

The efforts of the 'alternative' *Falange* were not, however, directed exclusively towards the working classes, nor concerned primarily with syndicalism. At the end of 1959, a series of meetings took place in the Madrid premises of the 'Medina Circle' of the Party's *Sección Femenina*. The purpose was the creation of the 'José Antonio' Doctrinal Circles, to keep alive the doctrine of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Falange's* founder. In reality, the Circles constituted an operation of 'preaching to the converted'. The participants in the initial meetings were, for the most part, Falangists of long standing, with the addition of some of the younger members of the regime hierarchy: Pilar and Miguel Primo de Rivera; Julián Pemartín; Jesus Fueyo (first Director of the Institute of Political Studies); Patricio González de Canales; Lulá de Lara, Carmen Isasi, Maruja Cuervo and Viki Eirora, four stalwarts of the *Sección Femenina*; Miguel Primo de Rivera y Urquijo, the nephew of *Falange's* founder and member of one of Spain's most powerful banking families; Antonio Castro Villacañas; and Diego Márquez Horrillo.¹ As we have noted earlier, some of these people had already been associated in previous years with ill-fated attempts to create an 'alternative' *Falange*, but many former 'opposition' Falangists were reluctant to become involved with this new group because 'politically, it was very confused'.² As in the 1930s, the *Falange's* essential contradiction in wanting to be at once an elitist and a popular movement had crystallised in the form of two factions, one selective and limited in its appeal, the other attempting to take root wherever it could, particularly among the working classes.

The concern of the *Circulos Doctrinales* 'José Antonio' was 'to save for posterity the revolutionary essence of national-syndicalist thought, personified especially in José Antonio'. For some members, a further prime objective was to 'differentiate the *Falange* from the Movement'. With this double aim, the founders of the Circles took as their starting point the determination to ensure that

in their doctrinal propositions, (the Circles) should be so orthodoxly Falangist that incorporation into them would be impossible for those who, originating in the Spanish Right, had militated first in the primitive *Falange* and then in the National Movement as pseudo-Falangists.³

This, in fact, should have excluded automatically a good many of the aforementioned founder members, except, of course, that no definition of pseudo Falangism' was given, and it could be tacitly assumed that those who qualified for exclusion on the first count were saved by their innocence on the second.

In their anxiety to differentiate themselves from the Movement and other sectors of the Right, the Circles were similar to the groups formed by Perales and Maestu. They differed, however, in two aspects. To begin with, the Circles were concerned with political doctrine, whereas Perales and his collaborators were concerned with trade union practice. Secondly, Perales was aiming outside the *Falange* in his search for support, whereas the founders of the Circles hoped to 'recover and unite the real Falangists, then dispersed throughout the organisations of the Movement, or withdrawn from active politics'.⁴ Once again, the contradictory nature of the professed ideals and the reality of the human composition of the Circles is apparent.

At the beginning of 1960, Circles had been formed in Madrid, Barcelona, Sevilla and Jerez de la Frontera. By the end of 1961, some twenty Circles had been formed in various other provinces. In Madrid, the President, veteran Falangist Julián Pemartín, was obliged by ill health to cede his place to Luis González Vicén. The following year, the Madrid Circle began to programme a series of lectures which aroused the suspicions of the authorities from whom permission had to be sought to hold any kind of public meeting, and the programme was suspended. The participants in the discussions were to have been Falangist economist and writer, Juan Velarde Fuertes; Jesus Fueyo; Adolfo Muñoz Alonso, late Director of the Institute of Syndical Studies and author of numerous works on life and doctrine of José Antonio Primo de Rivera; González Vicén; Ceferino Maestu; González de Canales; and Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, journalist and one-time exponent *par excellence* of the notion of Falangist socialism.⁵ With the exception of Maestu, all of them had at least one official post in the regime to his name.

The Circles' newspaper, *Es así*, was published for the first time in January 1963. Thereafter, it appeared in March, July and November of the same year and in May 1964, its final appearance before it was banned. It was in the pages of *Es así* that the Circles expounded their interpretation of national syndicalist doctrine, with the mixture of conceptual confusion and resentful demagoguery characteristic of the group.

The first edition was typical. In it, the President, Luis González

Vicén, explained the nature and beliefs of the *Círculos Doctrinales*, defining them in negative, rather than in positive terms: 'neither fascism, nor a sect, nor an exclusivist group'. He claimed that the members believed in trade unionism as the means to supercede capitalism, although he did not consider the point that the two are not necessarily incompatible and, indeed, can even be mutually beneficial.⁶ Finally, he expressed the group's belief in the organisation of the State on the basis of a bi-cameral parliamentary system – hardly the ideal of the totally anti-parliamentarian Primo de Rivera, but quite in keeping with the *Cortes* and National Council of the Movement of the Franco regime.⁷

In the same edition, in an article entitled 'Class-based Schism', an indirect attack was made on the Government, through a direct attack on the General Directorate of Internal Commerce. The article was occasioned by the holding of elections in the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Shipping. Characteristic of the way in which the organisations of the employer classes were allowed to retain their autonomous existence after the Civil War, whilst the workers' organisations were totally suppressed, the Chambers of Commerce were not integrated into the official Syndical Organisation. The elections were seen as a unilateral action which might have far-reaching consequences, and might set a precedent for similar action by the workers. This was the crux of the matter. The anonymous author of the article was worried by the possibility of a situation which would be tantamount to admission of the failure of the official Syndical Organisation, and saw the elections as 'the first crack, wide, deep and irreversible, which has been opened publicly in the politico-syndical structure of the nation'.⁸

The thought of the people behind *Es así* was certainly critical and outspoken. It was clear, however, that rather than wanting to see the regime razed to the ground, they were simply scandalised by the decadence into which parts of it had, in their opinion, been allowed to fall. What they wanted was a thorough purge to restore, or to provide for the first time in some areas, the purity and orthodoxy of the ideology on which the regime was nominally founded.

