



## **Education in Spain: Close-up of Its History in the 20th Century**

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This article is a general description of Spain's history of education and how it evolved in the 20th century. I analyze the characteristics of the educational system designed during the 19th century and the changes that took place during the country's political stages. I review the objectives and development of each teaching level, the school curricula, the professors, and their education. I also go over the extracurricular initiatives of this period and how they affected the student community. The review helps us understand the achievements that have been made and the limitations we face in the 21st century.

### ***Introduction***

Describing a century of education in Spain required choosing its most relevant aspects, those that showed a true picture of what was happening during the different political periods: the roles the government and the private sector played in education and its reforms, the social changes that demanded effective procedures, the objectives and consequences of the different educational models, and the quality of the results.

In April 1900 the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts was created (royal decree 18 April 1900). Its objectives were to improve the educational system, as demanded by various government and social groups. The numerous problems of the 19th century had created outrage and brought claims of Spain's decline. Intellectual groups, called the Regenerationists and headed by Joaquin Costa, demanded solutions and improvements in education (Pozo Andrés, 2007; Salavert Fabiani and Suarez Cortina, 2007).

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Regenerationists were backed by other movements, constituted of philosophers and writers of the Generation of 98<sup>1</sup> who spread opinions of Spain's backwardness (Gómez-Tabanera, 2000; Delgado Criado, 1997, pp. 5–31).

The Ministry of Public Instruction began to make the necessary changes to ensure development and continuity in the national educational structure that was taking place. The first law of Public Instruction inspired by Moyano, who was the Minister of Promotion at this time, passed in 1857. It was known as the Moyano Law, named after him. This law was backed by the majority of the political parties.<sup>2</sup>

I divide the educational trajectory of the 20th century into three main periods: The first period starts at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and runs up until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. During this period the government and social groups contributed to the expansion of primary education throughout the nation. They also designed a system of secondary education focusing on science and modern culture and introduced European and American innovations in education. The objectives included improving teacher training and salaries.

The second period, 1939–1975, opens at the end of the Spanish Civil War, during the Franco regime. During this period the country's prevalent political ideology and financial problems limited educational opportunities. Teacher preparation became a secondary objective and fewer new schools were opened. Private institutions, mainly the Catholic Church, assumed responsibility for education.

The third period begins with restoration of the parliamentary monarchy and the consequent democracy in all social spheres. Access to primary, secondary, and university levels of schooling was ensured. Democratic regulations in educational management meant more resources and more specialized teachers, which improved student development.

### **A Consolidated Educational System**

The first two ministers of Public Instruction and Fine Arts belonged to different political parties, one conservative and the other liberal. However, they guaranteed that their ideological differences would not interfere with their decisions and qualitative outputs. The obligation of the state to defend the right to education and its duty to inspect and regulate schools were among the most important measures they established. They also made a commitment to modernize secondary school curricula and include technical subjects. Teacher colleges were reformed, and an official salary for teachers was established and published in the State Budget Report. Continuing education was also contemplated, and the ministry established grants for students to study abroad (royal decree 18 July 1901). These measures were a response to issues that had been discussed over the years but not resolved.

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<sup>1</sup> The Generation of 98 was a group of thinkers, poets, writers, and philosophers who objected to or felt frustrated by the moral, political, and social climate in Spain during that period. They had a deep impact on the country's society, culture, and politics.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Promotion was responsible for public instruction during the second half of the 19th century.

As a result of political instability during the two decades that followed 1901 the continuity of educational programs was hindered. The wages of the teachers continued to depend on the Department, but continued the problems and discussions over of the curriculum of the secondary education, of the obligatory nature of the subject of religion, of the colleges directed by religious institutions, etc. From 1902 to 1923 there were 53 different ministers with different ideologies and professions that headed the Ministry of Public Instruction (Puelles Benítez, 2003 p. 217). Moreover, several ministers were named more than once, which resulted in rapid decision making and continual postponements. During this period, a great deal of energy was invested in issues related to the freedom of teaching, professorship, and science. Other issues, such as religion in school curricula and the requirement of a teaching degree for teaching in Catholic schools, were also discussed (Puelles Benítez, 2003, pp. 211–217). Controversies between conservatives and liberals shaded the achievements made.

Among the achievements, in 1907 the Board for Continuing Education and Scientific Investigation handled “the service of continuing education in and out of the country, ... foreign information and international relations in education, the promotion of scientific research projects and the protection of educational institutions in secondary and superior education” (royal decree 11 January 1907)<sup>3</sup> (Ruiz Berrio, 2000). Two years later, in 1909, the board took over teacher colleges that were “designated to prepare teachers of both genders in elementary teaching” (royal decree 3 June 1909)<sup>4</sup> (Molero Pintado and Pozo Andrés, 1989). Once students at these colleges obtained their degree, they would become chair professors in teacher colleges or elementary school inspectors. Mandatory school attendance increased to 12 years of age in 1909 (law, art. 9º) of 23 June 1909.<sup>5</sup> Since 1857 education had been mandatory from 6 to 9 years of age. In 1911 the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts assumed responsibility for running and financing the School Colonies, an educational summer camp for low-income girls and boys<sup>6</sup> (Moreno Martínez, 2009).

Two legislative orders marked the beginning of a new era for women’s rights: “The first, on 8 March 1910, freed women from having to ‘consult Superiors’ when they wished to enroll for university, as the general sense of the legislation for Public Instruction is not to distinguish on the basis of sex, authorizing the admission of male and female students on equal terms. The order of 2 September of the same year stated that “the possession of different academic qualifications will enable women to undertake all professions related to the Ministry of Public Instruction”. These orders reveal changing attitudes toward

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<sup>3</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 15 January 1907.

<sup>4</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 4 June 1909.

<sup>5</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 25 June 1909.

