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JESSICA COOPERMAN

Throughout World War I and during the period of demobilization, the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) worked alongside the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a Protestant organization, and The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic organization, as a civilian partner to the U.S. War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA). In early 1919, just months after the end of the war, Raymond Fosdick, chairman of the CTCA, speaking at the annual meeting of the JWB, assessed the wartime achievements of the three partners by asserting, "The fences have disappeared; the sectarian lines have vanished" in work carried on not as "Jewish work or Protestant work or Catholic work," but as "fundamentally an American work … for all the troops in the camps without regard to faith."[1]

Audience members, men and women who had devoted their time, money, and energy to the welfare of soldiers, must have been pleased to hear Fosdick praise their efforts and the harmony achieved among these different religiously based organizations. For those involved in founding the Jewish Welfare Board, it must have been particularly gratifying to have a high-ranking government official like Fosdick describe its work as fundamentally American. Less than two years earlier, in April 1917, when the United States had entered the war, the JWB had met with a far more skeptical view of what a Jewish organization could contribute to the welfare of American soldiers. The U.S. War Department had entered World War I committed to building a nonsectarian program of welfare services for soldiers, but it had understood "nonsectarianism" in distinctly Protestant terms. Over the course of conflict, the JWB managed to change official conceptions of the place of Judaism within the American military, and to advocate for a more pluralistic notion of religion in America.

American religious pluralism is most often thought of as a phenomenon of the post-World War II era, a triumph of postwar liberal ideology and a product of the social shifts caused by military service during that

1. Raymond Fosdick's address to the annual meeting of the JWB, *JWB First Annual Report* (New York, 1919), p.12.

war.[2] Ideas about pluralism, however, originated earlier and flourished in the 1910s in places such as the pages of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association's (IMA) *Menorah Journal* and the writing of one of the Harvard Menorah Society's founding members, philosopher Horace Kallen.[3] Kallen would go on to argue that ethnic "cultural pluralism" was one of the cornerstones of American democracy. Some of the IMA's early supporters, however, men like Jacob Schiff, Cyrus Adler, Julian Mack, and Irving Lehman, were deeply involved in the establishment of the JWB. They saw the welfare work done on behalf of American soldiers as an opportunity to advance a vision of pluralism that was tied to religious belief and practice, and supported by government policy.

During World War I, as a result of the interventions of the JWB, the U.S. government gave official sanction to a new vision of the types of moral guidance and religious observance young men needed in order to be good soldiers and responsible citizens. Judaism was recognized by the state, along with Protestantism and Catholicism, as a "fundamentally American" religion. While such recognition did not immediately transform the United States into a nation committed to broad conceptions of pluralism, it played a crucial role in advancing the idea that religious pluralism was central to American identity, and that the United States was a country of three faiths: Protestant, Catholic and Jewish.[4] Welfare programs for World War I soldiers thus marked a critical moment of experimenting with ideas about pluralism and with the possibility of transforming pluralism from a philosophic idea into a state-mandated reality.

The Welfare of Soldiers and the Commission on Training Camp Activities

In 1917, progressive reformer Newton Baker headed the U.S. War Department. Baker had come to Washington after serving as mayor of Cleveland, where he attracted national attention with his campaign

2. For a discussion of pluralism during World War II and in the postwar period, see Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2004) and Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)

3. On Kallen and other Jewish intellectuals, see Daniel Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

4. For a classic post-World War II articulation of the idea that the United States is a country of three faiths, see Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

to stamp out vice by providing citizens with wholesome, alcohol-free entertainment. He became Secretary of War in 1916 and immediately set out to reform and "improve" the morals and behavior of American servicemen.

Baker grew concerned about the physical and spiritual welfare of soldiers after receiving reports that, during the Mexican Expedition of 1916, bars and brothels had surrounded the men deployed to the border, and incidents of drunkenness, debauchery and venereal disease had run high among them.[5] Baker saw this behavior as a threat not only to military readiness, but also to these men's futures as husbands, fathers and citizens. He appointed Raymond Fosdick to investigate the situation and make recommendations to prevent such conditions in future military operations. On his return from the border, Fosdick testified before Congress, "[T]he fellows went to the devil down there because there was absolutely nothing to do … [O]ut of sheer boredom, they went to the only places where they were welcome … the saloon and the house of prostitution."[6]

As the country prepared for its entry into World War I, Baker established the Commission on Training Camp Activities to oversee the provision of welfare services to soldiers and he named Fosdick as its chairman.[7] Baker charged the CTCA with creating a clean and morally uplifting military by helping each man don what he called an "invisible armor" designed to protect him from temptation. In place of the bars and brothels found on the Mexican border, the CTCA would provide wholesome activities, such as athletic competitions, lectures, classes, reading rooms, sing-a-longs and theatrical performances, as well as social and spiritual services—all designed to boost morale and promote patriotism, self-sacrifice, teamwork, fair play, physical fitness, temperance and sexual self-restraint. Both Baker and Fosdick anticipated that soldiers would receive a healthy dose of moral guidance through these services, but they envisioned the program as nonsectarian and open to all American soldiers, regardless of their religion.

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5. Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War*, volumes 1 and 2. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1931) 296–97. See also Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), 4–6.

6. Quoted in Weldon Durham, "'Big Brother' and the 'Seven Sisters': Camp Life Reforms in World War I," *Military Affairs* 42:2 (April 1978), pp.57–60.

7. On the other members of the committee, see Raymond Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation: An Autobiography*, p.143; and Durham, "'Big Brother' and the 'Seven Sisters,'" pp. 57–60.

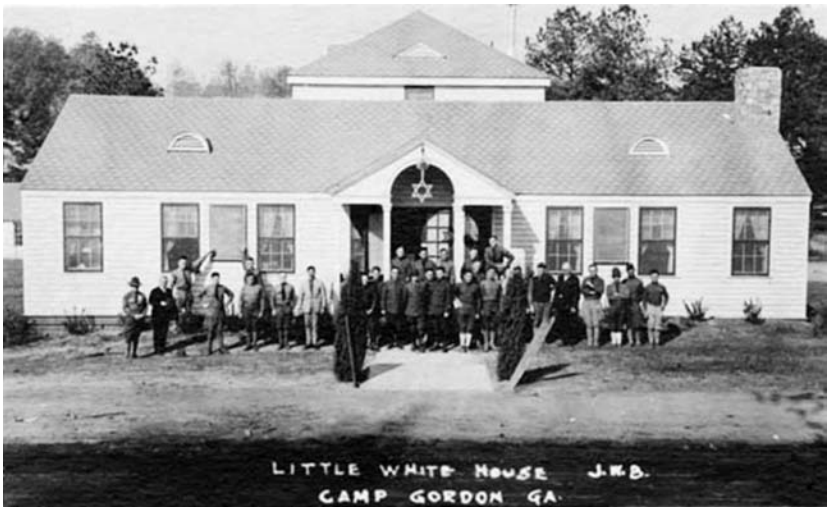

Figure 1. Soldiers standing in front of the JWB "hut" at Camp Gordon, GA, circa 1917. Courtesy American Jewish Historical Society.

