**National Education: The Annual Field Trip
as an Instrument of National Education in Israel’s State Education System, 2008–2020**

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Introduction

. . . To educate the complete Hebrew, it is not enough for us to open the wellspring of the spirit of Israel to him. Rather, it is our task to bring him into direct contact with the nature of our land, blessed with sights to see. Be aware that love of homeland is acquired by experiencing the tribulations of wandering and moving about along the byways, and the more the individual travels, the more passion for the homeland will strike root in his soul. . . .[[1]](#footnote-1)

With these words, the travel guides Pinhas Cohen and David Benvenisti prefaced their guide to Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel), published in the late 1930s. In their view, one way to build a new society grounded in Zionist narratives and to nurture Jews’ connection with their land is to take them on field trips around the country. In fact, in the various education settings established in the country in the dawn of modern Jewish settlement in the 1880s, from preschools up to primary schools in towns and villages, through high schools, and up to the teachers’ seminar, the field trip became a conspicuous educational feature in the curriculum.[[2]](#footnote-2) The religious model of pilgrimage was consciously avoided in these trips, with the outings having no specific sanctified destination and no connection with any system of religious belief. Instead, they were dominated by thinking about nature and education in an intellectual/rationalistic manner, similar to European thought about tourist travel at this time, centering on modern scientific observation and also, to some extent, entertainment and attention to children’s need to head into the open air. As the Zionist project in Eretz Israel expanded and the existential struggles of the Yishuv (the organised pre-independence Jewish community) against the British and the Arab population multiplied, so did the landscape become charged with more and more national significance. The Yishuv leadership saw outings around the country and direct acquaintance with its landscapes as an important educational tool for promoting Zionist ideology, enhancing national consciousness, and promoting independent Jewish sovereignty in the country. By implication, beyond their pedagogical goals, these outings had an emphasis on the national aspect that combined proud national defiance in the sense of ‘We’re here despite it all!’[[3]](#footnote-3)

After statehood was attained, field trips continued to figure prominently in defining the way space fit into patterns of symbolic memory. Many perceived them as proof of ownership of the place, and the individual’s physical struggle with the hardships of the journey were seen as equivalent to the national struggle to gain control of the country.[[4]](#footnote-4) From the institutional standpoint, even in the first stages of the country’s education system, there was a need to anchor the guidelines and the way the country should be explored in rules and regulations that appeared and were occasionally updated in instructions from the Director General for Field Trips at the Ministry of Education.[[5]](#footnote-5) Over the years, the Director General’s instructions went out of their way to emphasise the nature of the field trip as a value-centric and meaningful activity associated with the values and goals of the national education system.[[6]](#footnote-6) In 2004, however, the Israel State Comptroller published a sharp critique of field trips in the education system, pointing to defects and vagueness about the guidelines and the conduct of the trips[[7]](#footnote-7) and stressing, *inter alia,* the opacity and the flawed attention to the pedagogical aspect of the trip.[[8]](#footnote-8) Pursuant to the report, the State Control Committee of the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) convened in order to formalise and fine-tune the rules and regulations pertaining to these outings.[[9]](#footnote-9) In 2008, in accordance with the committee’s conclusions and guidelines, the Ministry of Education published a ‘core program for field trips’ that was meant mainly to regulate the pedagogical contents of the organisation and conduct of field trips in the education system.[[10]](#footnote-10) Among the principal goals, as stated at the beginning of the program, the field trips are intended to ‘acquaint [students] with and love of the homeland, and to cultivate a commitment to and responsibility for Eretz Israel, its landscape, nature, and human society, and the State of Israel’. Emphasis was given to attaining the national objectives of the field trip by ‘reinforcing national consciousness in connection with the history and legacy of the [Jewish] people in the Land of Israel’.[[11]](#footnote-11)

According to the nationalism scholar Hedva Ben-Israel, research that links education and nationalism should also examine the strategies by which national ideas were mobilised in order to instill national narratives among those participating in the field trips.[[12]](#footnote-12) Drawing on her approach, the purpose of the article that follows is to assess the way the annual high-school field trip in Israel’s State education system is used to inculcate national narratives that, according to Ministry of Education leadership, help to create national identity among the students. We conducted this inquiry by analysing a variety of sources: school field-trip programs,[[13]](#footnote-13) school correspondence and documents relating to annual field trips,[[14]](#footnote-14) and interviews with field trip coordinators in selected schools.[[15]](#footnote-15) These yielded a snapshot with which we could analyse the goals and culture of the schools’ field trips.

To choose the schools, we the Be-mabat rahav (From a Broad Perspective) database. The information in this database is grounded in an educational-information system developed by the Director of Digital Communication and Information Systems at the Ministry of Education.[[16]](#footnote-16) We used the database to choose recognised schools in the State (Jewish) sector in five Ministry of Education districts: North, Haifa, Center, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem.[[17]](#footnote-17) The State junior and senior high schools we sampled in this article are representative of the various districts in the State Jewish sector in accordance with population size.[[18]](#footnote-18)

To analyze the data, we selected several important six-year (7–12) schools that have had large enrollments (at least 1,000) over several years in order to harvest data that may provide information about the centrality and meaningful role of the school as a leading and formative institution in the community.[[19]](#footnote-19) Another source that we used to assess the educational atmosphere in the schools studied is the Shekifut be-hinukh (Transparency in education) database.[[20]](#footnote-20) This Ministry of Education database, operative since 2015, contains budgetary and quantitative data about the schools that we examined.

The article is divided into three main parts. In Part 1, we present the theoretical basis of the discussion and mention several studies that address the interaction of education and nationalism, collective memory, and school field trips. Part 2 presents the historical and scholarly background and deals with school field trips in Israel in years preceding the period investigated. Part 3 discusses the findings of the study on annual field trips in the State education system in 2008–2020 along two main axes. The first is a qualitative analysis of four areas of activity that we found dominant in annual field trips during the investigation period: instilling knowledge of the country’s geography, using the Bible, holding ceremonies in the course of the outing, and creating a challenging fieldtrip experience. The second is a quantitative analysis of two dimensions that we found salient: the nature of overnighting in the open and the conspicuous pedagogical content of the field trips.

