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WORKSHOP No. 3

BOOKDEALERS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

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Translations from the Spanish by Nettie Lee Benson

BIBLIOTECA



CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO
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WORKSHOP ON BOOKDEALERS
AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Latin American Bookdealers' Problems: Summary

Nettie Lee Benson

The various responses received from the Latin American bookdealers from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay, plus additional communications from those of other countries show clearly that the problems they would like resolved fall into the following categories:

- I. Bibliographic information desired by libraries in book lists and invoices
 - A. Descriptive elements for each item listed: author, title, series, volume, number, place of publication, publisher, date, binding, price
 - B. Organization of titles within lists or catalogs: by subject; by date
 - C. Frequency of book lists or catalog
- II. Types of orders
 - A. Blanket orders
 - B. Standing orders
 - C. Approval orders and return of books
 - D. Reservation lists and want lists
- III. Payment
 - A. Payment in advance or pre-payment
 - B. Payment on receipt
 - C. Other matters relating to payment

I suggest that these problems be developed in the present workshop. To guide the discussion on Topic I, Bibliographic Information Desired by Libraries in Book Lists and Invoices, a sheet entitled "Recommended Guidelines for Book Dealer's and Publisher's Catalogs" has been produced (see page 4 at the end of these comments), and these Guidelines should be discussed point by point. Topics I B and C should then be discussed.

Topic II dealing with Types of Orders is another important problem for bookdealers and publishers. Several dealers have requested definitions of the terms. Definitive definition is somewhat difficult because each library may interpret the terms differently. As a basis for discussion, I offer my definition of these terms as follows:

A. Blanket orders.--An order made for a stated period of time to cover various kinds of materials according to definite guidelines spelled out by the particular library placing the order. It is incumbent upon each library to state exactly the kind of material that it will accept and equally incumbent upon the book supplier to adhere to these guidelines. Blanket orders always pose problems, especially if the library expects the supplier to determine the research value of the material to be sent. The library must develop workable guidelines and not blame the vendor for the failure of its guidelines.

Likewise, the bookmen must adhere to the guidelines in filling the order. For instance, he should not send translations if the guidelines indicate that translations or certain types of translations are not desired by the library.

B. Standing orders.--Generally a continuing order for specific titles. It is usually the term used in reference to annual subscriptions to all types of periodicals, annuals, and numbered series and the exact titles desired are indicated title by title. Standing orders relate to specific titles or series. Blanket orders are usually much more encompassing and refer more to subject fields or disciplines than to specific titles.

C. Approval orders.--Some publishers offer material on approval. I, however, would not expect any foreign bookman to offer libraries books on approval. The cost and problems of returning books are too complicated for both the receiver and the vendor.

D. Reservation lists and Want lists.--Libraries, after checking a catalog from a book dealer, frequently find titles they wish to acquire. However, those titles listed may have been sold before an order can reach the dealer. In order to avoid encumbrance of funds for items no longer available, libraries write asking if the desired titles are still available and for those to be held (i.e., reserved) until an official order can be made. A library should check carefully the titles requested and should order those items it has requested held unless it later develops that the listing in the catalog was incorrect. On the other hand, the bookman should responsibly describe each title offered.

In the case of Want lists, a library has some responsibility to acquire those titles it indicates as wanting if the reply comes in promptly, say within a few weeks of issuance of the list. However, the bookman should be aware that the issuance of a want list does not necessarily imply that the library will buy all of the items listed at any price offered.

Topic III--Payment. Because of the long delay between shipment of material and its receipt, the book dealer finds himself in a difficult situation in regard to finances. Further delay is caused by the bureaucratic red tape involved in university handling of payment on top of the slowness of libraries to process shipments after their receipt. This is a problem that libraries and bookmen must try to resolve insofar as possible. However, both parties should recognize the other's problems. Many institutions have bureaucratic rules in regard to payment.

A. Payment in advance or prepayment is sometimes possible if the vendor sends a pro-forma invoice indicating that prepayment is required. THE INVOICE MUST STATE THAT THIS IS THE CASE. Problems can occur, however; for example, when prepayment is made, but due to the inevitable bureaucratic red tape, it arrives after the material being requested is no longer available, then the buyer is unhappy. One possible solution to this situation is that some arrangement or agreement be worked out between the vendor and the purchaser whereby the vendor, immediately following shipment of the material, air mails

the invoice of the shipment and requests immediate payment. In this case, it behooves the vendor to be sure that every item in the invoice has been shipped or else the purchaser will be unhappy upon receipt of the material.

B. Payment on receipt is what most institutions would prefer and some are compelled to carry out. When this is the only method possible, the purchaser should be certain to process the invoice promptly on receipt of the material and see that payment is handled as expeditiously as possible.

In considering Topic III C, Other Matters Relating to Payment, many countries have special regulations in regard to how payment may be made; that is, the form in which payment is made. Libraries buying from foreign vendors must recognize these facts and abide by the instructions given by the vendors in regard to payment. Often a small check will cause the vendor to be charged a special discount for its handling. If the vendor and purchaser work together on this matter, both will benefit.

All of these matters are of great importance to us gathered here today. Libraries cannot exist without the cooperation and assistance of bookmen, and the latter cannot exist without the libraries as purchasers. Surely, all of us will profit by discussing these problems which I have outlined from the excellent suggestions offered by the book dealers present here today.

