



## The Patriotism Education in History Courses of Israeli Middle School

Yi Li

To cite this article: Yi Li (2021): The Patriotism Education in History Courses of Israeli Middle School, Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, DOI: [10.1080/25765949.2021.1928414](https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2021.1928414)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2021.1928414>



Published online: 04 Jun 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 11



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## The Patriotism Education in History Courses of Israeli Middle School

Yi Li

Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, China

### ABSTRACT

Promoting patriotism and national cohesion in history classes is a well-known practice in modern countries, and especially evident in countries embroiled in ongoing conflicts. Patriotism in middle school history education of Israel bear the task to inherit the essence of Jewish traditional culture, promote awakening civic consciousness and teach the history of nation building. The courses contains main lines of national image creation, complaints for diaspora history, reflection on the holocaust, the current situation of the stalemate with rivalry countries and the outlook for the trend towards integration. It aims at shaping the minds of nation residents with different ethnic, religious, cultural and political background, and turn them into social members with a strong sense of responsibility, characteristics of multicultural and harmonious coexistence. In the comprehensive educational system, Israeli patriotism education is conducive to national unity, social integration and modernisation, but at the same time smacks of Zionism.

### KEYWORDS

Israel; middle school; history education; Patriotism

It is widely known that education policy and curriculum nature derived from the social and political reality. The way a nation remember its past, to a great extent, reflects its national culture, values and political needs. Patriotic education in history teaching is not only one of the main lines throughout history education, but also important for middle school students whose values of world, life and value have not been formed. This is considered to be an effective way to improve students' ideological and moral awareness. As history class is used as what we might call 'nationhood glue', history curriculum has a more important role to countries deep in the mire of conflicts.

When it went independent in 1948 and the need for unity was more urgent than ever, Israel, however, had an ideologically fragmented educational system. The Compulsory Education Law of 1949, rectifying the 'official' educational institutions, brought back to life three existing factions. In addition, it recognised the strictly Orthodox Agudat Israel schools. Sections 13 to 18 of the 1953 Law paved way for the establishment of a Council for Religious State Education and set out its structure, functions and powers. It helped set up a system under direct state supervision, but

comprising two types of educational institutions, state schools and state religious schools. In sum, the educational system epitomised the clear secular-orthodox religious dichotomy in Israel, featuring polarisation, disunity and periodic strife. At the same time, it created the social environment of patriotism education in Israel.

The Israeli education system is highly centralised; the Ministry of Education determines the goals and contents of each subject area. As far as history education is concerned, the content of patriotism is always closely related to the Jewish destiny. For the Jewish people, three times of the diaspora, the Zionist movement lasting for one hundred years and more than half a century of survival development history, created a unique cultural environment of Israel. Turbulent times gave rise to the strong national consciousness and value concept of 'Safety Priority'; being trapped in war for a long time cultivated in the Israelis a strong sense of crisis; the ancient Jewish civilisation gave birth to the precious spirit of national identity and cultural identity; good educational tradition brewed a conducive atmosphere of knowledge and science; the harsh living environment forced the Israelis to be tenacious and innovative. And considering all these, the patriotism education in Israeli middle school history curriculum is basically about national image creation, complaints for diaspora history, reflection on the holocaust, the current situation of the stalemate with rivalry countries and the outlook for Convergence Trend.

## National Image Creation

Education system is one of the cores of history story telling and of the elaboration of the past. The system is the state institutions shaping the minds of the citizens and it is by learning the national histories that they become loyal members of the society and conform to the social order. At the same time, 'imagined community' is regarded as the building of national image. Since its founding, Israeli has built its images several times, including images like 'A nation has the right to become a country', 'A country with religious right' and 'Persecuted national country.'