National education, collective memory, and school field trips

The philosopher of education Zvi Lamm defines national education as the kind that should ‘instill in the individual an awareness and a sense of belonging to the people and the state and implant feelings that support this belonging’.[[21]](#footnote-21) The ways and means of national education include study of history, literature, and geography, and cultivation of affective responses to national symbols and heroes and the way they are used in rituals. Thus a connection with individuals’ national culture and its values is emphasised as an outgrowth of their relationship with universal values.[[22]](#footnote-22) Anthony Smith stresses the common narrative that members of a people create by investing shared symbols, myths, and memories with meaning. Only by virtue of longstanding traditions and narratives, he claims, do peoples preserve themselves and remain willing to accept the principle of their nationhood. Examples are Zionism’s use of myths such as Trumpeldor and the battle at Tel Hai and the uprising of the Sicarii zealots at Masada. Indeed, Tel Hai and Masada are two of the most popular destinations of school field trips over the years. They have historical roots and create the wish to recapture that heroism—a fundamental that became central in the shared national ethos that evolved in the modern Jewish settlement project in Eretz Israel.[[23]](#footnote-23) In keeping with this outlook, one may argue that the annual field trips serve the goal of territorializing memory—a process in which certain places evoke a string of memories that persist intergenerationally and generate a tendency to instill narratives of persons and events in certain places and, by their means, to create strong and unique nexuses with specific geographical spaces.[[24]](#footnote-24) If so, one may hypothesise that the sites where guidance is given and the itinerary of the field trip are mobilised for the purpose of generating ‘collective memory’ among the population, in an attempt to produce a national connection and sense of belonging to the place. The French historian Pierre Nora, whose work is of foundational importance in defining terms relating to collective memory, notes that perception of the past and collective memory mean relating to the past, in many senses, as something that persists and remains relevant in the present as well.[[25]](#footnote-25) The provinces of past memory that can be ‘revived’ by being emphasised in the present are composed of three main elements: material, functionalism, and symbols. Together they form a collective memory and concurrently, albeit at a different level, an interaction among factors that define each other. Material aspects may be archive materials; examples of functional aspects are textbooks, wills, and gatherings of soldiers [erstwhile soldiers?]. Symbolic aspects are, for example, a memorial candle, a moment of silence, or a ritual. Pursuant to Nora’s postulates, we argue that the school field trip may also create symbolic memory in the ritual of marching to the destination, receiving the contents of the guidance given, touring battlefield legacy sites, and visiting monuments help to preserve the collective social memory as a living one in the participants’ consciousness.[[26]](#footnote-26) Visits to heritage sites in annual field trips may manufacture frames of remembrance, essential means of orientation. The shared memory at these sites, created in the course of an annual field trip, shapes the group’s perception of identity and thus helps to establish an infrastructure for the desired social order.[[27]](#footnote-27)

The school field trip in Israel: The state of research

As Lamm, Smith, and Nora indicate, various actions may generate a sense of national identity and link the individual with narratives shared by a larger group. In the Israeli context, studies on the topic of school field trips deserve examination in search of a connection between identity-creating strategies and these trips as engines of change in the participants’ national identity. Two conspicuous studies deal with this intent. In the first, Ehud Prawer looked into the workings of field trip sin Eretz Israel in 1887–1918.[[28]](#footnote-28) His study focuses on three schools: Lömel in Jerusalem, Haviv in Rishon Lezion, and Herzliya Gymnasium in Tel Aviv. In his thesis, Prawer claims that present and past, Bible and geography, all converge in Eretz Israel and that young people should be educated in this fusion. His main conclusion is that a change occurred in the purpose of these outings from a scholastic goal, emphasizing the reinforcement of study of various subjects by means of learning in the course of the trip, as in geography, history, and zoology, to an educational goal centering on strengthening the connection with the people and land of Israel. Until 1907, Prawer argues, field trips focused on the learning process, the development of universal values, and a focus on space as representative of nature. From 1907 on, the trips began to concentrate on conveying knowledge about the past and nature of the space, developing national identity, and emphasising space and on nature as parts of Eretz Israel.[[29]](#footnote-29)

The second study on the linkage between modern Jewish nationalism and the characteristics of the annual field trip in the education system is by Oded Avissar, who expanded the years examined to 1947–1988 and investigated the evolution of the field trip during that time, with emphasis on the changes that occurred in the ideological, social, political, and historical goals of the trip.[[30]](#footnote-30) Avissar chose this time frame because it was then most of the entities that deal with guiding these trips were shaped, crystallised, and even institutionalised. The main purpose of the study is to look into what the changes that occurred in the guidance programs in the *yedi’at ha-aretz* (defined below) [הוספתי] field trip reflect, what impact these changes have on the intensity of the trip, and where the trips get their validity and centrality. Avissar concludes, *inter alia,* that, on the one hand, the trips were tailored in their objectives and goals to historical events and served the social and ideological norms and values of sovereign Israel in its first years. On the other hand, despite the changes and the historical and ideological upheavals that Israel has experienced since then, the main goals of the education system’s field trips in the late 1970s remained somewhat similar to those of the typical field trip in the Hebrew education system at its outset, chiefly in giving over pedagogical and scholastic contents by leading students into the outdoors.

By reviewing the literature in this field, we find that the *yedi’at ha-aretz* field trip was of immense importance in shaping national education from the very beginning of modern Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel and also in the years following the establishment of statehood.

The annual field trip since 2008: Qualitative analysis

Before an annual field trip begins, schools give students a circular that provides instructions for the outing and usually emphasises its goals and contents. To see how schools relate to the role and importance of the field trip as an instrument of national education, one has to examine the values that find expression in these documents. In a qualitative review of the national contents and narratives, we identified four salient components of the field-trip experience that serve the cause of national education in the course of these trips: attention to imparting familiarity with the country and the attainment of this goal via identification with the affective and national facet of the matter (patriotism); an attempt to create a connection between the sites visited during the trip and the Bible and events mentioned in it; holding ceremonies with national contents at selected sites during the trip; and making the trip challenging in order to amplify the emotional experience that the students undergo.

Instilling knowledge and love of the country

The expression *yedi’at ha-aretz* in the modern era[[31]](#footnote-31) was evidently coined in 1845 by Yehosef Schwarz in the preface to his book *Tevu’ot ha-aretz.*[[32]](#footnote-32) The denotation of this term, as Schwarz indicates, is that apart from getting to know the places and sites themselves, an emotional and experiential connection between the individual and the country should be established. In an attempt to link knowing the country with loving it, the nexus of the act undertaken (the field trip) and the emotion experienced (love) is emphasised.

According to Katz, when trips to outlying areas of the country became establishmentarian in the course of the Yishuv era, the attitude toward *yedi’at ha-aretz* created an intersection of knowledge and affect—between scientific facts and values and Jewish and Zionist-pioneering legends. Pictorial and literary motifs were invoked in order to assimilate the affective meanings of the landscapes of Eretz Israel.[[33]](#footnote-33) In this context, David Ben-Gurion made the following remark about the purpose of State education: ‘[…] Love of homeland is not created by preaching. A condition for love of homeland is knowing the homeland and seeking roots in the homeland. One does not know a homeland from books, from stories, but from what one sees, from unmediated familiarity [….]’.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The following survey gives examples of the way those responsible for field trips emphasised this emotional nexus of knowing the country and loving it among the participants in the trip. At Katzir School in Rehovot, the organisers of field trips inserted the following remark in all circulars preceding the trips: ‘[…] One of the main purposes of the field trip is **nurturing love of Eretz Israel and improving familiarity with it’**[[35]](#footnote-35)(authors’ boldface here and below). This objective appears clearly and prominently in the instructions ahead of the outing. The organisers wrote, in effect, that a successful field trip is one that connects the geographic and cultural facet and knowledge of this aspect with the destinations of the trip, eliciting both love and identification with the places visited. A similar statement appeared at Comprehensive School 8 in Ashdod, where the field-trip organisers wrote in all field-trip circulars: ‘[…] The annual field trip is a social experience and an opportunity to create class solidarity, enhance pupils’ fortitude, and **reinforce love of and connection with the land’.**[[36]](#footnote-36) Again the trip is seen as a way of strengthening participants’ emotional connection with (= love of) Eretz Israel, a device that the school uses to amplify their sense of belonging to their country.

