Deborah Cowen
Military Workfare: The Soldier and Social Citizenship in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, 320 p.

What are the relationships among labour, citizenship, and soldiering? In what way have they evolved over time? How does the military fit in with the development of the welfare state since World War II? In *Military Workfare*, Deborah Cowen addresses these questions with a primary focus on Canada. Concentrating on the period from World War II through the early years of the twenty-first century, Cowen provides a comprehensive and intriguing study of the specific and sustained connections that link welfare, warfare, and citizenship. She concludes that the work of the soldier, and specifically the emphasis on entitlement through work that is at the core of military service, has played a crucial role in shaping social forms of citizenship.

Cowen traces major shifts in the development of what she perceives to be military citizenship and makes three important claims. First, she argues that welfarist forms of citizenship have their origins in times of war and that this accounts for the emphasis on contribution to society through work in post-war welfarism. Second, she explores the massive expansion of the Canadian welfare state in the 1960s and highlights the manner in which civilian welfare came to undermine military recruitment by directly reducing material incentives for enlistment. Finally, she discusses the decline of the welfare state since the 1980s, in conjunction with the recent expansion of the military as part of the "war on terror," and argues that this has created a tremendous opportunity for the military, which can now expand social benefits to draw in new recruits. In this view, the military is once again emerging as a form of work and citizenship for the "deserving" poor. While other scholars identify the shift from welfare to workfare as a recent and defining feature of the emergence of neo-liberal agendas, Cowen suggests that work as a condition for welfare has a long military history that has persisted through the relatively brief life of the modern welfare state.

By studying welfare through the prism of warfare, Cowen makes a valuable contribution to current studies in the field of labour and citizenship. Yet it is exactly this exclusive prism that, in some contexts, seems to dictate conclusions that are either over-conclusive or insufficient.

Cowen's first argument focuses on the military history of the welfare state. She highlights the manner in which key elements of the post-war welfare policies were already in existence in targeted form in the military and concludes that an expectation of service to the nation in exchange for social services remained an important organizing element of post-war entitlement. Cowen's research clearly uncovers the structural manner in which military social policies influenced the formation of similar civilian programs. However, it is not entirely clear whether the shift from the military context to the civilian context and the formation of the massive civilian welfare state of the 1960s could have materialized without a strong rights discourse. In this context, Cowen notes that post–World War II welfarism and social citizenship, as opposed to earlier social interventions, were defined by notions of social rights or universal entitlements. But her analysis does not go beyond this observation to explore the significance of this rights-based understating of modern welfare or to trace its origins and possible relationship to other aspects of World War II.

One such aspect of war that could supplement Cowen's analysis and enrich the normative discussion is the fact that World War II can also be defined as a turning point in the development of the international rights discourse that arose directly from the specific experience of this war. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, was the first global expression of this development. In addition to civil and political rights, the declaration recognizes social and economic rights such as the right to social security, the right to work, and the right to an adequate standard of living. These rights were subsequently elaborated in two additional international documents—the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Post-war social citizenship in Canada was therefore formed in the shadow of a newly established international commitment to a comprehensive bill of rights. Thus, war was a decisive factor in the development of the welfare state not only because of the service-oriented norms of the soldier but also because of the human-rights norms that emerged out of the overall war experience.

Similarly, Cowen's data call for a more nuanced discussion when it comes to the contemporary gendered implications of the re-emerging model of military citizenship. To be sure, gender plays an important role in Cowen's analysis of the military. She reveals that women now make up only 12.3% of regular forces; this is an intriguing figure in light of the fact that, as a result of recruitment pressures and employment equity initiatives, the Canadian Forces have targeted women for enlistment since the late 1970s—yet despite these ongoing efforts, women's participation in the military remains marginal. Cowen suggests that this marginality can be attributed to familial as well as geographical considerations. She also provides some data on the problem of sexual assault in the military and notes that the majority of Canadians see the military as a sexist and racist institution. This latter proposition may indicate that formal policies of gender integration in the military do not address the powerful dynamics of gender exclusion that still characterize military culture and practice. In this respect, the soldier of the twenty-first century resembles the post-war soldier more than we think. Masculinity and its norms still dominate the military, and, therefore, if social citizenship is constructed once again around the figure of the soldier, the problematic implications go beyond the growing link between neo-liberal workfarism and national militarism. It is not simply that the nation's poor are now instructed to sacrifice and serve in order to receive services, it is also that this model of citizenship reproduces a gendered and hierarchical social order that informs and structures the general population's understanding of entitlement.

Noya Rimalt
Associate Professor of Law
University of Haifa
Israel