The National President of the Circles, Luis González Vicén, until 1964 a member of the National Council of FET y de las JONS, resigned from his post in mid-1965. According to his successor, Diego Márquez Horrillo, Vicén resigned because he could no longer tolerate being 'harrassed and pursued from the upper echelons of power',⁹ on account of a letter which the Circles had sent to the Minister Secretary

General of the Movement, José Solís, in 1963. In the letter, the Circles had expressed support for the public denunciation, made by a group of intellectuals, of police brutality against workers. This represented a remarkable change of heart in a man who had once been a member of a Francoist secret service and leader of the *Guardia de Franco*, well known for its use of strong-arm tactics in defence of the regime. On resigning, González Vicén wrote to the governing body of the Circles a letter in which the same sense of aggrieved honour as had permeated the pages of *Es así* was perceptible. Referring to the suppression of the paper, he wrote:

We must accept that we have received a rebuff from the régime . . . with respect to our political conduct or the expression of our ideas about the future of the régime and about the situation of our Fatherland. I knew that such ideas were not going to be well received, coming, as they did, in the middle of the replete national siesta after the great meal. I knew that régimes of personal command have no other way to power than that of adulation, but I know too that certain values still hold sway in the world: dignity, self-pride and one's duty to one's country.¹⁰

With supreme cynicism, González Vicén included the entire Spanish populace in the 'great meal' and the 'national siesta', writing as though he and his co-religionaries had had nothing to do with it. The truth was, firstly, that the first twenty years of Francoism had been a period of peace and plenty only for a select minority and, secondly, that the majority of Falangists, including Dr. González Vicén, had also participated in the 'feast'.¹¹ González Vicén's letter made only the vaguest disapproving allusion to 'régimes of personal command' in general, but did not openly attack the Franco regime in particular. Playing safe in the final analysis, the Circles were attempting to create for themselves an image of martyred rejection at the hands of the regime. Their line was sufficiently ambiguous to permit either dignified acceptance, should the régime offer to readmit them on their terms, or identification with non-regime groups, should the Franco régime be succeeded, as seemed a real and even imminent possibility, by a different socio-political system.

By October 1965, with the departure of González Vicén, the death of Miguel Primo de Rivera, lack of funds and a decline in membership, the Circles had entered a period of stagnation. The election of Márquez Horrillo as President, however, brought a change of tactics.

The basic belief in 'national syndicalist solutions for the problems of Spain' remained unchanged, but now Juvenile, Labour and University sections were created; a programme of lectures, discussion groups and public meetings was arranged; and a total of seventy Circles had been opened throughout Spain by 1966.¹² Although the Circles were anxious not to be identified with the regime, it is possible that this sudden burst of activity was financed, or at least subsidised, by the Movement Secretariat.¹³

The campaign to differentiate the *Falange* of the Doctrinal Circles from that of the *Movimiento Nacional* was increased in the latter half of the decade, and a new element was added to the list of the Circles' claims: the necessity for the unity of all Falangist groups. The Circles were reacting to, but not necessarily against, the direction in which the regime was leading the process of its own institutionalisation. The latter half of the 1960s saw the promulgation of a series of Laws and Decrees which clearly indicated that the *Falange* could by no means expect to hold a privileged position. Such was the significance for the *Falange* of the Organic Law of the State (10 January 1967), the Organic Law of the Movement and its National Council (28 June 1967),¹⁴ the Basic Law of the Juridical Regime of the Movement, and the Law Providing for the Succession of the Head of State (23 July 1969), whereby Franco designated Prince Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón as his successor. In response to an article about the *Falange* published in *Cuadernos para el diálogo*, the Madrid Circle issued an open letter, in which it explained the historical process of the 'confusion' between *Falange* and Movement.¹⁵ In May 1969, Circles published a critique of the first draft of the Law of the Juridical Regime of the Movement, and seminars were held by the University section to analyse a recent Government White Paper on education. Lectures were organised explaining different aspects of national syndicalism. Finally, in an interview given in February 1969, Márquez Horrillo stated that the most important task for the Circles was 'to achieve the unity of all Falangist groups, and we are going to devote all our efforts to that task'.¹⁶

The public declaration made by the Circles in 1969, with respect to the Basic Law of the Juridical Regime of the Movement, showed that, in its opportunistic pragmatism, the 'alternative' *Falange* was little different to its 'official' comrades. By 1969, political plurality was a reality to the extent that the Party Secretary, Solís, had drawn up a Statute of Political Associations. The Circles, like the 'official' *Falange*, supported the regime's steps towards liberalisation, limited

though these were, not because they believed in political plurality, but because they were powerless to oppose the regime. Moreover, it was not in their interest to do so. In the same way that the syndicalist sector of the Falangist 'opposition' attempted to capitalise on the efforts of contemporary Left-wing trade union movements, the Circles took advantage of the degree of tolerance by then afforded to the moderate opposition, such as the group entitled '*Tacito*'. The demands made by the Circles in their 1969 declaration could have been subscribed to by any contemporary opposition group: immediate regulation of the free association of Spaniards; total freedom of ideas and tendencies, and full autonomy of associations; incorporation of all Spaniards into 'the common political task'; and the negation of the faculty attributed to certain administrative officials, of temporarily suspending any given association. The Falangists of the Doctrinal Circles were differentiated from the other groups, however, by origins which, as they were aware, were going to be something of a stigma. The declaration ended:

The Presidents of the *Círculos* "*José Antonio*", in their condition of Falangists, and precisely for that reason, ask that the aforementioned possibilities and rights be granted to all Spaniards without exception. They reject any position of privilege for themselves, as well as any limitation which may be imposed on them, based on misunderstood loyalties or disciplines.¹⁷

Since they did not wish to risk the political isolation which had almost killed *Falange* off in 1936, however, they neither denied nor reneged on those 'loyalties' and 'disciplines'.

As if to assist them in their efforts to promote a non-regime image for themselves, the police impeded, but did not prevent, the commemorative masses arranged by the Madrid Doctrinal Circle for 29 October and 20 November 1969 in the basilica of the Valle de los Caídos, Primo de Rivera's burial place.¹⁸ Nine days after the latter event, the *Círculos* announced their intention of forming the association *Falange Española de los JONS*,¹⁹ thereby marking the start of the tussle for the title which monopolised the activity of all Falangist groups in the first half of the 1970s.