Recomendaciones para la Compilación de Catálogos o Listas de Editoriales o Librerías (Recommended Guidelines for Book Dealer's and Publisher's Catalogs)

- 1a. NOMBRE COMPLETO DEL AUTOR o apellidos seguidos del nombre de pila. Más de tres autores: cite el título e indique los nombres de los primeros tres después del título. (AUTHOR'S FULL NAME(S), surname(s) first followed by personal name. More than three authors: list by title and note first three authors in text of bibliographic citation.)
- 1b. AUTOR CORPORATIVO O COLECTIVO: nombre completo de la división o departamento responsable, seguido por el nombre de la entidad administrativa a la cual pertenece esta división. (CORPORATE BODY AS AUTHOR, full name of body responsible for work with citation of administrative unit in which corporate body is located.)
2. TITULO COMPLETO (FULL TITLE)
3. EDICION: número de la edición (si no es la primera) e indicar si ha sido revisada, aumentada, compilada, etc. (EDITION, if other than first, and whether revised, augmented, etc.)
4. NUMERO DEL VOLUMEN O TOMO (si es más de uno) y de la PARTE si es más de una. (VOLUME NUMBER, if multivolume set with one title).
5. LUGAR DE PUBLICACION (PLACE OF PUBLICATION)
6. EDITORIAL: Nombre de la editorial o imprenta. (PUBLISHER, especially important to avoid duplication with blanket orders, subscriptions, and to assist in the determination of publication's quality.)
7. FECHA DE PUBLICACION (DATE OF IMPRINT)
8. NUMERO DE PAGINAS: Es especialmente importante en material de las ciencias sociales. (NUMBER OF PAGES, especially useful in social sciences material).
9. TITULO COMPLETO Y NUMERO DE LA SERIE, importantísimo para prevenir duplicación (COMPLETE TITLE OF SERIES AND NUMBER, will be of great value in avoiding duplication of series on subscription and also for determining potential value of title.)
10. TRADUCCION por quién y de que lengua (TRANSLATION should be indicated possibly by an *.)
11. INFORMACION MISCELANEA: ilustraciones, láminas (si son en color o no); tamaño: folio, octavo, cuarto (MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION, illustrations, color plates, folio size, recordings all may useful in title selection)
12. ENCUADERNACION-rústica, cartón, tela, piel, holandesa ¿cuál? (BINDING)

Información sobre venta (Sales Information)

1. PRECIO, indicar en que moneda: pesos, soles, cruzeiros, dólares, etc. (PRICE and in what currency)
2. MODO DE ENVIO, indicar el costo marítimo o aéreo postal o expreso (SHIPPING METHOD/OPTIONS, if airpost is available, what cost?)
3. MODO DE PAGO, ¿en qué moneda? ¿contra cuál banco?, ¿a qué dirección?, todo indicado claramente en el catálogo y en las facturas. Si es necesario pagar por adelantado, tiene que ser indicado en las facturas y el catálogo. (TERMS OF PAYMENT, in what currency, drawn on what bank(s), mailed to what address(es); should be clearly noted in the catalog and on all copies of the invoice. Prepayment or upon receipt must be stated.

Bases de discusión del "Workshop on Book Dealers and their Problems"

J. Noe Herrera

CATALOGOS Y LISTAS DE LIBREROS

- 1) Cómo deberían elaborarse las listas, es decir qué datos deben incluir respecto a la publicación sí, esto es el contenido bibliográfico, y en relación al precio y otros detalles;
- 2) Cómo debería clasificarse las publicaciones dentro de las listas, o la conveniencia de elaborarlas separadamente por materias, épocas, etc;
- 3) Cada cuánto tiempo es conveniente enviar listas;
- 4) A quién deben remitirse las listas (posibilidades de avisar recibo, de devolverlas si así lo desean los libreros, de indicar específicamente cuáles se deben continuar enviando y, si fuere el caso, de informar con franqueza a los libreros cuando no se desee o no se tenga interés en continuar recibiendo catálogos;
- 5) Podría elaborarse un directorio de oficina o personas a quienes deben remitirse las listas, indicando los campos de interés en cada caso y las épocas en que conviene hacerlas llegar.

RESERVAS Y PEDIDOS.- A los libreros se les acusa por falta de información, por no contestar la correspondencia y, en especial por demorarse en despachar los pedidos.

En cuanto a la información, es preciso tener en cuenta que el librero, por regla general, tiene que actuar un poco a oscuras y sobre un terreno que él no puede controlar: en primer término, muchas veces debe enviar sus listas a un destinatario anónimo, que generalmente no le avisa recibo; debe recolectar y suministrar publicaciones que, por carecer de distribución y mercadeo organizados, es necesario buscar como si se tratara de tesoros ocultos, que en ocasiones, como en el caso de las publicaciones gubernamentales colombianas, deben ser recuperadas de los cestos de la basura, a donde son enviadas sin romperlas ni mancharlas, por sus innmerecidos destinatarios oficiales y, peor aún, debe confiar la suerte de su mercancía, es decir de su dinero y su trabajo, al riesgo del correo, seguro de que algún día le pagarán, pero sin saber cuándo.

Sin negar los problemas que los bibliotecarios tienen a su turno, parece cierto que ellos, en general, pueden actuar sobre bases más firmes y cabe, por lo tanto, pedirles más eficiencia y prontitud en sus decisiones, por lo menos en lo que respecta al trámite de reservas y pedidos.

Posiblemente el factor que más perturba el proceso de las adquisiciones, por lo menos en lo que se relaciona con los libros, es la demora en recibir, si

no el pedido definitivo, sí la petición de reservar las publicaciones que le interesan a la biblioteca respectiva. Sería conveniente, en consecuencia, pensar en la necesidad de que el trámite de los pedidos y las peticiones de reserva, se hiciera a la mayor brevedad, a fin de que el librero no quede a merced de la incertidumbre en lo que respecta a los títulos y número de copias de publicaciones que debe adquirir y guardar para atender las posteriores demandas de sus eventuales clientes. De lo contrario, mal puede exigírsele eficiencia y prontitud en los despachos ni se le puede censurar por el hecho de que trate de compensar con precios más altos el recargo en los costos que para él significa el congelar dinero en publicaciones que han de almacenarse a plazo indefinido, con gastos adicionales por concepto de depósito, etc.

