



# WILEY

---

Confiscations in the Economy of the Spanish Inquisition

Author(s): Henry Kamen

Source: *The Economic History Review*, 1965, New Series, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1965), pp. 511-525

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the Economic History Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2592562>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Economic History Society* and *Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Economic History Review*

# *Confiscations in the Economy of the Spanish Inquisition*

BY HENRY KAMEN

**T**he present article is meant to be less a study than an inquiry; it consequently proposes to raise questions rather than answer them, and to open up further lines of investigation rather than resolve them. The lack of literature on the economic basis and function of the Spanish Inquisition is astonishing. A good deal of ink has been spent on debating whether the Inquisition was in any way responsible for the economic decline of Spain, but no one has attempted to gather evidence for a connexion between the economics of the Holy Office and the economics of a declining monarchy. Lea devoted a large chapter of his massive history of the Inquisition to an exhaustive survey of the technique and importance of confiscations, but his researches provided very little evidence indeed for his sweeping conclusion that to the Inquisition 'is greatly attributable the stagnation of Spanish commerce and industry'.<sup>1</sup> The failure to identify an ecclesiastical tribunal with economic decline is hardly surprising, since the tribunal had no direct links with the economic life of the country, nor did it possess vast estates as the prelates of the Church did. We are largely ignorant about the significance of the Inquisition as an economic institution. What we do know for certain is that its principal task throughout most of its history was to root out and eliminate false converts (whether secret Jews, Muslims or Protestants) from the midst of the Catholic body. But did this persecution have any serious economic repercussions? Did the Jews go into exile with their money and thereby impoverish nascent capitalism in Spain, or did the Inquisition relieve them of their property and retain their wealth within the country? Within the limits of this article I want to avoid the general issues, important though they are, and confine myself instead to what I consider the three main lines of inquiry relevant to the subject of confiscations.

## I

The modern Spanish Inquisition,<sup>2</sup> founded in 1480 by the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella on the basis of a bull granted by the pope, was not at first given any secure financial basis for its existence. It has been assumed that this was because the Catholic monarchs wanted the tribunal to be dependent on them for its financial existence. But if this were so, why did they not arrange for the inquisitors' salaries to be paid out of the royal treasury? Instead, it was decided to let the inquisitors exist largely on the erratic income

<sup>1</sup> Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain* (4 vols. New York, 1906–8), II, 386. Cited hereafter as Lea.

<sup>2</sup> The authoritative work is Lea. For a short study see my *The Spanish Inquisition* (1965).

forthcoming from the goods they confiscated from heretics. Even if this source of income often happened to be large, it was just as often insufficient to meet expenses, and in 1501 Pope Alexander VI was obliged to grant all the tribunals of Spain the income from specified canonries and other ecclesiastical offices.<sup>1</sup> Even this source provided only a fixed income of declining value in an age of monetary inflation, and confiscations continued to be the principal item of revenue.

Confiscation of property was the standard punishment prescribed by canon law for heresy. From the twelfth century onwards Rome encouraged all secular and ecclesiastical authorities to punish heretics in their property if not in their lives, and the Spanish Inquisition followed the medieval one in practising this. Ferdinand the Catholic stated expressly in 1485 that the confiscations being made in Spain were by order of the pope. It is true that clerical condemnation of heresy was the justification, but it was the secular authorities at first who actually carried out the confiscation. Only subsequently did the inquisitors begin to control the process. This power of the inquisitors over the goods of heretics was perhaps more dreaded than anything else. If a father of a family were penanced by the tribunal, all his property and consequently the property of all his family was forfeited and confiscated. A whole family could in this way be ruined and reduced to beggary if a senior member were accused of heresy. Foreign ships' captains under arrest would find that not only their personal goods but the ship they commanded together with all its cargo would be entered as forfeited property. To these examples there were naturally numberless exceptions, but it remains true that the inquisitors were as discerning in points of property as they were in points of theology. Every accused during his period of interrogation would be brought out to face a board which presented him with an inventory of his sequestered goods, and obliged him to give his word that no other items of property had been concealed or deposited with friends. The community of *conversos*, or converts from Judaism, was justly alarmed at the threat implicit in the policy of confiscations. To take one incident out of several, at the end of the fifteenth century they offered the king the sum of 600,000 ducats if he would pay the salaries of inquisitors out of the royal treasury, and keep the income from confiscations for the Crown.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of confiscations might be of small moment were it not generally accepted that the Spanish authorities made use of this source to bleed the richest minority in the realm – the Jews and, after 1492, the *conversos*, since after that date Jewry had no legal standing in the realm. At this stage the discussion can best be dealt with by three main questions: who gained from confiscations? who suffered from them? and what property was confiscated?

<sup>1</sup> Bernardino Llorca, *Bulario Pontificio de la Inquisición Española en su período constitucional (1478–1525)*, (Miscellanea Historiae Pontificae, XV, Rome, 1949), pp. 200–6.

