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**The Yoke of Isabella: the Women's Section of the Spanish  
Falange 1934-1959**

**Kathleen J. L. Richmond**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies**

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON  
ABSTRACT  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
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Doctor of Philosophy  
THE YOKE OF ISABELLA: THE WOMEN'S SECTION OF THE SPANISH FALANGE 1934-1959  
by Kathleen Jane Laburn Richmond

The Women's Section (*Sección Femenina*) of the Franco regime's bureaucratic framework was founded in 1934 as an offshoot of the small fascist party, the Falange. Its leader, Pilar Primo de Rivera, was the sister of the Falange's founder, José Antonio Primo de Rivera and remained in post throughout the regime. The present study is of *Sección Femenina* (SF) as it developed following the death of José Antonio during the Spanish Civil War, becoming part of the regime's bureaucracy while retaining its original ideological base.

The thesis examines the emerging role of SF in the Spanish Civil War as a supporter of the Nationalist cause and its mandate in 1939 to train and prepare the women and girls in Spain for life under the new regime. SF's influence on government legislation and its contribution to the nation's economic and social stability up to 1959 are examined in relation to the political events of the period as well as the compromises made as SF faced opposition from other sectors of the regime.

The second focus of the thesis is SF's ideological base and inner identity, and particularly the degree to which it exhibited features of fascism. This is examined in relation to its elite members, whose belief system was so enduring that it survived the decline of Falangism in the regime. In the face of political realities, SF always saw its 1939 mandate as its own 'Falangist Revolution' and its elite members as capable of transforming society. The origins of these beliefs, the contribution of foreign influences and the transmission of SF ideology in SF's elite academy are analysed in relation to the work and self-image of the elites. The paradox of SF as a loyal supporter of Francoism while challenging the class and social base of the regime is also examined, and religion is shown as the most significant area where SF differed from mainstream opinion and practice.

SF's programmes have been studied via primary sources, journals and archive materials. The major primary source, however, is the set of forty-five interviews, conducted principally in Madrid but also in Salamanca, Santiago de Compostela, Palencia, Medina del Campo, Zaragoza, Toledo, the province of León and Britain between 1994 and 1999. Interviewees are mainly former elite members of SF together with unaffiliated women, male Falangists and others with experience of SF's programmes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Fascism is a complex and contested label which has been the subject of much study since the 1920s. From Communist theory, which held it to be the 'agent of capitalism' to the belief that fascism could be placed within the broader category of totalitarianism, debate has now moved to an analysis of its conceptual framework. The belief that the ideological core of fascist regimes has a common base, with shared values, goals and operational style is expressed in the term 'generic fascism'.<sup>1</sup> Under this definition, underpinning all fascist regimes is a core belief in the power of the nation as a higher entity and quasi-spiritual ideal. Service to the nation is thereby deemed as the worthiest of endeavours, requiring commitment and personal sacrifice. The fascist solution to the nation's ills depends on an acceptance that there must be a 'rebirth' or 'regeneration', whereby present systems and values are replaced by a 'new order', which itself finds its inspiration in defining moments or eras in the nation's history.<sup>2</sup>

Although the dictatorship of General Franco in Spain has been described as being 'authoritarian' and 'parafascist' rather than fascist, there can be no doubt that his official party apparatus, the National Movement, (*Movimiento Nacional*) had genuinely fascist elements which remained in place throughout the regime. It had originated from the small Spanish fascist party, (*Falange española*), founded in 1934 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera. After José Antonio's death in a Republican jail in the first months of the Civil War, the party leadership was appropriated by Franco in April 1937 to provide legitimacy to his military campaign, and later to his regime.

Before the Civil War, and in particular before February 1936, the Falange had few members and could not be regarded as a significant political force. In broad terms, it shared political ground with other right-wing groups in its condemnation of the policies and reforms of the first government of Spain's Second Republic. The regionalist aspirations of Catalonia and the Basque Country, the politicisation of the working classes

<sup>1</sup> Fascism was defined in 1935 by the Third International as 'the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, and most imperialist elements of finance capital'. S. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-45*, (London, U.C.L. Press, 1995), p. 443.

<sup>2</sup> R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, (London, Routledge, 1991), pp. 32-8.

through the existence of marxist and anarcho-syndicalist trades unions, and the legislation which gave political and social freedoms to women were among the developments which were perceived as threatening the established order. Criticisms such as these were common to opponents of the Republic, but the Falange went further through its ideological analysis of Spain as a nation divided and having lost national pride and former greatness. Following the rhetoric of the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, who in 1922 had talked of 'the serious illness from which Spain is suffering'<sup>3</sup>, the Falange constructed an ideological alternative to parliamentary democracy. The totalitarian system it advocated would end the 'disunity' caused by regionalism, political parties and the class struggle.

The political conversion of Spaniards to the ideas of José Antonio was termed the 'Falangist Revolution' and it was this vision, more than anything else, which distanced the Falange from other parties of the Right. The 'healing' of the nation could begin, went the argument, once each citizen was working for the common good, without the competing interests of political parties and trades unions. Moreover, the Falangist Revolution would restore Spain to its former position as an imperial power. As José Antonio said: 'We have the will of Empire.... We reclaim for Spain a position of pre-eminence in Europe... Regarding the nations of Latin America, we support a unifying of culture, of economic interests and of power.'<sup>4</sup>

The utopian vision of a nation restored to former greatness was given form through the Falange's operational style. The militarism and asceticism which characterised the language of Falangist orators and the conduct and setting of its meetings emphasised its political goals as being attainable through service and sacrifice. As José Antonio said: 'Spain has to be mobilised from top to bottom and put on a war footing'.<sup>5</sup> Falangists were a 'resolute minority' who would mobilise the 'victims of a decadent period' to work for the common good.<sup>6</sup> And in its understanding of how the 'Conquest of the State' was to take place, the Falange justified the use of violence, a further point of difference from other political groups.

<sup>3</sup> J. Ortega y Gasset, España invertebrada, (Madrid, Revista de Occidente en Alianza Editorial, 1981), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Primo de Rivera, 'Norma Programática de la Falange' in Textos de doctrina política, (Madrid, D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1966), p.339.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Primo de Rivera, 'Mientras España duerme la siesta', *ibid.*, p. 619.

<sup>6</sup> J. A. Primo de Rivera, 'Acerca de la Revolución', *ibid.*, p. 664.

Falange membership began to increase following the parliamentary elections of February 1936. Although it failed to win parliamentary seats, the Falange began to seem a possible alternative to some, when a left-wing coalition won the narrowest of victories over the right-wing bloc. The election polarised the country between two utterly opposing political creeds and some disillusioned right-wing voters began to despair that the parliamentary system would ever manage to dislodge the Left.

There were fundamental differences, however, between the Falange and right-wing conservative opposition to the Republic. Part of José Antonio's understanding of 'social justice' was a programme of economic reform, which included the nationalisation of banks and public services, and the organisation of workers into a 'giant syndicate of producers'.<sup>7</sup> This set it apart from other groups, who were not interested in channelling workers' energies in this way and whose overriding priority was the restoration of the economic power base of the financial elites. The Falange's populism, too, was in contrast to the established class divisions dear to the Church, Army and parties of the Right. And although religion was a fundamental element of Falangism, José Antonio had advocated the separation of the functions of Church and State. Religion was acknowledged as an ingredient of Spanish nationhood but he recognised, too, that the Church had the potential to damage 'the dignity of the State'.<sup>8</sup>

But more significant than the Falange's political differences was its total opposition to the Popular Front government. It was this more than a clearly articulated ideology which initially united the alliance of Army officers, Church and right-wing political parties. In the event, the radicalism of the Falange and in particular, its militarism and operational style were of great use to the rebels. Despite its small membership, it had in place a territorial organisation with a policy-making committee and national council and at the outset of the rebellion, contributed militias as well as a propaganda machine.

On the eve of Franco's investiture as Head of State in October 1936, the Bishop of Salamanca called the uprising 'a Crusade for religion, the nation and civilisation'.<sup>9</sup> These were the early terms of reference for the rebellion and fitted well to José Antonio's

<sup>7</sup> J.A. Primo de Rivera, 'Norma Programática de la Falange', *ibid.*, pp. 341-2.

<sup>8</sup> J.A. Primo de Rivera, 'Puntos iniciales', *ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>9</sup> J.P. Fusi, Franco. Autoritarismo y poder personal, (Madrid, Ediciones El País, 1985), p. 4.

combative vision of Spain's future. His projected social revolution was not reflected elsewhere, but its outcomes - ending of the class struggle, a united Spain free of regionalist aspirations, political parties and foreign influences - were in accord with the aims of the rebellion.

But the credentials of the Falange as a revolutionary organisation changed in November 1936 when José Antonio was executed in Alicante jail, leaving a question mark over who could assume the party leadership. Franco, meanwhile, needed to harness popular support for the uprising and ensure that political factions did not subvert the common cause of winning the war. He decided that the Falange structure could feasibly be expanded and enlarged to provide the administrative and governmental structure for the territories ceding to the Nationalist army.<sup>10</sup> Five months after the death of José Antonio, the Decree of Unification brought all the parties of the Right under the umbrella of the Falange, with Franco assuming the leadership. The Falange now became the official and only party of State.<sup>11</sup>

Franco's decision to merge the Falange with the other parties of the Right created a power base for the winning of the war. The more radical aspects of José Antonio's social revolution were never seriously considered by Franco but his own political agenda was transmitted through the medium of fascist propaganda methods. Also important to the legitimacy of the uprising was the glorification of José Antonio. His death and the manner of his dying quickly became a strong propaganda tool for Franco. The Falangist doctrine of unquestioning obedience and the cult of its dead leader were useful in increasing Franco's power. As the new head of the Falange, his authority transcended that of a military general to become one of *Caudillo*, the political and spiritual leader of Spaniards in their Crusade against the Second Republic.

Before the Civil War, the Falange's cult of violence had alienated many, but its

<sup>10</sup> The 1934 Statutes of the Falange set out its structure as comprising: members (*afiliados*), local centres (*J.O.N.S.*), provincial and national centres (*jefaturas provinciales y territoriales*), heads of Falangist departments (*Jefes de Servicios*), deputy leader (*Secretario General*), a political committee (*Junta Política*), a national council (*Consejo Nacional*) and the leader (*Jefe del Movimiento*). R. Chueca, *El fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco: un estudio sobre FET-JONS*, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1983), pp. 411-12.

<sup>11</sup> Its title changed to reflect its merger with the other major party of the Right, the Carlists, or Traditionalists. Its full name was now F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. (*Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S.*). After initial doubts, Pilar Primo de Rivera accepted the Unification, in the cause of winning the war. P. Preston, *Las tres Españas del 36*, (Barcelona, Plaza y Janés, 1999), p. 168.

hierarchical structure and doctrine of obedience to its leader were exploited fully by the Nationalists. Its press and propaganda section was given responsibility for censorship and media control and its departments of Information and Investigation worked alongside civil police, with often crude methods of instilling fear and rooting out resistance to the regime. In the postwar, the departments and structures of the Falange continued and expanded their operations in the maintenance of law and order in the Francoist state. Although the National Movement, as it was now termed, had lost its original revolutionary aims, it remained the major agent of social control used by Franco to ensure civil obedience.<sup>12</sup> After the Second World War, the regime distanced itself from its wartime connections with Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy and many of the departments and sections of the original Falange disappeared or became mere bureaucratic entities.<sup>13</sup>

This was not, however, true of its Women's Section (*Sección Femenina*), which maintained its original structures, ideology and programme with only minor changes up to the end of the Franco regime. The present study firstly examines the ideology of *Sección Femenina* (SF) and the degree to which it may be said to exhibit the characteristics of 'generic fascism'. Even after 1945, SF retained its credentials as the part of the National Movement truest to the doctrinal purity of its early years through the identity and political motivation of its leader, Pilar Primo de Rivera. She was the daughter of General Miguel Primo de Rivera, the military dictator of Spain between 1923-30. She was also the sister of José Antonio, who had been shot in a Republican jail in November 1936. As one of its earliest members, Pilar never lost her vision of the Falange as a revolutionary organisation, capable of transforming society through the efforts of its elite members. She saw her leadership of SF as completing the 'unfinished mission' of her dead brother, and, in a broader sense, representing the tradition of service to Spain of her late father. In this context, the fascist ideology propounded by her brother became the framework within which SF lent its support to the Franco regime.

Throughout its existence, SF functioned as the transmission-belt for the moral and

<sup>12</sup> Himmler commented on the brutality of the Franco regime in its treatment of the working class. P. Preston, *The Politics of Revenge: Fascism and the Military in Twentieth-century Spain*, (London, Hyman Unwin 1990, ), p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Transport and Communications, for example, was disbanded in 1944 and the Falange Foreign Service in 1945. R. Chueca, *El fascismo*, p. 242 and p. 245.

political values of the regime. The causes associated with the Nationalist victory - a return to patriarchal society and restoration of traditional gender roles - remained SF's fundamental doctrine. The second focus of the thesis is how SF maintained this primary role in the face of Spain's changing social and economic climate. From the international isolation faced by Spain in the 1940s and its policy of autarky, the regime began a slow process of regeneration and modernisation. In 1957, the appointment of advisers who sought to undertake a degree of economic liberalisation was the prelude to the conversion of the nation to an industrial economy. The 1959 Stabilisation Plan marked the beginning of Spain's economic future and, to an extent, drew a line under her recent past.<sup>14</sup> Doctrinal values associated with the Civil War gave way to the need to integrate and compete with other economies. But 1959 was also the year by which the Franco regime had arguably achieved greatest acceptance and stability. In the post-war years, the challenge for SF was how to keep its original doctrine while adapting to improving social and economic conditions. The balance it sought between trying to keep alive the doctrine of José Antonio, while recognising the need for legislative and social change resulted in many compromises and contradictions.

Of course, SF was not alone in being a transmitter of social and moral values. As only one component of the National Movement, it had to fight its corner among other sources of influence, principally the Catholic Church. The thesis also examines SF's role within government and the ways it sought to maintain influence and power. In particular, it looks at the ways in which SF promoted itself as a modernising element of the National Movement and the contradictions inherent in this. The effect of its programmes both on the female population at large and on SF's elite members is the final focus of the thesis. The earliest SF members gave practical assistance to the Francoist cause throughout the Civil War. But the volunteer help needed in the war was soon replaced by a territorial network of politically-trained elite members, whose job was to establish political and social control of the female population. Added to these were members trained as instructors and health specialists to implant the teachings throughout the nation. The effect of this

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<sup>14</sup> The Stabilisation Plan was a counter-measure to the economic crisis of 1956, when Spain was on the point of bankruptcy, with rising inflation and a severe balance of payments deficit. S. Payne, The Franco Regime 1936-1975, (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 469-71.

intervention is examined in relation to SF's membership base and the extent to which non-affiliated women were persuaded to join its ranks. In particular, the lifestyle of the elite members (*mandos*) is considered. The way in which they carried out their work and the opportunities open to them are examined as representing a force for change, a forerunner of the diversity of lifestyles to come in later decades.

By the year of SF's founding in 1934, Spain had experienced three turbulent political years under the Second Republic. Democratic parliamentary government had followed the military dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera and was fragile. The years since the election of the first government of the Second Republic in April 1931 had been increasingly unstable. Government policies, intended to address the social and political injustices of centuries, enraged the forces of the traditional Right - among them the Army, Church, aristocracy and many sectors of the Catholic peasantry. In particular, the strongly anti-clerical policies which were intended to break the domination of the Catholic Church in the social and political affairs of State, left the country divided about what sort of society was appropriate and desirable.<sup>15</sup> In the Republican Constitution passed in December 1931, women had been given the same voting rights as men and in February of the following year, a divorce law was passed.<sup>16</sup> These were major and sudden changes in a country where Catholic values and morality had been entrenched for so long.

The majority of Spanish women enjoyed neither the social or educational freedoms of their sisters in more industrialised countries of Europe. One consequence of Spain's neutrality in the First World War was that women had not replaced men in the workplace to any degree. Spain was still largely rural and semi-urban and the pattern of life for most rural women had hardly changed since the beginning of the century. Female employment, predominantly in agriculture, domestic service and, in urban areas, in factory work, stood at 12.6 per cent of the national work force in 1930.<sup>17</sup> The adult female

<sup>15</sup> The Republican Constitution disestablished the Church and sought to curb its power. Legislation was passed in 1933 to remove all religious orders from primary and secondary teaching. A. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 167.

<sup>16</sup> Spain's divorce law was progressive, allowing the option of obtaining divorce by common consent or by cause, and treating both parties equally. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> C. Borderías Mondéjar, *Entre líneas. Trabajo e identidad femenina en la España contemporánea - La Compañía Telefónica 1924-1980*, (Barcelona, Icaria Editorial S.A., 1993), p. 67. The percentage of women working had fallen since 1900, from 14.51 per cent in 1900 to 9.16 per cent in 1930. *Ibid.* Catalonia, however, was the exception, with numbers of working women in line with those in more industrialised European countries (30.28 per cent in 1930). *Ibid.*, p. 69. The Spanish term '*población activa*' is interpreted as referring to those in work and those seeking it.



illiteracy rate was at 38.4 per cent in the same year.<sup>18</sup> And although the percentage of women entering higher education had doubled in the 1920s it was still only slightly above 8 per cent of the student population by 1927.<sup>19</sup>

Republican legislation for women had created expectations that for some were the beginnings of identification with a feminist cause and for others aroused deepest suspicions and anxieties. Either way, for a number of women, the prospect of the new laws was the catalyst for involvement with a political cause. Many middle and upper class women identified with the Church's declaration that support for the Republic was tantamount to a denial of Christian values and the traditional family base. Right-wing opposition came from a number of sources. Apart from mainstream political parties there were Church groups such as Catholic Action (*Acción Católica*) and the Daughters of Mary (*Hijas de María*) which involved women increasingly in a campaigning role.<sup>20</sup>

But the most enduring female right-wing voice did not emerge until after the election of the second Republican government in 1934. José Antonio's Falange party advocated a totalitarian system based on patriotic and military values which repudiated liberal ideas and thinking. Within its wish to return to the social and religious values of the Spain of pre-Republic days was a vision of restoring gender relations by returning women to their traditional roles as wives and mothers. In the first year of the Falange's existence, three women had insisted on attending its meetings, among them Pilar. From being mere supporters, the women demanded to be active members in their own right, and the decision was taken to form a Women's Section of the Falange. José Antonio appointed his sister as head of the organisation in 1934 and she became SF's first and sole national leader, in post for forty-three years.

Prior to the February 1936 elections, the post of national leader and indeed SF itself was of limited scope and significance. The role of the women followers was to assist the men in their campaigning. But after February, the Falange was declared illegal by the

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 60. The figures relate to illiteracy among the adult female population and girls over ten years old. The figure for male illiteracy is shown elsewhere at 19.5 per cent. S. Payne, *Spain's First Democracy: - The Second Republic 1931-36*, (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 86.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> The foremost political group was the CEDA, the alliance of Catholic conservative groups. Another right-wing force was the Carlists, whose Women's Section (the *margaritas*) had, from 1931, campaigned against the anti-clerical legislation. Interview with Petra Bondía Román, 28 July 1996. Her mother was an active campaigner and orator for Catholic Action.

new government and José Antonio arrested and imprisoned. Increasingly, the Falange was involved in acts of violence and attempts to destabilise the Popular Front government. In this, SF became accomplices and co-perpetrators as they acted as clandestine messengers for male members of the Falange, put up illegal posters, visited prisoners in jail and, in some cases, stored weapons in their own homes.<sup>21</sup>

In his views on women, José Antonio concurred with what was to be the official Francoist line. Proclaiming their essential and unchangeable differences from men, he deplored what he saw as the effect of Republican legislation on family life. By re-asserting the primacy of the family and restoring women to their traditional place in the home, the Falange would redress the perceived damage caused by the divorce law. The agenda of the pre-war SF echoed in general terms the doctrine of José Antonio but failed to specify how women would contribute to the sought-after unity of the nation. SF's earliest statutes declared its broad aim as 'supporting national-syndicalist militants in their fight against the anti-Spain'.<sup>22</sup> They spoke little about the role of women in general, apart from declaring the need to educate her to give the 'firmest support for the expansion of the future Spanish empire'.<sup>23</sup> SF had branches in eighteen provinces by July 1936 although only with 2500 members.<sup>24</sup> But after the outbreak of war, it quickly became an integral and visible part of the Nationalist campaign, involving women whose principal interest was not necessarily the doctrine of José Antonio and the Falange, but simply winning the war. Membership grew steadily and at the end of the war was calculated by the organisation at 580,000 women.<sup>25</sup>

SF worked behind the battle fronts and in newly-conquered territories as relief workers in many capacities. Front-line nursing responsibility was officially in the hands

<sup>21</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, 'Historia de la Sección Femenina', in *Revista 'Y'*, (October 1938).

<sup>22</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, 'Historia de la Sección Femenina' in *Revista 'Y'*, (September 1938).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina: historia y organización*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1952), p. 14; S.F. de F.E.T y de las J.O.N.S., *Concentración nacional de las falanges femeninas en honor del Caudillo y del ejército español*, (Bilbao, Talleres Gráficos de Jesús Álvarez, 1939), p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25. However, the interpretation of what constituted membership in SF varied with the times. It seems probable that the figure of 580,000 signifies the total of all women helping the war effort in various capacities within the institutions of SF. This would have included trained nurses, volunteer helpers and women carrying out obligatory social service with SF as well as paid-up members.

of the Carlist women's group.<sup>26</sup> However, SF had in place a territorial chain of command and members throughout Nationalist Spain. This helped establish it as the organisation best able to assume control of relief operations, especially in the newly-conquered provinces. The point was underlined at its first national conference in January 1937, when its achievements could be publicly stated and endorsed.

At the beginning of the war, Pilar Primo de Rivera had been in Madrid, which had remained under Republican control. She was therefore initially unable to support the rebels' cause, but in Valladolid, where the insurgents had been successful, a provisional wartime SF organisation was set up. Nursing, visiting the sick, mending uniforms and providing for orphans and refugees were SF's primary responses, as the coup developed into civil war. Pilar escaped into Nationalist Spain in October 1936 and went to Salamanca, Franco's first military headquarters. Here, she quickly turned the 1934 statutes into a fully-developed administrative structure and doctrinal base. The framework was a parallel with the male Falange, with a national, provincial and local hierarchy. Key figures were the provincial leaders, women appointed to take charge of activities and membership in their province. Local leaders had a similar responsibility for their village or district. Provincial leaders reported their progress and concerns to the national leadership, principally through the medium of an annual conference. Just one month later, the first of these took place in Salamanca, with a total of fifty provinces represented and at which the new statutes were approved.

Within the space of a few months, SF had expanded its pre-war role of general support, fund-raising and flag-sewing to become an organisation responding to the welfare needs of war at local and national level.<sup>27</sup> As the rebel troops continued their advance, SF expanded its provincial base, until by April 1939 with the end of the war, all regions were represented. Work took place in the newly-conquered provinces, where teams of women administered emergency food supplies and in military hospitals, laundries and workshops. For women wishing to give a few hours weekly to the war effort, SF organised relief

<sup>26</sup> Following the Decree of Unification, the women of the Carlists were organised into the department of Fronts and Hospitals, with the mandate to manage all relief work at the fronts. The department was dissolved at the end of the war. M. Gallego Méndez, Mujer, Falange y franquismo, (Madrid, Taurus, 1983), pp. 57-8.

<sup>27</sup> SF was not the sole provider of welfare. The Falangist department of Social Aid (*Auxilio Social*) had been set up in the first few months of war, before Pilar came on the scene.

activities such as the making and sending of food parcels and correspondence with soldiers at the front.<sup>28</sup>

With the end of the war came the opportunity to extend SF's operations from relief measures to fully-fledged propaganda and education programmes for the female population. José Antonio's agenda of restoring women to their rightful place, however, could not begin without the recruitment of elite members. SF had already started the process by setting up a school in Málaga during the war to train the future *mandos* needed immediately as provincial leaders. Initially, these had been appointed from the ranks of the pre-war members, but more politically-trained staff (*mandos políticos*) were needed to take responsibility both for the provinces and for SF centres in villages and towns. There was also a second kind of *mando* - a specialist teacher (*mando de servicio*). The majority worked alongside the local leaders, often sharing their premises and responsible for SF's delivery of its welfare and education programmes. Recruitment of these teachers began after the Civil War when courses were run in the new SF specialisms of agriculture, physical education and music. Successful candidates became *mandos de servicio*, qualified to transmit their skills to other SF members and unaffiliated women and girls. Now the war was over, the training of both types of *mando* became the most urgent need.