The pre-outing circulars that we reviewed at Branco Weiss School (Jerusalem District) emphasise: ‘[…] This is an educational trip that is taken in order to **achieve knowledge and of love the homeland** on the basis of a learning process in school combined with study and reinforcement of central values of national belonging, independence, and group belonging’.[[37]](#footnote-37) Here an attempt is made to tether scholastic processes to emotion. The field trip is the practical manifestation of a pedagogical process that takes place in school. The author of the circular states that after the students go through a scholastic and educational process on the school premises, the field trip is a practical step in which the learning process finds expression and links awareness and pedagogy to the affective aspect of ‘love of homeland’. The organisers of the field trip define the trip as an educational measure that serves the goal of creating an intersection between geographical familiarity with the country and a heightened sense of belonging based on an emotional experience, in which the participants will learn to ‘love’ the homeland.

Reali School in Haifa has a long-standing and well-grounded legacy in the matter of field trips. It is noted for sending its students on lengthy and relatively difficult trips including overnighting outdoors, preparing meals in the open, taking difficult hikes, and spending more days in travel than the average that we examined.[[38]](#footnote-38) On its website, the school explains the importance of the field trips in its worldview: ‘By means of field trips and forays up, down, and across the country, we instill in our students the wish to get to know Israel more deeply. […] Quality field trips that include challenging hikes, sleeping in the open, and cooking on their own, deviating from ordinary comfortable life, create profound experiences that, together with exposure to the tradition and history of the People Israel in its land, **amplify the students’ familiarity with the land, the people, and the state, in the sense of belonging to them’.**[[39]](#footnote-39)This example illustrates the way the field trips should be reflected in the heightening of students’ sense of belonging. This ‘profound experience’ cannot possibly be attained without pedagogical preparation in class, intended to make students realise that it is the challenge of the effort that will lead them to the hoped-for sense of belonging. These and other examples that we reviewed suffice to illuminate the strategy of creating deliberate and clear consciousness in students and parents. The main purpose of the field trip, the school explains, is to bolster the sense of loving and belonging to Eretz Israel. The message expressly given to students even before the field trip begins is that to attain the goals of the trip, they are expected, among other things, to be thrilled by the sites and trails that they will visit and regard them all as part of the shared national narrative.

Journeying with the Bible

Connecting biblical stories with knowledge and love of Eretz Israel in the national sense is a recurrent practice that has been invoked since the very dawn of Hebrew education. The use of the Bible as a teaching accessory for description of the landscape on field trips shows the students that the soil of the homeland carries a heavy load of national experiences and emotions from bygone times that project something of their spirit onto the present day.[[40]](#footnote-40) Anita Shapira describes this outlook aptly: ‘The Second Aliyah people traversed the country with the Bible in hand and identified toponyms that are mentioned in Scripture. Their offspring adopted the assumption that the Bible is a guide to *yedi’at ha-aretz,* a guide to [the country’s] fauna and flora’.[[41]](#footnote-41) The Ministry of Education also considers it very important to make the Bible part of school field trips. In 2019, its incumbent Director General, Shmuel Abohav, addressed himself to the use of the Bible on school field trips: ‘The Bible is the Book of Books and the foundation of our people’s existence. From it we derive language and culture, laws and ethics, history and wisdom. We wish to instill the amazing values that it contains in our students. Via the motion of their legs and the vision of their eyes, we will impart to them the values of the Prophets of Israel, the Kings of Israel, and [the nation’s] great and important leaders’.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Our survey of school field-trip programs shows that the Bible and biblical events are extensively referenced in the course of the outings. The itinerary stresses various narratives and other aspects of biblical accounts. What these narratives have in common is the close relation they establish between a seminal and highly meaningful event at the site and the history of the Jewish people. At Yitzhak Rabin High School in Eilat, care is taken to note in the circulars preceding annual field trips the inclusion of **‘strengthening the [Jewish] legacy in [Israel], the Zionist legacy, nature, and the Bible’** among the pedagogical objectives.[[43]](#footnote-43)In 2019, Rabin High School went on a three-day field trip in northern Israel, titled ‘A Journey in the Footsteps of the Bible’. In the circular that preceded this excursion, students were advised that the trip would focus on biblical stories in the Carmel and Jezreel Valley areas and that they would learn about personalities whom the narratives place in the places covered by the itinerary. The Keren ha-Carmel site, to be visited during the trip, is devoted to the Prophet Elijah, his struggle against the prophets of Ba’al, and his religious devotion. There would be a stop at Ketef Shaul on Mount Gilboa, a place customarily associated with the account of the battle on that mountain, the death of King Saul, and David’s dirge. By implication, the persona of the first King of Israel and his resolve to die on his sword and not fall into the enemy’s clutches would be strongly emphasised. Both sites stress the power of Jewish national leaders who acted doggedly and bravely in their own way and for their faith.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Danziger School in Kiryat Shemona, enumerating the pedagogical goals of its field trips to Upper and Lower Galilee, emphasises objectives such as acquainting students with the Zionist legacy in Israel, the Jewish national heritage, biblical stories, and nature.[[45]](#footnote-45) The itineraries that appear on this school’s field-trip programs dovetail with these objectives. The hike up the Arbel escarpment is a case in point. The Jewish sources mention the Arbel site repeatedly and associate it with traditions concerning the redemption. Vestiges of an ancient synagogue and tombs are observable there, and it is customary to stress the account of the Jews besieged in the Arbel caves during the rebellion against Rome in the Second Temple era, their resolve and steadfastness against the Romans, and their refusal to surrender and let the enemy take them prisoner. One of the best-known tragedies attributed to the siege of Arbel is the story of an elderly Jew who refused to heed the Romans’ call for surrender, slaughtered his wife and children, and leaped off the cliff to his death.[[46]](#footnote-46) The narrative of fighting the Romans and preferring to die rather than fall into Roman captivity is familiar; it recurs in the siege of Masada (Judean Desert), the battle for Yodfat (Lower Galilee), and the Jewish settlement Gamla (Golan Heights).

Hadera Municipal High School, one of the oldest schools in that city (est. 1936), has presented the district field-trip committee, in some of the years that we examined, with a program for ninth grade that includes a three-day visit to the Judean Hills and Jerusalem. One of the goals, the organisers note, is to give students a deeper acquaintance with the Bible by providing instruction on biblical events that took place in the area. The itinerary of the field trip corresponds to its pedagogical objectives. As part of the program, students sleep overnight in a tent encampment on the Nes Harim grounds and combine a visit to Jerusalem with hikes in the Judean hills and foothills. The sites in Jerusalem include the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and the Western Wall and the other stops include Nahal Kedoshim, Bnei Brit Cave, the Scroll of Fire monument, and the Sataf nature reserve, among others. The sites in Jerusalem afford multiple opportunities to create a connection with Scripture; the trails in nature have the same effect. The Sataf reserve is instructive of the reconstructed ancient hill agriculture of that area, thus effectively stressing the historical association with the region. In fact, this is one of the main reasons for the preservation of ancient agriculture at Sataf. Students who visit learn about terrace farming and the tilling and stone-clearing operations that had to be carried out in order to build the terraces; they also get an impression of additional agricultural structures such as a wine press and a guard tower. The entire visit is oriented to bonding visitors with the way their ancestors inhabited the site thousands of years ago.[[47]](#footnote-47)

