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Olivares Leyva, M. "The controversy regarding Graham Greene in Spain". En: O'Leary, C. y Lázaro, A. (eds.) *Censorship across borders: the reception of English literature in twentieth-century Europe*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, pp. 161-170.

Available at <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-4438-3218-2>

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THE CONTROVERSY REGARDING GRAHAM GREENE IN SPAIN¹

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The influence of Francoist censorship on the publication of Graham Greene's works is, for the most part, an under-researched topic. It has been mainly in the last decade that scholars have begun to address this question. Accordingly, Raquel Merino, who has thoroughly studied the censored translations of English theatre in Franco's Spain, has explained that Greene's *The Compliant Lover* (1959) was prohibited for approximately six years before it was staged in the Madrid theatre *Eslava* on 27 September 1968.² It is obvious that Greene, despite being a Catholic writer, had serious problems with the Spanish apparatus of censorship in the 1960s. However, little attention has been paid to the effects of censorship on the publication of Greene's early works, more precisely, the ones he wrote before his first religious novel *Brighton Rock* (1938), and before literary critics labelled him a "Catholic writer". To this end, the scope of this study comprises his fiction prior to *Brighton Rock*. The publications included in this time span are the following: *The Man Within* (1929), *The Name of Action* (1930), *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931), *Stamboul Train* (1932), *It's a Battlefield* (1934), *England Made Me* (1935) and *A Gun for Sale* (1936). Given that it is generally accepted that Greene's Catholic faith is not yet visible in these novels, one might think that they could not have been prohibited on religious grounds. In order to shed light on this question, this essay focuses on the censorship files relating to these texts and the conditions affecting their publication or censorship.³

The censorship records offer relevant data that is registered in the following table:

Title	File	Publishing House	Copies	Censor's resolution
<i>The Man Within</i>	6157-44	Luis de Caralt	3000	Banned
<i>The Name of Action</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----
<i>Rumour at Nightfall</i>	3020-47	Luis de Caralt	2000	Banned
<i>Stamboul Train</i>	2546-43	Aymà	2500	Banned
<i>It's a Battlefield</i>	4595-52	Luis de Caralt	2000	Banned
<i>England Made Me</i>	1889-44	Luis de Caralt	3000	Authorised
<i>A Gun for Sale</i>	304-45	Luis de Caralt	3000	Authorised

The table clearly shows that the Spanish publishing companies Aymà and Luis de Caralt were interested in this group of novels, because applications were submitted in relation to all of them, except for *The Name of Action*. The print run varies between 2,000 and 3,000 copies. If one considers the censors' decisions, it is obvious that Greene experienced difficulties with censorship in Spain. A

¹ This study is part of a research project entitled "La recepción de la narrativa inglesa en la España del siglo XX: ediciones crítica y censura" (The Reception of English Fiction in Twentieth-century Spain: Editions, Criticism and Censorship, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education under the 2007 programme of grants for research projects (Reference HUM2007-63296/FILO).

² See Merino 2000, 2001 and 2002. I have also examined the censorship files on the play and found that most censors did not particularly agree with Greene's conception that adultery was the most plausible solution to avoid the dissolution of a Catholic marriage that loses passion (see AGA (03)046SIG73/09421, File 299-62 and AGA (03)046SIG73/09523, File 238-65). Furthermore, the 1963 ban imposed on *The Compliant Lover* was based on the assumption that the play was a dangerous attack on this sacrament, since the *ménage à trois* was a proposal made by a Catholic author.

³ These documents can be found at the *Archivo General de la Administración* (AGA) that is located in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid. A censorship file usually consists of an application form submitted by the publisher, detailing the number of books to be printed, the format and the price, among other publishing details. The publishing house also sent a copy of the text itself, which was to be examined by a censor in charge of writing a report that is also frequently included in the file. The censor generally described the plot and then gave the reasons that justified the verdict.

detailed description of the censorship files can help to explain the reasons for the censors' verdicts on Greene's six novels.

