I'm going to formally introduce our speaker in just a moment, but beforehand, I thought I would just say a little bit. It's kind of funny how coincidences pop up. I became aware of Professor Cooperman scholarship, about religious services in the world war one military, right as we were pulling together our exhibit on Camp, Zachary Taylor. And it just seemed like a really exciting opportunity to merge local history and national history together. So hopefully some of you had a chance to see that exhibit and have the Louisville military camp experience in your mind before the lecture. If not, it's gonna be open again. It's still open through the end of July. So I hope you'll check that out. All right, and without further ado, we are pleased to have Dr. Jesse Eggman Jha, Dr. Jessica Cooperman with us tonight. Presenting why in heaven's name expect us to mingle Jewish and Christian soldiers in the World War One American military. Dr. Cooperman is an assistant professor at the Department of religion studies and director of the Jewish Studies program at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. There she teaches courses on modern Jewish history and culture, religion in the United States, and religion and violence. Dr. Cooperman earned her PhD at New York University's joint degree program in Hebrew in history and Hebrew and Judaic Studies. Her research focuses on American Judaism and American Jewish history, and she is particularly interested in the relationship between religion and the modern state. Her book, which will be released in September 2018, by NYU press is called Making Judaism safe for America, World War One and the origins of religious pluralism. Her next book project will look at Interfaith organizations in 20th century America. We are so pleased to have her here tonight and I hope you will join me in giving her a warm welcome. Thank you, Professor Cooperman.

