

The Events of the Past Find Meaning in the Reality of the Present

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Because democracy, by definition, implies choice, the dilemma, option, and choice, should occupy the centre stage: how a given state of affairs posed an alternative of way of dealing with it, that is, the manner of proceeding rather than the outcome should be the centre of interest. This can be done only if the subject matter of history is presented in terms of conflict: a plurality of conflicting opinions, conflicting values, and conflicting interests. The knowledge about the conflict within the elite is potentially democratic because people who know the nature of it can involve themselves in politics or communication, even when they are not politicians themselves. The aim of knowing what is really on the national agenda is not to train future leaders but rather to enable the future generation to be spirited citizens, narrowing the gap between rulers and subjects. This article presents the following thesis regarding the teaching of history as the politics of the past.

Du fait que la démocratie, par définition, implique le choix, le dilemme, l'option et le choix devraient occuper le centre de la scène: ce en quoi un état donné des choses énonce une alternative quant à la manière de le gérer, en somme, que le processus plutôt que le produit devrait être le centre d'intérêt.

Cela peut être effectué seulement si la discipline de l'histoire est présentée en termes de conflit: une pluralité d'opinions conflictuelles, des valeurs conflictuelles et des intérêts conflictuels. La connaissance du conflit par l'élite est potentiellement démocratique pour que ceux qui en connaissent la nature puissent s'impliquer en politique ou en communication, même sans être politicien. Savoir ce qui est vraiment dans l'agenda national n'a pas pour but une formation des futurs leaders mais plutôt vise à permettre à la génération future de devenir des citoyens engagés, réduisant ainsi le fossé entre décideurs et sujets. Cet article présente la thèse suivante à travers la discipline histoire conçue comme politiques du passé.

It is my intention in this article to suggest that in the teaching of history, the conflicting ideas of the historical agents who were active in the past should be stressed. Of course, this is open to criticism, on the one hand by conservatives, on the grounds of opening the door to an impermissible politicizing of the school, and on the other hand by progressives, on the grounds that excessive teacher guidance is an unwarranted imposition on children. My answer to both objections is that teaching about conflicting ideas and their agents by no means implies a reduction of everything to this or that ideology, as an abstraction, or even to a certain party, because the method here proposed always aims at the concrete. Besides, teaching history by outcomes only means the inculcation not merely of a bias, but a double one, and unconsciously at that: a bias in favour of a view that human choice has nothing to do with human history, and a bias in favour of the idea that might is right.

Among the elements that weaken progressive education is its underestimation of the significance of rigour, clear ideas, definite principles, and firm convictions in intellectual and moral life. The neutrality dogma, the doctrine that the development of the capacity to think must not be restricted by principles, has led generations of youth into perplexity and bewilderment of moral relativism.

In order to produce mature citizens, we need to raise the pupil's motivation to choose independently between conflicting values and alternative means. In teaching history this can best be achieved by choosing rival historical agents or prominent figures who acted in divergent directions in response to the same situation, this being exactly the case of present-day leaders. Indeed, the influence of the teachers about the choice is great, but not exclusive, because there are students that had actually preferred, for instance, Ben-Gurion over Sharett, considering the Arab intransigence against the Jews.

My argument is that the teaching of history has to be changed. It has been done to date largely through the teaching of outcomes of "what came to pass." In so far as this conveys the message that outcomes did not really depend on choices made by human agents, a world view is being fostered which is decidedly nondemocratic. The implication is that there are no true choices in given situations, at least none for agents, clever or informed enough to see the realities of those situations.

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Study of History as the Politics of the Past

The great Oxfordian historian, Robin George Collingwood has stressed the difference between historical thought and scientific thought, because of the unique attitude of history to the facts and events. The very events which are the object of historical thought, and are included as components in history, are not facts because they ceased to happen. Therefore "historical knowledge is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying." The re-enactment should guard against idealization of the past, because the practical value of history is critical rethinking of the historical facts and its problems, "as it confronted men in the past." The historian asks the questions that arise in his mind in the present, about the events in the past in order to prevent the recurrence of those kinds of errors in the future. That is the historian's responsibility, because "All thought is for the sake of action." While his colleagues at Oxford thought that history's task was only to understand the actual world and society, Collingwood thought that it is the historian's moral responsibility to improve the destiny of people by learning from the lessons of the past and to correct their deficiencies (Collingwood, cited in Griffith, 1992, pp. 422-428; Rubinoff, 1992, p. 433).

Collingwood thought historical agents such as Clemenceau and Lloyd George, foolishly coerced Germany to agree to the Versailles Treaty, and by doing so, subjected Germany and the rest of Europe to the forces of Nazism. The historians have an educative task, directed mainly toward the political elite, because "had the framers of the Versailles Treaty been better historians, we might have been spared the subsequent attack on civilization" (Rubinoff, 1992, p. 433).

From the point of view of educator John Dewey, however, the main question was how to educate all the children of a nation as the future citizens. Dewey, in line with Collingwood, thought that historical facts are those chosen to be such, and what actually happened is not the initial point of departure, but rather the consequence of historical enquiry. What

Collingwood demanded of history, Dewey demanded of the social sciences at large: "to guide and direct future inquiry that, subsequently, will resolve social problems," thereby contributing to the human society (Stone, 1994, p. 425).

