

## Literary Censorship in Sixteenth-Century Spain

by J. M. de BUJANDA  
*University of Sherbrooke*

No historian need to be told the importance of the published page for an understanding of a people's cultural, political, social, religious and artistic life. Take for example Henri Martin's recent work, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*.<sup>1</sup> Obviously a people's writings not only mirror its life but also constitute a prime factor in its evolution, whether to transform it or freeze it into immobility. It is hardly surprising, then, that governments and established institutions seek sometimes to direct such a factor, sometimes to control it totally. The study of how societies ensure their own survival is extremely important, and sixteenth-century Spain is a case in point. As the first European power engaged in the discovery and colonisation of the New World, the Spain of Charles V and Philip II exercised control over literary activity, above all by means of its much-discussed Inquisition. It has been the subject of a considerable number of works, but these are polemics rather than history in our view and its real history is yet to be written, above all the history of its supervision of the printing press.

His impressions formed by Jose Antonio Llorente's *Critical History of the Inquisition* and its list of a hundred and eighteen men persecuted for their thinking, the liberal historian took censorship to be the chief cause of Spain's cultural and political decay and its scientific and religious isolation.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the traditional Catholic position, as expressed particularly by Menendez Pelayo, not only denied this charge but affirmed that Spain's magnificent literary explosion in its Golden Age was due in no small measure to the watchfulness of the Holy Office.<sup>3</sup>

The tolerant atmosphere of medieval Spain is well known, three races and three religions side by side, Christian, Jewish and Arab. This medieval pluralism rested on freedom of speech and respect for the writer's work. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols. Genève 1969. See also Lucien Febvre et Henri-Jean Martin, *L'apparition du livre*, Paris, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> First published in French in Paris between 1817 and 1820, this work has been translated into a number of languages and many times reissued.

<sup>3</sup> Notably in *Historia de Los Heterodoxos españoles*, Madrid, 1880. New edition, Madrid, 1963, in 7 vols.

translations of Arab work into Castilian show that there was even intellectual collaboration between those professing ideas and religious beliefs later thought to be irreconcilable. The reaction against ethnic and religious minorities, which went with the unification of Spain's various kingdoms, and which was evident in the establishment of the Inquisition in 1478, created a climate favorable to literary censorship. But notwithstanding the destruction of a rather large number of Talmudic and Koranic works in the autos-da-fés at the close of the fifteenth century, the laws of Castile and Aragon were extremely liberal regarding the printing and sale of books. Moreover the setting up of local printing presses and the importing of foreign books were favored by the concession of numerous privileges and fiscal exemptions, as we see in the arrangements made by the Toledo Cortes of 1480.<sup>4</sup> With this help the book trade developed quickly in the last years of the fifteenth century.

The measures taken by the Catholic monarchs in 1502 had a precedent in ecclesiastical legislation. During the later Middle Ages, a number of institutions, such as the Franciscans and several universities, had begun the examination of manuscripts written by their members before permitting their circulation. The first known cases of such prior censorship in a particular district are those of the Bishop of Wurzburg in 1482 and the Bishop of Mainz in 1485. At the request of certain German bishops these measures were sanctioned by the papal authority of Innocent VIII, who in 1487 expedited a bull which already contained the principal elements of subsequent legislation. Though this decree looks as though it was meant for the universal Church, it does not seem to have exercised influence outside of Cologne and a few other German dioceses.<sup>5</sup> In 1501 Alexander VI addressed the Constitution *Inter multiplices* to the German dioceses of Cologne, Mainz, Trèves and Magdeburg, establishing prior censorship in clear concise terms.<sup>6</sup> The Pope gave as grounds for this decision the development of the printing industry which spread books containing propositions incompatible with the Catholic faith. In the sequel the issue of licences to print was to be the office of the diocesan ordinary. These measures were extended to the whole Church by Leo X at the time of the Lateran Council, 1515.<sup>7</sup> The problem of controlling the

---

<sup>4</sup> *Novísima recopilación de leyes de España*, 1. VIII, t. XV, vol. IV, Madrid, 1805, pp. 120.121.

<sup>5</sup> Edouard Gagnon, *La censure des livres*. Les thèses canoniques de Laval, n. 3, Université Laval, Québec, 1944, p. 33, and D. H. Wiest, *Precensorship of Books*, Washington, 1953, pp. 15-18.

