

Libraries in Times of War, Revolution & Social Change

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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The theme chosen for the conference, *Libraries in Times of War, Revolution and Social Change*, is a particularly timely one in terms of recent history. Events such as the pillage and burning of Iraq's National Library in Spring of 2003 have sent cultural shock waves around the world. The apparent contradictions of libraries, traditionally taken to represent stability and continuity, and wars and revolutions, which involve rapid and disruptive change, suggest a number of urgent historical questions.



Relevant events, issues, and concerns include:

- Books and libraries as agents of cultural memory to be protected, appropriated or obliterated.
- Library and archival collections and services as instruments of political power in providing, restricting or withholding access to information.
- Libraries and their contents as cultural heritage and as booty.
- Libraries as places of refuge, solace and practical help in times of war, revolution and social disruption.
- The responsibilities of the international community in creating and enforcing policies and procedures for the protection, recovery, and repatriation of cultural artifacts, including books and libraries.

Paper sessions featuring scholars from seven countries will focus on the histories of library collections and services in the context of particular conflicts, populations, eras, and geographic locations. Keynote speakers from North and South America, Europe, and Asia will examine and discuss historical and contemporary libraries in times of social crisis and violent dislocation. What happens in such times to an institution that symbolizes and facilitates intellectual, social, and cultural continuity? This approach offers a new kind of lens--and focus--for artifacts and events of the past that have heretofore been disregarded, minimized, or met with deliberate silence. The international scholarship presented at Library History Seminar XI represents an important step toward making this knowledge available to a wider audience. In addition to the LHSXI venue, a selection of conference papers will be published in future issues of *Libraries & Culture*.

Full program details for Library History Seminar XI, including registration forms, are available at <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/conferences/LHS.XI/>

Library, Holland House: London, 1940.
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