Figure 2. Recreational activities at the JWB "hut" at Camp Gordon, GA, circa 1917. Courtesy American Jewish Historical Society.

Invisible Sectarianism

When Fosdick assumed control over this new government agency, he lacked the resources to implement such a vast new program of services. Indeed, no organization within either the government or the military was prepared to provide an array of morally uplifting and morale-building activities to all of the men called into service. The War Department therefore sought out a civilian partner to help, and immediately settled on the Young Men's Christian Association.

Within days of the United States' declaration of war, the YMCA became a civilian partner to the CTCA. The association established the National War Work Council; named John Mott, general-secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA, as its head; and immediately went to work building educational, religious, athletic and entertainment programs for American servicemen. Fosdick and Baker, pleased with their decision, assumed that the YMCA would provide these services to all American soldiers and sailors, and thus would suffice as the only civilian partner to the CTCA's program for building military morals and morale. The YMCA, similarly convinced of its ability to meet the needs of the troops, promised that its programs would be conducted on a "broad basis … the facilities and privileges being open alike to officers and men of all arms of the service, regardless of religious affiliation."[8]

However, American Jews and Catholics felt less convinced of the YMCA's suitability for the job. Founded in London in 1844, the YMCA defined its mission as protecting workingmen from sordid city life through prayer and Bible study. It grew quickly and soon had branches throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada and the United States. The YMCA's popularity increased in the northern part of the United States during the Civil War, when it provided Bibles and religious services to Union soldiers, and continued to grow after the war, even though it initially restricted membership to young men belonging to evangelical churches. By end of the nineteenth century, the YMCA had redefined its mission, opting to emphasize activities that would complement, rather than compete with membership in mainstream Protestant churches. The association placed particular importance on sports and physical education as a means of developing a "balanced" Christian character—luring men to Christianity through the gym.[9] To Baker and Fosdick, it seemed the

8. John Mott, "The War Work of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 79, "War Relief Work" (September 1918), 206.

9. On the YMCA, see Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relationships and the YMCA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Thomas

perfect organization to take up the challenge of ensuring the welfare of soldiers, and the YMCA eagerly accepted this new commission.

The entirely Protestant character of the YMCA, the centrality of Bible study to its work and to the promotion of Christian fellowship, and the fact that it defined the "crowning service" of a YMCA secretary as leading men "to allegiance to Jesus Christ," appeared to be a matter of no concern. The War Department's policies seemed guided by what might be called an "invisible sectarianism" that blinded its leaders to the evangelizing activities and overtly Protestant biases of the YMCA. Even after naming the YMCA as its civilian partner, the CTCA described its programs as entirely nonsectarian. The YMCA reiterated this claim, stating confidently that the morals it sought to teach were universally held, and arguing that its programs would be open to men of all faiths, thus making those programs nonsectarian.

To Jews and Catholics, however, the religious agenda and sectarian biases of the YMCA were anything but invisible. Both Jews and Catholics had long been targets of evangelizing Protestant missions, and they certainly knew about the YMCA's strategy of using recreational activities as a tool for missionary work.[10] John Mott's leadership of the YMCA's National War Work Council, and his resulting position as a member of the CTCA, offered little reassurance. Mott presided over the 1910 World Missionary Conference, and he is remembered, among his many other accomplishments, for his book *The Evangelization of the World in this Generation*, which was published by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions in 1905.[11]

American Jews and Catholics did not see turning over the moral welfare of "their boys" to the YMCA as evidence of religious inclu-

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Winters, *Making Men, Making Class: the YMCA and Workingmen 1877–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). For a history of the YMCA, see C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951). On the connections between evangelical Christianity and physical fitness, see Tony Ladd and James A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Alexandra M. Lord, "Models of Masculinity: Sex Education, the United States Public Health Service, and the YMCA, 1919–1924," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 58 (April 2003), pp.123–158.

10. Such tactics were well-established. On efforts particularly designed to evangelize Jews, see Yaakov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

11. Mott received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. For a biography of Mott, see C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865–1955: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979).

siveness, but as an attempt to promote Protestantism under the guise of nonsectarianism.[12] Faced with a choice over how to react to these new policies, they opted to endorse the reforming impulses of the War Department, but to argue that a Protestant organization could never adequately meet the needs of *their* soldiers, who, they claimed, required the services of their own welfare agencies. Fosdick disagreed, arguing that the inclusion of Catholic and Jewish agencies would represent the *introduction* of sectarian interests into the government's nonsectarian program. Only when it became clear that the YMCA's National War Work Council expressly prohibited the participation of Catholics did Fosdick reluctantly reconsider. Pressured, perhaps, by the large numbers of Catholics expected to be called up for the draft, he named the Knights of Columbus as a Catholic CTCA civilian partner, but, in his memoir, blamed YMCA leadership for this change in CTCA policy:

> Baker and I had assumed … that the approach of the YMCA to its work in the camps would be nonsectarian. We thought that it would represent an American contribution without relation to creed or any other divisive factor…. It was with real dismay, therefore, that I learned that the YMCA had no real Catholic representation on its newly formed War Work Council. My reaction was that it was an inadvertence, but I was told that the omission was "a necessity."… Under the circumstances we seemed to have no choice, and we decided that the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic organization… should be included in the program.[13]

Jewish leaders sought to secure a place for Jewish spiritual and social services on the CTCA as well, and many Jewish groups attempted to establish welfare programs for soldiers. Local synagogues, branches of the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) and Jewish fraternal organizations, such as the International Order of B'nai B'rith and the Order of B'rith Abraham, all declared their intention to serve Jewish sol-

12. Jewish and Catholic organizations had, in fact, become concerned that the YMCA would use its work with soldiers as a tool for proselytizing them during the Mexican Expedition of 1916, before the United States entered into World War I. For Catholic responses to YMCA military services, see Christopher J. Kauffman, *Faith and Fraternalism: A History of the Knights of Columbus 1882–1982* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982). The Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Association was one of the Jewish organizations that sent representatives to the Mexican border in 1916 to combat attempts to proselytize Jewish soldiers. For a discussion, see the *YMHA Bulletin*, vol. xvii, no.12, (December 1916), p.1.