<sup>6</sup> D. H. Wiest, *Precensorship...*, p. 19, and E. Gagnon, *La censure ....* pp. 34.35.

<sup>7</sup> D. H. Wiest, *Precensorship...*, pp. 19-20, and E. Gagnon, *La censure ...*, pp. 35-37.

printing press was to preoccupy the Roman Church throughout its history. The Council of Trent set down precise norms in the course of Sessions XXIII and XXV, and these were promulgated later on by Pius IV to introduce the 1564 index of forbidden books. To see to all the problems surrounding publishing Pius V set up the Congregation of the Index in 1571.<sup>8</sup>

Sixteenth-century Spain, though indirectly affected by the Roman measures, had its own independent and somewhat different press control policy. By the Pragmatic of July 8, 1502, Ferdinand and Isabella set up prior censorship both before printing and before issuing a permit for importing books. Every bookseller had to have foreign publications examined and every printer, moreover, must have a printing licence, to be issued by the following officials: at Valladolid and Grenada, by the President of the Audienza; at Toledo by the Archbishop; at Seville by the Archbishop; at Burgos by the Bishop; at Salamanca and Zamora by the Bishop of Salamanca. Those who failed to meet these requirements, as well as losing all their books and profits, were to pay a fine, to be divided into three equal parts, one for the accuser, one for the judge, one for the royal treasury. Furthermore they were no longer authorized to engage either in printing or in merchandising. Note, too, that the book was to be examined by qualified scholars properly salaried. The measures also specify the criteria for forbidding the publication of books as apocryphal, superstitious, condemned, useless or dangerous. Though it could sometimes be exercised by ecclesiastics, it was a question of state censorship. These 1502 measures set up the legal framework for the printing industry during the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

In 1554 the Royal Council deplored the fact that printing licences and permits had been conceded on weak grounds, and useless and unfitting books had been published. It was decided that in future the President of the Royal Council grant the printing licence. It also instituted a sort of legal deposit, when it ordered that the original be kept by the Council. Here we see the centralisation of prior censorship in the hands of civil authority.<sup>10</sup> And on September 2, 1558, Philip II's Spain issued the precise legislation which would remain in force for several centuries. But in order to grasp the depths of this matter, namely, a law, described as a bloody law, and promulgated by the Infanta Dona Juana in Philip's absence, one has to take into account the entire historical context of the early years of Philip's reign and reconstruct the political, religious and cultural climate of those decisive years. Then it was

---

<sup>8</sup> E. Gagnon, *La censure* .... pp. 41-46, and D. H. Wiest, *Prior censorship* ...., pp. 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> *Novísima recopilación de leyes de España*, 1. VIII, t. XVI, vol. IV, Madrid, 1805, pp. 122-123.

<sup>10</sup> *Novísima recopilación* ..., 1. VIII, t. XVI, vol. 4, p. 123.

that a whole series of measures were taken destined to affect the evolution not only of Spain but of Europe as a whole, for centuries.

Historians draw attention to the importance of the rapid changes which occurred between 1556, the year Charles V retired, and 1563, the year Trent closed. The peace of Augsburg, 1555, with its formal recognition of the Reformation, meant the total abandonment of the pacifist ideals of all those who followed Erasmus in the attempt to avoid a definitive rupture. When the Inquisitor of the Roman Church, Cardinal Carafa, mounted the pontifical throne, it gave the Catholic Reform a note of intransigence which drowned out those who thought they could serve as a bridge between Rome and Reform.<sup>11</sup> Even though Spanish soldiers continued to do battle in Italy and the Low Countries, Spain turned in on herself, both intellectually and religiously. The great preoccupation of the Emperor during his last years in the monastery at Yuste, and of his son Philip, the new king, was to prevent Spain from being submerged by the religious conflict dividing Europe. A royal order in July, 1559, ordered all Spanish students abroad to return home within four months. In future they could go only to the traditional universities of Bologna, Naples and Coimbra. While this quarantine was being created to prevent Spain's contamination by the Lutheran epidemic, the Spanish Inquisition took on the task of purging the country from within. The famous trials and autos-da-fés of Valladolid, 1559, and Seville, 1560, nipped Spanish Protestantism in the bud. And the strict control the press then underwent pursued the same aim.

