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# FRANCISCO GINER DE LOS RÍOS

## (1839–1915)

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### **Giner's education**

Francisco Giner was a lawyer by training and profession. He was well versed in a number of branches of knowledge, had a systematic grounding in philosophy, great artistic sensitivity, wide-ranging intellectual curiosity and high ethical standards which distinguished him as one of the great pedagogical innovators and as a national educator. He planned and implemented a remarkable programme of national education for Spain, of genuine *paideia*, as Werner Jaeger would say, which merged with *politeia* by virtue of its quality and its aims.

He was born in Ronda (Málaga) in 1839 and died in Madrid in 1915. His early years were spent in Andalusia, but after the age of 24 he always lived in Madrid. He attended primary and secondary school in Cádiz and Alicante and began his university training in Barcelona, completing it in Granada where he obtained a law degree. While in Granada he also made a point of studying literature and aesthetics, German philosophy, painting and music, and continued to cultivate those subjects all his life, cogitating, writing, painting and playing the piano. All of these interests, taken together shed light on features of Giner's personality and explain many characteristics of his educational theory.

A strong personal influence in this period was the philosopher Llorens y Barba, positivist, professor at the University of Barcelona, 'perhaps the most abundant source that his exceptional nature drew upon during this early stage. A true educational influence[...]in the severe discipline of thought and the noble, pure meaning of life' (Cossío, 1919). Also worth mentioning is his professor of literature and aesthetics in Granada, Francisco Fernández y González. And, of course, although on another level, it should be pointed out that his time in Granada saw the beginning of the lifelong friendship with his companion in intellectual and reform work, Nicolás Salmerón, also a lawyer and one of the Presidents of the first Spanish Republic.

In the period around 1870, much of the world was undergoing considerable political, economic, social and ideological upheaval: in Germany, the United States, France, Italy and Japan, for example. Spain was also entering a process of decisive change at that time. This period and the later unfolding of events coincide with the first fifteen years of Giner's life in Madrid. It is therefore not surprising that his main formative years, with regard to his thinking and also his practical politics, occurred within this period.

He was awarded his doctorate in law and in 1867 sat a competitive examination as a result of which he was appointed to the chair of philosophy of law and international law at the Universidad Central of Madrid. He resigned this position after a few months out of solidarity with the colleagues dismissed by the government for refusing to swear personal allegiance to the Queen, loyalty to the throne and the Catholic Church, and for having taken the view that citizens were not obliged to reveal their religious or political convictions. This was the first

public occasion on which Giner acted in conformity with several basic principles that he upheld, more particularly those of the freedom and dignity of the human being, and defended them to the hilt.

The country was in a complex position from all points of view, and a few months later, in September 1868, the revolution triumphed and the professors who had been dismissed were reinstated in their chairs. Furthermore, many of them went on to hold important political posts, but neither then nor later was Giner affiliated to any party or denomination. Moreover, as Rafael Altamira said at his death, ‘nobody was more radical, but he was anti-revolutionary in principle and did not sympathize with any of the extreme solutions’ (Altamira, 1915). This did not prevent him from agreeing to advise the authorities on various matters, especially the reform of prison conditions and educational issues; he supported projects and decrees to the extent that they embodied educational freedom and strove for all-round modernization in the scientific, cultural, ethical and pedagogical fields.

## Spanish Krausism

Giner has lost some of his optimism by the end of the period known as the ‘democratic six years’, and from that time onward he always mistrusted disturbances and street revolutions, both those won by force of arms and those imposed in the pages of the ministerial gazette. And although he yearned for change in Spain, he came to the conclusion that this could happen and be meaningful only through ‘a revolution of conscience’, through change sought and effected by every single individual, by all and for all. He devoted the rest of his life, tirelessly and without losing heart, to planning such a revolution, pushing for it, promoting it and guiding it.