<sup>6</sup> Manuel-Bartolomé Cossío, director of the National Pedagogical Museum organized the first one in San Vicente de la Barquera (Santander) in the summer of 1887. The camps followed the model of the Swiss evangelist pastor who started camps in 1886. The state regulated these camps by Royal Order 26 July 1892 (Gaceta de Madrid, published 27 July 1892); the order would be published again by the director general of Public Instruction 15 February 1894 (Gaceta de Madrid, published 19 February 1894). The state {AU: OK?} took over the summer camps by royal decree 19 May 1911 (Gaceta de Madrid, published 20 May 1911).

women's place in society, since they granted women admission to university, along with the right to work as professionals at *institutos*, universities and libraries, and archives and museums (Flecha García, 1996, 2010).

A number of initiatives were geared toward improving the quality of teaching staff, which would in turn improve the overall quality of education. The reform of the study plan for teacher colleges signed in 1914 by Minister Francisco Bergamin (royal decree 30 August)<sup>7</sup> (Lorenzo Vicente, 1995) was a response to the need to extend the cultural, pedagogical, and didactic preparation of those who were in front of the elementary classroom. After the reform, students graduated in elementary teaching after four years of theory and practicum, which eliminated the former double degree: two years to obtain an elementary teaching degree and two additional years to obtain a secondary teaching degree (Rabazas Romero, Ramos, and Ruiz Berrio, 2006).

The university reform of 1919 by the conservative minister Cesar Silió provided universities with more organizational and operational autonomy (royal decree 21 May).<sup>8</sup> However, this initiative would not be as fully established as planned; the ministry's strictures concerning study plans, examinations, and degrees hindered its implementation (Soria Moya, 2003).

Nonetheless, Spanish politicians dedicated special attention to public instruction, in which they laid much hope. The intellectual ideology of the time, enlightened and liberal, influenced the regulations that established the criteria and rules for the national educational system and the initiatives developed during the first third of the century.

The main beneficiary of these efforts and interests however, would be the male population. The proliferation of girls' schools was initiated by private religious groups. There were more primary education girls schools than boys schools, but that was not the case for secondary education. This was because only a minority of students entered secondary school. As a result of the general impulse toward education, many Catholic organizations established schools in cities and villages all over the country (Flecha García, 2009b). There were signs of new expectations among women with respect to schooling. The number of girls studying for their *bachillerato* (Level of secondary education that was consisting of six academic courses; it was studied from 10 to 16 years.) grew steadily in the institutes of secondary education (Flecha García, 2000). As female Catholic schools expanded, disagreements cropped up between conservatives and liberals, who opposed the growing number of religious boys and girls schools.

During the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera (1923-1930) curricula, teaching methods, and hygiene were regulated. Many private religious schools did not comply with these regulations, especially regarding teacher qualifications. The demand for schools was so great, however, that the government overlooked noncompliance. The government began to make a tremendous effort to build more schools and improve existing schools to meet the growing need (López Martín, 1994).

Primary school attendance for young girls gradually became more and it reduced illiteracy among the female population (De Gabriel, 1998). Those who

<sup>7</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 2 September 1914.

<sup>8</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 22 May 1919.

continued their education during the first decade of the 20th century attended teacher colleges or schools of commerce or studied health care, mainly midwifery. The female population that attended college wanted to find better-paying jobs, although those jobs would be related to the domestic chores that were their lot whether they married or not. As a result of the changes that were taking place, more women were attending high school, a prerequisite to enter university, but they were a minority, and even fewer went to university. At the beginning of the 20th century, the number of women in the Spanish universities was merely symbolic: In 1900 there were nine women registered in the Spanish universities. By 1936, however, there were 2,588 female students. This figure reflected growing interest in female education. The percentage increased from 0.05 (in 1901) to 8.8 percent (in 1936) (Flecha García, 2005).

Educational authorities introduced a new level of high school *bachillerato* in 1926 (royal decree 25 August).<sup>9</sup> High school education was divided into two 3-year cycles: elementary high school—which helped meet the growing demand by young women for education (Introduction to the Royal Decree, 25 August 1926) and university-level high school. The university level was subdivided during the last two years into science and liberal arts.

High school had become a preparatory level to enter university; it was now an extension of primary school and a level of its own. This concept had been considered again and again by educational authorities for over half a century but had not been pursued. A more sophisticated Spanish population and the growing demands of the labor market made these educational measures essential.

This study plan was opposed by many. The main objection was the lack of connection between primary education and high school, which made it difficult to continue to the next level. There were other negative aspects, such as insufficient preparation for university by the university-level high school and religion as a mandatory subject.

An even more controversial university reform was introduced in 1928 (decree-law 19 May)<sup>10</sup> and led to the resignation of General Primo de Rivera. The reform limited professorships, added compulsory subjects to study plans, established a set of regulations concerning an academic year, academic degrees, inspections of the academic activity by the State, and severely restricted academic freedom. Moreover, the reform recognized official validity of the studies realized in two private institutions of higher education: the Jesuit University at Deusto (in Bilbao) and the Augustine University from El Escorial (in Madrid) without the exigency of any more requirement than an examination presided by a university professor. The government reacted to student protests and the opposition of intellectual groups by closing down the University of Madrid and dismissing its professors as Jose Ortega y Gasset, Fernando de los Ríos and others. The downfall of the government was inevitable.

The educational achievements during those years (1900-1931) came about through the efforts of not only government authorities but also individuals and institutions of diverse ideological positions that made important and valuable contributions to the general cultural and educational project (Marín Eced, 1990;

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<sup>9</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 28 August 1926.

<sup>10</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 21 May 1928.

Terrón Bañuelos, 1997; Viñao Frago, 2000). State and local schools carried out social educational projects; some were religious and others were not. Some examples of these initiatives are the Free Teaching Institution, directed by Francisco Giner de los Ríos (Molero Pintado, 2000a), and the Modern School, applied by Ferrer Guardia and with an anarchist and social organization point of view. Ferrer Guardia renovated didactic methodology, incorporating ideas and methods from abroad (Delgado Criado, 1979; Lázaro, Monés, and Solà, 2010). Furthermore, the socialist Nuñez de Arenas created what he called the New School, which played an important role in working-class literacy (Tiana Ferrer, 1992). With respect to religious schools, the pedagogue Pedro Poveda created high school, university, and qualified professional women's programs in the Teresian Institution (Morcillo, 2000; Flecha García, 2009a).

