History and Peace Education

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This article discusses the role of history in peace education in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Israeli and Palestinian histories are vital parts of the conflict between the two collectives aiming at the destruction of the collective memory of the Other. Nevertheless, history’s role in peace education is rarely discussed from a theoretical and philosophical perspective. In this article it is claimed that peace education uses history in basically the same manner as war education, namely in order to tell the ‘truth’. Inspired by Nietzsche’s understanding of history for purposes of Life this article suggests a renewed philosophical discussion of ‘history’, ‘truth’, ‘representation’ and ‘peace’ in peace education.

In the Israeli-Palestinian context, History is a vital part of the conflict and the mutual denial of the Other’s legitimate existence, at least on a collective level. Histories are constructed between Israelis and Palestinians as a function of their mutual denial and their respective nationalist ideologies, and these histories effectively rule out the possibility of the legitimacy of the history of the Other. The very creation of the histories of Israelis and Palestinians, as Israeli and Palestinian history, and the form and plot of their histories happened and happens in a relational and referential relationship between both collectives. Accordingly, the role of history in peace education as both educational programmes and philosophy can hardly be overstated. The problems of truth, representation, transcendence, and not the least violence in history are also the problems of peace education. In this article, we will consider the histories of the new Israeli historians, Ilan Pappé, Benny Morris and Avi Shlaim, as peace education in relation to a more general discussion of the concept of history and its implications for peace education. The reason for the selection of the new Israeli historians is quite straightforward. All three of them have argued that their histories are better for achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians than the so-called traditional Zionist or Israeli historiography. When the phrase “the new historians” was coined in 1988 by Benny Morris, he argued that the new history was necessary for purposes of peace. Anyhow, it has been Ilan Pappé who most consistently has pursued his history work as a work towards peace or at least a work in service of a political perspective usually associated with leftism and peace. Here, we will discuss the imagination of history and peace presented by the new Israeli historians and hopefully in the process question central issues for peace education.
Palestinian history came gradually into being influenced by dawning Arab nationalism and political secularism, but it only achieved its master-plot in the meeting with the Zionist colonization of Palestine from 1882 onwards. This plot evolved around traditional nationalist premises such the organic bond between people and land since time immemorial and the external threat to this natural organization in the shape of the Zionists. In the course of the struggle against the Zionists, Palestinian nationalism furthermore developed a variation of anti-colonialism, which was integrated in the wider ideology of Palestinian nationhood. Most recently, Islamism has provided the clearest and most powerful historical presentation of Palestinian nationhood with a force that has marginalized the Che Guevara-Fidel Castro anti-colonialism of the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the Islamist universe of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizballah is the readiest alternative Utopia. Its Palestinian history begins with Muhammad’s heavenly journey from Jerusalem and reaches a high point with Salah ad-Din’s victories over the crusaders in 12th century. Historical events are in the Islamist universe interpreted within an explicitly cosmological frame that installs essential qualities and attributes to collectives. These are in principle unchangeable. Islamist history installs a certain social order in which categories and spaces define the qualities of the people and things. This Palestinian history is even more militant than the redemptive anti-colonialism of the Palestinian left and its effect as war education is all-inclusive.

In fact, historical imagination is based on the possibilities and conditions of a social domain at the same time as a historical imagination works for the stabilization and conservation of a social order. Experience and the educational apparatuses that give the rules of interpretation provide the time-space parameters, historical reality, and an interpretive frame for individual and collective experiences for this imagination. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, the historical realities on both “sides” mobilize against the Other as a collective subject.

On the other hand, Zionist history also came into being influenced by European nationalism and political secularism in the versions derived from both Herzl and Ahad Ha’am. The latter’s Zionism was based on ideas of Jewish self-creation and the generation of a modern Jewish Bildung, while Herzl’s Zionism was an imitation of European colonialism and heavily imbued with utopian optimism. In Palestine, settlement and conflict generated a new ideology suited for the task of building pure, ethnic colonies under harsh and hostile conditions, namely that of Labour-
Zionism. The historical imagination of Labour-Zionism was committed to a two-way struggle, namely against the Palestinians and against alternative Jewish histories with the objective of realizing universalistic Jewish nationhood in Palestine. The Labour-Zionist project was basically a colonization project committed to a normalization of Jewish history and identity by European parameters. In Palestine, the native inhabitants were external to the perimeter of normalization and Zionism’s primary quest was the eradication of Jewish difference. The natives, Palestinians, were not part of the educational project of Zionism and they were not to be eradicated but to be excluded from any ideas of Jewish community. Only parts of the Left have had an ideology of normalization of the Palestinians.

