Jewish women's organizational activity in Buffalo and Niagara Falls

By CHANA R. KOTZIN, Ph.D Director, Jewish Buffalo Archives Project

n the BJR Jan. 3 issue, I outlined several areas of outstanding need for archival materials in the Greater Buffalo and Niagara Falls that remain of critical interest to the Jewish Buffalo Archives Project. One of these ten identified areas was that of Jewish women's voluntary groups because these groups have played very significant roles in the cultural, educational and philanthropic development of the total community, not only in the personal and social lives of members. Their impacts have been significant but often overlooked, so a dedicated strategy to re-covering this history is the duty of an archives collecting program. A later ar-ticle at the end of this series will highlight the essential work of synagogue sterhoods and women's temple axillaries as well as women's divisions within Jewish Federations and women's divisions within home town organizations (landsmanschaften), however this article will focus on women's organiza-

tions, founded and run by women.
Buffalo and Niagara Falls had a large
array of Jewish women's groups, and it
is hard to do justice to them all in this article. The goal here is to shine a light on
a sample of the groups that have existed
and enriched our communities in impactful ways. Some of the earliest Jewish women's organizations, aside from
sisterhoods or benevolent women's
funding organizations were the parallel
organizations that Jewish women
formed from the 1860s and 1870s to
mirror male fraternal organizations.
These women's organizations often had
self-help and philanthropic aspects, and
as a group of organizations continued
for well over 100 years, only going into
step decline in the late 1970s. One of
the earliest women's organization's of

this type that we know of, is the Sisters of Rebecca Lodge No. 12, that met once a month in Montefiore Hall, as well as a True Sisters Society, that was run as a sickness and benefit lodge. Both of these were independent of B'nai B'rith. Indeed, the first women's auxiliary organization that officially affiliated with Montefiore Lodge did not occur until 1922. From the 1950s, B'nai B'rith Women (BBW) had several active chapters in Buffalo that we know of through the gift of Annette Blanchard's papers: Aurora, #741; Balfour, #749; Boruch, #1040; Montefiore, #34; New Covenant, #602 and Tamar.

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Overtime, from the mid 1960s each chapter merged with another. At the end of the 1960s, Balfour merged with Montefiore, and this was one of the last remaining large chapters through the 1970s. It would be very helpful to expand the materials we have relating to B hai B rith Women, especially in its early years as well as its successor, Jewish Women International.

Other early women's groups (particularly popular from the 1890s) were sewing circles. Unfortunately, the only records we have of these sewing circles are by reference to their existence in other organizational materials, but sewing circles formed an incredible service to new immigrants and the Yishuy, and the nascent Israeli State. Signifi-



The B'nai B'rith Women's Charter. It can be found in the Annette Blanchard papers at UB's University Archives.

developed into early Hadassah groups. The earlier sewing groups would spend countless hours sewing shirts, dresses, pants and knitting sweaters: literally putting clothes on the back of the poorest of immigrant children, men and women, who often arrived with literally one set of clothes. It is hard to image in our time of relative prosperity despite a recession, how little new immigrants came with. Several changes of clothes were a luxury, and the time consuming task of cleaning clothes before the advent of modern appliances (which did not just need technological advances, but also prosperity), meant that changes of clothes were helpful beyond convenience. Indeed, clothes were used until they were completely worn out and were often functional rather than fashionable. In light of this, we are asking for materials from the community. Do you have any photographs of your grandmothers or great-grandmothers doing this work, or have any records re-

