



Summary of Meeting with the Library Administration, 9 August

2010

Attended by:

Oren Weinberg, Orly Simon, Asa Baram, Yoram Harel for the library administration.

Dvora Bregman, Dena Ordan, Nadia Zeldes, Avi Aronsky, Miriam Goldstein, Cana Werman for the Readers Association

The following topics came up for discussion:

1. New appointments at the library

We were introduced to some of the new members of the administration: Asa Baram, head of maintenance, logistics, and management (including human resources), and Yoram Harel, head of maintenance. The expectation is that these appointments will bring improved building maintenance after neglect and gaps that have developed in recent years.

2. Our liaison person

It was agreed that major reader-related issues would be raised at our bimonthly meetings with the administration. More immediate problems will be addressed to Orly Simon, head of readers services. The effectiveness of this decision will be assessed in two months time.

3. Unification of the central reading rooms

At present the library is exploring the possibility of unification of the JRR/ORR and the GRR. Its aim would be to relieve overcrowding and infrastructure problems, as





well as to reform the service counters by separating professional librarian services from technical services, such as recording books taken to photocopying and distribution of books that arrive from the stacks. This plan is in development and will only be implemented if found to be cost- and time-effective.

4. Training of the professional staff

A principled question that arose was the number of professional librarians presently employed at the library and the training of future librarians. At present, a large number of librarians are nearing retirement, including many in management positions. A lack of trained librarians is already felt in the afternoon.

The administration hopes to build a professional staff with specialization in specific areas--this is an ongoing process. The library also aspires to foster preservation and transfer of knowledge from one generation of librarians to another without conceptual rigidity.

5. New equipment

Independent of the possible unification of the reading rooms, the administration plans to replace the electrical infrastructure, an expensive, broad undertaking that will allow future expansion.

6. Bulletin boards

Use of signs is being reconsidered. The library plans to install electronic screens with information for readers at the entrance and other locations. A decision has yet to be reached as to where a general bulletin board will be located. Bulletin boards for





announcements are necessary for the library and for announcements by outside institutions with programs of interest for library users.

The readers association requested a separate bulletin board to post its activity and to encourage readers to voice opinions and contribute to the library. For example, the fact that there is a box for reporting lost or missing books is not common knowledge. A decision was reached that this matter would be addressed in the future.

7. Digitization

The question of determining priorities for digitization was discussed. The board of the readers association thinks that emphasis should be placed on items found only in the National Library and in urgent need of preservation, especially historical newspapers in general, and non-Hebrew newspapers in particular (e.g., Italian Jewish newspapers from the 19th century).

Those interested in suggesting historical newspapers to be digitized should contact the steering committee headed by Yaron Tsur {ytsur@post.tau.ac.il}.

Oren Weinberg surveyed four digitization projects being carried out simultaneously:

1. the JSTOR project, a joint Haifa University-National Library project; 2. the wall posters (*pashkevilim*) project; 3. existing and new journals; 4. manuscripts and rare photographs. Some 10,000 Hebrew books will be scanned during 2011.

8. Sundry matters





Remote storage: the question of what will be stored remotely was raised. The remote storage facility will also have workstations and services for readers, especially to serve researchers of archival material that cannot be stored at, or transferred to, the library. Remote storage is justified by the small number of books in constant use (250,000) of the millions presently in local storage, whose construction and maintenance are more expensive than remote storage.

The board of the readers association commented that accessibility is the key to efficient and enhanced use of additional titles. The administration explained that there will be movement between the remote storage to the central stacks and vice versa, depending on use of items.

9. Books belonging to the National Library held by the Mt Scopus Library

The board of the readers association requested that books presently housed in various libraries on Mt Scopus be returned to the National Library or purchased, with an eye to strengthening the collection in the General Reading Room. The agreement between the university and the library defined which collections would be transferred and no further collections can be transferred.

The humanities collection is presently being developed by the Office of Collections.

10. Maintenance and the cafeteria





The readers association commented on problems in the quality of construction of the new bathrooms and on problems in their daily upkeep. The administration is aware of the situation and is working toward solutions.

Our members commented on the general lack of satisfaction with the level of service, cleanliness, and food in the cafeteria, which was also reflected in the survey of readers. It is not clear whether the franchise will be switched at present.

The administration will check into the garbage that collects near the parking lot, behind the ramp.