<sup>2</sup> A(rchivo) G(eneral de) S(imancas), Patronato Real, Inquisición leg. 28, fo. 23. See also Lea, I, 220 ff. for other incidents.

## II

Who gained from confiscations? Though this was not the case at first, in the end the individual tribunal in each province of Spain was the primary beneficiary, because it had to pay for its own salaries and cover all its sometimes heavy administrative costs. The obvious danger in this, as the *conversos* realized, was that the tribunals had a vested interest in greater confiscations, and this led to extensive corruption at all levels. In the early sixteenth century the notorious case of the inquisitor of Córdoba, Lucero, who manufactured charges of heresy in order to carry out extensive confiscations, had repercussions leading to the dismissal of the Inquisitor General. Individuals also profited. In Toledo in 1487 it was testified by several witnesses that Juan de Uría, receiver of confiscated goods in that tribunal, had defrauded sums amounting to 1,500,000 *maravedis*.<sup>1</sup> Cases like these found an echo in numerous complaints presented to the Crown by public bodies from the Cortes downwards. A beneficiary dependent on the individual tribunal was the Council of the Inquisition, brought into existence at the centre of affairs in 1483 and known as the *Consejo de la Suprema y General Inquisición*, or Suprema for short. Each year the provincial tribunals had to send a contribution to meet the expenses of the Suprema, and sometimes, as shown by a statement in the 1670's,<sup>2</sup> this ate up all the income from confiscations.

A secondary, though at first the principal, beneficiary was the Crown. In the early days its share was extremely important, but unfortunately we have no reliable indications of how much was involved. It was reported at the time that Ferdinand and Isabella had obtained the enormous amount of 10,000,000 ducats from confiscations, and another source claimed that such income had been devoted to three purposes – the prosecution of war against the Moors, the financing of the Inquisition, and the promotion of pious works.<sup>3</sup> Great sums were certainly spent on the Moorish war, and there are several instances of pious foundations being set up with money derived from confiscations, but the general picture of what part such money played in royal finance is still unclear. In the sixteenth century control of confiscations was granted almost wholly to the Suprema, and the Crown was content to receive an agreed proportion of income. This proportion was apparently one-third, though in most recorded cases little or nothing appears to have been paid, and in one case – that of the great Majorcan confiscations in 1678 – it seems that under 5 per cent went to the Crown.<sup>4</sup>

If we have no evidence about how much reached the Crown, there are no such difficulties about how much the Inquisition obtained. The pity is that records of the earlier periods have not survived, and that very often later records are fragmentary, so that global estimates are probably impossible to

<sup>1</sup> A.G.S. Patronato Real, Inquisición leg. 28, fo. 16. This sum was about one per cent of the ordinary revenue of Castile at the time.

<sup>2</sup> A(rchivo) H(istórico) N(acional, Madrid), Inquisición leg. 4994<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Lea, II, 367, 371.

<sup>4</sup> The figure was  $4\frac{2}{3}$  per cent, according to Baruch Braunstein, *The Chuetas of Majorca. Conversos and the Inquisition of Majorca* (Columbia University Oriental Series, vol. 28, Pennsylvania, 1936), p. 68.

make. The barometer of income was the frequency of *autos de fé*, since it was the sentence read at these occasions that formalized a confiscation. The receivers of confiscations in each tribunal themselves rendered their accounts according to each *auto de fé*. How useful this is for our purposes is shown by the following table of income from confiscations in eight Castilian tribunals at a very slack period, towards the end of the reign of Charles V and just over a decade before the discovery of Protestantism in Spain.<sup>1</sup>

Tribunal	Period	<i>Maravedis</i>
Valladolid	20 Mar. 1542–31 Dec. 1543	193,494
Toledo	25 Oct. 1542–31 Dec. 1543	1,504,172
Llerena	10 June 1541–24 July 1542	1,841,260
Murcia	1 Dec. 1535–1543	4,072,778
Córdoba	13 July 1541–1543	10,501,126
Seville	20 Dec. 1541–31 Dec. 1542	196,908
Granada	7 Nov. 1541–28 Oct. 1543	19,128,421
Cuenca	2 Nov. 1535–31 Dec. 1542	40,518,029

In this table, the income for Valladolid came entirely from the *auto* of 22 April 1542; that for Llerena came principally from its *autos* on 6 August 1541 and 29 May 1542; and Murcia's confiscations derived from four *autos*, on 6 February 1536, 11 June 1538, 7 March 1540 and 11 June 1541. The greater part of Córdoba's money came from the *auto* it held on 29 January 1540, which brought in 8,062,882 *maravedis*. Even this figure was bettered by the *auto* on 25 February 1537 at Cuenca, which brought in 16,280,974 *maravedis*, while a later *auto* there on 18 May 1540 brought in 5,106,682 *maravedis*. These figures show how greatly the financial returns from confiscations varied, so that even a sheaf of *autos* at one period might bring in less than a single *auto* at another. But the table also illustrates how the great volume of heretics, and therefore of confiscations, continued to come from Andalucía and its environs. We have other evidence of this at a rather later period, when confiscations and sequestrations in the Inquisition of Granada from 1 May 1599 to 15 November 1601 brought in the huge amount of 23,678,987 *maravedis*.<sup>2</sup> Sums like this were seldom equalled by other tribunals.