At Hashmonaim Comprehensive School in Bat Yam, ninth graders took a field trip in 2019 titled ‘In the Footsteps of the Bible’. The circular relating to the outing began with a saying by David Ben-Gurion that linked the Bible to the Jews’ possession of Eretz Israel: ‘The Bible is our mandate. The Bible was written by us, in our language of Hebrew and in this country itself […]’.[[48]](#footnote-48) The author of the circular then states: ‘This year we will head out for a three-day trip to [Mount] Carmel and the Jezreel Valley in the footsteps of biblical stories. On the first day, we will tour the Carmel, learn about the story of Elijah on the Carmel, and discuss dilemmas of zealotry and indifference. On the second day, we will hike on Mt. Tabor and learn about biblical personalities, and on the last day we will follow the footsteps of Saul, David, and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa and clarify the extent of the value of responsibility in our lives’.[[49]](#footnote-49)

If so, a field trip that treats biblical stories as its central motif is designed to make its participants identify with ancient ethno-symbolic elements, thus linking the present with the historical past of the venue. By choosing sites that emphasise formative events, the organisers expose visitors to the Jewish people’s profound relationship with the places visited. The narratives taught may not be free of criticism; they may lend themselves to discussion of dilemmas related to the moral and value quality of the events in question. Thus, at Keren ha-Carmel the Prophet Elijah murdered hundreds of prophets of Ba’al in a spasm of religious zealotry; at Arbel some preferred to kill themselves and slay others for the cause of freedom rather than to respect the value of life. Other narratives connect visitors with the history and shaping of the Jews who inhabited the sites (thriving ancient agriculture in the Judean Hills; Saul’s battles on Mount Gilboa; David and Goliath and Samson in the Judean foothills). All of them help to link the heyday of the ancient Hebrew nation with that of the modern iteration.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Ceremonies

Another way of reinforcing the national motif is by holding ceremonies during the field trip.[[51]](#footnote-51) Ceremonies are symbolic events that amplify the importance of the event to which they are oriented. At sites that commemorate the battlefield legacy, for example, a ceremony is a medium that preserves a social order. Narratives of protection, defense, and even sacrifice of life for the homeland are legitimised in order to enhance social cohesion and national identity among the participants in the field trip.[[52]](#footnote-52)

In a briefing that students at Shehakim School in Nahariya attended before their field trip, the following was stated: ‘[…] There will be three ceremonies in the course of the trip: One will be at the beginning of the hike on the Israel Trail at Mt. Keren Naftali. The second will be at the trailhead on the fourth day at the Roaring Lion statue at Tel Hai [*sic*; at nearby Kefar Giladi]. [הוספתי] The third will be at the end of the hike on Wednesday at the Snir River nature reserve […]’.[[53]](#footnote-53) By scheduling three ceremonies during a four-day field trip, the organisers attested to the importance they attributed to holding them. The roaring-lion monument at Kefar Giladi is a symbol of Jewish determination, heroism, and self-sacrifice that became a myth with the demise of Joseph Trumpeldor at Tel Hai. The ceremony at the monument to the helicopter disaster at She’ar Yashuv, in the memory of the seventy-three soldiers who perished in that tragedy, is intended, and may serve, as a way to generate empathy among the students and amplify their sense of belonging to and responsibility for the places where soldiers fought and died in the course of their military service.[[54]](#footnote-54) In a ceremony held at the monument during a field trip of ninth-graders from a school in Nes Tsiyyona, the participants were told, among other things: ‘We ninth-graders from the David Ben-Gurion Education Campus in Nes Tsiyyona have come here today not to be sad and not to cancel the pleasure of our annual field trip. […]. Unfortunately, however, this country is saturated with pain and bereavement, and while we hope for peace we have responsibility for protecting what we’ve got and for defending this place, because we are able to visit and enjoy this area by virtue of those who were willing to pay the highest price, their lives, to defend this country. We are entitled to continue enjoying, but never to forget’.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Ceremonies related to battlefield legacy and Zionist heritage recur in the field-trip programs that ORT Ronson School in Ashkelon present ahead of annual trips to the Gilboa area and the Lower Galilee. The ceremony in this case alludes to various events that may create identification with collective memory both in the historical sense (the inception of Zionist settlement in Eretz Israel) and from the biblical perspective. At the ceremony, students explicitly mention the battles of Saul at Gilboa, note the completion of the Jerusalem Talmud in nearby Tiberias, and refer to localities in the vicinity and the onset of Zionist settlement in the Jezreel Valley.[[56]](#footnote-56)

The ceremonies described above are but a few examples of many diverse ceremonies that we discovered in our research. They attest to the way the landscape, the itinerary, and the area visited are mobilised to create various levels of connection between the students and patriotism and their right to the country. The events mentioned in the ceremonies link the provinces of memory at the symbolic level by presenting students both with the biblical stories that took place there and events that establish a solid legacy in the place, tracing back to the days of the First Aliyah, through the stories of battles and monuments of recent times. The ceremonies are intended to stir emotions of identification with a range of aspects of the place that they are visiting and exploring. At the ceremony at the helicopter-disaster monument, a link to the beauty of the country is made but, equally, students are reminded that the lovely landscape was redeemed with the blood of soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice. Thus the visitors realise that they should appreciate and remember what these soldiers did and the price they paid so that they, the students, may continue to visit. The nexus created by this statement is somewhat artificial because the monument, presented as a testimony to the heroism of the soldiers by whose virtue the students are able to travel around and enjoy the area, does not symbolise a battle that took place there or a heroic feat in which the soldiers fell to enemy fire in defense of She’ar Yashuv. The event commemorated by the monument, of course, is a ghastly tragedy in which, on a stormy night, seventy-three soldiers perished in an accident involving two helicopters en route to operational activity in Lebanon.[[57]](#footnote-57)

The motive behind the planning of the ceremonies recurs intensively in all field-trip programs that we examined in at least one grade. In schools that took part in structured outings such as those titled ‘Masa Yisraeli’ (Israeli journey), ‘Masa ‘im ha-Tanakh’ (Journey with the Bible), and ‘Le-‘Obeda u-le-Shomera’ (To cultivate and protect it—cf. Gen. 2:15), as well as other identity-shaping trips, students participate in the ceremonies simply because they take part in the trip. By implication, ceremonies are central in the course of the annual field trip. Their purposes are functional and symbolic; their aim is to compose the students’ collective memory.

The field-trip experience

The field trip creates an experience that challenges its participants both physically and mentally. Climbing mountains, crossing obstacles, going without sleep, and contending with heat or cold serve as tests of essential character traits such as willpower, determination, and self-restraint. Indeed, Almog describes the Yishuv-era field trips as tests of character: ‘[…] The trips had didactic ideological value that was no less than [their] military value. [...] Hiking and sleeping in nature symbolised direct contact with the country’s soil and landscape. The terminus of grueling hikes in places of historical significance (Masada, Bet She’arim, etc.) and the swearing-in and baton-passing ceremonies that took place at the end of many trips made them into mass pilgrimages, so to speak, to the “temples of Zionism”’.[[58]](#footnote-58) The postulate that emerges from Almog’s remarks is that by enduring the hardships of the field trip the participants pledge allegiance, as it were, to the collective national framework of the nation and the state. The more effort they need to expend and the more powerful is the experience they undergo, the more profound is the unifying national context of the participants—in this case, the students—in the setting of the annual field trip.