SF's contribution in the war was recognised officially by Franco a month after hostilities ceased. At a set-piece rally held in Medina del Campo in the province of Valladolid, he publicly thanked SF and set out its mandate for the postwar. It was to organise training of all women, to equip them for life in post-war Spain. He promised a centre which would also act as the focal point of the organisation - the castle of La Mota in Medina del Campo - and he also promised support. The two promises were kept: La Mota was restored and converted to the main training academy for elites and Franco publicly and privately endorsed SF's programmes.<sup>29</sup>

But within the vision of the ideal Falangist woman, there were ambiguities. José

<sup>28</sup> This scheme was termed the 'war godmothers' (*madrinas de guerra*). SF propaganda states that there were 8,000 nurses, 76 laundries and a total of 350,000 parcels sent. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Concentración nacional*, p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> SF had an annual budget, as did the rest of the Falange. But additionally, Pilar Primo de Rivera was always able to negotiate privately with Franco on issues of policy and the general direction of the organisation. There were also occasions when Franco's wife acted as go-between on behalf of SF.

Antonio, though a prolific orator, had said little about women's role beyond insisting on their natural dignity and the need to separate their functions from those of men.<sup>30</sup> This was the task for Pilar - how to develop the separate role of women as outlined by her brother to fulfil Falangist aspirations without challenging the authority of the male. In practical matters, this was not difficult, because the domestic contribution of women could be emphasised and refined. Housekeeping and child care - both undisputed areas for the woman - could become areas of expertise, benefiting from specialist courses and the latest information. The same applied to cottage industries, such as traditional crafts and small-scale domestic agriculture, where women's work generally did not compete with that of men but served to bolster the family income.<sup>31</sup> The usefulness of this in the stabilisation of the post-war economy reinforced the authority of the message. Domestic efficiency was necessary for national regeneration.

Involvement in domestic duties was also an interpretation of José Antonio's demand that women be treated seriously 'and never as the stupid target of catcalls'.<sup>32</sup> He had claimed that the Falange was a way of being, requiring an 'ascetic and military definition of life'.<sup>33</sup> From the earliest days, Pilar Primo de Rivera interpreted this as the necessary direction for SF. The austerity and militarism of the pre-war Falange meetings were mirrored in the surroundings and atmosphere of the first SF conference and continued largely unchanged.

As the sister of the dead leader, Pilar Primo de Rivera was both the link with the original truths of Falangism and the guarantor of their survival within the National Movement. Even when the Movement's bureaucracy increased and much of the early impetus provided by Falangists within it was lost, she continued to adhere to the doctrines of José Antonio. The building of the training schools and Pilar's creation of icons, honours systems and her code of conduct for members developed the identity of SF and defined the ideal of women within it. La Mota provided the mix of traditional and modern elements in the Falangist message. Its training routine and carefully restored interior embodied the

<sup>30</sup> The only occasion when José Antonio spoke specifically about women's role in society was in 1935, when he addressed SF members after a political meeting in Don Benito in the province of Badajoz. 'Lo femenino y la Falange', 2 May 1935, in J. A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, pp. 538-40.

<sup>31</sup> For example, keeping hens and bees, making cheese and butter.

<sup>32</sup> J. A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 538.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

military and the spiritual, while its decor was both traditional yet simple and uncluttered. In particular, La Mota's courses in religion were fundamental in establishing a spiritual identity for members that had no parallel outside SF. The style of liturgy, meditation and prayer taught at La Mota had an element of modernity, emphasising the potential of women as participants and not passive observers. That this occurred twenty years before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council was all the more remarkable.

SF's vision of woman as an active participant in the economic and spiritual reconstruction of the nation was consonant with the fascist ideal of a mobilised population ready to tackle problems in a modern, dynamic way. But this had to be weighed against another fascist imperative - the rejection of liberal politics and the freedoms they implied. Since the 1920s, informed liberal opinion had increasingly gone against the traditional vision of women as set out by the Catholic Church, the main provider of secondary schooling. The Ladies' Residence in Madrid, for example, had pioneered a new framework for female higher education. Similarly, although it was for a tiny minority of women, the Women's University Association (*Asociación Universitaria Femenina*) founded in 1920 and the Women's Lyceum Club (*Lyceum Club Femenino*) founded in 1926 had promoted cultural interests of professional women.

Women's lifestyles - particularly those of the urban middle classes - had in any case been changing since the 1920s. With the growth of towns and cities came new opportunities for leisure. Women had increasingly taken advantage of opportunities to emerge from their homes into more public social spheres such as the tea salon, the club or the big hotel, where they would drink, smoke and dress fashionably. Cinema stars, often American, were public role models and with them their fashions and social mores. Whereas in rural areas, work patterns were slow to change, in the towns there were opportunities for secretaries, telephonists and receptionists as well as more exotic occupations in the theatre and night clubs.

The challenge for SF was how to attract women who had been used to these freedoms and offer them programmes which were politically acceptable and socially useful. It attempted to do so with its training programmes for all women, which were concerned mainly with domestic matters. 'Education' in this context could be regarded as a body of

knowledge, the reverse of the 'ignorance', which (it was claimed) had led to the severe demographic and health problems of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>34</sup> SF would help remedy the nation's problems by ensuring that the required knowledge would be transmitted to the entire female population.

But SF also promoted female education and culture in the belief that women were *de facto* educators of their children. For this reason, girls were encouraged to enter secondary and higher education with the help of SF grants and bursaries. It was also acknowledged that some women would not marry and would therefore need to support themselves. It was, however, difficult to draw a line between 'necessary' education and learning for its own sake. It was even more difficult to distinguish the promotion of higher education from the despised feminist intellectualism associated with the Second Republic. SF tried to lay down ground rules - that women should not compete with men, nor 'fall on the reefs of frivolity and pedantry'<sup>35</sup> while insisting on its support for female education and personal development. Alongside this was a contradictory stance on women and work. On the one hand, the SF press continually promoted the ideal of the woman at home. On the other, the organisation stated its responsibility to the many for whom work was a fulfilment of ambition or an economic necessity:

The State and the National Movement will endeavour to give full encouragement to the legitimate aspirations of young women seeking to follow a career and to employ all others whose single state requires them to earn their own living.<sup>36</sup>

SF supported the working woman by promoting the representation of women on syndical committees although such intervention and support was balanced by repeated statements that work was for many a necessary evil and in any case, a second best to marriage and family life.

<sup>34</sup> Government Health Department statistics of 1932 showed a high incidence of infant mortality and infectious diseases. Departamento de Estadísticas Sanitarias, Resumen de la natalidad y mortalidad en el año 1932, (Madrid, Dirección General de Sanidad, 1933), pp. 30-36.

<sup>35</sup> M. Sanz Bachiller, La mujer y la educación de los niños, (Madrid, Ediciones Auxilio Social, F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1939), p. 79.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

It was no easy task to promote a broader view of education and the rights of working women as part of Falangism but different from the ideals of the Second Republic. Central to SF's attempts to do so was the creation of an ideal of femininity that would place women above criticism, allowing them to be educationally and professionally fulfilled and yet not a challenge to male authority. For the masses, this was translated into textbooks of social behaviour, outlining etiquette and dress code. For its own elite members, however, dress code and behaviour were understood and expressed through SF's use of the word 'style', (*estilo*). It was used to denote a simple but smart way of dressing together with a confident manner and social graces. This set an SF member apart from the stereotypical intellectual woman whose absorption in learning had caused her to neglect her personal appearance and forget how to behave with men. But here too was a contradiction: at its most effective, *estilo* was a powerful lever, enabling women to be active participants in an essentially male world while appearing to remain in a passive role.

The ambivalent attitude to work was also seen in the contribution of SF to legislation affecting women. It had an entry into national politics through Pilar's membership of the National Council and Spanish Cortes (parliament) and the fact that she had the ear of Franco.<sup>37</sup> There was little legislative change for women in the 1950s, but a view held by many former members is that the influence of Pilar both directly and indirectly paved the way for the advances of the 1960s by gradually persuading male critics of the need for change.<sup>38</sup> The contrary view is that chances were lost in the 1950s and that SF set back the cause of the working woman because of Pilar's conviction of the damage done to a family where the wife worked.<sup>39</sup>

SF's contribution to other political issues was no less contradictory. The most vigorous of Pilar Primo de Rivera's political battles sprang from her desire to extend SF's

<sup>37</sup> Members of the Falange National Council (*Consejo Nacional*) were made voting members of the Spanish parliament from its creation in 1943. Pilar Primo de Rivera was on the National Council in her capacity as head of SF and became a parliamentary representative (*procuradora*) from 1943. She was the only woman to maintain this political representation throughout the regime. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Interviews with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996; Vicky Eiroa, 17 February 1998; Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with Marichu de la Mora, 27 October 1997; Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997; Mercedes Fórmica, 22 February 1996.



sphere of influence.<sup>40</sup> On this issue, SF was vocal, proclaiming its right to control its own affairs and affirming its beliefs in the rights and duties of women. But in most other matters it remained outside controversy and political debate on the grounds that its primary duty was loyalty to Franco in all things. Only where Pilar Primo de Rivera perceived events as threatening the organisation or its doctrinal base was this loyalty tested. This was the case with the Decree of Unification in 1937, the Law of Succession of 1947 and Franco's decision to move the tomb of José Antonio from the Escorial Palace to the Valley of the Fallen in 1959.<sup>41</sup>

It would be wrong, however, to imagine that loyalty to Franco went no further than tacit acceptance of his policies. Pilar Primo de Rivera's interpretation of SF's mandate was that women should contribute actively to national life. In the 1940s, this meant endorsing and promoting Franco's policy of self-sufficiency and playing an interventionist role in health and welfare. More generally, it meant contributing to the regime's acceptance and stability by a ceremonial and propaganda role in Spain and abroad.<sup>42</sup>

During the 1950s, as the postwar hardships gradually lessened, and Spain took its first steps towards economic development, SF's role as stabiliser became less necessary and its propaganda and control function less pronounced. All its operations expanded throughout the decade but brought increased bureaucracy. It prided itself on a shoestring budget, but organisation and structures grew more complex. This, in conjunction with the improving economic conditions of the country, affected the spirit in which the work was being carried out. From a situation where the humanitarian face of SF's interventionism and social control had been obvious, its *mandos* increasingly had to rely on their own enthusiasm to persuade their audiences. One of the key messages of José Antonio had been the need for social justice - the idea that people were best helped by positive programmes such as job creation and training, rather than charity handouts. The welfare programmes

<sup>40</sup> She wrested control of the social service programme from the Falange welfare programme, Social Aid and in 1945 succeeded in separating the female youth programme from the Falange Youth Front.

<sup>41</sup> At the end of the 1940s, work began on a massive memorial and basilica in honour of the (Nationalist) dead of the war, on a site north of Madrid in the Guadarrama mountains. P. Preston, *Franco*, (London, HarperCollins, 1993), p. 351. Its basilica later housed Franco's own tomb. S. Payne, *The Franco Regime*, p. 225.

<sup>42</sup> SF promoted folklore and traditional music through its choir and dance groups (*coros y danzas*), which performed in Spain and abroad. It organised cultural events with Spanish-speaking countries in an attempt to end Spain's isolation after the Second World War.

of SF were undoubtedly interventionist but had been a counter-balance to the injustices and repression of early post-war Spain. SF propaganda continually stressed the humanitarian nature of its work and members were told to avoid recriminations and references to the past. Nonetheless, their message of social justice sat better with the post-war poverty and privations of the 1940s than in the following decade, when recovery and reconstruction had begun. As SF became part of a seamless whole with other State training providers and welfare bodies, so the political part of its programme lost any resonance. In 1956, Pilar told her conference that she felt that the Falangist message was either misunderstood or simply ignored by the majority of Spaniards. 'We ask far more of life than complacent people ever can. Perhaps we have demanded so much from this world of worn-out ideas and ancient moulds that at times we feel let down.'<sup>43</sup>

This pessimism was only in part justified. Neither SF nor the male Falange could claim that it had achieved the social revolution of José Antonio, but SF was its own harshest critic. It failed to convince the post-war generations of the political truths of Falangism, but its programmes and aid work provided a social and welfare structure which was an important stabilising factor in the Franco regime, while its ceremonial and propaganda role contributed to its general acceptance. There were other aid providers and groups loyal to the regime but no other organisation came near to providing the educational and professional opportunities that were offered to SF members and, to an extent, to the whole female population.

Pilar's main task had been to impose SF's teachings to all women and girls in the cause of national recovery and reconstruction. This was accomplished, but the teachings arguably had less impact in the long term than the role models of the teachers. The doctrine of José Antonio as applied to restoring women to the home and creating 'healthy, strong, independent women' provided an ideological base for elite members.<sup>44</sup> In practical terms, this meant that *mandos* had to be flexible professionals, able to cope with varied responsibilities and prepared to live and work away from home. Most, although not all stayed single, challenging the stereotype of the unmarried woman as an object of pity.

<sup>43</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1956 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1956), p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Franco's speech at the rally in Medina del Campo, 1939, in *Revista 'Y'*, (June 1939).

Specialisms varied, but the elite's lifestyle had little in common with that of the 'angel of the home' (*ángel del hogar*).

The contrast between the elite member and the reactionary nature of the message she preached remained a paradox. In the early post-war years, her dynamism and mobility could be interpreted as necessary to SF's objective of aiding the Francoist state. But as Spain began to modernise its economic structure in the following decade, some of the freedoms of the *mando* were experienced by a new generation of women by dint of their entering the workplace. SF doctrine was increasingly out of step with the growing mobility and career ambitions of this group. Amid the soul-searching to modernise the message without losing the thrust of José Antonio's doctrine, *mandos* had to reconstruct their own image. From the 'select minority' of the early years, cast as revolutionary, mobilised workers in the service of Spain, they were now considerably more static and often less diverse in their field of action. Yet despite the growing bureaucracy and the clear failure of the 'Falange Revolution', there remained a zeal and political conviction in both the older *mandos* and the newer recruits.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the changing of attitudes towards women was accelerated by social and labour legislation. SF had played its part towards this and helped raise the expectations of women. Underpinning its programmes was the philosophy that women needed to take responsibility for their own development and could, by their own efforts, bring about change. The work of the *mandos* did not bring about the Falange Revolution, but their own lifestyles and their efforts to empower other women were nonetheless striking. In this sense, the core myth had served its purpose, although the official icons of St Teresa and Queen Isabella were, in the end, less effective carriers of its message than SF's own members.

## Chapter One

### Starting the Revolution: SF's programmes for all women

The Nationalist victory of 1939 sealed the defeat not only of the democratic structures of the Second Republic but also of the moral and cultural beliefs on which it was founded. In its determination to eradicate the recent past, the regime continued to insist that the Civil War had been a 'Crusade'. The Republic was cast as the 'anti-Spain' and its supporters demonised, especially the organised working classes and those who sought to reform the army and weaken the power of the Catholic Church. The 'New State' sought to return Spain to the spiritual and patriotic values of its Golden Age, within which the economic interests of the privileged and powerful would be safeguarded.

Central to the regime's determination to turn back the clock was its focus on the lives of women. The foundations of patriarchal society were perceived to have been undermined by the emancipating legislation of the Second Republic. But it was not only the female vote and the Republic's divorce law which were cited as causes of the breakdown of the old order. Improved social legislation and changes to the Civil Code had given women more rights in the workplace and within the family structure, challenging the traditional authority of the male.<sup>1</sup>

The regime's attempts to restore gender divisions by returning women to the home were made for ideological reasons, ignoring the reality that paid female employment was helpful for the national economy and a financial necessity for many women. There was a parallel in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, where employment legislation was intended to discourage women from many areas of work and gross inequalities in wages ensured that women could not attain parity with men.<sup>2</sup> The justification by both regimes was the perceived demographic problem caused by high infant mortality and the declining birth rate. In these circumstances, it was argued, the workplace (and in particular in an urban

<sup>1</sup> A. Shubert, *A Social history of Modern Spain*, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 32-3.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in Italy, legislation in 1938 which gave women workers maternity rights was accompanied by progressive limits set on the employment of women in state and private offices. V. de Grazia, 'How Mussolini Ruled Italian Women', in G. Duby and M. Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women: Towards a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 140-41. In Nazi Germany, women were excluded from universities and many professions between 1933 and 1935. G. Bock, 'Nazi Gender Policies and Women's History', *ibid.*, p. 159.

environment) was unsuitable for women.

But in addition to legislation, the Franco regime - again in common with Germany and Italy - used women themselves to drive home its reactionary message to the whole of the female population.<sup>3</sup> The role of *Sección Femenina* (SF) was both to intervene in the lives of other women to ensure their compliance with the regime's social and political aims and themselves serve as exemplars of traditional gender roles.

The roles were interconnected. Understood by SF members as the 'Falangist Revolution', its work with girls and adult women was designed to underline the importance of the family, reinforce patriarchal authority and bring rudimentary welfare and health care to the population at large. There was, however, an essential contradiction between SF's advocacy of traditional gender roles for unaffiliated women and the personal qualities and lifestyle required of the bearers of that message. Its elites were to be the conveyors of political dogma but different in every way from feminist politicians of the Second Republic. This chapter traces the origins of the gender politics of the regime which elite members transmitted to others. Relatedly, it examines the ways found by SF to interpret its mandate and the ensuing ambiguities and contradictions as it sought to model itself on the equivalent women's organisations of Germany and Italy.

The context for SF's intervention was, as Michael Richards has stated, the ideological construction of Spain as a 'natural entity', contaminated and sick following recent political failures.<sup>4</sup> Within this vision, early postwar propaganda cast SF workers as both do-gooders and avenging angels. Amidst the appalling social and economic conditions of the early postwar, the rhetoric of the 'reconquest of the home'<sup>5</sup> could be read as an appeal to patriotic duty. In the cause of national regeneration, SF prepared to intervene directly into the lives of the female population, in the knowledge that its elite members (*mandos*) were part of a minority 'whose first steps will not be understood by

<sup>3</sup> In Italy, there were organisations for urban middle class women (*fasci femminili*), for peasant women (*massaie rurali*), working class women (*Sezione Operaie e Lavoratrici a Domicilio*) and for youths and students. V. de Grazia, 'How Mussolini Ruled Italian Women', *ibid.*, p. 140, p. 142. In Nazi Germany, there was an elite group, in charge of mobilising the masses (*NS-Frauenschaft*) and an association of auxiliary groups which organised activities at a local and regional level (*Deutsches Frauenwerk*). J. Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women*, (London, Croom Helm, 1981), p. 14, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> M. Richards, *A Time of Silence. Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936-1945*, (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1998), p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Franco's speech to SF in Medina del Campo, 30 May 1939, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 99.

the masses'.<sup>6</sup> The relief programmes of the war years, such as the feeding of the poor and the care of orphan children, continued and acquired a specific propaganda function. There was enormous political capital in the vision of women entering newly 'liberated' provinces. Headlines such as 'Campaign to disinfect Madrid from the misery left by Marxism' referred as much to the need for political as for actual decontamination.<sup>7</sup> Against the claim that the citizens of Madrid were almost all infected with parasites, the perceived remedy was medical inspections together with registration of affected houses and people. The women of SF were to be frontline workers in the cleansing of Spain, their brooms and disinfectant the external embodiment of a moral and spiritual campaign. Falangist nurses would be 'immunising the spirit of Spaniards from unhealthy doctrines'.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, mobilised women in the laundries and workshops of the rearguard were 'helping to bring about the principle which is stamped on the walls of shower compartments for the soldiers of Franco which says "Clean bodies, clean clothes, clean souls"'.<sup>9</sup> After the war, too, teams of SF health workers supplied soap, whitewash and cleaning materials to poor areas.<sup>10</sup> As a former staff member recalls: 'It cleared a lot of weeds and deloused a lot of children.'<sup>11</sup>

And SF's identification with the rhetoric of 'cleansing the nation' went deep. Paralleling the government's 'redemption of sentences' (*Redención de Penas*) system, whereby political prisoners could redeem part of their sentence through hard labour, SF started a domestic school in the women's prison in Madrid. Selected inmates were taught politics, religion and domestic subjects for five hours daily over one year. Those deemed to have passed the course had their sentences reduced by the same period.<sup>12</sup>

While SF capitalised on the ideological base for improved hygiene, its programmes also echoed government concern about domestic issues which pre-dated the Second Republic. The importance of cleanliness to public health in general was well documented,

<sup>6</sup> 'Acerca de la Revolución', in *Haz*, no. 9, 12 October 1934, in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos de doctrina política*, (Madrid, D.N. de S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1996), p. 664.

<sup>7</sup> *Arriba*, 23 May 1939.

<sup>8</sup> 'La Falange llama a todas las mujeres de España', leaflet, (n.p., F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1937 [?]), n.p.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> A hygiene campaign was started in 1945 and, according to the propaganda, SF personnel frequently did the work themselves. F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina - historia y organización*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1952), p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.

<sup>12</sup> 'Una escuela de hogar en la prisión de las mujeres en Ventas', in *Revista 'Y'*, (April 1941). The article claims that 200 prisoners attended these classes.

and its relevance to the health of infants and mothers had been a cause of concern for many years. Spain's infant mortality record was poor, and in the fight to stem tuberculosis it was recognised that clean airy houses were essential to stop the spread of infection. Government Health Department statistics of 1932, for example, painted a depressing picture of a high incidence of tuberculosis and infant mortality. Even more striking was the number of deaths from enteric disorders, a marker of the state of public health and hygienic conditions generally.<sup>13</sup>

In the same years, however, domestic issues were coming to the fore in the context of a changing representation of the home in the popular press and women's magazines. Danièle Bussy Genevois comments how a petty bourgeois ideal of a comfortable, spotless and uncluttered space was projected increasingly as an area in which moral control could be exercised.<sup>14</sup> The housewife was being helped, via more domestic appliances and gadgets, to entertain more and have a less closed role within the home. In this context, domestic skills were an enabling tool, allowing the housewife more control over her environment. SF's publications (the journals *Revista 'Y'* and *Medina*, for example) were able to capitalise on this trend, blending political articles with a mix of recipes, suggestions for interior design and photographs of ideal homes.

Domestic expertise was thereby able to be presented as necessary and desirable. It became the corner-stone of post-war SF educational programmes and was the primary area of control for SF staff members. Unlike the health and welfare programmes, it needed no male intervention or guidance. Elite members would be exemplars of housewifely perfection themselves and teachers to the wider female population. Post-war programmes were an extension of the voluntary courses started in 1937. They began in earnest three years later with the opening of the first SF domestic school (*escuela de hogar*) in Madrid, offering evening classes to married women and day-time courses for servants, nannies and

<sup>13</sup> Deaths of children up to the age of five years old accounted in that year for 29 per cent of all deaths in Spain. Of the causes of death, infectious diseases in general (classified as typhoid, smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, spotted fever, whooping cough, diphtheria, influenza, tuberculosis, meningitis, pneumonia, puerpal septicæmia) accounted for 24 per cent of total mortality, and enteritis and diarrhoea a further 10.7 per cent. Departamento de Estadísticas Sanitarias, *Resumen de la natalidad y mortalidad en el año 1932*, (Madrid, Dirección General de Sanidad, 1933), pp. 30-36.

