

FALANGE

A History of Spanish Fascism

STANLEY G. PAYNE

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Stanford, California

1961

STANFORD STUDIES IN HISTORY, ECONOMICS,
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, XXII

To the memory of
JAIME VICENS VIVES (1910-1960)
A great Spanish historian

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

LONDON: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

© 1961 by the Board of Trustees of the
Leland Stanford Junior University

All rights reserved

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 61-12391
Printed in the United States of America

Published with the assistance of the
FORD FOUNDATION



PREFACE

The Spanish Civil War has long been a subject of lively controversy in the English-speaking world, in part because the victory in that epic struggle went to the authoritarian nationalist tendency that lost out in the greater conflict of 1939-45. Yet few things in modern European politics have been less clearly understood than the foundations of the Franco regime which were laid during the Civil War.

This study deals with only one aspect of Spain's turbid political world of the nineteen-thirties—her experience with fascism. It has been obvious for many years that the fascist movements of the thirties were not cut of whole cloth, and that the various fascist parties differed considerably in character and composition; the Spanish essay in fascism is here viewed as a peculiarly Spanish phenomenon, the product of Spanish conditions and Spanish feeling. Its ideological content was usually less definitive than its emotional tone, and it was above all in the temper of his political spirit that the Falange's founder, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, stood out amid the passions and hatreds of the Republic. The first half of this book is therefore dominated by the *Jefe*, and I have tried to present, without adulation or recrimination, what I believe is the first fully balanced view of his career.

Since the outbreak of the Civil War the Falange has lived under the shadow of the Caudillo, Francisco Franco. The Generalissimo has been a most singular figure, a careful little man who has survived constant shifts of the political kaleidoscope. I have tried to describe as accurately as possible just how he has used a fascist party, and how it in turn has lived off his regime.

The later years of the Franco regime have been treated in less detail because the government had a relatively uneventful internal history in the decade 1945-55. Since the basic structure of the regime was forged in the period 1936-43, the central focus of this study has been placed on those years.

Perhaps no one will ever present the whole truth about Spanish fascism and the complex struggles of the Civil War period, but I have tried to be as balanced as possible and as objective as the circumstances permit. Every possible kind of printed source material has been consulted and listed in the Notes and Bibliography. I have also tried, where feasible, to return to the original Thucydidean method of historical investigation, talking with significant figures in my story whenever they were living and available, and collecting private notes and documents from a great number of people. In the latter part of the book, in dealing with topics on which very little public material is available, I have had to rely heavily on such personal sources. The dangers inherent in this procedure are clear, but I have tried to make reasonable allowances for egocentric bias and distortion.

The Spanish gentlemen to whom I am indebted for the collection of information are many, and it would not be possible to name them all. I must, however, acknowledge a very heavy debt of gratitude to Don Dionisio Ridruejo and Don Manuel Hedilla Larrey; this book could not have been adequately written without their help. Important assistance was also given to me by the late distinguished president of the Basque government, José Antonio de Aguirre, by Don Rodolfo Llopis, Secretary of the Spanish Socialist Party, and by the venerable but energetic Carlist historian, Don Melchor Ferrer. I would also like to acknowledge the generous assistance of José Andino, Miguel Angel Astiz, Pedro Gamero del Castillo, Patricio González de Cárdenas, José María Iribarren, Miguel Maura, Narciso Perales, Carlos Juan Ruiz de la Fuente, the brothers José and Luis Rosales, the Baleztena family of Pamplona, and my friends Jon Bilbao and Francisco Javier Lizarza.

This study was begun while I was a doctoral candidate at Columbia University under Professor Shephard B. Clough, to whom I owe a good deal for his aid and encouragement, as well as his helpful criticism. Much of the research and writing was made possible by a predoctoral fellowship from the Social Science Research Council in 1958-59. Parts or the whole of the manuscript were given careful attention by the following friends and mentors: Professors Francisco

García Lorca, Juan J. Linz, Garrett Mattingly, and John Wuorinen of Columbia University; Mr. Joaquín Maurín; Professor Richard A. Webster of the University of California; Mr. Cyril J. Fox of Queens College; Dr. Josef L. Altholz of the University of Minnesota; and Mr. John D. Donohue, Jr. To all of them, my sincere thanks.

STANLEY G. PAYNE

Minneapolis, Minnesota
May 1961

CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
I. THE BACKGROUND	1
II. THE BIRTH OF NATIONAL SYNDICALISM	10
III. THE EMERGENCE OF JOSE ANTONIO PRIMO DE RIVERA	21
IV. THE FOUNDING OF THE FALANGE	38
V. POETRY AND TERRORISM	49
VI. THE STRUGGLE OVER TACTICS AND COMMAND	59
VII. THE PARTY OF JOSE ANTONIO	74
VIII. THE ELECTIONS OF 1936	89
IX. THE FALANGE INTO THE HOLOCAUST	101
X. THE FALANGE EARLY IN THE CIVIL WAR	116
XI. JOSE ANTONIO IN ALICANTE	132
XII. THE FALANGE MILITIA	142
XIII. POLITICAL INTRIGUE IN SALAMANCA	148
XIV. THE FALANGE AS STATE PARTY, 1937-1939	174
XV. THE "NEW SPAIN" OF THE CAUDILLO	199
XVI. POLITICS DURING WORLD WAR II	225
XVII. PLAYING OUT THE STRING	239
NOTES	269
BIBLIOGRAPHY	299
INDEX	309

THE BACKGROUND

THE VIOLENT TENSIONS of twentieth-century European history have centered around two poles: strife between social classes and warfare between nations. Strikes and demonstrations by the working class were widespread on the eve of World War I, and that upheaval simultaneously brought a quickening of the nationalist spirit which had been growing for generations. During the war class consciousness was buried beneath an outburst of nationalism that transcended it, but the reasons for the class struggle remained. After the war, working-class rebellion was apparent all over Europe, and everywhere chauvinist zealots, combined with the entrenched interests, rallied support for the nation irrespective of class. The strength of these rival allegiances thus favored the growth of hybrid "national socialist" or "corporatist" movements designed either to blend nationalism and socialism or to use the first to control the second.

Given authoritarian form, the combination of nationalism with socialism or corporatism usually became known as "fascism." The attraction fascism had for European countries with serious political and social problems now seems obvious. It drew its main strength from the fear and insecurity of the middle classes, who turned to the corporate coordination of economic forces in the name of the nation as the only new creed which could control the proletarian rebellion. The success of fascist movements varied widely, depending on the vigor of a country's political institutions and the strength of its economic structure. Italian Fascism, for instance, groped toward a pragmatic reconciliation of socialist and nationalist aspirations; German National Socialism talked of socialism only to submerge it beneath nationalism.

The last of the larger west European nations to develop a native fascist movement was Spain. For several generations her social and

political development had varied so far from the European norm that socialism and nationalism after the European pattern had been very slow in maturing. The mediocre rate of economic growth, due largely to a low level of popular education and to a general cultural isolation, temporarily stunted the growth of organized class consciousness, but when the class struggle came, it came with a vengeance. After the turn of the century, anarchist assassinations, police retaliations, and peasant uprisings in the south occurred with increasing frequency. The bloody riots and church-burnings which upset the country in the summer of 1909 were but a modest prelude to Spain's first nationwide general strike, which took place in 1917.

Since 1875 Spain had nominally been ruled by a constitutional monarchy, and there had been a number of notable improvements. A cultural renaissance in the early twentieth century created the nation's greatest literary age since the days of Cervantes. Such thinkers as José Ortega y Gasset once more brought vitality to Spanish philosophy. Political life also increased in vigor, as more and more citizens participated in it. The nation seemed more active than at any time in its modern history.

The rise of organized social rebellion, however, threatened in the long run to overshadow these achievements. It was Spain's misfortune that limited change was not sufficient to solve her problems; it merely exacerbated them, creating new ones in the process. Economic development was not widespread, and its benefits were confined to certain regions and classes. Industrial and agricultural equipment was primitive, productivity was slight, and the standard of living did not rise rapidly, even though it started from a very low level; Spanish workers in 1914 were paid the lowest real wages in western Europe outside of Portugal. In the circumstances, the growth of the first scattered Socialist and Syndicalist movements into mass organizations took place rapidly and created a distinct class consciousness in the proletariat, which demanded revolutionary social and economic changes. A feeling of despondent extremism was especially pronounced among the landless peasantry of southern Spain, many of whom had been despoiled of their common lands by the aristocracy and middle class during the past two centuries.

The bulk of the Spanish bourgeoisie saw no need to make con-

cessions to the workers. In most regions the middle classes were lethargic; their economic acumen was usually slight and, except for the ruthless action of a financial oligarchy, they lacked initiative. Above all, they were self-centered. They took little positive interest in the present or future of their country, and sought no direct solution for the nation's economic imbalance until the problems which it caused were thrust forcibly upon them in the nineteen-twenties. For a time Spain's very backwardness shielded her from modern social conflict, but so stark a background merely made the class struggle more violent when it came.

The tardiness of Spanish political and economic institutions in adapting to the requirements of modern life created tension between regions as well as between classes. The nation's most advanced region, Catalonia, spoke a popular language distinct from Castilian and had a tradition of self-rule dating from the Middle Ages. The growth of the Catalan middle class, the pressure of economic development, and the abuses of centralized misgovernment from Madrid, together with the indispensable catalyst of a Catalan literary renaissance, combined to create a separatist movement with middle-class leadership. The same kind of regional nationalism, springing from some of the same causes, was a political force in the Basque country.

A substantial segment of the middle class was profoundly opposed to every new influence which had appeared in Spanish life. Though monarchism was fast becoming discredited, powerful traditional institutions like the Church had many defenders. Hence the changes taking place in Spain had an ambivalent meaning. To some, the growth of representative government meant the beginning of a new era of liberal progress. To others, the extremists of both the Left and the Right, the new era marked the start of an intensified struggle; the Leftists wanted to bring the process of growth and reform to a revolutionary climax, while the Rightists were determined to subject it once more to the authoritarian controls of an earlier period.

There was little articulate nationalist feeling in Spain similar to the organized middle-class nationalism which swept many other continental countries in the nineteenth century. No one had been able to arrest the slow decay of Spain's overseas empire, even though such a process of dissolution was diametrically opposed to the pattern

of expansion then characteristic of European states. There was no spirit of *revanchisme* or of irredentism, for Spain had been too deeply sunk in economic sloth and governmental incompetence to nourish positive ambitions. Her wars and territories had been lost either too long ago or too far away to excite popular feeling. After 1898 there were no real foreign threats to Spain; she was not involved in a single international incident capable of arousing collective excitement.

This does not mean that Spaniards were deficient in sentimental national feeling, but only that they were unresponsive to organized nationalism expressed in explicit ideologies or political movements. The Spaniard is perhaps the most traditionalist of Europeans, and tenaciously resists any attack on his customs or social relationships. This backward-looking patriotic traditionalism, especially dominant among the Castilian middle class and the northern peasantry, had little in common with the dynamic modern nationalism of central Europe, which harped on future growth and expansion as well as on the glories of the past.

The most vigorous example of traditionalist patriotism resisting forces of change was the Carlist community, which based its program on the major historical institutions of the nation, an intolerant Church and a nonconstitutional monarchy. Purporting to champion national tradition against modern perversion, the Carlists were in fact clerical reactionaries and monarchical corporatists who based their system on the particularism of the old regime. Their regionalist, neo-medieval monarchism bore no resemblance to modern nationalism, which was devoted to welding the nation into an instrument for new glory and accomplishment.

