

Minutes of a meeting of the Anglo-Catalan Society held in the  
Majorca Restaurant, Brewer St., W.1.  
on Saturday October 2nd, 1954.

Those present included members of staff of the Departments of Spanish of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Liverpool, Sheffield and Nottingham, and representatives of the B.B.C. and the Hispanic Council. Mrs. Helen Grant, Girton College, Cambridge, was in the chair.

Mr. Paul Russell-Gebbett (Nottingham) reported upon the response elicited from the circular letters sent out during the months May-July of this year. Some 44 circulars were distributed, of which 24 were returned. They showed that:

1. The interests of intending members lay primarily in the twin fields of the medieval history and literature of Catalonia, although most aspects of the country's culture were represented by at least one member.
2. The designation of the Society met with no serious objections.
3. It was felt that the Committee should be kept as small as possible; it was proposed that it might be composed of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two or more elected committee-members. It was further proposed that:
  - (a) offices be held for a period of one year
  - (b) the office of President be held initially by a Head of a Department of Spanish in a British University, but that this office should not be considered the sole prerogative of one such.
  - (c) Catalans be represented 'firmly' on the Committee.
4. The proposed subscription of £1 was in one or two cases considered excessive unless the publication of a journal or bulletin was envisaged - although generally the sum of £1 met with no violent opposition. However, proposals were made that:
  - (a) a reduced subscription of 10/6 or 7/6d. might be considered for research-students.
  - (b) life-members might be permitted to pay a compound subscription of £10, or £5 if over the retiring-age for University teachers.

5. In so far as concerned the time, place and nature of meetings of the Society it was felt that:

- (a) the Easter vacation period was more suitable to the majority of members than the Christmas one, although if the proposed Hispanists' Conference were to be held regularly during that period then a clash of dates might arise. Affiliation of the Anglo-Catalan Society to the Conference would dispose of this possible difficulty and render it a positive advantage.
- (b) the meeting-place should vary yearly between the more accessible of the British universities, with a possible greater frequency of meetings in Oxford, Cambridge and London. The Midland universities were felt to have obvious advantages, particularly for Irish and Scottish members.
- (c) the nature of the meetings should be primarily academic, with reading of one or more papers and general discussion. The principle of one invited speaker yearly from Catalonia proved to be generally acceptable.

In view of the suggestions contained in returned circulars that the Anglo-Catalan Society might usefully and profitably form a section of the proposed Hispanists' Conference, and prior to a general discussion of the advantages and disadvantages that might accrue to the Society from such affiliation, Professor Frank Pierce (Sheffield) was asked to report upon the meeting held in Sheffield on June 5th 1954 - at which were present the Heads of the Departments of Spanish of the Universities of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Nottingham and Sheffield. Professor Pierce, after relating in outline the resolutions of the Sheffield meeting proceeded to point out the advantages that in his view affiliation to the Hispanists' Conference would bring the Society. These were:

- 1. That the efforts of catalanists could thus be co-ordinated to the highest degree of efficiency
- 2. That by being able to present its case at a meeting of all interested in Hispanic studies the Society might best be able to interest those indifferent or even hostile to Catalan studies
- 3. That no reasonable objection could be raised to our Society on the score of its representing a separate element
- 4. That persons invited by the Society to attend or to address the section of the Conference represented by it would thus reach a wider audience, and in any case might more willingly accept any invitation extended.

Professor Pierce felt that by forming a part of the Hispanists' Conference the Society would have firmer foundations and would be strengthened rather than weakened. In the same way he felt that sections dealing with Luso-Brazilian, Hispano-American and Basque studies might be formed within the general framework of the Hispanists' Conference.

The ensuing general discussion brought out the following possible disadvantages arising from an affiliation with the Conference:

1. A loss of free action.
2. The difficulty of reconciling the aims of the Society - in which the furtherance of cultural contacts with Catalonia (by means of e.g. the interchange of British and Catalan students and the invitation of distinguished Catalans) were of prime importance. The Society's aims were not felt to be solely professional or academic.

The following recommendations were then made:

1. That the Society should go ahead with its plans as originally laid down, but should keep the organizing committee of the Hispanists' Conference fully informed of its activities. It was felt that in this way, if its recommendations were approved, some or all of its members might meet in 1956 as a Catalan section of the Conference.
2. That the Society's representatives should propose at the forthcoming St. Andrews meeting:
  - (a) that a Catalan section of the Conference be formed, being a part of and enjoying all the privileges of the Conference, with the right to invite its own lecturers and lay down its own conditions of membership
  - (b) that similar sections be formed devoting themselves especially to Luso-Brazilian, Hispano-American and Basque studies.

The following representatives were then elected:

President: Prof. Frank Pierce (Sheffield)  
 Secretary: Mr. Paul Russell-Gebbett (Nottingham)  
 Committee-  
 members: Dr. J.M. Batista i Roca  
           Sr. Joan Gili  
           Prof. J. Trueta

A provisional subscription of 10/- was approved, payable at the beginning of each academic year. It was recommended that it should be pointed out in this report that the subscription-rate will be revised in the event of affiliation of the Society to the Hispanists' Conference, and that meanwhile it should be understood that the activities of the Society have begun. It is hoped to arrange an 'acte d'homenatge' in honour of Dr. Charles Riba upon his arrival in this country in the late autumn.

Mr. Noel Marshall-Saunders' contribution was read upon the response elicited from the circular letters sent out during the months May-July of this year. The circulars were distributed, of which 24 were returned. They raised the following points:

1. The interests of intending members are primarily in the twin fields of the medieval history and literature of Catalonia, although most aspects of the latter were represented by at least one article.
2. The designation of the Society was still to be decided.
3. It was felt that the Society should be kept as small as possible. It was proposed that it might be elected by a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two or more elected committee members. It was further proposed that:
  - (a) offices be held for a period of one year;
  - (b) the office of President be held only by a member of a Department of Spanish in a British University, but that this office should not be considered the sole prerogative of one such;
  - (c) Catalans be represented fully on the Executive.
4. The proposed subscription of £1 was in one or two cases considered excessive unless the publication of a journal or bulletin was envisaged, although generally the sum of £1 met with no violent opposition. However, proposals were made:
  - (a) a reduced subscription of 10/6 or 7/6d. might be considered for Research-students;
  - (b) life-members might be permitted to pay a compound subscription of £20, or 15 if over the retiring-age for University teachers.