13. Fosdick, *Chronicles of a Generation,* 149. According to an editorial by B'nai B'rith President George Fox printed in *The Jewish Monitor* of Fort Worth-Dallas, Texas, both Catholics and Jews were rejected as YMCA workers. See *The Jewish Monitor*, September 1918, in General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG-165, NARA, College Park, Md.

diers and sailors. But on April 9, 1917, a small group of well-established men met in New York City to create "a single, all-embracing agency for unified Jewish efforts in connection with welfare work among military personnel," and this new agency, the Jewish Welfare Board, soon managed to relegate all others to the sidelines.[14]

The Jewish Welfare Board

The prominence and political savvy of the men behind the JWB proved crucial to establishing its position. Original trustees and executive board members included Cyrus Adler, president of the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia and acting president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York; Justice Irving Lehman of the New York State Supreme Court and a member of the Lehman Brothers banking family; Judge Julian Mack of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago; Louis Marshall, a prominent New York attorney who was president of the American Jewish Committee and who was once considered a likely candidate for the U.S. Supreme Court; philanthropist Jacob Schiff and his son, Mortimer Schiff, partners at the banking firm Kuhn, Loeb and Company; and Felix Warburg, Jacob Schiff's son-in-law and a partner at Kuhn, Loeb.

While other groups held meetings and sought the support of their membership, congregants or neighbors, the powerful men behind the Jewish Welfare Board recognized that their success depended on the JWB's ability to "assert and establish supreme authority in its field over all other Jewish organizations."[15] Rather than seeking support within the Jewish community, they went directly to the War Department with an offer of service. In a letter dated July 1917, Warburg congratulated Fosdick on the work being done in the country's military camps, and he announced the creation of an appropriate Jewish partner to the YMCA and the CTCA. He wrote:

> It ought to be a source of great satisfaction to you that as a result of your investigations the suggestions which you made to the War Department are being carried out … as one who was instrumental years ago in the start of this very work, … I feel that the time, energy and support given this work was well worth while [sic]….

14. For accounts of the founding and history of the JWB, see Cyrus Adler, "An Account of the Origin of the Jewish Welfare Board." in Cyrus Adler, *Lectures, Selected Papers, Addresses* (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1933) and Oscar Isaiah Janowsky, Louis Kraft, and Bernard Postal, *Change and Challenge: A History of 50 Years of JWB* (New York: The National Jewish Welfare Board, 1966).

15. Janowsky, *Change and Challenge*, 7

> So as to save the community unnecessary expenditure and duplication of effort, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Men's Hebrew Association [have] as you know, reached an agreement that the Y.M.C.A. shacks[16] will be available to the Y.M.H.A. secretaries … and with that understanding Messrs. Schiff and I have made substantial contributions towards the erection of these shacks.
>
> I am very anxious that there should be full understanding and no friction between the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.M.H.A. and with that in view Col. [Harry] Cutler of Providence, a leading citizen and a man who has had experience in army life, an efficient, tactful person will be elected chairman of the Board which will have the Jewish Secretaries under him.[17]

Warburg's letter emphasized the cooperation agreement that existed between the two agencies. He noted the similarity between the YMCA and the YMHA, which would now operate under the control of the board mentioned. Warburg assured Fosdick that the JWB represented an appropriate partner to the YMCA and that it would be run by the right sort of man for the job. Harry Cutler was in some ways an unexpected choice. Unlike the powerful men behind the board, he was an immigrant from the Russian Empire with little formal education. He grew up poor, but built a successful jewelry manufacturing business and established himself as a prominent figure in the Jewish community of Providence, Rhode Island, and as an eager volunteer in Jewish organizations, including his local synagogue and the American Jewish Committee. Moreover, Cutler had military credentials and the impressive title of "Colonel," which he earned while serving in the Rhode Island National Guard. Warburg argued that Cutler was a man of tact, efficiency, and leadership skills, but, of course, if these recommendations did not suffice, Warburg also reminded Fosdick that he and the Schiffs had already given a significant amount of money to the cause.

Fosdick appeared to be persuaded. He agreed to give the JWB informal authorization to serve as one of the government's agents for welfare work with soldiers.[18] Fosdick did not, however, formally recognize the JWB as a civilian partner or grant the JWB a position on the CTCA equal to that of the YMCA, insisting that a Jewish presence on the commission would run counter to its nonsectarian character.

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16. These shacks or huts were buildings erected to serve as a headquarters for the welfare work. The shacks often reserved space for the living quarters and offices of the YMCA secretary, but they also provided a place for religious services, for recreational and educational programs, and for soldiers seeking to relax when off duty.

17. Warburg to Fosdick, July 12, 1917. Records of the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS), I–180 (JWB), Box 343, folder "War Department," (#2 of 2).

18. This informal arrangement is mentioned in a letter from Fosdick to Cutler, September 20, 1917, AJHS, I–180, Box 343, folder "War Department 1917–1920," (#1 of 2).

The charge that the JWB was a sectarian organization, while the YMCA and the Knights of Columbus were not, frustrated JWB leaders. The lack of formal recognition left them open to challenges from other Jewish organizations unwilling either to give up their own welfare projects for soldiers or to work under the control of the board.[19] Resistance to the authority of the JWB created headaches for the board's national leaders, but, ironically, it also proved crucial to securing the formal partnership that the JWB wanted. For, while Fosdick initially dismissed the possibility of granting the JWB anything more than informal recognition, he realized that if he did not choose a Jewish partner, the CTCA might have to deal with multiple Jewish agencies, some of which might not be led by "tactful" and "leading citizens" who could contribute large sums of money, and that made the JWB grow more attractive in his eyes.

The International Order of B'nai B'rith (IOBB) proved to be a particularly determined opponent of the JWB. Cutler, himself a B'nai B'rith member, tried to persuade the organization's president, Adolph Kraus, to join forces with the JWB, but he and Kraus proved unable to resolve vital questions about the control of funds and about which organization's name would appear at the top of the letterhead.[20] In August of 1917, the IOBB announced the formation of the American Soldiers and Sailors Welfare League of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith and set to work undermining the JWB. Cutler wrote to his "brothers" urging them to abandon this plan, warning that the international nature of the IOBB made it an unsuitable partner for the CTCA and an inappropriate agent of American welfare services for soldiers. He wrote, "[A]s a loyal member of the B'nai B'rith, I think it is an imprudent error on the part of that institution, which has lodges in Germany, Austria, and Turkey, to endeavor to head the Army and Navy work in this country."[21] Kraus, however, remained determined to carry on with the creation of a separate IOBB welfare agency for soldiers.

