

3 1939-41

Apologists of the *Falange* would argue that the party created in April 1937 had little or nothing to do with the *Falange* founded in October 1933. Clearly, FE differed from FET y de las JONS in so far as the latter did not operate in a context of democratic competition; in that it could not aspire to the absolute control of State power; and in that its mechanisms of recruitment were based on automatic and obligatory, as well as voluntary, membership. However, to consider, on the basis of these factors alone, that the new situation was tantamount to a complete break with the past, is to overestimate the solvent power of the Decree of Unification and to underestimate the degree to which many of the differences which had existed between Right-wing groups before the war were carried over to the post-war period, albeit within a changed social and political framework.¹

In principle, as we have noted in the preceding chapter, Decree 255 imposed the formal disappearance of all political parties as they had existed prior to 19 April 1937. Nevertheless, their respective militants still felt themselves to be – and, what was perhaps more important, recognised *each other* as being – Falangists, Carlists, Alphonse monarchists, *CEDistas*, or whatever.² Their parties' formal structures had been eliminated, but neither the particular interests nor the convictions of those who had formed them had done a similar 'disappearing act'. On the contrary, they remained alive, if dormant, because although 'their' Army had destroyed the Republic it had not also brought the achievement of their ultimate goals. The monarchy had not been restored, nor had national-syndicalist totalitarianism been implanted. In the Spring of 1936, no one had envisaged that Franco would replace Azaña as head of the Spanish State; yet, in 1939, no one was prepared to unseat him, for fear of the 'reds' returning.³

Franco was well aware of the existence of various coteries within his own ranks and, as a soldier above all else, distrusted civilian politicking. At the same time, however, he was also head of a State and of a Government and could not dispense with politics, nor with politicians. The problem of how to make use of their civilian skills without losing control of ultimate power was resolved partly by involving them in the post-war repression (thereby establishing what, in the 1940s, came to be called 'the covenant of blood'); partly by making them the beneficiaries of the post-war spoils system; and partly

by employing the tactic of 'divide and rule', playing one group off against another. Ever present, too, were two infallible resorts: the threat of the use of force and the image of the common enemy. As part of this system, the Falangists worked alongside their erstwhile competitors on the Right, in what resembled the National Counter-revolutionary Front they had refused to join in December 1935.

As time went by and the regime adapted itself to changing circumstances within and beyond Spain's geographical frontiers, the Falangists began to complain that their particular representation in the corridors of power was undeservedly small. They were forgetting, however, that it was of the essence of Francoism not to allow any one group to occupy the centre of the stage for too long nor, even less, to hold a monopoly of power. They were also overlooking the fact that, until the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, it was the Falangist component of FET y de las JONS which was always in the foreground, setting the ideological tone of the New State.⁵ Finally, the Falangists who minimised their participation in the Franco regime were limiting their assessment to political power calculated in terms of governmental posts. Thus, they chose to ignore the power reflected in the fact that no other group (with the exception of the Catholic church) was permitted to retain its pre-war structure, title, symbols, lexicon, etc., nor to project them on society as Falange did throughout the Franco regime. That the fluctuations of national and international politics caused the Falangist ideology progressively to become irrelevant to the development of key areas, such as the economy or foreign affairs should not obscure the fact that, in other spheres, the *Falange's* hold remained formally intact until after the Dictator's death in 1975.⁶

In the distribution of fields of operation amongst the forces that had successfully undertaken the destruction of the Republican regime in 1936, it was essentially the socio-political areas which corresponded to the *Falange*. In particular, *Falange* exercised control over the mass of the population through the media, through the trade union organisation and through the vast, bureaucratic structure of the central and local Administration. In addition, the only women's organisation of a non-religious character allowed was Falangist, the *Sección Femenina* (Women's Section) and, although education was primarily the prerogative of the Church, *Falange* also inculcated its values in schools, through the teachers who trained in its colleges (*Escuelas de Mando*) and through the texts used in the classroom. Few Spaniards now recall anything of the Carlist or Alphonine monarchist credos from the days of the Franco regime, but almost everyone over the age of 25 has

childhood memories of having to sing the Falangist hymn every morning in school or going to a Falangist summer camp. As late as 1974, a Spanish girl of 18 could expect to do an obligatory period of 'social service' under the auspices and tutelage of the *Sección Femenina*.

Whilst the *Falange* acted in the areas of its control as a vehicle for the power of the Franco regime, it should not be considered that the party was unilaterally instrumentalised by the regime. The relationship was, rather, one of mutual support and benefit. In the same way that, in return for political inhibition or para-military services, the pre-war *Falange* had continuously sought the patronage or numerical strength of forces outside its own ranks, it now accepted the patronage of the Franco regime in return for an active contribution to the latter's consolidation and perpetuation. Contrary to what present-day Falangists affirm, the *Falange* was not an innocent and helpless bystander to the 'usurpation' of its symbols, style and ideals. *Falange* had been on the verge of disappearing in February 1936. Its adoption as the ideological basis of the Franco regime guaranteed that it would never again be without finance or militants.

