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Vulnerable Heroes: Veterans' Health, Family, and Sexuality in Chinese Politics

It was the middle of the night, but the PLA veteran, a former officer, could not fall asleep. He was, by most all accounts, a bona fide war hero (mainly in battles in China's Northeast), decorated and praised for his courage, poise, and clear thinking under fire; he was wounded in battle in 1938. After a mediocre career in the 1950s, he rose rapidly in the party in the early 1960s. But wounds, recurring illnesses, and years of artillery fire had wreaked havoc on his sleeping patterns; in peacetime, sleep was fitful because it was *too* quiet for comfort. Years on the battlefield also took a toll on his health. Those around him reported that he had been ill for many years, was in constant pain (he could work for only one or two half-hour periods a day and rarely attended meetings), and sometimes behaved erratically, all of which limited his ability to build bridges to other party leaders; most of his close contacts were in the PLA, not the "civilian wing" of the party. Like many other veterans we have seen, the officer often found himself politically isolated and thus politically vulnerable in the no-holds-barred world of Chinese politics. Still suffering from serious health problems, the veteran, together with his family, died during the Cultural Revolution in circumstances that can only be described as highly murky. His reputation has still not been rehabilitated by the party he helped bring to power.

For those familiar with the Chinese political scene, the above story should have a somewhat familiar ring to it. Subtract my literary license, and the veteran officer in question is none other than Marshal Lin Biao, Mao Zedong's Minister of Defense and heir apparent until 1971, when he and his family, sensing that walls were crumbling on them, perished in a plane crash while attempting to flee China. What might be a bit more surprising to students of Chinese politics is the causal weight I have placed on Lin's *medical condition*:

his erratic behavior at home and work habits (according to one source, he was better able to relax amid the sounds of a motorcycle—placed *in* his home—at full throttle, surrounded by fumes from diesel gasoline), his frequent illness, his difficulty managing relationships (including with his wife), and ultimately his fatal political weakness strike me as symptomatic of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) combined with more run-of-the-mill ailments of the body that have affected veterans throughout history.¹ Boasting a military record second to none (and superior to those of Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai, who successfully straddled the civilian–military divide), Lin’s case, I suggest in this chapter, can best be understood as simply the most famous, but not atypical, instance of how wartime experiences affected the bodies, minds, and families of thousands of more ordinary veterans and led to their difficulty taking their civilian opponents “to the mat” in many political wrestling matches. If Marshal Lin had a hard time managing his political career and his family affairs (his wife, Ye Qun, was said to have been able to easily manipulate him²), consider the predicament of less well-placed veterans.³

Lin Biao’s sudden demise was a shock to the political system—even Mao was not quite himself after it—but it should not have been at all surprising to any official who had access to reports on PLA veterans in the 17 years prior to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Unnatural deaths among veterans (and their family members, we will see in the next chapter) were one of those inconvenient facts that were known at the top but kept well hidden from the youth who imitated soldiers’ marches, battle tactics, and uniforms during this period. They had been a long-standing feature of political life since the earliest years of the PRC. In 1952, An Fuhun, a veteran from the old revolutionary base areas in Shanxi Province, took his life when he returned home and found that his wife had remarried, both of his parents had died, and “no one came by to console him”; another veteran from Shanxi attempted suicide in Beijing’s Zhongshan’s Park after he could not get settled into a job, was poor, and “had an illness that was not being cured.” A passerby, however, noticed his body and notified the authorities, who brought him to the hospital, where he recovered and was released.⁴ A decade later, and in wealthier areas of the country, reports called attention to veterans’ medical vulnerability: in Qingpu, there was Han Enyou, 66, a disabled veteran who suffered from chronic high blood pressure and committed suicide; Li Hailin, whose marriage was poor, was frequently sick, and “could not afford medicine”; and Hu Jinfa, a 28-year-old veteran from Songjiang County who was frequently ill, resulting in his wife’s petitioning for divorce.⁵ Lin Biao may have been one of the most prominent veterans for whom medical problems impacted his political and personal fate, but he certainly was not the only one in China; a 1956 estimate noted that nationwide there were roughly half a million veterans who

were chronically ill, "old and weak," and with Level 3 [the least injured on a scale of 1–3] [AQ50] disabilities.⁶ To the extent that we seek to understand the sources of veterans' problems in "political wrestling" in China, perhaps we need look no further than their bodies: pain, illness, and sexual and family-related problems were all handicaps that many of their younger, civilian rivals did not have.

Whether the victim was Lin Biao, Hu Jinfan, or Han Enyou, the political tale of war-related disability and vulnerability is an old one that refuses to fade away, even now. For instance, Sophocles' story of Philoctetes is about the son of the King of Pheacia, a famed archer and a warrior who was bitten by a water viper on the way to the Trojan War. The odor from his festering wound was so offensive to his comrades that he was marooned on the island of Lemnos.⁷ The disabled Philoctetes, however, had something that was indispensable to the war effort, which had been going on without him for ten years. Cassandra, the seer, told the Greeks that the war could not be won without the bow of Heracles, which was in Philoctetes' possession after he inherited it from his warrior father. The Greeks, forced to eat crow, sent Neoptolemus and Odysseus to Lemnos to ask Philoctetes to rejoin them. The wounded warrior was initially too proud to accept their apology: "What things you've done to me, how you've cheated me! Are you not ashamed to look at me here at your feet, a suppliant to you, yourself shameful?" Eventually, there was a *deus ex machina* (a sudden, unexpected story contrivance) [AQ51] that relieved him of the burden of this decision; the Greeks regained the bow and eventually went on to win the war.⁸

Like Sophocles, spinners of political fables in 20th-century China and the United States recognized the power of narratives involving heroic wounded soldiers whose sacrifices and sufferings are redeemed. Despite the Korean War and rising international tensions, disabled soldiers were almost invisible in Chinese films during the 1950s and early 1960s—CCP cultural elites insisted on showing images of a "healthy, strong nation"⁹—but in the years prior to the Cultural Revolution and during it, Chinese by the millions read Mao's essay about the non-mythological Dr. Norman Bethune ("In Memory of Norman Bethune"), a Canadian physician who tended to wounded PLA soldiers in the late 1930s (and who died from septicemia after cutting himself during surgery). The constant repetition of this story (together with many works of art) has created the impression that wounded PLA veterans received proper care; it has also forever sealed Canada's reputation as a "friend of China." Like the soldiers he treated, Bethune was a complicated figure—he had a fondness for women and drinking—but the narrative spun around his exploits was a simplified tale of heroism, selflessness, and martyrdom. More recently in the United States, the story arc of Private Jessica Lynch, who

was said to have been wounded in Falluja, Iraq, while valiantly repulsing her attackers, served, at least for a while, to convince Americans of the valor attached to being wounded in combat and the legitimacy of the cause. However, like the mythological Philoctetes, many elements of the Jessica Lynch story were also fiction. She was awarded a medal for heroic action largely as a result of pressure from politicians on the Pentagon (though their Congressional liaisons), against the recommendation of officers who examined her case and found that she had never fired her weapon.¹⁰

Wounds tended, disabilities surmounted, and physical hardships overcome in the line of duty are convenient tropes for spinmeisters in the political world and storytellers in literary circles. However, these kinds of representations or (to use the more fashionable term) *discourses* about suffering, care, and redemption tell fewer significant truths about the impact of war on the body than more “everyday” interactions, or lack thereof, between flesh-and-blood individuals who returned from war and the state officials and members of society who were entreated to hold them in high esteem; most veterans, after all, did not live on islands like Philoctetes on Lemnos did or benefit from interviews with celebrity journalists like Jessica Lynch did. While we recognize that wounded and sick veterans are inescapably embedded in particular cultures, histories, and political systems, it is also important to look at this relationship from the perspective of veterans’ bodies: chronic pain, disorienting medications, and the time required to navigate bureaucracies and clinics could easily limit their ability to get along and get ahead. Good health is a *resource*, an important part of an individual’s social and political “capital,” much like time, social connections, and financial resources. Lin Biao’s dependence on his politically ambitious wife, erratic behavior, isolation, lack of sleep, and the ease with which he was manipulated by others might just demonstrate the inherent limitations of engaging in politics while distracted by more corporeal problems. How society treats those with these sorts of problems can also serve as a gauge of the extent to which government and society give meaningful patriotic credit and citizenship status (that is, not limited to official praise or policies) to those who served in the military as well as accommodate their obvious needs. Health care, like good health, is a scarce resource that involves significant costs (medicine, hospital beds, sick leave) and is bureaucratically complex and fraught with tension since the determination of disability is “inescapably subjective.”¹¹ Moreover, it involves many educated personnel (doctors, nurses, and personnel officials)—in short, those who, at least according to scholarly accounts, were most exposed to patriotic sentiments. If the PLA was an esteemed institution, if ordinary people bought into the CCP’s thousand-told narrative of victory, and if pride in nation was manifested in the resurgence of national power, it would not be unreasonable

to expect that those victors whose bodies were scarred and marked by war would be treated well and with a good dose of sympathy and concern for their welfare. These criteria should apply with extra force to educated elites in the health field, whose position gave them tremendous powers to heal, cure, and reduce suffering. They can also apply to other sectors of society: were women willing to marry disabled soldiers? Were employers willing to take into consideration chronic pain when assigning jobs? Were Civil Affairs officials sympathetic when approached by a veteran with personal problems?

Tracking down the tête-à-têtes between veterans with disabilities or family- and sex-related problems and other members of Chinese society is not easy. Despite the overwhelming importance of warfare in the history of modern China, few have studied what actually happened to those who experienced war firsthand after their discharge. This neglect has more to do with academic bias against military topics and an unfortunate propensity in China studies to follow whatever topic, methodology, or theory is in vogue in our disciplines (political economy, democratization, cultural studies, etc.) than a scholarly consensus that military or civil-military relations are unimportant politically, culturally, or sociologically. As a result, we now face the rather odd predicament of knowing more about disability as a biologically rooted, quasi-ethnic identity (thanks to research by Matthew Kohrman on disability in China and Karen Nakamura's study of deafness in Japan, for instance) than the political and social experiences of millions of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans who returned from war in the 1940s and 1950s with missing body parts, chronic pain, and scarred minds.¹² That many would also have serious psychological problems should not be particularly surprising. According to psychiatrist Jonathan Shay, veterans' ability to recover from combat trauma often hinges on *staying together* with other veterans, but in China policy focused on returning them to their native place (see Chapter 2), even if this meant separating them from their comrades-in-arms.¹³

In Asia, the neglect of research on war-related disabilities is more understandable. Unlike the United States, which did not experience war on its territory, Asian countries suffered enormous devastation; there was scarcely a dimension of life unaffected by war. After WWII, it was far easier, and maybe even necessary, to look toward the future than to dwell on the messy consequences of the past. Chinese leaders repeatedly referred to "new China" after 1949, and Japan's national narrative focused on its "economic miracle" by the late 1950s; Westerners duly chronicled the revolutionary changes in China, and studies of the sources of economic growth in Japan became a cottage industry. But perhaps there was something else at work: a keen awareness that despite state policies, disabled and ill veterans were not treated well and that this poor treatment reflected poorly on their societies

and governments. In China, at least, archival research suggests that this often was the case: many disabled veterans found themselves exposed and vulnerable to several lines of attacks against their status. Officials and ordinary people were dubious about the value of their war-weakened bodies to the state and virulently contested their claims of worthiness for status and certain benefits. As these attacks took place, many veterans were unable to find the support they needed in bureaucracy, the media, veterans organizations, law, civil society, or family—all “institutions” that historically served to shore up veterans’ status in the face of adversity. In extreme cases, veterans by the thousands committed suicide, but in others they muddled through, often depressed, angry, and in pain.

HEALTH, MARRIAGE, AND SUICIDES: SOME NUMBERS AND PATTERNS

More than a century ago, Emile Durkheim published *Le Suicide* (1902), a landmark study in sociology that attempted to use suicide rates among disparate groups to demonstrate a more general theory of social cohesion, or the “integration” of society. For Durkheim, suicide rates could be used to study how “macro” causes, such as dislocation caused by urbanization and industrialization, shape individual-level behavior; the more dislocation, he suggested, the higher suicide rates would be in a given group. Suicide was a “social fact” that could be studied separately from the individual acts that constituted the total rate.

It was Durkheim’s good fortune, at least as a researcher, to have had access to fairly good data on suicide rates for the time, something that has eluded students of Chinese society until very recently. What we have instead are snippets of information from speeches and investigative reports, an unsystematic collection of statistical data, scattered numbers, and individual cases which need to be glued together to get a more general sense of its causes. In contrast to U.S. data vacuumed up by public health officials in the Department of Veterans Affairs that showed a statistically significant correlation between combat trauma and propensity to suicide,¹⁴ the scattershot information from China does not allow us to conduct statistical regression to determine what sort of veteran was more likely to commit suicide than others or a more Durkheimian analysis of how veterans’ suicides compared to those of other groups.

Even with these caveats, however, it is possible to observe several general trends. Chinese veterans’ suicides occurred throughout the 1950s and 1960s in numbers large enough (and in some areas, with increasing frequency over

the years¹⁵) to warrant investigations at the county, provincial, and national levels. Very little was done to prevent suicide, aside from ex post facto analyses whose conclusions were not implemented; most suicides were not caused by the macro-variables identified by Durkheim. For instance, for Durkheim, moving to a city could cause anomie, but in China, as we have seen, this was a more celebratory event. There were, of course, other "macro" causes at work. These included widespread discrimination against disabled people due to the pervasive notion that in the "new," "strong," and "reconstructing" China, a person identified as "weak" or suffering from various maladies and ailments, even though he may have had a heroic past on the battlefield, was less valuable than someone who was young, healthy, and strong. This notion was reinforced by the Marxist emphasis on the importance of "production," which made it difficult for ill veterans to prove their worth through continued sacrifice, as well as grinding poverty that sometimes resulted in Darwinian-like struggles for survival that placed even the heroic weak at a disadvantage.¹⁶ It is also possible that some veterans committed suicide as a dramatic form of political protest—a last-ditch effort to call attention to their plight and to make a statement about the ways in which the Revolution had gone astray (see Chapter 8 for suicide in the reform period). There is ample evidence about this use of suicide (and suicide attempts) among other groups in China (but particularly women),¹⁷ but assessing motives without more detailed documentation is somewhat hazardous.

The historical circumstances of the Chinese revolution almost guaranteed that there would be hundreds of thousands of heroic but unhealthy veterans. Generally speaking, since the emergence of cities and metropolitan lifestyles, most people who have served in the military have come from the lower-socio-economic strata, especially among enlisted men, and *rural areas* in particular (in many cases, of course, *rural* and *poor* often overlapped). As noted by historian Azar Gat, such military authorities as Vegetius, as well as Machiavelli, considered cities the least desirable recruiting ground compared to the countryside, with its stock of "sturdy farmers, accustomed to hard physical labor."¹⁸ This was true of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War,¹⁹ the German army in the 20th century,²⁰ the British Army until World War I (during which time its best troops came from farms in the rural dominions of New Zealand, Australia, and Canada),²¹ and Russia until the Bolshevik victory over the Whites.²² In those countries, however, the mass nature of total war and near-universal conscription in the 19th and 20th centuries led to a gradual broadening of the social classes that were drafted into military service; writers, poets, businessmen, clerks, laborers, and government officials were all thrown into the mix.²³ There was a relatively high degree of literacy among ordinary soldiers. China was notably different in this respect.