Whilst the 'José Antonio' Doctrinal Circles were denouncing the plight of the working classes in letters to the Secretary General of the Movement in 1963, the Perales sector of the 'alternative' *Falange* was making fresh efforts to gain a foothold in traditionally Left-wing territory, this time under the title of the Workers' National Front

(*Frente Nacional de Trabajadores* - FNT). At the same time, a student branch of the FNT was formed. This was the Syndicalist Students' Front (*Frente de Estudiantes Sindicalistas* - FES), led by Perales' son, Jorge Perales Rodríguez, José Real, the actor Juan Diego (who later became a member of the Spanish communist party) and Sigfredo Hillers de Luque.²⁰ Both organisations were small, clandestine and intent upon emphasising the novelty and validity of national syndicalist solutions for contemporary problems. They competed with the Circles, which they considered 'a peripheral group'²¹ for the title of *Falange Española* and the exclusive right to use the Falangist iconography.

As the decade advanced, internal conflicts arose and intensified between FNT and FES, particularly between Ceterino Maestu and Sigfredo Hillers, over organisational questions. According to Perales, Hillers suffered a narrowness of mind which only admitted ultra-authoritarian interpretations of national syndicalist doctrine. Hillers would have been ideal, he says, for organising an army barracks, but not for running a political group.²² As a result of these internal discrepancies, FNT separated from FES in 1965 and adopted the title of Revolutionary Syndicalist Front (*Frente Sindicalista Revolucionario* - FSR). The intention of the FSR was to create a revolutionary trade union organisation orientated towards workers not already associated with the *Falange* and, in particular once again, towards the anarchists. In a determined and transparent effort to play down the Falangist content of the group and to play up its out-going nature, the FSR adopted for its flag the red and black traditional to Spanish anarchism and, as its symbol, a black spiral, to represent the renovation from within and towards the exterior, which FSR aspired to effect.²³

In 1966, the FSR, provisionally headed by veteran 'opposition' Falangist Narciso Perales Herrero, held an assembly in Madrid, as a result of which a Central Committee was elected. It was composed of eight members, of whom Perales was the first Vice President, and Manuel Hedilla Larrey the President. Excused the death penalty in 1937 and sentenced instead to life imprisonment, Hedilla had begun his sentence in the prison of Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands. In 1941, he requested the reduction of his sentence to that of twenty years imprisonment. The request was granted at the beginning of 1942 and, in addition, the sentence was converted from imprisonment to confinement in Palma de Mallorca. He was finally released in 1946 and returned to Madrid, where he held an administrative post in a national airline for a short time.²⁴ Politically, he did not openly adopt any

particular position, nor did he appear to be interested in doing so, for he despised the proliferation of Falangist grouplets, yet would never have considered espousing any other ideology. Moreover, he was not in a position to engage in political activities which might arouse Franco's distrust, for he was subject to police surveillance and to the pressure of 'alternating offers and threats'.²⁵ Thus, when in 1965 Hedilla accepted the invitation to participate in the *Frente Sindicalista Revolucionario* it represented an unexpected return to active politics, even if he had never actually renounced his Falangism. The leaders of the FSR probably thought they had effected an intra-*Falange* 'coup', having at once gained a victim of Francoism as their figurehead and having stolen a march on the sector of the 'opposition' led by González Vicén, which had begun in 1958 to claim the cause of Hedilla as its own. Furthermore, by incorporating into their group a direct hierarchical descendent of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the FSR was preparing a strong claim to the title of FE de las JONS.

After the FES-FNT split in 1965, the FES, led by Hillers de Luque, continued to operate in university circles, but the extreme authoritarianism of the organisation in general, and of Hillers in particular, caused the progressive undermining of its membership in favour of other Falangist groups. The most orthodox of FES's members were formed into an élite corps, with the separate title of Falangist Youth (*Juventud Falangista*), which, after the style of the upper stratum of the *Opus Dei*, constituted a semi-secret sect, with vows, special rituals and iron discipline.²⁶

In 1966, the FSR was declared illegal. This did not, however, dampen the ardour of its members, who, besides toying with the completely absurd idea of attempting a *coup d'état*, engaged themselves in the more realistic task of organisation and propaganda on the factory shop-floor. To support their propaganda with action, militants participated in a number of the strikes which took place in that year, particularly in the engineering sector of Madrid.²⁷ By that time, the initially relatively clear picture of 'alternative' Falangist groups had become temporarily somewhat confused.

In 1964, and on the initiative of the General Secretariat of the Movement, the 'Manuel Mateo' Social Centre was set up in Madrid. Its objectives were the education, instruction and cultural recreation of trade union militants. Its inspiration was the national syndicalist ideology, although, like the '*Ballena Alegre*' group, the 'Manuel Mateo' Centre was open to anyone who wished to take part in the meetings held there, or use its facilities, such as the reading room.²⁸

Unlike the FSR, there was no doubt as to the Falangist nature of the 'Manuel Mateo' Centre. Its newspaper, *Orden Nuevo (New Order)*, was liberally scattered with quotations from Primo de Rivera and references to the Falangist and JONSist doctrine and history. Narciso Peralas participated in the meetings organised by the Centre, as did Ceferino Maestu,²⁹ and Falangist comrades Zaragoza,³⁰ Herrando,³¹ and Rebull.³²

Maestu was then in contact with members of the clandestine Spanish communist party and, apparently on his initiative, Marcelino Camacho, Julián Ariza and other PCE militants began to use the premises of the 'Manuel Mateo' Centre for their meetings, with the consent of Syndical Organisation official José Hernando Sánchez.³³ This coincided with the beginnings of the Workers' Commissions movement in Madrid, of which Camacho and Ariza subsequently became the most outstanding leaders. Peralas withdrew his collaboration at this point, on the grounds that Camacho and his political correligionaries were 'diverting the political line of the Centre'. In particular, Peralas disagreed with the conversion of a *Comité de Jurados y Enlaces* (Committee of Workers' Representatives), which he had helped to establish, into a section of Workers' Commissions.³⁴ In theory, there should have been no contradiction in the co-existence of *Comisiones Obreras* and the 'Manuel Mateo' Falangists, since both professed to be open to all political creeds and concerned primarily with labour matters. In practice, of course, since the political thought behind the one was opposed to that behind the other, it was inevitable that the two should ultimately prove incompatible.