The money was provided by the State budget. A large part of the membership was formed by State employees – such as Army officers, civil servants, trade union officials and the staff of the many ramifications of the party secretariat – for whom, under the terms of the Statutes of FET y de las JONS, party membership was an automatic and/or obligatory attribute of their posts. A prominent Falangist, Dionisio Ridruejo, wrote with respect to this form of recruitment, "One was not a political official (*funcionario político*) because one was a party militant, but *vice versa*." It should be noted, however, that his comment is that of the renegade whose critical view of the regime stemmed from its failure to be more specifically Falangist in content and form. The imposed identification between party membership and power élite was a way of avoiding the excessive protagonism of any one group, as it was also a means of limiting the destabilising effect of possible conflicts between them. Looked at from a different angle, the fact that anyone who held an official post had to swear fidelity to the "26 Points of *Falange*", was a mechanism which ensured the control and discipline of the political class; a ritual in which it was made clear that ultimate power lay only at the top of the hierarchical pyramid and that the first duty of the underlings was obedience.⁸

As part of the attempt to disown their participation in the Franco regime, Falangists argue that this artificial increase in members, like

the February 1936 influx, debased *Falange's* ideological purity. Yet, as we have indicated in preceding chapters, the *Falange's* history was liberally punctuated with occasions on which 'ideological purity' had been sacrificed for the sake of survival. Moreover, whilst many of those who received a party card may not have been convinced Falangists, their willingness to swell the party ranks, however passively, was the reverse side of their unwillingness to question the whole system of which FET y de las JONS was part, lending it and the regime the weight of acquiescence which helped both to survive for almost forty years.

FET y de las JONS was not, however, entirely composed of those who passively accepted automatic militancy. It also contained a considerable number of voluntary members. Some of these were people who found themselves without any alternative channel for their desire to be politically active.⁹ Others were those who joined the party genuinely motivated by political conviction.

Consequent with its decision to support the military rising in July 1936, the *Falange* continued consciously to render its services both when the *coup* turned to war and after the war, not because it was 'deceived' into doing so, but because its interests and beliefs demanded that it should. As long as there existed any vestige of Marxist internationalism in Spain, any possibility, however remote, of Left-wing ideas walking abroad, the *Falange* would support the forces opposing such currents. That the balance of power among those forces lay in Franco's hands, not in those of the party, meant the frustration of *Falange's* supreme ambitions, but it did not mean that its basic, impelling credo, nor the class interests from which it arose, were altered.

The Franco regime was the result of a rising driven by the desire of a property-owning oligarchy to eliminate what it saw as the threat to its interests represented by a politically conscious and organised working class. The nature of the system created to replace class-based trade unions for the organisation and control of the working masses is therefore closely linked to that of the regime itself. Officially designated as the master of the official trade union organisation, it was in this area that the *Falange* identified itself most closely with the aims and interests of the regime.¹⁰

Although not formally created until January 1938, the Francoist trade union organisation had its origins in the first days of the Civil War. Decree 108, of 13 September 1936, issued before Franco's appointment as head of State, declared illegal,

all parties and political and social groups which, since the announcement of the elections held on 16 February of this year, have participated in the so-called Popular Front. Likewise, all organisations which have taken part in the opposition to the forces which cooperate in the National Movement.¹¹

The express application of this Decree, in January 1937, to the CNT, UGT, STV, and 'all other entities, groups, affiliated parties or groups analogous to those indicated',¹² left the Falangist *Central Obrera Nacional Sindicalista* (CONS) (Workers' National Syndicalist Union) as the only trade union organisation in legal existence. A second Decree, issued on 25 September 1936, stated that, for the duration of hostilities, 'all political activities' were prohibited, although

professional guilds may be formed, subject exclusively to the authority of this National Defence Committee and its delegates.¹³

Under the provisions of this Decree, and in response to the existence of the CONS, a similar body was created for employers: the *Central de Empresarios Nacional Sindicalista* (CENS) (Employers' National Syndicalist Union). With priority being given to the war effort, however, neither of these organisms as separate entities was developed further than their existence on paper.

The publication of the Party Statutes in August 1937 gave a clear indication as to what would be the form of the trade union system in the post-war State. In particular, the essential role to be played by Party militants was explicitly stated:

FET y de las JONS will create and maintain the syndical structures appropriate to the organisation of labour and production, and to the distribution of goods. The leaders ("*mandos*") of these organisations shall proceed from the ranks of the Movement and the organisations shall be formed and guided by their leaders as a guarantee that the Syndical Organisation will be subordinated to the national interest and imbued with the ideals of the State. . . . The National Leadership of the Syndicates shall be conferred on a single militant and their internal structure shall be graduated in a vertical hierarchy, in the manner of a creative, just and ordered Army.¹⁴

Thus, the crusading spirit of the war, and of the Falangist militant in his double role of 'half monk, half soldier', was to be carried over to

peace-time and imposed on the organisation of civilian society.

With the formation of the 1938 Cabinet and the subsequent Law of State Administration,¹⁵ the Ministry of Syndical Organisation and Action came into being, directed, as we have noted, by the Falangist Pedro Gonzalez Bueno. The Ministry was divided into five departments (or 'Services'): Syndicates, Labour jurisdiction, Housing, Statistics and Emigration. Between them, they were responsible for dictating the 'norms of organisation, functioning and action of the Syndicates in the economic and social order'.