Hi, everybody. Hello. Thank you so much for having me here. It's a delight. Thanks very much to the Filson Historical Society, particularly to Abby, and to Scott and to over here. Okay, good. Thank you. And to Julie for inviting me, I really appreciate the opportunity to come and talk to you. So there was this Jewish soldier in camp Devon's in Massachusetts. And he wrote angrily to
the Jewish Welfare Board, which I'll tell you a little bit more about, about his frustration why in heaven's name, he asked them, Do you expect us to mingle with Christians? He was frustrated by this Coleman Silbert. And so I want us to think a little bit today about us World War One military camps as sites in which soldiers were expressly expected to mingle. Right Jews and Christians, northerners, southerners, foreigners, native born rich and poor, people from different ethnic groups, not so much people from different racial groups, the US military was segregated until 1948. But people from other kinds of groups across the country, different regions of the country were expressly asked to mingle in these in these groups. And if you haven't gone to see the camp Zachary Taylor exhibit yet? Head over there, right. And they talk about 50,000 men serving in that camp, right. So can you imagine the diversity of these people all working together plus civilian workers? So I want to think about who wanted the soldiers to mingle? Why, and what did they hope to accomplish by this? And what did the soldiers themselves want or not want in connection to this? Mingling? Um, here, wait, this one here, here's some mingling soldiers in camp Zachary Taylor hanging out and mingling. Okay. So when the United States entered World War One in April of 1917, they created the most diverse military the United States had seen up till that point. In part it was diverse because of the draft. 72% And of American soldiers in World War One were drafted. And we think of the Civil War and draft riots. And there were drafts before, but there were only 8% of the Union army was drafted. Right. So World War One is pulling in a much larger percentage of men who are not volunteering to serve they are compelled to serve. And so it's pulling in soldiers from all across the country. And it's pulling in both soldiers who who are not like jumping up and down to serve, but who are not native born, around 18% Of all the soldiers in the American military in World War One, our foreign born there were born in other countries. So if 18% of the soldiers themselves are foreign born, you can imagine what prayers gotta be, I think 50%, right, that are the children of immigrants may be more, right. So a lot of recent immigrants are being pulled into the military. And this is a reflection of what's going on at the club in the country, up till that point. So from the mid to late 1919 century, right into the early years of the 20th century, the United States is experiencing a period of mass migration into the United States, or here's a just a photo of the sort of teeming masses in Ellis Island. And this migration is changing the demographic makeup of the country in significant ways. Right, so this is just a chart of patterns of migration, right? And we can see that whereas in the 1820s, the majority of immigrants are coming from Ireland, Germany, Britain, right. As we move later, the countries of origin are shifting, right. So in the period, I'm particularly interested in around the 1880s to the 1910s. Suddenly, instead of having the mass majority of immigrants coming from Northern and Western Europe, they're coming more from Southern and Eastern Europe, right. And that's changing both the religious and ethnic makeup of the country. And then like now, I was saying I didn't expect to be quite as timely as I am talking about shifts in immigration policy. Not everybody was happy or comfortable or felt secure in these changing patterns of migration to the United States. In particular, certainly from the late 19th century or mid to late 19 century onward, there was tremendous concern about the impact that Catholics would have on the country. Right, what would happen to the United States if Catholics arrived in large numbers, and particularly Irish Catholics? So here is a thing if I can get the pointer working, right, the American river Ganges, right. And we have the public school system, teetering here precariously on the edge of the cliff as our brave teacher protects the children from these creatures that look like they might be alligators, but in fact, are wearing a bishop's mitre with teeth, crawling out of the river to eat the children and to threaten the public school system. Right. And this was a real debate that American society was having, what would it mean for the character of American society, society for the security of the country to have Catholics and particularly Irish Catholics? So here, the mortar of assimilation, right? Equal Rights stirring the pot of citizenship, and here is our Irishman up here, not mixing. Not mixing, okay. And another image of the same kind of thing the poor house from Galway sailing across the sea to besiege
the country. So Americans really had anxiety about immigration, the other group that provoked the same level of anxiety as the Irish were, well here most skip to this one. We're Asians, particularly the Chinese. So we passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Out of again, a threat what will these immigrants do to the character, the welfare, the security of the country? So in 1917, we pass one of our first major well, it builds on the Chinese Exclusion Act, but new pieces of immigration restriction designed to stem the flow of immigrants into the country and to quell the fears that American society has. So 1917 immigration restriction passes a series of policies designed to ensure the safety of the country, right? They restrict people with any sort of radical political ties from coming into the country. They restrict people who don't have the financial means to come into the country, right trying to keep poor people out the poor house from Galway, you don't want the poor coming in. They impose literacy tests with a thought that you want a more educated class of immigrants entering into the country. And we also expand on the Chinese Exclusion Act by creating something called the Asiatic Bard zone, which expanded the regions of Asia that we're now officially banned from sending immigrants into the United States. Right. And so I think it's important to think about these immigration policies both is a reflection of where the country's head is in 1917. What are people worried about? Right, and then thinking about who's going to end up serving in the US military once this draft is imposed in 1917? Okay, so when war is declared in 1917, and the draft is put into place, there are many people who see this as a fantastic opportunity. Right, because while you can restrict the flow of new immigrants coming in, I think it's something like 13 million immigrants have already arrived in the United States that demographic shift has already taken place. And so there is a cadre of fairly high level officials and sort of public intellectuals who argue that military service is going to create a fantastic opportunity, not just to win the war and make the world safe for democracy, but to American eyes, the immigrants who are already located in the United States, right. And they have been arguing for this from an earlier period of time, the late 1910s. Certainly, as World War One begins in 1914. You have people arguing for universal military training in the United States as a means of improving the physical and sort of moral character and health of the country. So somebody like Dr. William snow, of the American social Hygiene Association wrote, some good might be wrought out of the evil of war, through the effect of the right kind of army regime on the recruit if he escaped permanently disabling wounds and disease, the proper nutrition, exercise and regular hours might improve him physically, the tone of his associations might give him a sounder and broader sense of civic duty and human fellowship, right? The war, right with its regimentation, its training its forced, mingling, right can educate these