Clubs with significant charitable functions were very active from the 1920s and included the Jewish Mother's Club and the Naomi Club. The Jewish Mother's Club was incorporated in 1919 to provide working or sick mothers with daytime care for their children. The Jewish Mothers Club Nursery and Temporary Home, as it was first called, opened its doors at 252 Adams Street. Supported by the Ladies' Manhattan Auxiliary and other East Side women by 1921, the Home was caring for Jewish children from eighteen months to twelve years of age and was staffed with five full time employees, plus volunteer workers and an attending physician. Costs were minimal and depended upon ability to pay, with the highest fee 50 cents a day. Local synagogue appeals and free gifts of food and clothing helped fund the homes expenses and the Home closed at the end of WWII. A few years after the Mother's Club was founded the Naomi Relief Club began in 1921 by young women who had just moved out of the East Side. The club raised funds chiefly by sponsoring card parties, New Year's Eve celebrations, and public concerts and specialized in lending emergency relief until another organization could take over. The group was eventually absorbed into organizing the Refugee Exchange Bureau (Opportunity Shop). Any materials you my have related to these clubs would be enormously helpful

Not every organization has a continuous history as the National Council of Jewish Women in Buffalo demonstrates. The initial Buffalo Section of the National Council of Jewish Women was founded on December 27, 1895, with Cecil B. Wiener as president, prior to her rise to Judge, and her community roles in Jewish social service. This first NCJW grew rapidly and most of the women initially involved were also associated with Temple Beth Zion. In fact, this commonality of membership and mission with Sisters of Zion is what probably led to the demise of the first NCJW section before World War I, as their programs often overlapped. In the 1930s, another

roup of the National Council of Jewish Women was formed in Buffalo, and was active through the 1940s, but it also struggled. In 1953, the NCJW reconstituted in Buffalo and focused its main activities on community service and educational activities on a non-sectarian basis of both Jews and non-Jews. Much of our knowledge about the NCJW activities is restricted to the 1980s, as these are the only period for which we have records, kindly donated by Muriel Goodman, and some additional materials from Ethel Melzer and Elinor Weiss. The wide range of activities that the NCJW pursued during this time is significant: from environmental concerns over acid rain, clean water and asbestos in schools, to the annual Women's Plea for Soviet Jewry, the Thrift Shop, support of programs through the Jewish Book Fair, volunteerism at Rosa Coplon and else-where as well as campaigns to register voters. In addition, the NCJW organized numerous public programs and lectures in areas as diverse as aging, dv ing and bereavement, domestic violence, working mothers, and parenting as well as NCJW Council shabbats and Jewish literacy in many different ways. Do you have any materials across the

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span of NCJW chapters from the 1890s to the 1990s?

This article does not highlight the ignificant work of Hadassah of Buffalo which has its own current archives program, but other women's Zionist organizations were popular from the 1920s in Buffalo for which we are seeking records. Pioneer Women, founded in 1927 and absorbed an earlier Labor-Zionist women's group; the Manya Shocat Women's Club. Pioneer Women raised money for nursery schools and day care centers for chil-dren of working mothers and vocational schools for girls in Israel. While two groups of Pioneer women existed in the 1950s (one chapter was Yiddishspeaking group, and a younger group was called Hanita), we have no records of their activities or the earlier Manya Shocat Women's Club. Interest in Israel, and fundraising was not limited to labor Zionists as a women's Mizrachi group demonstrates. Known from the 1950s as the Deborah Chapter of the Mizrachi Women was originally orga-nized in Buffalo sometime in the 1930s and led by Mrs. Ruth Orenstein, Mrs. Morris Steinhorn and Mrs. Henry Apfelgreen, and in the 1950s, Henriette Klein. Mizrachi Women's mission is to support both Israel and traditional Judaism. Do you have materials from any of these groups? Distinct from Zionist and service or-

any of these groups?

Distinct from Zionist and service organizations already highlighted, one of
the longer running women's organizations has been the Jewish Liberal Arts
Club that was organized in 1926 by a
small group of women who wanted to
create a cultural outlet for stay at home
mothers. This organization also became a significant force for social and

(Continued on page 15)





2013 Mideast media mang

(Continued on page 15)
Arab wrongdoing is downplayed or omitted entirely. In some instances, the English account is completely at odds with the original Hebrew. Among dozens of corrections issued by Ha aretz at CAMERA's prompt ing in recent years, many have involved errors in translations.