One of the first tasks of this Government was the elaboration of the Labour Charter (*Fuero de Trabajo*). The importance of this piece of legislation cannot be overestimated, for it constituted the basis of all subsequent labour legislation during the Franco regime and, in particular, the basis for the organisation of the official trade union system, the only one permitted until the death of Franco in 1975. This wide-ranging Decree encapsulates, perhaps better than any other Francoist law, the contribution of the *Falange* at a critical moment in the formation of the regime and precisely in one of its most sensitive areas: the economic organisation and socio-political control of the working classes.¹⁶

Two projects were drawn up. The first was prepared by the Minister, González Bueno, and a group of technical experts. It was rejected by the Cabinet and strongly contested by the Party's National Council. The second project was drafted by Dionisio Ridruejo and the members of a 'kind of technical office or study committee', set up by the Secretary General of the Party, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta. It was also rejected, in this case on the grounds that it was too radical and excessively influenced by national-syndicalist ideas. On the suggestion of Ramón Serrano Suñer, the crisis threatened by this confrontation between the more conservative and the more revolutionary elements of the Cabinet was resolved by shelving both projects and drawing up instead, in collaboration, a declaration of general principles, rather than a concrete socio-political programme.¹⁷ The resulting *Fuero*, which came into being on 9 March 1938, was a compromise measure and had almost an air of provisionality about it. Nevertheless, it was given the status of Fundamental Law of the State. The radical Falangists were not content with the document, but accepted it in the hope that, once the war was over, they might be able to impose changes more in line with their totalitarian concepts. The process of the elaboration of the *Fuero del Trabajo* is a good example of the balance continually maintained between the various political currents

present in the regime, in the interest of the stability beneficial to all. The Falangists had not been allowed to elaborate the *Fuero* alone, but the final text, reiterating the Statutes of FET y de las JONS, explicitly stated that 'the hierarchy of each syndicate will necessarily be staffed by militants of *Falange Española Tradicionalista de las JONS*'.¹⁸ In practice, the organisation and administration of the trade union movement of the New State was the preserve of the Falangist component of the party, to an almost exclusive degree that does not appear ever to have been questioned by any of its other components.¹⁹

In addition, the text incorporated much of the Falangist lexicon and tenets. Indeed, the very notion of a State whose economic and social organisation was to be based on State-run, lay, non-class based, obligatory unions of workers and employers was essentially Falangist, differentiated from the corporatist ideas of other components of the Movement – former members of the CEDA or *Acción Española*, for example – by its laicism and the absence of any monarchical context. The definition of the State given in the preamble to the *Fuero* clearly owes more to Ramiro Ledesma Ramos than to Catholic nationalists such as Gil Robles or José Calvo Sotelo, or to Carlists like Víctor Pradera:

National, in so far as it is a totalitarian instrument at the service of the integrity of the Fatherland, and Syndicalist, in so far as it represents a reaction against liberal capitalism and marxist materialism.²⁰

A month after the publication of the *Fuero del Trabajo*, by a Decree of 21 April 1938, the hitherto separate workers' and employers' unions, CONS and CENS, were merged into a single body, to be known as the *Central Nacional Sindicalista* (CNS) (National Syndicalist Centre). Such professional organisations as the Catholic *Confederación Nacional de Sindicatos Católicos Obreros* (National Confederation of Workers' Catholic Unions), not previously declared illegal, were now also incorporated into the CNS.²¹ Through this body, which gave physical expression to Ledesma Ramos' idea of a country organised as 'a huge union of producers . . . ordered as militias', and which subsequently grew into a vast bureaucracy with ramifications all over Spain, *Falange* was to exercise its official monopoly over the entire working population. This was a far cry from only five years earlier, when the CONS organised by Ledesma had virtually collapsed for lack of members and funds.

Whilst the Party's energies were partially absorbed in laying the foundations of the future trade union system, and in spite of the fact that the continuation of the war imposed the need for unity in the nationalist camp, latent animosity between Falangists and Alphonine Monarchists came to the surface in a governmental crisis in June 1938. As in April 1937, the crisis was resolved via the imposition of Franco's personal authority and, also as in 1937, the Falangists not only accepted this solution, but accepted it at the political expense of some of their own comrades.

With the object of restructuring the Party, the *Consejo Nacional* had designed a Study Commission headed by Falangists Dionisio Ridruejo and Pedro Gamero del Castillo, and Carlist Juan José Pradera. The proposals put forward by the Commission were aimed at increasing the power of the Party within the State and also suggested that the Falangist militia be made autonomous. They encountered strong opposition from other members of the *Junta Política*, particularly from the Alphonine Monarchist Minister of Education, Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, on the grounds that what was being proposed was the establishment of a totalitarian State. Ridruejo replied that, indeed, such was precisely the intention. Franco, presiding over the meeting in which this confrontation occurred, accused Ridruejo of lack of confidence in his leadership. To this, Ridruejo replied that, on the contrary, in seeking to strengthen the role of the *Falange*, whose National Chief was Franco, the proposed restructuring also sought to strengthen Franco's position. It was an agile reply and sufficient to save Ridruejo from any reprimand more serious than the rejection of his proposals, but Franco was not the man to tolerate any kind of rebelliousness within the ranks of his followers and almost certainly took note of Ridruejo as a discordant element.

