

## Introduction

The Program Planning Committee instituted in order to organize the commemoration of IFLA's fiftieth anniversary has requested us to submit a prospective scheme for a jubilee publication.

It has expressed its agreement to the principles on which to our minds the setup of a publication of this nature should be based: it should not merely offer a retrospective view but also – if not more so – contain several papers on the future development of our organization.

We have attempted to put these principles into practice while bearing in mind the concomitant publication of a special issue of IFLA Journal entitled "IFLA and Contemporary Library Problems" prepared for this festive occasion. This will consist of various articles taking IFLA's new structural formula of divisions (as agreed upon in 1976) as their point of departure as well as a wide variety of personal memoirs.

In selecting essays on the future of the organization to be included in this volume we have opted for those reflecting a more overall approach. They are preceded by contributions on the prehistory, genesis and early history of IFLA and by observations and reminiscences of IFLA's latest two presidents.

The editors are very much aware of the unavoidable overlap caused by adhering to this line of editorial policy, though on the other hand they feel a certain amount of duplication may prove to be illuminating. In view of the contributors' divergent origins, backgrounds and professional experience the editors felt the need for occasional adaptations or abbreviations of the text. Consequently we invoke clemency for both these minor but inevitable alterations and for the decision – by no means taken lightly – to publish the papers uniformly in English so the jubilee volume may gain the highest possible degree of accessibility to IFLA's achievements and aspirations throughout the library world.

Upon reading the various contributions one may discover that many recently proposed ideas are found to be strikingly similar to others put forward a long while ago. This only strengthens our conviction that our activities have been and will remain consistent and fruitful, and that turning to previous experience may be highly profitable at times.

The editors are grateful indeed to the authors for their cooperation without which this volume could never have appeared. We are particularly indebted to Ms W. E. S. Coops who undertook the arduous task of translating a number of essays into English at short notice. Finally we would like to express our gratitude to IFLA's publisher Mr K. G. Saur and his staff who once more have done everything within their means to ensure the timely publication of this fiftieth anniversary volume.

Willem R. H. Koops  
Joachim Wieder