### ***Innovations in Education during the Second Spanish Republic***

An ambitious educational reform project was initiated in 1931, during the Second Spanish Republic. It combined principles of Spanish liberalism, pedagogical theories of the Free Teaching Institution, and the program of public instruction promoted by the socialist party. This educational program was viewed as an indispensable instrument for creating social change, some in response to demands of specific groups. From the beginning of the reform project, the government focused on introducing transformations that would influence understanding, organizing, and acting in the world of education (Molero Pintado, 1977; Pérez Galán, 2000). Practically the entire system was involved in the changes to come: some changes affected the school population—such as bilingual regulations in Catalonia schools or removing religion as a compulsory subject—and some involved more systemic adaptations, such as innovative teaching approaches and citizenship education (Pozo Andrés, 2008).

The government took special interest in primary schools, because approximately one million children still did not attend school (Puelles Benítez, 2010, p. 256). There was also a great amount of illiteracy among the adult population. The 1931 reform project included the construction of 5,000 schools per year, night classes for adults, and organization of pedagogical missions (decree 29 May 1931)<sup>11</sup> responsible for teaching basic knowledge in rural areas with little access to educational resources (Otero Urtaza, 2011, pp. 207–220):

The Educational Missions of the Spanish Republic had no useful or productive aims. Their mission was to make country people aware that leisure had a value in itself, and that everyone has the right to enjoy the benefits offered by culture (books, film, theatre, painting, music, romances, etc), regardless of that person's social status, place of residence or financial circumstances. (p. 210)

In addition to schools, there was a great need for properly trained and paid primary and secondary teachers for existing schools. To meet demands the government offered promotions, official teaching positions, and increased salaries. A new and innovative system was introduced through professional selection courses. These 3-month courses were divided into three parts: training courses in teacher colleges, practicum in primary schools, and pedagogical and

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<sup>11</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 30 May 1931.

cultural orientation sessions at universities. They covered the three essential training aspects: general culture, pedagogical preparation, and professional practicum (Molero, Pozo, and Alonso, 1994; Lorenzo, 1995; Rabazas Romero, Ramos, and Ruiz Berrio, 2006).

A decree published 29 September 1931 constituted a profound reform in teacher colleges. Educational authorities and the government believed that future teachers should be trained at universities and there should be a specialized teaching major for each level taught. The first step in the reform of teacher colleges was that entrants must have completed 4 years of primary school and 6 years of secondary school, obtaining a high school diploma, and then take a compulsory entrance examination. The students attending teacher colleges could not be under 16 years of age, and there would be 40 students per class: 20 men and 20 women. Students' psychological and pedagogical training and practicum curriculum would also be an important consideration in granting a teaching degree (Viñao Frago, 2009).

Creating new schools became urgent and consequently so was training more and qualified teachers (Molero Pintado, 2000b). Government authorities realized the importance of quickly creating teachers to meet the demand, but they were also aware of the need to prepare teachers who would have the prestige and authority necessary for a democratic society.

The principles underlying educational policies were promulgated in the constitution of December 1931. Article 38 states the following:

*The service of culture is an essential attribution of the State and will be carried out through educational institutions linked by the unified school system.*

*Primary education will be free of charge and compulsory.*

*Teachers, professors and chair professors that integrate the official educational system will be government employees. The freedom of professorship will be guaranteed and recognized.*

*The Republic will regulate the access to all levels of education to those Spanish citizens that lack the financial resources to study, taking into consideration the willingness and aptitude of the student.*

*Education will be non-confessional. The tasks will be the center of the methodological activity and will be inspired on humane solidarity ideals.*

*The Church holds the right to teach its doctrines in its own institutions and will be subject to State inspections.*

— Article 38

These legal precepts caused great upset within the Catholic Church, which did not accept the law stated in the constitution. The many Jesuits schools throughout the country did not comply with the newly established regulations, and so the government took over Jesuit school buildings and used them for public secondary schools.

Defining education as secular meant that there would be no religious symbols in public schools or classrooms. However, on 25 July 1931 a letter written by the Spanish episcopate declared that the Catholic Church had the right to intervene in public and private schools and that families had the right to choose the school they wanted their children to attend. For the first time in the history of Spain, the

radically different points of view regarding objectives and distribution of educational responsibilities resulted in a formal confrontation between the state and the Vatican. The confrontation between supporters of religious schools and those of secular schools was known as the School War. Tension grew when Pope Pious XI disagreed with the educational measures of the Spanish government authorities in his encyclical *Dilectissima Nobis* in 1933 (Moreno Seco, 2003).

The unified school system resulting from the 1931 constitution was guided and organized by the state, which was considered the only entity with the responsibility to teach its citizen members. The system was secular, universal, free of charge, and coeducational. These pedagogical principles were to be applied in all levels of teaching: in preschool, in primary and secondary schools, and up to university level (Cortada Andreu, 1988). To maintain continuity from one grade or level to the next, the educational system had to coordinate contents and methodology. The first level comprised two periods: preschool, a voluntary period for children between 4 and 6 years of age, and a compulsory period for children ages 6 to 12, the same mandatory age initially established in 1909. Secondary school was also divided into two age groups: from ages 12 to 15; during these years they were taught general knowledge. The second period, from ages 15 to 18 was preparatory for university. The university level was divided into graduate and undergraduate periods. The structure of the university education was in projects of the republican government; reform that did not have time to realize.

The unified school system offered an innovative pedagogical perspective taken from the context of socialist ideology. The system was conceived as mitigating the differences that caused inequalities and changing a classist educational system to one of social integration. Educators and administrative bodies were also affected by the new unified school system (Llopis Ferrándiz, 2005).

Up until 1932 study of pedagogy in the university had been an ambitious project. But in January of that year the University of Madrid created the first Department of Pedagogy (decree 27 January),<sup>12</sup> and a year later another one was established at the University of Barcelona (Ruiz Berrio, 1984).