When we conceive of both Zionist and Palestinian history as a vital part of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, history ceases to be part of the solution to or ending of the conflict and instead it becomes part of the problem. Nevertheless, history is inevitable in as much as there are no identities without history; no Israelis or Palestinians. Peace education understood as educational programmes that work towards the ending of violent conflict and the establishment of constructive relations between people cannot avoid working with history, and it cannot avoid being part of a conflict either. History and peace are both normative and normalizing concepts. Furthermore, the concepts of history and peace are intimately related because either history entails a teleology which has utopian peace at its beginning or end, or history identifies what is peace and conflict through a process of identification and a narrative structure. Peace becomes a normative and normalizing concept through being positively defined by history. We learn through history books that peace first and foremost means the absence of war between states or larger ethnic, national or religious collectives and secondly that is means stability.

History and its problems – a Nietzschean perspective

One of the central problems of history when related to peace education is the problem of alternative history. In both large scale and small scale conflicts, the conditions of conflict, war or general animosity depend on two or more different versions, different histories, that create the historical and social maps that set collectives against each other. Peace education is supposed to replace the hitherto existing education, the most often nationalistic or religious histories of the parties involved in conflict, such as the education of Israelis and the education of Palestinians. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, peace education and alternative history is most often offered and advocated by leftist peace groups and local or international NGOs interested in rights, reconciliation, pacifism,
aid, refugees or international understanding. Most have noble agendas but they pose a challenge the very idea of peace education. The fact is that, in the Israeli-Palestinian context, the histories offered as peace education by leftist groups and most NGOs are not even alternative but variations of the history of the Palestinians. The Israelis have to recognize the truth and the Palestinians have to enter history in the meaning of imposing a new order and this means for Israelis and Palestinians to embark on a journey towards peace by means of a concept of historical justice. This is in fact a teleology not significantly different from the one inherent to Zionist historical imagination. Alternative history is in this regard only a replacement, the same history only with new names. To grasp this dimension of history, we can look to Nietzsche’s reflections over history, which in the context of peace education and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are as untimely as they were in the 1870s.

Nietzsche’s Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben (1874) has a basic concern which is highly relevant for peace education and that is its questioning of the worth of history for Life. History is in this work by Nietzsche set against unregulated, creational life as a burden. Historical knowledge and historical Bildung can simply restrict the present and hinder the possibilities to come if studied in it self and for mere knowledge of phenomena. Nietzsche’s agenda is to evaluate history’s usefulness for Life; that is to release history from historicism and begin to consider history as an educational and pedagogical work. This is by no means an unhistorical agenda but an agenda by which history cannot provide us with any answers but possibilities instead, and for this to come to effect we have to recognize history as an ideology and a rhetorical strategy before we recognize it as knowledge. Nietzsche installs a new hierarchy in which Life, Action and Interpretation are at the top and history belongs to lower orders measured by their utility for the top of the hierarchy. Thus, history becomes much more than knowledge and we can divide it into three dimensions namely an educational, a philosophical, and a political and in this respect it is particularly important to notice that history is not in any of the dimensions external to the present.

Nietzsche invents the well-known distinction between monumental history, antiquarian history and critical history in order to point to the different functions of history when perceived as being for the service of Life and the present. Monumental history is for greatness in the modern sense, for the Napoleons, revolutionaries and modernizers of this world, while antiquarian history is a modest enterprise in the service of the local, the familiar and for the historization of such identities. Critical history in the Nietzschean sense judges the past and criticizes historical mistakes and wrongdoings in order to create a different past. This is a very dangerous form of
history because its purpose is to destroy something which is deemed an unjust existence by a present desire, a present life force. The judgement and destruction of a past is dangerous because its goal is to raise us over our history; we are still the results of the mistakes, incidents and even crimes of the past but with critical history we hope to *a posteriori* give ourselves a different past; to kill the history of the present. For Nietzsche there is a great risk that such an endeavour leads to weakness and thus the best outcome we can hope for with critical history would be a struggle between history as the basic condition of our being, on the one hand, and the problems of recognizing this tragedy on the other. Still, Nietzsche finds critical history necessary because humans need from time to time to destroy the past for the sake of freedom but the primary danger of such an endeavour lies in the possibility of lack of recognition of the history of the present. To our purposes here, Nietzsche’s understanding of critical history is very illuminating for a fresh view on the strong tradition of critical history of Israel and Zionism. It must be stressed that this tradition of historical literature understands itself as being in the interests of people, freedom and peace, to which we will return. In his perspective on critical history, Nietzsche touches upon the idea of power as a constructive force which is something that critical historians generally neglect. For the purpose of Life, the forms of history should be applied in a proper diet. A proper diet will heal the historical illness that prevents change in the present. Peace education is maybe more than anything about the possibility of change; the possibility of politics for Life before History, God and Truth.

