

The Quarterly Sydney PEN Centre

freedom to write, freedom to read

issue 124 december 2005



Focus on Turkey

- Writers, publishers snared by Article 301
- Orhan Pamuk's intervention
- A poetic journey in Australia

PLUS – The Sedition Fight ♦ A Caravan Toward Literacy ♦ Asia and Pacific Writers Meet
China's Internet Upstarts ♦ The Filipino Writer Today

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Translation in the Era of Globalisation

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J.M. Coetzee, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (2003), reflects on working with his translators

Brian Castro, winner of the NSW Premier's Book of the Year award (2004), explores the redemptive role of translation in a bleak local climate for literature

Linda Jaivin on television subtitling

Adrian Martin on translation in the world of the movies

Meredith McKinney on translating a Japanese classic

Kevin Hart on poets translating poetry

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PEN Membership Renewal

PEN members are asked to keep their eyes out for membership renewal notices for 2006 which will be arriving in the next few weeks.

Prompt payment of dues is much appreciated.

(Members who have joined since October 2005 will not receive renewal notices until next year.)

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sydney@pen.org.au

PEN Customs House Readings

Thomas Keneally, author of *The Commonwealth of Thieves*, will deliver the first Sydney PEN Customs House Reading.

Sydney PEN, in association with Customs House and the City of Sydney Library, will present monthly lunchtime literary events on the first Thursday of each month in 2006 at the City of Sydney Library, Customs House.

Each month a different PEN author will be presented by the library to read from their own work and share some of their influences with the lunchtime audience.

Come join us on 2 February to hear Thomas Keneally.

Where: City of Sydney Library, Customs House
Ground Floor Lounge

When: 2 February 2006, 12.45 to 1.15 pm and then
the first Thursday of every month

A New Year, A New Beginning

I LEFT THE COUNTRY just when the full ramifications of the anti-terrorism legislation and sedition provisions were being revealed, and am still away at the time of writing. It has felt surreal to be reading the discussion and debate via the internet, as if one has stumbled onto the wrong site, entered a portal that belongs to another country. But we are indeed at a perilous time in our history. I like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those PEN members who have contributed to the debate on this issue, who've spoken out against the artistic and civic erosion threatened by this legislation.

As you will all know, our major fundraiser for this year, the Annual Lecture, was cancelled. Our guest speaker Professor Wole Soyinka objected to the requirement that all visitors to Australia aged over 70 must have a signed medical certificate to indicate their fitness to travel. Professor Soyinka did not make his decision to cancel lightly, but when he did finally decide that he could not enter the country, it was too late to arrange an alternative speaker. The cancellation has been a great blow to Sydney PEN. Our interim (part-time) Executive Director Sharon Connolly has now left us: fundraising from the lecture was to have paid her salary into the new year.

Sharon brought enormous expertise and vision to PEN and made a significant impact in the six months that she was with us. On behalf of the membership I extend my thanks to her for her tireless work, and for the legacy she has left behind.

I'd also like to thank our lecture sponsors for their support and understanding following the cancellation. We look forward to talking to you again when our next major fundraiser gets underway. In order for PEN to achieve its goals, particularly in our literature and literacy programs, we'll need funds to secure staffing for at least four days a week.

In late January 2006 the Committee will move on to stage two of the strategic planning process it commenced in July this year. We do this with confidence, given that much of what we planned for PEN for 2005 has already been realised. One initiative has been a new category of membership, Publisher Partners, and PEN is looking forward to more of our publishers signing up and supporting PEN in this way.

PEN's literary activities will increase in 2006, commencing with regular lunchtime readings by PEN authors at the new City of Sydney Library at Customs House. These will be the first Thursday of each month, Tom Kenneally will be kicking them off on February 3rd and we look forward to seeing Sydney PEN members there.

Enjoy this issue of the Quarterly, and best wishes for the holiday season.



Katherine Thomson
President, Sydney PEN

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Sydney PEN, one of 141 PEN centres worldwide, conducts campaigns and holds events supporting literature and defending freedom of expression.

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Taishi Village Stands Up

YANG MAODONG (pen-name Guo Feixiong), has been detained since 12 September 2005 for his reporting and activism. PEN is seriously concerned for Yang Maodong's health, and urges that he is granted access to all necessary medical treatment, his family and legal representation as a matter of urgency.

A writer, lawyer and civil rights activist, Yang was arrested on 12 September 2005 while visiting the village of Taishi, Guangdong Province, where he had been advising villagers in their legal campaign to dismiss an elected local village committee chief whom residents accuse of embezzling funds.

The campaign for a re-election in Taishi began in July 2005, and since mid-September local officials have allegedly intervened to block the process. All seven elected members of the re-election committee have resigned, some citing official pressure. Following clashes with police dozens of residents and activists have reportedly been detained.

There have also been a series of violent attacks on journalists trying to cover the campaign. On 7 October two journalists, *South China Morning Post* reporter Leu Siew Ying and Radio France *Internationale* reporter Abel Segretin were struck and threatened by unidentified men and then briefly detained by police as they tried to enter the village. Later that day, an activist accompanying reporter Benjamin Joffe-Walt for the London daily *The Guardian* was dragged from a taxi and badly beaten by a mob. The village of Taishi is a test case of grass-roots democracy in China, and as such recent events there have been closely watched by national and international media.

What you can do

YANG MAODONG HAS REPORTED extensively within the Chinese news media on events in Taishi, including many articles published on-line on the Yunnan Forum which was recently closed down as a result of its discussions of this topic. He is a prolific writer and independent publisher, and his writings include two novels and one collection of short stories. He has also published many essays, poems and articles. He has been known to the authorities for some time for his critical writings and civil rights activism.

Sydney PEN members and others may send appeals:

- Protesting the detention of writer, lawyer, publisher and civil rights activist Yang Maodong, and calling for his immediate and unconditional release in accordance with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which China became a signatory in 1998;
- Expressing serious concerns for his health, and seeking immediate assurances of his well-being;
- Urging the authorities to respect his basic rights while he is detained and to granted him full access to his family, his lawyer and any necessary medical care.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of
China
State Council
Beijing 100032
The People's Republic of China

Her Excellency Wu Aiyong
Minister of Justice
10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie
Chaoyang District
Beijing 100020
The People's Republic of China



Photos Courtesy EastSouthWestNorth weblog, www.zonaeuropa.com/weblog.htm

APWN STRETCHES BEYOND BORDERS

FIFTY OR MORE WRITERS, journalists, publishers, performers, administrators and readers gathered in Melbourne from 6 to 9 November for the inaugural roundtable and public forum of the Asia and Pacific Writers Network (APWN) ...

APWN, an initiative of Australian PEN Centres in partnership with Asialink, is dedicated to writing, conversations and freedom of speech in the region. The program was open-ended, diverse and crowded. If no one knew what to expect at the beginning, by the end of four days' intensive interaction everyone felt that something important had occurred. Resolutions taken at the closing session try to express those dynamic possibilities and compelling imperatives. Whose voices are heard? And, by implication, whose voices are not heard, and how can we change this? Participants included many members of PEN in Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere. We met and debated as practitioners from very different contexts, connected as individuals by a shared concern for the complexities and rewards of communication across culture and belief.

Introducing the public program on a sweltering Melbourne Sunday in the venerable Trades Hall bar – the site where the battle for the Eight Hour Day was won long ago – Melbourne PEN president Arnold Zable made the link between Indigenous rights, refugee rights and human rights across the region, and the need for those stories to be told and owned by the societies where abuses occur.