<sup>14</sup> D. Bussy Genevois, 'El retorno de la hija pródiga: mujeres entre lo público y lo privado (1931-1936)', in P. Folguera (ed.), *Otras visiones de España*, (Madrid, Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 1993), p. 116.

nursery nurses.<sup>15</sup> As the network of these schools was extended throughout Spain, women were offered domestic training to equip them for the extremely difficult post-war economic circumstances. Members were told at the 1940 national conference:

We must study the minimum diet necessary to develop the maximum of work for the minimum of cost... This is the work started by the *Sección Femenina*... In the domestic school, where a food policy already exists in outline, we will put our idea into action.<sup>16</sup>

SF's role as the national manager of domestic efficiency increased when housecraft was introduced into the school curriculum and made a compulsory subject in both State and private schools in 1946.<sup>17</sup> The role was further highlighted with the introduction of a period of compulsory social service for unmarried women, in which domestic education played a central part.<sup>18</sup>

Social service dated from 1937, when it had been devised by the head of the Falangist welfare department. Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, the widow of one of the earliest Civil War victims, Onésimo Redondo, had started Social Aid (*Auxilio Social*) in Valladolid as a response to the nutritional and welfare problems of the old, the sick and children orphaned by the war.<sup>19</sup> Much to the displeasure of Pilar, who would have preferred all such initiatives to be the responsibility of SF, it became the body through which aid to the newly-conquered provinces was channelled. Pilar and Mercedes were soon rivals, with the social service scheme at the heart of the dispute.<sup>20</sup> Mercedes' original intention in establishing the scheme, however, had nothing to do with the relationship between Social

<sup>15</sup> A. Sanz, 'Escuelas del Hogar', in *Revista 'Y'*, (February 1940).

<sup>16</sup> Dr Blanco Soler's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro segundo)*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), pp. 33-4.

<sup>17</sup> The first piece of legislation was in 1941, when domestic subjects were introduced into State primary and secondary girls' schools. From 1944, it was broadened to include girls' private schools. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1992), p. 135.

<sup>18</sup> Most women working for SF in towns and cities had become involved through the social service programme. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Onésimo Redondo had been the co-founder of the syndicalist organisation, the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (J.O.N.S.). The J.O.N.S. fused with the Falange in 1934. S. Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era: Falange Española de las JONS 1936-76*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1987), p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> The tussle between Social Aid and SF is discussed in Chapter Four.



Aid and SF. She had seen the potential of a female equivalent of military service which would ensure a ready supply of unpaid help to the war effort. Single women of between seventeen and thirty-five years of age were to work without payment for a period of six months in the service of Spain, receiving a certificate of service in acknowledgment. In the post-war years, the currency of this certificate became greater, as it became necessary for entry to the professions, government employment and even to obtain a passport or driving licence. During the Civil War, the scheme was at its simplest, consisting of unpaid work in welfare institutions such as orphanages and a training course carried out in the Social Aid residences (*residencias-hogares*).<sup>21</sup> But in 1939, when the scheme was taken over by SF, the taught element was standardised to follow on from SF's existing training programmes and took place in its domestic schools and local headquarters. Its content was largely domestic subjects.<sup>22</sup>

Social service was arguably the most wide-reaching example of SF intervention into women's lives. Its training course was effectively a re-stating and continuation of the material that was being progressively introduced into secondary schooling programmes - namely domestic education, politics and physical education.<sup>23</sup> It was the vehicle for SF to realise its task of 'the total education of the woman' as directed by Franco at the end of the war.<sup>24</sup> What had started as a co-ordinated response to a national emergency very quickly became a tool for political persuasion. Women were to be drawn, via SF teachings 'to their daily tasks, to their children, to the kitchen, the house and the vegetable garden'.<sup>25</sup>

As SF's most ambitious attempt to mobilise unaffiliated women, social service was unsuccessful. Its element of compulsion was widely resented after the war, and despite the increasing regulations and controls governing the scheme, only a minority of women were

<sup>21</sup> M. Orduña Prada, *El Auxilio Social (1936-1940): la etapa fundacional y los primeros años*, (Madrid, Escuela Libre Editorial, 1996), p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> The training period was 216 hours, split into three hour daily sessions (Monday to Saturday), of two practical and one theory class. Of the 216 hours, 77 per cent of the time was spent on domestic subjects including childcare, 11 per cent on politics, and 5.5 per cent each on religion and music. D.N. de la S.F., *Plan de formación*, (Madrid, Afrodisio Aguado, 1942), p. 167.

<sup>23</sup> All SF basic training courses, whether for social service women or schoolgirls, had a very large degree of overlap. Members' courses were similar but more intensive.

<sup>24</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos, circulares, escritos*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

ever recorded as completing it in any one year.<sup>26</sup> The irony was that it was likely to be the neediest women who would have to do social service, because it was a requirement for many jobs, particularly in the State sector. Women who were better-off, not at university and not intending to work, could avoid it with few consequences.<sup>27</sup>

But other SF programmes were also intrusive. Its health programmes gave form to what Mary Nash has described as twentieth-century society's increasingly critical opinion of women's ability to cope as mothers without the intervention of medical experts.<sup>28</sup> In this, the Francoist State was reflecting concerns about the health of the nation that went back to the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera. Worries about population, birth rate and mortality rates ran alongside a wider debate about so-called 'racial hygiene'. Differing theoretical models of how future generations might be healthier and live longer were being discussed in various European countries. In Spain, as early as the 1920s, the king's physician, Gregorio de Marañón, had put forward ideas of how health - and particularly maternal and infant health - could be improved. He recognised the problems of multiple childbirth and premature ageing of the mother, quoting a figure of 46 per cent infant mortality from 1,534 families in the area of his own hospital.<sup>29</sup>

The writings of Marañón were followed in 1928 and again in 1933 by national conferences debating the health of the nation and (among other things) the responsibility of women in this regard.<sup>30</sup> All could agree that motherhood should be undertaken responsibly, but there were varying definitions of 'conscious maternity' (*maternidad consciente*). In

<sup>26</sup> Social service figures were first produced in 1940, for which year SF claimed that 31,397 women had been awarded certificates of completion. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Consejos nacionales (libro segundo), p. 188. The issue is discussed further in Chapter Five.

<sup>27</sup> This changed later from the 1960s, when greater numbers of women began to want passports and driving licences. In the 1940s, in country areas where the local SF had few training facilities, the certificate was often obtainable by presenting a set of baby clothes to the authorities. It was of course possible for mothers or grandmothers to do the sewing! Interview with Conchita Valladolid Barazal, 27 October 1995.

<sup>28</sup> M. Nash, 'Maternidad, maternología y reforma eugénica en España (1900-1939)', in G. Duby and M. Perrot (eds.), Historia de las mujeres en Occidente, vol. 5, (Madrid, Taurus, 1993), p. 634.

<sup>29</sup> G. Marañón, Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual, (Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 1927), pp. 102-3.

<sup>30</sup> The first of these conferences ('Primer Curso Eugénico Español') was suspended by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship as being too controversial but the second, larger event, held in 1933 ('Primeras Jornadas Eugénicas Españolas') had the support of the Republican government and comprised a conference and separate series of lectures. Eugenics was treated as four broad areas - the biological (latest work on evolution and genetics), medical (reports on clinical problems and best practice in Spain), sociological (the views of lawyers, writers, politicians and historians on social issues such as birth control and prostitution) and finally, educational aspects of eugenics, discussed by teachers and educational experts. E. Noguera y L. Huerta, Libro de las primeras jornadas eugénicas españolas: genética, eugenesia y pedagogía sexual, (Madrid, Javier Morata, 1934), pp. 9-10.

the 1920s and 1930s, it was for many inseparable from the promotion of birth control and came to be part of the wider political debate about the rights and role of women in society. But Marañón declared birth control 'an attack against society and a sin' and advocated abstinence as the way to control family size.<sup>31</sup> For him, 'conscious maternity' was a question of educating the woman for her future role and breaking with the traditional preparation for motherhood 'learning at home, at the side of her ignorant, heroic mother the elementary rules of household management'.<sup>32</sup>

Some of Marañón's recommendations - breast feeding, the avoidance of foreign nannies and the necessity for women to avoid the workplace - were echoed ten years later in the childcare manuals of SF. More significantly, his faith in the efficacy of education squared with SF's own view. Women were to be made responsible for themselves, no longer Marañón's 'passive mother, resigned and fanatical, the victim of her own generous instinct'.<sup>33</sup>

Marañón was not alone in believing that improved child care and maternal education would significantly reduce infant mortality and improve public health in general. The theme was taken up by medical experts on the Nationalist side and from Germany and Italy as part of a larger debate on the perceived racial inheritance of Spain. A psychiatrist who spoke frequently in Nationalist circles, Antonio Vallejo Nágera, had set out his vision of the degeneration of Spain in apocalyptic terms shortly after the election of the Popular Front government in February 1936. 'Regeneration' was the antithesis of values or beliefs connected to the 'democratic and Marxist virus' of the Second Republic. Implicit was the idea of commitment and sacrifice as a patriotic duty.<sup>34</sup> 'The regeneration of the masses requires the self-regeneration of the individual. The self-improvement of many will in the end regenerate the immense majority.'<sup>35</sup>

During the war and in the early 1940s, eugenic theory was more precisely defined. Vallejo Nágera, for example, believed that the individual possessed inherited qualities, some from the family, and others unique to the race. National virtues such as chivalry,

<sup>31</sup> G. Marañón, Tres ensayos, p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>34</sup> Dr A. Vallejo Nágera, Eugenesis de la hispanidad y regeneración de la raza, (Burgos, Editorial Española, 1937), p.6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

steadfastness and spirituality were at the heart of Spanish identity and constituted *hispanidad* (Spanishness).<sup>36</sup> This was the 'genotype' of the nation, the mix of genetic and racial characteristics which had been in danger of extinction since foreign influences (*extranjerización*) had permeated the country in the shape of liberal ideas and parliamentary democracy.

But the individual was also a product of nurture and environment. The mix between these factors and genetic inheritance was, in eugenic terms, the 'phenotype' and it was this which could be altered. Spain had degenerated, went the theory, because of alien influences on the phenotype 'first sown by the Jews, then the *moriscos*<sup>37</sup>, later by the influence of foreign encyclopaedists and rationalists'.<sup>38</sup> These had bred negative personality traits, such as malice, resentment and an inferiority complex, now the cause of Spain's ills and extinguishable only by moral rearmament with the values of the Golden Age as the model:

It is not merely a question of returning to the human values of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. It is a matter of putting them back into the thoughts, habits and conduct of the nation, with the aim of morally healing the environment in such a way that the phenotype may be strengthened and the genotype does not degenerate.<sup>39</sup>

This was so-called 'conductivist' (or positive) eugenics and differed from the 'geneticist' theory which preached selection of the fittest on racial grounds. Measures such as the sterilisation of psychopaths or mental defectives adopted in Nazi Germany were rejected by Spanish eugenicists as fundamentally anti-Catholic. As Vallejo Nágera said: 'Catholic doctors have been opposed to eugenic sterilisation for moral reasons, in accordance with instructions from the Church.'<sup>40</sup> In its place was a belief in religion and

<sup>36</sup> Dr A. Vallejo Nágera, 'Higiene psíquica de la raza', in D.N. de Deportes de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Memoria-resumen de las tareas científicas del 1 Congreso Nacional de Educación Física, (Madrid, Jesús López, 1943), p. 242.

<sup>37</sup> In 1492, Spain was fully returned to Christianity, after nearly eight hundred years of Moorish occupation. The only Moors allowed to remain were those who converted to Christianity, the *moriscos*.

<sup>38</sup> Dr A. Vallejo Nágera, Política racial del Nuevo Estado, (San Sebastián, Biblioteca España Nueva, 1938), p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Dr A. Vallejo Nágera, Eugenésia, pp. 109-110.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

patriotism as the keys to national regeneration:

A nation which wishes to be regenerated should look to encourage the practice of religion... Religiosity and patriotism automatically heal the environment; they engender high aspirations, they promote the cultivation of virtues and they destroy vice.<sup>41</sup>

The Francoist response to the eugenics debate was the passing of a series of welfare and health measures, which developed progressively from the Civil War into the 1940s. The promotion of the family was central to all its policies. As Vallejo Nágera claimed: 'The regeneration of the race must be founded necessarily on the regeneration of the family.'<sup>42</sup> The introduction of measures in support of the family and maternal and infant welfare gave both a context and a justification for the interventionist approach of SF and its education programmes. The first and most significant piece of legislation was the 1938 Labour Charter (*Fuero del Trabajo*). It proclaimed the primacy of the family unit as the 'natural cell and foundation of society' and pledged to help country workers and their communities.<sup>43</sup> As well as promising enhanced social insurance payments by the State for certain groups of workers, it made provision to remove married women from the workplace.<sup>44</sup> Work was prejudicial to women's health and therefore to the health of the nation. As one of the SF's medical experts wrote, it could be considered 'a real social plague, as much as tuberculosis or other illnesses'.<sup>45</sup>

Other legislation was soon in place after the war to combat infant mortality and promote large families by means of campaigns, propaganda and medical intervention. The Law of Infant and Maternal Health passed in 1941 established the need for existing medical services to work closely with the National Movement, and in matters of infant and maternal

<sup>41</sup> Dr A. Vallejo Nágera, *Política racial del Nuevo Estado*, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Dr A. Vallejo Nágera, *Eugenesia*, p. 118.

<sup>43</sup> Dr J. Bosch Marín, 'El Fuero del Trabajo y la mujer', in *Revista 'Y'*, (April 1938).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. It promised increased payments for old age, invalidity, maternity, work-related accidents and ill-health.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

health for there to be co-operation with SF and Social Aid in particular.<sup>46</sup>

SF was ideally placed to respond to the welfare legislation with the creation of its national team of health workers (*Cuerpo de divulgación*) in 1941.<sup>47</sup> These were SF's front-line troops against infant mortality, advising on hygiene and child care, working with rural doctors and giving information on State welfare provision.<sup>48</sup> The *divulgadoras* were always local village women. This helped to make their work more acceptable in the community and they made a direct contribution to eugenic policy. Their duties were to remind women considering marriage of the need to choose a healthy partner and explain the advisability of pre-nuptial examinations. They were to warn pregnant woman of the illegality and danger of abortion and of the need for professional medical advice rather than the attentions of the local herbalist or wise woman.<sup>49</sup>

The contribution of the work of *divulgadoras* to State welfare policy was constantly re-stated. According to Pilar, each had the 'important mission of educating between ten and eleven thousand women'.<sup>50</sup> The Minister of the Interior, Ramón Serrano Suñer, endorsed the interventionist nature of their role at the 1940 SF conference: 'You must also use your visits to collect a wide range of information... which will be used for the correction of our welfare census.'<sup>51</sup> But he also recognised their stabilising potential in poor rural communities: 'You will ensure that the sub-human rooms lived in by more than half of all Spaniards are replaced with happy houses, where there is neither tuberculosis nor hatred.'<sup>52</sup>

Thus far, SF could be considered as carrying out national policy. Even allowing for

<sup>46</sup> Other legislation confirmed the State's commitment to the primacy of the family. From 1940, the government introduced cash awards for the largest families and for those with the greatest number of surviving children. The 1941 largest total was twenty-five children and the best survival rate was sixteen out of nineteen children. Each couple won five thousand pesetas. *Arriba*, 1 July 1941. Marriage loans were introduced in 1941, conditional on the woman giving up her job and being under the age of twenty-five and her fiancé under thirty. Loans were interest-free and a quarter share was declared redeemed for each child born to the couple. *Revista 'Y'*, (August 1941). This was a similar scheme to Nazi Germany's, but no racial criteria were applied.

<sup>47</sup> The idea was not original. *Divulgadoras* were the SF-trained equivalent of the 'nurse-visitors' working in the Social Aid department. SF also introduced a course to train 'social visitors'. This was similar work to that of a *divulgadora* but carried out in towns and cities. Both *divulgadoras* and social visitors were at the lowest ('local') level of SF 'service' hierarchy. See Annexe 2.

<sup>48</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Lecciones de puericultura e higiene para cursos de divulgadoras sanitario-rurales*, (Madrid, Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1945), pp. 16-17; pp. 47-49.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17 and p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1939 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 27.

<sup>51</sup> Ramón Serrano Suñer's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro segundo)*, p. 88.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

its interventionist methods, it was merely reflecting the Nationalist concern on how to build the 'New State'. Its programmes were a mixture of reactionary ideas based on the premise of returning women to the home and policies deriving from the 'medicalisation' of maternity and child care. But control of the female population through direct intervention had to be accompanied by a willingness by unaffiliated women to put ideas into practice. Thus in SF's 'Revolution', there was a presumption that women, once educated and enthused to participate, would see the value of its own, female networks.<sup>53</sup> This had already been seen during the Civil War. In 1938 following their national conference the idea came to members of helping country families in household and rural tasks in the absence of their menfolk at the front. The plan was to organise teams of women members who would go in groups to villages and stay in households during harvest time or at other busy times of the year.<sup>54</sup> This experience prompted the SF national team to develop the department of Town and Country (*Hermandad de la Ciudad y el Campo*), which built on the idea that organised co-operation between town and country dwellers to improve working life would benefit both types of community. It established a range of courses for rural women in agricultural and craft skills and became the link with the Falangist syndical organisation. Here, a network of 'link members' (*enlaces*) was officially recognised and the fact that women had comparable representation in the workplace with men was deemed important by SF.<sup>55</sup> The *enlaces* organised the social service programme for women workers and also promoted government labour legislation and SF's welfare and leisure facilities.<sup>56</sup>

The appointment of *enlaces* typified one of SF's greatest ambiguities, namely its attitude to paid female employment. As in Germany and Italy, there was the recognition

<sup>53</sup> For example, the fact that the *divulgadoras* worked to the orders of the local doctor took nothing away from the interventionary nature of their work. It was their specific contribution as women talking to other women which was deemed important. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Lecciones de puericultura*, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> The stay varied from two to six months. The work often consisted in looking after the children or old folk of the house, releasing the wife to do the specialist outdoor work. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

<sup>55</sup> The first SF *enlaces* were appointed in 1940 and in the five years before State legislation recognised their authority within the syndical system, there were a total of 2,800. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Lecciones de puericultura*, p. 129. A further decree in 1948 specified their link with the Falange provincial labour departments. T. Loring, 'Promoción político-social de la mujer durante los años del mandato de Franco', in (Autores Varios), *Colección Azor de Estudios Contemporáneos, El legado de Franco*, (Burgos, Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, 1993), p. 600.

<sup>56</sup> SF provision for working women included the services of *divulgadoras*, weekend leisure activities and residential holiday homes. F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina - historia y organización*, p. 130.

that women's work contributed to the national economy but that it should not threaten the male status quo.<sup>57</sup> For this reason, SF's encouragement of women to help other women become financially better-off via rural regeneration schemes was uncontroversial. As with its programmes of domestic management, the aim was to improve the national economy by well-run homes and higher family incomes. For many countrywomen, the impact of SF programmes was to make existing (unpaid) work on farms and small-holdings more productive or enable them to access a separate source of income. But SF's intervention in the State syndical system suggested that it was actively promoting paid female employment. This was a far cry from the view in many Catholic circles that women should remain in the closed atmosphere of the home.

As in Germany and Italy, attempts to remove women from the workplace were problematical, since it was the case that the cheapness of their labour contributed substantially to the profits of bosses and factory owners. Ideologically, SF was caught between the parallel but contradictory aims of restoring women to domesticity while promoting and re-stating their essential role in contributing to the national economy.

In its attempts to reconcile the two viewpoints, SF presented the home versus work debate as pragmatism. It was acknowledged that despite the desirability of a wholly domestic role for women, this was not always feasible. For many war widows and single women as well as women struggling in poverty, paid work was a financial necessity. This had been recognised by the Social Aid organisation, which had opened day nurseries and creches. These enabled the poorest single parents to earn a living at the same time as ensuring that vulnerable children's health was being monitored. By the end of the war, this policy was coming under criticism from sectors of the regime who believed that encouraging women to work in whatever circumstances was against the spirit if not the letter of the Labour Charter.<sup>58</sup> SF was not included in the criticism as it did not actually own the nurseries and creches but merely provided staff. As the women workers were

<sup>57</sup> T. Mason, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class*, (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1995), pp. 160-161; P. Willson, 'Women in Fascist Italy', in R. Bessel (ed.), *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Comparisons and Contrasts*, (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1996), pp. 85-6.

<sup>58</sup> This was part of an attack on Social Aid made by Ramón Serrano Suñer in 1939, resulting in the removal of Mercedes Sanz Bachiller from her post and the re-drawing of the aims and objectives of the organisation. Thereafter, it lost much of its earlier autonomy and became a more explicitly confessional welfare programme.



largely volunteers, serving for patriotic reasons, there was no obvious conflict of interests but it highlighted both the force of traditional opinion and SF's distance from that point of view.

SF journals of the 1940s described work as a financial necessity for the unfortunate and otherwise the recourse of those women unlucky enough to stay single. 'No truly sensitive woman goes from preference to the office or workshop. She fulfils her human mission and does whatever life or the State requires her to do, but always yearns for home.'<sup>59</sup> Particularly in the immediate post-war period, women's decision to work could also be presented by SF as a patriotic response to the needs caused by the Civil War:

They resolved to be the ones who, by personal effort, would guide the ship to port. With God's help, no-one in their house would die of hunger, the poor old folk, weighed down with pain and illness, could live in peace to the end of their days and their younger brothers and sisters would be supported in their studies.<sup>60</sup>

In this sense, work was one of the means by which some women were enabled to achieve their natural goal: a home. It was acceptable principally as a short-term measure which contributed to the long-term wellbeing of the family, rather than as end in itself. Alternative strategies such as thrift and resourcefulness featured regularly in SF journals and were presented as modern, acquirable skills. Work and study were defensible as long as they did not compromise women's domestic efficiency, described euphemistically as the loss of 'essential values and the knowledge of their destiny'.<sup>61</sup> The path would be a narrow one. While accepting that there could be no return to pre-war economic circumstances, a way had to be found of detaching work from connotations of female independence and a removal from the domestic sphere. 'Let us not close our eyes to reality, because as long as we see it and recognise it, we will to a certain extent be able to limit it,' said a male speaker at the 1939 SF conference, referring to the growing numbers of working women

<sup>59</sup> E. Ruiz-Crespo, 'Un bello resurgir de artesanía', in *Revista 'Y'*, (November 1940).

<sup>60</sup> J. Hernández-Petit, 'La escuela de capacitación', in *Revista 'Y'*, (January 1940).

<sup>61</sup> E. Montes' speech at the 1939 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, p. 79.

in countries involved in the First World War.<sup>62</sup> Damage limitation in that sense would be the SF's objective and was another reason for emphasising the domestic programmes. These would render the mass of the female population less vulnerable to whatever negative influences were brought to bear in the workplace.

Yet SF's stance had its contradictions. Journal articles from an early date held employment information suggesting that work could be the realisation of ambition and an end in itself. Articles praised certain professions as well as commending the personal qualities of the individual who had achieved success. A woman studying for a doctorate in law was described as 'simply a woman who, above all, has an ambition to be something, to arrive'.<sup>63</sup> There were some surprising inclusions in the list of so-called 'approved' professions. As well as promoting traditionally female areas such as teaching, childcare and nursing, *Revista 'Y'* at various times carried articles on telephonists, metro workers, waitresses, beauticians and careers in the media. In September 1938, it advertised the newly-formed Nationalist film company, CIFESA, inviting young women to train for stardom. A later article asked the question: 'Have you ever considered the possibility of becoming a radio, theatre or cinema artiste?'<sup>64</sup>

However, this was not typical. The far more frequent message in *Revista 'Y'* was the importance of domesticity and the projection of SF's educational programmes as different, modern and in every way better than anything preceding them. There were regular features about the courses themselves and the SF departments which organised them. A management framework for delivering courses to unaffiliated women had been started in 1938, with the creation of the department of Culture and Training of leaders (*Departamento de Cultura y Formación de Jerarquías*). This oversaw the teaching of politics, religion and domestic subjects and by 1945 had expanded to become two distinct departments.<sup>65</sup>

The department of Training (*Formación*) dealt with what SF considered to be the bedrock of national-syndicalism, namely politics and religion, whereas Culture (*Cultura*)

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> E. Ruiz-Crespo, 'Mujeres en la ciudad' in *Medina*, (19 April 1942).

<sup>64</sup> '¿Ha pensado usted en la posibilidad de ser artista de la radio, del teatro o del cine?', in *Revista 'Y'*, (February 1942).

