

Fund for Central and East European Book Projects

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CONTENTS

Printing on Demand

Grants awarded in Autumn 1999

Faber, Album

Polish Book Marketing Research in Poland

Books recently published with the CEEBP's support

'Pristina 99', the Fair of the Albanian Book

Dutch Publishers Support a Colleague in Kosovo

Printing on Demand

Publishing houses in small markets with low purchasing power - that means the majority of publishers in Central and Eastern Europe - may gain significant benefits from introducing new technology that makes it possible to produce small print-runs of books and journals in cost-efficient ways and sell them at affordable prices.

They currently have two possibilities for defraying the costs of quality literature or journals for limited readership. They can either finance these valuable but unprofitable publications from the profit made by producing textbooks, manuals and popular books, a strategy that is feasible for only very few publishers in a small market. Or they can apply for support from the national government and international foundations, but such support is not only limited, but it also often infringes on the liberty of a publisher's strategy.

The recently developed technology of printing on demand on digital copiers, which has already been adopted by the publishing house Osiris in Hungary, has several advantages. For a print-run of less than 1,500 copies, the production cost per copy printed is significantly lower than either printing on a traditional offset press or traditional copying machine. Publications can be produced in a cost-efficient way in issues of even one copy. The speed of printing is another advantage of digital copiers.

The quality of the print is not as high as that of an offset printing press as yet, but only professionals in the printing industry can tell the difference. The binding is still done separately, and a layman would not be able to distinguish between a publication produced on a good-quality digital copier and one printed in the traditional way.

Last but not least, by 'printing on demand', publishers could dramatically cut the costs involved in the distribution of fine books and journals. Publishers, printers, distributors and bookshops alike do not need to hold stock, incur storage costs or make pre-operational investment in paper, as copies of a book or journal can be produced after an order from a bookshop, library or individual customer.

An innovative young Dutch company, Gopher Publishers in Groningen, has recently developed an interesting technique that combines printing on demand, electronic publishing, marketing, and selling publications on the World Wide Web. Electronic publishing and promotion on the World Wide Web have started to find a foothold in Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, as the use of computers and credit cards is not yet widespread, and the banking legislation in general and the means to control on-line payment in particular are notoriously poor in Central and Eastern Europe, Internet-based distribution of digital documents in the region is a matter for the distant future.

But Central and East European publishers could certainly make use of printing on demand. Digital copiers are currently manufactured by several Western companies. However, those

wishing to switch to the new efficient technology in most cases lack the capital to purchase the equipment.

Support for introducing printing on demand could in the long term not only improve the position of quality publishers in Central and Eastern Europe, but would also significantly reduce if not the need than certainly the amounts needed for subsidising their publications.

By Vera Ebels

Grants awarded in Autumn 1999

In October 1999, the CEEBP awarded grants for seven periodicals (including one for electronic equipment) and ten books. The grants for books were awarded for nine West-East translations and one East-East translation.

Arche, Belarussian cultural and political quarterly

Lica, Bosnian cultural quarterly

Aetas, Hungarian historical quarterly

Sheshi, Kosovar cultural, literary and political monthly

22 Magazine, Romanian political and cultural weekly

Apostrof, Romanian cultural monthly

Onufri, Albanian translation of *History of Albanian Literature* by Robert Elsie

Technologija, Belarussian translation of *The Capitalist Revolution* by Peter Berger

LIK Press, Bulgarian translation of *Postmodern Ethics* by Zygmunt Bauman

Fakel Express, Bulgarian translation of *Conversations with Joseph Brodsky* by Solomon Volkov

Politička Kultura, Croatian translation of *The Theory of Justice* by John Rawls

Antibarbarus, Croatian translation of *The Third Way* by Anthony Giddens

Triáda, Czech translation of *My First Five Lives* by Adolf Hermann

Sefer, Czech translation of *Jacob Edelstein of Theresienstadt: Elder of the Jews* by Ruth Bondy

JAK, Hungarian translation of *Fama o biciklistima* by Svetislav Basara

Feminist Publisher 94, Yugoslav translation of *A Writer's Diary* by Virginia Woolf

Index, the Slovak Association of Independent Publishers, received support for the English version of a joint catalogue for 1999 and its presentation at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

The Bosnian cultural quarterly *Album* and the publishers **Zeri** (Pristina) and **Faber** (Bulgaria) received grants for the purchase of electronic equipment (see details below).

