



Review

Mainer Baqué, Juan. (2020). Consecrating the distinction, producing the difference: a history of the Secondary School of Huesca through its teachers (1845-1931). Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses. 445 pp. ISBN: 978-84-8127-305-2.

This work by Juan Mainer develops a historical research about the current Ramón y Cajal Secondary School, former Provincial Secondary School of Huesca founded in 1845. A center closely linked to the development of the city of Huesca and considered essential for the maintenance and reproduction of the social and cultural order. Mainer allows us to explore the first eighty-five years of the school's existence through those who were its teachers with the main purpose of contributing to think of education as a social problem, something that he undoubtedly achieves. He does so by presenting three stories in one: that of the school, that of its teachers and that of Huesca.

After a first block in which more general issues in relation to the secondary education, the decline of the University of Huesca and the beginning of the Provincial Secondary School are addressed, three more blocks that delve into the lives of nearly fifty teachers who served in the school are presented. This makes us reflect on the role of the school, its workers and the power conflicts that took place with internal and external actors. Organized chronologically and in relation to their historical context, the teachers are grouped into: Elizabethan teachers, Restoration teachers and Regenerationist teachers.

The Secondary School of Huesca in the traditional elitist educational mode (1845-1931) is the title of the first block. Necessary. It places us not only in the historical but also in the educational context before immersing us in the lives of its main actors. It is key to understanding the beginning of secondary education, whose birth was inseparable from the end of the scholastic university and the establishment of the new traditional elitist model. It was in 1845 when one institution replaced the other in Huesca, an event that was considered a historical injustice and about which

Mainer offers a different historical approach, theoretically informed and which distances the Sertoriana from any iniquity.

The second section, *The Elizabethan Teachers, founders of the profession*, shows the difficulties in finding qualified teaching personnel at the time of the creation of the first schools. These teachers carried out their work in the first thirty years of the school and most of them entered the profession without facing the arduous public examination. They are a reflection of improvisation and the intrusion of different powers. We can highlight Julián Pérez Muro, key in the early years of the school, and Vicente Ventura Solana, indispensable to the understanding of its history.

The third section, *The Restoration Teachers: the consolidation of a socio-professional canon*, reflects the identifying features of a more stable body of teachers after the new legislation of 1857 and 1967 and with a more recognized academic level. López Bastarán, with more than thirty-five years leading the school, was the most charismatic director of the Restorationist period. During this period, there was a gradual stabilization of the teaching staff and a certain ideological change due to the incorporation of a younger group of teachers. The type of students did not change during these years, coming from the elite and the middle classes of the capital.

In *The Regenerationist Teachers, guarantors of the canon: tradition and modernization*, the fourth and last block, we find the authentic guardians of the professional canon. The baccalaureate continued to be the emblem of traditional elitist education and the professors its administrators. However, the first signs of crisis in this mode of education became apparent: the increase in enrollment, the incorporation of the first female students and the creation of new educational centers after 1928, which would destabilize the order of the body. These changes occurred in the second decade of the 20th century under the direction of Benigno Baratech, who also had to face the problem of vacant teaching positions.

In short, three stories connected with each other and in turn with Secondary Education during a key period in its development and that of its main actors. Great are the transformations that this book recounts and lasting the mark that these leave. As the author says, the echoes of the old Secondary Education still resound in today's secondary schools.

Álvaro Busnadiago Prieto