

because should anything happen to José Antonio, Falange activists would take revenge on the prime minister.³⁴

Within a fortnight the situation got completely out of hand. SEU activists decided to strike an audacious blow against the Left on their own initiative. On March 11 they sent a band of gunmen to assassinate the eminent Socialist Professor of Law, Jiménez de Asúa. They missed their man but killed his bodyguard.³⁵

With the tide of violence rising daily, the weak liberal government finally tried to control the situation by suppressing the Falange, which it considered one of the principal sources of disorder. Early on the morning of March 14, 1936, the Falange Española de las J. O. N. S. was declared outlawed. All members of the Junta Política who could be located in Madrid were arrested and jailed in the Cárcel Modelo.³⁶ Only one or two of them managed to escape.

IX

THE FALANGE INTO THE HOLOCAUST

AFTER THE POPULAR FRONT victory, many Army officers began to consider resorting to force, but it was extremely difficult for them to work together. Most men in the officer corps were of moderately liberal, petit-bourgeois background, and they were not inspired by fascistic ideology or by reactionary nostalgia for the monarchy. The UME was only a small minority, and most of the more important generals distrusted each other. During March and April various ineffective plots were fomented, but they were confined to local garrisons, and had no broad support. In April two different groups were uncovered in Madrid and several leading officers arrested.

The strongest nucleus of conspiracy developed in the Pamplona garrison. The commander there was General Emilio Mola, the last national police chief for the Monarchy and more recently the military commander of Morocco. Toward the end of April Mola made contact with the UME cell among his forces. The cell placed itself under his orders and began to feel out other garrisons in the north and east. The need for establishing some sort of central conspiratorial network became increasingly plain in May, for although the UME was willing to work through and under Mola, the honorary leader of all the military conspirators was General Sanjurjo, the nominal chief of the abortive 1932 revolt. On May 30, Sanjurjo, living ineffectually in Portuguese exile, gave his blessing to Mola's *de facto* position as leader of the plot.

So far only junior officers had expressed much interest in the conspiracy. During June Mola devoted his efforts to consolidating his support and drawing in more generals. To attract commanding officers was difficult, for most of them were generally satisfied with their station and not anxious to rebel against the government. The majority of the officer corps remained undecided, and reacted only gradually

to the rampant civil disorder. Mola originally scheduled the Army rebellion for June 29, but it had to be postponed for lack of support.

The conspirators were determined to establish an all-military dictatorship that would force the Republic into a more conservative mold. They did not intend to destroy the republican form of government, nor even necessarily to establish a corporative chamber. Furthermore, they were determined to have nothing to do with politicians and took none of them into their confidence.¹

Faced with so much indecisiveness in the military, Mola began to worry about means of beating down the workers in Madrid. In this situation civilian auxiliaries began to seem valuable. The only non-Leftist militia groups available were those of the Falange and the *Comunión Tradicionalista*. Negotiations with José Antonio were opened on May 29, and Manuel Fal Conde, the Carlist leader, was approached early in June. In general things went so badly for Mola that on July 1 he almost resigned. However, other officers soon offered their support and the Falange definitely decided to join the conspiracy.

There was no political unity behind the revolt. The attitude of the very prudent and extremely influential General Franco remained in doubt until late in the day, while the Carlists stayed outside the conspiracy until July 12. Despite the latter's adherence, most of the leading conspirators, such as Mola, Goded, Cabanellas, and Queipo de Llano, entertained a decided antipathy to the monarchical form of government. Even Franco agreed that the Moroccan troops would act only under the flag of the Republic.² This prolonged confusion became apparent when the rebellion began.

The events of February and March 1936 brought about the death of José Antonio's short-lived party, but they marked the beginning of a new process, bathed in blood and steeped in frustration, which was to make an enlarged, reorganized Falange into Spain's *partido del Estado*.

After March 14 the Falange's position became impossible. With José Antonio and the principal leaders imprisoned, the party organization disrupted, and the membership driven underground, all political prospects for the movement vanished. A clear choice remained:

either give up the struggle entirely or attempt a direct *coup*, singly or in collaboration, against the Republican regime. Obviously, only the latter alternative seemed reasonable. After March 14 it became almost inevitable that the Falange, either alone or with allies, would make some sort of assault on the government.

The Cárcel Modelo, Madrid's new "model prison" in which José Antonio and the national leadership were incarcerated, was indeed an exemplary institution. The directors, who were enlightened, progressive, and humane, granted every sort of privilege to the inmates, including ample opportunities for receiving visitors. It was not difficult for the Falangists to reconstitute their chain of command by means of an elaborate system of messengers who connected José Antonio with the clandestine executive network still at liberty. A party center was set up in Madrid and administered jointly by the permanent organizational secretary, Mariano García, and whichever national leader happened to be at liberty during any given period. Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, the Secretary-General, was sometimes able to serve in this capacity, but José Antonio finally had to delegate much of his authority to his younger brother Fernando. Fernando Primo de Rivera proved to be an able executor, even though he had not thrown in his lot with the party until the political crisis that followed the elections.

Since the Falange could not function as a legal party, José Antonio ordered that the party sections be reorganized into secret cells of three in order to make the Falange a more effective weapon for subversion.³ José Antonio had never entirely given up the notion that a small, determined, and efficient band of revolutionists might be able to seize power by a bold stroke, if worst came to worst. His first directives from prison ordered local leaders to prepare their groups for a *coup d'état* by the Falange's own forces, unhampered by alliance with anyone. During the next two months several schemes to provoke a *coup* were considered, but none of them offered any prospect of success.⁴

These furtive maneuvers were played out against a background of violence. When mild weather arrived street fighting opened up with an intensity not seen in Spain since the apogee of political terrorism at Barcelona in 1921. The extremists had thrown their last

scruples to the winds. Blacklists of the Falange's principal enemies were prepared by the activist squads.⁵ When a municipal judge sentenced a Falange youth for his role in the Asúa *atentat*, party *pistoleros* caught the judge alone within forty-eight hours and cut him down with a spray of bullets.⁶ In one "reprisal," Falange terrorists kidnaped the president of the Socialist Casa del Pueblo in the town of Carrión de los Condes; the unlucky Leftist leader was hanged in an isolated spot together with a subordinate. Some forty Falangists, several conservatives, and well over fifty liberals or Leftists were killed within a period of ninety days.⁷ *Mundo Obrero*, the Communist organ, demanded the "integral elimination" of the Falange and printed large pictures of "the bloodstained *señorito*, José Antonio Primo de Rivera."⁸

From prison, Ruiz de Alda published an article called "The Justification of Violence" in *No Importa*, a clandestine Falange paper that appeared three times during May and June. Ruiz declared that Spain was already living in a state of civil war, that it was too late to step back now, and that no holds should be barred. He received hundreds of telegrams of congratulation addressed to the Modelo by enthusiastic Rightists thirsting for vengeance on the Left.⁹

Spanish wealth was happy to finance Falange terrorism and even incited the militia to do a more effective job.* The Right had shut the Falange out of the elections only to ask for militia protection as the hour of balloting had drawn near. The Republic had its Assault Guards; the Falangists were still slated to be the shock troops of the reaction. The number of activists steadily increased as JAP members joined the SEU and passed automatically into the Falange militia. The JAP leader, Ramón Serrano Suñer, now collaborated with José Antonio and permitted some of his green-shirted youth to switch their affiliation. Gil Robles publicly distinguished between "good" and "bad" terrorists:

* Constanza de la Mora, a younger member of an influential monarchist-conservative clan, wrote: "My father and his friends gave money [to Falange activists] and stood back to watch the results. (In *Place of Splendor: The Autobiography of a Spanish Woman*, p. 215.)

José Antonio doubted that the new contributions to the Falange were being properly used for constructive purposes. (Letter to Onésimo Redondo, June 17, 1936, in *Epistolario*, pp. 502-3.)

Among these there are two classes of persons: those who take the path of violence honestly, believing that in this manner national problems can be resolved, and those who take it because their party cannot now apportion posts and prebends. The first, absolutely respectable, can constitute magnificent auxiliaries on the day when, disenchanted, they return to the common fold.¹⁰

By this Gil Robles meant that the conservatives would feel more comfortable if the violence were to end, but that as long as it should continue they would endorse the anti-Leftist *pistoleros* and condemn the gunmen opposing them.

By this time José Antonio had lost hope of checking the spread of violence. On April 16 one of his cousins was killed when gunmen opened fire on Falangists escorting the bier of a Civil Guard slain in Madrid by Leftists.¹¹ Such events convinced him it was better to let the revolution run on freely toward its inevitable climax. He publicly approved the Carrón de los Condes incident in the clandestine *No Importa*. Nevertheless, he vetoed an elaborate scheme for the assassination of Largo Caballero which was referred to him for consideration; this, apparently, was too provocative for him.

On May 6 and May 14 the new prime minister, Casares Quiroga, declared in the Cortes that the illegal Falange was the government's main enemy. He explained that people not officially connected with the party were also being arrested because the police now had Falange files listing the arch-reactionaries who were secretly aiding the movement.¹²

By the first of June, the Falange had suffered approximately its seventieth loss by death in street warfare since the founding of the party.¹³ The growth of violence had become so rapid and confused that it was difficult to follow.¹⁴ Some areas were on the brink of complete social chaos. The Anarchists and Left Socialists demanded their economic revolution immediately. Largo Caballero expected to become the heir of the Popular Front and did not want to be put off any longer. Innumerable strikes were under way simultaneously, and the newspapers kept box scores on those that sustained themselves longest. Many observers feared that Spain was reaching its breaking point.

Several plans to accomplish José Antonio's escape from prison

were considered, but none of them came to fruition.¹⁵ In legal stragem to secure his freedom, his name was entered on the conservative list in the special run-off election for Cuenca province.¹⁶ This move was arranged by José Antonio's Rightist friends, notably his intimate friend Ramón Serrano Súñer, the head of the JAP, and the monarchist Goicoechea.¹⁷

The Cuenca list was made up largely of local conservative leaders. However, one luminary besides José Antonio appeared on it—General Francisco Franco. On the night after the February elections, Franco had hesitated to heed Gil Robles' plea for military intervention; a few days later the victorious Left relieved him of his post as Chief of Staff and relegated him to the very minor position of military commander of Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Franco had doubted both the willingness and the capacity of the military to carry out an effective *coup*, and he had refused to associate himself closely with any of the multitudinous garrison conspiracies being developed by the UME and by other generals. He now wanted to fortify himself in a civilian political post and await developments.

However, José Antonio refused to let his name appear on a list that contained both Franco and other Rightists. He did not want to be identified with the generals' clique. Gil Robles, on the other hand, favored the candidacy of both men, thinking that it might promote a healthy balance for the perilous times ahead. José Antonio sent his brother Miguel to Gil Robles' office, where Miguel threatened that unless Franco would withdraw, he would publish a circular on behalf of the Falange condemning him.¹⁸ Furthermore, pressure from the Left against Franco's name was overwhelming. Before this, the Right had to back down. Serrano Súñer, Franco's brother-in-law, flew to Tenerife to advise the General to withdraw his candidacy.¹⁹ Faced with such varied opposition, Franco gave way and retired from the contest.

The Minister of Justice urged local authorities to conduct the election strictly as a run-off, with no new names allowed, but José Antonio remained on the conservative list.²⁰ His candidacy evidently did quite well when the voting occurred, although no reliable statistics are available. The Left, however, was determined not to permit him an unobstructed contest. In several districts his vote was

not counted on the grounds that his name had not been entered in the first election. José Antonio's total thus placed him at the bottom of the Rightist list instead of near the top, where it probably would have put him if all his votes had been counted.²¹ Serrano Súñer denounced this in the Cortes and presented a complicated set of district totals to show that José Antonio deserved a seat, but to no avail.²²

During May the political preferences of the conservative public in Madrid were indicated in a private poll of its readers taken by the clerical newspaper *Ya*. Queried regarding their choice for the presidency of the Republic, they gave José Antonio a slight margin over their other favorites, Calvo Sotelo, Gil Robles, and General Sanjurjo.²³ The swing toward "fascism" by the Spanish Right was definitely beginning. In some of the provinces, young ladies of the upper classes ostentatiously wore Falange emblems on their dresses.²⁴

Meanwhile, the government drew its coils tighter around the Falange leader. During April and May José Antonio was tried on a series of four charges, three of them legal excuses to prolong his detention. Two of these brought convictions that condemned him to some four months of imprisonment.²⁵ The fourth, tried on May 28, charged him with illicit possession of arms, since a full six weeks after his arrest his home had been searched and two loaded pistols found. José Antonio made an angry, impassioned defense, declaring that the arms had been planted and that the whole proceeding was a frame-up (as it clearly was, at least in intent). Nonetheless, he was found guilty, and his sentence was lengthened. José Antonio flew into a towering rage. He threw an ink pot at the clerk, then tore off his advocate's robes and stamped on them, declaring that if this were the best Spanish justice could do, he wanted no more of it.*

Since José Antonio was the government's star prisoner, police officials grew nervous about the possibility of his escape. On June 5 guards came to remove him to the provincial jail at Alicante, whence flight would be more difficult. The other Falange prisoners in the

* *El Sol*, May 29, 1936; *The Times* (London), May 29, 1936. José Antonio later repented his outburst, saying that he had set a very bad example for the young, who needed more, not less, discipline. (Iato, pp. 226-27.)

Modelo raised an enormous row when the *Jefe* was taken out. José Antonio shouted that he was on the way to his execution, but he arrived in Alicante without incident.²⁶ Some of the lesser Falange leaders were released, but all the more important ones remained behind bars. Ruiz de Alda and several score more were kept in the Cárcel Modelo, while others, like their *Jefe*, were sent to provincial prisons for safekeeping.

The possibility of José Antonio's removal from Madrid had not been unforeseen. Plans had already been laid to forestall the disruption this might cause in the clandestine chain of command, and the *Jefe* still managed to keep in touch with developments from his distant cell on the southeast coast.

The Falange's position was now growing desperate. Each day brought new arrests. Another six months of government persecution and the party would be ruined. Clearly, the Falange had to enlist the aid of someone, and before much time had passed.

In these days an essential change of orientation was registered in the political line taken by José Antonio and the Falange. Until then an innate lack of confidence in the possibility of a military stroke, and a profound aversion toward what would be its consequence, had reigned as the fundamental orientation of [José Antonio's] thoughts and activities."²⁷

In the new situation a great effort was made "to galvanize the enthusiasm of the discontented, timid, and ambitious [among the military], who were capable, because of their position, of weighing heavily in an armed rebellion."²⁸ This began as vague proselytizing in the officer corps, with no concrete coalition in sight.

As more and more leaders were arrested, it became very difficult to maintain the Falange's chain of command; this was not owing to willful insubordination, but simply to the confusion and isolation created when the organization was forced to go underground. The resulting lack of cohesion threatened to lead the party into awkward entanglements with various poorly conceived plots being elaborated by Army officers and reactionaries. Many Falangists were lost in the web of intrigue being spun throughout Spain. In the province of Alava, for example, the local *jefe provincial*, Ramón Castaños, had

begun to plot with Carlists and other extreme Rightists. While visiting the monastery at Nájales de la Oca in order to ask for contributions, Castaños declared that as early as April 1 the conspirators had collected 120,000 pesetas in Alava province with which to buy arms. He was arrested by the authorities after two months of intrigue.²⁹

José Antonio continued to fear confusion or compromise with the organized Right. His basic problem was to gain honest collaborators for a rebellion while avoiding political entanglement with other groups. The Falange leaders feared that the monarchists would steal their thunder. José Calvo Sotelo, in a significant speech to the Cortes, announced himself willing to accept the title "fascist" if other people should wish to apply it to his political philosophy. Although the Falange leaders had often denied the appropriateness of the term when it had been employed against them by the Left, they reacted angrily to Calvo Sotelo's espousal of it. They protested that this was simply another maneuver by the Right to use the Falange and to take advantage of its impetus "on the eve of victory." Propaganda leaflets were circulated in Madrid condemning Calvo Sotelo's mimicry.*

Meanwhile, José Antonio had established contact with the Carlist leadership in France. Manuel Fal Conde, the national leader of the Carlist militia (the *Requetés*), was impressed by the possibility of obtaining the Falange's cooperation in a *coup* then being considered by the Carlists. Since both groups propounded a rigorously anti-parliamentarian style of government, and since neither had compromised itself with the orthodox conservatives, a bargain seemed possible. Fal Conde apparently offered José Antonio equal representation in the first political directorate that would issue from a successful *coup*.