It might be that it is not entirely accurate to speak of a historical illness today in comparison to the times of Nietzsche but when we consider conflicts that exceed constructive antagonism and turn into bloodshed and destruction, we often, as in the context of Israelis and Palestinians, find a huge interest in history, historical monuments, museums, historical symbols and historical and cosmological rhetoric in politics. History is not a banal, civil and antiquarian interest in such contexts, it represents a deadly competition in which victory is destruction. In this regard, we should not at all dismiss academic and in particular not critical history, as we have seen. The most efficient producer of historical knowledge will define the regime of truth that can de-legitimize the history of the Other. In conflicts, historical literature often de-legitimizes the experiences of people by discovering or simply by re-writing history in order to find out what their history is really about. Zionist and Israeli historical literature has in this way belittled, ignored or outright refuted the Palestinian refugee problem, Palestinian history and national identity while Palestinian historiography has tried to “falsify” Zionism, ignore or belittle the Holocaust and deny any morality of Zionists and Israelis. In these kinds of histories the past is moralized, judged and
indirectly re-created to destroy the Other as part of an existing existential conflict. What is within the hegemony of a regime of truth is commonsensical, logical and natural while what is its Other, its reference to Otherness, is constructed and ideological in the meaning of being against the natural configuration of things. In this respect, it is in the interest of the prevailing regime to be intensely historical, historicist, while reformists and revolutionaries need to serve history according to a different diet. In particular in times of crisis or change history will gain in importance to answer to the threat against the self-evident (the regime) and the regime will re-produce the same self-evidence in new forms of self-evident histories and self-evident social orders. In the Nietzschean hierarchy history must remain an educational and philosophical rhetoric and discourse that have no intrinsic purpose apart from mobilization of the present. The discussion is then about what kind of mobilization and directed at what – the individual or the collective, *bildung* or collective political action.

Nietzsche also operates with another triple distinction between the historical, the unhistorical and the overhistorical as well a distinction between history and forgetting. The relevant issue to the second distinction is that peace is based on the premise of forgetting. Nietzsche considers people’s longing for happiness and simplicity as envy of the presentness and happiness of an animal. To even hope for such stability, tranquillity and happiness implies forgetting. This is obviously a grand Tragedy as we cannot forget ourselves and at the same time we long for forgetting and for symbiosis with the moment. We can equal Nietzsche’s happiness to extra-historical, utopian peace. The triple distinction between the historical, the unhistorical and the overhistorical is also tragic in as much as it is an impossible distinction because nothing is extra-historical apart, maybe, from suffering, hope and longing. We cannot really know and the content of suffering, hope and longing is very historical indeed which makes it impossible to find a transcendental politico-social solution to suffering, hope and longing. If we really want to take peace seriously, a very critical approach to the idea of utopia is required. We can, though, use Nietzsche’s distinction to speculate over the consequences of the three realms within the Nietzschean worldview. We have discussed the historical as an illness that burdens people and causes conflicts and the unhistorical is the living-in-the-moment of the animal, the life of the *eventum tantum* (forgetting). The idea of the overhistorical is, in opposition to both the other distinctions, the installation of eternity in history in the form of art. The overhistorical in the shape of art is the aesthetic or ethical cancellation of historicity through controlling people’s desire for knowledge. Art fosters emotions, longing, hope, love and hate and controls cultural forms, shapes,
while philosophy, understood as *Bildung* not epistemology, controls the desire for knowledge that threatens to destroy culture and Life. In other words, Nietzsche seeks to change the role of philosophy from knowledge into art-poetry-*Bildung* that deals with matters for and of Life and thereby controls history and knowledge. The consequence of this perspective is not that philosophy is in fact overhistorical but the consequence is a change of hierarchy. Without being itself metaphysical, philosophy is placed in a position in the hierarchy as though it refers to something fundamental in the meaning of overhistorical, which in a sense it does, namely the human being as our final category.\textsuperscript{14}