The Minister Secretary General of the Movement, José Solís Ruiz, knew of the meetings in the 'Manuel Mateo' Centre and allowed them to continue until he received notification 'from above' that they were dangerous and must be stopped. The Centre was consequently closed in 1966. The clandestine meetings, usually chaired by Camacho, were for a time transferred to the headquarters of the *Círculos Doctrinales 'José Antonio'*, in Madrid.³⁵ These activities were also interrupted, however, when, at the end of an abortive attempt to demonstrate in the area of the New Ministries in Madrid, Ariza, Camacho and Maestu were arrested, in June 1966.³⁶ On the day before it was due to be held, the trial was 'prepared' by the Public Prosecutor and the defence lawyer, Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, in the premises of the Woodworkers' Union (*Sindicato de la Madera*), of which Cantarero was then President.³⁷

By 1968, a certain tension had arisen within the FSR, on account of a

lack of consensus with respect to the political line proposed by the President, Manuel Hedilla. Whilst the Vice President, Peralas, was in Latin America in that year, Hedilla founded the *Frente Nacional de Alianza Libre* (FNAL) (National Front of Free Alliance). He was accompanied in the venture by a small group of military men and the extreme Right-wingers Blas Piñar, García Reboul and Pérez Viñeta. The FNAL was less radical than the FSR in its national syndicalist militancy; indeed, Hedilla had always been opposed to the inclusion of the word 'revolutionary' in the latter's title.³⁸ In reality, the FNAL aspired to being a legal platform, or screen, for the FSR, with the object of re-grouping dispersed Falangists.³⁹ Shortly afterwards, in 1970, Hedilla died, with the FNAL still amounting to very little as an independent group. Hedilla had said that Peralas was the only man capable of being National Chief of *Falange* and, says a Falangist militant, 'everyone recognised him as such in fact'.⁴⁰ Peralas did not, however, assume the leadership of FSR/FNAL but, by mutual agreement, ceded the position to Patricio González de Canales. After the death of Hedilla, the ultra Right-wing members of FNAL left the group and support tended to be given, rather, to FSR, which continued to operate independently, under the *de facto* leadership of Peralas.⁴¹

Whilst the main activity of the 'alternative' *Falange* in the 1960s centred around the 'José Antonio' Doctrinal Circles, the FNT, the FES and the FSR, a number of other small nuclei were formed. Financed solely from the subscriptions paid by their members, and without having any kind of organisational infrastructure, they were small, disconnected and short-lived. Such groups as the *Unión de Trabajadores Sindicalistas* (Union of Syndicalist Workers), *Acción Sindicalista Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Syndicalist Action), *Frente Sindicalista Unificado* (United Syndicalist Front), or *Frente de Trabajadores Nacional Sindicalistas* (National Syndicalist Workers' Front) were reminiscent, in their size and penury, of the *Frente Español* or the *Movimiento Español Sindicalista* (MES), of the early 1930s. Indeed, an attempt was even made to revive the *Central Obrera Nacional Sindicalista* (CONS), founded by Ramiro Ledesma Ramos in 1934. In 1968, however, the national and international situation was completely different to what it had been thirty four years earlier. Not only was Spain no longer the impoverished agrarian country it had been in the thirties, but also it was no longer possible for a faltering *Falange* to look to Fascist Italy, to Nazi Germany, or to anti-republican forces at home for moral and material support.

In the decade of the 1970s, the action of all political groups,

including the Falangists, was conditioned by the pressure for, and apparent imminence of, political as well as social and economic change. In addition, for the 'alternative' *Falange*, the seventies saw the clarification of the confusion which had accumulated in the latter half of the preceding decade. By 1975, the numerous small groups which had sprung up ten years previously had gradually been reduced to two main blocs which survived, 'immune to discouragement',⁴² into the post-Franco era.

The *Frente Sindicalista Revolucionario* (FSR), reinforced by former members of the *Frente Nacional de Alianza Libre* (FNAL), began the decade with the objective of spearheading fresh attempts to rescue Falangism from obitrium and of making itself felt 'in the scattered ranks ("diáspora") of the Falange, through activity consequent with the goal of recovering the content of the movement'.⁴³ The two groups continued to operate on parallel lines, but their fields of operation were different. The FNAL was an intra-Falangist group which aimed at reconstructing a united *Falange* from within the movement's own ranks, recovering former and margined Falangists. The FSR, on the other hand, in spite of the difficulties of the task, continued to orientate its appeal outside the *Falange* itself, particularly in the factories and other work-places.

In 1974, using the traditional Falangist tactic of concluding intra-group alliances in order simply to subsist, the FNAL was reinforced by the incorporation of two of the syndicalist fractions created in the late 1960s, and two student groups.⁴⁴ The FSR, for its part, began to disintegrate at about the same time. Perales splintered off to form yet another group in 1975 and, in the same year, a second group of FSR members announced the creation of the *Partido Sindicalista Autogestionario* (PSA) (Autonomous Syndicalist Party). One of its leaders explains the creation of the PSA and its separation from the FSR as a response to the excessively Falangist line imposed on the latter by Perales, with a consequent under-emphasis of the syndicalist aspects of the organisation.⁴⁵ Moreover, it was considered that, having failed to make any headway as a union organisation, it was necessary to adopt a more overtly political role in order to be effective.

The creation of the PSA was in clear, deliberate and openly admitted imitation of the *Partido Sindicalista* founded by the anarchist Angel Pestaña in 1934, also in the belief that the political interests of the working classes could not adequately be represented and defended by a trade unionism which lacked a separate party structure. This new attempt, like that of the anarchists, was a failure. In the case of the PSA, the failure was due to three entirely foreseeable reasons. In the

first place, the non-Falangist members of the working classes distrust groups which they knew to be of Falangist origin. Secondly, the majority of politically conscious workers were already members of, or in sympathy with, Left-wing organisations. Thirdly, Falangist workers already had a political organisation: FE de las JONS, in either its 'official' or its 'alternative' version. There was no room for a party which offered nothing new and held out few hopes of success. The atmosphere of optimism which accompanied the death of Franco in November of that year (1975), plus the advent of legalised political opposition, democracy, 'Europeanisation', and a relatively buoyant economic situation did not provide the necessary combination of economic gloom, working class agitation and middle-class fear which had provided the national syndicalists with a potentially favourable breeding ground in the second half of the 1930s.