The first brief expression of twentieth-century Spanish nationalism came from the orthodox Right rather than from the Carlists. After the fall of the conservative leader Antonio Maura in 1909, his followers organized a youth movement called the *Juventudes Mauristas*, which was dedicated to national regeneration. The Maurist youth decried the irregularities of parliamentary bargaining and called for reform on a nationwide basis, at the same time emphasizing the need for a drastic curtailment of Leftist subversion. However, they had no nationalist mystique, and their pronouncements often sounded somewhat like those of the old Conservative Party.¹

A more liberal kind of nationalist spirit, itself not untinged with xenophobia, was exhibited by some of the "Generation of Ninety-Eight." Such outstanding esthetes as Miguel de Unamuno and Antonio Machado probed into the marrow of Spanish being and came up with a new appreciation of the Castilian style and spirit, which they found full of harsh, sober colors and rugged contrasts, modulated by the deep flesh tones of earth and hillside, and shaded by the night of clerical black and a certain death-obsession. The *noventayochistas* were sure that Spain was different from the rest of Europe and had a distinct path to follow. But they could contribute to Spanish nationalism no more than an esthetic attitude without social or political content.

The military juntas which sprang up in 1917 were one form of nationalist or patriotic reaction. The rebellious junior officers who set up professional committees in that year were not explicitly nationalistic, and they offered no real program or ideology. But like similar rebels in other countries, they pronounced against favoritism and corruption in politics and demanded that the nation's energies be put to better use.

The years 1917-23 were full of bitter social dispute. Andalusian peasants scribbled "Viva Lenin" on whitewashed walls while hundreds of people were being killed in political assassinations at Barcelona. The disastrous defeat of Spanish arms in Morocco speeded a process of political decay already encouraged by the policies of a clever and ambitious but short-sighted King. Conservatives and liberals alike were eager for reforms which would fortify the state and decrease internal strife.

Thus the stage was set for General Primo de Rivera's coup in 1923, which first gave official expression to twentieth-century Spanish nationalism. Miguel Primo de Rivera was neither an intellectual nor a politician; he was simply an Andalusian general, and a somewhat old-fashioned one at that. He was impatient with constitutions, legal technicalities, and sociological theories. He liked order and simplicity. Though he came from the land-owning petty aristocracy, he had been given the spare and modest upbringing of most Spaniards. Even when dictator of Spain, Primo de Rivera found it hard to get used to expensive silk shirts. He liked wine, talk, and tobacco, and

the more he drank, the more he talked. He was especially fond of women, and his taste extended from the elegant courtesans of Paris to his dark Moorish mistress in Madrid, who was called *La caoba* ("the mahogany girl"). He had come to power after half a decade of confusion and violence, and he declared that his concern was for Spaniards, not for mere politicians or legal theories.

The only ideological basis for Primo's seven-year regime was patriotic feeling. Pronouncing the parliamentary system corrupt and inefficient, he first put the national government into the hands of a staff of colonels. After a few years, this arrangement was converted into a more conventional cabinet structure. The aim of his regime—the nonpartisan union of all Spaniards—was superficially realized in a new political party, the amorphous *Unión Patriótica*. This organization was set up in 1925 to help fill Primo's authoritarian caricature of a representative assembly.

The *Unión Patriótica* was by no means conceived as an authoritarian fascist party. In theory, it was a constitutional association, designed merely to provide support for the government during a difficult period of transition. According to the dictator, the *Unión Patriótica* "should be made up of all those who accept the Constitution of 1876. That is to say, of all those who accept and revere the precepts contained in the fundamental code of the nation."² Primo de Rivera always betrayed a guilty conscience about his usurpation of power. He publicly admitted that his *coup* was "illegal," adding the words "but patriotic."³ He even called it "a violation of discipline, which is the true sacrament of the Army."⁴ In an attempt to gain popular support, the qualifications for membership in the *Unión Patriótica* were later broadened to require only that members be men of general good will.⁵

Thus Primo de Rivera really had no party, no ideology, and no political system. The *Unión Patriótica* was nothing more than a collection of conservatives whose duty was to approve the dictatorship while waxing strong in patriotic rhetoric. The regime's economic program called for nothing more drastic than public works and more tariff protection. There was no program for social reform save the ambitious arbitration device of *comités paritarios*, in which the Socialist Union (UGT) was legally represented in Spanish government

for the first time. The Primo de Rivera regime was not a new order, but the old order on its last legs. It relied heavily on the Church for moral support.

The only political concept the General ever formed was that politics, politicians, and parliamentarianism were bad, while authoritarian control and national unity were good. He recognized that the nation needed economic development in order to create a base from which it could transcend the class struggle, but he left economic planning in the hands of younger cabinet ministers, notably José Calvo Sotelo and Eduardo Aunós. For the time being, this cautious paternalism seemed to satisfy the middle classes and the Socialists. The Anarchists, the only dissident group who remained hostile, were sternly suppressed.

Primo de Rivera expressed strong admiration for the Mussolini regime. The dictator and the King visited Rome during the first months of Primo's rule, and Spain signed a treaty of friendship and arbitration with Italy in 1926. Beyond that Primo could not go, for the political and ideological structure of Italian Fascism was too artfully contrived to fit his own shrewd but simple hand.

The only note of radical nationalism during Primo's regime was struck by a strange esthete, Ernesto Giménez Caballero. Of all the fascist writers who proliferated throughout Europe in the nineteen-twenties and -thirties, Giménez Caballero was perhaps the most bizarre.* A professional *littérateur*, he had gyrated wildly between the poles of modern political ideologies during his brief writing career. By 1930 his imagination was entirely captive to "Roman" Fascism. National Socialism interested him much less, though some of the first Nazi propaganda in Spain, prepared by party members resident in Madrid, was printed on the same press that turned out his own *Gaceta Literaria*.⁶ The ideal behind Giménez Caballero's fulminations was the "Universal Kingdom of Spain," something that had ended over one hundred years earlier. Spain was "the country chosen by God."⁷ Thus he wrote, "the Spaniard was born to command and not to be a proletarian."⁸ The trouble with Spain was that it had

* Unless otherwise qualified, the word "fascist" and derivative terms will be used in their broadest sense, to indicate adherence to an authoritarian, corporatist, nationalist form of government.

ceased to be Spanish; salvation would come by reasserting the essence of Spanishness. By this Giménez did not intend to preach a return to the past, as did many of the Carlists. The content of his nationalism was modernistic and radical and based on esthetic, not spiritual, norms.

Violence, he thought, was necessary to establish a new hegemony: "There is no murder in war. There is only he who strikes second or cannot strike any more."⁹ "Spain is and ought to be at war."¹⁰ Modern Spanish Anarchism was at once "the repository of the heroic tradition of the conquerors" and "the most authentic refuge for popular Catholicism in Spain."¹¹ "[Anarchist] gunmen are not vulgar criminals. . . . Those who respect the truly Hispanic revere those gunmen."¹² In 1934, at a patriotic rite near Covadonga, Giménez Caballero summed up his doctrine very clearly: "We are going to exalt national sentiment with insanity, with paroxysms, with whatever need be. I prefer a nation of lunatics."¹³

Though the *Gaceta Literaria* translated such foreign sensations as Curzio Malaparte's *Technique of the Coup d'État*, Giménez Caballero's frantic rhetoric drew very little attention from the predominantly liberal Spanish intelligentsia. Whatever prestige the journal had was purely literary. Spanish "fascism" could not thrive under the provincial authoritarianism of the Primo de Rivera regime.

Six years of that strange assortment of political devices which was *primoriverismo* produced confusion and general dissatisfaction. By 1929 public finance was in a parlous state. The World War I surplus had been dissipated and no new funds were available for public works. The peseta fell to its lowest rate of international exchange since 1899. The Socialists were growing tired of their political compromise with the regime, and their rivals in the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement were only marking time until a fresh outburst could be made. The upper classes, whose position Primo de Rivera had stepped in to save, were equally dissatisfied. Fearing that the nation's economic position would deteriorate further, they wanted to get rid of the overhead charged by the regime. The King, in whose name Primo de Rivera was supposed to be ruling, showed signs of eagerness to resume some degree of personal control. Furthermore, Primo's health began to fail. When his fellow generals proved re-

luctant to reaffirm his authority early in 1930, he was obliged to resign.

What followed was little better. Two brief governments of semi-dictatorship, led successively by a general and an admiral, produced no political peace and ran into the worldwide economic depression. Alfonso XIII contemplated a return to constitutional monarchy, but he was now seven years too late. He was blamed for both the failures of the dictatorship and the increasing frustrations of 1930. Even the moderate middle classes began to desert the Monarchy, and republican groups gained greatly in strength. The "forces of order" became seriously alarmed; there was even some apprehension over a possible rebellion by the Left. Amid this turmoil, the Court tried to win popular support by announcing that full municipal elections would be held on April 12, 1931. The turmoil mounted. In the larger cities, the elections were almost entirely swept by the republicans, who demanded that monarchy come to an end. By April 14 Alfonso XIII found himself with scarcely a single positive supporter in the land. The fruitless decades of Spanish constitutional monarchy had left a hollow edifice. Even the Right made no move to save it. Several leading generals had become republican sympathizers and the Monarchy had no sword. In a gracious gesture, the King left Spain. The Republic was proclaimed the same day.

eliminated. Republican liberals were riding so high that even the upper middle classes were not interested in wasting time with a nationalist monarchist agitator. Albiñana lamented:

Though enthusiastic and resolute, we could not even pay the rent for our Center, because the moneyed classes did not help us. To ask money in Spain for any work that does not bring immediate personal reward is to pass a fearsome calvary. The absence of the slightest sense of cooperation is one of the greatest ills of our country.³

Albiñana was arrested for seditious activities and later exiled to the barren region of Las Hurdes. José María Gil Robles, head of the conservative Acción Popular party, petitioned in the Cortes for Albiñana's release, but the Right was still unimpressed with the doctor's political potential.⁴ The hundreds of people who visited Albiñana in Las Hurdes did so largely out of personal sympathy; almost no one joined his now illegal party.⁵

Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, who was also trying to force himself onto a dimly lit corner of the political stage, was of an entirely different type. A postal clerk and sometime student of philosophy, Ledesma was an abrupt, taciturn, and unsociable young man; at the age of fifteen he had fled to Madrid from the province of Zamora, where his father had been a poor village schoolmaster.

Ledesma's first love was German philosophy, and he managed to gain a degree in philosophical studies at the University of Madrid.⁶ During the late nineteen-twenties he published some respectable but unimaginative essays on aspects of modern German thought in Ortega y Gasset's *Revista de Occidente* and Giménez Caballero's *Gaceta Literaria*.⁷ However, by the time Ledesma was twenty-five, formal philosophy had lost much of its appeal for him. He wanted to escape from the lifeless world of metaphysics into the febrile atmosphere of radical, ideologically oriented politics; he had a passionate longing to apply abstract ideas to practical affairs.

Coming from the deeply traditional society of Old Castile, Ledesma knew how incompatible the emotional temper of the Spanish people was with orthodox liberalism or scientific socialism. He ab-

THE BIRTH OF NATIONAL SYNDICALISM

THE PAINLESS BIRTH of the Republic gave rise to rejoicing and good feeling in many places, even though few Spaniards were ardent liberals. Such a peaceful change of regime seemed to augur a happy, progressive future for a troubled land which had never changed systems of government without bloodshed and tragedy. During the first days of the Republic dissenting voices were few.