Next day, as the rain came, we adjourned to the contemporary setting of the Sydney Myer Asia Centre for roundtable meetings. Keynote addresses on the theme of "The Regions Beyond" were given by Cathie Dunsford (Aotearoa-New Zealand), who called for "visionary" writing on the writer's own terms; Alexis Wright (Australia), who spoke of her commitment to literature that can be read by all, including her own people, Indigenous Australians, who would find their own languages and voices there; and Kirpal Singh (Singapore), who argued the need for

writing to be "located" and of how "defining moments" affect both literary narratives and the narratives of societies.

Discussion moved in working groups to

recurrent areas of concern. The question of translation. The protocols of understanding across cultures. The need for respect and recognition, particularly in relation to oral traditions. Censorship in all its forms, and the severe restrictions on freedom of expression in many countries in the region, damaging to cultures and punitive for individuals.

Suppression of free speech in relation to wider social abuses: religious repression, environmental and economic exploitation, marginalisation of minorities, corruption of political power. The double-edged sword of new technology, enabling repressive regimes to monitor dissent, even as it opens up new avenues of publication and transnational communication on an unprecedented scale. APWN's own website is up and running and promises to be an exciting site for writers across the region. Visit www.apwn.net for more information about Beyond Borders and the papers given.

Two visiting members of Independent Chinese PEN gave public presentations as part of International PEN's commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the execution of Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa. Senior Hong Kong-based journalist Cai Yongmei spoke about "Chinese Writers and China's Great Famine", concluding that Chinese writers "have responsibilities to speak for the voiceless people" but have mostly so far been unable or unwilling to do so. Yu Jie, author of "The Shout in the Iron House" and other works of cultural criticism, gave an up-to-the-minute account of "Freedom and Risk for Writers in the Age of the Internet" in China.

Berni Janssen of Melbourne PEN was deservedly thanked for making APWN happen, bringing in an impressive array of sponsors, workers and volunteers. It was great to be there, to meet each other and to plan together for what can grow from it.

Nicholas Jose

Writing for Fame Without Fortune in the Philippines

As Filipinos look to their past and overseas for their dreamings, writers search in vain for their readers. By Isagani Cruz

I come from the Philippines – a people with a glorious past, a nation created by writers, a country from the first world. In the 10th century, the Philippines was a great marine and economic power, building ships for its neighbors and setting up homes on foreign soil. In the 19th century, a group of young writers from the Philippines, studying in colonial master Spain, invented the idea of a free country in Asia, eventually inspiring the first successful anti-colonial revolution in our part of the world and establishing its first independent republic. Today, as far as I am concerned, the Philippines is the centre of the first world (I don't know about you, but as far as I know, the first personal pronoun is "I", the second, "you", and the third "they"). I am from the Philippines, and therefore, I start counting from myself – first world, then you as second world, and the rest of the globe the third world.

Why do I come with such a high regard for myself and for my country? Because we Filipinos have nothing else to be proud of. We live in a country which used to have enormous wealth in natural resources; now, the country has very little forest left and no potable water anywhere. We have a

We have a people whose main aim in life is to go abroad. We have children whose main fantasy, according to all surveys, is to have been born abroad.

government that has consistently stolen money from the citizens and stashed private, ill-gotten money abroad. We have a government run mostly by untouchable gambling lords, indicted murderers and rapists, incompetent movie stars, selfish business interests, and idiots with average IQs of 30. We have a population of 85 million that we claim to be more than 90 per cent literate, but is in fact 90 per cent illiterate, if we judge by the number of newspapers and books printed and sold; no newspaper sells more than half a million copies a day and no

book sells more than a hundred thousand copies – after several years. We have a people whose main aim in life, according to all

surveys, is to go abroad. We have children whose main fantasy, according to all surveys, is to have been born abroad. We have a people who supply the world with its best doctors, nurses, teachers, and engineers, but also its most undemanding mail-order brides, uninhibited prostitutes, oppressed housemaids, and hunted pickpockets. We have a country where successful doctors give up medicine in order to study nursing, so they can move their entire families elsewhere in the world. There is nothing to be proud of about the way we are today; that is why we are proud of the way we were yesterday.

At least, those of us who are writers are proud of our past. Our writers write about what we really are, as well as what we really were. There is a problem, however. Nobody reads what we write, not only because they cannot read, but also because writers cannot get published.

A creative writer of short stories can publish in literary magazines that come out occasionally. These magazines – paid for by the government's cultural agencies – are priced way above the daily wage, so that nobody can buy, let alone read, the stories. A couple of weekly magazines have space for one story per issue, but only if the story is short and does not challenge anything, especially writing conventions. Poets can and do publish in the Sunday supplements of newspapers, but only if there is space and only if the poems are really paragraphs cut up to look like verse. Theater companies – of which there quite a number, way out of proportion to the size of the theater-going public – used to focus on new plays by Filipino playwrights, but that is now part of nostalgia; the trend nowadays is to revive old plays (if they are Filipino) or to ape foreign productions.

So what do Filipino writers do? They go abroad, if not physically like one out of every ten Filipinos (or one out of every five Filipino adults), then spiritually. Filipino writers today get published outside the country, where they

have had some kind of fame but not much fortune. In fact, Filipino writers aim only for their few lines of fame, because writing does not pay in the Philippines. Royalty for a book can go only as high as 20 per cent, if that high, and since books sell an average of a couple of hundred copies, the royalty cannot even buy a meal at a non-fast food restaurant.

Newspapers pay for poems and magazines pay for short stories, but since there are few poems and stories published, not too many writers benefit from this benefit, and the pay is so small it does not pay for the gasoline needed to get to the cashier.

Technically, there is freedom of expression and freedom of speech, but since nobody takes writing seriously, neither do writers. There is an occasional novel published that is truly in the tradition of the national hero Jose Rizal's two incendiary novels during the Spanish colonial period, but nobody gets to read it, except for the Manila Critics Circle, which I helped found. We give out National Book Awards and get to read practically every book published in the country, but there are only ten of us. Because each of us reads at least one book a day, we raised the national average to something incredible: in the recent German GfK NOP World survey, the Philippines ranked fourth in the world in the number of hours spent reading per capita. Filipinos spend 7.6 hours a week reading, less only than Indians (10.7), Thais (9.4), and Chinese (8.0). Although we all know that statistics lie, this is one set of statistics that we prefer to believe.

The reality, however, is something else. Most Filipino writers do not even read works written by their fellow writers. This is a major stumbling block to establishing a true national literature. It is not only the expense involved in buying each other's books. There is also the problem of language. The country has more than a hundred different and mutually unintelligible languages, more than 20 or so of which have active writing going on right now. Nobody can read these 20 languages; I myself can read only four (Tagalog, Filipino, English, and Spanish) with any kind of confidence. I cannot even read the language in which the majority of Filipino creative works are written – Mandarin Chinese.

Is there censorship? Not legally, but there does not have to be. I cannot write against big business interests because, if I do, I will never get published by any media organisation, media being owned solely by big business interests. I cannot even teach in any reputable school, such schools being owned if not by big business interests, then by the big business interest that is the Roman Catholic Church. I cannot even experiment with literary forms, because the canon is determined by literary contests and writing workshops, of which there are plenty in the country; the old guards guard the old literary norms with their blue pencils and their deaf pronouncements. These contests and workshops give writers fame, at

Filipinos spend 7.6 hours a week reading, less than only Indians, Thais, and Chinese. Although we all know that statistics lie, this is one set of statistics that we prefer to believe.

least among the few that participate in them.

Maybe our fortune will change someday, as it has changed so radically since the 19th century, when every poem or novel by a Filipino writer was read by hundreds of people, who then armed themselves with knives to attack invading heavily-armed soldiers, and won. Or perhaps our fortune will change as it indeed changed just 35 years ago, when every poem or short story or play by a Filipino writer was read, recited, or watched by thousands of students, who then armed themselves with placards to warn against an American-sponsored dictatorship that imposed itself anyway and today is about to impose itself again. The Philippine Center of International PEN is committed to helping writers tell the truth, but unless the writers tell the truth first, there is nothing and no one to help.

