

Bibliodiversity

The monthly newsletter of the Alliance of Independent Publishers
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Editorial

The common thread running through this latest issue of *Bibliodiversity* – a newsletter which, don't forget, comes out simultaneously in French, English and Spanish – is perhaps the **international book fairs and exhibitions**. We must add sadly that, just this once, a rather depressing event opens the new issue of *Bibliodiversity*. When we attended the most recent Dakar International Book Fair (FILDAK – Senegal) last December, we were concerned about the direction and future of such events in Africa – particularly for its French-language area.

Still under the heading of *Events*, we are going to spend a little time considering the setting up and running of **joint stands** at trade fairs – which many of you have shown particular interest in. Starting with a short report on the joint stand run by the Alliance at the Children's Book Fair in Montreuil (France), we will consider the format for this type of operation. And following these two articles, we suggest you take a look (again) at the many and various international events being held during 2008 – on page 5 you will find a list of the main international book fairs and exhibitions that have happened or are about to happen.

When the **Casablanca International Publishing and Book Fair (Morocco)** opened, the Alliance was especially keen to support the campaign being waged by certain members of the Moroccan book trade. Our original intention was to co-sign a statement with the International Association of French-language Bookshops (AILF), but this was not possible. The situation of independent bookshops is giving sufficient cause for concern – it seems to be facing a determined initiative on the part of a subsidiary of the Hachette group (France) – for us to feel the need to urge it into a dialogue about plurality, the promotion of bibliodiversity, even if we have to do this just in our name.

Among these sometimes worrying or, to say the least, serious developments, there are nevertheless a few rays of sunshine. We are pleased to welcome into our Alliance **two new members**, Leone Verde directed by Anita Molino (Italy) and Éditions Jeunes Malgaches (Madagascar) run by Marie Michèle Razafintsalama. And to round it all off, we are going to introduce you to the Alliance's youngest member – the young and dynamic Octavio Kulesz, co-director of the Argentinian publishing house **Libros del Zorzal**.

Étienne Galliard

Event

A rather depressing International Book Fair in Dakar (Senegal)

What: The Alliance's visit to the International Book Fair in Dakar (FILDAK – Senegal)

Why: to meet African French-language publishers, circulate the Declaration, hold working meetings on pan-African co-publishing projects

Features: FILDAK is organised every two years by the Senegalese government. The Alliance organised its first major gathering of members on the fringe of FILDAK 2003.

Last December the Alliance attended the International Book Fair in Dakar (Senegal). We left with a fairly poor, not to say depressing, impression. The exhibition was held a long way from the city centre – which is nothing new, but serious traffic problems in Dakar make travel extremely difficult. The admission charge kept the public away. And the event was given very little publicity. For all these reasons, it was poorly attended by the public. We found there the stands of the NEAS, the NEI, as well as those of French publishers Hachette, Editis and Belin. Only a few independent African publishers were there, including Ruisseaux d'Afrique, Eburnie, BLD and ENDA. As is often the case, very few Senegalese publishers were in attendance, and the few people we were supposed to meet there did not even show up! These two things – a fair with little commercial potential due to a lack of attendance by the public and a practically non-existent

business-to-business dimension – is gradually pushing Dakar out of the big league of international book fairs. And this leaves one question unresolved: which major book fair now represents the great richness and diversity of Africa's publishing world? Southern Africa's hopes – after the decline of the Harare Book Fair in Zimbabwe – seem to lie now in the fairly new Cape Town Book Fair. For the French-language area might it not be, paradoxically, the book fairs

in North Africa that are going to represent sub-Saharan Africa tomorrow?



Apart from this rather disappointing assessment, progress was nevertheless made with several ongoing issues. Serge Dontchueng Kouam circulated the *International Declaration of Independent Publishers* in French, the joint publishers involved signed a co-publishing contract for the next two pan-African publications (*Sozaboy* by

Ken Saro-Wiwa and *De l'autre côté du regard* (*As Seen from the Other Side*) by Ken Bugul). So in the end the trip was not fruitless for the Alliance, but it was tinged with disappointment all the same!

Joint stands, a model worth repeating?

