

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

annual commemoration of the death of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, like that of 1941, when a mass of 28 000 marched from Madrid to El Escorial (some 60 km), to lay a wreath on the tomb of *Falange's* founder;⁹ and there were the plaques and street names commemorating the lives or deaths of other Party heroes. There were the magazines and books; the Youth Front meetings, outings and summer camps;¹⁰ the Falangist 'consultancies' set up in working-class districts, like Madrid's Vallecas;¹¹ the campaigns for the collection of waste paper organised by the Women's Section; and the Party representatives in every block of flats, every group of blocks and every suburb.¹² No other political current was permitted this massive and continual propagandistic 'bombardment' of the populace, such that what Primo de Rivera had described in 1933 as the essence of *Falange* had, with the *Falange's* connivance, become a reality: 'our movement is not only a way of thinking, it is a way of being'.¹³

Falangists may maintain, now that Franco is no more, that, in all this, their power was more apparent than real. For the mass of the contemporary population, however, it was very apparent indeed and constituted their reality. The *Falange* had hoisted itself on to the bandwagon of post-war opportunism, its hopes kindled by promises like that made by the *Caudillo* during his visit to Cataluña in January 1942. Addressing a reception given by the 'Social Service of Higher Economic Culture' (*Servicio Social de Alta Cultura Económica*) in Barcelona, he said:

We have said (that civilian life will run along the path traced by *Falange*) as an indispensable premise for the administrative organisation of the Nation, so that the feeling and the heat of the producing classes and other national sectors may reach us through hierarchical and specialised channels. . . . You have a channel and a way (to make your initiative, your complaint or your advice reach the State): the Syndical channel, the Syndical hierarchy. . . . No one and nothing will divert us from these directives. The watchword has been given to the Nation: civilian life is going to flow through the organisation of the *Falange*, with its syndicates, its CNS, and with all the activities it is in charge of organising.¹⁴

The Party organ, *Arriba*, triumphantly interpreted the speech as stating 'loudly, clearly, and unequivocally, the guarantees offered by Franco, confirming the *Falange* as the political base of the State and channel of civilian life in Spain'.¹⁵

In return, the anniversaries of *Falange* brought an impressive crop of telegrams of 'unshakeable fidelity' to the *Caudillo*, and newspaper articles lauding his mandate at the head of FET y de las JONS. Thus, for example, Giménez Caballero's piece, 'The Spanish Dilemma: Total Unification or Total Communism' on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the 1937 Unification, in which he praised Franco as the 'beloved programmatic executor of José Antonio Primo de Rivera'.¹⁶ When not directly in praise of Franco, the manifestations were expressions of solidarity with the Armed Forces – which was tantamount to solidarity with their *Generalsimo* – linking *Falange* and Army in terms of the values embodied and the objectives pursued by both. On 'Infantry Day' (8 December) 1941, *El Alcazar* reproduced passages from Primo de Rivera's 'Letter to the Military Men of Spain'.¹⁷ The same edition carried an article entitled 'Catholic and Military Roots of *Falange*', in which it was stated that externally and internally the Movement was inspired by Catholic and military principles, that the unity of *Caudillo*, Army and *Falange* was essential for the security of Spain, and that

the politico-military bloc has the solidity of granite. The fragmentation of one of those elements will always be impossible, as will the fragmentation of the unmovable and enduring unity of all three, with the desire for a vital destiny and the rejection of other, vanquished or superseded things.¹⁸

Finally, the reports which were published on 'Victory Day' (1 April) each year, and the attendance of Party officials at the parade, represented the high point of the anxiety to identify the *Falange* with the Armed Forces. *Arriba's* headlines on 1 April 1942 are typical: 'The Army and the *Falange* maintain the heroic spirit which initiated the universal enterprise against Communism'.¹⁹

The Party Press thus clearly shows that the *Falange's* *a posteriori* contention that it was, at best, a reluctant camp-follower in the Franco regime, is manifestly untrue.

Whilst the *Falange* worked hard to consolidate its position as part of the socio-political fabric of the New State in domestic terms, it did not neglect the opportunities offered by external situations and events to assert and assure its status as the only permitted representative and spokesman, at a non-governmental level, of the Spanish State and people. Although little is known of the work of the *Falange's* 'Foreign Department' (*Servicio del Exterior*), nevertheless, it undoubtedly

constituted an important facet of Falangist activity in so far as it represented the bridge-head established in different countries for the subsequent diffusion of the Falangist ideology. The prime targets for such 'missionary' work were, naturally enough, the Latin American countries (always referred to as the Hispano-American countries in the Falangist lexicon). It was proposed that, through *Falange*, these would form a close and mutually beneficial association with the mother country, a vast hispanic community. It was in this way, rather than through expansionist invasion of foreign territory, that imperialism manifested itself in the Falangist credo.²⁰

It is unlikely that there was ever any possibility that this imperialist dream could have been realised, and none at all once the Second World War had broken out. Nevertheless, the placement in various countries of groups of Francoist partisans could clearly have its uses in terms of information, channelling funds or arms, or subversion of the established order. A phrase from one of the Foreign Department's own publications suggests that, in effect, this particular part of the organisation was of use in more than strictly Party affairs: 'The national syndicalist doctrine had to create organs of unity and cohesion for expatriate Spaniards, which would, in different spheres, act in collaboration with diplomatic and consular agents.'²¹