The brutality and destructiveness of knowledge, history, efficiency, and economic rationality in social organisations towards the individual in herself and as an individual in relation to a human culture in opposition to a rational, profitable, organisation of ants is in the Nietzschean perspective the major threat against Life, Change and Politics. The problems of history identified by Nietzsche are philosophical and educational problems, they are not problems related to the proper understanding of the past or its correct representation. These problems and the Nietzschean claim that history is an educational and philosophical work in the present are intimately related to, and reveal, the problems facing peace education. Furthermore, we must acknowledge that the consequences of the new place of realism and representation below education (pedagogy) and philosophy (interpretation) in the hierarchy of the human and social sciences are highly, and overtly, political. In the Nietzschean vocabulary, each situation requires a diagnosis which results in a diet which means a proper balance of styles, rhetoric, and forms of history and narratives of identity suited for the possibility of an alternative peaceful order, the vision of hope, the vision of change. Truth and Representation oppose the prerogative of Life. This does not mean at any rate that histories and narratives of identities and experiences stop holding prime value as facts, examples, suffering, greatness, love and home but it means that we need to read them differently.

Peace education in the versions deriving from Johan Galtung as a type of idealistic international relations studies with a heavy focus on how the world ought to be for all people to live in peace and safety in line with the universal declaration of human rights does not really address the basic questions of how to define peace, peace education, peace culture and most importantly how to transcend or acknowledge educational, political and symbolic violence. The un-historical moment, the all-absorbing moment, is peace and it is the only moment which will not give rise to an opposition because it is individual, a state of mind, but at the same time contextual. That is the condition of historicity and at the same time the tragedy of the concept of peace. It is something we
know as a longing within ourselves. If we turn it in to a programme, a religion, or an ideology, we can no longer consider it peace education in a radical sense of the concept.

The New Israeli Historians and Peace Education

We will now shortly evaluate the new Israeli historians as peace education. The new Israeli historians, Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé and Avi Shlaim, have all claimed that their work is both truth-work in the meaning of revealing the reality of the history of the 1948 war, Zionism and Israeli-Palestinian relations and peace-work in the meaning of a rebellion against Israeli-Zionist normalizing education most directly in the shape of Zionist historiography. In the new history as well as in the overwhelming majority of analysis and commentaries of the new history, Zionist historiography is considered flawed and ideological by positivists and empiricists and a mobilization programme, a War Machine, by postmodernists. Zionist historiography, sociology, and literary criticism have been criticized, legitimately we should add, along the same vein for being un-reflexively part and parcel of the social domain it claims to re-present. The new historians and other critical scholars addressed this relation between the social domain and the representations it produced under the hegemonic Zionist regime, but few made an effort to genuinely reflect over the social domain that has produced the crisis in Zionism that allowed their own positions to flourish.

Even more, we lack reflections over what the basic differences are between the Zionist regime and the “critical”, if there are any. In this respect, we also address the issue of peace education in relation to which exactly the same problematic arises: We, the critical peace loving scholars in the Israeli-Palestinian context, are by and large in favour of the new history and we use it as the commonsensical history of Zionism, Israel and the suppression of the Palestinians because we find it either “truer” (truth claim), “better” (political-ethical judgement), or more “beautiful” (aesthetical judgement), or most likely a combination. But we have no absolute way of knowing this and thus we become as educators instrumental to the installation of a new historical regime and new violences.

There is no doubt that the new historians have radically changed key aspects of commonsensical historical knowledge in Israel not only by means of presenting new facts for students at the universities and the relatively few lay readers of academic history, but primarily through a new type of critical discourse that gained momentum from the organic crisis in Zionism known as post-Zionism. The archival discoveries of the new historians gave us new insights into the details of the 1948 war in particular, but also on the diplomatic struggles in international politics.
and the UN and not the least on Arab-Zionist relations. This knowledge went into alliance with a Leftist and critical discourse through which it was used primarily to pass judgement on Zionism and the policies of Israel and to a lesser degree it was used to mobilize empathy and sympathy with Palestinian suffering. The relation between the new historians and their works and a leftist position is not a necessary one in as much as the findings of the new historians easily can be integrated in a Revisionist historical imagination, which the recent interviews with Benny Morris have shown. What we need to look at, though, when concerned with peace education and social analysis in general is the edifice and constructivism of the new history. Which purposes, ideologies, and violences do the new history and critical discourse serve? Have the function, reception and perception of history in the social domain changed, or do we find the perpetuation of the Same under a new ideological umbrella? The new historians and their works are indeed central in this regard because it is the historical imagination as both an emotional experience and as a realistically conceived past-present-future relation that, firstly, is central to our sense of belonging and togetherness and, secondly, to our ability to envision change. These aspects of history come very clear when we consider the vitality of the new history in the public debates in Israel and Jewish environments in Europe and the USA. In this respect, the works of the new historians and in particular the academic and public debates over them are closely related to the era of the peace process in the 1990s.

