

Press Statement from October 5, 2003

Lettre Ulysses Award for The Art of Reportage First Global Prize for Literary Reportage Awarded

For the first time, a jury of internationally recognized authors awarded a prize for the best literary reportage in the world on October 4, 2003 in Berlin.

The project, initiated by the cultural magazine *Lettre International* in connection with the *Aventis Foundation* and in partnership with the *Goethe Institute* includes prize money amounting to a total of €100 000. The prize will be awarded annually as of 2003.

The prizes for 2003 were received by the following authors:

1. Anna Politkovskaja for *Tchéchnie – le déshonneur russe*, Buchet/ Castel, Paris 2003, Russian/ French
2. Nuruddin Farah for *Yesterday Tomorrow – Voices from the Somali Diaspora*, Continuum International, London/ New York 2000, English and Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 2003, German. Prize: 30.000 Euro
3. Jiang Hao for *Revealing the Secrets of Poachers*, Qunzhong chubanshe, Beijing 2000, Chinese. Prize: 20.000 Euro

The winners of the awards were announced in a ceremony on Saturday, October 4, in the presence of 450 guests from the worlds of literature, culture and politics in the Berlin *Tipi Tent*. Guest speaker at the awards gala was the Polish reportage author *Ryszard Kapuscinski*; the South African author *Breyten Breytenbach* acted as master of ceremonies for the evening.

The winner of the first prize, Anna Politkovskaja, received the *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* designed by the Berlin artist *Jakob Mattner*. The evening was rounded off with a musical high point, a concert by the Portuguese Fado singer *Misia*.

Among the finalists were also

- Adrian Nicole LeBlanc for *Random Family – Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*, Scribner, New York, 2003. English
 - Ian Buruma for *Bad Elements – Chinese rebels from Los Angeles to Beijing*, Random House, New York 2001, English. Prize: 50.000 Euro
 - Linda Polman for *We Did Nothing*, Viking, London, 2003. Dutch
 - Marc Tully and Gillian Wright for *India in Slow Motion*, Viking, London, 2002. English
- They received grants in the form of scholarships at German cultural institutions.

The seven reportages nominated tackle controversial subjects from various cultural areas of the world. The texts originate from the USA, Africa, China, India, Europe and Russia. They deal with the situation of the Chinese dissidents, the Somali diaspora, the life of poachers and party functionaries in China, the social reality of the New York Bronx, the war in Chechnia, United Nations crisis management and the development of the Indian subcontinent.

Extracts of the finalists' texts are published in the current edition of *Lettre International* No.62.

The multilingual jury 2003 was made up entirely of writers at home in the genre of reportage. Overcoming language and cultural barriers, they selected the literary reportage writing to which they want to draw international attention in an intensive process of discussion and

translation. The members of the jury are native speakers representing eleven of the largest linguistic regions, thereby guaranteeing as broad a spectrum of linguistic and cultural perception as possible.

The members of the jury 2003 were *Swetlana Alexijewitsch* (Belorussia), *Hans Christoph Buch* (Germany), *Jorge Edwards* (Chile), *Isabel Hilton* (Great Britain), *Philip Gourevitch* (USA), *Nedim Gürsel* (Turkey), *Natsuki Ikezawa* (Japan), *Pedro Rosa Mendes* (Portugal), *Nirmal Verma* (India), *Abdourahman Waberi* (Djibouti/ France), *Yang Xiaobin* (China).

An international advisory committee actively accompanied this pioneer project. Members of the committee included the German writer and Nobel prizewinner for literature *Günter Grass*, the Polish reportage author *Ryszard Kapuscinski*, the French anthropologist *Jean Malaurie* and the recently deceased Danish war reporter *Jan Stage*.

The intention of the initiators, the cultural magazine *Lettre International*, is to draw international attention to reportage writing and to offer financial and moral support for the work of writers of the genre.

Further information on the concept of the award and the jury can be found on the homepage: www.lettre-ulysses-award.org

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