

Europe-Centrism in Israel's General History Textbooks: 1948 – 2004

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Since the establishment of the state of Israel the curriculum planners at the Israeli Ministry of Education deliberated as to what part and place should be allocated to the program of general history in the overall curriculum, especially what place should general history have versus the history of the Jewish people (and the history of Zionism).

Another major deliberation was whether general history should be a separate subject, autonomous, in the studies of the Israeli student in order to enrich his world, broaden his horizons, enable him to form a universal world picture or should it serve the messages transferred by the program of the history of the Jewish people and thus, be subject, especially its contents, in a manner that would serve the Israeli government when it determines what contents should a student learn. This deliberation accompanies until this day all those who deal in creating study programs and study books of history in Israel, but not only here.

Historical education is a tool in the hands of the government, the state and its authorities in the junction between past and future. The government perceives itself as obligated to utilize the story of the past and the teaching of cultural heritage from one generation to the other while shaping the future generation. This transition, on the border of two different time systems, is characterized by nature in a dialectical tension between preservation, continuity and stability and innovation, agitation and change (Elboim-Dror, 1999).

The debate on history teaching in the Israeli education system often digresses beyond the disagreements between professionals, teachers and educators regarding the discipline. It reflects different points of views regarding the role of the state as an educating factor, its commitment to teach national, nation building, values and its adherence to humanistic, man building, values and democratic, society building, values.

Public debates regarding the teaching of history and writing study programs have occurred in recent years in various countries and societies around the world, these programs are disassociating from a tradition of teaching a collective-monolithic past and adopting identity patterns related to multiple narratives, historical narratives that often collide with each other. Undermining the authority of the heritage and placing it for scrutiny also characterize sectors and circles doubting the need to recruit the past for legitimisation and nurture an alternative legitimisation emphasizing the present and facing the future. The debates surrounding the teaching of history are especially common in democracies enabling them in the name of freedom of speech and often reveal acceptance towards trends of perspectives' change and multiple narratives.

Planners of study programs know that the programs (followed by the books) are not just a summary of research findings, their organization and transfer to the young generation. In teaching history, there is an expression of processes constructing the collective memory spaces from which derive identity perceptions and norms of society and its aspirations regarding its future image. Power and control centres of the ruling factors in society are especially expressed in the study programs (and the books that follow).

In the education system, history lessons are perceived not just as a source of information and a tool for analysing the human experience, but also as teaching values and as a means for shaping the collective memory of the learners.

The critical pedagogy which assigns itself, among others, a liberating role by exposing the overt and covert trends of education, regards every detail within the school as a calculated step for achieving goals, which final purpose is to limit the consciousness of the student as a person and as a citizen in the manner desired by the ruling elite (Shermer, 1999).

This pedagogy examines the study program as an approach with a certain direction versus the knowledge of the world, society and man and claims that this approach is directed to qualify the student to accept certain ways of social life as natural, and mostly desirable, and support their continuity without criticizing and exposing the social and cultural interests hidden in them.

According to this approach, school fulfils an explicit political role, thus the history study program fulfils a significant role in normalizing the students. Ilan Gur-Zeev claims “The critical reconstruction of the history of the Zionist education will enlighten the general rules of education by pointing out the general function of the normalizing education in a concrete historical manner. Reconstructing the control over the memory and consciousness with supervision over the construction of the Israeli identity in the framework of knowledge images and modern political practices should have a special place here” (Gur-Ze’ev, 1999, p. 20).

Through collective memory man is navigated by the education system in space and in time and forms a perception of “self”, individual identity and collective belonging. The dialectical tension between the research of history and memory modelling, between learning as an analytical judgemental activity and recollection as a bonding process shaping essential emotional stands, is an imminent factor in teaching history in Israel.

The study program in the hands of the ruling factors is a kind of an encoding memory province, summarising and harbouring within it the sublime and the inspirational of the national experience. The study program is a collection of symbols and social codes directing the entire education system. This existing tension, between the desire to shape students with a judgemental and autonomous point of view and one national story, is dictated from above, in the manner of common “see and do” all the time. Thus, the field of study programs is at the center of constant intervention by political forces and various social interest groups wanting to control it under the guise of “I hold the truth”. These struggles have impacted, since the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 to date, the final structure of the history study program.

Four core programs for teaching history were created in the Israeli education system during the first 50 years as a sovereign nation (Naveh & Yogev, 2002, p.27). They represent by their nature, contents and goals, three central periods in the development of the state of Israel and its inner struggles.

The first core program for teaching history was published by the Ministry of Education in 1954 and it replaced four programs that were common until that time in Israel. The program replaced the program at the elementary schools that was published in 1923 by the department of education of the Zionist management in Israel and the program for education published.

The first program was based on the designation motif in historical national education common primarily in nations politically resurrected wanting to provide a point for their struggle for freedom, beyond the aspiration for independence and sovereignty. Saul Robinson traced in Italy, Poland and Israel similar patterns of a new sovereign state justifying its historical aspirations expressions facing the other world nations, by the historical education intended to provide the emotional equipment by descriptions of heroism and suffering, triumphs and deprivation and also the rational justification by the proclaiming “an historical right” (Robinson , 1955, p. 26).

With the directive by the first Minister of Education, Ben-Zion Dinur, it was determined that the curriculum

should all be based on the national education goals as determined in paragraph B' of the "National Education Law" of the state of Israel.

This paragraph must base the national education on "the cultural values of Israel and its scientific achievements, love of country and loyalty to the state and the people of Israel, on training in agricultural and industrial work, on pioneer training, on aspiring to create a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual help and the love of the people" (Robinson , 1955, p. 3).

The goals of the Israeli education reflected, to a great extent, the "spirit of the period". The leadership and the public suffered from a rather depressed feeling, following the War of Independence in 1948 and the armistice agreements, which left Israel isolated in the Middle East while a threat of a "second round" of war was in the air.

Arab infiltration along the borders, the Egyptian quarantine of the Suez Canal, the Arab Boycott and many other actions reinforced the impression that the struggle is not over yet. This "combatant" atmosphere infiltrated the education system (Pode , 1977).

