



Off the Shelf

Turning Jews into Americans

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

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 I, at least according to Jessica Cooperman's "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 ease their economic future by changing their names, something discussed in "A Rosenberg By Any Other Name: A History of Jewish Name Changing in America" by Kirsten Fermaglich (New York University Press). Together, the two books offer insights into American Jewish history and the changing perception of Jews by their fellow citizens.

Perhaps the most interesting fact – and one that may be difficult for those of us in the 21st century to grasp – is that the Protestant outlook was so ingrained in the American mindset that most people considered the religion nonsectarian. Cooperman notes "for much of American history, Protestantism seemed so naturally intertwined with the institutions of American life that it was almost invisible, appearing only as the seemingly neutral ground on which society rested." The idea of a non-religious Protestantism affected Jews and Catholics who wanted to practice their own religions, and be fully accepted.

Cooperman shows how the definition of Protestantism as secular changed through policies instituted by the U.S. government during World War I. Her main focus is on the Jewish Welfare Board, an organization formed by the "old guard" of American Jewish leadership to help Americanize new immigrants from eastern and east-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, much as the Knights of Columbus sought to provide services for the Catholic ones. The government originally picked the YMCA to be the only organization to offer leisure activities to soldiers. The military saw the YMCA as nonsectarian, even though the organization proselytized, something that disturbed the Catholic Church and Jewish organizations.

The JWB was not equally accepted by all branches of Judaism. That was partly because the JWB sought to make Jewish religious practice 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 government. 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 highlight their difference rather than their 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, dignified in his bearing, personable, open, liked by all, and possessed of intuitive good sense and pride in his Judaism, but not overly punctilious about religious observance." Of course, this idea did not sit well with those who were more religiously observant.

For draftees, language served as a barrier for those immigrants whose native tongue was Yiddish. Being in the military meant adapting to the English language and American culture. Difficulties also arose from antisemitism: Jews were disliked for their foreignness and their interest in "isms" – socialism, Zionism, etc. – that were considered suspect. The JWB hoped to ameliorate these problems with programs and classes that would help these soldiers accept 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 become upstanding citizens after they left the service. Where the JWB drew 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 U.S. 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 groups no longer had to pretend they were nonsectarian or appeal to all soldiers. According to Cooperman, "the USO affirmed that Jews and Judaism had something of crucial value to contribute to the welfare of the country as a whole, and that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews stood side by side as equally valuable contributors to the moral welfare of the country."

Cooperman admits that it was not until the 1950s that Judaism was truly seen as an equal partner – with Protestants, Catholics and Jews being equally American. That fact plays an important role in Fermaglich's study of name changing in the United States. Fermaglich notes that no one has seriously studied Jewish name changing. In fact, the general understanding about name changing is wrong: few Jews' names were changed by officials at Ellis Island and most Jews who changed their names did *not* opt out of the Jewish community. The opposite was in fact true: Jews changed their names in order to make themselves 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 NIYA NICOLE LLC. Arts. Of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 2/12/2019. Office Location: Broome Co. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom service of process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Niya Carrington, 2011 Chatterton Avenue, Bronx, New York 10472. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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Notice of Formation of Goldenrod Studios Design, LLC. Arts. Of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 3/4/2019. Office Location: Broome Co. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom service of process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Erin Slavik, P.O. Box 285, Binghamton, New York 13903. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Hemp Geek LLC. Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/22/19. Office: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 279 Front St, Binghamton NY 13905. Purpose: Retail Store

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: The Back 40 Acres, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was November 30, 2018. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Alexandra Sullivan, Esq., 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

Notice of Formation

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CONTRACTING LLC was formed by the filing of Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State on February 5, 2019. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process to the company at 265 Greenwood Road, Lisle, NY 13797, the principal office of the company, which is located in Broome County. The company is authorized to conduct any lawful act or activity except one which requires some other business entity or natural person to be formed or used.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Lucas Little Enterprises, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was March 19, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Hurd Development, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was March 19, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

Notice of Formation of Nova Lehigh JV 1 LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/29/19. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may

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Notice of Formation of CGC Memorial Properties LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 02/26/19. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 64 Sweetland Hill Rd., Chenango Forks, NY 13746. Purpose: any lawful activities.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY UNDER NEW YORK LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY LAW