José Antonio had come to believe that the Carlists were his only possible collaborators on the Right. Their record was clean, and they would stand by their word. They were not given to double-dealing,

* Ansaldo, p. 122. This was the last word in the José Antonio-Calvo Sotelo rivalry, which ended shortly afterward with the latter's assassination by the Left. At this time there was even an attempt to copy the SEU. A certain *Haz de Estridentes Españoles* published a manifesto in May, using Falange emblems. (Iato, p. 227.)

and they were devoted to tearing out the liberal state root and branch. José Antonio did not propose to tie himself to Carlist apron strings, but the immediate future was so dark any honorable collaborator was welcome. If the suggested terms would be respected, José Antonio agreed to bring the Falange behind any Carlist revolt, provided only that sufficient notice were given.³⁰ These were hopes at best. The Carlisis were as weak as the Falange, and it was more than doubtful that either or both of them could stage a successful revolt without the support of the Army.

At this time José Antonio was only beginning to learn the details of the Army's conspiracy; the Falange had been working in the dark, disoriented by the great differences among local political situations. Evidence that the military conspiracy was in earnest brought him no comfort; it forced him instead toward a painful recognition of the Falange's prospects.

For three years the Falange had preached the overthrow of the Republic and the establishment of an authoritarian political system. Now that powerful forces had begun to conspire against the Republic, there was some chance that at least the negative part of the party's program would be implemented—but not by the Falange. A successful revolt by the Army, or the Right, or both would certainly produce an authoritarian system of some sort, but this would by no means be a national syndicalist revolution. The Falange militia was poorly armed and at best equipped only for sporadic street fighting.³¹ It was in no position to dispute supremacy with the Army, if the Army really planned to rebel.

Once the military conspiracy became a concrete fact, the Falange could only go along with it or be crushed by a militant Right or a victorious Left. Supported in his reluctance by Ruiz de Alda, José Antonio hesitated to accept this bitter truth, but other party leaders were eager to jump into the Army plot.³²

The *Jefe Nacional* first made official contact with General Mola on May 29. The agent was one of his principal messengers, Rafael Garcerán, a former law clerk in José Antonio's office. A series of messages was exchanged between the imprisoned Falange chief and the leader of the military conspiracy during the weeks that followed. José Antonio even sent to Mola "confidential information on persons

and the organic functioning of the party."³³ As he had previously done with the UME, José Antonio tried to impose political conditions on the military which the latter refused to accept. It was not easy to strike a bargain. Local Army outbreaks threatened in Valencia and elsewhere, but there was no understanding with the Falange.

The Falange leaders remained pessimistic and distrustful about the attitude of the military. Although preliminary orders regarding the manner in which the Falange militia would take part in the rebellion were sent out on May 30, Fernando Primo de Rivera, directing the party organization in Madrid, was quite gloomy. Describing Fernando's attitude, the *jefe provincial* of Burgos wrote:

He did not believe the military would rise. He had no faith in them, and when I assured him about Burgos . . . he told me: "Very well, that may be true for Burgos, Alava, and Logroño, and somewhere else, but in general we can do nothing with the military. In Madrid the cause is lost."³⁴

José Antonio wrote to one of his contacts in northern Spain, "If everything continues to be prepared the way it is going now, we shall have a regime that will have Spain tired out [*aburrida*] within six months."³⁵ In the last issue of the clandestine *No Importa* (June 20), he entitled his editorial "Watch the Right. Warning to *madrugadores* [sharpers or opportunists]: the Falange is not a conservative force." José Antonio urged party militants to be wary of the old conservatives, who would try to regain their lost power by provoking the military to a reactionary *coup* and expending the Falange as shock troops in the process.

On June 24 a circular released to the local leaders said in part: The plurality of machinations in favor of more or less confused subversive movements that are being developed in various provinces of Spain has come to the attention of the *Jefe Nacional*.

. . . Some [local chiefs], swayed by an excess of zeal or by a dangerous ingenuousness, have rushed ahead to outline plans of local action and to compel the participation of comrades in certain political plans.

. . . The political projects of the military . . . are usually not distinguished for their relevancy. Those projects are almost all

based on an initial error: that of thinking that the ills of Spain are due to simple disarrangements of interior order and will disappear when power is handed over to those [reactionary civilian politicians] previously referred to, who are charlatans lacking any historical understanding, any authentic education, and any desire that the *Patria* break forth once more on the great paths of her destiny.

The participation of the Falange in one of those premature and ingenious projects would constitute a grave responsibility and would entail *its* [the Falange's] *total disappearance, even in case of triumph*. For this reason: because all those who count on the Falange for such undertakings consider it . . . only as an auxiliary shock force, as a species of juvenile assault militia, destined the day after tomorrow to parade before these conceited oligarchs re-established in power.

Let all the comrades consider precisely how offensive it is to propose that the Falange take part as a supernumerary in a movement that is not going to lead to the establishment of the national syndicalist state.³⁶

The various *jefes provinciales* were to report within five days whether or not their independence had been compromised by such agreements.

Four days later José Antonio revealed his fears in a letter to an old friend, the liberal politician Miguel Maura. Some weeks earlier Maura had proposed a "national liberal dictatorship" as the only way to control the potential death struggle between the Left and the Right. No one had paid any attention.³⁷ The Falange leader commented to Maura:

But I fear you shall soon see how the terrible lack of culture or, better said, the mental laziness of our people . . . will end up giving us either an essay in cruel and filthy Bolshevism or a flaccid representation of shortsighted patriotism under the direction of some bloated figure from the Right. May God free us of the one and of the other.³⁸

The Falange's only hope was to outsmart the military. On June 29 José Antonio sent out another circular to party leaders, in which he gave instructions for Falange participation in a military revolt:

(A) The *jefe provincial* or *territorial* will deal only with the military commander in his district, and no other person.

(B) All Falange units will maintain their own identity, independence, and chain of command.

(C) If considered absolutely necessary, one-third, but no more, of the Falangists may be placed under the orders of the Army in any given locality.

(D) The local *jefe militar* must promise his Falange counterpart that the Army will retain control of the civil government for at least three days after establishing its victory before turning such functions over to civilian politicians.

(E) Unless these orders are specifically renewed, all plans shall be considered canceled as of 12:00 P.M., July 10.³⁹

José Antonio requested Mola to set another date for the revolt, definitely and quickly, if he wanted the Falange to participate. Mola shifted his feet; his rebels would need some sort of auxiliary aid to take Madrid in a quick *coup*, but he knew how tenuous his little conspiracy was, and he had no faith in the military value of the Falange.

However, it was now evident that part of the plot was known to government authorities, and swift action became essential. Mola revised the date of the military *coup* to July 9-10. Unfortunately for the plotters, José Sainz, the Falange's *jefe provincial* in Toledo, was arrested on July 6 carrying instructions for the uprising. This caused Mola to cancel the date once more, although the situation was increasingly critical.

On July 9 José Antonio extended the validity of his previous instructions until noon of July 20. He continued to bargain with Mola, but the latter made no concrete concessions. Mola was determined that the rebellion would be controlled by the Army, with no political obligations involved. There is no evidence the Falange ever received any political guarantees; most of the surviving leaders testify that there were none whatever. The only proviso which José Antonio secured was the one on which the Army insisted anyway, namely, that power would not be handed over immediately to the conservative politicians. This meant that the conservatives would not be able to dominate the Falange or vice versa; the Army would be in a position to control them both.

What José Antonio apparently hoped to gain from this was only the possibility that in the confusion following the *golpe*, the Falange

could force its way into a commanding position. As a result of its own participation, and of the increased prestige it had obtained among the impotent Right during the past fifteen weeks, the Falange might find itself in a much more favorable position *vis-à-vis* the conservative parties. José Antonio was still convinced of the political incapacity of the generals, but he hoped that they would unwittingly provide an opportunity for his "audacious minority" of revolutionaries. José Antonio did not expect to see his party in power within a matter of weeks, or even months, but he did expect a swift and successful military *coup* against the Republican government to enhance considerably the stock of national syndicalism.⁴⁰

By this time the party was at the mercy of events. Each day brought more arrests of Falangists in Madrid and in the provinces; they were being rounded up by the scores and the hundreds. The chain of command had virtually broken up. On July 10 Fernández Cuesta, directing the secret Falange secretariat in Madrid, sent out urgent orders to all *jefes provinciales* to send a person of great loyalty to the capital at once; the leadership wanted to be sure that the recent instructions had been received. A contact appeared from only one province.⁴¹

The tense situation was hard on everyone. In Valencia both the military garrison and the Falange group were very edgy. The Falangists jumped the gun on the night of July 11 by taking over the city's radio station to announce that "the national syndicalist movement will soon begin in the streets." This touched off a night of rioting and burning by the Left in Spain's third largest city.⁴² Mola still hesitated to set a new date for the revolt. Until the last minute, there was no assurance that the Army leaders would not back out, leaving the Falange in the lurch. Party leaders became increasingly anxious.

In Madrid hatred and violence increased by the hour. The Republican Assault Guards bore the brunt of maintaining order. On July 12 Lt. José Castillo, an ardent Leftist Guards officer who had shot one or two Falangists in street fights, was murdered by UME gunmen. His companions determined to avenge him on their own initiative. The following night a detachment of Assault Guards went to the home of José Calvo Sotelo. Since the defeat of Gil Robles, Calvo

Sotelo had become the leading spokesman of the organized Right. He had repeatedly declared his unremitting opposition to the republican form of government and had publicly accepted the threats flung at him by the Left. There were no threats that night. Calvo Sotelo was taken away in an Assault Guard truck, shot, and deposited in a suburban cemetery.

This lit the fuse. All the Right cried vengeance. Wealthy citizens began to flee the capital as though it harbored the plague; during the next five days a constant stream of limousines headed for the French and Portuguese borders.

In Alicante José Antonio could no longer contain himself. On July 14 he sent Garcérán to Pamplona with a final message for Mola: if the conspirators would not agree to act within seventy-two hours, he would begin the rebellion with the Falange in Alicante. He insisted that many UME men were now impatient to go over to the Falange.⁴³ To lead a rebellion with the Alicante militia would have been suicidal, but this bluff was José Antonio's last hope of forcing Mola's hand.

Mola was still skeptical of the Falange's potential. Since the nearest large contingent of Falange militia was at Burgos, Mola asked José Andino, their *jefe provincial*, how many men they were ready to provide now that their leader had proclaimed them ready to act. Andino replied that he could have six thousand men ready in four hours, which was a considerable exaggeration.⁴⁴

The principal gleam of light in Mola's world was the promised support of the Carlists, which he had obtained only during the past three days. The Carlists had promised to provide ten thousand trained militiamen to assist in the drive on Madrid. Many of the officers connected with the conspiracy were still unreliable, but further delay would be fatal. The revolt in Morocco was scheduled for July 18, with the rest of the Army to join in within forty-eight hours. Elena Medina, an upper-class girl who served as one of Mola's messengers, hurried to Cuesta with final instructions hidden in the buckle of her dress.⁴⁵

The General's decision reached José Antonio in Alicante on the morning of July 16.⁴⁶

X

THE FALANGE EARLY IN THE CIVIL WAR

THE REBELLION BEGAN prematurely in Morocco at approximately 2 P.M. on July 17. The two senior commanders refused to participate, but they were quickly arrested and later shot. All of Spanish Africa, including the only efficient units of the poorly organized Army, fell into rebel hands within twenty-four hours.¹

By the time the *coup* was finally made, the government had become so accustomed to false alarms that it could hardly believe the truth.² In the late afternoon of July 18, military garrisons in Spain began to declare a state of war; not until that evening did the Madrid government begin to realize that it might have a serious rebellion on its hands. It tried to call to the capital several unreliable Civil Guard units, to prevent them from joining the rebels. Labor leaders had already demanded that the workers be armed to defend the Republic.³ This request was at first firmly denied by the liberal government.

Mola issued his proclamation of revolt in Pamplona at dawn on Sunday, July 19. Within a few hours the leading cities of Old Castile and Aragon were in Army hands. Falange squads helped the troops quell resistance from the workers' militia in Valladolid and Zaragoza. Seville, Cádiz, Córdoba, and Granada had already been seized or were soon to be taken.

The first response by the Republican government was to dissolve the old cabinet. Diego Martínez Barrio, a conservative moderate, was entrusted with the new ministry. By telephone Mola was formally offered government posts for several of the leading generals. But the rebels, bent on winning full power from the government, would accept no compromise.⁴

Faced with a mortal struggle against the military command, the Republican leaders began to realize that complete disaster threatened.

They reluctantly consented to the arming of workers in one or two of the largest cities. In Madrid, poorly armed but greatly aroused proletarians stormed the two thousand soldiers who had retreated into the semifortified Montaña barracks.⁵ At Barcelona the Anarchists and the Assault Guards completely crushed the rebellion in two days of hard fighting.⁶ By Monday, July 20, the outcome was very much in doubt everywhere. Garrisons in Galicia had begun to come out for the rebels, but not a sound was heard from the Levante. It took the military governor of Valencia a long time to make up his mind. When he did, it was too late to do anything but surrender to the Republican forces.

The Army had suspected that the rebellion might fail in Madrid, but it had not expected the same thing to happen in three-fifths of the nation.⁷ Furthermore, the revolt in the Navy was largely a failure.* Government ships blockaded the straits, and it was impossible to transfer the vital Moroccan Army to the peninsula; only one boatload of Legionnaires (*Tercios*) got across to Algeciras before the barrier was established.

As the lines began to stabilize, the rebels could have counted on no more than forty thousand troops in the peninsula, perhaps less. The Republic may have had as many as five or ten thousand loyal soldiers and Assault Guards, as well as the unnumbered tens of thousands of half-armed men in the workers' militia. Most of the Civil Guard had gone over to the Army.

According to plan, Mola's northern Army group, aided by Falangist and Carlist auxiliaries, began a rapid drive on Madrid. They hoped to seize the capital before the situation got beyond their control, although the equivalent of only one Army division was all they could spare for the effort. Scattered units were sent to occupy the mountain passes that controlled the route to Madrid, but they were met by Republican militia intent upon the same object. A fierce fight developed

* Many naval officers favored the rebellion, but their sailors were more politically conscious than the Army recruits. In a number of cases, they simply put their officers to the knife and tossed the bodies into the sea. After a sharp struggle, that part of the fleet stationed at El Ferrol was won for the rebels, but it was only a part of the total. The rebel enlists Víctor María de Solá and Carlos Martel list 85,000 tons of loyalist warships, 52,000 tons for the rebels. (*Estados gloriosos de la escuadra azul*, p. 127.)

for control of the vital gaps. As the rebel commander, Colonel García Escámez, prepared a final assault to hurl back the government forces, he received the following message from his chief, Mola: "Impossible to send ammunition. I have 26,000 cartridges for all the Army of the North."⁸

The simple truth was that the greater part of the Spanish Army stationed in the peninsula was too poorly equipped even to fight a strong police action. Mola was in despair. According to his secretary, he was preparing to withdraw his forces for a last-ditch stand in the north when he received a message from General Franco which radically changed the entire situation.⁹

Up to this point, the rebellion had been carried forward almost exclusively by the officers of the Spanish Army. They had not been swayed by the proposals of the Falange, the demands of the Carlists, or the possible attitudes of foreign powers. There is no evidence that either the German or the Italian government was even aware that a *coup* was coming, much less guilty of having incited it. The only previous foreign contact was made through one Johannes Bernhardt, a leader of the Nazi Party in Morocco, who had organized a sizable nucleus among the German colony there and was in touch with the local representatives of the Falange. The German commercial company with which Bernhardt was connected had privately offered financial credits and air transport facilities to the Moroccan Army. This offer was flatly refused by the Spanish military.