A letter from the Supreme Council of the Inquisition, addressed to Philip on November 17, 1557, recalling the considerable number of foreign-printed books found in possession of those imprisoned by the Holy Office in Seville, asked his Majesty to take energetic action to prevent the diffusion of heresy by the printed page.<sup>12</sup> On June 12, 1558, the Inquisitor-General, Don Fernando de Valdes, had a memo sent to the Emperor demanding the adoption of the following measures: that all books imported be examined by inquisitors, and their titles be listed in the registers of the judges; that the sale of all foreign-printed books in Spanish be forbidden; when it comes to printing, that the inquisitors institute prior censorship and that it be compulsory to print the author's name, the printer's name and the place of publication with every book; that as to sale, every bookshop provide the public a list of works in stock and a list of forbidden books; that no one may acquire volumes from visitors; and that to see to the application of these measures there be monthly inspection of bookshops. Finally, Valdes

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, México, 1966, pp. 699-710, and Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, 1966, t. 2, pp. 249-275.

<sup>12</sup> Archivo de Simancas, *Estado*, 121, fol. 165.

wondered whether or not to command the recall of all works in Castilian so that it could in due course be ascertained which of them were permissible.<sup>13</sup>

Several of Valdes's recommendations turn up in the famous law of September 7, 1558.<sup>14</sup> First, from the law of 1502, the existing prior censorship was called to mind, together with the Inquisition's power, as censor, to suppress books already in circulation. But the royal law, instead of giving the inquisitors or the Inquisition a right to inspect before printing, reaffirms that this must be done directly by the civil authorities. As for book importing, it forbade the entry of works already condemned by the Spanish Inquisition, and also of anything in Spanish published outside Castile, even if it came from Aragon, Valencia, Catalonia or Navarre. Spanish books already imported were to be shown to Crown officials who were to send the list of them to the Royal Council. Infingers of this law incurred the death penalty and confiscation of all their property. To print any work, Spanish or Latin, the publisher (subject to the same penalties) must be forearmed with a licence from the Royal Council.

Next the procedure for the examination of books was detailed. The censor was to sign every page of the original and indicate at the end the number of pages, and state that what corrections had been made. On printing, the publisher was to present two copies to the Council, for comparison with the original. The licence granted by the Council must be reproduced at the beginning of the book with the author's name, the printer's name, the place and date of the printing, and the price of the volume. The law also decreed a register of licences granted, to be kept by the Council. Procedures for reprinting were the same, except for liturgical works, whose re-issue was under the ecclesiastical authorities. It was also pointed out that works printed directly by the Inquisition or by the Crusade Commissioners were not subject to censorship by the Royal Council. The exemption also covered printings of the minutes of trials.

Here we must note the particular arrangements for publication concerning America and the Indies. The polemic between Bartolomeo de Las Casas and Gines de Sepulvida, on the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of America, had raised questions involving state security. By the law of October 9, 1556, Philip II imposed on all works concerning America prior censorship by the

---

<sup>13</sup> Archivo de Simancas, *Estado*, 129, fol. 112.

<sup>14</sup> The opening part of this law is reproduced in *Novísima recopilación de leyes de España*, 1. VIII, t. XVIII, vol. IV, pp. 152-153. The second part is contained in 1. VIII, t. XVI, pp. 123-125. Cf. H. Ch. Lea, *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, vol. III, New York, 1907, pp. 486-489, and Antonio Sierra Corella, *La censura en España. Indices y catálogos de libros prohibidos*, Madrid, 1947, pp. 95-98.

Council of the Indies. Throughout the sixteenth century many were the decrees giving precise rules for this, or seeking to withdraw from circulation any works discussing American problems.<sup>15</sup> The 1558 pragmatic also dealt with recent manuscripts treating of religion and Holy Scripture: these too must be presented for the Royal Council to decide whether the manuscript should be destroyed or was worth printing.

The law furthermore instituted control of bookshops and private libraries. It gave a mandate of search to archbishops, bishops and local ordinaries, in collaboration with the local judicial authority; they were to examine all books already in print and send a list to the Council. The universities of Salamanca, Valladolid and Alcalá would designate visitators for the purpose, while religious superiors were responsible for the supervision of convent libraries and the personal book collections of religious. This visitation was to take place once a year. Finally, the fine-money imposed on lawbreakers was to be divided between informers, judges and the royal treasury.

