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BETH-JACOB EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ISRAEL

(Report attached to Letter #4490 dated March 25, 1949, from AJJDC-Jerusalem)

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The Beth Jacob Merkas maintains an educational network that differs from the rest of the educational currents in the country. This year an important change has taken place in the educational setup in the country with the Israeli government having undertaken the maintenance of grammar schools of all parties including Beth Jacob.

The Beth Jacob grammar schools are thus maintained this year by the government and the Beth Jacob Merkas has no special anxiety as regards teachers' salaries, rent and other expenditures. There is lack of space for additional classes but this problem is common to all schools and the government's educational department is concerned with it.

As to kindergartens, here too they are like the other kindergartens -- either private or supported by the government's institutions of assistance, municipality, etc. We have heard of substantial expenditures for the establishment of kindergartens, especially in Jerusalem, in the new sections (abandoned by the Arabs), but this is not a question of discrimination as regards the Beth Jacob kindergartens.

We have visited grammar schools in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv and we found classes full of children but as we have said before, they are now being maintained by the government.

Seminaries. The Beth Jacob seminaries are maintained as heretofore by the local administrations through subvention of the Beth Jacob Merkas. The main source of income is from tuition fees and the rest is from the JDC and other sources.

Of especial significance is the fact that at Beth Jacob's three seminaries (one in Jerusalem and two in Tel-Aviv) classes are conducted in the afternoon. Naturally, the administrations in this way save on the rent expenditure as the rooms which accommodate the grammar school classes in the morning are used by the seminary classes in the afternoon.

Afternoon classes permit some of the students in the higher grades to engage in teaching or do kindergarten work in the morning. It is to be noted that the instructors at the seminaries are mostly academicians and the curriculum includes all the necessary subjects for teachers, same as in the other seminaries. At the Beth Jacob seminaries the stress is laid on Judaica, to which many hours are devoted; thus, the young ladies who are graduated from Beth Jacob as teachers are more advanced in their studies of Judaism than the graduates of other seminaries.

There is also in Tel-Aviv a dormitory (small) for students of the seminary who are not from Tel-Aviv proper but from elsewhere. The problem of employment for the seminary graduates does not exist to date, because there is a great dearth of teachers in Israel and all of them secure work immediately upon completion of their course of study (five years).

This year, with the government having taken over responsibility for the Beth Jacob grammar schools, whose pay scale for teachers has risen to that of the rest of the teachers in the country -- the demand arose to raise the salaries of seminary teachers that has been low. There was the need to raise their salaries too though they had not reached the level of secondary schools and seminaries.

In Jerusalem the income from tuition fees have decreased because of the war, which left its mark especially on the city, and naturally the two factors have had a marked influence on the budget.

The government subsidy (mandate government - IL 875) that was extended in 1948 is open to question but there are prospects that a substantial portion will be forthcoming even this year.

The Beth Jacob Seminar in Jerusalem (Rehov David Yellin)

Classes at the seminary are conducted from one (1) in the afternoon to seven in the evening. There are five classes with approximately 100 students. The following subjects are taught: Torah and Rashi, Tanach, Judaica (laws, ethics & piety), Hebrew (grammar, literature and syntax), mathematics, general and Jewish history, nature study and physics, Palestinography, pedagogy and methodology, psychology, drawing, singing and craftsmanship.

There are eleven (11) teachers (part-time) and the number of hours a week is one-hundred fifty-seven (157). Rabbis Levin and Lieberman are the directors.

We visited the classes, sat in on courses and found the institution well organized. Of course, grammar school benches are not suitable for seminary students and there is no doubt that the institution needs new furnishings and additional improvements.

The institution is also about to begin a six-month kindergarten course for the young kindergarten teachers who need additional training. The course will include the following subjects: a study of the kindergarten (6 hours), nature study (2 hours), drawing and panelling (8 hours), Judaism (2 hours), craftsmanship (2 hours), child psychology and gymnastics. Instruction in this course will also be in the afternoon and the number of hours in the week will be twenty-five (25). We could not say anything about this establishment that does not as yet exist, but there is a need for it. They estimate the monthly budget to be from six to seven hundred pounds.