PAGOS Y DEVOLUCIONES.- Libreros y bibliotecarios debemos convencernos de que la solución a los problemas que nos afectan recíprocamente, debemos buscarlas, encontrarlas y ponerlas en práctica nosotros mismos y por nuestros propios medios. La solución a las devoluciones no será el lograr convencer a base de consejos, recomendaciones o ruegos, a los empleados del correo y de la aduana (que hoy son y mañana, no), para que entreguen las publicaciones devueltas, sin papeleo, sin demora, sin tener que sacrificarles tiempo e implorarles su benevolencia. Ni el mejor medio para acelerar el embarque y transporte de las publicaciones ordenadas, será el hacer votos por que los gobiernos acaben las aduanas, conviertan a sus funcionarios en bibliófilos, o determinen que los libros tendrán vía libre a través de los restringidos conductos del comercio internacional, que mientras permanezca bajo la jurisdicción de los Estados, forzosamente será rigurosamente controlado.

Aunque parezca perogrullesco e irónico, el medio ideal para evitar las devoluciones es el prevenir hasta el máximo recibir publicaciones que luego haya que devolver porque no se necesiten o no se desee tenerlas. Para lo cual, además de claridad y precisión en los pedidos, se requiere un adecuado grado de comprensión entre bibliotecarios y libreros, o, más aún, que éstos se compenetren en tal forma, con las necesidades, políticas y deseos de los bibliotecarios, que únicamente les suministren lo que a estos realmente les interesa, conviene y gusta tener.

Además, qué estímulo más poderoso para hacer enviar listas, contestar las cartas, así sean de reclamo, y apresurar el envío, que el pago oportuno? No es verdad, señor Capel o señor García Cambeiro?

Workshop on Book Dealers and their Problems: Bases of Discussion

By J. Noe Herrera; Translated by Nettie Lee Benson

DEALER'S LISTS AND CATALOGS

- 1) How should the lists be fashioned, that is, what bibliographic data should be included about each item, and what other details such as prices, etc.?
- 2) How should the titles within the lists be classified or arranged: by subject, by dates, [alphabetically by author]?
- 3) How often and when is it best to send the lists?
- 4) To whom should the lists be sent (what about the possibilities of acknowledging receipt of them, of returning them if the bookdealers so desire, of indicating exactly which ones should continue to be sent, and of frankly informing the bookmen when there is no interest in continuing to receive catalogs)?
- 5) Would it be possible to compile a directory of offices or persons to whom the lists or catalogs should be sent with an indication of the fields of interest in each instance as well as the most convenient time for receiving them?

RESERVATIONS AND ORDERS

The bookdealers are criticized for the lack of information given, for not replying to correspondence and especially for the delay in filling orders.

As for information, it is necessary to remember that the bookdealer generally has to operate to some degree in the dark and above all in an area in which he has no control. In the first place, frequently he has to send his list to an unknown destination, which generally does not advise him of its receipt. He has to collect and supply publications, which, in the absence of an organized distribution and market system, must be sought like hidden treasure, and which on occasion, as in the case of Colombian government publications, must be recovered without tearing or staining them from waste baskets or trash cans, where they have been thrown by unworthy officials who have received them. Even worse yet, he (the bookdealer) must entrust his merchandise, that is to say his money and effort, to the risks of the post office, sure that someday he will be paid but without knowing when.

Without denying that librarians have problems of their own, it seems certain that generally they can act on a firmer and surer basis; therefore, it is right to ask them for more efficiency and promptness in their decisions, at least with respect to the process of reservations and orders.

Possibly the most disturbing factor in the process of acquisitions, at least in relation to books, is the delay in receiving, if not the definite

order, at least the request for the reservation of publications of interest to the respective library. Consequently, it would be convenient to consider it a necessity that the processing of orders and requests for reservation be made as quickly as possible so that the bookdealer will not be faced with the uncertainty of the titles and numbers of copies that he should acquire and hold in order to meet subsequent requests from his eventual clients. Otherwise, efficiency and promptness of shipment cannot be demanded of him; nor can he be censured for the fact that he tries to compensate with higher prices his cost of investment of his money in the books for an indefinite period of time and warehousing the material, an additional cost to the vendor.

PAYMENT AND RETURNS

We, as bookdealers and librarians, must realize that in order to solve the problems which mutually affect us, we ourselves must search for, find and put into practice our solutions by our own means. The solution to returns will not be solved by consultations, recommendations or appeals to the postal and customs' employees (who are here today and gone tomorrow) asking them to deliver the returned publications without a lot of paper work, without delay without having to sacrifice time and imploring their benevolence. Nor is the best method to accelerate the shipping of material ordered to pray that the government will do away with custom houses, convert their employees into bibliophiles, or determine that books will be free of any restraints in international trade, as long as it remains under the jurisdiction of the government which will rigorously control it.

Although the solution may seem inane or ironic, the best way to avoid returns is to prevent to the maximum degree the receipt of publications that must be returned because they are not needed or are not desired. To accomplish this goal, besides precision and clarity in the orders, both librarians and bookdealers must adequately understand each other, or better still the bookdealers must be able to comprehend to such a degree the needs, policies and desires of the librarian that they will supply them only with what they are really interested in, need, and want to have.