We can learn about this atmosphere from the words of Dinur, who said in a symposium conducted in March 1953 by the association of high schools: "we are like a besieged city. We are in a situation resembling 'a certain agreement of cold war' while openly preparing for a war of annihilation against us" (Dinur , 1958, p. 43). These words were not said in an empty vacuum, they were recruited to present the justifications for the teaching of a new subject, civil studies. This anxiety was also expressed in the speeches of David Ben-Gurion.

Upon presentation of the first program to the teachers, principals and supervisors Dinur was emphatic in his demand: "Everything taught in school must assist in imparting to the student these values, train him to absorb them within him and raise them as a guiding factor in forming his identity, his thoughts and his way of life. Nothing in the curriculum or school life should be opposed to these goals" (Curriculum, Israeli Government Press, 1954, p .3).

Dinur left no selection option to the schools and negated the possibility of adding other chapters. The curriculum was dictated from the top, with strict instructions not to make any changes by people in the field.

Dinur used clear words according to which the program "will inspire the people...guide its thought, concentrate its will, activate its energy constantly" and he attributed to the program high significance as "this big awakening is mandatory now, this awakening and motivation is what the country requires". The final goal of the program is: "Moulding man's image" (School curriculum, 5th-8th grades, Government Press, 1956, p.12).

The first program suited the scientific approach in study planning conducted by a central professional forum. This approach perceives study planning in a linear constant line according to which, the work of the program developer is guided by clear formulated rules embedded in the knowledge structure of the subject. The developing forum determines the goals of the program, according to them it creates the learning materials and experiences while predicting expected teaching-learning situations and finally it determines the teaching methods. In this case, the study goals have a great significance since, according to them the program will be conducted, as will the considerations for its products. This is a master approach it regards the teacher and the study materials as a pipeline for transporting a dictated program, a kind of a factory where the teachers are workers with no opinion and consideration they are led by management (Pinkosser , 1997).

There were eight primary objectives in the first program:

Teach the students the great past of the Jewish people - its spiritual heritage, activities and vision, and information regarding the nations who came in contact with the Jewish people and the mutual impact.

Teach the students the knowledge that our people, which is one of the smaller people among the world nations, kept for 2,000 years in the Diaspora its religion, customs and views, did not submit to larger nations and their cultures and never stopped existing as one people in all the countries of the Diaspora.

Cultivate in the hearts of the students love for the sublime spiritual assets of our people and arise in them the will to act according to them, plant in their hearts feelings of admiration for the great figures of our people, its martyrs and heroes and inspire them to learn from their good deeds.

Teach the students the most important historical facts and the understanding of the spiritual and material forces operating in human society and general concepts regarding the development of this society, while paying special attention to the understanding of the historical foundations of the political, social and cultural reality of these days. Cultivate within the students the appreciation of partnership between nations and the mutual impact with the good and sublime of each people's culture, develop in them an attitude of tolerance towards other nations and teach them the importance of international organizations.

Embed within the students the understanding that our people, which is the most ancient and the first to believe in one God, cultivated high social ideals and was a primary force for the moral advancement of the world.

Cultivate within the students the awareness that the sublime elements of the Jewish religion, the vision of the prophets of Israel, the learning of the Torah in groups, maintaining the religious unity and courtesy, their deep belief in the eternity of Israel, their constant connections with their homeland and belief in redemption, all these provided our people with the power to face our oppressors and maintain our freedom and they brought us to our homeland from all parts of the world to re-build the state of Israel.

Provide the students with the awareness that the establishment of the state of Israel is the result of longing and loyalty by generations and the efforts and achievements of the great pioneer movement in the three generations of the Resurrection era and embed within them the love of Israel and the will to function for it and preserve its existence, develop and aggrandize it in the spirit of the great values of the Torah and the vision of the prophets.

The goals seek to utilize the glorification of the history of the Jewish people, select the chapters that serve the construction of the renewed Hebrew patriotic identity in the people's land and create heroic myths. The program was supposed to serve one narrative, the Zionist, the story of the renewed Jewish nation. According to this narrative the students were supposed to internalise the messages, that the nation began its way in the ancient land of Israel in which it became a people and an independent political entity and to which it returned after many years in the Diaspora in order to renew its previous days. Thus, chapters serving these messages were selected together with the accompanying chapters from the general history that would be subjected to them.

There is no central place in all the eight goals for the study of general history. It was pushed aside and utilized as a tool in understanding the events related to the Jewish people. In the specification of history teaching methods it was determined that the history of the Jewish people will be the central post of the teacher's goals while general history is a secondary goal. "In elementary school the history of the Jewish people will be the primary subject and from the history of other nations only the information required to understand the mutual relations between them and the Jews and the contribution of these nations to the human culture will be taught" (School curriculum, 5th-8th grades, Government Press, 1956, pp.17-18).

The study material encompassed subjects like Canaan and the land of Israel, while emphasizing the chapters discussing the settlement of the sons of Israel in the designated land and their unification into a people and the conquering of the land by Joshua Ben-Noon. Teachers were requested to pay attention to subjects like “evaluating the actions of the Israeli heroes to unite the tribes, the struggle of the prophets against the influence of foreign culture and for the implementation of justice in social life and the development of the land into an independent nation” (Study program, Israeli Government press, 1956, p.29).

Other topics studied then were: Israel at the end of the Persian Empire, the Greeks, Hellenism, the rules of Antiochus and the war of liberation, the renewal of the Judean monarchy, conquering the land and extending the settlement, the rule of the Roman Empire in Judea, the war of the Jews for freedom, the continuation of the struggle after the military defeat, formation of Christianity and its spread, the Jewish centre in Babylon and maintaining the unity of religion and the national culture. The teachers were given a directive: “in all the chapters dealing in general history, the teacher will provide general concepts of the period and its institutions without dwelling on details” (Study program, Israeli Government press, 1956, p.81).

In later chapters of the program there are subjects like: Islam, the Jews in the land of Israel during the Arab rule, the Jews in Christian lands, Jews in feudal Europe, the Crusades and persecution of Jews, longings for liberation and Messianic uprising, pilgrimages to Israel, the destruction of Jewish centres in Europe in the Middle ages, the banishments of Jews and their lives in their new colonies and the Jewish centre in Poland.