The seminary budget for 1948 added up, from what we were told, to the following:

Expenses

Salaries for teachers & manage.	IL 4,538.750
" " " " (debt)	350.000
Secretarial	325.000
Service	325.000
Rent & repairs	352.977
Furniture & Office expenses	169.755
Teaching aids & books	65.850
	<u>IL 6,127.332</u>

Income

Tuition	IL 2,377.850
From JDC through	
Merkas Beth Jacob	2,600.000
From Govt (mandate)	875.000
Miscellaneous	<u>204.660</u>
	IL 6,057.510

Their estimated budget for 1949 is:

Expenses

Teachers' salaries & manage.	IL 6,150.
Secretarial	300.
Service	300.
Rent & repairs	500.
Teaching aids & books	100.
Office expenses	450.
Furniture	500.
	<u>IL 8,300.</u>

Income

Tuition	IL 1,800.
From JDC through	
Merkas	3,600.
Government	?
Other sources	<u>250.</u>
	<u>IL 5,650.</u>

We do not understand the IL 500 expenditure for rent as the government pays the rent.

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The Seminary for Beth Jacob school and kindergarten teachers in Tel-Aviv (Rehov Gruzenberg 2) was established in 1937

Even in Tel-Aviv the Seminary is located at the quarters of the grammar school; the classes



are conducted in the afternoon from two to eight-forty. The teaching staff is composed of fine and distinguished pedagogues. There are only four classes up to 4. There is no fifth grade this year. The students number from 60-70. The curriculum is similar to that in Jerusalem with slight changes. The teachers are on a part-time basis and all of them teach mornings in various schools. There is a dormitory for out-of-town girls. Only sixteen young ladies eat there including five for whom the "Aliyat Hanoar" of the Jewish Agency pays IL 12.5 a month.

One cannot say that the dormitory is as it should be because the congestion is great and the girls cannot eat in one shift. The food is pretty good. They receive meat or fish several times a week. Some of them benefit from the dormitory free of charge. The regular fee is IL 20 a month but only one young lady pays this price, the rest pay less. They eat at the Dormitory three times a day and only nine and a half months.

Income for the Dormitory is IL 1,300 from students and 300 from various other sources, total IL 1,600; expenses are --- food IL 1,700, utensils and work ( ? ), 700, total IL 2,400.

The five students from the Aliyat Hanoar are at the dormitory this year. It looks as though the expenses are slightly exaggerated; perhaps they charged to Service the expenses of workers who come in the morning.

In addition to the Seminary there is a "Beth-Hamorah" with the aim to broaden and intensify the knowledge of the young school and kindergarten teachers especially in the field of practical pedagogy. Approximately twenty school and kindergarten teachers from Tel-Aviv and vicinity participate and come to listen to lectures on various subjects (Bible, History, Judaism, Psychology, Pedagogy and Nature Study), twice a week (Monday and Wednesday) and two evenings, devoted to theory and reading at the library of the institution. The estimated expense for 1949 is about five hundred IL as against the two hundred IL income from the teachers.

In 1948 the balance sheet showed:

Expenses - IL 3,707; Income - IL 3,027, and the deficit was IL 680.

The income includes IL 650 as assistance from the Beth Jacob Merkaz. The balance sheet is audited by a certified accountant. We heard no complaints here against the Beth Jacob Merkaz. They stressed the fact that they submit to the authority of the Merkaz in all educational and monetary matters.

Seminary for orthodox school and kindergarten teachers of "Beth Jacob Hechadash", Tel-Aviv. Rehov Yehuda Halevi 33

This Seminary was first established as a secondary school from which the girls, after completion of two or three classes would be transferred to the seminary on Grusenber Street in Tel-Aviv or Jerusalem. The principal, Mrs. Goldsmith-Gurary, acted against the Beth Jacob Merkaz and also opened classes four and five; hence the friction between this institution and the Merkaz Beth Jacob.

Here we heard bitter complaints about the Merkaz Beth Jacob not giving them part of the JDC allocation.

The Merkaz Beth Jacob claims that the JDC allocation was given before this new institution was established and therefore they are not obligated to give them part of the allocation. They are also opposed to the very existence of the institution as a seminary, since there is no need for two seminaries in Tel-Aviv, in addition to the one in Jerusalem.

The institution does not appear to be well organized. Classes are small, especially

the last three, and in no way is the number 131 students to be accepted.

We found about sixty girl students at the institution, or perhaps less. We can indeed see the claim of the Merkaz that the institution is ( not ? ) like a seminary by itself and can exist only as a secondary school with two or three classes.

Of course, the Merkaz Beth Jacob is not opposed to a special allocation in addition to the one they have been receiving so far, for Jerusalem, but they ask that if a special allocation is granted -- it should pass through the Merkaz thus enabling them to supervise the institution and give it the proper direction.

The expenditures of the new seminary amount to IL 1800 with a deficit of close to four hundred IL in 1948.

Jerusalem, March 17, 1949.

Transl. from Hebrew

4/13/49 - HW M

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