<sup>65</sup> *Arriba*, 24 January 1945. Programmes were taught in secondary schools, SF youth clubs and local premises, as well as in its own domestic and literacy schools.

was concerned with domestic education, literacy, music and folklore. The Training department produced national-syndicalism textbooks for members and the unaffiliated, together with the course materials on religion used in all staff training programmes.<sup>66</sup> The department of Culture was also responsible for the running of SF's domestic schools as well as the literacy schools (*escuelas de formación*), which were set up to provide basic reading and writing skills, especially in rural areas.

The programmes in these teaching centres were consistently represented by Pilar as Falangist responses to national problems: 'We must try and give young people, as José Antonio also used to say, "full and clear understanding in their soul which gives them solutions to practical problems."' <sup>67</sup> For women, this meant largely domestic skills within a political and religious framework, but they were to be acquired within the Falangist spirit of enthusiasm and commitment. This was no doubt empty rhetoric to the unaffiliated women and girls obliged to follow cookery, child care and physical education courses. Nonetheless, it offered a measure of encouragement, at least within SF journals, for other forms of female endeavour:

Become artists yourself, forget forever all those stupid prejudices of a regrettable time in the past. 'She doesn't know how to play music' used to be said ironically as a compliment. No, if you have a feeling for music, if you have a talent for it, play the piano, don't ever stop.<sup>68</sup>

But SF's encouragement of sport and physical education was more controversial. In its determination to impose sport, games and gymnastics programmes on the female population, it was reflecting government concern about the physical health of the nation. To Vallejo Nágera and other eugenicists, Spain's 'degeneration' was encapsulated in the poor physical condition of many of its citizens:

<sup>66</sup> The Training Department was also responsible for the mobile school caravans (*cátedras ambulantes*). Religion was never taught by the SF in schools and although the Training Department dealt with operational issues, Pilar had a separate panel (*asesoría religiosa*), headed by Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel, to advise her on matters of religious doctrine. This is discussed further in Chapter Three.

<sup>67</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, '¿Cuáles son los objetivos primordiales de la educación de la mujer contemporánea?', in *Pueblo*, May 1948, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 260.

<sup>68</sup> E. Neville, 'Cartas a las camaradas', in *Revista 'Y'*, (June 1938).

The leathery, angular, sober, chaste, austere racial type was transformed into the one who predominates today - wealthy, pot-bellied, sensual, fickle and a social climber. Physical shape is so closely allied to an individual's psychology that we must despair at the abundance of Sanchos and the scarcity of Quixotes.<sup>69</sup>

However, female physical education had been in existence before the Falange. Pilar's claim that before 1939 sport and physical education were considered improper in women and that the extent of participation was tennis and a little hockey was untrue.<sup>70</sup> There was at least some female competitive sport, as reported in women's magazines from 1930.<sup>71</sup> Facilities were doubtless poor in rural areas and the example of the Barcelona women's sports club may well have been unrepresentative, but the club's aim of creating 'a generation of strong, healthy women who will not be afraid to face the battleground of life' was close to SF's own objectives.<sup>72</sup> There were certainly women who took part in professional sport and many others who enjoyed it as a recreational activity or saw it as a health and beauty aid.

The need to disassociate sport from connotations of feminism led Pilar to reconstruct it as less to do with leisure than as part of the drive to improve women's health. This was in line with the vision presented in the Falangist press of sport as disciplined, State-controlled and having eugenic benefits:

The vision of anarchic, vociferous and empassioned sport, which used to be perennial, disappeared some time ago. The Falange has given it a hierarchical meaning and a systematic organisation which both horizontally and vertically has prevented it from being practised as a matter of free will. It has been given over to the... State, which has gladly accepted its

<sup>69</sup> A. Vallejo Nágera, *Eugenesia*, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos de una vida*, (Madrid, Dyrsa, 1983), p. 279.

<sup>71</sup> For example national women's athletics competitions held in 1931 and won by Catalan women or women's gymnastic championships held in Madrid. *Informaciones*, (26 October 1931), p. 8; *Mujer*, (7 November 1931), p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> The Barcelona club had opened in 1928 and had modern sports facilities, a library and a beach for the women's exclusive use. The low fee (one peseta monthly) encouraged women of all backgrounds to attend and participate in sport. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

role as the overseer of sport, seeing it essential to its policy of educating young people and improving the race.<sup>73</sup>

But as with female education and employment, SF was treading a fine line. Distancing its new programmes from the Second Republic and identifying with overall Francoist policy did not make the organisation immune from criticisms from the Church, which commonly regarded female sport as offending decency.<sup>74</sup> Pilar's strategy was to delegate the main decisions for SF's physical education programme to an appointed adviser. Luis Agosti was a doctor and had been the national javelin champion before the war. In common with SF's religious adviser, he was an Establishment figure and an expert in his field. Norms for the detail of how to introduce physical education were based on his advice and his manual in 1948 was quickly adopted as the definitive authority on the subject. Physical Education became a fully-fledged department with its own permanent staff and, as in the case of domestic education, SF was given a mandate to implement teaching in all State and private schools.<sup>75</sup>

But of equal importance was the practice of physical education by SF's own elites and here, SF showed its clearest fascist credentials. Apart from their role as teachers of the subject, *mandos* had to embody the ideal of womanhood in their appearance as well as in their behaviour and beliefs. Physical fitness was considered part of the mental and spiritual discipline of the Falange, which required 'bodies and souls ready and in line'.<sup>76</sup> Agosti lost no time in adopting the fascist vision of sport as a spectator event and a

<sup>73</sup> 'Por una raza mejor', in *Arriba*, 5 October 1943.

<sup>74</sup> From 1942, SF physical education teachers were also trained to teach politics and domestic subjects in schools. A former *mando* remembers opposition from both Church and parents at the imposition of the SF curriculum. Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994.

<sup>75</sup> It was introduced, along with political and domestic education, in 1941 but in practice was not taught in primary or secondary schools until 1948. Previous to this, the majority of women and girls engaged in sport organised by SF were youth or adult members and, from 1946, women doing their social service (for whom it became a compulsory component of the training course). Teacher training in physical education had started during the war with courses run in Santander and continued to expand with the opening of a training college in Madrid. This later became the SF National School of Physical Education. Additionally, from 1947, physical education became a part of teacher training courses. F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina -historia y organización*, p. 98.

<sup>76</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1937 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Escritos*, p. 13.

statement of adhesion to the regime, copying many ideas from Nazi Germany.<sup>77</sup> The patriotic interpretation of rhythmic exercises included national songs and these were often performed in massive displays, reminiscent of Nazi rallies, held regionally and nationally on a regular basis. Indeed, the SF's collective biography states that at meetings where physical education policy was being formulated, German sporting films and in particular the 'Olympiad' of Leni Riefenstahl, were often shown.<sup>78</sup> Riefenstahl's films are described as masterpieces which drew the attention of the audience to the cult of physical beauty.<sup>79</sup> The parallel with the SF public displays of the early 1940s is striking.<sup>80</sup>

A further important link between SF's objectives and those of the Nazi women's organisations was a common understanding of the link between female fitness and maternal health. As explained by the first national head of SF's Youth Wing: 'The mission of maternity requires and demands greater physical attention. This is sufficient explanation for the need for female physical education.'<sup>81</sup> The SF press made an even more explicit connection between the regime's pro-natalism and the policies of Nazi Germany:

The mother must be considered the most important citizen of the State. These were the words written by Hitler in his fundamental programme and... we all know how important it is for our country in these times to produce a large number of healthy children from strong mothers... but we must ensure that the harvest is not only plentiful but healthy, and for the fruit not to be contaminated we must start with the tree.<sup>82</sup>

This belief was reflected in the SF programme of rhythmic exercises and at least some of the original intent remained throughout the regime. One of the exercises in an early

<sup>77</sup> Agosti began advising the SF during the war. He had certainly seen both sides of the political coin, having been in the national athletics squad in the anti-fascist Antwerp Workers' Olympics of 1937 and subsequently visiting Nazi Germany at least twice in his capacity as SF adviser. P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos*, p. 279; Dr L. Agosti, 'Educación física femenina - papel de la mujer en deportes', in D.N. de Deportes de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Memoria-resumen*, p. 143 and p. 152.

<sup>78</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 156.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> For example, as illustrated in F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina - historia y organización*, pp. 95-6. An earlier edition of the book, published in 1944, shows an even more regimented display of wall bar exercises performed *en masse*.

<sup>81</sup> C. Cadenas, 'La educación física femenina', in D.N. de Deportes de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Memoria-resumen*, p. 438.

<sup>82</sup> Dr Luque, 'Futuras madres', in *Revista 'Y'*, (February, 1938).

edition of the magazine *Revista 'Y'* under the heading of 'Physical Culture', described as essential to avoid painful childbirth, reappears in an SF school textbook published twenty-six years later.<sup>83</sup>

But the third factor connecting SF's aims to those of Nazi Germany was its vision of physical education as a form of social control. There was admiration in the ranks of SF for the Nazi women's and girls' organisations, which promoted social cohesion and respect. These were aims dear to SF which, unlike the rest of the National Movement, had established itself as keen to obliterate the differences between the winners and losers of the Civil War. Nazi Germany set great store by residential camps and other communal ventures, and *mandos* visiting these projects were impressed:

I have lived among all the girls of the B.D.M.<sup>84</sup> in different leaders' schools and I have never been able to find out the social background of any of them: they have the same uniform, the same simple, clean hairstyle, the same cold shower, the same posture and manners at table, the same conversation about politics or history.<sup>85</sup>

But amongst the B.D.M., the openness extended to an acceptance of the physicality of close communal living. A former *mando* visiting Germany recalls her distaste at seeing 'fifty sirens' showering together openly in an immense communal washroom.<sup>86</sup> The contrast with the corresponding Spanish institution could hardly have been greater. In the recollection of a former summer camp leader, Pilar Primo de Rivera gave the following instructions during an inspection visit: 'It's up to you to make sure the girls wash properly and that when they get undressed ... that they're modest about it... You must see that they wash themselves thoroughly and that they don't lose their sense of shame.'<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Gimnasiarca, 'Cultura física', in *Revista 'Y'*, (June 1938). 'If all young women did this exercise from adolescence a dozen times daily, difficult, painful and dangerous births would be considerably reduced.' There are similar exercises in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Lecciones de educación física de 1º, 2º, enseñanza y comercio*, (Madrid, Fareso, 1964), p. 26 and p. 109.

<sup>84</sup> *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, the League of German girls, was the female branch of the Hitler Youth for girls over fourteen.

<sup>85</sup> C. Werner, 'Cartas de Alemania', in *Revista 'Y'*, (March [?] 1938). The same point was made to me by a former *mando* who spent time in Germany. Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Viky Eiroa, 31 May 1995.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996.

This epitomised a fundamental difference between Falangism and Nazism. Catholic insistence on female modesty did not sit easily with general encouragement for girls and women to be active sporting participants and there was repugnance at the idea that the female body in itself could be glorified. There was an immediate concern that sports clothing should not be provocative and a general determination to remove sport from any criticism of celebrating the female body. Pilar Primo de Rivera solved the first problem by requiring SF's religious adviser to take responsibility for all matters concerning the dress code. The second point was more difficult.

Catholic insistence on modesty required SF to make so many compromises regarding female sport that its final, agreed representation had no more than a fascist veneer. From an early enthusiasm for all forms of sport in the interests of women's health, SF soon advocated a restricted and specialist range of activities and the rejection of individual competitive sport of all kinds. Some sports were discounted as being unfeminine (wrestling, football, rowing) or elitist (sailing, riding).<sup>88</sup> This left basketball, handball and swimming as SF's preferred team activities.<sup>89</sup>

In place of competitive individual events was the idea of individual competence, tested against a set standard and rewarded with an emblem.<sup>90</sup> Agosti's manual made clear SF's opposition to competition, unless it was team-based. Athletics, however, was perceived to have special dangers:

Competitive athletics require qualities which are completely opposed to the female constitution (muscular power, contractile speed, considerable

<sup>88</sup> Dr L. Agosti, 'Educación física femenina - papel de la mujer en los deportes', in D.N. de Deportes de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Memoria-resumen, p. 144.

<sup>89</sup> There were anomalies in SF's choice and examples of changed opinions over the years. Its first national physical education courses trained women as ski instructors, this evidently not being seen as an elitist sport. Hockey was accepted initially, then dropped as unfeminine but reinstated soon after. Swimming, although aesthetically valid, presented practical problems of how female modesty could be preserved while competitive events were taking place. This was resolved by excluding males from public events and imposing a strict dress code, with approved models of costume for general and competition use. Cycling was acceptable as an activity but not a competitive sport. *Revista 'Mandos'*, (June 1944); 'La mujer y el deporte en 1945', in *Revista 'Y'*, (December-January 1945-6); interview with Julia Alcántara, 29 October 1994.

<sup>90</sup> D.N. de la S.F., Regiduría Central de Educación Física, Emblema de aptitud física: reglamento, (Madrid, Magerit, 1959), p. 8. The tests were in flexibility, balance, precision throwing (basketball), distance throwing (handball), fifty metres, high jump and swimming. To put the question of athletics in context, it is worth stating that opposition to women's participation was not confined to Spain. The 1928 Olympic Games were the first to include any women's competitive athletic events. J. Hargreaves, 'Women and the Olympic phenomenon', in A. Tomlinson and G. Whanel (eds.), Five-ring Circus, (London, Pluto Press, 1984), p. 59.



resistance to fatigue)... there have been various cases of female athletics champions who have had problems in determining their gender. One such incident happened not long ago in Spain.<sup>91</sup>

There was a further veto on professionalism in sport: 'Professional sport can have one purpose only and that is propaganda. This apart, all its consequences are harmful and it must be opposed.'<sup>92</sup> This apparently cancelled out the possibility of women's *pelota* teams, a significant decision in the light of the latter's undoubted propaganda value as a sport unique to Spain:

Our repugnance for professional sport is so great that the fact that this possibility even exists in women's *pelota* has caused us to drop it from sports chosen for the *Sección Femenina*, despite the enormous attraction it has for us firstly as a sport of truly Spanish character and also for its undoubted merits from the point of view of physical education.<sup>93</sup>

But SF found a more effective propaganda tool with its exploitation of folk dance and singing (*coros y danzas*). This was good exercise and had a cultural and nationalistic dimension. Not only did women and girls perform for the various SF competitive events: from 1940, the newly-formed team of *divulgadoras* was instructed to recoup folklore as part of its work in villages.<sup>94</sup> The songs and dances were collected nationally and subsequently published. From this came the development of choir and dance teams organised locally and regionally to compete in championships much as any sports team and also available for public displays of patriotism.<sup>95</sup> The philosophy of *coros y danzas* was in line with José Antonio's desire to see the villages of Spain dignified and rural traditions

<sup>91</sup> L. Agosti, *Gimnasia educativa*, (Madrid, Talleres del Instituto Geográfico y Estatal, 1948), p. 726.

<sup>92</sup> Dr L. Agosti, 'Educación física femenina - papel de la mujer en los deportes', in D.N. de Deportes de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Memoria-resumen*, p. 144.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> 658 songs and 24 dances were gathered from villages in that year. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro segundo)*, p. 185.

<sup>95</sup> The first example of this was the SF rally after the war at Medina del Campo, when offerings of fruit and flowers were made to Franco from each province and set piece dances and choirs performed as part of the exaltation of regional loyalty to the regime. *Coros y danzas* held their first national competition in 1942. *Arriba*, 21 January 1943.

valued. Physical fitness could be combined with cultural heritage and an identification with aspects of national identity.

Nonetheless, despite its propaganda value to the regime, female physical education continued to draw criticism. This was commonly from teaching nuns who were obliged to accept the presence of SF staff when the subject became compulsory.<sup>96</sup> Even the seemingly uncontroversial *coros y danzas* attracted the wrath of sectors of the Church. In Seville, for example, Cardinal Segura banned all dancing in his diocese, including the SF festival. Elsewhere, a former teacher recalls having to apply to the bishop, since the parish priest had refused permission for the customary end-of-course dance display in a village where the SF travelling school had been operating.<sup>97</sup>

The difficulties with physical education epitomised SF's problems in implementing the Falangist Revolution. All its programmes were consistent with Falangist doctrine and their rationale was the regeneration and economic improvement of post-war Spain. But the task was enormous and needed both operational efficiency and public support. SF believed it had found the former with the organisational features borrowed from Germany.<sup>98</sup> Judging from the frequent number of fact-finding visits reported in *Arriba* and the SF press, *mandos* felt they had much to learn.<sup>99</sup> SF based its hierarchical structure on

<sup>96</sup> Interviewees have commented on difficulties they faced as teachers of the new subject: that nuns did not like them personally (Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996); that they were given classes of sixty pupils to teach (Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996); that the mother superior initially only allowed the designated PE garment to be worn provided that the normal skirt was not removed (Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996).

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 27 May 1996.

<sup>98</sup> In the collective memory, the influence of Italy was more decisive than that of Germany but no evidence has been found to support this view. However, part of the work of Social Aid, the Protection of the Mother and Child, was undoubtedly based on the Italian O.N.M.I. (*Opera Nazionale per la maternità ed infanzia*).

<sup>99</sup> Between 1938 and 1942 there are press and journal accounts of sixteen visits made by members of SF to the Axis countries, of which thirteen were to Germany. Pilar Primo de Rivera took part in eight, visiting Italy, Portugal and Austria as well as Germany. Significant visits for the development of SF programmes were those of the national youth leader, Carmen Werner, to Germany and her successor to the post, Julia Alcántara, to the German girls' national training school in 1938. In 1939 nineteen *mandos* went for three months to study how the German organisation had set up its domestic schools and fifty SF provincial delegates attended and performed at the 'Strength through Joy' celebrations. In 1942, representatives from the SF choirs and dances groups performed for Blue Division soldiers convalescing in German war hospitals. Also in 1942, members of the Town and Country department went to study German agricultural methods. *Revista 'Y'* (February, May, December 1938; January, July 1939; December 1940; January, October 1942). *Arriba* 21 July 1939; 28 August, 7 October 1941; 3 July, 4 July, 22 August, 29 August, 13 September 1942.

the Nazi women's organisation, with departments and sub-sections in parallel areas.<sup>100</sup> Many activities, including summer camps and the uniforms worn there, were a copy of those seen in Germany.<sup>101</sup>

Support for SF's programmes, however, could not be taken for granted. It was undoubtedly true that despite the imitation, SF 'came out differently' from its model in Nazi Germany.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, the similarities made it difficult for SF to reinvent itself at the point where the regime wished to distance itself from the Axis and the events of the Second World War. Its strict rules, uniforms and the revolutionary thrust of its political message - all of which to a degree reflected the Nazi organisations - continued unreformed until the mid-1950s, when training plans were updated and routines gradually modified. The early style was doubtless helpful in the war situation to bring cohesion to the diverse programmes, but, in the words of one *mando*, SF 'was perhaps a bit dictatorial'.<sup>103</sup>

But although the ideology and SF's interventionary methods were recognisably fascist, all programmes were tempered by the political realities of the regime. There was a need for SF to co-exist with other sectors in the regime, and in particular the Catholic Church. Although both SF and the Church were incontrovertibly in support of the Nationalist cause, SF's vigorous implementation of its programmes highlighted the differences between the two. The dynamism which SF's elites wished to instil in the female population did not sit easily with traditional Catholic virtues of modesty and self-effacement. In this sense, the social control achieved by SF through its programmes for the unaffiliated made relations with the Church more difficult.

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<sup>100</sup> There was no exact equivalent of the SF's monolithic organisation. German women had two organisations - an elite group, in charge of mobilising the masses, and an association of auxiliary groups which organised activities at a local and regional level. The relationship between these two groups and the overall leadership changed several times during the Third Reich. J. Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women*, p. 117. The contacts with the SF were mainly with the most enduring of its leaders, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink and with the (male) leader of the Nazi youth groups, Baldur von Schirach. For a comparison of the departments, see Annexe 1. It appears that the German and Spanish organisations experienced conflicts and political wranglings in the same areas: their youth and Social Aid departments. *Ibid.*, p. 87 and p. 147.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994. The camp uniforms were in the style of peasant costumes (blue and white striped skirt, a red neckband and a white blouse). The gymnastics, handcrafts and music which they saw taught in the German training school were replicated by SF. Julia Alcántara personally brought back the idea of doll-making (with regional and national costumes), to be taught in the newly-created SF national school of El Pardo in Madrid. A further import was her introduction of a national Mother's Day which, she decided, should be celebrated on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Jesús Suevos, 30 May 1997.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994.

The domestic and literacy schools, social service and the expanded school curriculum with its physical education lessons were proof of SF's commitment to the Revolution.<sup>104</sup> But equipping women to be good mothers and become physically fitter was controversial. Women were being invited to emerge from the home - even if only to return there as better domestic managers. In the process of developing its programmes, SF had to contend with grey areas, such as the question of paid employment and the acceptability of higher education for women. The answers it found and the compromises it made in the process were indicative of the situations it was to face in the years ahead.

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<sup>104</sup> SF statistics record that by 1941, 57 domestic schools and 2,332 literacy schools were in operation. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Consejos nacionales (libro segundo), p. 233.

## Chapter Two

### The construction of ideology: icons, rituals and private spaces

It has been said of fascist ideologies that their core is the fundamental political myth which mobilises their activists and supporters.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Falange, the vision of a society transformed by José Antonio's projected 'Revolution' continued to inspire a minority of members, but for most, membership of the single party in the Francoist state soon lost most of its original political resonance. It might have been assumed that this would also have been the case within the Falange's *Sección Femenina* (SF). In its early days, SF had a tiny membership, little autonomy and a low public profile and even when the organisation grew, it was always hierarchically and financially dependent on the National Movement. As the latter's political force diminished in government, SF might have been expected to suffer equal decline and ideological dilution.

But this was far from the case. From the beginning of the Civil War, Pilar Primo de Rivera began to develop an ideological identity for SF which led to public perceptions of the organisation as being the 'ideological reserve' of the Falange. The focus of this chapter is how this was achieved and the extent to which the ideological base of SF may be said to display characteristics of 'generic fascism'. It examines how the legacy of José Antonio became the core myth of SF and the part played by Pilar in this. It also considers her part in constructing other elements of the SF belief system between 1937 and 1950. The first formal gathering of SF in January 1937 and the opening of the SF national academy at the end of the Civil War are discussed in relation to this. Finally, the chapter considers the context of Pilar's leadership and how it became in itself a part of SF's ideological identity.

José Antonio denied that the Falange was fascist, although he acknowledged its 'coincidences with Fascism in essential points which are of universal validity'.<sup>2</sup> Of these, the most significant was his creation of a mythic core of beliefs, inspirational for his followers but also sufficiently homogeneous to be rationalised in different ways and at different levels by succeeding generations. His vision of the projected Falangist Revolution

<sup>1</sup> R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, (Routledge, London, 1991), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> José Antonio, 'Falange Española de las J.O.N.S. no es un movimiento fascista', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos de doctrina política*, (Madrid, D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1966), p. 395.

is close to the definition of the 'fascist minimum' described by Roger Griffin, whereby the national community rises phoenix-like after a period of encroaching decadence which has all but destroyed it.<sup>3</sup> Also recognisable within Griffin's definition is José Antonio's utopic and organicist concept of the nation, a definition which fitted well to the Francoist project of reconstructing the state after the Civil War. For José Antonio, Spain was a 'unit of destiny in the universal order... a plane to which a people has risen when it fulfils a universal mission in History'<sup>4</sup>. The ills of Spain were described in terms of contamination and physical sickness, needing the force of a revolution to heal the patient: 'Spain needs to get itself going, not stay in bed like an invalid who doesn't want to get better.'<sup>5</sup> 'Curing the patient' was the responsibility of the Falange's elites, seen as fulfilling an important 'mission'. It was of course the case that much of José Antonio's political imagery and style had already been incorporated into Nationalist rhetoric. As Michael Richards has stated, the regime conceptualised the nation in terms of a division between good and evil, Spain and Anti-Spain.<sup>6</sup> The 'Crusade' of Franco sought to purge Spaniards not only politically but also morally of all traces of the recent past and in this, the Falange's militarism, austerity and cult of violence played an important part.