In the supplementary program for high-school published in 1957 there is an additional goal: “the students should be taught the understanding of the spiritual and materialistic forces functioning in human society and general concepts regarding its development...train them to judge...develop within them tolerance towards other nations and teach them the importance of international organizations” (Supplement for the Program in high school, Israeli Ministry of Education, , 1957; Shavit, 1985, pp. 1-9). But the primary focus remained “deepening the awareness regarding the universal contribution of the Jewish people, a people that maintained its uniqueness and calling at any cost and facing any threat” (Neveh & Yogev, 2002, p. 38).

Entire geographical regions and entire societies and nations and their contribution to humanity disappeared from the historical space in the first study program. In the division of study chapters the general history subjects were downsized into 14, which constituted 26% of the entire curriculum. All the rest, 39 subjects, were dedicated to Jewish history with an ethnocentric emphasis while cutting out the Jews of the Orient (Neveh & Yogev, 2002, p. 39).

Though its true that in the last years of high school there were additional subjects studied like: the liberation of the colonies in North America, the French revolution, reactionary and liberalism in the 19th Century, capitalism, imperialism, socialism, the 2 world wars and their results, but all these subjects only served as supplements to the main events of the history of the Jewish people.

Even during the first meeting of the Committee for Forming the Study Program for History (7.7.1948) it was decided that the history of the Jewish people and general history constitute one subject and will be taught in independent units from one another but “teaching a period in our people’s history will be based on the material previously learnt in general history”. It was decided at that meeting that “special attention should be placed in processing the program of the Jewish history in order to achieve the balanced ratio between all the discoveries of the nation’s life that have room in our subject”.

There were disagreements among the committee members, headed by Dr. Michael Hendel.

M. Sellinger raises issues that the subjects of the history of the Far East, South America prior to the Spanish

conquer and African culture, were not included. “The scope of history in our times compels not only the Indians and Chinese to study the history of Europe and America, it is a recurring obligation”.

The curriculum planners perceived the first study program as a required supplement to the National Education Law of 1953. The goals of the national education emphasized “the values of the Israeli culture” and “loyalty to the state and people of Israel”.

These goals received a more specified interpretation in the guide lines of the government’s program, which were confirmed by the Knesset (Israeli parliament) in 1957, chapter 5, education and culture, paragraph 24: “In elementary and high school education the government will seek to enhance Jewish awareness within the Israeli youths, instil the history of the Jewish people and its historical legacy and strengthen its moral link to world Jewry by recognizing the shared destiny and historical continuity, which unites the Jews all over the world for generations in all countries”.

These goals received a more specified interpretation in the booklet “Enhancing Jewish awareness in public school”. Three topics were discussed here: **A.** Rooting historical heritage within the students. **B.** Rooting youths in the history of the Jewish people. **C.** Enhancing the youths moral link to the Jewish people.

At that time disagreements were on the matter of interpretations given to “historical heritage”. A heated argument was conducted in Knesset, in the press and at teachers’ conventions. The argument primarily revolved around the way in which the students would internalise the values of the Jewish tradition and how will these values be expressed in their behaviour (Eden , 1976, p.14).

David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, perceived the national education law and the goals of history teaching as one unit aimed to serve the new state in its first steps. In a national pedagogic convention of the teachers’ association (18.10.54) he said: “The state has not settled in determining the knowledge and types of education that youths should be taught. It saw a need to tell educators and the nation, what is our historic destination towards which we strive and how we should equip and train the young generation so it would be able and willing to bring us closer to this destination...the law requires us to provide the youths of Israel knowledge, values and certain spiritual assets and to provide them with special emotional qualifications that would prepare them to implement the change required for shaping the new society” (Eden , 1966, p. 23).

According to Nave and Yogev “The teaching of general history was placed in the service of recognizing the yearning for Zionist revival motif and a substantial amount of time of the learning process was dedicated to the European community - the breeding ground of the Zionist movement” (Naveh & Yogev, 2002, p. 39). Writers of study books and educators in the history field supported the trend of the study program. Jacob Tory stated that, “We teach history in order to educated through history, to mould the image of a young person in his formation” (Tory, 1963, p.12). Michael Ziv stated “From learning the history the student should understand and be convinced, not with clichés but with facts, that the source for all our tragic weakness in the long Diaspora stems primarily from the absence of this initial tool for ensuring our national existence and in many cases our individual existence” (Ziv, 1957, p.18).

Ziv and Hendel warned from “national chauvinism” and “exaggerating our self esteem” (Hendel , 1967, pp.149-150) but supported the trend that general history should serve as a frame story for learning the history of the Jewish people returning to Zion.

Hendel thought “The learners should be taught the sense of belonging and identifying with the nation, root within them the love for its unique noble discoveries, enhance the anxiety regarding its destiny and contribute to moulding the emotional, psychic and voluntary forces to act for its continuing existence” (p.141). Hendel summarises: “It is obvious that we should teach the history of our people within the framework and taking into

account the history of the world” (p. 150).

Dinur, Ziv and Hendel differed from Ben-Gurion who adhered to the messianic historical narrative, which does not require external “justifications” and by its nature pushes aside the question of loyalty to the “historical truth”.

According to Ben-Gurion, the goal of the historical narrative is to lay the foundations of the Jewish existence and combine the resurrection of the state in a long-term historical process (Shapira , 1997, p. 228).

Ben-Gurion determined that “the students must know what the Jewish nation went through during 4,000 years, what occurred to it during its contacts with the nations surrounding it and the world nations among which the Jews resided”.

But in spite of the difference between them the end result was a synthesis of both approaches. On the cognitive level the core program of 1954 represented the concept of return from the Diaspora and renewal of the national independence of the Jewish people as a model for the historic development of the Jewish nation and enhanced the idea of opposing the Diaspora by emphasizing its damage to the Jewish people, while hiding the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Jewish communities in the various countries. The teaching of general history was also recruited to enlighten the unique features of Jewish nationalism in general and the constant link to Israel in particular. The history study program was directed to construct a process of uniting the historical narrative as a founding myth for the new state of Israel.

Over the years the first program raised criticism from teachers, writers and lecturers. Many of them were against the indoctrination trend, which was central in this program.

A.H Dans wrote: “close scrutiny of the study program reveals many chapters that were always taught but if we look at them unbiased we will see that they lost so much of their meaning that we can manage without them in the future. If we omit these subjects we will find room for others, which importance and value are rising in the modern world...if history lessons in our schools taught us to systematically think of our problems, evaluate the “pro” and “con” in order to reach careful judgement and when an instant decision must be made, not deciding blindly without thinking - for then learning and teaching history will not be in vain” (Dans , 1964, pp. 2 - 3).