For a better understanding of his work it is helpful to bear in mind Giner de los Ríos’ principal philosophical tenets, sometimes based on his personal experience and sometimes on his reading, but nearly always dating from the first fifteen years that he spent in Madrid. One of his best students, José Castillejo, once gave an accurate summing up of the philosophical influences that guided Giner’s thinking and action: ‘He was inspired by Kant and Rousseau; he absorbed Hegel’s idea of unity and Schelling’s synthesis of nature and spirit; he agreed with the process of inculcating law into the public conscience that the historical school of Savigny had devised; he approved the conquests of positivism and sociology, the psychological analysis of Wundt, the idealistic trend of the theological school and the harmonious solidity of Krause’s system’ (Castillejo, 1926). Names such as Ahrens and Spinoza should be added to the list.

However, we should stress the importance that Krause’s philosophical system assumed in shaping his ideology and his outlook, which together, as López Morillas suggests, are best described as ‘pragmatic rationalism’ (López Morillas, 1988). Indeed, Giner and his work can never be understood without a corresponding knowledge of the intellectual and moral adventure of Krausism in Spain, and it must therefore be mentioned, if only in outline.

The story begins in the first decade of the liberal regime in Spain, a little before 1840, when K.C.F. Krause himself was already dead (Ureña, 1991). This was a period of all-round reconstruction in Spain, a period of transition in which new patterns of thought, new paths of research and new ways of life were being sought. A group of intellectual friends published an introduction to Krausism in the form of ‘A Course in Natural Law’ by Ahrens, one of his students who was still alive. This book was translated and published. In 1843, the leading member of the group, Julián Sanz del Río, travelled throughout Europe to study the philosophical trends of the time, stopped in Brussels to meet Ahrens personally, and then settled in Heidelberg, undoubtedly the main centre of Krausism in Germany at the time, for a

considerable period. On his return, he translated some of Krause's works (Ureña, 1988), arranged for other translations and set up a circle of friends and students with strong Krausist leanings.

Sanz del Río considered that 'harmonious rationalism', as Krause called his philosophical system, gave a full explanation of the knowledge process through two distinct stages, the first consisting of analysis and the second of synthesis. On the assumption that knowledge is self-knowledge, analysis leads us to Being, the 'absolute infinite' which should co-ordinate the three 'relative infinities': nature, spirit and humanity. Contemplation of God is life in its perfect form, the dream of humanity.

Analysis ends there, but not the task of the philosopher. Now, for deductive work, synthesis reorders and reconstructs all the previous analytical work. If analysis has led us towards God, synthesis, descending from God, will lead us to a full explanation of the world, and this will yield the whole range of existing sciences, the most important of which is philosophy. Science, then, will show us the harmonious order of the universe. Finding this harmony and ensuring that it prevails among human beings is the essential and ineluctable task of practical philosophy. This is the message that Krausism brought to the Spaniards.

So wrote Llopis in 1956.

Sanz del Río emphasized this Krausist message of educating humanity, and also the prerequisites for achieving it: a wide range of knowledge, scientific rigour, a spirit of tolerance, sound ethical principles; above all, moral integrity. And until his death in 1869 he took pains to set up an enlightened inner circle, known as the 'Spanish Krausists', largely made up of friends and companions, and another circle, and more numerous, of students, among whom Giner was the most prominent. In a Spain tainted by feudalism, with an almost entirely agricultural economy, great backwardness in many areas and little respect for the ideas of others, Spanish Krausism faced a task that was both daunting and ripe to be tackled. This does not mean that it was either easy or welcome, except in progressive circles. Finally, as Elías Díaz pointed out, 'Krausist philosophy showed itself from the outset to be the political theory and ideological expression of the progressive trends of the liberal middle classes. Outside this context, in the face of liberalism[...]there would always be the traditional and Carlist ideologies and also, after them—and distinct from them—the various "neo-Catholic" and fundamentalist positions' (Díaz, 1973).