In preparations for a ‘Masa Yisraeli’ at Shehakim School in Nahariya,[[59]](#footnote-59) the first part of the trip was associated with rigorous physical effort and self-discipline. The authors of the circular preceding the trip explained: ‘[…] We are heading out on a Masa Yisraeli with your son/daughter. Much has been invested in this unique and value-centric outing. Therefore, it is important for us that, if your children are reluctant to take the trip, you convince them. Your son/daughter needs to reach the schoolyard by 11:30 p.m. There we will organise in order to set out a short time after midnight. Masa Yisraeli is first of all a project based on inquiry, togetherness, and reinforcement of the Israeli and Zionist identity of youth by voyaging into the national landscapes, combining scenery and content’.[[60]](#footnote-60) By implication, the excursion being prepared for is not meant merely to provide an experience or group cohesion. Rather, it a complex, lengthy journey; even its time of departure, in the middle of the night, cannot be taken for granted. This trip entails an effort by its participants. The students are explicitly advised even before they set out, that to attain the objectives of the trip successfully, they are expected, among other things, to relate emotionally to the sites and trails that they will be visiting and to feel that all of these belong to the shared national narrative.

At Danziger School in Kiryat Shemona, we learn from the preparations for a *masa noded* (a ‘migrating’ field trip) for twelfth grade in the mountains of Eilat in 2015 that arduous hiking, lengthy stays in the open, and multiple physical challenges are foreseen. In the preparations for the trip, participants are told up front to expect ‘lengthy ascents’, hiking ‘without shade’, trails that include ‘support stakes’, danger of falling’, and narrow paths in parts of the trip.[[61]](#footnote-61) The trip is marketed not only as a ‘fun’ or experiential activity; it seems intended to present students and staff with a meaningful challenge that may even be dangerous at times. The outing is portrayed as a mission that should be carried out to its very end. The body of the briefing is to-the-point, omitting all mention of the tour guiding, the respites along the way, and social group-formation, instead stressing the expected length of the hikes, travel instructions, topographical conditions, and safety precautions. In an interview with the school’s coordinator of field trips, the attitude toward the field trip as an experiential and challenging act was reinforced in order to give the outing a dimension of emotional depth and meaning for its participants.[[62]](#footnote-62)

In a field trip for ninth-graders at Comprehensive School A, part of the Reali Gymnasium in Rishon Lezion (2017), the participants toured the Upper Galilee and the sources of the Jordan River.[[63]](#footnote-63) Preparing for the trip, the students were advised of the following, *inter alia*: ‘Overnighting in Masa ha-Kokhav [the name of the trip] is done under outdoor/camping conditions—four-person igloo tents, sleeping bags, and field mattresses for which the students are responsible. The area where we will spend the night is on the Jordan-Kefar Blum grounds. The night will be spent on the grass, with latrines and showers nearby. […] From the first evening onward, all meals will be prepared and cooked by the students themselves, with guidance from the teachers’.[[64]](#footnote-64) Thus, on the one hand, the students are being prepared for the physical effort and the outdoors experience that awaits them; on the other hand, in accordance with twenty-first-century realities, they will also have latrines and shower facilities, comfortable grass to sleep on, and a staff of teachers who will help them fix their meals. The organisers of the outing apparently intended to give the students an experience that would transcend all the hiking involved. In fact, the process envisioned emphasises and strengthens the bond between the participants and the parts of the country they will be visiting, shaping their national identity in view of the challenges and hiking that the outing provides. In this manner, it invites the participants to idealise the landscape. The way they should relate to the venues of the trip has a meaningful effect on how they will define their national identity.[[65]](#footnote-65) The school emphasises the ‘special experiences’ that the students will have during the outing and credits them to the students’ steadily deepening connection with the state both as individuals and as members of a group. The nature of the trip as a group endeavor and a collective achievement, and not as an individual one, resembles the conquest of a military objective. Presenting an achievement in collective terms foists an additional burden of expectations on the individual. Apart from the expectation of personal success, collective success is emphasized as well. It obliges individuals to act and expend effort for the collective—to make preparations together, to haul backpacks together, to put out physical effort together. These, along with hiking ‘for the sake of the State of Israel’, make the trip into a group endeavor that promotes the sense of belonging to the national narrative.[[66]](#footnote-66)

The annual field trip since 2008—Quantitative analysis

In accordance with instructions from the Director General of the Ministry of Education, schools each year present at the district field-trip committees with their annual program of trips.[[67]](#footnote-67) A survey of these programs at the national level yields interesting quantitative data, among which we have chosen to analyse two salient parameters in the context of national education: overnighting outdoors in the course of the field trip and the pedagogical content of the trip.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Types of overnighting

One may judge the nature of a field trip by the way the participants do their overnighting. A field trip in which the participants sleep in the open, we believe, provides participants with the kind of meaningful experience that removes them from their comfort zone relative to more cushy conditions. We divided the distribution of types of overnighting into several categories: outdoors, tent encampment, indoors, and a combination of the foregoing.[[69]](#footnote-69) In the table below, surveying the overnight data in 2012–2021, we show that sleeping indoors is most common in seventh-grade field trips. As the participants’ age rises, they are exposed to a wider variety of types of overnighting that require higher levels of adjustment to the conditions in the field. For example, the combination of outdoors + tent encampment + indoors is typical of the pattern of Masa Yisraeli field trips. Indeed, the combination of these three types of overnighting appears most significantly in eleventh grade, the age for which this trip is intended. The much greater incidence of sleeping indoors over other forms of overnighting may indicate that a familiar and orderly overnight arrangement is the most common and ‘easy’ default for schools to choose. We assume that sleeping indoors evokes less resistance among the students and their parents before the trip because it remains within the students’ familiar and well-known zone. In addition, there is a wider variety of hostels than of tent-encampment sleeping arrangements and it is less expensive to sleep indoors than to do so in a tent encampment.[[70]](#footnote-70)

**Figure 1. Overnight arrangements, annual field trips**

[ציר אנכי מלמעלה למטה]

Count of overnight arrangements (N)

Grade

7th

8th

9th

10th

11th

12th

[שנים וסיגי לינה]

2012

Outdoors

Indoors plus tents

Indoors

Tents

2013

Indoors + outdoors

Indoors + tents + outdoors

Tents + outdoors

2014

Indoors + outdoors

Indoors

Tents

2015

Outdoors

Indoors + tents

Indoors

Tents

2016

Indoors + outdoors

Indoors + tents + outdoors

Indoors + outdoors

2017

Outdoors

Indoors + tents

Indoors

Tents

2018

Indoors + outdoors

Indoors + tents + outdoors

Tents + outdoors

2019

Outdoors

Indoors + tents

Indoors

Tents

2020

Indoors + outdoors

Indoors + tents + outdoors

Tents + outdoors

2021

Outdoors

Outdoors + tents

Indoors

Tents

[בתחתית האיור מצד ימין]

Type of overnighting

The data in the graph show that the higher the grade, the more frequent are field trips that include overnighting in a tent encampment or outdoors.[[71]](#footnote-71) The graph reinforces the assumption that the awareness of creating challenging field trips has been growing in recent years. In these outings, students are offered a cohesion-forming group experience by means of the combined challenge of difficult hikes and overnighting outdoors.