While the public indulged in a mood of expectant euphoria, two new expressions of Spanish nationalism in Madrid went largely unnoticed. One was a tiny group called the Spanish Nationalist Party. The other was a weekly paper called *La Conquista del Estado*, whose director was Ramiro Ledesma Ramos. The Spanish Nationalist Party had been formed by a fat, leather-lunged neurologist from Valencia, José María Albiñana. His proclaimed program was the defense of all existing institutions: "The Spanish National Party has no other base than the very broad one of Tradition."¹ Albiñana could point to a sudden rash of Anarchist outbreaks as a mere hint of what Republican liberalism would bring. His platform was grounded on respect for the military and a rigorously nationalistic line in every aspect of government.² Albiñana hated all liberal intellectuals, and they responded by ignoring him. Since no one took seriously his talk about being "above parties," he was discredited from the beginning, and he quickly gained the reputation of a reactionary rhetorician in the pay of the landowners. The only effective segment of his minuscule following was the organized group of militiamen and street brawlers known as "Legionarios de Albiñana."

When the Monarchy fell in April 1931, Albiñana's little band tried one or two street fights with the exultant Left and were immediately

horred both the atomistic individualism of liberal systems and the fatalistic impersonality of Marxism. His sympathies were not with the intellectual Left, certainly not with the international Left, but with the Spanish Left. He yearned for emotional identification with a Spanish proletarian movement, a truly nationalistic workers' revolution.

In a way, his notion was in keeping with the spirit of the times, embracing as it did both nationalism and collectivism. While everywhere else the world depression was threatening the foundations of liberal democracy, the Nazi Party had revived with great *éclat*. It seemed that the hour for Mussolini's system had truly arrived, and Salazar was about to install a corporatist republic in Portugal. Ledesma reasoned that since Spanish nationalist revolutionary ideology must be original and not imitative, its system could be called neither corporatism nor national socialism. On the other hand, the most purely revolutionary force in Spain was Anarcho-Syndicalism, which led him to conclude that the neo-Leftist quality of the nationalist revolution and the nationalist quality of the neo-Leftist revolution could best be synthesized in the term "National Syndicalism."⁸ This realignment of national forces took shape in the mind of Ramiro Ledesma, a penniless postal clerk, in the winter of 1930-31.

During the last year of the Monarchy, calls for national unity had frequently been made by Spain's intellectual leaders. The most perceptive and influential among them, Don José Ortega y Gasset, repeatedly called for an all-embracing "national front," a party of parties to represent all Spaniards almost as a corporate entity.⁹ This was poor, weak stuff to Ledesma, hanging on the fringe of the Spanish intellectual world. His mind had traveled beyond the realm of *orteguismo*, and liberal nationalism meant nothing to him. The nationalism of the Right meant still less. Ledesma several times described the loudest nationalist leader, Albiñana, as "reactionary" and probably despised him more than any other public figure of the day.¹⁰

At the time Ledesma's political notions were beginning to crystallize, he had few friends with whom to associate. Unkempt, opinionated, and asocial, he did not attract most intellectuals. But he was single-minded in his desire to create a fascist party, and he ultimately acquired ten disciples and collaborators, all about his own age (twenty-five).

With their uncertain help he began to publish a political weekly, *La Conquista del Estado*, on March 14, 1931, just one month before the Monarchy collapsed. The youngest of Ledesma's collaborators, his secretary, Juan Aparicio, has written that the only things the members of the little band had in common "were their youth and their university background."¹¹ In addition, they were all dissatisfied with the government, impatient with the backward Right and the doctrinaire Left, and eager to do something about Spain's domestic stagnation and third-rate position in world affairs.

Their greatest lack was money. Ledesma had managed to get the paper started on a handout from the monarchist propaganda fund of Admiral Aznar's government, which preceded the downfall of the Monarchy. Aznar's political informants apparently hoped to use Ledesma's group to create division among the liberal intellectuals. Ledesma and his colleagues signed their first manifesto by candlelight in an office consisting of four virtually unfurnished rooms. It emphasized the following points:

The new State will be constructive, creative. It will supplant individuals and groups, and the ultimate sovereignty will reside in it and only in it. . . . We defend, therefore, Panstatism. . . .

[We advocate] exaltation of the Universities, . . . the supreme creative organ of scientific and cultural values. . . .

[We advocate] articulation of the varied districts of Spain. The basic reality of Spain is not Madrid, but the provinces. Our most radical impulse must consist, then, in connecting and encouraging the vital forces of the provinces. . . .

Syndication of economic forces will be obligatory and in each instance bound to the highest ends of the State. The State will discipline and will guarantee production at all times. . . .

. . .

Our primary goal is revolutionary efficiency. Therefore we do not seek votes, but audacious and valiant minorities. . . . We favor the politician with a military sense of responsibility and combativeness. Our organization will be founded on the basis of syndical cells and political cells.¹²

During these early months, Ledesma's propaganda was more than a little confused. He applauded some aspects of Carlism, then eulogized the Anarchists at the opposite end of the political spectrum.¹³

His rhetoric often amounted to little more than up with the new and down with the old:

Long live the new world of the twentieth century!
 Long live Fascist Italy!
 Long live Soviet Russia!
 Long live Hitler Germany!
 Long live the Spain we will make!
 Down with the bourgeois parliamentary democracies!¹⁴

Ledesma tried to appeal to every non-Marxist revolutionary force in Spain. He commended the Anarcho-Syndicalists for being the first group in Spain "to free themselves from the bourgeois love of [individual] liberty," but criticized them for refusing to set their goals in national terms.¹⁵ Nonetheless, he saw the Anarcho-Syndicalist CNT as "the most efficient level for subversion" existing in 1931-32, because their revolutionary ardor was unsullied by connections with any branch of international Socialism.¹⁶ Ledesma planned a number of provocative demonstrations with his handful of supporters, but to no avail. No one was impressed by his writings either, and *La Conquista del Estado* was in financial trouble from the beginning.

Ledesma's political ideas were based on pure thought and unrelated to practical reality. No matter how passionate and fascistic, or how virulent and materialistic, his talk became, he always remained an intellectual theorist. Ledesma found not an Absolute Idea, but an Absolute Passion in nationalism. His emotion sprang from his mental struggles, so that in a sense even his irrationality was calculated.

The basic problem of Spain's Republican leaders during those months was to make parliamentary democracy take root in a land hitherto dominated by an intransigent Right and at the same time to stand off the Left, which scorned the slow give-and-take of parliamentary government. The Republic had been brought about not by a great popular initiative on the part of Republicans, but by the utter collapse of the Monarchy. In order to establish a secure democracy in a land where only a minority of the population were liberal democrats, work and patience were needed. Ledesma's penchant for abstract opinions made it impossible for him even to understand the nature of this task.

To finance *La Conquista del Estado* was a constant trial. After his original monarchist subsidy, Ledesma appears to have received a few meager handouts from the world of high finance, notably from the Bilbao bankers. The gradual drying up of these sources ended an internal debate within Ledesma's clique over the propriety of accepting funds from the far Right. It also ended *La Conquista del Estado*, whose last number appeared on October 25, 1931.

By this time Ledesma's ten had already begun to split up. One joined the Republican liberals, another the moderate Radical Party, and a third the clerical Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightist Groups (CEDA). A fourth went back to the Left, while a fifth, it would seem, later entered a mental institution.¹⁷ Giménez Caballero, who occasionally collaborated with Ledesma, had walked out some months before.

Despite its short life, Ledesma's paper bore the essential germs of what later became known as Spanish national syndicalism. Its writers refused the formal label of fascism and never used the term in referring to themselves. They were fumbling to develop a Spanish ideology, second-hand though it might be. Their writings on state-controlled nationalism, the legitimacy of violence, the glory of empire, national syndication of labor, land expropriation, and the incorporation of the masses set off a very slow chain reaction among university students and on the far Right which belied the original insignificance of the propagandists. Unfortunately for Ledesma, this reaction was long in coming, and was contingent on a series of events beyond his control.

In June 1931 a group of similar size and aim was formed in the ancient Castilian capital of Valladolid, under the leadership of Onésimo Redondo Ortega. Born into a peasant family, Redondo came from a thoroughly clerical background and grew up in the highly conservative environment of rural Castile. In 1928 he served for one year as reader of Spanish in the Catholic college of Mannheim, Germany, where he became acquainted with Nazi ideology.¹⁸ Although the peculiar characteristics of German National Socialism were not easily compatible with Spanish Catholicism, Redondo was

impressed by the possibilities of a revolutionary modern nationalist movement.*

Young, vigorous, handsome, and passionate, Onésimo Redondo was obsessed by three goals: national unity, the primacy of traditional "Spanish values," and social justice. His religion was the stern Catholicism of Torquemada, and his ideal was to drive the money changers from the temple.¹⁹ Redondo despised tolerance; he burned to revive the martial spirituality of Spain's warrior monks of the Middle Ages.

During 1930-31 Redondo spent nearly twelve months working as an organizer for a syndicate of *remolacheros* (sugar beet growers) that had recently been established in Valladolid province. Though the organization's efforts came to a temporary standstill owing to a lack of funds, they gave Redondo an introduction to national syndicalism.²⁰ Throughout his career as a nationalist agitator, he continued to work on behalf of the *remolacheros* of Valladolid.

Redondo was thus deeply engaged in the defense of the small farmer of Old Castile. He resented the bourgeois separatists of Vizcaya and Catalonia, the Leftist workers of the large cities, the finance capitalists of Madrid and Bilbao, and the meddling anticlerical politicians of the liberal parties. He wanted a rebellion that would reaffirm Spanish tradition in a manner adequate for the modern world, a rebellion that would restore to the toiling Catholic classes of solid, provincial Spain their proper dominance over the deluded liberals and godless radicals of the cities. He thought economic life should be controlled by nationwide syndicates, thoroughly organized but partially autonomous. All the agnostic, divisive, and relativistic forces which had gained ascendancy in 1931, or even in 1875, should be swept away.

Catholic Action, for which he had once been a propagandist, now seemed far too pale and compromising. Redondo wanted a revolutionary national youth movement, politically radical, economically nationalistic, religiously conservative, but violent in its style and

* Employing the customary line of the clerical fascist during those years, he declared that Adolf Hitler represented "Christianity facing Communism." (*El Estado Nacional*, No. 19, Mar. 20, 1933.)

tactics.* With the support of several acquaintances of vaguely similar backgrounds and aspirations, he founded a weekly paper in Valladolid entitled *Libertad*. Its first number appeared on June 13, 1931, just three months after the inception of *La Conquista del Estado*.

According to Redondo, the remedy for Spain's ills lay "in the people," that is, the honest and devout working people, and above all the peasant farmers and small shopkeepers of Old Castile, whom he called on to save the rest of Spain.²¹ He was certain that Castile had done the best job in Spain of preserving its spiritual integrity in the face of the egotistical, "pornographic," "Jewish" influences corrupting the land.²²

Redondo's propaganda had no more coherence than Ledesma's. On the one hand, he demanded the economic destruction of the bourgeoisie; on the other, he raged against the anticlerical laws of the new Republic.[†] He even declared that Spain already lived in a state of civil war and exhorted the young to gird themselves for battle:

Our young men ought to exercise themselves in physical struggle, ought to love violence as a system. National violence by the young is just, is necessary, is convenient. One of our permanent goals is to cultivate the spirit of a morality of violence, of military shock.²³

On August 9, 1931, Redondo founded a political group, the Juntas Castellanas de Actuación Hispánica, in order to translate some of his emotions into action. Its first members were a few rambunctious students and a handful of Redondo's followers around Valladolid.

