

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS THE CONCERN OF ALL!"

Francisco Ferrar Executed October 13th, 1909

One Year Later—His Memory Stirs the World

W EMANCIPATION W  
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# Industrial Worker

VOL. 30 No. 2

One Dollar a Year

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1910

Six Months 50c

Whole Number 82



(News Item)—Some Priests of European countries admit that there may have been a mistake in the execution of Ferrar

"What! Bowing to Me? Bow to the 'Modern School' and Education."

## FRANCISCO FERRAR, THE "MODERN SCHOOL," AND THE REVOLUTION

One year ago, October 13, 1909, in Barcelona, Spain, Francisco Ferrer was shot to death by Spanish soldiers. One year later, in every country in the world that boasts of even a semblance of enlightenment, meetings of memorial are held on the first anniversary of the murder of one of the greatest educators of the age. Who was Francisco Ferrer and why was he murdered?

"Little is known, except to a limited few, of the personality of Ferrer, apart from his work as seen in the full blaze of publicity during a brief period of three and a half years. During that period, dating from May 31, 1906, to October 13, 1909, he suffered fifteen months of detention in prison, with death by torture, garrote, or shooting hourly awaiting him; he passed through a civil and a military trial for his life; he saw the seizure of his private estate, the exile and banishment of his colleagues, relatives and dear ones; and after physical and mental tortures, which alone constituted a purgatory of agony, passed from his vermin-haunted cell amid the scowls of exultant priests to that moat at Montjuich which for countless generations will be remembered as the place where the first martyr of freethought in the twentieth century sacrificed his life for the cause of rationalist teaching."

And why was Francisco Ferrer executed? Why was this man, the friend and intimate of many of the greatest educators and scientists of the present day; this man, the president of the International League for the Rational Education of Children, which has for its honorary president Anatole France, and on its committee such men as Professor Ernst Haackel and Maurice Maeterlinck; an associate of Dr. Oden de Buen, member of the Spanish senate and a man of genius; why was this man slaughtered in cold blood by the clergy and ruling class of Spain? Furthermore, why was he tried (?) by court martial

and in secrecy? Why was he not allowed to produce witnesses in his behalf? Why was the faintest rumors against him admitted as good evidence while he was not allowed to introduce evidence directly bearing on the case?

For the following reasons:

Francisco was the very incarnation of intelligent revolution. He had in his youth passed through the stages of enthusiasm and had come to see that not by street baricades, not by mob violence could a people be liberated from economic, intellectual and social despotism. He had, through long years of careful study and much experience, learned that only by EDUCATION of the new generation to rational ideas could a foundation be reared that would support the hopes of advancement and liberty. He had evolved a system known as the "Modern School" which was nothing more than the appliance to the science of pedagogy, or teaching, the same laws that are observed in other modern sciences, the laws based on reason and logic. To this work of introducing scientific methods of teaching the child of the peasant and the peasant himself, Ferrer had devoted his life and fortune. Says M. Naquet, "He lavishly expended his life, not in buying arms and explosives, but in conducting that scholarly work to which he was devoted."

Ferrer's system of schools can only be described by the word rational. He taught not by rule, but according to the needs of the individual child. He even persuaded the authorities of a certain locality to give to him the pupils who were supposed to be backward and mentally deficient, and established a special school for them where the general average of learning under his system proved to be in advance of the particularly bright pupils of other schools. The Ferrer schools had no regular hours. If a certain pupil was nervous and longed for the out of doors, he was dismissed until he had worn off his animal spirits and could apply himself to study,

In the "modern School" all the facts of life and society are taught as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. Thus the child is educated to a broad understanding of things in general, and the possibility of superstition entering in and dominating the child is removed. And with the child, the father and mother are taught as well. Bishop Anglipay of the Philippines uses Ferrer's books in his schools, and, having thrown off the mediaeval yoke of Spain (for that of modern America) sees less harm in the modern methods of Ferrer than the feudal-minded priests and lords of Spain.