For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there are more figures and details available. In the records we can trace the destruction of numerous wealthy families, like that of Pedro Cardos, whose entire property, together with half his wife's, was confiscated by the Inquisition of Santiago in 1674, bringing in a total of 26,759,249 *maravedis* (or 787,037 *reales*, at 35 *maravedis* a *real*).<sup>3</sup> A later example is Eugenio Joseph de Lacourt, a director of the arsenal in Santander, who was deprived of his property of 350,972 *reales* by the Inqui-

<sup>1</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 5083<sup>1</sup>. For purposes of conversion, 375 copper or *vellón maravedis* equal one ducat. Unless stated otherwise, all coinage quoted in this article is *vellón* (at first a copper-silver mixture, but later debased to copper alone).

<sup>2</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4971<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 4562<sup>2</sup>.

sition of Navarre in 1760<sup>1</sup>. A glance at some tribunals will give us a few interesting global estimates. Figures for Córdoba show periodic variations:

Period	Confiscations
1652-1655 <sup>2</sup>	{ 52,100,115 copper <i>maravedis</i> 452,466 silver „
1712-1747 <sup>3</sup>	53,370,049 copper „
1727 <sup>3</sup>	1,052,731 „ „
1728-1729 <sup>4</sup>	2,740,157 „ „

The paucity of the last two returns is thrown into relief by the fact that in 1659 Córdoba managed to get 690,875 *reales* (or 5,550,625 *maravedis*) out of no more than twelve relatively poor Portuguese Jews.<sup>5</sup> The 1650's, however, were a period of great persecution. In the more tranquil period (from a religious viewpoint) of the War of the Spanish Succession, it is surprising to find that the Inquisition of Santiago in 1703-1704 made over 961,440 *reales* out of sequestrations.<sup>6</sup>

The following table gives figures for the tribunal of Llerena, in Extremadura.

Period	Confiscations
1657-1664	19,919,743 <i>maravedis</i> <sup>7</sup>
1706-1727	42,021,734 „ <sup>8</sup>
1728-1740	36,808,289 „ <sup>9</sup>
1741-1744	3,072,920 „ <sup>9</sup>

Interpreted at face value, this table could be completely misleading. 1706-1727 can rightly be considered a peak period for *autos de fé*, at least after 1718. There were *autos* held on 30 November 1719, 30 November 1722, 26 July 1723, 4 February 1725, 26 August 1725 and 22 June 1727. But the sums obtained in these years came from only 29 victims, whereas the smaller sum in 1657-1664, also a peak period, came from about 60 families. The incidence of heresy and persecution in the earlier period was therefore higher, but the financial returns were lower. Again, the figure for 1728-1740 suggests that heresy and *autos de fé* were continuing to bring in money. This was by no means the case, for the period was one of the quietest in the history of the Inquisition, and the figure represents little more than further income from confiscations made in preceding years.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4597<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4721<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4990.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 5144<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4724<sup>2</sup> no. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4561<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4571.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 5115<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 5115<sup>3</sup>.

The steady decline of income from the persecution of heresy is shown by the following table for the Inquisition of Granada in the eighteenth century.

Period	Confiscations
1724-1735	3,772,212 <i>reales</i> <sup>1</sup>
1 Jan. 1736-30 Apr. 1742	1,589,757 „ <sup>2</sup>
1 Jan. 1749-30 June 1750	849,395 „ <sup>3</sup>
1 July 1754-31 Dec. 1763	1,320,022 „ <sup>4</sup>
1 Jan. 1764-11 Sept. 1767	1,106,401 „ <sup>4</sup>
12 Sept. 1767-31 Dec. 1777	1,032,325 „ <sup>4</sup>
1 Jan. 1778-31 Dec. 1780	831,269 „ <sup>5</sup>
1 Jan. 1781-31 Dec. 1782	823,316 „ <sup>5</sup>
1789-1790	776,066 „ <sup>6</sup>
1800-1801	561,021 „ <sup>6</sup>
1804	254,830 „ <sup>7</sup>
1807	184,784 „ <sup>7</sup>

The eighteenth century was not Granada's great period for confiscations, and the high figures for 1724-1735 may well have been surpassed by the peak period 1721-1723, so that this table is only moderately interesting. Still, the sum of 3,772,212 *reales* (132,027,442 *maravedis*) is extremely large. It is worth noting that 54,470,919 *maravedis* of this sum was obtained in 1728 alone, 21,839,385 from the *autos* held on 9 May 1728 and 29,042,096 from that held on 12 October 1728. Even these sums do not exhaust the total obtained in this period, for a study of the high receipts in 1736-1742 shows that over 47 million *maravedis* of the 55,641,510 (1,589,757 *reales*) which entered the treasury of the Inquisition in these years, in fact derived from confiscations decreed in the previous decade. As in all other tribunals of the peninsula, these years of the reign of Philip V closed the great era of confiscations. The figures for Granada are typical in showing a dwindling income. Receipts in the second half of the century were based not on actual confiscations so much as on income from property long since confiscated.