Although Redondo and Ledesma had been aware of each other's work from the very beginning, several months passed before they officially took notice of each other. The leaders had little in common: the conservative Redondo deplored Ledesma's pan-radicalism, and Ledesma sneered at Redondo's religiosity. However, in September

* "This can only be done by a movement steeped in a true Spanish [*españolista*] frenzy, launched by the young, and dedicated to combating at every turn not only the uncontrolled wave of materialism, but also the irresponsible hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie." (*Libertad*, No. 29, Dec. 28, 1931.)

† "Coeducation is a ministerial crime against decent women. It is a chapter in the history of Jewish atrocity against free nations, a crime against the health of the people for which the traitors responsible ought to pay with their heads." (*Ibid.*, No. 17, Oct. 5, 1931. All italics are Redondo's.)

1931 Ledesma was fast running out of money and desperately needed collaborators in order to keep his movement alive. On the other hand, Redondo was isolated in Valladolid and knew virtually no one in Madrid. The two men obviously needed each other. For all their differences, they were both nationalist, and anti-Marxist authoritarian revolutionaries, and it was in their best interests to combine forces.

In its penultimate issue on October 10, *La Conquista del Estado* announced the impending formation of the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista, a fusion of the Madrid and Valladolid groups. The new organization was to be controlled by a national council, which in practice became a duumvirate, with Ledesma and Redondo remaining in more or less mutually autonomous command of their respective groups.

The members of the JONS, who were known as "Jonistas," belonged to the first official political organization in Spain bearing a national syndicalist label. For their emblem they chose the yoked arrows of the Catholic Kings, a fitting symbol for those who dreamed of reviving Spain's imperial grandeur.²⁴ It was during this period, also, that Ledesma coined several slogans—such as *¡Arriba!* and *España, Una, Grande y Libre*—which later became standard in the propaganda of national syndicalism.²⁵ To demonstrate their radical aims, the Jonistas adopted as their colors the red-black-red banner of the Anarchists.

With Ledesma's rasping tongue silenced owing to lack of funds, the only spokesman for the minuscule movement was Redondo. The Valladolid agitator poured out his moralistic frenzy in a steady stream, always emphasizing that the JONS was in no way tied to either the Monarchy or the Church.²⁶ According to Redondo, "nationalism" was utterly pragmatic with regard to formal political structure, and was bound to scorn all explicit programs or ideologies. Spain's two great ills were "foreignization and the cult of formulas." Redondo demanded a "popular dictatorship," which would create its own leader and its own program out of the process of its own dialectic.²⁷

* *El Estado Nacional* (a weekly review for the discussion of political theory, directed by Redondo), Feb. 20, 1932. The use of "formulas" assured "the selection of the worst policy." (*Ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1932.)

As Ledesma later admitted, "During all the year 1932, the activity of the JONS was almost nil."²⁸ Redondo's university students in Valladolid engaged in demonstrations against Marxism, but these soon degenerated into futile brawling, and the leader of the group was obliged to leave town.²⁹ Ledesma still had no money and no prospects. It was impossible to interest any of the reactionary, anti-Republican bankers in financing him. Though the liberal cabinet then ruling the country began to run into difficulties, Left and Right alike ignored the existence of national syndicalism.

The miniature movement possessed little ideological coherence or physical organization. Its leadership rested on the implicit compromise established by Ledesma and Redondo. A real test of their cooperation came in the summer of 1932, when a handful of military men prepared a hasty *coup* against the Republic. Ledesma regarded them as reactionaries and hence remained on the sidelines. Redondo, however, saw an opportunity for establishing the "national dictatorship" he always talked of, and took a very minor part in the conspiracy. When the rebellion failed, Redondo barely escaped across the Portuguese border, one jump ahead of the Republican police.

During its first two years of existence Spanish national syndicalism accomplished nothing more than a certain airing of ideas, which might better be described as noisy suggestions. Redondo and Ledesma rarely agreed and still more rarely made sense. In effect, there was neither a national syndicalist movement nor a national syndicalist program at the beginning of 1933.

The practical ignorance of the little group was staggering. Except for Redondo, with his brief experience among the small farmers of Valladolid, no one in the JONS seems to have had the slightest acquaintance with practical economics. As far as labor economics were concerned, ignorance reigned supreme. No theory of syndical organization was worked out, and no one had the vaguest idea what national syndicalism would really mean in practice.

Like many central European fascists, Ledesma and Redondo were petit-bourgeois types. Redondo, with his provincial background, could take to radicalism easily because modern upper-middle-class economic attitudes had never effectively penetrated his rural world. Ledesma, whose experience had been divided between the post office

and the philosophy classroom, had led a typical white-collar functionary's life. Both acted from personal emotion. Both sought great ends and were impatient with means. Both lived in a world of passionate vision, which bordered on illusion.*

At the end of 1932 the efforts of the Jonistas appeared futile. In making economic revolution one of their principal issues, they had cut themselves off from the wealthy and respectable Right-wing parties. Their nationalism had alienated the organized Left. They proposed, at least in their more lucid moments, to establish a national syndicalist dictatorship against the Left, but without joining the Right or suspending their ridicule of the Center. It is little wonder that there were few to heed them. Their only chance for success seemed to lie in a national catastrophe.

* "Ramiro . . . could never find the frontiers which separate the fluidity of real life from imagined existence, which only possesses us in fleeting moments of enchantment. . . . One cannot well ascertain if Ramiro dreamed in order to act or longed for action in order to dream. Nor could he himself." (Emiliano Aguado, *Ramiro Ledesma en la crisis de España*, p. 114.)

III

THE EMERGENCE OF

JOSE ANTONIO PRIMO DE RIVERA

THE ONLY RIGHT-WING GROUP not swept off balance by the sudden birth of the Republic in 1931 was the *Comunión Tradicionalista*, the political organization of the Carlists. The Carlist stronghold lay among the archconservative, hyper-Catholic peasantry of Navarre. Carlists had been predicting the downfall of the "illegitimate" line of the Bourbon dynasty for generations, and they regarded the abrupt end of Alfonso XIII's reign as almost Biblical justice. Only a few weeks after the birth of the Republic, at a secret meeting in Leiza (about 20 miles from San Sebastián) Carlist leaders agreed to reorganize the Carlist militia (known as "Requetés" or "Boinas rojas") for the purpose of protecting Traditionalist interests from Republican depredation and perhaps striking a blow for the cause, should the occasion arise.¹ The Carlists expected nothing from the Republic, but they continued to scorn the pragmatic Right. They were content to drill their militia and await developments.*

The majority monarchists, the *alfonsinos*, were slower to react. It was several months before their leaders began drawing together the strands of support which the King had left behind. In negotiations with Alfonso at Paris, it was finally agreed to organize a monarchist party, the *Renovación Española*, which would operate legally under the Republic and thus serve as a cover for efforts to restore the throne.² The party's open political activity was slight, for as one of its leading members later admitted, its only goal was to overthrow the Republic.³ Pressure from the *Renovación Española* was partly responsible for

* Part of the militia was later sent to Italy for further training, along with the customary Carlist complement of priests (Jaime del Burgo, *Requetés en Navarra*).

the *coup d'état* attempted by a handful of officers in August 1932. The *coup* was a miserable failure and showed what scant support the monarchist Right could expect from the nation as a whole.

Genuine monarchist sentiment was virtually dead among the Spanish middle classes in 1932. What most of the Spanish bourgeoisie wanted was a guarantee against any future agitation by the lower classes, a check on incendiary anticlericalism, and an assurance that the political revolution of 1931 would not become an economic revolution in 1933 or 1934.

With both monarchism and corporatism disqualified by their lack of broad appeal, direction of the forces of conservatism tended to devolve temporarily upon certain prominent members of the religious laity. This trend was almost unavoidable, for the most important disputes in the Constituent Cortes concerned those sections in the new constitution which disestablished the Church and banned it from education.

One of these new conservative leaders was Don Angel Herrera, editor of the influential Jesuit-financed *El Debate* and a leader of Catholic Action. Herrera took a moderate and practical position. He believed it the duty of the Church and its believers to submit to the prevailing government so long as it did not deprive them of necessary liberties. Regarding monarchism as a dead issue in Spain, he endeavored to mobilize the forces of Spanish Catholicism behind a pragmatic, parliamentary-oriented political movement, tied to the interests of the Church but respectful of the Republican regime.⁴

It was partly through Herrera's efforts that *Acción Popular*, the political arm of Catholic Action, became the center of a new federation representing the forces of the Spanish Right. Its title, the *Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightist Groups* (CEDA), suggested the moderate, pragmatic, and even heterogeneous nature of the group behind it. José María Gil Robles, a pudgy, balding young lawyer from Salamanca, emerged as the leader of this force, which received the full support of the Church.⁵ Gil Robles and his followers showed no interest in contesting the legitimacy of the Republican regime; their only goal was to restore the lost privileges of the Church and to re-establish the social and economic status quo of 1931. Accordingly, they planned to revise the national constitution and to

reverse the liberal legislation of the first year of the Republic. The CEDA was a careful, moderate, bourgeois party, with few vocal nationalists and no stomach for violence. It reassured the bulk of the Spanish middle class, which did not want to go either backward or forward.

The absence of well-organized opposition from the Right was not enough to provide a period of untroubled gestation for the new regime, which was under assault from the very beginning. The process began in the Constituent Cortes, where the conservatives walked out, the extreme Left refused to cooperate, anticlerical politicians attempted to right ancient wrongs, and Socialists endeavored to carve out their own version of working-class representation. As the months passed, the clerical dispute became increasingly bitter, and a modest land reform proposal created an enormous uproar. The Anarchists tried to set up a little republic of their own, and the world depression exacerbated the existing social disputes. Workers grew restive, monarchists plotted rebellion, and the cabinet bogged down completely. When the Socialists left the government, the liberal Republic was doomed.

No one had expected so much of the Republic as the intellectuals. Republican almost to a man and predominantly liberal in spirit, they had been eager to serve the new Spain. Ortega y Gasset set the pace by organizing his Group for the Service of the Republic, a body of professional men who offered their services to help draft laws and even to administer government departments. It was hoped that political justice would bring social justice, and that progress and enlightenment would turn Spain into a model republic. But Spanish reality was more resistant to the mold of theory than anyone had dreamed. The disillusionment was extreme. Remembering the republic he had hoped for, Ortega y Gasset could look at the real Republic in 1933 and exclaim, "It wasn't this!"

The *orteguistas* had not forgotten the notion of a national party-above-parties, which they had advocated in 1930, and during 1932 several members of the group talked of reviving this plan. Chief among them was Alfonso García Valdecasas, a Professor of Law and formerly one of the principal *orteguista* deputies in the Constituent Cortes.⁶ Late in 1932 Valdecasas and his friends established the

Frente Español, a party dedicated to saving the Republic from the dogmas of the intransigent Right, the radical Left, and the doctrinaire Center. Their platform had some appeal to nationalists, and one or two intellectuals left Ledesma's camp to join the new movement, but on the whole the Frente Español never amounted to more than a sounding board for a few ex-liberals who were looking to some sort of national consolidation for new political norms. It is significant only because it indicates certain new directions that the Center and the Right were beginning to consider in 1932.

The far Right did not profit from the frustrations of Spanish liberalism in 1931-32. The conservative counterattack was being led by the moderate, semi-Republican, religiously oriented CEDA. Nonetheless, certain industrialists and financiers were becoming increasingly worried about the potentialities of the working-class movement. Intermittently, they discussed the possibility of creating some kind of nationalistic socialist front. Furthermore, the scattered partisans of General Primo de Rivera still harbored dreams of restoring political and economic stability to Spain by authoritarian means. Some of them looked to Mussolini for inspiration. However, these conservative desires and ambitions would never have found public expression in 1933 had it not been for a high-minded and resourceful young man, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the eldest son of the late dictator. It was he who eventually brought together the divergent currents of Spanish fascism during the Republic.