Owing to the rural-to-urban dynamic of the revolution and the absence of conscription, the majority of soldiers (and thus veterans) were peasants who hailed from some of the poorest provinces in the country (mainly the northern provinces of Anhui, Shaanxi, Henan, Shanxi, Shandong, and Hebei), where health conditions were poor. Not unlike the United States during the Civil War, when "the frequent transfer of units to areas of unwholesome conditions, or simply of different climate increased the vulnerability of men,"²⁴ years of fighting without proper medical facilities or trained physicians (there were not enough Norman Bethunes to go around) exacerbated this problem. PLA veterans' health status could also be compared to that of Mexican-Americans drafted into the U.S. Army during WWII. Like the PLA rank and file, these soldiers usually came from impoverished areas and returned to small towns with "great health needs" but lacked adequate health care.²⁵

Most all archival reports concerning PLA veterans chronicle their health-related problems, particularly chronic diseases, post-traumatic stress disorder (then diagnosed as "insanity"), depression, and a host of unexplained maladies. A 1951 report from Shanghai classified only 228 out of 406 veterans as "not having illness" (56 percent); close to 100 of them suffered from either respiratory or digestive ailments; and 16 suffered from psychiatric disorders.²⁶ A 1952 report on 2,105 Shanghai veterans noted that "most" were "not healthy." Chronic illnesses were common (818 veterans, or 38.8 percent), and some suffered from STDs (89 veterans, or 4.2 percent) and mental illness (32 veterans, or 1.5 percent); only 893 of the 2,105 veterans (42 percent) were said to be in good health.²⁷ A 1956 analysis of the 3,134 disabled veterans residing in Shanghai found that slightly more than half (54 percent) were officers (whose rank allowed them to move to Shanghai) and that 70 percent were disabled at Level 3.²⁸ In Shandong circa 1951, 20 percent of all veterans were diagnosed as disabled (roughly 100,000 people), and 98 percent were living in villages;²⁹ among the 550,000 residing there in 1956, 60,000 had chronic diseases (11 percent); and in 1960, the figure stood at 52,000.³⁰ In Liaoning Province, a recently published Civil Affairs gazetteer notes that many Korean War veterans who returned to their villages were sick or had been wounded and often lacked land, housing, and family.³¹ In the entire Northeast region, a 1952 report noted that 3,000 veterans had already returned home, found a place to live, and got land "but could not work because of chronic illness, and 60 had already died." Reports coming in from Beijing, Shanxi, and Hebei also noted dozens of veterans suffering from various lung diseases, mental illness, and pain from old wounds who died without having received medical care; they were among hundreds who were waiting to be admitted to hospitals.³² To relieve some of this pressure, rural officials wrote letters of introduction for veterans and family members of revolutionary martyrs for hospitals in

Beijing, but because many city hospitals had no free beds (according to the Ministry of Health), some patients died while seeking medical attention.³³ In Qingpu circa 1957, 8.2 percent of veterans had officially recognized disabilities, mainly severed limbs and facial injuries,³⁴ a category that did not include those with chronic or recurring illnesses (as noted in a report from 1961): tuberculosis, leprosy, leukemia, gastric ulcers, chronic bronchitis, schistosomiasis, hepatitis, inflammation of old wounds, arthritis, and partial paralysis of one or more limbs.³⁵

A random sampling from recently published county gazetteers provides similar numbers regarding the extent of disabilities and illness among returned veterans. In Wuqing County in southeast Hebei, 24 percent of veterans had disabilities.³⁶ The Yutian County gazetteer does not provide the percentage of veterans with disabilities but does note that 51.3 percent of those with disabilities were "war-related";³⁷ the Yi County gazetteer (also in Hebei) mentions that, in 1954, some 45 percent of veterans had some sort of recurring illness or disability;³⁸ while the Wu'an gazetteer simply states, "Resettlement work commenced in 1950s; among the resettled veterans, most were wounded or ill."³⁹ Further confirmation of the sorry condition of PLA veterans can be found by looking at their counterparts on Taiwan, who shared similar conditions on the battlefield. In 1954, the government designated roughly 70,000 veterans as "combat ineffective" because of psychiatric problems (1,000 cases), tuberculosis (15,000), leprosy (800), blindness (300), and amputations (150), and "many others suffering from various chronic disabilities."⁴⁰

Pain, illness, and disease were not the only sources of post-war challenges to veterans' bodies. Marriage and reproduction—critical to a young man's sense of place, status, and identity in most societies—were also difficult, particularly in the context of the 1950s, when the PRC liberalized laws governing divorce. Many veterans had been away at war during those years when, in more normal circumstances, they (and their parents and relatives) would be actively searching for spouses. Unsurprisingly, many veterans were bachelors and, thus, anxious about their prospects for marriage and family. Some rushed into marriage with the very first woman they met, but others may have given up because of their health problems;⁴¹ likewise, in the USSR after WWII, veterans who were over the age of 30 were anxious to be rapidly demobilized: "In five, ten years a man loses his chances with the female sex. The season for that [having children] doesn't go on after age thirty-five to forty, it's no secret to anyone."⁴² In Shandong, among 550,000 veterans in the early 1950s, roughly 25 percent were unmarried at the time of their discharge because of lengthy military service.⁴³ In 1954, after more veterans were discharged, the provincial government found that 65 percent of them were not married.⁴⁴ In Fan County, Henan Province, 64 percent of veterans were bachelors when

they returned from war.⁴⁵ Some veterans lost their entire families in the war and had little choice but to move to villages where they were strangers or became adopted sons of poor families, typically a low-status position in the family and community.⁴⁶

Given that in poor communities women were often in relatively short “supply” (mainly due to female infanticide)⁴⁷ and, after 1950, eager to divorce using the provisions of the 1950 Marriage Law, bachelor veterans—particularly if they were older, chronically ill, or disabled—faced obstacles that many ordinary men did not. Take, for instance, Xu Family Village in Shandong. According to the minutes of a meeting of county-level officials, 25 out of 32 young village women divorced in 1952 and moved to cities;⁴⁸ those who remained in the village probably had considerable leverage when choosing a spouse and probably would be somewhat hesitant to marry a 26-year-old veteran missing a leg. Indicative of this are the sporadic calls for the Women’s Federation, village officials, and fellow peasants to help in “matchmaking” veterans (the disabled in particular) with local women.⁴⁹ In Dongzhi County, Anhui Province, for instance, 28 percent of the veterans absorbed between 1949 and 1958 (327 of 1,168) received some assistance finding a spouse,⁵⁰ and in Ningyang in Hebei, 38 percent received help.⁵¹ Widows appear to have been especially attractive candidates for marriage to the severely disabled.⁵² Shanghai was not immune to these difficulties: a 1949 handwritten report called the marriage situation of disabled soldiers (especially Level 2 and above) “relatively complicated”—only two were able to marry, and others “frequently approached the government for help.”⁵³ Civil Affairs publications, gazetteers, and archival sources from the city and countryside also hint that not everything was hunky-dory in these relationships: several mention the government’s role in “solving veterans’ marriage problems” (in Ningyang County, Hebei, 20 percent of returning veterans received help resolving marriage disputes, and in Jiangsu Province a report noted that there were women who married veterans and later sued for divorce because of the veterans’ “physical problems”⁵⁴), but a search of Women’s Federation records in Qingpu and Shanghai did not turn up a single investigation of veterans’ marriage or family problems—this was probably considered a “military matter.”

Suicide data substantiate the extent to which health- and family-related problems took a toll on veterans. Officially (although never published in gazetteers), roughly 4,000 PLA veterans took their own lives between 1953 and 1957, a figure which probably underestimates the extent of the phenomenon; the PRC during the early 1950s did not have a national system for reporting such deaths as these.⁵⁵ Among the causes of these deaths (accomplished by hanging, jumping into a well or river, ingesting poison, jumping off buildings, or gunshots⁵⁶), chronic pain, disability, poverty, abuse, ridicule, and

marital and family problems figured prominently, even more so than the politically oriented causes (bad class status) mentioned in Chapter 3. These suicides were not simply a product of the initial, more chaotic phase of demobilization; they persisted into the 1960s, some 15 years after the state had established functioning bureaucracies devoted to veteran resettlement and health care. The earliest indications that veterans resorted to suicide emerged in 1951 in an analysis of 34 suicide attempts in Shanghai that resulted in more than 10 dead veterans; of the 34, seven were caused by poverty, five because of "marriage problems or adultery," and five had "psychiatric disorders and were ridiculed."⁵⁷ In 1952, General Fu Qiutao rattled off regional figures: in the Southeast, 19 suicides; in the North and the Northeast, more than 60 each; and in a several-month period in Sichuan, 33 veterans committed suicide, mainly due to "marriage problems, poverty, and a feeling of hopelessness and depression because of incurable illness."⁵⁸ A 1953 report from Shandong, noting "not a few problems" dealing with the disabled veterans and revolutionary martyr families, admitted that suicides had occurred because "their problems were not solved" (these may have been a form of political protest).⁵⁹ In the mid-1950s, similar causes were at work in Shanghai and Beijing. An investigation of 43 suicide attempts between 1954 and 1956 (in which 11 died) revealed that 30 percent were caused by "marriage problems and unrequited love" and 21 percent by "mental illness and chronic disease."⁶⁰ In 1955, for example, a Shanghai report noted a case of an out-of-town veteran who came to the city with mental illness, but he deteriorated because he was the butt of constant ridicule. When he was "locked up in a bathroom, he screamed that he was going to commit suicide."⁶¹ In 1957, noting "not a few" (meaning "many") cases of veteran suicides and expulsions from the party, the Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs compiled the following list of causes for 40 of the suicide attempts (12 dead):⁶²

Financial difficulties	7
Marriage problems	8
Adultery-induced panic	3
Beaten up, took revenge	5
Inappropriate jobs	7
Political history	5
Other	5

This pattern held in the early 1960s in Shanghai as well. In an analysis of 12 veteran suicides between 1960 and 1962, the main causes were marriage difficulties, "inappropriate flirting" (*luan tan lian'ai*), chronic illness, and sex scandals. These causes, however, were not always easily distinguishable; one

suicide could easily fit two or even three categories. For instance, a veteran committed suicide because his boss ridiculed him as a result of his wife's having an affair, but she was having the affair because "he has been sick for a long time."⁶³

Rural suicides displayed a similar dynamic. In an analysis of 24 veteran suicides that occurred between January and June 1954, 18 had been caused by either "marriage problems" or "family disputes," three because of poverty, and one because the veteran was depressed owing to age and illness (the other two causes were unrelated to health or poverty). Although this suicide rate was lower than the previous years, during which time 89 veterans committed suicide, the report acknowledged that veteran resettlement work was "woefully inadequate" (*hen bu gou*).⁶⁴ A 1955 report compiled by the Provincial Party Committee (which I was not allowed to read in full) focused specifically on the problem of recurring suicides among rural veterans.⁶⁵ A 1957 investigation of veterans in Shandong Province did not cite any numbers but called attention to "serious" problems of veterans "committing suicide, causing disturbances and fleeing the province,"⁶⁶ and in 1960 (during the Great Leap Forward) seriously disabled veterans left villages to seek help at county governments and the provincial capital because their problems were not being addressed locally—"a bad influence on the reputation of the party and government."⁶⁷ This particular report did not cite precise causes, but others did. Qingpu County suicides resulted from "chronic illnesses," "marriage disputes," "political history problems," and "unsubstantiated accusations against them."⁶⁸ In a 1959 meeting of senior Civil Affairs officials from six northern provinces and Beijing, the Deputy Minister of the Interior told his audience, "The problem of medication for veterans with chronic illness is an old one that has not been completely resolved; among veterans who committed suicide in the last several years, a considerable proportion of them were caused by chronic illnesses that were not treated in a timely fashion." Bumbling administration was partially to blame: with the establishment of communes during the Great Leap Forward, no one was sure who was responsible for paying disabled veterans' medical expenses.⁶⁹

Other officials, however, mentioned more proximate causes. A 1962 study of Visits and Letters work in the Provincial Department of Civil Affairs found that 82 percent of 3,066 letters and 2,135 visits were by disabled veterans and martyr and military families. In these letters, disabled veterans accused local cadres of lowering their disability level, beating them up, cancelling their benefits, and denying them financial assistance, and they also complained about their poverty and problems in securing medicine.⁷⁰ A rare breakdown of veterans' letters in a county gazetteer (in Shandong) provides us with a

sense of both the type and scale of problems faced by the disabled and other veterans and their families. In Haiyang County, officials were kept quite busy, as Table 6.1 demonstrates.

Although the gazetteer does not mention this, there are some indications that many of these "reports on local cadres" were substantiated upon further investigation: provincial-level officials tersely confirmed cases of "beating up, taking revenge upon, and causing the suicides of disabled veterans and members of military and martyr families."⁷¹ Still, those who wrote letters rarely saw remedial action. According to the summary of the Letters and Visits work report, "some counties and cities pay no attention to this job; they shove letters they've received in the drawer, and this isn't revealed until an investigation takes place; other letters were placed in the bottom of the closet."⁷² As a result, some disabled veterans decided to take more aggressive action. A 1956 analysis of "disturbances" (*naoshi*) among veterans found that one major cause was "disabled soldiers disagreeing with their level of disability and demanding a reevaluation."⁷³

Some abbreviated case histories from the Shanghai countryside (circa 1963) put a little more meat on these overly bureaucratic analyses. A veteran surnamed Yu, from Chongming Island, hung himself at the age of 27 because "his wife looks down upon him; before the suicide there was a big fight, and the party secretary often criticizes him." Another Mr. Yu, from Fengtai County, was "depressed because of chronic illness that was not improving"; Mr. Ai, 26, from Jinshan County, was a worker who suffered from bad mi-

Table 6.1. Petitioning in Haiyang County, Shandong, 1953-1965

Year	Letters	Visits	Content of Letters and Petitions
1953	—	16	Finding work, medicine, marriage problems
1956	344	603	Financial difficulties, marriage conflicts, medicine
1957	341	959	Burial of martyrs, reporting on local cadres, evaluation of disability level, locating the whereabouts of soldiers
1958	615	1670	Disabled soldiers reporting on local cadres, requesting a change in class status, financial difficulties
1959	522	210	Aid recipients requesting emergency funds for medicine and food, evaluation of disability level, locating soldiers
1960	449	720	Pension requests, evaluation of disability level, finding work, migration problems
1961	481	990	Requests for financial aid to buy medicine, finding work, disability-level problems
1963	650	1280	Requests for financial aid to buy medicine, reporting on local cadres
1964	656	1274	Requests for pensions
1965	361	863	Veterans seeking work

Source: Haiyang xian zhi (Haiyang, 1987), 649.

graines; Ouyang Yingyan shot himself when his work unit tried on numerous occasions to send his wife back to his hometown in Hunan, but she refused to go.⁷⁴ These sorts of cases, which probably continued into the Cultural Revolution years, do not appear to have prodded significant improvements in how veterans' family and medical problems were handled; it was not coincidental, or necessarily unjustified, that in 1965 Chairman Mao famously criticized the Ministry of Health for the lack of decent health care in the countryside.⁷⁵ A 1963 report by the Shanghai Party Committee complained that neither the Bureau of Civil Affairs nor the Labor Bureau conducted follow-up investigations after assigning veterans to jobs—"if they did, some of the suicide cases could have been prevented"—but this, as we saw in the previous chapter, was never really in the political deck of cards.⁷⁶ Problems related to veterans' poverty and medical issues were not handled well, either. If veterans had hoped that their suicides would provide a jolt to the system and lead to better care, they were mistaken: "Even suicides are not given a lot of attention and investigation; no one thinks about concrete ways they could have been prevented," the report concluded.⁷⁷

NO DIRECT DEPOSIT: POLICY-RELATED VULNERABILITIES

As the reports above hint at, some veterans turned to suicide with a keen sense of isolation and abandonment, of having served the Revolution which placed them in a job but then forced them to fend for themselves as they tried to cope with medical, family, and financial challenges. To be sure, this assessment did not hold for all disabled veterans; those in the higher ranks of the PLA probably had less to complain about and fewer committed suicide. The suicide data indicate that veterans committing suicide are usually in their late 20s, [AQ52]which would preclude a very high rank. Even though those veterans who committed suicide did not succeed in getting the CCP to heed the "message" they may have been sending about medical neglect, in hindsight their desperate acts do tell us about their primary administrative cause: an excessive degree of local discretion (involving officials in unions, villages, bureaucracies, and various committees) over the allocation of official status and distribution of benefits. Disabled veterans, so to speak, never had "direct deposit" into their bank accounts from the Center; all funds were distributed by district (in cities) or county (in rural areas) governments. Absent a direct, secure link to the Center, local cadres who either disliked them or contested the legitimacy of their worthiness and entitlement were able to cause veterans no small amount of hardship. Disability provided an easy pretext for this, since (1) there was money involved and (2) the precise origins of the dis-

ability and degrees of suffering, need, and pain could be subject to different interpretations and political narratives.

