



SOUTH AFRICA

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF
PEN INTERNATIONAL**

A World Association of Writers

P O Box 30327, Tokai, 7966, Cape Town

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To: SA PEN Members

E-Newsletter No. 18/2014 – 26/11/2014

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Short Sharp Stories Award 2015 – call for submissions. Deadline = 30th November 2014

The “Short Sharp Stories Award” for South African short-story fiction is made each year by the National Arts Festival. An anthology of selected stories is published annually and the theme set for writers differs from year to year. The theme for 2015 is “Incredible Journey”.

The winning stories, selected from the stories to be published, by a panel of independent judges, are announced at an annual launch event at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

It is the aim of this award to encourage, support, and showcase established and emerging South African writing talent. The Award is curated by Joanne Hichens.

For more information go to <http://www.shortsharpstories.com/#rules-and-how-to-enter>

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Invitation to **SA PEN Event** – Free the Word! **4th December 2014, Johannesburg**



SAVE
the
DATE



Free the Word!

4 December 2014

7.30pm

The Orbit, De Korte Street, Braamfontein

PEN International, South African PEN, and the University of Witwatersrand are delighted to invite you for an evening of readings, discussion, and debate at Braamfontein's home of jazz, the Orbit.

Beatrice Lamwaka (Uganda), Mandla Langa (South Africa), Makhosazana Xaba (South Africa) and Masande Ntshanga (South Africa) will be reading extracts from their latest novels and poetry collections and discussing their work with Michele Magwood, Contributing Books Editor for the Sunday Times and host of TMLive Book Show.

The authors will also examine the role of contemporary novelists in bearing witness to social change in Africa and the tensions between the pressure to act as social commentators and their own creative expression.

The event will be free to the public.

Please RSVP to Dinesh.balliah@wits.ac.za

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PEN South Africa deeply alarmed at the breakdown of democracy in Parliament
SA PEN Press Release, 16th November 2014

PEN South Africa, part of an international organisation which represents writers, editors and translators, and whose members have pledged themselves to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression or censorship but to uphold freedom of the press, is deeply alarmed at the breakdown in Parliamentary democracy in Cape Town on November 13 when the Speaker lost control of the institution, members of Parliament were assaulted by a squad of riot police who had strong-armed their way into the House without proper authorization and videos of the proceedings were censored.

PEN South Africa, which believes that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organised political and economic order renders a free criticism of governments, administrations and institutions imperative, condemns the manner in which attempts were made by the Speaker to prevent MPs from raising issues according to a programme that had been agreed earlier between the political parties and followed that up by trying to order MPs to leave the House.

PEN South Africa interprets the Speaker's conduct in trying to stop MPs from raising their issues – even though it was a filibustering move -- as an attempt to prevent the people of South Africa being able to observe the temper and dissatisfaction of a large group of MPs at the way parliamentary affairs were being conducted – in particular, the presentation of a one-sided finding of an ad hoc committee that was supposed to investigate the reports relating to the scandal of the so-called "security upgrades" of President Jacob Zuma's estate at Nkandla.

The censorship was compounded by the serious manipulation of the TV reporting of the proceedings in Parliament where the camera pictures were cut thus preventing citizens of the country from viewing the actual proceedings in the House, the unruliness of MPs and alleged assaults by police. PEN South Africa points out that the manipulation and censoring of Parliament's TV broadcasts has occurred on more than one occasion in recent weeks.

PEN SA is deeply alarmed that these are deliberate and serious inroads on freedom of expression and transparency, core values which form the basis of our constitutional democracy.

Finally, the violent conduct of the police was more befitting of a police state than a democracy. It appears that no one in authority in Parliament such as the Speaker formally requested the police to enter the House. Several MPs, conscious of the violation of the constitutional order and the sanctity of Parliament, tried to block them and were assaulted. Some of the MPs sustained injuries.

A dark day indeed for South Africa and its democratic order and an ominous portent of a government favouring censorship and ranged against transparency.