As planned, General Franco had been flown from Tenerife to Melilla on July 18. He had been slated to take charge of the Moroccan Army and bring it over to the peninsula. Since the rebels had lost control of the straits, Franco was blocked in. Faced with a complete collapse of the rebel effort, the stubby general changed his tack immediately. He sent Bernhardt, one of his staff colonels, and the local Nazi *Ortsgruppenleiter* to Berlin by air to request that German supplies and transport facilities be sent with the utmost dispatch.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Mola had delegated a civilian collaborator, the Marqués de Portago (later Valdeiglesias), to ask for rifle ammunition in Berlin. The German authorities were naturally taken aback by the faulty liaison of the rebel leaders.¹¹

At the same time, urgent petitions for aerial assistance were made

to Mussolini. The Duce's 1934 agreement with monarchist conspirators had not directly concerned the Spanish Army.¹² The military revolt took the Italians by surprise. Since the Ethiopian affair had barely ended, the first impulse of the Italian government was to avoid getting involved in the western Mediterranean. However, Mussolini could not long resist a chance to participate in another "crusade" against Bolshevism; his son-in-law acceded to Franco's third and most urgent request.¹³ A number of bombers were sent to Morocco before the end of July.¹⁴

The Germans had now decided that Franco was the Army chief with the more important contacts and the more effective troops. Furthermore, one or two influential persons already acquainted with the General had been boosting the rebel cause in Berlin.¹⁵ A few transport planes were dispatched to Morocco before the first of August, and several days later an entire squadron was transferred. The ground crews arrived at Cádiz on August 6.¹⁶

The arrival of these first transport planes enabled Franco to begin slowly transferring his troops to Andalusia and flying small quantities of ammunition to Mola; this was the occasion of his jubilant telegram to the commander of the Army of the North. Finally, on August 5 two or three Italian bombers helped Nationalist warships disperse the government blockade, thus permitting the first rebel military convoy to cross the sea.¹⁷

It was the decisive intervention of the Germans and the Italians that turned the Army rebellion into a civil war. Without their contributions, the Republican forces might very possibly have gained control of the situation within a few weeks.¹⁸ With this aid, the rebels were able to build up matériel for a drive on Madrid. The capital's working class responded valiantly, and the assault was finally brought to a halt at the city limits during the first days of November.¹⁹ Subsequent efforts to take Madrid also failed, ending with the defeat of an Italian auxiliary force at Guadalajara in March 1937.²⁰

The rebels had long since been forced to renounce any hope of speedy victory. They now settled down to the task of building a military and governmental machine capable of subduing the greater part of the Spanish nation in what promised to be a prolonged and hard-fought struggle.

The critical nature of the military situation left the Falangists very little time for politics during the first weeks of the conflict. They had taken part in the rebellion in almost every section of Spain, although faulty liaison sometimes impeded their efforts to aid the military. Units of the Falange militia or the Carlist Requetés often occupied large sections of the still poorly defined front, while Army leaders searched desperately for new manpower.

The political situation was extremely confused, no less in the heterogeneous rebel camp than in the foundering Republic. The military directors had no clear goals; they all talked in vague terms about saving the Republic, restoring order, and effecting reforms. The first messages of Mola from the north and of Franco from Africa said nothing about overthrowing the present form of government; they spoke only of strengthening discipline and repressing the Left. Garçons throughout Spain had rebelled with the cry "¡Viva la República!"

Spain's basic problem, the class struggle, was social and economic in origin. On this the generals were both eloquent and contradictory. They declared that reforms were surely needed, but the only concrete social policy indicated in the first Army manifesto was a statement unequivocally abolishing the Republican land reform.²¹

Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, the noisiest and one of the most radical of the generals, had won Seville in a bold and brilliant *coup* on the afternoon of July 18. From his new Sevillian fief he declared that a military directorship of twenty-five years might be necessary to restore order and discipline to the unhappy Spanish people.

During the first two or three weeks of fighting, the dimensions of the conflict were not fully revealed. To handle immediate problems a Junta de Defensa Nacional was set up in Burgos on July 25. Its ruling board was composed of colonels and generals with subordinate civilian assistants; its nominal chairman was the white-bearded Mason, General Cabanellas, the commander of the Seventh Division. The generals would have preferred to appoint civilians to some of the more prominent positions, but they could not be sure of the loyalty of many public figures, and they feared that the elevation of obscure individuals would further alienate the masses.²²

The Falange had no official standing whatever with the Junta; it was merely an autonomous civilian force contributing to the rebel

effort. Since the rebellion had failed completely in the Levante, José Antonio was now an isolated prisoner far behind the Republican lines with no hope of escape. Not only the *Jeje* but virtually all the top Falange leaders had disappeared shortly before or after the outbreak of the rebellion. Ruiz de Alda and Fernández Cuesta were as securely imprisoned as José Antonio. Onésimo Redondo, who had been sounding the call to violence for a full five years, was killed instantly when he was stopped by a truckload of Socialist militiamen on the Valladolid highway. The Falange hence found itself utterly without leadership or official representation.

It was at first impossible to coordinate party activities. With supplies scarce and transportation from region to region both perilous and hard to arrange, a kind of natural regional autonomy prevailed.

However, as sides were drawn up for civil war, the party began to assume greater significance. The orthodox Right had never developed a *mystique* adequate to sustain a civil war, and it offered no new ideology to justify the present conflict. Discredited by their past failures and present impotence, the old political groups virtually ceased to function. Only the Requetés and the Falangists were able to respond to the call for direct action. Fortunately for the Falange, the political appeal of the *Comunión Tradicionalista* was limited. Only the most clerical and conservative joined the Carlists, while the bulk of the middle classes preferred the Falange.²³ The party seemed to offer a dynamic new political orientation for all those who wanted to join the fight against the Left on a civilian basis. Membership increased enormously and soon passed all manageable proportions.* Within a few months the old cadres were nearly swamped by the influx. As the first wave of emotion swept the Right, everyone hastened to put on blue shirts. Even financial institutions offered to support the Falange, hoping to be remembered in return.²⁴

Although the avalanche continued, pressure from the fighting front remained so great that the nominal leaders of the party had little time to work at achieving some sort of organizational coherence. There was a distinct threat that the party might become an amorphous, directionless mass, manipulated by elements from without or

* Two thousand Falange militiamen are said to have volunteered for party service during the first twenty-four hours of recruiting at Zaragoza. (*El Herald de Aragón*, July 25, 1936.)

disrupted from within by a flood of lower-middle-class ex-conservatives. The new members had but the scantiest indoctrination; most of them knew only that the Falange stood for something "new" and "social."²⁵ There was not even a national chain of command. As one Falangist said,

In the beginning we did not worry about a National Command, because the problem of supplying kilometers and kilometers of the war front weighed us down, being an immediate question of life and death. That is, we devoted ourselves to the war without thinking of anything else.²⁶

Falange leaders "had no clear idea" what political goals they might achieve in so turbulent a situation. * They hoped simply to enroll as many members as possible in order to provide support for themselves in any situation that might arise.

By the end of August the two centers of Falange strength in rebel-held territory were Valladolid and Seville. Valladolid had the larger party following, but Seville was temporarily of equal significance, being the anchor on the line of communication with the all-powerful African Army during its march north. In Andalusia party control had momentarily fallen into the hands of Joaquín Miranda, the *jefe provincial* of Seville. After contact was re-established with the north, he invited a number of Falange leaders from other regions to a conference in his city. This took place on August 29.²⁷ Besides Miranda, the three principal figures in attendance were Agustín Aznar, the unofficial head of the party's militia; Antonio Cazañas, the *jefe territorial* of Morocco; and Andrés Redondo, who not only had succeeded his brother but had stepped up to the rank of *jefe territorial* of Old Castile. Don Andrés was a banker and no authentic Falangist, but as the heir of the fallen *jefe* of Valladolid he managed to extend his power in the subsequent confusion. Cazañas was important at this time because a fair number of the younger officers in the Moroccan garrison had joined the Falange.

* Canales, p. 5. On September 11, one of the German representatives reported, "At the moment one has the impression that the members of the Falangist militia themselves have no real aims and ideas; rather, they seem to be young people for whom mainly it is good sport to play with firearms and to round up Communists and Socialists." (*Germany and the Spanish Civil War*, Doc. No. 86, pp. 84-89.)

Most of the leaders present favored calling a meeting of the surviving members of the National Council as soon as possible, in order to straighten out the snarls in the chain of command and establish some sort of official leadership. Such action would surely have to be taken if the party were ever to develop the many areas of contact between itself and the Army, reduce points of friction, and ensure uniformity in the solution of similar problems in the various provinces. A host of other problems—such as those connected with propaganda, the future of the CONS, and the Falange's police duties—cried for solution.

The party had always been extremely weak in the secondary ranks of its leadership. The technical competence of the local chiefs was limited, and they lacked a full grasp of the problems of the war. There was little culture or personality among them, and for the most part they were quite unable to provide direction for their amorphous groups. More important, there was considerable jealousy among the northern *jeffes provinciales* toward the potential new triumvirate of Redondo-Miranda-Cazañas, even though it had not yet actually taken shape.²⁸ Nor was this the only source of resentment within the party; the bitterest suspicion was shown by the surviving remnants of the Madrid Falange, who keenly resented this transfer of pre-eminence to provincial leaders.

When the surviving members of the National Council met in Valladolid on September 4, a disproportionate influence was exercised by Agustín Aznar, the former Madrid *jefe provincial* of militia. Aznar had assumed provisional control of all the Falange militia, which was now playing an important part in the rebel military effort. As the nominal militia chief, Aznar was the only titular national office-holder present. Although he was the most militant of the Falange chiefs, having directed much of the street fighting in Madrid, he was also the most devoted to José Antonio, whose character and personality differed so sharply from his own.

Aznar's only aim seems to have been to hold the party leadership open for the eventual return of the *Jefe*. He and other survivors from the Madrid group, such as Rafael Garcera, worked from the sidelines to block any move toward providing a new permanent leadership for the party. The personal initiative of the other Councilors was

so slight that it was not hard to accomplish this goal. Jesús Muro, José Sáinz, José Moreno, Rodríguez Acosta, and other provincial leaders continued to fear that Redondo and Miranda might try to impose a new provisional national leader upon them.²⁹ The expedient devised to resolve the dilemma was the formation of a temporary Junta de Mando of seven members, headed by a chairman, to exercise executive leadership for the party.

Manuel Hedilla, the former *jefe provincial* of Santander, was nominated for the post of *jefe* of the Junta de Mando. He had served during the spring of 1936 as one of the national inspectors who had held the party together during its hectic four months of underground existence. He was courageous and tenaciously honest but lacked political culture or personal preparation for assuming high responsibilities. The Aznar clique believed that Hedilla would make an honest executive secretary, but that his personal capacity was too modest to permit him to entertain further ambitions with regard to party command. Hedilla was respected by his fellows, and his lack of notable talent saved him from anyone's envy. His nomination was approved.

The naming of a Junta de Mando was hardly a satisfactory expedient, for it immobilized party leadership for any long-range planning or organizational work. Being only a temporary arrangement, the Junta might lack the authority to make an effective agreement with the military on spheres of influence, should such an opportunity ever arise. However, given the serious shortage of executive talent in the party after the fighting began, little more was to be expected. Effective leadership could not be found in any quarter, for José Antonio had no collaborators of like stature.

Manuel Hedilla could not possibly fill the boots of the absent *jefe*. He had no formal education, and no executive experience outside the party. He was not an intellectual or a political theorist but a former ship's mechanic. He had neither facility for rhetoric nor what one would call an outstanding personality. An Italian journalist said of him:

One cannot say that his appearance reveals uncontroversial signs of a leader, and nothing would indicate that he could show himself tomorrow to be that statesman for whom Spain waits. I should

rather call him an excellent lieutenant, an energetic and scrupulous executor of orders, indeed the man needed in this hour when all power is concentrated in the hands of the military. . . . The lack of a true leader constitutes the great handicap of Falangism.³⁰

But Hedilla had his virtues as a leader. He was honest, forthright, hard-working, and had great moral firmness and constancy. He understood the Falange program, and he did not intend to be turned aside from it. At the same time, he felt the pressing military needs of the hour, and he lent all the force at the Falange's disposal to help meet the requirements of the Army.

During the first months, decisions in the Junta de Mando were taken by majority vote, and business was handled as well as could be expected. Hedilla set up his headquarters in Salamanca after the military government was established there on October 1. According to all accounts, he lived with his family in a simple and unostentatious fashion, working diligently to give whatever structure he could to the often incoherent party organization.

Most of the honest and patriotic elements in the party accepted Manuel Hedilla's leadership. Sancho Dávila, *jefe territorial* of Andalusia, who was still in Republican hands at the time of the first Council meeting on September 4, soon escaped by way of the Cuban legation in Madrid. At the second meeting of the National Council, held a few weeks later, he allied himself with the Aznar faction, which ratified the formation of the Junta de Mando. Other Falange leaders who later escaped from the Republican zone also approved the new arrangement.*

Facilities for propaganda expanded enormously after the war began. Party dailies blossomed in Pamplona, Valladolid, Seville, Zaragoza, and Oviedo, to be followed later by organs in Santander, Bilbao, Málaga, and other cities. Until the spring of 1937, and even beyond that date, the propaganda was very often demagogic in tone:

* Such as Vicente Cadenas, *jefe Nacional* of Press and Propaganda, Roberto Reyes, *Delegado Nacional* of Social Justice, and Vicente Gacoe, national secretary of the now defunct Junta Política. Hedilla admits, however, that there was "quite a bit of disorder and considerable personal ambition" even during the first weeks of the war, despite the aura of moral purity feverishly being cultivated. (Conversation in Madrid, Jan. 20, 1959.)

Open arms to the worker and peasant!
Let there be one nobility: that of work!
Let idlers be exterminated!³¹

Party rhetoric was slanted largely toward the lower classes and was full of loud promises of social justice. Onésimo Redondo, in his only public address between the date of his liberation and his sudden death, declared over Radio Valladolid:

The Falange bears a doctrine firm and impregnate with the most profound and extensive concern: that of redeeming the proletariat. . . .

Let us conquer for them, above all, the satisfaction and security of daily life: bread.