Local discretion in policy implementation was nothing new for the CCP. Under the rubric of the "mass line," it was long-standing policy to take into consideration people's opinions when dealing with numerous issues, ranging from whom to execute (landlords, capitalists, corrupt officials) to more mundane economic issues, such as evaluating salaries. Veterans, who had their share of detractors, could easily become vulnerable to negative assessments of their worthiness. For instance, Ma Yuanchun, a chronically ill veteran in Qingpu, had his factory salary lowered during a "salary reevaluation" in November 1954. Making roughly 36 yuan a month with a wife and three children, Ma, like many veterans with illnesses, had a hard time making ends meet. He received two additional stipends totaling 25 yuan during the 1955 Spring Festival, but he was still having problems. He requested an additional stipend, "but the masses did not agree" to his request. In a fit of anger, Ma jumped into a nearby river in an apparent suicide attempt but was pulled out by several eyewitnesses.⁷⁸ The evaluation of disability level, a critical assessment because the amount of a disabled veterans' monthly stipend depended on just how "officially" disabled he was, also involved input from a wide range of people. In the early years of the PRC, disability levels were apparently established by a committee comprising officials from health departments, Civil Affairs, and disabled veterans,⁷⁹ but this proved to be problematic: veterans were pleased if they were diagnosed with serious problems (which meant more money) but raised a ruckus if their degree of disability was lowered. This was not uncommon: in Chahe'er Province (now Inner Mongolia), among 64 disabled veterans who showed up one year for a reevaluation, 17 (or 25 percent) had their level lowered, one was raised a level, and 44 remained the same.⁸⁰ To rectify this, a larger committee (roughly 12 people) was established, comprising county- and district-level Civil Affairs officials, veterans representatives, physicians, and local cadres. According to one report, this method resulted in fewer problems and was praised by veterans, but just how frequently these committees met has been difficult to assess.⁸¹ Later in the decade, evaluation of disability was complicated by political campaigns, which kept officials too busy to get involved with this issue. In 1957, a Shanghai investigation noted that reevaluations were "very complicated" and could only be done if the disabled applied for assistance; otherwise, no proactive measures would be taken.⁸²

Without more information about Ma Yuanchun and the deliberations surrounding his request for financial aid, it would be premature to conclude that the "masses" did not appreciate him—perhaps Ma wasted his money chugging local wine?—but the case does hint that present-day assessments

of worthiness could interfere with the credibility gained from a “glorious” past. But what would happen if even the past was very murky and officials had a hard time assessing the extent of disability and how this corresponded with policy and budget expenditures? The complexity of war and China’s long revolution (which involved multiple periods, actors, turnabouts, and shifting alliances) made this even more difficult. A “Question and Answer” guidebook (published by the Ministry of the Interior for the internal use of its officials) concerning disability and pensions makes this clear. Let’s briefly take a look at a sample of questions and answers, not so much to discern policy outcomes (we cannot be sure if anyone read the guidebook) but, rather, to get a sense of the sort of complicated questions about disability status that were lingering in the air:⁸³

Q: Who is a “revolutionary disabled soldier”?

A: Members of the PLA and Chinese Volunteer Army (who fought in Korea) and security cadres who became disabled because they participated in war or because of selfless action (*yingong*).

Q: Who are “revolutionary disabled personnel”?

A: With the exception of those in the military, those who left their jobs and participated in revolutionary work and belong to either democratic parties, government institutions, or mass organizations who were injured or became disabled because of the struggle against enemies or because of selfless action.

Q: How should we differentiate between disability documents?

A: There are five types: (1) proof of being a “disabled revolutionary soldier”; (2) a “disabled revolutionary soldier who receives preferential treatment”; (3) proof of being a “disabled revolutionary personnel”; (4) “disabled revolutionary personnel who receives preferential treatment”; (5) disabled militia and public works workers.

Q: What does “disabled in public service” (*yin gong zhi can*) mean?

A: An injury that did not result from a mistake or not being careful. It does not include accidents during routine activities (not in war). It is given to those who tried mightily to fix something or rescue someone and were injured because they bravely took action.

Q: What about those in the GMD who fought against the Japanese and were disabled? How should they be handled?

A: After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (September 18, 1937), those who fought for the GMD against the Japanese and were injured and have proof that they have severed their connection with Chiang Kai-shek and have public testimony by the local masses can get “disabled revolutionary soldier” status. Ordinary people must get approval of the County, but those with more compli-

cated histories must apply to the provincial level and above. Only those at Level 2 disability (out of three) and above can get pensions.

Q: What about someone in the army who was slightly injured in war and did not get documentation, but after discharge the old injury flares up and now he meets the disability threshold?

A: He needs authorization of his army unit and at least two people who were in the unit with him. If they do provide authorization, his work unit should investigate and give their opinion to the district government.

As we can see in this virtual conversation, many kinds of questions were “pose-able” to those claiming disabled veteran status from the PLA as well as those from other institutions: what motivated them? Whose side were they on? Who witnessed their actions? Moreover, the answers assume a simplicity that is generally lacking in wartime (What if “the local masses” had conflicting opinions? What if they had certain biases?) and unlimited financial and health-related resources: it was up to the veteran—even if he was in chronic pain—to locate his army unit, contact eyewitnesses, and prod the government to conduct its own “investigation” (which could be overturned by the district). The questions also do not address possible biases on the part of elite physicians, who could have easily used their power of diagnosis to repudiate veterans’ claim to status. For instance, in the United States after WWII, many (white) Veterans Administration physicians questioned and rejected claims by African-American veterans, claiming that they were injuries that occurred prior to military service and that the disabled were “fakers.”⁸⁴ Equally problematic, the CCP, given the length of the revolution and the number of people who “participated,” “struggled,” or “fought” in one capacity or another, was forced to be quite promiscuous in its designation of “disabled” status, which, like the frequent use of the term *glorious*, diluted veterans’ contributions in the eyes of many, including officials responsible for taking care of them.

This complexity did not end after 1949. Although disabled veterans officially belonged to the “red” classes, they still could be caught in the net of political campaigns or prosecuted for such crimes as theft, solicitation, or adultery, a trio of crimes directly related to their relative poverty and complicated family situation. The early 1960s was an interesting period in this respect. At the same time that the PLA was represented as the epitome of all that was good, true, and pure about the Revolution, its disabled soldiers who served in official capacities in villages and cities faced a particularly acrimonious political environment. During the “4 Cleans” campaign[AQ53] in 1964, hundreds of officials, including PLA disabled veterans, were charged with corruption and other abuses of power; some lost their political rights in the process. These prosecutions, which often originated in local rivalries between

lineages and different leadership styles, further complicated the lives of veterans and administrators: what should be done about those official, hard-to-get documents and disability payments? Should present-day “crime” (becoming a “capitalist roader”) take precedence over losing a limb during a war? In other words, should class identity trump martial status? A flurry of questions and letters from the provinces to the Center in the mid-1960s attested to this confusion. According to the Ministry of Interior and the Public Security Bureau, disabled veterans who were the “worst offenders” or accused of “counterrevolution” should lose everything—including payments, certificates of merit, and stipends. Ordinary criminals, they instructed, must also turn in their documents but should have them returned when their sentence was complete. This leniency was not granted to the more serious offenders who completed their sentences: until their “bad element hat” was officially removed, their documents would be placed “with the local archives” and their payments placed on hold. Officials in Shanghai and Shanxi were confused, however. Who was responsible for reporting the disabled veterans’ situation to the higher authorities? Was this a matter for Public Security or the courts? Who had the authority to cancel payments? Shanxi officials asked if they had to take back the disability documents on a permanent basis or only temporarily and if the pension had to be stopped “completely” because of the loss of political rights. The response from the Center was straightforward: “If their hats are removed, their documents should be restored to them and their payments resumed.” Using the vague word *keyi* (“may”), local authorities were authorized to distribute financial aid “in accordance to their level of disability and financial difficulties,” but this was not mandated.⁸⁵

This sort of treatment and denial of political status may have been the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back for some disabled veterans in terms of how they assessed the legitimacy of the CCP (of which many were a part) and its policies in the year prior to the Cultural Revolution. In Shandong, a significant number of disillusioned disabled veterans threw in the revolutionary towel (perhaps also a confirmation of the idea that people’s willingness to obey law is related to how they are treated by state and legal authorities⁸⁶). A 1965 investigation of 256 households that had members designated as martyrs or disabled soldiers or had sons currently serving in the PLA (representing 16 percent of the population) in Laoshan Commune, Rongcheng County, found that disabled veterans were involved in profiteering, smuggling, tax evasion, and different forms of collusion with various “class enemies” such as landlords and other “bad elements,” all behaviors which had a “very bad influence” on the masses.⁸⁷ Even though the investigation lauded the impact of the story of Norman Bethune’s heroism in China, many veterans were more concerned about day-to-day matters. In a June 1965 meeting of 30 families of

disabled veterans, 19 were designated "backward" (*luohou*) by Civil Affairs. Among these were several who had traveled to Beijing to submit petitions on three separate occasions and were well known for their willingness to complain to the county government. All ignored party policies. One veteran refused to join a cooperative and worked by himself; another stole state property; a Mr. Xu frequently left the area; and a Mr. Ye "frequently met with bad people, and told others that he's not satisfied with the party or socialism," in part because it "prevented his wife from progressing and caused his family to split up on two occasions." A veteran surnamed Miao expected to be treated well by local authorities upon his return to the village but was disappointed. He lashed out at them: "When I was in the army, you were still a baby! Who do you think you are now?" To higher authorities in the party, he said, "When I was conquering the country, you were here enjoying yourself!" Of the party generally, Miao and others repeated the analogy we have seen as early as 1952: disabled veterans were like "donkeys slaughtered after having ground the wheat." These accusations were not entirely unfounded. In their self-criticism, local officials, like those in the early and mid-1950s, admitted that they did not interact much with veterans, thought they were pains in the neck, and did not cultivate them for good jobs and positions.⁸⁸ It is not clear what these particular veterans did during the Cultural Revolution, but it would seem that veterans like them were involved in the angry meeting with Zhou Enlai in mid-1966. One can only wonder what they thought about the young, mostly urban Red Guards parading through streets in military uniforms.

Shifting policies regarding class status and what constituted "corruption" or "crime" were not the only political storms that disabled veterans had to weather. Even when the Center did not unleash a political campaign such as the "4 Cleans," [AQ54]disabled veterans, as well as those with chronic illnesses, could still find themselves in the middle of a formidable bureaucratic maze, particularly if they lacked documentation or had to consult physicians, gather testimonies, request leave from work, and the like. In Qingpu, for example, a female veteran surnamed Ye had tuberculosis, but her work unit did not allow her to visit a physician and sent her home instead; another veteran's wife had schistosomiasis and required hospitalization. Physicians told her that without urgent medical care her situation would deteriorate but refused to admit her because she could not pay. Concerned about his wife, the veteran was said to have been very distracted at work.⁸⁹ At the heart of this problem was concern over money, coupled with a lack of sympathy for veterans or their families. Even though the PLA gave veterans with chronic illnesses money for medicine, reports (as late as 1964⁹⁰) indicate that it was not enough to cover the costs of long-term care and medication. To cover the extra costs, the disabled had to request supplemental funds from local Civil

Affairs offices, but even these officials admitted that their assistance was insufficient and that veterans and their families suffered a great deal of hardship and mental anguish as a result.⁹¹ Discussions between Civil Affairs and the Health Department, which controlled medicine and medical care, came to naught.⁹² This was also nothing new: even in the mid-1950s, there was little agreement over who should take care of disabled veterans, even though all assumed that veterans would have to pay something. In 1952, for instance, General Fu Qiutao lambasted the medical establishment, complaining that “Even though the Center has already decided that veterans with chronic illnesses can go to nearby hospitals and have their expenses paid by the hospitals, which will then be reimbursed by the Ministry of Health,” there are “some hospitals that falsely claim that ‘We never received any directive from the Ministry of Health’ to deny medicines and refuse admission to hospitals.” This problem was said to be “relatively common” in the Northeast, and if it was not resolved quickly, it could have severe implications for veteran resettlement generally.⁹³ A 1951 report from Chahe’er Province confirms regional difficulties. There, Civil Affairs officials were charged with both ignoring disabled veterans and, when dealing with them, treating them harshly. (They thought the disabled were “bothersome.”) When those officials were upbraided for this, they tried to please their superiors by paying personal visits to disabled veterans’ homes, but it was too late: veterans told them, “Get out the house! Don’t treat us so hypocritically (*xuwei*)—ignoring us, then coming to our house and then ignoring us again.”⁹⁴

But four years later the problem was no closer to being solved. In 1955 the State Council, which was populated by many engineering and energy officials, issued a provisional document that placed a heavy burden on disabled veterans: hospitalization required the approval of city- or county-level health department officials; if the chronically ill could not get work, they could request an investigation which would then go to the county government for approval; there was no financial assistance to pay for medicine for the “ordinary chronically ill veteran” (he should “rest at home and ask a local doctor to come”), but “those few” who needed help could seek assistance from the government (“district level and above”) for a discount; veterans had to pay for transportation and food, but work units had to pay for hospital fees if they were admitted; those with “light mental illness” should remain at home; and any sort of temporary aid to relieve extreme poverty had to be approved by the county.⁹⁵ Even though these guidelines were highly restrictive, their very existence seemed to create the impression that the government would eventually pay for something. At least in Qingpu, some village and township officials ignored the plight of poor veterans for this reason. Wu A’xiao, for example, was a disabled veteran with a wife and two children. His wife became ill in 1955 and could

no longer work, and Wu's disability made it difficult for him to collect enough work points. When he approached village officials for financial aid, they refused on the grounds that he was already receiving a pension; they also refused to give him a break on the price of grain. According to the report, Wu was extremely angry about this (perhaps because most of the village officials had not served in the military and were not disabled), refused to work in the fields, and put in numerous requests for a transfer to a wage-earning position outside the village.⁹⁶ Sick children could push veterans into poverty. Another Qingpu veteran told officials at a 1957 meeting of veteran representatives, "My kid got sick and we had to spend over 40 yuan. I went to Civil Affairs to request emergency funds but they refused, even though other people got some. It's not right."⁹⁷ These Qingpu cases were not unusual. In a 1956 report by the Ministry of Interior, General Fu Qiutao noted that all over China, disabled soldiers (including the chronically ill) generally had lower incomes than others because they could not work as hard and that, when sick, they "frequently (*shichang*) experienced difficulties obtaining medical care and medicines."⁹⁸ In 1957, Fu added "serious mental illnesses that cause hardship for their families" and "many family members to take care of" as two more of the "many causes" of veterans' difficulties in civilian life.⁹⁹ A 1962 investigation of Civil Affairs work between 1958 and 1961 in the Shanghai area, including its rural counties, noted that disabled veterans also earned less than military dependent families. For instance, a veteran was married with three children, but because he could not work and his wife did not earn much, their household income was 307 "labor days," which converted into a per-person average monthly income of 3.1 yuan, which was 56 percent lower than the "average" peasant household. After receiving state aid, their income still did not exceed 4.01 yuan, which was still 42.8 percent lower than the average.¹⁰⁰ If disabled veterans managed to reach the "average peasant" income standard, medical expenses could lower their real income significantly, making them even more dependent on the goodwill of others and probably less respected in the community because of this.

A synopsis of a 1951 meeting between disabled veterans and district-level officials provides us with a reasonable sense of just how dependent disabled veterans could be on the goodwill of low-level officials and how they tried to find allies in other parts of the state structure to solve financial and family-related problems. During this meeting, several disabled veterans from Qingpu and the surrounding counties stood up and vented their anger at the lack of responsiveness to their difficult situations, in the hope that officials would intervene on their behalf. A veteran surnamed Gao complained that he never received aid and could not work his land because his father was old and that he was over the age of 30 and still unmarried; he also lacked fertilizer and did not own his home. "Don't district officials, Civil Affairs cadres, and the

PLA Political Instructor know my family situation, and that I participated in the revolution?" he asked. One veteran complained that he did not receive any land during land reform. Another said,

I participated in the revolution since 1937. There were six in my family—my father and mother, wife, and my son and daughter. When I returned, my father and mother both died, and so did my daughter. My wife left with my son. There's no one left. I have requested that the government help return my son to me, but they refused.

Yu Aiqing then got up and told the audience,

After I participated in the revolution, I returned to find that my wife married another man; she gave my son away to someone else; now there's no one at home. I have six *mu* of land, but village officials only provide assistance cultivating three *mu*.