Although, in the early 1940s, the possibilities of creating an empire were remote, the *Falange* nevertheless did what it could to take advantage of the international situation, to extend its field of operation outside Spain. Besides the space devoted to the military aspects of the Second World War and, especially, to the progress made by the Axis powers, the Falangist Press also reported all other connections between Spain and the Axis in minute and enthusiastic detail. In this context, for 'Spain' we can read '*Falange*' for, as the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin stated to the German Press in late 1941, 'the *Falange* has been the principle bond in the friendly relations between Germany and Spain'.²²

There were, for example, innumerable exchanges of delegations of one section or another of each country's respective Party. In 1940, a delegation led by Ramón Serrano Suñer, accompanied by Pilar Primo de Rivera, Manuel Halcón, Demetrio Carceller and others, visited Germany. In November 1941, they were decorated by the German Ambassador in Madrid, who also sent special regards to Dionisio Ridruejo and Manuel Mora Figueroa.²³ Italian and German delegates were present at the fifth National Council of the SEU, held between 9 and 16 December 1941, during which, Spanish students were urged to

be 'the youth of gun and book, like the youth advocated by Mussolini'.²⁴ In February 1942, a mission from the Education and Leisure Department of FET y de las JONS visited '*la casa del fascio*' in Venice while, on 27 March of that year, in Madrid, the Vice-secretary General of the Party, José Luna, visited 'the Italian fascist centre, at the invitation of the Fascist Officer in Spain, Conde Asinari de San Marsano'.²⁵ The Falangist organ, *Arriba*, regaled its readers in April 1942 with the entire text of a speech made by Hitler in which, among other things, the *Führer* praised Franco and the Spanish volunteer force, the Blue Division,²⁶ whose Commander in chief, General Muñoz Grandes, was decorated on 9 April 1942 with the German Iron Cross.

In the same month, readers were informed of the *Falange*'s activities in Italy. Almost all of the six hundred Spaniards resident in Rome were affiliated to *Falange*, said the report, observing that 'contrary to what people might suppose, the Spanish colony in Italy is very small'.²⁷ Nevertheless, the Italian branch of the *Falange* enjoyed relations with the Fascist Party which were 'characterised primarily by their cordiality, and, in preference to the normal diplomatic channels, acted as the intermediary for the latter's invitations to Spanish commissions to visit Italy'.²⁸

Whilst the first contingent of Spanish emigrant workers was on its way to Germany in June 1942, a delegation of adolescents led by Pilar Primo de Rivera, attended a meeting of European youth in Florence and, later in the year, the National Delegate for the *Falange* Youth Front, Antonio Eloia Olasa, spoke at the Congress of European Youth in Vienna.²⁹

Inside Spain, too, Hispano-Italian relations were nourished and cherished through the *Falange*. In May 1942, for example, Italian Fascist officials were received by the Vice-secretary of *Falange*, Luna, and taken on a tour of Extremadura, amid expressions of fraternity and political coincidence. In Madrid, meanwhile, a delegation of Fascist trade unionists were entertained by their Spanish colleagues and the *Sección Femenina* was 'At Home' to its Italian counterpart.³⁰ Gone were the days when Falangists could maintain that they had no connection with European totalitarianism.³¹

By far the most important and ostentatious of the *Falange*'s contributions to the strengthening of relations between Spain and the Axis powers was the volunteer force created in 1941, on Serrano Suñer's initiative, as an integral part of Spanish foreign (and military) policy.³²

The Blue Division – so-called on account of its almost exclusively Falangist composition – was created specifically as a force to be sent to fight as part of the regular German Army. As such, it was also one of the most paradoxical of the Falangist enterprises of the early 1940s. Many volunteers felt that, in enlisting, they were rebelling against the ideological and material disappointments of Francoism and striking a blow for doctrinal radicalism in the form of active solidarity with the Axis. In fact, they were allowing themselves to be used as a key piece in the delicate diplomatic game being played in order to avoid greater Spanish commitment in the conflict. It was clear from the article published by Serrano Suñer in the organ of the Hitler Youth movement, *Will und Macht*, in August 1942, that this was the function of the Blue Division with respect to external relations and situations. Serrano recognised the ‘importance for all’ of the world war, but reaffirmed the Spanish attitude of non-belligerence on the grounds that Spain had already contributed to the struggle against communism with the Spanish Civil War, and continued to do so through the volunteers of the Blue Division.³⁵ In effect, as well as aiding and abetting the foreign policy of the regime, the explicitly anti-communist nature of the Blue Division was entirely consonant with the very essence of Francoism.

Finally, the Blue Division served as an exercise in xenophobia, uniting against a common foreign enemy sentiments which might otherwise have been directed against leaders at home. Leaving aside the question of political repression, directed exclusively against those who had not supported the Nationalist cause, the years immediately following the Civil War were years of tremendous hardship for the mass of the working population, irrespective of political sympathies. The members of the lower and middle classes who had supported the Nationalists in the Civil War could not easily understand how their participation was now followed by shortages of basic necessities and an atmosphere of general misery, as if they had been on the losing side. Annual average *per capita* income, for example, had been around 8000 pesetas in 1935 and had fallen to some 6500 pesetas in 1940.³⁶ Wages, no longer negotiable between workers and employers but controlled by the State, were maintained during the period between 1939 and 1945 at only 25% of their pre-war levels in urban areas.³⁵ Production, particularly of agricultural goods, had fallen between 30% and 40% on pre-war levels, provoking shortages, price increases and massive corruption and abuse.³⁶ The State body whose mission was the collection and marketing of cereal crops, the *Servicio Nacional del*

Trigo, admitted that almost 40% of the 1942–43 wheat crop was sold on the black market;³⁷ whilst a British survey estimated that this illegal channel may have supplied up to 50% of national demand for all goods in 1940.³⁸ Ration books were introduced in May 1939 and were not withdrawn until 1952.

