

Summary of meeting with the library administration—26 Jan 2017

Present: Orly Simon, head of Readers' Services

For the Readers Association: Susan Fraiman, Dan Bitan, Dena Ordan, Benjamin Richler,
Cana Werman

We raised topics related to the new building and the existing one

I The New Building

Orly reported that progress is being made, more specifically on the digging of the foundations. The estimated time frame for completing the foundations is a year.

1. The members of the Readers Association board inquired as to the possibility of arranging a meeting between the committee responsible for planning the new building and the two teams from the Readers Association: the general team (Dan and Susan) and the team for planning the reading rooms in the new library (Simha Immanuel, Elisheva Baumgarten, Cana Werman). Orly responded positively. In the meantime, Dan and Susan have had a meeting with the administration on the new building.

2. Dan Bitan raised the question of transportation to the new building. It turns out that as opposed to the impression received at the public meeting held in August, the light rail will not be stopping near the library. We strongly suggested that the planners take this into account and should consider installing a parking lot with sufficient places for the readers.

We view the issue of public transportation as of supreme importance.

3. We asked if the plans for the new building include a “noisy area” near the reading rooms, in addition to the individual study rooms.

4. Another question raised was that of the first impressions on entering the building. Will they see books in Hebrew or in English? Susan suggested that the new building should showcase the importance of the Judaica and Israel collections and that the books in the entrance should be in Hebrew.

5. We also asked if there would be a reference section. Orly replied that a reference area is planned with an adjacent collection. It is unclear as to whether each floor will contain reference works. Dan suggested that the reference section be combined with the noisy areas.

6. In reply to the question as to how long the library will be closed during the transfer from the current to the new building, Orly reported that a committee will be formed shortly to address this question.

7. Our request that the plans of the new building be uploaded to the Internet was rejected due to the fluidity of the plans at this stage.

8. The library will participate in the upcoming World Jewish Congress of Jewish Studies to be held in summer 2017. A session is being planned (at the initiative of Professor Elhanan Reiner, the academic director of the library) at which the plans for the new building will be presented to the attendees of the conference.

II The Present Building

1. Visits by groups: Dena, Dan, and Susan commented on the noise generated by groups that visit the reading rooms and the Ardon lobby. The question arose as to the need for groups, especially those of school children, to enter the reading rooms and whether it is necessary to bring young children to the library. Orly replied that the National Library

Law requires the administration to acquaint youth with the library and this is a function of the Education Branch of the library. This branch carries out evaluations and follow ups and Orly claims that the questionnaires indicate the importance of bringing young children to the library. Cana countered that in her opinion there was no point in allowing children under 16 into the library (which is the policy at the Library of Congress).

2. Orly reported that a new director of the service desk in the JRR-ORR has been hired.

3. Transfer of important books to remote storage. It was agreed that Nadia would be in direct contact with those responsible.

4. Workshops for readers on databases. Cana suggested the development of guides to their use to be posted to the library website. Orly reported that the development of online guides is part of the work plans of the branch responsible for readers services.

5. Dena raised the question of the use of the study rooms and the “takeover” by certain people. She asked if electronic ordering could be instituted to enable more equitable use of the rooms. Orly promised to raise the issue with the members of the administration.

6. Maintenance: Dan commented on a continuing decline in maintenance and cleaning—burnt-out bulbs are not changed; the water pressure in the water fountains is very low.

The gates at the entrances to the reading rooms are not well calibrated; on many occasions the alarms go off because the librarians forget to neutralize them. What is necessary is a gate that prevents readers from leaving the reading rooms with books unless they have received an OK from the workers at the service desk.

Cana noted the embarrassing lack of cleanliness near the garbage can (“frog”) next to the building.

7. Cana commented on the impressive improvement in book ordering from the stacks.

Orly explained that the director has revolutionized the stacks and suggested that we write a thank you note to Alexis, who runs the stacks.