What: An assessment of the joint “Multiple Africa” stand at the Children’s Book Fair in Montreuil (France) and some general thoughts about joint stands

Why: to help member publishers find new commercial markets

Features: a joint initiative with the organisers of the Montreuil Book Fair, supported by the embassies of France in Brazil, Benin and Mali, and by the IFAS (French Institute of South Africa).

Last December, the Alliance of Independent Publishers suggested to around ten member publishers that they present their children’s book production on a joint stand measuring 60 sq

m. The publishers who attended, from West Africa but also from Brazil and South Africa, were thus able to test the waters at the Montreuil Book Fair (France), the biggest French-language children’s book event.

How the Montreuil joint stand worked – The joint stand was run by the Alliance of Independent Publishers, in partnership with the Fair’s organisers, setting up of the stand and its design, management of joint takings, scheduling of meetings and discussions etc. Each publisher could share in the costs, up to 150 euros per publishing house. For the Alliance, this operation cost a total of around €5,800 (including direct costs and man days).



Roundup of the joint stand at Montreuil

– The total takings for sales at the “Multiple Africa” stand came to €7,021.50. This was an excellent commercial success. As usual, the takings were distributed by the Alliance to the publishers present as the event progressed. Big differences in marketing were nevertheless evident between publishers, related to the language of publication (with French having a certain edge), the size and degree of professionalism of the publications. According to the publishers taking part, the positive points of this joint stand lay essentially in its large size, its design, the diversity of publishers involved, the support of the Alliance before and during the Fair, and the friendly atmosphere on the stand. Conversely, stock recording for the stand, management of the single till and management of client flow, were not the strong points of our organisation.

Considering the principle of joint stands – Recognising these strong points and weaknesses is very useful in

helping us to take a careful look at how we might make joint stands work better in the future. Many of you have asked us to repeat this type of arrangement. The Alliance can – as was the case in Montreuil – be the one to take the initiative and run the stand entirely, making it available to its members. In this context, it can use three possible strategies: with all the publishers represented on the stand publishing in the same language (linguistic strategy); all the publishers publishing books on the same subject (thematic strategy, as with the “Multiple Africa” stand at Montreuil); or with the publishers comparable in terms of size, status and commitment. The three strategies can of course be combined, the important thing being to find a clear identity on which to base the stand and any related events. In

addition, if the Alliance is managing the operation directly, we will have to specify the commitments of each party, i.e. what the Alliance is to do and what the publishers are responsible for. In this context, we have now accepted that we cannot continue to calculate each publisher's share on a strictly equal basis (with all the publishers paying the same amount); instead we will have to determine the share of costs on the basis of the sales made by each publisher (according to marketing results), or on the number of copies of books on display (according to the amount of space occupied). Finally, the Alliance could support the setting up of joint stands which it does not personally manage; either where the stand is the direct initiative of publishers belonging to the Alliance, or where the Alliance takes the initiative but entrusts its management to an independent bookshop, for example. When it comes to promotion and activities, the best way would be to involve all the opinion leaders beforehand: associations, librarians and teachers. Be that as it may, we are keen to hear your suggestions, in this as in other areas. Opposite we list the international book fairs – please let us know which of these you will be attending this year, as this information is extremely helpful to us!



International Book Fairs in 2008

14th Casablanca International Publishing and Book Fair - guest of honour France - Morocco, Casablanca, 9-17 February

Taipei International Book Exhibition
Taiwan, Taipei, 13-18 February

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair
Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, 11-18 March

Paris Book Fair
France, Paris, 14-19 March

Bologna Children's Book Fair
Italy, Bologna, 31 March - 04 April

London Book Fair
Great Britain, London, 14-16 April

34th Buenos Aires International Book Fair
Argentina, Buenos Aires, 21 April - 12 May

14th Prague International Book Fair
Czech Republic, Prague, 24-27 April

21st Teheran International Book Fair
Iran, Teheran, May

Turin International Book Fair
Italy, Turin, 08-12 May

Seoul International Book Fair
South Korea, Seoul, 14-19 May

53rd Warsaw International Book Fair
Poland, Warsaw, 15-18 May

Thessaloniki International Book Fair - guest of honour France
Greece, Thessaloniki, 29 May - 1 June