Also, what is a more powerful stimulus for providing lists, answering letters (even those claiming material and asking for speedy shipment) than that payment be promptly made? Is this not so, Sr. Capel or Sr. García Cambeiro?

ALGUNOS PROBLEMAS DEL LIBRO ARGENTINO

Fernando García Cambeiro

I

Presupuestos Universitarios

La base fundamental de los problemas que en la actualidad atravieza el mercado del libro argentino, está constituida -sin duda alguna- por la reducción que afecta los presupuestos universitarios de las instituciones de USA.

El presente año, 1973, ofreció un singular panorama y la merma observada incidió notablemente en el suministro de material argentino. Este aspecto se hizo singularmente notorio en la baja observada en los pedidos de material por parte de las instituciones norteamericanas, que se han visto necesariamente obligadas a solicitar exclusivamente aquel material estrictamente imprescindible para el desarrollo de los distintos cursos universitarios.

Este aspecto de la cuestión influyó e influye en la actualidad en el mercado del libro argentino, que ha visto descender en forma alarmante la demanda de material cultural, específicamente de libros.

La instalación y mantenimiento de los sectores que se dedican a este tipo de mercado, se ha resentido notoriamente, ya que la inversión llevada a efecto para el cumplimiento de la tarea de suministro, no se encuentra compensada por la colocación del material, lo que ha originado, infortunadamente situaciones de cese -como ha ocurrido en otras importantes empresas del área latinoamericana- ante la imposibilidad de afrontar compromisos contraídos en su momento.

Alza de los Costos del Papel

La segunda alternativa que ha descalabrado las estructuras del mercado, radican en la incesante alza de los costos del papel para la impresión de libros.

Este aspecto de la cuestión se vincula ineludiblemente a un problema de índole mundial. La falta de materia prima para la industria papelera incide peligrosamente en el precio del libro y los costos de impresión alcanzan ribetes insólitos, originando así una evidente reducción no sólo en la edición de libros sino también en el pedido de suministro, teniendo en cuenta el elevado precio del material. Los libreros del país se han visto en la obligación de ir ajustando los precios para mantener el nivel de venta mínimo para sus empresas.

Si se tiene en cuenta lo expuesto en el punto anterior y la problemática nacida del alza en los costos de papel que aquí se menciona, puede colegirse fácilmente que ambos problemas se conjugan para resentir notoriamente la tarea del librero.

Conclusiones

La solución de los problemas inherentes a la reducción de los presupuestos universitarios y el alza del costo del papel de impresión, por el momento no ofrece solución visible. La escasez mundial de materia prima para la industria del papel está siendo tratada en los más importantes centros de investigación de laboratorios, con el fin de lograr una materia prima sintética que reemplace la que proviene de las fuentes naturales de producción, siendo por el momento incipiente y sin incidencia importante para la industria. En lo que se refiere a la restricción de los presupuestos universitarios que afecta a las instituciones de U.S.A., confíase en que en un plazo no muy lejano puedan solventarse las necesidades de dichas instituciones para poder así retornar al "status" anterior y propender en forma efectiva a la mayor difusión del conocimiento.

II

Verificación de Novedades Bibliográficas

Este punto ofrece alternativas de suma importancia, pues a través de una buena información bibliográfica, puede alcanzarse un específico mejoramiento en el suministro de material de novedades.

En el orden nacional, el país tiene sin duda alguna una institución que realiza el mayor esfuerzo en lograr una información bibliográfica completa y a nivel internacional. Nos estamos refiriendo al FONDO NACIONAL DE LAS ARTES, entidad creada hace ya algunos años para reflejar exhaustivamente el acervo bibliográfico nacional. A través de sus publicaciones especializadas, LA BIBLIOGRAFIA ARGENTINA DE ARTES Y LETRAS y sus COMPILACIONES ESPECIALES, cuya aparición data del año 1959, ofrece un vasto panorama de la actividad editorial del país.

Lamentablemente, estas publicaciones son de índole irregular en su aparición (el último número publicado de la Bibliografía Argentina de Artes y Letras es el 49-50 de Enero-Junio 1971 y de las Compilaciones Especiales, es el 39-42: "Bibliografía de la Revista Nosotros", de 1971), por lo tanto suspendida en la actualidad y se estima muy difícil su reanudación.

Diversos aspectos tanto de índole económica como ideológica hacen suponer una posible desaparición de esta importante entidad cultural.

Por otra parte, existen barreras, muchas veces insalvables, entre las informaciones bibliográficas de los centros culturales y de difusión del interior del país y la capital Buenos Aires.

El sentido localista de muchos empresarios del libro y la rivalidad existente en este campo de la actividad cultural-comercial, impide una más fluida comunicación entre los diversos centros del país.

Además, la capital -Buenos Aires- es el macrocéfalo del país y en lo que

hace al panorama editorial absorbe casi el 90^o/o de las ediciones de libros. En la capital se encuentran instalados los más grandes establecimientos editoriales de la Argentina. En orden descendente, le siguen las Provincias de Córdoba, Tucumán y la zona de Cuyo.

No existe, hasta el momento, una entidad oficial que centralice toda la información editorial del país y todos estos aspectos inciden peligrosamente en la tarea del librero, que debe realizar incruentos esfuerzos para lograr informaciones fragmentarias de las publicaciones nacionales y que, muchas veces, no compensan la ímproba labor que debe desarrollar. De ahí que, frecuentemente, se observan blancos notables en las bibliografías que se confeccionan. No obstante ello, la Argentina, ocupa primerísimo lugar en el concierto latinoamericano en lo que concierne a la edición y publicación de material de lectura, como puede apreciarse a través de las estadísticas especializadas.