immigrants can teach them how to be good Americans. And so while there had been as as many of you I'm sure know, reluctance to enter World War one right, the United States, Wilson pledges to keep the US out of the war, and then doesn't, but there had been people arguing that the war creates a possibility. General John Pershing, who commanded the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe and was very much the embodiment of a sort of healthy military, masculine personality, a lot of people sort of saw him as the ideal they wanted Americans and particularly American men to be living up to he absolutely agreed. He said that military camps are a place where a rigid program of instruction is carried out daily with traditional American enthusiasm, engaged in healthy interesting exercises in the open air with simple diet. officers and men alike trained athletes are ready for their task forbidden the use of strong drink protected by stringent regulations against sexual evils, and supported by their moral courage. American mothers may rest assured that their sons are a credit to them and the nation and they may look forward to the proud day when on the battlefield, these splendid men will shed new luster on American men hood, right. So we have this idea of military camps and military training not simply as places where you prepare soldiers for battle, but where you prepare men to be good citizens, right that there is a long term goal here not just about the fight, but about what they can learn than they expect. Marines of being in the military, right. And in order to do this, the US War Department decides that it's not merely
going to allow men to mingle and sort of see what happens. It wants to impose a system of instruction that will help men learn how to mingle appropriately learn how to embody that sort of full blooded sense of American manhood that Pershing was talking about. And so I'm Secretary of War Newton Baker here, I'll skip ahead to him. Here's Newton Baker, who had no prior experience in the military at all, he was the mayor of Cleveland. Prior to taking on this position, he was a social reformer. He had sort of run this campaign in Cleveland to stamp out vice Bye, creating all these like alcohol free dance halls and public parks and amusement parks. And he funds the symphony. He does, you know, good civil, civic works projects, but very much with the idea that if you give young people healthy and wholesome things to do, you will deter them from vise right you will teach them you will provide them with the example of how to be good, upstanding American citizens. So Newton Baker comes into the office of Secretary of War, he is shocked and horrified to find what prevailed as the conditions in the US military. And again, if you go see either the photo exhibit here at the Filson or that camp Zachary Taylor exhibit, you'll notice that the soldiers have a good deal of downtime, right? It is their moments of horrific battle, but it's not all horrific battle. And it's not all military drilling right there. They they hang out on those, they they have a lot of free time. And when Newton Baker actually assumed the office of Secretary of War, just before the start of World War One, the US was engaged in a border skirmish with Mexico. And he started hearing about what those soldiers got up to in their free time along that border with Mexico. And he was unhappy. He was in fact shocked and horrified. Right. He received these reports that soldiers, young men left to their own devices drank. They got into fights, right? They got into trouble with the law, and they sometimes consorted with local women. I know really? Yeah. Who would have guessed that? I mean, it's shocking. And Baker was horrified. This was not the model of American manhood that he wished to see implemented in force supported in the US military. So when World War One gets underway, as the United States is gearing up for its entry into World War One, he orders the creation of something called the Commission on training camp activities. And this commission is specifically charged with providing soldiers like he did in back in Cleveland, right with wholesome activities that he feels will keep them away from the more unwholesome lore of what did person call it strong drink and dine are no loose women. And so Baker decides to create a new federal agency specifically to do this. We will go back to some of these images, right. And so they set up libraries, right, and clubhouses, and athletic competitions, and theatrical performances, and all kinds of different things that they feel will be healthy, wholesome, sufficiently attractive to men to keep them out of trouble, right, and that will help model the kind of American manhood and American citizen that they want to create through the military. They are particularly interested in singalongs because everybody knows that 18 year old men prefer sing alongs to beer. So they assembled song books. With popular songs and spirituals they appoint SONG LEADERS to gather the men and lead them in song and in a speech marking the first national community song day, Baker exalted the power of song to lead men to victory and to teach the virtue of subordinating the personal purpose to the common good, where individual success of anyone must be forgotten in the common good of all. So this commission on training camp activities started by or sort of, authorized by Secretary Baker is going to provide by them with activities, particularly singing, that will teach them to aspire to the common good of all, rather than to fall into the traps of vice as he sees it. He appoints this man, Raymond Fosdick, to head the Commission on training camp activities. First, it was an interesting guy in his own right, he worked previously for the Rockefeller Foundation, which had been founded at that point specifically to focus on combating venereal diseases. So he was certainly in line, intellectually with Baker. He's also the younger brother of Harry Emerson Fosdick. If anybody's familiar with him, he's one of the sort of most prominent liberal Protestant theologians of the certainly the first half of the 20th century. And Raymond is his brother, and they work together on several projects. He also not a lot of experience in the military. But he's called in and tasked with this astounding project of providing wholesome healthy recreation
and entertainment for nearly 5 million American soldiers. Right. That's, that's a big job. Right. And if you see no camp, Zachary Taylor and thinking about like how quickly those camps come up, right, there's nothing there. And suddenly 50,000 men are passing through or training, right; he doesn't have a lot of time to get these programs up and running. And he has the support of the Secretary of War, which is very important. He has the support of President Woodrow Wilson, which is very important, and of General Pershing the head of the military, but he doesn't have a lot of staff. And he doesn't really have the time to organize, hire, and train staff to do this work. So he decides that he's going to outsource and then he's going to turn to an organization that he feels will be the most capable of doing this kind of virtue promoting American value promoting work among young men. There, I heard somebody say it over here, the young men's Christian Association. Now, it's not a crazy idea to turn to the YMCA, the YMCA had been providing recreational activities to American soldiers since the Civil War. And they were founded very much as an organization, first in England, and then they moved over to Canada into the United States to combat the evils of urban life, that they were founded as a sort of not really a fraternal organization, but a Christian, an organization for young men and Christian Fellowship, right to give them a sort of respite from the temptations of the city, and of urban living through first fellowship, educational opportunities, opportunities to learn and study together. But by the 1910s, by the time the war is starting, they had moved away from simply providing fellowship and study opportunities to things like gyms, right, and sports teams. But they very much conceived of those sports teams as a way to again provide that moral guidance