District officials jotted down these comments and then sent them along to the Qingpu County Chief along with a cover letter summarizing some of the complaints: "Local cadres do not show enough concern for them, they are assigned impractical jobs [given their health], and are dissatisfied with a host of other things." According to the district, "not all of these complaints are correct," but the county chief should still try harder to improve veteran administration.¹⁰¹

It is difficult to assess with certainty how much improved in the next six years or so, but judging by the complaints of disabled veterans at a 1957 meeting, some problems remained quite intractable. At that meeting Su Baosheng stood up and said, "I was demobilized in Subei and came to Qingpu to work in transportation. Even though I'm injured, I've never received my disability pension. I've gone to Civil Affairs, but nothing has been solved." A Mr. Gao complained about an "inappropriate" job assignment: "I was wounded in my head by an enemy plane in Korea so I don't have the strength to work in agriculture, but the government wants me to do just this. I can't do it and want to be transferred to a paper-producing factory, but nothing has been done." For a veteran surnamed Chen, jobs and medicine were the critical problems: "Civil Affairs does not take into consideration anyone's unique situation. My hip's bad, and I have trachoma, but I can't get medical care. I requested to change jobs and they refused. The Director of the Conscription Bureau even said that they 'wouldn't bother about me' (*bu yao guan wo*). Is this the right way to treat veterans?"¹⁰²

Given the problems we have seen in Qingpu in the mid- and late 1950s, it is clear that there were still many unresolved issues. What the district failed

to realize, however, was that even if a county leader did his utmost for veterans, he would still be highly constrained by the vagaries of the past, the complexity of the political economy surrounding medical care, the discretion of village and township officials below him, and veterans' own present-day behavior. Without powerful allies in or outside the state or their own organization, disabled veterans were quite vulnerable to attack, as the following case shows.

LIU JUNMIN AND THE STRANGE CASE OF THE 10-YEAR REVOKED PENSION

In August 1965, Yishui County's (Shandong Province) Bureau of Civil Affairs issued a report to provincial authorities vouching for the full restoration, with back pay, of the pension provided to a 47-year-old disabled veteran named Liu Junmin, who, despite being wounded in 1942, had had his pension revoked since the end of 1955. The Yishui letter was the culmination of a 2-year investigation surrounding the circumstances of his injury and the cancellation of his pension. It also included a healthy dose of self-criticism. "Our Bureau," it noted, "has direct responsibility for Liu's case." Insufficient awareness of the importance of handling letters, lack of implementation of party policies, sloppy investigation, and "a bias toward oral testimony" were all cited as the main causes for the 10-year pension hiatus. Yishui promised provincial authorities that they would investigate "Letters and Visits work during the past several years" as well as veteran resettlement and preferential treatment work "in the entire county."¹⁰³

In all likelihood Yishui officials were not overly enthusiastic about admitting to these administrative deficiencies, but their hand was forced by several other investigations into Liu's case. According to a comprehensive investigation by an ad hoc team of six officials (from the provincial, district, and county governments) that lasted six days, Liu Junmin's case began back in 1944, when he was in a security detachment attached to *The Masses Daily* (*Dazhong ribao*), the newspaper of the provincial CCP. While pulling guard duty in the town of Beiguan, Liu was "shot by a special agent," which caused numerous wounds to his torso and leg. In September 1946, Liu returned home and was elected a member of his village party committee during Land Reform. The village was evacuated during a Nationalist offensive in 1947, but he returned in the spring of 1948. In August of that same year, he was "introduced" to the party by a fellow villager—Ma Jie—and some new cadres who had arrived from South-Central Shandong. In 1951, he was given a certificate confirming "Level 2 disability." By the end of that year, Liu was

the secretary of the village's party branch. In 1953, however, he was expelled from the party, and in 1955 he lost his disability payment.

This rapid turn of Liu's political fortunes resulted from the testimony of a fellow veteran in his unit, Yang Changxue. Yang charged that Liu's injury was not the product of being "beaten by a special agent" but, rather, was a "self-inflicted wound" designed to remove himself from harm's way; Liu, he charged, "betrayed the revolution." As "proof," Yang told village party members that Liu's wound was "top-down, on a slant, and began in the interior part of the leg"; this would not have been possible if someone standing in front of him attacked him. Moreover, Yang claimed that hospital physicians also thought it was self-inflicted, since they "did not give him any medicine or a splint for his leg, and allowed maggots to fester in the wound." Ma Jie, the village cadre, piped up: "If he was treated unjustly, why didn't he say anything for 10 years? His uncle told him to say something, but he didn't."¹⁰⁴ Faced with these two accounts—a war injury caused at night with no eyewitnesses and a self-inflicted wound—the special investigation team now faced the task of disproving one of the versions.

As it turned out, this proved easy to do. After two days they were able to ascertain that there was no proof that the wound's origin was on the inside of the leg or that it was self-inflicted. Three other members of his security unit testified that "No one at *The Masses Daily* said anything about a self-inflicted wound; everyone said a special agent did it." As early as September 1963, even Yang Changxue (who lodged the accusation) said that he "never heard of any leader disagreeing with the agent story" but decided that Liu's injury was fake "on the basis of the sound of the gun" and the position of Liu's body vis-à-vis the shell casing, which the investigation team re-created to show that the wound could only have come from the outside. The allegation about the hospital's denial of care did not stand up to scrutiny, either. The other "proof"—that Liu's decade-long wait for justice was in itself evidence of his guilt—was also challenged. Liu claimed that he did, in fact, report the case to the county-level Bureau of Civil Affairs and "talked to the township chief Wang Gui and others," who all confirmed that it was very difficult for Liu to pursue his case because he had a hard time walking and "needs money and free time." The outcome of the investigation was now clear: Liu was framed by Yang Changxue. But why?

Under pressure from investigators, Yang Changxue [AQ55] admitted to fabricating the story because of a personal vendetta against Liu. Access to medicine and illness, however, were at its messy core. According to Yang's 1965 confession, back in the early 1950s he had gone to Liu's village when the latter was the party secretary in order to procure medicine for his son, who was very sick. Liu was hanging out in the local pharmacy when Yang came

in. Yang asked that Liu cover the cost of the medicine, [AQ56]but Liu, for reasons that were not addressed in the report, did not intervene on his behalf (*mei you biaooshi taidu*). Even though the pharmacy agreed to give him credit for the cost of the medicine, Yang was incensed: "We were once together in the army, and now it's as if he doesn't even know me." The medicine did not help, however, and Yang's son died. Distraught, he vowed to Liu: "Your leg will be my retribution! Your disability's fake! Just wait until the CCP has a rectification campaign!"¹⁰⁵

In pursuing his grief-induced vendetta against Liu, Yang Changxue found an ally in Liu's non-veteran political rival in the village, Ma Jie. It was Yang who told Ma Jie during the 1955 rectification campaign that Liu's injury was "fake" and Ma who passed on this nugget to the leader of the outside work team running the campaign, who then moved to get Liu expelled from the party by sending off the materials about Liu's "betrayal of the revolution" to the County Party Committee. Why did Ma react in this way? According to the testimony by the former township chief, there were two factions in the village: Ma Jie's faction was on the ropes; Liu's was in ascendancy. Ma, however, was politically ambitious—"he really wanted to be an official"—but his background was somewhat problematic: he had been a bandit during the war. When this piece of information regarding Ma was exposed, Liu and others had requested that Ma be expelled from the party. Higher levels of the party, however, did not approve this decision. When village officials deliberated whether to restore Ma's status, Liu had been among those who decided against it. Since that time, Liu told investigators, "He has a grudge against me." Thus, when Ma was told about Liu's "self-inflicted injury," he quickly gave the information to the work team and met with Yang Changxue on three separate occasions; he also went to three others who provided corroborating testimony against Liu, just so they would all be on the same page. In sum, the investigator concluded, "It was all Yang Changxue's personal revenge and Ma Jie's ability to take advantage of the situation to cause him harm. Wu Chuantong, a township leader, was used by Ma, as were the others. Liu has his faults, but his main weakness was letting others take advantage of him." In 1955, at a meeting with 200 people led by the district's party secretary (whom the investigators blamed for allowing the likes of Ma Jie into the party), Liu was expelled from the CCP. To kill two birds with one stone and to prevent Liu from "creating pressure," they also decided to discontinue his disability payments; the paperwork for this was wrapped up in 1955 and authorized by the regional party committee (which received concurring reports from provincial and regional Civil Affairs), even though they did not have this authority, according to the regulations. The provincial government never authorized revoking his pension or his "revolutionary disabled soldier" status.¹⁰⁶[AQ57]

Not long after his pension was cancelled, Liu paid a visit to the Civil Affairs office to request that it be reinstated. When they said that it was now out of their hands, Liu "did not object." It was only in 1963, when an old acquaintance (and former editor at the *The Masses Daily*) named Huang Fengxian brought Liu back to the County to request that his payments be reinstated, that the case was reopened. Still, their letter to Shandong Province cast doubt on Liu's veracity: "Why did he not complain if something was wrong?" On the other hand, the County did note that "All the evidence is unreliable." Until the matter was resolved, however, "Liu should not get his payments reinstated."¹⁰⁷

Liu's saving grace was that, unlike most soldiers organized in battalions and brigades, he happened to serve in a security detachment to the Shandong's most important newspaper, *The Masses Daily*, whose highly literate officials stepped in to prod other agencies to reopen the case. From 1963 to 1965, two editors at *The Masses Daily*, Huang Fengxian and Zhu Min, repeatedly intervened on Liu's behalf. Huang and Zhu jointly wrote a letter to the Bureau of Civil Affairs in December 1963 with a blow-by-blow account of Liu's version of events; after writing to provincial Civil Affairs and not receiving a response, Huang accompanied Liu to their office to talk with them face to face; he also gave Liu money for medicine. Another newspaperman called Yishui County Civil Affairs in an effort to figure out what went wrong; the director's response was "We had testimonies from two people" and "Liu didn't get along with other cadres." A year passed and the matter was still unresolved, so they wrote yet another letter to provincial Civil Affairs in April 1964. Zhu Min procured a letter about proper administrative procedure from the newspaper's party committee and sent it to the provincial party committee. "According to the [unspecified] regulations," it noted, "disability status and pension are generally not revoked as a disciplinary measure, and only sometimes for criminal offenses." Because Liu was never prosecuted for a criminal offense, "his pension should not have been revoked." They found other officials who were able to locate members of Liu's former unit who were able to confirm that the wound was not self-inflicted. In 1965, with the matter still unresolved, Zhu Min wrote to the district-level Letters and Visits Office to request a special investigation as well as an eight-page report to the Shandong Party Committee. [AQ58] These efforts did the trick. A special investigation team finally was formed, the witnesses were located, and the truth was uncovered. Justice, however, probably did not last too long. A year after his pension was restored, the Cultural Revolution broke out, and Civil Affairs bureaus, which handed out the money, were pulled into the turmoil.

Liu Junmin's case, even though it has a less-than-tragic ending, is still sobering. It was resolved only after two years of active and persistent inter-

vention by a large newspaper. Had Liu not managed to reconnect with his former wartime unit, the injustice of 1955 would not have been corrected; by himself, he was no match for the non-veteran politicians in the village or the various levels of government who weighed in on the case. Alone, he could not go back to the complicated past, find all of its actors, and correct a distortion of his personal history. Even though the press eventually came to his rescue, his alliance with *The Masses Daily* was personal and ad hoc, with little room for future shared battles. There was no general commitment on the part of the press, or other educated elites, for that matter, to advocate for veterans as a distinct group, and the post-1949 policies of returning veterans to their villages and not creating a veterans organization only made this less likely. This is not all that surprising when we think about the strong peasant base of the PLA (Liu was from a poor peasant background) and the absence of universal conscription, which could have provided a stronger basis for solidarity, or at least sympathy, after the war was over. We have observed some of this in the comparative cases and will see even more at the end of this chapter when I take a brief look at disabled veterans in Israel. Absent this sort of cross-class alliance, older and disabled veterans like Liu could not fight the good fight when challenged. Liu, however, was not the only victim in this story. Even though the investigation pinned the blame on Yang Changxue, the peasant-bandit-veteran [AQ59] who framed Liu, it is important to remember that Yang lost his son because he could not get timely medical care and took out his rage and frustration on Liu. What seems clear from this case is that for those in predicaments similar to Liu (or worse) and who were contemplating suicide, the state was not a protector, ally, or place of refuge.

VULNERABLE FAMILIES

"Veterans have not a few problems in their marriage and family life," noted a 1955 State Council document on veteran resettlement, using its usual choice of adjectival euphemism.¹⁰⁸ It is difficult to assess the extent to which ministers and their deputies were surprised by this—in the previous six years they had been receiving numerous reports about this issue—but if they had bothered to study even a little bit about the impact of war on family and marriage life in addition to highfalutin Marxist-Leninist theory, they would have found that this problem was entirely predictable. Veterans rarely return home the same as when they departed, and it is often left to families to deal with the consequences. In the U.S. case, John Resch notes that veterans from all wars have experienced some degree of alienation and have been difficult to get along with;¹⁰⁹ after World War II, a study of post-war readjustment by

the University of Chicago's Committee on Human Development noted that "most returning servicemen appeared to feel a need for the company of other veterans," much to the chagrin of their spouses who wanted them to stay home. Despite sociologists who openly wondered whether returning veterans would "turn into Storm Troopers who will destroy democracy,"¹¹⁰ most veterans became better known for their restlessness and adventuresome spirit; their successful readjustment (into small communities) largely depended on their "ability to find a job that [they] liked and keep it."¹¹¹ Hollywood may have sealed this image in the minds of many post-war Americans in the Oscar award-winning film *The Best Days of Our Lives* (1947), in which all of the characters, but particularly Homer, the disabled veteran, have a difficult time adjusting to the routines of family life. Homer's wife, Wilma, eventually turns him around by being patient, calm, understanding, and appropriately feminine by the standards of the late 1940s.¹¹² Of course, American veterans were not the only ones who had a difficult time adjusting to family routines: WWI veterans in Great Britain also acquired a reputation for misbehavior, drinking, and carousing.¹¹³ The British disabled also caused much concern; there were even proposals to "procure wives" for them in order to give them back their "manliness."¹¹⁴

Complicated returns to family life were a product of not only shifting identities, new experiences, and expectations among veterans; time did not freeze while they were away: spouses might fall in love with someone else (in the "Dear John letter" romantic scenario) or find a man on whom they could depend for resources to get by (in the more pragmatic version of this story that we saw some of in the letters from the Qingpu veterans above and which has been noted in many other contexts).¹¹⁵ Some women might get used to calling the shots themselves and resist sharing authority after the soldiers' return. After protracted wars, the shortage of men of marriageable age can complicate relations between women and lead to unorthodox family and sexual arrangements (high rates of illegitimacy, prostitution).¹¹⁶ For these reasons, post-war marriages and relationships have been known for tenuousness and fragility. In Vietnam after the "American War," many people divorced or lost their girlfriends when the war was over, having spent too many years apart;¹¹⁷ in post-war Japan, some soldiers who were declared dead but remained alive came home to find their wives remarried to a brother or close friend;¹¹⁸ after WWI in Canada, divorce laws made it difficult to divorce, which only helped encourage bigamy and desertion among returning veterans—"marriage breakdown" was an all-too-familiar experience in "many families";¹¹⁹ and in the contemporary United States, not a few veterans of the war in Iraq have experienced family-related difficulties (including spousal infidelity and financial problems) in addition to a sense of isolation, an increased tendency

to sexual abuse, and suicide.¹²⁰ To the extent that we want to explain post-war suicides in China and the high percentage of marriage- and family-related causes among them, we need to get some sense of why veterans—many of whom were bachelors upon their return—were vulnerable in this respect. If suicides might have been prevented by a strong sense of family support, why was this lacking in many cases?