1. The name of the limited liability company ("LLC") is JENNINGS ENVIRONMENTAL, LLC.
2. The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is MARCH 21, 2019.
3. The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
4. The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 113 Hawley Street Binghamton, New York, 13901.
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Notice of Qualification of RENEW PC 4 LLC. Authority filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/11/19. Office location: Broome County. LLC formed in Delaware (DE) on 09/11/17. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: c/o Renew Energy Partners, LLC, 745 Atlantic Ave., 8th Fl., Boston, MA 02111. Address to be maintained in DE: National Registered Agents, Inc., 160 Greentree Dr., Ste. 101, Dover, DE 19904. Arts of Org. filed with the DE Secy. of State, 401 Federal St. #3, Dover, DE 19901. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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Americans.....Continued from page 4

community. They just made the same distinction between the public and private spheres of American life as did the JWB: they were not identified by their religion at work, but lived a Jewish life at home.

Fermaglich notes that "name changing was an important and widely-practiced phenomenon among New York Jews in the 20th century. Between 1917 and 1967, thousands of American-born New York Jews submitted name-changing petitions as families in order to combat antisemitism, find jobs, and receive an education. In fact, Jewish names represented in the New York City Civil Court name-changing petitions are far out of proportion to their numbers in the city, suggesting that legal name changing was a Jewish behavior during this era." During that time period, Jews were starting to enter the middle class, but often found themselves discriminated against because of their names. This occurred whether they were applying to colleges, the Civil Service or private businesses. Most of the name changing petitions did not address the idea of antisemitism: rather, people wrote they wanted to change their names because they were difficult to pronounce or spell. Two name-change petitions that did address the issue were submitted by non-Jews with Jewish sounding names: they wanted to change their names because of the problems caused by people thinking they were Jewish.

The petitions for name changes soared during World War II. Fermaglich believes that during this time "antisem-

Jar.....Continued from page 6

mirrors), or was worn as an amulet around the neck. Bes usually appears as a kind of bearded dwarf with a large face, protruding eyes and tongue sticking out when he is wearing a feather hat. The grotesque figure is apparently intended to evoke joy and laughter, and drive away the evil spirits.

The figure as a protector was apparently adopted by the Phoenicians, and many such amulets and Bes vessels have been found in numerous Persian Period settlements along the coast. Such vessels and amulets were also found in Persia itself, in Shushan, Persepolis and other cities, reaching there by Egyptian craftsmen who operated there as part of the international trade economy of the period.

itism grew to its greatest heights in American history... thousands of Jews came to believe that officially reshaping their personal, familial, and racial identities would provide 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. Fermaglich notes there were still problems after the U.S. entered the war: "Young Jewish men's and women's efforts to find jobs associated with the war, to serve honorably in the military, and to scale the military hierarchy sometimes met with exclusion and humiliation, and their distinctive names were frequently at the heart of these experiences." The end of World War II did not end discrimination, however. That continued into the 1970s. It was only after the passing of civil rights legislation that Jews began to move away from changing their names.

Misconceptions about Jewish name changing still exists. In the past, 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. The idea behind a name change was to prevent discrimination in the public sphere. This would not prevent people from practicing Judaism or joining Jewish religious and secular institutions in their private lives. Fermaglich notes that even today, when people discuss name changing in fact or fiction, the writers tend to disparage those who made a change. Those writers seem blind to the economic and social realities of that time, especially the antisemitism that was common in the U.S. during those years.

Both "Making Judaism Safe for America" and "A Rosenberg By Any Other Name" offer unique windows into Jewish American history – focusing on parts of 20th century Jewish history that are often forgotten. Although scholarly works, both are easy for a layperson to read and each contains a fascinating amount of information – far too much to be discussed in this review. Both books complement each other and reading them together offers greater depth than reading either alone. Anyone interested in 20th century American

Judaism will want to add them to their bookshelves. Readers may also find 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 Mishmeret in central Israel, which occurred at 5:20 am on March 25, Palestinian terror 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," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, an international trade association representing outdoor power equipment, small engine and utility vehicle manufacturers and suppliers.

"We're all eager 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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