The first question to arise from this survey of representative confiscations is - what part did confiscations play in the general finances of the tribunals of Spain? We shall consider only a few examples. In 1573 the income of the tribunal of Granada was as follows: <sup>8</sup>

From land-rents and house-rents	1,949,530 <i>maravedis</i>
From confiscations in 1572	225,000 „
From canonries in Málaga and Antequera	337,500 „
From other house-rents	54,500 „
From penances and fines in 1571	63,500 „
Total	2,630,030 „

<sup>1</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4755.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4756<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4757<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4758<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4758<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4721<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4721<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4760<sup>1</sup>.

This was obviously a poor year for confiscations, which shows that it is impossible to generalize about income from this source. Confiscations in this table come to about 8 per cent of the revenue; but it should be remembered that land and house-rents were themselves invariably property that had been confiscated some time previously, so that if we add this item alone the proportion rises to 82.6 per cent. Any analysis of the income of tribunals should therefore differentiate between current and previous confiscations, in order not to contradict the basic truth that confiscations made up the bulk of income. In 1678, for instance, Granada stated that its total revenue was 9,927,034 *maravedis*, of which 2 millions were from current confiscations:<sup>1</sup> but obviously much of the balance consisted of previous confiscations. Similarly, Córdoba in 1728–1729 had an income of 14,146,583 *maravedis*, of which 2,740,157 came from confiscations carried out in those two years,<sup>2</sup> but the balance must have consisted largely of previous confiscations. By the late eighteenth century the disappearance of confiscation as a source of revenue meant that the tribunals had to live off their past acquisitions and this they usually managed to do, though it often meant existing on a debit account.

Our survey of confiscations cannot omit to mention probably the largest amount of money ever gathered by the Spanish Inquisition. This was the result of the great annihilation of *conversos* on Majorca in 1678. The Jewish community became involved in a plot to better its own economic and social conditions, and the authorities made this an excuse to carry out mass arrests, deportations, executions and confiscations. The accounts of the Inquisition show that a sum well in excess of 2,500,000 ducats was collected from confiscations of property.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that the Inquisition did gain appreciably from confiscations, and that it was cautious enough to store up for itself treasures on earth as well as in heaven. When a tribunal obtained money in addition to property, it sometimes invested it in government bonds (*juros*) or in additional property which could be rented out, such as land (producing rents known as *censos*). In this way *juros* and *censos* formed the principal source of inquisitorial revenue apart from standard items such as ecclesiastical offices; and confiscations therefore continued to supply income long after the time that they had actually been seized.

### III

Who suffered from confiscations? Obviously every propertied victim of the Inquisition suffered, so that a full answer to this question would require a general history of the tribunal. In the present context I wish merely to point

<sup>1</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4994<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 5144<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* legs. 4776–4779. The confiscation papers are deficient, but those available give a total of 2,098,500 *libras* as the income from these confiscations from 1678 to 1682. I have converted this sum roughly into the figure given above in ducats. My total is well above the one of 1,491,276 *pesos* given in Braunstein, *The Chuetas*, p. 68, and also above that of 1,496,276 *pesos* given in Lea, III, 306. Braunstein says that 4⅔ per cent of the total went to the Crown, but gives no details of the actual distribution of the money. A memoir of the Inquisition, dated 4 May 1689, stated that the king ‘por su real decreto hizo gracia al Sto Off<sup>o</sup> de 200,000 pesos de la hacienda confiscada por el S<sup>to</sup> Off<sup>o</sup> de la Inq<sup>on</sup> de Mallorca en la complicidad del año de 1679’, A. H. N. Inquisición leg. 5134<sup>1</sup>. This suggests that the Crown had received more than 5 per cent.



out a few ways in which the racial minorities of the peninsula were affected by the loss of their property. Few countries can have had the experience of allowing an institution to exist for over three centuries with the principal purpose of rooting out, and with power over the lives and property of, nonconformist minorities. That such an institution did exist in Spain should give us cause, and material, to study the economic relations between the minorities, the institution, and the nation as a whole. Yet a study along these lines has never been attempted. In Spain the two relevant minorities were the Jewish *conversos* before and after 1492, and the Moriscos (or Moorish converts) whose forcible conversion occurred at the beginning of the sixteenth century. To what extent did these minorities suffer from the impact of the Inquisition?

