



SOUTH AFRICA

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF PEN INTERNATIONAL

A World Association of Writers

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To: SA PEN Members

E-Newsletter No. 14/2014 – 30/09/2014

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International Translation Day - 30th September

By Adré Marshall



Photo by Liesl Jobson, Books Live

As International Translation day this year followed on immediately after the packed programme of events organized by the Open Book Festival, no special event was organized to mark the day. Issues concerning translation came to the fore at various events, however, including Rainbow Tongues: Celebrating South Africa’s Languages, part of the Poetica programme. Here several poets read or performed their poetry in a variety of languages: Xhosa, Afrikaans, English, and - quite an innovation to some in the audience - Sign Language. Those who did not understand Xhosa realized how lost one can be without a translator.

*Translation around the World*, an event concentrating specifically on issues concerning translation world-wide, illuminated various aspects relevant to South Africa. On the panel were independent publishers from Switzerland (Jean Richard), France (Jutta Hepke), and South Africa (Dusanka Stojakovic, New Africa Books). The discussion was chaired by Carole Bloch, Director of PRAESA. PRAESA, the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa was recently awarded the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award, in Mexico City, Mexico. This is in recognition of its more than two decade's worth of work in the field of children's multilingual literacy development. PRAESA's Nal'ibali reading-for-enjoyment campaign. (Nali'ibali means 'Here's the story' in isiXhosa) is striving to put into place the conditions that support the initial and ongoing literacy learning of all children irrespective of linguistic, cultural and class backgrounds. This initiative relies heavily on the translation of stories from and into several of our official languages to promote a love of reading. (Ed – SA PEN has been partnering with Nal'ibali on translations thanks to financial assistance received from PEN International's Civil Society Programme.)

Switzerland, in addition to four official languages, has many dialects, and refugees from other countries bring their own languages with them. In this multi-lingual country translation is therefore essential. The translator is accorded virtually the same status as the author as the name of the translator is featured on the same level on the cover. The Centre National du Livre focuses on translation and translators are well paid.

France also recognises the importance of publishing books in minority languages. The French Centre National du Livre is state-funded and pays 60% of the cost of translating a work of restricted readership. In 2002 a book written in Creole, a language generally devalued, was published. It was regarded as being fundamental for Caribbean literature and is still selling well in both its French and original Creole versions. It is important that books such as these be translated to give space to texts in languages other than dominant languages. In this way under-represented cultures can be given more visibility.

Carole Bloch also emphasised the role of the translator in developing a reading culture. The translator is as important as the author, because he or she has to give the story in a culturally appropriate way. Translation from English into African languages is a version rather than a translation. In South Africa, it is difficult to get funding for translation as the emphasis is on the teaching of reading rather than reading for enjoyment. (85-90% of books published in South Africa are in the education market.) Many of our teachers and librarians are not themselves readers, and good translators do not abound. From the panel discussion it is clear that the role of the translator is vital in developing a culture of reading in South Africa.

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A warm **welcome to new member:** Alex Boraine

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**Invitation to engage with Global South arts and culture leaders – 1st to 3rd October 2014, Cape Town & Johannesburg**

Dear SA PEN members

This is to invite you and your colleagues to take advantage of a unique opportunity for South African artists and cultural leaders to engage with and learn from Global South cultural leaders

Each year, only a few South Africans are able to travel abroad to participate in international arts and culture forums. Now, the African Arts Institute (AFAI), with the support of the Commonwealth Foundation and Ford Foundation, is bringing leading thinkers and practitioners in the arts and culture from the Arab region, Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific and Caribbean to Cape Town and Johannesburg, creating exciting and unique opportunities for local practitioners to learn from their counterparts who practice their art or provide cultural leadership in social, economic and political conditions similar to ours.

A day-long mini-summit on arts, culture and social justice will be held on Wednesday, 1st October at the Slave Lodge in Adderley Street, Cape Town, followed by a public forum at the Homecoming Centre of the District Six Museum, 15 Buitenkant Street at 18:30. The mini-summit will be repeated at the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg on Friday, 3rd October, with the public forum taking place at the same venue the prior evening, Thursday, 2nd October at 18:00.

The mini-summit will begin with each international participant introducing their work in the context of their respective region or country. The Arab region have representatives from Egypt

and Lebanon; Asia will have Singapore, Bangladesh and India; Fiji will represent the Pacific region; Latin America will be represented by Argentina, Brazil and Chile, the Caribbean by Trinidad and Tobago and Morocco, Tanzania and Mali will represent Africa.