The talk of Man as ‘the bearer of eternal values’ and of ‘one great brotherhood of producers’, from well-fed Party officials in safe positions was far-removed from the day-to-day realities of hardship between 1939 and 1945. Those same officials added their seal of approval to the policies of the regime by acquiescing in, and repeating publicly, the official justifications of the difficulties. They explained the food shortages as due to the world situation, which caused supplies to be interrupted, and attributed to the outbreak of the world war the fact that the revolutionary aspects of the national syndicalist doctrine had not been able to go ahead as rapidly as they would have wished. Thus, the Vice-secretary General of the Party, José Luna, in a speech made in November 1941, regretted that the war was preventing *Falange* from devoting its full attention to the trade unions, which, consequently, he said, were not ‘in the hands of the best men, as *Falange* would have wished’, but ‘infiltrated’ by others of lesser category.³⁹ Considering, in the first place, that the trade union system was specifically the exclusive domain of the *Falange* and, in the second, that Spain was not an active participant in the war, it is difficult to understand, let alone accept, the logic of Luna’s argument.

Summing up the year 1941, the *Arriba* editor-in-chief admitted that the Syndical Organisation had not managed to transform the economy, improve the standard of living of the working classes, or structure itself adequately. Nevertheless, he continued, the CNS could feel satisfied with itself because ‘the masses are organised and subject to discipline, the anarchic economy is under control, and a brake has been put on abuse’.⁴⁰ In other words, the relatively comfortable economic position of the ruling classes had been secured at the expense of the working classes. The reference to the brake applied to corruption was a straightforward untruth, as the official admissions of the operation of the black market clearly showed.⁴¹

The Secretary General of the Party, José Luis de Arrese, spoke in similar vein to the *Arriba* journalist at the Sixth Congress of the *Sección Feminina*:

It is true that the circumstances of our Civil War and the present war suppose an obstacle in our way. It is true that some organisms of the

Falange, set up in haste, cannot yet yield as much as they would have done had they had a slower period of gestation.⁴²

He also recognised popular disbelief in the Falangist revolution, general apathy with regard to the possibilities of effecting it, and the loss of unity present in the initial Falangist euphoria. Such references to reality were brief and marginal, however, and the solutions proposed did not for one moment question the validity of the structural context. On the contrary, the remedy proposed by Arrese was already familiar and entirely in keeping with the style of the regime: greater discipline, within the framework established between 1936 and 1939.

While it was relatively easy to silence or ignore popular dissatisfaction, it was not so easy to obviate the threat to internal stability posed by Falangists discontented at the slow progress of their revolution (1941, it will be remembered, was the year in which syndical leader Merino was ousted and in which the Party purge was initiated). It was therefore necessary to find a means of diverting attention and uniting support once more around the dual image of national heroism and the common enemy; to give politically and socio-economically dissatisfied Francoists an outlet for their discontent; and to provide Falangists with a token means of participating in the world war, in lieu of the mass intervention from Spain for which they were anxious.

Such was the mixture of sentiments which could be discerned in Serrano Suñer's celebrated 'Russians to blame' speech, delivered from the balcony of the General Secretariat of the Party in Madrid, on 13 June 1941.⁴³ A month later, on 14 July 1941, the first contingent of several thousand volunteers left for Germany, amid a tumultuous send-off from Party officials, relatives and Falangist comrades. On arrival at their destination, they did not constitute a distinct Spanish unit with their own uniform, as they had expected, but were incorporated into the German army and kitted out as German troops. Nor could they immediately set about fulfilling their mission against the 'Russian monster', for the need to train them after German military style kept them in the rearguard for several weeks. When they did finally reach the battlefield, they soon encountered the hardships of the Russian winter, which took their toll on the Blue Division, in spite of the training some of its members had received during the Spanish Civil War on the Terner front.⁴⁴

At home, the Women's Section in several provinces organised a campaign of subscriptions to provide clothing for the volunteers in Russia. Collections were taken to send food to them, and Falangists

organised themselves into groups which would visit the homes of volunteers on Christmas Eve, as a 'testimony of brotherhood'. Even Franco sent a consignment of brandy and tobacco to be distributed among the troops, an event which was enthusiastically reported as a demonstration of the *Caudillo's* magnanimity by the Nationalist ex-servicemen's organisation, the *Confederación Nacional de Ex-combatientes*, of which the majority of members were Falangists.⁴⁵

Throughout 1941 and 1942, in a campaign aimed as much at foreign observers as at the domestic reader, the efforts of the Falangist Press to convey the significance and heroism of the Blue Division were unrelenting. Leading Party members – most of whom did not, however, go so far as to actually enlist – lost no opportunity to express support for the noble sacrifice being made by their compatriots in Russia and to reiterate the status of the volunteers as Spain's representatives in the world war. Thus, on 3 November 1941, *El Alcazar*, reported 'what the German Press says about our glorious Blue Division': that it represented the return of Spain to the international scene on a war-footing, 'the image of Spain's return to Europe to participate in the common mission of Europe'. The following day brought a similar report, taken from *El Corriere della Sera*, which laid emphasis on the character of the volunteers as the representatives of the traditional, imperial and military strength of Spain.