Throughout its existence the Inquisition directed its attention principally to the Jewish *conversos*, so that its defence of political and religious orthodoxy contained strong racial overtones which cannot easily be explained away. What is unfortunate is that for the period 1480–1502, when the Jews alone bore the brunt of persecution and confiscation, there are few or no reliable figures to supply us with information about the wealth and standing of the victims. Only in the later periods is there any evidence which would enable us to arrive at a picture of the *converso* community. Of special importance is the documentation for the Majorcan confiscations of 1678. From it we can establish fairly accurately the wealth of the group of families involved. The names that stand out in the account are those of Pomar, Martí, Cortes, Terongi and Forteza. The incomplete returns show that the sums confiscated from these families were as follows: Pomar, 54,224 *libras*; Martí, 311,334 *libras*; Cortes, 490,181 *libras*; Terongi, 426,317 *libras*; Forteza, 347,717 *libras*. Incomplete as the accounts are, they give some idea of the impact of confiscations on a closely knit community of judaizers. In Majorca an historian has the advantage of possessing an almost complete list of all those in any way disciplined by the Inquisition, as well as detailed financial accounts of confiscations: together, these provide material for a tentative study of the economic position of a minority. It should be possible, in other tribunals besides Majorca, to collate lists of victims with the invariably detailed account of confiscations, to get a reasonable picture of the social life of Jews in Spain in the centuries when they led a purely underground existence.

It has been suggested that the victimization of Jews and *conversos* led to the elimination of a growing middle class, and to the end of hopes for the development of capitalism in Spain. Such a view relies in part on the Sombart thesis, which identifies Jews with the rise of capitalism. In Spain some support for this view is gained from the fact that the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 left a gap in the world of finance which was soon filled not by Spaniards but by foreigners, particularly Genoese and Germans.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century a curious change had occurred in this picture. The influx into Spain

<sup>1</sup> See André E. Sayous, 'La Genèse du système capitaliste: la pratique des affaires et leur mentalité dans l'Espagne du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* (1936), pp. 334–54. And A. Domínguez Ortiz, 'Los extranjeros en la vida española durante el siglo XVII', *Estudios de Historia Social de España* (Madrid, 1960), IV, ii, 293–426.

of thousands of Portugese *conversos* fleeing from that country's Inquisition, included a large number of Portugese *converso* financiers. Under Olivares a policy distinctly favourable to Jewish finance was adopted, and the Portugese *conversos* were soon entrenched in leading positions as bankers of the Crown.<sup>1</sup> After the fall of Olivares in 1643 a reaction set in, and the subsequent half century saw the prosecution and condemnation of many of the wealthiest financiers in Spain.<sup>2</sup> Here, in the direct confrontation between the Inquisition and men of high finance, lies the opportunity to prove that the tribunal destroyed the intelligent creation and manipulation of capital and so retarded industry and destroyed investment in Spain. What is true is that, insecure of their security in the peninsula, Jewish financiers tended to channel their profits into safer investments in France and the Netherlands. But there is insufficient evidence available at the moment to say to what extent the Inquisition's activity here reacted on the economy of Spain.

Where other sources fail, the papers of the Holy Office give us a good analysis of the affairs of wealthy financiers in the second half of the seventeenth century. The seizure and confiscation of property meant that accounts had to be drawn up. One such account, that of the financier Fernando Montesinos (who fled to Amsterdam and lived there in freedom as a Jew), gives us an interesting summary of assets.<sup>3</sup> Of his total assets of 213,721,195 *maravedis* (567,256 ducats), less than 10 per cent was abroad. Despite this, Montesinos decided to leave his fortune and flee in 1654. Fortunately for him, 1654 was the very year that the government came to an agreement with the Inquisition whereby the latter confiscated only the personal property of financiers and left undisturbed those assets that involved state finance. Fernando's sons therefore took over the business, and the firm continued as before. It is perhaps safe to say that after 1654 the financial disruption caused by confiscation ceased to be a serious economic problem. When the great financier Francisco Báez Eminente was arrested and his property seized in about 1691, the firm of Eminente was not destroyed, and continued to function until well into the reign of Philip V.

In all these examples I have tried to suggest that confiscations are an important source for the study of the economic position of the minority who suffered from the Inquisition. If we turn to the Moriscos in Spain, a similar situation exists. Between Jews and Moriscos, however, there was a fundamental social difference. If the Jews, as usurers, were considered to be the exploiters of Spaniards, there was no doubt that the Moriscos were at the other extreme, as the exploited. This had one advantage: the Moriscos could appeal to their powerful lords for support against the Inquisition. As a result, the proceedings of the Cortes of Aragon in the sixteenth century were full of complaints pre-

<sup>1</sup> See Julio Caro Baroja, *La Sociedad criptojudia en la Corte de Felipe IV* (Madrid, 1963), for some useful comments.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Spanish Inquisition*, pp. 218–25.