After the introductory session, a representative from each region will participate in a panel discussion on *The possibilities and limitations of South-South Cultural Co-operation in the context of global economic, security and cultural dynamics*.

This discussion will address themes related to cultural exchange, cultural diplomacy, intercultural dialogue and artists' mobility (visas, funding, opportunities, etc.) within the global South, and in the context of current geo-politics and North-South inequalities and funding power relations.

After lunch, there will be two rounds of roundtable discussions led by the international participants. In the first round, delegates may choose from seven transversal topics: *Arts funding: Innovative fundraising and partnership models; Artist-led models for collaboration and sustainability; Contemporary global south/global north debates around the creative economy and creative industries; Art, artists and freedom of expression in societies in transition: the relationship of civil society to the state; Cultural rights and human rights – Global South perspectives; Culture in the post-2015 international development agenda; and Current discourses in cultural policy: what are the primary*

*themes and what or who is shaping the discourse?*

The second round of roundtable discussions will be more discipline-specific. Delegates may choose from *Visual arts and photography; Writing, publishing and literature; Theatre and dance; Arts management and administration; Public art; Festivals and Heritage.*

In the evening public forums, selected international participants will engage in a public conversation on the topic: *Our changing world – how is it impacting on arts and culture and how are the arts and culture impacting on our changing world?*

The purpose of the panel is to interrogate the proposition that culture, the arts and creative industries contribute to development, to conflict resolution and to national identity. But what is the relevance of culture and the arts in a world impacted by wars in Syria, Libya and Palestine, by the rise of Boko Haram, the Islamic State and El Shabab, by ongoing inequalities in the distribution of economic, political, military and cultural power globally and regionally? What is the role of the arts – and how are they impacted – in struggles for social justice globally, regionally and nationally?

The international delegates will be in South Africa for a preparatory meeting to plan a Global South Colloquium on Arts, Culture and Social Justice scheduled for 2015. These delegates include Oussama Rifahi, Executive Director of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture; Georgia Haddad-Nicolau, Director of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Management in the Brazilian Ministry of Culture; Anupama Sekhar, Acting Director of the Culture Department of the Asia-

Europe Foundation; Ayeta Wangusa, Director of Culture and Development East Africa and Magdalena Moreno Mujica, Deputy Director of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, and Director of the World Summit on Arts and Culture held in Chile in January 2014; Nicholas Laughlin, Editor of the Caribbean Review of Books; Aadel Essaadani, the Morocco-based Chairperson of Arterial Network; Sanjna Kapoor, Director of Junoon Theatre in India; Shahidul Alam, an internationally acclaimed photographer based in Bangladesh; Elise Huffer, Human Development Advisor: Culture for the Secretariat of Pacific Community; Patricia Kistenmacher of the Latin America Network; Attaher Maiga, engaged in the Festival sur Niger in Mali and Abdallah Daif, Programme Manager for the Gudrana Association for Art and Development in Egypt. They will be joined by a South African, Peter Rorvik, Secretary General of Arterial Network.

The mini-summits will run from 09:00 to 17:00, with the two-hour evening public forums starting at 18:30 in Cape Town on Wednesday, 1st Oct and at 18:00 in Johannesburg on Thursday, 2nd October.

There is limited capacity at both mini-summits and to help cover the costs of these events, there is a fee of R300 per person, which includes lunch and teas. A few half- or full-bursaries are available for those who cannot afford the whole or part of this fee.

To book a place (these will be granted on a first-come, first served basis and will be confirmed after receipt of the fee), contact Sophia Sanan at [sophia@afai.org.za](mailto:sophia@afai.org.za). We look forward to welcoming you at one of the summits and/or public forums.

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**Reddits Poetry meeting – 4th October, Grahamstown**

Reddits Poetry this month revolves around three loose 'themes': 100 Thousand Poets for Change; World Rhino Day; and the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos. But as ever - please come along and share your delight in poetry with us whether or not it fits these suggestions.

Place: Cafe D'Vine, 31 New Street, Grahamstown  
Start: 6.00 for 6.30pm  
Finish: 8.30pm  
Cost: ZILCH!

Looking forward to seeing you there. Harry Owen

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**August & September Monthly Letter from John Ralston Saul, International President of PEN International**

September 22, 2014

Dear PEN members, dear friends,

In a few days we will gather in Kyrgyzstan’s capital, Bishkek, at the invitation of Central Asian PEN, for the 80th PEN Congress. We will be coming together at a time of growing violence in large parts of the world. Whatever our particular opinions, none of us can help but see what is happening in Iraq/Syria/Palestine/Israel/Russia/Ukraine/Honduras to name only few crises.