Falange's Provincial Chief in Toledo, Alberto Martín Gamero, wrote a eulogistic piece entitled 'The Spanish Princes of the Blue Division' towards the end of 1941,⁴⁶ whilst the obituaries which soon began to appear spoke in terms of 'heroes gloriously fallen for the Fatherland' and the 'glorious crusade against Communism'. Some volunteers did, indeed, receive a hero's burial. For example, the funeral on 17 January 1942 of Vicente Gaceo del Pino,⁴⁷ was attended by three Ministers, four Under-Secretaries, two National Delegates, four National Councilors and a dozen other assorted Syndical chiefs, military men, diplomats and municipal officials.⁴⁸ The concession of such honours was, however, the exception, not the rule.

Whilst the reasons which motivated men to set off for an unknown country, probably not to return, are as diverse and as inaccessible in the case of the Blue Division as in that of the International Brigades five years earlier, it seems likely that, for the Falangist volunteers, patriotism or a strong ideological impulse moved only a minority. It is doubtful whether the idealistic vision of their motives described, for example, by Minister of Labour José Antonio Girón, bore any resemblance to reality: 'the attraction of combat, the desire for

sacrifice, the Spanish understanding of pride and of showing itself before the world as race and as imperialism'.⁴⁹

Such high-sounding phrases were more appropriate to the public-relations operation which surrounded the Blue Division than to real political or material motivations. Apart from the escape from frustration or other domestic problems, the incentives for joining the Blue Division were scarcely overwhelming. At most, there were vague promises of unspecified powers: 'The combatants must organise Spanish society and productive activities; they will control syndical action';⁵⁰ exemption from registration and examination fees in the University (though no mention was made of where the rest of the money necessary to complete a course was to come from);⁵¹ and the concession of 'certain advantages in official competitions and examinations'.⁵² Nevertheless, in the two years of its existence thousands of men passed through the ranks of the Blue Division, thereby lending themselves voluntarily to a national and international manoeuvre designed first and foremost to ensure the stability of the Franco regime.⁵³

Partly in rebellion against the way in which the *Falange* had been utilised in the person of the Blue Division volunteers, a group of Falangists was the protagonist of an incident which occurred in the Basque Country in the summer of 1942. The affair, in which certain returning Blue Division volunteers were involved, had the makings of a major political crisis. The *Generalísimo*, however, rode it out with the by then familiar mixture of insouciance and authoritarianism. In the entire course of its development, the *Falange* shows a remarkable incapacity to learn from its own history; the 1942 crisis was yet another occasion on which Falangist purism was betrayed by Falangist realism and demonstrated that neither José Antonio Primo de Rivera, nor Manuel Hedilla, nor Salvador Merino had taught the Falangists anything.

On 16 August 1942, a special mass was to be celebrated in the church at Begoña, near Bilbao, for the souls of Carlist soldiers of the Our Lady of Begoña *tercio*, killed in the Civil War. Already, on 25 July 1942, the Carlists had organised a special mass in the church of San Vicente at Abando (Bilbao), for the souls of 'the monarchs of the legitimate dynasty and all the Vizcaya Carlists and *Requetés* killed in the crusade'.⁵⁴ The religious service was followed by a demonstration through the streets of Bilbao. This event, as in the case of other, similar commemorative services in Moncada, Montserrat, Poblet and Valladolid, was silenced by the Press. In view of its potential size and

popularity, it was initially considered advisable to cancel the Begoña mass. No such measure was taken, however, and, worried by the strength of the Carlist forces, Vizcaya Falangist and local chief of the Old Guard, Maíz, asked for Falangist reinforcements to be sent from Valladolid, Santander and Vitoria.⁵⁵

On 15 August 1942, an official car left the Party provincial headquarters in Valladolid, occupied by the head of the Vizcaya SEU, Eduardo Berastegui Guerenliain, and Falangist Hernando Calleja García. They drove to San Sebastian, where they collected Falangist comrade Juan Domínguez Muñoz,⁵⁶ and the party then proceeded to Bilbao, where they stayed the night. On the following day, accompanied by a second party car, they left for Begoña and, on arrival at the church, they waited on one side, 'making use of the insignia and official uniforms they were wearing, accompanied by three comrades under the protection of a group of policemen who were there'.⁵⁷

Inside the building the mass was already under way, presided by the Minister of the Army, Enrique Varela. As the Carlists left the church, one of the Falangists threw a small bomb, which hit the portico, but did not explode. A grenade was then thrown into the crowd outside, which, although knocked to one side as it fell, nevertheless wounded more than a hundred people.⁵⁸ The public, most of them Carlists, would have overwhelmed the Falangists, but for the intervention of the police, who protected Domínguez and his comrades from the angry crowd, put them into the official cars they had come in and drove them away, evidently under arrest.⁵⁹

Franco was informed of the incident by Arrese, who was staying with the *Caudillo* at the latter's Summer residence in Galicia. Franco's initial inclination towards taking no action was typical of his use of 'wait-and-see' tactics, and of his capacity to maintain control by allowing possible sources of opposition to spend their strength in skirmishes against each other. He concluded that what had occurred was the reaction on the part of the Falangists who chanced to be in the area to subversive, anti-Francoist slogans shouted by the Carlists. General Varela, however, in conversation with Franco on 24 August 1942, denied this, maintaining that the incident had been an attempt on his life.⁶⁰ In official circles, the affair was silenced. In its 19 August edition, *Arriba* merely indicated that 'on 16 August, a mass was celebrated for 136 dead of the *Tercio* of Our Lady of Begoña, attended by more than 5000 people, and presided by the Minister of the Army and the Under-Secretary of the Interior'. There was not even room for reading between the lines in this hermetic report, and it is only with the

wisdom of hindsight that there is any special significance to be attached to Franco's speech at La Coruña on 25 August 1942, or to the *Arriba* Editorial of the following day, both of which laid particular emphasis on the importance of unity between the *Falange* and the Army.