The major change that the new historians brought into the history of Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a change in the character of the proper time-space of Zionist-Jewish history. Morris, Pappé and Shlaim placed Zionist and Israeli history in a Palestinian context beginning about the year 1900. In defining the relevant time-space parameters of Zionist and Israeli history, we at the same time define what events are relevant for the narration and evaluation in general and we, furthermore, define which events are external to the “real” context and which are internal and thus part of the context. In such a way, an intruding population and an autochthonous population are defined, respectively. In the new history, Palestine is Palestinian and the Zionist movement is a European colonization movement. We find in the new history no sense of togetherness with the Zionist-Israeli experience but rather a sense of togetherness with a globalized, cosmopolitan, intellectual audience with sympathies for the suppressed peoples of the world. Such a problem-oriented and/or ironic style of historical discourse can be part of a history and a social domain and actively engage in it without in any way representing or vouching for this history and social domain. This is indeed the case with the new historians but also critical sociologists and other
academics involved in the critical debate in Israel in the 1990s. The not only critical but also ironical distance to the history of Zionism as a history that previously explained itself as something it in reality was not is indicative for changing discourses of legitimization influenced by the process of globalization. The historical imagination enframing the historical discourse of the new historians is not nationalist, rather it is post-nationalist both fed by and feeding a cultural dimension of globalization. This is in opposition to the Zionist historiography which considered itself internal to its own histories in the meaning of engaging in a commonsensical, though not uncritical, relationship with the established facts and imaginations of Zionist-Jewish history.¹⁹

Eretz Israel is in the new history effectively replaced by Palestine. This is surely not only a terminological shift caused by political correctness but it implies the giving of a name to correspond to a collective in the way that Am Israel and Eretz Israel are terms in correspondence. Palestine was never a state inhabited by Palestinians and Eretz Israel was never a state inhabited by Israelis but nevertheless the discourses of loss (suffering) and repossession (utopia) are figured in completely realist terms as though our contextualizations and namings are in correspondence with the Real or Truth. Palestine becomes in the new history not only a name for a territory but also a defined social domain which is the context and starting point of Zionist and Israeli history’s engagement in practical and political change. Zionism becomes characterized by its effect on a presumably existing social domain of Palestine-Palestinians and judged by its efficiency, organisation, education, culture and political heritage.²⁰ Accordingly, Zionism is in the new history re-conceptualized as a European colonization movement that conquered a foreign territory by means of superior political organisation, mobilization and superior technology. In the definition of Gershon Shafir, Zionism is a colonization movement because it took foreign territory into possession by means of a colonization strategy and it replaced and controlled the natives by means of force.²¹ While we in general can agree with this definition, which is directly supported by the historical presentations of the new historians, we must also acknowledge that it is in opposition to aims and claims of Zionism as a European enlightened movement for the re-education and rescue of the Jews in a European 19th century context. Zionism was also a cosmopolitan, humanist, romantic, reaction to European nationalism and ethnocentrism driven by hope and the longing for freedom. In opposition to Zionist history, the new historians totally neglect this dimension of Zionism in their presentations of Zionist and Israeli history because the focus is on the effect of Zionism on Palestine-Palestinians.²²
The three major changes in the historical perception of Zionism and Israel after the new historians are firstly the issue of strength, secondly the issue of the expulsion of the Palestinians, and thirdly the Zionist relationship towards the Arab world. According to the new historians, the Zionists were stronger than the Palestinians and their Arab allies and they forcibly expelled hundreds of thousand Palestinians from their homes.23 Furthermore, the Zionists were not surrounded by a united enemy unwilling to negotiate. The Arab states were divided among each other and were actually on several occasions quite willing to compromise but this was rejected by the Zionist leadership.24 These issues have always been key points in the history of Zionism and Israel because when reversed from the above, they showed how the Zionists had no choice and it enabled the argument that the Zionists were peace loving but the Arabs were aggressive. The changes installed by the new historians combined with the changed time-space indicate a revolution in the historical discourse of Zionism and Israel. As previously mentioned, the Left and critical intellectuals and academics have more or less adopted the history of the new historians as the commonsensical historical background for their own ideological or academic positions.25 These groups in 1990s labelled with the term post-Zionists are generally speaking concerned with, and consider themselves avant-garde to, a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians. The capacity to achieve this challenging end is grounded in the critical perspective on Zionism and Israel and sympathy for the history of Palestinian suffering. As such, the histories of the new historians propose themselves not only as the real histories of Zionism and Israel but also as peace education. For our purposes here, the important questions are concerned with the role of history in peace education and accordingly the contribution of the new historians to Israeli-Palestinian peace education.