The study of pedagogy had two main objectives: The first objective was of a scientific nature: to cultivate the science of education and the development of pedagogy in higher education. The second objective was oriented toward teacher training. The departments offered three types of certificates or university degrees (lower degree levels): certificate in pedagogical studies for teachers of secondary education; degree in pedagogy for college teachers, for inspectors of primary education, and for Directors of Primary School (grade school director). The highest degree was a postgraduate doctorate in pedagogy for research and teaching in the pedagogy departments at the two universities (Ruiz Berrio, 1984).

Primary school inspection was regulated in December of that same year (decree 2 December 1932).<sup>13</sup> The educational authorities wanted to reduce the burden of the administrative tasks and control by the inspection service, and put in the center the advice and guidance given by the school teachers who could

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<sup>12</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 29 January 1932.

<sup>13</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 7 December 1932.



offer their own valuable experiences (Mayorga Manrique, 2000). By the end of December, the General Inspection of Secondary Schools had been established (decree 30 December 1932).<sup>14</sup> This body was created as an intermediary between the Ministry of Public Instruction and secondary schools. Its technical pedagogical tasks were to counsel and aid school centers and teachers (López del Castillo, 2000).

During 1932 other educational initiatives were created. Among the most significant was the International Summer University in Santander (decree 23 August 1932).<sup>15</sup> It was established to promote cultural exchange among national and international professors and students, promote exchange of important themes and current thinking, and teach scientific specializations and extension courses (Madariaga and Valbuena, 1999). Schools of Arabic studies were established in Madrid and Granada on 27 January 1932 to study the history and civilization of the Muslims and their relation to Spain. In 1933 the School for Physical Education was also created in Madrid (decree 12 December).<sup>16</sup>

These initiatives introduced a new model for expanding and renewing education. This model of education is still a valuable reference when orientations and educational reforms are proposed today.

After the elections in 1933 the government was a coalition of the radical right CEDA (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas, or Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right), which had very different educational ideas. The new government put a stop to building new schools and decided not to close the religious centers. Schools were no longer coeducational, and the central inspection was suppressed. The government allowed construction of the University City of Madrid (a space where buildings were constructed for the different university centers) but conflicts and numerous incidents there between student associations and the new government increased. The government suppressed the representation that the students had in the organs of representation of the university community: faculties, university government bodies, and faculty boards (Ministry Order 23 October, 1934). These actions were followed by student protests.

Two additional reforms took place during Filaberto Villalobos's second biennium as head of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts. The first was the high school reform of 1934, which returned to the former structure of two cycles. The high school reform established a modern evaluation system that took into account student performance throughout the year and examination results (decree 29 August)<sup>17</sup> The second was establishment of the School of Spain in Paris created in August 1927 (decree 18 August)<sup>18</sup> and inaugurated officially in April 1935, to promote scientific and cultural exchange<sup>19</sup>.

Before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, there was another change of government. On this occasion it was formed by a left-wing coalition, the Popular

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<sup>14</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 6 January 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 24 August 1932.

<sup>16</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 14 December 1933.

<sup>17</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 25 August 1934.

<sup>18</sup> Gaceta de Madrid, published 18 August 1927.

<sup>19</sup> Newspaper *ABC* (Madrid) – 11 April 1935, p. 33

Front, that proposed resuming the innovations of the first government of the Second Republic. The government invoked the constitutional precept that education and culture are unavoidable responsibilities of the state, and therefore, government must build new schools and control private schools. The new government also reestablished the central inspection and encouraged secondary and professional education. Educational authorities improved university education and established means for the young of the working class to receive an education. Workers institutes (see later description) were established in 1936 in response to demands.

The end result of all these projects, desires, and efforts was not always anticipated. Many projects were initiated, but the governments of the Second Republic were in power for so short a time that projects were never finished.

### **The Tragic Parenthesis of the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939**

From the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 Spain was split into two zones whose border constantly changed, depending on where battles took place. The Republican zone was influenced by the Popular Front—the elected government—and the Nationalistic (the "nationalistic" word has an independent meaning in Spain. During the Civil war they were called national zone) zone was under the control of the self-proclaimed leader of Spain Francisco Franco (1892–1975). Despite the war, school activities continued.

In the Republican zone workers institutes were established (decree 21 November 1936 and decree 28 October 1937) with a study plan directed to labor workers (Fernández Soria, 2003; Aragón Carrión, 2007). At the beginning of 1937, the Republicans organized the Militia of Culture to host extension courses and teach young men at the battlefield how to read and write. The Militia of Culture also transmitted social and political ideals to men in the battlefields. The Flying Brigades were created in September with the same purpose, but the target was the rearguard population (decree 30 January 1937 and order 20 September 1937)<sup>20</sup> (Fernández Soria, 2007). In October the Republican authorities adapted a general primary study plan to the circumstances of children and families during wartime (decree 28 October 1937).<sup>21</sup> The Republican government wished to maintain its ideological principles among the people, and doing that became a part of the initiatives that it carried out.

By the same token, the authorities controlling the Nationalist zone promoted their political, social, and religious ideals in their educational policies. The authorities of the Nationalist zone carried out systematic purges of professors, libraries, and text books. In each case, to remain it was necessary to prove total allegiance to the principles established by the new state. Professors had to profess allegiance to avoid penalization and being banned from teaching (Cuesta Bustillo, 2009; Celada Perandones and Esteban Ruiz 1999); school materials were revised or destroyed. General Franco's main objective was to undo everything that had been accomplished in former years. Coeducation was suppressed because it was considered immoral and pedagogically inefficient

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<sup>20</sup> Gaceta de la República, published 2 January 1937 and 21 September 1937

<sup>21</sup> Gaceta de la República, published 31 October 1937.

(Flecha García, 1989). First secondary schools were segregated and later teacher colleges. The ideological control exercised by the government in teacher colleges was very strict because of the influence that teachers could have; surveillance occurred in the continuing education programs for teachers (Peralta Ortiz, 2000). Primary schools were also segregated.<sup>22</sup> Catholic religion became a compulsory subject in schools and university. The Franco regime abandoned the measures instituted in 1931 that separated the country from the Catholic Church.