Another protest raised by the writer refers to the pressing aside of general history to make room for national history. “We must make sure that the history they learn will also include information regarding the contributions of other nations to civilization. Naturally we will study our history in a more complete way than the history of other nations. But we must not omit from the narrative of humanity the great things achieved by other nations. We should include in the curriculum an abundance of universal history” (Dans , 1964, p.3).

A similar criticism was raised regarding the preference of European history over American, Asian or African history. “The primary civilizations occurred not in Europe but in Asia and Africa and they were societies with culture...the primary contributions of Asia and Africa are less modern than the European contributions but no less important to a history teacher. For example, ancient China introduced in Confucianism and Taoism the foundations for a civilization which existence was longer than any other civilization” (Dans, 1964, p .4).

Michael Ziv one of the primary writers of study programs explained then why the teaching of history is focused on Europe. “The real role that Europe fulfilled in the historical development process, the habit, origin and the study course of many of those representing now the historic science in the country and that teach history in school” (Ziv, 1957, pp. 36-37) yet he understands the need to change it and its focuses. “Everything going on these days in the political world compels us to seriously contemplate construction of a new program, entirely different from the existing one and maybe processing another history research program, a program where Asia and America will receive their proper place” (Ziv, 1957, p. 40).

Pushing aside international history in favour of national history was at that time an international tendency and not just the tendency of programs writers in Israel. In a seminar convened by UNesco in 1951 dealing with history teaching

methods and study programs a “comparative survey of study programs in history, geography and social science” was prepared. The survey encompassed 53 countries and revealed that in most high schools around the world there is a preference for national history. A characteristic feature of most programs is a visible negligence of parts of the world which impact or contact with them was non-existent like India and China.

The primary conclusion of the survey was that elementary school students do not have an opportunity to acquire in their history studies a real knowledge regarding the development of great nations and civilizations around the world. Study programs disregard the expansion of world events and the preference of political history continues to focus on subjects of national history and international tension and hide the discoveries of international development and international cooperation (Robinson, 1955, pp. 39-46).

During the early 60's Dr. Naftali Zon, the supervisor for history studies at the Ministry of Education, raised questions regarding the program in Israel, but he did this subtly without taking actual measures to change it. Zon made the demand to introduce elements from the French Anal school of thought. “There is no room just for factual description, time demands writing live history (*histoire vivante*) as suggested by Flobert, Fabre and Brodel. According to this approach there is no room for a national aspect in the perception of history, it should demonstrate the fatal partnership of the human race. This problem receives further validation in the field of teaching the new era in school...history teaching should demonstrate the historic processes the way they were formed so the link between past and present will be enhanced and continuity in historic awareness between the generation will be guaranteed” (Zon , 1963).

At the beginning of the 70's Zon called for a certain protest regarding the basic perceptions of the first program. He demanded to integrate historiography combining society, culture, economy, psychology and social science and find the balance between national history and its values and universal history and its impact on the national development. He also called to create a judgemental awareness regarding many phenomenon sensing that the student population has changed and so have its needs. “We must check again our methods as history teachers” (Zon , 1973, pp. 1-3).

Unlike him, Michael Ziv determined that “teaching history cannot be reduced only to political history or the history of wars” (Ziv, 1957, p. 31). But he went on to say “yet, with all the importance of the history of culture and financial life we should not forget that the political occurrence, in the strict meaning of the word, is a focus point of historic occurrence in general” (p. 33).

Ziv believes that the history of the wars should be taught out of instrumental motives. “There is no possibility to fully understand history and regard it in the right light without learning about the wars and their discoveries and analysing their causes and results and especially without explaining why these were the results. Young people should understand that our national existence will not be ensured and all our love for peace will not benefit us if it will not be accompanied with a moral and physical willingness to use force when the need arises...great battles, battles with an impact on the course of history should be a serious learning subject” (p. 35).

Voices of malcontent regarding the first program were raised in different forums of the Ministry of Education and by history teachers. In a teachers' convention in 1971 the teachers voiced their criticism. One of them, Itzhak Peri said: “the teacher faces a clear design problem on how to bridge between his personal subjective approach and the clear scientific objective ramifications of the program without getting entangled in a pathetic propagandist approach immediately rejected by our rationalist students?” (p.18).

Teachers complained that they are unable to stimulate within the students empathy regarding events in the Jewish world and the imbalance existing in the program. “Our students, with the humanistic egalitarian awareness... claimed that our approach exhibits one-sidedness” (p. 21).

In the mid 70's prior to the publication of the second program, upon the publication of a book by S. Izhar in which he claimed that there are no absolute values thus it is impossible and unnecessary to educate for values (Izhar , 1974), there was a lively debate in Israel regarding the teaching of values and education through them. According to Izhar,

man should be educated and determine for himself his values according to the situations in which he finds himself and not according to directives. There were many opinions for and against this concept.

Among those disagreeing with Izhar was Hanna Yaoz who says that there are two types of values: absolute values and relative values. She believes that the role of the history teacher is to mediate between the absolute and relative values and the student by cognitive teaching, by personal example and by linking the historic text to the student's reality. Yaoz supports teaching history while judging events according to universal moral values based on the assumption that there is a basic similarity between people throughout the generations (Yaoz , 1994).

Europe-centrism and integration of general and Jewish history

The approach of the first generation textbooks was a clear Europe-centrism approach which places at the centre of the students' historic study Europe and its history – from ancient times, through the Middle Ages, the new era and the history of the 20th century. The primary chapters studied in history in the last 3 grades of the Israeli high school, from the establishment of the state, are related to European history. This trend was maintained with certain changes in the second and third generation textbooks.

The Europe-centrism is one of the outstanding features in the Israeli history study program thus it infiltrated also the textbooks. The first writers of study programs in Israel, most of them from European descent, emphasized that the origin of this trend is in the Middle Ages and furthermore, in modern times of Jewish history, and it has a special bond with the history of the European world and its development. Emphasizing the European motif and placing it at the centre of the study program system and textbooks was actually a personal fulfilment of those few writers, which constituted the backbone of first generation textbooks.

