March 29-April 4, 2019

The Jewish path in America has not always been an easy one. The acceptance of Judaism as a mainstream American religion equal to that of others did not begin until World War II. The Jewish WarVeterans Bureau (JWB) was formed in 1918 “Making Judaism Safe for America: World War I and the Origins of Religious Pluralism” (New York University Press). Although some acceptance began during the first part of the 20th century, Jews still experienced economic antisemitism even after World War II. Some Jews tried to change their names rather than changing their names, as discussed in “A Rosenberg By Any Other Name: A History of Jewish Name Changing in America” by Kirsten Fermaglich. Together, these two books offer insights into American Jewish history and the changing perception of Jews by their fellow citizens. Changing one’s name has always been difficult for those in the 21st century to grasp – is that the Protestant outlook was so ingrained in the American mindset that most people considered the divisions between religions, appearing only as the seemingly neutral ground on which society rested. The idea of a non-religious Protestant affected Jews and Catholicism. The JWB worked to practice their own religions, and be fully accepted.

Cooperman shows how the definition of Protestantism as a secular category was changed by the government during World War I. Her main focus is on the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB), an organization formed by the “old guard” to help American soldiers. The JWB worked to help new immigrants from eastern and central Europe while they were in the armed forces. The JWB worked to gain acceptance by the government as the official representative of American Jews in order to provide services for Jewish soldiers, such as the Knights of Columbus sought to provide services for the Catholic ones. The government originally picked the YMCA to be the organization that distributed leisure activities to soldiers. The military saw the YMCA as non-sectarian, even though the organization proselytized, something that disturbed the Catholic Church and Jewish organizations. The JWB was partly because the JWB sought to make Jewish religious practices resemble that of American Protestantism. For example, when Jewish groups pushed for kosher food for Jewish soldiers, the JWB decided not to request that from the YMCA. Since the purpose of the organization was to show the military that Jews were like their fellow Americans, saying that special food was necessary would have no doubt disturbed the military rather than similarities. Cooperman also suggests that JWB had specific ideas about what a Jewish American man should be like: “He should be athletic and good looking, and have a hairstyle that appealed to his personal, open, liked, all, and possessed of intuitive good sense and pride in his Judaism, but not overly punctilious about religious observance.” This idea did fit well with those who were more religiously observant.

For draftees, language served as a barrier for those immigrants who wanted to practice their own religions, and be fully accepted. In the military, the JWB worked to adapt to the English language and American culture. Difficulties also arose from antisemitism: Jews were subjected to labels and their only “jews” – socialism, Zionism, etc. – that were considered suspect. The JWB hoped to ameliorate these problems with their help. The military saw the JWB as a non-sectarian, American culture and create friendships between Christians and Jews. Some soldiers definitely wanted a Jewish space where they could relax and feel at home. The JWB worked with local communities to provide connections with other Jews, particularly “good Jewish girls.” This was to remind the men of their communal obligations so they would be upstanding citizens after they left the service. The line was intermarriage: the organization believed there was a difference between the public sphere – where the soldiers were expected to be good citizens like everyone else – and the private sphere, where they were expected to remain Jewish and marry Jewish women.

By the time World War II arrived, the US government had formed another group to help all soldiers: the United Service Organization – also known as the USO – became the umbrella group for all service related religious groups. Now, religious organizations no longer had to pretend they were non-sectarian or appeal to all soldiers. According to the article, “What It’s Like to Be Jewish and Judaism had something of crucial value to contribute to the welfare of the country as a whole, and that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were equally American. That fact plays an important role in Fermaglich’s study of name changing. In fact, the general understanding about name change is wrong – a few Jews changed their names at official Ellis Island and most Jews who changed their names did not opt out of the Jewish community. The opposite was in fact true: “By the 1950s and 1960s, the number of Jews who sound more American so they would have greater economic opportunities, but most remained involved with the Jewish See “Americans” on page 8

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Under New York Law

1. The name of the limited liability company (“LLC”) is JENNINGS Property Management, LLC.
2. The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the LLC with the Secretary of State of New York was February 20, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the LLC shall be located is Broome County, New York.
3. The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Endicott, Broome County, New York.
4. The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against the LLC may be served. The post office address at which the Secretary of State shall mail process against it may be served. The post office address is: 40 Lewis St., Binghamton, NY 13901. Purpose: any lawful activities.