José Antonio Primo de Rivera was born in 1903 into an upper-middle-class family with a strong military tradition. The Primo de Riveras were socially prominent in Andalusia, having intermarried with large landholders and merchants around Jerez de la Frontera. José Antonio's great-uncle, General Francisco Primo de Rivera, had been awarded the newly created title of Marqués de Estella for bringing the Second Carlist War to a close in 1878. When his father died in 1930, José Antonio became the third Marqués in that line.

José Antonio was very different from his father, who had been a jovial, sensual man, little troubled by intellectual problems.⁷ Like so many patrician Spaniards, José Antonio was educated in the law. He also received considerable instruction in literature and modern

languages, and was an amateur poet. Although very popular and even something of a social charmer, he was known for his modesty and was never accused of presuming on his station as the dictator's son.⁸ He was first put to work at the age of sixteen in the business firm of a maternal uncle, where he handled a share of the English-language correspondence. He was a good student and did graduate work in law before completing his military service. He was basically a serious young man.⁹

At the University of Madrid José Antonio took an interest in student politics, but despite his family background he spurned the backward Catholic students' organization and tended to favor the liberal faction in university affairs.¹⁰ He was careful never to identify himself with any sort of political activity during the seven-year dictatorship. Nonetheless, he was emotionally very much involved with his father's career, glorying in the dictator's successes and watching with dismay as his regime foundered. As the years drew on, José Antonio formed his own interpretation of the regime's mild but authoritarian policies. He later showed himself to have been strongly influenced by his father's scorn for all politicians and his faith in what he called "intuismo" or "intuitionism."¹¹ José Antonio came also to scorn the liberal intelligentsia which had attracted him as a student. The more they attacked and ridiculed his father, the more antagonistic he became toward their insistence on middle-class liberal democracy and parliamentary forms.

When the regime began to totter in 1928 and 1929, José Antonio put aside his literary pursuits and became seriously interested in public affairs.¹² He began reading Spengler, Keyserling, Marx, Lenin, and Ortega, as well as the Spanish traditionalists. He speculated at length on the ambivalence of modern freedom, which enfranchised the masses but offered no shelter for cultural values; which vastly increased national wealth but so grossly maldistributed it that only a cataclysmic class revolution seemed able to remove the inequities. To him the liberal emphasis on abstract equality and internationalism seemed to obliterate the national, regional, and individual differences that had made European culture so rich.

By the end of 1929 the Spanish upper classes were ready and eager to let Primo de Rivera go. They had never supported his vague

plans for reform, and they now feared that his continued presence as head of the government would only bring new and greater difficulties. The ailing dictator's resignation in January 1930 thus came as a relief to those who had profited most from his rule. He was bundled off to Paris, where he died within a few months.

José Antonio was deeply moved by his father's end and revolted by the hypocrisy of many erstwhile aristocratic supporters. Without hesitation, he undertook the political defense of the dictator. Primo de Rivera's most acute commentator has written that "in the main, the dictatorship fostered class cleavage and class particularism and made more difficult, almost impossible, the coexistence of the disparate elements of Spanish society."¹³ José Antonio was incapable of such an objective estimation of his father's record. He whitewashed the regime completely, and even tried to pretend that the disastrous financial policies of the dictatorship had helped stabilize the public treasury.¹⁴

After Primo de Rivera fell, certain conservative forces which still favored his idea of a non-party directorship for the nation joined with the strongest supporters of the Monarchy to form the Unión Monárquica Nacional. This new organization was more than merely monarchist; it held to a certain vague conception of a monarchical government that would formulate, above the party system, national policies for preserving present institutions and effecting needed reforms. As the pressure from Leftists and Republicans grew stronger, most of the vested interests threw their support behind the Unión Monárquica, whose superficial interest in a few reforms offered them a convenient disguise.¹⁵

José Antonio was asked to become Vice-Secretary General of the Unión Monárquica; he accepted the post on May 2, 1930, one month after the formation of the group. He declared that he looked upon this first venture into politics as an obligation, since all but two of the ministers who had served his late father were Unión members.¹⁶ José Antonio had no real concern with the Bourbon Monarchy, and Alfonso XIII's secretary had broken off personal relations with him after the fall of Don Miguel; but he was so accustomed to an aristocratic environment that he did not rebel against the unimaginative conservatism of the Unión Monárquica. His father had served the

traditional institutions, and so would he, despite his personal bitterness against the leading Rightists for their undignified haste in helping get rid of Don Miguel. He announced that his only political aim was to defend his father's record and to continue his work, regardless of circumstances.¹⁷

However, José Antonio's wide reading and energetic temperament were beginning to suggest to him that modern society and government could no longer be held together simply by the paternalistic defense of nineteenth-century institutions. Firmly believing that his father's ideas had been right, he began to realize that Don Miguel had pursued them in the wrong way. In February 1930, during a lecture at the Ateneo of Albacete on the juridical subject "What Is Just?" José Antonio had suggested that the just and fair could be ascertained only by considering the entire range of particular norms which might bear on a given problem.¹⁸ Taken in a political sense, this would seem to recommend a thoroughly open-minded, pragmatic approach. But no matter how tolerant José Antonio tried to be, he could hardly remain free of political prejudice when the very name Primo de Rivera was anathema to the liberals and the Left.*

Not until several months after the fall of the Monarchy did José Antonio resolve to enter politics as a candidate for office. Unable to bear the attacks on his father's record that abounded in the Constituent Cortes, he decided to run for election to that body; he sought the support of the Right as a candidate from Madrid in the by-election of October 1931. He announced that he wanted to go to the Cortes solely

to defend the sacred memory of my father. But I do not present myself for personal vanity nor because of a taste for politics, which every instant attracts me less. . . . God well knows my vocation is amid my books, and that to separate myself from them to throw myself momentarily in the sharp vertigo of politics causes me real pain. But it would be cowardly or senseless if I dozed quietly while in the Cortes, before the people, accusations continue to be hurled against the sacred memory of my father.¹⁹

* After José Antonio spoke in Albacete the leading Socialist jurist, Luis Jiménez de Asúa, canceled an engagement in the same hall, saying that he would not occupy the chair just used by a Primo de Rivera (*La Nación*, Feb. 26, 1930).

During the campaign part of the Rightist press maintained a glacial tone, not wishing to compromise itself with any more Primo de Riveras.²⁰ Despite this handicap José Antonio made a reasonable showing. His opponent, the revered liberal academician Bartolomé Mañuel de Cossío, beat him by a margin of two to one, but that was better than many people had thought a Primo de Rivera could do in the Socialist Madrid of 1931.*

After his electoral defeat, José Antonio returned to private life and devoted himself to building up a respectable private law practice. In his leisure hours he tried to sort out his political and social ideas, which were in a very confused state.²¹ At times he seemed very discouraged and sometimes spoke to friends about emigrating to America.

Meanwhile, he grew more and more antagonistic toward the old political and social regime in Spain, the regime his father had tried to save through mild reform but which had discarded his father and then collapsed before the liberal wave of 1930-31. Even when campaigning for the Unión Monárquica, José Antonio declared that one of his father's greatest achievements was overthrowing the rule of the political bosses who had dominated the Spanish provinces.²² He took a similar attitude toward the enormous social and economic abuses sanctioned by the Spanish Right. According to him, the only thing wrong with the late dictator's public development program and system of workers' representation was that, for lack of opportunity, they had not been carried far enough.

On the other hand, José Antonio could not tolerate the doctrinaire liberal theorists and intellectuals. This attitude, firmly rooted in family sentiment, was sometimes expressed in the bitterest terms. Defending his dead parent from their barbs, he had sneered, "Behold the ridiculous *intellectuals*, stuffed with pedantry. . . . How are they ever going to see—through their myopic eyeglasses—the solitary gleam of divine light?"²³

The incessant wrangling of the Republicans and the slowness of their approach to basic problems combined to complete José An-

* Ramiro Ledesma applauded the result, claiming that José Antonio's ballots reflected a "national" reaction against the bourgeois Constituent Cortes. (*La Conquista del Estado*, Oct. 10, 1931.)

tonio's alienation from political liberalism. He declared that intellectual positivism and political liberalism were in mortal crisis, and that the death of liberalism would be followed not by reaction but by revolution.²⁴ Europe had entered the social age, in which traditional conservatism and old-guard liberalism were equally bankrupt.

If the Right was incompetent and the Center inadequate, the Left could not attract a man of José Antonio's aristocratic background. He considered revolution almost inevitable, especially for so backward a country as Spain. But radical change could take many directions, and José Antonio, as an esthete and an aristocrat, had no intention of becoming either a Marxist or an Anarchist. Instead, he wanted to take up his father's burden of national reform, on the same basis of authoritarianism and revolution-from-above at which Primo de Rivera had clumsily aimed. The difference was José Antonio's belief that the process of national authoritarian reconstruction must be made more radical and thoroughgoing in order to succeed.

Patriotic sentiment was familiar to José Antonio, who had grown up within the Spanish military hierarchy. Though his English literary training sometimes made him skeptical about the capabilities of the Spanish people, he accepted nationalism as the emotional lever necessary to engage popular enthusiasm for a non-Marxist program of revitalization. Furthermore, he was repelled to see his father's efforts to create national solidarity being undone by the regional autonomy statutes of the Republic Cortes.

José Antonio was an enthusiastic student of Ortega y Gasset and other theorists who advocated an elite. This belief in the role of what later came to be called the "creative minority" was consonant with the simplistic political notions on which his father's dictatorship had rested. A small group of national-minded reformers had swept away the political chaos of 1923 by authoritarian means. The same solution, he thought, could be imposed on the problems of 1933, except that it had to be more potent and supported by a real political movement.

By the beginning of 1933 José Antonio's political ideas coalesced in a plan for leading an audacious minority which would inaugurate radical political and economic reforms by authoritarian means, employing the ideological framework of nationalism to enlist the moral

enthusiasm of the young. If successful, such a movement would not only save the political integrity of Spain but raise the country to a more prominent position in the new nationalist European order. For José Antonio, this was Spanish fascism.

Practical plans were slow to take shape in his mind. He hesitated for months trying to decide whether he should throw himself into the current of corporatist interest which had begun to run through sections of the Spanish Center and Right.²⁵ His basic problem was to decide what kind of men he could best work with and what sort of cooperation he could expect from them. José Antonio was not bent on founding a new group of his own; indeed, he lacked the resources for such a task. He was drawn toward both the liberal leader Manuel Azaña and the conservative José María Gil Robles, but he decided that neither could provide the radically new initiative he wanted. The issues of *La Conquista del Estado* had aroused a certain interest, and when one of his law clerks joined the JONS José Antonio sent him to talk with Ledesma; but from his clerk's report the Jonsista leader seemed too brash and undisciplined, too cold and materialistic.²⁶ José Antonio was searching for a political creed that would appeal to esthetic sentiment and the generous instincts—an idealistic, poetic style of nationalism.

