

## EDITORIAL

In the lobby of the Belgrad Hotel on Friday 16th August a map was displayed for the benefit of delegates to the IFLA Conference. It clearly marked the location, not far away, of the Moscow International Centre for International Trade and Scientific Cooperation with Foreign Countries (the Sovincentre) where most conference events were to take place. However, with an irony which only became apparent in the days to follow, a mistake had been made: the building marked on the map, which at least one delegate approached intent on registering for the conference, was not the Sovincentre but the Russian Parliament or "White House", on which the eyes of the world would soon be focussed. Deserted late on that Friday afternoon, just three days later its imposing flight of steps provided a foundation for improvised barricades bristling with long pieces of iron; from high up in the Sovincentre (which was just a few hundred yards further along a bend in the river) delegates attending the first session of the Section of Art Libraries were treated to a panoramic view from which it could be seen how the barricades extended onto the river itself where barges had been moored together like a logjam.

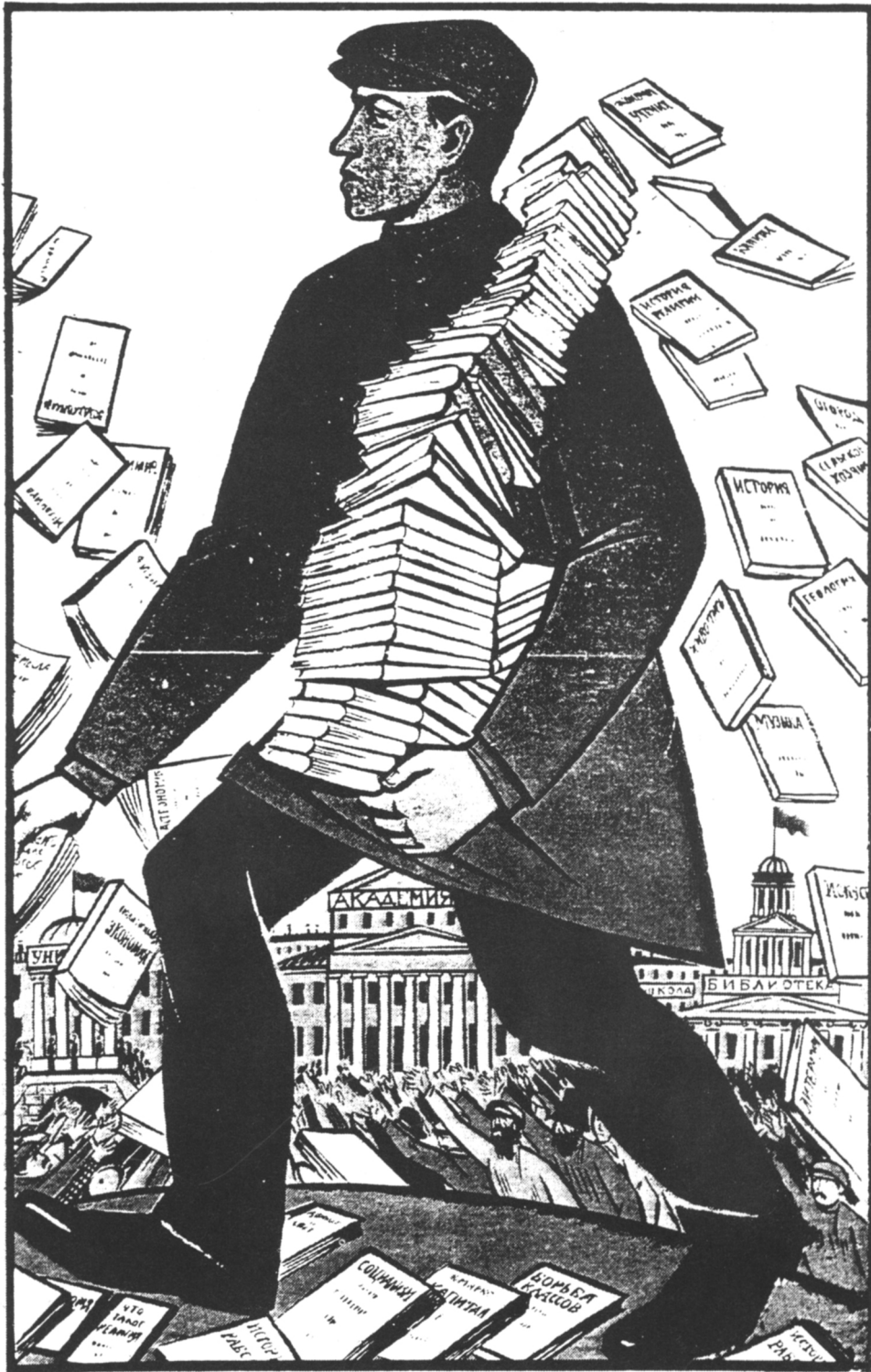
But this is not the place to relate the dramatic events of that week, or to tell of how the IFLA Conference, and within it, the formal meetings and informal camaraderie of the Section of Art Libraries, determinedly and successfully carried on, sharing time and space and in countless ways interacting with a turning point in history. Suffice it to say, that two contributors to this issue of *Art Libraries Journal*, together with both the Editor and the Deputy Editor, were residents of the Belgrad Hotel, and that one paper from the Section's "workshop", by Margaret Shaw, is published in these pages. The Section has appointed a sub-committee of its Standing Committee to consider the question of the publication of its papers, many of which have in the past appeared in the *Art Libraries Journal*, but some of which have also, in certain instances, been published together as a separate volume – often following a lengthy delay. So far as the Moscow conference is concerned, "workshop" papers relating to Russian (Soviet) art libraries and to collections of documentation on Russian art in other countries,

will be published in an issue of the *Art Libraries Journal* devoted to them, in May 1992.

Shortly after returning from Moscow, I came across a reproduction of a poster, by an unknown artist, published in Moscow in 1919, which vividly represents the aspirations of the Bolshevik regime regarding literacy and access to information. The slogan above the image, which can be translated as "The day of Soviet propaganda", makes explicit one supposed benefit of teaching people to read, yet is this not also an image of what might have been, of what "Glasnost" had begun to make possible once again, and of what librarians must continue to strive to facilitate and defend? The caption beneath the image proclaims "Knowledge – to all!"; the buildings include a Library (on the right; the other buildings are an Academy, a University, and a School); one of the books is titled "Art". Looking at this poster, I was reminded at one and the same time of a conversation with a Russian librarian concerning libraries and democracy; of a library in Moscow where until relatively recently "prohibited" books in foreign languages could only be consulted by a privileged few; and of Clive Phillpot's eloquent plea for "open libraries" – an art librarian's *credo* – which is the lead article in this *Art Libraries Journal*. I have taken the liberty of reproducing the poster overleaf as a frontispiece to Clive's paper.

Российская Социалистическая Федеративная Советская Республика.  
*Пролетарии всех стран, соединитесь.*

# День Советской Пропаганды.



## ЗНАНИЕ — ВСЕМ!

*Poster by an unknown artist, Moscow, 1919*