feminism and the religious sector—as a vehicle for accumulating power, social mobility, and political capital outside the army, or at least to clear some of the obstacles to accessing such resources. These ideological clashes are evident in countless everyday IDF activities—from objecting to women

in combat forces by protesting their integration as instructors, to *Kol B’Isha Erva* (the female voice has an erotic quality)²¹ controversy, which outraged much of the Israeli public and spread outside the army into a broad-based protest.²² The tension between a growing feminist consciousness that cannot consent to the exclusion of women in the public sphere, on one hand, and the purported infringement of religious customs on the other, are major factors in the current escalation of the crisis between religious Zionism and the IDF, and within religious Zionism itself.²³

6. Ambiguity in IDF “Appropriate Integration” rules:

In 2003, a high-level committee headed by General Yiftah Rontal, then commander of IDF ground forces, issued the policy paper “Appropriate Integration.” Its guidelines stipulate that, in every training exercise or course aimed at both sexes, where there is the risk of physical contact—*Yihud* in Halachic terminology—religious soldiers would be assigned to single-sex units; it is adamant that religious soldiers must not be forced to serve in mixed-gender combat units. In addition, the paper sets out ground rules regarding matters of modesty, separate accommodations in army barracks, and more.²⁴ Today, more than ever before, it seems that Appropriate Integration policies are causing problems: on one hand, the many grey areas in

Yeshiva heads’ bargaining power with the IDF increases proportionately with rising rates of religious soldiers in combat positions

its phrasing are forcing low-ranking field officers to deal with many broad and complex dilemmas, which the army refuses to resolve. On the other hand, in recent months it is increasingly argued that the very implementation of Appropriate Integration policies erodes the status of women in the IDF. In response to the problem, Prof. Yedidia Stern, the Israel Democracy Institute's vice president for research, has suggested that "what is needed is a multi-faceted policy of setting limits while allowing commanders to be flexible... On the other hand, the carrot needs to be used along with the stick: After setting limits, the army should

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go the extra mile on behalf of religious soldiers, and allow prudent officers the flexibility to deal with specific issues."²⁵

7. The Arrangement—"Torah Study as Vocation": Having been enforced as a temporary regulation since the days of David Ben-Gurion, the arrangement was crystalized in the Tal Bill (2002), which

stipulates that youngsters whose only vocation is Torah learning, and who are eligible under the law, may be granted postponement of military duty for one year. This postponement may be extended in additional one-year increments, up to full exemption from military duty. Designed specifically to accommodate the needs of the Haredi community, the arrangement serves many

religious Zionist youth, mainly in postponing their army service during their studies in Hesder yeshivot and Mechinot. It should be noted that a similar arrangement serves secular youth who volunteer for a "service year" or enroll in secular Mechinot. The great fear is that the bill's structure creates a dilemma among religious youth, or perhaps even a negative incentive, to leave Hesder yeshivot and opt for the "Torah Study as Vocation" arrangement instead.

8. Dedicated Frameworks for Religious-Zionist Recruits:

Many religious-Zionist recruits enlist at a later age, having studied in Hesder yeshivot/ Mechinot, and they stay affiliated with these mediating structures, which are governed by civilian rabbis. This framework, especially at this youthful stage of life, is a force multiplier for the rabbis' influence, on their young adherents as well as the army; this rabbinical influence tends to dwindle among older/adult religious Zionists.

9. Growing Media Involvement: Many issues, which previously were resolved within individual army units, are currently talked about publicly in a loud and widespread debate playing out in the media. One of the key problems is that due to the nature of media coverage, most of the events on the agenda tend to focus on the sensational—the most visible and extreme voices make the news, while more moderate voices of the majority are ignored.

The overall picture, however, is not so bleak, and there are some reconciliatory factors in play as well:

1. The Army of the People: The IDF constitutes a human mosaic of cultures, which reflects the whole of Israeli society, and is perceived as a catalyst for integration and communication between sectors. Despite an erosion in the army's status in recent years, this idea remains at the core of national consensus, and many vehemently object to any breach of the Army of the People principle.²⁶