Before the war's end, educational reforms began at the secondary level, which continued to be a major concern for politicians. In 1938 a new secondary education reform law was passed. It introduced radical changes in structure and final objectives (Lorenzo Vicente, 1998a). Its objectives were to mold future university students, the future leaders responsible for social transformation. Thus it became a priority to prepare students before entering university. The new law rejected the liberal approach applied to the secondary school level, which viewed it as an extension and continuation of primary school. Secondary school was structured to consist of seven consecutive years without cycles and ended with a final state exam. It became elitist, for the upper class, and oriented toward the male population. Only a few self-determined young men and women who could devote the time to finish managed to graduate. Under these circumstances, not many women were able to prepare for a university career. The ideals of the time did not encourage women to broaden their futures: "Calm the souls of the Spaniards with the virtues of our great captains and politicians of the Golden Age" (law 20 September 1938, in relation to the reform of secondary education, named "middle school" in this regulation).<sup>23</sup> This quotation underlines the philosophy of this political period. The number of years required to obtain a degree did not facilitate higher education for the lower class like it had been achieved from the reform of 1926 and from 1931. Nevertheless, the numbers do not show a decrease in the number of students enrolled. The opportunities for young male students belonging to other social classes were more limited than before the war, and opportunities were even more limited for women, regardless of their social status. Women were destined to domestic chores (Núñez Gil and Rebollo Espinosa, 2006). Nevertheless, the percentage of women enrolled in high school with the idea of continuing their education increased.

### **Changing the Objectives; Educating a New Man**

The Silver Age of Spanish culture<sup>24</sup> was disrupted during the Franco regime. Cultural, scientific, and artistic dynamic displays, as well as modernization, had been interrupted. Likewise, public instruction suffered.

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<sup>22</sup> Decree 23 September 1936, dictating rules for efficient segregation of high schools (Official Bulletin of the Board of National Defense, no. 28, 25 September, p. 105); order 16 May 1938 (Official State Bulletin, no. 574, 18 May, pp. 7386–7387); order 1 May 1939 (Official State Bulletin, no. 126, 6 May, p. 2472).

<sup>23</sup> Official State Bulletin, no. 85, published 23 September 1938, p. 1388.

<sup>24</sup> From *Introduction to the History of Spain* (p. 798), by Antonio Ubieto, Juan Regla, and José María Jover, 1963. The authors refer to the decades between centuries as the "real Silver Age of the Spanish culture, during which novels, paintings, essays, and music and lyrics of the peninsula will gain great strength and prestige in Europe."

The circumstances, conditions, and final objectives of education changed radically under the new government and its laws. The authorities designed a model of education to fit the “new man,” a reference to the ideals, values, and behavior demanded by the regime that came into power after the civil war (Pozo and Braster, 2006). Speeches by those in power and regulations they made incorporated their understanding of patriotism and the values of the Catholic religion. They expressed the feelings of the two most influential groups: Falange Española (Spanish Phalanx; Richmond, 2003) and the Catholic Church. However, there was hostility between the two groups due to the interests involved in controlling the field of education. This was revealed in the laws that were passed concerning each level of education between 1938 and 1945.

Following government proposals, these two institutions applied the necessary means to guarantee the values, skills, and specific economic, political, and family expectations that the new regime demanded of the Spanish people. Women were limited to learning domestic economy and needlework was entrusted to the Female Section of the phalanx. The Catholic teacher colleges reinforced women’s roles as wives and mothers. In addition, by law, women were never of age. All these factors contributed to the making of meek, subordinate, and socially inactive women (Canales Serrano, 2006; Grana Gil, 2007). This situation, which very few could rise above because of the official ideology of the time, made it difficult for women to attend high schools and universities, as shown in the table below:

**Table 1.** Percentage of Female and Male Students in High School and University

Period	High school (%)		University (%)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
1940–1941	35.9	64.1	13.2	86.8
1950–1951	35.2	64.8	13.9	86.1
1960–1961	38.3	61.7	23.4	87.0
1970–1971	45.7	54.3	26.6	73.4

*Note.* *Statistical Yearbook of Education.* Spain. Corresponding years.

Five years after the high school reform, in 1943, a university reform (law 29 July) privileged a model of control over knowledge and promoted patriotic values.

The Phalanx succeeded in creating ideological orientations in the universities. Under these regulations, all universities were government ruled (Rodríguez López, 2002). No private initiative was permitted in higher education. It became mandatory to belong to the Spanish University Syndicate (Ruiz Carnicer, 1996), which took over the Federation of Catholic Students. University chancellors came from militants of the Spanish Phalanx. University teachings could not contradict the political principles nor go against Catholic Church dogma.

When it came to legislating regulations for primary schools in 1945, the basic approach was to impress acceptance of the political regime and social stability on the students. The Catholic Church governed this level of education. Whether

public or private, all schools were religious.

Educational regulations set mandatory school attendance from 6 to 12 years of age. Public schools were subsidized. However, the government did not go out of its way to create new schools because it insisted that education was first the responsibility of individuals and families and social and religious institutions and second, the state (Navarro Sandalinas, 1989). This political policy contributed to the expansion of private educational centers, the majority belonging to Catholic institutions. Many schools established by religious institutions were located in places where the government refused to build, claiming lack of funds.

In 1951 Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez (1913–2009) was appointed minister of education and educational approaches and orientations became more flexible. The new minister was a Catholic of liberal spirit, approachable helpful, and an expert in European educational trends. He selected and drafted criteria in a different manner from before; less determined by the political dominant ideology. He introduced reforms that were less postwar oriented, establishing pedagogical and technical perspectives. Carmen Benso Calvo (2006, p. 416), a professor of the history of Spanish education, believes,

The 1950s witnessed the first attempt of the regime to break away from the isolationism and autarchy—economic, political and cultural—of the previous period, and to move towards a society that, without parting from the rhetorical essence of Francoism, still shared the modernity and developmental signs of the most advanced societies. In the field of education, the period lasted from the arrival of Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez at the Ministry of Education in 1951, to 1964 when the first Development Plan was implemented. It was a stage of transition from the old, outdated pedagogic model of the so-called “blue period”, to the full implementation of the new scientific paradigms of the international community which, without being incompatible with the regime’s dogmatism, could meet the demands of modernization of the Spanish society of the time. The result was the coexistence in those years of the old pedagogic traditions of the previous period and the unequivocal signs of modernity, which heralded the methodology revolution of the 1960s.