Margie Orford (President, PEN South Africa), Mandla Langa and Raymond Louw (Vice Presidents, PEN South Africa)

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Book Launch – Manti’s Miracle by Pieter Scholtz, 1st December, Durban

MONDAYS AT SIX AT ST CLEMENTS, 191 Musgrave Road, Durban invites you to the launch of Pieter Scholtz’s new book for the young and young-at-heart, *Manti’s Miracle*, a tale about Divali and about a cat named Manti, with a strange tail (tale), and a stranger happening.

There will be a reading. Adi Paxton and Gisele Turner will interpret the roles of Manti and Ali-cat in an extract from the story, while Pieter Scholtz will read Percival Piston, a scarecrow made of old car parts.

For table bookings call St Clements on (031) 202-2511

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PEN International – Annual Season’s Greetings List

14/11/14

Dear Colleagues,

Ahead of Day of the Imprisoned Writer, please find attached a copy of the annual season’s greetings list (*Ed. Please email me at rudebs@icon.co.za to request the list*).



We hope to circulate an updated list later in the year, where we anticipate including additional writers and contacts once we have secured them.

Important notice: the writers included in the list represent a variety of religious faiths. Therefore it is not advised that you send cards with overtly religious symbolism to any of the prisoners as this may cause problems. Please send general greetings or tourist cards from your own town, avoiding any reference to Christmas or other religious festivals. Email addresses are given where we have no postal address.

Links to websites that provide details of the individuals’ case are given in the document. You may also refer to the PEN International’s website www.pen-international.org and the Writers in Prison Committee Case List January – December 2013.

Your message could simply state:

- You are a fellow writer/journalist who has learned of his/her case;
- That you are sending a message of good will in the hope that your card finds the prisoner in good health/spirits
- Give a return address should the writer be able to reply

If you get a reply from the writer, please send a copy to: Ann Harrison, Writers in Prison Committee, PEN International, Brownlow House, 50/51 High Holborn, London WC1V 6ER, United Kingdom Tel: + 44 (0) 20 74050338 Fax: + 44 (0) 20 74060339 email: ann.harrison@pen-international.org

Please print out names and addresses in non-Latin script where provided and stick on the envelopes as this will enhance the likelihood of letters reaching their destination.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Emma Wadsworth-Jones / Writers in Prison Committee / Research/Campaigns Assistant / Emma.Wadsworth-Jones@pen-international.org

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**October & November Letter from John Ralston Saul,
International President, to the PEN membership**

20th November 2014

Dear PEN Members, Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, two hundred and fifty writers from almost 80 PEN Centres came together in Bishkek. Nothing like this has been tried before. And it probably would not have been possible elsewhere in the region.

This 80th Congress was an illustration of why PEN exists. We came to a part of the world where our presence could have an effect on the situation. Let me put this another way: our very presence was an important act.

It was difficult to put together, difficult to fund and complicated throughout. But Dalmira Tilebergenova and her Central Asian PEN Centre did a wonderful job, along with Jena Patel and many others from PEN International, as well as Markéta Hejkalová, who chairs the Congress Committee and Hori Takeaki, who encouraged the idea of the Congress.

* * *

I'll come back to what happened in Bishkek, but first a few words about Kazakhstan. Hori Takeaki, Carles Torner and I flew there before the

Congress. At the invitation of Kazakh PEN and its President, Bigeldy Gabdullin, we went to Astana, the new capital. An astonishing creation of commodities wealth, built in a decade on the old model of the grand planned city with a wide variety of modern styles.

Kazakhstan doesn't pretend to be a democracy. It has strong leadership and wealth.

Our primary purpose in going there was to visit the country's writers, some of whom were also coming to Congress. We met many of them, as well as supporters of PEN like Islambek Salzhanov. No one can doubt the vibrancy of Kazakh writing and its relevance.

