

November 2019

Dear partners and supporters of New Profile,

We are glad to present to you updates on New Profile's activities and on militarism and its impact on Israeli society. In 2019 we continued our grassroots work, providing information and support to hundreds of youth, in their efforts to seek exemption from military service or discontinue their service. We also engaged teachers and social workers in critical discussions about militarism. We are able to continue our work in the current political context in Israel, which is hostile to our anti-militaristic and pro-peace agenda, mostly in informal settings, outside institutions such as schools. This kind of grassroots work was generally not affected by the political uncertainty, with two general elections rounds this year which until now did not result in a new government.

Warm regards,

Noga Kadman and Adi Dagan, Development Co-Coordinators

New research - Israeli soldier's volunteering in civil society organizations

A new groundbreaking academic research on Israeli soldier's volunteering in civil society organizations, was conducted in 2017-9 by Dr. Itamar Shachar, during his Marie Curie fellowship at the Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam. As part of what Dr. Shachar termed 'conscripted volunteering', soldiers are encouraged to participate in volunteering activities once in a while, as a unit, in smaller teams or individually, usually instead of routine activities in the military base, but sometimes even in their private time. Such activities were initiated in military units since the early 2000s, and have become increasingly popular since. In his research, Itamar held observations in NGOs, schools and institutions where soldiers volunteer (he refrained from engaging in official cooperation with the military institutions, but gained access to activities and interviewees through informal networking).

These hybrid volunteering settings intermingle and entangle actors and rationales from military and civic spheres, and sometimes even from the corporate world (e.g. through sponsorships). Their increasing prevalence in Israel may indicate an emergence of what Dr. Shachar termed a military-industrial-nonprofit complex, drawing inspiration from the collection “The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex” by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. By promoting ‘conscripted volunteering’, the military harnesses civil society discourses and practices to its own interests and needs, but also militarizes civil society. Furthermore, ‘conscripted volunteering’ appears as a new mechanism that can contribute to nurturing and reinforcing the military’s public legitimacy, assisting the military to whiter explicit critiques on the necessity of its immense budget or its compulsory draft policies.

However, Itamar’s research demonstrated that maintaining the military’s public legitimacy was not the only rationale for the military’s investment in ‘conscripted volunteering’. The research showed how engaging soldiers in ‘doing good’ also strengthened their belief in the morality of the military. It enabled soldiers to maintain ‘moral coherence’ during their military service, despite the military’s routine operations, including the maintenance of a repressive military occupation of the Palestinian people. One of the soldiers Itamar talked to commented on about his volunteering experience in a residence for people with disabilities: “Coming here gives you energy to continue. You are going out of the everyday routine in the military base to do something like that, and it gives you a good feeling”. Volunteering appears as not only providing a break from military routine, but also serving as a means to (re-)engage soldiers in their military role, and leading soldiers to (re-)appreciate the military as an institution because it provides them the opportunity to ‘do good’ and thus ‘feel good’. Another soldier who organized volunteering activities for her unit that was deployed in the occupied West Bank, indicated:

“Because these soldiers are doing daily policing jobs and working at the checkpoints, it is very important for me to give them also this experience of – I’m not only the... bad policeman, who has to stand at the checkpoint and has to prevent people from passing. I want to give them also a good experience, of like – I am wearing uniforms, and I am representing something good. [...] In the checkpoint, everyone curses them. [...] And then we have the school that we adopted, we are going there before almost every holiday to have some activity

with the kids. [...] We danced with them, we sang with them, we made them happy - and the soldiers were “high” after this experience. They felt good about themselves”.

Through engaging soldiers in activities that are accepted uncritically as ‘good’, potential moral doubts and emotional difficulties are mitigated, and soldiers are increasingly able to maintain their self-perception as ethical subjects is restored. Soldier`s volunteering thus appears as a useful mechanism in the maintenance and regulation of soldiers’ ‘moral coherence’.

*This summary is based on papers presented by Itamar Shachar at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (November 2018) and at the international academic workshop “Weaponized Volunteering: New Configurations Between Civil Society and Armed Organizations” that he organized at the University of Amsterdam. The papers are currently under review in academic journals. **Please do not distribute further or quote without author’s permission.***

ליטורגיה

**ישראלי
אמיתי
לא משתמט**
באמצעות - פי שחוק המאס ורל עליו נבצר שרלא להמאס

**אף פעם לא שוכחים
למה חובה לשרת בצה"ל**

Each year the campaign “A real Israeli does not dodge military service”, initiated by a publicity company, releases a new ad and slogan. In May they released their new ad with the slogan “Never forget why it is a duty to serve in the IDF” paraphrasing the words “Never forget” which are often used in relation to the Holocaust and with an army

uniform and a yellow, star shaped badge, similar to the badge that Jews had to wear under the Nazi regime. This reinforces the message that the only option in the face of past and present threats is having a strong army.