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Education

It is difficult to speak of peace education without discussing a specific context. Peace education has no theoretically established foundation but is inspired from many places.26 The idealistic international relations studies of the tradition of Johan Galtung combined with progressive education, democratization, multiculturalism, non-violence, the UN, and various NGO-type projects concerned with local living together or acknowledging the story of the Other together form discourses of peace education. Within these educational and philosophical discourses there is not much philosophical reflection as to what peace and education are as concepts but these discourses mostly agree commonsensically about human rights, equality, domestic and international justice.
and accordingly truth. As such, they are imbued with ideologies of what is good, what is justice etc. and in order to define such concepts in practical circumstances, history becomes important. The commitment to justice of peace education places a heavy burden on historical representation as a judge and on power as the primary indication of guilt. A complete commitment to domestic and international justice renders the very existence of the state of Israel as an ethnocentric Jewish state problematic when grounded in the conception of Zionism and Israel as a result of colonialism (the new history), but is this a contribution to peace education? If we wish to conceive of justice as a contribution to peace education, we have to consider Palestinian ethnocentrism and wishes to transform Israel into Palestine as equally problematic. We are left with a situation of un-decidability when committed to justice and no historical, realist and representationalist, discourse can resolve this situation.

Gavriel Solomon argues that in cases such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the best peace education can do is to change the individual’s perception of the other’s collective narrative, as seen from the other’s point of view.\textsuperscript{27} The changes of the perception of the collective narrative of the others then have a number of related goals such as legitimization of the collective narrative of the others, the critical examination of our contribution to the conflict, empathy for the suffering of the others, and engagement in non-violent activities. The emphasis on the collective has to do with a low degree of personal animosity between Israelis and Palestinians but a high degree of collective animosity and structural violence. Solomon thereby argues that history, or collective narrative, is of crucial importance. Peace is about accepting the history of the other as being part of a different collective narrative than one self and to relate this awareness to non-violent conflict resolution. The emphasis on collective memory refers the idea that Israelis and Palestinians belong to a collective memory as their respective senses of we-identity, and that these collective narratives are by Israelis and Palestinians considered realistic. This perspective is quite representative of Israeli-Palestinian peace education and it raises several problems. Firstly, the uncritical perspective on history and memory fails to point to history as part of the problem and to collective memory as education representing an ideology. Secondly, the perspective on collective memory disregards the individual and her experiences because it stipulates a correspondence relationship between individual and collective but this relationship is much more complicated than that. We can as individuals live estranged from our social domain without being excluded from it and accordingly experience the memory education of our we-group as a violent effect on oneself before the Other.
Ruth Firer also touches upon some of the central issues when she discusses war education versus peace education and in this regard questions the clarity of this distinction.Obviously, the distinction between war education and peace education is based on a commonsensical and more or less intuitive knowledge. Peace education is simply and generally considered good but nevertheless millions of pupils and students around the world are everyday influenced by war education. War education is according to Firer based on a war culture that forces individuals to live and learn after war-like criteria; something which is not only limited to dictatorial regimes but also European and American democracies. Peace education is the opposite, namely a type of education developing in a relationship to a peace culture. To Firer, war education and culture is characterized by aggression while peace education and peace culture is characterized by negotiation. But how is a peace culture to come about? By means of power (how else, we should add). Firer writes: ‘Whenever a characterization is needed, however, the strongest typologies of a given society, against the background of the real situation it faces determine the nature of the culture. Therefore, it is legitimate to speak about theoretical holistic cultures, wherein a particular context dominates and determines, for the most part, the collective and individual lives of the nation’. Peace education has to be part of a holistic culture of peace, a dominating context, that can provide the social domain with strong typologies and thereby enact a hegemony of peace replacing the existing war culture.

In contexts such as the Israeli-Palestinian, the dominance of goodness begins with what is in peace research often called “negative peace”. Negative peace is an opportunity to install a new curriculum, new political discourses and new media discourses and thereby facilitate the dominance of peace culture. In order to sustain and reproduce peace culture new narratives has to be produced by the educational and political authorities. In the new narratives, there are different heroes than in war education. Dichotomies are reversed so that the powerful makes peace while the weak wins wars. Peace must be as appealing and exiting as war. This perspective is in most aspects in complete concordance with the mission of the institution of the United Nations and it holds Human Rights as the central aspect of peace education. We can say that Firer’s perspective holds the commonsensical ideas of peace to be universally and absolutely true, while she recognizes the giving of education as being the prerogative of the strong. Accordingly, the strong has to be good and install a hegemony of peace. From our perspective, Firer’s ideas are highly problematic for a number of reasons the two most important being the lack of reflection over the concept of peace and
the lack of reflection over the concept of education. History education is also in this perspective important because it is supposed to provide the narrations to reproduce a peace culture.