Book Expo America
United States, Los Angeles, 30 May - 1 June

3rd Cape Town Book Fair
South Africa, Cape Town, 14-17 June

15th Beijing International Book Fair
China, Beijing, end August - beginning September

Frankfurt Book Fair
Germany, Frankfurt, 15-19 October

53rd Belgrade International Book Fair
Serbia, Belgrade, October

13th Algiers International Book Fair
Algeria, Algiers, October-November

15th Gaudeamus Educational Book Fair
Romania, Bucharest, November

22nd Guadalajara International Book Fair
Mexico, Guadalajara, November-December

Fiction / Non Fiction – 10th International Book Fair
Russia, Moscow, November-December

Solidarities

Networking, organisations and beyond

Networking

French-language network

We are pleased to welcome Éditions Jeunes Malgaches to the French-language network. This publishing company is run with great brio by Marie Michèle Razafintsalama. Alongside Éditions Tsipika, Éditions Jeunes Malgaches will bring further representation for the big island within the Alliance – especially in the children’s books field.

Spanish-language network

This year at the Guadalajara International Book Fair (Mexico), the Alianza de Editoriales Mexicanas Independientes (AEMI) set up a joint stand presenting books from its 15 member publishing houses. The stand also provided an excellent opportunity for the Alliance of Independent Publishers to circulate the Paris Declaration (2007) and the Guadalajara Declaration (2005). The Guadalajara Fair and Cerlalc this year also jointly organised an International Forum of publishers and book trade professionals on the subject of “Networks and alliances in the book world”. At the invitation of Marcelo Uribe from Ediciones Era (Mexico), Paulo Slachevsky from Lom Ediciones (Chile) and Pablo Harari in his capacity as coordinator of the Alliance’s Spanish-language network, took part in this event. Both the AEMI joint stand and the Forum helped raise the Alliance’s international profile and

strengthen the work of independent publishers. We would like to thank them all for championing and promoting bibliodiversity so ardently!

English-language network

The meeting of the English-language network, originally planned to take place on the fringe of the New Delhi Book Fair was wisely postponed by its members. Indeed there seemed to be difficulties in organising and preparing this meeting for that date. The members of the English-language network have now agreed on a new schedule – but the venue will remain the same.



Arabic-language network

The *International Declaration of Independent Publishers* now exists in Arabic. Translated by the Med Ali publishing house (Tunisia), the Declaration can now be accessed on the website www.alliance-editeurs.org. It will also be circulated at the Casablanca International Book Fair (Morocco), from 9 to 17 February.

Independent Publisher Organisations

The seventh Primavera dos Livros in Rio de Janeiro (29 November - 2 December 2007) organised by the **Brazilian League of Publishers (LIBRE)**, was an opportunity to launch a Portuguese translation of Gilles Colleu's book *Éditeurs indépendants : de l'âge de raison vers l'offensive (Independent Publishers: moving from the age of reason on to the attack)?* This year the Primavera dos Livros gathered around a hundred publishing houses and over 25,000 visitors. Several articles on the Primavera dos Livros and Gilles Colleu's participation are available online on the LIBRE website (www.libre.org.br).

The Italian Federation of Independent Publishers (FIDARE) were present at the first Italian Book Festival in Paris (France), from 1 to 3 February, organised by the Leggere Per bookshop of Florence. The Alliance took part in a small meeting with the publishers from FIDARE attending the event. Joint Alliance / FIDARE projects were discussed: participation of an Italian publisher in the "publishing and digital" international working group, setup of a link between FIDARE and Latin American publishers in the context of the Rome Book Fair in October, translation into Italian of Gilles Colleu's book on independent publishing, etc. On this occasion, we were pleased to announce to Anita Molino – President of FIDARE – that her publishing house Leone Verde's (www.leoneverde.it) application for membership had just been given the green light. So welcome Green Lion!

Beyond

Books in Morocco, a worrying situation?