Faber: Printing on Demand

The CEEBP allocated a grant to Faber publishing house from Veliko Turnovo in Bulgaria for the purchase of equipment for printing on demand. Faber is an independent publishing house established in 1996, which mainly publishes books in the fields of linguistics, history, philosophy, literature, and poetry.

In recent years Bulgaria, a country with an average monthly income of 160 Deutschmark, saw a continuous decline in the demand for books, which makes the price per copy more expensive. The publication costs of academic and other books with small print-runs have become prohibitive.

New developments in desk-top publishing and professional laser printers provide a new opportunity for this publishing house: printing on demand. Combining new technology from Western firms with an old-fashioned but competent Bulgarian binder, Faber will not only be able to publish academic small print-run titles but also offer its services to other publishers of small print-run publications.

Album

Another noteworthy grantee is *Album*, a literary and cultural quarterly from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The main aim of *Album* is to bring together the different regions and people

of Bosnia-Herzegovina through prose, poetry and essays. The journal is a forum for exchange and presentation of new creative ideas regardless of political views, nationality and/or religion. Special attention is paid to new young authors who are talented but have so far not had the opportunity to be published.

The concept and organisation of the journal reflects its ideals. The editorial team consists of three editors, each living in different nationally and politically defined parts of the country; and texts are published in three official languages and two official alphabets. The CEEBP provided *Album* with the means to buy necessary equipment.

Polish Book Marketing Research in Bulgaria

Within the framework of the Polish Cultural Journals Support Project (1996-1998), the Stefan Batory Foundation in Warsaw developed working relations with consultants from Book Marketing Research (BMR) regarding marketing, distribution, and training of publishers. It proved to be a successful association.

Encouraged by the enthusiastic reactions to BMR workshops in Poland, the Centre for Publishing Development in Budapest recommended that national Soros foundations in other Eastern European countries should hire BMR specialists for workshops, and offered to cover half of the costs.

The CEEBP, together with the Soros coordinator of the Bulgarian Small Print-Run Support Project, agreed to invite BMR's Polish trainers, Jacek Włodarczyk and Mikolaj Burchard, to Sofia in September 1999. They spent two days prior to the workshop visiting bookshops, publishers, and the open-air book market in Sofia.

During the next four days, 20 participants (publishers and book distributors from all around Bulgaria), attended lectures on strategic planning in marketing, focusing especially on product, price, distribution, promotion, research and advertising. In particular, new ways to outline advertising strategies were received with much interest by the participants.

The workshop's positive results were partly due to the method of presentation used by BMR during the seminar, linking theoretical knowledge with an empirical analysis of the book market in Bulgaria, and exemplifying possible solutions with practical examples taken from Polish experience.

All participants were asked to bring a few copies of their journals. After uncompromising comments based on detailed analysis, BMR consultants offered the publishers their professional opinion about the sustainability of each product.

All questions and issues raised during the lectures resulted in discussions and consultation with the lecturers, allowing the participants to benefit from each other's experience. The BMR consultants succeeded in motivating the publishers actively to use and adjust marketing tools for the non-commercial part of the publishing sector. As a direct result of the workshop, several journals embarked upon joint advertising and promotional activities.

By Milena Deleva, Sofia

Books Recently Published with the CEEBP's Support

Dubravka Ugrešić, *Amerikanski Recnik [My American Fictionary]*, Sofia: Stigmati, 1999, is the Bulgarian translation of *Americki fictionar*. In her characteristic light-footed ironic way, Ugrešić ponders in these essays the alienating experience of the Yugoslav war, the political and economic upheavals in her native Croatia following its independence in 1991, and her American exile.

My American Fictionary was her breakthrough as a literary essayist, and it was soon to be followed by the publication of *The Culture of Lies*, which is also published by Stigmati with financial support from the CEEBP. After having roamed the world for several years, Dubravka Ugrešić now lives in Amsterdam. Stigmati is a small Bulgarian publishing house that is dedicated to the promotion of recent literary work by writers from other Central and East European countries.