2. Mediating Structures: There are a number of such structures in the Israeli system interfacing between the army and the people. Some operate outside the military system but with its endorsement and encouragement, such as the Hesder Yeshivot and pre-military preparatory colleges, and other mediating structures exist directly under IDF auspices, such as its Yeshivot Section and the Military Rabbinate. These bodies assist in bridging gaps between the secular and the religious and regulating pressures between them. Experience shows that when their disagreements are made public they foster a hostile atmosphere, whereas settling disputes in the reconciliatory and tolerant settings these mediating bodies provide decreases hostility levels often enabling the parties to achieve an arrangement acceptable to both.²⁷

3. Increased Numbers of Religious Soldiers in Command Positions (including senior officers): In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of 'skullcap wearers' in key IDF command positions which has also proven to be a significant rapprochement enhancer. These commanders are

already functioning as fair mediators, generally capable of looking at both sides of the divide between the IDF and the religious Zionist youth and compassionately comprehending the difficulties and limitations of each. In addition, they act as role models, and their experience in navigating the system's inherent difficulties sets an example and can provide a basis for finding middle ground.

4. The Existence of Authority Structures and Decision Rules: The IDF provides several structures and rules designed to minimize frictions or offer solutions. These include adjustments that had been made in the past and the Appropriate Integration Order (from the legal aspect), and IDF institutional structures such as the Yeshiva Section and Military Rabbinate. Despite the many grey areas that exist, most of the problems are adequately addressed within existing frameworks.

5. A Liberal Culture that Promotes Tolerance and Reciprocity: Despite the many difficulties and the inherently rigid military setting, military leaders, state officials, and the mainstream of religious Zionism, have all called for finding solutions amicably, with consideration and respect for different views and beliefs.

One must not underestimate the rapid succession of events that have taken place within the IDF recently.

The IDF is a human mosaic of cultures, which reflects the whole of Israeli society

In the State of Israel, military and political elites are intertwined through both the incorporation of the military elite into political decision-making processes, and in its function as a human resources reservoir for the political system (and, more and more, the business sector as well). Revisions and decisions introduced in the military arena carry major social and political implications for Israeli society as a whole. As former Chief Military Rabbi Brigadier General (Ret.) Avihai Rontzki astutely described it, “the struggle over control of the IDF is a battle over the shape of Israeli society.” The IDF is at the forefront of a culture clash between opposing forces, each vying to impose its approach and

“Price Tag” attacks began to appear in 2008, to create balance of terror to dissuade the government from dismantling certain settlements

normative values. But this is not the only front, nor the last.

The responsibility for finding solutions and coping strategies for this social challenge cannot rest solely on the shoulders of IDF commanders. The army is capable of dealing with the problem within the military setting by solving localized conflicts

(using existing means and ground rules and the prudent application of conciliatory measures), and by setting guidelines for the period of military service (such as the Appropriate Integration order). But in order to address the root of the problem, a broader decision is needed, guided by a national and social vision from which clear definitions can be derived and translated into unambiguous policy.

It is the government, and not the security agencies, that is responsible for paving the way for drawing up a social-cultural contract to provide rules, tools and guidelines related to the state’s vision of the complex relationship between religious and secular groups in Israel, and especially with respect to the state and its national agencies. In this way we could potentially avoid future internal conflicts, or at least alleviate tensions, to create a more tolerant, liberal and supportive Israeli society.

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The Second Axis of the Clash: The Religious Right, the IDF, and the Government

Although it is beyond the scope of this writing to address the causal-ideological connection between the religious radicalization of parts of the religious-Zionist faction and their radicalized rightwing political leanings, recent events, including the escalation in violent “Price Tag” acts by extremist settler groups—against Israelis and Palestinians alike—cannot be ignored.

Price Tag attacks began to appear in 2008. At first, these acts were aimed at Palestinians as part of the struggle and competition over land, and as acts of revenge, sanctioned by a number of rabbis,²⁸ for Palestinian terror attacks against Jews. Although acts of revenge, on both sides, are nothing new, the Price Tag acts of violence and vandalism are distinct because they have been responses to what the government and the army have been doing in

the territories: attempting to demolish structures in outposts and evacuate settlers. The goal, at first, of those planning and executing Price Tag attacks was to create a balance of terror that would force the government to reverse its intention to dismantle certain settlements. Then the Price Tag perpetrators upped the ante and decided on two new courses of action. One was the use of focused violence against IDF property (such as destroying military vehicles at the Benjamin Division base and torching tires), and recently also against key army figures (such as stoning the commander of the Ephraim Division); the other involves activities inside Israel (among others, the desecration of Muslim and Christian burial grounds in Jaffa, and mosque torchings in Tuba Zangariya in the Galilee, and in Jerusalem).²⁹

