

Dear Colleague,

At its last Annual General Meeting the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland discussed the desirability of there being founded an International Association of Hispanic Studies to affiliate with the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes (FILLM). The matter had originally been raised by Dr. S.C. Aston, Secretary-General of FILLM, who had pointed out to us that Spanish was the only major language in the field of Modern Language Studies not yet represented on the Federation. Our Association decided that, if sufficient support were forthcoming from other countries, it should endeavour to hold an International Congress of Hispanic Studies which would meet with the express purpose of founding an International Association to apply for membership of FILLM. It is in connexion with this that I am writing to you.

As you will know, UNESCO set up in 1949 its Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines, membership of which was conceived in terms not of national bodies but of humanistic disciplines, organized as international associations. In order that Modern Languages and Literatures should be represented on this Council, FILLM was founded in Florence in 1951, growing out of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Littéraire Moderne which had been in existence since 1928. The general aim of FILLM is "the promotion, development and encouragement, through international co-operation, of the scholarly study of modern and medieval languages and literature." To this end it holds regular International Congresses; but it also has particular and practical aims in the furtherance of research, and it has already sponsored a number of bibliographies with UNESCO subventions; other possible enterprises that it may sponsor with the same financial support are the revision and reprinting of some of the great dictionaries, the reproduction of MS material in the great libraries, and so on.

Membership of FILLM is open only to international associations. These may be dedicated to the furtherance of the studies of one particular language and/or its literature, or of several languages. Thus among its members are the Association Internationale des Études Françaises, the Association Internationale des Études Slaves, the Associazione Internazionale per gli Studi di Lingua e Letterature Italiane,

the International Association of University Professors of English, and so on. Spanish is represented in FILLM only indirectly, in so far as individual hispanists are members of the Modern Humanities Research Association and the Modern Language Association of America, which bodies are affiliated with FILLM. The Federation itself feels the lack of, and would welcome, an Asociación Internacional de Estudios Hispánicos.

If such body came into being and were affiliated with FILLM it would qualify for grants from UNESCO for such projects as the compilation and publication of bibliographies and dictionaries. Subsidies from this source are not yet available to hispanists since they can be granted only to international associations and not to national organizations or individuals. The Constitution of FILLM stipulates that for an association to qualify for membership it must fulfil the following requirements among others:

- (a) "it shall be international in its aims and outlook, free of political aims and independent of any form of external control";
- (b) "its membership shall be open to scholars of any nationality";
- (c) "it shall have a membership of not less than 50 and comprising ~~scholars~~ scholars of not less than five self-governing nations."

Since as far as we know we are the only national Association of Hispanists in existence, we are the only body in a position to take the initiative in this matter. We therefore propose to sponsor an International Congress of Hispanists to be held in England in 1961 with the express purpose of founding an Asociación Internacional de Estudios Hispánicos. This aim cannot be fulfilled unless we can be sure that at least five different nations will be represented by at least a few hispanic scholars actually present. We are therefore approaching some of our colleagues in Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain and the United States of America in order to discover what measure of practical support there may be for such a Congress.

I should be very grateful, therefore, if you could kindly give me your answer to the following questions:

- (a) Do you think it desirable that an Asociación Internacional de Estudios Hispánicos be founded with a view to its affiliation with FILLM?

- (b) Would you yourself consider attending a Congress of Hispanists in England in 1961 convened for this purpose?
- (c) Do you think the idea of such a Congress would meet with the general support of hispanists in your country?
- (d) Is there any organization, group or individual in your country who would be prepared to canvass support for the Congress? If not, would it be possible for us to be furnished with a list of all, or as many as possible of the teachers of Spanish in the universities of your country?

If I am able to report to the next Annual General Meeting of our Association, which will be held in March, that our proposal has met with sufficient support, we shall immediately begin preparations for the Congress.

Thanking you in anticipation, I am

Yours sincerely,

Professor of Spanish Studies in
the University of London.
President of the Association of
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