During this period, high school education was the object of a new reform, legislated by the Law of Middle School Management, in 1953. The reform made attendance in secondary school more accessible to social sectors other than the upper class. Secondary school now lasted 7 years and comprised three cycles: 4 years of elementary high school (after which the student could go on to a middle degree career, such as teaching, commerce, health care, or technical engineering); 2 years of upper-level high school, which enabled graduate students to take administrative jobs; and a last year of high school, which was a university preparatory course. The structure of the educational reform responded in a more realistic way to the nature of the Spanish society of that period and to the demands of the labor market. The number of students enrolled in secondary school—especially in the first cycle—increased significantly, and consequently more children stayed in school until age 14, surpassing the 12-year mandatory age.

Ruiz-Giménez also established the Middle School Inspectorate, created to guarantee the fulfillment of the legal regulations in all schools—public or private. The novelty in this case was supervision of private schools.

The Spanish economy still depended on agriculture, and a majority of people lived in rural environments. Nevertheless, industrial development was under way and education had to supply a workforce (Gómez Rodríguez de Castro, 1992; Cabrera Rodríguez, 1997). In 1949 educational authorities, backed by the Law of Middle and Professional Schools (law 16 July),<sup>25</sup> established a professional high school. This specialized educational level prepared students for various fields such as farming, industry, mining, and fishing. There were also specialized professional courses for women. The courses were offered in special centers supported by industries of the specialized fields of interest. In this way, the student received concrete and professional orientation. This initiative was extended in 1955 through the Law of Professional Industrial Training (Law 20 July)<sup>26</sup>, which offered technical training in sea fishing, industrial fields, and administrative fields.

The well-focused educational measures and initiatives created by Ruiz-Giménez, came to a halt in 1956 with student protests against the regime. The minister's inclination to discuss issues with the students was not welcomed by Franco's assistants and he was forced to resign that same year. Nevertheless, the educational measures he had designed to meet the demands of his tenure continued during the years following. From then on, the government was inclined to appoint ministers with higher technocratic qualities, which reinforced Spain's modernization. From an educational perspective, the new measures were meeting the growing industrial and urban demands of Spanish society (Mayordomo, 1997).

Educational measures were also intensified in primary school. The government insisted on school attendance. In April 1964 Manuel Lora Tamayo (1904–2002), minister of education, passed a law that increased mandatory primary school attendance by two years: to 14 years of age. Moreover, the government finally subscribed to the view that free education was a right and created an ambitious program to build new schools. Teacher training also improved with a reform of 1967. It became a prerequisite to have finished upper-level high school—6 years of secondary education—to enter teacher colleges. These were signs that indicated that the authorities had accepted a more direct responsibility in education.

### *Change Objectives and Equal Opportunities*

The growing economy, the progressive industrialization process, and the population growth along with the manifested discontent of the people toward the political regime were factors that forced the government to reformulate objectives and offer new and equal opportunities to those who had been deprived of an education.

In 1970 an advanced educational policy was promoted by José Luis Villar Palasí, minister of education and science. The General Law of Education and Financing of the Educational Reform (law 4 August)<sup>27</sup> was passed. This

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<sup>25</sup> Official State Bulletin, Published 17 July 1949.

<sup>26</sup> Official State Bulletin, Published 21 July 1955

<sup>27</sup> Official State Bulletin, published 6 August 1970.

represented a step forward in the modernization of Spain's educational system. It marked a significant change in the way of understanding the purpose and goals of education. The law promoted equality in education opportunities for boys and girls; a surprising change of perspective in the aims of the education, and brought a qualitative and quantitative advance in school attendance. For the first time since 1857—100 years earlier—the educational system had been considered as a whole: From the general management of its structure, to the types and characteristics of school centers, to pedagogical and methodological procedures.

To analyze the educational system, a study was authorized. The *White Book of Education* (Ministerio de Educación, 1969; Lorenzo Vicente, 1998b) symbolized a break with the procedures of the authoritarian regime, which was reluctant to face external or self-criticism. Authorities applied the necessary means to diagnose and solve existing problems. The study reflected the differences that existed in the itineraries of the mandatory school years. Between the ages of 6 and 14, the student could have completed either primary or middle school, depending on the study plan. This meant that a student could start high school at the age of 10. Consequently, the educational authorities admitted that the system was unacceptable. Equally inadequate was having to choose between science and arts at the age of 14 before entering upper-level high school. They also proved that there was little or no connection between high school and professional education. At the university level, they found the system inflexible and without autonomy.

The government passed a new education management law in August 1970. The law established the following study plan: preschool was divided into two stages: kindergarten I (children from 2 to 3 years old) and kindergarten II (children from 4 to 5 years old). Attendance was voluntary during these stages. General basic education became mandatory and free and was also divided into two stages, for children ages 6–10 and ages 11–13. A 3-year high school program was unified for students ages 14–16. Its curricula offered foundation courses and electives and technical-professional courses. Higher education also faced changes. The university system offered three degree levels: diploma level, licensure degree, and doctorate. This system unified education for students ages 10–14. In addition, coeducational classrooms became an option, new high schools and new study plans were established, and universities offered diploma-level courses such as teaching, business, and technical engineering.

In the unified school system, students were granted a diploma after 8 years. This avoided the overlap of former study plans, in which some students were in high school at the age of 10 and others were still in primary school at age 14 because they were studying under different systems.

The results of the new system could be seen several years later in the female school population. A higher number of girls obtained their primary school certificate than boys. As an example, at the end of academic year 1982–1983, 70.5 percent girls versus 65.6 percent boys obtained their primary school certificate (CIDE, 1988, p. 101). More girls were successfully passing the mandatory school years and were going on to high school, which meant that female students were responding to the equality of education.