Libuše Moníková, *Ujma [Damage]*, Bratislava: Aspekt, 1999, is the Slovak translation of the literary debut by this world-renowned German author of Czechoslovak origin (*Eine*

Schädigung, Rotbuch Verlag, 1981). Moníková (1945 Prague-1998 Berlin), who emigrated to Germany in 1971, started to write this book in Czech, but finished it in German, to become one of the most important German writers. Combining great erudition, wit and immensely rich and imaginative language with a marvellous skill in storytelling, she earned a name as a 'modern Cervantes'. Her novels and essays, among which *The Façade* received the greatest international acclaim, were rewarded with many literary prizes, but have not yet been published in her native country (*The Façade* appeared in Czech translation, issued by the Czechoslovak Exile '68 Publishers in Toronto, Canada, in 1991). Shortly before her death, the author gave the translation rights for her work to the Slovak publishing house Aspekt.

'Pristina 99', the Fair of the Albanian Book

With the miracle we were hoping and dreaming for, freedom of the book arrived as well. Sixty Albanian publishers from Kosovo and abroad gathered together at the 'Pristina 99' book fair, held in the Pristina Youth Palace from 17-22 November 1999. There were twenty-two publishers from Albania, six from Macedonia, two from Montenegro, as well as others from Kosovo. More than 5,000 recently published books were exhibited at the fair, which was organized by the Union of Albanian Publishers with the support of many sponsors from Albania and Kosovo.

The opening of the fair turned into a national celebration of freedom. This was the first time that so many writers and masters of written and spoken Albanian had been able to meet. The most distinguished ones such as Ismail Kadare, Rexhep Qosja, Dritero Agolli, and many other writers and intellectuals from Albania created a wonderful atmosphere.

During the fair, thirty books that had been published very recently on both sides of the border, in Kosovo and Albania, were presented. The most important was Ismail Kadare's new book, *Ra ky mort e u pame*, a summary of letters and a diary dedicated to Kosovo and the war for its liberation. Another important activity was the launch of an anthology of the poet Flora Brovina, who is still a political prisoner in a Serbian prison. Understandably, most of the new books presented at the fair were dedicated to the Kosovo tragedy.

According to an approximate calculation by the fair's organizers, the flow of visitors, who could visit the fair for free, was beyond any expectation: 30-50,000 visitors per day. Considering the limited possibilities for organizing and publicizing the fair, the delicate situation after the war and other impeding factors, this was a large number. During the fair, over one thousand books were sold.

The following week the fair was transferred to Tirana, Albania, and preparations are being made to organize a National Fair of the Book in spring 2000 in Skopje, Macedonia, where a considerable number of Albanians live.

Many literary activities organized in cafes, hotels and art centres during the 'Pristina 99' book fair increased the festive atmosphere in liberated Pristina. Two of the most important institutions regarding the study of Albanian language - the Albanologic Institute of Pristina and the Institute of Language and Literature in Tirana - held a national symposium that was dedicated to the one hundredth birthday of one of the greatest Albanian poets of this century, Lasgush Poradeci. During the Symposium's three days, hundred academics and critics from Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia presented their studies, placing Albanian literature in a Balkan, European and international context.

The presence of many guests and friends from Kosovo and abroad, promotion of many books, and daily interviews with Albanian writers on the just reconstructed Kosovar television provided what Albanians had missed for years: meeting each other and getting to know each other.

If Albanian and Kosovar publishers exchange books among each other, there is no need for them to publish the same book on both sides of the border. This will increase the number of published titles because they will now be addressed to a broader group of readers, publication costs and other expenses will decrease, and revenues in the book trade will increase.

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Dutch Publishers Support a Colleague in Kosovo

Zeri is an independent Albanian publishing house in Pristina, Kosovo, run by a small circle of writers and intellectuals. Zeri publishes Albanian fiction, translations of Western non-fiction, and the literary journal *Sheshi*. During the war in spring 1999, Zeri's office equipment was stolen and the editor-in-chief Halil Matoshi arrested and taken to a prison in Serbia.

While his colleagues and international organisations are still trying to gain the release of Mr Matoshi, the kind financial support of the Dutch companies **Meulenhoff & Co bv** and the **Weekbladpers Groep bv** has enabled Zeri to buy new computer equipment. It will be used for both the cultural journal *Sheshi* and publication of a series of literary translations.