The affair also had immediate repercussions for other members of the *Falange*, for it had sensitised Franco to possible sources of disloyalty within the Party. On 23 and 25 June 1938, two other members of the National Council, Agustín Aznar and Fernando González Vélaz respectively, were arrested on suspicion of preparing a plot against Franco.²² Falangist Narciso Perales, who, since February 1938, had been working in Granada under the direction of the party Secretary, Fernández Cuesta, was also implicated. He had organised a public meeting in Córdoba, which was attended by, among others, Aznar and González Vélaz. Through them, news leaked out of what had occurred in the *Junta Política* meeting a few days earlier. They were arrested shortly after the Córdoba gathering. Nothing was

proved against them but, as in 1937 with Manuel Hedilla, Franco's decision to exercise his authority went unquestioned by the rest of the *Falange*. Perales asked to be relieved of his duties as Extraordinary Delegate in Granada, not so much in solidarity with Aznar and González as in dissent from Fernández Cuesta, who maintained that the moment was not propitious for putting the *Falange's* original programme into practice. Perales transferred first to Málaga, in order to avoid arousing Franco's suspicions again, then joined the battle-front at Teruel in July 1938.²³ His was the only gesture of protest, limited as it was.

Similarly, the *Falange* did not object when, on 16 November 1938, the regime appropriated the date of the death of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, declaring it an annual day of national mourning. By that time, the end of the war was thought to be imminent and a Francoist victory assured. It would not have been politic to risk losing post-war rewards for the sake of one day a year.

Falangist hopes of increasing their stake in the governmental apparatus were realised when the war ended in 1939. The reorganisation and expansion of the Cabinet and central Administration carried out in August of that year reflected not only the need to develop governmental structures no longer conditioned by the necessities of war, but also the desire to give the impression of a regime in harmony with those of fascist Europe.

A considerable contingent of *camaradas* was added to those Falangists already occupying ministerial posts. They were given posts of lower hierarchical category but which, nevertheless, were important for the possibilities they afforded of manipulating people and resources. Pedro Gamero del Castillo was appointed Minister without Portfolio and Vice-secretary General of the Party; Rafael Sánchez Mazas was also made Minister without Portfolio; José María Alfaro became Under-Secretary for Press and Propaganda and member of the *Junta Política*; Miguel Primo de Rivera was appointed Provincial Chief of the Movement for Madrid and member of the *Junta Política*; and Manuel Valdés Larranaga became Under-Secretary for Labour. General Agustín Muñoz Grandes, who was not a Party militant but was known to have strong Falangist sympathies, replaced Raimundo Fernández Cuesta as Secretary General of the party.²⁴ Ramón Serrano Suñer took over from Pedro González Bueno as President of the *Junta Política*.

This last appointment may appear to have been disadvantageous to the *Falange*, since Serrano had never been a member of the party founded

by Primo de Rivera in 1933. It was, however, at the height of Serrano's political career that the *Falange* too was at the height of its visible power and through his presence that FE seemed to have most possibilities of promoting its men and its ideology within the conglomerate Movement. Precisely that attempt made an important contribution to Serrano's ultimate downfall.

Shortly after the August Cabinet changes, in September 1939, the first National Head (*Delegado Nacional*) of the Syndical Organisation was appointed. The post was assigned to Falangist Gerardo Salvador Merino. Merino had been *Falange* chief in the province of La Coruña and was, according to his colleague and personal friend, Pedro Gamero del Castillo, 'well situated politically, in so far as his relations with Ramón Serrano Suñer were good'.²⁵ As head of the CNS, which was a department of the Party Secretariat, Merino collaborated with Party Vice-secretary Gamero in the elaboration of a Law which determined 'the mode of incorporation of extant economic and professional bodies into the Syndical Organisation'²⁶ and laid down that,

the Syndical Organisation of FET y de las JONS is the only one recognised by the State – which will admit the existence of no other with similar or analogous aims – as having personality sufficient to bring to the State the needs and aspirations which, in the socio-economic order, may be felt by the producers of the nation and is, at the same time, the vehicle whereby the economic directives of the State reach the producers.²⁷

The Law proposed to unite workers, technicians and entrepreneurs in a single, 'classless' organisation divided only according to sectors of production, not according to ideological or social differences. Gamero states that the fundamental aim of the project was

to cement at the social level the healing of the wound, caused by the Civil War, being worked at the intellectual level by such enterprises as the magazine *Escorial*, in which people of very different opinions participated.²⁸

This altruistic view should not obscure the reality that the reason for setting up a trade union organisation at all was that, through it, the greater part of the populace could be controlled in an area of prime importance: its working life.