The image of 'A nation has the right to become a country' was created shortly after Israel's independence. Today, it is still the main tool to instil national memory into the secular Jewish students. The image creates national subjects. Those students think themselves as members of the Jewish people with a shared history, culture, and political structure. The national subjectivity is realised by strengthening connections between citizens and nations and connections between state and country. On the one hand, the teaching of history can strengthen citizens attachment to the nation. Israeli high school history textbooks aim at 'letting the students know that our nation, although is one of the smallest one in the world, retains its religions, customs and beliefs in more than two thousand years of diaspora';<sup>1</sup> what's more, the teaching of the Bible (especially the first five volumes and Mishne Torah) strengthens citizens attachment to their land. The main goal is to 'instil the love of home into the hearts

---

<sup>1</sup>J. Resnik, "'Sites of memory" of the Holocaust: shaping national memory in the education system in Israel', *Nations and Nationalism* 9(2), (2003), p. 299.

of Israelis students, that our ancestors lived there, the people of Israel once suffered here, but continue to live on and created a culture of Israel.<sup>2</sup> It's safe to assume that Jewish fight for the land rights and attachment to land provide students with historic and religious support, proving that the their claim to the land of Israel is reasonable.

The image of 'A country with religious right' was to be included in the education system in the early 1960s. The national image aimed to strengthen national commitment to the Jewish people through the promoting of religious symbolic meanings and values. The focus of Ministry of Education back then covered all parts of the education system, teaching widely about the Jewish culture, customs, and traditional heritage of knowledge, and deepening the interest of the diaspora Jews. This should be clearly reflected in the school curriculum and the training handbooks for teachers. To further implement the new policy, the Minister of Education announced in a report submitted to the national to set up a new Jewish consciousness training centre equipped with specialised courses and teachers responsible for advanced courses.<sup>3</sup> This innovation included history teaching (such as emphasis on respect and sympathy for the period of exile, etc.), and associating informal Jewish holiday activities with daily school activities, etc. The schools required teachers to encourage students to visit Jewish churches in the day of atonement; to build temporary shelters in tabernacles; to visit the ultra-orthodox villages accompanied by the teachers at the feast of the Passover; to watch the making process the Jewish unleavened bread (Matza). Along with the changes of religious classes, together with the promulgation of the National Law about the Jewish consciousness, religion has become an important part of the Israeli patriotism education.

The image of 'Persecuted country' showed up in the field of education in 1970s. The Ministry of Education added a history curriculum, named 'From Holocaust to Resurgence', to reflect Israel ethos, implying that the holocaust in some sense led to the founding of Israel. The national image, created around its past and suffering, strengthened the connection and attachment of overseas Jews to the Israeli. On one hand, the history class was designed to show the mercilessness of the Holocaust. The Zionists mentioned the suffering during the Holocaust as a part of their statements, which was of the vital importance for the founding and existence of Israel. Due to the important connection between the Holocaust and founding of the nation, in April 1976, Israeli Ministry of Education decided to set a subject of 30-hour the Holocaust study for the senior level of general schools. Soon after, in 1980, Israeli Ministry of Education enhanced the education of 'consciousness about the Holocaust and heroism memory,' and asked the general schools to include the Holocaust as 20% of the final exam contents.<sup>4</sup> In order to form high students' empathy of the suffering during the Holocaust, the section of World War II in history textbooks were compiled to focussed on the Jewish Holocaust. On the other hand, ceremonies and social activities were held to reproduce the scene of the Holocaust. These activities, including the visiting of

---

<sup>2</sup>M. Lizarazu, 'In the shadows of memory: the Holocaust and the third generation', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 16(3), (2017), p. 522.

<sup>3</sup>M. Lynn-Sachs, 'Dilemmas and tensions in Jewish education', *Jouranal of Jewish Education* 83(4), (2017), p. 246.

<sup>4</sup>A. Carmon, 'The Holocaust as a subject for the senior level of general schools', *Teacher's Guide, Ministry of Education and Culture, Curriculum Center*, 1981.

memorial institutions, holding anniversary ceremonies, and organising youth delegation tour to Poland, were important to the education of the Holocaust and heroism. The purpose of these activities was to create for students opportunities of facing the atrocity bravely, arousing the strong empathy of the sufferings of ancestors, and strengthen the national unity.

## Complaints for Diaspora History

The Jewish is the only ethnic group reuniting at its hometown after being dispersed two thousand years ago. Rove and diaspora, two important hallmarks of the Jewish, exerted significant influence on the awakening of its ethnic consciousness. The great diaspora refers to the period lasting 1,800 years during which the Jewish had roved around following the failed uprising of Jewish politician Bar Kokhba. Since the founding of the Israel, the government emphasised the education of traditional patriotism and value derived from ethnic survival, and regarded the quality of the education as one of the school assessment metric.<sup>5</sup> The moral and value education required the Israeli people not only to remember the past suffering of its ancestors, but also encouraged them to strive to be resurgent. Therefore, the history education is designed to safeguard the survival right of the ethnic group, and to foster among students love for or devotion to the Jewish ethnicity.

