

## The Jews of Colonial Mexico

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THE STORY of the Jews of Mexico is yet to be written; for the modern era there are a few reports and magazine articles, and for the colonial period there are a few biographical sketches and several narrative accounts of incidents of persecution. These do not tell the whole story.

B. Lewin's *Mártires y Conquistadores Judíos en la América—España*<sup>1</sup> is a series of sketches of individuals, four of whom resided in Mexico. Examples of the efforts to relate Jews to the panorama of a larger history are Cecil Roth's *History of the Marranos*,<sup>2</sup> *Herejias y supersticiones en la Nueva España*, by Julio Jiménez Rueda,<sup>3</sup> *History of the Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, by Henry C. Lea,<sup>4</sup> and *Historia del Tribunal de la Inquisición*, by José Toribio Medina.<sup>5</sup> There are a few others which will be mentioned later.

As late as 1907 little was known about the Jews in colonial Mexico, since books such as *México a través de los siglos*,<sup>6</sup> by Riva Palacio, and *México viejo*<sup>7</sup> by Luis González Obregón, were not widely distributed or read, although the former was cited in an article in the Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society.<sup>8</sup>

### THE FIRST JEWS

The first Jew known to have been in Mexico was Hernando Alonso, ship's carpenter with Cortés. He arrived in 1521, and in 1528 had the unenviable distinction of being the first Jew to be burned at the stake on the North American continent. He shared this fate with Gonzalo

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<sup>1</sup> Buenos Aires, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> New York and Philadelphia, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> México, 1946, pp. 79-139.

<sup>4</sup> New York, 1922.

<sup>5</sup> México, 1952, with additions by Julio Jiménez Rueda.

<sup>6</sup> México, 5 vols., n.d.

<sup>7</sup> México, 1959.

<sup>8</sup> "Trial of Gabriel de Granada," *PAJHS*, No. 7 (1899) 1, trans. of original proceso by David Fergusson, with Preface by Cyrus Adler.

de Morales, reputed to be his brother. There was a third Jew (so charged) at the same auto-da-fé, Diego de Ocaña, but he was reconciled.†

In 1523 Charles V issued a decree that Jews, Moors, New Christians, and their descendants could not emigrate to the New World. This was not the first such decree, and it was repeated from time to time. Others were issued by the Inquisitor General of Spain. The last such decree was dated September 16, 1802.<sup>9</sup> The very repetition of these decrees to the end of the colonial era suggests that Jews infiltrated the colonies in spite of the vigilance of the king's captains and the Inquisition's *comisarios*.

There is more substantial evidence that numerous Jews resided in Mexico throughout the entire colonial era. Yolanda Mariel de Ibáñez lists 84 cases of Jews brought before Inquisitors during the period from 1528 to 1599.<sup>10</sup> They held communal prayers, observed their religious rites in spite of all dangers, and were in communication with Jewish communities in other parts of the world.

Their role during the colonial period was significant, albeit their true religious status was *sub rosa*. Their specific contributions to the material and spiritual development of the colonies, and their many acts of heroism, have usually been overlooked by historians. Alfonso Toro states, for example, that "In spite of the legal prohibitions, we found that many Israelites went to the New World and that they had a role in its conquest and discovery, as also in the foundation of the colonial society; thus one finds them in all social classes and playing a role in the professions and offices."<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Toro refers to them as *Israelitas* rather than as *marranos*, *nuevos cristianos*, heretics or other generic terms employed by others.

It is impossible to write of colonial Mexico without recourse to the Inquisition documents, for they cover practically every facet of life in New Spain. The entire viceroyalty was under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition Court or *Tribunal del Santo Oficio* of Mexico City. It was established in 1571, but bishops had exercised inquisitorial powers

† A glossary appears at the conclusion of the article.

<sup>9</sup> Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter referred to as AGN), vol. 1408, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Yolanda Mariel de Ibáñez, *La Inquisición en México durante el siglo XVI*, (México, 1946). Her tabulation does not include the probable Jews who may have appeared on charges other than *judaizante*. Her statistics are predicated only on those procesos in the AGN. She did not include the names of those referred to by José Toribio Medina, Luis González Obregón, and those cited by Genaro García, *Documentos inéditos muy raros de la historia Mexicana*. (México, 1906), vol. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Los Judíos en la Nueva España*, AGN XX, Publicaciones (México 1932).

before this time. In 1528 Fr. Vicente de Santa María, a Dominican, came with full authority to act in all matters of the Faith. He was followed by other members of his order until the Holy Tribunal was established in 1571.

