



**THE WRITERS'
UNION OF CANADA**

200-90 Richmond Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1P1

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For immediate release

WRITERS' UNION DEPLORES PROPOSAL TO BURN CANADIAN NOVEL IN HOLLAND

Toronto - The Writers' Union of Canada is decrying the proposal by an organization of Dutch-Surinamese to burn the best-selling Canadian novel *The Book of Negroes*, by award-winning author, Lawrence Hill.

"The burning of books represents censorship at its worst," says Greg Hollingshead, Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada. "While we recognize the sensitivity over the use of the word 'Negro' in the book's title, the *Book of Negroes* is a real document and Mr. Hill uses it deliberately to underscore the plight of African Americans being shipped from New York to Nova Scotia in 1783."

Upset by the literal Dutch translation of "Negroes" in the title, Roy Groenberg, chairman of the Dutch group, Federation for Honour and Reparation of Slavery in Suriname, declared that his group would burn Mr. Hill's book in Amsterdam. *The Book of Negroes* is the actual title of a British naval ledger of 3,000 freed Loyalist slaves requesting permission to enter Nova Scotia in 1783. Lawrence Hill's book traces the fictional story of 11-year-old Aminita Diallo who was abducted from her African home and sent to slavery in North Carolina before arriving in Nova Scotia.

The book is published in Canada by HarperCollins. The original title was also rejected by Mr. Hill's publisher in the U.S. where the title is *Someone Knows My Name*.

The Writers' Union of Canada is our country's national organization representing professional authors of books. Founded in 1973, the Union is dedicated to fostering writing in Canada, and promoting the rights, freedoms, and economic well-being of all writers. For more information, please visit www.writersunion.ca.

- 30 -

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