

The Boston Workmen's Circle Library

Since the beginning of 2010, I had been working with Marie Ariel, a wonderful librarian, to get the Boston Workmen's Circle Library in shape. For years, it had consisted of a jumble of books, and I added to it when we moved from Greenough Street to the Brook House, by contributing a lot of my "Jewish" books for which I no longer had room, a supposedly win-win situation.

The "library" also had a few hundred volumes, which had been left to us by One Generation After. They had used our building as their office some years ago. It was a fairly exhaustive collection of books on all aspects of the holocaust. The books had been given Dewey decimal numbers (almost all of them 940.46) and a little pocket was glued to the inside back cover with a 2 inch by 5 inch card listing the author and title of the book, and space to put the date due and the borrower's name. None had ever had an entry. The other volumes included children's books, world Jewry, American Jewry, Israel and the middle east, fiction with Jewish content, books by Jewish authors—novels, short stories and poetry, and Yiddish books. It was a challenge organizing them, but we did it.

When Marie and I were finished with our labors, we agreed that it was time to announce to the world that the library was open for business. Marie chose Sunday April 11, 2010, as the date. It coincided with the date that the Workmen's Circle Book Group was meeting, and it was two days before Fran and I were leaving on our big trip to Spain and France..

I thought it would be a good idea to contact One Generation After (OGA) and invite them to the opening, since we had absorbed their library. Unbeknownst to us, it was the same day that the Jewish Community Relations Council had scheduled its observance of Yom Hashoah. This I learned when I tracked down someone associated with OGA, which is now known as Generations After. I was surprised that the Workmen's Circle had not received advance notice of the date. I have been attending these observances for years, and one year I served on the planning committee. I would have liked us to postpone the opening, but I chose not to press the matter. We went ahead with the opening, and the JCRC went ahead with its memorial.