<sup>3</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4971<sup>1</sup>. The assets were as follows. Realizable debts to him: 36,919,183 *maravedis*. Partly realizable debts to him: 21,189,351. Debts to him in the Netherlands: 20,745,722 (of this 11,250,000 was in Amsterdam). Grain assets (especially in Málaga and Santander): 23,978,500. Value of his contract for provisioning Ceuta: 33,694,100. His contract for provisioning the navy: 19,300,000. His property in Galicia and Asturias: 40,723,016. Income from investments (excluding the principal of about 3 millions): 11,940,793. Household effects and wholesale goods: 5,230,530.

sented by the Estates against the Inquisition and on behalf of the Morisco peasantry. The reasons for this were simple. Moriscos as a rule held their lands from the nobility; if these lands were confiscated because of heresy, the rights of the lords would be prejudiced and the Inquisition would be acquiring land it had no real right to. A compromise on this was eventually reached, and in 1556 the Moriscos of Aragon agreed to an annual tax of 17,800 *reales* to be paid to the tribunal of Saragossa, providing no confiscations of property were made because of heresy. In 1571 the same agreement was made by the Moriscos of Valencia, who agreed to pay 2,500 *libras* annually. From these dates up to the final expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609, no formal confiscations of property were made.<sup>1</sup> Monetary fines were frequently levied, but these were limited theoretically by the 1571 agreement to a maximum of 10 ducats. It is possible that a settlement of this sort satisfied both sides to some extent. How it affected the finances of the tribunals is shown by the following accounts. In Valencia just before the expulsion of the Moriscos the annual income consisted of: <sup>2</sup>

Rent from houses and property held by Old Christians <sup>3</sup>	1,734	<i>libras</i>
Rent from houses and property held by Moriscos	658	„
Canonries	2,468	„
Buildings, etc. owned by tribunal	569	„
<i>Concordia</i> of 1571 with Moriscos	2,500	„
Average annual fines on Moriscos	400	„
Total	8,329	„

In this budget the Morisco contribution is 42.7 per cent. The economic consequences of the expulsion could not fail to have been felt by the tribunal. In Saragossa the income in 1612 as compared with that before the expulsion was as follows: <sup>4</sup>

	Before expulsion	In 1612
Rents on property	14,315 <i>reales</i>	8,175 <i>reales</i>
<i>Concordia</i> of 1556	17,800 „	— „
Canonries	28,000 „	22,500 „
Houses, etc. of tribunal	1,500 „	1,500 „
Totals	61,615 „	32,175 „

In other words, the expulsion led to an immediate fall in revenue of over 48 per cent. These figures give us some idea of how far the Moriscos of the realms of Aragon were supporting a tribunal which was devoted to the destruction of their religion and culture.

<sup>1</sup> In Granada, however, the Alpujarra rebellion led to considerable confiscations in the 1570's. For income from this, see Modesto Ulloa, *La Hacienda real de Castilla en el reinado de Felipe II* (Rome, 1963), pp. 333-4.

<sup>2</sup> 'Memorial del estado de la hazienda de la Inq<sup>on</sup> de Valencia y de la hazienda que ha faltado con la expulsion de los moros', A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4671<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'Old Christian' refers to the non-Moorish and non-Jewish Christian population.

<sup>4</sup> Tribunal of Saragossa to Suprema, 24 Jan. 1612, A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4671<sup>1</sup>.

No similar figures are available in Castile, because here the social position of Moriscos never led to the drawing up of *concordias*. What we do have are relatively full accounts of *autos de fé* and of confiscations, principally in the tribunals of Andalucía and, of course, the kingdom of Granada. In Castile the Moriscos were far from being as poor and depressed as in the kingdom of Aragon. In 1596 it was even claimed that there were 20,000 Moriscos in Andalucía and Toledo with an income of over 20,000 ducats a year. The *autos* held in Granada in the late 1720's shed some light on this claim. The so-called 'Mahomedan conspiracy' unearthed in those years struck principally at the families of Aranda, Chaves, Figueroa, Vargas, Díaz and Lara. An analysis of the records<sup>1</sup> would establish in detail the wealth possessed by these and other families. What is noteworthy is that, as we have already seen, the *autos* held in Granada in 1728 alone brought in a total of 54,470,919 *maravedis* in confiscations. A glance at the inventory of jewellery confiscated by the same tribunal in the same year is also revealing. The list consists of 226 items of jewellery made up of pearls or pearls set in gold, and 231 other items made up of gold, diamonds and emeralds, all this valued at 239,368 silver *reales* (or 16,277,024 *vellón maravedis*).<sup>2</sup> This sum is, of course, quite separate from the total of general confiscations of property.

The Moriscos did not exist as a clearly defined social group after the expulsion, so that a study of their relations with the Inquisition would lack any of the precision to be found in the history of the Jews in Spain. In the case of both minorities, however, the incompleteness of many records would leave much to be desired in building up a comprehensive picture of their wealth and status. This difficulty does not alter the fact that the archival inventories of sequestrations and confiscations offer the research student an important guide to the position of racial minorities persecuted by the Inquisition.