Conclusiones

En los últimos tiempos se está tratando, no sólo a nivel oficial, sino también privado, de alcanzar un mayor acercamiento entre todos los puntos del país que realizan tareas editoriales, procurando salvar los inconvenientes tanto de distancias como localistas, con el alto propósito de dar a conocer en forma integral el alto grado de cultura del país, actitud que se conforma a través de organismos oficiales especializados y empresas particulares mancomunadas en el esfuerzo de dar una real imagen de la nación en lo que se relaciona con la difusión cultural necesaria para cimentar las premisas de una verdadera reconstrucción nacional.

III

Transporte del material de lectura

El envío de libros por correo marítimo no sufre grandes demoras. En los despachos de materia hacia U.S.A. y países de Europa, en especial Inglaterra, Alemania, Francia e Italia, los términos de recepción del material enviado se encuadran dentro de plazos normales, no así con los países latinoamericanos, a excepción de los limítrofes -Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Perú y Brasil- que sufren prolongadas demoras que evidentemente provocan perjuicios importantes para la difusión del material.

Los envíos que se realizan mediante el uso de la VIA AEREA, se efectúan con real rapidez, pero este sistema incide sobre el costo del material, que se eleva sobremanera, convirtiéndolo en artículo muchas veces inaccesibles para las instituciones. Claro está que hay excepciones, como aquellos casos en que el cliente solicita el envío por VIA AEREA, debido a la necesidad imperiosa de contar con el material dentro de plazos fijos.

Conclusiones

La solución del problema del transporte en lo que se refiere a países

latinoamericanos no limítrofes y la posible disminución de los términos actuales para el despacho de material a U.S.A. y países de Europa, por el momento no tiene aspectos favorables, ya que debería realizarse cambios de sistemas en las comunicaciones que llevaría bastante tiempo y estudios oficiales.

IV

Asuntos Varios

- a) Sistema de pedidos: Como detalle informativo, cabe destacar la conveniencia de efectuar los pedidos mediante fichas individuales, cuyo procesamiento puede realizarse con mayor fluidez y contralor. Por el contrario, el pedido de material a través de listas, provoca notorias demoras, ya que debe desmenuzarse el pedido por medio de la confección de fichas internas para su mejor manejo. En consecuencia y haciendo propicia esta oportunidad de detallar los problemas del librero, se recomienda muy especialmente la necesidad de efectuar los pedidos de material mediante el uso de fichas individuales.
- b) Devoluciones: Este rubro ofrece un único problema y que se concita exclusivamente en las reglamentaciones sociales argentinas para el retiro del material que se devuelve, ya que presentan serias dificultades para el librero que debe hacerse cargo de una devolución de material. Muchas veces los libros no pueden ser retirados y finalmente son redespachados a su lugar de origen (la institución que los devuelve) provocando demoras y otras alternativas que terminan por provocar perjuicios al librero, y a su actividad en general.

EPILOGO

Las cuestiones tratadas en esta síntesis de los problemas del librero argentino, hace tiempo que se vienen desarrollando y nuestro deseo es que todos los asistentes al XIX SALALM tengan conocimiento de los mismos, con el único propósito de propender a lograr soluciones mutuas, en beneficio de la importante tarea que sintetiza el intercambio cultural entre los países, hecho que, a la postre, no es más que procurar mejorar el status de vida del hombre, para que alcance el nivel natural para el que ha sido creado.

SOME PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO ARGENTINE BOOKS

Fernando García Cambeiro; Translated by Nettie Lee Benson

I

University Budgets and [Rising Book Production Costs]

The fundamental problem presently facing the market for Argentine books is, without doubt, created by the reduction of university budgets in the United States.

The year 1973 offered an excellent example of the impact of this decline that notably affected the supply of Argentine material. This aspect was especially demonstrated in the reduction of requests for material on the part of North American institutions which have been necessarily obliged to request only that material absolutely necessary for the development of different university courses.

This aspect of the question has influenced and continues to influence the present Argentine book trade, which has witnessed an alarming decrease in the demand for cultural material, specifically books.

The establishment and maintenance of those sectors dedicated to this type of market have suffered tremendously, since the investments undertaken to have the material supplied have not been compensated by the delivery of the material, a situation which unfortunately has caused the disruption of business as has occurred in other important Latin American companies which find themselves unable to fulfill previous contracts.

Rise in Paper Costs

The second development that has hurt the structure of the trade is the constant rise in the cost of paper for the printing of books.

This aspect of the problem is a world-wide one. The lack of raw material for the paper industry drastically affects the price of the book and the printing costs reach unexpected heights, thus creating a reduction evident not only in the number of copies per edition but also in the demand for supplies. The book dealers in the country have been forced to continue adjusting the prices in order to maintain the minimum sales levels needed to stay in business.

If one bears in mind these two problems [reduced budgets and elevated costs for paper] one can easily understand how they have combined to make the task of the book dealer more difficult.

The solution to the problems of the reduction in university budgets and the rising cost of paper for printing at the moment is not discernible. The world scarcity of raw material for the paper industry is being studied in the

most important centers of laboratory research with the purpose of finding synthetic material to replace the natural resources. This research has only just begun and at the moment is of little significance to the industry. As for the reduction in university budgets in the United States, it is to be hoped that in a short time those institutions will be able to meet their needs so that they may return to their previous status and be able to contribute effectively to the greater diffusion of knowledge.

II

The Verification of New Bibliographic Information

This matter is of very great importance because good bibliographic information can bring about specific improvement in supplying new material.