The first application to publish *The Man Within* in Spain went to the censorship board in October 1944, when Luis de Caralt submitted an application to print 3,000 copies. The Spanish title was *El hombre interior*.⁴ This file relating to this novel in the AGA is incomplete and contains neither the censor's report nor the novel itself. Nonetheless, two interesting notes are written on the application form. Firstly, the censor jotted down: "Autorizada 18-XII-44", indicating that Luis de Caralt obtained permission to publish on 18 December 1944. The following day the process was interrupted because the *Jefe del Lectorado* (the Director of the Censorship Board) crossed out the previous verdict and noted down: "Suspendida 19-XII-44", which shows that the application was turned down on 19 December 1944. It is impossible to establish why an authorisation was rapidly turned into a prohibition, when the appropriate documentation is unavailable. It is unlikely that the book was regarded as an attack on religion, since, as has been previously noted, critics commonly argue that Catholicism is not present in this novel. It could, however, have been banned for reasons of "morality" because of its overt sexual connotations, as noted by Julio Manegat, who wrote that Andrews wanted to evade his fear of life by having a sexual relationship with Lucy (1958, 16). The *Jefe del Lectorado* may also have been conscious of this connotation and, consequently, considered it morally censurable. Whatever the reason, *The Man Within* was not made available to Spanish readers in 1944.

In 1947 Luis de Carat also asked for permission to publish 2,000 copies of Greene's next novel, *Rumour at Nightfall*.⁵ The provisional title was *Ruido al atardecer*. While once again the censor's report is missing from the file, a valuable note - "Suspendido, 27 agosto 47"- written on the publisher's petition indicates that the novel was prohibited on 27 August 1947. This time a copy with the problematic passages underlined by the censor is available.⁶ It seems that a cursory reading was sufficient to upset the censor, since all of the marks are concentrated on the first twenty eight pages. The first controversial sentences are found immediately after Greene's presentation of Chase, the British correspondent, who has been in Spain for two years reporting on the Carlist Civil War in the north of the country. He has been on the trail of the revolutionary, Ramón Caveda, for the previous six months. When Chase thinks he is just about to uncover Caveda's identity, one of Chase's companions, Luis Roca, is shot and seriously injured, and his superior, Colonel Riego, becomes worried about the incident. The censor underlined the following sentences in the section where Greene introduces Chase's thoughts about the colonel's concerns:

I shall never understand these Spaniards, and the importance they attribute to death. They seemed every one of them to fight under the shadow of this sense of immortality. Round corners, in the shadows cast by anonymous peaks, stood wooden crosses bearing bloodstained and contorted Christs, the superstitious emblems of a race untouched by scientific knowledge. Their religion seemed to him not a consolidation but a horror, the product of a deadly cold and an intolerable heat. (1931, 5-6)

In the previous passage, Greene makes an overt comment on the Spanish attitude to death; as can be inferred from the markings, however, the censor may have not agreed with the writer's insinuation that Spaniards are superstitious Catholics, far from reason and near irrationality. Roca is in agony and asks for a priest for confession. There is not enough time and Colonel Riego hears his confession in front of the rest of his men. Chase observes attentively and, once again, his thoughts about Spaniards flow in the narrative. On this occasion the censor underlined Chase's judgement of them as "[...] barbarians. They are behind the times" (1931, 10). The censor also objected to Chase's opinion on Spanish songs which "[...] dealt inevitable with the agony of the Cross and the terror of death" (1931, 13). The censor may have objected to this because, in the previous sentence, Greene insists on the fact that Catholic Spaniards fear death. Apart from this, there is a short marked passage describing the moment Chase requested a Spaniard to bring his horse:

"What was the use of saying 'at once,' he thought, to a Spaniard." The man made no attempt to obey him, but asked with a soft, friendly, doubting air whether the caballero intended to ride far. (1931, 28)

The censor may have taken exception to Chase's suggestion that Spanish people are lazy or stupid. The censor also objected to Chase's thoughts on the Spanish queen, Isabella, since the following

⁴ See AGA (03)050SIG21/07519, File 6157-44.

⁵ See AGA (03)050SIG21/07947, File 3020-47.