It is no doubt that the institutionalisation of Zionism reflects to a substantial extent the changes in the fields of external political security and internal ideology and politics. In 1920s and 1930s, Israel inherited the 'shelilat ha-gola' (counter the dispersal) from the Zionism and tried to cut their connection with the European Jew. In 1940s and 1950s, the Israel government claimed its attitude to the exiled, and viewed the influx and integration as a chance to improve the cultivation and the economic diversity. The government encouraged its citizens to build connection with the exiled Jewish, especially the youth, and to prepare for participating in the great outlook of national resurgence, which was called the 'mission of our generation.' By the end of the World War II, Israel Faculty Committee introduced three courses. Two of these them focussed on teaching Zionism, and the rest one taught the general history of the Jewish and the world. These classes described the exiled Jewish as those whom fight with life difficulties, and highlighted the role the exiled played in the establishment of the country.

The Israeli history courses had several goals: demonstrating the values of Israeli culture and scientific achievements, cultivating in students love and loyalty for the motherland and their fellow citizens, and building a society based on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance and care. By recognising and analysing Israel's status in the world, the history classes demonstrated the country's ideals, attitudes and experiences in its development and helped students understand the unbreakable relation between the country and its land and culture. The students were taught to view the human culture as a result of the joint efforts from all human beings. History classes during this period were included into the syllabus. And some chapters were designed

---

<sup>5</sup>S. Li, 'Comparative research on the characteristics of basic education development between China and Israel', *Foreign Education Research* 30(7), (2003), p. 19.

to discuss 'Israeli's political, economic, cultural and religious struggles during the war and diaspora.' While some chapters focussed on the bond between the Jews and their homeland. To better promote the Jewish diaspora history, the government established the Museum of Diaspora (Jewish Ethnography Museum) in 1978, exhibiting items related to Jewish history, culture, and beliefs, and therefore strengthening national identity. By building a huge database, it offered visitors an opportunity to trace their family histories. Since 2011, Israeli government has made plans to update the museum's technical equipment and better serve the needs of patriotic education .

By teaching the diaspora history, the patriotic education in middle schools achieved the following goals: first of all, it consolidated the core of 'Zionist' education, including the education of Jewish cultural value, national defence, homeland security, etc.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, it strengthened the citizen's awareness of homeland and reminded them of the hardships their ancestors had gone through so that students can understand the values of Jewish ideology, ethnic group and religion during the founding of Israel, in order to cultivate in students sense of unity, fight and endurance. At last, it further fused the Israeli national spirits. The patriotism education urged the students to remember the bleak history and suffering, thereby building the Jewish spiritual backbone and make the nation unbreakable, robust and powerful.

### **Reflection on the Experience of the Holocaust**

For Israeli people, 'Holocaust education is a challenging task. It is just like trying to find a way through a minefield in the fog.'<sup>7</sup> In the early days of the founding, to deal with the threats of war and pressure from surrounding Arab countries, Israel's propaganda and education on the Holocaust only emphasised the armed resistance and heroism of the Jews in the Holocaust, while turning a blind eye to the suffering and humiliation suffered by the Jews. In the 1950s, Israel leaders discouraged any propaganda about the memory of the Holocaust, not considering it as appropriate to strengthen national unity. Take history courses of high schools in 1956 as an example. It contained two courses under the 'Knowledge of the People and the Country' system. One is 'Jews in their country' and the other is 'Jews in the Diaspora.' The structure and goals of these courses revealed the state's view of the national collective at the time. It regarded Israeli Jews and Jews in other countries as one community. According to the requirements of the syllabus, being a good citizen meant understanding Zionism in Israel. These goals included solving border problems, engaging in production activities (agriculture or construction) and helping to achieve 'a gathering of exiled. In short, the analysis of the image of this nation showed that the trauma of the Holocaust had little weight in the national memory at that time, and naturally it would not appear in any propaganda.