Meanwhile, we pride ourselves on our glorious past, on our country's having been created by writers, on our being first world. Otherwise, we would commit suicide, or acknowledge that we have already committed suicide.

Isagani Cruz is a playwright, critic and short story writer, and National Secretary of Philippine PEN Centre.

Freedom and Risk for Writers in the Age of the Internet

The Internet in China is not only challenging the control of the state, it's threatening the position of the privileged intellectual elite. By Yu Jie

The number of internet users across mainland China in 2005 now exceeds 100 million making China the country with the second largest population of internet users outside the US. At the current annual growth rate of nearly 20 per cent, the population of internet users in China will overtake that of the US in two years. As in the rest of the world most internet users in China use the net to chat. Although a comparatively tiny percentage within a huge population of internet users, the number of those who post their writings on the net has also reached several million and is far more than the number traditionally accorded the title and privileges of "writer" in China. In ancient times only the scholar-officials in the upper echelon, educated at an elite level and able to use the complex classical language Chinese characters qualified as "writers". With the assumption of power by the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1949 the cultural system of the former Soviet Union was adopted with salary, health benefits and travel provided to those writers who submitted to Party ideology. The Chinese Writers Association became a large bureaucratic government department and the system of writers was an important part of the planned economy. Accordingly, a person who just engaged in writing could not be designated a writer unless he or she was accepted as a member of the official Writers' Association. The advent of the internet in the mid 1990s however initiated a major change in this state of affairs.

All media in China including newspapers, periodicals, books, TV programs and radio broadcasting are strictly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. The Party's

"Mainstream periodicals" have become a breeding ground for corruption in academia.

Propaganda Department overrides the Constitution and tightly controls the right to publish in all forms, like a pair of dark hands appearing everywhere and muffling writers' voices. However, the freedom of expression that is so essential to writers, and that writers in China did not have before the advent of the internet, is now becoming a tangible reality as the new technology of the net develops. In the last decade many young writers have published their articles directly on the net instead of submitting them to traditional processes of editorial examination. This freedom to publish has not only ushered in freedom of thought and expression but has extended the notion of "Writing", adding

new meanings, pushing the boundaries of styles of writing and breaking through restrictions on once forbidden topics.

Online writing in today's China can basically be divided into three categories:

online academic publishing, online literary writing and online political review.

An example of online academic publishing is a website called Ideological Realm established in the late 1990s by Li Yonggang, a doctor of law, which within two years came to surpass much official academic publishing in terms of both academic quality and ideological orientation. Within the rigid official academic system there is a group of periodicals deemed "mainstream". Having papers published in those periodicals is a prerequisite for academic promotion. Consequently, the space in "mainstream periodicals" has been priced like that of newspaper advertisements, and "mainstream periodicals" have become a breeding ground for corruption in academia. In sharp contrast, academic websites such as Ideological Realm have won the support and appreciation of a large number of genuine scholars, without utilitarian targets and the obligation of paying writers fees. Many scholars publish high quality papers directly on this website, which made it an ideal forum for research in the humanities and social sciences in mainland China. Although the website was shut down by the government after some papers addressed real-life issues in China, its pattern has been followed by many others and today there are a number of similar sites in operation.

Literary writing posted on the internet has already had a significant impact on traditional literary writing, although as a whole the quality of the former is still inferior to the latter. While much internet literature is still crude and in need of refinement, some work of very high quality has also appeared. Ms Zhang Yihe, for example, was awarded the 2004 Freedom Writers Award by Independent Chinese PEN for her memoir *Deep Memory of the Past*. Zhang researches traditional Chinese opera and has little to do with the literary world. To Ms Zhang, the aim of her depiction of the tragedy experienced by people of her father's generation during the Mao years – liberal-minded intellectuals and so-called "democratic individuals" whose ideological position was somewhere between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the CPC – was to commemorate the bitter past rather than to create literary value or sensation. Her work did not draw much attention when it was published in some non-mainstream literary and historical journals. But it suddenly became popular reading when it was published and cited on different websites. As a result Zhang's memoir was brought to the attention of some editors and after undergoing serious cutting and editing was put into print. In 2004 it was the literary book that had

the largest circulation in China and a few months after its release was reprinted with over one million copies. If the pirated versions are also taken into account the circulation would be two or three million copies.

Unfortunately, this book was finally banned by the top level of the CPC. The fitful process of publishing this work vividly demonstrates the impact that contemporary internet media has had on traditional media in China, and the close relationship between these two media. The oversensitivity of the CPC is also revealed by this example.

Regarding online political review, nowadays there are hundreds of active online political commentators operating in mainland China who insist on "living in freedom and truth". Many outstanding reviewers are members of Independent Chinese PEN, the composition of which is different from writing communities in most other countries due to the special political conditions that prevail in China. While the writers who are still well-treated by the official Chinese Writers' Association and maintain a good publication record in recognised journals generally do not criticise real-life situations, the writers expressing political opinions online enjoy much more intellectual freedom due to their largely being deprived of the right to publish via traditional media. The majority of writers in Independent Chinese PEN publish their work on the internet. Independent Chinese PEN is not a political organisation, rather it offers a spiritual home to writers who operate in special circumstances. The internet provides contemporary writers in China who hold their own political opinions with a relatively spacious stage. Mr Liu Xiaobo, the Chairman of Independent Chinese PEN has recalled that in the 1980s, when he worked as a political reviewer in Beijing for the western media, it usually took him a couple of hours to cross the city by bicycle in order to get to a foreign journalist's home in the diplomatic quarter where he would fax his writing overseas. But now by just clicking a mouse he can easily post his writings to millions of readers within a few seconds. That is the freedom brought about by the internet.

This kind of freedom also comes with risks. The CPC authorities exert their control on domestic websites by continually

releasing new rules and regulations and shutting down thousands of them. Within this year the Chinese websites "Messy" and "Swallows Flying South", which are very popular among students at Beijing University, were shut down without explanation. With the exception of some expert users who are able to use special web-surfing software, most users cannot browse overseas websites because the CPC authorities have set up barriers to disable access. Web writing also has risks for writers. According to the findings of a survey conducted by the Writers in Prison Committee of Independent Chinese PEN, in recent years dozens of web writers have been arrested and sentenced with charges such as "endangering state security" and/or "disclosing state secrets". A typical case is that of Shi Tao, a journalist, poet and member of Independent Chinese PEN who was sentenced to ten years gaol because he published his writing on overseas websites disclosing that CPC propaganda prohibited Chinese newspapers from reporting on the massacres near Tiananmen Square in the days leading up to the 15th anniversary in 2004.

Such risks accompanying freedom of expression affect each online writer in China. Therefore online writers cannot begin to write unless they have first overcome their fear of persecution. This is the greatest difference between online writers in China and those in western countries.

Just as the pioneer of democracy in the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel said, we must "live truth", we are a group of writers who look forward to living a life in truth. Coming from a country teeming with lies, we have made a decision and chosen a mission of refusing to lie and of defeating lies. Enjoying the freedom brought by the net, we are also immersing ourselves in the risks brought by the net. I would like to share my experiences, as well as the experiences of some of my compatriots, with friends from different countries, cultural backgrounds and life situations. There is an old Chinese saying: "The bond between two writers who are close is stronger than the bond of blood". I believe that in the course of defending freedom and seeking truth we should provide mutual support, as if we are brothers and sisters.