Fosdick received news of the IOBB's activities when it approached the War Department for authorization to work with American servicemen. In early September of 1917, he responded that the CTCA did not desire the services of the B'nai B'rith, writing: "It has been the policy of the Commission of Training Camp Activities to deal with one agency alone, in connection with specific lines of welfare work … Several months ago

19. AHJS I–180, Box 326, folder "Affiliated Organizations."

20. See Kraus' letter to Felix M. Warburg, November 8, 1917. AHJS I–180, Box 326, Folder "B'nai B'rith."

21. Letter from Cutler to Julian Rosenwald, August 24, 1917. AJHS I–180, Box 336, Folder "R-Miscellaneous Correspondence."

after careful consideration, we made up our minds that the organization best fitted for social work among Jewish soldiers was the Jewish Welfare Board, and that Board was recognized to carry on this kind of activity."[22]

By the time he sent this letter, Fosdick may have simply decided that the JWB should be recognized on a more formal basis, but, more likely, the threat of competing Jewish agencies and the IOBB's ties to hostile countries helped to persuade him of the need to grant more formal recognition to the JWB. He further reinforced the JWB's position by sending a letter to Cutler stressing the desirability of having all other Jewish agencies unite under the coordination of the JWB. He wrote:

> I am writing to reaffirm the arrangement made informally with your Board some months ago to the effect that this commission recognized your society as the official agency for Jewish welfare work in the military camps of the United States.
>
> It is necessary for us, in each case, to deal with one such agency, so as to eliminate duplication of effort and overlapping of function. I trust that you will be able to co-ordinate [sic] all the activities along this special line which are seeking independently to work with Jewish soldiers in the camp.[23]

Fosdick's statement of support proved helpful, but it did not put an end to the competition between the groups, nor did it put the JWB on equal footing with the YMCA. After receiving Fosdick's letter, Cutler wrote to inquire whether he, like the YMCA's John Mott, would now receive a seat on the Commission for Training Camp Activities. Fosdick expressed exasperation with the request. He wrote: "As I have repeatedly told you, it will be impossible for us to make any appointments to the Commission on Training Camp Activities for the purpose of sectarian representation. Secretary Baker and I have both made the attitude of the War Department very plain to you in this matter. I am at a loss to understand what you think will be gained by insistence upon this point. My letter to you of September 20th in which I told you of the recognition this Commission extended to your society, is as far as we can go along this line."[24]

Cutler and other JWB leaders, however, knew exactly what was to be gained through an appointment to the CTCA. Such an appointment

22. Letter from Fosdick to Strasburger. The letter is dated September 3, 1917, but it makes reference to a memo of September 5. Presumably, the date is incorrect and the letter was written sometime after the fifth. AJHS I–180, Box 343, folder "War Department 1917–1920," (#1 of 2).

23. Letter from Fosdick to Cutler, September 20, 1917, AJHS I–180, Box 343, folder "War Department 1917–1920," (#1 of 2).

24. Letter from Fosdick to Cutler, September 29, 1917, AJHS, I–180, Box 343, folder "War Department 1917–1920," (#1 of 2).

would ensure a Jewish presence on the commission equivalent to that of the YMCA, and it would guarantee that only the JWB would control Jewish welfare programs for soldiers. Meanwhile, the War Department continued to insist that the YMCA, despite its Protestant affiliation and mission, met the requirements for designation as a "nonsectarian" agency, while the appointment of the Jewish Welfare Board would merely be a concession to sectarian interests. JWB leaders remained determined both to fend off challenges from other Jewish organizations and to ensure that Jewish welfare services would not be considered secondary to those of the YMCA.

Members of the JWB executive committee were, therefore, dismayed to learn that while Fosdick had rebuffed the IOBB's efforts to make itself a CTCA partner, Secretary Baker had opened another door through which their rivals could enter the field of welfare services for soldiers. On October 29, at the instigation of IOBB President Kraus, Baker met with the leaders of Jewish fraternal organizations and announced that he would allow them to "carry on welfare work in the camps to a certain extent," with the intention of "widen[ing] the more or less exclusive privilege that had up to then been accorded to the YMCA and the Knights of Columbus."[25] Did Baker's decision reflect a lack of coherence in the War Department's policies? Did he not know of the conflict between the IOBB and the JWB? Or did he want to displace the JWB from its position? War Department correspondence does not reveal the answers, but Cyrus Adler, a member of the JWB executive committee, clearly saw this policy as a problem. He wrote to Jacob Schiff, saying, "I am rather disturbed by a statement given out from the War Department to the effect that Secretary Baker has agreed to allow all fraternal organizations to establish headquarters in different camps and cantonments. If this be correct, the B'nai B'rith, B'rith Abraham, B'rith Shalom and all other similar organizations will probably, in order to rival each other, put up separate establishments and have separate workers and no unity can be maintained … I very much fear that a way to disunion has been opened by the Secretary's ruling."[26]

Disunion, Adler knew, posed a threat not only to the JWB's authority, but also to the whole project of Jewish welfare services for soldiers. The CTCA, unenthusiastic about working even with the well-heeled JWB, would not tolerate an uncoordinated field of rival Jewish agencies competing for access to American military camps. Moreover, other

25. *American Jewish Chronicle*, December 7, 1917, p.159.

26. Letter from Cyrus Adler to Jacob Schiff, October 31, 1917. AJA, MS 456, Box 451, folder "Adler, Cyrus."

groups, in addition to the fraternal organizations, were seeking to take advantage of Baker's decision. In early November, Leon Goldrich, a JWB field secretary, reported that the socialist International Workingmen's Association had held a mass meeting in New York City. Seventy-three different organizations were represented at the meeting, and 162 people attended. They agreed to form a new organization, the People's League for Jewish Soldiers of America, intended to "enhance the spiritual life for the Jewish soldiers and to create a Jewish atmosphere for Jewish men in the national camps."[27]

The entry of a socialist organization into the field of welfare services for soldiers promised greater disunion and the threat that soldiers, far from being improved as citizens, would be exposed to political ideas out of line with Baker's and Fosdick's vision of a clean and moral military. To Adler and Schiff, the entry of a socialist organization into the field of welfare services for soldiers must also have raised the specter of accusations that Jews held radical views and lacked sufficient loyalty to the United States and its war efforts. Certainly, some among the public, within the Woodrow Wilson administration, and in the military command already espoused such views and would have been happy to see "sectarian" interests such as those of the JWB, shut out of the CTCA.[28] But rather than weaken the claim of the JWB or cast doubt upon the patriotism of American Jews, the demands of more politically radical groups seemed to strengthen Cutler's hand. Cutler wrote to Fosdick:

> My Dear Mr. Fosdick,
>
> I am enclosing a copy of an advertisement which appeared in the "Warheit."[29] You will observe that this is an attempt to form another organization for work among soldiers and sailors of the Jewish faith. I am informed that its sponsors are members of the socialist group in New York City, who hope to obtain the support of elements of the East Side which have insisted upon policies impracticable of the accomplishments on the part of the War Department.

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27. AHJS I–180, Box 326, folder "Affiliated Organizations."

28. For a discussion of antisemitism during the war, see chapter 4, "Racism and Antisemitism in Progressive America" in Leonard Dinnerstein's *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 58–77. For a discussion of attitudes toward Jews in military circles, see Joseph Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat: Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), particularly pp.1–166. For a discussion of nativism and wartime suspicion directed toward all minority and immigrant groups, including Jews, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* and Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), particularly chapters 2 and 3.