This clear and precise law established both prior censorship and book-banning. Historians have been less struck by the preventive censorship than by the suppression of books already published. Despite a few direct interventions by the civil power, the suppression of subversive, heretical or dangerous literature was the task of the Inquisition. With its two-fold character, at once ecclesiastical and civil, this organization, whose prime aim was to protect the true faith, exercised the closest vigilance. We have no space here to delay over the famous trials of the Archbishop of Toledo, Bartolomé de Carranza y Miranda, or of Fray Luis de Leon, and the many other writers condemned for what they wrote. Let us rather look at the better-known sixteenth-century Indices of forbidden books.

From the first half of the sixteenth century we have several decrees by Spanish inquisitors regarding books. Cardinal Adrien, the Inquisitor-General, signed one on April 7, 1521, to order all Luther's works withdrawn. This decision was renewed in 1523 by the new Inquisitor Manrique.<sup>16</sup> The decree of August 17, 1530, has much more interest. It means that the reformers were introducing their works into Spain and having them attributed to Catholic authors. So the bookshops were asked to send the Inquisition the booklists in their possession. At the same time the writings of the Illuminati or *dejadados*

---

<sup>15</sup> A Sierra Corella, *La censura...*, pp. 196-206, notes the arrangements of 1543, 1552, 1556, 1571, 1572, 1575, 1580.

<sup>16</sup> F. H. Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher*, T. L. Bonn, 1883, repr. 1967, pp. 131-132.

were condemned.<sup>17</sup> In 1534 the central Council of the Inquisition ordered local Inquisitions to publish this edict and post it in the churches.<sup>18</sup> The inquisitors correspondence alludes to lists of illegal books sent by the Supreme Inquisition to the Barcelona Inquisition in 1540 and 1545. Unfortunately these lists are lost. Nor have we recovered the first printed Index sent to the local Inquisitions, September 1, 1547. This Spanish Index reproduces that of the University of Louvain, 1546, adding books forbidden in Spain.<sup>19</sup>

Five versions of the Index of 1551 are known. It was published by the Inquisitions in Toledo, Valladolid, Valencia, Granada, Seville. Despite differences in some of the titles, it reproduces the Louvain Index of 1550, adding works already condemned in Spain, some seventy works in Latin and fifteen in Castilian. These additions to the Louvain list show that the inquisitorial censorship was not yet particularly active in 1551.<sup>20</sup> In the years following, Inquisitor-General Valdes was worried above all by the many foreign bibles entering Spain. Between 1552 and 1554 several university professors from Salamanca and Alcalá, appointed by the Inquisitor-General, worked on the publication known by the name "General Censorship of Bibles," issued in the course of 1554. This document named seventy-one editions requiring expurgation, in view of one hundred and thirty expressions used in them which were taken to state central Protestant doctrines.<sup>21</sup>

Next is the first properly speaking Spanish Index, 1559.<sup>22</sup> Its publication

---

<sup>17</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional. *Inquisition*, livre 320, f. 343 cited by José Luis G. Novalín, *El Inquisidor General Fernando de Valdés (1483-1568)*, Oviedo 1968, p. 247, n. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Novalín, *El Inquisidor* .... p. 247, n. 10.

<sup>19</sup> I. S. Révah, *Un Index espagnol inconnu: celui édité par l'Inquisition de Séville en novembre 1551*, in *Studia Philologica* Homenaje ofrecido a Dénasco Alonso, t. III, Madrid, 1963, pp. 131-132. The Spanish portion of the Valencia edition is reproduced by F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices librorum prohibitorum des Sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen, 1886, reprint 1961, pp. 73-77.

<sup>20</sup> I. S. Révah, *Un Index* ..., pp. 133-146.

<sup>21</sup> This document is published by J. I. Tellechea, *La censura inquisitorial de Biblias de 1554*, in *Anthologica Annu*, X (1962), pp. 89-142.

<sup>22</sup> *Catalogus librorum qui prohibentur mandato illustrissimi et reverendissimi domini D. Ferdinandi de Valdés hispalen, archiep. inquisitorioris generalis Hispaniae necnon et supremi sanctae inquisitionis senates, hoc anno MDLIX editus. Anorum junu et bicentia Sebastianus Martinez excudebat Pinciae*. It has been reproduced in *Tres Indices expurgatorios de la Inquisition Española en el siglo XVI. Salen nuevamente a la luz reproducidos en facsimil por acuerdo de la Real Academia Española*, Madrid, 1952. Also by F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices librorum prohibitorum des Sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*,