#### IV

What property was confiscated? The answer to this question is closely related to the preceding one, in that it offers a guide to the social status of victims. We have already touched on the way in which the disposal of property affected the finances of the Inquisition. Very roughly, a man's confiscated goods could be divided into two categories – movable property, and capital assets. The movable property was as a rule sold outright by public auction, often in the common market-place. Capital assets were usually appropriated, after due allowance had been made to debtors and rightful heirs. (It was a frequent practice for victims to be forgiven all monetary debts which existed prior to

<sup>1</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición legs. 4755–4758.

<sup>2</sup> 'Imbentario General de todas las alajas . . . pertenecientes a las confiscaciones de las complicidades de Mahometismo', A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 51261. The same source illustrates the rule that jewellery was not retained by provincial tribunals but was sent to the Suprema for safe-keeping. In 1728, for example, the same year as the great Granada confiscations, the Suprema had in its possession a total of 305 items of jewellery, estimated at a value of 184,691 silver *reales* (12,558,988 *maravedis*): 'Imbentario Gral de las alajas de plata, oro, piedras, perlas y aljofar . . . remitidas por diversas Inq<sup>ones</sup> provinciales de confiscaz<sup>s</sup> echas por ellas, como pertenecientes al sequestro de Fran<sup>co</sup> de Mir<sup>da</sup>'. In addition, some of the jewellery came from confiscations in Cuenca.

their punishment; in this way the tribunal could dispose of confiscations without embarrassment). Assets in the form of land and houses went to swell the income from rentals of all kinds. How important this was is shown in the case of the Inquisition of Granada in 1573, where out of a total revenue of 2,630,030 *maravedis*, no less than 1,949,530 *maravedis*, or 74 per cent, came from property rents of various sorts. Many a rent-payer would have found that he had become a tenant of the Inquisition because his landlord's property had been confiscated by the tribunal. We have seen that tribunals continued to live off income of this kind long after the rentals had actually been confiscated. *Censos*, *juros*, and house-rents, were always the most permanently profitable type of confiscation.

In the detailed inventories of confiscated house property which were always drawn up in proper legal form, we have an unparalleled source for studying social life in Spain. These inventories covered all social classes, so that by comparing the household effects of different houses it becomes possible to compare the standard of living of different sections of the population. Inventories allow us to generalize even about the exact number of sheets, dresses, stockings and shoes possessed by a typical urban housewife in seventeenth-century Spain. Here, for instance, are the contents of a kitchen in the town of Lorca (Murcia) in 1681.<sup>1</sup>

We entered the kitchen of the house and found the following – a small pine chest with a lock but no key; some small used tablecloths, a yard square; three bushels of grain in two sacks; two small stools; some tongs; an oil-lamp; a hemp-cloth towel; some sifting-cloths; three old strainers; a two pound weight; a small wood-scraper; a dozen white crockery plates and half a dozen cups; an old chair; two old fire irons; some fire-tongs; a pillow of blue cloth; a needle-work basket; a used napkin; an old meat-knife; two oil-lamps; a shovel; a medium frying-pan; a kettle; some gridirons.

Similar detail is given for all the other rooms in the house, and the papers of the Inquisition contain hundreds of such inventories. Yet so far no historian has used this source for the social history of Spain. The most useful inventories are those made in the presence of an official valuer, when each household item was appraised in actual cash terms.

In addition to this, the confiscations give us some marginal guide to cultural history, not only in the quality and nature of property but also in the reading habits of the victims concerned. The household noted above seems to have had no reading habits at all, for the only book found on the premises was one of Marcus Aurelius. Since, however, it was the house of a Jewish trader, there was ample evidence of literacy in the large number of account books kept. Other confiscation lists supply greater evidence of education. The library of Gaspar López Rubio and his brothers, of which an inventory was drawn up in 1719 after their condemnation by the tribunal of Murcia, is of great literary

<sup>1</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4649<sup>1</sup>. Inventory, dated 28 Oct. 1681, of the possessions of María de Silva.

interest because of its store of medical books.<sup>1</sup> Even more interesting is that of a cleric in minor orders, Juan Cruzado de la Cruz, of Seville, whose house in 1692 contained the impressive total of 1,125 volumes; more impressive was the fact that most of the books were in French, English or Dutch, and included forbidden works by Erasmus, Bacon, Descartes, Grotius and Gassendi.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly a study of such minutiae can throw immense light on several aspects of Spanish history. But inevitably there are more questions than answers. What was the economic effect of confiscations? The few contemporary complaints that survive came from interested parties. When the nobility of Aragon protested in 1533 at the Cortes of Monzón against inquisitorial seizure of Morisco lands,<sup>3</sup> they were defending their own interests alone. When the Holy Office initiated the Majorcan confiscations of 1678, a Majorcan noble, the Count of Montenegro, protested to the king in June 1679 that this 'would result in the gravest damage to and destruction of the commerce that used to exist in Majorca because of the property and capital of these people'.<sup>4</sup> But the nobility always protested in this way whenever property which they could have seized was seized by someone else instead. In the early days the Crown had wisely allowed feudal lords one-third of the confiscated property of their vassals,<sup>5</sup> but the growth of royal and inquisitorial power soon made it unnecessary to share the spoils in order to placate opposition. The anti-clericalism which inspired seventeenth-century complaints also renders untrustworthy the evidence of contemporaries. From Murcia in 1683 comes the exaggerated claim that, among other ills suffered in those years, 'no less considerable and worthy of attention is the scarcity suffered in this city from all the property of merchants, the houses and revenue confiscated by the Holy Office'.<sup>6</sup> In 1694 in the town of Antequera the people said 'that the Inquisition had driven out considerable capital by castigating the sins and crimes of those who owned it'.<sup>7</sup> This may well have been true, but concerns the wider impact of the Inquisition rather than the detailed issue of confiscations. The result is that we have little or no detailed evidence to show how far confiscations, which were such a source of profit to the Inquisition, could have reacted on the economy of the country as a whole.