The attentiveness and the diligence with which this court kept its records provides us with scrupulously detailed documentation. Screams in the torture chamber were noted in the records, as well as on which turn of the wheel the tortured shrieked forth his or her confession, and how many quarts of water were poured into the supine victim through a silk handkerchief. The records even reveal the imprecations poured forth against the Church, the Inquisitors, and even the Trinity.

### *Indice del Ramo de Inquisición*

One of the buildings on the grounds of the National Palace at the Zócalo in Mexico City is the *Archivo General de la Nación*. It is a two story structure with a basement. The ground floor has thousands of bound volumes of documents and show-cases with famous documents of Mexican history.

On the second floor are a reference library, thousands of volumes of documents, including those of the Inquisition, the offices of the Director, Dr. J. Ignacio Rubio Mañé, and of his staff. The history of the AGN has been ably set forth in Dr. Rubio's study in *Revista de Historia de América*<sup>12</sup> and Mario Mariscal's *Reseña histórica del A.G.N. (1550-1946)*.<sup>13</sup> These archives are the oldest in the Americas, having been founded in 1550.

In the library are 15 volumes known as the *Indice del Ramo de Inquisición*. This is the index to the 1552 volumes of Inquisition documents. There are 69 separately numbered volumes known as the *Lote Riva Palacio*. The indices to these 69 volumes are to be found in the *Boletín del AGN*, Tomo IV No. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1933) and Tomo IV No. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1933).

The indices contain an aggregate of almost 3300 pages, and all entries are single-spaced, without alphabetical or other organization. Some entries are brief but many are lengthy. Each entry states the year of the document, and its nature, e.g., *proceso*, denunciation, information, letter; the name or names of the people involved; the nature of the charge, e.g., heresy, witchcraft, superstition, solicitation of women by priests or monks in or out of the confessional, bigamy, being a Jew or a descendant of a Jew, following Jewish practices or observ-

<sup>12</sup> No. 9, August, 1940, pp. 63-169.

<sup>13</sup> México 1946.

ing the Laws of Moses, Calvinism, Lutheranism, and the possession of prohibited books. Then follows the number of leaves of each document, and the volume in which it is to be found, the page or number of the document in the volume (hereafter we shall use *volume* in referring to the *documents* and *tomo* to refer to the *Indice books*). The entries cover all the activities of the Inquisition such as procesos, the naming of fiscals, comisarios, expurgators, prohibited books, entries at the ports of Vera Cruz and Acapulco of each ship with inventories of the cargoes, accountings, pleas of all kinds, estates, sequestration of properties, genealogies, and other items.

The proceso of Jorge Álvarez is a good example of the difficulties involved in using the *Indice*. His name first appears in the *Indice Tomo 1A* page 143. The entry states that in 1594 a proceso was brought against Ana Váez, wife of Jorge Álvarez, and that the proceso is in Volume 152, #2, and has 110 leaves (each leaf has two sides) and that the charge against her was *judaizante*. In the same Tomo and page, the following references appear with respect to Jorge himself; a proceso against him in 1595, charging him with ‘*judaizante*,’ that the document is in Volume 153, #1, and that it consists of 194 leaves. The next entry is on page 196. His name is now followed by the word ‘reconciled,’ and there is an entry that in Volume 252A, #2A, (1597 A.D.) is a document of eight leaves concerning the sequestration of his property. Farther down on the same page of the *Indice*, his name reappears, but this time it is followed by the word ‘relapsed,’ the document, in Volume 254A, #10, is of 10 leaves involving the sale of his property in 1601. No further entries appear about Jorge Álvarez in the *Indice*. In the Index to the Lote Riva Palacio, however, there is a reference to Volume 18, in which is another proceso in 1598 against him for “concealing the real identity of himself and others.” Without the Riva Palacio collection, no one would have known of the second proceso. The change from reconciled to relapsed would have been inexplicable.

