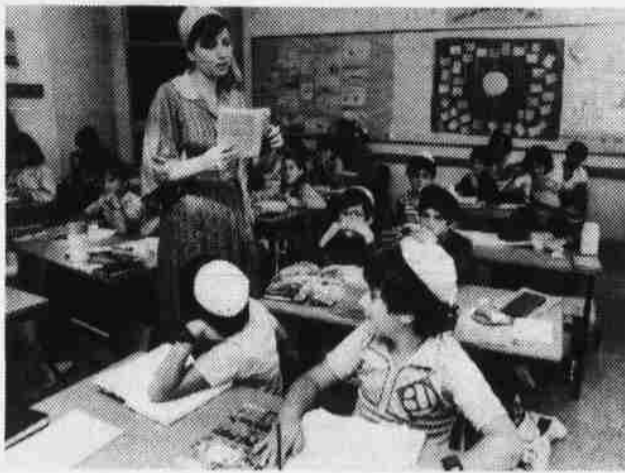


# Israeli School Finding Middle Path Between Religious And Secular Systems



Students learn of their Jewish religion and heritage in a curriculum that values religious diversity at the Frankel School in Jerusalem. (UJA Press Service Photo by Karen Benzian.)

By Leslie Klineman  
UJA Press Service

JERUSALEM — The school day begins quietly with morning prayers, followed by the clamor of children, bright with curiosity, moving to their classroom. At morning recess, they spill out into the hallways, racing for the courtyard. Outside the children, some with kipot (skullcaps) and others without, play together. Teachers with headcoverings and others in jeans gather in the teachers lounge. This is the Frankel School in Jerusalem's French Hill neighborhood.

This is an unusual school for Israel, where the state educational system offers two separate educational alternatives -- the religious and the secular. Orthodox education is emphasized in the religious schools. In the secular schools the Bible is taught as literature and history and there is far less attention to the Jewish religion. One alternative or the other satisfies the needs of many families, but not all.

The Frankel School is the result of the determination of a group of parents to create a school that represents a middle path. These parents take pride in their Jewishness, enjoy its rich traditions, and want their children to know and love their Jewish faith. But the parents do not

subscribe to the Orthodox way of life. Their school reflects their efforts to increase opportunities for diversity in Israel through provision of a pluralistic Jewish education.

Some parents also play a direct educational role, as in an afterschool program where they teach art, flute and chess.

The parents have made important contributions to the development of a curriculum based on secular as well as Torah studies. The emphasis, however, is acceptance of religious diversity. Barbara Levine, the principal, describes the school environment as one of openness and said there is ample opportunity for what parents and school officials consider a healthy questioning of tenets.

The boys must wear kipot during prayers and religious studies, but otherwise there is no dress code. The teachers are from varied backgrounds, too.

The school, which opened with 33 children in 1976, today has some 530 pupils in its eight grades. Next year a junior and senior high school program will be instituted. Recently the school vacated its overcrowded facilities and moved to a beautiful new building.

Because of the success of the Frankel School, and the desire of some Israelis to articulate a middle ground between the dominant educational philosophies of secular and religious, similar schools are being planned throughout Israel.

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unity. Supporters of Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat urged support for the PLO. No incidents were reported.

May Day is one of two alternative public holidays allowed government employees. The other is Tisha B'Av.

## Situation Of Jews In Iran

WASHINGTON (WNS) — While Jews and other religious minorities in Iran are discriminated against, they are not persecuted in the way that members of the Bahai faith are, Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs said recently.

Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Abrams said that in one of the world's "worst" human rights problems, the regime of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini "has virtually criminalized" the Bahais.

Viewed as "heretics" and as a potential fifth column for the U.S. or Israel, the Khomeini regime has robbed the Bahais of their rights as citizens in a way sickeningly reminiscent of Nazi Germany's treatment of German Jews before the

Holocaust," Abrams said.

Judaism, however, is a recognized religion and Jews can practice their faith and teach it to their children, Abrams said. He noted that "synagogues and religious schools operate, at least in Teheran" and the Jewish community has a representative in the Iranian parliament.

But, Abrams said, "the Khomeini regime is fiercely anti-Zionist and anti-Israel, with little distinction discernable between these sentiments and anti-Semitism. Iranian Jews have been forced to make anti-Israel statements in public and prominent Jews, particularly those who may have visited Israel during the Shah's regime, are always in danger of being denounced as Israeli agents. The loyalty of all Jews in Iran is suspect," Abrams said.

## May Day Celebrated In Israel

TEL AVIV (WNS) — May Day, the traditional workers' holiday, was observed in Israel May 1. Many schools were closed as were post offices and the Histadrut-owned Bank Hapoalim. Other banks remained open.

Histadrut and Labor Party leaders headed a May Day parade in Haifa. The slogan was "Stop the Collapse," a reference to Israel's economic woes. There were May Day rallies in other parts of the country.

The pro-Moscow Rakah (Communist) Party organized a parade in Nazareth with slogans calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state to exist alongside Israel. But May Day observances planned on the West Bank were cancelled at the last minute because of what the organizers called the "situation." No further explanation was given.

Nevertheless, Communist-backed trade unions held meetings where the appeal was for

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