On the national scene, the country has without question an institution which is making the greatest effort to produce the complete national bibliography as well as international. We are referring to the Fondo Nacional de las Artes, an entity created some years ago to exhaustively record the national bibliography. With its specialized publications, La bibliografía argentina de artes y letras and its Compilaciones especiales, whose appearance dates from 1959, it offers a vast panorama of the country's editorial activity.

Regrettably these publications appear irregularly (the last number published of the Bibliografía de artes y letras is No. 49-50 of Jan.-June, 1971 and that of the Compilaciones especiales is No. 39-42: the Bibliografía de la Revista "Nosotros", 1971). They are presently suspended, and it is doubtful that they will resume publication.

Various factors, as much economic as ideological, cause one to assume that this important cultural body may possibly disappear.

On the other hand, barriers exist, many of them insurmountable between the bibliographic sources of the cultural centers and other media in the interior of the country and the capital.

The provincial attitude of many publishers and the rivalry existing in this field of cultural-commercial activity impedes more fluid communication between the various centers of the country.

Furthermore, the capital Buenos Aires is the macrocephalous of the country and as far as the editorial situation is concerned, absorbs almost 90% of the editions of books. In the capital are also the largest publishing firms of Argentina. In descending order Córdoba, Tucuman and Mendoza follow.

An official body that centralizes information on all the country's editorial activity does not exist at present. All these aspects drastically complicate the task of the bookdealer who must exercise the most gruelling efforts to obtain fragmentary information on the national publications and who many times is not rewarded for the laborious work that he must carry out.

Therefore notable gaps occur in the bibliographies prepared. Nevertheless, Argentina ranks at the top among Latin American countries as far as the editing and publication of reading material is concerned, as can be seen in the specialized statistics.

Recently efforts have been made officially and privately to draw all editorial activities in the country closer together, by trying to overcome both the inconveniences of distances and provincialism in order to make known the high degree of the culture of the country. Both specialized government entities and private firms have joined forces to create a true image of the nation in the realm of cultural dissemination necessary to lay the bases of the truly national reconstruction.

III

The Transportation of Reading Material

Shipment of books by sea does not suffer great delay. The shipment of material to the United States and to Europe, especially England, Germany, France, and Italy arrives in a normal time span; but this does not occur in relation to the Latin American countries, which with the exception of neighboring countries - Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Peru and Brazil - experience excessive delays that evidently increase the problem of delivering the materials.

Shipments by airmail can be made with great rapidity, but this system increases the cost of the material to such an extent that it frequently makes the material inaccessible to interested institutions. Of course, there are exceptions, such as cases where the client requests shipment by air because of the need to have the material by a specified date.

The solution to the shipping problem with respect to non-neighboring Latin American countries and the possible diminution of the present terms for shipment of material to the U.S. and European countries presently is not favorable; for to remedy it, changes in communication systems requiring much time and official study must be carried out.

IV

Various Topics

- a) Procedure for ordering: As a point of information, it is fitting to emphasize the convenience of placing the orders by using individual forms, which can be easily and quickly processed. On the contrary, sending order lists causes great delay since the order must be broken down by the use of individual forms for better processing. Therefore, the use of individual forms for processing orders is especially recommended.
- b) Return of material: This classification presents a special problem which can be traced to the official Argentine regulations for the clearance of

material that is being returned. These regulations create serious difficulties for the dealer who must take charge of materials that are returned. Often the books cannot be cleared and are finally returned to their point of origin (the institution that is returning them), causing delays and other problems for the bookdealer.

EPILOGUE

The problems covered in this synthesis of the Argentine bookdealer's situation have not developed overnight and our wish is to make them known to the participants in the XIX SALALM meeting. Our sole purpose is to attempt to find solutions, mutually, by means of cultural interchange among our countries, which in the long run is really the effort to improve man's status in life, so that he may naturally achieve the purpose for which he has been created.

Problems of Latin American Booksuppliers

Werner Guttentag

1. Political Material

In view of the quick changing pattern in South American politics, a book, or even more, a pamphlet with political content, can be sold today freely in all bookstores, and the next day it can be a very dangerous piece of paper. The immaturity of South American society makes most of the rulers believe that free expression is dangerous. (This is not only in political matters, but regarding free discussions of sex, religion, history, etc.).

Including such political material in a catalogue can mean that the dealer can be searched by a bureaucrat, when the official point of view has changed. Sometimes, special lists, without indication of the source, which only the librarian should know, would be advisable. For shipping the order, the dealer must find ways.

Also the price structure of such material may alter accordingly.

If the political situation in some country is disturbed, ordering should be done very carefully.

2. Foreign Exchange Control

The hazards in South America also include the unstable economic situation and following the political pattern, government regulations can change overnight in regard to foreign exchange control, export of books and foreign accounts. Payments should be made-better, MUST BE MADE-exactly as the bookdealer indicates. Any changes the supplier writes about should be given immediate attention. Not obeying his wishes could mean huge fines, often in no relation to the amount, and even prison, or even closing of his business organization can happen. Many times shipment of small orders cannot be done legally because red tape would cost so much, that it would not be worthwhile. And how often orders for single books arrive, which the bookdealer would like to attend.

In some countries checks sent directly to the dealer or, worse, to a bank there, can cause many troubles to him. Paying small amounts through a banking organization means, because of the huge bank expenses, a loss, as for example: instead of the five dollars billed, he receives only 3 dollars from the local bank, which does not cover even cost and freight.

Very recently a librarian sent a postcard asking for the Federal employee number or social security number. Can a foreign bookdealer have this??

3. Return of Books

When some library gets a gift, they send a book back as unwanted or ask for return rights. Or cancellation arrives when the book is already shipped.

