

Prof.Dr.Tugrul INAL:

Dear Colleagues, dear guests, dear students

Our speaker today is Dr.Terry CARLBOM, the International Secretary of International PEN, which has 134 Centres in 90 countries.

International PEN was founded in 1921. As an acronym, it originally referred to Poets, Playwrights, Essayists and Novelists. As a worldwide association of writers, a leading voice of literature, PEN works to promote friendship, intellectual cooperation and goodwill among writers, to foster understanding through literature, to dispel class, race and national hatreds. It upholds freedom of expression. Believing in the ideal that literature should be a bridge between cultural and national borders, International PEN brings together writers, publishers and journalists from 90 countries. International PEN is a Non Governmental Organization which is in formal consultative relations with UNESCO.

Membership to PEN is open to all qualified writers, journalists, publishers, translators and historians who subscribe to the aims stated in the Charter of International PEN without regards to nationality, language, colour or religion. Other supporters of the promotion of literature and freedom to write can be associate members.

International PEN's Charter embodies four main objectives:

- 1- To promote literature and linguistic rights
- 2- To promote to read and write
- 3- To work on behalf of persecuted writers worldwide
- 4- To build a community of writers in PEN Centres in every region of the world

The main programmes of International PEN are: Writers in Prison Committee, Writers for Peace Committee, Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee, Women Writers Committee, Writers in Exile Network and ***PEN International Magazine***. This magazine is published twice a year by International PEN in London. It contains a lively mixture of poems and short stories; papers delivered at International PEN Congresses and conferences; reviews on contemporary literature in languages of lesser currency; articles; and a section of information on and writing by imprisoned writers.

Prof. Tugrul INAL
Dean
Faculty of Letters
Hacettepe University

Terry CARLBOM (Ph.D.)

(ENGLISH)

**Terry Carlbom/ draft address at the Hacettepe University Monday May 5 – 2003
(version 1)**

International P.E.N. and the Role of the Intellectual in Western Society from Emile Zola to Our Days

Dear Dean, dear academic colleagues, dear students,

I thank the Dean most kindly for his introductory words. Having been an academic myself, at the Department of Political Science at the University of Uppsala for most of my professional life, it is both an honour and a pleasure to be invited here to the Hacettepe University.

Today, I would like to talk about International PEN, but I would also like to broaden the seminar by discussing a very closely related topic _ the responsibility of the Intellectual and the Writer in present-day society. I, maybe naturally, represent a West-European view _ I would be most interested to listen to your perspective too.

On January 13th 1898, the French writer Émile Zola wrote the arguably most notable single newspaper article of the last hundred years. It was called “J’accuse” _ I accuse!, and it was published in the Paris newspaper “Aurore”. It caused uproar. Why?

The background was an infected climate of French nationalism and narrow-minded, anti-Semitic chauvinism. An officer, Captain Dreyfus, had been accused and condemned by a military court for spying for the enemy. It was suspected in large circles that there had been a miscarriage of justice in this secret military trial, but as captain Dreyfus also was a Jew, and above all the honour of the military was concerned, everybody kept silent _ even when evidence pointed to the fact that another officer was the real spy. What Zola’s article did was to have the courage to speak up when all others kept silent. Through forcing the matter into the public space, the politicians had to face a most uncomfortable issue: can _raison d’état_, reasons of State, ever be an excuse for trampling on the rights of an individual citizen?

The intellectual answer in our times is no. But only many years later was captain Dreyfus finally acquitted in a re-trial. By then, Émile Zola had paid dearly; he himself was convicted for offending the honour of the army, went into exile, and died 1902. But this he expected _ and yet he wrote his articles A monument to the importance of the civil courage of an individual.

In Western intellectual history, the Dreyfus affair becomes a milestone along the road from the general heritage of the Age of Enlightenment, or The Age of Reason, to contemporary society. It started the modern, still ongoing, debate about the role of the intellectual in society. Does the intellectual _ however we may define that elusive term _ have a special responsibility for the qualities of civil society?