The development of the other main current of the 'alternative' *Falange*, the 'José Antonio' Doctrinal Circles, in the decade of the 1970s was little more brilliant than that of their syndicalist counterparts, FSR and FNAL.

Following the decision to found FE de las JONS as a political association, announced in 1969, the Doctrinal Circles had begun in 1970 to set up a series of 'promotional committees' (*Juntas promotoras*). The first was created by the Barcelona Circle and the example was followed, in the course of the year, by numerous other provincial Circles. At the same time, 'in view of the possible regulation of political associations', and thinking of 'the recovery of the name *Falange Española de las JONS* for the whole of the Spanish people',⁴⁶ the campaign to demonstrate that *Falange* and régime were two different entities continued. When, in 1970, the Secretary General of the Movement, Torcuato Fernández Miranda, suspended the annual commemoration of the foundation of *Falange*, the Circles celebrated the anniversary in their respective meeting rooms, with defiant speeches affirming their position of 'radical intransigence' and 'rational and sincere criticism of our own history and of the socio-political reality which surrounds us'. They denounced, too, the 'social conquests which are presented to us as solutions... because "there are no social conquests, only partialities, the work of a paternalistic capitalism, which is every day less a national capitalism". These meetings and speeches were accompanied by a letter of protest in similar vein to the National Council of the Movement, a meeting of which had been the official substitute for the customary gathering in the 'Teatro de la Comedia' in Madrid.⁴⁷

That same year, 1970, the *Juntas Promotoras* and the Circles called

for a national demonstration to be staged in Alicante on 22 November, to commemorate the 34th anniversary of the death of *Falange's* founder on the site of his execution. The gathering was not authorised by the police, allegedly as a result of pressure from Fernández Miranda.⁴⁸ Police and Civil Guards were called out to prevent the entry into Alicante of the large contingents of Falangists who, nevertheless, began to arrive on 21 November 1970. In spite of the preventive measures, some four thousand Falangists managed to enter Alicante.⁴⁹ Their leaders tried to secure authorisation for the demonstration but, in view of the discovery – which filled them with ‘perplexity and anxiety’ – that ‘the order of unhesitating repression came from the Head of State himself and that the President of the Madrid *Círculo José Antonio*’, Diego Márquez Horrillo, would be tried by a Council of War if serious disturbances occurred in Alicante’, the Falangists limited themselves to ordering a mass to be said for Primo de Rivera on the morning of 22 November in an Alicante church.⁵⁰ Outside the church, the anti-riot squads were waiting, and took action, ‘though without excessive force’.⁵¹ The incidents (‘fortunately not very serious’) culminated with the arrest of a few young members of FES and the *Círculos Doctrinales*, on account of their having distributed publicly the text of the speech which was to have been delivered at the suspended mass meeting.⁵² The national President of the *Círculos Doctrinales* drew the conclusion that,

the repercussions of the aborted Alicante meeting were translated, basically, into respect, even on the part of the Administration, for the serene behaviour of the Falangists in such critical moments, and affiliations *en masse* from old and new Falangists to the groups which tried to achieve unity in Alicante.⁵³

This opinion was not unanimous. Rank and file militants of the organisation, particularly the younger members, were disappointed by the submission of their leaders to the orders of the Ministry of the Interior and the General Secretariat of the Movement, precisely when those same leaders were encouraging militants to disobey Party hierarchs. They found it difficult, too, to relate such submission to the claims made that the ‘opposition’ *Falange* had nothing to do with the *Movimiento Nacional*. It was in Alicante in 1970 that a process of disillusionment and separation began for many young *Falange* militants, in the same way that the events in the University in 1956 had been the turning point for the preceding generation of ‘opposition’

Falangists.⁵⁴ In effect, in spite of the revolutionary tone of the speeches, lectures and publications, there were indications in the same that, in the Circles’ scheme of things, the old relationship of obedience-command was to be maintained between people and parties:

The Spanish people cannot be content with a slow process of opening-up, because it will not resign itself to being considered a political minor. However much they may insist on monopolising the political areas, the pressure groups cannot prevent popular participation from being a fact, although its role is to follow the flag of realism so that the democratising operation, an absolutely legitimate demand, may be carried out without violence.⁵⁵

Throughout the 1970s, the Circles and their ‘Promotional Committees’ continued, within limits, to criticise the status quo and to defy the prohibitions imposed on the celebration of commemorative events. Nevertheless, these always took place, prohibitions notwithstanding. It is noticeable, too, that the meetings and lectures of the Circles were frequently held in such respectable and official places as the premises of the Savings Banks or the Municipal Institute of Education in Madrid, with the attendance of mayors, councillors and other worthy representatives of the Establishment.

By 1971–72, however, the idea of resuscitating FFE de las JONS as such was an essential part of the programme of all Falangist groups and the competition for the title was becoming keener. The factionalism and jockeying for positions of pre-eminence which had occurred in 1936 and 1937 were present again in the 1970s, even though by then, the goal – power – was in relative rather than in absolute terms. Thus, in December 1971, a group made up by FES, the *Círculos Ruiz de Alda* and the *Asociación Juvenil ‘Octubre’*, and led by Sigfredo Hillers, accused the *Círculos Doctrinales José Antonio* of trying to monopolise the title FFE de las JONS. The national Secretary of the Circles replied, denying the accusation and accusing the Hillers group, in turn, of persistently torpedoing the Circles’ efforts to achieve Falangist unity.⁵⁶

In June 1973, the Circles held their ‘TV National Event’ in Toledo. It ended in uproar during the address given by the guest speaker, Manuel Valdés Larrañaga, then Vice-secretary General of the Movement. The reason was not only the obvious contradiction between anti-Movement rhetoric and the invited participation of a top Movement

official, but also the rumour that the Circles were being financed by the General Secretariat of the Movement.⁵⁷ As a result of the scandal, the Secretary General, Fernández Miranda, closed all the Circles in the country and prohibited their activities for three months. As when FE de las JONS was subject to similar closures in the 1930s, this was, nevertheless, useful anti-Movement propaganda for the Circles.