29. *Di Warheit* was a left-leaning, Yiddish-language newspaper published in New York City from 1905–1919.

> Under these circumstances … would it not be prudent and advisable at this juncture for a public statement to be made by the Secretary of War, giving the definite recognition to this Welfare Board and urging that in just the same degree as the Catholic element has consented to the Knights of Columbus being its functional agency and the Protestant element, the Young Men's Christian Association, so should all organizations of the citizens of Jewish faith merge and cooperate with the Jewish Board for Welfare Work in the United States Army and Navy as their official agency recognized by the War Department?
>
> If you and the Secretary of War approve of this suggestion, and will immediately make such a public statement, it would, in my judgment, have a salutary effect, not only on the Mass Meeting, advertised for next Sunday, but also on the contemplated propaganda of certain secret fraternal organizations.[30]

Cutler's warnings about socialists, the "elements" they represented, and "secret fraternal organizations" found their mark. Fosdick responded quickly, assuring Cutler that he would be happy to write a letter indicating his full support of the JWB that "could be published as widely as you liked."[31] A week later, Cutler received an official letter from Secretary Baker. On War Department stationery, Baker wrote:

> Mr. Fosdick has told me of the effective activity of the Jewish Board for Welfare Work in coordinating the various Jewish agencies which have sought recognition for work inside our military training camps. In order to prevent duplication of effort, it was necessary to deal with a single agency, broad enough in its scope and organization to comprehend other groups seeking to do the same kind of work. For that reason, we were very glad when such men as Mr. Jacob Schiff, Mr. Felix Warburg and yourself, came forward with this plan for a Jewish Board for Welfare Work.[32]

Fosdick further agreed to settle the JWB's dispute with the IOBB by effectively banning the B'nai B'rith from military camps. He wrote to IOBB President Kraus, explaining:

> For the purpose of preventing duplication and overlapping and in order to enhance the concentration of work necessary within the camps for the welfare of the men, this Department has recognized the Jewish Board for Welfare Work in the United States Army and Navy as the functioning agency on the cantonments and training camps among the men of Jewish faith … Under these circumstances it seems unnecessary for any exclusively Jewish

30. Letter from Cutler to Fosdick, November 8, 1917. Records of the American Jewish Archives (AJA), MS 456, Box 453, folder I–L.

31. Letter from Fosdick to Cutler, November 10, 1917, AJHS I–180, Box 343, folder "War Department 1917–1920."

32. From a facsimile of the original, published in the JWB's pamphlet "Purpose, Scope, Achievements," New York, 1918.

> organization such as the B'nai B'rith, the B'rith Abraham, and Young Men's Hebrew Association, etc. to obtain passes to the military camps.[33]

Fosdick's letter put an end to the competition between the JWB and the IOBB, but it also indicated that, at least when compared to other Jewish organizations, the JWB had managed to make the leap to nonsectarian status. For while he described the various fraternal organizations as "exclusively Jewish," and therefore inappropriate to the task at hand, he no longer described the board designated to direct and coordinate their activities in the same way. In comparison with the YMCA, Fosdick and Baker may still have considered the JWB a sectarian agency representing only Jewish interests— and, indeed, Cutler never received a seat on the CTCA—but, in comparison to the other Jewish organizations clamoring for access to American servicemen, the JWB emerged as the most suitable, most "nonsectarian" among them.

Judaism as an American Religion

The JWB fought hard for its position as a CTCA partner organization. It won the post by convincing Fosdick and Baker that the JWB's values were in line with those of the War Department, and that it could work with the YMCA better than any other Jewish organization. The JWB could not, therefore, afford to publically challenge the "invisible sectarianism" that guided CTCA policy, or to complain about the overtly Protestant bias of the YMCA, yet it remained committed to protecting Jewish servicemen from evangelism and to promoting Jewish welfare services. It therefore opted to mimic the YMCA—adopting the rhetoric of nonsectarianism, while providing distinctly sectarian programs.

The praise lavished upon the YMCA by Secretary Baker provided the JWB with plenty of room in which to maneuver. Blind to the sectarian implications of the YMCA's work, Baker extolled the value of the association's contribution to the well-being of American servicemen, proclaiming to the YMCA worker and supporter:

> You are the makers of that armor … this attitude of mind, this state of consciousness, this *esprit de corps* which will not tolerate anything unwholesome, this brand of righteousness … this pride that they ought to have in being American soldiers and representing the highest ethical type of a modern civilization—all this you are manufacturing in your armories, in the basements of churches, in the lodge rooms of societies, the dinner tables of private homes, the rooms of Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations.[34]

33. Letter from Raymond Fosdick to Adolf Kraus, I.O.B.B. President, November 20, 1917. AHJS I–180, Box 326, Folder "B'nai B'rith."

34. From Baker's speech "Invisible Armor," printed in his *Frontiers of Freedom* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), pp.94–95.

If, JWB leaders concluded, the "righteousness" that American soldiers encountered in "the basements of churches" and "the rooms of Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations" made them better citizens, then the JWB did not have to demonstrate that it could embrace nonsectarianism more earnestly than its Protestant partner, but, rather, to show that Judaism, too, offered young men a path to righteousness and American values.

Catholic leaders seemed to agree. The Knights of Columbus called on its representatives in military camps to make sure that "the Catholic identity and activity [are] not submerged" in the provision of welfare services, stressing that "if the YMCA is conducting an Evangelical institute, it is very essential that we conduct a Catholic program."[35] Cyrus Adler, describing the work of the JWB, made clear that the board had adopted a distinctly Jewish mission. At the JWB's annual meeting in 1919, he noted, "[I]t was resolved as a guiding principle to extend the service of the organization to soldiers and sailors without sectarian restriction, but at the same time to make adequate provision especially for the needs of soldiers and sailors of the Jewish faith, whose particular requirements could be fulfilled only by an understanding Jewish organization."[36] Adler avowed that the JWB would serve all American soldiers and sailors, in keeping with the nonsectarian policies of the War Department, but that the board remained committed to providing distinctly Jewish services for Jewish servicemen.

