

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 10.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Write!
Africa,
Write!

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The last two weeks have seen a convulsion in tertiary education in South Africa. Students from all universities have come out in large numbers to protest the costs of an education that the majority of students and their hard-pressed families cannot afford. This unfolded in a nation still reeling from the shock of the massacre of the miners at Marikana. It feels like a miracle that no students were killed or seriously injured during the protests. A great number of writers signed our letter ([here](#)) addressed to the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, the Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande and the Vice Chancellors of the affected universities calling on them to safeguard the lives and welfare of the protesting students. We are relieved that, so far, they are safe and that charges have been dropped against students who were arrested.

Protests about an inadequate education and unfair access are not new. The 1976 protests in Soweto were a turning point in South Africa's history and during the violent 1980s education served as a flashpoint. It is a travesty that twenty one years into our democracy we have seen the same standoff between students who are demanding something owed to them – a productive place within the society into which they were born and to which they wish to contribute.

An education – especially a tertiary education - is a hard-won thing in South Africa where the gulf between rich and poor is as marked as it ever was. An education enables that most foundational of rights – freedom of expression. It is key to a vibrant and growing economy as it is key to a cultural life and to literature.

PEN South Africa reiterates its call to the leadership of South Africa – politicians and professors – to find imaginative ways to move beyond the impasse that has bedeviled education and transformation – that wearied phrase that asks of us change, generosity and a new way of envisaging both the present and the future – so that the students who have quite rightfully been at the barricades – can return to class and become the educated young people they dream of being.

The one thing that writers do is imagine futures. A future of thwarted, angry young people is easy to see – it's all around us right now. We can do something much better than that.

Margie Orford
PEN South Africa President

Jennifer Clement Elected President of PEN International at 81st Congress

“It is wonderful to welcome Jennifer Clement as the new President of PEN International. She takes up this challenging role at a time of increasing global conflict

and repression which has seen growing numbers of writers killed, jailed and silenced across the globe. She is a feminist, a gifted writer and has wide experience in human rights work in Mexico where writers and journalists are routinely persecuted. She brings with her an imaginative vision and a pair of experienced and steady hands. I look forward to working with her both as President of PEN South Africa and as a member of the PEN International board.” – Margie Orford

[...read more](#)

“The most important thing to remember is that these students represent the future. They deserve to be heard.”

- PEN South Africa

PEN SA Continues to Call on Government and Universities to Safeguard Students' Futures

The confirmation of a 0% fee increase in 2016 is just the start of the process and we must ensure that the issues of access to education are resolved as promised. Add your voice to our

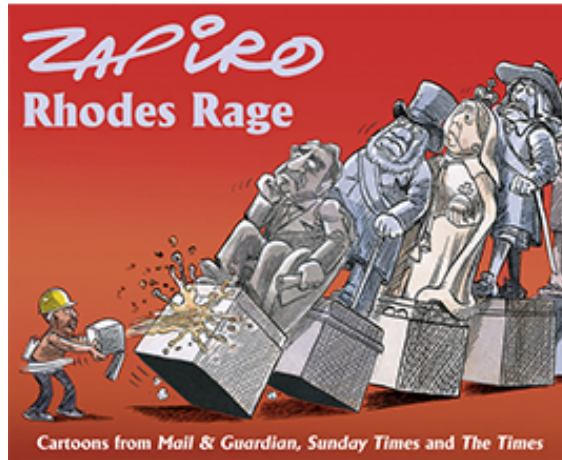


John Ralston Saul's September Letter to PEN International Membership

"You have often heard me talk about PEN as a grassroots organisation – a virtual nation of the word – driven by 30,000 writers around the world. This last month has been, for me, a moving illustration of this reality" [...read more](#)

call...[read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



PEN SA members have published several new titles in the last few months. Click through to see them all...[read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Athol Williams won the 2015 Sol Plaatje EU Poetry Award...[read more](#)

ZP Dala won the Debut Prize at the

Read John's last speech as PEN International President...[read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at what's happening in November...[read more](#)

SAVE THE DATE

The International Day of the Imprisoned Writer is on 15 November and we will be commemorating it with an event on Monday 16 November at Kalk Bay Books in Cape Town. We'll be sending out more information next week.

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Bodley Head/FT Essay Prize...[read more](#)

Sillerman First Book Prize for African

Inaugural Minara Aziz Hassim Literary Awards...[read more](#)

Sarah Lotz won the 2015 British Fantasy Award for Best Newcomer...[read more](#)

REQUEST FOR INFO

Adrienne Warricker, an Information Specialist in the Humanities Faculty Library at the University of Pretoria is looking for information on Francophone publishers in Africa. If you know of any please contact Adrienne at adrienne.warricker@up.ac.za.

Send us your news

Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? We welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the PEN SA newsletter.

Please email your contributions to
communications@pensouthafrica.co.za

Poetry...[read more](#)

Brunel University African Poetry Prize...[read more](#)

'Three Score and Ten' Poetry Competition...[read more](#)

YMCA African Alliance Youth Voices Competition...[read more](#)



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