Neither the Carlists nor the Falangists, however, were prepared to allow the matter to be buried in official silence. Each party issued an inflammatory leaflet denouncing the other.⁶¹ Ten Carlists resigned from their posts in the Movement and, unbeknown to Franco, Varela and the Minister of the Interior, Valentín Galarza, sent notes to all the Captaincies General in the country, presenting the incident as an attack on the Army as an institution.

Franco was prepared to induce his collaborators to reveal their political hand, but he was not the man to tolerate any outright indiscipline, least of all when a major crisis might be the outcome. An example had already been made of Hedilla and Merino, and a further example was now made of the perpetrators of the Begoña incident. The harshness of the punishment meted out to the Falangists, whilst the Carlists' part in the confrontation was ignored, indicates that, although absorbed into the Movement, Franco still saw in the *Falange* a potential threat to the delicate balance of his house-of-cards regime. Juan Domínguez Muñoz and six Falangist comrades were tried before a Court Martial in Bilbao. Domínguez and Hernando Calleja were sentenced to death. Jorge Hernández Bravo, Luis Lorenzo Salgado, Eduardo Berastegui Guerenlain, Virgilio Hernández Rivadulla and Eugenio Moretón Soriano were given prison sentences. Calleja's sentence was commuted to a prison term, on account of his being a war cripple. He and the other five prisoners were subsequently pardoned by a Decree issued by Franco in 1945.⁶² Juan Domínguez's sentence, however, was confirmed.

Led by Falangist and former comrade-in-arms of Domínguez, Narciso Perales, a campaign was mounted by a group of Falangists to save Domínguez's life. They may have been motivated by humanitarian considerations, but they were principally concerned by their view that the survival or demise of the *Falange* as a credible political force depended on the success or failure of their attempt. If Domínguez were shot, the *Falange* would lose an important round to rival forces within the Movement. If he were saved, *Falange's* influence in high places would not only be proved, but even strengthened. Perales, then Civil Governor of León, spent a week in feverish efforts to convince fellow Falangists of the long-term importance of the case, and to whip up support for Domínguez in official circles. He spoke

with Arrese, Girón, Ridruejo, and Serrano Suñer, who promised to intervene before Franco on Domínguez's behalf.⁶³ Serrano achieved nothing, however, and it was clear that Arrese and Girón were only prepared to give moral support, not to risk their posts by active disagreement with the sentence. Serrano promised to make fresh attempts to sway Franco's decision, but, before he could do so, Domínguez was shot 'in the ditch surrounding the prison at Larrinaga (Bilbao), in the early hours of 2 September 1942'.⁶⁴

It was unlikely that he could have been saved from the firing squad. Apart from the internal political factors involved in the affair, Domínguez was also suspected of being a British spy.⁶⁵ Perales had obtained information from Domínguez's address book which indicated, rather, that he was working as a German agent, but this hardly improved the situation, for his role as such was evidently to provoke an internal conflict which would lead to the dismissal of the anglophile Varela and the subsequent entry of Spain into the war in support of the Axis.⁶⁶ A passage in J. M. Doussinague's book, *España tenía razón*, echoes this version and indicates, furthermore, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was already aware of Falangist-German machinations when the Begoña incident occurred:

An attaché of the German Embassy in Madrid left the capital by car one day for France and, having stopped for lunch in Burgos, exchanged opinions with one of his companions on the projected conspiracy (an attempt at a *coup de main* by Falangists and SS people in order to take over the Government and allow the Germans to reach Gibraltar via Spain). They were overheard by someone who knew German well and who listened to the conversation, which provided some very interesting details. From 15 (sic) August onwards, when a tragic incident occurred after mass in the church at Begoña, Bilbao, certain Spanish elements of very low calibre, and in the pay of the German Embassy, were being tracked down and one of them was shot as responsible for that incident.⁶⁷

Domínguez's 'Testamentary message for national-syndicalist posterity'⁶⁸ suggests clearly that, in effect, the Begoña incident was at once a Falangist protest against what was considered to be part betrayal, part political error, on Franco's part, and a deliberate attempt to correct the *Caudillo's* line. Whilst Franco's foreign policy had not yet taken a decidedly pro-Allied turn, the Falangists considered that it was not, and never had been, sufficiently pro-Axis either. Thus, Domínguez wrote shortly before his execution that Franco,

in these moments of hesitation improper of the path traced by José Antonio, has – unconsciously, perhaps – joined our secular foreign enemies, but he will answer to God and to History for debility improper in a General who wears the Cross of San Fernando and who wrote in letters of gold a page of national resurrection.⁶⁹

From the standpoint of their Falangist logic, Domínguez and those who tried to save his life undoubtedly acted in good faith. They believed that the national-syndicalist revolution had not been implemented in accordance with the doctrine elaborated by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and that *Falange's* position in the regime was not hegemonic, because of the influence exercised on the *Generalsimo* by elements contrary to *Falange* and to the Falangist interpretation of the historic tasks of Spain.⁷⁰

What they did not seem to understand was the objective role of the *Falange* as an integral part of the system established by means of the Civil War. As such, it was charged with the execution of the socio-political aspects of an overall plan designed for the promotion of those interests whose protection had made the civil War 'necessary' and possible, and in which the *Falange* itself participated. Any attempt by a fraction of the *Falange* to assume any other than the executive function assigned to it would be crushed by the combined efforts of the other forces present in the regime and, ultimately, by the holders of supreme power, the Armed Forces, headed by Franco.⁷¹