We also went because of the freedom of expression situation. We have two important cases of writers in prison – Vladimir Kozlov and Aron Atabek. Bigeldy organized a meeting with Nurlan Nigmatulin, who is the Head of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It was a long and complex discussion. We then met with Colonel Baurzhan Maratovich Berdalin, the Director of the prison system and three of his senior officers. One very positive

outcome was an offer to visit Vladimir Kozlov in prison. The next day, Vladimir Karcev of Kazakh PEN and Carles went to see him. During the visit, Mr. Kozlov wrote a short message to all of the writers coming to the Congress. A few days later it was read in the Assembly by Bigeldy.

Takeaki and I also met with Mr. Kozlov's wife in the old capital of Almaty, as well as other human rights activists. Finally, with Kazakh PEN, we held a Press Conference. I think I should describe it as an unusual event in that it dealt mainly with free expression and there was clearly discomfort, particularly around the Atabek case. However, we explained our belief in his innocence. And the roof didn't fall in. As I said earlier, much of this trip was a simple demonstration of how we at PEN talk and act everywhere in the world. Free expression almost always requires those with power to develop a thicker skin. That is not such a momentous requirement. After all, we writers have to do it to survive our critics. All that is needed is a thicker skin and an acceptance that disagreement coming from those in a minority of opinion or culture is not treason. It is merely disagreement, which is part of normal life. Police everywhere have difficulty with this simple truth, but politicians everywhere have an obligation to accept that disagreement is healthy.

We will continue working with Kazakh PEN to demonstrate how true this is.

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Now back to the Congress and Bishkek. Let me mention only a few things.

We are all concerned with the rising tide of Anti-LBGTQI laws around the

world. These laws attack both free expression and literature because they attempt to limit the expression of a part of society.

Masha Gessen was one of our special guests and was a great help as we developed our strategy in this area. There was a full discussion in the Assembly, including the participation of Kyrgyz leaders of the local LGBTQI community. There were larger private meetings. A strong resolution was passed which dealt with the most problematic states and provides PEN International with the Assembly's authority to fully engage on this issue.

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The Congress was also a celebration of Central Asian literature and culture. Writers and filmmakers came from all five of the region's countries including Olzhas Suleimenov as a special guest from Kazakhstan. There was a showing of Sadyk Sher-Niyaz' remarkable film, *Kurmajan Datka: Queen of the Mountains*.

On the opening evening, Anna-Lena Laurén of Finland chaired a discussion of the Russia/Ukraine's situation between Andrey Kurkov, the Ukrainian writer and Masha Gessen.

At the cultural evening, the Canadian Yann Martel spoke and the Kyrgyz, Talip Ibrahimov. People were electrified by an experimental group of young musicians developed by the Aga Khan Music Initiative. Poetry of some of the delegates including Dalmira's and other writers accompanied the music.

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The size of the Congress meant we were in two hotels and events were

held all over the city, at universities and museums. It was a logistical challenge, but it meant that our presence was felt everywhere. A number of our delegates went into schools to talk with the students. After the Congress, the Ural Altay Network, involving Centres and chaired by Kaiser OzHun met at Lake Issyk Kul.

* * *

In the middle of the Congress, Almazbek Atambayev, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic asked to see me. This was an important gesture. Dalmira, Takeaki, Carles and Yann Martel came with me.

It was a long and challenging meeting. We explained our view of the Askarov case and why we are calling for his release. One outcome was a second long meeting with Aida Salyanova, the Prosecutor General of Kyrgyzstan, involving Carles, Marian Botsford Fraser, Chair of the Writers in Prison Committee, Ann Harrison, our Program Director and our regional expert, Cathal Sheerin. There was an agreement that we would be allowed to visit Mr. Askarov in prison, but this has not yet happened.

We also talked at length with the President about the draft anti-LGBTQI law slowly making its way through the Kyrgyz Parliament.

My sense after all of our meetings and investigations is that this proposed law is a political tool being used by a small group of Members of Parliament, who are using the subject to advance their careers. They believe there is a portion of the population they could stir up around this issue and so everyone will be afraid to call their bluff. The question is, will anyone have the strength of ethical will to oppose them.