and healthy alternative to young men so that they could have those models of how to become a good American or how to be a better American. So Baker, and Fosdick, when they had initiated this program, had promised that the only objective here was Americanization. There was no religious component to what they were doing. Right. The YMCA is well positioned to do this work, they have experience with it. John Mott, who was the chairman of the YMCA, this point is a personal friend of President Wilson's. So they're well connected, they're well funded. Right. And Baker and Fosdick insist that that is their only objective. Right. And here, you know, for your boy, right, the YMCA will be there to for, you know, a shoulder to lean on a hot cup of coffee, they'll be there to support them. That's the official line of the US War Department. But the YMCA really does not share that commitment. Right. They're happy to they're eager to provide those sorts of sort of support services for soldiers they are committed to that mission. But this idea that they don't also have a religious mission is not at all reflected in their own literal Sure. So in the YMCA manual of Camp work that they issued to all of the their camp secretaries, they described the fundamental objectives of their work as following. What is the fundamental purpose of the Army Navy work as conducted by young men's Christian Association? It may be said that the simple and yet comprehensive objective and young men's Christian Association service is the making of a symmetrical, symmetrical and serviceable Christian character. And in the manual that they sort of go on to judge the efficiency on how well are you doing your work as a YMCA secretary, they say the final test of the why secretary's efficiency is how largely he's able to lead men, one by one, through his personal influence through Bible classes and meetings, as well as through the participation of the individual in service for others to accept and follow Jesus Christ. His crowning service for any man is to lead him to allegiance to Jesus Christ. Right there, Mother, I promise to read the Bible every day Bible discussion classes will keep you true to your home ideals fit to face your folks, and up to the task at home. Now, in a way, it's kind of interesting to think about, right how the YMCA is not masking these intentions in its work. It's actually quite explicit about it. And the word department seems almost not to be able to see a contradiction between saying this is purely This is religiously neutral. Americanization work, no religion here, right and hiring this organism don't look right and hiring the YMCA to do this work, but they are really very insistent that there is no religious content here. And a lot of scholars of American religion have written about what and Pellegrini and Jana Jacobson calls stealth Protestantism,
right, this idea that Protestantism was so normal in American society, that really maybe they
didn't see it, that maybe it truly just seemed like the the neutral ground on which American
society was built. So that when you said American values, right, they just sort of assume that's
American values. every American wants their son to read the Bible and stay true to the values
and to swear their allegiance to Jesus Christ, what American wouldn't want that. I'll tell you
what, America with what that? So, but I want to sort of acknowledge, right that I think it was
genuinely hard for the men at the War Department for somebody like Raymond Fosdick, right,
who came out of a deeply pious Protestant upbringing, whose brother is one of the most
prominent Protestant theologians of the early 20th century. Right that that he, I want to give
him the benefit of the doubt that he really thought, well, this is the work of Americanization and
didn't necessarily see a problem with it. Jewish and Catholic Americans, however, immediately
saw a problem with this immediately, and had been concerned about the YMCA long before
right with its alluring gym programs and basketball teams or whatever had already. This was
already a source of concern for them. What were they doing in those urban neighborhoods?
Why are they trying to get our kids to play sports? What? What's going on? What's the
intention? So when it's announced that the YMCA is now going to provide these services for 5
million American men who are stuck in military camps forced to mingle with each other? Right?
There's tremendous anxiety about what this is going to mean. And I think it gives us a kind of
window, I think, to thinking about what Americans have meant when they talk about
Americanization in the early 20th century, right that they generally claim that this is a
religiously neutral idea. And I think that looking at this dynamic and World War One forces us to
realize that maybe Americanization was never an entirely religiously neutral project. Certainly,
certainly Jews and Catholics did not perceive it as a religiously neutral project. Right. And you
have to remember, there's a lot more of them in the country than there had ever been before
because of that massive wave of immigration that had come in. I think I'm out of order with my
notes, so I'll skip around somewhere in there, but the Jewish population of the United States I
don't have my statistics before the Civil War. It's like the 80,000 people, I think by 1860, it's
around 200,000 Jews in the United States. By 1917. It's about 2 million people. Right? And
Catholics are an even larger percentage of the United States population. So this project, which
might have looked religiously neutral at some earlier moment in American history, in 1917,
does not look religiously neutral at all. And soldiers almost immediately like that guy, Coleman
Silbert at Camp Devins, who I started with immediately begin to complain that mingling with
soldiers in the sort of protective environment provided by this new war department program
feels a lot like evangelism, rather than just mingling. One soldier wrote to JW B headquarters.
Last night, we marched into the YMCA, and after witnessing some movies and listening to some
singing, which, you know, young men just can't get enough of an army chaplain got up and
spoke about Jesus Christ. Can you beat that for nerve, when you stop to consider that every
religion in the world was represented at that gathering? And at the close, he cried, who will
stand up and pledge allegiance to his flag and Jesus Christ? Can you see his trick and trying to
get us to stand up for Jesus Christ? I think it was a dirty contemptible trick, and it should be
reported to the proper authorities, other students, other students, other soldiers wrote in to say
that the YMCA was distributing copies of the Christian Bible translated into Yiddish, no joke, so
that it would be more accessible, right? And they don't have anything to do. They're stuck
there. All of their all of their reading material, all of the recreational activities are being
provided by this program. So if you've got nothing to read, and somebody's handing you a
Yiddish Book, right, so they're they're really deeply disturbed about this. A guy named Adolf
chirps are Jewish camp, workers stationed at Camp Fremont, near Palo Alto, California wrote,
The YMCA, as stated by their own general secretary, Jr. Mott is essentially and preeminently a
Christian movement. The YMCA does not deny this, nor in their work, do they forget this, in
their statistics of each of their buildings, they register the number of Christian talks they have
each day, the hymns, the talks, everything was decidedly Christian. They discuss the