Yu Jie himself has been detained and harassed for his writing on the internet. At 32 he is one of China's most promising intellectuals, his book *Fire and Ice* extraordinarily popular among mainland university students. A graduate of the prestigious Beijing University Department of Chinese, his books sell widely in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas. None of his major works has been translated into English. This speech was given at the APWN meeting in Melbourne in November. Yu Jie will return to Australia in early February 2006.

Wins and Losses in the Sedition Battle

The brother act of Robert and Chris Connolly led Australia's arts groups in contesting the sedition provisions in the Anti-Terrorism legislation...

THE GOVERNMENT'S Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005 has been passed. In the end a total of 74 Government amendments were placed on the bill, including on the sedition provisions, the introduction of which galvanised the Australian arts community into action. Among those amendments are both victories of which we can all be proud, and the agenda that remains for us as the law faces its promised review by the Australian Law Reform Commission in 2006.

On 31 October, the day after the bill was introduced into parliament, the arts community snapped into gear. A gathering of representatives was convened by filmmaker Robert Connolly, director of *The Boys*, *The Bank* and *Three Dollars* at his Arena Films Studios in Surry Hills, New South Wales. Connolly was joined by his brother, Chris Connolly, Visiting Fellow at the University of New South Wales School of Law, who prepared a briefing on the sedition provisions. (See our excerpt of this briefing, "Sedition: A Brief History" on the following page). The meeting was attended by representatives

The legislation's definition of seditious intention did not include the intention to use force or violence. The amendments insert that link.

from Sydney PEN, the Australian Society of Authors, the Australian Screen Directors Association, the National Association for the Visual Arts, and dozens of film directors, writers, agents and producers.

The group noted that most civil liberties groups and law associations were already weighing in on a number of aspects of the bill – including the controversial control orders and preventative detention provisions – and decided early on to focus on the legislation's sedition provisions. The group declared the provisions were "unnecessary, dangerous, too broad and unfair" and a "threat to

Australia's proud tradition of protecting free speech and promoting democracy".

Over the following month, the brothers Connolly, joined by a small working group, put out rapid-response statements for every pronouncement made by the Prime Minister and Attorney-General; lobbied Coalition, Green, Democrat and Labor senators to remove the sedition provisions; and testified before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee's inquiry into the legislation. That Committee found that the sedition provisions impeded freedom of speech and needed to be scrutinised by the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) before they were passed by the parliament.

In the end the provisions remained, but not without some significant changes. The legislation's definition of seditious intention did not include the intention to use force or violence. The amendments insert that link. In addition, many testifying to the Senate Committee inquiry expressed concern that the two new sedition offences (urging to assist the enemy and urging to assist those engaged in armed hostilities) were too broad in their definition. In both cases, such assistance could be "by any means whatever". The amendments struck this phrase from the legislation. Finally, the amendments added to the defences the "publishing in good faith a report or commentary about a matter of public interest".

The amendments were decidedly less than the group's desire for the provisions to be excised completely, and concerns remain about a number of aspects, including the onus of proof being on the defendant. Arts organisations will band together in the new year for a review of the passed legislation in the lead up to the ALRC review. See Robert Connolly's blog, ozsedition.blogspot.com, for updates.

Chip Rolley

Sedition: A Brief History by Chris Connolly

SEDITION HAS A LONG and undignified history. It is hard to go past the Bible for the most famous of sedition trials. Both Barabbas and Jesus faced charges of sedition. (See Luke 23 and John 18:28-40, respectively.) The charges against Jesus were said to be at least in part a result of his encouragement of others to refuse to pay taxes to Rome.

There are numerous other important figures in history who have been charged and sometimes imprisoned for sedition, including both Ghandi and Nelson Mandela.

The clear lesson from the history of sedition laws is that they are used routinely by oppressive regimes, or are used by more liberal regimes at times of great national stress. Their use is nearly always the subject of considerable regret at a later date.

It is also difficult to find a single example of a sedition trial that resulted in a useful long-term outcome for the ruling authorities. The sedition charges are either the last desperate gasp of an authoritarian regime (eg Ghandi) or the extreme result of a regrettable moment in national history (eg McCarthyism).

In 2005, sedition is most often encountered as the desperate tool of undemocratic regimes such as Zimbabwe and, on occasion, China. Sedition may rear its head elsewhere, although it is probably used more sparingly than people realise. For example, Singapore recently charged two Internet bloggers with sedition, but it was the first use of the charge in Singapore in more than thirty years.

In Australia the crime has come in and out of fashion. There have been times when it has laid dormant for decades, but in keeping with global experience, it has been used at times of national stress.

Sedition charges were famously used against the rebels and their supporters following the Eureka Stockade. Most charges were a mix of sedition and "high treason" and almost all were unsuccessful (in jury trials). Some of the rebel leaders such as Peter Lalor later became Members of Parliament and it could be argued that many of the principles of democracy we enjoy today are a result of their alleged sedition. (Their chief demand was "one person one vote".)

However, Henry Seekamp, the editor of the *Ballarat Times* was not so lucky – he was

jailed for six months, serving three, for sedition for writing positively about the Eureka Stockade rebels. One of the four articles on which he was convicted contained the following prophetic words:

This league [the Ballarat reform league] is nothing more or less than the germ of Australian independence. The die is cast, and fate has cast upon the movement its indelible signature. No power on earth can now restrain the united might and headlong strides for freedom of the people of this country ... The League has undertaken a mighty task, fit only for a great people – that of changing the dynasty of the country.

The second significant use of the sedition provisions was to "shut down" the Sydney arm of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1916. The IWW was a left wing labor organisation opposed to conscription and Australia's involvement in World War I. Twelve of its members were imprisoned for sedition and membership of an unlawful association.

Monty Miller was probably the best-known of the accused. He was 77 at the time and was sentenced to six months' hard labour. He was freed after a public outcry and by 1920 all twelve men had been released.

Sedition charges were famously used following the Eureka Stockade.

Several other minor sedition offences had been pressed in Australia, often related to the "troubles" in Ireland rather than Australian issues or politics, but the final significant case of sedition was against the General Secretary of the Australian Communist Party, Laurence Louis Sharkey (Lance Sharkey) in 1949. He was jailed for three years, later reduced to 18 months, for sedition after answering a hypothetical question from a journalist about whether the Australian public would welcome the Soviets here. His answer (according to the journalist) included the following words:

If Soviet Forces in pursuit of aggressors entered Australia, Australian workers would welcome them. Australian workers would

welcome Soviet Forces pursuing aggressors as the workers welcomed them throughout Europe when the Red troops liberated the people from the power of the Nazis. Invasion of Australia by forces of the Soviet Union seems very remote and hypothetical to me. I believe the Soviet Union will go to war only if she is attacked, and if she is attacked I cannot see Australia being invaded by Soviet troops. The job of Communists is to struggle to prevent war and to educate the mass of people against the idea of war. The Communist Party also wants to bring the working class to power, but if fascists in Australia use force to prevent the workers gaining that power, Communists will advise the workers to meet force with force.

Sharkey pleaded not guilty, noting amongst other things that he was responding to a question over the telephone by a persistent journalist, rather than addressing a crowd. Still, he was convicted by a jury and the conviction was affirmed by the High Court in 1949.

The case was based on a definition of "seditious intention" that is virtually identical to the recent proposal. In addition, a series of "good faith" defences were available to Sharkey

(again very similar to the recent proposals), but none of these saved him from conviction. Anticomunist sentiment was strong – at sentencing the trial judge described Sharkey as "exercising an evil disproportionate influence over the life of this country".

Sharkey was charged under Section 24 of the Commonwealth Crimes Act 1914. The Section was amended slightly in 1986 to require an additional element – "the intention of causing violence or creating public disorder or a public disturbance". There have been no prosecutions since that amendment.

