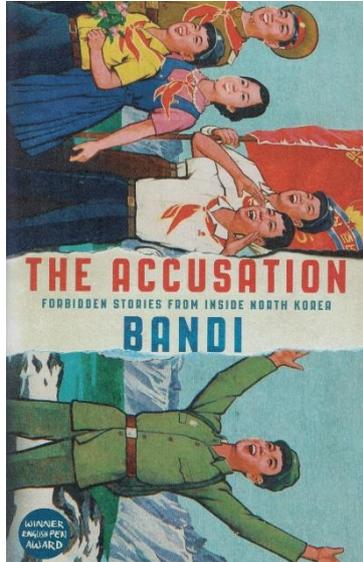


Bandi's book "The Accusation" smuggled from North Korea now published in 18 languages



This book can be purchased on Amazon here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Accusation-Forbidden-Stories-Inside-North/dp/0802126200>

HRWF (03.04.2107) - On 29 March, a conference was held in Seoul to announce that the literary work "*The Accusation*" had just been published in English, the 18th language in which many English-speaking countries are now having access to this book written by a North Korean author under the pen name of Bandi (*). The organizer of the event entitled "*International Literature and Human Rights Conference*" was **Mr Do, Hee Youn** who had been instrumental in the smuggling of the book from North Korea. A dozen publishers from the UK, USA, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Poland... had been invited to the event.

The conference was well attended by human rights NGOs, academics and young students from the different universities in Seoul. Defector writers currently writing and publishing in Seoul were also present indicating increasing interest in new and creative ways of addressing the North Korean challenge. Such a new way is indeed to bring human rights and literature together.

The keynote speaker, **Willy Fautré**, from *Human Rights Without Frontiers* (Brussels), addressed the issue with a paper entitled "*Human Rights in North Korea: Pyongyang in the Dock*":

"Since 1948, North Korea has been ruled by a single family, the Kim dynasty, which has imposed a single ideology, the Juche, to a population that is now estimated at around 25 million people. North Korea is a one-party system which has in its grip all the powers: legislative and executive as well as the judiciary. North Korea has never tolerated the emergence of a civil society outside the one organized by the Workers' Party. North Korea is the last country in the world which still has a Stalinist-type Gulag. North Korea is ranked by all the human rights organizations as the most repressive state in the world, and rightly so. In North Korea, there is no freedom of conscience, no freedom of thought, no religious freedom, no freedom of expression, no freedom of association and assembly, no political freedom." (Full speech available on request)



International Literature & Human Rights Conference in Seoul (29 March 2017)

Some quotes from the speakers

Mr. Do, Hee Youn director of the Seoul-based NGO "Toward a Happy Unification", was quoted as saying:

"Bandi's book is the scream of the people. Everybody should read the book to let the world know about what is happening in North Korea. This is my wish but for the message to be delivered worldwide, we have to unite our efforts and to act together."

Mr. Thae Yong-ho, former Deputy Ambassador of North Korea to the UK, who defected last year from London made a moving statement:

"The majority of North Koreans continue living as slaves today. The day we defected with my family I said to my children 'this is when your shackles are broken, but we have to continue to fight for our family left behind in North Korea and for all those enslaved'. We have to uphold Bandi's critical thinking, and free the slaves of North Korea. Where should we begin? We have to tell more people around the world of the realities, to make them aware of the truth of the regime. Bandi is a writer in a country where there are no readers of such literature."

Former Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil (1998-2000):

"We talk about the unification of the two Koreas, but it is a very abstract thought. Totalitarianism exists in North Korea, and the concept appears in Bandi's novels. He describes North Korea as a totalitarian state full of deception and fiction but we don't have full knowledge of what this represents. We have to deal with this kind of fantasy before we are able to emancipate slaves. The reality of North Korea is not known in the outside world. This is why we gathered today'.

Chang Hae sung, a writer in NK before his defection to South Korea:

"Literature does not exist in its pure form in North Korea, it is all state regulated. Broadcasts follow state directives. Content is allowed for three aims: to praise the greatness of the leaders, to promote their virtue and to uphold the greatness of the system. So it is truly shocking that Bandi could write such a book."

Pierre Rigoulot, from the Paris-based NGO *Comité d'aide à la population nord-coréenne* and author of the famous book *"The Aquariums of Pyongyang"* with Kang Cheol Hwan, titled his presentation *"The Accusation: A Target for Friends of North Korea, but an Opportunity for Human Rights"* (Full text in English and in French available on request). He said among other things:

"The publication in March 2016 of *La Dénonciation* by the Publishing House Piquier in France has not remained unnoticed in French-speaking countries, far from it. In France, the novel has been quoted over 40 times. However, it has not made the headlines. No debate on television. Neither the translator nor the author of the afterword in the French version of the book was invited to literary programs on television. It was not different in South Korea."

Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy: a political adviser at the European Parliament in Brussels, spoke about *The European Union's Engagement Policy Towards North Korea* and was quoted as saying:

In spite of European and international efforts to engage with North Korea, the dictatorship has continued its provocations and **increased isolation away from the international community. Dialogue has seized.** However, academics have suggested that it is vital to facilitate as many people-to-people contacts as possible beyond government officials, through for example education and research programs. As our event on North Korea, last week at the European Parliament revealed, facilitating information into the country is essential. People are increasingly interested in consuming foreign media content, through which they discover a new reality and slowly realize that they have been living in a lie, imposed by the regime through indoctrination and propaganda.



Ms Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy, European Parliament political adviser

Other speakers were:

Jang Haeseong: He spoke about *The Actual Condition of North Korean Literature and North Korean Defectors' Humanities from North Korean Authors' Point of View.*

Nam Jung Wook: His paper was entitled *"Bandi is not the Solzhenitsyn of North Korea"*.

and some defectors.

CNN

On 30 March, CNN reported on the publishing of the book with a report filming the publishers and the speakers of the conference at the DMZ near the Freedom Bridge while they were reading aloud the best pages of the book.

(See <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/02/asia/north-korea-the-accusation>)



Willy Fautré (Human Rights Without Frontiers) reading a recent poem of Bandi at Freedom Bridge on the border between South Korea and North Korea under the eye of CNN's camera (29 March 2017)

(*) 'The Accusation' is a collection of short stories secretly written by Bandi from 1989 to 1995 and smuggled from North Korea a few years ago. Bandi still lives in North Korea today. The collection overwhelms with powerful emotions depicting the inner life, dominated by fear and anxiety, but also by love and affection of everyday North Koreans trying to make a sense of their world. Smuggled out in 2013 by South Korean human rights activist Do Hee-youn, the manuscript was published in Seoul in 2014 but remained unnoticed. Today the book can be read in French, English, Finnish, Norwegian, Spanish, Italian, soon Hungarian, Japanese and others to follow. 'Bandi is love, Bandi is an act of great love', Mr. Do said at the conference in Seoul gathering publishers of 'The Accusation' and human rights activists, bringing together literature and human rights, two of the most essential things the world needs to encourage and embrace, protect and guarantee.