. . . If the capitalists, the rich, attended today by a facile euphoria, . . . occupy themselves as heretofore with incorrigible egoism, with a single interest, without turning their heads to the side or the rear to contemplate the wake of hunger, scarcity, and pain which follows them and closes in upon them, they will be traitors to the *Patria*.³²

The Falange demagogy was not a materialist demagogy full of tangible promises; it was a fascist demagogy that preached unity and sacrifice as well as social justice and economic readjustment. In an interview for Italian correspondents on March 11, 1937, Hedilla outlined a militantly nationalistic program. He declared that the Falange's goals were to capture the Red masses, to eliminate their leaders, and to organize the Falangist militants serving at the front into a National Militia which would survive the war and create a militarily strong Spain.³³

The party press devoted considerable space to favorable reports on the Nazis, the Italian Fascists, and the minor fascist movements. Periodic outbursts of anti-Semitism even occurred; these were doubly stupid because there were no Jews for Spain to contend with, but the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" were piously dusted off by obscure Falange ideologists.³⁴

However, the Falange propagandists took pains to separate themselves from racism and statism *per se*, to escape identification with the other nationalistic fascist parties. Although derivations from Italian Fascism were not denied,³⁵ the Falangists preferred to com-

pare their ideology to the nationalist policy of Spain's Catholic Kings of the late fifteenth century. Their propaganda differed radically from that of most European fascist groups in its emphasis on Catholicism and Christianity. This religious theme continued to swell as the war progressed, and it tended to soften the party's waitlike pronouncements. Hedilla declared in a newspaper interview in October 1936:

The pagan sense of the cult of Fatherland and subordination to race, force, and so forth, that one finds among some foreign movements of a similar type is substituted in ours by a strong dose of religious spirituality, which is very much in accord with our traditions.³⁶

Since Church leaders were characterizing the struggle as a holy crusade, the Falangists began to outdo themselves in declaring that all Spanish institutions must be imbued with a specifically Catholic spirit.³⁷ Fermín Yzuriaga, the Pamplona priest who directed *Arriba España*, became the party's most active propagandist and rose to the post of chief of Press and Propaganda after April 1937. Hedilla's address over Radio Salamanca on Christmas Eve, 1936, went so far as to proclaim a twisted version of brotherly love. He said, in part:

Its [Falange's] doctrine is immortal. It is the expression of Divine Justice in the secular world. . . .

I direct myself to the Falangists who take charge of political and police investigations in the cities and above all in the small towns. Your mission is to purge chiefs, leaders, and assassins. But prevent with full rigor anyone satiating personal hatreds and let no one be punished who because of hunger or despair has voted for the Left. We all know that in many towns there were—and still are—Rightists that were worse than the Reds. . . . [Falange's goal is] to sow love.³⁸

Falange publications were subject to the same censorship as all printed material in rebel Spain. Hardly a single edition of a Falange newspaper appeared without visible marks of hasty deletion. The military censors were not so much disturbed by abstract demagogy as by tendencies to claim public authority or prescribe the practical ends of the state in political or social matters.

Nonetheless, a good deal of friction was created within the rebel camp by the frequently strident tone of the Falange's revolutionary pronouncements.* When Gil Robles appeared briefly in Burgos during August 1936 to confer with other Rightist leaders, he was virtually driven out of town by the local Falange. Other Ceditistas began to fear for their lives. A former personal secretary to Gil Robles was killed in Galicia over a local political dispute. Giménez FernándeZ, the agrarian leader, hid from Falange gunmen in Cádiz province.³⁹ The Carlists and other conservatives referred to the Falangists as "our Reds" and "FAllangists."

This antagonism within the party was greatly heightened by the influx of ardent liberals and Leftists; when trapped in rebel territory, many of them joined the Falange as a means of saving themselves from the predatory hunters of the Right. After Málaga fell to the nationalists on February 10, 1937, one thousand new members joined the Falange within twenty-four hours, a good many of the newcomers being Leftists.† In Logroño and Navarre the liberals joined the Falange *en masse* as a means of thwarting the Carlists. In Andalusia and Estremadura Falange organizers followed the military advance guard into workers' districts, signing up Leftists and incorporating them into the militia. After their defeat in 1937 many of the Communist miners in Asturias were brought into the party, if only on a formal basis.⁴⁰

The Leftists who fled into the party did not always escape persecution. In Andalusia party chiefs sometimes went back over the records of their new members; those with only moderately Leftist records were sent to join militia units at the front, but those whose previous activities had been of a more militant nature were sometimes shot.⁴¹

On the whole, the Falange continued to welcome ex-Leftists and liberals to the fold, although it was sometimes necessary, as at Sala-

* Furthermore, most Falangists antagonized their constrained bedfellows of the Right by rigidly opposing the use of any symbols of the Bourbon Monarchy, such as the red-and-yellow flag.

† Gollonet and Morales, *Málaga*, p. 165. The United Press correspondent Charles Foltz watched Communists and Anarchists tear up their party cards as they crossed the threshold of the Falange recruiting office. (*Ibid.*, p. 77.)

manca, to suspend such admissions temporarily because so many were joining.⁴² Posters and announcements read: "The past means nothing to us. . . . There is room in our ranks for all those comrades who respond to our slogans and the desire to redeem the *Patria*."⁴³ As late as six months after the war ended, so many of those arrested in the wholesale purges conducted by the military courts were found to have enrolled in the Falange that a special order was finally published on September 9, 1939. It stipulated that everyone arrested in the future would have to be asked if he were a member of the party. If the reply was affirmative, Falange authorities would at once be notified of the proceedings.⁴⁴

The problem of providing effective leadership for the rebel war effort could be solved only by naming a supreme military commander. Cabanellas had never been more than a figurehead, and the Burgos Junta was only a temporary group. Cabanellas had been named to conciliate the moderates, but the Right never trusted him because of his strong Masonic background.* Therefore, a series of intrigues to appoint a military chief unfolded during September 1936. The whole process of nomination and appointment was in the hands of the higher officers, and no civilian influence was visible.⁴⁵ Once it had been decided that a commander-in-chief would supersede the Junta, it became clear that the victor in this personal struggle would be placed in a position of supreme political power.

There were only two practical candidates: Mola and Franco. Mola had planned the rebellion, Franco had taken advantage of it. However, very few people were aware of the peculiar nature of Franco's role in the conspiracy. His rank prior to the February elections had been higher than Mola's and his general prestige was greater, even though Mola was equally respected in military circles. Franco had the reputation of being a very shrewd politician. Furthermore, he had providentially come into command of the decisive section of the Army, the Moroccan units. It was here that the rebels' real military power lay.

* The Burgos Falange created a special bodyguard for Cabanellas but gave them secret orders to see that the General made no false moves, according to José Andino, their *jeŕe*. (Conversation in Madrid, Feb. 6, 1950.)

The most influential officer among the younger commanders from Africa was Colonel Juan Yagüe. It was he who had organized the rebellion in Morocco. Yagüe had joined the Falange before the fighting began, but his sympathies were divided between the Army and the party.⁴⁶ There was much bad blood between Yagüe and Mola, whereas Yagüe and Franco were old comrades from the Tercios.* Yagüe not only lent his aid to Franco's supporters but campaigned actively and effectively among his fellows on behalf of the commander of the Army of the South.

By this time it was obvious that foreign aid would play a decisive role in the war. Almost all the vital German-Italian support had been received by Franco, for his troops were making the assault on Madrid. Mola admitted that Franco had greater recognition abroad and was a better diplomat than he.⁴⁷ He decided not to oppose Franco's candidacy for head of the armed forces as long as the position was to be purely military and restricted to the duration of the conflict.

Besides Yagüe, Franco's strongest promoters were his brother Nicolás, the veteran General Orgaz (a conspirator with fifteen years of experience), General Millán Astray (the half-crazed founder of the Tercios), and General Kindelán (head of the rebel Air Force). Kindelán has written that the decision to make Franco Generalissimo of the Armed Forces was reached at a meeting of the "Junta de Defensa" on September 21.⁴⁸ The only real opposition came from Cabanellas, who wanted no *mando único*, but the other officers were now ready to dispense with that old gentleman's services. Since Mola did not protest, Franco was voted military commander-in-chief.

However, the Burgos Junta failed to announce Franco's appointment immediately, and the General's backers became worried. They prepared a draft decree which Kindelán read at the next meeting of the Burgos Junta on September 28. In it there was a clause naming Franco Chief of State as well as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Mola now protested, but the Franco candidacy had gone too far to be stopped. No faction could match the determination of the

* Mola's secretary says that it was Mola who insisted on depriving Yagüe of the command for the attack on Madrid and even threatened to shoot him. (Conversation with José María Iribarren, Pamplona, Dec. 16, 1958.)

Franco backers, and an organized, organic command was a vital necessity. The decree was approved by the Junta and was read officially three days later, on October 1, 1936.

Having been elevated to power, Franco quickly took steps to ensure his remaining there. With everyone else busy directing the war, the figure of the five-foot-three-inch Galician loomed gigantic against a background of blurred mediocrity. ^{Teles 113}

The Falange as a whole had no preference for Commander-in-Chief, but Franco did have one or two admirers among the party leadership. The most important was Andrés Redondo, the banker who had temporarily ceased foreclosing on local peasants to boost himself into his late brother's job and then increase his rank to *jefe territorial*.⁴⁹

However, a group of "legitimists" had begun to form around the surviving friends and personal associates of José Antonio. They considered the new developments dangerous for the political future of the party. On October 2, the day after Franco had been named Commander-in-Chief, the Seville *FE*, then the leading Falange newspaper in Spain, dedicated its entire third page to favorable articles on the *Generalísimo*. Agustín Aznar and Sancho Dávila, the leaders of the Falange in Madrid and Andalusia, respectively, were furious. They raged bitterly at Patricio Canales, the editor of *FE*, for having dedicated so much space to the man they called the Falange's chief enemy.⁵⁰

XI

JOSÉ ANTONIO IN ALICANTE

WHEN THE FIGHTING BEGAN, José Antonio had been imprisoned in Alicante for six weeks. On the eve of the revolt he wrote a final manifesto to the nation.¹ It said not one word about national syndicalism or revolutionary youth, but simply called upon patriotic Spaniards to support the rebellion.* Its author could only hope for the best.

The conspirators had expected to free José Antonio in their first stroke and then send him immediately to Madrid by air.² However, the entire rebellion failed miserably in the Levante, although that was one of the regions in which Mola had expected complete success. Some of the military leaders there suffered a complete paralysis of will. Their belated rebellion in Valencia was crushed by a thoroughly aroused workers' militia, and, as a result, the small garrisons around Alicante were largely quiescent. Officers pledged to lead the Alicante *cuartel* into the streets lost their nerve during the crisis, and nothing happened. Seeing that the military had failed utterly in this region, the Falange militia stationed nearest José Antonio made an effort of their own to rescue him, with the help of local monarchists. This, too, was ill-prepared. The rescuers were discovered and subdued by Assault Guards before they even got near the prison.³

José Antonio was now cut off from the outside world and was gradually deprived of sources of information. After August 16 he was denied further visits from Rightist friends in the vicinity. Though the reports he received were incomplete, José Antonio perceived the general lines of the conflict taking shape that summer. He realized

* Some have even thought that José Antonio could not have written such a manifesto. The author of the standard military history of the Civil War, Manuel Aznar, is among them. (*Historia militar de la guerra de España*, p. 40.)

that nothing good could result from an exhausting civil war, which would warp the course of the nation's development for years to come. He was appalled to think that the force of the Falange might be expended in a long and enervating struggle between Right and Left in which the nation as a whole would come out the loser. The aftermath of such a conflict would be the exact negation of that spirit of national unity he had preached. If the Left won, it would destroy all hope for restoring Spain to its historical Catholic solidarity. If the Right won, there would be black reaction, maintained only by force and smothering the vital energies of the nation. As he had rightly feared, the Falange was more and more to be ground between the upper and the nether millstones.

Among José Antonio's papers is preserved a very interesting draft of a letter which he prepared during that month of August 1936. It says, in part:

Situation: I have not sufficient facts as to who is doing better. Therefore, a purely moral synthesis.

A: If the Govt. wins. (1) Shootings; (2) predominance of the workers' parties (of class, of discord, of war); (3) consolidation of certain Spanish castes (unemployed functionaries, Republicanization, etc.).

It will be said: The Govt. is not to blame. The ones who rebelled are the others.

No, a rebellion (especially one so extensive) is not produced without a profound motive.

Social reaction?

Monarchical nostalgia?

No, this rebellion is, above all, of the middle classes. Even geographically, the regions in which it has most firmly taken root (Castile, León, Aragón) are regions *petit-bourgeois* in character.

The determining cause has been the insufferable policy of Casares Quiroga.

One cannot increase indefinitely the pressure in a boiling pot. The situation had to explode. And it exploded. But now:

B: What will happen if the rebels win?

A group of generals of honorable intentions but of abysmal political mediocrity. Elementary clichés (order, pacification of spirits . . .).

Back of them: (1) Old Carlism, intransigent Carlism, boorish,

disagreeable. (2) The conservative classes, with their own interests, shortsighted, lazy. (3) Agrarian and financial capitalism, that is to say: the termination for many years of any possibility of building a modern Spain; the absence of any national sense of long-range perspective.

And then, after a few years, as a reaction, the negative revolution once more.

The only way out:

An end to hostilities and the commencement of an era of political and national economic reconstruction, without persecutions, without a spirit of reprisal, that can make of Spain a peaceful, free, and industrious nation.

My offer:

1. General amnesty.

2. Reinstatement of the functionaries declared expelled since July 18.

3. Dissolution and disarmament of all the militias. . . .

4. Lifting of the state of siege. If, for reasons of public order, this is not considered possible, modification of the law of Public Order to provide: (1) that government imprisonment may not last more than fifteen days, nor be imposed more than twice each six months; (2) that the closing of political centers are to be subject to the same norms; (3) that government fines are to be imposed only after proper resolution and, not being imposed in application of prosecuting orders, are not to be effective until all legal recourse is exhausted; (4) that revision of the penalties can be carried out during the abnormal period, in order to accommodate them to the precepts effective prior to July 18.

5. Declaration of the permanence in office of all public employees, save for the provisions of the organic regulations of the various bodies already effective on July 18.

6. Suppression of all political intervention in the administration of justice. This will be dependent on the Supreme Tribunal, constituted just as it is, and will be ruled by the laws effective prior to February 16.

7. Immediate implementation of the law of Agrarian Reform.

8. Authorization of religious teaching, subject to the technical inspection of the state.

9. Formation of a government presided over by Diego Martínez Barrio, of which the Señores Alvarez (D. Melquiades), Portela, Sánchez Román, Venosa, Maura (D. Miguel), Ortega y Gasset, and Marañón form a part.

10. Preparation of a plan for national pacification and reconstruction.

11. Closure of the Cortes for six months and authorization to the Government to legislate within the lines of the approved program.

José Antonio later drew up a list of cabinet members for a government of "national pacification," which contained the following names:

President: Martínez Barrio

State: Sánchez Román [one of Spain's most eminent jurists]

Justice: Melquiades Alvarez [a conservative liberal on the nineteenth-century pattern]

War: the President

Marine: Miguel Maura

Interior: Portela Valladares

Agriculture: Ruiz Funes [a man with special qualifications in this field]

Finance: Ventosa [a very able Catalan financier]

Public Instruction: Ortega y Gasset

Public Works: Prieto

Industry and Commerce: Viñuales [a talented upper-middle-class businessman]

Health and Labor: Marañón [an eminent liberal physician, historian, and writer]⁴

Some days afterward Marín Echeverría, the Subsecretary of Agriculture, passed through Alicante, and José Antonio asked to be permitted to talk with him. According to his later testimony, the Falange leader told Echeverría:

I am watching Spain go to pieces. I can see that a triumph of one side not controlled by anyone else may bring a return to the Carlist wars, a regression in which all gains in the social, political, and economic order are carried away, the entry into a period of darkness and torpor.⁵

He asked to be allowed to fly to Burgos to mediate with the Nationalists, leaving his relatives in Alicante as hostages. Echeverría skeptically transmitted the offer to the central government, which refused to accept it.⁶

After the reconstitution of the Falange command early in September, serious efforts were made to secure the freedom of the *left*. The first plan centered around an elaborate political intrigue in Alicante that failed utterly in execution.⁷ The German consulate

was involved

in Alicante played a central role in this scheme. Von Knobloch, the consul, was an ardent Nazi. He told his superiors that

the liberation of José Antonio is vital to Spanish Fascism, which must bring about a National Socialist revolution of the people now, during the Civil War, since otherwise, after victory, reactionary elements . . . would hinder Franco in the execution of his program.⁸

Von Knobloch knew little about José Antonio, but he realized that the Falange leader was the only person who could face the clerical-monarchist-military elements in rebel Spain with any chance of success. He petitioned the Wilhelmstrasse for authority to exert diplomatic pressure on the Civil Governor of the province. However, the German Foreign Office had no desire whatever to become entangled with the personal fate of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and even the Nazi Party declined to back the Falange in such matters.* Von Knobloch's requests were bluntly refused.