Pedagogical contents of the field trip

The themes of tour-guiding on field trips deserve careful examination because there is no restriction on the contents that trip organisers can define as pedagogic matters worthy of attention during the trip. In fact, there is no effective way to determine whether the declared pedagogical contents of the various documents are actually delivered. Just the same, below we analyse the data on the basis of the pedagogical contents that the trip coordinators reported because the large majority of contents emphasise the ‘Zionist legacy’ and ‘the Bible’. The very fact of the mass repetition of these expressions as objectives to be attained on the annual field trips gives an indication of the organisers’ intentions and, to a considerable extent, reflects what actually happens.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade****Scholastic theme** | **7th** | **8th** | **9th** | **10th** | **11th** | **12th** | **Not noted** | **Total** |
| Details missing | 265 | 243 | 366 | 343 | 203 | 295 | 9 | 1724 |
| Nature only | 43 | 37 | 60 | 75 | 66 | 73 |  | 354 |
| Jewish legacy in Eretz Israel  | 58 | 56 | 83 | 119 | 102 | 152 |  | 570 |
| Jewish legacy in Eretz Israel, Zionist legacy, nature, Bible | 1358 | 1064 | 1201 | 1084 | 1095 | 878 | 41 | 5626 |
| Bible only  | 18 | 26 | 27 | 19 | 7 | 10 |  | 107 |
| Zionist legacy, Bible | 193 | 172 | 164 | 204 | 158 | 200 |  | 1091 |
| Ancient civilisations only | 27 | 24 | 17 | 22 | 18 | 20 |  | 128 |
| Ancient civilisations, nature, Bible | 28 | 46 | 24 | 25 | 12 | 24 |  | 159 |
| Religions and ethnicities in Israel | 34 | 36 | 34 | 29 | 21 | 17 |  | 171 |
| **Grand total** | **2024** | **1704** | **1976** | **1920** | **1682** | **1669** | **50** | **11025** |

Study of the contents reveals three themes that may be considered more meaningful than the others in the context of national education: Jewish legacy in Eretz Israel, Zionist legacy, and Bible. The table above shows that four themes in combination—Jewish legacy in Eretz Israel, Zionist legacy, nature, and Bible—appear most frequently as pedagogical objectives and goals that should be attained during the field trip. Within this collective, the combination of Zionist legacy and Bible receives the largest number of mentions among all combinations. The choice of only one theme or two themes appears much less frequently. It is also observed that the combination of multiple themes occurs most frequently in seventh grade. We assume that the pedagogical contents of the annual field trips become more meaningful and comprehensive when students advance to junior high and are older. The field trip at this level, unlike that undertaken in primary school, is part of the students’ entrance into the world of adolescence. As a result, it is given profound and rich contents that reinforce the importance of the annual field trip at the junior-high level, in contrast to that undertaken in primary school. Another finding in the table that needs explanation is the high incidence of guidance in Bible and Zionist legacy mainly in seventh and tenth grades. The number of field trips and of schools participating in them is much higher in the Tel Aviv and Central districts than in the other districts. Parsed by the destinations of field trips for these grades, seventh grade is set aside for trips to the Gilboa area, eastern Galilee, and western Galilee, and tenth grade visits the Judean Desert and the Negev. These regions abound with landmarks of Zionist legacy and biblical stories (Modern Hebrew settlement in the Jezreel Valley and the stories of King Saul and the Prophet Elijah in the Gilboa region and eastern Galilee; the stories of Masada, David at ‘Ein Gedi, and the struggle for conquest of the Negev in the Southern District). This may explain the preponderance of contents of Jewish legacy in Eretz Israel, Zionist legacy, nature, and Bible in grades seven and ten. The table also shows that in tenth grade, the most common combination of themes and that of the highest intensity (878) is Jewish legacy in Eretz Israel, Zionist legacy, nature, and Bible. This, presumably, is due to the students’ maturity and their ability to accommodate a wide variety of themes, along with the wish of the education system and the teachers to sum up and equip students with the largest possible takeaway as the students are about to complete their twelve years in the Israeli education system.

Conclusion

Over the years, instructions from the Ministry of Education concerning field trips have stressed the immense importance of the trips as meaningful and value-intensive activities. Basing ourselves on the copious data that we gathered, we can state that knowing and loving Eretz Israel are significant motifs that recur with high intensity in all school field-trip programs. The objective of connecting students with their country appears repeatedly as central in preparing for and planning the trips. The numerous field-trip circulars presented in this article begin with statements such as ‘The annual field trip will establish a connection between the students and the state’, ‘The trip will intensify students’ identification with the places they will be visiting’, or ‘The trip will enhance the students’ love of their country’.

This ritual of using national terminology that invokes expressions such as ‘love’, ‘identity’, and ‘connection’ is indicative of the way students are expected to relate to the trip even before it begins. The message students receive is that to attain the objectives of the trip, they are expected to develop a deeper connection with the place visited. In this manner, those at the helm of education in Israel hope to strengthen shared narratives and memories. These are the actions that rest at the core of national education as manifested in the annual field trip. This outlook did not come about *ex nihilo.* In 2000, the State Education Law was amended in respect of the goals of education and the value, social, and affective objectives that students should attain. In Section 2 of the amendment, for example, in reference to the objectives of social education, it is written that the goal is ‘to educate an individual to be humanitarian, benevolent, and patriotic—a loyal citizen of the state of Israel who respects his or her parents and family, legacy, cultural identity, and language’.[[72]](#footnote-72) The qualitative and quantitative analyses that we presented show that the annual field trips in the State school system emphasise national education, mainly by means of giving over *yedi’at ha-aretz* (‘knowing the country’), using of biblical stories, holding ceremonies in the course of the trip, and creating the meaningful experience of a challenging outing. Thus, too, in field trips that combine sleeping outdoors with pedagogical content geared to the assimilation of Zionist narratives, the program of the trip places special emphasis on reinforcing the national bond that unifies the participants.

Much like Smith’s explanation of nationalism as, among other things, the creation of traditions and memories that make people ready to accept the principle of nationhood, today’s field trips use commemoration of the Jewish past to offer an alternative reality for the postmodern era.[[73]](#footnote-73) This era is typified, *inter alia*, by psychological estrangement that originates in the proliferation of realities that are unstable and prone to human manipulations as part of the postmodern tendency to shatter social paradigms and conventions. In opposition to this negational stance, the field trip and its wealth of national elements are put forward in order to denote, and to symbolize, stability of values, focused narratives, and a clearly bounded framework. We offer this point of view as one of the reasons for the strong emphasis on education in nationhood and patriotism in the objectives of the field trip. If postmodernism is typified, among other characteristics, by ruling out the existence of any single essence or absolute truth and by positing clashing values that cancel each other out, then, to a large extent, the field trip may produce a safe and focused framework devoid of multiple identities and contrasting narratives. Its main motive is national education, an act that concerns itself with finding what unites and connects as opposed to deconstructing myths and instilling doubts. As they hike, the students are totally ‘within’ the trip. The distractions that swamp today’s students—particularly the mobile phone, the leading distractor—do not exist during a hike outdoors, or at least exist less intensively than in ordinary times. Thus students have to engage in interpersonal communication and absorb the surroundings without mediation. The annual field trip may unite its participants around values such as Israel geography, patriotism, Zionist legacy, and biblical stories. Many actions that take place during the field trip promote the attainment of this affinity. They operate at two levels: an intellectual level, largely expressed in ceremonies, battlefield legacy, and guidance that connects places with biblical stories and the Zionist legacy; and an emotional level, with emphasis on long and arduous hikes up and down the country’s trails, social experiences that develop as this is done, excitement as the participants behold the landscapes that they encounter, and the physical and emotional challenges that the trip poses.