Going back to the meeting with the President, on a positive front, we proposed a program of support for literary translations, which he embraced with great enthusiasm. We will follow how this develops. And are ready to help if that is useful.

* * *

A great deal more happened at the 80th PEN International Congress and you will hear much more about the other decisions taken.

We held our post-Congress Board meeting in a small farming village in the north. For two days we worked hard on future strategies for PEN. We'll report back to you on this in a separate letter.

One thing we decided was to try to hold every third Congress in a place like Bishkek, where our presence could contribute to something important in the local situation.

Next year from October 12 to 17, we will gather for the 81st Congress in Quebec City, a place which is historically important, beautiful and culturally on the cutting edge. We will be there at the invitation of the Centre québécois du P.E.N. International and their President, Émile Martel. It should be a remarkable gathering at the heart of francophone culture in the Americas. And I know that the Congress will focus on the importance of translation and the defence of languages.

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Finally, Yang Lian finished his second term on the Board and Sylvestre Clancier decided not to run for a second term. Both of them could be counted on to bring fresh ideas to our

meetings. We thank them and we will miss them.

Josep-Maria Terricabras finished his second term as Chair of the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee. It was thanks to Terri that we have the Girona Manifesto, an important contribution. He is now the Vice-President of the Green Party in the European Parliament.

Two new Board members were elected. Teresa Cadete, President of Portuguese PEN, and Margie Orford,

President of South Africa PEN. Simona Škrabec was elected by the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee as their new Chair and this election was confirmed by the Assembly. We all welcome them and look forward to working with them.

Once again, thank you to Dalmira and Jena and all who worked so hard with them to make this Congress possible.

With best wishes,
John Ralston Saul
International President

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Rhodes MA Creative Writing Journal Launch – 11th December 2014, Cape Town
By Kerry Hammerton

At the end of each year the Rhodes MA in Creative Writing publishes a journal called *Tyhini* showcasing the work of students both full-time and part-time. The 2014 journal has been published and the launch in Cape Town will be on 11th December, 5.30 p.m. at the Straight No Chaser Club, 79 Buitenkant Street.

You are welcome to forward this email to anyone who may be interested in doing the MA and want to come along and chat to some of the current students. Look forward to seeing you there!

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The Thundafund campaign to produce African Folktales Onstage!
By Robin Malan

Dear Friends of Junkets

Ey, this worked so well! You know we had to reach the ‘Tipping Point’ of R25 000 before the money paid in by all of you generous people became ours. If we did not reach the R25 000, we would get nothing.

Three days before the campaign ended we did reach the Tipping Point, and, at the close of play, we stood at R27 350. Take away Thundafund’s 7%, and you are left with R25 435.50! So, we *just* made it!

The other thing is: because of people’s generosity, 78 under-resourced schools will receive a set of the two books, free. Isn’t that great? In a way, I’d hoped we would reach 100 schools. So ... **Here’s a Schools’ Special!**. You can donate R250, and that will cover a set of the two books, including p&p. (Normal retail price + p&p =

R310.) So, it really *is* a ‘Special’! Please contact us at info.junkets@iafrica.com regarding payment, and please give us the name and postal address of the school (primary or high) you would like the books to go to. Or you can tell us to select.

To everyone, regardless of whether you contribute or not ... if you know of a school (primary or high) who would value having these two books, please let us have their names and postal addresses, so that we can send the books to deserving under-resourced schools.

Thanks to all!

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If you’d like to sign a **petition regarding the One Textbook issue** go to:
http://www.change.org/p/minister-of-basic-education-angie-motshekga-don-t-prescribe-only-one-textbook-for-every-south-african-child?recruiter=161960489&utm_campaign=signature_receipt&utm_medium=email&utm_source=share_petition

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SA PEN subscription fees for period 01/10/14 to 30/09/15

A HUGE thank you to those members who promptly paid their subs further to receiving the relevant renewal email recently. Please contact Deborah at rudebs@icon.co.za if you did not receive your email.

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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.

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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>