5. Two Major International Newspapers Feature Anti-Israel Cartoons Using Blood

Libel Imagery
January 27 was International
Holocaust Remembrance Day.
That same day, The Sunday
Times of London published an
editorial cartoon showing a hooknosed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu building a wall on the hodies of Palestinians and using their blood as mortar. On July 2, alongside a favorable re-view of two books that are highly critical of Israel, the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung ran a cartoon depicting Israel as a voracious Moloch, the deity to whom ancient Canaanites sacrificed children. After powerful letter writing campaigns, both newspapers apologized.

Terrorists and Killers Re-leased by Israel as "Political Prisoners"

The Israeli government is in the process of releasing 104 con-victed terrorists as a gesture to the Palestinian Authority to facilitate

The Guardian and The Independent have misrepresented the killers as "political prisoners." Though both of those outlets eventually corrected the characterization, there has been a widespread neglect by all media of the crimes committed by the released con-victs and the details of the lives of their many victims.

7. PBS Doubles Down on Anti-

Of the fifteen films broadcast in the 2013 season of the documentary series POV, two of them, tary series POV, two of them, more than 13 per cent, were anti-Israel. PBS aired "The Law in these Parts" August 19 and "5 Broken Cameras" on August 26. Among the thousands of documentaries released in recent years on all subjects – medical advances will the production of the produ vances, pollution, political corruption, architecture, famous crimes, literature, internet dating, the life of Elvis – why did PBS seruption, lect two in one season that are misleading and anti-Israel? And air them in successive weeks?

ewspapers apologized. 8. C-SPAN Provides Ongoing Platform for Obsessive Anti-Israel, Often Anti-Semitic Callers

Since November 2008, CAM-ERA's C-SPAN Watch has documented hundreds of on-air anti-Jewish, anti-Israel calls to Wash-ington Journal, C-SPAN's daily 7a.m. (Eastern) public affairs call-in show. Potentially reaching millions of viewers, these hateful tated by hosts who fail to repudiate the numerous slanderous falsifications and distortions

9. BBC's Inaccurate Report Used to Promote Hate During Operation Pillar of De-

fense, the BBC, flouting its own editorial guidelines on accuracy and impartiality, falsely reported that the young son of one of their staffers was killed by an Israeli airstrike. Though it was later de-termined that the death was likely the result of a misfired Palestinian rocket, subsequent corrections received far less attention.

Promoted as part of a preconceived narrative depicting Israelis as "baby killers," an image of Jihad Masharawi holding his son's body became entrenched in the minds of many as a depiction of Israeli wrong-doing. The image has since been used in several anti-Israel protests and contin-ues to foment hatred against Israel. Months later, the flawed

Women's organizational activity

(Continued from page 2)

community service and philan-thropic activity within a decade of its organization. In 1938, the Jewish Liberal Arts Club began a Scholarship Fund to help students complete their college education at the Uni-versity of Buffalo and elsewhere. The club's central purpose, however, was to organize lectures and discussions on cultural and civic subjects. enable dramatic presentations and reviews of current books. It also began an annual fundraising concert that became a cultural highlight in the community. This organization like many of the others featured in this article demonstrated the variety and breadth of women's organizations and contributions to Jewish Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

Please enable their stories to be told and remembered by donating your materials to the Jewish Buffalo Archives Project. We need: Letters/email, memoirs/reminiscences, diaries/blogs, scrapbooks/photo albums, professional papers, genealogical information, speeches/lectures, articles/essays, subject files, legal documents, minutes/reports, brochures and fliers, awards/cer-tificates, photographs, films/videos/au-dio tapes (including identifying infor-mation is helpful), websites printouts and in digital form, architectural records. articles of incorporation, charters, audio recordings, budgets, bylaws and revisions, newspaper clippings, constitution and revisions, correspondence/email of officers, Directories, Handbooks, Mem-oranda, Minutes of meetings, Membership lists, Motion picture film, videotape, audio recordings, DVDs, and CDs, newsletters and other publications, Organizational charts, Pamphlets, brochures, fliers, etc., Planning documents, Press releases, Reports (annual, committee, etc.), Rosters, Subject files.