But where the doctrine of José Antonio comes closest to the definition of fascism as a political ideology is in the style and semiotic language of the Falange. As Roger Griffin has said: '(Ideology)... is rooted in sub-rational and pre-verbal layers of consciousness within the individual and may express itself in a wide variety of both verbal and non-verbal cultural phenomena.'<sup>7</sup> For Pilar, anxious to propagate the teachings of her brother in ways which would have resonance among women, it was important to establish SF as both fully within the Nationalist cause and yet with its own, female distinctness. Part of this involved putting into place operational structures which used SF's financial and human resources to the full. In this, Pilar was helped by Falangists and her members during the Civil War, creating the bureaucracy which remained in place throughout the regime. But more significant was her creation of an identity for SF which engaged members' emotions

<sup>3</sup> R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> José Antonio, 'Sobre Cataluña', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> José Antonio, 'Mientras España duerme la siesta', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *ibid.*, p. 617.

<sup>6</sup> M. Richards, *A Time of Silence. Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936-1945*, (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1998), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, p. 17.

and loyalties. The values and world-view of SF were to be expressed not just through political rhetoric but by giving the organisation an internal structure, style and set of core values which would build loyalty and commitment.

Given SF's early status as an off-shoot of the male Falange, this was a considerable task. When Pilar came to write a serialised history of SF in 1938, great store was placed on its role before the Civil War. In fact, in the first three years of SF's existence, the women allowed to join did so in the capacity of general supporters round José Antonio and their first manifesto said little: 'Our mission is not in hard combat but in preaching, spreading the word and setting an example. We must also support the menfolk, confident in the knowledge that we understand them and can share their concerns.'<sup>8</sup>

Little interest in SF was expressed outside Madrid. By the end of 1935, only the provinces of Vigo, Valladolid and Pamplona had a constituted SF base and there were just eight hundred members nationwide.<sup>9</sup> But there were indications that the first members were looking for a role beyond that of attending the men's meetings. Early SF fundraising devices signalled a desire to have ownership of a part of the Falange political campaign. The sale of bars of soap inscribed with the Falange emblem and the commemorative José Antonio stamp were examples of SF initiatives that owed nothing to male Falangists.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the organisation played a wholly subsidiary role in Falange and Pilar's leadership was primarily as 'campaign manager'. Only with its ceremonial presence did the early SF have any distinct public image. At funerals and memorial services to Falangist 'martyrs', members laid the wreath of roses, providing, as a contemporary observer remembers, an air of 'optimistic theatricality'.<sup>11</sup> It was the forerunner of a role that became characteristic of SF during and after the Civil War. Members' uniformed presence at the many public gatherings was a symbolic recognition of the human cost of the

<sup>8</sup> The 1934 manifesto of SF, in M. Gallego Méndez, *Mujer, Falange y franquismo*, (Madrid, Taurus, 1983), p. 212.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29; S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Concentración nacional de las falanges femeninas en honor del Caudillo y del ejército español*, (Bilbao, Talleres Gráficos de Jesús Álvarez, 1939), p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, 'Historia de la Sección Femenina', in *Revista 'Y'*, (February and March [?] 1938)). The José Antonio stamp was created at the beginning of the war to fund the SF laundries at the battle fronts and to provide war comforts to soldiers. It continued after 1939 as a general fundraiser for the organisation. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995. The Falange anthem spoke of returning soldiers bearing flags of victory and five roses (each representing one of the Falange arrows). The woman of the anthem waited patiently at home for her absent husband or fiancé.

conflict, a poetic sharing of Nationalist grief.

However in all other aspects, SF continued in the shadow of the male Falange, even after February 1936 when the Falange was declared illegal. SF itself was now illegal and in the months which elapsed before the Civil War, members were fully involved in Falangist conspiracies. In Pilar's account, this period was represented as SF's 'foundational' stage, shown as a time of 'persecution, hatred, and incomprehension on the part of our enemies'.<sup>12</sup> Following the arrest of forty-two Falangists, members were asked to visit them in prison and care for their families. In monthly instalments in SF's journal, *Revista 'Y'*, this pre-war period was reconstructed as dangerous and heroic, when activities included smuggling and storing guns and the tiny band of original members risked arrest at any time.<sup>13</sup>

This chronicle was the first part of Pilar's construction of SF as an organisation with its own legitimacy. At the outbreak of war, because of her absence from the Nationalist zone, SF welfare activity was sporadic and uncoordinated. But within a few weeks of arriving in Salamanca, she had established a central base for SF activities, communication with members in the 'liberated' zones and planned SF's first national conference. This was a decisive step in the creation of SF as an organisation with its own legitimacy, ideological base and set of conventions, rituals and symbols. Central to the issue was Pilar's leadership of SF as the sister of the founder of the Falange.

By the time of the conference in January 1937, José Antonio had already been killed. His death in Alicante jail in November 1936 meant that the ideological base of Falange, at least at a symbolic level, could now be interpreted as residing within the leadership of SF. Pilar, as the closest link to José Antonio, could invest SF with the importance of being the organisation which most closely embodied his teachings. This was consistent with Pilar's own importance in Salamanca, where she was established as a leading Falangist, and SF as the reference point for doctrinal purity.<sup>14</sup> Her apartment was the unofficial centre of Falangist activity in Salamanca and she received frequent visitors

<sup>12</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, 'Historia de la Sección Femenina', in *Revista 'Y'*, (February, 1938).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; *Revista 'Y'* (March and May 1939). Accompanying pen drawings showed elegant SF women flirting with prison governors and pasting Falange emblems onto shop windows. P. Primo de Rivera, 'Historia de la Sección Femenina', in *Revista 'Y'*, (March [?] and February 1938).

<sup>14</sup> D. Ridruejo, *Casi unas memorias*, (Barcelona, Planeta, 1976), p. 103.



from other provinces including the Falangist poet and head of propaganda, Dionisio Ridruejo.<sup>15</sup> He already knew Pilar and, as related in Chapter Six, his sister Angela was the SF provincial leader for Segovia. With his help, Pilar organised the January conference and it is likely that his was the guiding hand behind its ceremonial and aesthetics.<sup>16</sup>

It is also probable that it was Ridruejo who was instrumental in persuading her to join the conspiracy of silence surrounding José Antonio's death in November 1936.<sup>17</sup> It was known to Pilar and the Falange immediately that José Antonio had been shot, but his death was not declared officially for two years.<sup>18</sup> Until November 1938, on all public occasions, he was referred to as the 'Absent One' (*El Ausente*). Concealment of the facts was (at least in part) the idea of Ridruejo, who wished to cast José Antonio as a symbolic, inspirational presence during the war.<sup>19</sup> But in agreeing to silence, Pilar must have been aware that José Antonio's death was public knowledge.<sup>20</sup> Certainly everyone in SF knew the facts, but at the January conference, the fifty delegates shared in the fiction as she enjoined them to pray for him:

Please remember, comrades, to pray to the Lord for (José Antonio)... who is still in prison and whom we need so badly, so that it may be as it says in the Scriptures: "A thousand arrows may fall at your left and ten thousand at your right, but none will touch you. Because He sent His angels to watch over you wherever you pass."<sup>21</sup>

It was the first stage in the construction of José Antonio as a figure of mythic importance in SF. The idea of *El Ausente* had come from the male Falange, but it was arguably in SF where its impact was greatest. Pilar's use of the present tense to refer to him at

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> He gave advice and helped her with 'literary tasks'. Ibid., p. 83. He was also one of her principal speech writers. Interview with Jesús Suevos, 30 May 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Jesús Suevos, 30 May 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Jesús Suevos, 30 May 1997. He believes that the idea was possibly inspired by a historical precedent. The sixteenth century king of Portugal, Sebastian, had died in battle against the Moors but his death was concealed from the Portuguese people, who believed for many months that he would return.

<sup>20</sup> It was possible that news had not reached some villages in Nationalist zones, but most people knew. Interview with Jesús Suevos, 30 May 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1937 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos, circulares, escritos*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 14.

conferences and her constant allusions to his teachings confirmed him as a metaphysical presence over the course of the two years before his death was announced. Emotional references to José Antonio in public forums also encouraged a projection of collective grief onto her. Intentionally or not, she had been established as the principal conduit for the emotions of José Antonio's followers and was herself the bearer of national grief. As members were told at the the second SF national conference:

Few of you will be without sorrow or sad memories - a father, brother or child who has fallen in battle or who is fighting in the trenches. Because... you have Pilar Primo de Rivera as leader, the magnificent comrade, model of... sacrifice and virtue, the sister of José Antonio who for us, uniquely, is ... a constant presence, watchful and inspiring.<sup>22</sup>

After the Civil War, Pilar's leadership of SF continued to be based on the legitimacy of José Antonio's memory, her position as his sister and her early membership of the Falange.<sup>23</sup> His main ideological legacy was his writings, quoted extensively by Pilar both in formal settings and in conversations with her staff. José Antonio's speeches were understood variously as chronicles of the past, inspiration for the Falangist Revolution and as solutions for the present. In the memory of one *mando*, the end note for many political discussions was Pilar's phrase 'as José Antonio said'. On the basis that his words conveyed absolute, eternal truths, they were felt to be relevant for every problem and there was no need to speculate on how he would have faced current circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

José Antonio's works were SF's doctrinal core, but the memory of his life and death was also central to its belief system. From the end of the Civil War, SF members contributed actively to the elaborate ceremonial of his burial in El Escorial and the many

<sup>22</sup> The Falange Secretary-General's speech at the 1938 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> The early members of Falange before it was joined with the Traditionalists were known as 'old shirts' (*camisas viejas*). Those joining after Unification were 'new shirts' (*camisas nuevas*). After the Civil War, when Franco renamed the Falange the National Movement, *camisas viejas* and *camisas nuevas* continued to describe themselves as Falangists. The word became synonymous with belief in the early aims of the Falange and the doctrines of José Antonio. In this context, SF (with its national leader a *camisa vieja*), considered itself the most Falangist part of the National Movement.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996.

commemorations which followed. His cell in Alicante jail was preserved by local members as a shrine, and artefacts were sent from SF provincial centres to adorn the chapel built on the site of his shooting.<sup>25</sup> Their collective sense of loss was shown by a mass presence at his funeral procession in November 1939, when José Antonio's body was transported on the shoulders of Falangists from Alicante to the royal palace and monastery of El Escorial.<sup>26</sup> It was a journey of nearly five hundred kilometres, taking ten days and nights and the spectacle had the resonance of a State occasion and a traditional religious procession.<sup>27</sup> Although not the coffin bearers, SF considered itself a main player in the ceremony: five thousand youth members were outside the church, Pilar took part in the all-night vigil before the funeral and the cortege was welcomed in many villages by SF choruses of Gregorian chant.<sup>28</sup>

Emotional identification with José Antonio continued through SF members' intense interest in his past. His high profile in society ('sporting, elegant, just turned thirty, with a prestigious surname and a distinguished professional reputation'<sup>29</sup>), gave rise to speculations about his love life, it being generally agreed he had sacrificed private happiness in the service of Spain. The secrecy built up around this added to the mystery: 'Like all men he had a love life: his existence would not have been complete without this side to his character. But, respecting the privacy he himself would have maintained, we must remain silent.'<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, it was true that a leading member of the SF had been romantically involved with him and this was doubtless the basis on which the stories of the girlfriends of José Antonio (*las novias de José Antonio*) continued to circulate.<sup>31</sup> But José Antonio's most serious attachment had no connection with SF. It was with Pilar Luna Azlor

<sup>25</sup> White robes for the priest, chalice, altar cloth and statues were donated by SF provincial centres. *Arriba*, 2 December 1939. The Alicante prison was dubbed the 'House of José Antonio', and Pilar was presented with the lock of her brother's first cell in the Model Prison in Madrid, to be placed there. *Arriba*, 16 February 1941.

<sup>26</sup> He was buried at the foot of the high altar, near the crypts of Spanish monarchs. I. Gibson, *En busca de José Antonio*, (Barcelona, Planeta, 1980), p. 248.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Gibson has pointed out the precedent of the burial in 1478 of Philip the Fair, whose body was similarly transported across Spain to Granada, accompanied by his wife, Juana the Mad. Ibid. On Holy Day processions, the figure of Christ was sometimes represented as a body in a coffin. Interview with Msgr. Ronald Hishon, 5 December 1996.

<sup>28</sup> S. Ros y A. Bouthelie, *A hombros de la Falange*, (Madrid, Ediciones Patria, 1940), p. 36, p. 62.

<sup>29</sup> N. González Ruiz, *José Antonio, biografía e ideario*, (Madrid, Editorial Redención, 1940), p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos de José Antonio, conferencia pronunciada por Pilar Primo de Rivera en el Club "Mundo"*, (Barcelona, D.N. de la S.F. del Movimiento, 1973), p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Carmen Werner was a girlfriend although apparently not a serious one, since José Antonio lacked the time for serious attachments. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

de Aragón, a member of one of Spain's most aristocratic families. The relationship was opposed by her family on the grounds of his inferior lineage and came to an end.<sup>32</sup> Sympathy for José Antonio's rejection by the aristocracy could therefore also be read as an affirmation of Falangist populism in the minds of SF members.

Whereas SF's role at his funeral was faithfully chronicled, the romantic stories became oral tradition, adding an intriguing dimension to the known facts about the dead leader. Whether members were displaying hero-worship or sublimating religious or sexual stirrings, their commitment remained. Terms such as 'you loved José Antonio', 'you followed him' and 'his spirit kept us going' are used by past members to describe their sense of closeness. As one *mando* recalled: 'By the age of fourteen I had read everything he had written and I was convinced.'<sup>33</sup> After 1945, when all but a minority in the National Movement were losing interest in ideological origins, Pilar Primo de Rivera continued to base her thinking and development of the organisation on the *joseantoniano* past. In the words of one former Falangist, 'one whole part of the SF was José Antonio', and as late as 1958 Pilar assured members: 'Outside José Antonio, there are no solutions that are either attractive or effective.'<sup>34</sup>

The memory of *El Ausente* and the sense that SF was the 'ideological reserve of the Falange'<sup>35</sup> were also encouraged by the aesthetics of the Salamanca conference, no doubt engineered by Dionisio Ridruejo to echo the gatherings of the Falange in José Antonio's lifetime. In the austere setting of the Bank of Salamanca, the uniformed delegates sat at tables draped with Falangist flags, with the only ornamentation a statue of the Virgin.<sup>36</sup> At Salamanca, norms were established which were absorbed and remained within SF identity

<sup>32</sup> I. Gibson, *En busca de José Antonio*, pp. 228-32.

<sup>33</sup> Interviews with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996; Antonia Ortolá, 3 August 1994; Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996; Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996; Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with José María Gutiérrez del Castillo, 19 February 1996; Pilar's speech at the 1958 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera*, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1958), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Enrique de Aguinaga, 22 February, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, p. 17.

throughout its existence.<sup>37</sup> But the conference went beyond imitation of the male Falange style. 'Invented traditions' played their part, too, all the more remarkable given the speed with which arrangements had been made.<sup>38</sup>

Principal among these was the political capital made from the location of each conference, which began in one city and ended in a second. In this, SF was the forerunner of the postwar Francoist project of recreating the justification for the Civil War through the 'sanctification' of battle sites.<sup>39</sup> Apart from being the conference venue, each city was regarded as a political shrine, with the journey in between a further opportunity for sightseeing. No precedent for this existed in the male Falange and it set a pattern for subsequent annual gatherings, which in the war years were all in Castile.<sup>40</sup> José Antonio had seen Castile as the spiritual heart of the nation, with its 'austerity of conduct, a religious sense of life... a solidarity with forebears and descendants'.<sup>41</sup> Through its exploitation of the conference sites, SF created its own 'mythic time', identifying Falangism with the heroes, events and buildings of medieval and Golden Age Spain. *Mandos* would be 'penetrated by the spirit and... comforted by the aroma of History and Legend emanating from the old stones'.<sup>42</sup> Pilar claimed her conferences to be like constellations: 'Each must have its sign'.<sup>43</sup> Salamanca was a seat of wisdom, its present day classes still teaching 'universal laws above the will of Caesar' while Segovia's aqueduct reminded members that 'Order and Service should be in the supreme service of charity'.<sup>44</sup>

The principal reference point in this 'mythic time' was the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. For SF (and also for the regime in general), this period

<sup>37</sup> The opening and closing Mass, the speech by Pilar, the black curtain behind the stage with the list of war dead. In operational details, too, the 1937 conference was the blueprint for SF's future annual gatherings. Conferences took place at the beginning of January and lasted five days. They were attended by provincial leaders and specialist staff working in the national office. They included visiting speakers from the Falange or Church officials connected with SF. Sessions were either lectures or reports from provincial staff. Conferences were a forum for debate, and decisions on organisational matters were taken by those attending. Interview with Mercedes Otero, 20 February 1996. From 1952, the conferences were biennial.

<sup>38</sup> E. Hobsbawm describes invented traditions as 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past'. E. Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1983), p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> M. Richards, *A Time of Silence*, pp. 72-3.

<sup>40</sup> 1937 Salamanca - Valladolid; 1938 Segovia - Avila; 1939 Zamora - León.

<sup>41</sup> José Antonio's speech in the Calderón Theatre, Valladolid, 4 March 1934, in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 189.

<sup>42</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1947 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 82.

<sup>44</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, p. 8., p. 24.

epitomised José Antonio's vision of past greatness and the inspiration for Spain's future. Four historical events had particular importance: the expulsion of the Jews, the establishment of the Inquisition, the completion of the Christian Reconquest of Spain from the Moors and the authorisation of Columbus' voyage to the Indies. The Catholic Monarchs had found the solution to Spain's problems of the past (lack of religious and national unity) and were the heralds of future glories, as territorial expansion brought wealth and power to Spain. The parallel with Franco's 'Reconquest' of a godless Spain was an obvious one.

The first two post-war national conferences were held in Madrid - Toledo (1940) and Barcelona - Gerona (1941). In each, the theme of the Falange 'Reconquest' was evident in Pilar's speech and the visits organised for delegates. Addressing conference members in Madrid, Pilar welcomed the 'liberated' provinces, comparing them to the return of the Prodigal Son:

If you could have seen us go out on our terraces, like the father of the Prodigal Son, to see if you were coming! Until one by one, broken and in ruins, you came in. Now we have your lands but what we must do now is win back your souls.... You know the Caudillo, because it is he who freed you; you also know who José Antonio is because he visited your lands; now we shall show you what the Falange is.<sup>45</sup>

At this conference, visits were made to historic sites and Falange memorials such as the house of the Marquis of Riscal. This was the venue of the first Falange National Council, and where both José Antonio and later Pilar had been appointed. And although this had only been six years before, it now became a moment to be noted in the SF chronicle of its past.<sup>46</sup>

Conferences allowed connections to be drawn with both the Golden Age and more recent times. The first venues were proclaimed as having links with Queen Isabella (her image on the facade of Salamanca university, Valladolid where she married and Segovia where she was proclaimed Queen of Castile). In subsequent years, conferences exploited

<sup>45</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> SF published a two-volume chronicle of its first six conferences, describing both the conferences themselves and SF's activities in the year.

Civil War connections (the siege of Toledo, SF 'martyrs' in Valencia, the Liberation of Tarragona), earlier glories (the Reconquest of Granada, El Cid of Burgos) or were held at religious shrines (Santiago, Guadalupe, Zaragoza). The combination of austerity and militarism affirmed the role of the SF as part of the Falangist Revolution, which had begun in 1933 but for which the historic justification was placed in the fifteenth century.

Reinforcing SF's own symbolic continuity with the past, the Golden Age word *regidor* was appropriated to denote a specialist SF staff member. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the term had meant an alderman, but in 1939 SF constructed the description *regiduría* for each of its specialist departments.<sup>47</sup> With every specialist designated a *regidora*, there was a current of modernity alongside the nostalgia. In the Golden Age, the *regidora* had been merely the wife of the *regidor* but in SF terminology, her post had considerable autonomy and no male equivalent.

The emerging structure of SF had been formalised at the Salamanca conference in 1937 and this was followed by the opening of its first training school in the same year. As already noted, the staff corps was organised into twin hierarchies. The first of these, the political hierarchy, linked Pilar and her staff working in the provinces and villages.<sup>48</sup> The

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<sup>47</sup> The aldermen were members of the town council. Many were from the lower and middle ranks of the nobility. J-P Amalric, B. Bennassar, J. Pérez, E. Témime, *Léxico histórico de España siglos XVI a XX*, (Madrid, Taurus, 1982), p. 186.

<sup>48</sup> Within the political hierarchy at national level were Pilar, her deputy (*secretaria*), and two advisory bodies on religion and legal matters.

second was the service hierarchy, the specialists who managed the SF departments.<sup>49</sup> The need for coherence and consistency in the training of elites of both hierarchies had been recognised at the beginning of the war and the Málaga school ran two courses for the training of provincial *mandos* in wartime.<sup>50</sup> Its training programme gave form to the rituals and customs which had characterised SF activities since 1934. These could now be written up formally and presented to potential recruits as the value system of SF.

Among these were the SF awards, established in 1937 with the creation of its Legal Advisory Department, which worked as part of the political hierarchy at national level. This dealt with all legal and disciplinary matters and recommended individuals for the annual awards of the emblem 'Y'.<sup>51</sup> The awards system was an acknowledgment of service and an important strand in SF's construction of its own past. It was a recasting of the male Falange's ways of honouring war heroes, or 'the Fallen' (*los Caídos*) as they were always known. The first step in doing this had been at the Salamanca conference, where the list of

<sup>49</sup> By the early 1950s, the national departments (*regidurías*) of the service hierarchy were as follows: Administration (SF budget and salaries, fittings and furniture, upkeep of premises); Training (political and religious education, travelling schools); Personnel (membership issues); Youth Wing (youth membership, summer camps); Culture (domestic and literacy schools, libraries, music, choirs and dances); Physical Education (gymnastics, sports and games, dance); Health and Welfare (nurse training, health and welfare auxiliaries' training, health centres, vaccination campaigns, sanatoria); Town and Country (agricultural schools, workers' syndicates, promotion of craft skills); Social Service (management of the social service scheme); Press and Propaganda (journals, training literature, promotional material); Foreign Service (cultural and political links with foreign countries, especially Latin America, scholarships to foreign students, 'Medina' Cultural Circles); Students' Syndicate (political and domestic education for university students, halls of residence, hostels for secondary pupils). F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina - historia y organización*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1952), pp. 39-179. SF's Foreign Service existed only in SF's national office, and the Students' Syndicate was represented only in provinces containing a university. These apart, all the above departments, each with its provincial specialist (*regidora provincial*) functioned in the provinces. At local level there were no departments, but SF specialists worked in a village or an urban neighbourhood. The only staff common to all local areas were the health workers (*divulgadoras*) and the youth workers (*instructoras de juventudes*). In urban neighbourhoods, there were extra SF instructors specifically in charge of cultural activities such as the choirs and dances. Elsewhere, organising these events was part of the local leader's or instructor's role. From 1950, there were also SF rural instructors (*instructoras rurales*) working in many villages. All local staff were hierarchically dependent on their respective provincial offices (Health and Welfare, Youth Wing, Culture, Town and Country). Also working at local level were SF's specialist instructors who delivered programmes of domestic, physical and political education in schools. The numbers and distribution of these staff varied according to the location of schools. Increasingly, they were not 'separate' SF staff, but mainstream teachers qualified to teach SF specialisms. They too were dependent on their respective provincial offices (Culture, Physical Education, Training). In the course of the 1950s, there were some changes to the nomenclature, but the basic structure remained. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 24 October 1999. See Annexe 2.

<sup>50</sup> Introduction to the 1938 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, n.p.

<sup>51</sup> Circular no. 85 from the Secretary-General of the Movement established the awards (Decree of 27 October 1939). This was later broadened in scope (Decree of 9 March 1942). The award of 'Y' was at three levels - gold, silver and red, either individual or collective. In 1945, a green 'Y' youth award was added. In that year, thirty-five youth awards were made. Reply to questionnaire to Asociación Nueva Andadura, January 1995.