Intrigue having failed, the Falange chiefs now initiated a more direct plan to secure their leader's release: they proposed to develop a commando squad for a lightning descent on Alicante. All the top Falangists gave their support to this project, disregarding the fact that José Antonio's return might give swaggers and opportunists cause for alarm:

Among some leaders of the Falange there was considerable fear of José Antonio because they knew that he would disapprove of their conduct and that they would be resoundingly removed from their positions.⁹

But no one could oppose an all-out attempt to rescue the *Jefe*. Even the Generalissimo cooperated, although with caution:

For Franco it was a very delicate question, given the scant political confidence which the Falange had in him. If he took charge of the operation and it failed, the responsibility would fall on his

* Ernst von Weizsäcker, chief political secretary to the Foreign Office, wrote on October 26, "There is no question of any authorization of Knobloch by the party to work there toward a National Socialist revolution in Spain." (*Germany and the Spanish Civil War*, Doc. No. 108, p. 120.)

shoulders. If he did nothing, he would be guilty by omission. . . . He left the initiative to the Falange and helped as much as he could.¹⁰

A training camp was set up outside Seville, but the whole plan came to nothing because of the technical complications involved and the general incapacity of the leadership.¹¹ It was necessary to turn again to political intrigue.

Early in October Hedilla went to Franco to ask for funds to support a trip to France by the Falangist writer Eugenio Montes. The money was readily granted, Montes' object being to get in touch with leading Spanish and French personalities in France and attempt to win their intervention on José Antonio's behalf. These efforts went on over a period of six weeks and involved such dissimilar figures as José Ortega y Gasset, the French cabinet member Yvon Delbos, and the wife of the Rumanian ambassador to Spain. Indalecio Prieto was the chief contact on the Republican side. But once more, it was impossible to achieve anything concrete. There seemed to be no direct way to influence the fate of the *Jefe*.¹²

The last person from the outside world to visit José Antonio was Jay Allen, an American reporter who interviewed him toward the end of October. It was clear that the Falange leader was poorly informed on current events; he asked Allen for news, saying that he could not be sure what was happening in the rest of Spain. The reporter parried by inquiring what José Antonio would say were he told that Franco's forces merely represented old conservative Spain fighting selfishly to retain its traditional privileges. José Antonio replied that he doubted whether that was true, but that if it was, the Falange had always worked for something very different. Allen then recounted the gory exploits (both true and false) of the Falange's execution squads in recent months. José Antonio said that he believed, and wanted to believe, that none of this was true, but he pointed out that his young men now had no real leader and had suffered great provocation. Reminded that he himself had introduced the term "pistol dialectics" in his founding speech, José Antonio retorted that the Left had struck first. He declared that if the Franco-led movement were in truth reactionary, he would withdraw the

Falange from it and would shortly end up in another prison. José Antonio still appeared confident of receiving his freedom within a short time. Allen thought his performance "a magnificent bluff."¹³

It was, indeed, for the personal drama of José Antonio was swiftly drawing to a close. As the Civil War grew bloodier and positions became more entrenched, pressure arose in certain quarters to settle the case of the Falange chieftain. The more extreme groups urged action against José Antonio, and several newspapers in the Republican zone began to agitate for a quick hearing. The decision to bring José Antonio to trial was taken by local political authorities. Jesús Monzón, the Civil Governor of Alicante, was a Communist and eager to be rid of the Falange leader. Prieto has written,

On learning that my agents had approached Don Miguel Primo de Rivera [José Antonio's younger brother, imprisoned with him] . . . in order to find testimony by José Antonio which would be unfavorable to the military rebellion, he [Monzón] ordered a police investigation of these efforts in order to see if it were possible—as he publicly confessed—"to have a political weapon against him."¹⁴

The formal charge brought against José Antonio was that of helping prepare the revolt against the Republic. His brother and sister-in-law were prosecuted with him. The preliminary arraignment took place November 13, 1936, before a "people's court" of the kind recently instituted by the Republican legal system. During the course of his defense José Antonio read his strongest editorials from *Arriba* condemning the Right and distinguishing it from the Falange. He pointed out that the military groups around Alicante had made no attempt to free him and noted that newspapers in rebel territory had published lists of cabinet members for the future rebel government without ever, to his knowledge, having included him. José Antonio declared himself innocent

by the very simple fact of being there in the jail, a situation that has been directly desired by the forces of the Right in rebellion. They wanted to take advantage of the spirit and combative energy of the boys of Falange Española, to thwart my control over them.¹⁵

He then went on to mention the letters and offers of mediation he had addressed to Echeverría and Martínez Barrio.

None of this really impressed the jury, and the verdict was almost a foregone conclusion. The only direct account of the final session was written by a local reporter:

Alien to the beehive of people packed together in the chamber, José Antonio Primo de Rivera reads a copy of the closing statement of the prosecutor, during a brief respite authorized by the Court. He does not bat an eyelash. He reads as though those pages dealt with some banal problem which did not concern him. Not the least trace of a squint or a raised eyebrow, not the slightest gesture alter his serene face. He reads intently, with full attention, without being distracted by the incessant buzzing of the chamber for an instant.

Primo de Rivera hears the courtroom ritual like a person listening to the rain. It would not appear that this affair, all this frightful affair, moves him. While the prosecutor reads, he reads, writes, and arranges his papers, all without the slightest affectation, without nervousness.

Margarita Larios hangs on the reading and on the eyes of her husband Miguel, who waits, perplexed by the reading, which must seem to him eternal.

The prosecutor reads on, before the emotion of the public and the attention of the jury.

José Antonio raises his head from his papers when the accusation against the prison officials is dismissed and he sees them depart freely amid the approving clamor of the public.

Yet that expression, not of surprise, but only, perhaps, of a brief hope, lasts no more than a moment.

Immediately he begins to read aloud, with tranquility and composure, his own closing statement, to which the public listens with close attention.

Margot raises a small handkerchief to her eyes, which are filling with tears.

Miguel listens, but he does not look at the prosecutor; his eyes are turned toward the face of his brother, which he searches avidly for an optimistic gesture or a sign of discouragement. But José Antonio continues to be a sphinx who only becomes animated when it is his turn to speak in defense of himself and the other two people on trial.

His remarks are clear and direct. Gesture, voice, and word fuse in a masterpiece of forensic oratory to which the public listens carefully, with evident signs of interest.

At last the sentence.

A split sentence, in which the jury has fixed the penalties according to the differing responsibilities of the accused.

And here the serenity of José Antonio Primo de Rivera was shattered before the eyes of his brother Miguel and his sister-in-law.

His nerves broke.

The scene that followed may be imagined.

His emotion, and the pithos of it, touched everyone.¹⁶

José Antonio was condemned to die before a firing squad. Miguel Primo de Rivera was sentenced to thirty years in prison and his wife, Margarita, to three years. The case was reasonably clear, although partially based on circumstantial evidence; death is the customary penalty for conspiring to overthrow the state. An appeal was made to the highest government authority, and the Republican cabinet itself reviewed the decision. The members of the cabinet were not of one mind, and some strongly opposed the execution of the Falange chief. But as so often happened with deliberations held under the Spanish Republic, the authorities dallied too long. According to Largo Caballero, the Prime Minister, they had not reached a final decision when word was received that the Governor of Alicante had already executed the sentence.¹⁷

On the nineteenth of November, José Antonio wrote his personal testament. He noted sadly the understanding and sympathy shown by some of those present in the courtroom when he listed what had been his ideals for the Falange; once more he lamented the political vacuum in which his party had been compelled to struggle. He was left to reflect on just how much his insistence on fascistic form was contributing to the nation's tragedy.*

However, José Antonio refused to cast any reproach on the current activities of the Falange or the conduct of the war. He retracted

* After José Antonio's death, Prieto collected the Falange leader's private papers and was impressed by what he found. Prieto later wrote: "The philosophical affirmation that there is some truth in all ideas has a long history. This comes to my mind on account of the manuscripts which José Antonio Primo de Rivera left in the Alicante jail. Perhaps in Spain we have not examined with serenity our respective ideologies in order to discover the coincidences, which were perhaps fundamental, and measure the divergences, probably secondary, in order to determine if the latter were worth being aired on the battlefield." (*Prologue to Palabras de ayer y hoy*, p. 17.)

the charges of betrayal made in his courtroom defense as mere tactical maneuvers. He could not see his way clear to condemn the failures and frustrations of his associates, nor even what may have seemed the treachery of his military allies. The outcome of the war was uncertain, and his personal opportunities were now over. José Antonio had always used his initiative as he thought best for a given moment. After writing a brief personal testament, he saw no point in saying more. His record he left without commentary.

During that next-to-last day of his life, José Antonio composed a dozen short notes to his closest relatives and associates.¹⁸ He also said good-bye to the members of his family still in Alicante.¹⁹ The execution took place shortly after dawn on November 20. José Antonio was placed beside four other political prisoners also condemned to die. His last words were ones of consolation to the men who were to be shot alongside him. There was no romantic flourish, only a laconic dignity.²⁰

The Civil War was very hard on the Primo de Rivera family. Besides José Antonio and his brother Fernando, killed in the August 22 prison massacre in Madrid, an uncle and five cousins perished in the conflagration of those years.²¹

XII

THE FALANGE MILITIA

DURING THE GREATER PART of the Civil War three-quarters of the Falange's energy was spent preparing militiamen for military and paramilitary duties. One of the basic problems of the party command in the early months was to give adequate organization and leadership to this effort. Most of the leaders of the Falange militia had no military training; and party militants were often sent to the front under the command of amateur volunteer officers. The leaders soon realized that unless they could somehow train party men for command at the front, their whole initiative might be lost.

In some regions, such as Aragón, the local chiefs had merely named professional officers to the militia. This was clearly necessary in certain areas near the front. But large numbers of auxiliaries had to be dispatched to fill sectors which the regular Army was incapable of manning. By September 7, 1936, seven weeks after the rebellion began, the Army reported that four thousand volunteers were serving with the Fifth Bandera of Aragón alone.¹ All these men were outside the direct control of party leadership. This would not be satisfactory if the Falange were to maintain some sense of political cohesion throughout the war effort.

In José Antonio's provisional agreement with Mola it had been stipulated that no more than one-third of the Falange forces in any given area would serve under regular Army command. However, the *Jeje Nacional* of Milizia, Luis Aguilar, was killed in Madrid at the beginning of the war, and his provisional successor, Agustín Aznar, did not concern himself with most of the technical, organizational problems of militia leadership. Aznar spent most of his time perpetrating acts of personal violence, avenging himself on enemies, developing plans to rescue José Antonio, and bolstering the position of his political clique.

When the military government began to talk of organizing a school for "provisional lieutenants," it became clear that Falange leaders had to develop some initiative in this respect or see their militia swallowed up by the regular Army. Despite the anti-Falange atmosphere prevailing at military headquarters in Salamanca, a fair number of the younger officers at the front were vaguely pro-Falangist. If the party leaders were capable of concerted action, they might yet be able to build up a fully autonomous and independent militia. The regular Army needed every man at the front and had no troops to spare for coercing the Falange's Junta de Mando.

Of the more important rebel officers, only Colonel (soon General) Yagüe sympathized with the goals of the Falange. He and the militia leaders from Valladolid (Girón, Vicén, Castelló) made several trips to Salamanca to convince the Junta de Mando of the need to train a real Falangist officer corps.² Hedilla apparently failed to see the full importance of this physical arm of the party. He first suggested that the Falange need not control posts above that of sergeant and could continue to draw its regular officers from the Army.

Much time was wasted, but the Junta de Mando was finally persuaded that something had to be done. The party decided to establish two small "military schools" for militia officers—one at Pedro Llen, near Salamanca, and the other near Seville. The Seville branch was staffed with the best instructors the organization could muster from its own ranks. The military teachers at Pedro Llen were loaned to the Falange through the offices of the German Embassy in Salamanca.³ The Junta hoped later to develop independent technical staffs in engineering, chemistry, medicine, and other fields.⁴

The Falange military schools were not a success. The most capable candidates were attracted by the benefits and prestige of the regular Army's officer courses. Many militiamen had hastened to marry and needed the increased pay offered by the regular Army. Since the new

* In a report of Dec. 10, 1936, the German ambassador, Faupel, showed considerable concern over the lack of military training in the Falange militia. (*Germany and the Spanish Civil War*, Doc. No. 148, pp. 159-62.)

† Meanwhile, an even more ambitious effort in this line by the *Requetés* was being brutally quashed by the military. The Carlist leader, Fal Conde, was summarily exiled from rebel Spain.

militants lacked political indoctrination, they were not always impressed by the Falange's ideological conflicts with monarchists and conservatives, and the spirit of comradeship prevailing among the rebel officers at the front diminished other differences. Most of the Falange youth from Burgos, Zaragoza, Valladolid, and Granada ignored the schools. The branch at Seville lasted through only a portion of its first course, and its directors proposed that the whole project be scrapped. They suggested that the Falange accept a regular quota of the assignments for the training of the Army's *alféreces provisionales*.³

The problem was partially solved on December 22, 1936, when Franco's Cuartel General decreed the unification of all civilian militia units. Henceforth, all auxiliary forces would be subject to regular military discipline and the official Army code. Their commanders would be regular officers.⁴

This was largely a paper unification. No commander was named for nearly a month, and most militia units continued to go their own way.⁵ The problems at military headquarters were too numerous to allow constant attention to the militia. The Pedro Ilen training school, such as it was, was allowed to continue, although on January 28, 1937, provision was officially made for the preparation of officer candidates from the militia in the regular courses of *alféreces provisionales*.⁶

It would be difficult to exaggerate the lack of direction and organization in the various Falange units. There was really none whatever. Everything was done on a local basis. *Centurias* were recruited and equipped by the provincial and regional leadership. No one in the Falange headquarters at Salamanca had any idea how many battalions were in existence, nor what their approximate location or relative strength might be. This was largely the fault of the men who constituted the national command. Their short-range views on how to handle the political situation, their devotion to petty detail in the party bureaucracy, combined with personal factionalism, prevented constructive action. Aznar demonstrated utter incapacity to the end. He had no broad understanding of the war and no general talent for organization. He was not interested in the real problems of

leadership, and saw no need to be. It would be impossible to explain his lack of initiative in strictly logical terms.