was closely bound up with the discovery of Protestant households in Seville and Valladolid. When the Seville Inquisition arrested Julian Hernandez in October 1557, a well-organized network was brought to light for the importation of books printed in Venice, Frankfurt and above all Geneva. Lutheran books also infiltrated Valladolid and other Castilian centres. Valdes's correspondence in 1558 evidences the growing concern of the Holy Office. On September 9 that year, Valdes wrote to Pope Paul IV asking that he kindly revoke all licences and permits granted earlier to read or own forbidden books. The Inquisitor-General also asked the Pope for the power to act against all offending persons regardless of status, even if it was a question of bishops and cardinals. There is no doubt that Valdes had the Archbishop of Toledo in mind, Bartolome de Carranza, who was in fact to be imprisoned some months later.<sup>23</sup> By Brief of January 4, 1559, Paul IV granted the request of the Inquisitor-General, revoking all earlier privileges touching the perusal of condemned books, even if these privileges had come from the highest ecclesiastical or civil authority, even including the Emperor.<sup>24</sup>

In the following months the Inquisition officials were extremely busy examining confiscated books and, making use of earlier indices published inside and outside of Spain, they drew up a new list of forbidden books. On August 17, 1559, Don Fernando de Valdes, who had enjoyed the close collaboration of the Dominican Melchior Cano, published the all-too-celebrated Index of the Spanish Inquisition. It is much mentioned and little known. I plan to publish a rounded-out study of it shortly. It has several weaknesses, due mainly to its hasty publication and the way it was put into effect. From the many errors in the listing of titles and authors and the strange descriptions of some works one can deduce that the censors sometimes went on indirect knowledge of a volume, or had only a mutilated copy of it. For example the prohibition of the following work: *Obra impressa en Valladolid por maestro Nicolas Thierry ano de 1528 en Romance*.<sup>25</sup> This odd listing is hard to explain. In my opinion, the reason for the Inquisition's failure to name either author or title of the forbidden book was that the man drawing up the Index knew neither. Books of the period, above all books under suspicion, often had their first pages eliminated. It must frequently have occurred that the censor was given a volume without a title page and had to use the colophon to indicate the book, not knowing it by title. Only by other indications are we able to identify the work as Juan de Cazalla's Light of the Soul.

---

pp. 209-212. The letter is reproduced by H. Ch. Lea *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, vol. III, pp. 566-572.

<sup>24</sup> This Brief was published as a preface to the Index. F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices...*, pp. 212-216.

<sup>25</sup> F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices...*, p. 237.

It must be realized, of course, that a number of works have disappeared. Others exist in single copies which contrary to expectation are not to be found in Spanish libraries. I have located some of these in Portugal, others in the British Museum and in the Hispanic Society's holdings in New York. The identification of the works mentioned and library research into them often pose tough problems. From 1559 on, for example, all published Spanish indices, even after the suppression of the Inquisition, contain the following work: *Dialogos de la union del anima con Dios, en Toscano y en otra qualquier lengua*.<sup>26</sup> It was only very recently that I was able to identify this in the provincial library of Barcelona, where I found a Catalan work published in Barcelona in 1546, without its first page.<sup>27</sup>

Whereas Portugal accepted the Roman Index of Paul IV in its totality – it was reprinted at Coimbra in 1559<sup>28</sup> – the Spanish Inquisition got up its own catalogue of forbidden books, differing greatly from the Pope's in content and in tone. About five hundred works were condemned, three hundred of them in Latin, one hundred and sixty-six in Castilian, eleven in Dutch and German, two in French and twelve in Portuguese. The number of Protestant works prohibited was relatively small. As Bataillon notes, "one can only admire the relative moderation with which Erasmus's books were treated," especially if one compares with the Roman Index of Paul IV, which condemned his works en bloc.<sup>29</sup> From the inquisitors' correspondence during those months and from the titles prohibited, it seems clear that Valdes had an eye above all for the danger stemming from imported Protestant literature, most notably from Geneva; works of spirituality from Italy and the Netherlands or even issued in Spain were a second major concern. Thus one can account for the condemnation of authors as renowned as St. Francis Borgia, St. John of Avila, and Fray Luis de Granada. There was something paranoid in Valdes's distrust of works published in the vernacular. He banned not only versions of Sacred Scripture but even all works of any kind, even in manuscript, which treated of Sacred Scripture, the sacraments of the Church and the Christian religion.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices*, p. 233.