The 'Adolf Eichmann Trial' in 1961 revealed the horror of the Holocaust and pushed the people of Israel to regard the Holocaust as an integral part of the history of Israel.

---

<sup>6</sup>Z. Peng, 'National education in Israeli elementary and secondary schools: goals, approaches and enlightenment', *Foreign Elementary and Secondary Education* 31(6), (2012), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>D. Lindquist, 'Guidelines for teaching the Holocaust: avoiding common pedagogical errors', *The Social Studies* 97(5), (2009), p. 215.

The government gradually realised that only by teaching the histories of catastrophes and disasters suffered by the Jews can make them powerful, so as to ensure that the Jewish state can survive the heavy siege of the Arab world in the future. To this end, the Israeli government formulated a series of plans designed to educate citizens about the history of the Holocaust and construct the memory of the Holocaust. An education system around the Holocaust was set up. The system was led by the state, supported by the law, and with the Holocaust Memorial as the core, it built the collective memory of the Holocaust through a national education based on institutionalisation and ritualisation. The image of Israel's 'Persecuted Nation-State' did not appear in the education system until the 1970s. The course was named 'Resurrection from the Holocaust',<sup>8</sup> which was about two historical events: The Holocaust and the establishment of the Israeli state. It can be said that this kind of national image based on the painful common experience united the entire Jewish nation, thereby strengthening the Israeli people's attachment to the country, making Jewish culture one of the few 'consistent' cultures in the history of human civilisation.

In terms of public education, the Israeli government established the Holocaust Memorial Hall in Yad Vashem in 1953 to tell the public about the histories of the Holocaust by collecting evidences and materials about the Jews killed in the Holocaust, to promote the Holocaust education in Israel. In 1988, the Israeli Ministry of Education organised a two-week Holocaust annual education project named 'Survivors Tour', arranging a delegation of Israeli students to Poland to explore the remains of the Holocaust and learn about the history and knowledge of the Holocaust and the Jewish nation. Many issues such as strengthening the bond between the Jewish nation and the Israeli state, as well as cognition of human nature in the context of the Holocaust, had a certain colour of religious hajj.<sup>9</sup> By the early 1990s, the Holocaust became an patriotic education as important as the Masada spirit.

In terms of school education, the National Education Law took 'the memory and understanding of the Holocaust and the heroes fighting against the Holocaust' as one of its goals. As the memory of the Holocaust played an increasingly important role in Israel's national ideology, the country begun to adopt more effective educational methods to institutionalise and ritualise the memory of the Holocaust. Since 1985, the Holocaust has become a mandatory theme to be taught in Israeli high school. The Ministry of Education included the Holocaust education in literature and history courses, and asked high schools assign 30 hours to Holocaust education, and listed it as a separate subject in the university entrance examination. Other government departments were responsible for selecting textbooks, such as 'The Holocaust and Memory' by the Israel writer Gutman and *The Holocaust: A Journey of Memory* by Nellie Karen. While recounting the history of the Holocaust, the two scholars focussed on two points of view, but both inspiring students to think about the role the Holocaust played in the Jewish self-recognition.

Through the Holocaust education, the concept of Holocaust heroism in Israel's collective memory has changed. Now heroism includes not only armed resistance but

---

<sup>8</sup>J. Resnik, "'Sites of memory" of the Holocaust: shaping national memory in the education system in Israel', *Nations and Nationalism* 9(2), (2003), p. 293.

<sup>9</sup>Z. Zhong, 'Memories of the Holocaust and Israel's ideology', *West Asia and Africa* 36(6), (2015), p. 30.

also the people's struggle for survival and dignity. This is regarded as the continuation of the entire Jewish national spirit and the fights to stop Hitler's genocide plan. In this process of fierce exchange of diversified ideas and views, Israeli patriotism education has accomplished the following goals: forming Jewish identity, strengthening Zionist cognition, teaching historical knowledge, giving civic education, strengthening religious beliefs, and cultivating Jewish values among Israelis. With all these feat, it can be said that Israel's Holocaust education is more than education of emotions, politics, and citizenship. Its influence is not only felt in schools, but also in Israeli society. It has played an fundamental role in enhancing national cohesion, strengthening national unity, strengthening national identity and maintaining national stability.