When the party fell into a profound internal crisis during the spring of 1937, even Aznar realized that something had to be done.⁷ So that he would not have to do it himself, some of the best militia leaders, such as Vicén and Castelló, were recalled from the front. They were given the task of preparing some sort of technical organization for the militia, and the work began in March. Before the Falange had a chance to accomplish much, its whole political position blew up. In the shambles, the entire upper class of officer candidates at Pedro Ilen was temporarily placed under arrest and their direction was taken over by the regular Army.⁸

On the whole, it cannot be said that the Falange militia ever achieved great efficiency as a fighting force. Very often "it was regarded almost with derision by the various units of the Army and by the Reds."⁹ Draft dodgers later joined the Falange to escape the full rigor of military discipline, and morale was uneven. Furthermore, the military pursued a definite policy of pre-empting the ablest units for the regular forces, leaving only the dregs for the party's *banderas*. Records of the Burgos Falange show that 9,120 volunteers joined the militia in that province prior to April 19, 1937. Four hundred and ninety of these were listed as casualties. Of the remainder, 4,232—the more valiant half—were co-opted by the Cuartel General for the regular Army. The other 4,378, the less skillful and combative, remained in the militia to help win for it a name as a third-rate fighting force.

Nonetheless, portions of the Falange troops acquitted themselves well on a variety of fronts, although there has since been much bickering between different military groups about dividing up the glories of the war. It is true that the Reguetés, man for man, were more aggressive and effective. However, the Falangists also served on occasion as shock troops. At the beginning of the conflict, when the rebels had difficulty manning their front, Mobile Brigades were formed in Aragón and Andalusia; these were mixed units composed of picked militiamen and trained Legionnaires.¹⁰ Several of them

were cut to pieces in the drive on Madrid.¹¹ The Falange of Aragón lent valiant assistance on the northeastern front. The resistance of a section of the Twenty-fifth Bandera at Alcubierre, on April 9, 1937, was especially noteworthy.¹² The Second Bandera acquitted itself well during the bloody struggle for Codo peak during August of that year.¹³ Other banderas distinguished themselves in the fighting at Teruel and Huesca.¹⁴ Several militia leaders won renown during the first year of fighting. Outstanding among them were Fernando Zamacola, of Extremadura, who received the Army's highest decoration,¹⁵ and the Castilians Giron and Fernández Silvestre.¹⁶

Owing to their disorganization, full records were never available regarding the total number of volunteers contributed by the Falange. At the end of 1936, the party claimed that fifty thousand militiamen were serving at the front, with thirty thousand more in the rear guard.¹⁷ A reversal of these figures might bring one nearer the truth, since the militia usually performed paramilitary duties not directly connected with front-line service. Conservative British observers noted the almost total predominance of the Falange in the rear guard.¹⁸ In April 1937 General Monasterio, the titular chief of the united militias, is said to have stated that the militias then contained 126,000 Falangists, 22,000 Requetés, and 5,000 men from other groups.¹⁹

The first recruits were drawn from such Falange centers as Valladolid, Burgos, Zaragoza, and Seville, and from outlying areas such as Morocco and the Canaries.²⁰ However, the party was soon accepting recruits from all available sources. Definite pressure was put on ex-Reds to "redeem" themselves through service at the front. A circular was sent through León and Zamora stating that voluntary enlistment for active duty was a clearer sign of loyalty than was ideological purity.²¹ The percentage of ex-Leftists in the militia was at least as high as in the regular Army organization. In Asturias, where the danger was great and the militia took part in heavy fighting, twenty per cent of the *centurias* were genuine Falangists, sixty per cent were ex-conservatives and political indifferents, and twenty per cent were ex-Reds.²²

Falange leaders also gave generously of their time in recruiting for other units. The Galician Battalion, which played so important

a role in Asturias, was originally recruited as a joint enterprise by the Falange and the Army.* Furthermore, the Falange provided volunteers for the Spanish units slated for incorporation into the picked Fascist corps of the Italian contingents serving in the war. In Extremadura many young ex-Communists were enrolled to aid the Italians in their drive on Málaga.†

All this activity was bound to have some effect. Although progressively denuded of its best elements and kept under the thumb of the regular Army, the Falange militia never entirely lost its identity. The better contingents succeeded in obtaining military commanders who were sympathetic to national syndicalism. It has been estimated that a very large proportion of the *alféreces provisionales*, who eventually led the victorious nationalist Army, began their service with Falange groups. Whatever the actual percentage, a goodly number of the tens and tens of thousands of men who passed through the Falange militia developed a certain sympathy with national syndicalist aspirations.²³ These *ex-combatientes* would be the party's only hope for political success on the morrow of victory.

* When Francisco Bravo, jefe territorial of Salamanca, went to Galicia at the end of the year to drum up more recruits, he was honored with the official Army rank of Major. (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*, No. 54, Dec. 12, 1936.)

† According to Ricardo Nieto, the Falange endeavored to provide two thousand recruits for the Italian "Fleccie Nere" during the winter of 1937. Hecilla says that he himself assisted General Gambara of the Italian General Staff with recruiting in Badajoz.

XIII

POLITICAL INTRIGUE IN SALAMANCA

AFTER THE MADRID OFFENSIVE of 1936 failed, the scope of the Civil War widened. Both sides realized that full military and political mobilization would be necessary for victory. However, Franco's headquarters was absorbed with military details and unable to bring order out of political confusion. The Nationalist government had no ideological orientation whatever. Although conflicting political interests were never permitted to interfere with military affairs, as they were in the Republican zone, they nonetheless presented a serious problem. As the war went on, it became clear that some sort of political doctrine was necessary, both to mobilize the civilian population and to provide a viable framework for government. The moderate Right had been discredited, but a political vacuum existed in its place.

The bulk of the officer corps was probably opposed to any non-military political force. Colonel Castejón, who led the first units in Franco's advance from the south, summed up their attitude toward the end of 1936; when asked whether he was a Falangist or a Requeté, he answered,

Franquista. Only that, which already suffices.... I am not informed of political plans... at the top. That notwithstanding, my personal opinion is that for a long time in Spain's future the delicate and pre-eminent role of being the just, balanced, serene, and imperative arbiter of public affairs is reserved for the Army.¹

On the other hand, many officers were attracted to some sort of nationalist reform movement and opposed to a mere regrouping of the old conservative interests.

During the first months of the *caudillaje* the Generalissimo's principal political adviser was his brother Nicolás. Nicolás devised a

scheme for creating a Franquista Party, based on the followers of the Commander-in-Chief, which could lend political support to the rebel war effort. This notion seems to have been sketched out along the lines of Primo de Rivera's old Unión Patriótica. It would have been a consolidation of all the safe, worn-out, conservative-reactionary forces in Spain, something in the nature of a revival and revitalization of the majority Right of the CEDA. Indeed, the idea seemed to attract some of the less constant members of the CEDA,* such as José Ibáñez Martín, Moreno Torres, the Conde de Mayalde, the journalist Joaquín Arrarás, and the outspoken priest Ignacio Menéndez-Reigada, who was soon to become the Generalissimo's household confessor and advocate of civil war as a sacred Catholic crusade.²

The stumbling block before the plan was that all these conservative-patriotic groups had become archaic in the violent and idealistic atmosphere of an ideological war. Nicolás Franco was not the most subtle of men, and he found it impossible to put across another mere conservative front. Evidently Don Nicolás was at first interested in bringing the now-numerous Falange into such a federation, but the party's leaders scoffed at the very idea. They were reluctant to have any dealings with the Generalissimo's brother, whom they considered, with some justification, a corrupt capitalist Mason.³

With the orthodox Right now *declassé*, an anti-Republican doctrine could come only from the two political movements actively supporting the rebel war effort: the *Comunión Tradicionalista* and the Falange. The continuity of the Falange, such as it was, had been irreparably shaken by the tragic events of 1936. Lack of effective leadership and the influx of ex-conservatives had destroyed the relative unity enjoyed by the obscure movement in 1935. After the decree that formally unified the various civilian militia groups in mid-December, the active members of Falange were bound to the code of military discipline whenever the need should arise. This severely undermined the independent political existence of the party.

To make matters worse, factionalism had begun to gnaw at the roots of the Falange command by the beginning of 1937. The reasons

* See Zugazagoitia, p. 241. The "orthodox" CEDA had tried to assemble the Right-wing members of the 1936 Cortes in Salamanca, but this was prohibited by the military.

were various. José Antonio had been shot in Alicante on November 20, and although many refused to accept the fact, the Falange was now formally without a head. The pressures of war and the effects of sudden expansion continued to disrupt the few surviving cadres of leadership. As we have seen, Manuel Hedilla did not have the qualities of an outstanding political leader. His personal approach was too open and simple, and lacked the suppleness and maneuverability so necessary in a hectic and disordered political situation. His control was not firm or comprehensive enough to hold the party organization together, and he did not have the cooperation of the other Falange leaders. Faupel, the German ambassador, shared the opinion most common in Salamanca:

Hedilla was a completely honest person, but by no means equal to the demands imposed on the leader of the Falange. He was surrounded by a whole crowd of ambitious young persons who influenced him instead of being influenced and led by him.⁴

As 1937 wore on, the Falange leaders became divided into three main factions. The first of these, and the strongest within the party, was the official group centered around Hedilla. Hedilla was not entirely lacking in personality, and indeed he had shown more initiative than some of his fellows had expected. When he finally made real efforts to re-establish discipline within the Falange, however, opposition developed. His adherents were characterized by vigorous social conscience and considerable revolutionary impulse. They were supported by the majority of *jefes provinciales*, at least in the northern sector of rebel Spain. Virtually all the party intellectuals supported Hedilla, including the ideological esthetes who comprised the Pamplona clique centered around the propagandizing priest Fermín Yzuriaga.

However, Hedilla was compromised by his close association with a number of pseudo-fascist journalists and intellectuals, who, as recent converts to *falangismo*, were already under a vaguely Nazi influence. Chief among them was Víctor de la Serna, who wrote for Juan March and had just returned from Germany a few months before the war began. Although Hedilla himself was by no means

pro-Nazi, there was a general lack of enthusiasm in his group for the less militant foreign fascist parties, such as the one in Italy; his supporters tended to look to Germany for technical training and support, if not precisely for ideological orientation.

The second faction was composed of the Falange legitimists, the followers of José Antonio in a narrow and legalistic sense. They refused to accept any change in the organization, command, or style of the Falange unless they could find it explicitly outlined in the previous speeches of the *jefe*. They opposed Hedilla's leadership without having anything very different to offer. They criticized Hedilla's independent initiative and said that he had no right to exercise real authority in the party, being only one among equals on the Junta de Mando.

Augustín Aznar was the principal representative of this group in Salamanca. His chief collaborator from the remnants of the Madrid Falange was José Antonio's former law clerk Rafael Garcérán, who had begun to intrigue incessantly against Hedilla's leadership. Garcérán managed to boost himself into the *jefatura territorial* of Salamanca at the end of 1936 and then ousted one of his rivals to become Secretary of the Junta de Mando. In January 1937, Tito Menéndez, a strong adherent of Garcérán's, was named Chief of Propaganda, under the *Jefe Nacional* of Press and Propaganda, Vicente Cadenas. More or less connected with Garcérán and Aznar were most of the leaders of the Andalusian Falange, which included José Antonio's "family" appointees, such as Sancho Dávila. In times of stress, any of Hedilla's other enemies could be counted on to join forces with this group.

During December 1936 a struggle for power took place in the Valladolid Falange, and Andrés Redondo was expelled from the leadership. In Old Castile, the party tended to fall under the domination of militia leaders from the front, notably Luis González Vicén and José Antonio Girón. These two veteran activists had finally emerged victorious from a two-year struggle with the Redondo brothers.⁵ Although relations between Hedilla and Girón had once been pleasant enough, having led to Girón's appointment as *inspector territorial* of Castile, Girón soon began to share Vicén's disenchantment with the political leadership of the party. They probably dis-

trusted the Germanophile intellectuals around Hedilla and questioned Hedilla's own capacity, and they may have feared that the Falange would lose its political independence in Salamanca. At any rate, the new Valladolid leadership tended to support the opposition attitude of Aznar and the Andalusians.

The third faction within the Falange was made up of newcomers, opportunists, ex-conservatives, clericals, monarchists, and the quasi-fascist technocrats of conservative corporatism. They had their own program, which was simply to take over the party altogether and recast it in a more conservative mold.

The existence of these factions seriously divided the Falange at the very time when the future political structure of Nationalist Spain was about to be determined. The more intelligent observers realized that the present political uncertainty in the rear guard could not endure. Since both the Falange and the *Comunión Tradicionalista* wanted different forms of authoritarian government, there would not be room for both groups in the state structure of the new nationalist Spain. Some sort of combination or elimination would be necessary, and if the politicians could not accomplish it, the Army would.

The Falangists had always declared that they would never compromise with the Rightist groups, which should rather disband and come to them. For their part, the Carlists were officially the most intransigent people in the world. Having maintained their anachronistic organization before the resistance of all modern Spain, they felt no need to compromise with a transient group of hypermodernistic fascists.

Formally, however, each party saluted the other as a valiant champion of the Spanish nation. Certain individuals went even further. The more political-minded among the Carlists, who had dragged the *Comunión* into the rebellion, realized that some kind of adjustment would be necessary. As early as December 19, 1936, Román Ayarzun wrote in *El Pensamiento Navarro*, under the caption "An Idea: REQUETE Y FASCIO":

Among the things I don't care for in fascism are its banner, whose colors are the same as those of the FAL; its uniform, which is so easily confused with that of Red militiamen (which can even give

rise to dangerous incidents on the battlefield); the habit of calling each other "comrade," a word that sounds ill (for having been prostituted by the Marxists, those Marxists who have hunted down with bullets so many valiant and noble Falangists in our cities); and other things, possibly of greater importance. But such objections should not prevent one from believing that there are many points of coincidence, so that one might judge it convenient to tighten the bonds of union, to soften the points of friction, to smooth over difficulties . . . instead of deepening more and more the divisions, aggravating more and more the bruises and the wounds.

Both forces have their roots in the people, both draw their support from the masses; in neither of them do the high bureaucratic interests have a place of privilege or positions of command. . . . Both forces confess their belief in God. Between them exists not the slightest fundamental incompatibility.

Reader . . . : Though you may be opposed to the idea [of union], consider how noble and patriotic is the goal.

There was a definite response from the most clerical sector of the Falange. On January 6, 1937, Fermín Yzuriaga declared in his paper's large New Year's supplement:

Regarding the tendency toward the formation of a single [political] force, it is undeniable. We think it will be produced by the Falange—whose volume and force of expansion is superior to that of any other party—assimilating those points of Traditionalism that are compatible with the necessities of the movement.

This was not particularly reassuring to the Carlists.

Such sentiments became particularly congenial to the conservatives, clericals, monarchists, *Acción Española* men, and assorted opportunists who lurked on the fringes of the party. They attempted to use the vague possibilities of a Falange-*Carlist entente* to attract the support of the *José Antonistas* who resented the Hedilla leadership. Among the most active proponents of a new Falange combination were the professional men who had infiltrated the party's Technical Services, particularly José Luis Escario, Pedro González Bueno,

Agreement was impossible, since neither side would give in. Final conversations were held on February 23 and 27. A Regency under Franco was also discussed, but no progress was made. The only understanding reached during these meetings was set forth in a private note stipulating that neither party would have anything to do with any other political group and that both would oppose any government embracing a third political party. The negotiations closed with a letter from the Conde de Rodezno designed to leave the way open for future arrangements of a practical nature.⁸

When the members of the Junta Política first learned that Dávila and his entourage were on their way to Lisbon, reactions were mixed. Some wanted to lend them a private automobile and otherwise assist their efforts; others spoke of expelling the trio from the party, or even of having them shot.⁹ Hedilla himself did not learn of the intrigue until it was too late to stop it. His inactivity throughout the whole affair diminished his prestige, especially among political observers at military headquarters.¹⁰

After this, Hedilla became touchy about any kind of cooperation undertaken with the Carlists without his consent. On February 26 he deprived the *jefe provincial* of Burgos of his party shirt for one day because the latter had permitted Falange militia to alternate with Requetés in an honor guard for the Virgen del Pilar in Zaragoza.¹¹

After the beginning of March plans for unifying the party system were rife in rebel Spain, and intrigues multiplied on all sides. Many political formations finally gave up, disbanded, and either tacitly or explicitly threw in their lot with the corporatist new order of the conservative-clerical "technocrats." On March 8 Renovación Española announced its own dissolution and officially petitioned for unification of parties. At a major meeting in Salamanca, Antonio Goicoechea declared:

Do some organizations concern themselves with the humble and needy, bearing the ideal as a banner? Yes. Yet I say that the solidarity of the war has increased the capacity for sacrifice of the powerful in favor of the humble classes, and that this is a postulate of all the political organizations.

