

Cheshvan 17th 5727  
October 31st, 1966

Mr. Jakob Michael  
211 Central Park West  
New York City

Dear Mr. Michael:

I am still under the impression of the extremely pleasant hour I spent with you yesterday evening. I left convinced of your profound interest in our area of discussion. Your questions conveyed a rich understanding of the historic significance of Torah education for our people.

Your telephone call this morning was most encouraging, and it is my pleasure to submit this memorandum as per your request. In thinking through the ideals of the forthcoming proposal, I was keenly aware of what its implementation could mean for the spiritual future of tens of thousands of our children in Israel.

The following is a basic proposal and will be followed with a supplementary one:

Chinuch Atzmai comprises two divisions; for the education of boys and girls respectively.

Chinuch Atzmai, which established the entire system, directly supervises their educational program, and is directly responsible for the maintenance of their budgets.

The girls' network consists of 125 schools, whose educational program is patterned after the original Beth Jacob movement in Poland. Beth Jacob was founded by the renowned Sura Schenirer, of blessed memory, and later spread throughout the countries of Europe. Prior to the second world war, the Beth Jacob movement was directly responsible for saving an entire generation of Jewish girls from assimilation and ignorance of Judaism. Its graduates revolutionized the character of the entire European Jewish community. Since the war, the Beth Jacob ideal has struck deep roots in both contemporary major Jewish communities, America and Israel -- but with a specially dramatic impact in Israel.



Just as the term Yeshiva has come to signify the standard type of Jewish education for boys, equally has the name of Beth Jacob become representative of Torah education for girls.

In the recent history of Beth Jacob in Israel, we have been faced with one crucial problem of major proportions. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, some 85% of the immigrants came from European countries, while only 15% were of Afro-Asian origin. The situation has currently reversed; 65% of the immigrants are currently of Afro-Asian origin, while only 35% originate elsewhere. The fact that 65% of the children of elementary school age have parents who themselves received no formal education, poses a crucial problem for our movement. To elevate the standard of education for these children requires the simultaneous lifting of their living standard. It is the aim of this proposal to provide Chinuch Atzmai's budget with the necessary wherewithal for elevating both the living standard and the standard of education of these tens of thousands of children.

It is our intention that the historic effect of your munificence, in making such a program possible, shall be common knowledge to the tens of thousands of Beth Jacob students in Israel, as well as to the parent community at large. We intend to place -- in the lobby or at the entrance of each of our 125 schools -- a plaque containing the following inscription:

"Erna Michael - Mother of the Beth Jacob Movement."

We should like to project a volume containing an account of your wife's life story and high-lighting those ideal aspects of her life which would serve as an inspiration to the students of Beth Jacob. The book would be distributed in the schools, and specific passages would be cited for the students on the day of her Yartzait. Likewise, on her yartzait day, special awards would be distributed bearing her name, to leading students in every class of the entire network. Special contests and examinations would be held as a means of selecting the "Erna Michael" awardees and awards would be distributed at special assemblies on her Yartzait day. Just as Sura Schenirer, of blessed memory, is recalled for all generations by tens of thousands of Beth Jacob students, as the founder of the movement, similarly, would the name of Mrs. Erna Michael be remembered as having made possible the elevation of Beth Jacob's standard of education at the present time of crucial transition in its history. Her name would forever be identified with the glory of the Torah integration



of a generation returning from exile to the land of Israel.

The above is a basic proposal.

As to the possibility of affixing the name of Erna Michael to a special division -- such as the high school division, for example -- of the Beth Jacob movement, may I propose the following:

In addition to the grade level (ages 6 to 14) division of Chinuch Atzmai, there are two additional divisions. One comprises childrens day nurseries for children under pre-school age level (2 to 6), while the other contains a chain of 23 secondary schools throughout the country. These high schools are the crowning importance to our system since they provide a vital means of educational continuity for our grade level pupils during the decisive teen age period of their lives. This division has an independent budget, which is not included in our elementary school budget.

The pre-school branch consists of a chain of 26 day nurseries for children aged 2 to 6, where special care is provided for children whose parents must both work for their daily bread in order to provide sustenance for the family. There are in addition large numbers of under-privileged families with many children, as well as children from numbers of broken homes who are special prey for the nefarious activities of the missionaries in Israel.

This pre-school network of 26 children's homes has already rescued many hundreds of children from the missionaries. These nurseries serve as a reservoir for the future students for our elementary schools, in addition to providing these under-privileged children with a fine educational head start program. The budget of these institutions is likewise completely separate from that of the elementary schools.

We propose to name both the pre-school and high school departments of our movement, "The Erna Michael Children's Day Nursery" and "The Erna Michael High Schools", hence, the blessed ~~name~~ <sup>name</sup> of Erna Michael will rest upon the entire national effort of our movement in Israel. Our high school and pre-school departments will bear her name directly. In every one of our elementary schools her name will live proudly and eternally in the life of the eternal people.



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If the above proposals meet with your approval, I should much appreciate an opportunity to meet with you again personally for further discussions on the matter.

Very sincerely yours,

Menachem Porush  
Member of Parliament  
Israel

MP:dg