

MANIFEST

Ferrer i Guàrdia: an unfair sentence that democracy must redress

Born in Alella, Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia was executed by firing squad in Santa Eulàlia moat at Montjuïc Castle in 1909, after having been tried in a court martial with no guaranteed rights and sentenced on the basis of a **false accusation**: of having instigated the revolt of Tragic Week, or Setmana Tràgica as it is known in Catalan. More than a century later, the sentence still stands. It has not been reversed or rectified. It is time to put an end to this **historical injustice**.

Ferrer i Guàrdia was the founder of the Modern School, or Escola Modena, an **educational project** based on reason, science, coeducation of the sexes and regardless of social classes, and critical thinking. He defended a secular education that broke the chains of ignorance, dogmas and submission as a tool of collective emancipation. The elite of the time would not stand for it. **The trial** was marked by a **campaign of repression** by the political, religious and media sectors. Through his sentence, the authorities of the time sought to quash a model that questioned the established order. His **execution**, however, was condemned internationally as a clear injustice, with protests around the world in cities such as Paris, London, New York, Brussels and Buenos Aires.

He has received no **institutional recognition** since then. This silence not only perpetuates impunity but negates the possibility of creating a memory based on **truth, justice and reparation**. Reversing his sentence is not just an act of historical justice: it is an essential step towards strengthening our democracy.

We therefore demand:

- 1. Reversal of the death sentence of Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia**, rendering it legally null and void.
- 2. Public and institutional recognition of his educational, humanist and libertarian legacy** as an international reference in secular, critical and universal education.
- 3. The acceptance of responsibilities by the institutions**, consistent with the principles of truth, justice and reparation that must govern all policies regarding democratic memory.
- 4. The promotion of symbolic, educational and memorialistic measures of reparation**, including institutional acts, forums for collective memory and teaching materials.
- 5. The inclusion of the Ferrer i Guàrdia case in public policies of collective memory.**

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This manifesto is an open call to all citizens, entities, institutions, schools and social organisations. Now, more than ever, we need examples such as Ferrer i Guàrdia to rethink the educational model and fight the new dogmatisms threatening freedom of conscience. Vindicating his name also means fighting intolerance, bigotry and authoritarianism and defending an education committed to human rights, critical thinking and social transformation.

We want the truth. We want remembrance. We want justice for Ferrer.

LINK TO THE FORM

☞ www.justiciaperferrer.org

Signature

Ajuntament d'Alella

Fundació Ferrer i Guàrdia

Federació de Moviments per la Renovació Pedagògica

Societat d'Història de l'Educació dels Països de Llengua Catalana

Pere Solà, historian of education, expert on Ferrer i Guàrdia and progressive pedagogy

Marina Subirats, sociologist and educator, a leading figure in education and feminism

Alella, 6 June 2025



AJUNTAMENT D'ALELLA