Dewey's point of departure, of the education of children in general, induced him to prefer social and economic history because "economic history is more humane, more democratic, and hence more liberating than political history." Dewey knew that not all industrial history is humane: "there is a clash of interests between munition manufacturers and most of the rest of the population" (Ratner, 1939, p. 444). However, he preferred teaching industrial history and not political history because it is more real to the children's experience (Westhoff, 1995). Dewey feared that a focus on the personalities, the agents of politics, runs a great danger of idolizing them through a false patriotism, in contrast to democratic education (Dewey, 1958, pp. 251-252; see also Blewitt, 1992-1993, p. 31).

Dewey's conception of nation was generally positive, as an "enduring historic community of traditions and outlook in which the members of a given territory share, its reality." He was, however, appalled by the extremist nationalism of his time. Dewey defined as a myth a "nation by which millions swear and for which they demand the sacrifices of all other loyalties." He was frightened by "the erection of the territorial State into a Person" whose "Honour to be defended and avenged at the cost of death and destruction." Dewey's preference to teach economic history as "more humane," than political history was influenced by his time, when some European nations behaved like "any savage tribe" (Ratner, 1939, pp. 469-471; cf. Willcox, 1993, pp. 58-84).

However, John Dewey's teaching on the relations between experience, democracy, and education (Dewey, 1916, p. 144) failed to mould American education. The lesson of Dewey's failure to shape the curriculum of the American schools (Labaree, 1991, pp. 513-521; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, pp. 7-14, 196) might have strengthened other educators, who agree that politics has much to do with decision making in the sphere of social economics, and therefore the study of history might be more politically oriented.

The progressive educators, Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux, who were influenced by Dewey (McLaren & Leonard, 1995, p. 137) regarded teaching history, including political history, as an important instrument of attaining educational goals (Freire, 1985, pp. xxiv; Simon, 1992). They criticized educators in both the United States and Latin America on account of the

conservative concept of citizenship which emerged there and which had given preference to a vague American patriotism over social consciousness (Giroux, H., 1989, p. 4). Freire warned against the use of education as a tool effecting a conciliation with the present state of affairs and with the prevalent views (Freire, 1985, pp. 2, 116). Like Collingwood, Freire also argued that it is important to recognize the alternative courses of politics which were open in the past, because once we learn to think along indeterministic lines about the past, we learn to distinguish between political alternatives of the present (p. 201). Freire's view of learning history of the past for the sake of progressive politics in the present, was to conform with his own experience which connected teaching history and progressive education with recent history and actual politics. Such was Freire's educational activity in Latin America, which was assisted by President Kennedy's project of the Alliance for Progress (McLaren & Leonard, 1995, pp. 120-121).

However, in general, historians and history teachers are afraid of connecting history with politics, as John Lewis Gaddis from the National Council for History Education of the United States stated:

The single greatest impediment to the effective teaching of history ... is the tendency on the part of teachers and textbooks to separate the past from the present. The very expression 'that's history' has usually [been] taken to mean that whatever's being referred to lies in the past; it is all too easy for our present-minded students to jump to the conclusion that, since it's there, they don't have to concern themselves with it. The result is that we leave the realm of the present and the future ... to the economists, psychologists, journalists, and even – let us not forget a recent presidential administration in this country – astrologers. No wonder things are in such bad shape. (Gaddis, 1990, p. 3)

Gaddis uncovered the truth that the deep reason for the fact that teaching history and its textbooks are so boring (see also Epstein, 1994, pp. 41-44) – it is because they refrain from touching upon anything that has relevance to present conflicts:

The fear of controversy ... is the single biggest reason why teachers of history – and far too often authors of the textbooks ... shy away from the task of relating the past to the present. We want to teach history, we tell ourselves, without being controversial. And yet, a history stripped of controversy would be about as exciting as if we were to shift our students from reading books about Columbus to reading the Columbus telephone book The Rankean 'cult' of objectivity, from viewing history as 'just the facts,' ... if the effects of that doctrine is to wall off the past from the present, thereby making history so dull that our students lose interest in it. (Gaddis, 1990, p. 4)

Research and teaching history have a responsibility of using the lessons of the politicians' deeds of the past, without flinching at the "fear of controversy," in order to improve the students' understanding of the political issues of the both the past and the present. This might be done by choosing some turning point of world and national history, in which certain agents of history, the statesmen of this particular time, stood in front of certain political alternatives: one of them wanted to veer in one direction and another pushed toward the opposite direction. The surrounding political, geographical, economical, and social historical situation might be learned as preconditions which would justify one course of action or another. This alternative should be learned through the eyes of the rival historical agents of this certain period, including what they have tried to achieve, what they have partly or wholly succeeded in accomplishing, what their rivals did to thwart their aims, and finally what were the reasons for choosing the opposite alternatives by the two adversaries.

The value of learning through historical conflicts lies in the broadening of the social and political experience of the pupil. By a study of the conflicting views of historical personalities, the pupil is encouraged to get a better understanding of contemporary national and social problems and the conflicting answers put forward to resolve them. In other words, the events of the past find their meaning in the reality of the present. As for the contention that meddling in contemporary affairs is a barrier to learning history, it is also true that direct reference to contemporary events may be a prerequisite for, or at least an enhancement of, genuine understanding.