Nowhere was the dual nature of the JWB's mission more apparent than in connection to the Chaplain Corps of the U.S. Army and Navy. The military chaplaincy underwent a dramatic restructuring during World War I. In the years immediately prior to the war, in an attempt to assert control over the selection of qualified clergy for military and naval commissions, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America assumed control over the initial screening of all Protestant candidates

35. Christopher J. Kauffman, *Faith and Fraternalism: The History of the Knights of Columbus, 1882–1982* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), pp.209, 211. This was neither the first nor the last time that American Catholics sought to assert a right to religious difference in the face of official assumptions regarding the normative standards of Protestantism. Schools were a particularly contentious subject of debate. For a discussion of nineteenth-century debates over Catholicism and Protestantism in schools, see Steven K. Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For debates about religion in schools in the second half of the twentieth century, see Kevin M. Schultz *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

36. *Jewish Welfare Board, Final Report of War Emergency Activities* (New York: 1920), p.13.

for the military chaplaincy, and the Catholic Army and Navy Chaplains' Bureau took control of the nomination of Catholic candidates.[37] Other changes came at the initiative of General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, supreme military commander of the American Expeditionary Forces. Pershing, like Baker and Fosdick, believed that the military could "improve" American men, and also that religious influence would help to bring out the "finer aspects" of soldiers' personalities while keeping temptation at bay. Upon assuming command, Pershing demanded that the number of military chaplains be expanded, that their duties be more clearly defined, and that they be organized into a Chaplain Corps with its own staff and headquarters. The War Department granted all of these requests, and by Armistice Day in 1918, the number of chaplains in the U.S. Army had increased from a prewar total of 146 to 2,230.[38]

At the start of the war, it was unclear whether and by what means Jewish chaplains could be commissioned. No Jewish equivalent to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ or the Catholic Army and Navy Chaplain Bureau existed, and while Civil War-era legislation made it theoretically possible to appoint a rabbi as a chaplain, military policy dictated that the selection of chaplains be made dependent upon the religion of the majority of men in a given regiment.[39] Jews never represented the majority, and the military had no procedure by which to commission chaplains to minister to minority populations.

The JWB therefore lobbied Congress for new legislation to make it possible to appoint Jewish chaplains-at-large whose appointment would hinge on the number of Jews in the U.S. Army as a whole, rather than within a given regiment. The JWB turned to Congressman Isaac Siegel of New York City for assistance, and Siegel worked hard to ensure the

37. For a history of the development of the U.S. military chaplaincy in this period, see Richard M. Budd, *Serving Two Masters: The Development of American Military Chaplaincy, 1860–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), particularly chapters five and six, pp.92–155. See also John F. Piper, "The American Churches in World War I," in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 38, no. 2 (June 1970), pp.147–155; and Earl F. Stover's *Up from Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1865–1920* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the U.S. Army, 1978). For Pershing's view of the military chaplaincy, see his memoir *My Experiences in the World War* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes & Co., 1931), pp. 281–84.

38. Budd, p.124.

39. For a discussion of this change to the law and of Jewish chaplains during the Civil War, see Albert I. Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*: *Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* (New York: NYU Press, 1999); Louis Barish, *Rabbis in Uniform: The Story of the American Jewish Military Chaplain* (New York: Jonathan David, 1962); Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War,* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951); Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) pp.119–120.

passage of House Bill 5271 (there was also a companion bill in the Senate) which "called for the appointment of twenty chaplains at large into the Army of the United States with a rank of lieutenant at a salary of $2,000 to serve during this war emergency."[40] Congress intended for these new positions to serve all religious groups not previously represented within the Chaplain Corps,[41] but after the bills passed on September 11 and September 13, 1917, respectively, the New York-based weekly magazine the *American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* reported, "[I]t is well known that half of this number would be composed of Jewish clergymen of both the orthodox and reformed congregations."[42]

At the same time, in anticipation of the desired legislative changes, the JWB assumed control over the task of nominating Jewish candidates for military commissions. Cyrus Adler oversaw the work of organizing and staffing the Jewish military chaplaincy, and he also took on the role of head of the JWB Chaplains' Committee, an interdenominational Jewish body created to screen and select candidates for the chaplaincy. Out of the 149 rabbis who applied to the JWB for positions as military chaplains, the committee passed along the names of thirty-four men to the War Department for consideration, and an unprecedented twenty-five Jewish chaplains received commissions during World War I.[43]

40. From George Mason, "Army Chaplain Bill a Law," *American Hebrew*, October 12, 1919, p.638.

41. Cyrus Adler, claimed that he and Baker drafted the Senate bill, which was intended to meet the religious needs of Jews and Christians from minority groups, particularly Unitarians and Christian Scientists. See Adler, "An Account of the Origin of the Jewish Welfare Board," p.224.

42. George Mason, "Army Chaplain Bill a Law," p.638. See also Slomovitz, p.49, although he claims that the bills were passed in October of 1917. Slomovits also asserts that the bills passed easily and without any debate, but this does not seem correct. Correspondence between Adler and Siegel indicates that a good deal of negotiating preceded the bill that was coming up for a vote, as evidenced by the fact that the United States was five months into the war before House Bill 5271 was passed. See AJHS P–33, Siegel, Isaac, Box 1 – Folder "JWB."

43. Twelve chaplains, Israel Bettan, Harry S. Davidowitz, Louis I. Egelson, Solomon B. Freehof, Benjamin Friedman, James G. Heller, Jacob Krohngold, Lee J. Levinger, Elias N. Rabinowitz, Harry Richmond, David Tannenbaum and Elkan C. Voorsanger served with the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. An additional thirteen received commissions as military chaplains too late to be sent oversees, and they served on military bases in the United States. They were: Nathan E. Barasch, Harry W. Ettelson, Max Felshin, Samuel Fredman, Raphael Goldenstein, Abram Hirschberg, Morris S. Lazaron, Emil W. Leipziger, Julius A. Leibert, Abraham Nowak, Jerome Rosen, Leonard W. Rothstein, and Israel J. Sarasohn. One additional chaplain, David Goldberg, bypassed the JWB and applied directly to the U.S. Department of the Navy for a commission. He received his commission on November 5, 1917, and became the first Jewish chaplain to serve in the U.S. Navy, and the only one to serve during World War I. See Lee J. Levinger, *A Jewish Chaplain in France* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1922) pp.85–86, 93.

These changes to the chaplaincy represented a profound shift in military policy. Commissioning rabbis as military chaplains integrated Jewish religious practices and religious leaders into the structures of military life. The presence of Jewish chaplains meant that Jewish men would have the opportunity to attend Jewish religious services under the auspices of the U.S. Armed Forces. It also meant that non-Jewish men in need of a chaplain might find themselves ministered to by a rabbi, since chaplains were required to tend to all servicemen, regardless of faith. These twenty-five Jewish chaplains, while only a small segment of the entire Chaplain Corps, offered a powerful sign that Judaism was now to be considered a "fundamentally American" religion, necessary to the corps, and possessing values, morals and even rituals that would be accessible to all Americans.

JWB leaders and rabbis affiliated with the board did their part to reinforce the notion that Judaism was an American religion. Like earlier generations of American Jews, they proclaimed the natural affinity between Judaism and American democratic values.[44] Speaking at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1917, Reform Rabbi Louis Grossman of Cincinnati, a JWB board member, declared to his audience:

> … Judaism and Americanism are identical, as in times of peace so now in these ordeals of blood … Our Americanism has been surcharged, as it were, with the moral longings we had cherished through the ages. Our political fealties fused with our historically trained pieties. Jews were democrats long before America was discovered and before the Constitution was framed.[45]

Rabbi Hyman G. Enelow, who was later selected for a commission as a military chaplain, proclaimed from the pulpit of New York's Temple Emanuel:

> … [T]he genius of Judaism has from the first been essentially democratic, and … it expressed itself in democratic institutions and personalities even in remote antiquity, when the world at large was predominantly aristocratic. The Decalogue was a democratic code. The Torah was democratic in form and ideal. And no group of men ever were more represented of democracy in every way—in origin, conduct, and purpose—than the Jewish prophets.[46]

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44. For more on the history of American Jews' belief in the reinforcing nature of Judaism and Americanism, see Jonathan D. Sarna's "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture," *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 5 (Fall–Winter 1999), pp.52–79.