There are numerous other cases to be found in four or five different Tomos of the *Indice* with references to 10 or 12 different Volumes. There are still some documents in the cellar of the AGN that have not been indexed or otherwise classified.

Despite efforts of the present Director and some of his predecessors, the AGN does not possess originals or copies of all Inquisition documents, and they could not locate all the missing documents. Some are owned by private citizens, and many are reposing in churches or other institutions both within and outside Mexico.

In 1907 E. Nott Anable took 31 volumes of bound documents out

of Mexico. He offered them for sale to Elkan N. Adler, an Englishman, who thereby acquired their description. Adler wrote a book, *Auto-Da-Fé and Jew* in which he has an appendix with the aforementioned description.<sup>14</sup> Many of these documents were only parts of procesos; some pertain to Jews, and others reveal names not found in the AGN. Efforts to ascertain the present location of any of these documents have thus far proven fruitless.

G. R. G. Conway, an Englishman, bought thousands of such documents, which became scattered after his death. Conway made paleographic transcripts and English translations of many procesos which he donated to various institutions. Concerning these contributions, we find valuable information in the *HARR* series of articles on the collections outside Mexico.<sup>15</sup>

By chance this writer came across five original documents, each quite lengthy, at the Henry C. Lea Memorial Library at the University of Pennsylvania, and learned of the existence of two others at Washington State University. The librarian at the University of Pennsylvania graciously presented microfilm copies of the documents to the AGN. The Washington State University procesos appeared in the March, 1946, and March, 1947, issues of the "Research Studies of the State College of Washington." Six of the aforesaid seven documents pertain to Jews and two of them supply significant missing links in this writer's research.

There have been further incidents in the quest for documents which prove that much remains to be done to complete the Mexican archives. One institution in the United States has a substantial number of Mexican Inquisition documents, but it has refused to honor requests of other institutions and individuals for photostatic or other copies.

#### *Information and Observations Gleaned from The Indices*

Failure to dig deeply into the primary sources has obscured the fact that the Jews constituted a substantial proportion of the white population in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. This writer's name index reveals that over 1100 Jews were brought before the Mexican

<sup>14</sup> Oxford University Press, England, 1908.

<sup>15</sup> Ivie E. Cadenhead, Jr., "The G. R. G. Conway Collection in the Gilcrease Institute: A Checklist," *HARR*, XXXVIII (Aug. 1958), No. 3, 373-382; J. Street, "The G.R.G. Conway Collection in Cambridge University Library," *HARR*, XXXVIII, 60-81; A. P. Thornton, "The G.G.G. Conway Collection in the University of Aberdeen," *HARR*, XXXVI, 345-347. There are at least 47 volumes of Mexican Inquisition documents in the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, a listing of which has never been published.

Tribunal during its reign. A cursory search among documents and sources other than those in the AGN has revealed another 200 names prior to 1795. A few members of prominent Mexican Christian families have not hesitated to reveal that they have Jewish ancestry. Their lineage dates back two or three centuries in Mexico. Excluded are the over-glamorized and publicized "Indian Jews." Doubt of their ancestry prior to 1870 is entertained by the few who have sought out the facts of their history.

It is a reasonable estimate that during the middle of the 17th century between two and three thousand Jews were living in New Spain. This is a considerable part of the total white population which, excluding the clerical hierarchy, is estimated at 20,000.

The Indice reveals that many Jews (as well as others) died before the termination of their trials. Some died from torture and others from causes brought on by the unsanitary conditions in the Inquisition cells.

Most were spared capital punishment in any form. Confiscation of property was inevitable. Men received as many as 300 lashes and some were consigned to the galleys for years, some were imprisoned for a few years, and practically all had to wear *sambenitos* for varying periods. Women were often sentenced to serve in convents, sometimes for life, and a few received lashes which were applied in the public streets with the criminal, regardless of sex, stripped to the waist. Approximately 200 Jews died directly or indirectly through the Inquisition in Mexico. The Inquisition itself never decreed capital punishment. The criminal was turned over to the secular arm to pronounce and carry out the final punishment. In this manner, the Church was spared from having "blood on its hands." However, the clergy and monks officiated at autos-da-fé.