Please contact Chana Revell Kotzin, Director, Jewish Buffalo Archives Project, if you have any leads or would like to discuss a particular donation at 716-204-5388 or email archivesproject@bjebuffalo.org. You can also visit the Jewish Buffalo Archives Project at 2640 North Forest Road, Getzville, NY 14068; however, as this is a part-time position, and there are times when I am offsite conducting surveys or oral histories, it is always best to make an appointment to avoid disappointment. In addition, I can also visit your home or organizational location if more convenient. Please do not send materials through the mail. until you have contacted me first to make sure that it is not a duplicate, and always use FEDEX or UPS, to track your materials.

account of Omar Masharawi's death was still featured prominently in the Magazine section of the BBC website.

10. Prominent Newspapers from Coast to Coast Publish U Penn Professor Ian Lustick's

Calls for the Demise of Israel
In The Los Angeles Times in
March and again in The New York Times in September, Ian Lustick depicts Israel as a pariah state, glosses over the sins of its adversaries, and goes so far as to call for the dissolution of the Jewish state. While he apparently suffers from the delusion that Jewish self-criti-cism and Israeli concessions can bring a unilateral end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the outrage here is the fact that influential newspapers believe it is reasonable to debate the idea of eliminating Israel, a democratic country and the world's only Jewish state.

Can we expect 2014 to be a better year for Israel and media coverage? While CAMERA is gratified at the many instances of responsi-ble action by members of the media, it's also obvious there will be numerous challenges!
That's why CAMERA is dedi-

cated every day to setting the record straight on Israel and Middle East realities. Please contribute as gen-erously as possible to support CAMERA's essential work protecting Israel from the great harm of defamation. To contribute, please visit http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x context=47.

Israel to spend more than \$1 billion on Diaspora Jews

(JTA) - The Israeli government plans to invest more than \$1 billion over the next 20 years to strengthen the Jewish identity of Diaspora Jews.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the initiative, to be developed and implemented jointly with overseas Jewish communities, was first announced in November, but government officials did not share dollar amounts or other details at the time.

The initiative is aimed at Jews between the ages of 12 and 35, and will include programming in seven content areas: immersive experiences; follow-up; Israel and peoplehood education in formal institutions and informal set-tings; serving "the global good"; Jewish life and Israel engage-ment on campuses; and the im-

migration of young professionals. Final recommendations by the committees, composed of Israeli and Diaspora members, are to be ready by late February, and the budget framework is expected to be brought to the government for approval in a few months, The Jerusalem Post reported.

Among the ideas being con-sidered are a world Jewish peace corps; Hebrew-language courses in public schools in cities with large Jewish populations; the expansion of Birthright-like programs to younger age groups; and increasing financial support for Jewish summer camps.

LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of a Domestic Limited Liability Company (LLC) MJS MARKETING GROUP, LLC

Name: MJS MARKETING GROUP, LLC Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on Dec. 9, 2013. Office located in Eric County, N.Y. SSNY designated as agent for the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against it served upon it to: MJS MARKETING GROUP, LLC, 3479 Warner County of the State of the State of Stat Drive, Grand Island, N.Y. 14072.