Adolescents can Study a "Meaningful History"

Even if one has been convinced that teaching history has much to be gained by teaching it from a political viewpoint with the focus on the agents, still the question which poses itself is at which age are youth prepared to learn this kind of history.

In this respect Piaget's theory of intellectual development by stages explains that in the course of their improved objectification, the adolescent is able, by a kind of introjection, to feel within him or herself what he or she observes or contemplates, he or she functions as an historian. Moreover, each stage of learning also seems to lead to the development of capacities that are not so much integrated with more sophisticated capacities but persist in the student's mind as more or less independent constituents. Stories about heroes of the past lay the basis of the adolescent's capacity for empathy and reasoning that enable him or her to make a judgment about the agents of history.

During early adolescence children's learning seems especially sensitive to absorbing the romantic extremes of human experience This capacity certainly may be developed and integrated with more sophisticated forms of understanding. But it also persists as something that becomes a more or less independent constituent of the later educated person ... it remains as a source of vivifying knowledge, of imaginatively inhabiting the human experience that lies within written records of past events. (Nyberg & Egan, 1981, pp. 37-38)

Cassirer has shown that

reason is not man's primitive endowment, but his achievement. The seeds of it – fertile, yet long dormant – lie in language; ... language takes us from the myth making phase of human mentality to the phase of logical thought and the conception of facts. (Cassirer, 1953, pp. ix-x)

Therefore, we can conclude that the development of thinking from a primitive, childish phase, or stage, to a more and more scientific one, does not erase from the child's mind all the meaning of the stories, the songs, and art objects it made, what it had written, painted, or played, and so on (Lamme, 1994, pp. 159-164). The school has to use children's imaginative capacity to see Robin Hood as if he were in the present, in order to internalize in them the concepts of injustice and oppression (Egan, 1992, p. 653). The adolescent is able, by empathy, like an actor performing or reading a part, to feel another person's sentiments, to think another person's thoughts, and to share his intentions (VanSledright & Brophi, 1992, p. 840).

Thus, the development of thinking by stages has much to do with planning curricula in general and with the teaching of history in particular (Fenton, 1970, pp. 4-7). Piaget's theory of the progressively expanding boundaries, according to the stages of maturity, helped educators and teachers of history understand why adolescents should learn history (Jurd, 1978, pp. 312-314; Egan, 1986; 1988); they learn history in order to develop their special ability for imaginative and intellectual conceptualization. A developmental framework for history education in adolescence might have been based on the assumption that adolescents are able to grasp the importance of possibility (Graff, 1993, p. 283) as opposed to reality. The teachers have to make use of the youth's ability to reject conventional views of history which begins with the historical facts. Therefore the teacher should "reverse the old way of teaching first 'what happened' and then only later looking at historians' debates" (Brickley, 1992, p. 37). In learning history a youngster might profit by knowledge of the debate between historians and the conflict between the historical agents of a certain era before the student searches the historical facts that might conform to one intention of the past

agent of history or another. The focus of history that would probably encourage more adolescents to think about, is human intentionality (VanSledright & Brophi, 1992, p. 839).

Learning history would be another and higher stage of understanding the other's subjectivity. The understanding of the motivation of agents of historical action, the ability to depart from his own point of view is difficult for an adolescent, whose mother country is always right. Nevertheless he or she is able to understand that his or her country has done wrong (Jurd, 1978, p. 304) because he or she can understand the viewpoint of the other.

The Policy of History Teaching in Israel

As nationality has remained the point of departure in both Europe and the United States, in the teaching of history, it is not easy for Israeli educators to moderate their patriotism in the turbulent and fanatic Middle East (Kashti, 1995, pp. 300-302). One might think that nationalistic or imperialistic education becomes anachronistic in the process of a united Europe, which explains a view spread among European educators that "history of a single nation became obviously impossible" (Nielsen, 1992-1993, p. 56). However, it has remained a problematic issue. One educator still suggested in 1994 to the proud British to free their National History Curriculum from every trace of British Imperial heritage (Pankhaia, 1994) while another educator suggested that even in history teaching throughout the Council of Europe, national history will remain important as a point of departure. That is so even in the United States where some educators demand "revision of history teaching" in terms of intercultural tolerance (Perotti, 1991) and "teaching history through analytical and reflective thinking" (Mumford, 1991 p. 191) the National Council for History Education feared that "our nation ... is losing its collective memory" (Gaddis, 1990, p. 3) .

The teaching of tolerance in the face of prejudice and of persistent anti-Semitism (Benz, 1993, pp. 3-13) all over the world, is actually difficult but it is especially so in Israel. It is no wonder that Jewish history, in the view of "The people shall dwell alone," is prevalent in Israel. Jewish and Israeli history is seen as an endless sequence of Jewish suffering caused by the widespread anti-Semitic bias among all non-Jews (Zimmerman, 1992, pp. 21-29). The Ministry of Education through the 1970s and 1980s, declared that the plan for teaching history in high schools in Israel is based on the intention of approaching the historical subject matter from different points of view (Shavit, 1981, pp. 183-184). One official maintained in 1986 that The New Plan for Teaching History concentrates on Arab-Israeli relations, in order to encourage tolerance among Jews toward Arabs through the study of

history: "Many historical events have a different or even opposite meaning for different groups of people who were involved ... for example the Israeli War of Independence is a 'Palestinian Holocaust' from the Arab point of view." Therefore, "presenting history as accomplished facts, explanations, and evaluations which the pupil should accept as the truth and learn by heart, cannot assist the pupils toward understanding history, or any other discipline" (Shavit, 1986, p. 197; see also Tamir, 1993, p. 79). The Ministry emphasized the importance of presenting historical events from various points of view. However, after all the humanistic and democratic exhortations, in reality the plan for teaching history in Israel fostered quite different goals:

The first chapter ... describes the ascendance of two new monotheistic religions which sprang from Judaism or were influenced by it, then persecuted its adherents The second chapter ... describes the 'fate of our people,' against the background of the hatred of the new monotheistic religions." (Shavit, 1986, p. 86)

Apparently the pluralistic methods, which this Israeli educator seemed to cherish as prerequisites for the preservation of democracy, evaporated when he had to apply them to Jewish history. He virtually deserted not only democratic values, but also rationality, when he wrote suggestions for teaching the history of the Jewish messianic movement: "The Goal ... is to win the pupils' empathy, to understand the deep messianic passion," which as he knows is "a difficult task, because the leaders of the messianic movement were not truly realistic men and they involved the people in wishful thinking, which resulted in misery and despair" (Shavit, 1986, p. 89).

There are other lines of educational thinking in Israel. Moshe Zimmerman, an Israeli historian specializing in German history, is very sensitive to Israeli excessive nationalism and therefore he tried to work with the Israeli ministry of education, and recommended giving more weight to rational discussion. He criticizes the methods of teaching history that emphasize memory rather than reason, and discourage creative imagination and such empathy (Zimmerman, 1981, pp. 13-14.) Schremer says that memorizing historical facts strengthens prejudices, especially at the point where teaching history begins, thinking is practically dead (Schremer, 1992, p. 50). So long as teachers of history thought of themselves as brokers of information rather than as educators, whose aim is to assist in the development of their pupils intelligence, the pluralism lost its last chance. Some progressive educators demanded that intelligent learning of history should concentrate on the aims of the agents of historical actions as a key element of historical events. This will enable pupils to understand the

motivation of the historical agents (Zimmerman, 1981, pp. 22-23) including the Arabs.

However, a member of the committee which authorized the plan for teaching history in Israel and who is also an examiner in history for the matriculation certificate, explained frankly, that it is necessary to base the content of both the plan and the matriculation examination in history largely on memory and not on intelligence in order to enable the largest possible number of pupils to succeed in their examinations. He praised the authors of the matriculation with regard to certain questions where it was stated that the pupils' answers should specify, for example, four items, which had helped them to memorize (Doron, 1991, p. 111). The stress on memorization (Zadok, 1991, p. 51) was dictated not only by the low intelligence of the pupils, but also that of the teachers. The pupils generally regarded the study of history as an absolute waste of time. After a final examination, one of them wrote: "The whole of this year we made huge efforts for something we suddenly have absolutely no need for" (Doron, 1988, p. 43).

The problem of teaching history that has meaning for the pupils, concerns many educators in Israel. One of them thought that the teaching of history has to be reformed in order to educate pupils to understand the dilemmas and the possibilities which presented themselves to previous statesmen. There has never existed a situation where there has not been more than one possible course of action, and choosing the appropriate one has been the most dynamic factor in all human societies. This educator expressed the view that the pupils of the secondary schools are mature enough for this critical reasoning, "and are ready to accept responsibility," for their choices of the historical possibilities (Tadmor, 1993).

Still the difficulties encountered by like-minded educators, who tried to teach political alternative history, that, according to John Lewis Gaddis, do not seek "to please his generation or serve his government," can be formidable; especially in Israel, where it is not easy *to please* either the government, or the pupils themselves. An example of an educator who did not seek to please either of them is given below.

"Progressive" Versus "Reactionary"

When Zionist ideology generally and Zionist Marxism in particular, became outmoded, the progressive education of *Hashomer Hatzair* – a Kibbutz movement – became emptied of its ideological contents (Kafkafi, 1992; King, 1994; Balaban & Erev, 1995) the educators had a difficult problem to deal with. One of the second generation Hashomer Hatzair educators, who studied history at Oranim College, was not surprised to find

that all vestiges of Marxist ideology had disappeared from the youngsters' mind, but was surprised by the deep vacuum that had remained after the ideology had gone (Schremer, 1992, p. 50; Winchester, 1993, pp. 191-198). The kibbutz adolescents had in fact relative morality in national and social affairs. In the course of study of the Napoleonic era their teacher posed a simple question: Was Napoleon good or bad? The adolescents vehemently criticized their teacher who challenged them with such an irritating, stupid question. They confidently assured him that if they had lived in France during the Napoleonic era they would have identified themselves with the strong leader. They were not even prepared to state categorically that Hitler was bad. They wholeheartedly agreed that Hitler was the sworn enemy of the Jews, but for the Germans he was a rather good leader, very good indeed. Fundamentally, they said, this is true also if they had been Germans in the Nazi era. "The strong is also in the right" they said (Shamir, 1979).