### **The Present Situation of the Conflict Stalemate**

Most history courses in Israel are taught under the framework of Jewish identity. And the relationship between Jews and Palestinian Arabs has become an inevitable topic. Until the 1990s, as a result of increasing political pressure, certain topics emerged in the official curriculum, and hegemonic and nationalist narratives/local narratives dominated the propagation. This narrative viewed national peace as the ultimate goal and portrayed Arabs and Palestinians as 'the other.'

In the context of advancing globalisation and the development of Israeli society, curriculum was reformed in the late 1990s and aimed at integrating multiculturalism, which reduced depictions of Jewish self-victimization, 'siege mentality', ethnocentrism and prejudice, and gave a more objective commentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and focussed more on patriotism in a peaceful context. This trend can be seen in all courses: literature textbooks featured a wide selection of poems praising peace; history textbooks condemned war and praised peace agreements and peace negotiations; geography textbooks focussed on the economic development and political advantages of Palestinians and residents of neighbouring Arab countries; civics textbooks promoted values of tolerance, pluralism, and non-violent conflict resolution; and Jewish Religion and Culture textbooks studied peace in ancient Jewish histories and the reasons for its deep roots in Jewish culture; Arab textbooks included the meaning of and ways for the coexistence between different religions and ethnic groups, with the aim of teaching students to live with different people in and around Israel.<sup>10</sup>

The Israeli Ministry of Education attaches great importance to the compilation and updating of materials for patriotic education and highlights the characteristics of the subject of history. The series of history textbooks compiled in 1999 were largely based on the guidelines of Zimmerman Commission established in 1995. The new textbooks included five texts: *A Journey to the Past*, *The Twentieth Century*, a two-volume edition of *Modern Times* and *A World of Changes*. The textbooks were developed by the History Unit of the Israeli Ministry of Education, with the efforts shared by scholars, technical advisers and writers coordinated by the General Directorate of Education within the Ministry of Education and Culture.

---

<sup>10</sup>M. Al-Haj, 'National ethos, multicultural education, and the new history textbooks in Israel', *Curriculum Inquiry* 35(1), (2005), p. 63.



A Journey to the Past detailed the tensions between Arabs and Jews. In this book, the role of the Palestinians was reduced to attacking on the Yishuv<sup>11</sup> and organisation to stifling its development. Jews, by contrast, worked to development and national defense against Arabs.<sup>12</sup> The Twentieth Century was in some sense a departure from the history textbooks used in Jewish schools. The author began the chapter on the Yishuv with a fairly balanced paragraph in which he referred to the Jews and Arabs as two national communities fighting for the same territory. After this, however, the chapter sketched a picture based on the typical Zionist narrative, according to which the Jews were dedicated to development, while the Arabs were involved in violent activities and hostile anti-Jewish organisation, and the British tried to make peace between the two groups.<sup>13</sup> Modern Times were for senior high schools. The authors rejected both the traditional Jewish explanation of the refugee problem (that the Arab leaders called on the Palestinians to leave) and the Arab argument (that the Jewish leadership planned and implemented ethnic cleansing). Instead, they gave an alternative explanation with one phrase of 'the war.' On the whole, the problem of refugees was because of the collapse of the Arab community. A World of Changes was used only for one year, however, before it was removed from the list of approved texts by the Minister of Education. The ban was imposed because had it that the book was not faithful to the classic Zionist narrative, and consequently did not adequately reinforce the national-Zionist ethos for students.<sup>14</sup>

The new history textbooks sought to give a fresh explanation of the Israeli-Arab conflict, presenting a more open and pluralistic perspective. In history textbooks, coexistence with the Palestinians and other neighbours was not only portrayed as mutually beneficial and achievable, but should be the ultimate goal pursued by all concerned. Textbooks acknowledged the pre-1948 Palestinian presence in Israel, the development of Palestinian national identity, and the hardships and different ways of life of Palestinians; maps in textbooks acknowledged the physical presence of Palestinians in the region, including major Palestinian cities, while identifying the territory of the Palestinian Authority, including the 'Green Line', which was called 'Road of Return' by the Palestinians and in several places maps detailed the extent of the territory described in the Oslo Accords; and textbooks included friendly statements about Arab and Muslim culture and heritage. Of course, Israeli history textbooks were unable to escape the ethnocentric fence that Israel and the Jews were the primary victims of war and violence, and that they reacted to hostility from Arabs or Palestinians. Some scholars argued that this self-justifying stance was natural for a society that had been in conflict for a long time. In sum, Israeli history textbooks explained the complexities and political divisions within Israeli society, attempted to convey a message of tolerance and coexistence to some extent by giving objective portrayals of Arab and Muslim minorities.