## **The *institución libre de enseñanza***

In 1875, the monarchy and the Bourbon dynasty were restored in Spain, and the Ministry of Public Works (then responsible for education, *inter alia*) took it upon itself to exercise rigid control over official education. For that purpose, it ordered that curricula must be submitted for approval to the rectors, and prohibited any form of education that was contrary to dogma or critical of the throne. A large group of teachers, most of who were Krausists, were outraged by this attack on the freedom of science and education and protested against it. Giner (then the recognized leader of the Krausist group) was among them and was arrested, imprisoned and exiled. They were all dismissed from their posts for failing to obey these orders and to show the obedience they owed to the educational authorities. Thus ended the 'second university question'.

This event is another important illustration of Giner's uncompromising moral stance and of the difficulties in developing science and thought in Spain; but its true importance resides in the fact that it resulted in the establishment of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* [Free Institution of Education] (ILE), Giner's experimental teaching centre and the driving force of his reforming work.

In view of the constraints laid and the attacks made since 1857 on efforts to renovate national education as a whole, and in particular the universities, that occupied a leading position on account of the strategy upheld by Sanz del Río from the very beginning to train intellectual and social élites that could then reform other sectors of society, the Spanish Krausists had on several occasions considered opening a centre of higher education in which university education, its content, methods, organization, etc., could be modernized. It first became possible to put this idea into practice in 1866, when Nicolás Salmerón, who was to become professor of metaphysics at the University of Madrid, opened the International College in the Spanish capital. The experiment, which lasted for eight years, was a very interesting one and was the main precursor of the ILE. This college provided classes at university level and others of a more open nature, nearly all of them using new approaches and themes. They were taught by teachers with a range of philosophical opinions, Giner being one of them.

When he was dismissed and persecuted, Salmerón and others devised a plan to establish a free university in which neither the authorities nor the forces of reaction could prevent university education from being shaped on the lines they advocated. Article 24 of the Spanish Constitution of 1876, which allowed educational centres to be set up provided that they complied with moral and health standards, gave them the legal framework they needed in which to carry out their design. They divulged their plan to a number of friends and sympathizers, of various professions and different ideologies, held meetings and drew up draft statutes on the basis of the outline prepared by Giner. To solve the financial problem, which was of particular importance in this case, since complete independence had to be maintained, an association of subscription—paying shareholders was set up. The subscribers included teachers, politicians, bankers, doctors, soldiers, scientists, writers, one aristocrat and numerous property owners: the liberal middle classes. It was thus possible for the ILE to function without receiving financial aid either from the State or from any other institution or group throughout its existence.

On 31 May 1876 the statutes of the ILE were approved. The most important of these, Article 15, deserves to be reproduced here:

The Free Institution of Education has absolutely no connection with or leanings towards any religious belief, school of philosophy or political party; it upholds only the principle of the freedom and inviolability of science and of the consequent independence of scientific research and explanation with regard to any authority other than that of the conscience of the teacher, who is alone responsible for what is taught. [\[SOURCE?\]](#)

These, in a nutshell, were the principles that governed the work of the ILE until 1936–39—the teaching methods of the college as much as its drive to educate society. Efforts were made to seek harmony and coexistence in all spheres of human activity and among all human beings, with particular emphasis on the cultivation and development of science, and viewing the individual as a being endowed with freedom as a necessary condition of dignity.

Launched in 1876, the institution began to operate as a true centre of higher education with a teaching staff made up for the most part of those who had been dismissed during the ‘second university question’ period. It continued the substantial task of cultural and scientific extension begun in 1868 and brought out its own publication, edited and written by Giner, the *Boletín de la institución libre de enseñanza*—*BILE* [Newsletter of the free institution of education] that, during its early stages, 1877–1936, was one of the leading European educational reviews. But as Giner became more actively involved in the task of reforming Spanish society, or ‘of training teachers’ (Barnés, 1927), he placed greater emphasis on general education (Gómez y Rodríguez de Castro, 1992), that is, education provided up to the age of 16 or 18. And in 1878 he suddenly introduced general education from childhood to

adolescence into the institution. When, three years later, the government reinstated the teachers who had been dismissed, most of them were already scattered around the country pursuing their careers in public education; the institution, as an educational centre, was converted into a free college of general education that provided complete but unofficial education for infants, primary and secondary school children.