SF women killed in service had been added to the names of Falange heroes printed on the black curtain. Some SF members had received government military decorations but SF introduced its own system for recognising service.<sup>52</sup> Thirty-eight of the fifty-nine women members who died in service were awarded posthumous honours and many survivors were decorated for bravery. The SF award of 'Y' could be collective, as in the case of all SF nurses who served in the Blue Division and the entire SF centre of Toledo, honoured in October 1939 for 'the continued excellence of their services'.<sup>53</sup> The founding *mandos* of the organisation were also rewarded. The system had not only recorded SF's proudest moments but was restating its stages of development.<sup>54</sup>

The significance of the awards ceremony was increased by its celebration on the day of St Teresa. The adoption of Teresa of Avila as patron saint and Queen Isabella of Castile as historical role model for members provided SF with a female version of José Antonio's concept of the ideal Falangist.<sup>55</sup> He had described service to Falange as 'both religious and military' and the lives of Teresa and Isabella were idealised in SF propaganda and textbooks to represent the female equivalent.<sup>56</sup>

Teresa and Isabella were praised for their high intellectual capacity and readiness to tackle domestic tasks.<sup>57</sup> Both were presented as revolutionaries, Isabella having confronted many enemies (Moors, Jews, nobles) and Teresa, who had travelled Spain founding convents. Isabella had supposedly sacrificed personal happiness with her marriage to Ferdinand 'who lacked the firm morality of his royal consort' and Teresa had established a norm of austerity in the face of opposition.<sup>58</sup> The amalgam of Isabella's and Teresa's virtues embodied the 'way of being' which SF required of its *mandos*. 'The

<sup>52</sup> Sixteen SF nurses at the Huesca Military Hospital were awarded the Military Medal for staying with their patients when under direct attack; four more who remained with advancing troops for two months in Somosierra were mentioned in dispatches. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1992), p. 87.

<sup>53</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro segundo)*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 93.

<sup>54</sup> Recipients were allowed to wear the emblem on outer clothing and those awarded the gold 'Y', were entitled to attend national conferences. F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina - historia y organización*, pp. 160 - 61.

<sup>55</sup> Teresa was declared the patron saint of SF on 4 September 1939. Each year on 15 October, the Day of St Teresa, junior members of the organisation (*flechas*) were admitted to the adult ranks. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 721.

<sup>57</sup> C. Werner, *Formación familiar y social*, tercera edición, (Madrid, Ediciones de la S.F., Departamento de Cultura, 1946), p. 247.

<sup>58</sup> Jesús Suevos' speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro segundo)*, p. 75.

shortest path between two points is the one going through the stars,' José Antonio had said.<sup>59</sup> This neatly expressed the near impossibility of SF's task and the superhuman strength needed to accomplish it. Once members understood the lives of Teresa and Isabella, they would understand that service with SF transcended earthly dimensions and brought divine intercession:

*Who is the Patron Saint of the Sección Femenina?*

St Teresa of Jesus.

*Why was this saint chosen?*

Because she is a Spanish saint, because her virtues and character fit very well into our way of being, but above all so that she can protect the *Sección Femenina*.<sup>60</sup>

As Pilar could say to the youth members (*flechas*) about to be received into the adult organisation on St Teresa's Day: 'Until now, as the little girls you were, we have been putting you to the test, as aspirants.'<sup>61</sup> Teresa was not just the patron saint: the women of SF were members of her Order.

Part of the construction of Isabella as SF's role model was her representation as emblem and icon. Her monogram, 'Y', was chosen as the principal SF award and became the title of SF's main journal (*Revista 'Y' para la mujer nacional-sindicalista*). This appeared monthly from 1938 and combined propaganda with items of more general interest to women. *Revista 'Y'* had originated from Pilar's wish to create a parallel to the male Falange's *Vértice*, and generally maintained the latter's critical quality, with well-known contributors writing for both.<sup>62</sup> The symbolism of the letter 'Y' was many-layered. It was the Isabelline monogram and also the conjunction 'and'. Moreover, it was the first letter of another symbol with which she was associated - the yoke. All three were

<sup>59</sup> José Antonio's speech at the Córdoba Theatre, Córdoba, 12 May 1935, in J. A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 549.

<sup>60</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Enciclopedia elemental*, (Madrid, E. Giménez, 1959), p. 118. (Programme of political education for social service courses).

<sup>61</sup> Pilar's lesson to *flechas* about to join SF, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 183.

<sup>62</sup> Contributors in 1938 included Luis Rosales, Dionisio Ridruejo, Eugenio D'Ors, Concha Espina and Carmen de Icaza.

representations of unity, and in the Falangist context, symbols of what José Antonio had called 'the poetry of the State'.<sup>63</sup> Above all, SF literature represented it as the symbol of service:

The "Y" unites and the woman's mission also was to unite: city with country, the powerful with the needy, pain with joy, harshness with gentleness. The woman must give cohesion - union - to the members of a family; she must secure that vertical union which is the continuance and survival of the home in the course of all the trials of life.<sup>64</sup>

The Isabelline yoke was an SF modification of the Falangist emblem of the yoke and arrows. In the SF version, the yoke was depicted separately and the arrows were lashed to it. This never entirely replaced the official Falange emblem but was used in much of the official literature.<sup>65</sup> The size and design of the yoke (longer and wider than the arrows) reinforced SF's claim for a role and identity of its own. Its work would have a shared historic constant with the male Falange but a separate expression.

But the major way in which separate identity was achieved for SF was by its acquisition of a permanent private space, which would embody all its ideology and allow full expression of its practices and rituals. It already had premises throughout Spain and a national office in Madrid, but these were functional buildings with no capacity for ceremonial functions.<sup>66</sup> But in 1939, at a mass rally in Medina del Campo, Franco promised Pilar Primo de Rivera an academy for SF elite members. The spirit of Isabella would reside in a 'mother-house' which would be SF's highest ranking training school and its spiritual core. As Pilar had said: 'We must now create the yoke and arrows in stone.'<sup>67</sup>

La Mota, a fifteenth century castle in an elevated position above the town of Medina

<sup>63</sup> The interchanging of the letters 'i' and 'y' was common in fifteenth century Castilian. In 1492, the grammarian Nebrija had made a further symbolic connection between the initials of Ferdinand and Isabella and the icons associated with them - the arrows (*Flechas*) of Ferdinand and the yoke (*Yugo*) of Isabella. M. Ballesteros Gaibrois, *La letra 'Y' - su historia y presente*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), pp. 21 - 23 and p. 46.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>65</sup> The earliest example found is a 1939 publication. It appears on all kinds of SF literature - training manuals, the official calendar and school text books. A variant is in SF religious texts, where it is surrounded by four crosses and a circle. See Annexe 3.

<sup>66</sup> SF headquarters were in Almagro 36, now the Institute of the Woman.

<sup>67</sup> A. Tovar, 'Arquitectura, arte imperial', in *La Gaceta de Salamanca*, 6 August 1939.

in the province of Valladolid opened in 1942 as the 'Senior National Training School: José Antonio' (*Escuela Mayor de Mandos: José Antonio*). Its pedigree as SF's spiritual and historical home could hardly have been bettered. Its location was the heartland of Castile, in a town which had been reconquered from the Moors by a companion of El Cid.<sup>68</sup> It had been presented in 1475 to Isabella, who had then ordered its restoration and enlargement.<sup>69</sup> The castle's heyday had been the Golden Age of Spain when it had become (at least in the folk memory of the SF) one of Isabella's favourite residences.<sup>70</sup>

The reconstruction of the castle was placed under the supervision of Franco's Director-General of Architecture, Pedro Muguruza. It took three years to complete and was formally opened in May 1942.<sup>71</sup> Only the outer shell of the castle was standing and it was not until Muguruza's team had excavated the foundations that the original interior was glimpsed. They established that there had been a central courtyard surrounded by pillars on three sides and a freestanding facade. A plan for reconstruction was drawn up by Muguruza's architect, with a few touches which suggested a thought for its future use. A pulpit was set into the wall of the dining room, giving it the appearance of a convent refectory.<sup>72</sup> The facade in the central courtyard was a cast of one originating from Isabella's tutor, Beatriz Galindo, and the banister of the great staircase was a copy of the original in the Hospital founded by Beatriz Galindo in Madrid.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of La Mota was the speed with which its constructed identity and training routine came into operation. It received its first students shortly after its inauguration in May 1942 and, judging by the staff handbooks, even its detailed running scarcely changed over the following twenty years.<sup>74</sup> It played a significant

<sup>68</sup> There had been an earlier castle dating back to the twelfth century, on the foundations of which the present castle was built. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Escuela Mayor de Mandos 'José Antonio'*, *Castillo de La Mota mayo 1942 - mayo 1962*, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1962 [?]), n.p.

<sup>69</sup> La Mota's strategic and defensive importance lessened after 1492 when territorial unity had been established throughout Spain. After this time, it was used variously as arsenal and as prison and despite one attempt at reconstruction in 1646, fell into disrepair. By the 1800s, it was ruined. *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>71</sup> It seems likely that the restoration of La Mota was not, however, of national interest. It did not feature in a high-profile German and Spanish architectural exhibition held in Madrid three weeks before its opening. *ABC*, 7 May 1942.

<sup>72</sup> See Annexe 4.

<sup>73</sup> Beatriz Galindo (1451-1534) was Isabella's tutor of Latin and literature. She became known as La Latina, and after Isabella's death founded a charity hospital in Madrid, also known as La Latina. M. Sanz Bachiller, *Mujeres de España*, (Madrid, Textos Escolares Aguado, 1940), pp. 49-51.

<sup>74</sup> For example, the requirement that SF *mandos* had to be saluted on every occasion in La Mota was not withdrawn until 1956. Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.

public role, becoming the cultural focus for the town of Medina and a reception centre for guests of SF and of central government.<sup>75</sup>

La Mota's rapidly constructed pedigree found no rival in the many other training schools which followed and it remained the undisputed spiritual and emotional heart of the organisation: 'La Mota was La Mota - it was never a matter for debate.'<sup>76</sup> As its first staff handbook stated: 'Life in the School is a permanent act of service. No frivolousness in the behaviour and spirit of its *camaradas* can be tolerated.'<sup>77</sup> Tales of cold showers, readings from the pulpit and its formidable director of studies soon became part of SF folk history.<sup>78</sup> In the memory of one student: 'When you knew you were going, you were a bit scared.'<sup>79</sup>

The refurbishing of the castle established much of what came to be known as the SF style (*estilo*). This was central to long-held ideas of Pilar, who had said in 1940: 'We have wanted to make La Mota the synthesis of tradition and revolution following the style of José Antonio.'<sup>80</sup> Past glories and modern realities were to be combined in decor that harmonised with the castle's restoration and was functional for its intended use. Some of its acquisitions became instant icons, such as the statue of the Virgin commissioned for the chapel.<sup>81</sup> Paintings by Benjamín Palencia and a bust of José Antonio by Emilio Aladrén were other early acquisitions and the chapel received the memorial stone from José Antonio's tomb in El Escorial when his remains were reburied in the Valley of the Fallen in 1959.

Interior design at La Mota was also a political statement. Decor reflected both the imperial past and rural traditions, with a combination of formal, classical furniture and simpler pieces in local and provincial style. La Mota illustrated the good taste that was part of José Antonio's 'invariable doctrine' and would be the guiding principle for members in the creation of their own home. Pilar had stated in 1938:

<sup>75</sup> Visitors included ministers and the future King and Queen of Spain and Eva Perón. Events at La Mota included guest lectures, play readings, tableaux and recitals.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Angelina Garrido, 22 February 1996.

<sup>77</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Reglamento para Escuelas Nacionales de formación de mandos y especialidades de la S.F., (Madrid [?], S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], n.d.), n.p.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996. The standards set by this *mando* were well known. A creased examination script lost the candidate a mark, as did a change of handwriting in the course of the paper, for example. The same *mando* allegedly applied the same standards to Franco's daughter, Carmencita, who started (but did not finish) her social service training there.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Nieves Serrano, 19 February 1996.

<sup>80</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, Recuerdos de una vida, (Madrid, Dyrsa, 1983), p. 177.

<sup>81</sup> The sculptor was José Clará. It became known as 'St. Mary of the Castle'. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

The true duty of women towards their country is to form families, with a proper base of austerity and joy, where everything traditional is fostered, where carols are sung on Christmas Day round the crib and where there is also a joyous generosity in actions.<sup>82</sup>

In the SF understanding, all matters of taste, as well as personal and domestic virtues, found expression in home-making. It required not only application of *estilo* but the broader qualities and outlook of the 'way of being'. Thrift, ingenuity and cheerfulness were part of this and could be read as the external manifestations of political conviction.

That understanding was exemplified in La Mota, the mother-house. It was not an exact representation of domestic reality, being a larger-than-life ideal home which contained no men. However, its bricks and mortar stood for the enduring values of domesticity and its interior elegance for the elevation of the role of housewife. At one level, life in La Mota exemplified the Falangist family, where women from all over Spain and from a variety of backgrounds came together in camaraderie to experience and restate their political beliefs. At another, it was a construct of home and family life, an acting out of some of the routines and roles implicit in women's 'transcendental mission' as home-builders. The etiquette at table, daily tidying of rooms, flower arranging and handwork classes were part of a routine which would add to understanding and development of 'way of being'. As Pilar told her members:

In our Schools, we will absolutely insist that a vase is placed well and that unharmonious shrieks in conversation are avoided... In other matters of our personal grooming, housekeeping, of our concealment of our animal instincts, we must keep on telling our *camaradas* (comrades) how they must organise their lives so that their outer appearance is in accordance with the truth and finesse of their Falangist temperament.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1938 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1947 SF national conference. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

La Mota was bound to the figure of Pilar and it remained her pet project, the place where she felt most at home. In the early days she often lectured there but even when administration kept her in the Madrid office, she visited socially on a regular basis and a bedroom was kept there for her permanently.<sup>84</sup> Many of the emotions bound up in the collective memory of La Mota and its courses are also of her as leader. The numerous anecdotes relating to Pilar at La Mota (her impromptu visits, the personal interest she took in 'her girls', her lack of ceremony and extreme frugality, for example) suggest that the identities of the national leader and her main training school were bound together in the collective memory of the *mandos*. The lectures on national-syndicalism were the formal statement of doctrine but it was the example of Pilar - her actual and remembered presence - which gave practical expression to those theories. The apparent contradiction between her unassuming persona and her achievements as leader was the management model for everyone else.

La Mota also provided the model for the further training establishments built by SF in the early 1940s. The names of the war heroines read out at national conferences as well as those of the organisation's favourite role models were used as titles for schools and summer camps. The overall most important name - José Antonio - had already been taken for La Mota. The second - that of Isabella - was soon adopted for the second national academy. The 'National School for Youth Instructors: Isabel La Católica' was opened in Madrid in 1942, shortly after La Mota, its first site being part of the El Pardo Palace and moving in 1951 to its permanent home in Las Navas del Marqués outside Madrid.<sup>85</sup>

Las Navas had parallels with La Mota. It was another restored castle, modelled on the lines of its sister establishment and offering residential courses only. Its rules and regulations were identical, but it was a training establishment for SF instructors and the regime was harsher in character.<sup>86</sup> La Mota might have been the spiritual centre of SF, but

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Angelina Garrido, 22 February 1996. A bedroom was also kept for Pilar in the other main training school of Las Navas.

<sup>85</sup> Up until 1956, it trained 'general instructors', SF personnel who would work part-time or on a peripatetic basis in schools teaching the special SF subjects of political and social education and often, domestic science and physical education. General instructors also ran SF local youth activities and worked in SF summer camps. After 1956, Las Navas became a teacher training institution. Students continued to gain general instructor status as part of their overall training. Reply to questionnaire to Asociación Nueva Andadura, January 1995.

<sup>86</sup> Courses in Las Navas were of one or two years, depending on the educational level of the students on entering. No course in La Mota lasted longer than six months - the average was two.

in Las Navas members were tested physically. It combined a bleak mountain setting with inadequate heating and an emphasis on competitive sport. But as in La Mota, committed students apparently accepted its discipline and held affectionate memories.<sup>87</sup> Even after 1956, when it began mainstream teacher training, its routines continued unchanged although it is debatable how far students identified with its name and role model.<sup>88</sup> Just as the Senior National Training School José Antonio was never called anything but La Mota, so the School of Isabella the Catholic remained Las Navas in the collective memory.<sup>89</sup>

The other national schools of SF followed the model of the two 'greats' but were less well known. The first agricultural school was named after two of the SF war victims, the fourth national training school after St Teresa and the remaining institutions after recent military political heroes.<sup>90</sup> SF had no need to seek out the male historical equivalents of St Teresa or indeed introduce the figure of Isabella's husband. In the absence of a suitable female figure, the recent past was good enough.

But in whichever national school elites did their training, the values and ideology of SF were constant and transmitted in the same way. Members brought to their work a sense of political identity which encouraged them to regard their service as a patriotic duty and themselves as belonging to the 'select minority' of José Antonio. The construction of that identity had begun before the Civil War with the remembered exploits of the original members in the months when the Falange had been declared illegal and was developed through the aesthetics and conventions of the national conferences and the adoption of female role models. But more important than any of these was SF's identification with José Antonio and the legacy of his teachings.

The strength of members' belief in José Antonio established SF as an organisation

<sup>87</sup> Interviews with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994; Teresa Loring, 27 October 1994; Andresa López Enseñat, 27 October 1994 (past directors of Las Navas); Margarita Pérez-Urria Baqueiro, 20 February 1996; Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996 (past students).

<sup>88</sup> Up to the late 1960s, for example, the dining room was run as in La Mota, with students on dining room duties and elegant tableware (silver cutlery and white china decorated with the letter 'Y'). There was, however, no pulpit. Interview with Angelina Garrido, former teacher at Las Navas, 22 February 1996.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Angelina Garrido, 22 February 1996.

<sup>90</sup> The 'Agricultural School: Hermanas Chabás' opened in Valencia in 1941. F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., La Sección Femenina - historia y organización, p. 120. The 'National Specialist Training School: Santa Teresa' opened in 1960 and trained nurses, welfare workers and teachers of music and physical education. The first travelling school (*cátedra ambulante*) was named after Franco, the national agricultural school after the leader of the J.O.N.S., Onésimo Redondo, and a second national specialist school after the Falangist and war hero, Julio Ruiz de Alda. See Annexe 5.



with its own mythic core. His doctrine was seen to contain absolute, eternal truths and as Georges Sorel has said of core myths within fascism, these gave the members of SF 'inclinations which recur to the mind with the insistence of instincts in all the circumstances of life'.<sup>91</sup> Apart from direct reference to his teachings, SF made symbolic connections with José Antonio through the adoption of the Falange 'style', with its austerity and militarism and particularly through the opening of La Mota. And alongside the memory of its charismatic leader was the establishment of ideological roots for SF in Castile. José Antonio's identification with Castile as the spiritual heart of Spain was already part of the broader Nationalist rhetoric. SF's appropriation of La Mota, therefore, enabled its symbolic core to be both unique and particular while fitting seamlessly into the overarching ideology of the regime.

La Mota was the epicentre of that reality and Isabella its human representation. But of equal significance to SF *mandos* was the identification of La Mota with the leadership of Pilar. The core belief of SF in the absolute truth in the doctrine of José Antonio did not change. With the acquisition of La Mota, however, a parallel core belief developed - that SF itself was inseparable from Pilar. Her adherence to *joseantoniano* ideology, which earned SF a reputation as being the most doctrinally pure part of the National Movement, went beyond imitation of the male organisation. The rituals and icons she developed, which had their fullest and most abiding expression in La Mota, established the existence of a parallel and exclusively female Falangist identity.

The importance of the creation of SF's ideological identity cannot be overestimated. It was certainly true that its political goals encompassed both José Antonio's vision of a transformed society and the broader agenda of the Franco dictatorship. But its use of symbols, icons and private spaces encouraged a level of personal engagement which went beyond the regime's political rhetoric, so that its ideology was a lived reality for activists. In this sense, SF matched José Antonio's early vision of the Falange as 'not a way of thinking but a way of being' and stood out from other parts of the National Movement because its ideological identity remained intact.<sup>92</sup> The call to the Nationalist cause and the

<sup>91</sup> G. Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, (London, Collier-Macmillan, 1961), quoted in R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, (London, Routledge, 1991), p. 28.

<sup>92</sup> José Antonio, 'Discurso de la fundación de Falange Española', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 68.

subsequent appeal to women to help rebuild Spain after the Civil War mobilised many women. The strength of SF's emotional appeal, however, endured the political and social changes of post-war Spain, surviving for thirty-eight years.

## Chapter Three

### Modernity and reaction: SF and religion

As part of the rallying forces against the 'godless' Second Republic, the Falange explicitly acknowledged and supported the Catholic Church as a fundamental pillar of Spanish society. The Prime Minister, Manuel Azaña, had told Parliament in 1931 that Spain was no longer Catholic, referring to the fact that the real importance of religion in daily life had diminished.<sup>1</sup> However, whilst religious observance had lessened, the Church's influence in State affairs, particularly its control of education, was still widespread. This was recognised by the new Republican government as a reinforcement of social division which effectively blocked the betterment of the working class poor.<sup>2</sup> Azaña's political opponents, however, presented the Republican religious legislation as an attack not just on the Church but on the family and property as well.<sup>3</sup>

Republican laws which separated Church and State, ended State funding to the Church and religious orders, expelled the Jesuits and secularised primary and secondary education offended many on the Right. To practising Catholics, these laws (together with the introduction of civil marriages and a divorce law) were a direct attack on their religious beliefs. Others, such as landowners, were already deeply critical of proposed agrarian reform which would appropriate areas of privately-owned estates to give to the landless poor. The government's anticlericalism in their eyes was further proof of its intention to destroy the established social order.

This belief was shared by the Falange. Its support for Catholicism was both an indictment of Republican legislation and the conviction that religion was an essential part of Spanish national identity.<sup>4</sup> As José Antonio had said: 'The new State will be founded on Spain's traditional Catholic religious spirit and the Church will be given the consideration

<sup>1</sup> Azaña's speech in the Spanish Parliament, 13 October 1931, in A. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> In this sense, in Raymond Carr's words: 'The Republic was not "persecuting the Church" but taking away the privileges that had made it the stronghold and nursery of political reaction. R. Carr, *Spain 1808-1975*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2nd ed., 1982), p. 607.

<sup>3</sup> A. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> The religious dimension was explicit in the organisation's principles, members' oath and its ceremonial prayers. José Antonio's 'Puntos iniciales', 7 December 1933, in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos de doctrina política*, (D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Madrid, 1966), pp. 92-3.

and support which is its due.<sup>5</sup> This defence of Catholicism became an important part of the Falange's identification with the Nationalist cause, although in fact, José Antonio's support of religion was qualified by a recognition that there was a potential conflict of interests between Church and State. He saw that the power of the established Church could frustrate the Falangist agenda of social reform and favoured its separation from the State. The 'Initial Points' of the Falange had balanced the two views, endorsing the Church while pointing to the need to clarify its functions:

The whole reconstruction of Spain must be Catholic in outlook. That is not to say that non-Catholics will be persecuted. The times of religious persecution have long passed. Nor does this mean that the State will take direct control of those religious matters which are the Church's responsibility. Even less will it tolerate any interference or machinations of the Church which could possibly harm the dignity of the State or national integrity.<sup>6</sup>

But this essential difference between the Falange and other right-wing groups was less important than the conservative agenda which united them in their 'Crusade' against the Second Republic. In this sense, as Frances Lannon has said, Catholicism was a 'convenient shorthand for a whole series of conservative aims and pursued with varying emphases and priorities by constitutional monarchists, Carlists and law and order republicans'.<sup>7</sup>

The Falange's stance on religion was shared by *Sección Femenina* (SF) at the beginning of the Civil War. It had supported opponents of the Second Republic who had condemned efforts of its first government to curb its power. Religion did not figure separately in its statutes nor in the SF oath but traditional Catholic values were implicit in the vision of woman it projected. She was man's helper and subordinate, whose main role in life was as wife and mother. But from 1938, at the point where SF began to organise formal training for its elites, its engagement with Catholicism went beyond support for the

<sup>5</sup> José Antonio's 'Puntos iniciales', 7 December 1933, in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp. 92-3.

<sup>7</sup> F. Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875-1975*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), p.199.

Nationalist cause. This chapter is concerned with Pilar Primo de Rivera's development of a religious identity within SF and the bearing which this had on the wider self-image of the organisation. It examines how the inclusion of religion within SF's training programmes was instrumental in determining a gender model for the elite members, thereby distancing SF from traditional Catholic aid agencies and confessional groups. Relatedly, the chapter considers the extent to which its particular gender model contributed to a perception of SF as being both 'different' and 'more modern' than other women's groups.