[We require] a sole party, or better, a patriotic front like that which exists between us and I say that we will carry out all the

sacrifices necessary that this may be attained. . . . A totalitarian system . . . in a purely organic state, in which all have a role to fill.¹²

The abuse of power by Falange leaders like José Moreno, José Muro, Arcadio Carrasco, and Agustín Aznar weakened the prestige of the party in the eyes of non-Falangists. When party bosses commanded large cars and drove about accompanied by squads of five or six men armed with submachine guns, the general impression could hardly be favorable. Conditions varied from region to region, but the requisitions and insolence which now marked much of the leadership augured ill for the moral influence of the party. Furthermore, there were all sorts of low-level swaggers who made themselves resented and feared in rebel territory. They made people forget the hard work and modesty of some of the most important men in the party.

The bulk of the civilian population understood that the Falange was an organization with great social demands, but the nature of the demands remained vague in their minds, as it was vague in the minds of most Falangists. The great mass of the party members had virtually no ideological training, even in 1937. Only another José Antonio might have retained some control over this amorphous mass. It was entirely beyond the reach of the less competent men on the Junta de Mando.

Counteragents were now working for both the Cuartel General and the conservatives who were trying to engineer a new political arrangement. They strove to increase the inner tensions among the Falange leadership in order to capture the movement more easily. Although Manuel Hedilla had early escaped from the control of the "legitimists" who hoped to use him, some of the writers and intellectuals in his coterie exercised an equally undesirable influence. Insofar as one may distinguish fact from fiction, the *éminence grise* of these elements was Víctor de la Serna, the thoroughly unscrupulous journalist already mentioned. He evidently wrote a good number of the fine-sounding addresses delivered by Hedilla during the winter of 1936-37. He did all he could to impress the Falange chief with the possibilities open to him, flattering his talents (modest though they were) in the hope of leading him to believe that the moment

was right for him to assume José Antonio's vacant role. There is little doubt that Serna was also connected with other groups in the political maneuvering then going on in Salamanca. It has even been suggested that he was bribed to incite Hedilla to push his personal leadership to the point where a split in the Falange command would become imminent.¹³

By the spring of 1937 the political direction of the party had fallen into total confusion and uncertainty. A unified direction, with adequate moral and physical authority behind it, was essential if the Falange were not to fall under its own weight. As the establishment of a new *jefatura única* became a practical necessity, the struggle to control its appointment was carried on by the three factions dividing the party.

The intransigent followers of José Antonio held that the election of a new *Jefe Nacional* was illegal, since the death of José Antonio, according to their peculiar manner of reasoning, had not been adequately verified. Their only plan for providing authoritative leadership was to secure the exchange of Raimundo Fernández Cuesta from his cell in a Republican prison. Having been Secretary-General of the party before the war, Fernández Cuesta was next in line for the apostolic succession. That he was lacking in real executive capacity did not seem to disturb those who advocated this move.

The intellectuals around Hedilla, joined by the northern *jefes provinciales*, supported the chairman of the Junta de Mando as a worthy candidate for *Jefe Nacional*. Basically, their plan was to elect Hedilla and hope that a tightening of the reins of party authority would make it possible to steer the Falange into a position strong enough to permit effective bargaining with the Cuartel General. Some of the militia leaders, especially those from Valladolid, favored a stern and military candidate, such as the "Falange General," Yague.¹⁴

The new Falangists, conservative and opportunistic, wanted to remake the party by nominating a new leader brought in from outside. Even some of the Old Falangists turned against the official party. Prominent among them was Joaquín Miranda, the *jefe provincial* of Seville, who had become the unofficial *jefe territorial* during the spring of 1936, only to be demoted after the return of Sancho

Dávila. Nursing personal grievances against the Falange leadership, he joined forces with those who conspired to overthrow it. Miranda was seconded by Ernesto Giménez Caballero, the bizarre esthete who had sown the seed of national syndicalism among the more unbalanced sectors of the Spanish intelligentsia. Having dropped out of the movement only to have his request for re-admittance refused by José Antonio, Giménez Caballero was also looking for vengeance. The only difficulty encountered by the various factions was to settle on a candidate. Almost everyone wanted some kind of general, but they did not all agree on which general. The Generalísimo himself was the logical choice, though some of the military would have preferred Mola.

Franco badly needed a political lord chamberlain to help him construct a civil government for the Army dictatorship. His time was largely occupied with military affairs, and his brother Nicolás had met with little success as a political adviser. Don Nicolás had failed completely to get a "Franquista Party" off the ground, and he was inept at handling relations with the Falange and the Carlists.

The political vacancy in Franco's household was filled during March, when Ramón Serrano Suñer, the Generalísimo's brother-in-law, arrived in Salamanca after a long journey from the Dutch Embassy in Madrid, to which he had escaped the previous October.¹⁵ Before falling temporarily into Republican hands, Ramón Serrano had built up a promising political collaboration with Franco, having served as the Generalísimo's chief civilian contact in metropolitan Spain during the troubled spring of 1936. To make things even more convenient for him, relations within the Franco family had become strained over differences between the wives of Francisco and Nicolás.¹⁶ Since the Generalísimo's wife was the sister of Serrano's spouse, the form of the new power alignment could be easily foreseen.*

Besides being very ambitious, Serrano was easily the shrewdest

* This was far from the first occasion, although certainly the most significant one, on which his wife's influence made Serrano's opportunity. He had been aided in his bid for freedom at Madrid by her acquaintance with Belarmino Tomás, the Socialist leader. (Antonio de Lizarrta, *Los vascos y la República española*, pp. 124-27.)

politician to have appeared in Salamanca during the war. His former post as head of the JAP had given him extensive contacts among the Right. He was also acquainted with members of *Acción Española* and the *Comunión Tradicionalista*, and his former friendship with José Antonio even lent him some slight standing with the Falangists.¹⁷ As the days passed, Franco tended more and more to place political affairs in his hands.

Personally, Serrano was emotional and highly subjective. He had few friends. He was badly shaken by the execution of his two brothers in Republican Spain. He had barely escaped the same fate, and for some time he felt as though he were virtually in mortgage to the dead, liable to them for an immense debt. Although this pious mood did not last, it provided an initial orientation for his energies. He viewed with immense scorn the "tribe" of narrow opportunists around Franco, which included Don Nicolás and the Foreign Minister Sangroniz, among others. He had more respect for members of *Renovación Española*, the Rodezno clique, and his own CEDA, but he considered their ideas insufficient for the twentieth century. Serrano knew that some of the generals, notably Mola, were looking forward to the permanent establishment of a military government. He, on the contrary, believed such a government would prove too superficial to last.

Serrano was perhaps the only man at rebel headquarters with a clear notion of what he wanted to do. He wanted to construct a new Spanish state on a juridical basis, essentially authoritarian, which could prevent any future democratic excess like the one that had taken the lives of his two brothers. At the same time, the new state was not to resemble the ineffective monarchist creations of the past. A strong form of organized corporatism, resting on a solid conservative base, would have to be installed in order to dissipate social tensions and hold the country together as a single national unit.¹⁸

Ramón Serrano had been a close friend of José Antonio's from college days, but he had carefully resisted the latter's persistent requests to join the Falange. The national syndicalists had always seemed to him too demagogic and superficial, a radical party based on an insecure foundation. But after surveying the situation in Salamanca, he decided that there could be but one solution, for there was

only one modern corporatist party with any popular support. Its only competitor, Carlism,

suffered from a certain lack of political modernity. On the other hand, a good part of its doctrine was included in the thought of the Falange, which furthermore had the popular social revolutionary content that could permit nationalist Spain to absorb ideologically Red Spain, which was our great ambition and our great duty.¹⁹

At that time the Falange was filled "even with masses coming from the Republic and [Anarcho-] syndicalism. . . . Its leaders were old provincial chiefs, usually little known, and extremely young squad leaders, in many cases merely improvised."²⁰ The Falange must be reorganized on a firm, conservative basis, which would then qualify it to become the state party of nationalist Spain. In this way Serrano hoped to realize the aims of the "true" José Antonio, which he took to be José Antonio the nationalist and party leader, not José Antonio the aspiring revolutionary.

To advance this scheme for reorganization, Serrano made contact with people of every political stripe. The talents of intellectuals from *Acción Española* and the initiative of conservative-minded planners from the party's Technical Services were the most convenient tools. Serrano conferred with young Gamero, with González Bueno, with Alfonso García Valdecasas.²¹ Valdecasas had by this time returned to the Falange and was one of the leading proponents of readjustment.²²

A policy of political unification was being strongly urged both by the military and by the Axis powers. The officers were tried of political parties, and the more vocal among them demanded their abolition. Since the Army had started the war and tightly controlled its half of the country, it would doubtless get what it wanted. Furthermore, the Germans made no secret of their attitude. Both to the Falangists and to the rebel government, Faupel declared that a strong party-state was needed immediately.²³ Although no direct pressure was applied, the qualitative importance of German aid made it inevitable that hints so blunt would have their effect. The Italians were also known to favor the same step, though their ambassador was more cautious and uncertain in his advice.²⁴

Reform and reconstruction had been loudly proclaimed by the rebels from the beginning. The Generalissimo had declared to the world that although the nationalists proposed a military dictatorship, a plebiscite would be taken; he added that unions would be sanctioned if they did not preach class warfare. Franco now promised

All possible reforms within the capacity of the nation's economy. We balk at nothing that the country's economy can stand.

No use in giving poor land to poor peasants. It is not land alone that counts, but money to work it. Another twenty-five years will see the break-up of the big estates into small properties and the creation of a bourgeois peasantry.²⁵

As the war continued, the military stepped up such propaganda. Queipo said to the foreign press: "We realize that the problem of class hatred can be solved only by the removal of extreme class distinctions. We realize, also, that the wealthy, by means of taxation, have to contribute toward a more equitable distribution of money."²⁶ Mola publicly declared his belief in a "representative" corporatism.²⁷

Such statements seemed compatible with some kind of watered-down national syndicalism, and some of the more politically astute provincial leaders of the Falange were coming to accept the inevitable. Confronted with the present vacuum of authority within the party and the complete monopoly of power by the military from without, they began to believe that the only viable policy was to unify the existing political groups under the only real leader then enjoying public confidence—the Generalissimo. Andrés Redondo had already said this during the autumn of 1936, before his ouster from Valladolid. Other leaders privately thought the same while remaining outwardly loyal to the Junta de Mando.

An independent initiative in this direction developed on the part of Ladislao López Bassa, a Falangist and a lieutenant of engineers from the garrison of Mallorca. He propagated the notion of a great Falange of all the nationalist parties under the direction of Franco, and visited Falange groups in various parts of Spain.* These gestures were assisted by dissidents like Miranda and Giménez Caballero.

* He was accompanied by a cousin of José Antonio's, one Doctor Orbanjea. Orbanjea, a strange individual, was an accomplished children's specialist who had won a gory reputation for himself in the Falange terrorism on Mallorca.

Handwritten note: "López Bassa" with a checkmark.

Meanwhile, Hedilla was urged by his backers to seize the initiative before it was too late. He was even invited several times to the home of General Faupel, who further encouraged him to take the lead for the Falange.²⁸ Given such a strong incentive, Hedilla met secretly with several Carlist leaders in a small town in Alava province. They realized both the Carlists and the Falangists might soon be presented with a formal degree of fusion by the Cuartel General. It was still impossible to resolve their mutual differences, but it was agreed that none of those present would accept a post in a party created by military fiat.²⁹

Meanwhile, in conjunction with Serrano, López Bassa took up residence in Salamanca and worked hard to impress upon Hedilla the importance of unifying all parties under Franco. He intimated that although the Generalissimo might become the nominal head of the unified movement, Hedilla would undoubtedly be made Secretary-General and given extensive powers with which to implement the national syndicalist program. He implied that the independence and internal organization of the Falange would be respected. Although Hedilla never talked directly with the Cuartel General, López Bassa was presented to him as its official representative, and the Falange leader was partly convinced by his talk. He began to speak of Franco with enthusiasm, whereas he had hitherto made it clear that he was no partisan of the Generalissimo.³⁰

While Franco's entourage persevered in these political soundings, they also saw the advantages of promoting further confusion and division within the party, which would retard the growth of possible nuclei of resistance among the veterans. To help overcome the present state of disunion, Falange "legitimists" continued to urge the exchange of Fernández Cuesta. When Hedilla was persuaded to speak to Serrano in this regard, Serrano made the most of the situation by declaring that such a transfer would be morally inexcusable, since there were so many other people of equal or greater rank languishing in the Republican zone.³¹

Opposition to Hedilla within the party grew apace. The "legitimists" were determined to take nominal control from his hands, for they feared that he was planning to make himself *Jefe Nacional* under military authority. They wanted to seize control of the party first, so that no single *Jefe* could be proclaimed. Their only concrete aim

seems to have been to preserve the party in a continuing state of political limbo, but under their own personal command.

When Hedilla expressed intentions of convoke⁸¹ a National Council, the dissidents made their move at a surprise meeting of the Falange leadership called on April 12. Dávila, Aznar, and Garcerán immediately went to Hedilla's office and read a series of charges against him, among which were the following:

Manifesting reserve with the official Junta, to which he has never given a full account of his activities, conversations, and political leanings, of which persons alien to the Falange command were informed. . . .

Submitting docilely to the unofficial Junta, while acting with brusqueness and hostility toward the official Junta. To the former belong opportunists and dangerous men.

Making inordinate and improper propaganda for himself in order to gain greater authority than is due him, and *orienting his activity* toward the creation of personal followers, employing for this task otiose collaborators who have fabricated articles and speeches of all kinds.

Engaging in ultimate treason against the Junta de Mando, in order to free himself from its control. . . . Excluding from this forthcoming National Council the names of important comrades whose policies he thinks are opposed to his own, and calling instead only those whom he supposes to be his friends, . . . and therefore capable of making him *jefe* of the Movement. Among these "friends" are several implacable enemies of José Antonio, traitors to our organization who constantly disfigure it, whose action became so dangerous that an agreement had to be made in a meeting of the Junta de Mando, held in March of this year, to prohibit him [Hedilla] from speaking in public without express permission from the Junta itself.

Showing manifest ineptitude, heightened by illiteracy, which has caused him [Hedilla] to fall into the hands of the men most dangerous for our Movement, men of whom he feels himself a prisoner.⁸²

They even accused Hedilla of plotting with Mola to establish a new rebel government.⁸³

According to the party's statutes, if it were necessary for the *jefe Nacional* to absent himself from Spanish territory for any length of time, the organization would be directed by a triumvirate until his

return. Basing their action on this grotesquely inappropriate rule, the rebels simply declared that Hedilla was deposed and would be replaced henceforth by a triumvirate chosen by and composed of themselves. The self-appointed triumvirs were Sancho Dávila, Agustín Aznar, and José Moreno (a former *jefe provincial* of Navarre whom Hedilla had eased into a new position). The opportunistic intriguer Rafael Garcerán became the official secretary for the triumvirate, which announced that it would call a special National Council within fifty days, adding that ten seats on the Council would be held vacant for Falange leaders presumably still detained in Republican territory.