Israeli-Palestinian peace education is highly focused on history on a more or less commonsensical level. It focuses on either the recognition of the collective memory of the Other, avoiding the distinction between history and memory, or on installing a new educational regime that can produce the proper historical narratives which will sustain the peace regime. Peace is not itself considered something other than the work of the educational technologies in the same way that history is not considered anything but a tool to install and preserve a peace regime. Thus, war education and peace education are both grounded in a similar concept of education and historical representation as a vital part of it, and not in opposition to violence but by means of violence.

History and Peace Education

In the Israeli-Palestinian context, and indeed in general, history is a highly significant means by which to create identities, realities and enframe experiences in a larger structure of meaning that at the same time serve to struggle against the Other and alternative possibilities. Every identity, name, conflict and idea of peace is historical in as much as it is made possible by a social domain as a precondition. In this sense, there is no essentials to identities and things, no real origins, but on the level of the individual there are experiences that are inscribed in such a way that they form a poetic; a limiting of possible interpretation. Thus, history is not only a technology installed by the regime and its representatives, or its opposition it is also the relations to which we owe our identities without the possibility of escape. Histories and memories are a great resource for action of both a preservative kind and a revolutionary kind and for the possibility of criticism. The main reason for Israeli and Palestinian history’s instrumentalization in the service of destruction of the legitimacy of the Other is history’s dominant realist and representationalist style which operates in a dialectic with the discourses of the official apparatuses of securing the state, its institutions and its togetherness. Peace education conceived of as a regime of peace or goodness does not pose an alternative to the instrumentalization of history or questions history’s modern prerogative for defining the real.

The perspective on history deriving from Nietzsche can assist in lifting us above both the conventional historical realism and representationalism and the soft postmodernist perspective on collective memory. The concern of peace education could be explained as the concern for Life before History, Religion, or Ideology, which would implicate a perpetual critical perspective also on
the ideologies of good, utopia, human rights, peace, democratization and their historical justifications, and such a concern would thus pose a serious challenge to many of the current discourses of peace education. History must be regarded as within the contemporary social domain instead of without. This does not weaken the power of history, its relevance or commonsensical qualities, by no means, but it installs an order that considers interpretation on a higher level taxonomically. Historical facts and historical structures, developments and processes are interpretations because they are installed as facts, structures and processes. Peace education must not be about installing Truth through colonizing antagonisms with an ideology or a Utopia of goodness and peacefulness. The challenge facing Peace Education then becomes to give up the definitions of peace and instead embark on a practical-philosophical course.

History belongs to a field of action, where these actions install facts that produce the boundaries of our social domains. Most often the role of history is that of the judge, or a point of observation which is external to discourse to which we can refer for truth. Projects such as dialogue groups, bridging the narratives projects, recognizing the Other projects are within the current discourses of peace education too often correctional installations which seek in a Socratic manner to expose the truthful recognition. Such a process is in serious danger of becoming a process of production of the Same instead of a process that works to allow difference, respect and at the top of the taxonomy interpretation. The concrete human experience in general and the human experiences that in the course of time constitute histories cannot be formalised into History in itself or History as it really is but are always cases that are exemplary. The exemplary case may be seen as an offer/invitation of/to a poetic; a non-formalised, practical-poetic-philosophical understanding which constitutes a presentation. To actively engage in listening to individual or collective self-presentation, to read histories, write histories or to be a peace worker, or many other efforts, is to be part of a social encounter that does not make “peace” but enables new conception and interpretation.

The new Israeli historians have made an important contribution to the possibility of change in the Israeli-Palestinian context and their historical presentation worked in a given historical moment against a particular ideological instrumentalization of history. In the 1990s, the new historians presented the Nietzschean critical history intended to judge and kill the past in the shape of the monumental and antiquarian Zionist historiography. It is dangerous to kill the past because it includes the risk of neglecting the history of the present but precisely therefore it enables change or at least the possibility thereof. The new historians did not contribute with histories that
considered the questions of reality, representation or truth any different than the “old” historians in their works. Therefore, we cannot in a linear way consider the new historians’ work for peace education. Their works are no longer only critical but they are monumental to the collective self-conception of large segments of Israeli and Palestinians. The new historians’ works, and Zionist historiography, should be asked the same questions and viewed with equal criticism if the possibilities of Life as peace education are our concern. Peace education ought to focus on the individual and her potential for recognising violence including educational violence and securing her possibility to be estranged to her own collective and view with suspicion any representationalist history.

