

A LITERARY TRANSLATORS MANIFESTO

AN APPEAL TO WRITERS

from the Literary Translation Committee of the International
Federation of Translators
(FITLIT)

Through literary translation national literatures become international and writing trapped in a single language can be released and read throughout the world across linguistic and cultural borders.

The art of literary translators is a unique act of communication that demands a creative and scholarly knowledge of at least two languages and cultures and the ability to write in the language of translation in the voices of many different writers. It is an art which requires proper time, remuneration and professional recognition.

Too often in the cut-and-thrust of the publishing industry, translation is seen in terms of costs and keeping costs down or of the need to meet deadlines set for marketing and promotion. This is to ignore the professional needs of translators if they are to produce translations of high quality. In many countries translators are expected to translate novels or plays in a month without proper contracts, copyright on their translations, royalties or pay that give even a semblance of a living wage or encourage professionalism.

It is in the interest of writers (and their agents and publishers) to ensure their translators get professional conditions to carry out their translation and fair remuneration. Such support for the art of translators helps them professionally to produce translations of high quality. As a writer, do you want to be well translated? Then, sign and support this manifesto!

This is in turn in the interest of readers and promotes an enthusiasm for reading and literacy throughout the world. In many countries, over fifty per cent of what is published is in translation. All writers develop as writers by reading work in translation. Therefore the quality of over half of what is read in some countries depends on the writing abilities of translators and their professional conditions. All writers develop as writers by reading translations

Yet at the recent Frankfurt Book Fair, the German Secretary of State for Culture castigated publishers for often paying their translators less than office cleaning staff.

We ask you as writers to support this manifesto which will be presented at Book Fairs and cultural events and to governments throughout the world.

We need:

- Professional contracts with copyright and royalties for translators
- Deadlines which give translators the necessary time to research, write and edit their translations
- Writers - with their agents and publishers- to make their best efforts to enforce the above

I support the aims and demands in the FIT Literary Translators Manifesto

Signature

Name

Address

E-Mail