

ÉDITIONS D'EN BAS

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The Editions d'en bas, based in Lausanne, Switzerland, are hereby presenting two projects for the translation program linked to the theme « Culture and development ».

The first project is an essay by Libero Zuppiroli, *La bulle universitaire. Faut-il poursuivre le rêve américain ? (The university bubble. Should the american education dream be pursued ?)* published in 2010. This book has just been translated in Spanish and adapted for the Spanish context on the initiative and by the professor Bruno Aguilera-Barchet under the title *La burbuja universitaria ¿Hay que perseguir el sueño americano?*

The second project is a literary collection of short stories by Laurent Feuz, *Derniers murmures derrière les murs (Last murmurs behind the walls)* that are all situated in Gaza and follow the destiny of four persons.

Presentation of Éditions d'en bas

Éditions d'en bas was founded in 1976 in Lausanne, Switzerland with the objective of publishing books which other publishers did not care to publish at that time in the fields of popular literature and of the history of working class movements. Since then, more than 300 books have been published at a rythm of 10 to 15 books a year. The catalogue has thus grown giving voice to popular literature texts of singular personal narratives ; furthering research in the history of working class and social movements ; allowing citizens to gain in responsibility through books exposing their rights ; exploring social, cultural, economical and political issues through critical documents and essays ; developing a literary sector covering bilingual poetry books, translations of swiss authors and of authors who migrated to Switzerland, and french speaking literary works ; and finally art books with social concerns mainly in the field of photography. Many critical books which were published had considerable impact : they initiated, accompanied and analysed fundamental social changes in swiss society. Éditions d'en bas is a founder member of the International alliance of independant publishers.

1. The title

Libero Zuppiroli, *La bulle universitaire. Faut-il poursuivre le rêve américain ? (The university bubble. Should the american education dream be pursued ?)*

11,5 cm x 16,5 cm – 160 p. – paperback coll. N° 1 – ISBN 978-2-8290-0385-1 – 2010

2. The author

Libero Zuppiroli is a scientist of great qualities and a remarkable pedagogue. His field of specialisation is material and solid state physics. He is the founder of the LOMM, the Laboratory of Optoelectronics of Molecular Materials, who is active in the fields of « plastic electronics », and hybrid polymer films for photonics. His work is at the interface between physics and chemistry, at the interface between theory and experiments, and at the interface between basic science and industrial applications. From 1977 to 1985, he was Associate researcher at the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique (France). From 1985-1990, he was Associate Professor at the Ecole Polytechnique of France. Since 1990, he is Professor in Material Physics at the Ecole Polytechnique fédérale of Lausanne. He is the author of numerous scientific studies as well as works for a more general public (*Traité de la lumière, Le traité des couleurs de Goethe et la science d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, Traité de la couleur, Traité de la matière*).

3. The Spanish translation

This book has just been translated in Spanish and adapted for the Spanish context on the initiative and by the professor Bruno Aguilera-Barchet under the title *La burbuja universitaria ¿Hay que perseguir el sueño americano?* It is unusual to proceed in such a manner, but prof. Aguilera-Barchet was impatient to translate the essay. The book does not yet have a publisher in Spanish. No other translations are planned.

4. The translator

Bruno Aguilera-Barchet is Professor of Comparative Law and Director of the Institute for International Law Studies at King Juan Carlos University, Madrid. He holds a Ph.D. in Law and was Deputy Dean of International Relations of the Law School at Complutense University in Madrid and a visiting research fellow at Harvard Law School. Bruno Aguilera Barchet contributes to several newspapers in Spain (e.g. *El Mundo, El Pais*) and has published a book on *Islamic Law in the light of the history of Al-Andalus*.

5. The book

La bulle universitaire is the work of a XXth-XXIth century humanist (humanists are a pretty rare kind in our times). In his essay, Libero Zuppiroli first critically examines the transformation of the western model of university education into the american model of higher education. Secondly, he proposes a new university education system called « Utopia » – a highly risky enterprise.

Libero Zuppiroli has taught in higher education technical institutes for more than 38 years and has been an often outspoken critical voice within the education institution for which he has worked, especially in the past fifteen years. His analysis concerns the École polytechnique fédérale of Lausanne (EPFL), but is applicable to any similar higher education university who has adopted or is adopting the american education policy system and the american model of management of higher education.

