

## In what company are we working ?



"All the staffs of the Agency", writes the CEO in a recent note on ASAP, "are invited to elect their two representatives to the Board of directors". ALL the staffs? Really? AFP claimed in 2001 some 2,200 employees and 2,000 stringers (source: ASAP – Présentation – Chiffres et données – L'AFP en quelques lignes). Only 1,118 journalists and 578 non-journalists are registered for this election: on the whole 1,696 employees. The excluded count by hundreds!

### AFP: 4,000 people, what rights?

Grotesque situation: some freelancers have the right to vote, while some permanent staff members with headquarters status do not. The criteria are bound to the chaotic history of our company. From the Eighties, AFP massively decentralized its Paris staff: the English Desk was split between Hong Kong, Paris and Washington, the Spanish Desk between Paris and Montevideo, while the German Desk was transformed into subsidiary in Bonn (then Berlin). Set up as dogma, the editorial arguments advanced to justify this decentralization hide the fact that it was not accompanied with appropriate social measures and with the granting of new rights.

Let's quote Jean Huteau, former director of information, and Bernard Ullmann, former chief of AFP offices abroad: *"Under its strictly countable aspect, the decentralization is nothing else than a "relocation", as say the manufacturers, that is the installation of a factory in a foreign country to take advantage of a manpower and less expensive overheads. (...) Moreover these employees will be never as prompt to adhere to trade unions as in France. They will be more disciplined and easier to lay off if necessary. But these are things that the management does not proclaim from the rooftops."* (in : « AFP, une histoire de l'Agence France Presse, 1944-1990 », Editions Robert Laffont, p. 449.)

The excluded from the board election are the victims of this globalization: Foreign employees (non-Europeans), local-status staff-members, most of the stringers and precarious... Impossible to obtain a synthetic document of the management allowing to see clear there. SUD tried to recut all the partial information available on the composition of the staff. We invite the management to comment on the board which follows (on the back), even if it means bringing precision or corrections.

The CEO recently indicated that a possible agreement on copyright could concern approximately 2,100 AFP journalists (headquarter status, local statuts, subsidiaries, regular stringers in France and abroad). To compare with 1,118 journalists registered to vote! From this figure concerning **the heart of the editorial staff**, we try to understand the global composition of the staff.

**Rough distribution of the AFP workforce (except subcontractings)**  
(SUD Estimation recutting all the available sources)

<b>Editorial staff</b>	No right to vote	Right to vote (staff rep on the board)	Total
Permanent staff, headquarters status	40	815	855
Permanent staff, local status	355	175	530
German subsidiaries	130	0	130
Short-term contracts headquarters	60	10	70
Stringers France > 3,500 €/year	0	55	55
Stringers abroad > 3,500 €/year	400	65	465
<b>Total « heart » of editorial staff</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>2,105</b>
Stringers France < 3,500 €/year	230	0	230
Non-journalist stringers France (CLP)	100	0	100
Stringers abroad < 3,500 €/year	900	0	900
<b>Total editorial staff</b>	<b>2,215</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>3,335</b>
Administrative executives	10	135	145
Technical executives	5	120	125
White-and blue-collar employees	130	150	280
Technicians	30	175	205
Short-term contracts	20	0	20
<b>Total non-journalists</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>775</b>
<b>Total global AFP staff</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>4,110</b>

The right to vote for the staff rep on the board applies in principle to all the AFP employees, whatever is their status or their contract of employment, but on condition... to be European! Are excluded: The non-European, the employees of subsidiaries, staffs of the subcontractors (canteen, cleaning). The short-term employees have not the right to vote, except when their current contract is in progress for more than 6 months. As for the freelance journalists, most of them are excluded because the right to vote is bound to a minimum amount of rods (3,500 €/year) instead of being defined according to criteria of regularity (number of rods a year).

## **SUD seized an official human rights body**

These differences clear themselves only from an employers' point of view. ALL employees and correspondents who contribute regularly to the functioning of the AFP must be able to benefit from the most favourable dispositions in force. This also concerns right to vote in the board of directors. That's why SUD has submitted a brief to the French High Authority to Combat Discrimination and Promote Equality (HALDE) in 2007 so that it pronounces on the conditions of nationality concerning vote in the board. We think, the exclusion from the non-European of this vote is contradictory to the ban on any discrimination because of "the membership to an ethnic group, a nation, a race". The inquiry is in progress.

The election of the representatives to the Board makes it possible to send a strong message to the directors:

- **AFP needs a true plan of development!**
- **It is necessary to guarantee the employment, to improve the wages of ALL, to reduce the precariousness and to grant new rights for the local employees!**

**Seize this occasion: vote for the candidates supported by SUD!**

**Journalists, vote for TULATZ ! Non journalists, vote for DUVI VIER !**

Paris, March 25th, 2008