A decade later, the role of the Intellectuals was again under pressure, during the waves of uninhibited nationalism of the First World War, Bertrand Russell, the great philosopher and mathematician, just to mention one name, was sent to jail for pacifism when he opposed the war.

International PEN was founded in 1921. This was immediately after the Great War when national passions were still flaring, a lady writer in England had the idea of founding a club for writers, where, in brief, they could just be whoever they might be, of whatever nationality, but as writers interested in discussing matters concerning literature “in a space free from nationalism”. She wanted to reopen the links between English, French, Belgian and German

writers. She got a group of great names together, and in 1921 the club was founded. Surprisingly rapidly it caught on and within two years there were some twenty Centres all over the world, and more followed.

PEN attracted great names: Some Nobel Prize Winners. At first it was quite certainly a literary club. It was decidedly international, and individualistic: freedom from nationalism means that a person came as an individualistic writer - never as a representative of national politics in any sense. You must not carry a ruck-sack of heavy political or national convictions or ambitions when you come to PEN.

Of course we all have an identity usually linked to language or place of birth or cultural heritage. The important thing is though, that YOU as an individual define this identity. And if you do not reserve the right to define yourself-be sure-someone else will always be prepared to define YOU!

So, how did this PEN idea turn out?

In nearly all countries, PEN has to a large extent an overlapping membership with national associations of writers. We are not in competition with any other organization. PEN offers the “value added” aspect of individual internationalism: A space for your writers to meet colleagues from abroad, a circle of solidarity when freedom to write is under threat.

So what was the relationship between Zola and the PEN Club? History itself gave the answer. When Hitler started burning books, Mussolini imprisoned journalists, and Franco strangled poets, International PEN rose as best it could to rise to the defence of colleagues everywhere. Promoting literature, and defending freedom to write, are indivisible elements of the same phenomenon.

After the Second World War, International PEN faced the challenges of the Cold War, again pressurizing intellectuals everywhere to “take sides”. This is the background to the great philosophical debate in the fifties, between French writers Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. In brief, Sartre said, “be engaged, get involved in politics” _ and Camus said: no, the intellectual must distance himself, and be the independent commentator. The writer_s loyalty, held Camus, is primarily to his intellectual mission, to analyse, formulate and make visible “la Condition Humaine”, in all the paradoxes, challenges and passions of human life. International PEN tries openly and honestly to combine both.

Today, International PEN is the oldest international writers organisation in the world. It is also the largest. We have formal consultative links to UNESCO. In every country, PEN members can be members of their national writers organisations too. There is no contradiction in this - PEN can additionally offer to be an international link for writers; a platform for national presentation when appropriate, a forum for discussion when wanted, and a circle of solidarity when needed. We have a very active section in our Standing Committee for Writers in Prison. Every PEN Centre is independent under our charter and membership platform documents, in what meetings and discussions it wants to arrange. Mostly, their theme and participants will be international.

Finally, in trying to answer the question posed: what is the role of the intellectual in contemporary society? PEN’s answer is: writers must be seen primarily as individuals,

engaged in a creative process which is intrinsically linked to the humanistic qualities /delete/
we want to characterise a modern society.

As individuals, they must have a birthright to express themselves in the language of their choice _ how else can one encourage true creativity? Writers must by definition be free to use their pen. They must share an idea of being loyal to something I will call “concerned humanistic individualism” _ meaning that a true intellectual can never allow himself or herself to become a tool of others, or specific party political purposes. To be able to stand aside to analyse, yet answer the call when colleagues are in distress, you must keep your intellectual independence, and independence of thought. These are the qualities we are looking for. They are expressed in our Charter document.

Ours is not the solidarity of the collective herd _ it is the solidarity of the concerned and caring individual, a solidarity with a fragile world and fragile civilisations, - and the solidarity that can provide comfort in the sometimes very lonely process of human creative writing.

These are our ideals; - tell me - are they possible???

Thank you.

TERRY CARLBOM