The first article of the law underlined concepts such as comprehensive training, harmonious development of personality, preparation for the Christian

concept of life, and respect for the traditions and culture of the nation; specifying each of these goals without undermining the regime's political principles, as drafted and adopted still during the Franco regime. The objectives recommended active and personalized teaching methods. It underlined the need to train teachers in universities and established continuing education for adults. The law addressed the need for a quality of education that would meet the demands of the labor market. It focused on the state's responsibility in the planning, development, and evaluation of the educational system (Martínez Tirado, 1992).

The reform adjusted internal misalignments due to sectoral reforms over the century and adapted the system to those of other countries. By offering free compulsory general basic education, the government solved one of the major problems. The different school levels were adapted to the demands of the social and economic transformations taking place. It also introduced pedagogical rationality in its procedures. However, the reform was too expensive to fully carry out. Nevertheless, financial limitations did not stop the growing demand for education. The expectations of improvement of the education propitiated the creation of new pedagogical movements that renovated educational methodologies, and were very active in introduction more quality in the education process; movements that had his more expansive phase after Franco's death (Palacio Lis and Ruiz Rodrigo, 2003).

### ***Education under Spanish Democracy***

After the death of Franco in 1975 and the approval of Spain's constitution in 1978, all legal dispositions were revised. The educational laws and regulations were shared between the state and the autonomous communities of the country. The authorities drew up measures to ensure that democratic procedures were carried out as stated in the Constitution. Pauli Dávila Balsera of Basque Country University, describes this decision:

*The result of the new constitutional situation meant a break with the centralist nature of the education system. The Autonomous Communities are able to take on whatever powers were enshrined in their statutes of autonomy, except those reserved for the state.*

*The first step in the exercise of these powers is the transfer of functions and services that had hitherto been performed and managed by the central administration, and the transfer of financial resources. Articles 148 to 150 of the Constitution, the autonomy statutes, and the corresponding organic laws, which have the same force as the statutes, define how these powers are shared. ... This has affected important areas such as the teaching force, technical inspectors, centres of learning, including universities, partial development of curricula, etc. It can be claimed, therefore, that we are faced with "a practically total decentralization of the administration and a considerable degree of political decentralization.*

—Pauli Dávila Balsera (2005, p. 37)

An important issue that led to conflict was the relationship between political power and individual rights in education. Similarly, the relationship between



public and private school centers, or subsidized schools financially supported by the state, had to be established. School regulations, rights and obligations of the students, and freedom of education were laid out in the Fundamental Law that Governs the Schools in 1980, developed in article 27 of the Constitution on equality and freedom of education. In the Fundamental Law of the Right to Education of 1985, the governing socialist party established educational principles, especially those relating to private education. School governance would be by democratic participation in school councils. The State School Council would govern schools on a national level and autonomous school councils would govern regionally (organic law, 19 June 1980; May 1980, 19 June, and organic law, 3 July 1985)<sup>28</sup> Likewise, parent associations gained acknowledgment.

In August 1983 the University Reform Law came into effect. The universities became autonomous following the principles of the Constitution as applied to the university system. Regulating an autonomous university affected the entire organization: the university authorities, the academic system, professors, personnel, financing, and the students (organic law, 25 August 1983)<sup>29</sup>,

Twenty years after the major changes introduced by the educational law of 1970, a new law came into effect: the Organic Law of General Education Management (LOGSE), on 3 October 1990. This law introduced significant structural changes. Compulsory education increased to 16 years of age. The school itinerary was divided into more stages. Preschool was now from birth to 5 years of age. This stage was subdivided into two cycles, each lasting 3 years. Primary education was now from 6 to 11 years of age, and secondary education was now from 12 to 15 years of age. The purpose of this new system was to offer students a unified education, without having to choose electives until they reached 16 years of age. After successfully completing compulsory education, the student chose between two years of high school or two years of professional education.

Several principles define the educational statute of 1990. Among the most significant are the following: Contents and methodology were adapted to students with special needs. The school curricula and the skills taught were adapted to the geographic location of a school and its region concerning specific skills. Distance-learning education was created for those who had difficulty attending school. Understanding and respect become priorities in the learning processes of the students. Binding knowledge to moral values would enable students to shape their identities and relate to their surroundings.

The law was criticized mainly because of the lack of resources and difficulties in finding specialized teachers to assist students with special needs. Another controversial issue was automatic promotion, or the so-called culture without effort. Students with learning problems could repeat the school year a limited number of times and take reinforcement classes, but these measures were considered insufficient.

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<sup>28</sup> Official State Bulletin, no. 154, published 27 June 1980, and Official State Bulletin, no. 159 {, published 4 July 1985.

<sup>29</sup> Official State Bulletin, no. 209, published 1 September 1983

In 1995 the Organic Law of Participation, Evaluation, and Government in Schools was approved. This law extended the channels of participation, stated in previous laws. It also detailed issues in relation to subsidized school authorities (Escolano Benito, 2002, pp. 219–237).

### ***Progress in Education and Questions for Debate***

I can point out several major changes during the 20th century that affected all social levels. Progressive literacy, increase of mandatory school years, growing demand for teacher training, and rising number of women students and teachers are some examples. *The Report of the Spanish Educational System*, published by the Ministry of Education in 2009, illustrates three of these factors.