intercourse with soldiers and were instructed on how to act and what to do in a Christian way. I'm not condemning them for it. In fact, it is their duty, and they're doing it. Jewish and Christian, Jewish and Catholic leaders in the United States, however, are freaking out. Right that this is unacceptable to them. And they almost immediately begin lobbying, their congressmen, their connections, the War Department, the President, for their own representatives in the camp. Right. And they aren't make the argument that if the YMCA is the organization that the government is going to turn to, in order to provide these necessary americanizing forces and influences in the US military. Right, then, obviously, men need religion in order to be good American citizens, right, that some form of religious instruction must obviously be necessary to this project of making better soldiers, keeping men sort of on the straight and narrow and teaching American immigrants in particular, how to be good Americans. And they make the argument that if religion is required, then they will have to the government will have to provide some access to Judaism and Catholicism in US military camps. Right. And they, they make this argument sort of in different, fairly clever manners, right? But they sort of appeal to the idea that you can only speak to the soul of each man through his own religious tradition, that Jewish and Catholic soldiers will not respond to the ministrations of the YMCA. And without that kind of care without that kind of moral, educational, spiritual guidance. Who knows what they will get, they'll stop going to their sing alongs, right, who knows what they'll get up to? Right? So if you want to protect them, you're going to have to accommodate them in some way. Right. And so, here's that statistic, which I couldn't find earlier. Right? There's nearly 2 million Jews in the United States. There's 200 and 50,000 Jews serving in the American army that's more than had ever served in the American military before because of that wave of immigration. Right. The Jewish population had grown. So the percentage of Jewish men in the military had grown Catholics, they think or may end up being as much as 1/3 of the entire military force. Right? How can you say we're going to leave a third of our soldiers without the kind of moral guidance that they need? Particularly particularly, because there's that high percentage of those shady looking Irish, not mixing into the pot, right? You've all these Irish Catholics? surely surely they need guidance and Americanization. You can't leave them unprotected. You can't leave them, right unattended to we have this opportunity to Americanize these immigrants. But we'll need a sympathetic appropriate Catholic and Jewish organization to do that work. It won't work just to have the YMCA in charge. The Knights of Columbus, which is a Catholic Fraternal Order, volunteers, lobbies hard and eventually convinces the government which had been very reluctant at first, that they would serve as the Catholic counterpart to the YMCA is another Knights of Columbus poster. Right and they argue that they call on their secretaries in the camps, right? These these sort of paid employees and volunteers who are going to be sent into camps like camp Zachary Taylor, to go and provide these healthy, wholesome recreational activities. They say that they are to make sure that the Catholic identity and activity is not submerged in the provision of welfare services and stress that if the YMCA is conducting an evangelical Institute, it is very essential that we conduct a Catholic program. Right. So suddenly those like libraries sing alongs sporting events, right? The the fact that they are not religiously neutral is going to kind of rise to the surface right, though Knights of Columbus says that we're not running it religiously neutral program, right, we have Americanization on our mind. But we also have this other Catholic agenda on our mind. Okay, this is the group that I've done the bulk of my research on. It's an organization called the Jewish Welfare Board. And it was founded in 1917 expressly to be the Jewish counterpart to the YMCA was founded by a group of well heeled, well connected. Often quite wealthy Jewish leaders who were concerned about what was going to happen to the welfare of those Jewish immigrants and Jewish young men in the military. And they put together this organization. Cyrus Adler, who was he was, at that point, the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in America, which is the conservative movements rabbinical Seminary. He was the acting president of that organization. At the time, he had also been a librarian at the Smithsonian Institute, he was a incredibly
accomplished and well connected man. He explained that it was resolved as the guiding principle to extend the services 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, right. So it becomes kind of the same language that the Knights of Columbus use, their services will be open to all they're engaged in this shared project of Americanization but one will have a distinctly Catholic program and one will have a distinctly Jewish program and I think that they kind of make the agenda of the YMCA visible for the first time by insisting that they need programs of their own. So I love their I love World War One posters I evidently missed an exhibit on World War One posters here. And I'm very sorry I hope you all got to see them because I think they're awesome. This one says in Yiddish at the top Nick absorbed errs All right, don't worry. He's okay. Right and we have our Jewish Welfare Board worker write a letter with Mama and Papa on Jewish Welfare Board stationery, right reassuring your boys. Okay, I got him. Yeah, it's kind of sweet. Great to have another one here. Here I like this one. FZ myth. Alice, he's taken care of everything. Don't worry, he's got it. And I love this. He's got like, you know, a Torah scroll a package of books, a violin, right? I guess so the Jewish guys will play along during the sing alongs. Right? He's, he's ready. Okay. Now, so these two groups, the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board, they also wanted the men to mingle, right? They're not opposed to the idea of the men mingling. In fact, they're pretty invested in Americanization of immigrants, right? They want Jewish and Catholic immigrants to adapt, to assimilate, to show that they are capable of being good American citizens. In fact, I think there's a strong sort of position of self defense in this as the United States is growing more and more and more anxious about what are the implications and the impact of all these immigrants coming in, and they're beginning to pass what will be a series of three evermore increasing policies restricting immigrants coming into the United States, these Catholic and Jewish organizations want to prove that Catholics and Jews are perfectly capable of being good American citizens, right? So they want to protect them from what they see as the evangelizing impulse of the YMCA. But they're not opposed to an americanizing agenda as long as it has its own sort of religious key to it. Here, let's look at this one. Right. So a lot of the advertising that they do is about this idea of a united front now, right. United We Serve all of these different organizations eventually become part of this commission on training camp activities program here and I love this one united behind the service star, right. And we have each of the organizations right standing and holding their flag, this idea of a united policy for the image, the assimilation, the Americanization of immigrants, but each with their own religious flavor. Right and so J WB Jewish Welfare Board leaders talk about Americanization a good deal. So Louis Marshall, who was a very prominent attorney, and one of the founders of the JW V said, our sons are fighting side by side for the preservation of liberty. They recognize no distinction of person, faith or pedigree as companions and arms they know but one test that of loyalty to the flag. Impressed by this lesson heralded from the battlefield, Protestant, Catholic and Jew have joined hands. We now understand better than ever before that prosperity and happiness of the nation depends upon the complete unity of its citizens, and then it can only attain its highest development when all prejudices have been banished. When loyalty and devotion to national ideas which alone constitute good citizenship shall be the supreme test by which men are judged. Jewish military chaplain Morris Lazybone, wrote in this book of prayers and meditations for soldiers that was distributed not just to Jewish soldiers, but to all American soldiers, my lads you have worked trained, served suffered sacrifice together, what is the effect to have the all this is to have on you? You've been thrown together in a jumble black, white, yellow, brown and red, French, Italian, English, Russian Japp, Chinese Portuguese American, you've eaten and live with Muhammad in confusion, Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant and you haven't you found some good and all. And Rabbi Horace Wolfe, writing in the American Hebrew newspaper, promise that khaki obliterates all the artificial distinctions of civil life. So we have