Much like their counterparts around the globe, PRC veterans' marriage and family situations hardly matched the stereotypical image of the stable, patriarchal "Asian" family. Marriage-, sex-, and family-related problems, which sometimes led to criminal prosecution or social ostracism, were noticed early on in the city and countryside and continued well into the 1950s and 1960s. A 1952 report by the Shanghai Veterans Committee found that some veterans, like their counterparts in Japan mentioned above, returned home to find their spouses living in common-law marriages with other men. For example, a veteran in Shanghai's working class Yulin District found his wife in an "ambiguous" relationship with a worker in a private firm. Wang flew into a rage and demanded the worker's address so that he could smite him on the spot. Somehow, word of this threat reached the ears of someone in the district government, who found the worker and invited him in for a "talk" in which he was roundly criticized. His wife also got a talking-to: she was told that her husband was a "glorious veteran," so the two should find a way to get along. According to the report—in which this case was presented as a "model" for other institutions—the two then lived happily ever after, much like Homer and Wilma in *The Best Days of Our Life*.¹²¹

We should be skeptical of this sort of narrative. Problems such as these could not be kept secret, and it was a serious "loss of face" to be forced to wrest a wife from the arms of another man (even when the mythological Helen of Troy did not keep the faith by having an affair with the Trojan prince Paris, her husband, the King of Sparta, also became a loser!); it might also be dangerous from a political and legal standpoint. According to a report on suicides from 1956, four out of 18 suicides "in the last several years" were because veterans were "ridiculed because of marriage problems or because of fear of punishment because they themselves had illicit sexual relations";¹²² in another report from that year, 13 out of 43 suicides, also "in the last several years," were because of "marriage and unrequited love."¹²³ Moreover, contrary to the hopes of their critics, not all veterans were so determined to stay in a monogamous marriage; some bachelors and married veterans had a hard time keeping away from local prostitutes or could not resist leaving work to flirt with neighborhood women,¹²⁴ both activities which left them vulnerable to arrest and dismissal from their jobs (a problem also noted among Mainland veterans living in Taiwan¹²⁵). In the 1956 investigation of crimes committed

by veterans (mentioned in Chapter 4), investigators found that 20 percent were due to rape, adultery, or prostitution,¹²⁶ a statistic that led the Civil Affairs bulletin, *Minzheng jianbao*, to note that “most veterans have relatively pressing demands with regard to marriage problems.”¹²⁷ Other crimes were more serious but also attributable to their sense of vulnerability in their relationships. Some veterans murdered their wives because they suspected them of having affairs.¹²⁸ In other cases, however, veterans were on the other side of the courtroom. Some married veterans discovered during the course of their service that local cadres were having their way with their wives (a phenomenon I will address in greater depth in the next chapter). In Jintang County in Sichuan, five out of 17 veterans who had wives back in the village had their marriages violated by local officials; in Huiyang County in Guangdong, there were 42 veterans with pending marriage cases at court; two involved suicide, seven were murder cases, and many of the others focused on cadres accused of ruining their marriages.¹²⁹ These were not isolated cases. A national-level report on veterans also noted instances of veterans who filed charges after enduring ridicule by cadres who had raped or seduced their wives.¹³⁰

Veterans in Qingpu County were also embroiled in sex- and marriage-related conflicts and shenanigans, some of which seemed to stem from jealousy over others' access to sex. The case of Tao Baoqing, discussed at length in Chapter 3 as an example of whistleblowing on sexual improprieties (Tao made life difficult for a female cadre with a lover from another village), might also be understood as a case of sexual frustration—the woman's lover, after all, was from another village.¹³¹ A 1956 investigation noted other sorts of cases. One veteran, who worked as a security guard, had two goals: to get married and to become an official. When he found himself smitten with a woman who did not return his affection, he (for reasons that are unclear) “pretended to be insane, hitting and yelling at people.” This went on for days, despite numerous attempts to get him to stop. Finally, they sent him to Shanghai, where he was committed to a mental institution affiliated with the Public Security Bureau.¹³² These Qingpu reports were echoed farther north in Shandong. A report on veterans proudly noted that “over 22,000 veterans received help getting married” but also that “over 1,931 cases involving marriage disputes, ostracism (*paichi*) and abuse” were handled by the authorities.¹³³

Even though the Shandong report did not mention how many disputes were *not* handled, the brief reference to “ostracism” in the context of marriage and family is intriguing, particularly in light of some comparative evidence on post-war family situations. Although there is a fair amount of literature attesting to the discrimination faced by African-American veterans who fought for the Union during Civil War, evidence does suggest that in the context of their families, those veterans *gained* a great deal of status and respect (“face”); they

were sought after as prospective husbands. As suggested by Donald Shaffer, "While veterans fought a losing battle to retain their political rights in the wake of Reconstruction, the gains that they and other African-Americans in the South made in terms of marriage and family law remained largely intact despite the rise of Jim Crow."¹³⁴ Although we would need far more microscopic studies of Chinese veterans' status within their families to make this sort of bold statement, there is some evidence suggesting that PLA veterans, and the rural disabled in particular, did not enjoy this sort of post-war boost in status because of the policy of forcing most veterans back to the countryside. For instance, a 1956 report on the national status of veterans instructed officials involved in veteran administration: "We need to do more education in military families to get some of them to stop thinking that their sons or husbands are 'good-for-nothings' (*mei you chuxi*) because they returned to the countryside."¹³⁵ In Chuansha County near Shanghai, a veteran surnamed Zhu returned from the army in 1959 after three years of service. His father, however, was very disappointed, telling him, "You've served three years, and now have a skill, but there's no future in the countryside." To compel him to leave, he refused to feed him, but Zhu threatened to jump in a river and commit suicide and his father relented.¹³⁶ In Shandong, another investigation report found, families "resented those veterans who were not able to work because of sickness and disability and just sat around and ate."¹³⁷

Nowhere did ostracism, resentment, and family problems intersect more problematically, and, on occasion, tragically, than in instances of veterans with some form of mental illness. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), though never diagnosed as such at the time (in WWI it was usually called "shell shock" and during WWII either "combat fatigue" or "war neurosis") surely affected hundreds of thousands of veterans of PLA combat operations, if evidence of comparative cases can serve as a rough estimate of this.¹³⁸ In the United States, David Gerber notes that 500,000 WWII veterans suffered from some form of mental illness,¹³⁹ and the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder estimates that one out of 20 WWII veterans suffered from such symptoms as bad dreams, irritability, and flashbacks. The National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Survey (conducted between 1986 and 1988) found that 15.2 percent of all male veterans were diagnosed with PTSD, and almost half of them had been arrested or jailed at least once, a reflection of the more difficult background of these recruits. A 2003 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that one of six soldiers returning from the war in Iraq (not the 1991 Persian Gulf War) suffered from PTSD.¹⁴⁰ Care for those with PTSD has always been challenging. In Russia, Ethel Dunn notes that the most severely disabled from WWII were "kept out of sight" and probably lived together on an island near St. Petersburg.¹⁴¹ In Japan, WWII veterans

with PTSD were shunned by their communities,¹⁴² and in Mozambique, after its long and violent civil war ended in 1992, veterans who were considered traumatized by their experiences had to undergo a “healing” process that involved the administration of specific medicines and a cleansing ritual next to a river (which would wash away some of their problems).¹⁴³ In China, there has been little published research on this topic, owing to its political sensitivities (mentally ill veterans do not fit into the heroic narrative of the CCP’s victorious wars), the weakness of psychiatry as an autonomous medical profession, and the lack of state resources committed to this problem, but it was an issue that could not be completely ignored.

At least officially, the most serious cases of mental illness would be treated in hospitals, while “light” cases would be treated at home. In practice, however, the line between serious and light was blurry, and because care was not cheap or necessarily good—reports indicated that veterans with mental illness were beaten¹⁴⁴—many veterans with PTSD remained at home. In Shanghai, a 1956 report on veterans with long-term illness identified 24 who had mental disorders, 30 with tuberculosis, and 23 others with heart, stomach, circulatory, and other ailments. Officials admitted that “even though we have done some work to care take of their employment and medical issues, their problems are not taken seriously enough.” As a result, the burden fell primarily on their families, who were said to be “dissatisfied” with the government on account of this. Some mothers said, “My son was fine when he left, but he’s changed and become mentally ill and now no one cares”; others complained, “When they wanted people [for the PLA] they were very good about approaching you, but now when they’re sick they push them on the family.” Lacking money for food and medicine, desperate families “frequently” went to government offices and “raised a ruckus, demanding a solution for their problems.” Most of these demands went unheeded. As a result of Civil Affairs’ investigation, only two veterans were transferred to Beijing hospitals, but the officials encouraged veterans and their families to look on the bright side: “Our government is better than previous ones, which left people like this to die.”¹⁴⁵ This was only partly true. Though not left to die, Civil Affairs data from that same year indicated that nine out of 43 veteran suicides were caused by either “mental illness” or “other forms of disease that caused abnormal behavior.”¹⁴⁶

If access to mental health care was difficult in one of China’s most modern cities, in poorer areas of the countryside it was far worse. In a meeting of Shandong county chiefs in 1952, the gathered officials reported on veteran suicides in Jiaohe County because they returned to the village and found that “they had no land or housing” as well as problems with mentally ill veterans: “These veterans are all scattered around now, and it creates a great burden

on their families," they pointed out.¹⁴⁷ Several years later, families still bore the brunt of care. In 1954 Shandong officials "diagnosed" 720 veterans with mental disorders in the province, among whom 242 were "very serious." Since Shandong had only limited facilities, "most all" of these veterans remained at home, where parents and relatives struggled to feed and take care of them. In some cases, families pooled resources and hired others to help, but in the most serious cases, the report noted, "even three hired people are not enough to care for them." Some mentally ill veterans were beaten to death. "A very bad influence on the people," the report concluded.¹⁴⁸ This situation may have improved later in the decade, but since reports and investigations consistently pay short shrift to the mentally ill and focus instead on employment issues, this issue is difficult to evaluate with any degree of certainty.

VULNERABLE BODIES ON THE JOB

Illness and disability produce certain vulnerabilities even in the best of circumstances, and vulnerabilities, in turn, create dependencies on those individuals or institutions that have power to provide good health or decrease pain, offer assistance around the household, or provide money to buy food and medicine. If workplace relations in China have already been characterized as "principled particularism" (in which a worker is dependent on the goodwill of a supervisor as well as adherence to political ideas),¹⁴⁹ those who were chronically ill or disabled experienced yet another layer of workplace dependency: they might have to take off work to get to the hospital; they might need a less strenuous job; or they may need certain workplace accommodations. Helping chronically ill veterans in the workplace is not easy anywhere—veterans after the American Civil War were handicapped by "wounds or chronic illnesses" and faced job competition "from men with several years' head start"¹⁵⁰—and this is why it serves as a good measure of society's willingness to value martial contributions and expend valued resources to accommodate them in a reasonable way.

In China, employers were not unaware of the costs they would incur by hiring disabled or chronically ill veterans. Rather than taking them on because it was the "right thing to do," or to express gratitude for a well-fought battle (against the Japanese or Americans, for example), many employers did their best to avoid them altogether. As we have seen in the chapter on veteran employment, for many years factory personnel directors and managers had enough discretionary power to turn them away. As employment practices go, this was not unusual—unlike Weimar Germany, neither the United States nor England enforced quotas for hiring disabled veterans after WWI and WWII—but Chi-

na's ample labor supply made these decisions much easier. Reports indicate that one of the reasons many work units refused to hire veterans was their perception that *all* veterans had some sort of medical problem. In the mining districts of Shuangyashan and Jixi in Heilongjiang Province in China's far Northeast, for example, "very many" veterans managed to secure jobs only by pretending that they were *not* veterans, just ordinary peasants. When investigators interviewed 28 of these veterans, 25 of them "did not reveal that they were veterans" during the job registration process and initial trial period on the job; in a sample of 12 veterans' photos, 11 had taken off their fatigues to disguise their true identities. They did this after learning from other veterans' experiences. Zheng Jinfa, for example, was a veteran and CCP member who wore his uniform for his photograph and was immediately turned down. He came again without his uniform, claimed he was a "peasant," and passed the first stage, but was then sent for a physical. The doctor, however, discovered that, like many other veterans, Zheng had a respiratory illness and flunked him, not believing his claim that the problem was only an ulcer. Still determined to get the job, he tried a different physician. He passed only by covering his mouth with his hand whenever he had to cough. Still, of the 72 veterans introduced by the county Bureau of Civil Affairs, only nine were hired.¹⁵¹

Employers made similar efforts in the Shanghai area. Disabled veterans who left their villages because of political discrimination or difficulties working the land or earning enough work points (both prior to and after collectivization¹⁵²) found little help upon their arrival in Shanghai. As early as 1949, city employers tried to avoid hiring them on the grounds that they were difficult to control, were too proud of their accomplishments, and would "harm efficiency."¹⁵³ A 1956 investigation of veteran-migrants to the city found a great deal of dissatisfaction among them. "Local government doesn't help," they complained. Still, none considered returning to the countryside: "Even if I lose my party membership I still won't go back to the village," one disabled veteran said.¹⁵⁴ Factory-level investigations substantiated these complaints. In the spring of 1955, the China Record Factory was preparing to hire 200 workers. Someone "mentioned hiring veterans," but the leading cadres at the firm said, "They've all been disabled fighting wars. But some might have some skills—those guys we can assign to do cleanup."¹⁵⁵ For the Shanghai Ocean Shipping Bureau (*haiyun ju*), age was associated with physical strength, so even if veterans were not actually ill, their bodies might still be too weak. When veterans arrived at the Bureau with their letter of introduction in 1958, they were told that they had to "lift 200 *jin*" (roughly 220 pounds or 100 kilograms) to get the job. "As soon as they heard this, they left."¹⁵⁶ In 1963, the same bureau took in 54 veterans but then immediately assigned all of them to be boatswains, "even though some of them can't han-

dle the physical labor."¹⁵⁷ Not surprisingly, in Qingpu, 50 percent of letters the Bureau of Civil Affairs received from veterans in the late 1950s were job related. Of those, half were written by the disabled or sick veterans appealing for employment assistance or transfer to a more appropriate job.¹⁵⁸

Ill veterans who passed through this hoop and found positions in government or factories did not necessarily fare very well, however. Poor health could enhance political and job-related vulnerability. In 1951 in Shandong, a report noted that when some disabled veterans and martyr families complained about their treatment to village cadres, the latter immediately took revenge by denying them the right to participate in village meetings.¹⁵⁹ In Qingpu, Ling Linsheng returned to the county in 1953 as a disabled veteran and was appointed secretary of a township's Youth League and militia. He was reported to be very effective at his job but was frequently ill. This led to arguments between him and the township's non-veteran party secretary, Tao Genfu. Using Ling's recurring illness as an excuse, Tao forced him out of power, sending him back to his village to work in agriculture. Two village officials, however, opposed this move, but Tao falsely told the two that Ling was to return "by order of the district party secretary." They eventually relented and Ling returned home.¹⁶⁰ In 1963, the Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs still noted many intractable problems in the treatment of disabled veterans in rural areas: "Some commune and brigade leaders show little concern for the placement of veterans who are older, weaker, disabled, or sick and do not have much labor power; this is reflected in their difficulties with medical care, housing, and financial difficulties."¹⁶¹ In 1965, at the height of pro-PLA propaganda, a joint report by the Shanghai Garrison, Civil Affairs, and the Labor Bureau found that veterans who returned to villages "with illnesses" and had problems with medicine, work, and finances were "not provided with timely assistance."¹⁶²

The situation in Shanghai was not much better. The cases of Shi Maoru, who was hired by the Jinxing Pen factory in 1954; Chen Youxian (Tianfu Manufacturing); and Shao Ran, who worked at the Jiangnan Shipyard, are good cases in point. After being hired, Shi Maoru was forced to go on sick leave on several occasions due to a recurring illness. Citing his frequent sick days, the factory refused to make him a permanent worker. His salary was particularly low: after a factory-wide salary adjustment in 1956, other than Shi's (who earned 21 yuan a month), the lowest salary was 40 yuan. When he approached management for a raise, the personnel director took out a pen produced by the factory and quizzed Shi with all sorts of technical questions. When Shi could not answer, the director told him, "See. This is why I can't give you a raise."¹⁶³ Chen Youxian, a CCP member, also fell victim to his health but in a more severe way. Introduced to the factory in 1951 by the Labor Bureau, Chen had Level 3 disabilities because of a respiratory illness

which caused him to fall asleep on the job. He also had to request several leaves of absence. The factory, however, considered his behavior as a manifestation of "poor labor discipline." When Chen was in the hospital, the party branch, without notifying Chen, convened a meeting and announced that he was being expelled from the CCP. Even after this came to light and his status was restored, Chen never received an apology.¹⁶⁴ Shao Ran also suffered because of health-related difficulties stemming from his service (in the Korean War). Similar to many veterans we have seen, Shao frequently experienced flare-ups of his old wounds. On one occasion, an infection caused a fever and a temperature of 40° Celsius (roughly 104° Fahrenheit). He requested that the shipyard's personnel department arrange for a vehicle to send him to the hospital, but its director, Qu Mengzhang, refused on the grounds that Shao's injury "was not a work accident," so it was not the shipyard's responsibility to help him. When his fever flared again, Shao asked Qu for a letter of introduction to the Shanghai Military Medical University Hospital, but he again refused; an appeal to another official was also unsuccessful. Thanks to help from some other workers "angered at this injustice," Shao found a car that did not belong to his work unit and made it to the hospital. But his problems did not end there. Because of his absence, the factory docked 50 percent of his monthly salary. When he complained about this to the Salary Department, they accused him of "economism" (or looking at issues only through the narrow lens of money) and refused to correct their error. "There are not many cases like this in every work unit," the report noted, "but if they were all collected together, it would be not a few."¹⁶⁵