Adolf Hitler's rise to power on January 30, 1933, quickened the interest of the Spanish Right in the nature and goals of fascistic nationalism. The first person to take advantage of the curiosity thus aroused had commercial rather than political ends in view. This individual was Manuel Delgado Barreto, a capable journalist then serving as editor of the Madrid daily *La Nación*, which had been founded in the twenties to serve as the mouthpiece for the Primo de Rivera regime and was still patronized by former leaders of the Unión Patriótica. Delgado decided to capitalize on the new wave of interest by establishing a weekly called *El Fascio*, which would be devoted to the discussion of things more or less fascist. He advertised this venture throughout the circles of the extreme Right and obtained enough advance subscriptions to assure the success of the paper.²⁷ To supply copy he enlisted the services of Ledesma and his colleagues, who

gladly accepted an opportunity to make free propaganda for themselves. Delgado also asked José Antonio Primo de Rivera and a few other nationalist writers, including Rafael Sánchez Mazas and Giménez Caballero, to contribute articles.

The first number of *El Fascio* was to appear on March 16, 1933. No one who wrote for it was greatly enthusiastic; most of the contributors realized that the paper was chiefly a middle-class business venture, and Ledesma even decried the mimicry of the title itself. José Antonio, partly against his better judgment, contributed a vague article about the nature of the nationalist state, which was supposed to establish some sort of permanent system that he never managed to explain clearly. The other articles ranged in style from the weird outpourings of Giménez Caballero to the rasping dialectic of Ramiro Ledesma. Some of the articles read almost like translations of the more abstract points of Nazi and Fascist doctrine.²⁸

El Fascio did not survive the day of its birth. With Germany just fallen into the hands of National Socialism and with fascist movements on the march in Austria and even in France, the liberals in power did not want to take chances in Spain. The entire first edition of *El Fascio* was confiscated, and further publication of the paper was banned by the government.²⁹

By this time it was well known that José Antonio was interested in fascism and entertained political ambitions in that direction. He now began to put out serious feelers of his own, seeking to unify some of the flutters of sympathy and interest aroused among the Right. When Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena, editor of the influential monarchist *ABC*, wrote a sympathetic criticism of *El Fascio*, José Antonio engaged in a friendly polemic with that newspaper. In his first letter he outlined an abstractly idealistic view of fascism:

Fascism is not a tactic—violence. It is an idea—unity.

Fascism was born to inspire a faith not of the Right (which at bottom aspires to conserve everything, even the unjust) or of the Left (which at bottom aspires to destroy everything, even the good), but a collective, integral, national faith. . . .

A fascist state is not created by the triumph of either the strongest or the most numerous party—which is not the right one for being the most numerous, though a stupid suffrage may say other-

wise—but by the triumph of a principle of order common to all, the constant national sentiment, of which the state is the organ. . . .

If anything truly deserves to be called a workers' state, it is the fascist state. Therefore, in the fascist state—and the workers will come to realize this, no matter what—the workers' syndicates are directly elevated to the dignity of organs of the state. . . .

One achieves true human dignity only when one serves. Only he is great who subjects himself to taking part in the achievement of a great task.³⁰

Luca de Tena's reply was apt, if rather eulogistic. After defending *El Fascio's* right to exist, he pointed out that José Antonio's schema was excessively idealistic and not supported by political reality:

Only place "socialist" where you say "fascist," and the partisans of Marxism could subscribe to a very similar concept. . . .

What is born in the heart cannot be imported. And I suspect that your fascism has sprung from your great heart rather than from your brilliant intelligence.³¹

During the spring of 1933 José Antonio corresponded with family friends, political associates of his father, representatives of the Spanish financial world, radical-minded monarchists, Jonsistas, and nationalistic ideologues of varying descriptions. Each group had its own ideas, often extremely vague, about the form a fascist movement should assume. Among the interested parties, José Antonio was taking the most definite stand, and he emerged as the most likely candidate to head an organized movement. García Valdecasas was too lukewarm and academic, Ledesma too unstable.

However, some of the businessmen who had expressed interest in helping finance a new nationalist movement showed little enthusiasm about backing another Primo de Rivera. They argued that a fascist leader must be a man of the people, like Mussolini, or a front-line soldier, like Hitler; if the workers were to be seduced, they must be seduced by one of their own kind.

A candidate whom Bilbao financiers had wanted to consider was the pragmatic, middle-of-the-road Socialist leader Indalecio Prieto. Having made his way up selling newspapers on the streets of Bilbao, Prieto fitted the working-class description they desired. As a practi-

cal politician, he had never lost contact with Vizcayan finance and industry, and within the Socialist Party he had tried to combat the irresponsible agitation of idealistic revolutionaries. In return, Bilbao capitalists had not been above sheltering him from police during the last days of the Monarchy. In 1932 they hoped he might become sufficiently disgusted with the wild talk and obstructionism of the Left wing of the Socialist Party to consider developing an alternative "national" socialism. But Prieto proved to be a dedicated working-class leader and a stout progressive. He refused to sponsor any variant of social fascism, although he later showed a certain personal interest in the national syndicalist movement.³²

Another possibility was Demetrio Carceller, the director of a petroleum company in the Canary Islands, who had risen from the proletariat to a significant position in the business world. Carceller was talented, possessed great drive and energy, and was not averse to entering politics. However, the total lack of concrete political preparation behind the ideas of the financiers eventually caused him to lose interest; besides, he was primarily interested in making money.³³

José Antonio was well aware of the suspicion with which he was viewed by business circles, and disclaimed any desire to make himself the *caudillo* of Spanish fascism. He told friends that he would like to help form a more authentic and popular kind of political movement, but not one purely of his own making. He declared that he had "too many intellectual preoccupations to be a leader of masses." "My intellectual vocation is one of the least suitable for the role of *caudillo*," he said.³⁴

On March 24, 1933, José Antonio authorized an old friend and distant relative, Sancho Dávila, to act as his representative in organizing those among the upper classes around Seville and Cádiz who were sympathetic to a nationalistic fascism. Dávila did not find the assignment easy. On April 2, José Antonio wrote to his cousin Julián Pemartín, who was helping Dávila:

It is true that the working out of this idea is something that will probably be reserved for a man of popular extraction. Being *caudillo* has something of the prophet about it, requiring a large dose of faith, health, enthusiasm, and anger that is not compatible with refinement. For my part, I would serve for anything better

than for a fascist *caudillo*. The attitude of doubt and sense of irony, which never leaves those of us who have some degree of intellectual curiosity, incapacitates us for shouting the robust, unflinching cries that are required of the leaders of masses. Hence, if in Jerez, as in Madrid, there are friends whose liver suffers from the thought that I should want to make myself *Caudillo del Fascio*, you may reassure them with respect to me.³⁶

José Antonio had found a solid collaborator in Julio Ruiz de Alda, a famous aviator who had accompanied Ramón Franco on the first nonstop transatlantic flight to Buenos Aires in 1926.³⁶ The Spanish Air Force had been a fertile breeding ground for radicalism in the twenties, but the Left had no appeal to Ruiz de Alda. A hearty, direct, military type, he had served as president of the National Aeronautic Federation, and had filled minor technical posts during the dictatorship. He was attracted by nationalist appeals and distrusted the established parties. After the founding of the Republic, he wrote to the Catalan politician Francesc Cambó, declaring that the republican system was entirely wrong and that a "totalitarian system" was needed. He made contact with Ledesma in 1931 and was briefly enrolled in Ledesma's group, but he never had anything to do with the later JONS.³⁷

Ruiz de Alda had helped set up the Spanish Company of Aerial Photogrammetric Works, which was to make an aerial survey of Spain in order to supply the data for a study of national water resources. This scheme fell through in 1932 when government aid was suspended, partly because of the radical Right-wing sentiments of Ruiz de Alda and his principal associates, the monarchist Ansaldo brothers. Embittered at this treatment, they established an "Aviation Armaments" group to lobby for nationalization of the virtually nonexistent aircraft industry.³⁸ By early 1933 various Right-wing figures had begun to sound out Ruiz de Alda on the subject of a national fascist party. As one of the obvious candidates for leadership in such a party, he was interviewed by Giménez Caballero for *El Fascio*.

In these circles Ruiz de Alda made the acquaintance of José Antonio. They considered themselves more sincere and idealistic than the opportunists and reactionaries around them, and discovered with mutual satisfaction that they could work together. They wanted to

found a fascist movement, but on their own terms, not on those of the Bank of Bilbao.*

Ruiz de Alda was level-headed and a good organizer. He was utterly inept as a public speaker, but his solid, methodical talents helped control José Antonio's sometimes unbridled rhetoric. The latter's grandiloquent concept of nationalism as *destino en lo universal* seemed too deterministic for Ruiz de Alda's simple activism. The aviator would have preferred to say "unity of mission," but his tongue was no match for José Antonio's.³⁹

It took the two several months to concert their efforts fully, and for some time they worked along separate but parallel lines. The first title José Antonio put forward for the proposed group was *Movimiento Español Sindical*, a vague and abstract term. Ruiz de Alda wanted to label propaganda leaflets "F.E.," which might stand for either *Fascismo Español* or *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx). Rightist financiers soon placed adequate financial resources at the command of the two men, and by the early summer of 1933 they had begun to circulate around the capital a considerable number of tracts advertising their idealistic brand of national syndicalism.⁴⁰

This new activity, combined with the increasing energy of the Jonsistas in Madrid, frightened the Dirección General de Seguridad, which was being pressed by the Socialists not to take chances. Between July 19 and July 22, 1933, hundreds of suspected fascists were arrested all over Spain.⁴¹ Ruiz de Alda and José Antonio prudently removed themselves from circulation for a few days, but Ledesma was detained, along with a heterogeneous collection of Jonsistas, Anarchists, monarchists, Albiñanistas, retired officers, and *ex-upetistas* from the dictatorship. Ninety of the more important suspects were held for a week or two, until the police finally satisfied themselves that there was no "fascist plot" to worry about.

* In the *El Fascio* interview, Ruiz de Alda said that he favored "a radical and violent movement, directed to the coming generation, with a deep social base integrating workers and intellectuals. A movement directed by resolute spirits ready for sacrifice, so that it would not result in a simple act of class defense or of cowardly capitalism. . . ." (Ruiz de Alda, *Obras completas*, pp. 205-9.)

José Antonio and Ruiz de Alda resumed their organizational planning in August. They hoped to persuade García Valdecasas to solve his Frente Español and join hands with them. Valdecasas was definitely interested, but hesitated to become actively involved. At the end of the month the three had a conference with Ledesma in Bilbao, at which they explored the possibility of uniting forces with the JONS under a new name. Ledesma later admitted that he was "perhaps too intransigent" on this occasion.* He proposed that José Antonio and Ruiz de Alda devote their efforts to expanding the JONS, which would then be directed by a new triumvirate headed by José Antonio. José Antonio, however, insisted on an entirely new party, one capable of attracting his late father's more conservative supporters as well as other elements which still disdained the JONS; he proposed that this party be called "Fascismo Español." Ledesma said that such second-hand titles and attitudes were out of the question and broke off the talks.⁴²

By late September José Antonio and Ruiz de Alda had completed their organizational work, and they decided to launch their movement at the next change in the national political weather.⁴³ They had not long to wait. In October a caretaker government was ordered to adjourn the Cortes, and elections were scheduled for mid-November. The temporary limitations on political propaganda imposed earlier in the year were lifted, and full freedom of speech was to be allowed during the electoral campaign.

Favored for his family connections and his proven opposition to liberal idealogy in public life, José Antonio was offered a place on the Rightist lists in Madrid and in Cádiz.† He rejected the offer from Madrid, since election there might have bound him to the cautious

* *¿Fascismo en España?*, p. 111. Within his own coterie Ledesma sneered at the "ingenuous" nature of José Antonio's propaganda, which he claimed was directed exclusively toward old elements connected with the dictatorship, the horde of newly retired Army officers, and the big provincial landowners. (See *¿Fascismo en España?*, p. 104.)