At the opening of the Casablanca International Publishing and Book Fair (Morocco), the Alliance of Independent Publishers wishes to express its serious concern over the situation of independent

bookshops, and indeed the whole local book chain.

Having contacted the various players involved in the controversy which seems to be troubling the Moroccan book world at the moment, it seems that:

- The Librairie Nationale, a subsidiary of the Hachette Livre group (France) represents the catalogues of 120 French publishers in Morocco; it apparently supplies directly, with no intermediary, approximately 1,000 secondary and higher education establishments. With the products distributed and via the commercial strategy implemented, the Librairie Nationale is tending to become an unavoidable partner, especially in the institutional market for school books.
- This position as importer of French books, distributor and bookshop might allow the Librairie Nationale to come close to having a monopoly situation by applying significant discounts, thereby weakening the majority of Morocco's independent bookshops.
- The Librairie Nationale seems to be planning to open around twenty sales outlets throughout Morocco, thereby strengthening an already sizeable presence in the local book chain.

While staying out of the controversy, we feel that in general and in light of what we have seen in other countries, setting up strategies for capturing the market and monopolistic intentions can be extremely detrimental to all the local players, from author to reader, through distributors and independent bookshops. The structural links that local subsidiaries have with French publishing groups give them an essential influence, and the possibility of implementing a commercial policy that might weaken the diversity of the book chain. The repercussions are all the more serious, of course, in a legislative context in

which little heed is paid to the publishing and bookshop sector.

The Alliance of Independent Publishers calls upon all the players in the book chain, as well as the Moroccan public authorities and international organisations, to work together to support and strengthen the plurality of the book chain in Morocco. It is urgent, to say the least, that we consider the problem that might be posed today by the action of just one – supported by a powerful group. Publishing would suffer greatly if the situation is not clarified, and without a balanced solution based on consensus. For this reason, we wish to launch **an appeal on behalf of Moroccan bibliodiversity**, while staying out of any controversy.

- We appeal to the **Moroccan authorities** to consider legislating in favour of a single book price. Such mechanisms have proved valuable in several countries, particularly in protecting the network of independent bookshops – especially when supported by a compulsory discount ceiling for public procurement.
- Without any spirit of confrontation, we appeal to **the Hachette Livre group and its subsidiary the Librairie Nationale** to consider the importance of reaching a fair solution in which Moroccan books and books distributed in Morocco come out the winners. In a more general way, we appeal to publishing groups, French publishers and their professional associations to help foster genuine commercial partnerships providing solidarity between players in the book chain in France and in Morocco. Provided they are open and sincere, and respectful of the specific characteristics of local markets, these partnerships would prevent any “predatory” and destabilising enterprise, intentional or otherwise. Such practices seem to come from a period long past, are ethically reprehensible and economically questionable.

- We appeal to **the higher and secondary education establishments of Morocco, as well as all the opinion formers for school books in Morocco**, to promote diversity and plurality among the organisations that produce and distribute the textbooks and other books they need. It is essential for buyers to become aware of the issue in order for shops of different sizes and different types to continue to exist side by side.
- We appeal to **UNESCO and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie** to support and back up the debate on cultural diversity of the book in Morocco. By signing the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity Expressions, States are now able to regulate the book sector in their country positively. This Convention should not go unheeded, and according to the signatories it is a significant basis for reflection, for any public initiative in favour of the development of local cultural industries.
- Finally, we appeal to **the French Minister of Foreign Affairs**, through the publishing arm of its Embassy in Morocco, to establish invitations to tender supporting access to reference books, in the form of batches that might be allocated to different suppliers. This healthy practice of dividing up invitations to tender would moreover be in accordance with the recommendations of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication governing French public procurement.

We hope that this very reasonable appeal is understood by all as the expression of our concern, and of our willingness to participate as far as we can in smoothing over any tensions that might arise. **We stress our greatest respect for all the players in the book chain in Morocco, and we are certain that a balanced**

solution which respects all parties will emerge through dialogue and consultation.

If you are facing similar situations in your country, please give us as much information as possible (egalliand@alliance-editeurs.org).