An example of the understated figure of those who died as a result of the Inquisition is that of Henry B. Parkes, who, in his *History of Mexico*,<sup>16</sup> states that "Less than 50 persons seem to have been burned by the Inquisition during more than 200 years." An illustration of why more died is the case of Francisco Home alias Vicente Henríquez. In 1641 he "under torment admitted that he and 14 others [named in the Indice] were Jews. He was crippled as a result of the torture and died in jail." (The foregoing is the literal translation of Tomo

<sup>16</sup> New York, 1950. Many American authors rely on famous Mexican authors, e.g., Joaquín García Icazbalceta, for sources and statistics. They ignore the fact that in the nineteenth century many documents were privately owned. The researchers employed are sometimes not as meticulous as they should be in accuracy, verification, and employment of primary sources.

4 page 26 of the *Indice*). Juan Méndez Esporán was another who died in jail in 1614. Others suffered the same fate.

Other mistakes have been made by historians. The redoubtable Riva Palacio confused Luis de Carvajal, a conquistador and governor, with Luis de Carvajal, *el mozo* (the younger) and nephew of the governor. José Toribio Medina's excellent work also contains numerous errors. These have been indicated by Pablo Martínez del Río in his *Alumbrado*,<sup>17</sup> and in *La Inquisición en México durante el siglo XVI*, by Yolanda Muriel de Ibáñez,<sup>18</sup> and in other works. Many of Medina's errors were corrected in the 1952 edition of his work by Julio Jiménez Rueda. The addition of the great number of names by Jiménez Rueda shows how much had been disclosed by new finds in 50 years.

Some historians imply that the existence of Jews in Mexico terminated with the general auto-da-fé in 1649 that rivalled anything held in Spain for the number involved and the elaborate theatrical setting. The *Indice* and other competent sources, however, indicate that there were 300 cases involving Jews before the Tribunal between 1649 and 1795. In 1663 it was presumed that the town of Mixteca was so overrun with Portuguese Jews that the Inquisition ordered that the Edict of Faith be read in the churches there.<sup>19</sup>

Subsequent to 1649 most of the *procesos* against Jews were those in the public eye, such as members of the clergy, (several Jews were monks); one was Chief Constable of the Santo Oficio, others served as secretaries to church dignitaries and office holders.

The fact that in the later days of the Inquisition there were not many *procesos* against Jews does not prove that none were present. In *México viejo*, Luis González Obregón states (p. 718), "As in earlier times, the Jews [judaizantes], Lutherans, Calvinists, witches, heretics, bigamists, etc., etc., had occupied their [the Inquisition's] attention, they were now completely absorbed with the contamination of ideas of the past century, the progressionists, patriots and lovers of independence."

The following are some samples of Jews against whom proceedings were brought in later times: a group of soldiers in 1671; Captain Diego González Figueredo, 1693; Fr. José de San Ignacio, alias Juan Fernández de León, 1712, who was the subject of 2 *procesos* and was a Jewish dogmatizer (see Glossary); several *gachupines*; an Irish Jew, Juan Guillermo, 1714; an army scout same year; Antonio Calbo

<sup>17</sup> México, 1937, p. 195.

<sup>18</sup> México, 1946.

<sup>19</sup> AGN vol. 502, No. 18.

Díez, pharmacist, 1731; Don José de Villauriti, alias Diego Rodríguez García, meat supplier for Tlaxcala, 1733; the Mayor of Zacualapa from 1765 to 1782; José Solomon, a doctor, in 1768; the attorney for the Royal Court in 1729; don José de Cárdenas, mayor of Tecali, 1735; a Franciscan monk Rafael Gil Rodríguez, 1788; and the mayor of Pánuco and Tampico in 1783.

The difficulties in the use of the Indices thus lie primarily in its lack of organization. Remarks interpolated in the entries prevent rapid study and are not properly part of an index. In Tomo 1A, p. 214, there is reference to a declaration made against 15 Jewish prisoners by the warden and another Jew, followed by "this case has curious information about the Jews." Some entries are almost digests. In 1642 Juana Enríquez de Silva was charged with being an observer of the Laws of Moses. The following is part of the entry,

She testified against 114 Jews. She was tortured and confessed on the second turn of the wheel. She was regarded as a perfect and saintly Jewess. She fasted, prayed and bathed for all the Holy Days and gave charity to all who fasted.