† Shortly before, José Antonio had launched a movement to force the prominent liberal moderate Ossorio y Gallardo from the presidency of the College of Lawyers in Madrid. Ossorio later resigned. (Angel Ossorio, *Mis memorias*, pp. 217-18.)

policy of the clerical CEDA.⁴⁴ The Cádiz candidacy, which had been arranged with the help of his old oligarchical family friends, came with fewer strings attached. He accepted this proposal, since it offered a fairly certain seat in the Cortes and a platform for his own propaganda. He decided to announce his political candidacy and the organization of the new movement at the same time.

liberal slavery, went astray because it resulted, first, in the materialist interpretation of life and history; second, in a sense of reprisal; and third, in the proclamation of the dogma of class struggle.

The *Patria* is a total unity, in which all individuals and classes are integrated; the *Patria* cannot be in the hands of the strongest class or of the best organized party. The *Patria* is a transcendent synthesis, an indivisible synthesis, with its own goals to fulfill; and we want this movement of today, and the state which it creates, to be an efficient, authoritarian instrument at the service of an indisputable unity, of that permanent unity, of that irrevocable unity that is the *Patria*.

And we already have the principle for our future acts and our present conduct, for we would be just another party if we came to announce a program of concrete solutions. Such programs have the advantage of never being fulfilled. On the other hand, when one has a permanent sense of life and history, that very sense gives solutions beyond the concrete, just as love may tell us when we ought to scold and when we ought to embrace, without true love having set up a minimum program of embraces and reproaches.

Here is what is required by our total sense of the *Patria* and the state which is to serve it:

That all the people of Spain, however diverse they may be, feel in harmony with an irrevocable unity of destiny.

That the political parties disappear. No one was ever born a member of a political party; on the other hand, we are all born members of a family; we are all neighbors in a municipality; we all labor in the exercise of a profession. . . .

We want less liberal word-mongering and more respect for the deeper liberty of man. For one only respects the liberty of man when he is esteemed, as we esteem him, the bearer of eternal values; when he is esteemed as the corporal substance of a soul capable of being damned and of being saved. Only when man is considered thus can it truly be said that his liberty is respected, and more especially if that liberty is joined, as we aspire to join it, to a system of authority, of hierarchy, and of order.

Finally, we desire that if on some occasion this must be achieved by violence, there be no shrinking from violence. Because who has said—while speaking of “everything save violence”—that the supreme value in the hierarchy of values is amiability? Who has said that when our sentiments are insulted we are obliged to be accommodating instead of reacting like men? It is very correct

IV

THE FOUNDING OF THE FALANGE

José Antonio's new national syndicalist movement was launched at a political meeting held at the Teatro Comedia of Madrid on Sunday afternoon, October 29, 1933. Free use of the theater had been offered by its owner, a friend of the Primo de Rivera family. National radio coverage had been arranged, and three speakers, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Julio Ruiz de Alda, and Alfonso García Valdecasas, addressed the meeting.* About two thousand people were present, most of them sympathetic Rightists; Ramiro Ledesma and a group of Jonistas took seats near the front.¹

The highlight of the day, without question, was José Antonio's address. Its heavily rhetorical and tensely poetic style set the tone for the Falange's early appeals; and as the first official statement of the party's goals, it is worth quoting at length:

Finally, the liberal state came to offer us economic slavery, saying to the workers, with tragic sarcasm: “You are free to work as you wish; no one can compel you to accept specified conditions. Since we are the rich, we offer you the conditions that please us; as free citizens, you are not obliged to accept them if you do not want to; but as poor citizens, if you do not accept them you will die of hunger, surrounded of course by the utmost liberal dignity.” . . .

Therefore socialism had to appear, and its coming was just (for we do not deny any evident truth). The workers had to defend themselves against a system that only promised them right and did not strive to give them a just life.

However, socialism, which was a legitimate reaction against

* García Valdecasas later claimed that he was only asked to take part in a meeting of “Spanish affirmation” and did not know that José Antonio and Ruiz de Alda intended to proceed immediately to the foundation of a political movement. (Conversation in Madrid, Nov. 18, 1958.)

indeed that dialectic is the first instrument of communication. But no other dialectic is admissible save the dialectic of fists and pistols when justice or the *Patria* is offended.

But our movement would not be understood at all if it were believed to be only a manner of thinking. It is not a manner of thinking; it is a manner of being. We ought not merely to propose to ourselves a formal construction, a political architecture. Before life in its entirety, in each one of our acts, we must adopt a complete, profound, and human attitude. This attitude is the spirit of sacrifice and service, the ascetic and military sense of life. Henceforth let no one think that we recruit men in order to offer rewards; let no one imagine that we join together in the defense of privileges. I should like to have this microphone before me carry my voice into every last working-class home to say: Yes, we wear a tie; yes, you may say of us that we are *señoritos*. But we urge a spirit of struggle for things that cannot concern us as *señoritos*; we come to fight so that hard and just sacrifices may be imposed on many of our own class, and we come to struggle for a totalitarian state that can reach the humble as well as the powerful with its benefits. We are thus, for so always in our history have been the *señoritos* of Spain. In this manner they have achieved the true status of *señores*, because in distant lands, and in our very *Patria*, they have learned to suffer death and to carry out hard missions precisely for reasons in which, as *señoritos*, they had no interest at all.

I believe the banner is raised. Now we are going to defend it gaily, poetically. There are some who think that in order to unite men's wills against the march of the revolution it is proper to offer superficially gratifying solutions; they think it is necessary to hide everything in their propaganda which could awaken an emotion or signify energetic or extreme action. What equivocation! The peoples have never been moved by anyone save the poets, and woe to him who, before the poetry which destroys, does not know how to raise the poetry which promises!

In a poetic movement we shall raise this fervent feeling for Spain; we shall sacrifice ourselves; we shall renounce ourselves, and the triumph will be ours, a triumph—why need I say it?—that we are not going to win in the next elections. In those elections vote for whoever seems to you least undesirable. But our Spain will not emerge from [the Cortes], nor is our goal there. The atmosphere there is tired and murky, like a tavern at the end of a night of dissipation. That is not our place. Yes, I know that I am a candidate; but I am one without faith and without respect.

I say this now, when it can mean that I lose votes. That matters not at all. We are not going to argue with habitués over the disorder remains of a dirty banquet. Our place is outside, though we may occasionally have to pass a few transient minutes within. Our place is in the fresh air, under the cloudless heavens, weapons in our hands, with the stars above us. Let the others go on with their merrymaking. We outside, in tense, fervent, and certain vigilance, already feel the dawn breaking in the joy of our hearts."

Although it was clear that the new movement would attract wider support than the JONS, it was not taken seriously by the political press. *El Sol*, the nation's leading liberal newspaper, aptly dismissed it as "A Poetic Movement," one largely concerned with style and outward forms: "We reject it in the first place for wanting to be fascist . . . and in the second, for not truly being it, for not being a deep and authentic fascism."³ Most of the Right concurred, although *Acción Española*, the clerical-corporatist-monarchist intellectual review, received the movement very favorably. An article by the Traditionalist leader Victor Pradera pointed out its similarities to Carlist corporatist antiparlamentarianism.⁴ Only the clerical reactionaries saw possibilities in the organization.

The Martínez Barrio government took an almost benevolent attitude toward the new movement. Police protection was provided for the Teatro Comedia meeting, which passed entirely without incident.* José María Carretero, the leading pundit of the intransigent Right, wrote: "It seems a bit suspicious that the first public fascist meeting should end in an atmosphere of peaceful normality. On leaving the theater and stepping out into the clear, quiet street, I had the feeling of having attended a lovely literary tea at the Ateneo."⁵

The movement did not receive a name until November 2, when the official organizational meeting took place. Either Ruiz de Alda or Sánchez Mazas suggested the ultimate choice, "Falange Española," a term which had been in the air for some time.⁶

The Falange was the fifth party of the radical Right to be formed

* Martínez Barrio was one of the leading Masons in Spain. This caused Giménez Caballero (who had been introduced to José Antonio through Ruiz de Alda) to declare that Masonry favored the foundation of the Falange and hoped to control it through intrigue. (Ramiro Ledesma, *¿Fascismo en España?*, p. 125.)

in Spain. Among the others, the *Comunión Tradicionalista* (the Carlists) maintained its customary isolation, and neither the JONS nor the *Albññistas* counted for anything.* The leaders of the monarchist *Renovación Española* had no use for fascism, but because of the great dispersion of political forces in Spain they considered it more prudent to infiltrate the Falange from within than to ignore it. Hence a considerable number of monarchist zealots took up membership in the Falange during the winter and spring of 1934. They were tacitly led by Juan Antonio Ansaldo and his brother, both leading activists in *Renovación Española*, professional aviators, and personal friends of Julio Ruiz de Alda.⁷

A fairly large number of people joined the movement during its first two or three months. Whereas the JONS claimed only a few hundred adult members in all Spain, the Falange soon signed up several thousand. This initial success was in large part due to the aura of conservative *primorriverismo* and paternal nationalism associated with José Antonio's name; a disproportionately large number of those who were first attracted to the party appeared to be disgruntled conservatives, retired Army men, and *ex-upetistas*. This conservative element was balanced only by a nucleus of students who were fascinated with José Antonio's rhetoric. An aura of vagueness surrounded the political program of the Falange; it was commonly supposed to be Spanish fascism, but each member had his own notion of what that meant.

At this stage the party leaders were hardly more enlightened. José Antonio had formulated no concrete goals, no day-by-day party program, and no general outline of party tactics; he continued to talk of a "poetic movement." Ruiz de Alda was no help with regard to ideology, and it proved impossible to obtain the cooperation of García Valdecasas. Within a fortnight after the organizational meeting Valdecasas married a marquesa and went off on a long honeymoon; he never returned to the party. Fearing that the movement would either fall apart or degenerate into street-gang violence, he had decided to have no part of it.⁸

* Albiñana was elected to the Cortes in 1933 on the Rightist list from Burgos, but that was scant solace; his following, never large, had virtually disappeared. Much of the *pistolero* element went over to the Falange.

During the first months of the Falange José Antonio spent most of his time trying to spell out the theoretical premises of his political attitudes, although even among party members there were few who cared to listen to him. According to his philosophy, the individual achieved true significance only when occupied in some noble collective task: "Life is not worth the effort if it is not to be burnt up in the service of a great enterprise."⁹ Great enterprises were formed only by the free and enthusiastic union of individuals. Individuals bound together by historical tradition, material cooperation, and mutual destiny formed a nation.

A nation could guarantee the freedom of individuals because law and justice could arise only from its historical development and could be enforced only by its superior moral authority.¹⁰ Going one step further, the nation could fulfill its function and maintain the integrity of its institutions only by offering individual citizens a common destiny, to be achieved through a transcendent, national enterprise. That is, the nation was really possible only as Empire. When the nation lost its sense of a transcendent vocation and common destiny, when classes and regions pursued goals of their own, the ethical fabric of national life went to pieces. Social strife, economic misery, and political discord would end only when Spaniards once more forged a common destiny for themselves in the world.

The economic correlative of a common destiny was some form of national coordination—a nationwide syndical system, for example—which would guarantee economic justice and increase material production. At first, José Antonio's ideas on economic reconstruction went little beyond this; in 1933-34 he was still preoccupied with drawing up the outlines of his nationalist vision.