Hot off the press

LIBRE, free and independent

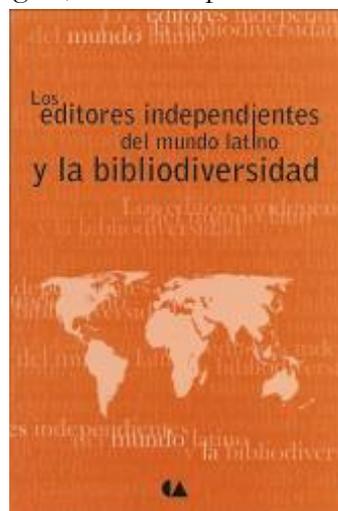
After the publication of *Como proteger o livro* by Markus Gerlach in 2006, *Editores* is the second co-publishing between LIBRE and the Alliance of Independent Publishers. This publication also benefited from the support of the cultural department of the French Embassy in Brazil. This year Gilles Colleu, director of the publishing house Vents d'ailleurs, was the international guest at the Primavera dos Livros, and he gave a talk on independent publishing.



Saying bibliodiversity in Spanish

A little over two years after holding the “Independent Publishers of the Latin World and Bibliodiversity” event in Guadalajara, exactly one year after sending the French version of these texts, and true to the commitment made before all the participants, the Latin Union, the Alliance of Independent Publishers and the Mexican National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA) were determined to publish the texts resulting from this meeting in Spanish, as an essential set of testimonials when considering the developments in your profession. A copy of the publication will be sent to all the participants of the Guadalajara meeting. The Alliance also has a small stock of copies, which can be sent to interested parties on request.

As you may well imagine, such an operation cost quite a lot – translation (paid for by the Latin Union and the Alliance) and publication (paid for by CONACULTA). Hence the need for some “marketing”, albeit modest: the books are therefore being sold by CONACULTA at 120 pesos in Mexico. In addition, it is highly likely that the book will be available at all the book fairs in Latin America during 2008.



Portraits

Octavio The Coolest, the joyful Argentine bird



“You know how you say “the most-cool-man” in English?” - that’s how Octavio Kulesz likes to present himself; the similarity between his surname and the English expression is real. But make no mistake: he may be the coolest guy, he’s also hard-working, passionate and on the ball.

Octavio has a degree in Philosophy from the University of Buenos Aires, where he now teaches his favourite subject. In 2000, when he had just turned 23, he founded, the Argentine publishing house Libros del Zorzal with his brother Leopoldo, a mathematician. The zorzal is a bird of the passerine family. Titles built up very quickly and today the publishing house boasts a rich catalogue of over 130 books.

Its first book, *Leyendo a Euclides (Reading Euclid)*, by the great Italian-Argentinian mathematician Beppo Levi, was very well received – three successive editions have sold out. Libros del Zorzal has gradually included renowned authors both national and international in its catalogue, such as Silvia Bleichmar, Ivonne Bordelois, Alain Badiou, Pierre Bourdieu and Immanuel Wallerstein. The authors come from all the countries of Latin America, Spain and Europe. Several titles have been translated

into French, Italian and Portuguese. The publisher’s Web site – www.delzorzal.com.ar – gives a good overview of the editorial line – in the *Perfil* section – but you can also buy books online, and the site offers many other features. Finally, a look at the list of distributors of the publishing house gives you a sense of the dynamism of those that run it: it’s all about holding the field – and that’s certainly what they’ve done. Added to this already very impressive network, is a desire to have a regular presence at several major international book fairs. Right now, moreover, Octavio is carting his good humour off to somewhere in India, on his way to the New Delhi Book Fair.

So it’s hardly surprising to find him among the 10 finalists for the 2006 British Council International Young Publisher of the Year award. He may not have won but being short-listed is no mean feat, so it’s with genuine pleasure that we are awarding him the prize of Youngest Publisher in the Alliance, with a special jury distinction for his Cool Attitude. Congratulations to him.

Libros del Zorzal

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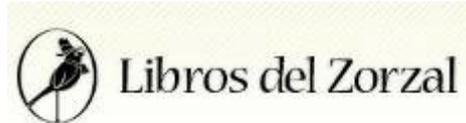
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