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1. The name of the limited liability company (“LLC”) is Off the Shelf Books, LLC.
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continuation of page 4

...them with safety, security, and opportunity.” Before the U.S. entered the war, Nazi propaganda was used against Jews: Jewish stores were picketed and synagogues were vandalized. Jews were being seen as a race apart – one that did not participate in American life. Fermaglch notes where there were still problems after the U.S. entered the war: “Young Jewish men’s and women’s efforts to find jobs associated in fact or fiction, the writers tend to disparage those who made a change. Those writers seem blind to the economic discrimination in the public sphere. This would not prevent active within the Jewish community and with Jewish organizations. The idea behind a name change was to prevent those who changed their names were sometimes condemned for trying to disguise their Jewishness. The fear was that they were trying to assimilate and leave the community. While a small proportion did leave, most remained active within the Jewish community and with Jewish organizations – focusing on parts of 20th century Jewish American history – making Judaism Safe for America” and “A Rosenberg By Any Other Name” offer unique windows into Jewish Judaism will want to add them to their bookshelves. Readers may enjoy the fact that these works help them better understand contemporary American reactions to Judaism. 

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

IDF positions hundreds of soldiers in Gaza border

Reservists for air-defense units and two additional brigades of Israel Defense Forces were called to the Gaza border region following the launch of a long-range missile from Gaza, which destroyed a residential building and injured seven people, including three children, on March 25. The call-up will bring more than 1,000 additional Israeli soldiers to the Gaza border, and will be comprised of an infantry and an armored brigade. Several reservists in the Iron Dome air-defense division and other select units were also called in. Following the attack on Mishmish, in central Israel, which occurred at 2:50 am on March 25, Palestinian terrorist groups began immediately evacuating their positions throughout Gaza in anticipation Israeli counter-strikes. Israeli military officials have already begun to hold briefings with heads of local government in communities near Gaza to prepare them for strikes and a serious uptick in violence along the border. Though the IDF has not issued any specific safety instructions, it has encouraged all citizens to be prepared to find shelter immediately in the event of a siren.

Bipartisan bill introduced to sanction financial supporters of Hamas

A bipartisan bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives the week of March 22 to sanction financial backers of Hamas. Introduced by Reps. Brian Mast (R-FL), Michael McCaul (R-TX), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) and Eliot Engel (D-NY), who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Palestinian International Terrorism Support Prevention Act, if enacted, would slap financial penalties on foreign persons, agencies and governments that assist Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad or their affiliates. Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad are U.S.-designated terrorist groups.

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Lawn equipment: keep safety in mind

(NAPSI) – When spring is on its way, home owners are often eager to get outside and spruce up their yards. It’s important when doing so to keep safety in mind. “Before you use a mower, trimmer, blower, chain saw, pruner or other piece of outdoor power equipment this season, it’s important to refresh yourself on handling and safety procedures,” Kris Koppenheffer, and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, an international trade association representing outdoor power equipment manufacturers, small engine and utility vehicle manufacturers and suppliers.

“We all enjoy to get outside and enjoy the living landscape after a long winter, but take the time to do basic maintenance now to ensure your equipment operates safely for the season and is ready to get the job done.” These six tips can help: 1. Read your owner’s manual. Follow all guidelines for your outdoor power equipment and familiarize yourself with the controls. If you have lost your manual, look it up online (and save a copy on your computer for easy reference in the future). See “Lawn” on page 9

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