Those writers served the dominating Zionist narrative that tried to create a clear link between the birth of Zionism in Europe during the 19th century and the Jewish national awakening and its direct continuation – settling the homeland. Historians like Ben-Zion Dinur, Michael Ziv, Michael Hendel, Samuel Etinger and others were prominent in emphasizing this trend. Their writings reveal a complete congruency between the historic narrative appearing in the textbooks and the Zionist historiography.

In the battle to create and preserve the Israeli-Jewish collective memory, the textbooks served as an important "battle field". The final product reflected generally the cultural and ideological consensus among the elite and wide parts of the Israeli society (Pode , 2000). At that time the elite was dominated by Zionists arriving from Eastern and Central Europe as were the textbooks writers who came from Eastern Europe and Germany and were better versed in European history and Jewish history thus, their imagery vocabulary and their themes were derived from their European cultural and historical world (Shapira , 1997).

Michael Ziv, one of the leaders of textbook writers and the one who wrote the primary book serving as a foundation for the first and second generation textbooks, determined that "the study program we have today is still embedded in the mark of the European approach, at the centre there is still Europe. The reasons are obvious: the actual part Europe played in the process of historic development, habit and origin and study course of many of those now representing the historic science in Israel and are teaching history in school" (Ziv , 1957, pp. 35 - 37).

The first generation writers regarded the beginning of the modern Jewish nationalism as having a conflict between tradition and modernism. Zionism is therefore a typical case of attempting to combine between unique traditions and universal values, and these were born in Europe, (thus the great emphasis on the study of revolutions

like the French revolution) and the Hebrew culture developing in Israel.

Also the Zionist narrative, according to which there is a clear link between the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel, had a central place in determining the distinguished place of Europe in the textbooks. Many of them deal in the connection between Bismarck, the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler to power in Germany and place great emphasis on the subject of the refugees and the homeless from Europe and their arrival in Israel.

Dinur, one of the architects of the first program, described it like this: “I believe it is appropriate that this period ending with the international recognition of the Jewish independence in Israel, which came after the great Holocaust that destroyed the Jewish communities in Europe – will begin with this first wave of immigration that perceived itself as the announcer of redemption and saving itself from the avalanche“.

It was declared in the first Jewish congress in Basel 1897 that: “we should enhance the national sentiment and the Jewish national awareness”. At the same time a group of Hebrew teachers in Israel formulated a curriculum for first-fourth grades in which it allocated a substantial place for teaching history, the majority was Jewish history and the rest was general history.

This Zionist narrative is deeply expressed in the words written to Jewish teachers not only in Israel but also abroad, especially by Dr. Zvi Zohar (1948). He demanded that the teachers draw a clear line from the Bar-Cochva uprising to the Zionist and the pioneer movement. “It is unimaginable that the Hebrew school would not pay attention to the aspiration line for Israel, the elements of uprisings and revolts in the life of the Diaspora, which are interwoven in the history of the Jewish Diaspora and its different periods” (p. 118).

Zohar determined that “We are obligated to emphasize the appropriate elements from general history which would enable to integrate the values we are dealing with in this discussion” (p. 119).

The spirit of Zohar’s words, as would be made clear later, served as a guide for the first generation history textbook writers and for the study program planners – placing general history to serve Jewish/Zionist history and recruit elements from European history in order to strengthen the Jewish chapters that were required in order to emphasize the narrative of the Zionist project.

Zohar explicitly wrote about it: “The Israeli teacher must use these contact points between the different elements in general history and transform them into a source for enhancing knowledge in the spirit of our idea” (p. 120). He recommended a line of events like Hellenism and through it, Rome, the ways of Christianity, the Crusades, Napoleon, Turkey, the English and their ways to India, the colonial development in Asia, world war, England, France, formation of cities, development of technology and others.

Shlomo Shavit, one of the leaders of study program writers in Israel, determined that the innovation in learning history is not the consideration of the past but the way we regard it. The past as a history is perceived as an endless chain of causes and results. Meaning, the historical significance of a certain event is related to it being a link in the process and that at the same time it is result and cause (Shavit , 1985).

The goals of the Israeli study programs, as were expressed in the textbooks, present the events in Europe, especially in recent centuries, as the cause of the result, the birth of the Zionist movement and its revolutionary nature. This was performed subtly by similar events from centuries preceding the Zionist revolution and overtly during the Zionist revolution and the global events surrounding it and that were chosen to serve as study subjects in the various core programs throughout the years. European history was also recruited by textbook writers to clarify historical concepts and to learn important historical processes, but also to achieve goals set forth for teaching it in school and strengthen the perception of the nation as a unit with a joint fate and emphasizing the European events that shaped it in order to enhance within the students the

sense of national identification.

Shavit claimed that history's special contribution is first of all in the cognitive field; history refers to a nation as a totality, as a framework of events and occurrences. History also deals with social frameworks that are not national, like personal statuses and these are presented as operating within a larger framework, the national framework (p.86). Shavit actually admitted here that a manipulative and selective use was done in the selection of the figures, periods and events in order to serve the national narrative and the project within which it functions. Shavit added that most of the events and phenomenon, the institutions and ideas were chosen for teaching because they had an impact on moulding the nation's destiny (p. 88). He listed a series of events from Jewish history like: the Maccabis uprising or the destruction of the Temple, the messianic movement of Shabtai Zvi, the structure of the Jewish community, Anti-Semitism, Zionism and more. Thus, it is no wonder that the general history, which was recruited to explain the events of Jewish history – so at least claimed the first generation program writers – was Europe-centrism and was recruited for ethnocentric goals.

Shavit summarized: “history frequently deals in opinions and attitudes where the value considerations are obvious. In actions there is also an element of value, even in cases where the people operating avoid explicit specification. Every action is a result of choice thus, it holds a significance of value...even the historical description possesses within it an element of comment, explicitly or subtly, by the mere choice of subject, concentration of the facts deemed relevant and the language the historian utilizes” (pp. 88-89).

Dr. Michael Hendel determined that in the difficulty of an overwhelming amount of material and overcoming it, we should prefer the chapters in general history that would serve the Jewish history. Hendel actually determined the Europe-centrism framework of the study program and thus, determined also the framework of the history textbooks, to date, with some kind of changes here and there.