It remains and will remain difficult to speak of peace education but we can speak of and develop practices in philosophy, history, and education aimed at individual bildung and resistance, which can be implemented in all kinds of social analysis. But we, the critical peace loving scholars, can only aim at this from a permanent resistance position never accepting reality and common sense. The philosophical-practical perspective can state that peace education should not be enacted as it is thought philosophically, but thought over philosophically as it is enacted which is inspired by Nietzsche’s questions: ‘What actually is it I am doing? And what is it especially that I want to do with it. This is the question of truth’. 33

History and collective memory are effective educational and organisational discursive technologies that create order and secure efficiency through knowledge and identification and if we want people, conflicting parties, students etc. to differentiate between peace in the meaning of absence of overt violence and stability, on the one hand, and the transcending of one’s own instrumentalization and historicity on the other, then interpretation, the philosophical-practical work and hierarchy change derived from Nietzsche seems to be a promising starting point for further reflection on the im-possibilities of peace education.
Notes

2 See Pappé’s numerous newspaper commentaries, articles in leftist magazines, and his involvement in bridging the narratives projects.
3 Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993; Irving Jensen, 2002
5 We will return to the concept of war education.
6 Ahad Ha’am, 1937; Herzl 1960, 1972.
7 Sternhell, 1998.
8 For instance long time peace activist Uri Avneri and his Gush Shalom but also groups inspired by Jonathan Ratosh and his Hebrew nativism.
10 This order is most often accompanied by other equally important orders such as religious, ethnic, social and economic orders which nuance the character of conflict.
12 Nietzsche elaborates on the possibilities of the three forms of history in chapter 2 and 3. Nietzsche, 1994 [1874].
13 A problematic distinction because recognition and knowledge are also historical. Our understandings and interpretations can never be outside historicity. In this early work, Nietzsche is not entirely clear on the condition of historicity in principle.
14 The human being is not in itself but remains perpetually created in relations and actions. We cannot think the human being without a social domain, action and violence which is a solid argument for placing reflection/interpretation at the top of the hierarchy over reality, representation and truth.
15 These claims have been made in the introductions to their works, in the media and at numerous public meetings. Morris’ articles in Tikun Magazine and Ha’aretz in 1987-88 started the debates over the new historians. In Tikun Magazine Morris wrote that the new history was important for purposes of peace. Morris, 1988. Morris has since then severed his connection to the “peace camp” by embarking on a completely different line of argument when he in Ha’aretz on 06-01-04 stated that had all the Palestinians been expelled, there would have been peace in the region today.
16 Uri Ram’s The Globalization of Israel. McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem is one of the significant exceptions. Such descriptions of a changing social domain and its new discourses and conceptualizations provide us with the opportunity to think the new positions and critical discourses as being a part of an order instead of outside an order. Ram 2005.
17 The new historians are mainly controversial for a Labour position which has something to do with the republicanism and civil values of the Labour movement. The peace, justice and morality incorporative ethos of the Labour movement cannot integrate the violations of Zionism and the 1948 war when these violations are not part of a larger human Comedy in the meaning of evils inflicted by History on the path to redemption/rebirth. In the discourses of the new historians, the violations inflicted by Zionism and Zionists are not presented in such a way.
18 This problematic is among Nietzsche’s central philosophical concerns.
19 In my opinion most traditional, representationalist, historical scholarship considers itself internal to its histories in a commonsensical way. In particular, this counts for the strong European tradition of nationalist historical scholarship in which Zionist historical scholarship must be included. See e.g. Myers, 1995.
20 These parameters are, paradoxically, most evident in Morris’ The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem (1987) in which they explain the success of the Yishuv in winning most of Palestine during the war of 1948.
21 Shafir, 1996.
22 Author Amos Oz’ recent autobiographical Between Love and Darkness is more or less driven by such a paradox. Oz very movingly describes the humanist, peace-loving, cosmopolitan intellectuals gathering more or less involuntary in Jerusalem from app. 1900 until 1939. In Oz’ presentation these people, the writers, philosophers, scholars, loved Eretz Israel but they dreamt of and longed for Europe. They were not colonizers, they were misplaced people filled with pain, loss and nostalgia. Surely, this was only one segment of the Jewish population of Palestine but the story told by Oz illustrates how the different trajectories of Zionist history create different moral meanings to the story of Zionism and Israel. Oz, 2005.
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