<sup>27</sup> "Dialogo del amor de Deu, son autor seignora." What was in question was a Catalan translation of Bartolomeo da Castello's book, *De Unione anima cum supereminenti lumine*, first published in Perugia in 1538.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. I. S. Révah, *La censure inquisitoriale portugaise au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. I, Lisboa, 1960, pp. 141-143.

<sup>29</sup> M. Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 718.

<sup>30</sup> F. H. Reusch, *Di Indices...*, p. 240: "Todos y qualesquier sennones, cartas, tractados, oraciones o otra qualquier escriptura scripts de mano, que hable o tracte de la eagrada Escripura o de los sacramentos de la sancta madre yglesia

Nearly a quarter of a century elapsed before the appearance of the next Spanish Index, that of Cardinal Quiroga, 1583, followed a year later by an Expurgatory Index (books free to circulate in expurgated form).<sup>31</sup> In the interim that of the Council of Trent appeared, issued by Pius IV in 1564 and also, the following year, in Valencia by Archbishop Martin d' Ayala. But it was not accepted in Spain, at least not in Castile.<sup>32</sup> Philip II's acceptance of Trent's decrees on July 12, 1564, did not include the Roman Index.<sup>33</sup> Besides, the Spanish Inquisition was fiercely jealous of its independence vis-à-vis Rome when it came to do with anything concerning expurgation and book-banning. The Trent Index was published in 1570 in the Netherlands by Arias Montano, who also prepared an expurgatory index which came out the following year.<sup>34</sup>

At first sight Quiroga's list appears very different from the Spanish Index of 1559. It contains nearly five times as many titles. The Latin works condemned rose in number from three hundred to eighteen hundred, if we count in some ninety editions of the Bible. German and Dutch works rose from eleven to two hundred and twenty, French from two to ninety-three; Italian books, of which none appeared on Valdes's list, now numbered seventy-one; six more Portuguese titles were added to the existing twelve, and Castilian titles listed rose from one hundred and seventy to two hundred and seven. One can easily conclude that Quiroga's Index, as well as using the earlier Spanish lists, drew particularly on the Trent Index and on that of Anvers. The publication of the Expurgatory Index followed the tradition initiated by Arias Montano and was to be a characteristic feature of Spanish inquisitorial censorship.

---

y religion christiana.”

<sup>31</sup> “*Index et Catalogus Librorum prohibitorum, mandato Illustriss. ac Reverendiss. D. D. Gasparis a Quiroga, Cardinalis Archiepiscopi Toletani, ac in regnis Hispaniarum Generalis Inquisitoris, deuno editus*. Madrid, Apud Alphonsium Gomezium Regium Typographum Anno MDLXXXIII.”  
*Index Librorum expurgatorum Illustriss. ac Reverendiss. D. D. Gasparis Quiroga Cardinalis Archiep. Toletani Hispan. Generalis Inquisitoris iussu editus*. Madriti, Apud Alphonsium Gomezium Regium Typographum Anno MDLXXXIII.”

The 1583 Index is reproduced by F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices...*, pp. 377-447.

<sup>32</sup> Cf Mariano y José Luis Peset Reig, *El Aislamiento científico español i través de los Indices del inquisidor Gaspar de Quiroga de 1583 y 1584* in *Anthologica Annua*, 16 (1968), p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> L. Willaert, *La Restauration catholique (1563-1648)*, vol. 18 of *L'Histoire de l'Eglise*, A Fliche et V. Martin, 1960, p. 411.

<sup>34</sup> F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices...*, pp. 289-323 and A. Sierra Corella, *Le censura ...*, pp. 234-242.

Quiroga's Index collected practically all the Protestant literature, enormously increasing the number of Latin and German works, whereas Castilian works increased by scarcely forty. The greater part of the works condemned or expurgated were religious or theological, but there were others that met the same fate, such as the legal writings of Charles Dumoulin, François Douarem and Antonio Rosselli, in politics the treatises of Machiavelli, Bodin and even Thomas More, in medicine the works of Michael Servetus, Arnaldo of Villanova, Amatus Lusitanus, Juan Huarte de San Juan and Paracelsus; and in mathematics Jerome Cardan and others.<sup>35</sup>

Certain of the prohibitions were governed by political motives; for example the *Historia Pontificalis* of Gonzalio de Illescas. The mixed nature of the Inquisition must not be forgotten; as Leo X had already pointed out in 1520, it had the power to hunt down those who were active against the national good.<sup>36</sup> The lists of condemned and expurgated books are prefaced with an introduction by Quiroga explaining the meaning and importance of these two indices. He also pointed out the collaboration of the universities and of scholars. Chief among the scholars known to have participated was the great historian, Juan de Mariana, several of whose works were to be included in succeeding indices.