In 1991 the Fifth Interim Report of the Committee of Review of Commonwealth Criminal Law (the Gibbs Report) proposed that the Act should be amended to repeal sedition and to rely on the crimes of incitement and treason where there was a clear intention of violent interference with the democratic process. However, no amendment had been prepared until the recent proposals – and the recent proposals were a more substantial revision of the sedition laws than recommended by Gibbs and largely contrary to them.

Chris Connolly is Visiting Fellow, UNSW School of Law.

Hall of Shame: A Selective Review of Sedition in the Arts

- CHARLIE CHAPLIN, DASHIELL HAMMETT and ARTHUR MILLER. The best known use of sedition laws to attack the arts community is the period of McCarthyism in the 1950s. Some of the greatest artists and thinkers of that time spent long periods out of work or underground after allegations of "Un-American" activities.
- ROBBIE BURNS was threatened with a charge of sedition in 1794. He is rumoured to have "tempered his writing", and even written letters and articles under assumed names as a result of the threat.
- WILLIAM BLAKE was charged with sedition in 1803 for exclaiming "damn the King and damn his soldiers" in a heated moment. (He had discovered a drunken soldier urinating in his garden.) He was acquitted in 1804.
- JOHN KEATS was never charged with sedition, but he was famously accused of "lispering sedition" by his critics.
- DANIEL DEFOE was imprisoned for his satire on church and state, "The Shortest Way With Dissenters" (1702).
- SALMAN RUSHDIE fought off a private prosecution for sedition following publication of *The Satanic Verses*.
- BEN JONSON was imprisoned in 1597 for sedition for writing *The Isle of Dogs*. The play is lost but it was thought to be a political satire. The Government also shut down the entire theatre community for six months.
- In the 1660s MOLIÈRE's satirical play *Tartuffe* was banned by Louis XIV for sedition. The ban was later lifted.
- Cartoonist JOSEPH JOHNSON of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was exiled for sedition in the 1970s.
- ROBERT GOLDSTEIN, the maker of *The Spirit of '76*, which depicted British atrocities in the American Revolution, was charged under the US Sedition Act 1917 during World War I. The judge was concerned that the film might cause Americans "to question the good faith of our ally, Great Britain". The filmmaker was sentenced to 10 years in prison, but was released after three years. It was his only film.

Dance the Guns to Silence

100 poems for Ken Saro-Wiwa

Amiri Baraka
Kamau Brathwaite
Merle Collins
Jayne Cortez
D'Aguiar
Kwame Dawes
Martín Espada
E. Ethelbert Miller
Mutabaruka
Sonia Sanchez
Benjamin Zephaniah

Tide

(for Ken Saro-Wiwa)

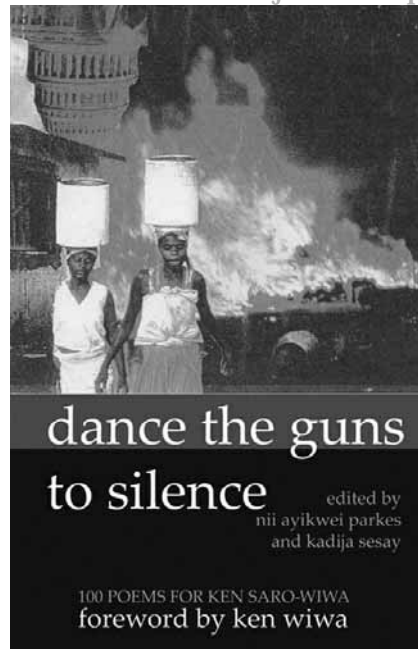
Look, look my friend, over there
how those white sand beaches are
turned by the lap of the tide
into wet black gold by night.

See, my friend, nearer here,
how those flock of gulls,
grow fat off of Black gold;
gulp the lives out of smaller shells.

One day, we will not be here to witness this;
the lap of that tide will make
each one of us a tenant of its waves.

to the cackle, overhead, of those
same gulls. Each one, spreading
the long lies of its wings,
writing history out
across the thin blue sky.

Rommi Smith - March 2005



“A heartfelt, tremendously moving and hugely powerful testimonial to a great man.”

— William Boyd

Edited by Nii Ayikwei Parkes & Kadija Sesay
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or order from www.amazon.co.uk
Royalties go to the Ken Saro-Wiwa Foundation.

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Sharan Strange
Geoffrey Philp
Kalamu ya Salaam
Sarah Maguire
Pascale Petit
Mario Petrucci
Nathalie Handal
Ruth Padel
Matthew Caley
Rommi Smith
Steve Tasane
Heather Taylor
Choman Hardi
Rachel E. Griffiths
Kamilah Aisha Moon
Zena Edwards

A Noble Fight

As Orhan Pamuk faces trial for “insulting the Turkish state”, Mark Mordue finds the author’s labyrinthine novels blending into reality.

read a book one day and my whole life was changed.”

So go the opening words to Orhan Pamuk’s 1994 novel *The New Life*. Words good enough to run as a billboard campaign to promote what became the fastest selling novel ever published in Turkey.

Like so much of Pamuk’s work, the words bled into reality, blurring the lines between the author, his labyrinthine novels and the dangerously politicised world in which he finds himself today.

On December 16 Pamuk will stand trial in Istanbul, charged under Article 301/1 of the Turkish Penal Code with “insulting the Turkish state”. He faces an additional sentence for

making these alleged insults outside the country. If convicted, he could serve up to three years in jail.

The charges arise from a February 6 interview published in Swiss newspaper *Tages Anzeiger*, in which Pamuk said: “Thirty thousand Kurds and a million Armenians

were killed in these lands and nobody dares talk about it but me.”

He was referring to the brutal war against Kurdish separatists in southeast Turkey since 1985 (now in cessation with the capture of rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999) and the slaughter of Armenians (who sided with invading Russian forces) during World War I that many regard as the first genocide of the 20th century.

When Pamuk’s comments were relayed back home through the Turkish press he suffered death threats and calls for his books to be burned. One website asked who would be the one to “exterminate” him?

A literary heavyweight most often compared to Jorge Luis Borges and Fyodor

Dostoyevsky, Pamuk enjoys the kind of blockbuster status in Turkey we in the West associate with a Dan Brown. His book releases are treated with all the fanfare of a major Hollywood film and to be merely sighted with his latest work is a form of cultural cachet. His trial could only be paralleled in Australia if Peter Carey or Tim Winton were hauled up before the courts for daring to speak up about the Stolen Generation.

Cynics in Turkey argue that Pamuk is more bought than read, but that does not lessen his abilities as a writer or his growing significance at home and abroad.

Comparisons with epic 19th century geniuses and 20th century postmodern tricksters alike suggest he writes books that appeal to the heart as much as the mind.

For all the postmodern allusions Pamuk is as much indebted to Sufi mysticism and traditional folk tales as architecture and reportage (he studied to be a painter, then an architect, then a journalist) and the tradition of the European novel. American writer John Updike hit a chord when he observed that Pamuk “in his dispassionate intelligence and arabesques of introspection suggests Proust”.

The New Life, his fifth novel, was a contemporary fable in which an Istanbul student journeys through the shadowlands of Anatolian (outback) Turkey to dissolve like a character into the strange and disturbing novel that has possessed him. Pamuk’s concerns then were much as they have always been: the nature of identity and culture in a civilization torn between East and West; how the intellectual influence of the Enlightenment can co-exist within the weave of Islam’s artistic history; and why Turkey has, as he calls it, “two souls”, and if this is a bad or a good thing or something more? In a country that has spent the best part of the 20th century wavering between the ballot box and military domination, these are not



Orhan Pamuk has suffered death threats and calls for his books to be burned. He now faces trial.

questions to be asked without a little risk involved.