The corollary to this particularly bitter bout of political in-fighting was made public at the beginning of September 1942. The headline of *Arriba* on 4 September left no doubt as to Franco's determination to show that he alone would decide where leadership and the balance of power were concerned: 'The *Caudillo* and National Leader of *Falange* assumes the Presidency of the *Junta Política*.' The front pages of all the national dailies that day were devoted to a series of important Cabinet and other changes. Serrano Suñer was removed not only from the Presidency of the *Junta Política*, but also from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he was replaced by General Gómez Jordana. General Varela ceded his place as Minister of the Army to General Asensio Cabanillas, thereto Chief of the Central General Staff. The National Delegate for Law and Justice, Falangist Blas Pérez González, succeeded General Galarza as Minister of the Interior and José Luna was replaced in the General Vice-Secretariat of the Party by Manuel Mora Figueroa. Rodrigo Vivar Tellez was appointed as the new Civil Governor of Vizcaya on 6 September 1942 and, on 12 September, José

Porres was dismissed as Civil Governor of Valladolid – two changes which support the allegations made in the Carlist leaflet to the effect that the Begoña affair was prepared with the connivance of Party officials in these two provinces.

Franco's intention in making these changes was clear from the comments printed in the Movement Press in the first half of September 1942: absolute unity of command ('*unidad en el mando*') was as necessary in peace-time as in war-time and, in internal politics, 'the severest discipline in observance of the Law' would be imposed inexorably, in order to preserve that unity.⁷² The dismissals represented a mere 'changing of the guard', wrote *Arriba*, which in no way meant that there would be changes in national or international policies, nor that the essence of the regime's principal institutions, the Army and the *Falange*, would alter. The nominal holders of power might vary, concluded the official Editorialisist, but the permanent essence of the totalitarian State remained and the only real government, that of Franco, did not change at all.⁷³

Varela and Galarza had clearly over-reached themselves in sending their notes to the Captaincies General after Franco had already taken the measures he considered sufficient to compensate the Army for the affront allegedly received in Begoña. The Party officials involved in the changes were suspected of being implicated in an affair which could well be interpreted as a demonstration of disagreement with Franco's leadership and such an act of defiance could not go unpunished. Only those who obediently toed the line were safe. Girón, Arrese and Valdés kept *their* positions because they did precisely that.

The reasons behind Serrano's ouster are not so immediately comprehensible, although it may be said at once that a change in foreign policy was not among them. In his memoirs, Serrano himself writes:

The fact that Franco eliminated Varela from the Government because of the internal political situation, in spite of the excellent relations that the twice-decorated General then maintained with the British Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare, is a further demonstration of the fallaciousness of the official story, concocted *a posteriori*, that my dismissal was for reasons of a shrewd rectification in our external policy.⁷⁴

Dionisio Ridruejo echoes Serrano's judgement:

The fact that, months after (Serrano's) fall, the Axis' star began to fade, served to weave the legend of the astute foresight of the dictator – a legend which any explorer of newspapers archives will, with little effort, see refuted.⁷⁵

In effect, the Movement Press maintained its pro-Axis tone for several months after the September 1942 crisis. In January 1943, *Arriba* published front-page reports of the summary of 1942 made by Hitler, giving an outstanding position to one of the *Führer's* phrases in particular: 'A nation is sinking, and it is not Germany. Alas for Europe if the Jewish-bolshevik-capitalist conspiracy triumphs!'⁷⁶ Falangists Arrese, Valdés Larrañaga, Aznar and Arias Salgado visited Germany in the same month; Arrese was received by Hitler and the two held 'a long conversation characterised by the spirit of frank amity which exists between Germany and Spain'.⁷⁷ The leading article in the 24 January 1943 edition of *Arriba* was entitled 'Russia is the enemy', whilst exactly six months after Serrano Suñer's dismissal, on 2 February 1943, the front page of the same paper proclaimed that 'the initiative has not been taken out of Axis hands'.