Having thus elevated themselves, the self-styled directors of the party hurried to Franco's headquarters to report on their action. They were kept waiting for some time, but the Generalísimo finally received them in a cordial mood, congratulated them, and advised them to do nothing rash.⁸⁴ Next, they delivered a dispatch announcing the new party directorate to the National Radio for broadcast.

The triumvirs at once began to call in supporters from nearby provinces to strengthen their position. Not all of the "supporters" were happy about the move. When Dionisio Ridruejo, the *jefe provincial* of Valladolid, was called to Salamanca and advised that the rebels had acted to forestall a sellout by Hedilla, he protested that the whole business had been an enormous mistake. He believed that what the party needed above all else in that perilous moment of its existence was a united front; and even though old Falangists like Miranda and López Bassa were making deals with the Cuartel General, it was necessary to unite behind Hedilla in order to achieve the best bargain possible.

After recovering from the shock of this *coup* against him, Hedilla apparently decided to attempt a reaffirmation of his leadership, in which he was strongly encouraged by members of his entourage. The proclamation by the triumvirs had not yet been broadcast by the National Radio, and events were hanging fire. On the night of April 14, some sixty hours after the rebellion, José María Goya, a young militia leader and National Counselor of the SEU, asked permission to try to patch things up. Goya, although one of Hedilla's supporters, was also a personal friend of Dávila's, the two having taken shelter together in the Cuban Embassy at Madrid. He proposed to Hedilla

that he go to Dávila's house and attempt to persuade the latter to change his attitude and come to terms. Hedilla agreed, adding that Goya should be careful to tread lightly. Goya was accompanied on this mission by another militiaman, Daniel López Puertas, and three companions.

When the group arrived at Dávila's *pensión*, Goya went ahead to talk with Dávila alone. The discussion had hardly begun when it erupted into a brawl; who started the fighting cannot be determined with complete accuracy. A series of shots rang out across the second floor of the building. When the firing ceased López Puertas and his three companions were in control of the situation. They had disarmed Dávila, his male bed partner, and his bodyguards, but Goya and one of Dávila's escorts named Peral lay dead. Civil Guards, attracted by the firing, soon arrived and arrested most of those involved.³⁵

This fatal incident played directly into the hands of Serrano Súñer and his collaborators. A howl went up from the General Staff about disorder in the rear guard, which further discredited the Falange with the Army. The affair also seemed to remove all possibility of the Falange leaders agreeing on a common position with regard to the unification about to be thrust upon them.

Within twenty-four hours Dávila, Aznar, Garceraín, and their immediate supporters had been placed under arrest for inciting civil disorder. The way was now clear for the reassertion of Hedilla's leadership. On Saturday, April 16, the chairman called an impromptu session of the Junta de Mando. Dávila and Aznar were temporarily released from jail so that all the members might be present. Hedilla proposed that if his leadership were being questioned, it should be put to a formal vote. Of the seven Junta members, Dávila, Aznar, Moreno, and Jesús Muro voted against Hedilla; only Francisco Bravo and José Sáinz voted for him.³⁶ The Junta de Mando had obviously broken up.

The next day, after Dávila and Aznar had been sent back to jail, Hedilla posted urgent notices calling a formal session of the Falange National Council for Sunday, April 18. All the available National Councilors appointed in 1935 and 1936 were summoned, as well as several others whose precise status was in doubt.³⁷ The two-page circular announcing the meeting declared that its object was to clear up

questions relating to appointments, dissolve the Junta de Mando, and elect a *Jefe Nacional*. The *Jefe*, it stated, would be named with the understanding that he would serve only until the possible reappearance of José Antonio (in whose death many still refused to believe); should the Secretary-General, Fernández Cuesta, be returned to rebel Spain, the Council would be reconvened to reconsider the problem of legitimacy.³⁸

The National Council met on the morning of April 18 in a heavy atmosphere, with the embalmed corpse of Goya, now dead more than seventy-two hours, lending a macabre touch to the scene. There was by no means a feeling of comradeship among those present.* The first six topics discussed dealt with petty points of party personnel and bureaucracy. Only after wrangling for some time over which *jefe* ought to be admitted under what status, or censured for exceeding his nominal authority, could the Council get down to business.³⁹

After Hedilla had aired the charges of the dissidents against him, Jesús Muro said that it would be better to forget internal differences and consider the solemnity of the occasion. He referred to Goya's cadaver, which heightened the unreal quality of the meeting. Hedilla then stood up once more to say that he had just been told in the Cuartel General that the Generalísimo was planning to take charge of the command of the Falange, possibly that very night. This news, though not unexpected, had a sobering effect. Francisco Bravo proposed that Hedilla be delegated to talk with Franco about the terms for a unification and reorganization of parties.

With that, the Council finally proceeded to the order of the day, which was the election of a new *Jefe Nacional*. The results of the voting were as follows: 8 blank votes; 1 vote each for Miguel Merino, Martín Ruiz Arenado, Jesús Muro, and José Sáinz; 10 votes for Manuel Hedilla.[†] Only ten of the twenty-two present voted for Hedilla. There was really no alternative leader, but some members of the Council thought it foolhardy to defy the Cuartel General by

* Andino relates that José Sáinz tried to persuade José Moreno, the only one of the new "triumvirate" who had not been arrested, to give up his pistol. Moreno was fearful, and required a good deal of persuasion.

† Merino was the *jefe territorial* of Lower Aragon, and Ruiz Arenado was the *jefe provincial* of Seville.

electing their own *Jeje* when a complete loss of independence threatened.⁴⁰

The new Falange Chief went to call on the Generalissimo that same evening. According to Hedilla, Franco congratulated him on the election but refused to discuss more fundamental matters. Later that night the General made a short speech to a crowd gathered outside his balcony window, and Hedilla also appeared for a few moments. This touched off a small demonstration by Falange sympathizers, who chanted "Hedilla—Franco."⁴¹ The incident created great suspicion at military headquarters.

The following day, April 19, Hedilla reconvened the National Council. The party was already engulfed by the shadow of Franco, but the Falange leaders went ahead with their title-making. A three-man board was appointed to investigate the recent internal revolt, and then the delegates proceeded to elect a new four-man Junta Política. Apparently incapable of divining the real intentions of the Generalissimo, the delegates proceeded to discuss the significance of his speech the night before. They decided that clemency ought to be asked for those being held as prisoners as a result of the Goya affair. Finally, in a last attempt to rise to the demands of the occasion, the delegates to the last independent National Council of the Falange Española decreed that no Council member was entitled to a bodyguard of more than two men. The old Falange went out with only a whimper.

That night the Cuartel General delivered its *coup de grâce*. Serrano Suñer had been charged with the preparation of a decree unifying the Falangists and the Requetés. According to Serrano, both Mola and Queipo had already been consulted about the text, which was released at midnight on April 19, 1937. From that hour forward, the Falangists and Carlists were fused as the official party of the new Spanish state.*

The new political formation was to be called Falange Española

* "It was, in essence, a unilateral act by Franco, even though there were some previous negotiations with elements of the parties concerned, whose most outstanding representatives had been notified of the intentions of the Cuartel General, which nonetheless did not decide to complete what was laboriously being prepared until prompted by the events that occurred in Salamanca during the first days of April." (Thus, in a long breath, Ramón Serrano Suñer in *Entre Hendaya y Gibraltar*, pp. 30-31.)

Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista, a very clumsy title reflecting its eclectic composition.⁴² The pragmatic intentions behind the new party were made clear in the official decree:

The Movement that we lead today is truly that: a movement more than a program. And, as such, it is in the process of elaboration, subject to constant revision and improvement, as reality may counsel. It is not rigid or static, but flexible. Therefore, as a movement it has undergone different stages [of development].

... Abandoning that preoccupation with doctrine, we bring an effective democracy, bearing to the people what really interests them: seeing and feeling themselves governed [by men with] an aspiration for integral justice, as much in the moral order as in the socio-economic realm.⁴³

Within forty-eight hours Falangists everywhere had dispatched fervent statements of allegiance to the policy of the Caudillo; they entertained no thoughts of rebellion. The political weakness of the party was never more dramatically exposed. The weak propaganda for Hedilla had never compared with the overwhelming build-up given Franco by the government press. At the moment of unification Manuel Hedilla, the mechanic from Santander, was entirely forgotten.

In Salamanca, Hedilla's support had been completely swept away. Mistakenly believing that there was something to negotiate, he had thought that the new Falange hierarchy would be respected. But there was nothing to negotiate, and no one had any intention of respecting the leaders of his party.

Franco had declared himself the *Jeje Nacional*. As of the moment, there was to be no Secretary-General. Hedilla was named chairman of the new Junta Política of the FET, which was then in process of being organized. That is, Hedilla was expected to find solace as the first among equals on an honorary advisory board composed of opportunists and pliable Carlists selected by the Generalissimo and his brother-in-law.⁴⁴ Immediate executive administration would be handled by a new Political Secretariat headed by López Bassa.⁴⁵

Hedilla refused the proffered position. For three days military headquarters cajoled and threatened him, but he remained adamant.⁴⁶ Representatives of the Axis powers endeavored to ease the tension by

suggesting that Hedilla make a professional visit to one of their countries, but such a solution was not desired by the Cuartel General. On April 25 Hedilla was arrested. To get the uncooperative Falangist out of the way, the political directorate behind the fusion of parties apparently concocted the charge that Hedilla had inspired a plot against the Caudillo. Without further ado, he was handed over to a military judge and placed in solitary confinement.

Among other things, Hedilla was accused of sending telegrams to all the provincial chiefs asking them to assemble in Salamanca to put pressure on the government. There is no real evidence such a telegram was ever sent. José Sáinz has since testified that word was received in Salamanca that, owing to erroneous interpretations of the decree of unification, Falangists and Requetés had begun to snarl each other's chain of command. The only telegrams sent out read as follows: VIEW OF POSSIBLY ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION UNIFICATION DECREES OBEY NO ORDERS SAVE THOSE RECEIVED THROUGH DIRECT COMMAND HIERARCHY.⁴⁷

The Generalissimo may or may not have been convinced of the truth of these charges. Whatever the case, Hedilla says that he was offered his release if he would accept the post on the new Junta Política. Having proved steadily recalcitrant, Hedilla was swiftly convicted of rebellion by a military court and sentenced to death on two counts. Those Falange leaders who remained at liberty mobilized whatever influence was available to help their vanquished chief. General Yagüe was asked to petition on behalf of the military, and the German ambassador even made a formal intercession with Franco.* Franco apparently remained unmoved, but Serrano Suñer finally decided to intervene. He probably knew all along that Hedilla was innocent of any "plot," but he had no desire to prevent the removal of one of the principal Falange "radicals." However, he did

* German pressure was a secondary influence in saving Hedilla from execution. Faupel had earlier suggested to Franco that it would be better to leave a civilian as *jefe Nacional* of the new party.

After Hedilla's arrest, Faupel did what he could for the man he called "the only real representative of the workers." However, his request for permission to make a formal protest was denied by the Wilhelmstrasse. (*Germany and the Spanish Civil War*, Doc. No. 243, pp. 267-70; Doc. No. 286, pp. 312-13; Doc. No. 296, p. 319.)

ask Franco to commute the double sentence of death to life imprisonment, which might make the remaining Falange chiefs more pliable. Hedilla was promptly shipped off to the Canary Islands and placed once again in solitary confinement.

Many lesser Falangists were caught up in the maelstrom and arrested, but none were actually shot. Ricardo Nieto, the *jefe provincial* of Zamora, was sentenced to twenty years and one day as an "intrinsigent" and an accomplice in the "Hedilla plot"; this came about even though he had not voted for Hedilla and had sent an immediate pledge of support to Franco. It seems that in the confusion and excitement of those days a young Falangist from Zamora had informed military headquarters that his *jefe provincial* was working to thwart the unification decree.⁴⁸ Nieto had also been blacklisted for declaring in a public café that when the war was over the Falange militia would be entitled to give the country its new political orientation.

Virtually all Falange leaders of any importance were detained by Civil Guards or military police for a few days, as a precautionary measure. Most of them were swiftly released, but some of the political stalwarts of the party were strongly encouraged to go off to the fighting front for the duration of the war.

As for the other side in the internal Falange dispute, a government War Council eventually proclaimed their "absolute innocence." They were even commended for their "patriotic spirit" and "civic virtues" in enduring a long test of their feeling for the *Patria*. Dávila, having been something of a friend of Serrano Suñer's, was released and sent back to Seville. Garcerañ did not fare so well, having been accused of a clandestine relationship with Indalecio Prieto. Given his penchant for intrigue and Prieto's subsequent interest in fishing among troubled waters in the Falange, this is quite possible. Garcerañ was not freed for some time and was permanently eliminated from rebel politics.

Pilar Primo de Rivera, being a cousin of Aznar's fiancée, attempted to intervene on behalf of the militia leader. Aznar was soon released, but he was never considered fully reliable, even though he was later honored with a position on the Junta Política.⁴⁹

The only Falange leader to manage a clean break with the mili-

tary regime was Vicente Cadenas, the *Jefe Nacional* of Press and Propaganda. He happened to be in San Sebastián, near the French border, when the storm broke. Rather than risk the same fate that befell Hedilla, Nieto, and several others, he fled across the Pyrenees and spent the remainder of the Civil War in Italy.⁵⁰

All the Falangists condemned in this affair were eventually reprieved, most of them within two or three years. The one who suffered most was Manuel Hedilla. At first it was evidently hoped that he would rot to death in prison. For four years he was allowed to see virtually no one save Jesuit confessors. During that time he was often denied food, and at one point his weight dropped to almost eighty-five pounds.⁵¹ His wife went insane over the unjust fate meted out to her husband and later died in an asylum. But Hedilla managed to survive. He may have been shortsighted, gullible, and bereft of political talent, but he had an iron constitution and a very strong moral will. After more than four years of solitary confinement, Manuel Hedilla remained relatively healthy—and more independent than ever. The government finally relented, and in mid-1941 he was moved to comfortable quarters at Mallorca.⁵²

The average supporter of the military government received the news of unification with considerable relief and even with joy. Few people beyond the clique at the Gran Hotel in Salamanca had any taste for politics during those months. It was felt that a unification of the two most active civilian groups would solve the political problems of nationalist Spain and close its ranks for the winning of the war. Some professional politicians might murmur, but that was only to be expected.

At the front, news of the unification was accepted by Falange militiamen almost with indifference. The nominal structure of the party meant nothing to them, and since they had little grasp of ideology the politics of the rear guard seemed unreal. During 1937 the Republican war machine began to show signs of real efficiency, and the militia had to concentrate more effort than ever on military affairs.

Everyone who thought seriously about politics had realized that some sort of party unification behind the rebel war effort could be

expected. Military control of the Nationalist government made it certain. The *caudillo* heritage from nineteenth-century Spanish politics and the military atmosphere enforced by the war made the leadership of Franco inevitable.

Some Falangists had already admitted this, and the fusion was generally accepted as a natural and unavoidable *dénouement*. Patriotism precluded any other attitude. Furthermore, the official proclamation of the Falange program by the Caudillo seemed to assure the continuity of the party. Many Falangists still clung to the view that the militia would provide the impetus for a reorientation of the nation's political life when the fighting was over. Amid the confusion and tension of the war effort, it was hard to push one's thinking much further than that.