

Santiago, Chile, May 19, 1948

Hermon Ould Esq.
International Secretary,
PEN Clubs,
1, St. John's Gardens
LONDON, W.11.

Dear Mr. Ould:

I wish to request your valuable opinion on certain matters concerning the Pen Club de Chile. As its founder and Honorary Director, I have been asked to submit to your judgment those points which it has become necessary to solve as soon as possible.

Since December 1944, the Pen Club de Chile, associated to the London organization, has been directed in what we might call a dictatorial manner, by only four persons who have held their positions since then, the President, Mr. Latcham; the Secretary, Mrs. Reyes; and two directors, the Spaniard Trabal and a Mr. Del Solar. Elections are not carried out, as before, on fixed intervals, but only when they so determine, whereas the rules state that elections should be called every twelve months. On such occasions, they make a list of people of their acquaintance, even though not necessarily members of the institution, and present it to the voters, making things difficult for any one who does not wish to accept such names.

Another point to be questioned refers to the selection of the best book published in Chile each month. This section was created some years ago, but it is now directed by them in their own way, that is, by means of an anonymous jury, unknown to all, who selects only their own or their friends' works. Membership fees are not collected, thus leaving members automatically outside the organization and giving this minor group complete control.

Finally, a very serious point is that the monthly bulletin previously founded by another Directorate, is now edited with commercial views, as it is destined to praise and raise Rapa-nui Editors, of which entity Messrs. Trabal and Del Solar are Managers on salaries.

The above reasons have come to create a great disapproval as regards the Pen Club de Chile. The Vice-President, Mr. Augusto d'Halmar - a most prominent name in Chilean literature who was awarded the National Literature Prize in the year 1941 - has resigned to his position in view of the turn taken by the society. It is now May and no meeting has been called to verify new elections, on the pretext that the President is abroad.

In view of all the above, a group of members and prominent writers who would care to join the institution provided it were to take a normal course, have requested through the newspapers that a meeting be called to reelect the Directorate. I enclose cutting in this respect. Among the signatures are those of two writers who have already been awarded the National Literature Prize: Durand and V. D. Silva; and other prominent names in Chilean literature.

We have waited very long before presenting this special case to your judgment, as we were reluctant to trouble you with matters which should normally be solved within each centre. However, things do not appear to have any local solution and we are therefore forced to inform you of the situation, trusting that as Secretary General of the Head Institution, you will be good enough to give us your opinion on this case, helping us to solve our problem.

With sincere greetings, I am

Yours very truly,

María Flora Yáñez.

Kindly send your reply to my name at the following address:
Av. José Manuel Infante 85, Santiago, Chile.