The teacher tried, applying the Socratic method, to facilitate his pupils thinking without losing his own clear personal stand (cf. Giroux, A., 1992, p. 126). He tried to probe into the origins of this complete moral relativism in his pupils, when they refused, on principle, to acknowledge any difference between reactionary and progressive trends in a given society. Every "reactionary" for someone is a "progressive" for someone else (Shamir, 1979, pp. 36-46). Being himself a product of Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutz Movement, where education had absolute moral standards, he wondered, in a dialogue with his pupils, whether the seeming loss of moral sense was a reaction against the former task-oriented education, and of the Zionist-Marxist codes which presented a too rigid, too final world-view of progressive versus reactionary (Dascalu, 1992-1993, p. 31; Adar, 1954, p. 132-158).

Dascalu believed the root of the problem to be a fundamental disbelief that people are capable of acting out of selfless, or moral, or ideal motives. Clearly, democracy would never have existed, unless people had fought for it – people who fought for a just idea, not merely for personal interests. Democracy was not a fact, as the youngsters thought.

Something deeper than words lay at the bottom of the students' conviction that might is right. The Israeli society at large outside the kibbutz fence became an ordinary capitalistic society and the kibbutz pupils thought according to the principle that might is right. Their teacher succeeded in achieving a breakthrough in his history teaching only after a traumatic social experience in the group. That experience transpired when several boys applied the dictum that right lies with the stronger.

The students finally reached the conclusion that relativism does not apply to moral principles, and the idea that might being right led to the perversion of the strong members of the group. They also understood how nationalism injured not only its "outside" victims – such as Jews, who were exterminated by the Nazis – but also its "inside" victims, the Germans themselves. In this case it was not only because of the millions of Germans who died, but because of the endless corruption of both the society and the souls of individuals (Shamir, 1979). The pupils came to understand, that when Chancellor Willi Brandt went down on his knees in front of the memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto, he did this first and foremost, for the sake of the German people. For the students' teacher of history the essence of historical conflict and its true meaning is revealed not in the relation between nations but between the agents of history inside every nation.

The Oranim School

This conviction stands at the heart of the educative-historical work done by a group of teachers of history, at *Oranim*, the teachers' college of the kibbutz movement. The group which included teachers in colleges and secondary schools, began some 30 years ago by Yigal Wagner (1988) who specializes in modern social and political history.

The Social-democratic ideal of the Oranim teachers followed that of the young Karl Marx, who portrayed the future of communism as an accomplishment of personal freedom, and also with the abolition of both labour and politics. One of the founders of the school, a lecturer in philosophy at Haifa University, rejected the conventional definition of spontaneity as creative, in contrast to passive, submissive receptivity. When the sculptor discovers the stone that could become a statue he absorbs, through his receptive faculties, his surroundings in a spontaneous and creative way. Moreover, there is a forced activity and a creative receptivity. The source of this erroneous juxtaposition is a specific value-preference of a certain culture, which puts motoric activity above the receptive (Strauss, 1977, pp. 35-36). This culture and society, with its inherent opposition between man and woman, teacher and pupil, writer and reader, leader and led, must be reformed.

It seems that by following Marx, the group of educators and historians, were not prepared to sit down with passive expectation until, somehow that ideal of the double abolition will be materialized (Cohen, 1993). Like many progressive educators they were convinced, so long as politics were not abolished, of the importance of learning political history in the school. However, in contrast to the educators of postmodernism, who are striving

towards "creating new public spheres" rather than reforming them, (Giroux, H., 1992b, p. 25) Oranim teachers were more moderate in tone, although in their methods they, like Giroux, let the students express their own positions (p. 16). Oranim teachers think that, so long as politics decided their society's destiny, the special role of the teacher of history is to enlarge the knowledge of future citizens about their political leaders in the past as well as in the present. This insight into the activity of statesmen cannot be gained by a sociological approach with respect to the elite of society or to the government in the abstract. History as politics of the past might be helpful in understanding both statesmen and the governments they represented.

Oranim School and the Political Conflict Within Israeli Elite

The Oranim group taught the students the centrality of the rift in the Israeli elite across the parties: not essentially between the political parties but as a continuation of the conflict inside the Jewish ruling elite (Gutwein, 1989, pp. 321-350). Thus the group taught, according to this method, the history of the Zionist movement, founded by Theodor Herzl at the end of the 19th century. Herzl's aim was to establish a national society in Palestine in the form of a state or as an autonomous unit within the Ottoman Empire. Herzl sought to base this new society upon European modernization. He detested the Jewish Messianic pretension of preaching morality to all the world, and envisioned a Zionist society in which all men, including the native Arabs, Moslems, and Christians, would be citizens of equal status (Herzl, 1979). He foresaw the danger that after the establishment of a Jewish pluralistic society, the anti-Zionist elements, the Jewish religious fanatics, would appear on the scene and try to change such a society into an isolated theocratic Jewish state, while inciting the Jewish population against foreigners in general and the Arabs in particular (Herzl, 1961, pp. 116-117).

No sooner had Herzl's Zionist utopia, *Altneuland*, been published, than he was accused of sacrilege. The reason being one of the main characters, the President of the Jewish society, invited prominent Christians and Moslems to his home for Passover and he had built the Temple on the Mount of Olives (Herzl, 1961, p. 197) where there were mosques that housed the old Temple. It was this kind of vision that symbolized Herzl's tolerant attitude and brought down the fanatic wrath of some Messianic Jews who actually planned to take over the reins of power to establish a Jewish theocracy (Kafkafi, 1987, pp. 24-26, 36). The teachers used extensive biographic sources, including Herzl's diaries and some of his literary works, as well as his rivals's pamphlets and a few historical researches (Gutwein, 1995) to avoid boring the students with textbook material.

