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Lipset, Seymour Martin, 1991-1993.

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George Mason University

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FEB 8 1991

February 1, 1991

Professor Morton L. Mandel
COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION
IN NORTH AMERICA
4500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Dear Mort:

I had agreed to serve on the new Council in a phone conversation with Virginia Levin. But if you want my acceptance in writing, here it is.

I look forward to seeing you in March.

Cordially,

Marty
Seymour Martin Lipset
Hazel Professor of Public Policy

SML/at

Memorandum

TO: Steering Committee/CIJE
FROM: Shulamith Elster
RE: Seymour Martin Lipset
DATE: November 3, 1991

I. On the CIJE

Marty recently spoke with Seymour about the CJF study as well and other CIJE activities so he was up-to-date about our work. He was sorry to have missed the August meeting (due to his accident). He maintains his very strong interest in what is going on.

He clearly has gotten "the message" about the study, was apologetic about the delay in his report citing difficulties with the data as well as with the graduate students who have been working with him.

2. On the Lead Communities

This is THE project in which he has the most interest. He traced his own involvement back to the introduction of the Flexner Report to stimulate thinking on the subject. He endorses the CIJE adaptation of the concept and would perhaps even "vote for" a single community or focus rather than many if it meant a chance to really bring about significant change.

3. Best Practices/Programmatic Options

We spoke at length about the college-age population and how exemplary programs on campuses might work to reverse some of the demographic trends. His work on the Hillel Commission years ago gives him particular insights and wisdom in this area. Our conversation made me think again about the RRC/ Hillel proposal, the selection of programmatic areas for Best Practice and other ways that the CIJE could work to bring about improvement. I will speak with Barry. I've called Richard Joel at Hillel to set up a time to meet: a good role for Joel as a Senior Policy Advisor.

4. GA/ Annual Meeting

He will not be attending the GA. He has the Annual Meeting on his calendar. Seymour spoke with him about the agenda for the meeting.

5. Footnote

I spent two hours with him on Friday afternoon. I went out to George Mason University in Fairfax to meet him. In short, he is very interested in our work. I think he has a great deal to offer: I plan to contact him again about the college issue.

Be careful about
suggesting continuum
fr. Outh → Cons. → Reform
as becoming less Jewish.
(p. 27)

file - Lipset

American Jewry: Thriving but worried

While intermarriage increases and Jewish education decreases, US Jewry is rising in profile in terms of wealth and politics, Prof. Seymour Martin Lipset told Yosef Goell

IN the mid-1980s, the US Jewish Establishment was given a shot-in-the-arm dose of optimism regarding the fate of its community, after a period of growing concern over the long-term increase in its intermarriage rate. Some Cassandras were loudly proclaiming American Jewry's impending demise.

Then came Charles Silberman's book *A Certain People*. Using the accepted statistics on the rate of intermarriage, the tendency of young American Jews to postpone marriage and to have fewer children, and the decline of the traditional two-parent nuclear family, he went on to argue that the American Jewish community would actually increase.

The thesis was based on the claim that Jews were not opting out of marriage but simply postponing it; that in many cases of intermarriage, the non-Jewish spouse eventually converted; and that in very many such marriages the children were being raised as Jews. The growing phenomenon of intermarriage, ran his argument, should not be seen as a threat but as an infusion of new blood into an ageing American Jewish community.

Last week, Prof. Seymour Martin Lipset, the leading American political sociologist, presented an analysis of the 1990 national population survey of American Jews, and its implications for Jewish continuity, to an audience at the Hebrew University Senate in Jerusalem.

Lipset, recently retired from Stanford University but still affiliated with its Hoover Institution and teaching at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, was somewhat more pessimistic in his findings.

Over half of the marriages of US Jews since 1985 have been to non-Jews, he noted; and the number of non-Jewish spouses in such marriages converting was declining steadily. The population survey also found a steady decline in the proportion of Jews involved in Jewish education. Parents most likely to send their children to some form of Jewish education were those who themselves had it.

The survey had found that a fifth of the 5.5m. Jews saying they were

part of the "core Jewish community" identified themselves as "secular," and defined their Jewishness by culture and ethnicity rather than by religion.

Of the 4.4m. who said they were Jewish "by religion," one-third were Reform, one third Conservative, but only 5 percent Orthodox. "Only one quarter of the children of the Orthodox continue themselves to be Orthodox," Lipset said.

Although the number of Jewish day schools and the pupils attending them has been growing, the term "some form" of Jewish education refers to the majority of Jewish children who attend very partial Sunday schools or other once- or twice-a-week sessions, which usually culminate upon the child's bar or bat mitzva. Many Jewish educators question the value of this form of education and the impact it actually has on the Jewish identity of the next generation of American Jews.

LIPSET HAS been to Israel scores of times at the invitation of many Israeli government, academic and professional institutions - this time to advise the Mandel Institute for Jewish Educational Research, headed by Prof. Seymour Fox, on the implications of the survey findings for its educational projects.

Noting the high correlation between high family income and the readiness to send children to Jewish day schools, Lipset pointed to their enormously high cost. A family with two children in Jewish schools has to pay well over \$10,000 a year for their education, a heavy burden even for those with comfortable incomes.