Up to 1938, however, SF's stance on the role of women in the war was indistinguishable from that of mainstream Catholic groups. Their contribution was self-sacrifice and fortitude and their 'natural' sensitivity and spirituality found best expression in domesticity, nursing and caring for children. Early SF propaganda leant on Biblical references to make the point. A domestic science manual praised the industrious housewife in the Gospel<sup>8</sup> and, as delegates were told at the 1939 national conference, the successful outcome of the SF programme would be the Old Testament vision of the perfect home: 'The words of the Scriptures will be true of you: "Your wife will be like a fertile vine in the area of your home. Around your table your children will be like olive shoots... and you will see your children's children and the peace of Israel."'"<sup>9</sup>

New Testament role models were combined by the SF press to create an idealised vision of an SF member. Like Mary Magdalene who washed Christ's feet, Martha who received Him in her house and Veronica who wiped His face, members would have an important role in the New Spain and would bring 'the tenderness of Mary and the hardworking knowledge of Martha' to their task.<sup>10</sup> For early members, who were predominantly from the upper classes, the Martha and Mary principle built on a tradition of women's involvement with which they were familiar. Nursing, in particular, was an accepted channel for women's energies. In the war years, SF trained many nurses, and the fact that they frequently worked alongside nuns reinforced the saintly connotations of their

<sup>8</sup> C. Werner, *Formación familiar y social*, tercera edición, (Madrid, Ediciones de la S.F., Departamento de Cultura, 1946), p. 251.

<sup>9</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1939 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos, circulares, escritos*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> C. de Icaza, 'Quehaceres de María y de Marta en la España Nueva', in *Revista 'Y'*, (March [?] 1938).

work.<sup>11</sup>

There was shared ground, too, in the practice of religion and the acceptance of its centrality to the Nationalist cause. In common with other women's organisations such as Catholic Action, SF's early religiosity was inseparable from the political circumstances of the Civil War. Devout Catholics in newly-liberated provinces were no doubt keen to reaffirm their faith but it was also the case that public expression of religion was a token of loyalty to the regime. Open-air Masses where huge numbers gathered to give thanks for the conquest of a new province were not necessarily spiritual occasions.<sup>12</sup>

But although adhesion to the Nationalist cause did not change, the first of the elite members began to undertake training for leadership, and it was at this point that the religious identity and profile of SF changed, as the early sentimentality of its propaganda message developed into something more weighty than a statement of political support.

In the political training for elites, religion was brought to the forefront as part of the core beliefs of Falangism. José Antonio had posited the existence of a Spanish national soul which was inescapably Catholic. The individual was 'the bearer of eternal values', made in God's image and was part of a collective national enterprise termed the 'unit of destiny'.<sup>13</sup> In this understanding, Spain could retrieve its former position of importance in the world through the collective efforts of its citizens. Service to the Falange was the channel for this national enterprise because, uniquely, it harnessed both the material and spiritual energies of its members. Membership of Falange was not just a commitment to work for the good of the nation: it was a statement of faith in the spiritual potential of each Spaniard.

And if within Falangism it was hard to separate the political from the religious, the death of José Antonio made the distinction even less clear. The more fanatical members of the male Falange cast him as a Christ figure and the political circumstances of his life were reinvented as the Crucifixion story. In Falangist propaganda, he became a martyr in the

<sup>11</sup> For example, 2890 nuns of an order founded by St Vincent de Paul nursed in military hospitals during the Civil War. E. Escribano, Por Jesucristo y por España: las Hijas de la Caridad de la provincia española en trescientos veinticinco hospitales de sangre durante la Cruzada Nacional - tomo primero, (Madrid, Uguina, 1941), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Interviews with Adelaida del Pozo, Teresa Loring, Viky Eiroa, Andresa López Enseñat, 27 May 1996.

<sup>13</sup> José Antonio's speech at the Teatro de la Comedia, Madrid, 29 October 1933, in J.A. Primo de Rivera, Textos, p. 67, p. 66.

cause of the nation:

They killed him, as they did Christ,  
Those assassins of Averno,  
Thirty-three years old, he died  
Preaching the Gospel.  
Blood of Yokes and Arrows  
Spurred, red, from his breast,  
So that Spain - great and free -  
Might be flooded with his dreams.<sup>14</sup>

Most lurid of all was the 'Vía-Crucis', published in 1938 by the Falangist, José María Amado. This represented José Antonio's suffering as both the historical situation of Spain and the Passion of Christ. Jesus's death sentence was paralleled with the proclamation of the Second Republic, the stripping of His clothes was the imprisonment of José Antonio and His crucifixion the rebirth of Spain in the Civil War. The death on the Cross marked the 'blue martyrdom' and His burial the promise of renewed national glory.<sup>15</sup>

It was not just fanatical Falangists who encouraged this line of thinking. In the same year as the publication of 'Vía-Crucis', the wartime government in Burgos ordered a list of the Nationalist war dead to be engraved on the outside of every parish church, with José Antonio's as the first name.<sup>16</sup> Memorial crosses erected after the war were similarly inscribed and their symbolic meaning exploited by the Falange press: 'The crosses of our Fallen are made of the same wood as the true Cross... Things perish with time, but he remains as he was and his image is there for all those who ask for it.'<sup>17</sup>

The cult surrounding José Antonio had consequences for SF. It was on the fringes of the male Falange's extreme views, with one propaganda message going so far as to liken the National- Syndicalist Revolution to the Holy Trinity - 'José Antonio who teaches you,

<sup>14</sup> M. Junquera, in *José Antonio, fundador y primer jefe de la Falange, capitán de luceros, ¡presente!, número extraordinario del Boletín Sindical*, (Madrid, Departamento Nacional de Prensa y Propaganda Sindical, 1942), n.p.

<sup>15</sup> J. M. Amado, *Vía-Crucis*, (Málaga, Editorial Dardo, 1938), n.p.

<sup>16</sup> R. Garriga, *El Cardenal Segura y el nacional-catolicismo*, (Barcelona, Planeta, 1977), p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> *Arriba*, 29 October 1940.

Franco who loves you and Christ on the Cross presiding over you'.<sup>18</sup> And if members of SF found it difficult to disentangle love of José Antonio from love of God, it was hardly surprising, since SF edited his works and made them required reading on all its courses.<sup>19</sup> The format of the book, with its index and concordance, resembled an edition of the Bible and members were urged to get into the habit of reading him directly, in order that they might 'use the same words as him, react in the way he used to react, get upset and be pleased by the same things that upset and pleased him'.<sup>20</sup>

But Pilar recognised danger signs. With the publication of Amado's 'Vía-Crucis', she is said to have realised that homage to the dead leader had become unhealthy.<sup>21</sup> She ordered the book to be burned, seeing it as a violation of her Catholic beliefs and stressed to members that they were to pray for José Antonio, not to him.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Pilar never allowed SF a formal act of commemoration on 20 November, the day of José Antonio's death. This was not an official Francoist holiday but the National Movement marked it annually by events of mourning, processions and masses. SF limited itself to holding a service, recognising that the significance of the day lay in remembering the death of José Antonio, not expressing personal grief.<sup>23</sup> Common sense appears to have prevailed and the exaggerations of some male Falangists were rejected as 'not authentic'.<sup>24</sup> Contradictions abounded, however. Amado was outlawed, but the spirit of adulation marking the funeral procession was dubbed 'poetic' and was therefore acceptable to SF, as was the collection of sonnets written in praise of José Antonio by Falangist poets.<sup>25</sup>

The reality was that the teachings of José Antonio were only very slightly concerned with religion.<sup>26</sup> The specifically religious component of SF programmes was not inspired

<sup>18</sup> 'Escuela de Jefes', in *Revista 'Y'*, (July-August 1938).

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Enrique de Aguinaga, 22 February 1996. In his opinion, it was significant that it was SF which organised its publication, a reflection of the weak state of the rest of the National Movement. Interview with María Jesús García, 20 February 1995. She regarded José Antonio's teachings as very much like the Bible.

<sup>20</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1942 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, pp. 53-4.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with José Utrera Molina, 29 May 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 27 May 1996. Pilar's stance on the issue was explained to her in one of the classes at La Mota.

<sup>23</sup> The commemoration continued throughout the regime. There was always a Mass and a wreath laid at the monument or cross in memory of the Nationalist dead of the war. Interview with Carmen Moreno de Vega, 28 October 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Teresa Loring, 27 May 1996.

<sup>25</sup> *Corona de sonetos*, (Madrid, Ediciones Jerarquía, 1939), a collection of twenty-five sonnets by, among others, Dionisio Ridruejo, Manuel Machado, Gerardo Diego and Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel.

<sup>26</sup> His teachings were primarily about politics, with little said directly about religion. Interview with Carmen Moreno de Vega, 28 October 1996.



by his sayings nor introduced as an antidote to hero-worship.<sup>27</sup> In her memoirs, Pilar claims that she felt a need during the Civil War to formalise religious training in view of the rapidly-expanding membership base.<sup>28</sup> This was probably politically expedient. Since the Decree of Unification in April 1937, the Falange was struggling to find common ground with the Traditionalists, with whom it was now joined. The difficulties were compounded in SF, where there were not only ideological differences but a real conflict of interest with the Traditionalists' women's section.<sup>29</sup> Another factor may have been SF's early difficulty in gaining credibility with the Catholic Church. The sight of women aid workers rushing to help in the liberated zones apparently ruffled the feathers of some priests, who would have preferred to rely on the traditional welfare programmes of the religious orders.<sup>30</sup>

There were probably other concerns on the horizon. Pilar doubtless wished to ensure that SF would have a say in deciding how religion was to be taught in schools.<sup>31</sup> More controversially, by 1938, plans were well underway for training the first SF physical education instructors. These women would shortly be working in schools, many of which were convents. Pilar may have had a thought for the inevitable battles ahead when she judged it advisable to find an intermediary between her and the Church.

Her choice was Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel, a Benedictine from the abbey of Silos. He accepted Pilar's invitation to head the programme and from that moment SF 'entered a whole new world which took us towards God'.<sup>32</sup> Fray Justo's associations with both the military and the Church hierarchies made him a valuable ally for SF, which in 1938 was still fighting for its ground with other factions after the Unification. He had worked with Catholic organisations including the female youth movement of Catholic Action and had strong links with the intellectual and artistic wing of the Falange. His fascination with the history of Spain together with his religious pedigree made him the embodiment of Falangist

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Teresa Loring, 29 May 1996.

<sup>28</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos de una vida*, (Madrid, Dyrsa, 1983), p. 113.

<sup>29</sup> The tussle between SF and the Traditionalist women's organisation to retain control over wartime nursing and relief work at the battlefronts is discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Carmen Martín Olmedo, 21 February 1996.

<sup>31</sup> By 1938, compulsory religious education in schools had been re-introduced, with the promise of a new religiously-inspired secondary school curriculum. S. Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-75* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 207.

<sup>32</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos*, p. 134. Fray Justo headed an advisory panel, which reported directly to Pilar and her deputy and was separate from the Department of Training, which dealt with the practical aspects of the delivery of religious programmes.

values - someone who could draw readily on the past to provide parallels and answers for current problems.<sup>33</sup>

But in his views on the role of women in society, Fray Justo added nothing to José Antonio's few words on the subject and mainstream Catholic opinion. When he spoke at SF national and provincial conferences, he declared her place to be in the home: 'her poem, her discovery, her masterpiece', and demonised women with intellectual aspirations: 'You will see her immobile, devouring book after book... Instead of the Gospel or the "Confessions of St Augustine" or "The Perfect Wife" of Fray Luis de León or "The History of Art", you will find all manner of insubstantial or dangerous books.'<sup>34</sup> With such strong views expressed, Fray Justo as national adviser was able to give the full weight of ecclesiastical authority to SF's religious training programmes and its code of conduct. His remit was to write the courses for members and unaffiliated women and to co-ordinate the team of clergy engaged by SF to teach religion to the above groups. He contributed to many of the organisation's religious publications and advised Pilar on how to proceed with difficult areas, such as regulations on bathing costumes and sports outfits for the girls.<sup>35</sup>

But apart from adding to SF's operational efficiency and legitimating its programmes, Fray Justo made a lasting impact on the core of the organisation, the elite members. In broad terms, his religious and political views coincided with the Establishment, but he was a Benedictine monk as well as a priest. The Benedictine tradition was liturgical, and the Order saw communion with God as being achieved through

<sup>33</sup> Fray Justo entered religious life at the age of fifteen, was ordained at the abbey of Silos and in 1958 became the first abbot of the Valley of the Fallen. He was on friendly terms with the Primate, Cardinal Gomá, and the papal nuncio, Monsignor Cicognani. He published around fifty books, most notably a history of Castile, and was associated with literary figures who came to be prominent Falangists, such as Gerardo Diego and Eugenio D'Ors. M. Garrido Bonaño, O.S.B., *Fray Justo y los hombres de su tiempo*, (Valle de los Caídos, Abadía de la Santa Cruz, 1983), pp. 10-13, p. 26, p. 168, p. 120, p. 117, p. 20, p. 70.

<sup>34</sup> Fray Justo's speech at the 1945 SF provincial conference, in F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos provinciales de la Sección Femenina*, (Madrid, F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1945), pp. 69-70.

<sup>35</sup> For example Pilar consulted Fray Justo about whether SF should include competitive swimming in its sports programme. The issue was whether the special swimming costume worn for such events but recognised by Pilar as not being 'a moral garment' compromised SF's ethos. Letter from Pilar to Fray Justo, 5 July 1939, Archivo de Santa Cruz, J-P 4, G. He intervened personally in disciplinary matters (M. Garrido Bonaño, O.S.B., *Fray Justo*, p. 110). He was also asked to resolve a local difficulty of morale. Letter from Pilar to Fray Justo, 12 September 1939, Archivo de Santa Cruz, J-P 4, G.

direct, disciplined participation in acts of worship.<sup>36</sup> Fundamental to this was choral singing, the use of the prayer book and acts of meditation, none of which were in common use outside religious communities.

Ironically, in appointing Fray Justo, Pilar was proving SF's credentials as loyal to the Church while committing SF to a programme of radical change.<sup>37</sup> In less than a year after his appointment, she told national conference members that the organisation wanted all women to 'have thorough religious training, removing certain things which are not necessary and which actually prevent them from understanding the full grandeur of the liturgy ordained by the Church'.<sup>38</sup> Her own religious background had none of the innovations which she admired in the Benedictines. She had been educated at convent schools and was brought up in a religious tradition which included praying to the Virgin Mary, reciting the rosary and regular church attendance.<sup>39</sup> But as a Falangist, Pilar's views on religion coincided with those of José Antonio. As she told her members in 1942:

We cannot think of our comrades as having two separate identities: part Falangist and part Catholic. Rather, we understand these two elements making up the whole, in the same way as body and soul together are part of every human being and as a person one is both Catholic and Spanish.<sup>40</sup>

There was a sense in which Fray Justo's new style of religious observance was a two-edged sword. Not only was it a vehicle for SF members to express their faith (and their politics) positively, it also pointed the contrast with the past. Pilar's interpretation of José Antonio's 'Revolution' was a society 'set on its feet' with its women restored to the family.<sup>41</sup> On the premise that the main barrier to this was the fundamental ignorance of the female population, Pilar saw education in religious matters as central to the Falangist

<sup>36</sup> Since the nineteenth century, the Benedictines have been a liturgical movement, emphasising active participation in the Mass and promoting the use of the prayer book. Benedictine liturgy is based on a much older form of worship, the Mozarabic rite, dating back to the 6th century A.D. and still celebrated in the Mozarabic chapel of Toledo Cathedral. Interview with Father Manuel González, 12 August 1998.

<sup>37</sup> Pilar is said to have recognised immediately that Fray Justo's ideals were the true ideals of the Church in general. Interview with Father Manuel Garrido, 26 July 1996.

<sup>38</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1939 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 25.

<sup>39</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos*, p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1942 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1940 SF national conference. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Revolution.

Pilar made a direct connection between religious observance and the nation's moral and spiritual health. But although SF was always fully supportive of the regime's Catholic orientation, Pilar developed a critical view of existing observances. The status quo of religious practices was presented to members as the consequence of political 'misunderstandings' of previous eras and the effects of Republican legislation. In this sense, education in religious matters could be represented as a break with the past, indicative of a determination to present modern ideas, or, at least to re-present essential values in ways which would engage hearts and minds. The participative, disciplined nature of Benedictine worship would ensure that everyone, particularly in the villages 'alone, lost in their ignorance' would be educated in the true faith.<sup>42</sup>

It was certainly true that religious observance did not necessarily denote sincerity of belief. As Frances Lannon has described, the ceremony of the Mass before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council was less a service of public participation than a remote spectacle which provided a backcloth for the congregation's private devotions.<sup>43</sup> In this context, saying the rosary or venerating statues in the church while the service was going on was entirely acceptable. Another concern was the relationship between popular religiosity (the veneration of local saints and Virgins, holy processions organised by communities, for example) and true Catholic faith, particularly in rural areas. Popular rites and devotions in Spain were not necessarily accompanied by regular church attendance.<sup>44</sup> Added to this was the fine line between religiosity and superstition. A former member recalls that in very poor Castilian villages in the 1940s and early 1950s there was belief in amulets and miraculous cures effected by the local saint or Virgin and in people's own prayers as a substitute for going to Mass: 'Bells ring for Mass, we cannot be there, let angels go instead of me and offer up a prayer.'<sup>45</sup>

Religious ignorance was also seen by Pilar in terms of social class. As she told her members in 1940, the poorest women were in simple ignorance of their duties 'to their

<sup>42</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1941 SF national conference. Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> F. Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy*, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> 'A misa tocan, no podemos ir, que vayan los ángeles y recen por mí'. Interview with Carmen Moreno de Vega, 28 October 1996.

menfolk, to the Nation and to God' whereas the better-off had interpreted religion to their convenience and with insufficient rigour:

Even women with the best education, including in religion, see things wrongly. They would never commit a sin against the fifth, sixth or seventh Commandment, but think nothing of criticising someone or, for the slightest of reasons, of disobeying the Commandment to fast. They fail to remember that there are not just three or four Commandments, made to suit them. There are ten which are the Law of God, a further five belonging to the Church and seven deadly sins.<sup>46</sup>

SF's new religious programmes satisfied Pilar's desire for more spirituality and the need to transmit religion in the context of José Antonio's teachings. SF had nothing to do with the teaching of religion in schools, which remained the preserve of the Church, but all its training courses for adult members, youth members and social service students included a religious component, taught mainly by Fray Justo's team of monks and priests.<sup>47</sup> And before long, SF staff were being trained as auxiliaries for Fray Justo's team as programmes expanded.<sup>48</sup> The introduction of a standard SF guide to the liturgy ensured a common approach throughout its centres and at every level of the organisation.<sup>49</sup>

It was in the national schools that Fray Justo's innovations were the most striking, since the chapel in each was the establishment's doctrinal and spiritual core, and religious life a fully integrated part of every course.<sup>50</sup> Weekday Mass was said as a dialogue between the priest and the congregation, unlike the usual pre-Vatican Council services where little

<sup>46</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, pp. 34-5.

<sup>47</sup> Religious teachings were divided into three areas: dogma, morality and liturgy. Gregorian chant was always included in SF music courses. D.N. de la S.F., *Plan de formación*, (Madrid, Afrodísio Aguado, 1942), pp. 16-21 and pp. 37-44.

<sup>48</sup> These members were entrusted with the teaching of religion to youth groups and summer camps although never with the religious education of adult members. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>49</sup> A report in 1948 on summer camps criticised observed deviations from the prayer book, poor choral direction and the inability of the *mandos* to lead prayers convincingly. Circular to provincial leaders, 'Defectos encontrados en la inspección de Albergues, procedentes todos ellos de falta de sujeción a las normas dadas y por defecto de no leer el Plan de Formación', in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 285. SF's liturgical guide decreed the order of service and instructed on the adornment of chapels. D.N. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Directorio litúrgico, tercera edición*, (Madrid, Ibarra, 1963), pp. 57-69, 73-108, 111-115.

<sup>50</sup> Interviews with Nieves Serrano, 19 February 1996; Margarita Pérez-Urria Baqueiro, 20 February 1996; Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996.

participation was required.<sup>51</sup> There were psalms and Gregorian chant, and certain parts of the Mass were in Castilian.<sup>52</sup> Most radically of all, many chapels had a central altar, and in all of them the priest faced the congregation. After the Second Vatican Council this became a requirement but in post-war Spain it was unheard of outside certain religious communities.

In theory, *mandos* had an explicitly religious role as part of their duties. Training literature for teachers in the SF travelling schools emphasised their potential to influence religious observance and all matters of public morality but the reality was probably less spectacular. When women were engaged in welfare or educational programmes, the important issues were health and literacy.<sup>53</sup> The relevance of religion was what it taught about social justice, the belief that human beings should be helped to help themselves. In this sense, the politics of José Antonio and Christian ethics were fully compatible. This idea was encouraged, no doubt intentionally, by the format of political education school textbooks, which until the 1960s were written in a question and answer format, resembling the catechism:

*Why do we say that humankind is the bearer of eternal values?*

Because having defined the nation as a unit of destiny in the universal order, we must value the human beings who are to fulfil that destiny.

*And who will carry out the destiny that the Spanish nation must fulfil in the world?*

The Spanish people. *Who are the Spanish people?*

People like all peoples made by God in His image and likeness.<sup>54</sup>

Arguably more significant than the content of the religious education was the

<sup>51</sup> Before the Second Vatican Council, many parts of the Mass were recited by the altar server or sung by a choir without the direct participation of the congregation.

<sup>52</sup> The Epistle, the Gospel, and certain of the prayers. In the order of service for the youth members, the preparation for communion and prayer of thanks were also in the vernacular. The SF prayer book gave translations of the Latin responses. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Directorio litúrgico*, p. 57, p. 19.

Opposition to the use of the vernacular came from some bishops. Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 29 May 1996.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Carmen Moreno de Vega, 28 October 1996.

<sup>54</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Enciclopedia elemental*, (Madrid, E. Giménez, 1959), p. 127.

manner and context of its delivery to trainee *mandos*. Expectations were high and classes were intensive.<sup>55</sup> As one past member recalls: 'You had to concentrate on what you were doing.'<sup>56</sup> Teaching at the national schools was not just the exposition of Catholic dogma. It included discussion and participation was expected. One past member recalls that a discussion of the Sixth Commandment by the priest at La Mota led to a discussion of human sexual behaviour - a contrast from her convent upbringing where the subject had been taboo.<sup>57</sup> The openness and participation extended to members' personal devotions, where the austerity of SF chapels and the simplicity of services encouraged serious reflection. It was a far cry from the trappings associated with middle-class religious practices.

With the adoption in 1939 of St Teresa of Avila as the organisation's patron, the message was reinforced that SF women's identity was inextricable from religion. But the choice also established the particular reading of SF identity as different from the more usual model, the Virgin Mary. It was Teresa's combination of faith ('a pure knowledge of God') with practical action ('having her feet on the ground') which fitted so well with Pilar's vision of religion.<sup>58</sup> And Teresa's role as foundress of convents made the connection between SF service and the religious life. In the memory of a contemporary, Pilar liked to compare SF members with *teresianas*, groups of lay women who had taken a religious promise to dedicate themselves to work in education.<sup>59</sup>

The model of Teresa, the style of worship established by Fray Justo and the fact that many SF members had exceeded their original Martha and Mary role all contributed to a new understanding of religion within SF after the Civil War. It distanced SF conclusively from confessional aid groups, which set their good deeds in a traditional religious framework.<sup>60</sup> The journals of Catholic Action, for example, stressed that women's main contribution to the needs of the nation was an acceptance of original sin: 'Everywhere there is unremitting suffering and neverending lamentation... Suffering is necessary because it

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Margarita Pérez-Urria Baqueiro, 20 February 1996; Andresa López Enseñat, 29 May 1996; Carmen Moreno de Vega, 28 October 1996. All describe it as 'profound'.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Adelaida del Pozo, 27 May 1996.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Nieves Serrano, 19 February 1996.