It has been maintained that Merino's Falangist radicalism as Syndical Delegate and, especially, his capacity and opportunities for organising the workers *en masse* alarmed conservative and military elements in the Government.²⁹ In effect, the Law of Syndical Unity aimed at increasing the weight of the trade union system at political, as well as socio-economic levels and at strengthening the exclusive character of the *Falange's* control thereof. Certainly, too, the large contingent of well-drilled, blue-shirted 'producers'³⁰ who took part, for example, in the Victory Day parade in Madrid on 30 March 1940 could, as representatives of the different *Sindicatos*, be considered Merino's men. As such, it is possible that those who were hostile to the creation of trades unions were also made uneasy by the sight of large numbers of civilian 'recruits' behaving in such military fashion. Both suggested the resurgence of an organised working class, this time under the direction of the *Falange*. Franco, however, had no such fears. On the contrary, says Gamero del Castillo, he liked the workers' parades, for they represented a popular clique for his leadership.³¹ Furthermore, if the first post-war manifestation of genuine worker feeling had appeared in a down-tools in Barcelona in 1940, the repressive apparatus was more than equal to the task of restoring order.³²

In fact, Merino had aroused the hostility of certain members of his own party, who based their objections to men like himself or Gamero del Castillo on the contention that, as people who had joined *Falange* after 1936 ('New Shirts'), they could not be the legitimate interpreters of the Falangist ideology. This was the view of *Falange* 'legitimists' such as Pilar and Miguel Primo de Rivera, Sancho Dávila, Agustín Aznar and José Antonio Girón. In reality they were anxious to oust the likes of Merino in so far as he was a rival for positions of social, economic and political power to which they themselves aspired. Merino was denounced³³ as a former member of a Masonic Lodge – a far more powerful weapon against him than nebulous accusations of Falangist revisionism. As a result, Merino was dismissed from his post in the CNS and exiled to the Balearic Isles, in July 1941.

The demise of Merino was part of a dismantling operation carried out on the group around Serrano Suñer, whose star began to decline in 1941. Some of those Falangists (the 'legitimists') who, since the time of the Unification, had relied on Serrano as their only 'real link between the authority of Franco . . . and the aspirations of the Falangists',³⁴ became disillusioned or impatient with their intermediary and began to seek ways of dealing directly with the *Caudillo*. At the same time,

encouraged by such 'Old Shirt' Falangists as Party Secretary José Luis Arrese Magra and those conservative and military elements within the regime who felt no affection for *Falange*, Franco began to doubt the loyalty of a man who 'took upon himself the representation of a collective will, that of the *Falange*, different to his own personal will'.³⁵ Any manifestation of independent or spontaneous activity was liable to arouse the *Generalísimo's* mistrust and, by 1941, it was beginning to seem to him that Serrano Suñer and his collaborators were trying to force the pace of post-war reconstruction too fast. Gamero del Castillo quotes four, rapidly-succeeding events in this connection: the creation of *Escorial*, the foundation of the Institute of Political Studies; the Law of Syndical Unity; and the Law of the University Students' Union (SEU).³⁶ All of these were, in fact, initiatives in favour of the regime, designed not to replace Franco, but to broaden the socio-political foundations on which the military victory rested. Franco, however, saw in them an excessive desire to promote the *Falange* and, therefore, a potential threat to his hegemony. Serrano Suñer was seen as the prime mover of that threat.

Consequently, when a series of Cabinet changes were made in May 1941, the *Falange* 'legitimists' gained ground at the expense of Serrano. The latter, who had also been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in October 1940, was replaced in the Ministry of the Interior by Valentín Galarza, considered extremely anti-Falangist. The appointment, for once, caused a furore among the Falangists. The publication of an anonymous article (later attributed to Dionisio Ridruejo), entitled 'The Man and the Pipsqueak', in defence of Serrano Suñer, provoked a reply in the 12 May 1941 edition of the national daily, *Madrid*, which claimed that the Falangists were 'incompatible' with the new Minister. The Falangists responsible for Press and Propaganda, Ridruejo (then Director of Propaganda), Antonio Tovar (Under-Secretary for Falangist Press) and Jesus Ercilla (Director General of Press), were dismissed from their posts and Miguel Primo de Rivera resigned as Civil Governor and Party Chief of Madrid, as did Arrese, then Civil Governor in Málaga.

Serrano Suñer, thinking it his duty to show solidarity with what appeared to be a token of protest from the 'legitimist' group with which he had actively sympathised since 1937, also submitted his resignation to Franco. The *Generalísimo* refused to accept it and Serrano would have insisted, had he not learned that three of the Falangists whose position he was defending were about to accept Ministerial posts. In effect, Miguel Primo de Rivera was appointed Minister of Agriculture; Girón, minister of Labour; and Arrese, Minister Secretary General of

the Party.³⁷ In addition, Agustín Aznar, rehabilitated after his political peccadilloes of 1938, was appointed as the Party's National Delegate for Health, whilst, in October 1941, veteran *JONSista*, Juan Aparicio, took over as Director General of Press.³⁸

Serrano Suñer remained in his posts as Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the *Junta Política* for over a year after this episode, but the damage was done, in that he had revealed his hand and part of his erstwhile support had gone over to the highest bidder – Franco. With the incorporation of Girón, Arrese, Primo de Rivera and Aznar into the official rewards system, success was assured for the absorption process initiated in December 1936, with the militarisation of the *Falange* militias, and made irreversible by the 1937 Decree of Unification.

Up to 1943, continuing Axis victories in the Second World War favoured the consolidation of the mutually beneficial links between the Party and the personal power of the *Caudillo*. The former sought to extend its influence at the expense of other elements in the Movement, whilst the latter sought to consolidate his somewhat isolated position via the international connections of *Falange*, via the Party's ability to provide an entourage of loyal and grateful followers, and via its coercive and coercive roles with respect to the mass of the population.