Since the late 1960s, two major trends have characterized radical religious Zionism. One is increasing religious observance—among other things, in matters of modesty and gender relations—and another is the increased level of political engagement and other activities meant to preserve the integrity of “Greater Israel.” The diverse phenomena accompanying these trends are merely different manifestations of the same ideological conception. Many of the rabbis are responsible for this religious radicalization, and for supplying the ideological arsenal and purported Halachic justification for political radicalization as well. Some play a role in the violent activities of settler youth, albeit mostly indirectly. One salient example of this phenomenon can be found in a statement by Rabbi Dov Lior, who has repeatedly supported and praised the “Hilltop Youth” who, it is alleged, perpetrate “Price Tag” attacks: “*Noar Hagvaot* [the

Hilltop Youth] are wonderful youth, busy settling and redeeming the land, not wasting their time with drinking and violence. The establishment of *Garinim Toraniyim* (Torah Nuclei)³⁰ and the *Teshuva* movement are a tremendous process that will have a massive effect on the people of Israel who are thirsty for any morsel of Judaism.”³¹ Rabbi Lior also weighed in on the female singing issue, when a public affairs body he heads, *Beit Horaa L'Inyanei Tzibur*, ruled that orders to listen to women singing are clearly illegal, and that those who choose to obey them would be held responsible for their actions.

The great fear is that such statements by Rabbi Lior and some of his colleagues could inspire further violence by religious-Zionist youth, whether through direct or indirect influence. There is concern too that they may foment stigmatization of those religious-Zionist youth who choose to join the army.

For the most part, the religious-Zionist public has been, and still is, a staunchly Zionistic community that is deeply committed to the State of Israel and its frameworks. However, the attacks by some within their ranks on the IDF, the state, and its agencies are certainly alarming. These developments and their social and political implications will be a focus of study and analysis in the ongoing work of JPPI.

Rabbi Dov Lior:
"The Hilltop Youth are wonderful, busy settling and redeeming the land"

Notes

1 Perry, Yoram. (2007). A New Military Elite. In Ben Raphael, E., Sternberg, Y., et al (eds.), *New Elites in Israel*, p 133.

2 Rothenberg, Hagit, "The Battle over Camp Sanctity", *Channel 7*. (14/02/2008).

3 "Senior Kibbutz Movement official warns against religious 'takeover' of IDF," *Walla editorial board*, December 3rd, 2002.

4 Drori, Zeev. (2005). *Between Faith and Army: The Haredi Nahal Battalion: Risks and Opportunities*, Floresheimer Institute for Policy Studies, pp. 13-14.

5 B. (2010). The place of skullcap wearers in IDF's tactical command. *Maarachot*, p. 51 [in Hebrew].

6 "... There is a need for military people and weapons, and equally important, a lot of people of Torah and faith. We have said that two commands are upon us: to be great in Torah and to serve in the army to save us from our enemies" (Drori, 2005, p. 13); Janet O'Dea (1977). Gush Emunim: Roots and Ambiguities. *Bitfutzot Hagola*, No. 79/80, 18th year, Winter 1977, pp. 95-103.

7 O'Dea (ibid.).

8 Eldar, Akiva, & Zertal, Edit (2004). "Masters of the Land: Settlers and the State of Israel 1967-2004", p. 265, 269.

9 Huberman, Hagai, "Knitted Beret". *Arutz Sheva*, July 8, 2004.

10 Ministry of Education website: www.cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Mechinot_Kdam/Mechinot/.

11 The data regarding the rate of combat soldiers in previous years were taken from B. (2010), p. 53; data regarding the last advanced infantry training were taken from Harel, Amos, A different IDF. *Haaretz*, November 11, 2011; data regarding the share of religious people in the population are taken from the

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), "Statistical Abstract of Israel 2011," Table 7.4: Persons aged 20 and over, by religiosity and by selected characteristics: www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton.html?num_tab=st07_04x&CYear=2011 (last access January 8, 2012).

12 Supra, Perry (2007), p. 26.

13 For a a discussion, see Spiegel, Udi (2001). *Motivation to Serve*. The Knesset Research and Information Center [in Hebrew]. Levy, Yagil (2007). *From the Army of the People to the Army of the Periphery*, pp. 67-68, 85; Perry, "New Elites," p. 122, 127-127.