Notes

1. *El Alcazar, Arriba* (27, 28, 29 & 30 Jan. 1942).
2. *Ibid.* (2 Apr. 1942).
3. *Ibid.* (19 July 1942).
4. *Ibid.* (21 & 25 Aug. 1942).
5. *Ibid.* (10 Feb. 1942).
6. *Ibid.* (9 Mar. 1942).
7. *Ibid.* (22, 23 & 24 Feb. 1942).
8. *Ibid.* (3 May 1942).
9. *El Alcazar*, 19 November 1941.
10. According to a Law of 6 December 1940, membership of the *Frente de Juventudes* was obligatory, in order that Spanish youth should 'receive the formative influence of the *Falange*'. As of December 1941, the Youth Front had 943 951 members, both male and female, between the ages of 7 and 18, according to a report published in the 3 December 1941 edition of *El Alcazar*. At present, there exists no monographic study of this section of the *Falange*, which undoubtedly exerted a significant influence on post-war Spanish youth, except Alcocer, J. L. *Radiografía de un fraude*, Planeta, Barcelona 1978.
11. *El Alcazar*, 17 November 1941.
12. *Arriba*, 16 March 1943 published the following figures referring to the capital city of Madrid: 22 000 block representatives, 1800 representatives of groups of blocks, and 120 suburb representatives.
13. Foundational speech, 29 October 1933, in *Obras Completas*, p. 24.
14. *Arriba* (29 Jan. 1942).
15. *Ibid.* (5 Feb. 1942).
16. *Ibid.* (19 Apr. 1942).
17. See above, pp. 87–88.
18. 'Ratz católica y militar de la *Falange*' in *El Alcazar*, 8 December 1941.
19. See also the Editorial in *Arriba*, 26 August 1942 and the speech made by Franco in La Coruña on 24 August 1942, in which he stated that 'nothing is closer to things military than our *Falange*, and nothing more Falangist than the virtues of an Army'.
20. This is not to say, however, that territorial gains were absent from the *Falange's* aspirations; see, for example, Ledesma Ramos, R., *Discurso a las Juventudes de España*, pp. 90–1, 101–7; Primo de Rivera, J. A., *Cortes* speech, 2/10/35, in *Obras completas* pp. 397–406; Redondo, O., 'Castilla en España' in *JONS*, no. 2 (June 1933); Aparicio, J., 'Imperio o anarquía' in *JONS, Antología*, pp. 211–13; Arelliza, J. M., & Castiella, F., *Reivindicaciones de España* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1941) *passim*. Cf. also, Southworth, H. *Antifalange*, pp. 13–19, 29–41, 48–61; Costa Morata, P., 'La idea del Imperio' in *Historia internacional*, no. 11 (Feb. 1976) pp. 51–5 and refs.
21. Servicio Exterior de FET y de las JONS, *FET y de las JONS en el exterior. Revista hispánica moderna* (New York, 1939), quoted in Southworth, H., *Antifalange*, p. 154. The only existing monographic study of the Falangist Foreign Department is Allan Chase, *Falange: the Axis' Secret Army in the Americas*, (New York: G. P. Putman, 1943).
22. *El Alcazar*, (7 Nov. 1941).
23. *Ibid.* (10 Nov. 1941). The Nazi party had a centre and representatives in Spain at this time. When their leader, Thomsen, left Spain in February 1943, he was presented with a leather-bound volume containing the signatures of several hundreds of Falangist 'producers' (*Arriba*, 24 Feb. 1943).
24. *El Alcazar*, 11 Dec. 1941.
25. *Arriba*, 15 Feb. and 28 Mar. 1942.
26. *Ibid.*, 28 Apr. 1942. On the Blue Division, see below, pp. 80, 82–4.
27. *Ibid.*, 29 Apr. 1942.
28. *Ibid.* It also acted as the channel for such matters as a request to Spanish vintners to send wines and spirits for distribution among the wounded in Roman hospitals.
29. *Ibid.* (10 May 1942).
30. *Ibid.* (27 June & 18 Sept. 1942).
31. Even although, as we have discussed in Chapter 1, the assertion was untrue.
32. Franco was always mistrustful of the spontaneous initiatives of his collaborators. The fact that this was a quasi-military initiative probably fostered even further his suspicions with respect to Serrano's desire to promote the *Falange*.
33. *Arriba* (15 Aug. 1942).

34. Ros Hombravella *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
35. Esteban J. in Preston, P. (ed.), *España en crisis* (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978) p. 163.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
37. Servicio Nacional del Trigo, *Cosechas, Comercio y Consumo de Trigo durante las veinticinco campañas 1939-1940, 1963-1964* (Madrid: Ministry of Agriculture, 1964) quoted in Ros Hombravella *op. cit.*, p. 57.
38. Walker, J. *Spain, Economic and Commercial Conditions*, Overseas Economic Surveys (London: HMSO, 1949) quoted in Esteban J., *loc. cit.*, p. 161, n. 53.
39. *El Alcazar* (10 Nov. 1941).
40. *Arriba* (1 Jan. 1942).
41. See notes 37 and 38 above. In 1942, indeed, a Falangist, José Pérez de Cabo, was shot precisely for his apparent involvement in black market dealings in eastern Spain.
42. *Ibid.* (12 Jan. 1942).
43. Serrano Suñer had already indicated the convenience of mobilising popular sentiment against the communist enemy in a speech made at a Falangist gathering in Mota del Cuervo on 3 May 1941. He repeated the idea in the meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 25 June 1941. Cf. *Arriba* (4 May & 26 June 1941).
44. Ridruejo, D. *Los cuaderros de Rusia* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1978) pp. 10-14. See also, Esteban Infantes, E., *La División Azul* (Madrid: Editorial AHR, 1965). Esteban Infantes was Supreme Commander of the Division between Dec. 1942 and Dec. 1943.
45. *El Alcazar* (15 Nov. 1941).
46. 'Los infantes españoles de la División Azul' in *El Alcazar*, 21 December 1941.
47. Gaceo had been a member of the first National Council of *Falange Española*, Chief of the Press Office of the Party Secretariat, and journalist on the staff of *Arriba*.
48. *Arriba* (18 Jan. 1942). According to Serrano Suñer (*Memorias*, p. 191), Gaceo was accused *en rebeldía* in the Court Martial held against Manuel Hedilla and others on 5 June 1937, which implies a good deal of cynicism, or hypocrisy, on the part of Gaceo and no less on the part of those members of the Establishment who buried him as a hero.
49. Girón J. A., 'The transcendence of the Blue Division', in *Arriba* (2 Jan. 1942).
50. Francisco Franco, speech made in Terrassa (Barcelona) in Jan. 1942, and quoted in *Arriba* (7 Feb. 1942).
51. *BOE*. (5 Feb. 1942).
52. *Ibid.* (8 May 1942).
53. Cf. Ridruejo, D., *Los cuaderros de Rusia*, p. 13. Esteban Infantes, E., *op. cit.*, p. 25, gives the figure of 17 406 volunteers, although it is not clear whether this includes replacements and does not include the airmen of the 'Escuadrilla Azul'.
54. According to a Carlist pamphlet, *El crimen de la Falange en Begoña*, dated 17 Aug. 1942, of which a copy was kindly lent to this writer by D. Miguel Alvarez Bonald. Cf. Marquina Barrio, A., 'El atentado de Begoña' in