⁶ It is a Heinemann edition from 1931.

statement appears partly underlined: “[...] the lecherous, impulsive woman with her *battalion of priests and lovers*” [1931, 22]. The censor may have considered it disrespectful toward the sovereign, particularly because Greene insinuates a close relationship between the queen and the clergy. In short, the marks on this copy of the novel shows that Greene’s critical description of nineteenth-century Spain contributed to the banning of *Rumour at Nightfall* on 27 September 1947.

The examination of the censorship file on *Stamboul Train*, Greene’s first literary work to be submitted to the censorship office, reveals that the Barcelona publishing house Aymà had problems when it applied for permission to print 2,500 copies in 1943.⁷ The censor summarised the plot of *Orient Express* -the Spanish title- and mentioned the diverse relationships established among Greene’s numerous characters in this novel. The censor was convinced, however, that the narrative was “adulterated” and “disfigured” due to the sexual nature of certain relationships. He described them as “pornographic” and “morbid” and hence argued that the text had to be banned. The truth is that the censor gave little detail about what exactly he disapproved of. Nonetheless, one can see what the censor objected to, thanks to the marks on the censor’s copy of the book, which was a French translation.⁸ It seems that *Stamboul Train* was condemned because of the relationship established in the novel between Mabel Warren and Janet Pardoe and, more precisely, Mabel’s most inner thoughts regarding Janet. These are among the most underlined passages: when she remembers the day she met Janet for the first time, when she imagines Janet in pyjamas at home while she is preparing breakfast, or when Mabel shows her fear of losing Janet when she meets Carleton Myatt. One of the most noteworthy examples of the censor’s uneasiness with Mabel’s feelings is given in the following passage marked by the censor:

Tandis qu’elle, Mabel Warren, elle qui avait sauvé Janet de cet enterrement qu’e était sa vie de gouvernante, elle qui l’avait nourrie, l’avait vêtue, elle qui était capable de l’amer d’une passion égale jusqu’à la mort sans éprouver de satiété, elle n’avait d’autre moyen que ses lèvres pour exprimer son amour; elle se trouvait toujours en face de cette impossibilité de donner du plaisir ou de gagner pour elle-même autre chose qu’un amer sentiment d’insuffisance. (1935: 55)

The reference to homosexuality was clearly unacceptable to the censor.⁹ It should also be noted that the censor found certain questionable passages regarding the passengers Coral Musker and Myatt and, in particular, Coral’s sexual surrender to Myatt’s charms. All things considered, this private meeting between Coral and Myatt, together with the close relationship between Mabel and Janet, could have been on the censor’s mind when he recommended prohibition and, consequently, *Stamboul Train* was banned on 28 April 1943.

Luis de Caralt submitted an application to publish *It’s a Battlefield* to the censorship office in September 1952.¹⁰ The censor examined *La batalla* -the Spanish title given by the publisher- and pointed out in his report an interesting detail: Jim Drover’s wife falls into the arms of her husband’s brother. While the censor did not criticise the woman’s infidelity explicitly, it is likely that this reference to adultery was a consideration, given that his report refers to the novel’s depiction of moral depravation. The censor also disliked the fact that the book had connotations of scepticism that led to anarchism and nihilism. He may have disapproved of those characters, like Jim’s brother, who continuously tries “to evade the unjust and cruel society” (Manegat 1958, 19). In his report, the censor indicated the pages comprising the most scandalous content. Regrettably, the copy examined by the censor is not part of the documentation available in the files and, as a consequence, it is impossible to verify the censurable passages. The censor concluded the report by stating that he would not authorise the publication of the novel because it might produce harmful effects on certain readers. Subsequently, the book was prohibited on 25 September 1952.

Luis de Caralt was also the first publisher to submit *England Made Me* to the censorship office in March 1944.¹¹ The following month, the *Delegación Nacional de Propaganda* (National Propaganda Agency) informed Luis de Caralt that the novel was authorised for publication, provided that the galley

⁷ See AGA (03)050SIG21/07147, File 2546-43.

