

Sheffield
2 June 1978

Dear Joan,

The A-C.S. Committee met today in Liverpool and the main item on the Agenda was the question of using the subsidy of some £360 from Omnium Cultural towards a publication. (The grant was originally requested to fund the Vida Hispánica Catalan issue but, because of communication problems, only came through recently.) The idea now is for the money to be used to extend the VH initiative, and today we tried to set things in motion. We have set up an editorial sub-committee -Derek Lomax, David Barrass, Geoff Walker i un servidor- and it was unanimously agreed that we should ask you to join us so that we might benefit from your experience and expertise. We all very much hope that you will feel able to help.

We discussed and reached basic agreement over the outlines of a scheme, including some for the present unknown factors. The idea is to produce a volume giving a panorama of 'Catalonia in Europe', with commissioned essays, mainly from 'Anglo-Catalans', covering Catalan history and (probably less comprehensively) contributions in art, literature, music, etc. to European civilisation. We feel that there is a real need for such a book -which would, mutatis mutandis, follow the general lines of A Companion to Spanish Studies- since Alison Peers's Catalonia Infelix, despite V. Alba's recent effort, is now clearly inadequate as the standard history in English. Properly conceived and presented, we think that this kind of work could be well received and that it could appeal to a publisher on a normal commercial basis. The comparative approach would be stressed, and the 'selling' strategy would be to focus on the importance of Catalonia as a model 'minority nation and culture' such as are increasingly in the news. Obviously your guidance in this matter of viability will be invaluable. The question of whether it might be published by Dolphin (on a normal commercial basis) was obviously raised in our discussion, but now is not the time to propose this to you, for indeed there are considerations which might make possible alternatives preferable.

This letter is becoming interminable and, I fear, over-complicated, so I'll conclude with two final points.

1) The volume is to be published as the Society's homenatge to Batista i Roca, a gesture which we all feel is very appropriate (and overdue).

2) £360 is clearly not much as a subsidy these days. But it should be seen as a first instalment. The Society's general funds could probably make it up to £500 immediately and after that there are other possibilities for topping up the amount, including a further grant from Omnium Cultural. Would some sort of current account arrangement with a publisher be out of the question?

There is much more to discuss before we can think of launching the thing in earnest. I hope, though, that I've managed to put you in the picture and to persuade you that the scheme is feasible and worthy of your collaboration. We should all be grateful for your initial reaction, for any observations that occur to you and, we hope, for expression of your willingness to take the matter further with us.

Hoping to hear from you soon. All best wishes, as ever