55. *Historia 16*, no. 76 (Aug. 1982). *El Crimen de la Falange en Begoña*. The request was made to the Party Vice-secretary, Luna. It is not known whether the Secretary General, Arrese, was informed of these movements.
56. David Jato Miranda, interview (7 July 1977). Jato was among a group of Blue Division volunteers on their way home whom Domínguez tried to persuade to accompany him to Begoña.
57. *El crimen de la Falange en Begoña*. Neither the origin of the second car, nor the names of its occupants are given.
58. An unpublished list compiled by Carlists who visited the hospitals where the wounded were attended, given to this writer by D. Miguel Alvarez Bonald, gives the names of 117 people, two of whom ultimately died of their injuries.
59. This is the Carlist version. The Falangist version, as given to this writer by Falangists Perales and Jato, claims that the Falangists were arrested when they went to report the Carlists to the police.
60. David Jato, interview, 7 July 1977. Lopez Rodó, L., *La larga Marcha hacia la monarquía* (Barcelona: Noguer, 1977) pp. 29, 503-5.
61. The Carlist leaflet has already been mentioned. The Falangist reply was evidently dated 18 Aug. 1942 and written by a SEU official. The present writer has been able to find no trace of its text. Cf. Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
62. *BOE*, 26 Nov. 1945.
63. Narciso Perales, interview, 31 Dec. 1976.
64. Taken from an unpublished account of Domínguez's final moments, written by the priest who heard his last confession, Fr. Eusebio G. de Pesquera, and shown to this writer by Narciso Perales. Notice that the execution had taken place was published in a discreet corner of the *Monarchist daily, ABC*, and, without any detail whatsoever, in *Arriba*, on 3 Sept. 1942. Cf. Serrano Suñer, R., *Memorias*, pp. 366-7.
65. Falangist Manuel Valdés Larranga was said to be responsible for the report denouncing Domínguez as a British spy. When questioned by this writer (interview, 22 Nov. 1977), Valdés was prepared only to say that it was 'a matter without any importance'.
66. David Jato, interview, 7 July 1977; Narciso Perales, interview 31 Dec. 1976 and in *Persónas*, Madrid, 11 Dec. 1976.
67. Doussinague, J. M., *España tenía Razón* (Madrid, 1950) p. 127. Doussinague was General Director of External Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his account can therefore be considered as having a semi-official character.
68. This unpublished document, loaned to the present writer by Dr Narciso Perales, was written in Larrinaga prison, 'at 22 hours and 1 minute of September 1942'.
69. *Ibid.*
70. Similar sentiments are frequently expressed in the internal organ of the Blue Division, the *Boletín de la Hermandad de la División Azul*: whilst the volunteers were away saving Spain from Communism, comrades with less altruistic motives had stayed at home to enrich themselves personally and to climb up the socio-political and professional ladders.
71. As has been noted earlier (p. 31), Primo de Rivera had realised what

might be the role of *Falange* in a State established by a military coup. His confidence that the risk was eliminated if the coup was prepared by 'a very capable minority which exists in the Army', was not confirmed by the use made of his party during the Franco regime.

72. *Arriba* (4 & 22 Sept. 1942). See also the edns of 5, 6, 10 & 12 Sept. 1942.
73. *Ibid.* (4 Sept. 1942).
74. Serrano Suñer, R., *Memorias*, p. 372.
75. Ridruejo, D., *Escrito en España*, p. 85.
76. *Arriba* (2 Jan. 1943).
77. *Ibid.* (20 Jan. 1943).

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The political demise of Serrano in September 1942 represented another important stage in the process of the absorption of the *Falange* into the fabric of the regime. With his departure from active politics, the hopes which Falangists like Perales and Ridruejo had cherished of being able, through him, to secure independent power for their party also disappeared. The direction of the *Falange* was, henceforth, more than ever in the hands of men who were, first and foremost, subordinate to, and identified with, the objectives and interests of the regime, adapting their particular beliefs and interests to these.

In international terms, this meant the acceptance of the de-fascitization of the regime's façade after 1945. In national terms, it meant being aware of, and adaptable to, the presence and ambitions of political rivals more acceptable in the post-world war international context. The most dangerous of the competitors in the political race were the Alphonine Monarchists, allied to whom were what the Falangists termed 'Christian-Democratic elements', who felt that an Allied victory in the war would oblige Franco to renounce his position as Head of State.¹

Some of Franco's own supporters also considered this a likely possibility and even had the temerity to write a collective letter to Franco, in June 1943, in which they suggested that he cede his place to the Alphonine Pretender, D. Juan de Borbón.² In fact, however, the Allies had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Spain to restore the monarchy, nor had Franco any intention of bowing out gracefully. On the contrary, a deliberate policy of isolation was practised against Spain by the victorious Allied powers and the Franco regime took advantage of this circumstance to adopt an equally deliberate independentist posture, which had its politico-economic expression in the period of autarchy which lasted until the 1950s.³

Nevertheless, after 1945, and in a context of international ostracism which contributed in no small measure to the long-term prospects of survival of the regime, Franco began to move slowly but unremittingly towards a monarchical solution to the as yet remote, but inevitable, question of the preparation of the post-Franco era. In spite of this being in contradiction to the anti-monarchical doctrine of José Antonio Primo de Rivera which the Falangists professed to defend,