In this context and, perhaps, in the wake of the Merino affair, on 24 November 1941, the Minister Secretary General of the Party, José Luis Arrese, ordered a Party purge to be initiated. No new admissions were to be made for six months, except from the Party youth organisation, the *Frente de Juventudes* (Youth Front). Expulsions were to be made on a national scale for a variety of social, political or moral reasons and for having passed from 'militant' to merely 'supporter' status. The criteria according to which expulsions would be made were numerous: former Masons, communists and anarchists; former officials or sympathisers of the Popular Front; former supporters of separatist movements; anyone who had 'attempted to prevent the success of the Movement'; anyone considered, publicly or privately, 'immoral'; members of pre-Unification political groups attempting to revive the same; anyone considered to have scoffed at, or ridiculed, the Catholic faith; and anyone judged guilty of crimes 'incompatible' with Party principles.³⁹ Such were the guide-lines of a witch-hunt of which almost anyone might fall foul and whose double objective was not increased efficiency or 'energetic social action', but simply the reactionary elimination of radicals within the ranks and the increase of pro-Francoist fervour.⁴⁰

The purge, organised by one of the departments of the Party

Secretariat, the National Delegation of Information and Investigation, was financed and executed by a body set up for the purpose, the Inspectorate of Purges (*Inspección de Depuración*).⁴¹ The public explanations given maintained that it was essential to the 'dignity and confidence' due to the Party, especially in the circumstance of international war, and in preparation against 'everything which, out of the present external conflagration, might turn into an obstacle for the existence and development of the national-syndicalist Movement'.⁴² In similar vein, the Party's Provincial Chief for Madrid, Carlos Ruiz, told militants at a meeting called in Madrid on 26 November 1941 that the purge was necessary to 'quell external criticism of the doctrine and integrity of the Party'.⁴³

From the point of view of the national context, Party leaders expressed their support for the purge in the interests of 'unity, hierarchy and discipline',⁴⁴ and exhorted unquestioning obedience to 'the leadership, or whomsoever the leader might designate',⁴⁵ by which, of course, they referred to themselves. The Falangist Press also made its contribution to the campaign in support of the purge. Thus, *Arriba* referred to it as the guarantee given by *Falange* itself that the task entrusted to it would be carried out with the utmost seriousness,⁴⁶ whilst *El Alcazar* linked it to the desirability of close collaboration between the *Falange* and the Armed Forces. These, it continued, together with the *Caudillo*, constituted the foundations of 'the security and expectations of Spain'.⁴⁷ The object of cleansing Party cadres, added *El Alcazar*, was to guarantee the inclusion of *Falange* in the trinity which, in 'brotherhood, harmony and solidarity' would provide and preside Spain's prosperous future.⁴⁸ Only five years earlier, José Antonio Primo de Rivera had warned against the risks inherent in subscribing to the 'political plans of the military men'.⁴⁹ Yet, now, the *Falange* had assumed precisely the status which Primo de Rivera had then rejected, that of 'auxiliary shock troops', 'the chorus', for the real holders of power, the Armed Forces. Far from finding this role offensive as Primo had urged, the Falangist leaders in 1942 were anxious to consolidate it.⁵⁰

Notes

1. The argument that the 'real' *Falange* died in 1937 was frequently used by Falangists anxious to dissociate themselves from the Franco regime as a prior step to finding a place in the transition to post-Francoist democracy.

2. The various 'families' identified by sociologist Amando de Miguel as the socio-political components of the Franco regime have their origins in the pre-war parties (*La herencia del Franquismo*, Cambio 16, Madrid 1976).
3. Cf. Escobar y Kirkpatrick, 1. *Testimonio sobre una gran traición*, typewritten pamphlet, undated (1978?): 'None of us who supported the 18 July rising thought the end result would be a personal régime headed by Franco'; and R. Salas Larrazabal, interviewed in Salamanca, 1 August 1984: 'even the dissatisfied preferred Franco to the "reds"'.¹
4. Carr, R. & Fusi, J.P., *España, de la dictadura a la democracia* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1979) p. 30.
5. Cf. Jerez Mir, M., *Elites políticas y centros de extracción en España* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1982) pp. 49-175. A comparison of the most important pieces of early Francoist legislation with texts such as the writings of Primo de Rivera or the '27 Doctrinal Points' indicates that many of the concepts and much of the vocabulary of the former were culled from Falangist sources.
6. In practice, and particularly from the 1960s onwards, it was increasingly questioned and by-passed, by social and political groups outside and inside the regime. The alternatives they advocated, however, were illegal. Legality was constituted by the system which began to be established in 1937 and which was not entirely dismantled until the first democratic elections were held in 1977.
7. R. Truquejo, D. quoted in Ros Hombravella *et al.*, *Capitalismo español: de la autarquía a la estabilización* (Madrid: Edicusa, 1978) p. 77.
8. As time went by, this requirement became little more than a formality. In the foundational years of the regime, however, it had a very real sense. Access to the ranks of a uniformed élite constituted immediate public recognition of being on the 'right' side - by no means unimportant at a time when the 'crusade' against anything and everything outside the regime was far from over.
9. A former Falangist (and, subsequently, member and ex-member of the Spanish Communist party) commented to the writer, with respect to his joining the *Falange* in the 1950s: 'What else could you do? If you had any urge to participate in politics, you had no other way to do so other than by joining the *Falange* - in much the same way that, later, if you wanted to be part of the anti-Francoist opposition, you had to join the PCE. There was nothing else.'
10. Cf. Velaarde Fuentes, J., interviewed 13 June 1978: 'In the Franco regime, the *Falange* can be seen particularly in the social and labour policies applied from the Ministry of Labour and the Syndical Organisation.' For a monographical study of the Francoist trade union system, see Aparicio, M.A., *El sindicalismo vertical en la formación del Estado franquista* (Barcelona: Eunibar S.A., 1980) *passim*.
11. Decree 108, *BOE*, 16 Sept. 1936.
12. Order of 10 Jan. 1937, *BOE*, 13 Jan. 1937.
13. *BOE*, 28 Sept. 1936. The National Defence Committee (*Junta Nacional de Defensa*) was formed on 25 July 1936.
14. *Ibid.*, 7 Aug. 1937. *Estatutos de FET y de las JONS*, Articles 29 & 30.
15. *Ibid.*, 31 Jan. 1938. Ley de Administración del Estado.

