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Index of forbidden books

The Index Librorum Prohibitorum was a catalog of prohibited books maintained by the Catholic Church from the 16th to the 20th centuries. #### The Master Title Page of the Index Librorum Prohibitorum #### A Series of Councils and Documents #### The Catholic Reformation and Revival Catholic Church's Index was a comprehensive list of banned books, active from 1560 to 1966. The Index prohibited thousands of titles, including works by influential thinkers such as Robert Bellarmine and Johannes Kepler. It condemned texts deemed repugnant or dangerous to the church, aiming to protect its members from reading disruptive books. Editions of the Index contained guidelines for book censorship, including rules on printing and publishing. The historical context in which the Index emerged involved early restrictions on printing in Europe, dating back to the introduction of moveable type by Johannes Gutenberg around 1440. This innovation enabled mass production and dissemination of books, leading governments and churches to regulate and control printing. The Protestant Reformation fueled a surge in polemical writing, making censorship a pressing issue. Governments established controls on printers, requiring licenses and restricting access to book publishing. In France, the Edict of Châteaubriant (1551) summarized censorship policies, while the Edict of Compiègne (1557) applied harsh penalties for heresy. The Index's influence extended beyond theological works, targeting philosophical and scientific texts as well. ### Historically, censorship and restrictions on knowledge dissemination have followed a similar pattern to church-state relations. In the 17th century, René Descartes faced Indexing in the 1660s, prompting France to ban teaching Cartesianism in schools by the 1670s. However, copyright laws introduced in Britain (1710) and later in France provided some relief. Historian Eckhard Höffner suggests that these restrictions hindered progress for over a century, as British publishers could print valuable information in limited quantities for profit, while Germany's economy thrived due to the absence of such constraints. The first Index was published in 1557 but withdrawn, with subsequent lists appearing under various auspices until the Tridentine Index was introduced in 1564, serving as the basis for later blacklists. This list effectively barred Catholic thinkers from works by Protestant scholars like Conrad Gesner, Janus Cornarius, and Martin Luther, unless they obtained a dispensation. The inclusion of the Libri Carolini, a 9th-century theological work, in these lists reflects the attempts to control knowledge dissemination during this period. Roman Catholic Church administrative bodies dealing with matters outside the normal bishopric or parish level. The Holy See's central administration includes various dicasteries, each handling different functions. Some key examples include the Secretariat of State, which deals with international relations and diplomacy; Section for Relations with States, focusing on diplomatic efforts between the Vatican and foreign governments; and the Evangelization Doctrine of the Faith, concentrating on spreading Christian faith and doctrine within the Church. Additionally, bodies such as the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors address sensitive issues like child protection within the Catholic community. The Roman Curia also encompasses various commissions dedicated to promoting unity among different Christian denominations and fostering dialogue with other religions, including Judaism and Islam. Furthermore, there are committees focused on education, culture, and human development, as well as institutions responsible for financial management and legal affairs within the Vatican. The Congregation of the Index, established by Pope Pius IV, aimed to regularly update the list of condemned books and correct those deemed in need of revision. The congregation reviewed various works annually, documented discussions, and scrutinized each work by two people before collectively deciding whether it should be included in the Index. The final approval rested with the pope, who relied on documentation from meetings for his decisions. Galileo's condemnation in 1633 led to lengthy lists of corrections published in the Index Expurgatorius. Prohibitions made by other congregations were passed on to the Congregation of the Index, where final decrees were drafted and published after papal approval. Pope Leo XIII updated the Index in 1897, introducing a more sophisticated grading system for authors. Subsequent editions marked specific passages for expurgation rather than condemning entire books. The Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition later became the Holy Office, which continued to oversee the Index from 1917 onward. Notably, Adolf Hitler's book Mein Kampf was not placed on the Index despite its controversial content. The last edition of the Index, published in 1948, contained 4,000 titles censored for various reasons. The Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books had a notable omission in the 20th century: Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf. Although studied for three years, it was not included due to Hitler being a head of state, citing biblical authority on state power. However, the Vatican later criticized Mein Kampf in an encyclical about challenges facing the Church in Nazi Germany. In 1965, Pope Paul VI reorganized the Holy Office, and the Index's status became unclear. A notification from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1966 stated that while the Index retained moral value, it no longer held ecclesiastical force or penalties. Instead, local ordinaries (bishops) were advised to judge books on scripture, theology, canon law, and church history, with recommendations for imprimatur and nihil obstat approvals. Members of religious institutes required permission from their superiors to publish books on morals or religion. The Index allowed authors to defend their works and prepare corrected editions to avoid bans, promoting pre-publication censorship within the Papal States and adopted by some civil powers in Italy. Other regions had their own lists of forbidden books, with varying degrees of recognition and enforcement. The Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books was a list of books deemed dangerous to faith and morals. In 1966, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declared that all such books should be avoided, regardless of any absence of written law against them. This decision removed the index from having the force of ecclesiastical law, but placed the responsibility on individual Christians to avoid writings that could endanger faith and morals. The Index Librorum Prohibitorum was a list of banned books compiled by the Catholic Church in the 16th to 