The Circles were re-opened in early 1974 and in 1975 requested information from the National Council of the Movement as to the legitimacy of the use of the title FE de las JONS by a political association formed in accordance with the Statute of Political Associations approved in December 1974. They were given the same negative answer as had been given to the 'regime' Falangist pretenders to the title: the name was part of the patrimony of all Spaniards and could not be assigned to any one group. Not content with this verdict, the Circles issued a public invitation to all Falangist groups to collaborate in the formation of an association bearing the prohibited title and, in April 1975, the Circles presented the necessary papers to the National Council of the Movement for approval. Their application was again rejected, in June 1975. The piqued response of the Assembly of Presidents of Circles and Promotional Committees came in September 1975: 'not to constitute, sponsor, nor support any political association which did not bear the title of FE de las JONS'. This, said the National President, 'showed clearly their rejection of the National Movement's associationism'.⁵⁸ Their 'rejection' did not, however, prevent them from making a third attempt in 1976, 'in accordance with the requisites of the Law of Political Associations'.⁵⁹

The call to unity issued in 1975 by the Circles was as unsuccessful as their attempts to appropriate *Falange's* original title. The *Círculos Doctrinales 'José Antonio'* and the Falangist sector led by former Party Secretary Raimundo Fernández Cuesta were at daggers drawn, precisely over the question of the title, whilst the FSR and FES groups continued their separate courses unheeding. Only the FNAL responded. In January 1976, and on the initiative of Patricio González de Canales, a meeting was held between representatives of FNAL and *Círculos Doctrinales 'José Antonio'*. It was decided to form a political party with the title FE de las JONS, with seven members from each of the constituent groups composing a *Junta Nacional*, the governing body at national level. In February of that year, González de Canales died, and the union of the two groups collapsed in May 1976, as a result of disagreements over political strategy and discipline.⁶⁰

Thus, by 1976, the first year of the post-Franco era, the Falangist

'opposition' was grouped into two main blocs, expressed in two national congresses.

In May 1976, the so-called *Hedillistas* (former members of FSR, FNAL and CONS) held a meeting in Madrid which marked the public constitution of *Falange Española auténtica* (FEa). The group had been created in embryonic form by Narciso Perales, when he left the FSR in 1975. He did not, however, assume its national leadership at this first Congress. The President elected was a young engineering worker from Valladolid, Pedro Conde Soladana.⁶¹

In June 1976, the *Círculos Doctrinales 'José Antonio'* formed a Liaison Committee (*Junta Coordinadora*) with a number of other small Falangist groups, to organise the 'First National Syndicalist Congress' in Madrid.⁶² This three day event, held in the Congress and Exhibition Centre of the Ministry of Information and Tourism,⁶³ was a curious mixture of pretentious organisational efficiency and real political confusion. Entitled 'Towards Unity', the Congress in fact merely served to point up the *disunity* existing between the different groups. The continual harping on unity of the speakers could not disguise the tension between the *Junta Coordinadora* and other Falangist blocs, nor the conflict latent within the *Junta* itself. The final event of the Congress, a gathering in front of the house where José Antonio Primo de Rivera was born, ended in a clash with members of *Falange Española auténtica*, the most prominent and aggressive of whom was Miguel Hedilla Rojas, youngest son of the second National Chief of *Falange*, Manuel Hedilla Larrey.⁶⁴

In the same month of June 1976, the Falangists grouped together under the leadership of Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, with the collective title of *Frente Nacional Español*, published an open letter in which they justified their claim to the title FE de las JONS, and invited all Falangist groups to unite. The *Frente Nacional Español* based its claim to the title essentially, though not exclusively, on the "Old Shirt" composition of its membership:

Our application is legitimated by the signature of surviving comrades of the first party card-holders of *Falange Española de las JONS*, of National Councillors nominated by the JONS or appointed by José Antonio, and those whom Manuel Hedilla designated during his leadership, as well as by the signatures of thousands of Falangists of all generations currently affiliated to the *Frente Nacional Español*.⁶⁵

The contradiction between the *Falange's* original anti-party attitudes

and the decision to form what was a political party in all but constitutional status and parliamentary functions, was equally rationalised and justified, with arguments reminiscent of the belligerence offered forty years earlier to the Second Republic:

Since, under the legality in force and projected . . . the entry into the political arena of certain forces constitutes a danger and a worry for the men, classes and lands of Spain, our common proposal must be to oppose to that threat of rupture, not a negative attitude of mere resistance, but a positive and creative attitude, demonstrating that the *Falange* . . . can give the Spanish people satisfaction for its aspirations of justice and freedom, outside international capitalism and Marxism, and outside party Liberalism.⁶⁶

The letter expressed the belief that all Falangist groups must unite and that such unity '(did) not seem difficult, since what separates us at present is accidental. Between us there are no differences of ideological content. It is precisely our ideological identity which must unite us'.⁶⁷ As in 1934 and 1937, however, personal differences, coupled with individual anxieties for protagonism, proved stronger than common 'ideological identity'.

Pedro Conde Soladana, leader of the *Hebilista* sector of the 'alternative' *Falange*, reacted to Fernández Cuesta's proposals in the following terms:

We believe that the only name for which Don Raimundo Fernández Cuesta can change the present one of *Frente Nacional Español*, is FET y de las JONS, which he has served faithfully for forty years; but not for FEE de las JONS, which he has ignored and trampled on during that same period of time.⁶⁸

The response of the *Junta Coordinadora* was equally negative. The *Junta's* Secretary, Eduardo Zulueta, issued a *communiqué* announcing the *Junta's* intention to 'present an application similar to that of FNE, laying claim to the name of FE de las JONS' and lamenting that the concession of the title 'must necessarily be an administrative decision, and, therefore, alien to the Falangists themselves'.⁶⁹

In spite of this announcement, and in spite of fifteen years of propaganda denouncing those considered 'collaborationists', such as Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, Miguel Primo de Rivera, or Manuel Valdés Larrañaga, in July 1976, the representatives of the *Junta*