14 This opinion was voiced by both sides: in a *Arutz Sheva* interview in 2004, Rabbi Eli Sadan said that "if the religious sector takes over the army it will be a Pyrrhic victory" (Knitted Beret, July 8th, 2004); in a *Maariv* interview upon completing his term as Paratroops Division Commander, Brigadier General Herzi Levi said: "Today the situation is distorted, and no one can be happy about it. The religious population cannot be boastful and say, 'great, our share of soldiers and officers is growing', because this is not good for anyone. The short-term gain is a major threat in the long term."

15 For more on this issue, see, for instance: Sheleg, Yair (2002). On the brink of division in religious Zionism. *Haaretz*, March 26, 2002; Fischer, Shlomo (Forthcoming). Turning point or continuity? Torah regime, citizenship and the sources of radical Zionism in Zeev Shavit, Orna Sasson-Levy and Gai Ben Porat (eds.) *Identities, Boundaries and Spaces of Classification*, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Kibbutz HaMeuchad. ; Cohen, Asher (2009). The skullcap and the beret: Image and reality – the public discourse on religious Zionism and military service. In Moshe Rachimi (ed.), *Sefer Amadot; The Beret and the Kippa*, Orot College, Elkana, pp. 95-114.

16 Supra, Perry (2007), pp. 133-134.

17 For an elaboration and internal view of the struggle within religious Zionism, see: Stern, Eliezer (2009). "Knowing to Disengage." In *Massa Kumta: Navigating at Eye Level*, pp. 193-220.

18 Halevi, Abraham. "Sacrifice the soul over women's singing, even soldiers are shot to death." *Kikar Hashabat*, November 17, 2011.

19 Supra, Levi (2007), pp. 88, 262, 264.

20 Levi, Yagil (2008). "Proper/Hesitant integration: A Proposal for a multi-dimensional analysis of the women-religious struggle in the IDF," *Public Space Journal of Politics and Society*, Vol. 2.

21 B. Brachot 24a. Kidushin 70a.

22 See, for instance: Ravid, Barak. Netanyahu: The exclusion of women is an issue the secular public will not concede. *Haaretz*, November 27, 2001; Liss, Yehonatan, and Bar-Zohar, Ophir. Proposed bill: Religious soldiers to have impunity from women's singing. *Haaretz*, November 29, 2001; Bender, Arik. Peres against the exclusion of women: 'Public spaces must not be made into foci of discrimination.' *NRG*, December 12, 2011.

23 Expressions of the various positions within religious Zionism may be found here: Navon, Haim. "Women's singing: The world must have gone mad," *Ynet*, November 20, 2001; Editorial by Elazar Stern: "Less rabbis; less fabricated laws," *Srugim*, September 14, 2001; Nachshoni, Kobi. "The army enforces women's singing? Rather be shot to death than listen," *Ynet*, November 17, 2001.

24 Supra, Levi (2008).

25 Harel, Amos. "A different IDF," *Haaretz*, November 18, 2011.

26 Supra, Perry (2007), p. 135.

27 Rosman-Stolman, Elisheva. "Army and Religion as Demanding Systems: IDF and Religious Zionism," Ph.D. Dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, 2006.

28 One of the rabbis who explained and even justified revenge acts was Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, head of the Od Yosef Hai yeshiva in Yitzhar, among others in his book *Kuntreis Baruch Hagever*, which relates to the massacre perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein in the Cave of the Patriarchs. These ideas are elaborated in: Fischer, Shlomo (2007) "Nature, Authenticity and Violence in Radical Religious Zionist Thought", in Hannah Herzog, Tal Kochavi and Shimshon Zelniker (eds.), *Generations, Locations, Identities: Contemporary Perspectives on Society and Culture in Israel, Essays in Honor of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt*. Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew).

29 Fischer, "The State Crisis and Potential for Uncontrollable Violence in Israel-Palestine," Workshop on **Religion, Violence and War**, Institute for Theological Inquiry, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., October 30 – November 1, 2011, pp. 35-36.

30 Groups of highly religious and highly nationalistic young religious-Zionist couples who go to urban towns and neighborhoods to intensify religious life.

31 Katz, Menachem, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, "Encourage Arab Emigration" *Kikar Hashabat*, April 16, 2009; also cited in *Newsflash*, "Rabbi Lior calls for support of hilltop youth," *Arutz Sheva*, December 7, 2011.