Whatever the actual numbers, there is evidence suggesting that even "not a few" cases were sufficient to create a very strong association between the concepts "veteran" and "poor health." In 1963, and even during the Cultural Revolution, this linkage was alive and well. "Some cadres," a Civil Affairs report complained in 1963, "think that veterans are sick, weak, and have problems."¹⁶⁶ According to Republic of China intelligence reports on Fujian Province in the early 1970s, employers who had only reluctantly taken on veterans prior to the Cultural Revolution (and paid them low salaries) now absolutely refused to hire them, "especially those who were disabled or ill." Some returned to their villages because of the daily discrimination they faced.¹⁶⁷

DEATH AND CLOSE CALLS

Most veterans, of course, did not die as a result of discrimination or family- or health-related problems. Suicide, by its very nature, is an extreme act, even among distressed populations. It is, however, the proverbial canary in the

mine, a phenomenon that can render visible more widespread problems in a group hidden by everyday struggles to survive and manage during or after a trauma. Take the case of British veterans of the Falklands War. Although known in society for their "stiff upper lip," there are some indications that more soldiers died of suicide than from the war itself, largely as a result of PTSD. While this is a minority of the soldiers who fought, the "social fact" of the suicides is indicative of a larger failure of both the society and the state to deal with the long-term repercussions of war-related trauma, enhanced by the macho self-image of elite units who fought.¹⁶⁸ Most governments also appear to be aware that suicides are indicative of larger problems, despite their infrequency. At least in the case of veterans, the PRC government took these more seriously than the abnormal deaths of landlords, former GMD officials, and other enemies of the regime, and the U.S. Congress, for its part, worried about rising suicide rates among veterans after wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, introduced a bill (the "Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act," or H.R. 327) that "directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans."

Chinese statistics about veterans' suicides, with their rather odd phrasings (such as 43 veterans "died in the last several years") cannot be relied upon to measure overall frequency—even in the United States, with its sophisticated statistical bureaucracies, it is not clear how many veterans died of post-war suicides after each conflict—but some of the case histories can provide us with a deeper understanding of the circumstances swirling around those who died, or tried to, even if they cannot be generalized in a scientific sense. Below are some examples of marriage- and health-related suicides from the 1950s.

MARRIAGE- AND SEX-RELATED SUICIDES: WU QINGYUN, LI RUFA, AND WANG YUEQING

Wu Qingyun was a veteran who returned to Wenjiang County in Sichuan Province. Said to be a good worker, Wu was participating in a mutual aid team in 1951. Because of poor health, however, Wu was a frequent visitor to the inpatient ward of the county hospital. It was there that he met a widow "from a poor peasant family," fell in love, and decided to get married. When he returned to his village and announced his intentions, however, the village chief objected, calling him a "degenerate" (*fuhua*), and threatened him with unspecified sanctions. Soon after, he hung himself. Farther east, in Yichun County, Jiangxi Province, veteran Li Rufa met a village woman named

Zhong Guiying and petitioned to get married. Officials at the district government, however, refused to register the marriage because Zhong's late father had been a landlord. Li was also harshly criticized for his choice. When he returned to the village, the township cadres called a meeting of his fellow veterans and initiated a struggle session against him. Feeling hopeless because of his failed marriage efforts and pit against his fellow veterans, Li threw himself into a river and drowned.¹⁶⁹

Shanghai was also the scene of these sorts of suicides. Veteran Wang Yueqin [AQ60] returned to Shanghai in 1951, but because the district government was not able to secure a job for him, he found himself wandering around the district with nothing to do. After a while, the district arranged for temporary work on the "Patriotic Hygiene" public health campaign. During this campaign, he met a housewife who had also been mobilized for it and had an affair with her. This indiscretion was exposed, and Wang found himself in the Laozha District Police Station. He was released, the report noted, "but he still could not solve his marriage problems." Sometime later he was given an introduction to a private firm, where he acquired a reputation of a braggart by "exaggerating his personal contributions to the country." When one lie was exposed—he told management that he had joined the PLA when he was 9 years old—he "lost face, and felt as if he had no future." On August 7, 1952, he drank poison. Fortunately, he was discovered and sent to the emergency room before he died and was saved. According to the official report, Wang tried to commit suicide because he "found his personal problems burdensome, is vain and likes face."¹⁷⁰

HEALTH CARE-RELATED SUICIDES: QIU GUANGMING AND JIN RONGHUA

Qiu Guangming worked in the dye department of an underwear factory. Suffering from chronic stomach ulcers, he found his assigned work too strenuous. Frequent requests to see a physician were turned down except on one occasion, but even then he was not provided with insurance money. Reported to be "very dissatisfied" by this treatment, Qiu complained to the factory, which finally relented and allowed him to see a doctor. He went to the hospital for treatment, but the factory had already called the hospital in advance, informing them that Qiu's problems were not medical but, rather, "political" in nature (without providing specifics). When Qiu heard about this in the hospital, he flew into a rage, ran up to the roof, and yelled that he was going to jump off. According to the report, he was "seen and pulled off the roof," but it does not indicate whether his problem was solved.¹⁷¹

Jin Ronghua, who also worked in Shanghai (at the Jinxing Pen Factory), encountered similar apathy toward his medical problems. Much like Shao Ran, Jin suffered from a frequent relapse of a war-related disease and needed a "letter of introduction" to a hospital. He managed to procure the letter, but when he went to the emergency room, the personnel refused to treat him, even as he was writhing in pain on its floor. Apparently, they had tried calling the factory's "insurance section" on three occasions, but when they did not get a return phone call, they sent him back to the factory's infirmary. Before he left, however, the physicians provided him with free advice: Jin should ask his sister or aunt to come to the factory to help him out. When he approached Huang Chuanwen, the head of the insurance section, with this idea, Huang yelled at him, "Don't you know our factory is in the middle of production competition? I have work to do." Because Jin's injury continued to flare up and he frequently had to take off from work because of pain, management promptly deducted the time from his salary; on occasion, the deduction totaled 40 percent of his monthly salary. Facing this cash shortfall, Jin went to the union and told the union personnel that he was a revolutionary disabled veteran and "according to central state regulations, I'm entitled to 100 percent labor insurance coverage." But the union ignored him. Its chair, Xie Yimin, was surprised that Jin was not satisfied with the symbols of high status and also wanted more substantial benefits: "You're a war hero and a labor model and you still want 100 percent insurance coverage?" A worker, [AQ61]Zhu Yongyi also complained about Jin's demand: "Do you think you get full insurance just because you have two red certificates [one for being a veteran, the other for being disabled]?" Jin then contacted the two organizations that were expected to help enforce central state regulations: Civil Affairs and the Veterans Committee. Both called the chairman of the factory union about Jin, urging him to implement the regulation guaranteeing 100 percent coverage for disabled veterans. In a response that complicates the notion that China had a "command economy" during these years and that the CCP was a highly disciplined organization, the chairman refused, telling both organizations, "Government institutions can't order our factory around" (*zhengfu jiguan bu neng lingdao women gongchang*). Sometime later, Jin overdosed on drugs in a suicide attempt, which failed because he did not consume a sufficient dosage. According to the investigation, management was unmoved. Factory officials claimed that Jin attempted suicide because of "heartbreak" (*shilian*) and his only goal was to try to scare people.¹⁷²

In fact, this may have been the case; it is entirely possible that Jin, like many veterans, did have problems with marriage and women that did not figure into this report. Nevertheless, it was a blatant effort by factory officials to shift responsibility for the suicide attempt away from their neglect of Jin's

poor health and disregard for health care “rights” that were merely embedded in State Council policies. While the precise circumstances surrounding Jin’s overdose (or Qiu Guangming’s rooftop stand) may have been unique, I would venture that even a short perusal of documents in other archives would reveal roughly similar circumstances: poor health, institutional failure, social apathy, and uneven enforcement of central state directives. Still, the question remains: was this “perfect storm” of individual circumstances, state incapacity, and a lack of cultural or political appreciation for veterans worse in China than in many other countries, and if it was, why? Research on disabled veterans in countries as different as Namibia and the United Kingdom has also noted their marginality, particularly if their disability is severe.¹⁷³ On Taiwan, unemployed veterans tend to be older, holding lower rank, and in poor health as well.¹⁷⁴ To get an even sharper perspective on this, let’s briefly turn to a country where, for many reasons, disabled veterans faced a far more hospitable environment than their Chinese counterparts—Israel—and see how they have fared over time.

THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS AND ENFORCEMENT OF RIGHTS AMONG DISABLED VETERANS IN ISRAEL

If there is any country in the world where disabled veterans should have had a much easier time reintegrating into society and acquiring rights and respect, surely Israel would be a prime candidate. Since its founding one year prior to the PRC’s (1948), Israel’s military, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), has fought six wars against states and conducted numerous military operations against Palestinian organizations and uprisings,¹⁷⁵ ensuring that service-related disability would always be politically salient; there has been no “peace-time lull.” Israel, quite unlike China, is a very small country, both in terms of size and population. Governing Israel is challenging, but not quite on the same scale as China. Israel has always had compulsory and near-universal military service for most Jewish men and women¹⁷⁶ as well as conscription for men from the minority Druze community. Between 1948 and 1973, Israel, for better or worse, has been a militarized society: unlike China’s State Council, many cabinet ministers were former generals; Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, viewed the IDF as the heart of nation-building efforts; IDF officers—pilots in particular—enjoyed very high prestige; and Israeli culture was suffused with images of heroic, self-sacrificing, and courageous “fighters” not unlike Lei Feng in the early 1960s.¹⁷⁷ The Israeli landscape is full of memorials to fallen soldiers of its many wars; until 1957, the dead of the 1948 war were represented in no fewer than 121 monuments.¹⁷⁸ Surveys

reveal that disabled veterans, particularly if they were wounded in combat, have benefited from these attitudes.¹⁷⁹ Israel, unlike China, has had a statute, based on pre-state programs, governing disability rights that have awarded disabled veterans generous, expanding, and generally non-means-based benefits linked to civil service salaries and degrees of injury. In contrast to China's diffuse and overstretched Civil Affairs bureaucracy, David Ben-Gurion placed the Ministry of Defense—the most prestigious ministry in the state—in complete charge of implementing these benefits. As a result, the IDF's disabled, unlike those born with disabilities or injured in car accidents, do not have to deal with the regular welfare bureaucracies. Israeli disabled veterans, also quite unlike their PRC counterparts, have a representative organization, the Zahal [IDF] Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO hereafter), which is recognized in law as the “official” body representing the military disabled. In terms of its budget, Israel spends more on disabled veterans pensions than any other industrialized country (in 1994, 0.4 percent of the Gross Domestic Product).¹⁸⁰ Politically, Israel is a vibrant democracy with a free press. As a “best-case scenario” for disabled veterans' rights, Israel can tell us two important things. First, it allows us to eliminate, or at least reduce, the weight of key variables as the most critical to an explanation. For instance, if Israeli disabled veterans also encountered very serious problems (even if not on the scale of China), we can rule out the size of population or territory as the most critical variable; since Israel is a democracy, perhaps China's problems should not be attributable primarily to its regime type. Second, by looking at the story behind the expansion of rights and generous benefits for Israeli disabled veterans, we can also tease out the conditions for proper veteran disability care that may have been lacking in the Chinese case.

Contrary to my own expectations, even a rather cursory glance at the mainstream Israeli press (*Ma'ariv*, *Yediot Achronot*) reveals that, despite their many advantages, disabled Israeli war veterans were not handed rights or benefits on a silver platter, and the state's protective umbrella was not necessarily wide enough, either. Even after the most military heroic periods of Israeli history (after the War of Independence and the Six Day War), disabled veterans, either as individuals or through the ZDVO, had to fight (usually against officials in the Finance Ministry¹⁸¹) for most of the necessary adaptations for their everyday needs as well as for preservation of memory. In March 1960, for example, disabled veterans (at the time there were 6,000 of them) were described as “furious” at the state, and the Ministry of Finance in particular, because of the nitpicking negotiations over their benefits (involving tax breaks, medicine, disability levels, unemployment issues) which led many disabled to feel that they were being treated like supplicants to be pitied, or just another interest group. “It's not how much you give,” one

correspondent summarized, "it's how you give it and how the state returns the debt it owes you."¹⁸²

This complaint, however, was partially disingenuous, since Israeli disabled veterans were not beyond combining high-minded appeals to their status with concrete discussions over meat and potatoes. In December of that year, the "Organization of Disabled Veterans from the War of Independence" (the predecessor of the ZDVO) complained about "insulting treatment" on the part of the Ministry of Defense and threatened to initiate a sit-in strike at the Ministry if various income tax deductions were not resolved and their compensation scale was not adjusted "to level 15 on the Civil Service salary scale"; the statute governing their compensation stipulated that it be set at level 10, but this level "no longer exists."¹⁸³ In 1965, the same organization initiated a "public struggle" to improve upon their rights, which they claimed had lost much of their value during the previous decade. Claiming that their struggle "will affect military morale," organization leaders sent a letter to the Minister of Defense demanding an upgrade to their benefits, since those who were non-disabled enjoyed a significant boost in their standard of living. When time passed and no answer was received, the organization contacted the media, which published their letter to the Minister of Defense. Two days later, there was some action: an interagency meeting was convened between representatives of the Finance, Defense, and Labor ministries. When an interim report from this meeting was brought before a crowd at the disabled organization's headquarters, a wave of protest erupted, in part because two days earlier, some veterans, in a matter unrelated to the legislation, had "broken into the Finance Ministry" but were also given the bureaucratic run-around. After this heated meeting, the Deputy Minister of Defense, Shimon Peres, called the chairman and other officials of the organization and they worked out an agreement whereby monthly payments would be made to disabled who had "19 percent disability" (the organization initially demanded 24 percent) as well as increased payments for the unemployed and those who had extremely serious disabilities (such as paralysis and blindness).¹⁸⁴

This national-level action was not the only one prior to 1967. In January 1966, the disabled veterans organization was "preparing for a struggle" against Israel's two primary transportation cooperatives, "Dan" and "Egged," on grounds already familiar to us from Chapter 4: job discrimination. According to the news account, many disabled veterans began to work at these co-ops after their release from the hospital in 1950, but usually as "hired" workers (repairman, ticket punchers, etc.). Because many disabled veterans could not drive, they could not become full members of the cooperative, since the co-ops' charter stipulated that all members must have a driver's license. Frequent attempts to find a compromise solution failed, including a

back-channel intervention by former Defense Minister Shimon Peres, which prompted threats of collective action: "The public should know that disability is not a crime that should be punished. Our comrades at the cooperatives are not alone. We will all come together to demand our rights, if necessary."¹⁸⁵

This call for solidarity proved prescient. Six months later, the Six Day War broke out, which resulted in thousands of newly disabled veterans. The decisive victory in the war did not always translate into a smooth transition to civilian life, however. The years immediately following the war witnessed a flurry of small skirmishes and larger battles between disabled veterans and the state, public agencies, and individual employers.¹⁸⁶ Between 1967 and 1968, the key law governing disability benefits was revised and expanded, thanks largely to activism by the disabled themselves, their allies in the media, and strong public opinion in their favor, the latter of which provided a great deal of leverage in negotiations between the various ministries involved.¹⁸⁷ For instance, in the summer of 1968, 200 disabled veterans planned to protest outside several movie theatres in a town near the northern city of Haifa, claiming that the owner of the theaters was not doing enough to employ disabled veterans, as was required by law.¹⁸⁸ In March 1969, a well-organized task force of 500 disabled veterans "conquered" the Postal Service Building "without encountering much resistance"; the Post Office, which was also in charge of installing landlines in the pre-cell phone era, had refused to implement various tax breaks and, gallingly, "did not respond to their correspondence"; this conflict apparently had been brewing since 1958. Even though the disabled entered clerks' offices, "no one even thought about calling in the police" (they invited them for drinks instead).¹⁸⁹ The media was sympathetic to the veterans and railed against "government and public agencies" for their "apathy and lack of sensitivity" in dealing with the disabled, a charge that was echoed by many disabled in a 1971 Ministry of Defense survey of this population.¹⁹⁰ Eli Landau, the military correspondent of the mass circulation daily *Ma'ariv*, wrote, "The shameful sight of an Israeli government minister being forced to 'receive' hundreds of disabled veterans 'attacking' him could have been prevented if it were not for their blatant disregard and neglect of this painful problem which is shared by thousands of families in Israel." The disabled's fight against the Post Office was successful.¹⁹¹

In other cases, disabled veterans, like their PLA counterparts, wrote to the press. In 1968, a man with the initials M.S. penned the following letter to *Ma'ariv*:¹⁹²

Disabled veterans encounter problems that have nothing to do with their physical condition. From experience I know that many problems are not resolved. For example, every factory is supposed to allocate 5 percent of their positions for the

disabled, but this is not enforced. Many of my disabled friends are unemployed. Education grants from the Ministry of Defense are insufficient, but when I asked the clerks how I could manage with such a paltry sum, they said, "We know it's hard, but that's all the law allows." Employees of the Civil Service get telephones at half-price, but the disabled person has to pay full price, even though he needs to make emergency calls on occasion.