Pamuk's seventh and most recent novel *Snow* (2004) amplified these themes through the story of a poet and would-be journalist caught in a Turkish border town during a snowstorm. The protagonist, Ka, finds himself pushed and pulled between right wing extremists and Islamic fanatics as a coup takes place.

A mere pawn in their game – and at heart an apolitical creature more absorbed in his troubled love life, metaphysical questions of identity and a resurgent burst in his writing abilities that he guiltily enjoys amid the chaos – Ka moves through this world as if he were in a dream.

We learn about Ka through the narration of a nameless friend who is attempting to piece together what happened and how it was that he ended his days in exile in Germany. In that old game of art mirrors life, a game Orhan Pamuk plays more fatally than most, we are about to see how premonitory and “real” his writing is.

For many reasons, not the least of which is his extraordinary popularity, Pamuk has been increasingly if reluctantly drawn into Turkey's political affairs since the mid 1990s. Pamuk was the first writer from a Muslim country to criticise the fatwa against Salman Rushdie. No lightly taken action when your home is opposite a mosque and your enemies are many. His outspokenness on the so-called Armenian question can only be partly explained by his 13-year marriage to Aylin Turegin, an historian of Russian descent (whom he divorced in 2001; they have one teenage daughter, Ruya).

An equally strong supporter of environmental and women's issues, both of which get short shrift in Turkey, Pamuk has an almost brazen reputation for speaking his mind. It is something of a joke that when asked a question, Orhan Pamuk gives an answer.

A long-time critic of the conduct of the war against the Kurdish minority, he went so far as to agree to sell a Kurdish newspaper on the streets of Istanbul when its offices were bombed in 1994.

His refusal of state honours in 1999 and comparisons he made between the government of the day and the White House

of the Vietnam era did not endear him to authorities. He was also annoyed that the ensuing row distracted attention from his then latest novel, *My Name Is Red*. Its translation in 2001 would cement his reputation internationally and win him the IMPAC Dublin prize for literature.

Pamuk's looming trial is doing little to help Turkey's bid to join the European Union, which is strongly opposed by the French. Fears about “the Islamicisation of Europe” are finding convenient marriage with more high-handed concerns over Turkey's record on human rights and freedom of speech.

Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, who began his career as an Islamic

The trial indicates brinkmanship of a darker kind as competing forces – remarkably like those in *Snow* – attempt to damage Turkey's chances of entry into the EU.

fundamentalist, now promotes himself as the leader of a moderate coalition. As his reforming government tries to jump through the EU hoops, Erdogan attempts to appease extremist groups at home. Reports that right wing nationalists might attempt a coup, through their control of the military, hint at the delicacy of this balancing act.

And so we see in Turkey a schizophrenia. Despite much-touted moves to improve freedom of speech, more than 50 writers, journalists and editors are on trial for transgressions against the state.

The Pamuk case then is far from unique. But given his international stature, the trial indicates brinkmanship of a darker kind as competing forces – remarkably like those in *Snow* – attempt to damage Turkey's chances of entry into the EU and the liberalising energies this might encourage. That Pamuk's stature will probably protect him from conviction matters less than the manipulation of his public conscience as a crucible for ill will and political destabilisation.

Pamuk would hate being used to poison the EU process for Turkey. Though neither he nor his publisher has been permitted to discuss the matter until the trial, a recent flurry of activity saw him suddenly interviewed on CNN Turkey as well as by Germany's *Der*

Over 400 writers signed a petition and joined with PEN Centres around the world in continued protest at the decision to bring Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk to trial. Those signing the petition include: AS Byatt Julian Barnes Louis de Bernières Maureen Freely Nick Hornby Kazuo Ishiguro Ian McEwan Andrew Motion Joan Smith Graham Swift

What you can do

SYDNEY PEN MEMBERS AND OTHERS wishing to protest to the Turkish Authorities may send appeals:

- Expressing concern that Orhan Pamuk is tried for a statement made in an interview for an overseas publication.
- Pointing out that many others are also on trial for their writings and publications.
- Pointing out that this is in direct contravention of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, to which the Turkish government is a signatory.
- And therefore protesting against the trials of writers and publishers, tried under Article 301 of the Penal Code and other articles that infringe the right to freedom of expression.

While Pamuk's trial is imminent, PEN still recommends you post your letter for greater impact. Appeals should be personalised and sent to:

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan
TC Easbaskanlik
Ankara
Turkey
Fax: +90 312 417 0476

Cemil Cicek
Minister of Justice
TC Adalet Bakanligi
Ankara
Turkey
Fax: + 90 312 417 3954

Spiegel and by his translator Maureen Freely for the UK *Independent*. Though he refused to back away from his words, Pamuk did attempt to refine them by pointing out he never actually used the explosive word "genocide" that made so many Turks feel he was a traitor to their national image.

Yet it would be naive to regard Pamuk simply as a pro-Western voice. One senses throughout his novels an ambivalence towards the West that is broadly political and deeply personal.

In an essay titled "The Anger of the Damned" for the *New York Review of Books* on November 15, 2001, he argued against what he called "the artificial tension that some quarters are trying to generate between 'East' and 'West' or 'Islam' and 'Christian civilisation'."

It reflected as much about the motivation for writing *Snow* as any commentary he was making on September 11. In the essay Pamuk spoke of how television and the media had revealed the grotesque gaps in lifestyle between these worlds and what that realisation does to people. "The Western world is scarcely aware of this overwhelming feeling of humiliation that is experienced by most of the world's population; it is a feeling that people have to try to overcome without losing their commonsense, and without being

seduced by terrorists, extreme nationalists or fundamentalists.

"This is the grim, troubled private sphere that neither magical realist novels that endow poverty and foolishness with charm nor the exoticism of popular travel literature manages to fathom. And it is while living within this private sphere that most people in the world today are afflicted by spiritual misery."

For him as a writer this same misery condemned him as a young man to what he calls "a second-class existence", his talent all but banished to the fringes of the world. Experiences he details at melancholy and, yes, angry length in his recent maze-like memoir, *Istanbul, Memories of a City*.

Ironically the delay in announcing the Nobel Prize for Literature this year was said to be because Pamuk, at age 53, was poised to win. Behind closed doors there was a deadlocked argument about his relative youth and what might be a premature and politically charged decision. In the end the Nobel went to Harold Pinter, but you can be sure the name Orhan Pamuk is not about to be forgotten or leave the headlines of our era any time soon.

A slightly different version of this article was originally published in The Australian, Review, 3-4 December 2005. Mark Mordue is an author and freelance journalist.

PEN bears witness

IN MARCH 1985, the internationally renowned playwrights Arthur Miller and Harold Pinter visited Turkey on an International PEN mission to investigate the plight of writers in prison. Turkish author, Orhan Pamuk, who had just published his third book, *The White Castle*, served as a guide to the two visitors.

Twenty years later, Orhan Pamuk himself is to stand before a court for a statement accusing Turkish soldiers of the killings of Armenians and Kurds in the last century.

While it is true that the torture and killings of writers that was endemic in Turkey in the mid-1980s is no longer the norm, many writers, journalists and publishers still find themselves hauled before the courts, facing sentences of several years, simply for their writings and publications.

Pamuk is keen to state clearly that his is not the only case and points to the increasing use of the law under which he is charged, Article 301 of the Penal Code. This law was introduced this year as part of changes to Turkish legislation aimed at meeting EU demands for improvements in human rights but it has in some cases exacerbated rather than alleviated the situation.

International PEN is also highlighting other cases currently in process under this law: those of the Armenian magazine editor, Hrant Dink, publishers Ragıp Zarakolu and Fatih Tas, writer Zülküf Kisanak, and the most recent five journalists accused for their commentary on a court intervention that halted an

academic conference on Ottoman Armenians. All are accused for writings on the Armenian issue, one of Turkey's most sensitive.