As has always been the case, each outbreak of state or insurgency violence includes an assault on free expression. Writers are killed or silenced. Debate is silenced or sidelined. Propaganda flourishes. What is happening now is no exception.

I should add that in many countries the use of moralizing laws to divide societies and limit free expression continues to grow; the taste of many Western governments for surveillance and secrecy has not abated; the use of populism to target specific communities and undermine civil debate continues to spread; and there has been no improvement in other areas such as impunity in Latin America or openness to debate in China.

And so we gather at a somber time which requires from us careful thought as to how we can have an impact on these situations.

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As with all congresses, this one will involve a few hundred of us out of tens of thousands of our members. But it does seem that more than 175 members from as many as 80 Centres are coming to Bishkek, if we are able to resolve some of the visa

issues, which we consider disturbing and unacceptable. A number of our members have been turned down in their request for a visa. We have been working hard on this issue since June. We are continuing to work on it full time.

The 80th Congress will be an important and complex meeting as we enter an area of the world in which PEN has never gathered. There will be solid briefing material which will be essential to our conversations there.

\* \* \*

One piece of very good news is that we have now confirmed Carles Torner as our Executive Director. He has been with us since April on an interim basis. He has done a wonderful job in this crossover period and is now officially confirmed in the position.

Many of you know Carles well. He has a long experience with PEN. He is a well-known novelist, a Catalan, speaks our three official languages as well as others, and has an impressive managerial experience. Perhaps most important, as Chair of the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee during the 1990s he led in the development of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights. He will of course be with us in Bishkek. Welcome Carles!



With best wishes,  
John Ralston Saul, International President  
*(Ed – Our President, Margie Orford, is currently in Bishkek, representing SA PEN.)*

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### **Committee additions**

The SA PEN committee would like to welcome Gabeba Baderoon, Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi and Mike van Graan to the committee. They have been co-opted on to the committee as per the SA PEN constitution and will be nominated as full committee members at next year’s AGM.

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### **Local NGO receives International Children’s Literacy Award**

13th September 2014

On Saturday, 12th September 2014, Cape Town-based NGO, PRAESA, was awarded the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award, in Mexico City, Mexico. Initiated by the International Board on Books for Young People and sponsored by the Japanese newspaper company the Asahi Shimbun, the award is presented biennially to two groups or institutions whose activities are judged to be making a lasting contribution to reading promotion for children and young people.

PRAESA, or the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, was nominated for the award by IBBY Sweden for its more than two decade’s worth of

work in the field of children’s multilingual literacy development. The independent research and development unit was established in 1992 by the late Dr. Neville Alexander – a leading proponent of a multilingual South Africa, who spent ten years on Robben Island as a fellow prisoner of Nelson Mandela – to carry out developmental research into multilingual classrooms, early literacy teaching and learning, as well as to promote a culture of reading and facilitate storybook and other reading materials development for use in multilingual settings.

More recently, under the directorship of Dr. Carole Bloch, PRAESA has been driving the Nal’ibali reading-for-enjoyment campaign. Launched in 2012, Nal’ibali (which means ‘Here’s the story’ in isiXhosa) is working with partners to help put into place the conditions that support the initial and ongoing literacy learning of all children irrespective of linguistic, cultural and class backgrounds. The initiative is doing so through the a network of more than 300 reading clubs in collaboration with communities nationwide; a weekly bilingual literacy with reading tips, support and stories for caregivers to enjoy with children; as well as a vibrant awareness and advocacy media campaign to highlight the critical link between reading for enjoyment and children’s educational success.

Upon receiving the award at the Papalote Children’s Museum in Mexico, Bloch said: “The following core principles have guided us over the years: Firstly, the same kind of enriched and inspiring conditions that encourage English-speaking children to become engaged readers and writers are the same ones that African-language speakers need. This should be self-evident, but it isn’t. In our work we are countering the low level expectations of the education system for millions of bright young African-language speakers as they enter and progress through primary school. Secondly, nurturing a love of stories offers us all enjoyable inroads lifelong learning journeys. The hegemonic pressure of schooling to deliver measurable skills, however, has led to a loss of appreciation for the deep educational value of stories. We are reviving the value of narrative as an essential part of not just education but also community and home settings.”