45. *Reform Advocate*, July 13, 1918, pp.547–48.

46. Hyman Gerson Enelow, *The Allied Countries and the Jews: A Series of Addresses* (New York: Temple Emanu-El, 1918), p.90.

Col. Harry Cutler, chair of the JWB, assured his audiences that the American values for which they had gone to war represented "the same ideal and the same purpose that was handed down to us from Mount Sinai."[47]

In editorials and public statements, JWB leaders and supporters emphasized the loyalty and reliability of Jews as citizens, claiming that it was their Judaism that made Jews "instinctively" attached to the United States and to American-style democracy. They offered up a vision of Judaism perfectly in keeping with the values of Americanism, and they stressed the claim that, through adherence to the tenets of Judaism, Jews became better citizens and better Americans.

Memos sent to JWB field workers from the national headquarters in New York followed the same line of argument. In one way or another, all of them emphasized the idea that it was the duty of the JWB to ensure that American soldiers would be improved in their role as citizens after the war. They stressed that keeping Jewish soldiers attached to their faith was crucial to this process. [48] In a 1918 pamphlet, the JWB explained:

> The prime purpose of our work is to help the morale of the army by preserving among our own men ethical and religious values and the finer aspects of personality. This means stimulating all that is Jewish in our men, and offsetting the mechanizing effects of army life. … Such suppression of personality would be harmful to army spirit and morale. Therefore the Government has not only given its sanction to, but it has actively called for the work of the semi-religious YMCA, Knights of Columbus, and the Jewish Welfare Board, for them to bring to expression the depths of personality in the individual soldier.[49]

Assertions of the American nature and values inherent in Judaism allowed the JWB to defend its sectarian goals in a supposedly nonsectarian setting. Through the War Department's mission of instilling nonsectarian American values in the men of the American Expeditionary Forces, the JWB, following the lead of the YMCA, reconfigured its purpose. It dubbed its work "semireligious," based on the claim that religion played a crucial role in building up the character and personality of the individual soldier. Work promoting the welfare of soldiers, despite all protestations to the contrary, would of necessity have a markedly sectarian component, JWB leaders argued, since one could reach the necessary "depths of personality" in each soldier only by ministering to him from within his own tradition. Strict nonsectarianism had to give way

47. From an address by Harry Cutler at the training school for JWB workers, July, 1918. AJHS I–180, Box 333, Folder "History 1918–1920."

48. AJHS, P–58, Box 1, Folder "JWB 1918–1919."

49. *American Jewish Chronicle*, September 13, 1918—article by David de Sola Pool

for the good of the country. The observance and practice of Judaism, JWB representatives asserted, would enhance American Jewish soldiers' commitment to their country and to the "righteousness" inherent in American civilization. Like the YMCA and the Knights of Columbus, the JWB provided welfare and recreational services to all American servicemen, while promoting a distinctly religious and sectarian agenda based upon the argument that men needed to practice their own religion in order to maintain their morale and to develop as citizens. As Cutler explained at the school the JWB board had established to train its field workers, "[T]he Catholic priest, no matter how well intentioned, cannot lead our men in *Kaddish*, nor can he lead our men in *Yiskor*, nor can he give that spiritual stamina which we must ourselves give to our men … There is a definite thing in connection with our welfare work, that is to add to the morale of our men in camp, and this Board is doing that definite thing thru its religious and spiritual ministration."[50]

Indeed, the JWB touted its programs for providing religious services to Jewish soldiers not only as a means of instilling American values in the men, but also as an example of American democracy in action. As Chester Teller, executive director of the JWB, explained in an article for the *American Jewish Year Book*:

> As official representatives of the Government, we are called to minister to *all men* (italics in the original). This by no means implies that religious work has no place in the American welfare program, or that the welfare agencies must reduce their efforts to that colorless, meaningless something which frequently goes by the name of non-sectarianism. On the contrary, the Jewish Welfare Board would not truly represent the American Government, unless it also represented the organized Jewry which created it. Indeed, specialized ministrations of each group to its own men in the camps are implied in the very organization which the War Department created.[51]

Fosdick's reluctance even to work with "sectarian" agencies such as the Knights of Columbus and the JWB, makes the assertion that the government desired the establishment of "specialized ministrations" under the umbrella of the CTCA somewhat ironic, but it was, in fact, the War Department's inability to perceive the sectarian character of the YMCA's work that had inadvertently placed religion at the heart of the government's welfare program for soldiers. The War Department's insistence that CTCA services remain entirely nonsectarian—even after

50. From an address at the JWB training school by Col. Harry Cutler, July, 1918(?). AJHS I–180, Box 333, History 1918–1920 (#3 of 3).

51. Chester Teller, "The Jewish Welfare Board," in the *American Jewish Yearbook* (1918–1919), p.91.

they were divided among Protestants, Catholics and Jews—opened the door to lasting change in official policies toward these religious groups.

The issue of religious diversity within government programs came to the fore when, in August of 1918, the CTCA organized a national fundraising campaign. Leaders of both the JWB and the Knights of Columbus assumed that all seven of the civilian agencies that were eventually named as CTCA partners, including the Salvation Army, the YWCA, the American Library Association, and the War Camp Community Service, would participate in the campaign. However, the YMCA opted not to do so. In a letter to Raymond Fosdick, John Mott insisted that the Young Men's Christian Association and its sister organization, the Young Women's Christian Association, should be allowed to organize and schedule funding drives on their own terms and without the inclusion of the other agencies. Mott argued that the YMCA was doing the majority of the work and shouldering the majority of the financial burden. The organization had already put mechanisms in place to begin fundraising immediately. To force it to wait for the other agencies in order to raise funds together would, in his words, "be absolutely disastrous."[52]

Louis Marshall, a member of the JWB's executive committee, received word of the YMCA's protest and of the CTCA's subsequent plans to schedule two separate fundraising campaigns—one for the YMCA, the YWCA, the American Library Association and the War Camp Community Service, and the other for the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army and the JWB. Marshall wrote immediately to Cutler, arguing, "It is highly desirable that the people shall now, more than ever, act as one, that all differences of creed shall be disregarded, that all shall work for one and one for all. To place in one class the protestant Christians and in another the Catholics, the Jews and the members of the Salvation Army, cannot fail to stimulate class prejudice and to arouse jealousies and animosities."[53] Cutler wrote to Fosdick, including Marshall's letter with his own. He re-emphasized Marshall's point, adding, "[T]he classification [of the different] agencies will have the effect of impressing on the public mind a separatism which, especially in these critical days we are all striving to obviate. It smacks too much of caste distinction …"[54]

52. Letter from John Mott to Raymond Fosdick, August 7, 1918, General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG–165, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.