As was the case 20 years ago, International PEN is standing up in support of Turkish writers at the 16 December trial and those held later. The Chair of International PEN's Writers in Prison Committee, Karin Clark, and a member of the International PEN Board, Eugene Schougin, will be present, as will representatives of other PEN Centres. They will be bearing PEN's message that the trials of writers have to end and that laws such as

PEN is also highlighting other writers, editors and publishers brought to trial under this law, including Hrant Dink, Ragıp Zarakolu, Fatih Tas, Zülküf Kisanak and others.

Article 301 of the Penal Code are a direct violation of the right to freedom of expression, undermining Turkey's attempts to meet its commitments to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Leading members of International PEN were also in Istanbul on 22 November to take part in an international panel on freedom of expression in Turkey. This meeting coincided with the continued court hearings against Ragıp Zarakolu, currently facing trial in three separate cases. A large delegation of PEN members joined Orhan Pamuk and other Turkish writers and journalists to observe and show support for their colleague.

Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code states:

1. *A person who explicitly insults being a Turk, the Republic or Turkish Grand National Assembly shall be imposed a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to three years.*
2. *A person who explicitly insults the Government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial bodies of the State, the military or security organisation shall be imposed a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to two years.*
3. *Where insulting being a Turk is committed by a Turkish citizen in a foreign country, the penalty to be imposed shall be increased by one third.*
4. *Expression of opinions with the purpose of criticism does not require penalties.*

Sydney PEN marks Day of the Imprisoned Writer

"THE SIMPLE ACT of sitting around and telling a story to each other is very powerful," said director Kate Gaul, who brought the story of the unjust death of environmental activist and writer Ken Saro-Wiwa to life in a short play reading of *The Trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa* by Helon Habila. Read by members of the Nigerian community, including John Osifo, President of the African Communities Council of NSW, the play reading was the theatrical highlight of an evening both sombre and celebratory. November 15, PEN's annual Day of the Imprisoned Writer, was this year celebrated at Gleebooks in Sydney on November the 10 to mark the day in 1995 on which Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed by the Nigerian regime of the time.

The proceedings, which culminated in the play reading, included speeches by PEN members Alison Broinowski and Anne Summers, and John Osifo. Each of them contributed a new angle on the story of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a story that inspires solidarity through the legacy of his struggle for Ogoni autonomy in Nigeria, as well as admiration for his writing.

Alison Broninowski introduced the evening with comments on the Day for the Imprisoned Writer, reminding us that PEN has the influence to prompt the release of writers from prison, or at least to prevent

This was a reminder of the challenges faced by writers in countries where criticism of the government is less tolerated...

their mistreatment. Ken Saro-Wiwa, due to his outspoken criticism of Shell and Nigerian military rulers, could not escape the silencing that resulted in his imprisonment and unjust death.

Alison Broninowski also highlighted the current threat posed to freedom of speech by the sedition clause of Howard's proposed anti-terrorism laws, which include the maximum jail term raised from three to seven years. This was a reminder of the challenges faced by writers in countries where criticism of the government is less tolerated, and the courage with which Saro-Wiwa resisted through his writing.



John Osifo (third from left) joins others after the play.

Anne Summers, Chair of the Board of Greenpeace International, brought up the environmental impact of Shell's oil drilling in the Ogoni region of Nigeria that Saro-Wiwa had found devastating, quoting from the 1995 Greenpeace report. John Osifo then gave the Nigerian perspective, saying, "We are very emotional people and experience the pain of past events as if they happened yesterday." The emotion in Osifo's voice was audible as he paid tribute to a countryman who resisted the bullying of big business and corrupt leaders up until his death.

Osifo then took part in the 20-minute play reading, which dramatised Saro-Wiwa's arrest and final days in jail. The play is based on the actual journal entries written by Saro-Wiwa while incarcerated, which were smuggled out to International PEN. The hot November night felt suddenly cold as the audience heard Saro-Wiwa's confrontations with his mortal jailers, and his dialogue with the surreal manifestation of power that tried to crush him. Seated in a semi-circle, the readers (John Osifo, Chux, Gideon, Marvin, and Oller) invoked the sound of rain – a welcome sound on the hot night – through simple but effective body percussion; instantly the drama of those terrible events of November 1995 was realised and the audience was transported. Kate Gaul, who was approached by PEN president and playwright Katherine Thomson to direct the reading, said, "We were all emotionally engaged by the material".

Miri Jassy

A Caravan Toward Literacy

PEN Centres throughout Africa are putting the spotlight on human values and reading. By **Mohamed Magani**

IN AFRICA, THERE ARE PEN Centers deeply involved in the education system. The Malawi PEN Center is engaged in education with a program set up in 2002 called "Promotion of Reading and Writing in Disadvantaged Schools", with a pilot phase in three schools: prison school, girl school, and rural community school. PEN Sierra Leone has set up PEN School Clubs in senior secondary schools on a pilot basis. The goal is to use these clubs to encourage reading and writing among young people. Now and then, PEN writers go the schools and meetings, and conferences are organised, bringing club members together to discuss their common concerns in literary arts. (Quite recently, poetry reading sessions were organized in several schools and readings were held by 22 budding poets). PEN Algeria is planning a series of symposia on the teaching of literature and human rights in schools.

The purpose of these meetings is not that PEN members are going to teach how to teach literature and human rights, but rather to bring together specialists in the fields to talk about these crucial issues in a society that almost saw the eradication of literature and human rights altogether in the plight of the violence of the 90s. It is also to reassert human values, freedom of expression, respect for the individual, women's rights, education about citizenship and democratic values. As a contributor puts it in *The Wrath of the Damned* (an anthology from the Danish PEN symposium on Bridging the Cultural Gap – a European-Arab Symposium, November 2003), "The ultimate goal is not to send people to the ballot box. It is to build the circumstances and conditions for them to lead healthy, productive and fulfilling lives after the votes are counted and government in place".

PEN Zambia has been very active in lobbying schools and colleges to allow its members who are teachers/lecturers in various learning institutions to set up PEN clubs of which eligible membership shall be open to those able to write and submit essays, poems, stories and folk tales. In order to attract writers to join PEN clubs, Zambian PEN plans to introduce annual writing competitions with district, provincial and national awards. The winning writer may have the chance to travel abroad with the delegation attending that year's world PEN Congress, provided the centre manages to lobby for financial support to meet the resultant costs. This will also help create the image of PEN, as such national competition may attract wide reporting in both print and electronic media. For Zambian

PEN, talents, gifts and skills in writing must be identified right from the lower educational level, with individuals progressively built into adult professional writers. Zambian PEN believes that "a shrub of today makes the forest of tomorrow". Another laudable Zambian PEN initiative is the plan to penetrate deaf schools and tap from their rich writing talent, but it faces the challenge to communicate without skilled persons in sign language. Accordingly, Zambian PEN is urging International PEN to have sign language interpreters at its world congresses in case deaf people may be in attendance.

Eight years ago, PEN Ghana started a number of PEN clubs still functioning in second-cycle schools. African Writers Abroad (AWA) runs an Arts in Education program called "Once Upon a Story", an oral history project working with school children between the ages of eight and 15. "Once Upon a Story" aims at gathering stories from the children's various cultures – from parents, grandparents and neighbours – and recording them in different media (audio, visual, online and in books), as it encourages young people to read and tell culturally different stories that are daily present in their lives.

