

# THE JAUME BOFILL FOUNDATION



FROM THE BEGINNING, THE FOUNDATION ENCOURAGED THE PREPARATION OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN UNIVERSITIES ABROAD, ESPECIALLY IN THOSE SUBJECTS IN WHICH THE SPANISH UNIVERSITIES FELT MOST KEENLY THE DICTATORSHIP'S IDEOLOGICAL OPPRESSION: SOCIOLOGY, POLITICS, ETC.

JORDI PORTA DIRECTOR

**D**uring the sixties, and especially from 1962 to 1972, various cultural projects emerged, promoted by those sectors of society that had for a long time been fighting Franco's dictatorship. These initiatives took advantage of the cracks which had been opened by the mild liberalization carried out by the team of Opus Dei ministers who had recently come to power. In the publishing world, in educationalist movements and in the citizens' associations, there was an attempt to bring to the surface certain institutional platforms that were juridically tolerated but that grew from a clandestine movement with broad popular support.

Within this set of initiatives we find the *Fundació Jaume Bofill*, created in 1969 in memory of the Catalan philosopher who died in 1965. The rare combination of people from the background described above and a patrimony generously given over to these aims and ideals provided a real impulse to the desire to work together for the cultural recovery of the country.

From the beginning, the foundation encouraged the preparation of students and teachers in universities abroad, especially in those subjects in which the Spanish universities felt most keenly the ideological oppression of the dictatorship: sociology, politics, etc. It also made it possible for social scientists to get together to analyse and reflect on the questions which would have to be faced in the then uncertain democratic future, with a view to a social and political organization which would satisfy the aspirations of the people: autonomy, language and culture, territorial organization, popular participation, etc.

With the arrival of democracy, the foundation has shifted its social function and, while remaining faithful to its original concerns, has tried to present a public image of general service, independent of any political, religious or business organization.

In this new phase, the foundation is determined to promote social sciences applied to the study of the immediate social surroundings, though aiming to embrace questions whose interest goes beyond the limits of Catalan society, either encouraging comparative studies or promoting



international exchange of the results and methods of the work carried out. To this end, the foundation regularly awards research grants in the fields of sociology, politics, population studies, history, anthropology, economics, town-planning, etc., but also commissions research groups to develop a programme of investigation which will allow collaboration with investigators from other countries in the treatment of a general topic.

An important example of these programmes is the study of Catalan and Spanish voting patterns as from the first elections, in 1977. All the elections since that date have been taken into consideration and the results have appeared in the collection *Estudis electorals*, published by the foundation. The eight volumes

gather together the results of all the analyses that have been made of the election results, as well as the papers presented at the two international conferences on electoral sociology held in 1978 and 1984, and organized by the *Fundació Jaume Bofill* with the collaboration of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Another investigation which should be pointed out is the study of Catalan population in comparison with that of other autonomous communities of the Spanish state and that of the regions of Europe. This study, which appeared recently, is an attempt to compare the movement and growth of population in the different areas mentioned.

The foundation also intends to collaborate with other bodies in the joint funding of an investigation project. In this sense, it is important to mention, for example, that the *Fundació Jaume Bofill*, with the collaboration of the Volkswagen Foundation, is carrying out a study of the trade-union situation in Spain in comparison with the evolution and crisis of trade-unionism in Europe.

Another question of importance for the coming years is the study of technological innovation and its impact on social structure and cultural behaviour. This programme includes studies—one of them carried out in collaboration with Barcelona polytechnic—their publication and the organization of debates on their results.

Finally, it should be mentioned that one of the concerns that influenced the establishment of the foundation in 1979, was and still is one of the basic preoccupations of the present moment: to give transparency, through study and debate, to two apparently contradictory but dialectically complementary social and political processes. It is a question of analysing, on the one hand, the growing need for integration in supra-national or supra-state entities, thus allowing effective communication and international solidarity, and, on the other hand, of underlining the importance of maintaining and strengthening the identity of national minorities who want control of their own affairs and demand a new territorial organization of power as a means to effectively consolidating real democracy. ■