In discussing the educational characteristics of this institution and its innovative nature, which were very similar to those of the ‘escuelas nuevas’—but a quarter of a century earlier—I shall refer to Giner’s educational theory since, in the final analysis, it is Giner’s ideas that are being assessed. I shall confine myself here to quoting the testimony of one of its alumni:

If anything remains of the Institution’s work, and if its educational action leaves its mark, this must always be sought in the prevailing moral tone. Francisco wanted his pupils to be not only healthy, strong and active—never sad—but also educated and thoughtful. Above all, he wanted them to be sincere, loyal and truthful (Do Rego, 1927).

## National education

The ILE was the arena of on-going innovation that I have discussed: innovation in design, structure, methods, administration, techniques and teaching staff for the most part, but it was at the same time the source of intense activity for the regeneration of society, this being the great task that Giner had set himself and in which he was strongly supported by many friends and successive generations of students. It was, as Luis de Zulueta said, a ‘diffused institution’ (Zulueta, 1915) which could also be called an ‘institution—cum—movement’. It sparked off or carried out much of the work of modernizing Spain through new social, political, teaching, scientific and artistic institutions, congresses, debates, centres for women, students’ hostels, articles and books, teaching missions, drama, associations, courses, etc., and, above all, through new ways of being, acting and behaving. Its principal limitation lay in the very small number of those concerned, this being mainly the result of the error made by the first Krausists in adopting a uniquely élitist strategy. Nevertheless, the supporters of the institution did enough to earn the label ‘reformers of contemporary Spain’ (Gómez Molleda, 1966).

The spirit of this national reform and its leader was none other than Francisco Giner. He was a cross between Socrates and Saint Francis, and regarded by many as little short of a saint. The Greek writer Kazantzakis had this to say of him:

He was a saintly, quiet man, very gentle, a professor of philosophy of law at the University of Madrid. He was sensitive, a man of few words, so limpid that he almost shone and appeared transparent. He always wore a white bow tie. His conversation was full of irony, humour and warmth (Kazantzakis, 1966).

But those who spoke of his asceticism and sensitivity, although they were, of course, right, perhaps forgot how his personality was transformed when it came to fighting the cultural and moral uncouthness of individuals and organizations, shaping worthy individuals, and fighting for the regeneration of the country. His sarcastic vein then gave a sting to his righteous anger and he lashed his opponents hard and tirelessly.

It seems that Giner expressed himself thus on many occasions, and he also left written proof. When he criticizes Spanish society, urging it to be equal to the task that the times demand of it, his dialectical ability rivals his talent as a writer and offers us some of the most telling passages of Spanish satirical prose (Giner, VII, p. 127; XVII, p. 177–80, etc.). To sum up those strictures, Giner considered much of the Spanish population to be clearly in a state of moral perversity, so that, as an heir of the Enlightenment, he sought to regenerate or ‘redeem’ it, as Morillas says (López Morillas, 1988). But, at the same time, going beyond the Enlightenment and the good judge of human nature that he was, he did not confine himself to

academic programmes but worked to educate people thoroughly, in the full sense of the word, to produce fully rounded, mature individuals and to emancipate minds.