Often the book was bought especially for a certain client. How can, in this case, the dealer accept return? Mostly the gifts are from governments or societies and are often material very difficult for the dealer to obtain. A library, which considers important the acquisition of a special book or pamphlet should be happy, if, by chance, they get a free copy. It can also always be used for exchange.

Sometimes a page is missing or the binding is upside down. It is usual in the booktrade to exchange such copies and logically, the librarian wants to exchange such "damaged" copy too. But, before, in this case, returns are made, the bookdealer should be advised. Maybe, he cannot get a returned book through customs, or maybe, he can send another copy, free of charge, without getting the damaged copy back and the copy can be destroyed or used by the librarian.

Sometimes, no other copy is available: a short edition which disappeared from the market, a political or government brochure, so that no exchange can be made. In this case, a credit note from the dealer, giving away his profit would be the solution, avoiding expenses or troubles.

Neither should a book damaged in the mail be returned immediately and without previous advice.

4. Books lost in the mail

It is commercially usual that the buyer takes the risk if the book is correctly mailed and certified. But most librarians take it for granted not to pay for the material which did not arrive at due time, even if the registered mailing is clear and the fault is by the post authorities. A payment limit should be arranged between library and supplier.

5. Official Material

This includes government papers as well as publications made by Ministries, government agencies, often industries run by the government etc., as well as universities, government-run scientific or literary organizations, municipalities, etc.

These publications are printed mostly in small quantities and they are available only in certain circles. Often they are given away, free of charge, apparently without any commercial value. But to get them, means, often more expense than normal commercial publications. Sometimes, it is not possible to find out whether this material is "classified" or not. In this case, the sudden changing political pattern has to be taken into account. Listing of official material can be a hazardous job for these reasons. What can be done? Handling of such lists should be done by the librarian with discretion. Indicating the buying source publicly should be avoided. Greater understanding if the prices change suddenly, would be appreciated. A list or catalogue, falling in the hand of a bureaucrat could be in a certain moment, dangerous.

6. Old Books

Many times, in a not very explicit and erroneous way, books printed at a certain date, are considered National Heritage and their sale, especially abroad, considered a delict. The free sale to libraries should be included in the official and mostly useless cultural treaties between countries.

7. Serials

The headache of everybody. In the case of magazine publications, numbered collections, etc. which appear sometimes only after a one-year interruption, a subscription would be hopeless. Maybe, listing of these numbers or serials separately could be a solution.

8. Better tools for the Librarian

Better lists, better catalogues should be discussed in SALALM. More harmonizing regarding stationery (ordering, invoices, etc.), should be discussed.

9. Mailing Lists

Everyday costs of mailing increase. This should oblige the librarian to answer the dealer's request if he still wants to be on his mailing list, or not.

Elaboration of working papers on these topics is suggested.

Situación del libro en el Uruguay. Sus perspectivas.

Alfredo Breitfeld

La implantación de la ley Rodó el 23 de Julio de 1910 que liberaba totalmente de impuestos la importación de libros, marcó el primer jalón en lo que se podría llamar una política de protección al libro.

La industria editorial privada que tuvo su auge en la década comprendida entre 1960 y 1970, marcando su ápice el año 1967, ha decrecido en la actualidad debido a distintos factores como por ejemplo: crisis económica, crisis de la enseñanza, problemas en el abastecimiento, en la producción de papel, etc, llegando a niveles que podríamos llamar mínimos.

Factores importantes para el desarrollo del libro fueron por ejemplo la creación del Instituto Nacional del Libro, que funciona en la órbita del Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, con el cometido principal de la formación de bibliotecas públicas, adaptando el nivel cultural de la biblioteca al medio en que se la instala. Dicho cometido, que en sus comienzos se cumplió normalmente, en la actualidad se vuelve difícil de realizar por haber rebasado el mismo sus posibilidades económicas.

El citado auge editorial que como decimos anteriormente marcó su nivel más alto en el año 1967, fue ayudado en forma sustancial por la Feria Nacional de Libros y Grabados, que bajo los auspicios de la Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo, se realiza todos los años en la misma. En algunas oportunidades esta feria se trasladó a varias localidades del interior del país, e incluso hizo una incursión a la ciudad de Buenos Aires.

Otro factor de desarrollo fue la creación de la Comisión del Papel, que fiscaliza la entrega de papel para las editoriales con un descuento del 30% sobre los precios corrientes de plaza.

También fueron ayuda importante los préstamos del Banco de la República para la edición de obras de autores nacionales. Lamentablemente este crédito está en la actualidad congelado, y no guarda relación con la situación del país, pues solamente otorga hasta la cantidad de \$750.00. El Banco de la República otorga también a los editores préstamos para la impresión de obras a nivel escolar y liceal.

Existe también una Comisión del Libro y una Comisión Asesora de la Industria Editorial que funcionan en el ámbito del Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

Las perspectivas futuras para la difusión del libro no ofrecen en el momento circunstancias favorables, pues una gran masa de lectores como es el caso de maestros y profesores, padece como el resto del país una inflación constante y ha visto reducido su poder adquisitivo a niveles muy bajos,

lo que unido a la intervención por parte del Poder Ejecutivo de la Universidad de la República, a la crisis en la Enseñanza Media (Enseñanza Secundaria y Universidad del Trabajo), debida a cesantías, traslados, etc, ha sumido este sector en crisis.

Otro grupo importante de compradores es la llamada "clase media", consumidora valiosa de bienes culturales, que padece en la actualidad un intenso proceso de empobrecimiento.

