

**THE ORIGIN AND
IDEALS OF THE
MODERN SCHOOL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649483303

The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School by Francisco Ferrer

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FRANCISCO FERRER

**THE ORIGIN AND
IDEALS OF THE
MODERN SCHOOL**

The
Origin and Ideals
of the
Modern School

By
Francisco Ferrer *Guardia*

Translated by Joseph McCabe

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1913

LA
713
F 353

COPYRIGHT, 1943
BY
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

0351374

INTRODUCTION

ON October 12, 1909, Francisco Ferrer y Guardia was shot in the trenches of the Montjuich Fortress at Barcelona. A Military Council had found him guilty of being "head of the insurrection" which had, a few months before, lit the flame of civil war in the city and province. The clergy had openly petitioned the Spanish Premier, when Ferrer was arrested, to look to the Modern School and its founder for the source of the revolutionary feeling; and the Premier had, instead of rebuking them, promised to do so. When Ferrer was arrested, the prosecution spent many weeks in collecting evidence against him, and granted a free pardon to several men who *were* implicated in the riot, for testifying against him. These three or four men were the only witnesses out of fifty who would have been heard patiently in a civil court of justice, and even their testimony would at once have crumbled under cross-examination. But

iii

256591

there was no cross-examination, and no witnesses were brought before the court. Five weeks were occupied in compiling an enormously lengthy indictment of Ferrer; then twenty-four hours were given to an inexperienced officer, chosen at random, to analyse it and prepare a defence. Evidence sent in Ferrer's favour was confiscated by the police; the witnesses who could have disproved the case against him were kept in custody miles away from Barcelona; and documents which would have tended to show his innocence were refused to the defending officer. And after the mere hearing of the long and hopelessly bewildering indictment (in which the evidence was even falsified), and in spite of the impassioned protest of the defending officer against the brutal injustice of the proceedings, the military judges found Ferrer guilty, and he was shot.

Within a month of the judicial murder of Ferrer, I put the whole abominable story before the British public. I showed the deep corruption of Church and politics in Spain, and proved that clergy and politicians had conspired to use the gross and pliable machinery of "military justice" to remove a man

whose sole aim was to open the eyes of the Spanish people. A prolonged and passionate controversy followed. That controversy has not altered a line of my book. Mr. William Archer, in a cold and impartial study of the matter, has fully supported my indictment of the prosecution of Ferrer; and Professor Simarro, of Madrid University, has, in a voluminous study of the trial (*El Proceso Ferrer—two large volumes*), quoted whole chapters of my little work. When, in 1912, the Supreme Military Council of Spain was forced to declare that no single act of violence could be directly or indirectly traced to Ferrer (whereas the chief witness for the prosecution had sworn that he saw Ferrer leading a troop of rioters), and ordered the restoration of his property, the case for his innocence was closed. It remains only for Spain to wipe the foul stain from its annals by removing the bones of the martyred teacher from the trenches of Montjuich, and to declare, with *real* Spanish pride, that a grave injustice has been done.

Meantime, the restoration of Ferrer's property enabled his trustees to resume his work. Among his papers they found a manuscript

account, from his own pen, of the origin and ideals of the Modern School, and their first act is to give it to the world. In 1906, Ferrer had been arrested on the charge of complicity in the attempt of Morral to assassinate the King. He was kept in jail for a year, and the most scandalous efforts were made, in the court and the country, to secure a judicial murder; but it was a civil (or civilised) trial, and the charge was contemptuously rejected. Going to the Pyrenees in the early summer of 1908 to recuperate, Ferrer determined to write the simple story of his school, and it is this I now offer to English readers.

In this work Ferrer depicts himself more truly and vividly than any friend of his has ever done. For my part, I had never seen Ferrer, and never seen Spain; but I was acquainted with Spanish life and letters, and knew that there had been committed in the twentieth century one of those old-world crimes by which the children of darkness seek to arrest the advance of man. I interpreted Ferrer from his work, his letters, a few journalistic articles he had written—he had never published a book—and the impressions of his friends and pupils. In this book the

man portrays himself, and describes his aims with a candour that all will appreciate. The less foolish of his enemies have ceased to assert that he organised or led the riot at Barcelona in 1909. It was, they say, the tendency, the subtle aim, of his work which made him responsible. It may be remembered that the *Saturday Review* and other journals published the most unblushingly mendacious letters, from anonymous correspondents, saying that they had seen posters on the walls of Ferrer's schools inciting children to violence. As the very zealous police did not at the trial even mention Ferrer's schools, or the textbooks used in them, these lies need no further exposure. But many persist in thinking, since there is now nothing further to think to the disadvantage of Ferrer, that his schools were really hotbeds of rebellion and were very naturally suppressed.

Here is the full story of the Modern School told in transparently simple language. Here is the whole man, with all his ideals, aims, and resentments. It shows, as we well knew, and could have proved with overwhelming force at his trial had we been permitted, that he was absolutely opposed to violence ever