In one of the few public speeches made at the inauguration of the ILE, he said that the institution did not intend to confine itself to[...]teaching, but will co-operate in turning out individuals who will be useful to humanity and the nation. For that reason it will not lose a single opportunity for close dialogue with students[...]Only in this way, by ensuring that students are involved in all relations, can it sincerely aspire to truly educational action in the spheres in which there is the most urgent need to free the mind: from the building up of moral character, so weak and flabby in a nation indifferent to its ruin; to care of the body, more neglected perhaps than in any other civilized country of Europe through sickening indifference; the development of the individual personality, never more necessary than now, when the idolatry of levelling down to the lowest common denominator holds greatest sway; strict obedience to the law, against the reign of arbitrariness, which always encourages arrogant confrontations between governors and governed; respect for vocations, before any selfish considerations, the only means of strengthening our weak social bonds in the future; sincere, loyal and active patriotism which is ashamed to perpetuate, by ill-advised flattery, evils which servile egoists would see no point in remedying; love of work, whose absence makes every Spaniard a beggar, dependent on the State or public charity; hatred of falsehood, one of the concerns in the body of society, carefully sustained by a corrupting education; finally, the spirit of equity and tolerance, set against the frantic efforts to destroy one another which make us all blind to parties, religions and schools other than our own (Giner, VII, p. 50–51).

Giner, like other prominent contemporary educators, such as the Italian Francesco Tonucci, firmly believed that reforms were not made by laws, but by teachers and professors. And he entrusted the school with the lofty task of emancipating people, training men and women, to bring about ‘the intellectual and moral redemption of the nation’. But it may be supposed that he was speaking of a teaching staff and of a school that was complete and had been duly renovated; not the school for ‘reading, writing and arithmetic’, but a school that educated in a more elevated sense, and also provided school meals, excursions, holiday camps, theatrical performances, visits, active learning methods, modern knowledge, health—care arrangements, etc. Teachers, too, who had been trained as genuine educators, of sufficiently high cultural and scientific calibre, who would be respected and would earn a sufficient salary to prevent anyone, whether the State, the local authority or individuals, from detracting from or destroying their dignity. The best teachers would go to rural schools, where they would receive higher salaries than the others. Spain would be awash with libraries, and the schools themselves would have ‘educational libraries’ where teachers could maintain and update their knowledge (Ruíz Berrío, 1987).

And for this ‘sacred task of national education’, Giner called for the assistance of all possible forces, all existing institutions, to ensure that this task would ‘overcome the greatest divergences, and that it could and should be a common task in that all people of goodwill would take part in the same spirit of loyal solidarity’ (Giner, XII, p 13).

## **New education**

While ‘national regeneration’ (or ‘national redemption’) is a task for national education, an undertaking usually entrusted to schools, it is easy to understand the extraordinary importance that Giner attached to education. In the first place he gave a very negative analysis of the education already being provided (which at best amounted to no more than lecturing and rote-learning), studied and assessed the renovative educational models existing up to that time and assiduously sought all the innovations relating to education that were springing up in the Western world.

His philosophical opinions and educational ideas led him to support a line of educational modernization which began with Comenius and came closest to him in the person of Fröbel, via Rousseau and Pestalozzi. He hardly mentioned the Englishman Locke, but he had undoubtedly read and been influenced by him with regard to many educational issues, such as the importance of ‘character training’, physical education and a realistic curriculum, as also in other matters such as political and religious tolerance and the empiricist theory of knowledge. Among his contemporaries, I believe that he paid particular attention to Jovellanos and Montesino, and especially the latter, of whom Giner wrote in glowing terms, despite his disinclination to praise the living or the dead. Not in vain had Jovellanos and Montesino also expected educational reforms to yield solutions to the political, economic and cultural problems of Spain.

With regard to his contemporaries, suffice it to say that this was the era of experimentation with schools, methods and doctrines. His constant co-operation with the *BILE* thus takes on importance, and confirms his up-to-date knowledge of education in France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and North America, in fact throughout the Western hemisphere. In his daily struggle to discover educational innovations that could help him to improve teaching practice, he showed a great talent for comparison (naturally with a wider field of objectives than that of education systems) and, although he was well acquainted with education in Europe, he also took an interest in other civilizations, such as those of Japan and China. He acquired this mastery of new educational concepts and techniques by reading the main educational texts available, and also the literary, philosophical and scientific works that were being published throughout the world; a wide selection of specialized reviews that the *ILE* received; the highest quality international press, which he read every day; visits to other countries (especially the United Kingdom and Portugal); and attendance at a number of international congresses, where he made significant presentations.

