

Staff Dissatisfaction

Recently my attention was drawn to dissatisfaction over these arrangements and I discussed the matter fully with the staff at a meeting. The main point made by their spokesman was that they were working a half-an-hour per day longer than most teachers in Liverpool and they did not see why they should continue to do so. I pointed out to them the many counter-vailing advantages which they have in this school:

1. The pupils are, for the most part, compliant and well-motivated and their parents take great interest in their work. This makes the life of the teacher on the whole very much easier and teaching is not the strain that it can be in some other schools.
2. The Foundation pays for extra staff and although the secular staff do not gain extra preparation periods, they do often have smaller classes.
3. The efforts of the auxiliary organisations in providing amenities and equipment for the school also help to make the teacher's lot easier. With one honourable exception, these auxiliary organisations have never received any support whatever from the secular staff. The teachers have been invited to co-operate but no pressure has been placed upon them to do so.
4. Whilst I am grateful to the few teachers who do arrange and control extra-curricular activities it must be said that the majority make no contribution of this kind. I have never, however, placed any constraint upon any teacher to do so.
5. On winter Friday afternoons and certain other occasions teachers finish their work early and on days such as Yom HaAtzmaut they are not required to arrive in school until 10 o'clock.
6. The majority of teachers have no duty laid upon them between five to nine and nine thirty and this time can be and should be regarded as a marking and preparation period. Since every teacher worth his salt takes work home in the evening, this enforced morning marking period is really no loss of time.

I reminded them that Jewish Religious Instruction was the *raison d'être* for our School, and I appealed to them to continue to support a system which functioned admirably. As professionals they should be prepared to place the interest of the pupils above their own. I suggested that they think the matter over carefully and hold a further meeting, with or without me, at which they would decide what they wished to do. One senior teacher, for whom I have much respect, stated that he considered the present arrangement gave non-Jewish pupils a bad start to the school day, in that they were insufficiently occupied between the end of the Christian Assembly and 9.30. After my meeting with the Staff, Mr. [REDACTED] and I established the following facts, which I conveyed to the staff.

1. Time gained by the staff through late starts and early finishes made up for about 22 minutes out of the daily extra 30 which they claimed to work.
2. There are other Liverpool schools, notably Catholic Grammar Schools, which work the same hours as we do, without the advantage that most of our staff have of a half-hour marking period in the morning.

Yesterday I received a memorandum, the essence of which was that at a meeting of twenty-two full-time staff, seventeen voted in favour of the following motion: "It is the wish of the full-time staff of this school to return to the working of the normal five-and-a-half hour day with effect from the 1st January, 1972."

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Number of Periods for Jewish Studies.

The field of Jewish studies covers a very wide range of subjects: Chumash, Nach, Rabbis, Biblical History, Religious Knowledge, Modern Jewish History, Barmitzva/Eshet Chayil, to quote just a few. Due to the very limited time allocated in the timetable to Jewish Studies it is not possible to devote more than one period per week (and often this is a short (assembly) period of only 25 minutes) to these subjects. Thus important subjects such as Chumash or Jewish History can receive only one period per week and Mishnah receives only one-third of a period! Some subjects have to be omitted completely for lack of time. It is thus obvious that we require a definite increase in the time devoted to Jewish Studies. In this context, may I say that I was very disturbed by the suggestion of Mr. Eleazer Marcus for a decrease in the time devoted to Jewish Studies and I want to take this opportunity to answer and correct a number of the points made by him in his letter to Mr. [redacted] dated 8th March, 1972. Mr. Marcus begins his letter by giving a table of the number of periods devoted weekly to (Modern) Hebrew and Religious Knowledge. Apart from being in several instances inaccurate this table is also misleading and gives a distorted picture, for the following reasons:

- (1). Whereas Modern Hebrew is only one subject, Jewish Studies as I have explained above is a generic term for at least a dozen subjects. (Incidentally, the term Religious Knowledge which Mr. Marcus used as the heading for his table on the Jewish Studies periods, is in fact only one of the subjects within the wide field of Jewish Studies.)

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- (2). Whereas all the Modern Hebrew periods for the first and second forms are of 35 minutes duration, 3 of the Jewish Studies periods for these forms are only of 25 minutes duration and in addition, during these short periods, a register must be taken and a slip with the absentees and late-comers prepared.

Thus a table showing the actual state of affairs at present would be of the form: Modern Hebrew 3, Chumash 1, Jewish History 1, Mishnah $\frac{1}{3}$ etc., thus showing that Modern Hebrew has 3 times as much time devoted to it as Chumash or Jewish History, 9 times as much as Mishnah etc. (Also if any of these Jewish Studies periods take place during the assembly period (i.e. 25 minutes duration) then a ratio of the time devoted to Modern Hebrew and these subjects will be greater still).

I also find it very difficult to understand why Mr. Marcus suggests that time be given to Modern Hebrew from the Jewish Studies periods - why doesn't he suggest they be taken from the periods of a secular subject?

In conclusion, whereas I would be very happy to see an increase in the number of periods devoted to Modern Hebrew, I cannot under any circumstances agree to them being taken from Jewish Studies periods. On the contrary, in order to carry out an effective full Jewish Studies programme, we require additional periods.