In the Zionist movement after Herzl, and in the State of Israel through the 20th century, the conflict initially concentrated on: a) the main stream of Zionism and the Revisionists, which was the right movement that seceded from the Zionist Organization in 1935 (Wagner & Kafkafi, 1982); b) between the leader of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion and his two main adversaries, Haim Weizmann, President of the Zionist Organization and Moshe Sharett, Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister in 1954-1955. Ben-Gurion removed Weizmann from his position in 1946 and he also removed Sharett from the Israeli government in June 1956. The conflict between Ben-Gurion and his two moderate adversaries was about relations with the Arabs. While both Weizmann and Sharett tried to abate the Arab-Israeli conflict, Ben-Gurion thought that Israel had profited from the Arab extremity.

Not fearing controversy in secondary schools and colleges, the Oranim teachers taught the history of the political division within the ruling party of the Israeli Labour, Mapai, between David Ben-Gurion and Sharett (Sharett, 1978; Shlaim, 1983). This theme was in sharp contrast to the Israeli schools in general, and sometimes brought upon these teachers the wrath of the parents. Thus, the conflictual method for education of pupils-teachers-historians held that Ben-Gurion and Sharett, although both of them certainly wished to strengthen Israel's security, tried to achieve it in different ways.

The Oranim School stressed from the 1960s (Adar, 1969, pp. 441-579; Nimrod, 1966) that Sharett as Prime Minister during 1954, tried to reach an agreement about the division of the water of the Jordan River in the framework of the American Jordan Valley Plan through Eric Johnson's negotiations. When Ben-Gurion opposed the American Jordan Valley Plan, Sharett wrote that "I oppose concessions to Johnson beyond a certain limit – I am in this fight daily" but if Ben-Gurion were to succeed in preventing the whole plan, a policy "which in my view is absolutely negative and barren, then some other Foreign Minister should execute it." Sharett threatened to resign if Israel were to reject the American Jordan Valley Plan (Kafkafi, 1992).

The Oranim group taught Israeli youth that the rumours which were published in some papers through the 1960s of Sharett trying also to reach *modus vivendi* with the Egyptian leader, Abd al-Nasser, were true. Therefore, Ben-Gurion, who feared Nasser as an Egyptian and Arab leader, as though he was a new Cemal Ataturk, a Turkish modernizer leader, decided, when he returned to the Israeli government in February 1955 to launch a large military operation. The result of which was the death of many Egyptian soldiers and the end of the *modus vivendi* (Ya'ari, 1975). Ben-Gurion intended to

humiliate Nasser by military means with a movement against Egypt or some other Arab State and Sharett by ridiculing him in parliament. Ben-Gurion developed in his Independence Day speech of April 1955 the thesis of Israeli self-reliance and ridiculed the then Prime Minister Sharett on the “cowardice allegedly speaking in the name of reason – what are we and what is our strength?” Ben-Gurion protested against Sharett that “our future does not depend on what the Gentiles will say but on what the Jews will do” (Ben-Gurion, 1957, p. 166). On three occasions Sharett, then a Prime Minister, prevented the use of military force, which Ben-Gurion and Chief of Staff Dayan had proposed, to occupy the Gaza strip and expel its refugees to Jordan thereby cancelling the armistice agreement with Egypt.

However, while Sharett was abroad in December 1955 talking with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, trying to convince the United States to send arms for Israel's Defence Forces, Ben-Gurion ordered the launch of the Kinneret Operation. This successful military operation killed Syrians and Israelis, and it humiliated the Syrians and Egyptians, who could not help them. Of course it humiliated Sharett because the operation had thwarted his effort to obtain weapons for Israel (Sharett, 1978, p. 1313). The Oranim group told their students that when Sharett returned to Israel, he told Ben-Gurion's assistant Nehemiah Argov, “You've stabbed me in the back” (p. 1312). Later, during the meeting of Mapai's political committee, in Ben-Gurion's presence, Sharett claimed that even “Satan could not have chosen a worse timing” for the Kinneret operation (Rafael, 1981, p. 52). The Oranim School interpreted the Kinneret operation as the expression of the intent of Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan, Chief of the General Staff on preventive war, that their main opponent had been Moshe Sharett.

One of the historical classic sources these teachers used to read with their students was the speech that Moshe Dayan made at the funeral service of a young kibbutznik, Ro'i Rothberg of Nahal Oz near the Gaza strip, who was killed by the Egyptians. Dayan stated:

it is not against the Arabs of Gaza that Ro'i's blood cries out for vengeance but against us, for we have sworn a thousand times that blood shall not be spilled in vain. Yesterday we were again taken unawares, again we trusted and believed. Let us examine our own conscience today. (Dayan, 1976, pp. 190-191)

The Chief of the General Staff's inflammatory remarks made against his government was not the crux of the speech according to the Oranim group. There is something deeper than the government's authority which was at stake: the manner of the *understanding* on Dayan's part, towards the Arab's hate. This almost eternal Arab-Jewish hatred, intended to teach that nothing

can be done to ameliorate Arab-Israeli relations, so “without a steel helmet and a gun we cannot plant a tree, and erect a building” (Dayan, 1976, pp. 190-191). Thus, the understanding of Arab extremism towards the very existence of Israel, might strengthen her intransigence against any compromise on her part toward the Arabs.