16. According to the Syndical Organisation itself, it constituted the 'basic norms of all the dispositions which subsequently shaped our syndicalism'; quoted in Oficina Internacional del Trabajo, *La situación laboral y sindical en España* (Geneva 1969) p.127.
17. Serrano Suñer, R., *Siete discursos* (Bilbao: Ediciones 'FE', 1940) p.25; Ridruejo, D., *Casi unas Memorias*, p.195. See also: Mayor Martínez, L., *Ideologías dominantes en el sindicato vertical* (Madrid: Editorial Zero, 1972) p.111; Aparicio, M.A., op. cit., pp. 79-83 & 108-10 and 'Aspectos políticos del sindicalismo español de posguerra' in *Sistema*, no. 13 (Apr. 1976).
18. *Fuero del Trabajo*, Declaration XIII, 'National Syndicalist Organisation', Point 4, *BOE* (10 Mar. 1938).
19. This is not to say that they did not, on occasions, question the line followed by particular Falangists within the trade union system. See below, p.67.
20. Preamble to the *Fuero del Trabajo*, *BOE*, 10 Mar. 1938.
21. *BOE*, 24 Apr. 1938. For details of the structure and functioning of the CNS at national and provincial levels, see Iglesias Selgas, C., *El sindicalismo español* (Madrid: Doncel, 1974) pp. 9-20 & 45-6; Oficina Internacional del Trabajo, op. cit., pp. 129-30; Legaz Lacambra, L. and Gómez Aragón, B., *4 estudios sobre sindicalismo vertical* (Zaragoza, 1939); Ludevid, M., *40 años de sindicato vertical* (Barcelona: Editorial Laia, 1976).
22. Ridruejo, D., *Casi unas memorias*, p.127. Aznar had been relieved of his post as Chief of the Party militias, but was organising militants in 'work units', which were considered highly suspiciously non-Falangist.
23. Narciso Perales Herrero, interview 31 Dec. 1976.
24. Narciso Perales states (interview 31 Dec. 1976) that he was in close personal contact with Muñoz Grandes during the forties and that he was 'an austere, mature man, who could have taken over from Franco. But, above all, he was a professional soldier and could not, therefore, participate actively in politics. Despite his agreement with the Falangist theses, his professionalism, his sense of discipline and hierarchy, prevented him from being actively in agreement. Hence the fact that, although he maintained relations with members of *Falange*, he could never commit himself to acting alongside *Falange* and not alongside Franco'. As far as is known, the General never found himself obliged to choose between the two.
25. Pedro Gamero del Castillo, interview, 4 Mar. 1978.
26. From Declaration XIII, Point 9, *Fuero del Trabajo*, *BOE*, 10 Mar. 1938.
27. Law of Syndical Unity, *BOE*, 31 Jan. 1940.
28. Pedro Gamero del Castillo, interview, 4 Mar. 1978. The 'Editorial Manifiesto' of the magazine, whose Editor was Dionisio Ridruejo, and which first appeared in November 1940, stated that it was not 'a propaganda magazine, but honorably and sincerely a professional magazine devoted to culture and letters'. Nevertheless, its political character was also clear: 'the *Falange* has for a long time been interested in creating a magazine which might be the meeting place and viewing point of Spanish intellectuals... and which would 'offer to the Spanish Revolution and to its