53. Letter from Louis Marshall to Harry Cutler, August 15, 1918, General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG–165, NARA, College Park, Md.

54. Letter from Harry Cutler to Raymond Fosdick, August 16, 1918, General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG–165, NARA, College Park, MD.

Fosdick replied that a joint campaign would be preferable, but he denied the validity of Marshall and Cutler's charges, arguing that no one would mistake the groupings for evidence of sectarian segregation.[55] Marshall wrote again to disagree. He stated:

> [I]n the first group there are two Protestant organizations and two non-sectarian societies … The two non-sectarian societies … are conducted under Protestant auspices. At all events protestantism[sic] is predominant in that group. That fact in itself amounts to sectarian segregation. The general public would likewise look upon the second group as distinctly sectarian overlooking the Salvation Army as a member … and considering only the Catholic and Jewish organizations.[56]

Cutler again forwarded Marshall's letter to Fosdick and urged him to press the issue of a combined fundraising drive with Secretary of War Baker and even with President Woodrow Wilson, if necessary.[57]

While in matters pertaining to religious observance the JWB sought justification for pursing a distinctly sectarian agenda, in cases where the incursion of sectarianism threatened to relegate Jews to a second-class status, the board protested quickly and effectively, yielding remarkably positive results. With the support of the Knights of Columbus, but against the wishes of the YMCA, the JWB prevailed with its plan for a single fundraising drive.[58] Wilson himself announced the decision to schedule a United War Work Campaign for the week of November 11, 1918. Cutler telegrammed Fosdick to congratulate him for his role in making the united campaign possible. He stressed that this was a decision of great ethical importance, demonstrating American citizens' embrace of cooperation between faiths, "which will go far in impressing upon our men at the front that the nation as a whole is behind them in this war for victory …"[59]

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55. Letter from Raymond Fosdick to Harry Cutler, August 17, 1918, General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG–165, NARA, College Park, Md.

56. Letter from Louis Marshall to Harry Cutler, August 20, 1918, General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG–165, NARA, College Park, Md.

57. Letter from Harry Cutler to Raymond Fosdick, August 21, 1918, General Correspondence 1917–1920, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG–165, NARA, College Park, Md.

58. Correspondence from Harry Cutler to Louis Marshall indicates that Father John Burke, representing the Knights of Columbus, also protested the segregation of the two groups

59. Telegram from Cutler to Fosdick, September 5, 1918, AJHS I–180, Box 327, Folder—Buildings, 1917–1929.

Cutler and Marshall effectively framed their protest in terms of the sort of sectarian segregation Fosdick and Baker has sought to avoid. The CTCA had initially refused to work with the JWB and the Knights of Columbus because it viewed them as sectarian agencies, and argued that their presence would promote religious division among the troops. Once it agreed to work with them, however, the CTCA was compelled either to contradict its own rhetoric of nonsectarianism, or to find a way to include Jews and Catholics within it. The decision for a united funding drive demonstrates the CTCA's embrace of the second option, and once it had made that choice, it could not afford the appearance of discrimination among its partner organizations.

The CTCA saw the idea of transcending differences and promoting a more unified sense of Americanism as a crucial component of its work with soldiers. Baker and Fosdick understood the process of forging a shared American identity as critical to their plans for "improving" the characters of its soldiers as part of creating a more moral citizenry. They expected that sectarian religious differences would be subordinated in the interest of national unity—not religious faith, per se, but rather the denominational differences that kept men from perceiving their supposedly common values and their shared responsibility as Americans.

However, the JWB never saw the blurring of religious identities as its goal. Rather, it sought to use its work for the welfare of soldiers to strengthen the Jewish identity of American servicemen while helping all Americans to see beyond the prejudices that divided them. It did not imagine an American future in which religious differences would disappear, but one in which, having learned to see each as comrades-at-arms, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants could stand side by side knowing that each tradition was equally and fundamentally American. The JWB argued that Judaism, like Protestantism, helped to build the sort of invisible moral armor that kept American soldiers safe from temptation and transformed them into better citizens. It did not intend to facilitate the subordination of differences in order to speed the creation of a religiously homogenous American whole, but rather to emphasize that Jews expressed their American nature by preserving their religious difference. Raymond Fosdick described the work of the CTCA as bringing down the "fences" between men, the JWB sought to prove that the "fence" of Jewishness offered no hindrance to being a good American citizen.

Conclusion

Secretary of War Newton Baker and Raymond Fosdick, chairman of the Commission on Training Camp Activities, almost certainly did not

intend to use their programs for the welfare of soldiers as a means of promoting "specialized" religious ministries in the U.S. Armed Forces, or of celebrating the value of religious pluralism. Indeed, the decision to hand the CTCA's programs over to the YMCA revealed the Protestant bias and "invisible sectarianism" that guided the government's policies. Both Baker and Fosdick seemed to perceive the Protestantism of the YMCA as religiously neutral, in spite of the association's explicitly evangelical agenda. The JWB offered a competing vision of Americanism and of the role that religion had to play in building the character of American men. While the U.S. War Department initially argued that allowing Catholic and Jewish agencies to enter the field of soldiers welfare work would create an unnecessary duplication of efforts and an un-American sectarian division among servicemen, the JWB argued that American values demanded, and good citizenship required, the free expression of religious differences among men. JWB leaders sought not only to dispel the notion that Americanism required an adherence to Protestantism, but also to promote a vision of Americanism that celebrated and encouraged religious pluralism.

It is unlikely that either Fosdick or Baker ever saw the Jewish Welfare Board as equivalent to the YMCA, but the War Department stood behind it as a CTCA partner organization—including the JWB in all publicity materials, supporting a joint fundraising drive, and fully integrating Jewish chaplains into the Chaplain Corps. In the interwar period, the JWB was always represented, alongside the YMCA and the Knights of Columbus, at all official World War I commemorations. And when the country entered World War II, there was no question but that the JWB's role would be equivalent to that of the YMCA, that rabbis would receive commissions in the military chaplaincy, and that, at least within the policies of the U.S. Armed Forces, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism would be accepted equally as fundamentally American faiths.[60]

60. The idea of the United States as a country of three faiths became increasingly influential in the post-World War II period. For a discussion of the further development of "tri-faith" America, see Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); Deborah Dash Moore, "Jewish GIs and the Creation of the Judeo-Christian Tradition." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter, 1998), pp. 31–53; and Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).