Oranim School used *A Personal Diary* of Sharett (1978) and compared it with Dayan and Ben-Gurion's speeches, along with reports of their actions, as important educational materials to show the conflict within the Israeli elite towards the Arabs. They used also *A Personal Diary* to learn how Ben-Gurion forced Sharett's departure from the cabinet; a step that the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Abba Eban, defined as “Ben-Gurion tendency toward dictatorial methods”(Kafkafi, 1994, p. 67). Analysing the fresh diaries of the agents of history, Sharett and Dayan, the teachers explained, in contrast to all the textbooks of history, the fact that Sharett's resignation allowed Ben-Gurion and Dayan to ally with France and Britain in an effort to destroy the Egyptian leader Nasser. The pupils wrote about the rift between Ben-Gurion and Sharett, and sometimes the pupils' efforts works were not approved by other teachers, or the parents, because such thoughts were considered sacrilegious..

According to the Oranim group, the disagreements between Sharett, Ben-Gurion, and Dayan, on the means of attaining security, were fundamental. Sharett endeavoured to reduce active military escalation as far as possible while integrating the efforts of the United Nations and the United States toward a thaw between Arabs and Jews. The image that Sharett wanted to portray of Israel was of a small nation protecting itself against aggression and in need of defensive arms. Ben-Gurion and Dayan strove to incorporate Israel into the West while proving that Israel was an active, efficient, and loyal military tool, and an intimidating whip against pro-Soviet Arab provocations. The large arms deal with France which contributed to the Suez War, was the fruit of the undertakings and political direction of Ben-Gurion, whereas Sharett had to bear the cross of the one whose removal would bring about an abundance of arms (Kafkafi, 1992; Golani, 1992; Morris, 1993). In the critical attitude towards the Sinai Campaign the Oranim group found a prominent associate: The Chief of the General Staff in the Six Day War in 1967, General Yizchak Rabin (Troen & Shemesh, 1990, p. 239).

After the Six Day War in 1967, Oranim group, as a part of the Labour Party, stood by Yigal Allon and Yizchak Rabin against Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, who supported the fanatic Jewish settlers in the midst of the hundreds of thousands Palestinians in the West Bank. The fear of controversy was never the style of the Oranim group, therefore they did not agree with the

common doctrine of the Israeli schools and colleges to wall off the past from the present. The group talked freely with their students about the conflict inside the Labour Party in the present politics as well as about history – the politics of the past. They used newspapers along with historical sources, showing the continuity of thought between the adversaries of the past and those of the present (Wagner, 1988).

The method of teaching history which stresses the policy rift between the history as well as political agents in the same country, and quite often in the same party, has a democratic bias, although it focuses on the leaders and not the masses. In a representative democratic state one should not expect that the politics would be managed by the people themselves. However, by elaborating on the conflicting trends inside the elite and demonstrating how decisions taken by that elite might influence everybody's lives, students gain an insight into alternatives as they are posed in representative democracy. In this view, history is essentially made by persons with conflicting motivations, interests, and unique personalities. There is no question but that the study of history is much enlivened by this dramatic conflict of personalities and intents, without the use of external didactic contrivances. Analysis like this does not leave the student uninvolved; the retrospective choice between alternatives, which pertains to past situations, is at the same time a model of choosing between alternatives in real time.

There is another democratic aspect, which is explicit in taking this method into the field of Israeli history. Emphasizing internal conflict between Jewish agents of history, as to the action to be taken vis a vis Arab hostility, encourages moderation. The views on Arab-Israeli relations and the dispute about the concrete steps which had to be taken with regard to the Arabs was a constant element in the strife among Israeli leaders. By teaching the history of the conflict, as the history of a conflict within the leadership circles of the nation, the Oranim School opposes a nationalistic reading of Israel's history, as well as opening a way for involvement in present-day politics on the basis of adequate knowledge (Wagner, 1988).

The "Agents" in World History and Politics

The method of teaching history by learning the conflict between the *agents* of it, is not used by the group of teachers for Jewish history alone. This method has to miss many facts of history; instead, it concentrates around some issues and agents, like Napoleon, as aforesaid, or the murders of President Lincoln, the Kennedies, and Martin Luther King. These teachers also taught George Orwell's *1984*, thereby breaking the wall between history and present problems, as John Lewis Gaddis had wished (Gaddis, 1990, pp.

4-5). The group also breaks down the wall between history and present problems, for instance, by relating their courses to Thatcherism, just as Giroux does (Giroux, H., 1992a, pp. 306, 309).

As progressive educators, the teachers of the Oranim group use individual and collective works, source reading, and history films. However, their main didactic method is not in the form but in the content. The group is teaching history according to that sentence of "the great analyst" Karl Marx, which John Lewis Gaddis admirably cited: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they pleased; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given, and transmitted from the past" (Gaddis, 1990, p. 5).