---

<sup>11</sup>The Jewish community in Palestine before the founding of Israel.

<sup>12</sup>E. Yogev, 'A crossroads: history textbooks and curricula in Israel', *Journal of Peace Education* 7(1), (2010), p. 12.

<sup>13</sup>M. Al-Haj, 'National ethos, multicultural education, and the new history textbooks in Israel', *Curriculum Inquiry* 35(1), (2005), p. 57.

<sup>14</sup>E. Yogev, 'A crossroads: history textbooks and curricula in Israel', *Journal of Peace Education* 7(1), (2010), p. 8.

Fundamentally, however, much of the new textbook still presents a typical Zionist narrative that aims to show the collective memory of Jewish students on the basis of the nation-state by upholding Zionist values. This narrative does not fundamentally consider the legitimacy of dealing with the Palestinian narrative. The narrative of the conflict between the two groups of people in most textbooks remains ungrounded and does not reflect the key events in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that has lasted for more than a century. Some new textbooks do not even answer important questions such as the status of Arabs as a minority in Israel, but instead focus on aspects such as the strengthening of Jewish national culture and its dominance in Israeli society; some textbooks describe the Palestinian national movement as a direct result and reflex action of the Zionist movement, rather than a claim based on its right; some textbooks consider Jewish ideology as pluralistic, while the Arab-Palestinian side as dictatorial. It is clear that the implementation of multicultural education has a long way to go. It suggests that a curriculum centered on the defence of hegemonic narratives, even if it operates and is constructed according to a multiculturalism model, is unlikely to lead to multicultural education.

By examining and comparing the depiction of the Arab-Israeli conflict in Israeli school history textbooks in three different phases (i.e. from 1948 to the mid-1970s, from 1975 to 1992, and since the mid-1990s), it is clear that the history classes in Israeli schools, like other tools of socialisation, has shaped the collective memory of the nation. The portrayal of the Arab-Israeli conflict in these textbooks has changed considerably over the different periods.<sup>15</sup> The first phase of textbooks reflected the construction of a single, unified, and relatively distorted national historical narrative and goal; the second phase was less biased and paid proper attention to the circumstances and livelihoods of Palestinians, but told in the sensitive issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict like the way in the first phase; and the third phase went a step further, not only by challenging some of the basic myths of Zionist historiography, but also by arguing that they were no longer the only means by which the state shaped its collective memory. Despite many attempts, the basic belief underlying Israeli patriotic education remains the inculcation of Zionist values.

### **Outlook for Convergence Trend**

The National Education Law clearly stipulates that the purpose of Israeli educational is to enable students to learn knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of national development; what's more, it is to promote the integration of Jews from all over the world and eliminate their cultural differences between the two countries to form a new Jewish national culture. The whole curriculum must be based on the aims of state education ... on the values of Israeli culture and scientific achievements, on the love of the homeland and loyalty to the State of Israel and the People of Israel, on belief in work on the land and the crafts, on training for pioneering spirits, and on aspirations to build a society founded on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual help and love of

---

<sup>15</sup>E. Podeh, 'History and memory in the Israeli education system', *History and Memory* 12(1), (2000), p. 65.

mankind.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Proposals for Curricula for Secondary Schools gave similar blueprints: in-depth study of the Bible, awareness of 'the special status of Israel among the nations' and 'promoting love of mankind and of the homeland'; 'imparting the ideals, attitudes and experiences of the nation in its development...' and learning about the historical ties, never severed, between the nation and its land and culture by studying the language and literature of the Jew; the presentation of the culture of mankind as the fruit of the shared efforts of the People of Israel and the nations of the world throughout many generations.<sup>17</sup>

However, from a global perspective, only a very small number of countries conform to the traditional paradigm of nation-states, that is, race, culture and political boundaries are relatively consistent, and most countries are diverse in terms of race, language, religion and culture. In order to avoid conflicts, governments of countries often use patriotism education as a tool for nation-building. Among them, the practice model of immigrant society dominated by integrated education has not only effectively improved immigrants' political identity and economic participation, but also significantly filled the cultural gap between different groups. In a country like Israel where there are ethnic and racial conflicts and multiple identity narratives, patriotism education plays an important role in shaping citizenship.