With this educational culture as a basis and these constant efforts to improve his knowledge and educational abilities, together with his philosophical opinions, it is easy to imagine that Giner advocated a type of education that was not only modern in its techniques but was truly new in its overall design, premises and methods. He supported a type of education in which all the proposals he made were not only of value in themselves, but also progressive for their time, in promoting the achievement of an improved educational process designed to make the individual a worthy member of the human race, and a human race that would truly be the work of God, the reflection of divine harmony. This was of fundamental importance in the ‘Panentheism’ of the Krausist system which he upheld (López Morillas, 1956).

As Professor Nieves Gómez has explained, ‘two axioms lie at the heart of Francisco Giner de los Ríos’ philosophical thinking: the existence of a Supreme Being, absolute perfection, and the existence of the individual as a finite but perfectible being, continuously progressing’ (Gómez García, 1983). These two axioms, and the dialectical relations between them, according to Giner’s thinking, provide the basis for his anthropological approach to education and show Giner to be a forerunner of the humanism of the mid-twentieth century, close to the personalized view of Meunier and also to the social view of Erich Fromm to such an extent, I believe, that we are entitled to speak of his educational humanism and—why not—of his humanistic pedagogy. A pedagogy in the service of character—building (as Pablo Montesino had already urged half a century earlier) designed to reform the individual, and to do so from within.

‘It seems that every day brings greater recognition of the fact that there are only two main branches of education: (a) general education to train the individual as an individual, all of whose potentialities are unified and harmonized; (b) specialized or vocational education to prepare the individual for an occupation of a specific social type, according to talent and

aptitude and other natural and social circumstances', Giner emphasized once again in 1892 (Giner, XVII, p. 161), with a view to clarifying the stages and types of education of the individual for the sake of teachers and politicians.

In the same paper he added that such principles laid the basis for these conclusions: '1. Primary and secondary education together form a continuous period of truly general education, beyond which there can be nothing but vocational or special education. 2. The grading of education into primary, secondary and higher levels needs to be modified to take account of the fact that there are no more than the two qualitative branches of which I have spoken [...]'. He thus spread his renovating and educational concept of secondary schooling, giving it a meaning of its own which it has seldom had, while at the same time rejecting the poor teaching meted out to girls and boys at the intermediate stage of their general education for no other reason than social prejudice and the absence of a psychology of development.

Taking as a starting-point this clear and unequivocal distinction between general education and special/vocational education, which I consider to be fundamental, I shall attempt to summarize the most characteristic pedagogical and didactic principles of Giner's general education policy. One of the foremost is the need to educate in freedom and for freedom, as an intrinsic necessity of the human condition. In accordance with this requirement, education will be neutral as far as religion, philosophy and politics are concerned. This does not mean that there will be no education of this type, but education 'with a common spirit and foundation'. Moreover, Giner, who was a deeply religious person (although he belonged to no particular denomination) (García Morente, 1922), stated during the early years of his training as an educator that 'without religion, without raising the child's spirit to at least a glimpse of a universal order of things, of a supreme ideal of life, a first principle and fundamental link between human beings, education is incomplete, arid, devoid of value, and efforts to involve all the child's faculties and initiate that child in all aspects of reality and thinking will be made in vain' (Giner, VII, p. 76).

That stage of general education will therefore include religious education, social education and physical, artistic, intellectual and moral education. All-round, active and unified education is co-educational (this system was considered central to character training and also to combating the inferior position of women in society). Training in a sense of duty, a healthy and vigorous body, decent habits, suitable intellectual activity, sound aesthetic taste, intellectual tolerance and moral self-control were among his objectives, all aimed at forming individuals 'with a sense of the ethical meaning of life'. Echoing the well-known English educator Arnold, with whom he was in fairly close contact, Giner would often repeat that he wanted to turn out individuals who were versatile, truthful, valiant, pure and tenacious.