this moment in which everybody's like, Okay, we've got our piece, the Catholic part, the Jewish part, the Protestant part, hurray. And then we get to the soldiers themselves. Because remember, they didn't like mingling. They still don't like mingling. And what we find, interestingly, is that when you turn to the soldiers themselves, they're resistant. Right? They're not necessarily happy about this agenda to Americanize and improve them. They're not all necessarily on board. So one Jewish Welfare Board worker for a reading from Camp Dix in New Jersey says, A good many of the men have always lived in ghettos and are clannish. Their circle of acquaintance at home was always Jewish. They can't all of a sudden change their habits of life. A man in the army cannot act in that manner. All must be friendly and mix well to enhance this freedom. or the condition of clannishness exists among the men entering a national army camp. It'll wear off as they get used to it. But it didn't wear off all that quickly. At Camp Upton in New York Jewish Welfare Board worker Joseph Hyman said, a great mass of the boys from the Lower East Side and particularly the Yiddish speaking and Russian speaking Jewish boys, many merely declarants you were eligible for the draft as soon as you filed any paperwork in stating your intention to become citizens. So men were drafted into the military before they were citizens. Men were drafted into the military before they could speak English. No joke that our army had to have significant language training. Right and he said they can't be brought to an immediate sense of communion socially with Protestant Americans and Catholic Irishmen. No they can can they be educated overnight in this respect? Right in our friend Coleman Silbert, who I started with from Camp Devon's wrote 90% of the men here are of the Orthodox type, many if not illiterate, speak broken English. Few have more than a common school education. Many have emigrated within the last five to 10 years. These men must have a haven, right? We're not we're dealing with realities, not theories, donning a uniform has not transformed them overnight. And he says if we at least saw a nonsectarian building, right or program, we might pause and consider, right but we see these YMCA programs that display distinctly Christian literature where Christian songs are sung and played even when there are no services where the air is Christian whose hold movement is Christian. The YMCA is not nonsectarian. Unless it be for all shades of Protestantism. The YMCA claims it no man thinks it's so except the Jew. It is laughable if not ridiculous why in heaven's name, expect us to mingle with the Christians. Silbert doesn't want to, and a lot of the men in the camp and I'm looking at Jewish soldiers. But I'm gonna bet that if we look at the letters that were sent home to Knights of Columbus, organizers and offices that will see that same thing. It's nice that you want to Americanize us all together by force as we serve here in the military, which we've been drafted into. But we don't want to they end up making concessions. Each of the different organizations gets to run, what it's what are known as soldiers welfare huts. And they come to this agreement that they will all participate in this shared program of Americanization and of providing healthy and uplifting and wholesome recreational activities. And the huts will be open to anybody who wants to come in. They can't shut the door to anybody. But each of these different organizations will get to run their own. So we have here a poster again of a Jewish welfare but board hut Marhaba is a a home Good boys. We've built for them a home, a Jewish home in the military. And the Knights of Columbus ran its own Catholic Homes in the military, and the YMCA ran its own Protestant homes in the military. Right. And as George Cohen wrote from Camp Devon's, where Coleman Silbert was complaining about mangling the US War Department has deeply considered the fact that it is very necessary for the mental moral and religious welfare of the soldier, that there would be provided for him a suitable place where he may spend his leisure time in a proper environment. It is realized the general morale of the soldier is raised in this way. It is also apparently concluded that although pleasure and recreation do not depend on religion, and no division on the basis of religion might, to a certain extent tend to segregate various groups, after all, religious environment is the key to each man's heart. So what do we learn from all of this? So one thing that I want us to appreciate is that this policy of creating these separate homes, right of having these separate organizations
working together, does in fact, change American society. If we went into the World War, one period thinking of Protestantism as this invisible, neutral set of American values, certainly by the second half of the 20th century, American society doesn't tend to talk about that anymore. We talk about the Judeo Christian heritage of American society, or we use the phrase that the political philosopher sociologist will Herbert used in 1953 when he wrote his very popular book Protestant, Catholic and Jew and talked about all three faiths as being the moral basis of American values and American society. And from this period onward and certainly after World War Two into World War Two, and after World War Two, we start talking about a try faith basis of American values. And a great example of that is I don't know is anybody know the story of the four chaplains? Oh, I meant to write down their names, I'm sorry. Um, this is a window, a stained glass window of them in the Pentagon. So the four chaplains and I apologize, I always forget all their names, I owe you their names, or you can look them up. Are there's two Protestant chaplains, Catholic priest and rabbi who are shipped out on this the SS Dorchester, I want to say it's 1943. And they're on a transport vessel taking men to fight in World War Two, the ship is sunk. And the story goes, that the chaplains, realizing that there aren't enough life vests and seats in, you know, lifeboats to go around, hand out the life vests, and then link arms and pray together, and go down with. And so they're commemorated at that moment in 43, as being this embodiment of try faith, American values, Protestant, Catholic Jew, serving together, fighting together, not dissolving into each other, but supporting this American project. So one thing that I think comes out of these programs is this consciousness of a, a new vision of American values, and what Americanization means around a try faith model. Over here, I'll put this one up, too. They also all link to form this organization that you might have heard of, as well. They collaborate to form the USO. But I think it's also gives us an opportunity. And again, I didn't mean to be quite as timely as I am of thinking about our debates about mingling and Americanization of immigrants, and what that means and the sort of resistances and obstacles to it. We are certainly in the midst 100 years later, of continuing to debate who is capable of being a good American? And on what terms? What are the obstacles that we see in that process? What are the obstacles that immigrants and members of religious minorities themselves put up to that process? And I think that this moment in world war one gives us a real appreciation of the longer history of those debates, where we were 100 years ago. And I hope that that gives us at least a framework for thinking about the debates that we're having today. So thank you. I am super happy to take any questions to and a lot of you may have more expertise on Camp sack retailer or local history. I'm happy to learn from you. And I'm happy to answer any questions that I can. So please, I think there's a mic going around.