From the early days of the founding of the nation to the end of the 1950s, Israel implemented a 'melting pot' policy. Ben-Gurion, its first Prime Minister, once pointed out that 'The so-called 'melting pot' policy is to integrate these people from different cultures, religions, and races into a unified whole society, and then rebuild the entire society under the guidance of the revival of the national spirit.'<sup>18</sup> One of its goals is to reduce the barrier between immigrants and indigenous people by way of education, so as to make them quickly integrate into Israeli society. The policy was designed to close the gaps between different cultures and to solve the problem of 'two Israels.' The 'melting pot' policy in Israeli patriotic education helped reshape Israeli civil society and the modern state. The implementation of relevant policies provided equal education for primary and secondary schools as much as possible, and provides institutional guarantees for immigrant children to fit into the society.

The policy eased the conflicts in Israeli society caused by differences in value, religious beliefs and behaviours. Besides that, Israel also formulated laws and regulations to that end. For example, to help immigrants fit into Israeli society and master Hebrew language, local governments created 'Ulpan' (Intensive Language Learning Class). Hebrew language schools played a unique role in immigrant education. 'Ulpan' not only teaches Hebrew, but also Jewish culture, history, geography, etc., thereby enhancing the commitments of Israeli immigrants to their 'motherland.'

In the 1960s, as the 'melting pot' policy enforced the integration and standardisation of education without paying attention to the educational demands of the Israeli Arabs, along with the policy of military control over Arabs, educational equality was not achieved in Israel. With the development of society and changes in the

---

<sup>16</sup>A. Dushkin, 'The state education law in Israel-its genesis and sequel', *Jewish Education* 25(2), (1954), p. 17.

<sup>17</sup>Y. Dror, 'From "negation of the diaspora" to "Jewish consciousness": the Israeli educational system, 1920-2000', *Israel Studies Forum* 18(2), (2003), p. 67.

<sup>18</sup>Z. Zameret, *Melting Pot in Israel* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 56-67.

educational environment, the 'melting pot' policy was replaced by the 'social integration' policy. This policy will include all students into a unified school system, regardless of ethnicity, talents, or hobbies, and put them into neighbouring schools and classrooms. This policy not only helps to advance the social cohesion of different nationalities and improve the performance of disadvantaged students, but also promotes mobility between classes. It's possible for groups with lower social status to have opportunities meant for the upper class. However, economically dominant Jews have therefore migrated to large cities, resulting in a sharp imbalance of educational resources between urban and rural areas. In addition, in line with the existing conditions of collective farms, the Kibbutz<sup>19</sup> education model is very sophisticated, but not enthusiastic about policies of other governments, therefore it lacks the support of people.

In the 1970s, the 'social integration' policy, which favoured social interests and opposed individual uniqueness gradually wound down. The 'multicultural' policy aimed at cultural exchanges and integration of ethnic groups and maintaining their own characteristics came into being. Prior to this, the narrative in Israeli history courses often marginalised minorities. Although Palestinian citizens of Israel seemingly enjoyed all the civil rights, they have long been regarded as hostile. They hardly had any political representatives, and their social, economic and educational infrastructures were also backward; after that, the history courses of Arab schools and Jewish schools were reformed on the basis of the Peled Committee's<sup>20</sup> proposal accordingly, which to a certain extent reflected important changes in Israel's view of education, like cultivating students' ability to evaluate historical events on the basis of human and national values, and teaching them to understand each other and understand the differences of other nations and peoples. The history textbook at this time 'recognised the existence of Palestinian nationalism, and no longer used contemptuous terms to describe the strong resistance from Arabs to Jewish immigration and settlement, but began to make a more balanced and objective approach to the root of the Palestine refugee problem.'<sup>21</sup>