Libero Zuppiroli raises a number of embarrassing issues. How can the professors of some of the « best » worldwide technological universities (as well as the human science universities) still care to teach or find the peace of mind to think when they have to spend most of their time seeking funds, doing *management* and *marketing* tasks ? What would a university be like without a system of bureaucratic *controlling* ? Does the present university system not underwrite the death of the imagination and the freedom necessary for creative thinking ? Libero Zuppiroli answers these important questions and addresses these crucial issues offering stimulating food for thought with ravaging humour.

He offers us firstly a highly satirical study of what a technical and scientific university is like nowadays. He takes as an example the École polytechnique fédérale of Lausanne known worldwide and who regularly receives high marks on the « Shanghai ranking system ». He exposes with ferocious humour the concepts of *bling-bling* Science and of *Unapplicable applied research*. Finally, plunging us in the imaginary world of a university called « Utopia » we could engage more in thinking, Libero Zuppiroli offers us a model in the wake of Thomas Moore.

In our mind, this book offers stimulating thought about what is happening to many university systems world wide along the model of liberal economics. The Chilean student movement uprising against their university education system testifies to the urgency in addressing a major problem at the crossroads of democracy and education.

1. The title

Laurent Feuz, *Derniers murmures derrière les murs* (*Last murmurs behind the walls*)

14 cm x 21 cm – 88 p. – ISBN 978-2-8290-0415-5 – 2011

The picture on the cover of the book is a reproduction of a painting Laurent Feuz bought from the palestinian artist, Hazem Harb, born in Gaza in 1980.

2. The author

Laurent Feuz is a young author born in the Neuchâtel countryside, Switzerland, in 1977. He obtains a degree in history and in literature at the University of Neuchâtel. He then widely travels in the Middle East visiting countries such as Turkey, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Jordania, Egypt and Yemen. He learns arab and is well read in the literature and geopolitics of the region. Between 2003 and 2008, he is engaged in humanitarian work which leads him to be confronted to the violence, the perfidy, the injustice and the violence of conflicts. He spends fifteen months on the Gaza strip, and then goes on to South Sudan, the Darfur, and the Congo Kinshasa, as well as in the deserts of North Niger amongst the Touaregs. In 2008, he returns to Switzerland and becomes school teacher of history and french, and, since 2009, is engaged part time in creative writing.

3. The book

Derniers murmures derrière les murs is a collection of four short stories. One story per season. One story for each of the walls surrounding Gaza.

These shorts stories plunge their roots in the experiences lived in contact with the daily life of people in one of the most difficult parts of Palestine. The political aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not directly treated in these narratives. Laurent Feuz was involved in two main activities : urgency work among the Palestinians and in contexts when the Israeli army made deep incursions in Gaza territory. Secondly, he was involved in monitoring violations of International humanitarian laws.

These narratives allow us to discover what Laurent Feuz has both lived and experienced, and those stories which he has been told by the innumerable inhabitants he has met and who have shared with him their life and death experiences. These stories are both a homage to these people who are suffering and an attempt to retribute to them their dignity as human beings.

Umm Saïd (1929-2004) tells the story of a family who are held in custody by the Israeli army while the bulldozers are destroying a thirty year plantation of lemon trees in retaliation. But that is not enough, once the army is away, a « stray » bullet kills the eighty years old grandmother of a young boy whose eyes fill up with hatred.

Yasmina (1991-2005) accounts for the death of a young girl killed in the no man's land under the gunfire of a soldier in a mirador. The young girl had been led to this extremity after the death of her best friend in a classroom under another « stray » bullet and she is determined to claim responsibility of the soldier for his action.

Abou Moussa (1935) is all about the humiliation and injustice of having to « beg » or to « justify » to go back and forth across the border of Gaza ; and how such vexations have completely transformed the livelihood of many habitants who no longer have free access to their lands or to the sea.

Ahmed (1985-2004) explores how a young boy loses his mother when he is young because she could not be cured of cancer due to the closure of the frontier. And, much later, his father is killed by the collaterals of a missile : desperation and hatred fills his life, and he will slowly be drawn to the extremes of human sacrifice as a living bomb.

We believe that these shorts stories, apart from their narrative substance, are bourne by a style that is both tense and fluid at the same time giving us access to the destinies of the persons the author portrays with empathy and respect.