Updates on Militarism in Israel

- In June, [an article was published in the Times of Israel](#), reporting that some 10,000 troops served time in military prison in 2018, one in every 15 service members. The majority of these incarcerated soldiers, most of whom come from minority and low socioeconomic groups, were sentenced to prison for going AWOL — absent without leave. This has been found to be especially true of Israel's Ethiopian community - approximately a third of all soldiers of Ethiopian origin served time in prison, according to a study from 2013, and the primary cause leading to their imprisonment is dereliction of military duty without permission, as a result of severe familial or financial difficulties. The level of incarceration of soldiers is far greater than in the general population. Last year, law professor Boaz Sangero estimated that soldiers were imprisoned at a rate 67 times that of civilians.
- In an interesting analysis by Orly Noy - [The origins of Israeli racism lie in our hyper-militarized society](#) she claims that racism is a symptom of deeply rooted militarism, which is more dangerous than the later and needs to be eradicated.
- In an interesting article about how [Militarism also feeds gender-based violence](#) Henriette Chacar describes recent events in Israel, demonstrating connections between toxic masculinity and a militaristic society.
- [A story by the Social TV](#) about militarism and how it shapes the perception of men about power relations between them and civilians - women in particular.



A kit that is being sold in post offices in Israel with the title “To the IDF with Love”, and includes stamps with IDF berets and greeting cards for soldiers. This is another example of how civilians (especially children) are encouraged to develop strong emotional ties to the military and are expected to demonstrate appreciation and care for soldiers.

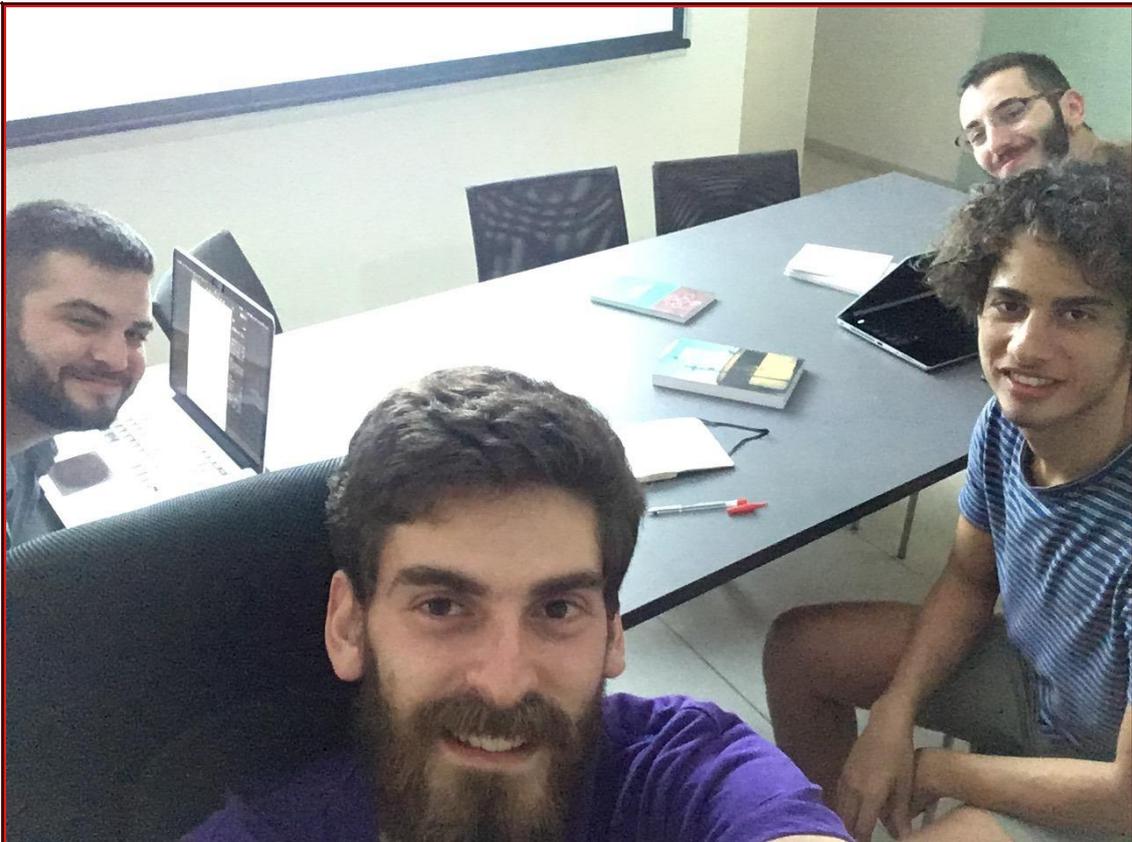
New Profile's Counseling Network

Since the beginning of 2019, more than 800 youth have turned to our network for assistance, regarding exemption from military service or discontinuing their service. 46 youth received support from our legal coordinator. 28 volunteers are part of the network, supporting the youth who seek help.