His essay “Teaching history” (Hendel , 1967, pp. 119- 180) laid the Europe-centric foundation of the textbooks and it included the following chapters: early Middle Ages, resurrection of Islam and its spread, resurrection of the German states and the establishment of the Papacy, mid Middle Ages the crusades and their results, late Middle Ages the Imperial idea in its battle with the church idea, the feudal society and its statuses and the beginning of urban status. In the transition to the new era – inventions and discoveries, the Italian Renaissance, overcoming the spirit and culture of the Middle Ages. The 15th and 16th centuries: beginning of Capitalism and resurrection of bourgeoisie, the religious reform movement through its various stages, its discoveries and its social and political significance, the decline of Spain, changes in English parliamentary, the absolute state in France. In the 18th century: resurrection of Russia and Prussia, mercantilism, changes in colonial regime, and revolution in viewpoint originating in rationalism. The end of the 18th century: the war for liberation in the USA, and the French revolution. Beginning of the 19th century: international policy stemming from Napoleon's charge.

In the 20's up to the 70's of the 19th century: the industrial revolution, resurrection of the workers status, victory of liberal, democratic and national ideas. From the end of the 19th century up tp world war 1 – imperialism and armed peace, development of science and technology, changes in life styles. Second decade of the 20th century: stopping the German expansion, the USA enters the international political arena, the Communist revolution in Russia, and foundation of The League of Nations. In the 20's: political awakening in the Arab world, escalation of international conflicts. The League of Nations outspread of Fascism, World War 1, the cold war, political awakening and its social diversification in the Far East and the UN (p. 147).

With mild changes, Hendel's program remained as the core program, which is compelling to date in the education system and serves as an organizational element for the finals that conclude history learning for most of the Israeli students, which do not continue in higher studies in this discipline and so constructs their collective memory and

their historic judgement. Hendel's program, based on the words of Dinur, also constituted the basis for the criticism by the members of the Shalem institute for what they called "the silent revolution in teaching the history of Zionism" (Hazoni, Poliser & Oren, 2000; Hazoni, 2000).

Dividing the general history material was performed according to Hendel by the construction of placing a particular people or phenomenon at the centre of the occurrence, which determines the nature of the period. By this, Europe was chosen as the centre of the Jewish people and that is why its general history was chosen as a background for Israeli/Zionist history.

Determining the reciprocal relations between the selective Europe-centric history and the history of the Jewish people, according to the Zionist narrative, were fixed and inflexible, due to the positioning of the education goals of Israel as a primary organizational factor in the study program.

Most of the textbooks march, by nature, in the same path and adapt themselves to the same scheme: the Babylonian centre at the beginning of the Middle Ages was studied while at the centre of the general history was the resurrection of the new Germanic states on the ruins of the Roman Empire. Jews in Spain during the late Middle Ages versus the primary problem in general history – the battle between the secular and the religious regime and the growth of urban life. The expansion of the Jews in Poland in the 15th and 16th centuries was chosen versus the religious reformation movement, religious wars and the international states and the beginning of Capitalism in Western Europe. Jews in Russia in the 19th century were placed versus occurrences in Western Europe and America. Hendel integrates Islam only as a background for the discussion concerning the Babylonian centre and later on, the Arab culture in the Middle Ages as a background for the Jews in Spain (Hendel, 1967, pp. 150 – 151). This division was determined upon the establishment of Israel in a manner that prevented history teachers and textbook writers from digressing from this program. The lack of choice and Dinur's determination, that schools should not decide for themselves, determined this historiography scheme for many years. Review of the first generation textbooks reveals that their titles speak of "General history", "General history in the new era", "The battle for global rule" but they actually deal primarily in European history. In the introductions to the textbooks and those of the various subjects the student does not receive a clear picture according to which, a European story is recounted and even that story is recounted from a certain viewpoint.

Itzhak Shapiro, one of the first textbook writers, wrote: "the history of the world from the end of the 18th century to date encompasses events and processes that completely changed ways of life and thought of the human race" (Shapira, 1956, introduction) but in reality he only discusses one chapter out of all his chapters in America (the uprising of the 13 colonies) and the rest of the chapters are related to European history (the Enlightenment, the French revolution in times of war and peace and the era of Napoleon).

In another volume of his book (Shapira, 1985) that reviews the period of 1870 to 1918 he discusses in one and a half chapters (the USA and Japan) regions that are non-European. In all the rest of the chapters he discusses only Europe (period of armed peace, the German Empire, the 3rd French republic, England on a crossroads, decline of empires in Eastern Europe, Europe and the Orient and World War 1). In his last volume he again only dedicates one and a half chapters (to the USA and the impact of World War 2 on countries beyond Europe) to subjects beyond Europe. The rest of the chapters deal with European subjects (the period between 2 World Wars, growth of totalitarian regimes in Europe, democratic countries between the wars, the rising Orient and World War 2).

Perceiving Europe as "the history of the world" accompanies other writers and it constructs an inaccurate and partial view of the world by the Israeli student. It places within him the events in Europe as a centre for global occurrence and distances him from other centres of activity: Africa, Asia, South America, the Orient, Australia and

of course, many phenomenon that occurred there.

The program also does not enable the student to explore other places since school is the entity that determines the student's agenda and his selection and especially, the order of things according to their order of importance. The USA also receives a narrow consideration, evolving around specific periods only without expansion. For an Israeli student, which the USA constitutes for him today a centre of political, cultural and social activity, this is somewhat of a historical distortion.

The Europe-centrism was expressed not only in the selection of subjects but also in the texts found in the textbooks. Horowitz describes the European activity as follows: "Invention followed invention, theory followed theory. In a period of less than 200 years humanity reached out of steam to the age of nuclear energy, from the invention of the locomotive to that of the ground guided robot, from the theory of ground development by James Hutton to the theory of relativity by Einstein"(Shapira 1956).

Revolutions were also attributed to occurrences in Europe and to three primary processes within it: the intellectual revolution, the political revolution and the industrial revolution. Shapiro summarises "the history of the world in the new era revolves around these three processes" he claims that the intellectual revolution is apparent in the French revolution, the industrial revolution, which brought forth new inventions expedited the pace in the development of technical science.

