

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 20 2016

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SOUTH AFRICA

Write!
Africa,
Write!

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Write in the New!

PEN SA invites you to respond to the current state capture crisis and the multitude of other issues facing South Africa at the moment in the form of short essays, fiction or poetry. We ask you, as writers and artists, to reflect and respond creatively to this tumultuous time. Please send your submissions (word limit: 800) to communications@pensouthafrica.co.za.

PEN SA Board member Mark Heywood is a supporter and member of the Steering

Committee of The Save South Africa campaign which has been established to address the state capture crisis and other issues. He has written about what the organisation aims to achieve and how you can get involved:

How can it be that a country so rich in human resources can be so poor in leadership? How is it possible that a people with such deep and diverse cultures can have become so barbarous to each other? How could it be that a people with a rich agriculture, natural and mineral resources have become a nation where most of our youth have a choice of being car-guards, nyaope addicts and thieves. How did a country that threw off one form of inequality end up so quickly in another?

How could the country of Madiba, sink so far?

We are on the cusp. If we don't personally live in a disaster, many people do. We implode and explode at the same time. We burn libraries. We throw rocks at firemen. We rob each other. We KILL EACH OTHER. Surely it's time to call a halt. The **Save South Africa** (SSA) campaign (also on Twitter: [@_SaveSA](#) and on Facebook: [SaveSouthAfricaNow](#)) has been recently established to rally the people of our country and revive the dream that made 17 million people stand in queues to vote on April 27, 1994. SSA seeks strength in diversity. It aims to leverage all that is good and principled in South Africa, whether it comes from churches, businesses or civil society, to root out all that is bad.

Save South Africa is about state rescue rather than state capture.

The SSA campaign was started in response to the take-over of many parts of our democratic state by rogues and criminals ('state capture' in common parlance) and the social crisis that is consequently burning untended beneath it. Our objective is to unleash and empower sufficient public pressure from multiple quarters of society to bring about the lawful resignation or removal of President Zuma, the man who encapsulates so much that his wrong, the man of turning a blind eye, the man of nods and winks to cronies, the man of saying one thing and meaning another.

But the Save South Africa campaign goes way beyond one bad man. It is also about defending and cleaning up our public institutions and government departments, restoring accountable and Constitutional governance, insisting that those with economic power take responsibility for the welfare and possibility of people. It is going to be about getting all sectors, particularly those with political and economic power, to seriously focus their efforts on inequality and the places where it finds its most egregious expression, including the issues on rights to healthcare services and basic and tertiary education.

We must overthrow our present. What a travesty it is that apartheid and mission schools offered better hope to many children than the schools we have bestowed upon them in our democracy. How can children learn, or be enthused and inspired by knowledge, without libraries or toilets at schools? How can a little boy, Micheal Komape, drown in a pit toilet? The hurt we are inflicting is untold, even by us the writers. Last week, as I sat amongst students during an attempted 'peace meeting' at Wits University, I wondered whether the propensity to violence, the unwillingness to seek compromise, is evidence of a generation that has surrendered trust because it has been denied access to the fruits of civilization, including our literature.

Love should be the lodestar of revolution, not hate or anger.

In coming weeks a Public Declaration and Pledge from SSA will be consulted and distributed. Plans are afoot for a series of meaningful activities that will carry us through to April 27 next year, when we will convene a National Convention for a New South Africa.

We are all fed up – or at least the good people are. In this context Save South Africa is potentially the game-changer; the movement that brings about and realigns our politics and society with the values and purpose of Constitution.

Of course, saying that that is our objective and making it happen is not the same. This revival of people's movements could be defeated. Our efforts could not succeed. They could be suppressed. They could falter. They could be betrayed. But it's time for us to

stop being bystanders, arm-chair critics of others' mistakes, cleverer-than-thou people's waiting for the perfect moment and organization to be hatched. Sorry, society makes progress through the willingness to make mistakes. Your future is mine. Its dignity depends on whether people are prepared to throw their weight behind it and possibly to make sacrifices.

At this point, support for Save South Africa is mushrooming. It started with a handful of people meeting in a space where our beloved Mandela used to walk and work, sculpting out a vision. Since then many organisations and individuals have come to the fore and are taking responsibilities. Archbishop Tutu has "enthusiastically endorsed it." Networks are being extended or established. These networks will be very important for our core vision in future.

But our strength is your strength; it depends of our ability to capture people's imagination. To listen and launch new discourses. To revive hope. Part of that job is ours as writers. In many ways our poetry and novels have already mapped a prescient path into the present we now occupy. Our warnings weren't heard or internalised. Our imagination risks being marginalized.

