
INTRODUCTION

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Méditerranéens est une revue bilingue (français/anglais) et semestrielle, composée de textes inédits ou traduits, qui veut explorer et laisser s'exprimer la variété des peuples et des cultures qui se trouvent dans la région méditerranéenne. Elle vise des lecteurs qui aiment la littérature ou qui cherchent à mieux connaître et comprendre les réalités de la région. Unique dans son mélange de langues et dans son ambition multi-culturelle, mais aussi par la diversité des genres: fictions, poésie, témoignages, dialogues, commentaires, analyses, humeurs, arts graphiques, photographies. Les éditeurs comptent identifier et publier les écrivains les plus doués et les plus intéressants, qu'ils appartiennent à cette région ou qu'ils s'en nourrissent pour leur écriture.

Chaque numéro de *Méditerranéens* a un thème central, qui regroupe des écrits de genres différents. Dans ce numéro, nous présentons un dossier sur la société algérienne qui comprend des témoignages et des analyses de la situation actuelle, des textes littéraires et des articles sur la musique et le cinéma.

Notre revue était établie jusque-là en Angleterre, avec l'aide d'une petite maison d'édition de Manchester, qui n'a plus les moyens actuellement de continuer. Nous sommes convaincus que cette revue doit avoir son siège en France, pays méditerranéen, tout en gardant son caractère bilingue et international. Grâce à une subvention du Centre national des Lettres, nous avons pu réaliser notre objectif. Nous sommes convaincus que notre revue répond à un intérêt grandissant en France et en Europe, pour le monde méditerranéen, et au désir réel des écrivains, intellectuels, créateurs de ce monde, d'avoir une plus grande audience.

Mediterraneans has a new home and a new team. In late 1992 the journal moved from Manchester to Paris. The editorial team has gained Hannah Davis, an American writer and anthropologist living in Paris. Robert Waterhouse, who remains based in Manchester where he edits *The Insider*, continues to lend us his advice.

We have also changed our source of funding. The review was launched with the financial support of Patrick Quinn and Didsbury Press in Manchester. We knew from the start that after the first two issues we would be on our own. Fortunately we have received a small subsidy from the Centre nationale des Lettres in Paris to help us bring out this issue. But our future depends more than ever on your support. Our ambition remains the same — to publish the best writing that we can find from and about all of the cultures and peoples of the Mediterranean region.

Mediterraneans will be coming out twice a year, with part of each issue focused on a central theme: here, we look at Algeria. Besides this special dossier, the issue also includes as always a rich variety of writing; John Berger and Susan Sontag in a fascinating dialogue on the art of telling stories, fiction by Edmund Keeley, Emond El Maleh, Naim Kattan, Andreu Martin, and others, and poetry in Berber, Italian, Catalan... There are also essays as diverse as John Laurenson on Kosovo and Shulamit Hareven on being a Levantine. And there's lots to look at through the eyes of photographers and painters. We think that you will find pleasure and instruction in these pages.

Algeria is a challenge to our understanding and sensibilities. Everything is changing, yet there's a sense of paralysis. The power structure is threatened, and it's digging in its heels. The daily lives of Algerians have become increasingly difficult. Ramadan, spoiled by high prices and curfew, brought

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little joy this year. In the spring of 1993, Algeria was a tense and anxious place.

Part of the challenge is to do what John Berger calls "looking misfortune in the face." How to look calmly at adversity, how to reflect the ambiguities in people's reactions, the variety of points of view? How to make sense of Algeria's interconnected crises when they cannot be rationalized, explained in terms of ideology, resolved in the mind?

We decided, in the spirit of *Mediterraneans*, to mix political analysis with cultural expression of all kinds, including popular songs, creatively-written journalism and essays, short stories, poetry in all of the Algerian languages (Arabic, Berber and French), scenarios from films, interviews and photographs of daily life. We've tried to listen in as best we could!

There is a tendency towards stark contrasts in Algeria which is summed up by the cartoonist Slim: "I come from a country where there's only black and white, where when you talk about colour it's as if you're talking about a rocket!" We think that this dossier reflects some of the tragic elements of today's Algeria. At the same time this rich and diverse collection of perspectives shows Algeria in colour and light.

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"Politics in Other Guises," by **Mohamed Harbi**, is an excerpt translated from *L'Algérie et son Destin: Croyants ou Citoyens*, Paris, Arcantère, 1992, pp. 208-218. **Ghania Mouffok's** "Bab el-Hadid" was first published in *Le Jeudi d'Algérie*, 30 January 1992. **Akram Belkaïd's** "Their Sons in Gaol" was first published in *Le Jeudi d'Algérie*, 12 March 1992, and his "The Day President Boudiaf Died" was published in the same publication on 2 July 1992. "Might Makes Right" by **Salima Ghezali** was first published in *an-Nyssa*, March 1991. **Aissa Khelladi's** "Is Man the Future of Woman?" was first published in *Oanatha* No.1 (1991). The conversation between **Susan Sontag & John Berger** is translated from a transcript of the Channel 4 Television programme "Voices" which was broadcast in 1987. **Naim Kattan's** Farida is an excerpt from his latest novel in preparation. **Holly Chase's** "Working Notes from Turkey" are excerpted from *Turkish Tapestry: A Traveller's Portrait of Turkey*, Groton Long Point, Connecticut: Bosphorus Books, 1993. **Fanny Colonna's** *Un homme de désir* was first published in *Révolution Africaine*, no. 1311, 21/4/1989. **Mouloud Mammeri's** "The Crossing" is an excerpt translated from *La Traversée*, Paris, Plon, 1982.

We direct our readers to several excellent recent publications on Algeria which were sources of inspiration and information for us: *Paris Plus*, "L'Algérie aujourd'hui" (Hors série No. 3/ décembre 1992); *Autrement*, "Algérie 30 ans: les enfants de l'indépendance," eds. M. Allouache and V. Colonna (Paris 1992); *Impressions du Sud*, numéro special "Expressions algériennes" (No. 27/28, Hivers/printemps 1991; John Reudy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Indiana University Press, 1992); and *AWAL, Cahiers d'études berbères*, "Hommage à Mouloud Mammeri" (Paris 1990).