... Again, my point is to spur those involved in these matters to take action. If there is a government agency handling these issues, please do something!

Veterans also took legal action to contest the state's determination of their disability level or to obtain "disabled veteran" status, problems we have also seen in China, albeit in Letters and Visits Offices or the Civil Affairs bureaucracy. On the whole, Israeli disabled veterans, despite living in a democracy and a generally supportive social atmosphere, were not very aware of their rights; an unpublished study of disabled veterans (1971) found that 54 percent were either unclear, or knew nothing, about their rights (of 45 specific rights, only three were clearly identified by 75 percent of respondents), a legal deficit that the large majority of veterans (77 percent) blamed on the Ministry of Defense's "not doing enough to let us know about our rights."¹⁹³ Those who were more aware of their rights, and had the wherewithal and resources for a lawyer, did take the Rehabilitation Department and other agencies to court. In *Arye Dayan v. State of Israel*, the plaintiff was injured in his spine in 1964 and recognized as 20 percent disabled. In the 1980s, however, his condition deteriorated, and he had several operations. A medical board then established his degree of disability at 44 percent "permanently." He appealed this decision at the District Court in Haifa, which decided to send his medical records back to the medical board.¹⁹⁴ Israel's Supreme Court (convening as a Court of Appeals) heard a case involving a soldier who developed diabetes several years after shell shock during a battle in the Yom Kippur War; his initial claim for compensation was denied because the law stipulated that the statute of limitations for claims was three years, so the plaintiff was too late. This decision was overturned at the district level, but the Ministry of Defense appealed the decision at the Supreme Court. The Court ruled against the Ministry and ordered it to pay 2,000 new Israeli shekels (NIS).¹⁹⁵ These cases are not unusual: according to Judge Sara Sirota, a former Vice President of Tel Aviv District Court, courts tend to be quite sympathetic to claims by disabled veterans, even those whose circumstances are somewhat murky; when they err, it usually benefits the veterans and not the bureaucracy.¹⁹⁶

Despite ongoing wars and conflicts, protests involving disabled veterans continued unabated in Israel. In 1984, the ZDVO threatened to "blockade the Rehabilitation Department offices" if the government did not rescind what they claimed were "sharp cuts" in their rights that resulted from a fiscal

austerity program.¹⁹⁷ In 1985, a group of 500 disabled veterans, including amputees and soldiers whose entire bodies were burned inside tanks, camped outside the Ministry of Defense to demand that the Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, intervene on their behalf with the Prime Minister and Finance Minister because their pensions were not keeping up with double- and triple-digit inflation. (A placard read: "Rabin: in '67 we went into battle with you; in '85 you're abandoning your fighters.") If their demands were not met, "thousands of disabled veterans would stage a protest outside the Finance Ministry and Prime Minister's Office."¹⁹⁸ In 1986, the ZDVO took out a half-page ad in *Ma'ariv* in response to the state's effort to tax their benefits. The appeal was very emotional, evoking themes of debt, sacrifice, and pain:

Government Ministers, from where did you derive the courage and gall to tax bereavement, orphans, widows, and disabilities?

Have you lost your sense of humanity, feeling, and shame?

How can you not see that we have already paid the government with our blood in all of Israel's wars?

How can you not understand that we paid this tax with our bodies, our eyes, limbs, and ugly and painful scars or sense of taste?

We've been through the hell of defending the Golan Heights and Sinai, the Chinese Farm [in Sinai, during the Yom Kippur War], and Ammunition Hill [in Jerusalem in the Six Day War]. Those wars were imposed on us by our enemies; our government should not impose upon us another war.¹⁹⁹

But protests continued. In 1987, amputees staged a protest in the middle of Tel Aviv because the government disallowed exchanging their vehicles for new ones after several years of use. Echoing a phrase heard among veterans in China ("slaughtering the mule after he ground the wheat"), one of the protesters said, "The war's over, and the grunt's work is done, so now he can go. That's what's happening now: we did what we did, paid the price, but no one remembers us for it."²⁰⁰

Despite their flair for aggressive tactics, as well as highly emotional and dramatic gestures and language, disabled veterans did not face their problems alone, even when the ZDVO did not directly advocate on their behalf. After the Six Day War, employees of the Nature Authority contributed the proceeds from one day of work to the disabled; a "spontaneous volunteer organization" with 600 members was created by Pinchas Yom-tov to help them "reenter civilian life";²⁰¹ and volunteers from WIZO, [AQ62] a large women's organization, stepped in to help disabled soldiers' families adjust to the difficulties after returning from the hospital and rehabilitation clinics.²⁰² In 1977, the Supreme Court implored the legislature to revise the disability law (in force since 1959) so that disabled veterans would have an easier time obtaining

the benefits to which they were entitled; many of the disabled encountered health-related problems several years after their service, which was well past the two-year statute of limitation for making claims.²⁰³ [AQ63]Private foundations both inside and outside Israel have also helped pay for big-ticket items such as new medical facilities.²⁰⁴ Disabled veterans have also had many allies in the media, exposing problems with buildings that lack access for the disabled, very serious difficulties getting good care for those suffering from extreme forms of PTSD, insensitive bureaucrats, employment discrimination (“The names of factories in the North that refuse to employ disabled veterans [from the Six Day War] will be published”), or physicians who did not have good bedside manners.²⁰⁵ In Israel, problems with disabled veterans (and those disabled by terrorist attacks) remain acute, but they are generally exposed and stay fairly high on the public agenda. Unlike many would-be critics of the government in the United States, Israelis do not fear being labeled as “unpatriotic” if they speak out on these matters.

So what have we learned from this brief survey? Let’s first look at some of the important similarities between the two cases. In both Israel and China, it is clear that bureaucracy, no matter where, does not appear to be well equipped to deal with emotionally fraught issues such as loss and disability and, as a result, will always draw the ire of the disabled. We have also learned that in both cases employers usually draw the most “red cards” for not accommodating veterans after their injuries; in Israel, however, this is more understandable because they operate under the constraints of a market economy driven by competition and profit, which was not the case in China. Furthermore, in both cases, disability was a “contested concept”—there were arguments over who was disabled, the “degree” of disability, and just how long one can claim benefits and status as a result of war-related injuries. It was also the case that disabled veterans in both countries used similar rhetorical strategies to frame their claims, using such phrases as “debts owed,” “sacrifices made,” and the “moral responsibility” of the state to take care of them after their injuries. Finally, in both cases, accessing rights and benefits was not easy; there were, in effect, battles after the wars in terms of making sure that politicians lived up to their promises and patriotic rhetoric.

By looking at the differences, however, we can see just how far China has to go in terms of providing disabled veterans with a sense of social and political appreciation. In Israel, disabled veterans benefited from a law and institutions that were able to overrule or critique bureaucratic practices, but Chinese disabled veterans do not have recourse to the law; its veterans almost certainly would benefit from a statute where their rights are clearly spelled out. A free press can also make a positive and significant difference in exposing problems, shaming employers and bureaucrats, and spurring politicians to

take necessary remedial action. Unlike Chinese veterans, the Israeli disabled also had a very feisty and aggressive organization, which we have seen is critical in securing rights and benefits. (This was also the case among some African-American disabled veterans after WWII, who formed their own organizations in response to discrimination.)²⁰⁶ Their allies at home and abroad have eased the burden on state coffers to some extent. It is also apparent that there were key differences in the extent of public support for their cause. Israeli disabled veterans did complain about bureaucratic apathy and some public indifference, but there is little evidence of the nastiness and derision in everyday interactions between the disabled and other citizens of the sort we have seen between Chinese and their disabled veterans.

These differences, I suggest, can be traced to several root causes, some shallow and others deep. Among the former I could include the difference in political systems. Democracy, law, and freedom of the press and association do matter, even if they cannot be said to be indispensable, since many veterans in the USSR appear to have had an easier time than their counterparts in the PRC. The root that lies deeper under the surface, however, is the nature of military service and the legitimacy of the wars that produced so many disabled soldiers. In Israel there is near-universal conscription, which has led to a higher degree of respect and sympathy for those wounded in action; it is not a coincidence that disabled veterans have allies in many places in society. In Israel, the wars have had a clear foreign enemy and were generally seen as necessary and legitimate (until 1982), and this perception rubbed off on the status of disabled veterans. In China, I argue, the military was too narrow in terms of its social composition and its wars were more complicated and less legitimate, which had a negative impact on the status of disabled veterans.

NOTES

1. PTSD, or anything equivalent to this ("shell shock," "battle fatigue"), does not appear in a county-level [AQ64]census of patients in mental hospitals. See QA 48-2-300. The USSR also did not recognize PTSD, and veterans suffering from it were unlikely to get treatment. See Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 364-65. The DSM-III-R symptoms that would seem to apply to Lin include difficulty concentrating, detachment and estrangement from others, sense of a foreshortened future, difficulty falling or staying asleep, and diminished interest in significant activities, as well as chronic health problems stemming from chronic mobilization of the body for danger. See Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 166-69.

2. Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao*, 12.

3. For Lin's sleep-related disorders and poor health, see Qiu Jin, *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution*, 145-47. Jin writes that

Lin's poor health made him "more vulnerable and submissive." MacFarquhar and Schoenhals note the connection between Lin's health and political isolation but seem to question whether Lin was actually ill: "Lin's long years of *apparent illness* meant that he had no constituency outside of the PLA. And he would almost certainly have had to rely upon his clique of senior generals in the center and PLA first secretaries in the Provinces." See MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 23, 300–01; emphasis mine). Teiwes and Sun also note Lin's detached and introverted manners but cast less doubt on the authenticity of his health problems: "Clearly poor health was a major factor." However, they also suggest that Lin may have used ill health as an excuse to get out of meetings. See *Tragedy of Lin Biao*, 10, 78, 89.

4. *Jundui ganbu*, 159–60.

5. SMA B168-1-209 (1963), 24.

6. *Minzheng jianbao*, August 15, 1956, 56.

7. Homer, *The Iliad*, Robert Fagles, trans. (New York: Viking, 1990), 122. For a book-length study on *The Iliad* through the prism of combat trauma, see Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*.

8. Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, Carl Phillips, trans., 73.

9. On the gradual inclusion of disabled people in PRC films, see Sarah Dauncey, "Screening Disability in the PRC," 481–506.

10. Lieutenant General Michael DeLong, deputy commander of the United States Central Command, complained that "politicians from her home state, West Virginia, wanted the military to award her the Medal of Honor" and that the "politicians said that a medal would be good for women in the military." DeLong was responding to politicians' efforts to pin the blame for the Jessica Lynch myth on the Pentagon, which he calls "utter hypocrisy." See "Politics during Wartime," *New York Times*, April 27, 2007.

11. Derthick, *Agency under Stress*, 37.

12. See Matthew Kohrman, *Bodies of Difference: Experiences of Disability and Institutional Advocacy in the Making of Modern China*; Karen Nakamura, *Deaf in Japan: Signing and the Politics of Identity*.

13. Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 187–88.

14. Tim Bullman and Han Kang, "The Risk of Suicide among Wounded Vietnam Veterans," 662–67.

15. DDA 11-7-306 (1959), 72.

16. This idea was not new—eugenics and Social Darwinism were extremely influential in China prior to 1949, and sports and physical education were heavily promoted as remedies to China's weakness vis-à-vis the West. See Andrew Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China*. For the importance of physical prowess as an important criterion for political and social status in rural China, see Chan, Madsen, and Unger, *Chen Village under Mao and Deng*, 29.

17. See Diamant, *Revolutionizing the Family*, Chapter 3; Lee and Kleinman, "Suicide as Resistance in Chinese Society," 289–311.

18. Gat, "The Democratic Peace Theory Reframed: The Impact of Modernity," 91.

19. Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution*, 216–17. This included immigrants, who composed a significant portion of the Continental Army.
20. Gat, "Democratic Peace," 91.
21. Alan Skelly, *The Victorian Army at Home*, 297–98; John Keegan writes that the primary motive for enlisting in the British Expeditionary Force in 1916 was usually "simple poverty." See *The Face of Battle*, 216. On troop quality, see Gat, "Democratic Peace," 91.
22. John Keep, *Soldiers of the Czar: Army and Society in Russia, 1492–1874*, 147.
23. Between 1940 and 1973, a period that combined the draft and selective service in the United States, "those entering the military tended to come from low- and high-status families without discrimination." See Neil Fligstein, "Who Served in the Military, 1940–1973," 298.
24. Gerald Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War*, 115–16.
25. Henry Ramos, *The American G.I. Forum*, 3–4; according to Carl Allsup, Mexican-Americans had the highest incidence of illness and disease because of poverty and discrimination. See *The American G.I. Forum: Origins and Evolution*, 57–58.
26. SMA B168-1-600, 113.
27. SMA B168-1-607, 54.
28. Among the officers were 2 brigadier generals, 60 colonels, 250 battalion commanders, 554 first lieutenants, and 625 second lieutenants. The rest (1,293) were classified as "soldiers." See SMA B168-1-632 (1956), 80.
29. SA A20-1-029 (1951), 17.
30. SA A1-2-516 (1957), 19; SA A20-1-295 (1960), 43.
31. *Liaoning sheng zhi: minzheng zhi*, 104.
32. *Jundui ganbu*, 161–62.
33. SMA B242-1-574 (1953), 2–3. Rural officials were admonished on account of this.
34. QA 48-2-141 (1957), 12.
35. QA 48-2-146.
36. *Wuqiang xian zhi* (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 1996), 416.
37. *Yutian xian zhi* (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaiké quanshu chubanshe, 1993), 371.
38. *Yi xian zhi* (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2000), 360–61.
39. *Wu'an xian zhi* (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshe chubanshe, 1990), 698.
40. Fred Riggs, *The Consulting Firm*, 4–5; Yu-Wen Fan notes that the percentage of veterans with mental illness was far higher than average. See "Becoming a Civilian," 130, ft. 35.
41. Cited in Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, 98; in the film *Assembly*, Captain Gu Zidi, a former officer, loses part of his eyesight. After the war, he resigns himself to bachelorhood.
42. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 355.