Literacy is understood as a citizen's right as well as a personal obligation toward society. School, family, church, and other institutions contribute to its achievement through their support. These people and institutions not only reduced illiteracy but also caused people to want to expand their cultural interests and search for knowledge. At the beginning of the 20th century, illiteracy was very high, due to lack of schools and low attendance rate among children. A. Viñao Frago (1990), a professor at the University of Murcia, explains it thus:

*If it is considered a product of schooling, literacy would be limited by the amount that local authorities and the central government budgeted for elementary education (primarily for school building or renovation and for hiring teachers). As the basic educational costs were considered a municipal matter until the twentieth century, the financial difficulties of local treasuries, coupled with popular rejection in many rural areas of a school and teacher imposed on them by Madrid, explain the delayed payment of teachers' salaries, teachers' low standard of living, and the poor state of school premises and materials. Only in 1911 did the central government budget for teachers' salaries, and it was not until 1920 that Madrid began to supplement municipal funds for school construction.*

—A. Viñao Frago (p. 584)

However, these funds decreased as the years went by—in some decades at a higher rate than others depending on the government initiatives at a given period. The literacy rate among children over 10 years of age at the beginning of the 20th century was 41.24 percent: 30.54 percent for males and 52.69 percent for females. The numbers had doubled by 1950, which proves the tremendous effort invested: 78 percent literacy, of which it was 87.82 percent for males and 82.66 percent for females. Literacy had spread throughout the country by the last third of the century. The objectives stated in the General Law of Education and Financing of the Educational Reform in 1970 and the laws passed in 1978 with the Spanish Constitution extended literacy to adults and marginal groups. By 1991 literacy had reached 95.41 percent: 98.16 percent for males and 96.75 percent for females (De Gabriel, 1998). OK

In 1857 mandatory school attendance was three years, extended to 6 years in 1907. From 1964 to 1990 it increased from 8 to 10 years. Still, school attendance didn't reach the majority of the population until the 1970s, when educational

authorities began to pay special interest to school attendance. However, classroom attendance could not be imposed only by laws; going to school depended on the availability of schools. Parents also played an important role in children's attendance. Some families believed in the importance of education for their children's future, while others could survive only if their children contributed financially.

For these reasons school attendance for children between 6 and 12 years of age in the beginning of the 20th century was 47.3 percent and in the 1930s still only 56.6 percent. By 1952 the rate had risen to 69.1 percent (Viñao Frago, 2004, p. 231). Absenteeism was 30 percent. In 1970 the situation began to change. Social and economic factors and growing demand for qualified workers contributed to rapid and regular increase in school attendance.

Primary school teacher education had also been a constant concern. Where were teachers to be trained and under what school curricula? study plan? Reforms were made to broaden their knowledge, update their pedagogical perspectives, and institute practice teaching in schools as part of their training. In time, the reforms also included continuing-education courses for practicing teachers. The reform of 1901 incorporated secondary school teacher training, extended to 4 years in 1941. In 1931 teachers' education reached the equivalent of university level. The training period was reduced during the Franco regime but recovered in 1967. Teaching finally became a university course of study in 1970. Secondary teachers' education was also reformed. The Pedagogical Aptitude Certificate (Order of 14 July 1971)<sup>30</sup> became a prerequisite to teach in secondary school. The courses that prepared for this certificate and other optional training programs were offered at the institutes of educational science of the universities.

Toward the end of the 20th century the presence of female students and professors became a relevant factor in educational progress. Women became a majority in high schools and universities and had better performance than men. Decades of dedication and perseverance helped them overcome the obstacles imposed by society, which had relegated them to the home, in a world where education was a man's privilege (Booth, Darke, and Yeandle, 1996; Ballarín Domingo, 2005; Ballarín and Martínez, 2005).

The rate of illiteracy among women was approximately 50 percent at the beginning of the 20th century. But by the end of the century, the results proved their desire to do more with their lives. As students and teachers, they began to find their place in education, in not only primary education but secondary school as well. The percentage of female high school students went from 0.13 percent in 1900 to 35.2 percent in 1950, and increased to 50 percent in 1976. By the end of the century the rate had reached 55.1 percent. This growth was also seen in universities: 0.05 percent in 1900, 14.8 percent in 1950, and 50.1 percent in 1986. By the turn of the 20th century, the percentage of women had increased to 53.3 percent.

The number of women teachers also increased significantly. In primary and secondary schools during the 1999–2000 academic year, 58.88 percent of the teachers in Spain were women. The rate of women professors in Spanish universities during that academic year was 34.25 percent. These growing rates

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<sup>30</sup> Official State Bulletin, no. 176, published 24 Julio julio 1971

triggered important transformations in the lives of women. Education enabled them to choose their own roles in a more pluralistic community.

### ***Conclusion***

Spanish educational policies of the 20th century suffered the consequences of continual political and ideological changes and the slow economic growth of the nation. Depending on the point of view of those involved, the first decades of the century had different names. From a political point of view, it was the Restoration period; from a cultural point of view, the Silver Age. Intellectuals of the time referred to the social demands and changes as Regenerationism. Regardless of the name, changing governments and ensuing crises caused instability in education. The willingness and efforts of certain groups made it possible to apply innovations and measures at different levels of education. By introducing educational reforms, they sought to make social and individual changes. At times, this meant having to negotiate between the views of the government and the Catholic Church in matters concerning education.

Education became a major concern for government authorities during the Second Republic. They introduced important transformations that were revolutionary. The policies changed the objectives, teaching models, and educational inspections. More schools and cultural institutions were built. Departments of Pedagogy at the universities of Madrid and Barcelona were created.

In the 1940s, under Franco's dictatorship, educational policies were established according to the political, philosophical, and religious ideologies of the decade. However, with the appointment of Joaquín Ruíz-Giménez as minister of education in the 1950s, education began to expand its horizons.

In the 1970s, two changes in the legislative environment were significant in the progress of Spain's educational system. The General law of Education and Financing of the Educational Reform of 1970 modernized the system and brought education to all the social spheres. In 1978 the Spanish Constitution instilled education as a fundamental right of all citizens.

Toward the end of the century, in 1990, the Fundamental Law of General Education Management (LOGSE) introduced new changes. However, reducing the rate of student drop out remained an unsolved issue in Spain's education.

According the Ministry of Education, in 2002, dropouts during compulsory schooling reached 29.1 percent. Dropouts during the last mandatory year of schooling, at 15 years of age, were 63.9 percent: 57.5 percent male and 70.5 percent female. These figures reveal an unequal situation between males and females in the objectives established by the educational system. Taking this into account, it may be advisable to use female students as a reference when evaluating and outlining new educational reforms.

The educational infrastructures and resources, in addition to the qualified teachers and the rising rates of school attendance in high schools and universities, demonstrate Spain's high educational standards, which enable quality learning.

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