



Trial against IPA Freedom to Publish Prize-Winner Irfan Sancı Continues Tomorrow in an Istanbul Court IPA Calls for his Immediate Acquittal

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Publisher Irfan Sancı (Sel Yayıncılık/Publishing), recipient of the “2010 IPA Freedom Prize—Special Award” and translator Suha Sertabiboglu are again brought to trial on obscenity charges (Art. 226, Turkish penal code) for publishing William Burroughs’ *The Soft Machine*. This is the latest in a series of trials targeting publisher Sancı and his translations of contemporary foreign literature. The International Publishers Association (IPA) will observe the second court hearing tomorrow (9:00 a.m. in Caglayan). If convicted, Sancı and Sertabiboglu face between 6 months and 3 years in prison. IPA calls for their immediate acquittal, and for an end to the obscenity trials against publishers and translators of works by foreign writers that are freely published outside Turkey.

Says Anders Heger, member of IPA’s Freedom to Publish Committee (FTPC), who will observe the court hearing tomorrow on behalf of IPA: “That the recipient of the “2010 IPA Freedom Prize — Special Award” is again facing obscenity charges – this time for having published 2,500 copies of William Burroughs’ novel, *The Soft Machine* in Turkish translation - is simply mind-blowing and disappointing. First published in 1961, Burrough’s book is seen as a classic of the Beat Generation. IPA calls for Sancı’s and Sertabiboglu’s immediate acquittal”.

IPA Board Member and FTPC Chair Bjørn Smith-Simonsen adds: "Last year, Irfan Sancı had already been sued under paragraph 2 of Article 226 of the Turkish penal code (TPC; obscenity) for having published several books, including Apollinaire's *Adventures of the Young Don Juan*. IPA campaigned for his acquittal, recalling the Turkish authorities that the European Court of Human Rights had already condemned Turkey in 2010 for violating Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) for having banned Apollinaire in 1999". The Chair of the IPA FTPC further notes: “The obscenity charges that publisher Sancı and the translator of Burroughs’ *The Soft Machine* face also violate Article 10 of the ECHR. Like last year, the Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Minors from Harmful Publications decided that Burroughs’ work was not literature! The process that is being applied and the decision itself made by this governmental board are undemocratic, anachronistic and unworthy of a modern and open society. Sancı is being harassed for doing his publisher’s job. These practices should be stopped and Sancı and his colleagues like the owner of the Ayrinti publishing house should be left alone”.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Sel Publishing: Publisher Irfan Sancı (Sel Yayıncılık/Publishing), recipient of the “2010 IPA Freedom Prize—Special Award”, and the translator of Apollinaire's *Adventures of the Young Don Juan*, were acquitted by an Istanbul court in December 2010. IPA, which observed the trial, had welcomed their acquittal, hoping that this would lead to other publishers' acquittals and a significant decrease in freedom to publish trials in Turkey. Sadly, this has not been the case. The owner of Sel publishing, Irfan Sancı, was being sued under Article 226 of the Turkish penal code (TPC; obscenity) for having published this book by Apollinaire, as well as Ben Mila's *The Fairy's Pendulum*, and *Letters of a Learned and Well-mannered French Bourgeois Lady* by P.V., facing up to 9 years in jail.

In May 2010, despite an experts' report concluding that these three books published by Sel were works of literature, an Istanbul court decided to send these books to the Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Minors from Harmful Publications for review, deciding whether they constitute literature or obscenity. This was a first for this Board established in 1927. In February 2010, the European Court of Human Rights had condemned Turkey for violating Article 10 of the ECHR for having banned and condemned, already under Art. 226 TPC, another book by Apollinaire: *Eleven Thousand Rods* published in Turkey by Rahmi Akdas in 1999, ruling that censorship of this book “hindered public access to a work belonging to the European literary heritage”.

The current case against the Turkish translation of Burroughs' *Soft Machine* published by Sel (www.selyayincilik.com/selpublishing.asp) was brought following an investigation by the Board for Protection of Minors from Harmful Publications. The Prime Ministerial Board pronounced the book as "not compatible with the morals of society and the people's honour", "injurious to sexuality" and "generally repugnant". A number of academics from various Turkish university literature departments have been asked for their view on whether the book can be considered pornography of literature, and their opinions should form part of the hearing.

Ayrinti Publishing: The publisher and translator of the Turkish translation of *Snuff* by Chuck Palahniuk will also be brought to trial on obscenity charges. The Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Minors from Harmful Publications found in May 2011 that there were grounds for indictment. If convicted, the owner of Ayrinti Publishing, Hasan Basri Çiplak and the book's translator, Funda Uncu, also face between 6 months and 3 years in prison.

More about IPA:

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the global non-governmental organisation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing worldwide. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for cultural and political advancement worldwide. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate. IPA currently has 65 member associations in 53 countries.

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