Grand Island, 18. . . e: Any Lawful Purpose se. Latest date unon which LLC is to dissolve: No specific date. 1/3/14 1/10/14 1/17/14 1/24/14 1/31/14 2/7/14

LEGAL NOTICE

408 and 409 Evans Street Properties LLC, Articles of Organization filed with New York State on Nov. 7, 2013. Located in Erie County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the limited liability company upon whom process against it may be served and the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against it served upon him or her to 5530 Sheridan Drive, Suite 1, Buffalo, N.Y. 14221. This LLC will be pur-12/13/13 12/20/13 12/27/13 1/3/14 1/10/14 1/17/14

LEGAL NOTICE NOTICE OF FORMATION

Sue Freeman, LLC filed Articles of Organization with the New York Secretary of State (NYSS) on Dec. 6, 2013. Its office is located in Eric County. The NYSS is the designated agent of the LLC upon who process against it may be served. NYSS may mail a copy of process to 5780 Main St., Williamsville, N.Y. 14221. Purpose: Any

lawful purpose. 12/27/13 1/3/14 1/10/14 1/17/14 1/24/14 1/31/14

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLICATION NOTICE OF ORGANIZATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

The name of the Limited Liability Company is Gates Circle Holdings LLC; its Articles of Organization were filed with the Secretary o State on Dec. 9, 2013; the County within New York in which its office is to be located is Erie; the Secretary of State has been designated as agent upon whom process may be served; the Post Office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail the process is 2760 Kenmore Ave., Suite 100, Tonawanda, N.Y. 14150; the purpose of its business is to conduct any lawful business under law. 12/27/13 1/3/14 1/10/14 1/17/14 1/24/14 1/31/14

LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Formation of a Domestic Limited Liability Company

Name of LLC: Buffalo East Properties, LLC. Date of filing of Articles of Organization with the N.Y. Dept. of State: Dec. 16, 2013. Office of the LLC: Erie County. The N.Y. Office of the LLC: Ere County, The N.Y.
Secretary of State has been designated as
the agent upon whom process may be
served. NYSS may mail a copy of any
process to the LLC at: P.O. Box 721,
Buffalo, NY, 14231. Purpose of LLC: Any
lawful purpose permitted for LLCs under
NY I mixed Liability Company Act N.Y. Limited Liability Company Act. 1/10/14 1/17/14 1/24/14 1/31/14 2/7/14 2/14/14

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of a Domestic Limited Liability Company

Name of LLC: Buffalo North Properties, LLC. Date of filing of Articles of Organization with the N.Y. Dept. of State: Organization with the N.Y. Dept. of State: Dec. 16, 2013. Office of the LLC: Eric County. The N.Y. Secretary of State has been designated as the agent upon whom process may be served. NYSS may mail a copy of any process to the LLC at: P.O. Box 721, Buffalo, N.Y. 14231. Purpose of LLC: Any lawful purpose permitted for LLCs under N.Y. Limited Liability Company Act. 1/10/14 1/11/14 1/24/14 1/31/14 2/7/14 2/14/14

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of a Domestic Limited Liability Company

Limited Liability Company

Name of LLC: Buffalo South Properties,
LLC: Date of filing of Articles of
Organization with the N.Y. Dept. of State:
Dec. 16, 2013. Office of the LLC: Eric
County. The N.Y. Secretary of State has
been designated as the agent upon whom
process may be served. NYSS may mail a
copy of any process to the LLC at: P.O. Box
721, Buffalo, N.Y. 14231. Purpose of LLC:
Any lawful purpose permitted for LLCs
under N.Y. Limited Liability Company Act.
1/10/14 1/17/14 1/24/14 1/3/14 2/7/14 2/14/14

LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Formation of a Dome Limited Liability Company

Name of LLC: Cheekawanna Properties, LLC. Date of filing of Articles of Organization with the N.Y. Dept. of State: Organization with the N.Y. Dept. of State: Nov. 25, 2013. Office of the LLC: Eric County. The N.Y. Secretary of State has been designated as the agent upon whom process may be served. NYSS may mail a copy of any process to the LLC at: P.O. Box 721, Buffalo, N.Y. 14231. Purpose of LLC: Any lawful purpose permitted for LLCs under N.Y. Limited Liability Company Act. 1/10/14 1/17/14 1/24/14 1/31/14 27/14 2/14/14

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