Coordinadora and FES signed an agreement, entitled the 'Pact for Unity', with the *Frente Nacional Español*. Under the terms of the pact, the decision of the Ministry of the Interior as to the concession of the title would be considered final and binding. A constituent period would then be opened, in which 'the ideological scheme, the programme and the statutes of the party would be worked out by everyone, without a previously established hierarchy and without privileges for anyone'.⁷⁰

Once the title *Falange Española de las JONS* had been officially assigned to the FNE, in October 1976, the *Círculos Doctrinales José Antonio*, considering that the Fernández Cuesta sector had not completed its side of the 'Pact for Unity', themselves adopted the status of political party, without altering their original title. The FES, for its part, also became a political party, with the name of *Falange Española independiente*. The third of the aspirants to the old title, *Falange Española auténtica*, like the *Círculos Doctrinales*, retained its original name and, as such, registered officially as a political party, in accordance with the provisions of the 1976 Law of Political Associations.

Thus, in spite of *Falange's* original anti-party, anti-parliamentarian doctrine, the defence of whose purity formed the backbone of the Falangist 'opposition's' *raison d'être*, all sectors of that opposition had adopted party status by the end of 1976. Once more, *Falange* had sacrificed ideological concepts to the demands of political pragmatism.

Notes

1. Perales, N., interview, 7 Jan. 1977; Castro Villacañas, A., interview, 23 Nov. 1977.
2. Perales, N., interview, 7 Jan. 1977; he states that he signed as a founder member but never attended any of the meetings.
3. Márquez Horrillo, D., *Círculos José Antonio* (Bilbao: Albia Política, 1977) pp. 14-15.
4. *Ibid.*; Pordomingo, E., interview, 2 Jan. 1979.
5. See, Cantarero del Castillo, M., *Falange y socialismo* (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1973).
6. As the experience of the Catholic and 'yellow' unions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Spain had demonstrated.
7. *Es así* (Madrid, Jan. 1963).
8. *Ibid.*
9. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 19.

10. González Vicén, L., in Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 20.
11. González Vicén, for example, as well as being a member of the National Council of FET y de las JONS, was head of the Casualty Department at one of Madrid's largest State hospitals, where he also ran a private practice.
12. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 21.
13. This was suggested to the present writer by a former Falangist. Although the rumour was confirmed by former Vice-secretary General of the Movement, Manuel Valdés Larrañaga (interview, 22 Nov. 1977), with respect to 1973, it is not known when such financing began. The poor typographical quality of the Circles' publications such as *Unidad y Autogestión*, *Eje*, *Acción* or *Aula Azul*, was in marked contrast to the well-printed pages of *Alcalá*, *La Hora*, or 24, produced by the SEU with official funds from the Movement Secretariat.
14. Amongst other things, the Organic Law of the Movement regulated the possible formation of political associations, thereby implying that the political monopoly of FET y de las JONS was coming to an end.
15. 'Contemplación analítica del Estatuto Orgánico del Movimiento', in *Cuadernos para el diálogo*, no. 68, Nov. 1968. The Circles' reply appeared in the *Boletín de los Círculos José Antonio* (Madrid, Dec. 1968).
16. 'Círculos José Antonio: hacia la unidad de los Falangistas' in *Nuevo Diario* (Madrid, 19 Feb. 1969).
17. *Boletín de los Círculos José Antonio* (Madrid, June 1969) *Diario SP* (Madrid, 29 May 1969).
18. Eduardo Zaldívar, interview, 21 Dec. 1977; E. Pordomingo, interview, 2 Jan. 1979; 'Legitimidad de una fecha. Legitimidad de una idea', the text of a speech made by Márquez Horrillo on 29 Oct. 1969 and reproduced in the *Boletín del Círculo José Antonio* (Madrid, Dec. 1969).
19. *Informaciones* (Madrid, 29 Nov. 1969).
20. Born in 1934, Hillers de Luque was, like many members of his generation, a member of the *Frente de Juventudes* from an early age. He was a member of the *Guardia de Franco* in 1953, head of a *Falange* centurion in 1955, and a teacher in the Youth Front *Escuela de Mundos* in 1959. Hillers has published two books, *Estilo y ética falangistas* (1974) and *España: una revolución pendiente* (Madrid: Ediciones FES, 1975).
21. Falangist youth leader, Javier Morillas, interview, 22 Feb. 1977.
22. Narciso Perales, interview, 7 Jan. 1977.
23. Perales states (4 Jan. 1977) that the FSR was formed in secret between 1961 and 1962, and that 1965 was the date of its definitive establishment.
24. Hedilla Rojas, M. I., interview, 24 Feb. 1977; Alcazar de Velasco, A., interview, 15 Feb. 1977; Llorens Borrás, J. A. (ed.), op. cit., pp. 557-619.
25. Hedilla Rojas, M. I., interview, 24 Feb. 1977. Dionisio Ridueño describes Hedilla's attitude in his account of a visit to Hedilla in 1944, in *Casi unas memorias*, p. 264.
26. Demetrio Castro Alfín, interview, 2 Mar. 1978. Since the University was an important field of recruitment for both FES and *Opus Dei*, and both were aiming at middle class youth, it is perhaps not merely coincidental that FES should adopt a style and methods similar to those of its rival.
27. Narciso Perales states (interview, 4 Jan. 1977) that FSR militants

