

To the Inquisitors of Spain

Fernando Tarrida del Mármol

1897

The Spanish government, by means of terror, falsehoods, and slanders hopes to be able to hide the crimes it doesn't cease to commit both in the peninsula and in its unfortunate colonies. It is in error if it thinks it can do this, and the hour of expiation is not far off. Even with the support of the clergy and the sinister "Association of Fathers of Families" it will suffice that light be shined and everything will collapse with a thundering noise.

I do not claim to attack Spain, but rather those who dishonor it. On the subject of my latest articles a few Spanish newspapers affirmed – with the good intentions that one can imagine – that I insulted my fatherland. On the contrary, I find that it is they who insult it, since they appear to identify it with the wretches I unmasked. Spain is only a victim; those who rule its destiny are its executioners; those who support these executioners are their accomplices.

Nor do I claim that the crimes, whatever they might be, remain unpunished. But I protest against the monstrous speculations that the modern inquisitors make on these crimes, anxious as they are to more easily pursue all elements that are truly democratic and anti-clerical. They always proceed in the same fashion: torture, executions, slanders. If the unfortunate they want to destroy lives in Cuba he is a "filibuster;" if it's on the peninsula he's an anarchist; if it's in the Philippines he's a Free-Mason. I, for example, have been graced with all three names. It must be noted that though it is true I am Cuban I am not a filibuster; I am an autonomist, but not anarchist; free-thinker but not Free-Mason since, despite my sympathy for Free-Masonry I have never belonged to any lodge. As for the means they use, it must be admitted that these people doubt nothing, but it must also be recognized that their intelligence is quite poor and that they are only inventive in imagining new tortures. After the pitiful invention of the so-called letter that I spoke of in my article of October 15, they have now invented another letter, according to which I counseled the crime. It's pointless to say that I never wrote such a monstrosity. But I won't go to Barcelona to prove this: they have means too special there of making you declare all they want, and M. Portas would be too happy to keep the promise that he made to make me suffer the tortures I spoke of so that, as he said, I could complain again, but this time with reason. But outside of Spain there are experts who are not Montforts and it wouldn't cost me much, at the right time and place, to demand reason for such an infamy. Messieurs of the Inquisition, you are used to fabricating falsifications, and this has never had any evil consequences for you. By means of these falsifications you have the pretense of surprising the good faith of a foreign government, and this has more serious consequences. In any event, this won't get you anywhere. You want

to prevent me from speaking out, but I have only just begun. In order to speak at my ease I first left Spain and then France. I'll leave Europe if I must but **I WILL SPEAK**. You have force and falsehoods to defend the most revolting monstrosities. I have reason and truth to defend your victims. You have given me the *beau role*, and I thank you for this. One could laugh at your blunders, but the memory of organs crushed, of flesh burnt, of nails torn-out nails, of lips slit removes any desire to do so.

I won't go into the details that are already known to all and that don't honor you. In any event, I will have the occasion to give full details and documents in a book I am currently writing and whose text I will soon send to Paris. To which publisher? That's none of your affair and you will know this only too well when the revelatory book will have appeared.

Though the unfortunate innocents have only called for the light that is not refused the guilty, despite the protests accompanied by convincing proofs that I am in the process of collecting in order to offer you them as a bouquet, despite the sensation produced by the first revelations of *La Revue Blanche*, revelations that have found an echo among so many writers of heart and talent: Severine, Paule Minck, Rochefort, Clemenceau, Faure, Malato, Pi Margall and so many others, despite the indignant demonstrations that have taken place virtually everywhere, notably in France and Holland, you have covered your deeds in a mantle of silence. But everyone today knows that you have resurrected the reign of the Inquisition and you were not able to justify yourselves in the eyes of Spain and the civilized world. You chose to judge the trial *in camera*: you couldn't do otherwise.