**Question 53:24**

So if these outreach situations one by the various organizations, did they attempt to teach English or teach men how to read that may have been illiterate?

**Jessica Cooperman 53:41**

Yeah, that's a great question. So English education is really important. They teach American history. And they teach things like civics, right? There's they assume that men won't necessarily know how American government functions. So as the war picks up, and certainly into the post war period, the War Department starts running more of those sort of civic education programs on their own, rather than through the religious organizations. But absolutely, they all very much team up on this kind of broad education program, because
again, they want to prepare these men to be good American citizens after they get out. And the language project problem isn't immediate problems. They have to be able to teach these men at least to respond to commands. And they they don't all speak English when they come in. Thank you.

**Question 54:29**

My father was at Camp Zachary Taylor, during World War One. And went of course, as a Jewish soldier. They're one of the people from Louisville. He considered himself I think, fairly urban in his viewpoints. And he always talked about how amazed he was when he met so many people from Kentucky, who he felt were very poorly trained in the basic facts of hygiene and what you're supposed to do and how you're supposed to live. Insofar as his personal situation was concerned, the Jewish soldiers who were at camps, Zachary Taylor, and I guess, throughout World War One had issues with their diet. You could eat, what they couldn't eat, what was permitted, what wasn't permitted, and what the rabbi's would let them do and not let them do. But it was all sort of an interesting issue. And I've learned a lot from him about that time.