Consideration of Europe ranged from a peak of enlightenment, science and human development to ebb of humanity. The peak and ebb are related to the Jewish/Zionist narrative. The low points are usually related to severe actions taken against the Jews. The peak points are related to actions that are not related to Jews at all, or actions that had a positive affect on Jews. Y. Frishman best describes it: "from the knowledge of the historical facts, in the right perspective and in understanding the context between events we must select from the past, for intensive processing, only those pages that have an educational significance...in short: we will provide a sort of 'Zionist enlightening' to our history" (Frishman , 1962, pp. 17-18). Frishman admits later on that: "historiography strives as best as possible for objectivity and it aspires to present facts and events 'as they were' without tendentious enlightenment but this can hardly be achieved since every historian is affected by his environment and the spirit of his time and is guided by different attitudes...the Zionist enlightenment regarding our history is not a distortion of the truth but an assessment of facts on the basis of data and trends according to which we live and function" (pp. 18-21).

But the portrayal of Europe as the centre of the universe, as the centre of formation and rejuvenation of humanity is also apparent in the choice of texts by the writers. Shapiro describes the Enlightenment movement of the 18th century as "A superior and summarising stage of an intellectual movement that grew in Europe in the 17th century and which roots stem from the Renaissance...in the way it developed, the movement produced many crops and caused radical changes in the position of scholars in Europe in regard to science, religion and questions about society".

Shapiro's book about the period of the Enlightenment movement opens with words that place the young Israeli reader within Europe-centrism and at the same time hide the texts related to developments in similar fields occurring in other parts of the world. "To summarize in a few words its spiritual crop we could say that it bore the modern perception of natural and social sciences, created a new metaphysics where at its basis lay, instead of theology, the laws of nature and the evolution of man, brought to the world modern humanism and generated new currents in literature and art". All this loot is defined as "A rich and revolutionary harvest" and according to Shapiro - European.

The historical consideration of processes in Europe is rooted in European activity. The European narrative motivates itself in a clear linear line with the aim to provide the reader with the impression that Europe is the cradle of civilization and that processes developed there which matured into other processes. This kind of history writing disconnects the reader from international processes that affected Europe and which Europe affected them. This is an isolated history.

According to this way of writing the ideas of "The Enlightenment" are rooted in the Renaissance, which occurred in

Europe and the great scholars were European. Hobs “was the first modern scholar that tried to establish political science on rationalist foundations and on the scientific thinking which developed then in Europe” (Shapira, p. 16) , Lock “lived during the glorious revolution in England”, Monteskiue was one of the most important French scholars, Russo “the most interesting personality among the social scholars born out of the Enlightenment in France”, Voltaire “the lion of the pack” was French. Disregarding other continents was expressed in expressions like: “the Enlightenment movement was cosmopolitan by nature and pan-European in scope. It was only natural that France, that since the days of Louis the 14th served as Rome and Athens of Europe, would serve as its centre and make its imprint and that its primary ideas were the fruit of scholars from many countries and their extensions spread all over Europe” (p. 25).

This trend of emphasizing peak periods in the life of Europe alone and disregarding other places and hiding them from the textbooks continues in later periods. During the armed peace, between the Franco-Prussian war and World War 1, the textbooks note the development of science and technology, scientific discoveries, development of large industry, advancement in health and education. This positive position to European trends of world expansion characterizes some of the first generation writers. The European imperialism is defined as “outspreed of European peoples over the seas” or “during the armed peace the nations of Europe divided among themselves the African continent and most of the Pacific islands”. There is no judgemental consideration towards these acts or indication as to their results. Furthermore, Shapiro notes that “Europe’s expansion over several parts of the world and closing the distances between them following the development in transportation, united the different parts of the world into a tighter unit, and as a result of this, provided global orientation and dimensions to the political relations between nations at that period” (Shapira , p. 25).

There is an historic distortion by selecting to note the European interests and closing an historical eye to the consequences, at times grave, that the European imperialism had on the local residents at the colonies or land that was captured by the superpowers, this distortion was motivated by a tendency to regard Europe as the centre of the universe and the European culture as central and dominant.

Ziv and his partners dedicated a chapter to the European nations’ conquest of countries in other continents. They add a description about the responses in India, China and Japan but prefer not to dedicate to much room to it. This trend is later remedied in the volume of the history of our times “The new era”.

In Ziv and his partners’ book on the Middle Ages there is great emphasis on the European culture but only a few chapters are dedicated to the Arab’s conquests in the Orient and the West and to the principles of Islam. In the introduction the writers note that consideration to the Arab period stems from the need to link it to the history of the Jews in those places thus, it is a necessity in order to crystallize the Jewish/Zionist narrative and not an independent decision.

This approach to integrative history was per the guidance of Dr. Michael Hendel, Chairman of the History Teaching Committee and one of the leaders of the first generation study program planners.

This trend of dealing with Europe and placing it at the centre of the collective memory of the students continues with second and third generation writers (Zimmerman , 2000 ; Afek, 1972). The new textbooks express it well “Journey to the past - from the Middle Ages to the new era”, “Days of crescent and crucifix”. Both are for the 7th grade and place Europe at the centre with inklings to the beginning of Islam.

Eli Bar-Navi and Aviad Kleinberg explain in the introduction to their book “Days of crescent and crucifix”(1977, pp. 8-11) why these chapters were chosen in the book. “Historians review these processes and try not just to coordinate but also to understand them. How did the cease of commerce affect other areas of life? Why do certain groups survive and others disappear? Not always what seems important at first glance has had an actual

impact on the period”. In this statement the writers determine for the young students at the start of their history studies that their selection, the writers, is the important one. They assign themselves the role as judges of history, the ones that determine it, they are the footnotes on what is important and what is not, what had an impact and what did not, what should be learnt and what would best be forgotten, since “not always what seems important at first glance actually had an impact...”.

Thus, dedicated to their “mission statement” the authors of “Days of crescent and crucifix” pave a clear path where the headline chapters of the book become its central narrative: decline of the ancient world and “the birth of a new culture”.

Three chapters are dedicated to Islam, one to Jews under Islam and then the authors return to describing European history in which central processes dominate once more: the growth of the modern state, Renaissance and humanism, the Reformation, the scientific revolution, parliamentary regime, Baroque and classic, kings and nobles, education and state, revolutions (American and French). All these are integrated into the history of the Jews.