The primary aim of Quiroga's Index was to combat Protestantism and prevent the spread of ideas which might go counter to the orthodox teaching of the Council of Trent. One can say in general that at the end of the sixteenth century the Spanish Inquisition was still serving the end for which it had been founded a century before: safeguarding faith.

What conclusions can be drawn from this exposé, which does not pretend to more than a summary tabulation of preventive censorship and book suppression in Spain during the sixteenth century? I think a global judgment is premature until the materials buried in the National Archives of Madrid and Simancas have been systematically gone through. But even though the question remains complex, one can already outline problems and glimpse the chief elements in their solution.

First of all, it seems to me very risky indeed to try to bring judgment on all the activity, taken as a whole, of the Spanish censorship in the period from the foundation of the Inquisition in 1478 to its suppression in 1834. Seen from here, the problematic is as differentiated in the sixteenth, in the seventeenth and perhaps too in the eighteenth century as the history of Spain

---

<sup>35</sup> Peset Reig, *El aislamiento científico ...*, pp. 34-40.

<sup>36</sup> F. H. Reusch, *Die Indices...*, p. 436, and Bernardín Ilorca, *Bulario Pontificio de la Inquisición española en su período constitucional (1478-1525)*, Roma, 1949, pp. 274.277.

was in those centuries.

Even in the sixteenth century there is an unavoidably clear distinction between the age of the Catholic monarchs and that of Charles V and Philip II. The constellation of Spain, and indeed that of Europe as a whole, looms very different to the eye. In the early years of the century men were still living out dreams of Europe's political and religious unity. At the full flood of expansion, the country was an all-in participant on the international scene and was experiencing an era of youth and optimism, little concerned with controlling ideas. We have already said something of the change of climate which occurred over the years from 1555 to 1563, during which an attitude of self-absorption and distrust became prevalent, with the printing laws of 1558 and the Index of Valdes in 1559 as its chief manifestations. The religious conflict which other European countries underwent at the time, France chiefly, motivated those in charge to maintain this attitude of defensiveness through the entire remainder of the century. About the turn of the next century the situation was beginning to change. To assess the influence of censorship on the evolution of ideas, of literature and of life in general in sixteenth-century Spain, I think you have to study prior censorship and book-suppression separately. With prior censorship, in default of evidence, one is confined to one's suspicions and suppositions. It is impossible to calculate the number who were self-censored against either writing or publishing under such difficult conditions. Louis Vives alludes to the atmosphere of suspicion, and later Saint Teresa.<sup>37</sup> It is perhaps here that we have a part explanation of the existence of so great a number of manuscripts of the period in Spanish libraries. The measures of 1558 and 1559 probably account for the drop in publishing in the following years, when only a much-reduced number of works saw the light compared with the exuberant output of the Golden Age. From Saint Teresa's letters we know her anxiety and distrust when she learned that the Holy Office was examining the manuscript of her autobiography.<sup>38</sup>

Although we are much better informed as to how book-suppression went about its business, there is still an immense amount of work to be done before we can determine its real influence on Spanish life and culture. Can we say that the restrictions of the Index were always observed? We know many people of the time who used forbidden books – men such as Fray Luis de Granada, Diego de Estella, and probably also Saint John of the Cross.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P.S. Allen, TX., Ep. 2932 cité par M. Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 490. Francisco Marquez Villanueva, *Espiritualidad y literatura en el siglo XVI*, Madrid, 1968, p. 181.

<sup>38</sup> F. Marquez Villanueva, *Espiritualidad...*, pp. 182-184.

<sup>39</sup> J. M. De Bujanda, *Diego de Estella*, Madrid, 1970, pp. 20-21, 172.

In the course of the sixteenth century the inquisitorial censorship was preoccupied chiefly with religious problems. The moral bearing of books had little interest for the Holy Office. As an example we might point to *Celestina*, a work which might be termed highly improper, first published in 1499, not condemned till 1747.<sup>40</sup> Thus contrary to what happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries one can say in general that, during the sixteenth century, Spanish censorship was systematically concerned only with theological works, or works religious in quality.

---

<sup>40</sup> Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, *La Inquisición española y los problemas de la cultura y de la intolerancia*, vol. 1, Madrid, 1953, pp. 102-103.