Your shadowy proceedings, your lies, the care you show in only allowing the press to publish official accounts have prevented nothing. The press was forced to admit it: the principal accused declared before the military tribunal that their confessions were torn from them through use of atrocious procedures. But this didn't stop you for one instant, no more than did the indignant protests of the defenders, nor the provocations that these latter threw at the accusers. No more than did the suicide of the honorable Captain Morales, who preferred to kill himself rather than survive such iniquities.

You chose your victims by chance; having no choice, you fabricated a tissue of lies so clumsy that they only prove that your ferocity is only equaled by your stupidity. I know something about this myself. According to information furnished in a well documented letter addressed to Rochefort by a person perfectly informed about your present, past, and future projects, it is I who was the first to be destined to suffer the tortures that were to make me say that I had brought the bombs in from another country. The correspondent adds that the influence of certain highly-placed personalities who I abstain from naming, but who he names (proving to me that he is well informed) prevented the execution of this plan.

In order to give satisfaction to the Spanish Episcopate you replaced me with Corominas, judging that a lawyer was worth as much as an engineer, though knowing full well that he was as innocent as I. If I participated in more than a hundred anti-clerical meetings and if all my life I have attacked the abuses of the Jesuits – of which I am quite proud – Corominas for his part was at the head of the demonstration directed at the Bishop of Barcelona when the latter wanted to ban the works of my friend Dr. Odon de Buen, professor of Natural History at the University of Barcelona, decorated by the French government. Corominas' head, which was supposed to be executed, but which you only dared condemn to twenty years of hard labor, had to console the Episcopate for not having mine. It was still that of a good centralist republican and an ardent free-thinker that you thus made disappear.

And now I have accounts to ask of you on the subject of the late verdict, since the French government, whose good faith you surprised and continue to surprise, wouldn't think of asking it of you. At the time of the attack on the Liceo you asked of France, and it granted you, the extradition of the citizen Alfredo Rugiero Rinaldi as the author of the crime. After having endured all the tortures, after they twice threw him into the sea so that he declare things he knew nothing about, he was acquitted. I didn't know him, but he came to see me in my office. When I saw that man who was no longer anything but a cadaver; when I heard the tale of his horrible and long (around thirteen months) Calvary; when I realized that he was telling me the truth, since on his body were still visible the traces of the most horrific tortures, I thought of the responsibility assumed by the French government in delivering an innocent to torture. But even more of your infamy, for you were more or less the same people as today, the Portas, the Tressols, etc. In summary, I gave this poor man, who was dying of hunger, money and a letter for Deputy Lostau. The latter gave him a job on the Catalan Bus Company and, a short while later, on that of the tram of Sarria. But this man is back in Montjuich; he was one of my cellmates.

He had been arrested like many others, because he had already been arrested in the past. This unfortunate doesn't know a word of politics or sociology, so little that the military tribunal, which condemns to twenty years of forced labor men accused of nothing except having attended public meetings, had to acquit him again. What indemnity will you give this man? Without any doubt, prison or a penal colony at the first opportunity.¹ It is so incredible that it's difficult to believe the things you dare to do, but I take it upon myself to furnish proof and point out who is responsible. Even among conservatives there are men in Spain who are perfectly honest, who condemn your act and deplore their inability to prevent them. You know full well that you almost always act unbeknownst to them, and in doing this you abuse the exceptional rights which allow you to suspend constitutional guarantees.

The disappearance of the prisoner Pujol who you went to the prison to turn into a spy by offering him 2500 francs and freedom – IT IS YOU, YOURSELF, MONSIEUR PORTAS WHO TOLD ME THIS – and whose services you were unhappy with because he was angered to see beings tortured who he knew were innocent; this disappearance, I say, we'll talk about it another day, as well as that of Ardiaca. We have all the time in the world, and it won't hurt you to wait. As I said, I am only beginning.

F. TARRIDA DEL MARMOL
Portsmouth, January 25, 1897

¹ I point this fact out to MM. Barthou and Lepine so that they realize the moral responsibility they assume in ceding to the solicitations of the Spanish police.

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