Concurrently, however, we also wish to offer a critical viewpoint that emerges from the attempts to attain ‘national’ objectives as the field trip takes place. In view of the high frequency of national motives in these trips, integrating the national facet appears to have become, over the years, a code for the ‘right way’ to plan out and carry out a field trip. As part of the core curriculum, students are required to visit Jerusalem at least three times in the course of their studies in the State education system. To help the schools obey this instruction, the Ministry of Education budgets the participation of schools in a project called Na’ale li-Yerushalayim (Let’s go up to Jerusalem). In this project, students are encouraged to include the City of David in their visit. The City of David is run by Elad, a nonprofit that, alongside its tourism and archaeological activities in the location, engages in pronounced right-wing indoctrination that it continues in its efforts to settle Jews in the eastern Jerusalem village Silwan. There is reason to wonder whether tours given by members of this nonprofit relate objectively to the multinational history of Jerusalem and the conflict that typifies life in this mixed-population city. In 2011, concurrent with the rule about visiting Jerusalem, there was an initiative by the Minister of Education, Gideon Saar, to encourage students to visit Hebron and the Tomb of the Patriarchs.[[74]](#footnote-74) The initiative had its opponents, who saw it as a demarche that amounted to blatant politicisation of the secular State education system for the purpose of exposing students to one point of view, the Israeli national one, without giving equal attention to the complexity of the Palestinian inhabitants of the locale.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Seemingly, one of the most meaningful challenges in designing school field trips is how to preserve constructive national contents that can help to unify the nation and society while avoiding narratives that identify Jewish nationhood with nationalism and downplay any dimension that reflects pluralism, human rights, and liberal values. Thus, school field trips appear to derive their importance and power from being a balancing and multidimensional instrumentality for national education in Israel’s State education system. As such, they make a major contribution to the formation of a shared Israeli national identity.