Several cases have other notations: 1642 Agustín de Roxas, "hung himself in jail"; Leonor de Rojas, wife of Agustín, "tormented and then confessed." Some of the difficulty involved in using the Indices is that of varied spelling, as that which appears in the names of husband and wife just mentioned. The letters B and V were used interchangeably. Thus when Báez and Váez appear the question arises whether these refer to the same people. One finds Castel Blanco and Casteloblanco, and since they both follow proper names without an intervening comma, there is doubt as to whether this is part of the name or a place of origin. Several Jews came from the town of Casteloblanco.

Many people were brought before the Inquisition on the charge of blasphemy. The charge of Judaism or a related charge may have entered the case later, for the indexer noted only the first charge. Tomo 1A p. 44 lists Gaspar de los Reyes as a pharmacist charged with blasphemy, but Document Volume 52 #1 shows that the ultimate charge was "being a Jew." Over 50 such cases have already come to this writer's attention, indicating that the number of cases involving Jews is probably much greater than supposed, since it is likely that many other cases involving Jews appear in the Indices only on a non-Jewish charge.

The Indices is neither wholly accurate nor complete. References to documents in Volumes do not insure that they are at the places stated. There are also documents in the Volumes that have been over-



looked by indexers. Since these errors, although few in number, exist, they must not be ignored by those who use the *Indice* in the future.

The *Indice* reveals aspects of Jewish life other than the matter of religious persecution. One learns, for example, some of the trades and professions practiced by the Jews. These included being members of the clergy, operating mines, and participating in the slave trade.

Jewish customs are also revealed in the *Indice*. Circumcision was practiced consistently, and this mark was often the revealing factor of their faith. As early as 1540 Juan de Baeza was denounced as a Jew because he circumcized some children, including an Indian child, and as late as 1780 José Antonio Fernández, a Spanish soldier, was denounced because he bore the mark of the covenant.

We also learn from the *Indice* that Jews lived in every part of the country, in the smallest hamlets as well as in the important cities. Some of the places named no longer exist, while others are still only tiny villages.

The merchant Agustín de Espinola was apprehended because he was seen attending the synagogue in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1778. Jamaica then belonged to England and the victim was observed and denounced upon returning to Mexico.

The predominant number of Jews detained by the Inquisition in the early years came from specific places or areas in Spain and Portugal. Among the cities from which came the greatest number caught by the Inquisition prior to 1625 were Llerena in Spain, and Fondon, São Vicente Davera, and Lisbon, Portugal.

The Jews mingled and intermarried. There were cases of Jewish mulattoes, mostly female, two of whom had come from Spain. Many Negro slaves who were loyal to their masters knew and, it is believed, later adopted Jewish customs, as did some Indians. Some of the leaders of the Jewish community knew how to indulge in "cloak and dagger" tactics. They placed their servants and slaves in the Inquisition jails to carry messages back and forth and between the prisoners. There are other instances of brazenness or even defiance of the Inquisition. This may mean that the Jews existed in greater numbers than is presently realized or that they thought they had sufficient influence to prevent further persecution.

Reconciled penitents could not bear arms, ride horses, or wear silk. In spite of these prohibitions, Alonso Romero del Campo and Rodrigo del Campo (both reconciled for being Jews) rode horses with saddle and bit in 1604; Gonzalo de Molina was arrested in 1615 for "using silk, sword and riding a horse"; and Simón Díaz was also incarcerated

for the same reason in 1613. Molina was the grandson of Antonio Machado, who had been relaxed in *estatua* for being a Jewish dogmatist. Perhaps there was more truth than fiction in the claim of Baltazar de Ubago, who in 1630 declared that the house of Inquisitor Pedro Bazas in Tacubaya was built by the bribes of Jewish Familiars.

In 1601 Isabel Rodríguez, Costanza Rodríguez, Justa Méndez, Ana Enríquez, Tomás Day, and Antonio López were denounced for not wearing their sambenitos. This was a mild violation when compared to the eight in 1650 who not only failed to wear this odious garment, which was intended to make the wearer a pariah, but who were caught walking and riding through the streets of Puebla at night in full dress evening regalia. Justa Méndez and Francisco Rodríguez (husband and wife and both later convicted of being Jews, she a second time) had what may seem the temerity to file a complaint in 1633 against one Gaspar Gerónimo for calling them "Jew dogs."