In the late 1990s, the Israeli Ministry of Education published a series of new history textbooks. Appreciating the values of Arab schools, it focussed on developing the bond between cultures of Israeli Arabs and Palestinian Arab, and arousing in all students the awareness as Israeli citizens; in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it presented an open and comprehensive perspective than the original curriculum, and stressed that the conflict between the two sides was not only caused by both Arabs and the Zionism. Israeli government revised the 'National Education Law' in 1999, with emphasis on 'respect for culture and compatriots' views, and striven to promote peace and tolerance; to spread the language, cultures of the Arab population of the State of Israel and other minorities, histories, heritage, and their unique traditions.'<sup>22</sup> In the 'Five-Year

<sup>19</sup>It means collective farms or collective communities in Israel. Israel's first kibbutz was built in 1910. At first, it was mainly engaged in agricultural production, and later it also engaged in industrial and high-tech industries. Till now, there are about 274 kibbutz nationwide.

<sup>20</sup>The committee was established in the 1970s and was the first education committee in Israel to have both Jewish and Arab members.

<sup>21</sup>D. Bar-Tal, 'The Arab image in Hebrew school textbooks', *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics* 8(2), (2001), p. 11.

<sup>22</sup>T. Chen, *Resurgence for a Nation: An Overview of Israel's Education* (Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2005), pp. 247–248.

Plan' formulated by the Ministry of Education, the state set up special funds to improve Arab teaching to increase the enrolment rate of college entrance examination by avoiding dropouts, increasing school hours, and stipulating teaching guidance.

During this period, with the establishment of more Israeli Arab teacher training schools and more Arab college graduates, the quality and quantity of Arab teachers have improved. The development and improvement of Arab education has led to political, economic and social development, and the Arabs' awareness and recognition of the Israeli state has continued to be improved. They gradually got rid of a single agricultural structure, and ushered in the industrial and commercial era; they have established presences in politics, and their influence in Israel's multiparty politics has gradually increased; their standards of living have increased, showing signs of an overall modernisation. Although the education of Arabs in Israel has been developing and has played an increasingly important role in the development of the country and themselves, it is undeniable that the education level of the Arabs needs to be raised compared with that of the Jews in the country.

## Conclusion

As the education system is a central arena where the elaboration of national memory takes place, a thorough research of the educational field will enable us to evaluate the predominance of the patriotism since the beginning of Israel.

In Israel, conflicts are protracted, violent, and central in the life of the national groups involved. In this zero-sum game, the school curriculum is usually an instrument for the creation of social beliefs that together constitute a national ethos that strengthens the nation to cope with the conflicts while prolonging the conflict.

In general, patriotism education includes aspects like national identity, national self-confidence and cultural inheritance. The patriotism in the history education of Israeli secondary schools aims to transform citizens of different nationalities, religions, cultures and political backgrounds into responsible and multicultural members that can coexist in the society. From the perspective of its national image, the Jewish nation not only 'has the right to be a country', but also a 'country with religious rights' and a 'country of persecuted nations.' From the perspective of the history of diaspora, Israeli political ideology has gradually transitioned from the 'anti-dispersal' complex (shelilat ha-gola) to the 'normalization' of its attitude towards deportation, which has strengthened citizens' sense of national territory and sense of distress. In terms of the Holocaust experience, the cohesiveness of the entire Jewish people has been enhanced through the construction of a complete Holocaust education system that institutionalises and ritualises the memory of the Holocaust. From the perspective the current state of the conflict, despite the introduction of the concept of multiculturalism in Israeli high school history textbooks and a more open and pluralistic understanding of the Israeli-Arab conflict, most of the content still presents a typical Zionist narrative. In terms of integration trends, the Israeli government has, from the 'melting pot' policy to the 'social integration' policy to the 'multiculturalism' policy, continuously tried to use integration education to enhance the political identity and economic

participation of immigrants, which has to some extent promoted equality and respect among different cultural groups.

### **Acknowledgements**

The article is funded by the Fifth 'Foreign Cultural Policy' of Shanghai Research Base Projects 2020.

### **Disclosure Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.