Un factor importantísimo que contribuye al deterioro de la industria editorial es la situación política, ya que gran parte de las publicaciones estaba constituida por libros de tendencia izquierdista, cuya difusión en estos momentos está muy restringida.

En cuanto a las publicaciones oficiales, el panorama tampoco es nada brillante ya que al deterioro económico se aúna el que las instituciones gubernamentales publican muy poco y en forma totalmente irregular desde el punto de vista bibliográfico. Citamos a continuación algunas excepciones.

Quizá la publicación más importante sea el llamado "Bibliografía Uruguay", publicada por la Biblioteca del Poder Legislativo, que aparece regularmente desde el año 1962 abarcando toda la producción editorial del país.

También merece citarse la revista de la Biblioteca Nacional, que aparece con bastante regularidad, lo mismo que las publicaciones estadísticas editadas por la Dirección de Estadísticas y Censos sobre vivienda, costo de vida, mortalidad, índices de morbilidad, etc.

El Ministerio de Educación y Cultura hace su aporte importante con la publicación de la Biblioteca Artigas-Colección de Clásicos Uruguayos-que abarca la producción de autores nacionales contando en el momento con aproximadamente 140 tomos, muchos de ellos agotados. En la actualidad los volúmenes de esta colección aparecen en forma bastante esporádica.

La Fundación de Cultura Universitaria, creada bajo los auspicios de la Universidad de la República, edita y distribuye obras principalmente de derecho, aunque también publica excelente material de crítica literaria, política, economía, sociología y estadística.

Generalmente las publicaciones gubernamentales no se ponen a la venta, y allí comienzan los problemas para obtenerlas como es bien sabido, debido a su poco tiraje y poca difusión y principalmente al hecho de no existir catálogo de las mismas, es preciso librar arduos esfuerzos muchas veces infructuosos para tomar conocimiento de su aparición y posterior obtención.

En cuanto a las perspectivas de futuro, son francamente poco promisorias, ya que no hay índices que permitan auturar un cambio favorable en lo que respecta a la situación del libro en el Uruguay.

The Book Situation in Uruguay. Its Prospects

By Alfredo Breitfeld; Translated by Nettie Lee Benson

The Rodó law of July 23, 1910 which totally freed the importation of books from any duty can be said to be the first step in the policy to protect the book.

The private publishing industry which reached its apogee in the decade between 1960 and 1970, peaking in 1967, has decreased at present, to what can be called the minimum level because of different factors such as the economic and educational crises, and problems of supply, production of paper, etc.

Among the important factors in the development of the book was the creation of the National Book Institute, which functions under the Ministry of Education and Culture, with its principal commitment to the formation of public libraries, adapting the cultural level of the library to that of the area in which it is installed. This commitment, which at first, was normally carried out, at present has become difficult to fulfill because the economic possibilities on which the program was based have decreased.

Publishing, which as we said earlier reached its highest peak in 1967, was aided substantially by the National Book and Engraving Fairs which under the auspices of the Municipal Intendancy of Montevideo were held annually in the Intendancy. In some instances this fair was carried to various places in the interior of the country, and even made one excursion to the city of Buenos Aires.

Another factor in the development of book publishing was the creation of the Paper Commission which supplies paper to the publishing houses at a 30 % discount of the current price.

Also the loans of the Bank of the Republic for financing the works of national authors were an important aid. Regrettably this credit is presently frozen, and bears no relation to the situation in the country, for it authorizes sums only up to \$750.00. The Bank of the Republic also authorizes loans to publishers for the printing of works for public schools.

A Book Commission and an Advisory Commission to the Editorial Industry which function under the Ministry of Education also exist.

Future prospects for the diffusion of the book at the moment do not appear favorable. The great mass of readers, such as the teachers and professors, suffer like the rest of the country from growing inflation, and their purchasing power has been reduced to the lowest levels. This fact together with the intervention of the Executive Power in the University of the Republic, the existing crisis in public education (secondary and the University of the Worker), caused by dismissals, transfers, etc. has added this sector to the crisis.

Another important group of purchasers is the so-called "middle class"—valuable consumers of cultural goods—which presently is suffering an intense process of impoverishment.

The most important factor which has contributed to the deterioration of the publishing industry is the political situation, since a great part of the publications were books with a leftist tendency, whose dissemination at the moment is greatly restricted.

With respect to official publications, the outlook is not at all bright, since, because of the economic decline, government bodies are able to publish very little and in a totally irregular form from a bibliographic point of view. We shall cite below a few exceptions.

Perhaps the most important publication is the so-called Bibliografía Uruguaya, published by the Library of the Executive Power, which has appeared regularly since 1962 covering all the publishing production of the country.

Also there should be cited the review of the National Library which appears regularly, as well as the statistical publications edited by the Direction of Statistics and Censuses on housing, cost of living, mortality, indexes of disease, etc.

The Ministry of Education and Culture offers its important contribution, the publication of the Biblioteca Artigas-Colección de Clásicos Uruguayos, which embraces the production of national authors and now numbers approximately 140 volumes, many of them out-of-print. Presently the volumes in the collection are appearing quite sporadically.

The Foundation of University Culture, created under the auspices of the University of the Republic, edits and distributes principally legal works, although it also has published excellent material on literary criticism, politics, economics, sociology and statistics.

Generally government publications are not offered for sale and there begin the well-known problems of how to obtain them. Principally because no catalog of them exists but also because of the limited number of copies produced and their limited distribution, it is necessary to exert the most arduous efforts very often unrewarded in order to know of their appearance and then to obtain them,

As for future prospects, they frankly are not promising, since at present there are no indexes that permit me to see a favorable change with respect to the situation of the book in Uruguay.