**Jessica Cooperman 55:38**

That's great. Thank you. To your first point. Certainly your second point is correct. That question of Jewish dietary restrictions. Not much accommodation is made for that in the US military, certainly not in a World War One. And that was an ongoing problem for at least some percentage of a percentage of Jewish soldiers. But to your your first point, I think that's exactly that, that sense of mingling, right? Men who are highly educated men who were illiterate, right, the idea that you can bring them together and have them learn what's the right way to live? Right, the military, these military camps provide an unimaginable opportunity to do that. So that's a great example of it. Thank you.

**Question 56:21**

Yeah, I appreciated your talk about how the military was a way to create a citizenry, which had a uniformity and where, even though people had difference in their religious life, still were kind of brought together. And yet, at this time, you know, this was one of the periods where the Ku Klux Klan was on the rise, where Leo Frank, had just been lynched. Where there was a tremendous amount of, if not anti semitism, directly, a number of incidents which were notable is that, you know, even the zoldak Dreyfus case in France, was known here. And the ways that Jews were depicted in popular culture was abominable. So I'm wondering if there any specific incidents during the war leading up to World War One that were, you know, extremely anti semitic?

**Jessica Cooperman 57:23**

That's it's a good question. I was actually surprised in going through Jewish Welfare Board records that they didn't have more discussion of anti Jewish incidents in the military. There's one, Jacob Raider Marcus, who went on to a illustrious career as both a rabbi and a American Jewish historian, kept a diary during his time he was a World War One soldier. And he kind of
brushed it off as like, well, there's just the average anti semitism like nothing, nothing worth noting. And so I think that there was probably a certain percentage of incidents that I might find objectionable today, but that he brushed off as like a that's just the run of the mill stuff. I think the military did, however, try to keep more egregious examples of not just anti semitism, but a prejudice under control, not because they necessarily loved minority groups and ethnic groups, right? Not out of love, but out of the need for efficiency, right? If you have your soldiers fighting with each other, they're not going to fight together. So yeah, the anti semitic event that actually is causing tremendous concern for American Jewish leaders at this moment, is in 1916, the German government calls for a census of Jews in the German military, because an anti semitic party in Germany had raised the accusation that Jews were not serving in the army that they were shirking their military duty. And they call for a census of all Jews and what they're doing and how they're contributing the census. The assumption is the census demonstrated with other studies have found that Jews were serving at exactly the same rate and capacities as other Germans. And so the census data was mysteriously lost. But the fact that Germany which in 1916 look like a country in which Jews were well established, well integrated, highly assimilated into German society would take this very overtly anti semitic stand cause tremendous anxiety throughout the Jewish world. Thank you.

Question 59:28

Yes, thank you, Dr. Guberman, wonderful talk. My concern notwithstanding the First Amendment's establishment, the religion clause, today's population has so many religious traditions, and fully 25% of our current population has no religious background or no affiliation. I wonder how things are going today in the military, as is still being established is the USO truly neutral? And are there other organizations working today?

Jessica Cooperman 59:54

Yeah, I think that's a great question. In fact, Abby sent me an article earlier today. I really think You so I have a book with me. We can all read it together. woman named Renee Stahl just published a book called enlisting faith, which is much longer history of the military chaplaincy. So I, I am going to read it on the flight home, but I recommended approach her work in other contexts. The chaplaincy I think is a super interesting organization, because it really does defy the logic of the separation of church and state, right. These are people who are professional, religious functionaries, working in the service of the US government. They are paid for by the Government. There they are. Protestant, Catholics, Jews, imams, whoever, who are officially, you know, official representatives of the US state. So I think the chaplaincy is an interesting organization to think about the nuances of that the dynamic of religion in the state, writ large. In terms of what's going on today, I think that there are real struggles around religious representation. The article that both of you guys sent me was about, there's been a and this has been documented before tremendous upick in evangelical Christian chaplains, which is probably representative of the desires of some soldiers. But that sort of smooth pattern of all religions equal, everybody serves in the chaplaincy to protect the religious interests of their group. Right. So but do you see the religious interests of your group as being the embrace of a pluralistic religious environment? Or do you see it as an opportunity to draw more men to your faith? And I think that that is a is a source of tension in the chaplaincy today. Uso? Yes, they split into different components of the organization. So the sort of entertainment part Bob Hope
going to see the troops kind of splits off from the welfare component of the USO. So I think all of the organizations I think still have a stake in it. But I think this sort of front facing programs that they provide to soldiers are much more religiously neutral than they were before.

Question 1:02:11
Dr. Koopman Thank you.

Jessica Cooperman 1:02:13
Thank you everybody so much.

1:02:14
Right. RIGHT