Bibliography

1. Notes

. Cohen and Benvenisti, 1938, preface, no page noted. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Rinot, ‘Ha-hinukh be-Eretz Yisrael’, 621. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. .Tadmor-Shimoni, *Shi’ur moledet,* 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . The guidelines promulgated in these instructions express the educational and administrative principles of the Ministry of Education and the ways in which they are to be implemented. See Ministry of Education, Circulars of the Director General. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . Ministry of Education, Instructions of the Director General, ‘Tiyulim u-fe’iluyot.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . Israel State Comptroller, Report 55b for 2004, 645–654. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . Ibid., p. 250. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . State Control Committee, November 16, 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . Ministry of Education, *Tokhnit ha-liba.* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . Ibid., Preface, no page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . Ben-Israel, *Be-shem ha-uma,* 74–75. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . All recognised schools (those carrying the Ministry of Education emblem) must submit an annual field trip plan, constructed jointly by the entire school faculty under the principal’s direction. See Ministry of Education, *Hora’ot mankal misrad ha-hinukh* ‘Tiyulim’. Section 3.1.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . To carry out the study, we approached the schools that we surveyed and asked them to share correspondence and documents that might be helpful in understanding how the trips were planned and carried out. The documents that we gathered were contingent on the schools’ responsiveness and ability to assent to our requests; they differ in content and range among schools examined. Examples of such documents are security authorisations that the schools issued before each outing, specifying the hikes that the school will be taking; circulars to parents and students in advance of the trip; minutes of staff meetings before and after the annual field trip; and correspondence with service providers and hospitality venues. These sources helped us to gain insights into the planning aspects of the field trips and the extent of the schools’’ commitment and investment in making the annual field trip happen. See *Hora’ot mankal misrad ha-hinukh*, ‘Tiyulim u-fe’iluyot’, Section 3.3.2 (April 2, 2019), <https://apps.education.gov.il/Mankal/Horaa.aspx?siduri=244> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. . In accordance with instructions from the Director General for Field Trips, principals must appoint a member of teaching faculty as the coordinator of field trips. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. . Ministry of Education, Development Administration, ‘Mipui ve-tekhnun’. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. . The system also provides statistical information about schools in other sectors such as Bedouin, Arab, Haredi (‘ultra-Orthodox’), and Non-Recognised. In this article, we do not refer to these schools on the assumption that their field trips are different in their nature and goals. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. . We focused on junior and senior high schools because annual field trips at these levels are at least two days long if not longer. In primary schools, there is a tendency to limit field trips to a single day. The Ministry of Education core program (*Tokhnit ha-liba*) for field trips requires overnight trips only from seventh grade up. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. . For example, in accordance with data published in 2018, if we wished to search for the largest schools in the districts in terms of enrollment, the system indicates that in the Central District, the Dror Education Campus school has seventy-nine classes and nearly 2,500 students; in Tel Aviv District, the Kefar Hayarok School has seventy-one classes and more than 2,300 students; and in Haifa District, Amal Hadera School has eighty-seven classes and more than 2,000 students, and so on. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. . Ministry of Education, *Shkifut be-hinukh.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. . Lamm, *Ba-ma’arbolet,* 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. . Ibid., 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. . In regard to the myth of Tel Hai, see Zerubavel and Goldstein, *Tel Hai*; for the Masada myth, see Yehuda, *The Masada Myth*. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. . Smith, ‘Amim nivharim’, 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. . Nora, ‘‘Al ha-be’aya’, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. . Ibid., 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. . For elaboration on the topic of collective memory, see Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance.* [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. . Prawer, *Darko shel ha-tiyul*. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. . Prawer specifies 1907 as athe year when that changes matured in Eretz Israel that argued for emphasis of national identity in the course of field trips, in contrast to accenting the pedagogical and universal facet as had been the case until then. Among these changes, Prawer mentions crises associated with the ‘war of the languages’, the trickle-down effect of the idea of establishing Jewish statehood in Uganda, and the employment crisis in Rosh Pina. Ibid., 148–151. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. . Oded Avissar, *Tokhniot yedi’at ha-aretz.* [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. . The expression *yedi’at* *ha-aretz,* ‘knowing the land’, originates in *ve-yad’u et ha-aretz,* an ancient biblical phrase that appears in Numbers 14:31—‘But your little ones, whom ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land [*ve-yad’u et ha-aretz*] which ye have despised.’ The meaning of ‘knowing’ that the verse evokes is an intimate, sensory acquaintance with the place. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. . Schwarz, *Tevu’ot ha-aretz*, author’s preface, no page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. . Katz, ‘The Israeli Teacher-Guide’, 49–72. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. . From Ben-Yehuda Project, the Purpose of State Education, David Ben-Gurion, <https://benyehuda.org/read/14700> retrieved on July 1, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. . Circular ahead of annual field trip, Katzir High School, Rehovot, undated (private archive of Ro’i Shamir—hereinafter: PARS). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. . Circular ahead of annual field trip, Comprehensive School 8, Ashdod, undated, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. . Circular ahead of annual field trip, Branco Weiss Comprehensive School, Tzur Hadassah, undated, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. It is customary to single out Herzliya Gymnasium and Reali School in Haifa as the schools that shaped and institutionalised annual field trips in the early Yishuv era. See Almog, *Ha-tsabar,* 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. . Reali Hebrew School in Haifa, Gadna program, [https://www.reali.org.il/%d7%94%d7%a8%d7%99%d7%90%d7%9c%d7%99-2030/%d7%94%d7%92%d7%93%d7%a0%d7%a2/](https://www.reali.org.il/%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99-2030/%D7%94%D7%92%D7%93%D7%A0%D7%A2/) [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. . See Almog, *Ha-tsabar,* 265. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. . Shapira, *Herev ha-Yona,* 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. . D. Yarkechi, ‘*Arakhim le-hayyim: tiyulim shenati’im bevate-ha-sefer yefakhu le-masa bishvil ha-Tanakh,* Walla! August 11, 2019, <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3252243?utm_source=whatsup&utm_medium=sharebutton&utm_term=social&utm_content=whatsup&utm_campaign=socialbutton#!/wallahistory> [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. . Rabin High School, Eilat, field trip programs presented to the Southern District committee, 2019–2021, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. . See Kadari, *‘‘Ad she-Yavo Eliyahu,* pp. 147–149, and A. Selzer (ed.), *‘Emek Yisre’el*, 59–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. . Circular ahead of field trip, Danziger School, Kiryat Shemona, undated, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. . Miron (ed.), *Ha-Kinneret*, 64–68. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. . Davidson, *Lesayer ‘em ha-mekorot,* 54–65. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. . Statement attributed to David Ben-Gurion in his testimony to the Peel Commission in 1937. For the full testimony, see Ben-Gurion testimony to Royal Commission, Ben-Yehuda Project, <https://benyehuda.org/read/2520#ch17> [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. . ‘Circular to Parents and Students: A Trip in the Footsteps of the Bible’, Hashmonaim Comprehensive School, Bat Yam, 2019, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. . Almog, *Ha-tsabar,* 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. . On ceremonies and historical memory, see Nora, ‘‘Al ha-be’aya’, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. . Combat zones and battlefields [***Erstwhile*** zones and battlefields?] are regular destinations of school field trips as part of a curricular program that is called, tellingly ‘Battlefield Legacy’. See Kantor, *Tarbut hazutit,* 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. . Preparatory presentation for ‘Masa Yisraeli Tsafon’ [Masa Yisraeli to the north], Shehakim School, Nahariya, February 25–28, year not noted. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. . As a rule, monuments are significant in commemoration of casualties and central in commemorative and memorial ceremonies. See Shamir, *Andarta’ot be-Yisrael.* [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. . Students at David Ben-Gurion Education Campus, Nes Tsiyyona, field trip to Upper Galilee, undated, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. . Students at ORT Ronson School, Ashkelon, field trip to the Gilboa area, undated, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. . Feige, *Ha-andarta la-ason ha-masokim,* 122–143. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. . Almog, *Ha-tsabar,* 277. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. . In 2006, the Ministry of Education collaborated with the Masa Yisraeli nonprofit to launch a new educational program that aimed to strengthen the personal, social, Zionist, Israeli, and Jewish identity of high-school students in Israel. The heads of the nonprofit chose the name ‘Masa Yisraeli’ in order to distinguish it from other school activities such as annual trips, workshops, seminars, and Gadna (the pre-military program). Their choice of name demonstrates their wish to distinguish the experience of the trip from other educational events by linking it to the tradition of trips in the history of the Yishuv and the State of Israel. The Masa Yisraeli organisers claim that their trip is instrumental in cultivating Israeliness and intensifying the values that underlie it. Its success, they say, is connected with the authenticity of the activity, which affords participants an experience of Israeliness that traces back to the Israeli culture at the time statehood was established. See Yair, *Masa Yisraeli havayot,* 32–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Circular ahead of ‘Masa Yisraeli Tsafon’ (Masa Yisraeli to the north), Shehakim School, Nahariya, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. . From circular for parents and students, *Masa Noded*—Eilat Mountains, Danziger School, Kiryat Shemona, November 22–27, 2015, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. . Interview with Rahel Salame, Kiryat Shemona, October 27, 2019, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. . Circular for ‘Kokhav Mai’ field trip, Comprehensive School A, Reali Gymnasium, Dorot Junior High, Rishon Lezion, 2017, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. . Circular ahead of ‘Kokhav Mai’ field trip, Comprehensive School A, Reali Gymnasium, Dorot Junior High, Rishon Lezion, 2017, PARS. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. . Gertel, *Derekh ha-teva,* 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. . Almog, *Ha-tsabar,* 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. . All recognised schools (those identified as Ministry of Education institutions) must present annual field-trip programs that are put together by the entire school faculty led by the principal. Source: Instructions of the Director General of the Ministry of Education, Field Trips, Section 3.1.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. . Notably, the system of inputting field-trip programs began to operate online in 2012. As a result, it penetrated the various districts slowly. Also, there is a disparity among the districts in the manner and completeness of data entry. In addition, it is difficult to quantify the exact number of field trips that actually took place in each district. Therefore, we need to treat the numerical data obtained cautiously. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. . When the organisers of the field trip write that the overnight will take place under conditions of a field school or youth hostel, we understand that this means sleeping indoors. Accordingly, we had to identify other sites as tent encampments or outdoors only, with no regular infrastructure; therem the organisers had to supply all necessities for the overnight stay, such as lighting, latrines, and running water. The grounds where this occurs include Tse’elim in the Judean Desert, Goren Park in the Galilee, and Yotvata in the Arava Valley. By categorizing these sites as ‘outdoors’, we were able to analyze a large number of overnight venues. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. . This is because, in accordance with the guidelines and instructions from the Ministry of Education at the time this article was written, a recognised and certified overnight security person must be present at a nighttime activity. However, when the school puts up its students in a recognised hostel (e.g., a youth hostel) or a field school, the cost of security is included in the price and the need the need to bring overnight guards to the outdoor venue at additional cost is obviated. Furthermore, in ‘full’ outdoor overnighting on grounds that have no infrastructure whatsoever, water, lighting, latrines, and other amenities need to be brought in. See Instructions of the Director General of the Ministry of Education, Field Trips, Section 5.3.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. . The decrease in 2021 may be explained by the fact that at this stage of gathering the data for this study, not all field trips taken that year had been input, leaving us with incomplete data only. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. . In the course of 2000 (when Yossi Sarid of the Meretz Party, and afterwards Ehud Barak, served as Minister of Education in the 28th Knesset), the goals of State education were revised in several ways with emphasis on social, cultural, and national objectives. See State Education Law, *Sefer Hukkim* [Israel Lawbook] 181, the Knesset, Jerusalem, August 20, 1953. <https://fs.knesset.gov.il/2/law/2_lsr_208355.PDF> [זה החוק המקורי ללא התיקון] [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. . The word ‘postmodernism’ is engulfed in murk and mist and defies thorough definition in many respects. Among the many attempts to define it, we choose to relate to it as a state of multiple identities and absence of clear rules for appreciation and condemnation. Postmodern thinking is essentially an outgrowth of political thinking because when one traces the way its ideas and realities took shape and evolved, one finds that they are not stable, self-evidently clear, and natural as they are perceived, but rather malleagle and replaceable. Source. Rosmarin, 44–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. . Curricular Program, Kit for Visits to the City of the Patriarchs. Society and Youth Administration, Jerusalem District, Ministry of Education, December 20, 2012, <https://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Jerusalem/PikuahPadagogya/Hevra/bikurim.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. R. Kashti, ‘Minister of Education Gideon Saar Launches Program for Student Visits to Tomb of Patriarchs’, *Ha’aretz,* retrived December 17, 2021, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.1162276> [↑](#footnote-ref-75)