PRAESA is affiliated to the University of Cape Town. **For more information about PRAESA and the Nal'ibali reading-for-enjoyment campaign, go to [www.praesa.org.za](http://www.praesa.org.za) or [www.nalibali.org](http://www.nalibali.org)**

*(Ed – SA PEN has been partnering with Nal’ibali on translations thanks to financial assistance received from PEN International’s Civil Society Programme.)*

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**Worldwide Reading for Edward Snowden**

SA PEN participated in the Worldwide Reading for Edward Snowden at Kalk Bay Books on the 8th September, International Literacy Day. To read about the event go to <http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2014/09/10/south-african-writers-take-a-stand-against-surveillance-in-support-of-edward-snowden/>

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**Zapiro Democracy Exhibition – 29th September to 24th October, Cape Town**

**Please join the Board of the AVA Gallery and Spier Wines at the opening of**

**ZAPIRO**  
**DEMOCRACY**

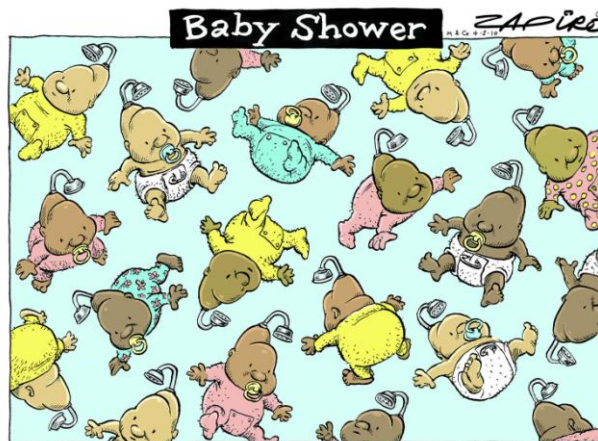
**On Monday 29 September 2014 at 18:00 for 18:30**

In the twenty years since the advent of democracy, Zapiro has produced more than 4,500 cartoons for publication in *Mail & Guardian*, *Sowetan*, *Sunday Times* and Independent Newspapers. For his exhibition at the AVA Gallery, he honed this to a selection of 60 graphics that describe – with fearless determination and precise clarity – a South Africa that, he writes, “was crazier than anything my imagination could conjure up”.

*Zapiro is South Africa’s best-known and most-awarded cartoonist. He has won the Principal Prince Claus Award and Press Freedom Awards from the International Publishers’ Association, the Media Institute of Southern Africa and Cartoonists’ Rights Network International. In 2011 the magazine Jeune Afrique voted him one of the 50 most influential people in Africa.*

EXHIBITION CLOSES 24 OCTOBER 2014

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**PEN International welcomes the release of activist Maryam Al-Khawaja**

19/09/14 - This week, PEN International joined English PEN and 155 other civil society organisations around the world, in co-signing an open letter to King Hamad of Bahrain. The letter, co-ordinated by the CIVICUS alliance, calls for the release of detained activist Maryam Al-Khawaja and for an end to the clampdown on civil society in Bahrain. The letter was also co-signed by PEN Centres from Denmark, Ghana, Mexico, Nicaragua, the United States, Egypt, **South Africa** and Switzerland. Within a matter of hours of the letter being published, it was announced that Maryam was to be released. Read more at <http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/open-letter-release-maryam-al-khawaja/>

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**Carles Torner appointed Executive Director of PEN International**

Dear members of PEN,

I am very pleased to tell you that Carles Torner has been appointed permanent Executive Director of PEN International. As you know, he has been Acting Executive Director since April and the PEN International Board of directors is delighted that he will continue full-time. Carles has done an excellent job leading the London secretariat and working closely with centres, the Board, and our funders.

Carles is a highly regarded Catalan poet, essayist and non-fiction writer who has been active in PEN International’s work for over twenty years. He served as a member of the Board, was chair of the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee, chaired the commission that drafted the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, represented PEN at several UNESCO meetings, and participated in missions on behalf of imprisoned writers. Until he became Acting Executive Director, Carles was director of the Literature and Humanities Department at the Ramon Llull Institute in Barcelona, where he also was a lecturer in Communication and International Relations and was in charge of presenting Catalan literature as guest of honour at the Frankfurt book fair and the Guadalajara book fair. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Paris VIII.

Carles will of course be at the Congress in Bishkek and you will have the chance to welcome him to his new post in person.