When the group teaches the Industrial Revolution, it follows Marx in his description of the enclosures in England in his book *Das Kapital*, because he perfectly showed that the economic processes which laid the foundation for the Industrial Revolution were not objective but were intentional, political expropriations that were violently done by rich landlords against poor peasants. However, the analytical attitude of Oranim does not conform to the Marxist method of the classes, because most statesman in Western countries belong to an elite, and their objective class origins, are not supposed to explain their policies. For example, the Kennedies were richer than Thatcher, but their policies tended to the *left*, while her policy tended to the extreme *right*. On the other hand, the difference between the opposing policies of Thatcher-Kennedy is their attitude toward the classes. Thus, although the Oranim group criticizes the sociological mode of explaining political and historical events as an *objective* expression of the interests of some *sector* the group realizes and underlines the role of economic interests in history. They criticize the sociological mode of thinking because it sees things as a *fait accompli*. Therefore the group rejects formal, sociological definitions which compare, for example, *Educational Revolution from Above: Thatcher's Britain and Gorbachev's Union* (McLean, 1992). In the groups view such a comparison between Thatcher's reforms and Gorbachev's are absurd, because the group considers the content of the reforms, rather than their form, as important.

As stated earlier, the Oranim group teaches issues and personalities of European history, for example, Bismarck. This was done with the help of the biography of the historian A.J.P. Taylor (1955) who made clear the alternatives that were open to the German people in the 19th century, and how Bismarck, because he refused to open the German economy, integrating it with Western Europe and especially with Great Britain, pushed Germany

on the road of "Blood and Iron." Otherwise the great, liberal Germany "would have ruined Prussia – and Bismarck along with her" (Taylor, 1955, p. 93). It is natural that German history is as controversial in Israel as it is in Europe.

The Oranim group teaches about Hitler and the Holocaust, while remaining true to their method that differentiated between Germans. Their focus in teaching about World War II is not only Hitler, but also Stalin, Roosevelt and, above all Churchill. The policy of appeasement in Europe prior to World War II is not outrightly rejected by the group, as it is in the conventional teaching of history in Israeli schools and colleges. The group is open to learning about the controversy around appeasement, and even goes as far as to ask what might have been if the appeasement policy had not been successful. However, even considering the war as a *fait accompli*, the group continued, through some scores of years, to question Churchill's policies. The teachers in Oranim, with their students and even, to some degree, pupils in their secondary schools, followed the British and other revisionist historians. One of the group researched this topic for his dissertation, and this helped other group members in teaching the controversy about the appeasement policy, and they dared to ask rational questions even about the Munich Agreement. In Israel this topic is considered almost taboo. In his dissertation he found that the appeasers hoped "that if the demands of the moderates in Germany could be satisfied their objection to war would be strengthened" (Komelos, 1994, Summary). For Israelis this view of some Germans in the elite of Germany on the eve of the World War II, as *moderates* is an anathema. It is an anathema even though Israelis are now trying to strengthen the policy of moderates among the Palestinians. Although his dissertation does not flatter Churchill's policies, the teaching of the Oranim group followed some historians (Liddell Hart, 1970) as they asked, for example, why Churchill prolonged the war so that most of Europe was given to Stalin? (cf. Chalmsly, 1993).

Is it any wonder that many students in the Oranim College, are asking why they did not learn history in this way?

Conclusion: "All Thought is for the Sake of Action"

At the roots of a preparedness to be involved in social justice and aims there is a need for something primordial such as a "Robin Hood character" presented in early childhood and sustained throughout adulthood. Assuming true respect for the pupil, the danger that has to be guarded against is a mystic faith, frequently implied in the emphasis on free expression and individual initiative, where there is a process of *inner development* that requires nothing from the environment except to be left alone. Even when a student learns

about the division of the elite, if he or she did not care, because he or she had not internalized a "Robin Hood character," the result may be an indulgence of pure intellect about the strife within the elite, and this would not be sufficient to move that person to fight for a progressive cause.

This attitude attempts to demonstrate that it is possible to teach history as the politics of the past rather than as a conglomeration of dry facts on a linear basis. The Oranim group agrees with Giroux that the teaching of history in schools, teachers' colleges, and universities should become one of the cornerstones of the new society, by transforming history from an obedient childish treasuring of the past into a mature engagement which enables one to criticize the past. As progressive educators the Oranim group view present education systems as highly politicized and that is a tool to raise obedient citizens. This is the political meaning of conventional school discipline, which educators since Rousseau were exposing to the pretension of it not being involved in politics. The conventional school is undemocratic, as it is modelled on an hierarchy of the many who know nothing as against the few who know a great deal (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, pp. 152-153). This is the highly *politicized* school, that the Oranim group is striving to abolish by *politicizing the content* of the teaching of history.

The teaching of history can be of critical importance in making the capacities of expression and initiative serve the development of the individual's interest and involvement in the social environment, without which there can be no formation of a social democratic attitude of mind. If the teaching of history can be invaluable for the attainment of this end, it can, by the same token, become a decisive hindrance, because of the built-in deterministic bias inherent in much of the writing of history.

The foremost object of teaching should be the development of the student's capacity to form independent judgements, rather than training his or her thinking to reproduce authoritative ideas and beliefs. This end can only be achieved by helping the development of the rational faculties and by enhancing the esteem of the critically thinking personality.

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