- participated in the strike at the 'Saint Gobain' factory, whilst José Luis Rubio recalls (interview, 29 Mar. 1979) their taking part in the strikes staged in the 'Standard Electric' works. Such activity is barely reflected, however, in the FSR's periodicals. Certainly, these differed from the majority of Falangist publications in that they reported and analysed current events in labour circles, rather than devote space to treatises on doctrinal questions, but they were reporting on events in other countries more often than on those in Spain. Documentary evidence of FSR's participation in the working class mobilisation of the mid-1960s is limited to a series of leaflets addressed to the 'Comrades of Standard Electric'.
28. Manuel Mateo, founder member, in 1934, of the *Central Obrera Nacional Sindicalista*, had been a member of the communist party before joining the primitive *Falange*.
 29. Maestu now states that he did not participate as a Falangist, since he was by then 'estranged' from *Falange*.
 30. Head of the workers' section of the official trade union organisation, in the Banking sector.
 31. Collaborator of the Press Director in the Ministry of Labour, Falangist Antonio Gibeño.
 32. Member of FSR, which did not, however, participate as a group.
 33. Maestu, C., interview, 14 Dec. 1977. Cf. Ariza, J., *CC.OO.*, *Avance/ Mañana* (Madrid, 1976) pp. 18-19; Iglesias Selgas, C., *El sindicalismo español*, pp. 54-5.
 34. Narciso Perales, interview, 7 Jan. 1977; Javier Morillas, interview, 22 Feb. 1977. Cf. Ariza, J., op. cit., p. 15; in Madrid and Barcelona, participation (in the 1963 syndical elections) was high, which explains the fact that the first Workers' Commission to appear in the capital was called the *Comisión de Enlaces y Jurados de Empresa*. The *enlaces* and *jurados* were the only representatives elected directly by the workers in the Spanish official trade union system.
 35. Eduardo Zaldívar, interview, 2 Mar. 1978. Zaldívar, then a member of the Circles, was entrusted by Márquez Horrillo with the job of opening their premises every Sunday morning for a period of six or seven weeks, to admit Camacho and others. See also Ariza, J., op. cit., p. 19.
 36. Zaldívar, E. (2 Mar. 1978). Ariza, J., op. cit., p. 20, states that on that occasion, 181 people were arrested, of whom 19 were sent for trial. The four leaders, whom Ariza names as Camacho, Maestu, Hernando (Secretary of the 'Manuel Mateo' Centre) and Martínez-Conde, were held in prison for twelve days before being given provisional liberty.
 37. This information was provided by a member of the 'José Antonio' Doctrinal Circles who wishes to remain anonymous. It has not been possible, however, to confirm this information in any other source.
 38. José Luis Rubio, interview, 23 Mar. 1979; Javier Morillas, interview, 22 Feb. 1977.
 39. Narciso Perales, interview, 7 Jan. 1977.
 40. Javier Morillas, 22 Feb. 1977; M. I. Hedilla Rojas, interview, 24 Feb. 1977.
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. 'Inasequibles al desaliento'. According to José Antonio Primo de Rivera,

this was an essential quality of all true Falangists.

43. Narciso Perales, interview, 4 Jan. 1977.
44. The syndicalist groups were *Acción Sindicalista Revolucionaria* and the *Frente Sindicalista Unificado*; the student groups were the *Juntas de Oposición Falangistas* and the *Frente de Estudiantes Nacional Sindicalistas*. Like most of the 'alternative' Falangist groups other than the main currents (FSR, FNAL, FES and *Círculos Doctrinales*) these groups were composed mainly of young, lower middle class people, without any political formation or experience and without any formal structure or regular finance for their activities.
45. José Luis Rubio Cordon, interview, 23 Mar. 1979. Rubio adds that he disagreed with Perales' refusal to enter into any kind of cooperation with Left-wing opposition groups such as the CNT, *Comisiones Obreras*, or the *Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática*, thereby wasting the 'opposition' *Falange's* last opportunity to be an effective political force.
46. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 26.
47. Speech made by Márquez Horrillo on 29 Oct. 1970 and reproduced in the *Boletín de los Círculos 'José Antonio'*, Madrid, Dec. 1970. See also, *Arriba*, 29 and 30 Oct. 1970.
48. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 30.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 31; Castro, D. and Zaldivar, E., interview, 21 Dec. 1977.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. The *Frente de Estudiantes Sindicalistas* (FES) had been supporting the *Círculos Doctrinales* since its split with the *Frente Nacional de Trabajadores* in 1965.
53. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 33. The Movement Press made no reference to these events, reporting only the official commemoration.
54. Demetrio Castro Alfán, interview, 23 Feb. 1979; Eugenio Pordomingo, interview, 2 Jan. 1979.
55. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 34.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
57. See above, note 13. It was also rumoured that Fernández Miranda had been appointed Secretary General of the Movement with the express task of 'getting rid of *Falange*' ('de cargarse la Falange').
58. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 45; *Pueblo* (Madrid, 8 and 9 Apr. 1975).
59. *Ibid.*, p. 48; *Informaciones* (Madrid, 5 Jan. 1976).
60. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 45; Narciso Perales, interview, 21 Jan. 1977.
61. *El País* (23 May 1976); *Ya* (28 May 1976); *Rojo y Negro* (*Boletín informativo de los Círculos '4 de marzo' y la Asociación Juvenil 'Amanecer'*), no. 0, June 1976. Conde Soladana projected a strongly anti-Movement and populist image. He was dismissed from the FASA-Renault car works and briefly imprisoned in 1974 for his participation in labour disputes and strike action in Valladolid.
62. The other Falangist groups participating were the Association of Former Members of the SEU, Association of Former Members of the *Frente de Juventudes*, *Asociación Juvenil 'Amanecer'*, *Círculos '4 de marzo'*, *Agrupación Juvenil 'Bandera Roja y Negra'*, Young Falangists, and the

Civil War volunteers organisation, *Antiguas Banderas de Falange*.

63. It has not been possible to ascertain, either from the organisers or from the appropriate Department of the Ministry of Information and Tourism, who financed this Congress. It seems highly unlikely, however, that the funds came solely from the subscriptions of participants. The hire of the Congress Centre alone would have amounted to several thousands of pesetas.
64. Personal observation at the *I Congreso Nacional Sindicalista, FE de las JONS* (Madrid, 26-9 June 1976). See *El País* (26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 June 1976); *Arriba* (29 and 30 June 1976); *El Alcazar* (26 June 1976); *Cambio 16*, no. 239 (5 July 1976).
65. *Arriba*, *Pueblo*, *ABC* (18 June 1976).
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *El País* (18 June 1976).
69. *ABC* (18 June 1976).
70. Márquez Horrillo, D., op. cit., p. 48; *Informaciones* (9 July 1976) (see also the editions of 7 August 1976 and 16 Sep. 1976); *El País*, *Arriba* (18 July 1976).