Among the practices that he recommended (and which were introduced on an experimental basis in the institution from 1880 onwards) were regular relations with the family and a family-style school life as a model for the dynamics of school activities, frequent close contacts with nature and art, physical games in the open air, school walks and excursions, study trips, holiday camps, vocational guidance, etc.

Giner was a firm believer in the learning process occurring step by step throughout the process of general education. He also believed in the value of intuition and left us many writings on the subject. The development of the intuitive method on the lines proposed by Pestalozzi and Fröbel fitted perfectly with his idea of activity as essential to learning, with instruction constantly aspiring to be educational. As he had observed that some teachers who claimed to use the intuitive method did not know how to proceed, he called more than once for its correct use. On one of these occasions he said:

Exploration, like experiment, like the analysis of a concept or the observation of a known fact—like all the aspects, indeed, of the intuitive process—should not follow the usual pattern of being used to illustrate and

compare with the previously expounded theory, but should precede that theory, so that the pupil arrives independently at the theory, guided and encouraged, but not taken over, by the teacher' (Giner, XII, p. 17).

He also adopted the principle of adapting education to the individual and that of education as a lifelong process. We cannot forget, as I said at the outset, that Giner was more than a pedagogue; he was an educator, and in this connection it is useful to recall that he used the Socratic, heuristic procedure, helping his pupils and students to find for themselves the right sort of training for them. He roundly condemned examinations in educational establishments as instruments of misguided teaching policy and hence of moral error. He eliminated homework and did away with set texts, and the pupils at the ILE made their own textbooks out of exercise books. He likewise emphasized the importance of school materials that were prepared by the pupils themselves. Creativity was, manifestly, one of the sovereign principles of his educational theory.

In fact, throughout his life, Giner tackled nearly all the problems involved at all levels of teaching and the whole issue of education, and he has bequeathed to us truly modern approaches and solutions to nearly all of them. It sometimes seems incredible that a man of such profound philosophical knowledge and such great professional activity should have known and been concerned about such apparently disparate matters as the need for first-aid kits in schools, the causes and consequences of neurosis, football, the location of schools, the value of the campus, drugs, and many others things. Proof of the significance of these concerns in his educational theory as a whole, always aimed at shaping the individual, is to be found in a paragraph in a speech made in 1880 but whose vibrant nature, pedagogical modernity and claims are such that it appears to have been written since the First World War. It reads thus:

Change these old-fashioned classrooms, get rid of the teacher's podium and chair, an icy barrier which isolates and makes close contacts with pupils impossible; get rid of benches, grades, amphitheatres—lasting symbols of uniformity and boredom. Break up these huge masses of pupils, constrained to listen passively to lessons or to be tested on what they have memorized, when they have been sitting so far away from the teacher and the blackboard that they could hardly absorb anything. Instead of all these classic features, surround the teacher with a small circle of active pupils, who think, speak and debate, who are alive and active[...]Then the lecture room becomes a workshop and the teacher is a guide in the work; the pupils are a family; the link with the outside world becomes an ethical one, experienced internally; the smaller and the larger society breathe the same air; life circulates everywhere and teaching becomes richer, more solid and more attractive, to make up for what it loses in pomp and circumstance (Giner, VII, p. 34–35).

In spite of the importance he attached to these principles, methods and techniques, there was one element in the educational process that he considered to be of the highest importance: the teacher. He was convinced, partly through the influence of his favourite student, Manuel Bartolomé Cossío (Otero, 1992), that the key element in education, to be treated with the greatest care, was the teacher. To begin the reform process, he called for a teaching staff carefully trained to a level higher than elsewhere, sound educational preparation of a theoretical and practical nature and, of course, thorough knowledge of their special subjects. He drew attention to the lack of educational preparation of secondary school-teachers and expressed misgivings about the teaching methods used; he called for the establishment of centres providing full training for such a teaching profession, as the sole means of rendering their teaching truly educational.