After two years as the Counseling Network’s coordinator, Daniel Birger left his role and was replaced in July by Or Ben David. Or has known New Profile since she was a teenager and participated in the movements’ activities for youth. She herself was imprisoned for 4.5 months following her refusal to enlist in the army in 2009. During those challenging times she received a lot of support from New Profile. It is interesting to note that both Daniel and Or, who were assisted by New Profile, decided that they want to help other draft resisters and to promote anti-militarism in our society, like many of our volunteers in the Counseling Network. Or, who is 29 years old, has extensive experience working in political

and human rights organizations such as the Coalition of Women for Peace, Amnesty International, an Israeli LGBT organization and more.

Our part time legal coordinator, Michal Goren, left this role in November and was replaced by Inbar Har-Adir, who is a lawyer with many years of experience, working for social justice causes.



Daniel, the former Counseling Network Coordinator, trains 3 new volunteers. Tel Aviv, June 2019.

Feedback

Examples of the feedback we collected in 2019 from young people who were assisted by our Counseling Network:

- The information from the Counseling Network helped me because I was very confused before that.

- It helped me - there was always someone to contact and to share my difficulties.
- It was just great! The network volunteer helped me every step of the way. She helped me see the process in a completely different light from how I perceived it because of the commander attempts to scare me.
- The help was very significant, otherwise I could not have gone through with it.
- The Network volunteer answered all my questions and gave general instructions for each step until the exemption. The information he provided was necessary in order to know what to expect and how to prepare to leave the army.
- The help was very significant, she answered all my questions with answers that I couldn't find elsewhere.
- The counseling was very meaningful to me - kind, calm and provided correct and important information.

New Profile's anti-militarist educational and outreach work

In 2018 New Profile initiated - The Forum of Education Coordinators from NGOs that promote Human Rights and an end to the Occupation (including Zochrot, Breaking the Silence, Sadaka-Reut, Combatants for Peace, ACRI and more). A recent initiative of the forum is a series of 10 lectures and workshops for teachers in Tel Aviv, that started in October and will continue until January 2020. The 10 meetings include a wide variety of critical political topics such as: Self-censorship of teachers in the classrooms; How the 1948 war is taught in schools and how to use urban spaces, oral history and art to expand the narrative beyond the official one; The shrinking of democratic spaces; How to empower youth to become involved in activism in their communities; and more. One of the meetings, organized by New Profile, will be dedicated to militarism in the Education System in Israel and will cover topics such as militarism and gender and how militarism presents in schools and in the civil public sphere, in ways that normalize it. The meeting will include a guided tour in the streets of Tel Aviv, highlighting the everyday presence of militarism.

In July and September we conducted for the first time two workshops about “The day after exemption,” which were attended by young people who received exemption from military service. The information presented in the workshops was based on our updated online guide [“The day after exemption.”](#) which outlines civilian options available for young Israelis who were exempted from military service, including national civil service, subsidized housing and education, professional training etc. The workshops provided an opportunity for questions and discussions.



The workshop “The day after exemption,” June 2019, Tel Aviv

Save

the

date!

On January 16th, 2020, New Profile will hold for the first time a seminar about military service as a risk factor impacting different populations in Israel. We are inviting

educators, social workers and mental health professionals to this one day seminar, which will include lectures and discussions.

We are grateful for our donors:

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Women's World Day of Prayer

What You Can Do

Support

us

Please support the work of New Profile, and help us continue our struggle for demilitarization of Israeli society.

1) [Via Paypal or credit card](#)

2) **In the US:** Make a tax-deductible donation via the Refuser Solidarity Network [here](#) (please specify the donation is to New Profile under "Additional information").

3) **In Canada:** Make a tax-deductible donation via La Galerie Fokus: Fokus

Galerie Charity Registration No. 132450230 RR 0001 Plateau Mont-Royal 68,
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4) Send a wire transfer to our bank account:

Bank Hapoalim, Account No. 421121, Branch 769, Trumpeldor Street, Ramat
Hasharon, Israel.

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(Note: Following new banking regulations, you must specify the IBAN code in
any money transfer for it to go through)

And please kindly notify us by [e-mail](#) or using our [contact form](#).

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receiving our information (several messages per year) by clicking [here](#)

Help us promote our work

We would be grateful if you would like to organize a speaking tour with New
Profile activists in your area or write to us if you have other creative ideas to
promote our work.

Thank you! Your support will enable us to create a more peaceful society!

For more information contact development.newprofile@gmail.com