⁸ The censor examined a French version of *Stamboul Train* that Librairie Stock published in 1935 under the title *Orient-Express*. The translator was Denyse Clairouin.

⁹ My recent research on Spanish censorship of Iris Murdoch’s literature has revealed that homosexuality was also the reason for banning some of her novels. See Olivares 2009.

¹⁰ See AGA (03)050SIG21/10038, File 4595-52.

¹¹ See AGA (03)050SIG21/07378, File 1889-44.

proofs with the Spanish translation of the story were sent for examination. Accordingly, a censor received Francisco Baldiz's version of the text in July 1945 and summarised the plot of the novel, which, in his opinion, was written in a lively style. It was finally authorised and Luis de Caralt published *England Made Me* in the same year.

Once more, Luis de Caralt was the first Spanish publishing house to demonstrate an interest in publishing *A Gun for Sale*. An application was submitted for a print run of 2,000 copies of *Esta pistola está en venta* in January 1945.¹² The publisher was notified that the permission would be obtained, if the galley proofs were provided for examination.¹³ The following month the censor revised the translation by Baldiz, the same person who translated *England Made Me*. The censor expressed his admiration for the book, which he considered to be of excellent literary worth within the detective fiction genre. Moreover, he recommended no cuts. Consequently, *A Gun for Sale* was authorised on 14 February 1945. Curiously enough, Luis de Caralt published the same novel two years later with the new title *Una pistola en venta*.

Despite the evident lack of documentation in some of the censorship files discussed, the compiled data leads to certain conclusions about the effects of Francoist censorship on the reception of Greene's work in post-war Spain. It is important to point out that Aymà was the first publishing house to show an interest in Greene's fiction; it was Luis de Caralt, however, who played the most significant role in introducing Greene's fiction to a Spanish readership. It must also be stated that the censors were responsible for thwarting most of the attempts to publish Greene's early novels in Spain. A curious discovery has been that *Stamboul Train* was prohibited due to immorality and, more precisely, to its reference to lesbianism. In addition, it is interesting to note that the questions on religion led to the ban on *Rumour at Nightfall*, a novel in which the Catholic element is generally assumed to be absent. On one occasion Greene wrote that no one noticed his Catholic faith before the publication of *Brighton Rock*¹⁴ but, as has been shown here, a Spanish censor had identified it more than two decades before the writer's statement. The literary critic Fernando Galván has argued that there is no convincing explanation for the absence of this novel in Spain (1987, 10). Thanks to this study it is clear that the lack of a Spanish edition cannot be attributed to the publishing houses' lack of interest, but rather to the prohibition of the work by the censors. One can conclude, therefore, that the Spanish censorship system impacted negatively on the reception of Greene's literature in Spain. *Rumour at Nightfall*, *The Man Within*, *Stamboul Train* and *It's a Battlefield* were prohibited between 1943 and 1952 and, as a result, Spanish readers had no access to Greene's early fiction.

There are still many questions to be answered regarding the official reception of Greene's work in Spain. For example, why did the *Jefe del Lectorado* reject the publication of *The Man Within* in 1944? Was it seen as moral offence as suggested here? It would be interesting to view the censorship files on this novel in order to find out how Luis de Caralt managed to publish it successfully some years later, in 1947. Similarly, it would be fascinating to consider what had changed to allow this publishing house to publish *Stamboul Train* in 1953.¹⁵ There are no records of Spanish translations of *It's a Battlefield*, but there may be as yet undiscovered files with further information on the censorship of this novel in Spain. While some work has already been done, the answers to these inquiries will provide a fuller picture of the publication history of Graham Greene's literature in Francoist Spain.

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¹² See AGA (03)050SIG21/07567, File 304-45.

¹³ The exact date is not written down on the letter sent to Luis de Caralt.

¹⁴ The writer explains this issue in his introduction to the 1970 Heinemann edition of *Brighton Rock* (reprinted in 1991).

¹⁵ *Historia de una cobardía* and *Orient Express* are the Spanish titles given to *The Man Within* and *Stamboul Train* respectively.

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