43. SA A1-2-516 (1957), 19.
44. SA A20-1-109 (1954), 47. In Tai'an county, 1,025 out of 1,636 veterans were not married (63 percent); after several years, 426 got married and 129 were engaged, which still left 28 percent unmarried, assuming all the engagements resulted in marriage. See SA A1-2-516 (1957), 19.
45. *Fan xian zhi*, (Henan renmin chubanshe, 1993), 514. Guomintang veterans on Taiwan experienced similar problems. ROC statistics indicate that 21.2 percent of veterans were bachelors. See Yang Ruizong, "Taiwan diqu yu dalu diqu tuiwu junren anzhi zhidu bijiao yanjiu," (Ph.D. diss., National Taiwan University, East Asian Studies, 1998), 85; Yu-Wen Fan, "Becoming a Civilian," 110-16, 125-27, 136-38.
46. *Wuqiang xian zhi*, 416. Wuba County, located on the Hebei-Shandong border, also took in homeless veterans. See *Wuba xian zhi* (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 1998), 581.
47. According to the gazetteer of Huangling County in Shaanxi Province, in 1956 for every 100 women there were 118 men, and in 1960, 144 men. See *Huangling xian zhi* (Xian: Ditu chubanshe, 1995), 85. In Anhui, for every 100 women (in 1953), there were 110 men. See *Anhui sheng zhi: renkou zhi* (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1995), 163.
48. SPA A20-1-41, 69.
49. SA A20-1-81 (1953), 18.
50. *Donzhi xian zhi* (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1991), 538.
51. *Ningyang xian zhi* (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 1994), 258.
52. SA A101-1-607, 7; SA A20-1-109 (1954), 47.
53. SMA B168-1-596 (1949), 63.
54. Luo Pingfei, *Anzhi guanli*, 63; *Ningyang xian zhi*, 258; *Jieshou xian zhi* (Hefei: Huangshan, 1995), 352; *Minzheng jianbao*, August 15, 1956, 56; Diamant, "Making Love 'Legible' in China," 73.
55. This was reported by General Fu Qiutao in SMA B1-2-1958 (1957), 30.
56. For this list, see the 1963 report in SMA B168-1-209, 24.
57. SMA B168-1-517, 139.
58. *Jundui ganbu*, 159.
59. SA A20-1-81, 62.
60. SMA B168-1-628 (1957), 72-73; *Minzheng jianbao*, August 15, 1956, 56.
61. SMA B168-1-619, 30.
62. SMA B168-1-633, 78.
63. SMA B168-1-209, 21.
64. SA A20-1-109 (1954), 48.
65. SA A20-1-133 (1955); for 1957, see SA A1-2-422.
66. SA A1-2-516, 17.
67. SA A20-1-295, 103.
68. QA 48-2-98, 112.
69. DDA 11-7-306 (1959), 3.
70. SA A20-1-332 (1963), 81-82. A 1960 report on letters and visits in Shandong noted that 90 percent of letters from Civil Affairs' revolutionary clientele came from Level 3 disabled veterans, who also accounted for 83.57 percent of visits to

the provincial capital (they often came with their families). See SA A20-1-295, 91. In the United States, administrative decisions regarding disability were also "highly susceptible to changes in the political context," but citizens had far better access to several levels of appeals if benefits that flowed from disability were cancelled. See Derthick, *Agency under Stress*, 44.

71. SA A20-1-332, 1.
72. SA A20-1-332 (1963), 83–84.
73. SMA B1-2-1958, 31.
74. SMA B168-1-209, 24.
75. See Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 152–60.
76. SMA B168-1-209, 21.
77. SMA B168-1-209, 21.
78. QA 48-2-96, 58.
79. QA 48-2-30 (1951), 122.
80. QA 48-2-30 (1951), 125.
81. "Geming canfei junren canfei dengji jianping gongzuo," QA, in author's collection.
82. SMA B168-1-632 (1956), 83.
83. SMA B1-2-1959, 32–33.
84. Robert Jefferson, "Enabled Courage," 1105, 1115.
85. SMA B168-1-671 (1965), 24, 18.
86. Tom Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law*, 82.
87. SA A20-1-411 (1965), 62, 79–80.
88. SA A20-1-411 (1965), 79–80.
89. QA 48-2-96 (1956), 51.
90. SMA B168-1-582 (1964), 201. Some complained, "The government sees people dying but doesn't come to their rescue"; "The Health Department doesn't do anything about leprosy; Civil Affairs only cares about expenditures, nothing else. Where are we supposed to go [for care]?"
91. QA 48-2-141 (1957), 14.
92. SMA B127-1-358 (1963), 39.
93. *Jundui ganbu*, 162.
94. QA 48-2-30, 124. On one occasion, local officials called for all Level 3 disabled veterans to gather at the County for a reassessment of the disability level. However, when they finally arrived—no doubt a difficult journey for many—they found that no one had prepared a place to stay or even food for them. After some time, the County chief found out about this and made the necessary arrangements, but the disabled were not mollified.
95. SMA B127-1-811 (1954), 6.
96. QA 48-2-141 (1957), 14.
97. QA 48-2-105, 136, 140.
98. *Minzheng jianbao*, August 15, 1956, 56; for Qingpu, see QA 48-2-96, 8.
99. SMA A54-2-49 (1957), 34.
100. SMA B168-1-565 (1962), 11–12.
101. QA 48-2-30 (1951), unpaginated.

102. QA 48-2-105 (1957), 134–35, 139.
103. “Guanyu huifu Liu Junmin tongzhi canfei fuxu wenti de baogao,” SA A20-1-432, 2.
104. “Dui Liu Junmin tongzhi shangcan wenti de diaocha baogao,” 4.
105. “Dui Liu Junmin tongzhi,” SA A20-1-432, 7.
106. “Yishui xian minzhengju,” “Guanyu dui Liu Junmin canfei wenti,” SA A20-1-432, 24.
107. *Ibid.*, 28.
108. *Jundui ganbu*, 325.
109. John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, 62.
110. Cited in David Gerber, “Heroes and Misfits,” 548.
111. See Robert Havighurst et al., *The American Veteran Back Home: A Study of Veteran Readjustment*, 72, 78, 90.
112. Gerber, “Heroes and Misfits,” 550.
113. Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home*, 145.
114. This proposal came to naught. See Seth Koven, “Remembering and Dis-memberment,” 1189.
115. For Australian veterans who were cuckolded by their wives while they were away at war, see Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, 235. For fragility of American wartime marriages, see Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s*. For Germany during WWI, see Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, 121, 164.
116. For post-war West Germany, see Elisabeth Heineman, “The Hour of the Woman,” 374, 380.
117. Karen Gottschang Turner (with Phan Thanh Hao), *Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam*, 152. This theme can also be found in novels. In Bao Ninh’s *The Sorrow of War*, the protagonist returns from war a broken man and loses his girlfriend.
118. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 60.
119. Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 118.
120. Deborah Sontag, “Injured in Iraq, a Soldier Is Shattered at Home,” *New York Times*, April 5, 2007. Monica Davey, “For Soldiers Back from Iraq, Basic Training in Resuming Life,” *New York Times*, May 31, 2004.
121. SMA B168-1-607, 73.
122. SMA B168-1-628, 22.
123. SMA B168-1-628, 72.
124. SMA B168-1-619, 70. German chaplains leveled similar complaints against rural veterans after WWI: “Many married men have also gone wild.” See Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, 219.
125. Yu-Wen Fan, “Becoming a Civilian,” 119–20. Officials complained that veterans “courted women recklessly,” which, of course, included falling for women working in “teahouses” (*chashi*), a popular type of brothel in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.
126. SMA B168-1-628, 90.
127. *Minzheng jianbao*, December 21, 1956, 87.

128. *Jundui ganbu*, 160.
129. *Zhu-Mao*, 45.
130. SMA B1-2-1958, 31.
131. QA 48-2-98 (1956), 68.
132. QA 48-2-96, 60-61.
133. SA A1-2-516 (1957), 19.
134. See *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans*, 97.
135. SMA B1-2-1958, 28.
136. SMA B168-1-645, 41.
137. SA A20-1-109 (1955) 48.
138. Exposure to combat significantly increases the risk of PTSD as well as chronic diseases and early death. See Lee, Vaillant, Torrey, and Elder, "A 50-year Prospective Study of the Psychological Sequelae of World War II Combat," 516-22.
139. Gerber, "Heroes and Misfits," 549.
140. Jack Epstein and Johnny Miller, "U.S. Wars and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 22, 2005.
141. Ethel Dunn, "Disabled Russian War Veterans," 253.
142. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 61.
143. See Paulo Granjo, "The Homecomer: Postwar Cleansing Rituals in Mozambique," 387. As noted by Jonathan Shay, cleansing and purification rituals for veterans have a long history, such as in [AQ65]the Book of Numbers in the Old Testament (31:19ff) and in the medieval Christian Church. See *Odysseus in America*, 152.
144. SMA B168-1-226 (1965), 21.
145. SMA B168-1-630, 22.
146. SMA B168-1-628, 72.
147. SA A20-1-41, 69.
148. SA A20-1-109, 48.
149. Andrew Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*.
150. Stuart McConnell, "Who Joined the Grand Army?," 139.
151. SMA B168-1-628, 40.
152. *Minzheng jianbao*, October 11, 1956, 67; QA 48-2-27 (1956), 48.
153. SMA B168-1-596, 55.
154. SMA B168-1-633 (1957), 101.
155. SMA B168-1-628, 74.
156. SMA B168-1-645 (1959), 30.
157. SMA B127-1-358 (1963), 37.
158. QA 48-1-40, 18.
159. SA A20-1-29 (1951), 58.
160. QA 48-2-98 (1956), 68.
161. "1963 nian yilai jieshou anzhi fuyuan," SMA B168-1-666 (1964), 4, 9. There were also more serious cases. Jin Maogen, a veteran of the Korean War in Songjiang County, was falsely accused of theft. He was beaten with the butt of a gun, tied up and hung upside down on an electric pole, and spent three months in jail. He filed multiple charges against the officials responsible, which, after an extensive

investigation, were shown to be “basically correct.” [AQ66] Only one person was expelled from the party; the others received warnings or made public confessions. See SMA B123-5-1314 (1963), 24–25.

162. SMA B127-1-869, 10.

163. SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 45–46; SMA B168-1-517, 139.

164. SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 120.

165. SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 74, 102; *Minzheng jianbao*, November 19, 1956, 81; SMA B168-1-517 (1951), 139.

166. SMA B168-1-666, 4, 9.

167. Zhou Ziqiang (ed.), *Gongfei junshi wenti lunji*, Bureau of Investigation–Ministry of Justice Archives (Xindian, Taiwan), #590.8/3882, 209.

168. “Falkland veterans claim suicide toll,” *BBC News*, January 13, 2002.

169. *Jundui ganbu*, 160.

170. SMA B168-1-607 (1952), 58–59, 73.

171. SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 22.

172. SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 121; SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 46.

173. On Namibia, see Rosemary Preston, “Integrating Fighters after War,” 468; according to Deborah Cohen in *The War Come Home*, the slightly disabled benefited the most in post-war WWI Britain; by the mid-1920s, the severely disabled were “forgotten men” (pp. 109, 147).

174. *Zhonghua minguo 90 nian Tai-Min diqu rongmin jiuye*, 2, 5–6.

175. These include the War of Independence (1948), the Sinai Campaign (1956), the Six Day War (1967), the War of Attrition (1969–1971), the Yom Kippur War (1973), and the first Lebanon War (1982–1985). Every war added to the number of disabled veterans. For instance, 2,300 were added immediately after the Six Day War and the War of Attrition (mostly amputees of arms and legs). See Ze’ev Schiff, “2,300 nechim me’az sheshet hayamim,” *Ma’ariv*, January 27, 1971. According to one report from 1989, 2,000 disabled veterans are added to the state’s roster per year as a result of ongoing conflicts. See Shmuel Tal, “2,000 nechei Zahal nosafim midai shana,” *Hadashot*, May 16, 1989.

176. Exemptions were generally limited to the ultra-orthodox. Arab men have not been eligible for the conscription owing to questions about their loyalty to the state, which from the beginning was defined as Jewish.

177. On these aspects of Israeli “militarism,” see Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israel Militarism*. Even today, the military is viewed very positively. In a 2001 survey of accountability and trust in different state institutions, the highest-ranked institutions were the Secret Services (73 percent approval), Israel Defense Forces (71 percent), universities (68 percent), and the judiciary (65 percent). Political parties came in dead last (38 percent). See Eran Vigoda and Fani Yovel, *Bitsua Hamigzar hatziburi biYisrael*, 31.

178. Yoram Bilu and Eliezer Witztum, “War-Related Loss and Suffering in Israeli Society,” 10.

179. Shlomo Kravetz, Shlomo Katz, and David Albez, “Attitudes Toward Israeli War Veterans with Disabilities,” 377.

180. John Gal and Michael Bar, “The Needed and the Needy,” 580–86.

181. Gal and Bar, *The Needed*, 589.
182. Ze'ev Schiff, "Nechei Zahal zo'emim," *Ma'ariv*, April 12, 1960.
183. S. Ben-Haim, "Nechei milchama ma'ayemim," *Ma'ariv*, November 14, 1960.
184. Eli Landau, "Nechei milchemet hashichrur," *Ma'ariv*, April 19, 1965.
185. Eli Landau, "Nechei hamilchama mamshichim lihilachem," *Ma'ariv*, January 17, 1966.
186. This does not suggest that *all* disabled veterans were dissatisfied. An unpublished study commissioned by the Ministry of Defense in 1971 found that "only" 40 percent of the disabled were dissatisfied to some extent with the compensation they received from the state, and 75 percent were generally satisfied with officials (private and public agency employers were not mentioned). Ze'ev Ben-Sira, "Pe'ulat hashikum shel ma'arechet ha'bitachon" (Jerusalem: Institute of Applied Social Research, 1971), IDF Archives 2384/1996-51, 204. This number surely increased [AQ67]after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, which vastly increased the number of disabled veterans.
187. Eli Landau, "Nechei Zahal lo gamru lihilachem," *Ma'ariv*, January 9, 1968.
188. "Bi'motzash—dorshim avoda," *Ma'ariv*, July 23, 1968.
189. Tzvi Lavie, "Nechai Zahal 'kavshu' et misrad ha'doar," *Ma'ariv*, March 6, 1969.
190. Disabled veterans complained that Rehabilitation officials (like their Civil Affairs counterparts) helped them with jobs and then "forgot about them," did not give enough individual attention, acted as if they were "giving money from their pockets," did not care enough ("some officials have been there for far too long"), were not flexible enough, pushed them from office to office, and took too long to return letters. See Ze'ev Ben-Sira, 204–07.
191. See "Histararut hanechim hitzleecha," *Ma'ariv*, April 6, 1969.
192. "Hatipul binechei Zahal adayin lakui," *Ma'ariv*, July 2, 1968.
193. Ze'ev Ben-Sira, 101, 204. The disabled were aware of their right to assistance with employment, exemption from television and radio tax, and right to coupons for the IDF supermarket. More important rights (medical, education, housing) were much less known.
194. Dayan v. State of Israel, Tel Aviv, 901/91 (Israel Bar Association records).
195. State of Israel v. Avraham Caspi, 455/85.
196. Interview with the late Judge Sirota (conducted at her home in Mishmar Ha-Sheva, Israel, in Hebrew), April 21, 2007. One finds similar sympathy in higher-level appeals in the United States. See Martha Derthick, *Agency under Stress*, 40–41.
197. "Nechei Zahal: Nachsome hayom misradai agaf hashikum," *Ma'ariv*, August 26, 1984.
198. "Nechei Zahal: Rabin, ata notesh et lochamaicha," *Ma'ariv*, December 31, 1985.
199. See *Ma'ariv*, December 17, 1986.
200. "Protzot nisrafot, mafginim k'tuai raglaim," *Ma'ariv*, March 26, 1987.

201. *Ma'ariv*, July 7, 1969; Yishayahu Avi'am, "Yesh Ezrachim she echpat lehem," *Ma'ariv*, January 14, 1968.
202. Ephrat Arad, "Tipul nashi binechei Zahal," *Ma'ariv*, March 2, 1971.
203. "Beit Mishpat Ha'elion kore litaken et chok hanechim," *Ma'ariv*, September 29, 1977.
204. "Taram reva million lirot," *Ma'ariv*, November 21, 1968; "Press Release," U.S. Information Service, American Embassy, July 4, 1974. *Ma'ariv* Archives, Tel Aviv; "Merkaz hadash lishikum," *Yediot Achronot*, May 21, 1984.
205. Amiram Cohen, "Nichnas 97, yatza 21," *Al-Hamishmar*, May 19, 1989; Alex Fishman, "G. shav misadeh hakrav," *Al-Hamishmar*, November 26, 1985; Yosef Micha'eli, "Nechim hazkukim litna'ai diur," *Ma'ariv*, July 17, 1974.
206. Jefferson, "Enabled Courage," 1102-03.