



**pen**  
READERS CIRCLE

The PEN  
International  
Readers Circle



‘PEN’s campaign to protect the life of someone imprisoned somewhere in the Kazakh steppes, has touched all our hearts’

**ASKAR AIDARKHAN, SON OF IMPRISONED KAZAKH POET ARON ATABEK, AUGUST 2013**



‘I would like to express my deepest thanks to all the PEN members who sent me letters and postcards...they were what kept me going.’

**PEN TURKEY MEMBER, HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER AND ACTIVIST, MUHARREM ERBEY**



‘[I] don’t have strong enough words to thank you for all the help that you have provided over the last three years...throughout the duration of my incarceration...’

**CAMEROONIAN WRITER AND ACTIVIST ENOH MEYOMESSE WRITES TO PEN ON HIS RELEASE (27 APRIL 2015)**



‘Many thanks to PEN and for your solidarity. We know that the visibility that you provide can save lives.’

**SANJUANA MARTÍNEZ MONTEMAYOR, MEXICAN WRITER AND JOURNALIST**

# The Readers Circle

# The Writers Circle

# The Publishers Circle

# The Screen Circle

These four groups form a worldwide community that weaves together the worlds of literature and free expression. PEN's essential work is enabled by the commitment and the support of our own community - writers, readers, publishers, translators, bloggers and screen writers.

Now nearly 100 years old, PEN operates on the cutting edge of creativity and opinion. Every year we are extending our reach and developing our support to writers around the world, from providing asylum support to writers at risk in Syria and Iran to ensuring that children in Guinea have access to mother language literature and education.

PEN is needed now more than ever.

The Readers Circle brings together those passionate about the power of the written word to support the essential work of PEN International in protecting freedom of expression and celebrating literature.

Literature and freedom of expression only exist because they are shared between the writers and the readers of the world. Together we are as mighty as the pen, we are stronger than the sword.

PEN International is the world's only global association of writers. We work to promote literature and to strengthen freedom of expression on every continent. PEN was founded by the British poet, playwright and peace activist C.A. Dawson-Scott. Working with our first two Presidents, John Galsworthy and H.G. Wells, her idea was to create a space for writers everywhere to share ideas and a forum uniting writers and readers. Today, PEN includes tens of thousands of writers, translators, publishers, journalists and bloggers. We are organised into over 150 PEN Centres spanning more than 110 countries.

In the 96 years since its inception, PEN's active members have included **Chinua Achebe, Margaret Atwood, Aung San Suu Kyi, J.M Coetzee, Joseph Conrad, Nadine Gordimer, Günter Grass, Vaclav Havel, Eugène Ionesco, Mario Vargas Llosa, Norman Mailer, Amin Malouf, Arthur Miller, Toni Morrison, Pablo Neruda, Sofi Oksanen, Harold Pinter, Salman Rushdie, Orhan Pamuk, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Susan Sontag, Tom Stoppard, Rabindranath Tagore, Luisa Valenzuela, H.G. Wells, Liu Xiaobo** and many more.

The strength of PEN is its membership, consisting of over 30,000 writers committed to the power of the written word, literature and advocating for the right to freedom of expression. Our campaigns, events and programmes connect writers and readers, strengthen freedom of expression, defend linguistic rights and promote quality education across the globe.

PEN has been campaigning for freedom of expression against human rights violations, particularly against writers, since the 1920s. We formalized this work with the creation of the Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) in 1960. The WiPC was and is committed to supporting all persecuted writers in their own countries and elsewhere in the world. Each year we document and campaign on behalf of hundreds of writers who are, attacked, killed, arrested and imprisoned across the globe.

We negotiate and campaign for an end to impunity in Honduras and Mexico, where writers are being killed in growing numbers. We bring Ukrainian and Russian writers together. We encourage translations for lesser known and endangered languages. Our PEN Centres teach citizenship through literature in hundreds of public schools across Africa. Our Central Asian Centre runs a Freedom of Expression Summer School. Our Publishers Circle trains emerging publishers in Myanmar. We defend linguistic rights and, on the ground, work with endangered and marginalized languages in places such as Haiti and Kenya.

As PEN International approaches its centennial year, the need for what we do is constantly growing, and with it our need for support from our community. As the PEN International community grows, with the strength of the Readers, Writers, Publishers and Screen Circles, we can together work to meet this need.

**pen**  
INTERNATIONAL

# As a member of the Readers Circle you will receive:

Readers Circle Membership pack

News about PEN events around the world  
which you may wish to attend

Quarterly Readers Circle newsletters,  
with in-depth updates and analysis on freedom  
of expression news and featured literature

“What matters is the information,  
not what you think about it”

**ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA,  
PEN MEMBER AND MAIN CASE,  
ASSASSINATED IN 2006**

“The writer and the reader are locked in an intimate  
relationship. Literature is about writing, but equally about  
reading. Free expression means being able to speak out.  
But it equally means being allowed to listen.”