The act of *landrecilla* (cutting away fat and veins of the thigh of an animal) led to the discovery of many Jews. The adherence to this law is reported in several cases. The refusal to eat pork, even in the presence of guests, was also self-revelatory. The case of Tinoco was reported in the PAJHS, Vols. VII and XIX.

The Indice discloses an emigration from South America to Mexico. There were Inquisition Courts in Lima, Cartagena, Chile, and Argentina, and records were exchanged between the various courts. An alias did not always succeed in hiding the emigrant's identity. The first such case was that of Diego López Regalón in 1593. One of the last was that of Pedro Gutiérrez in 1700, who had been previously punished by the Inquisition in Lima. The cases found in the Indice do not indicate the measure of the total emigration from South America to Mexico any more than the number of cases in the Indice are an exact measure of the Jewish population. With respect to the latter, there are at least eight entries which refer to "other Jews," and there are similar notations which also fail to reveal the precise number involved. It must not be forgotten that the Inquisition in its search for heretics was not infallible.

The Inquisition was not a popular institution after 1650. It was opposed by the viceroy and the aristocracy. It was detested by the Indians and abhorred by the mestizos. It had difficulty in filling many of the positions in the last century of its existence (1721-1821).

The documents report not only the occupation of the Jews but also their wealth and property. The inventories of sequestered property, confiscated and then sold for the benefit of the Santo Oficio, are most revealing. The Indice relates the specifics of a dozen cases.

Of the 1100 individual Jews mentioned in the *Indice*, 31 family names appear five or more times. Rodríguez is the most common entry, with almost 100 citations. It is followed by López with 54 entries, Díaz 37, Núñez 34, Gómez 26, Enríquez 23, Fernández 22, and Juárez 22. Juárez is also spelled Suárez and Xuárez. Other family names that appear at least 10 times are González, Hernández, Méndez, Silva, Álvarez, Rivera, Ruiz, and Tinoco. The first or given names are the usual Spanish ones. There are no Abrahams, Isaacs, Jacobs, Davids, or other biblical names except José. That some possessed such names is known because when they went to non-Hispanic countries to stay permanently, this secret identity was revealed. Among the oddities in names are the few Juan Bautistas and a María Bautista. By their names alone their religion could not be known.

### *Summary and Conclusion*

1. The Jews were among the early colonizers of Mexico and resided there without interruption during the colonial period. Dr. Richard E. Greenleaf in his manuscript on "Zumárraga And The Mexican Inquisition" (to be published by the Academy of Franciscan History, Washington, D. C.), writes of the large colony of Jews in Mexico City as early as 1537. The Inquisition records indicate prosecution of Jews until the beginning of the nineteenth century.
2. No mention has been made of the many cases of non-Jews who were beating statues of Christ, of throwing stones at churches, of non-attendance at mass or other religious rites. This indicates a large anti-Church population in Mexico, some of whom befriended and concealed Jews. There are many such cases on record.
3. The history of the Jews in Mexico is one filled with events of heroism, dedication to their faith, and martyrdom.
4. The Jews were an integral factor in the economic and spiritual development of Mexico.
5. The *Indice* is not a complete representation of all the Jews who were in Mexico. There were many whose faith was not revealed even when they were before the Inquisition on charges such as blasphemy. Some were hidden within the hierarchy of the Church. The noted canon and scholar of the Cathedral of Mexico City, Dr. Ángel María Garibay, states that the Franciscan, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, was of a Jewish family. Sahagún was the first anthropologist in Mexico. Without his efforts, invaluable information about Indian life, knowledge, and customs in the pre-Cortés era would have been lost. He lived in Mexico from 1529 to 1590. Dr. Garibay wrote that his dis-

closure of Fray Sahagún's family religion, "lo que no ha de dar gusto a algunos antisemitas" (it would not give pleasure to some anti-semites).

6. The AGN does not have all the Inquisition documents.

7. Jewish scholars should be encouraged to undertake the search for additional documents, to study those available in Mexico and elsewhere. The work should be done by students with a positive Jewish background and a knowledge of Spanish. Ability in paleography is highly desirable. To quote from Dr. Greenleaf's forthcoming book, *supra*: "Work done *in absentia* through paid researchers nets the would-be author of Mexican Inquisition topics very little."