The leading theme of the book follows European history while avoiding histories of other continents, at the critical age of forming the historical identity of the Israeli student. According to the book of Bar-Navi & Kleinberg, the Israeli student will read that the Renaissance and humanism were formed in Northern Italy during the 16th century and spread throughout Europe. Humanistic education was rooted in Northern Europe (p. 130). The discovery of the New World by the Europeans was the beginning of the revolution. Europe, which land had dwindled after centuries of agricultural farming assaulted the new world and the European conquest changed it completely (p. 138). The scientific revolution was a pan-European phenomenon and it affected all aspects of life (p. 158). The parliamentary regime in England became the supreme authority. A revolution occurred there titled “the glorious”(p. 174). The Baroque and classic styles celebrated in Europe in all art forms and reached a perfect expression in classical style during Louis the 14th which was a model for imitation (p. 182). A positive presentation of the European continent, unlike other continents, was portrayed not just in a quantitative manner but also textual, as would be demonstrated in the chapter dealing with China, Japan and Africa.

The European society bred a movement of “thinking people who aspired to eliminate ‘isles’ of barbarism and improve even more man’s destiny – education (p. 224). The American Revolution, the French revolution.

In the second book, “Journey to the past”, for 7th grade, there is a more balanced attitude preferring to describe reality in Europe without the glorifying superlatives. This book prefers a factual description, almost dry, regarding the occurrences in Europe in all aspects of life - from the birth of Christian Europe to the age of revolutions.

In the 9th grade textbooks the Europe-centric line continues to dominate while pushing aside the other narratives, the African, Chinese and the Japanese. In “A world of changes” for the 9th grade (Jacobi , 1999) the subjects relating to Europe are prominent. The book has 7 subjects in 35 chapters. Only four of them do not deal with the European narrative or subjects: the de-colonisation process and the foundation of Algiers, Egypt, a leader of “the third world”, uniting and dividing factors in the Arab world and wars and revolutions in the Persian Gulf. There is no serious mention in this book of subjects related to Africa or the Far East.

In the book “Journey to the past, the 20th century in favour of freedom”, also intended for 9th grade (Tavivian , 1999) there are 16 chapters with an addition of 4 historian workshops. Only one chapter out of those dealing in general history is dedicated to non-European subjects and deals with the founding of independent states in Asia and Africa. This chapter precedes the battle for Israel’s independence, the battle with the British and the battle

for immigration and settlement. The connection is obvious and clear and is intended to demonstrate that the Zionist struggle was part of a global trend. According to this book, the description of de-colonialism was intended to describe the dismantlement of the Jewish communities in the colonial countries like North Africa and India (Naveh, 1994). This description of liberation does not contain any details regarding the popular history just the struggle for independence.

Eyal Nave calls his book dealing with the 20th century in Europe “The 20th century – a decade that changed world order”, a name indicative of global history. But close examination of the chapters reveals that the European narrative is prominent. In the 5th chapter dealing with “international system” the students actually deal with “the formation of the collective defence system in Europe. The titles of other chapters discussing a certain continent are written with a generalization including chapter 6 “Old democracies under scrutiny” and chapter 7 “The new democracies”. These chapters deal in Europe and not the entire globe.

A quantitative comparison reveals that the USA receives in Nave’s book (as in Shahar’s book (Shahar , 1992) receives very few chapters. Regard to the USA is only when its involvement concerns Europe, in the contexts of the end of World War 1, loans it gives Germany during the stable years of the Weimer Republic, the economic crisis and its affect on Europe (especially on Germany (, its involvement in World war 2 in Europe and of course “the Cold war” and its involvement in crises like the “Berlin crisis”.

Utilizing American history in high school is instrumental in order to emphasize European events. For an Israeli student at the beginning of a new Millennium placing Europe as the centre of his studies, in the age of the “global village”, is a severe distortion of the everyday reality. Since the first study program was written until today there is a trend of distancing America from the centre of the historical awareness of the Israeli student, almost complete disregard of the Asian continent, large parts of the Far East, the happenings and lack of global activity in the African continent, its culture and difficulties, disregard of South America, its culture and the rich human development occurring there.

In Nave and Shahar’s book there are additional non-European elements only in two chapters. Nave dedicates a chapter to de-colonialism and the third world (8 pages) and one chapter to China “The giant in the East” (6 pages). Shahar dedicates a chapter to India and its path to independence (6 pages) and a chapter to China from republic to the Communist victory and the establishment of the Communist regime during 1911-1970 (20 pages).

Summary

Throughout the years of Israel’s existence, the history curriculum has been utilized as one of the most important devices used by the central Department of Education for relaying messaging and constructing the collective memory of the pupils in Israel. The curriculum, followed by the schoolbooks, were the cardinal means for designing the national and societal identity of the pupils, and were loaded with materials and chapters which would benefit the goal set by the educational system – to serve the hegemonic narrative of the state of Israel, the Zionist narrative. Throughout the years of the state’s existence the curriculum in history has moved back and forth from periods where Jewish and Zionist History was studied separately from General History, to periods where these histories were studied intertwined. These separations also reflected the educational ideology, in which political pretensions had played a part.

This article examined the manner of the construction of the collective memory of pupils in Israel in junior-highs and high schools during the years of 1948-2004 via the General History curriculum and the General History schoolbooks in governmental (secular) schools.

The article shows that the first members of the education system in Israel had made a strategic decision, upon

which the General History curriculum was subjected to the Jewish/Zionist curriculum. This was followed by a decision to build an ethnocentric and Eurocentric curriculum skeleton, in which the General History chapters had served the Zionist narrative of the Jewish/Zionist curriculum. In addition, the chapters about Political and Militaristic History were chosen over Social and Economical History chapters and the Europe-centred approach was preferred in order to serve the Zionist narrative. The goals of this decision, which manifested especially in the schoolbooks published throughout the years, were to aid the Israeli youth in building an image of the world and a collective memory, whose center was the Jewish/Zionist History, as a part of the renewing national identity of the People of Israel in its land, to allow Israeli youth to identify itself with the Jewish/Zionist History as part of the nation's building process, and to enlist to its service. These decisions of the heads of the historical educational system were consistent with the Israeli educational goals, as they were outlined by Israel's first Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, David Ben-Gurion, and by the first Minister of Education, the curriculum's architect, Ben-Zion Dinur.

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