- mission in the world, one more arm and one more vehicle, be it modest or valuable'.
29. Payne, S.G., op. cit., p.220.
30. It is probable that not all of the participants were genuinely 'workers', except in the sense that, in accordance with the Falangist division of the active population into employers, technicians and workers, anyone who did not fall into either of the first two categories automatically fell into the third. Thus students could be paraded as 'producers'. The authenticity or otherwise of the characterisation, however, was not what concerned some observers. What mattered was that here was a show of organised force, potentially at Falangist command.
31. Gamero del Castillo, loc. cit.
32. Serious incidents also occurred in Cádiz in 1941, Mataró (Barcelona) in 1942 and Valencia in 1944. Cf. Barba, B., *Dos años al frente del Gobierno Civil de Barcelona* (Madrid, 1948); Ferri, L. et al., *Las huelgas contra Franco* (Planeta, Barna, 1978).
33. According to Falangist Narciso Perales (interview, 24 Dec. 1976) and ex-Falangist Ceferno Maestu (interview, 14 Dec. 1977), Merino was denounced by a Falangist comrade, although neither was willing to disclose the name of the person concerned.
34. Serrano Suñer, R., *Memorias*, p.197.
35. Ibid., p.201. Arrese was appointed to the post, which had been vacant since Nov. 1940, in May 1941 (see below, pp.68-9).
36. This represented the realisation of a project conceived in 1934, whereby three student organisations (SEU, FEC and AET) would be amalgamated. The opposition of the Traditionalist AET frustrated the plan in 1934, but it was revived in 1940-41 and culminated in the Law which made the Falangist SEU (*Sindicato Español Universitario*) the only, and obligatory, union of students.
37. Serrano Suñer, R., *Memorias*, pp. 200-1; Arriba (8 May 1941); *Madrid* (12 May 1941); Narciso Perales, interview, 31 Dec. 1976.
38. By that time, this Department had been taken out of the Ministry of the Interior and transferred to the Vice-Secretariat of Popular Education, in turn part of the General Secretariat of FET y de las JONS.
39. *El Alcazar* (Madrid, 25 Nov. 1941).
40. Cf. Ridruejo, D., *Escrito en España* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1962) p.87: 'It was a measure of adaptation to the general criteria, with a view to pacific enjoyment of privileged positions which the mistrust of other political powers might place in jeopardy'.
41. Ibid. The National Delegation of Information and Investigation carried out intelligence services parallel to those of the Police Forces and was, thus, part of the regime's repressive apparatus. A report published by the department itself in 1941 stated that it then had 693 agents, and that during 1941, it had provided 570 000 reports 'for the Party and State organisms' and had approximately 6 000 000 references in its files (*Arriba*, 8 May 1942).
42. *El Alcazar*, 25 Nov. 1941.
43. Ibid., 27 Nov. 1941.

44. The Civil Governor and Party Provincial Chief of Sevilla, at a meeting of Old Guard Falangists in Sevilla on 18 Jan. 1942 (*Arriba*, 19 Jan. 1942).
45. Miguel Primo de Rivera, *ibid.*
46. Editorial, *Arriba* (5 Jan. 1942). See also editions of 3 and 8 Jan. 1942.
47. *El Alcazar* (8 Dec. 1941).
48. *Ibid.*
49. Primo de Rivera, J.A., 'Circular to all Territorial and Provincial Chiefs' (24 June 1936), in *Obras Completas*, pp. 970-1.
50. Up to the end of the purge in June 1945, some 4000 militants were expelled from the party. Admissions recommenced in Nov. 1943, however, and, by that same date (June 1945) about 3000 new members had been admitted (*Boletín Oficial del Movimiento*, 1942-45).

4 1941-43

It was not only in the upper echelons of the body politic that the *Falange*, more than any other political group, made its presence felt. In the years in which the New State was being established on the basis of the Falangist ideology and through the channels of the Party apparatus, the *Falange* permeated every level of day-to-day existence.

It appeared in the provincial tours of Ministers and Party officials, not to mention those of Franco himself; in the mass gatherings and parades of 'producers' who turned out to listen to the VIPs; and in the Movement Press which provided lengthy and graphic reports of these events. Thus, in 1942 alone, the national dailies *Arriba* and *El Alcazar* and, where appropriate, the provincial Press, reported in eulogistic terms on no less than fourteen major tours or gatherings and innumerable minor Party meetings and celebrations throughout the country. Of the former, the most important was Franco's visit to Cataluña from 26 to 30 January 1942, accompanied by Secretary General Arrese and the Minister of Defence, General Varela, during which Franco watched a parade of 400 000 workers from the balcony of the CNS in Barcelona, wearing the uniform of the National Chief of the *Falange*.¹ Other important events were the 1942 Victory Day parade in Madrid, presided over by Franco, the Cabinet and a numerous contingent of Party officials;² the parade of 60 000 workers arranged in Madrid by the Syndical Organisation to commemorate the rising of 18 July 1936;³ and the two 'massive Falangist demonstrations' watched by Franco and Arrese in Vigo and La Coruña in August 1942.⁴ Also worthy of ample coverage were the open-air meetings organised to commemorate the death of the first Falangist 'martyr', Matías Montero, in February 1934;⁵ or the fusion of *Falange* and JONS in January 1934;⁶ a three-day visit by the Minister of Labour, Girón, to the Basque Country, where he addressed numerous gatherings on the shop-floor;⁷ or the same Minister's tour of Andalucía where, among other events, he presided at a parade of 20 000 miners in Jaén.⁸

Then there were the *Falange*'s symbols (five arrows joined horizontally by a yoke) at the entrance and exit to every town and village, large or small; the heads of Franco and Primo de Rivera stencilled on the walls, along with the *Falange* slogan '¡Arriba España!'; the local premises of 'Social Aid', the Women's Section, the Syndical Organisation and the Party, *proprement dit*. There was the national ritual of the