PEN Morocco puts forward the idea of a greater mobility. To encourage reading among the younger generations writers ought to meet their readers wherever they are and not wait for them to purchase their books. The meeting points could very well be a "book caravan" with nomad writers driving a bus across the country and, possibly on a larger scale, across African borders. The bus will stop at schools, universities, libraries and public places. Its rear could serve as a mobile library open to

Zambian PEN believes that "a shrub of today makes the forest of tomorrow".

schoolchildren, students and their teachers. In so doing, writers get the opportunity to talk about their works, as the latter should be privileged. Furthermore, writers are strongly encouraged to run writing workshops and launch writing competitions throughout their journey. Each stop is another effort to involve writers in the educational system and a renewed contribution which will strengthen their role and restore to society their image as active members who struggle for human values, freedom, respect and fundamental rights. The end result of the "book caravan" is the no less significant impact on writers themselves who are therefore able to meet and share ideas about their distinctive activity.

Mohamad Magani, from Algerian PEN, is a member of the International PEN Board.

GET READY FOR YOUR REBIRTH

Every birth is painful
Get ready for your rebirth
You are full of pearls from the Sea
Get ready for your rebirth

The system has shaped you
Piling up fears upon your true self
You were thrown into the seas
Get ready for your rebirth

You are running from your rebirth
You are suffering from labour pains
You explain it all away
Get ready for your rebirth

Before you reach your midlife crisis
Before your heart is hardened forever
Before you go down a one-way street
Get ready for your rebirth

Before your last day arrives
Before your skin touches the soil
Before your fortieth-day meal is cooked
Get ready for your rebirth

You need to die before your death
You need to be reborn while you're alive
You need to get to know yourself
Get ready for your rebirth

When your umbilical cord is cut
Your maturity arrives
You will act as you really are
Get ready for your rebirth

You are your own father and mother
It's you who gives birth to you
It doesn't matter what the others say
Get ready for your rebirth

Your path will become full of love
Your tongue will speak humanity
You'll be afraid of death no more
Get ready for your rebirth

Hidayet says if you aren't reborn
If you don't know what living is
If you don't ask yourself why you exist
You are dead while still alive

*November 2005, Melbourne - Australia
Translated by Matt Hetherington &
Hidayet Ceylan*



Hidayet Ceylan

Hidayet Ceylan was born in Turkey in 1964. He has been in Australia for eight years. Since he has Alevi/Bektashi (a Sufi path) background, he has been inspired by Yunus Emre (a great Sufi poet from the 13th century), Haci Bektas Veli, Rumi, Erich Fromm and Frantz Fanon. He tries to reflect their philosophy in his poems. The poem "Get ready for your rebirth" reflects the main philosophy of the Sufi path, in which you have to die before death and be reborn while living.

Aussie Bees

you work without any break
 from eucalypts to coolibahs
 –flower to flower–
 in your dainty way.
 Some fear your sting
 your needle-stick.
 But your honey is precious
 –takeaway food from your hive.
 How do you create this miracle?
 You keep your secret,
 Producing your golden flow
 by working ceaselessly.
 You enter our hearts and homes
 with your gift
 From Australian scrub.
 Your buzz is pure poetry.
 –Give me your honey!

Journey of Migration

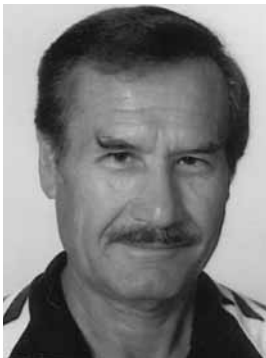
... the first step

'A Teacher Died in Australia' headline news
 spreads quickly to reach Ankara and beyond.
 Saddened, my friends believe that I am dead
 when the corpse of a teacher is sent home.

The end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980,
 in Alitalia a different New Year and its celebration,
 beloved ones with me only in my memory
 as I celebrate the New Year among strangers.

A stormy day starts the journey to Australia
 A cold weather, the temperature below zero
 a thirty-eight hour flight with some breaks from Ankara
 and I, unable to sleep from excitement and anxiety

While standing on the threshold of this New Year.
 I am talking to myself... and asking questions:
 What if Australia is never reached? Or
 if reached, fails to take a hold on my emotions?
 What if this new land does not meet expectations?



Ferit Berk

Ferit Berk was born in Turkey and he migrated to Australia in 1980. He has completed studies at the University of York, the University of Edingburgh and the University of Ankara. His articles, poetry and works of fiction have been extensively published in Australia, America and Turkey. He is currently preparing his next book of poetry for publication.

How do I make a donation to Sydney PEN Centre?

AS AN INDEPENDENT, not-for-profit organisation, Sydney PEN Centre relies heavily upon donations, membership, sponsorship and other forms of support.

Donations, large or small, are always greatly appreciated and play a very important role in allowing Sydney PEN to continue its work.

Sydney PEN is not yet registered as a deductible gift recipient, however it has received advice that contributions, including membership fees and donations, could be regarded by many professional writers as related to the conduct of their professions and as relevant to earning an income from writing.

Intending contributors, whether by donation or otherwise, should confirm with their financial advisors that their particular contributions would be deductible for tax purposes.

Please make cheques out to International PEN Sydney Centre or contact us at sydney@pen.org.au to inquire about making credit card payments.

Donations and inquiries should be sent to:

International PEN Sydney Centre,
c/- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
UTS, PO Box 123
Broadway, NSW 2000

Recent donors

Sydney PEN is grateful for donations received from the following individuals and organisations: Sally Blakeney, Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation, Felicia Boyages, Cassandra Case, Robyn Durack, and Rosalie Higson. We are also grateful for the ongoing support given by Dr Gene & Brian Sherman.

New members

SYDNEY PEN WELCOMES new members:

Patrick Allington	Samantha Sirimanne
Ross Blade	Hyde
Felicia Boyages,	Indira Naidoo
Cassandra Case	Anna Solding
Robyn Durack	Alana Valentine
Rosalie Higson	Ian Watson

Farewell to committee members

MARY CUNNANE AND DANIELA TORSH have resigned from the Sydney PEN Committee after five and three years' service respectively. Cunnane, a literary agent and past senior editor at WW Norton (US), served for two years as Vice President and was a key player in the revitalisation of Sydney PEN. Torsh, a journalist and past producer at SBS Television brought much needed expertise in media relations to the association, her tenure marked by a dramatic rise in Sydney PEN's profile. PEN is grateful for their service.

Special Meeting a success

AT A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING on 10 November, Sydney PEN members approved amendments to the Constitution of Sydney PEN to make provision for a Public Fund to which what it is hoped will be tax deductible gifts will be made in future. The meeting also approved a re-wording of the association's Objects to confirm that Sydney PEN's aim is the promotion of literature – something which members have always understood but which has not previously been expressed quite so plainly.

John Durack

Forward thinking by local card company lifts PEN's profile

SYDNEY PEN IS GRATEFUL TO AVANT Card for their financial contribution to the Writers in Prison postcard campaign funded by Harper Collins publishers. 14,500 cards were printed and distributed by AVANT in cafes, bars, universities, theatres, shops and cinemas throughout Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong

during the month of October. The card was designed by UTS graduate designer Lurdes Borrvalho who worked as a student volunteer for PEN in 2004. We used the image designed by Lurdes on the back cover of our last issue of *The Quarterly*. Our thanks also to Simon Pace at AVANT for his assistance.

Sydney PEN thanks its 2005 sponsors



We gratefully acknowledge the UTS Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which provides essential support to PEN throughout the year.



PEN projects have also been assisted by the Copyright Agency Limited, the Myer Foundation, Harper Collins, Avant Card, Random House and Gleebooks.



Schwartz Publishing, Peachy Print, Sydney Theatre, Turnbull Foundation, Qantas, Sydney Writers' Festival, and Allen and Unwin have also helped Sydney PEN in 2005.

Support from these organisations has enabled Sydney PEN to continue its work in support of literature and defending freedom of expression.