20th centuries. The list included works by various authors such as André Gide, Nikos Kazantzakis, and Blaise Pascal, among others. Magdalena Haymairus became the first woman to be included on the list in 1569. Women like Anne Askew, Olympia Fulvia Morata, and Paola Antonia Negri also appeared on the list. Contrary to popular belief, Charles Darwin's works were not included on the list. However, many authors' opera omnia (complete works) were forbidden due to concerns over religion and secular content. The Index stated that this prohibition did not apply to all works, but this explanation was omitted in later editions. In 1966, Cardinal Ottaviani acknowledged the challenge of keeping up with contemporary literature, leading to the eventual abolition of the index in 1966. The list included authors whose works were deemed objectionable by the Church, such as Machiavelli and Erasmus. The Index Librorum Prohibitorum had a significant impact on book censorship and literary history, reflecting the complex and often contentious relationship between the Catholic Church and literature during this period. The concept of intellectual property and copyright law has been closely tied to the history of publishing and censorship. In medieval Europe, the Catholic Church had significant influence over what could be published, with works deemed heretical or subversive being placed on the Index Librorum Prohibitorum (List of Prohibited Books). This list was used to suppress dissenting voices and maintain control over ideas. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century allowed for mass production of books, which further amplified the Church's efforts to censor unwanted works. However, as nationalism and individual freedom grew, so did the pushback against ecclesiastical censorship. By the 18th century, many European countries had established their own copyright laws, which often protected the rights of authors but also served to limit free expression. Throughout history, various empires and regimes have used copyright law to control ideas and suppress dissent. For example, during the rise of Renaissance France, the monarchy imposed strict censorship on publications that challenged its authority. In Germany, the lack of a strong copyright law was cited as one reason for the country's industrial expansion, as it allowed for more open sharing of knowledge. Despite these historical precedents, modern copyright law continues to evolve and adapt to changing social norms. Today, intellectual property rights are seen as essential to protecting creative work and promoting innovation, but they also raise concerns about censorship, surveillance, and control over ideas. The Index of Prohibited Books was officially abolished by the Vatican in 1966. The abolition was announced by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on June 14, 1966. This move was part of a broader effort to reform the Catholic Church's censorship policies. Historically, the Index of Prohibited Books was established in 1569 and remained in effect until its abolition. The index listed books that were deemed heretical or contrary to Catholic doctrine, and their owners were often censored or prosecuted. The Index had a significant impact on literature and intellectual freedom, particularly during the Renaissance period when it was used to suppress works by authors such as Galileo. The index's influence also extended beyond the Catholic Church, with Protestant and secular censors adopting similar practices. In 2005, a book titled "The Church and Galileo" edited by Ernan McMullin examined the historical relationship between the Catholic Church and Galileo, who was condemned by the Church in 1616. The book highlighted the significance of the Index's abolition as a symbol of the Church's growing recognition of its own role in suppressing scientific inquiry. Overall, the abolition of the Index of Prohibited Books marked a significant shift in the Catholic Church's approach to censorship and intellectual freedom, and its impact can still be felt today. The Index Librorum Prohibitorum was a list of forbidden books to Catholics, published from 1559 to 1966. It contained the names of authors and writings that were considered heretical or contrary to Catholic doctrine. The index was first created under Pope Paul IV in 1559 and was later updated to become more lenient. In 1835, Pope Gregory XVI issued a new index, which was the last to be published before its abolition in 1966. Researchers have studied the Index Librorum Prohibitorum to understand why certain books were banned, with one study focusing on Portugal's edition from 1581. The Vatican has also made efforts to open up the secrets of the Index, providing insight into the history and motivations behind the censorship of books. The Sacred Congregation of the Roman Inquisition, part of the Sacred Office and Index, held exclusive authority over book bans. While approved by the Pope, their decrees remained congregational, unlike the Pope alone could make decisions without consulting other congregations. Prior to Pius X's reorganization in 1908, a complaint was needed before a book could be examined by one of the Roman Congregations. However, with this change, the Sacred Congregation gained additional responsibilities, including supervising published books and making decisions on prohibited writings. They also had to inform bishops about their duty to combat harmful publications and share information with the Apostolic See. Pius X's reorganization built upon earlier regulations, particularly those of Leo XIII's Bull "Officiorum" and Benedict XIV's "Sollicitae provida". The latter outlined a detailed procedure for examining books, requiring revisors to be impartial and expert in their field. They had to base their decisions solely on Catholic teaching and dogma, rather than personal opinions or party loyalty. In some cases, books by deserving authors were granted free circulation, with fairness and leniency considered. Decisions were made through a process of multiple revisions and consultors' votes, with final approval resting with the cardinals. The Congregation of the Index, established by the Catholic Church, had the authority to prohibit books deemed heretical or immoral. In cases where a book was forbidden due to its content, the author could publish an edition that aligned with the congregation's wishes if they wished to do so. However, this decision would only be made after the book was widely circulated and known. The secretary of the Congregation had the power to communicate the censured books' criticisms to their authors or representatives, but only at the author's request. The official secret surrounding these publications was strictly observed by all involved. Books that were initially deemed heretical could be prohibited immediately. The Index of Prohibited Books first appeared in 1559 under Pope Paul IV and was revised several times since then.