Substantial subsidizing of such Jewish education from community sources would be crucial in persuading and enabling a growing number of Jewish families to give their children Jewish education to do so. A problem is that the well-to-do leaders of Jewish communities and institutions usually find it difficult to admit that there are many poor or middle-class-income Jews.

In this regard, Lipset thinks a growing role would be played by family foundations such as the Mandel Foundation, which he predicted

would take over more and more from communal institutions such as the United Jewish Appeal.

The survey findings confirmed earlier perceptions of the high educational profile of American Jews. From age 18 to 24, some 85 percent were at, or had been to, university, many to the best and most prestigious such institutions. In the 30 top American universities, Jews on the average constitute 30 percent of the faculties.

Even more dramatic is the position of the Jews as possibly the richest identifiable ethnic community in the US. Jews account for 40 percent of the 400 wealthiest families in the US and 25 percent of the 100 richest. Such extremely wealthy Jews are channeling more and more of their personal wealth into family foundations, Lipset noted.

Jews are also more prominent than ever in politics - eight Jewish senators in the 100-member Senate, 31 congressmen in the House of Representatives and a large number of influential Jews in state and local politics and in all-important political and professional advisory bodies.

But none of these extraordinarily impressive educational, financial and political achievements, Lipset noted, attenuates the age-old Jewish sense of foreboding. Very many American Jews believe that antisemitism continues to be a very serious threat, though few could give personal instances in which they had been exposed to even mild forms of antisemitism.

But there is very much a feeling that Jews cannot trust the Gentile world. Illustrating this clash between perception and reality, Lipset noted that several years back, when the Jewish Dianne Feinstein was serving as mayor of San Francisco and the congressmen from the four districts around the city had all been Jewish, 60 percent of the respondents to a survey among Jews had said they agreed with the statement that "A Jew didn't stand a chance of being elected to Congress."

Lipset's explanation: People have a tendency never to let reality and the facts get in the way of their gut feelings.



Seymour Martin Lipset

(Sunphot)

Super-liberals

THE American Jewish community is politically extremely liberal and "possessed of a social-democratic ethos." Of all the assertions by Prof. Seymour Martin Lipset in a recent lecture here, this one came in for the most heated challenge from one of the respondents and from some members of the audience.

He traced that ethos back to the East European Jewish immigrants of the turn of the century, many of whom had been socialists in the Old Country, and were to become founders of the American socialist movement, many of its trade unions, and readers of the socialist *Daily Forward*.

Today, he said, that ethos still expresses itself in the extreme liberalism of American Jews, which is often at odds with their enormous growth in wealth. They are the only community in America in which the overwhelming majority continues to vote Democratic, ostensibly against its own particularistic economic interests.

He added "They are the only group in the US today which favors higher taxes," because of their sensitivity to America's pressing social and educational needs.

Those early radical Jewish immigrants to America came from a very similar background to that of the early socialist pioneers who had migrated to Ottoman, later British-ruled Palestine at about the same time, and who went on to found Israel, Lipset thought. "And they don't especially like what's been going on politically in Israel for a long time; this is especially true for most Jewish university students."

Because of these negative attitudes, he claimed, "as of now, Israel constitutes a negative factor for Jewish continuity in the US." The upshot of these attitudes, he added, is that "the vast majority of American Jews will be overjoyed if Labor wins the Israeli elections."

This was challenged vehemently by Bar-Ilan University political sociologist Charles Liebman, one of the panel respondents. While paying obeisance to Lipset as the greatest of political sociologists, he asserted that he was all wrong in his claim that the early East European Jewish immigrants to the US resembled, and actually came from the same background as, the young socialist *halutzim* pioneers of the early waves of immigration to this country.

Y.G.

file - lipset

AUG 23 1993

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19 August 1993

Morton Mandel
CIJE
1750 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115

Dear Mort:

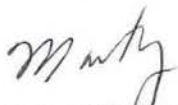
Thank you for your letter of August 13 which reached me on my return to Virginia. As you may know, I have been away for most of the summer, and I have been busy particularly as President of the American Sociological Association, which just finished its annual meeting.

I was glad to see the good news reported in the letter, particularly that we now have some full time staff. They sound impressive.

I have been looking forward to attending the August 26th meeting, but unfortunately that may be difficult because of some major family obligations. I have a 90 year old aunt who is dying of lung cancer and the family has decided to have a big function in her honor.

In any case I will be back to report as to whether I can come. Please give my best to everyone.

Cordially,



Seymour Martin Lipset
Hazel Chair of Public Policy

George Mason University

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4 June 1993

JUN 14 1993

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Morton Mandel
Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education
PO Box 94553
Cleveland, OH 44101

Dear Mort:

Thank you for the report. Things sound good. I am sorry, however, to learn that Shulzmith will be leaving. She will be hard to replace.

Regrettably, I may not be able to attend the August 26th meeting. I am spending the summer in California and am scheduled to return on August 28th. If possible, I will try to change my schedule.

This last week here has been hectic, in part because of good things. I am receiving two honorary degrees, one from HUC (in Cincinnati) and the other from Boston Hebrew College.

You can reach me during the summer at The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305,

Have a good summer.

As ever,

Marty

Seymour Martin Lipset
Hazel Chair of Public Policy