## **The ideal university**

In Giner's reformist organizational structure for education, the university always held pride of place, since it was the highest sphere for advancing science, for developing knowledge to the utmost, and for training fully rounded human beings rather than narrow professionals. It was certainly the teaching establishment with the most experience, the greatest physical and human resources and also the most power. His aim was to transform it into the driving force of national regeneration, somewhat in the style of the thinkers of the Spanish Enlightenment. But, as was the case for them, the corresponding process was very slow, and gathered speed only a few years before Giner's death, with the establishment of the Junta de Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas (Council for the Extension of Scientific Study and Research).

Without going so far as to sign the vehement petition of Joaquín Costa (an ardent champion of political regeneration in Spain) who believed it was necessary to set fire to the university, Giner ridiculed the latter on several occasions and constantly called for its reform, wishing Spain to have the benefit of a university education of the same standard as the German or English ones, renowned for their scientific and their educational merits, respectively.

He believed that Latin universities were exclusively concerned with training for the professions, and he wanted to improve that situation. With his knowledge of the history of most Western universities and of the way they operated during that period, he was able to outline what the Spanish university ought to be. In the first place, it must be self-governing and independent of the State. And he declared that its special functions should be the development of science through research and teaching, the general education of its students and their care and guidance both inside and outside its precincts, the dissemination of culture throughout all social classes, top-level policy-making (by virtue of its moral influence and free development) for national education and its individual establishments, and the training in teaching methods of all the teachers in the country, directly or indirectly.

Specific ways of helping to achieve this type of university would be: to relegate training for diplomas to a more secondary position; to give top priority to further scientific training; to establish closer connections between different courses of study and faculties; to pay greater attention to the material conditions, moral concerns and intellectual life of the students; to enlist students' participation in university life; to assist and maintain closer relations with other cultural institutions; and to establish more contacts and promote educational activities in a sphere that today would be called non-formal or informal. Finally, Francisco Giner wanted the university to be 'not only a body of students and scholars but an ethical force in life' (Giner, II, p. 121).

## **Giner's influence**

The university reform advocated by Giner and the institutionalists in general gained momentum in the first third of the twentieth century to the extent that the State established a body capable of carrying forward part of the strategy imagined by them: sending the best teachers and researchers abroad to update their knowledge, and making greater resources available for scientific research in Spain and for full-fledged academic training. The body in question was the Council for the Extension of Scientific Study and Research, which, besides setting up a useful programme of study grants, promoted the establishment in the country of various other institutions that carried out complementary activities in this great national education scheme, such as schools, laboratories, a centre of historical studies, students' hostels, female students' hostels and so forth.

The generations trained in these establishments in their turn held various posts in education and research in Spain at all levels and helped to spread these educational ideals throughout the country, in their classrooms, in reviews, in inspection work, in study plans, in the training of teachers and in educational missions. Giner's reform programme was studied with interest at the political level during the first few years of the second Spanish Republic (1931–36).

The Franco regime harshly condemned persons, programmes or methods that had connections with the ILE, but a private centre, the Colegio Estudio, kept the flame of Giner's ideals burning. From 1975 onwards, the college/residence of the institution was given back to the Giner de los Ríos Foundation, some of its activities were resumed, publication of the *BILE* started up again and, more significantly, many aspects of Giner's educational plan received pedagogical and social accolades. Others, naturally enough, have lost their relevance with the passage of time.

## Notes

1. Julio Ruiz Berrio (Spain) Professor of the history of Spanish education at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid, President of the Sociedad Española de Historia de la Educación, former member of the Board of the International Standing Conference on History of Education, Editor of the *Revista complutense de educación* and author of several publications and approximately 100 articles on the history of education

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