With my best regards,  
Hori Takeaki, International Secretary  
19th September 2014

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**SA PEN events at Open Book Festival**

SA PEN held two PEN Dialogue events as part of the Open Book Festival held in Cape Town recently. To read about these events go to:

<http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2014/09/20/open-book-2014-michele-magwood-chats-with-margie-orford-and-rabih-alameddine-in-a-fascinating-pen-dialogue/>

and

<http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2014/09/26/mandla-langa-reflects-on-his-time-in-exile-and-the-texture-of-shadows-during-a-pen-dialogue-with-margie-orford-at-open-book-2014/>



*PEN “empty chair”  
Photo by Liesl Jobson, Books Live*

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**SA PEN PRESS RELEASE – 16/09/2014**

**PEN South Africa alarmed at arrest of Botswana editor**

PEN South Africa expresses alarm at the arrest of Outsa Mokone, the editor of the *Sunday Standard* in Botswana, and its alarm is deepened by the report by the Committee to Protect Journalists that Mokone's senior reporter, Edgar Tsimane, has fled Botswana in fear of his life and has sought and received asylum from the South African government.

The concern is heightened by the fact that these latest reports follow within days of the arrest of an editor and a human rights lawyer in Swaziland and the murder of two American journalists by Islamic State jihadi in the Middle East.

Botswanan newspapers reported that police arrested Mokone on September 8 when he could not account for the whereabouts of Tsimane, who had written a story two weeks earlier claiming that Botswana President Ian Khama was involved in an unreported traffic accident. Victor Baatweng, a financial reporter at *The Telegraph*, a sister publication to the *Sunday Standard*, later reported that Tsimane had applied for, and received, asylum from South Africa, though there is now uncertainty whether the application was received by the South African authorities.

The deeply alarming issue is that Baatweng claimed Tsimane applied for asylum after being warned by his brother, who works for Botswana's intelligence unit, that his reporting was putting his life and that of his family, in danger.

Tsimane's report was published on August 22 under the headline "President hit in car accident while driving alone at night". It claimed that the President had not reported the accident. Both Mokone and Tsimane have been charged with sedition. Mokone was reported to have questioned Tsimane about the sources of his information and accepted that they were credible and reliable.

PEN South Africa regards the charges against the journalists as lacking credibility and likely to have a chilling effect on writers and journalists in Botswana and southern Africa generally, especially the report that Tsimane and his family were in danger. PEN South Africa calls for Mokone's release and for a full investigation into the allegations that Tsimane had been informed that he and his family were in danger of serious harm.

PEN South Africa calls on the South African authorities to provide clarity on whether Tsimane applied for and was granted asylum and whether any protest has been made to the Botswana government over the treatment of the journalists and the contravention of media freedom principles in the SA Constitution and codes of practice accepted by the SADC and Botswana.

PEN South Africa is concerned that this attack on journalists to prevent them from publishing information about matters of public interest is not only a contravention of constitutional principles upholding the freedom of the press and freedom of expression but is also a threat to writers and authors exercising their rights to freedom of expression as individuals without the financial backing of newspaper publishers.

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**Forthcoming events**

- ❖ **Cape Town Fringe** - 25th September to 5th October 2014.  
[www.capetownfringe.co.za](http://www.capetownfringe.co.za)
- ❖ **PEN International Congress** – 29th September to 2nd October 2014, Bishkek, Krygyzstan. Hosted by Central Asian PEN.
- ❖ **2014 International Conference on Arts, Culture, Heritage and the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030** – 1st to 3rd October, Pretoria.  
[www.regonline.co.uk/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=1348237](http://www.regonline.co.uk/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=1348237)
- ❖ **Poetry Africa International Poetry Festival** – 13th to 18th October, Durban.  
[www.cca.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.cca.ukzn.ac.za)
- ❖ **McGregor Poetry Festival** – 23rd to 26th October 2014.  
[www.mcgregorpoetryfestival.co.za](http://www.mcgregorpoetryfestival.co.za)

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Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a Festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? The compiler would welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the SA PEN e-newsletter. Please e-mail your contributions to [rudebs@icon.co.za](mailto:rudebs@icon.co.za).

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All information regarding awards/competitions, residencies, festivals, etc., included in this newsletter is passed on to you as a service to SA PEN members. Any questions regarding entry rules, entry processes, festival programmes, etc., should be forwarded direct to the relevant organisers. SA PEN 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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Please note that SA PEN Newsletters are available to members and to the public on the SA PEN website at <http://www.sapen.co.za/newsletter-archive>