Hence, this call to you as writers and members of PEN to respond to the crisis in the form of essays or short fiction or poetry. Help us catalyse reflection and analysis in response to the current state capture crisis. Heed this call. Please find ways to support this organization individually and as an organization.

PEN can help catalyse a conversation. Writing can help us talk. Imagination is the first step towards reconstruction.

Mark Heywood

**PEN's 2016 Universal Periodic Review Submission on
Human Rights in SA**

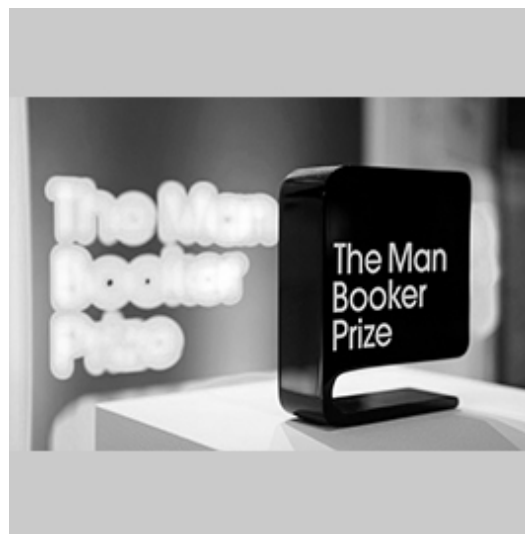
PEN South Africa, PEN Afrikaans and PEN International recently welcomed the opportunity provided by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) to comment on the climate of human rights in South Africa. OHCHR facilitates the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which involves a review of the human rights records of the UN member states.

The submission addresses legislative and regulatory concerns including the Freedom of Information Bill, the Cybercrimes and Cybersecurity Bill and the Media Appeals Tribunal as well as looking at issues at the SABC, violence against journalists and South Africa's failure to uphold free expression standards at the Human Rights Council...[read more](#)



21 Resolutions Adopted at 82nd PEN International Congress

The 82nd PEN International Congress was held in Galicia, Spain from 26



Paul Beatty Wins 2016 Man Booker Prize

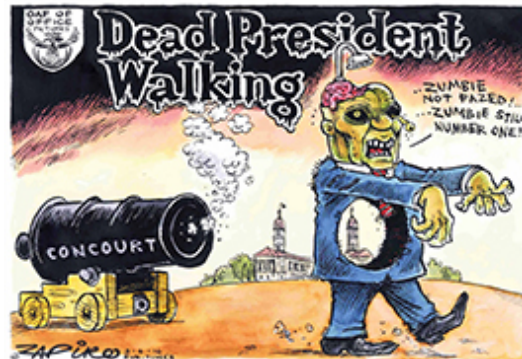
Paul Beatty has won the 2016 Man Booker Prize for his novel *The Sellout*.

September to 2 October 2016. During the Congress, 21 Resolutions were proposed and adopted by the delegates...[read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

The [Bridge Book Festival](#) is being held in downtown Joburg this weekend and there are several books being launched next month...[read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



Recent titles from PEN SA members include [Dead President Walking](#) by

Beatty is the first American author to win the prize in its 48-year history, after US authors became eligible in 2014...[read more](#)

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Jalada and Transition Magazine calling for submissions...[read more](#)

2017 Brunel University International African Poetry Prize...[read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Albie Sachs honoured with ACT Lifetime Achievement Award for Arts Advocacy...[read more](#)

NATIONAL NOVEL WRITING MONTH

National Novel Writing Month starts next Tuesday. If you haven't heard of it before it's a pretty simple concept - you commit to writing 50 000 words in 30 days. You can sign up and connect with the other

Zapiro, [Travel – A Collection of Poetry and Prose on Travels and Travelling](#) which features writing by PEN SA Board Member Justin Fox and PEN SA member Abigail George, as well as [The Craven Silence 2](#) co-written by Nick van der Leek...[read more](#)

writers (there are over a thousand currently signed up in South Africa) or you could just use the concept to create your own writing challenge for next month...[read more](#)

PAN Macmillan has announced that it will be publishing a new novel by PEN SA member Achmat Dangor next year, as well as a new edition of the Man Booker Prize-shortlisted novel *Bitter Fruit*...[read more](#)

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



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residencies, festivals, etc., included in this newsletter is passed on to you as a service to PEN SA members. Any questions regarding entry rules, entry processes, festival programmes, etc., should be sent directly to the relevant organisers. PEN SA attempts to establish that the information received is genuine before passing this on to our members, but we cannot be held responsible should that not be the case.

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