In 1908 the normal school teachers of Europe belonging to the Rational Educational Society called a convention for the purpose of introducing the "Modern School" into the public school system of Europe.

These things are what constituted the real charges against Ferrer. He had attempted to disseminate knowledge in a way that would prevent the ruling classes from dominating the workers by means of superstition and ignorance. They, still feudal in their conceptions, thought that by murdering one man, the chief factor, the light of education could be snuffed. They failed to realize that while men may be murdered, an idea cannot be executed. When they foully shot to death Francisco Ferrer, they only advertised his work and millions of people who had never known of him became active workers in the cause that he represented. Today, in every country, in every city, the work of Ferrer is looming up more powerful than the mere work of one man could have made it. Due to the short-sightedness of the Spanish ruling class, the workers have become acquainted with the "Modern School," and even in America this "School" has branches.

To Ferrer's execution may be traced much of the present spirit of revolt in the Latin countries of Europe and South America. Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Brazil, Uruguay,

all are affected by the great crime of last year.

The church, through its accredited representatives, has accused Ferrer of every crime under the calendar, from inciting to riot to leading an "immoral" life. It may safely be said that 100 per cent of their accusations are lies, wholly unfounded. He is accused of actual bomb throwing, while he decried the use of physical violence. And the accusers are not clear of the same charge, for in the last few days we have heard of priests throwing bombs in the midst of the students of Lisbon.

It is of interest to note that a few years ago Ferrer was imprisoned on a charge of bomb-throwing, cooked up by his enemies, when a body of workers broke down the doors of the jail and liberated him, defying the government to do its worst. Just why they did not rise a year ago is not sure, but many attribute it to the pernicious influence of the politicians and those who believe in the "civilized plane" of action. Certain it is that if half the effort wasted in preparing petitions had been expended in direct action, the authorities would have realized that it was dangerous to their own hides to harm the champion of education.

Today, one year after the murder of Ferrer by the ruling class of Spain, which is largely made up of the church and the religious orders, we find the memory and fame of Ferrer greater by far than a year ago; while his persecutors in Spain, in Portugal, in France, find themselves sitting on the lid of a boiling, seething caldron of discontent and rebellion. Tomorrow they will find themselves dethroned and in their place will sit the militant, organized workers, while the shade of Francisco Ferrer will smile a grim smile of satisfaction.

**TWO LETTERS OF FERRER'S.**  
The following letters are the last two writ-

ten by Professor Ferrer. They were written from his cell in the fortress of Montjuich, Barcelona, Spain.

One letter says: You see the most terrible thing about this was the discovery in my house of revolutionary leaflets which I had never seen before. Today the judge informed me that he had finished the study of my case and that it would be tried by court martial. I shall be tried by men who, I fear, have not minds sufficiently free to enable them to judge seriously the charge against me. I am in an infected cell. I have no light. The food is vile and requires strength to bear it. Everything good to all, all, all.

**FRANCISCO FERRER.**  
Another letter: Although I am not guilty, the prosecutor demands capital punishment. This is based on police denunciation. The whole case has been arranged by the investigating judge and the police. The case against me is a tissue of lies and calumnious insinuations. They have not a particle of proof. Greetings,  
**FERRER.**

**SAN DIEGO TO HAVE FERRER MEETING—INDUSTRIAL WORKERS TO MARCH BEHIND THE RED FLAG ON OCT. 16th.**

San Diego, Cal., Oct. 4.—San Diego Industrial Workers will have a big meeting at Germania hall, corner of Ninth and G streets, on Sunday, October 16th, commemorating the assassination of Francisco Ferrer, the Spanish educator by the Catholic church and the Spanish government. It will be a big event in the history of San Diego, as the Spanish speaking fellow workers, members of Public Service Workers' Industrial Union No. 373 and Local No. 13 are to march behind the red flag from the I. W. W. hall to Germania hall, where the meeting will take place.