Page from my Memorandum dated June 1972, which in particular strongly criticized the suggestion by the Inspector of the Zionist Federation Educational Trust to increase the number of periods for Modern Hebrew at the expense of Religious Education.

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL, LIVERPOOL

JEWISH SUBJECTS IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS

by Rabbi Dr. C. Simons, Director of Jewish Studies

March 1974/Adar 5734.

The present weekly arrangement of periods within the timetable of the fourth and fifth years is as follows:-

- (1) English - 5 periods leading to 'O' level or C.S.E. Language and Literature.
- (2) Mathematics - 5 periods leading to 'O' level or C.S.E.
- (3) P.E. - 2 periods
- (4) Five subjects chosen from the options table - each occupies 5 periods and leads to 'O' level or C.S.E.
- (5) During the remaining three periods Christian pupils study Scripture Knowledge for 'O' level. Within these three periods, the Jewish pupils must fit in Modern Hebrew (including 'O'-level) Scripture Knowledge-('O'-level/CSE) and General Jewish Studies!

It is very hard to justify that in a school whose *raison d'être* is its Jewish Studies, out of a total of 40 weekly periods, 37 are devoted to secular studies and the remaining 3 must accommodate Modern Hebrew, S.K. and General Jewish Studies.

Obviously it is impossible to fit all these subjects into three periods and in an attempt to solve this problem, Jewish pupils in these years have an additional period before school each day. Such an arrangement creates problems regarding punctuality, attendance etc. Furthermore since these subjects are in the main being taught outside the official school hours, the pupils psychologically regard these subjects as less important than secular subjects and hence do not give them the respect they deserve.

A further problem of this present arrangement is that the majority of the fourth and fifth year periods take place simultaneously (during these assembly periods) and this causes limitations on the arrangement of staffing for these classes. In no secular subjects do the fourth and fifth years meet simultaneously.

One should also point out here that even with these early morning periods, the time that can be devoted to 'O' level Modern Hebrew and 'O' level/C.S.E. Scripture Knowledge is far less than that devoted to the various secular subjects. With the acceptance of my new 'O' level and C.S.E. syllabuses this problem has become far more acute since the examination is no longer just a knowledge of the Scriptures (which could partially be achieved as a home-reader) but an understanding of the principles and laws contained in the Bible and this requires class periods. The Jewish Studies staff are now repeatedly pointing out to me that it is quite impossible to get through the new syllabus with the present arrangement of periods.

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL

Minutes of extraordinary meeting of the Staff Association
24th June, 1974

Present: Bt Da Ra Jy RS Fl Br Wr Bk Ct Ph Mo Kt Ne Bn On P Sn
Ya Rd Nn Pa Sm

The meeting was called to discuss the headmaster's proposal concerning the school day, i.e. that three fourth years periods take place on a Tues. Thurs. and Fri. from 8.55 to 9.30 a.m., members of staff teaching during these periods being compensated by an extra free period. Members were informed that the Headmaster thought it reasonable that this free period be an 8th period when members would be free to leave school.

The general feeling of the meeting was still that a uniform start to the school day was the ideal to be pursued and that any further movement away from this ideal was unacceptable. It was the experience of all staff on early-morning duty that the staggered start was unsatisfactory and that teaching conditions between 8.55 and 9.30 were very difficult. It was pointed out that teachers of secular subjects were implying unwillingness to work in the conditions in which teachers of Jewish Studies now worked - and this was reaffirmed. This feeling was then tested by a vote on the proposal that the general principle of extending secular subjects to the assembly period was unacceptable to the Association. This proposal was passed by 19 votes to 4.

It was then proposed that, while rejecting the proposal as a permanent feature of the timetable, the Association should agree to working the three morning periods for this year only. This proposal was defeated by 10 votes to 6, with 7 abstaining.

The general principle was then reiterated that the Governors should decide the priorities of a Jewish School. Religious Studies should be established within the curriculum of a forty period week and the secular curriculum built around the requirements of Jewish Studies. This principle, put to a vote, was passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 1.20.

Minutes of meeting of General Staff Association to try and find a solution
to integrate the Jewish Studies periods into the regular school day.

27, DALE STREET.
LIVERPOOL, L2 2ND.

2nd May 1975

Dear Headmaster,

At the last meeting of the Jewish Studies Committee of the Schools the question was again discussed of the Jewish studies time-table in 4th and 5th years. During those years of the 8 periods only 3 are in the regular time-table, the other 5 precede the normal school day.

The Committee again reaffirmed its views that this was an unsatisfactory situation and that at least 2 of the 5 Assembly periods should be brought into the regular school-day. The Governors' representatives who were present accepted (as we have in the past) the force of this recommendation. For myself I believe it is a reasonable indeed unanswerable request.

I would therefore like you to accept that we have committed ourselves to the proposition that two of the Assembly periods in 4th and 5th years should be incorporated in the regular school-day. I would like you in conjunction with the staff to give immediate attention to the best method of implementing the proposal. It would seem good sense that no subject should lose a period in both the 4th and 5th years. Apart from that it seems a matter suited for staff consideration and decision

rather than Governors but you will appreciate that if our views can be of help to you, you have but to ask.

Yours Sincerely,

Henry L. Lachs

Henry L. Lachs