It seems probable, however, that the direct contribution of the tribunal to the economic decline of Spain has been exaggerated. If we accepted the Murcian complaint of 1683 as credible, we would expect the Inquisition there to be in possession of a handsome income; yet a statement of revenue in 1675 put its income at 6,003,924 *maravedis* only, and expenses at 6,833,505 *maravedis*.<sup>8</sup> Since revenue varied from year to year and from tribunal to tribunal, however, it would seem more reliable to judge the wealth of a tribunal by its assets

<sup>1</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4649<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 4695<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Article 12 of their protest: British Museum, Egerton MS. 1832, fos. 37-8.

<sup>4</sup> Braunstein, *The Chuetas*, p. 70, n. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Lea, II, 319-20. Lea says that the practice was discontinued after about 1520.

<sup>6</sup> A.G.S. Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda leg. 1057.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* leg. 1988.

<sup>8</sup> A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 4994<sup>1</sup>.

rather than its income. Again, details are available for Murcia. A statement of income towards the end of its career, in 1799, estimated that the Inquisition of Murcia had in its treasury a total of 277,423 *reales*; and that all the real estate it possessed was a mill on the river Segura, near Cieza, and a house nearby, both these properties being valued at a total of 936,509 *reales*. At the same period the tribunal of Valencia owned real estate to the value of 750,000 *reales*. The Inquisition of Seville, first of all the tribunals to come into existence and the one which had probably carried out more confiscations than any other, was in happy possession of 25 properties let out for rent, and two landed estates, at Puebla de Cazalla and Ecija; altogether these brought in the substantial annual revenue of 29,339 *reales*.<sup>1</sup> These examples show three of the more affluent tribunals in the peninsula, but none of them could be said to be a great property-owning institution. The Holy Office never became as richly endowed as the Spanish Church, and consequently never became one of the great vested interests (such as the Mesta, the Church, the landed aristocracy or the guilds) that tended to stand in the way of economic development.

We must conclude that confiscations in themselves do not help us in any inquiry about Spanish decline. The real issue is the indirect contribution of the Inquisition, in its impact on those who suffered from confiscations. But it is difficult to follow Lea and others who attribute decay of trade to the Holy Office. It is true that foreign traders in Spain were regularly prosecuted by the tribunal for alleged offences against religion, and that ships' cargos and even ships were often confiscated in such circumstances, but one would expect the corollary to be that English, Dutch, German and French trade with Spain consequently decayed. In fact, as we know, the grasp of foreigners on the Spanish and American trade increased, and the Protestant powers shared in this to an even greater extent, perhaps, than the Catholic ones. Apart from this issue, there are no other recorded cases of the Inquisition interfering with commerce.

To blame the tribunal for decay of industry is even less plausible, since it played no part in formulating economic policy. Foreign Protestant manufacturers were as a rule forbidden to settle in Spain, but numerous Flemish and French Catholic manufacturers were actively encouraged. It would be foolish to suggest that the excluded Protestant entrepreneurs were the only capable ones.

In the end the great unknown factor is the economic role of the minorities who suffered from confiscations. Since the Jews and *conversos* seem to have been more active in the world of finance than of industry, any inquiry would have to estimate the impact of the Inquisition on capital accumulation and on the role of the middle class of which the Jews probably formed a majority. The persecution and expulsion of Jews in the late fifteenth century, and the prosecution of rich financiers in the seventeenth, was undoubtedly very important. But the second of these developments occurred when Spain was already in a state of decline, and the first was followed by a century of world-wide expansion, so that on either count the Inquisition seems not to have been an immediate cause of economic disruption. These qualifications must be made in order to

<sup>1</sup> All these details are from A.H.N. Inquisición leg. 5144<sup>1</sup>.

rebut undocumented attacks on the Inquisition, but they should not be read as an *apologia*. For it is certain beyond all argument that through confiscations the wealth of the *conversos* was whittled away and destroyed and that in the process the most prosperous section of the urban bourgeoisie was reduced to impotence.

*University of Edinburgh*