Christian historians have written most of the secondary material. They express admiration and respect for the personalities whom they mention. A genuine appreciation of such things as the mysticism of young Luis de Carvajal (almost cabbalistic), or the heroism with which some of the martyrs endured the rigors of Inquisition torture and the serenity with which they stood at the stake, can be better explained by those thoroughly versed in Jewish history and customs.

8. The insights to be gleaned from the history of the Jews of Mexico are infinite. The narration of their persecution should not be made "to lament the fact or to idealize it, but to understand it," as was aptly stated by Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz of England. He continued, "the historian today must seek to explain the position of the Jews in the national histories of the countries where they dwelt." This is important information not only to the Jews but to Mexico and Mexicans.

### *Glossary and Explanation of Terms*

Auto-da-fé—literally, Act of Faith. It was a religious ceremony.

There were different kinds: *auto particular* or *autillo*, which was for light offenses and could be private or held within convent grounds, without outsiders present; and *auto general* or *auto público general* held as a fiesta day, when a public holiday was declared and attendance was practically mandatory for all within miles around, including the Indians. Not all the penitents at these autos general went to the stake. Those who recanted in time recited the most debasing confessions, holding a candle in each hand. Decrees for less than capital punishment were read aloud and sambenitos donned.

Comisario—the agents of the Inquisition in the various towns of the kingdom, including all places under the jurisdiction of the Santo Oficio.

**Declaración**—declaration or deposition made by the witness before the Inquisition.

**Denunciación**—Accusation made by any person other than officials of the Santo Oficio.

**Dogmatiza**—see judaizante.

**Edict of Faith**—an edict read in church which gave heretics an opportunity to secure absolution by making a confession within 30 days after the reading of the document in church. However, many confessants found themselves subsequently imprisoned because they had not revealed the names of their family or friends who had also been heretics. It is safe to assume that the Church entertained the theory that where there was one Jew there were many more and that the Jews knew of the existence of each other. The Edict also listed customs observed by Jews so that Christians could detect them.

**Familiar**—an Inquisition officer devoted primarily to investigations.

**Fiscal**—prosecutor for the Inquisition.

**Gachupín**—a person born in Spain. Used primarily in Mexico, where they constituted the social aristocracy.

**Garrote**—execution by tightening of a cord about the neck (sometimes the temples and skull) of the guilty before being burned at the stake. This kindness was reserved for those who abjured their heresy after being found guilty, (but before leaving the secret jails of the Inquisition), and reaffirmed their faith in Catholicism. Their corpses were then burned.

**Información**—information, charge or accusation.

**Judaizante**—a judaizer or one who follows the laws of Moses and practices Jewish rites and ritual. This term was applied primarily to those who were Jewish apostates but practised Judaism secretly. Some had the word “dogmatizer” appended to “judaizante.” These sought to bring new Christians back to Judaism, which compounded their crimes.

**Judío**—a Jew, Jewish or Judaical.

**Landrecilla**—the cutting away of forbidden fat and veins from the leg or thigh of slaughtered animals, according to Jewish Law. It is known as porging in English.

**Proceso**—Inquisition lawsuits or trials.

**Reconciliado**—one who was caught straying from the Faith for the first time, confessed the error of his ways, and was sentenced by the Santo Oficio. He or she was readmitted to the Faith; punishment usually consisted of loss of property and the wearing of a sambenito.

Relajado—while the term literally means “to be relaxed,” in the context of Inquisition vocabulary, the individual (*relajado*) was to be turned over to the secular arm of the law, which condemned him to be burned at the stake. The act of turning over was *relajación*. The clergy was present at the *quemadero* (the stake where prisoners were burned) but only in a spiritual or religious capacity.

Relapso—a reversion to criminal conduct. A person who had been converted and then reverted to his original faith.

Sambenito—(also sanbenito), a garment worn by penitent convicts of the Inquisition. There were different kinds, depending upon the nature of the punishment or penance. After the completion of the judgment, they were returned to the Santo Oficio and hung on the walls of the Cathedral, with the name of the wearer, the date, and the details of his crime. In later times, *tablillas* were substituted for the sambenitos on the Cathedral walls.