José Antonio's "destiny in the universal," which he had derived from a concept of Ortega's, had few practical implications.¹¹ He never made it clear whether the phrase implied a restoration of Spanish cultural dominance or a resuscitation of the Spanish Empire. Although dreams of empire were patently absurd considering Spain's meager resources, José Antonio was not above dreaming. He was apparently convinced that Europe was entering an area of conflict that would bring great territorial realignments on the Continent and in North Africa. Personally, José Antonio was a repressed Anglo-

phile and even admired Kipling.* But as an intellectual, he had absorbed all the antiliberal propaganda of his generation, and, like Ledesma, he believed that the end of the Western liberal order was at hand. If Spain could rejuvenate herself in time to follow the dynamic new nationalist trend, she might greatly increase her territorial holdings and international influence. In private conversations José Antonio later came to talk confidently of absorbing Portugal.¹²

José Antonio wanted Spain to make a great historical leap, vaulting feudal backwardness and liberal capitalism at the same time. Apparently he never imagined that it might be the possibilities and not the impracticalities of liberalism that were exciting disturbance in Spain, which had never known an honest system of liberal representation. Rather than trying to help the nation resolve its differences, José Antonio and his colleagues proposed to jam the mechanism of parliamentary government and replace it with an abstract system that few people supported and even fewer understood. He thought that an elite or "creative minority" could lead the nation to greatness. He forgot that an elite can control a resistant majority only by the ruthless and terroristic exercise of power.

José Antonio easily won a seat in the Cortes in the elections of 1933, placing second on the Rightist list at Cádiz.¹³ Alienated by the corruption of Andalusian politics, he did not play an active role in the new Cortes.† Nevertheless, he took great care to make a good impression there, except when it came to the defense of his father's reputation or record, a matter on which he remained intransigent. He prepared his infrequent speeches carefully, and was very pleased when he could impress such leading orators of the Left as Prieto and

* José Antonio's favorite poem was "If," which he used to recite in English.

† Cádiz was managed for the conservatives by Ramón Carranza, Marqués de la Pesadilla (literally, Marquis of the Nightmare), one of the last of the old-style political bosses (*caciques*). Since the Anarcho-Syndicalist CNT had considered boycotting the elections, Carranza simply increased their incentive with a personal bribe. The voting power of the Left was crippled and the conservative list won easily. (Cánovas, *Apuntes*; Foltz, pp. 68-69; conversation with Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez, one of the leading political manipulators of the radical Right during the Republic, in Lisbon, May 1, 1959.)

José Antonio later began a comic political novel in English (his second language), entitled "The Anarcho-Carranzists." (Foltz, p. 69; Jacinto Miquelarena in *Dolor y memoria*, pp. 239-41.)

Azaña. His eloquence and personal charm won a number of friends for him in the national parliament. The clerical reactionary Ramiro de Maeztu remarked that in elegance of figure and gesture, the leader of the Falange reminded him more of the young Ramsay MacDonald than of Mussolini or Hitler. José Antonio's antagonistic comrade Juan Antonio Ansaldó used to tell him that he looked the perfect image of a proper president for the International Anti-Fascist League.¹⁴

At the time the Falange was founded, the originators of national syndicalism in Spain, the JONS, were just beginning to prosper. According to Ramiro Ledesma, "The year 1933 was the real year of the JONS."¹⁵ An effort to form a student syndicate at the University of Madrid in the spring of that year was immensely successful; four hundred students joined immediately.¹⁶ A syndicate of taxi drivers was also set up, and one hundred young activists were organized into squads of four to do battle in the streets.¹⁷ Furthermore, a few elements of the moneyed Right came forward once more to provide a meager subsidy for Ledesma's radical agitation, and he was given enough money to begin publishing a new monthly review of JONS propaganda.* By the summer of 1933 national syndicalist units were operating in eight cities of Spain. None of the groups had more than a few dozen members, but two of them (Valencia and Zaragoza) began to publish weekly reviews.¹⁸ Although he still had fewer than five hundred followers (apart from University students), Ledesma saw the future brighten for the first time.

The party's prospects were soon swept away, however, by the first wave of interest in the Falange, with its superior financial resources and propaganda facilities. As Ledesma later admitted, "The entry of new militants and the upward course of the JONS slackened most noticeably from the very beginning of FE."¹⁹

Both parties suffered from the victory of the moderate Right in

* Small sums were evidently paid by the ex-smuggler Juan March, the richest man in Spain; by Antonio Goicoechea, head of the *Renovación Española*; by José Félix de Lequerica, the chief political agent of the Bilbao industrialists; and by the Bank of Vizcaya, which was partly controlled by the Jesuits. (Foltz, p. 64.)

the elections of 1933. It became apparent that if Spanish conservatives could achieve their aims by parliamentary means, they would never support the authoritarian parties. After the fall of Azaña, both Ledesma and José Antonio had hoped to woo embittered liberals, but few of them had lost their faith. The largest group of all, the workers, grew more intransigent by the day. With so little potential support, two competing national syndicalist movements in Spain could hardly survive.

During the winter of 1933-34, there was considerable pressure on Ledesma to agree to a fusion of the JONS and the Falange.* *Jonsismo's* main prop, its student following, had begun to fall away, seduced by José Antonio's rhetoric and the more lavish propaganda of the Falange. As incidents attending the sale of party papers in Madrid mounted, all available attention became focused on the Falange, and the prospects of the JONS were "paralyzed."²⁰ The sources of financial support that had temporarily been opened to the JONS closed once more; the business world was prepared to sustain only one fascistic movement, and the Falange was the larger and safer party. At the same time, the leaders of the Falange were having difficulty maintaining discipline, and José Antonio thought that fusion with the JONS would make it easier to control the amorphous reactionaries in the Falange. For his part, Ledesma finally decided that

the enormous defects of the FE were, perhaps, of a transitory character, and could be overcome. As for that alluvial mass (the Falange), it lacked vigor and a unified historical consciousness, so that it should not have been difficult to displace it from the areas of control. On the other hand, the JONS, utilizing the resonant platform of the FE, could popularize its ideas with relative ease.²¹

Ledesma thought that Ruiz de Alda's military mentality and totalitarian aspirations were very favorable to *Jonsismo*, and would tilt the balance of internal power.

* Ledesma threw all the blame for the separation of the two groups on José Antonio's ideological confusion and his political compromises with reactionaries. (Letter of Nov. 14, 1933, to Francisco Bravo, the JONS leader in Salamanca, in Bravo, *José Antonio*, pp. 63-64.) Meanwhile, Ernesto Giménez Caballero had decided to eulogize José Antonio as the new Caesar in his next book.

On February 11, 1934, the National Council of the JONS, representing the nine local Jonsista groups then in existence, met in Madrid to consider a merger with the Falange.²² A majority of the fifteen-member Council voted to consider terms of unification, while condemning certain "grave errors" in the Falange which they proposed to rectify. Since José Antonio and Ruiz de Alda were also anxious for union, there was very little difficulty in arriving at terms. It was agreed that the new movement would henceforth be called Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista, or, in moments of fatigue, F.E. de las J.O.N.S. All the Jonsista slogans and emblems (the yoked arrows, the red and black flag) were officially adopted by the new organization.* The unified movement would be directed by a triumvirate composed of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, and Julio Ruiz de Alda. José Antonio insisted that Ledesma take membership card No. 1 in the Falange, because of his seniority. José Antonio became No. 2, Redondo No. 3, Ruiz de Alda No. 4, and so on. Each local unit of the Falange was to be called a *Jons*.²³

In a general sense, the two groups had been very similar, and the union worked well, although the monarchists and conservatives who had signed up to work for "Spanish fascism" were not enthusiastic about the revolutionary dialectic of the JONS. The only member to desert Ledesma's small following was Santiago Montero Díaz, a history teacher and ex-leader of Communist youth who headed the JONS group at the University of Santiago de Compostela. In announcing his resignation in a letter to Ledesma, he declared that national syndicalism could thrive only on the basis of "revolutionary rivalry" with Marxism. The "Rightist limitations" of the Falange would be mortal, he said. "Despite all the merely verbal declarations to the contrary, the membership, content, and political tactics of the Falange are in open opposition to the national revolution."²⁴

* All the major Falange slogans, such as "España, Una, Grande y Libre," "Por la Patria, el Pan y la Justicia," and "¡Arriba!" were coined by Ramiro Ledesma in *La Conquista del Estado*. (See Francisco Bravo Martínez, *Historia de Falange Española de las J.O.N.S.*, p. 23.) The phrase "¡Arriba España!" is said to have been coined later by the rhetorician Sánchez Mazas. (Ximénez de Sandoval, p. 222.)

Although the personality differences between Ledesma, the intellectual proletarian, and José Antonio, the aristocratic esthete, were never overcome, the Jonsistas strengthened the Falange a great deal.* Ledesma was correct in believing that the revolutionary rhetoric of the JONS would eventually prevail over the monarchist-*upetista* sentiment in the Falange. In the first month after the merger Falange propaganda began to adopt a tone and content characteristic of Ledesma and Redondo; this helped fill the gap between the verbal incompetence of Ruiz de Alda and the fine spiritual tension of José Antonio's talk. Falange ideology henceforth took its esthetic tone from José Antonio and much of its practical content from Ramiro Ledesma.

Forced to compete with Ledesma for internal leadership, José Antonio began to place increasing emphasis on revolutionary aims. He was pushed still further in this direction by the hesitations of the older conservative supporters of the Falange. Although their money was vital, José Antonio began to realize in 1934 that he would have to work himself free of them; if he did not, they would eventually cripple his party and abandon him, just as they had his father. But the break did not occur immediately, for the party was just entering a year of internal crisis.

* Numerically, however, they added little. Whereas the Falange membership was about two thousand, the Jonsistas, not counting their students, numbered little more than three hundred in all Spain. (*¿Fascismo en España?*, p. 178 n.)

V

POETRY AND TERRORISM

WHEN JOSÉ ANTONIO SPOKE in the Comedia of a "poetic movement," he was not merely coining a phrase; he was determined to give the Falange a literary and esthetic appeal. After the establishment of *FE*, the movement's first official weekly, in December 1933, he seemed to worry more about finding the proper tone for the party organ than about urgent practical problems. In the turbulent years that followed, this esthetic preoccupation never left him.*

His intimate associates were personal friends and second-rate writers rather than dedicated national syndicalists. One of the activists ridiculed them as José Antonio's "court of poets and *littérateurs*."¹ But he was deaf to criticism, and in 1934 and 1935 his circle at the Ballena Alegre ("Happy Whale"), a Madrid literary cafe, continued to expand. One of his chief cronies was Rafael Sánchez Mazas, a journalist and sometime poet from Bilbao who became "the provider of rhetoric for the Falange."² Other young poets in the circle were José María Alfaro, Agustín de Foxá, Samuel Ros, and Dionisio Riu-drujo.

José Antonio's interest in cultivating an esthetic approach to politics was not altogether unnatural. All the national syndicalist ideologues had paid homage to Unamuno, Ortega, Angel Ganivet, and Pío Baroja, whom they deemed their "precursors" among the Generation of Ninety-Eight.† Ledesma had once hoped to attract men of

* The establishment of *FE* is described in Arrarás, I, 681-85. Even in the violent weeks preceding the outbreak of the Civil War, when the party had been outlawed and its leadership imprisoned, José Antonio warned the party members who were publishing the clandestine Falange sheet *No Importa* that they would have to suspend publication if they could not improve its format. (Bravo, *José Antonio*, pp. 194-201.)

† Pío Baroja, Spain's foremost living novelist, had written in his *César o nada*: "More than a democratic, federalist organization we need iron, military