**JOHN RALSTON SAUL, PEN INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT EMERITUS  
AND MEMBER OF THE WRITERS CIRCLE**

*Image: Peter Englund, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy along with Nobel Prize winners, Herta Müller and PEN International President Emeritus, Mario Vargas Llosa, PEN International President Emeritus and member of the PEN International Writers Circle, John Ralston Saul, and Ola Larsmo, President of Swedish PEN come together in 2011 to call for the release of Dawit Isaak, Eritrean-Swedish Journalist and Poet.*



“Literature without feeling is like a  
man without a soul”

**HU SHIH, PEN WARTIME  
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL  
COMMITTEE 1941– 1947**



“You never do any good until you get into some trouble”

**ARTHUR MILLER, PEN INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 1966 -1969**

“The Pen Club is the only international organization of  
writers and I feel very honoured to be invited by Arthur  
Miller and the North American PEN Club. That writers  
communicate with one another, whatever their political  
beliefs may be, signifies a triumph of intelligence.”

**PABLO NERUDA, PEN MEMBER AND WINNER OF  
THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 1971**



“Literature is about writing, but equally  
about reading: every writer assumes a reader.”

**MARGARET ATWOOD, PEN VICE PRESIDENT AND MEMBER  
OF THE PEN INTERNATIONAL WRITERS CIRCLE**



**HEINRICH BÖLL** (PEN International President, 1971-1974) The German Nobel Prize winning novelist, was central to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's arrival and life in the West.

**ARTHUR MILLER** (PEN International President, 1965 -1969) Reached across the ideological barriers of the sixties to Pablo Neruda and others in order to show how literature could rise above politics.

**ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA** PEN member, Russian journalist, writer and human rights activist. Her dedication to journalism, freedom of expression and justice was unwavering. She was assassinated in 2006.

**H.G. WELLS** (PEN International President, 1933–1936) Chaired the historic 1933 Dubrovnik Conference when PEN expelled Nazi sympathizers; the first international organization to take such a stand.

**HU SHIH** (PEN Wartime International Presidential Committee, 1941–1947) Led the revolution which opened written Chinese to the broader public.

**VICTORIA OCAMPO** From the mid-1930s to the 1960s she was the leading voice of Argentinian PEN and a force across Latin America, a relentless advocate for others.

**LÉOPOLD SÉDAR SENGHOR** (1906-2001), a Senegalese poet, was the first president of Senegal, the founder of PEN Senegal and the first African member of *Académie française*.

Finally, **FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA** and **ARTHUR KOESTLER**, PEN's first two emblematic cases. They were arrested in 1936 and 1937, during the Spanish civil war. Garcia Lorca was executed. Koestler was saved just before his execution. A tragedy and a victory. Both are reminders that PEN is built on the voluntary engagement of writers and readers around the world in the cause of literature and free expression.

# Annual Membership in honour of outstanding PEN voices

Heinrich Böll  
**\$25,000 USD**

Arthur Miller  
**\$10,000 USD**

Anna Politkovskaya  
**\$5,000 USD**

H.G. Wells  
**\$1,000 USD**

Hu Shih  
**\$500 USD**

Victoria Ocampo  
**\$250 USD**

Léopold Sédar Senghor  
**\$100 USD**

Federico Garcia Lorca /  
Arthur Koestler  
(Student membership)  
**\$25 USD**

To become a member of the Readers Circle,  
please email Holly Strauss:

[Holly.strauss@pen-international.org](mailto:Holly.strauss@pen-international.org)

or

Sign up via the PEN International website:

[www.pen-international.org/join-pen-readers-circle](http://www.pen-international.org/join-pen-readers-circle)

*[From top left] Anna Politkovskaya. Assassinated in 2006. Alain Mabanckou presents Masande Ntshanga with the inaugural PEN International/New Voices Award in 2013. Jirō Asada, president of PEN Japan and member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Elena Poniatowska, Mexican journalist and PEN member. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Nobel Prize, on his arrival from Russia with Heinrich Boll, Nobel Prize, and former PEN International President (1971–74). Jennifer Clement, PEN International President. Isabel Allende, member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize, PEN International Vice President. Liu Xiaobo, Nobel Peace Prize, PEN main case, imprisoned since 2009. Razan al-Maghrabi, Libyan writer, journalist and winner of the 2015 Oxfam Novib/PEN Award with Karl Ove Knausgaard, member of the PEN International Writers Circle, and John Ralston Saul, PEN International President Emeritus and member of the PEN International Writers Circle, in The Hague, 2015. Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Prize, founder of the All-India PEN with Victoria Ocampo of PEN Argentina in Buenos Aires. John Galsworthy, Nobel Prize, first International President of PEN, Founder Catherine Amy Dawson-Scott and International Secretary Hermon Ould. Colm Tóibín, member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Salman Rushdie, member of the PEN International Writers Circle with Judith Butler and Sofi Oksanen, member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Arthur Miller, former PEN International President (1965–69) at the New York PEN Congress with Pablo Neruda, 1966. Yann Martel, member of the PEN International Writers Circle, with Margaret Atwood, PEN International Vice President and member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Hanan al-Shaykh, member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Elif Shafak, member of the PEN International Writers Circle. Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize, PEN member and former Main Case. Hu Shih, Chinese PEN Leader, part of the PEN International Wartime Presidential Committee.*

**pen**  
**READERS CIRCLE**

**pen**  
WRITERS CIRCLE

**pen**  
SCREEN CIRCLE

**pen**  
PUBLISHERS CIRCLE

To become a member of the Readers Circle, please email Holly Strauss:

**[Holly.strauss@pen-international.org](mailto:Holly.strauss@pen-international.org)**

or

Sign up via the PEN International website:

**[www.pen-international.org/join-pen-readers-circle](http://www.pen-international.org/join-pen-readers-circle)**