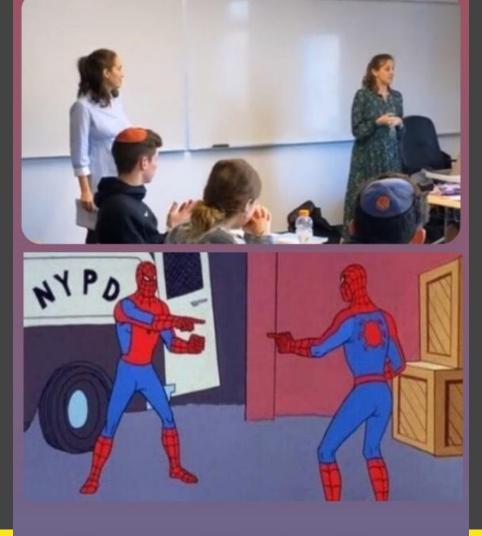
Town Hall #10

December 17, 2019

Meme of the Week:



By Sophie Handelman

Outfit of the Week



The Gist

- Some ultra-orthodox yeshiva day schools in New York are providing almost exclusively a Jewish education to their students, with no substantial education in subjects like English, math, etc.
- In response to the allegedly inadequate education, New York passed a regulation that would require that students in private schools be given a "substantially equivalent" education as provided in public schools

Substantial Equivalence

 during grades 1 through 6, mathematics, including arithmetic, science, and technology; English language arts; social studies; the arts; career development and occupational studies; health education, physical education, and family and consumer sciences. Instruction in these subjects may be integrated or incorporated into the syllabus or syllabi of other courses;

During grades 7 and 8, mathematics (two units of study); English language arts (two units of study); social studies (two units of study); science (two units of study); career and technical education, wherein the unit of study requirement may be initiated in grade 5 (one and three-fourths units of study); physical education (similar courses of instruction to those required in public schools pursuant to section 135.4 of this Title); health education (one-half unit of study); visual arts (one-half unit of study); music (one-half unit of study); library and information skills, which may in incorporated or integrated into any other subjects (the equivalent of one period per week in grades 7 and 8); career development and occupational studies, which may be incorporated or integrated into any other subjects;

 During grades 9 through 12, instruction in English (four units of study); social studies (four units of study); mathematics (three units of study); science (three units of study); health (one-half unit of study); physical education (two units of study); the arts (one unit of study);

The State's Perspective

 "With the regulations, we will ensure that all students — no matter which school they attend — have the benefit of receiving the education state law says they must have"- State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia

The Orthodox Perspective

"The regulations would require our schools to limit the instruction we offer in Jewish studies and require us to <u>replace</u> them with classes in theater, arts, dance, consumer and family science, and <u>other subjects that our parents and our school leaders do not want</u>. <u>Yeshiva education is not identical to public school education</u>. In addition to a robust secular studies curriculum, we offer our students an education that includes studies in Jewish law, ethics and customs. <u>Parents make that choice when they opt for yeshiva.</u>"

- Rabbi Yaacov Sebbag, educator at a New York yeshiva

Right Off the Bat

- Who do you side with, the yeshivas or the State of New York?
- Should the yeshivas be able to educate their students entirely how they see fit or should they have to teach secular studies?

If you side with New York...

- Does a "proper" education trump religious liberties?
- What if a population does not value a secular education?
- How do you balance the value of education with the value of religious liberty?
- How much secular education should the schools be required to provide? The same as public schools or a very basic education?
- Does this law target Jews/ is it anti-semitic?

If you side with the Yeshivas...

- Consider the fact that these are primarily children receiving an education that their parents are determining for them. Would this hinder their ability to function outside of the Orthodox world?
 - Can parents educationally limit their potential for lives outside of the Orthodox world?
- Does society have a responsibility to ensure that all children receive an education that enables them to participate in democracy and the workplace?
- Is there an inherent value to education?
 - Does that value change based upon the type of education? Ex: religious vs secular.

The government's role...

- Is secular education a compelling interest of the state? In all cases?
- How much authority should the government have to impose their vision of education on a religious minority that would prefer to be left alone?
- Is the government attempting to secularize Jews? Or merely holding everyone to the same standards?

Power of Parents

- How much power should parents have to send their children to schools that emphasize religious subjects at the expense of topics such as science or math?
- Should children have more of a say in where they go to school?

As Jews...

- Should we defend other Jews no matter what?
- How does an increasingly anti-Semitic world change our obligations to fellow Jews?