<sup>58</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, "Lecciones de Santa Teresa", conferencia pronunciada por Pilar Primo de Rivera en el Casón del Buen Retiro, cerrando el ciclo organizado con motivo de la exposición "Santa Teresa y su tiempo", pamphlet, (Madrid, Ruan, 1971 [?]), n.p.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Father Manuel Garrido, 27 July 1996.

<sup>60</sup> The most comparable of these bodies was Catholic Action. It was a lay organisation, reorganised after the Civil War into four sections (men, women, boys, girls), with a programme of religious and charitable works for each. Its women's section was hierarchically organised in a similar way to SF.

is the antidote to sin.<sup>61</sup> In contrast to the energy of St Teresa, it was the Virgin Mary's passivity and self-effacing purity which provided the model for Catholic Action women in their proselytising campaigns directed at the needy and morally deficient.

Catholic Action women, described by the Falangist press as 'funny and adorable Cinderellas of charity' were not taken seriously by SF.<sup>62</sup> Their stereotypical female behaviour was much despised and categorised in the organisation as 'soppiness' (*ñoñería*). The word was used frequently in training literature to describe the antithesis of SF style and 'way of being'. It encompassed a range of perceived negative qualities, such as superficiality and lack of moral robustness. In the religious sense (and it was here that the term was most frequently applied), women considered *ñoñas* were ostentatiously pious, observing the traditions and practices of the Church without necessarily having the faith to put them into any real context. The hallmarks of religious *ñoñería* were the saying of novenas, excessive devotions and private prayers to saints and an exaggerated humility towards the clergy. So clear was the common understanding of the word that it was part of SF selection criteria for its courses, grants and awards. *Mandos* supplying references were obliged to comment on the applicant: 'Specify whether she is *ñoña* or whether she possesses a profound religious education.'<sup>63</sup>

The core purpose of SF's religious education was the philosophical perspective on life which it gave each *mando*.<sup>64</sup> Catholic Action's programmes were perceived as narrow, focusing on charity handouts and rarely going outside the parish.<sup>65</sup> SF work, on the other hand, was based on the principles of self-help and education.<sup>66</sup> The seriousness of discussions in the religion classes helped *mandos* deal with difficult social and moral problems and above all, change the mentality of people. Work in the villages, particularly, was concerned with penetrating the perceived apathy and acceptance of poor living conditions. To do so, staff members needed tolerance and acceptance of human frailties. Once a mobile class team came into a village, for example, the staff member in

<sup>61</sup> *Orientaciones y normas*, (November 1940).

<sup>62</sup> *Arriba*, 11 October 1939, describing nannies who were members of Catholic Action.

<sup>63</sup> D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Personal: organización. Delegación provincial*, (Madrid [?], S.F. [?], n.d.), p. 121.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Carmen Moreno de Vega, 28 October 1996.

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with Teresa Loring, 29 May 1996; Carmen Osuña Castelló, 31 July 1996.

<sup>66</sup> Even when the poor were helped directly, for examples with gifts of baby clothes, SF stressed that the point of the exercise was the learning experience for the social service student who had made them. Interview with Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996.



charge tried to develop close relationships with women in the village. Her office became the consulting room to which many came for advice on problems, including personal and marital.<sup>67</sup> The foundation of the help given was the specialist courses but also the religious base that had been established at La Mota and other training schools. The readiness of staff members to tackle moral issues was coupled with their own forceful image as missionaries of Falangism. 'We are a religious militia', teacher trainers were told, 'and when we feel as much spiritually for the Fatherland as the Falange does, then by serving the country we shall be serving God.'<sup>68</sup>

However, these religious and social energies coupled with the innovations of Fray Justo did not escape the censure of local church hierarchies. SF was in the unfortunate position of being criticised by the very institution it worked so hard to support. In the case of the changed style of worship, it was not a question of having to seek formal permission, since Fray Justo carried national authority. The changes were within the parameters of the liturgical movement and did not contravene ecclesiastical law, but were sufficiently controversial as to arouse suspicion and mistrust in certain bishops. Pilar was always anxious to maintain good relationships at both parish and diocese level and in many cases this worked, as for example at the opening of the chapel at La Mota. Pilar had already been in contact with the bishop of Valladolid to seek his approval for the dialogued Mass and he presided at the opening ceremony, giving the chapel his official blessing.<sup>69</sup> The bishop of Avila, however, was less accommodating in his attitude to the building of the chapel at Las Navas. Fray Justo had designed a centrally-placed altar, but the bishop of Avila refused to consecrate the chapel, despite the *mando's* efforts to persuade him.<sup>70</sup>

The opposition of the bishops may have been less for ecclesiastical reasons than from a broader distrust of SF women based on their social behaviour and belief in educational programmes. Certainly it was the bishops to whom mother superiors in

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996.

<sup>68</sup> D.N. de la S.F., Escuela Nacional de instructoras de juventudes 'Isabel la Católica', (Madrid, Vicente Rico, 1951), n.p.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Carmen Martín Olmedo, 21 February 1996. The bishops of Burgos, Palencia and León were also present.

<sup>70</sup> The same bishop in later years accepted an invitation to Las Navas but refused to enter the chapel. Interviews with Teresa Loring and Andresa López Enseñat, 27 May 1996. In the event, the abbot (Benedictine) of Samos, who was of equivalent rank to a bishop, performed the opening ceremony. The bishop of Avila did not visit the chapel until after the Second Vatican Council.

convent schools appealed whenever they had problems with the SF teachers drafted in to teach domestic science, sport, music and political education. The problems were legion. Apart from resentment that secular staff should be allowed to teach alongside nuns, there was strong feeling that the areas of study themselves were unsuitable.<sup>71</sup> After the subjects became compulsory, nuns had to face the necessity of retraining or, even less palatable to many, of paying SF to come in and teach the classes. Although the SF press carried a story of one mother superior enthusiastically teaching national syndicalism after doing her instructor's course, the reality was that bad feeling was widespread.<sup>72</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, particular exception was taken to the teaching of physical education, despite the fact that the stipulated sports garment had Fray Justo's approval.<sup>73</sup>

Opposition from the Church was also directed specifically at the teaching of domestic science. Although seemingly uncontroversial, it did include first aid and childcare. Protests came both nationally from the teaching orders' professional body and locally, where it was directed at the local SF staff trying to implement the programme.<sup>74</sup> In one instance, a bishop told SF to suspend all domestic science teaching. When challenged by the *mando*, he explained that nuns had complained to him that in childcare classes, pupils were given information that was too frank.<sup>75</sup> Because of earlier protests from the Church, the childcare programme had already dropped all mention of antenatal matters and taught postnatal care only, so this was a further blow. The response from SF was robust: Pilar defended her stance to the nuns' professional association by reminding them that they owed their existence and that of their schools to the sacrifices of the Falange in the Civil War and that many religious communities and convents outside the association were actively seeking their help in establishing such courses.<sup>76</sup> At a local level, SF reacted pragmatically. Where there was support or at least no open opposition, the entire programme was taught. If there were difficulties, staff would try and convince the bishop or mother superior. But

<sup>71</sup> Interviews with Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996; Teresa Loring, 27 February 1996.

<sup>72</sup> Bradomín, 'Falanges juveniles en los colegios', in *Revista 'Y'*, (June 1945). Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994. She believes now that the legislation was counter-productive.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Teresa Loring, 27 May 1996. The official garment was the *pololo*, half-length trousers elasticated at the knee.

<sup>74</sup> The Federation of Religious in Education asked the Ministry of Education to protect the 'distressed nuns' from these intrusions. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1992), p. 190.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Teresa Loring, 27 May 1996.

<sup>76</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 190.

in the final instance, the need for good relations was paramount and they would cede the point.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the impeccable social aims of the organisation, the public face of SF continued to challenge and upset ecclesiastical hierarchies. The first staff members of La Mota, for example, were banned by the bishop from riding their bicycles up and down to the castle.<sup>78</sup> The leader of the first mixed student camp organised by the Falange students' syndicate in 1957 remembers that there was a national protest from the bishops at the perceived immorality of such a gathering.<sup>79</sup> The clashes appear to have ended in the 1960s after the Second Vatican Council when, apart from the liturgical changes (which hardly impacted on the SF), the new emphasis on social justice did much to align SF's *joseantoniano* populism with mainstream Church practice. The reforms removed many of the injustices seen by members in convent schools, where poorer, non-fee paying pupils frequently received inferior education within the same establishment and from the same teachers.<sup>80</sup>

There was, however, a profound difference between the perception of religion by the elites and those on the edges of the organisation. Most visible on the periphery was SF's support for the Church as a pillar of the regime. Here, it shared ground with Catholic Action in its rejection of Republican ideas of morality and women's rights. Both accepted the authority and hierarchy of the Catholic Church and its role in Franco's Spain. Woman's role within this was as upholder of religion. As a Catholic wife and mother she would be an educator of her children and encourage those around her (including her husband) in the faith. For both Catholic Action and SF, Catholicism was part of Spanish heritage. Reaffirming religious traditions such as family prayers or the building of a Christmas crib was a statement of cultural as well as spiritual identity:

The foreign Christmas tree does not fit into the austere, idealistic homes of Spain... The imagination of the Spanish child is not content with the paltry

<sup>77</sup> On occasions, a little guile won the day, as in the case of the *pololos*, which were deliberately made shorter over the years. Interview with Adelaida del Pozo, 27 May 1996.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Teresa Loring, 29 May 1996.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Interviews with Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996 and Teresa Loring, 29 May 1996. The latter felt strongly enough about this as a pupil in such a school to make her views known to the mother superior, who called her a communist.

vision of a Father Christmas. He needs great processions of fine slaves from the East leading long caravans of precious cargoes.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, lesser-ranking members of SF who worked with aid agencies appeared to share traditional views of religion. Volunteers in the welfare body of the Falange, Social Aid (*Auxilio Social*), came closer to the Catholic model of charity than did SF *mandos*. Social Aid's orphanages and nurseries were staffed largely with social service students.<sup>82</sup> Its descriptive literature was moralistic and sentimental, emphasising the responsibility of staff to be a link with the parish and those in their care.<sup>83</sup> It was here, one step removed from the distinct religious identity of the SF programme but nevertheless involved in spiritual matters, that girls and women helped to rechristianise sectors of the population. In orphanages, maternity homes and welfare centres, volunteers from Catholic Action worked alongside SF-trained girls and women to ensure that with 'no liberalesque respect for the freedom of the child's conscience' all in care attended communion classes and weekly Mass.<sup>84</sup>

It was important for Pilar to maintain SF's credibility with the Church. The price of successful programmes in the community was compliance with Church authorities and here, Pilar acted decisively. In matters concerning religious etiquette, she required correctness from all in any way connected with SF. No sporting events scheduled for Sunday could begin before eleven o'clock, so that members would not be diverted from attending Mass. In the case of an event played away from home, the local *mando* carried the responsibility of informing the visitors of times of services and directions on how to get there. Transport arrangements had to take into account likely delays which might entail

<sup>81</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Nace Jesús*, (Madrid, Ibarra, 1958), p. 29. One of the apostolates of Catholic Action was specifically to restore traditional customs at such times as Christmas.

<sup>82</sup> Social Aid was a separate department of the Falange and its (mostly male) staff were not connected directly with SF, despite the interest of both bodies in health and welfare matters. Any women working for Social Aid (for example trained nurses, midwives, directors of orphanages) had been given preparatory training by SF but were not necessarily members. SF's main point of contact was as suppliers of Social Aid's volunteer workers. The institutions of Social Aid provided the main work placements for social service students.

<sup>83</sup> F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Auxilio Social desde el punto de vista religioso y moral*, (Madrid, Ayala, 1940), p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

members missing church.<sup>85</sup> Public behaviour, particularly where members were in the company of religious or priests, had to be above reproach, as for example at the 1944 rally at El Escorial, where most were lodged in convents or in the monastery itself: 'They will behave with the sobriety that exists in the Falange and the respect which is owed to religious houses, so that never through the frivolousness of a comrade will anyone think badly of the Falange.'<sup>86</sup> SF staff setting up their programmes in the mobile classes were required to offer assistance to the local priest without usurping his authority. Guidelines told them to involve him fully in planning the village's programme, to refer 'doubtful' moral or religious problems to him and to maintain the correct distance at all times.<sup>87</sup>

To those on the edges of the organisation SF was not afraid to proselytise, although it was done sensitively, as for example at Christmas 1946 when all married members were contacted and sent leaflets of prayers. Together with a letter from Pilar explaining why SF considered religion so essential to them was the apology: 'Forgive this if it seems a little like interference in your family life, but it is merely the desire that you too should participate in what we consider the best things.'<sup>88</sup> There are many instances of Pilar campaigning to keep religion a live issue, such as pilgrimages to Rome and Santiago, and when in 1950 she received Papal blessing for the work of SF, 'it was like a consecration of its name and activities'.<sup>89</sup>

But despite SF's enthusiasm for its religious activities and commitment to the Benedictine style of worship, non-believers were accepted among staff members. The religious education classes provided a rationale and a moral base to SF's programmes but stopped short of requiring personal faith. Trainee *mandos* were assessed on their religious knowledge, not the strength of their beliefs.<sup>90</sup> Religious faith was not a requirement of

<sup>85</sup> 'Normas para actuaciones públicas', circular general no. 85, individual no. 4, 15 April 1944, in *Revista Mandos*, (June 1944).

<sup>86</sup> S.F., *II Concentración nacional de la Sección Femenina en el Escorial*, (Madrid [?], S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1944), p. 32.

<sup>87</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Cátedras de Sección Femenina: organización*, (Madrid, Magerit, 1965), pp. 66-7.

<sup>88</sup> Pilar's letter to married members, Christmas 1946, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 294.

<sup>89</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos*, p. 243; L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 249.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 29 May 1996. The national schools each had a chaplain who led services and taught the religion classes. Other priests were brought in at Lent to conduct meditations. At Las Navas, it was decided to split the function of the chaplain so that he did not teach at all. A problem had arisen because the degree of members' spirituality (known to the chaplain) was being reflected in the marks he gave for the taught course. The length of the courses at Las Navas made its case an unusual one and there is no memory of the situation arising elsewhere.

membership of SF nor of promotion. It was acceptable to be non-practising and to admit it.<sup>91</sup> At national schools, attendance in chapel was only compulsory at morning and evening prayers and Sunday Mass, and Pilar was insistent that religious observance should not be forced upon the youth members: 'They should not take the sacraments with a bad grace, just to stay in with the *mandos*.'<sup>92</sup> As long as members believed in Falangism and were not actively against the Church, strength of faith counted less than teaching ability and leadership qualities.<sup>93</sup>

This was no doubt visible to few outside the core of SF. To Church hierarchies, it was frequently SF's interventions into education which appeared its more obvious identity tag. And ultimately, the distrust of the bishop of Avila was perhaps more significant than the carpings of mother superiors. The innovations of Fray Justo were unwelcome because they heralded a more active and empowered female membership, which would inevitably challenge the status quo.

The fact that SF staff members had been given the opportunity to question their values and test their beliefs affected their ways of working and their own behaviour. Particularly in the early post-war years, the memory of José Antonio was undoubtedly strong, and even without overt hero-worship of the dead leader, there was always to be an overlap between the teachings of Falangism and those of the Catholic Church. But the strength of *joseantoniano* doctrine in conjunction with SF's religious practice and training altered its members' perceptions. It harnessed energies and convictions that led some to dub SF women the nuns of the Movement and the Archbishop of Valladolid to assert that there was no finer convent in Spain than La Mota.<sup>94</sup> These missionaries of Falangism, however, were worldly-wise. Unlike many of their contemporaries in Catholic Action, they often travelled alone and lived away from their families. They were likely to be on working terms with the parish priest, not passive members of his congregation. They

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 25 July 1996.

<sup>92</sup> Circular to provincial leaders, 'Defectos encontrados en la inspección de Albergues, procedentes todos ellos de falta de sujeción a las normas dadas y por defecto de no leer el Plan de Formación', in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 286. A further example of religious tolerance was an SF-affiliated school in Madrid, which in the 1950s admitted a number of Jewish girls, some Protestants and a number of Moslems from Spanish Morocco. Interview with Mercedes Otero, 20 February 1996.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 27 May 1996.

<sup>94</sup> Interviews with Mercedes Fórmica, 22 February 1996; Father Manuel Garrido, 26 July 1996.

were smartly-dressed, physically fit working women who, in José Antonio's words, were both 'religious and social'.<sup>95</sup>

The modernity of the self-image of the SF *mando* was illustrative of the shifting meaning and context of religion within the organisation. Religion was recognised as an essential component of Spanish nationhood and the vehicle through which wives and mothers would express and propagate moral values to their families. It was therefore at the heart of SF's full identification with the regime's moral agenda, indicated by its work in Christianising the population, its deference to ecclesiastical authorities and the scale of its own religious programmes. These efforts also pointed to SF's willingness to integrate with all sectors of the regime, recognising the sensibilities of the Church and non-Falangist aid organisations.

But alongside this, scrutiny of SF's religious identity gave Pilar the chance to mark out new ground for her organisation. Although her motives for doing so were probably only to protect SF from criticism, it is the case that in this area, she moved the organisation away from traditional thinking. Whereas in matters domestic -cooking, household management and interior design - SF based its programmes on bourgeois norms, the practice of religion in the tradition of the Benedictines was something unknown to the middle classes. In particular, its requirement for women to be both reflective and participative encouraged SF *mandos* to articulate opinions and to be pro-active in all areas of their operations. The fact that religion within SF was never proclaimed as 'new' takes nothing away from the effect it had. Neither should the fact that in the SF training programmes, religion and politics were strongly interlinked. It would be wrong to attribute to Pilar any wish to change the balance of gender roles, and her encouragement of women to be devout was in the belief that they would carry out their 'mission' as wives and mothers more effectively. Nonetheless, as in all areas of SF operations, it was not always possible to predict the outcomes for the transmitters of its messages.

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<sup>95</sup> Father Félix García's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, S. F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Consejos nacionales (libro segundo), (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 67.

## Chapter Four

### Loyalty, influence and moral authority: SF 1936-49

The early postwar and 1940s were characterised by the most extreme poverty and political repression of the regime. Mass executions of the enemies of the regime followed the end of the Civil War, the suicide rate rose, and as many as 200,000 are estimated to have died of hunger.<sup>1</sup> Daily survival was the priority of most people, made harder by the autarkic policies of the regime, which drove down wages, created massive shortages and paved the way for a widespread and longlasting black market in essential food supplies. The 'years of hunger' were also characterised by the rapid escalation in fortunes of those who had been on the winning side of the war. The other face of autarky was the power it gave to the social elites, bankers, landowners and industrialists who benefited from low wage levels and the political control of the working population. It was in this climate of political violence, desperate poverty and institutionalised corruption that SF was charged with intervening into the lives of the female population.

In doing so, it faced two political realities. Even though much of its work was in welfare and regeneration activities, all its programmes were underpinned with the aim of supporting the regime. The chapter contrasts SF's more public role as propagandist for the regime with its effectiveness as a stabiliser and control mechanism in these years. It assesses the extent to which SF was able to maintain credibility in these circumstances and how far its collaboration with the authorities was a bar to its acceptance by the wider population. The second factor in its effectiveness was SF's ability to initiate and maintain programmes in the face of the declining influence of the Falange within the regime. The Decree of Unification in April 1937 had established it as the official party of State, but at the expense of its doctrinal radicalism. Now renamed the National Movement, the Falange was further diluted at the end of the Civil War and after World War Two and no longer had a single political agenda. The chapter is also concerned with how SF consolidated its position in the regime in these circumstances. It contrasts Pilar Primo de Rivera's defence of Falangism and her assertiveness in the face of opposition or competition to SF's

<sup>1</sup> M. Richards, *A Time of Silence. Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936-1945*, (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1998), p. 11.



programmes with the organisation's more usual stance of pragmatism and political non-involvement. Relatedly, the chapter examines how SF programmes were presented as compatible with Francoism, the organisation as beyond criticism and its members as unthreatening to male politicians.

In fact, although SF quickly proclaimed itself as fully supporting the Nationalist cause in July 1936, Pilar had long been critical of the direction of the Falange after her brother's imprisonment in March of that year. It had a following among the working classes, particularly in the Valladolid area and also among the wealthier and upper classes, predominantly of Madrid and Seville. The provisional replacement for José Antonio, Manuel Hedilla, came from the former background and his leadership was strongly opposed by a group composed of the latter. These were the Falangists who had been closest to José Antonio and felt bound to his leadership style and privileged social background. Known as the legitimists, they included his personal friends and family members. Within this group, Pilar was a powerful figure and after she returned to Nationalist Spain, her flat in Salamanca became the focal point for political debate and criticism of the Hedilla leadership.

She voiced even stronger doubts following José Antonio's death in November 1936, when Franco moved to take over the leadership of the Falange for himself. Pilar and the other legitimists opposed this and in the leadership struggle that ensued, came into serious conflict with Hedilla. Both they and Hedilla were subsequently manoeuvred into having to accept Franco as the overall leader and the Decree of Unification. Although Pilar was away from Salamanca at the height of the crisis, it is hard to take at face value her assertion that she was not involved in the events there: 'As I was not there at the time I cannot judge the situation but I can say that in the rearguard of the war, it was a serious complication.'<sup>2</sup>

She was initially so against Unification that she accompanied Dionisio Ridruejo to protest to Franco.<sup>3</sup> Within a short space of time, however, she was persuaded by Franco's brother-in-law, Ramón Serrano Suñer, that a unified command under Franco was the only hope of implanting the teachings and doctrine of José Antonio to any degree. As Paul

<sup>2</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos de una vida*, (Madrid, Dyrsa, 1983), p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> R. Fraser, *Blood of Spain: The Experience of Civil War, 1936-1939*, (London, Allen Lane, 1979), p. 318.

Preston has said, it is difficult to know whether she believed Serrano Suñer or whether acceptance was a wholly pragmatic decision.<sup>4</sup> But acceptance of Franco brought immediate benefits. Pilar was appointed as first member of the Falange National Council, the consultative body set up in October 1937, ensuring that SF would have a voice in the limited opportunities for participation offered by the regime.<sup>5</sup> However, this was arguably small compensation for the changes made to SF, whose departments were restructured to spread the responsibility for nursing, female youth activities and welfare to other interested parties. From having autonomy in all these areas, SF was no longer the main player.

The decision to relocate nursing was an acknowledgment that bodies other than SF had contributed substantially to the work in hospitals. SF had provided emergency nurse training in the war and co-ordinated volunteer help to the front. Many of its recruits worked in military hospitals alongside conventionally-trained nurses and those in the religious orders.<sup>6</sup> But nursing was not an exclusive SF preserve and much work at the fronts had been done by the Traditionalist women's groups, the *margaritas*. From April 1937, all its members working locally were brought under SF leadership. Less palatable for Pilar, however, was the elevation of a *margarita* to national leader of a new government department. Henceforth, it was to be a separate section of the Falange, Fronts and Hospitals (*Frentes y Hospitales*) not SF, in charge of the operation.

Pilar's response to the changes made at Unification was an early illustration of her ability to play a double game. SF members were told to 'come fearlessly and unreservedly' to Unification, with the warning that discord would allow the enemies of Falange to infiltrate 'with the cunning of their old style of politics, looking for gaps where they can

<sup>4</sup> P. Preston, Las tres Españas del 36, (Barcelona, Plaza y Janés, 1999), p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> The National Council was the first consultative body set up by Franco during the Civil War in 1937. It had been constituted by the pre-war Falange and met for the first time under Franco on 15 October 1937. S. Payne, The Franco Regime 1936-75, (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 163-96. Pilar was appointed first national councillor - the only other woman was Mercedes Sanz Bachiller. The latter lost her position when she renounced her post as head of Social Aid in 1940. In 1942, Franco established an 'organic' parliament with the passing of the Ley de Cortes. The new parliament opened officially on 17 March 1943, with all national councillors as members plus a further fifty direct appointments. This lessened the importance of the National Council, which after its drafting of the legislation for the Labour Charter of 1938 had little further significance. R. Chueca, El fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco: un estudio sobre FET-JONS, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1983), pp. 217-24.

<sup>6</sup> The courses run by the SF nursing department were validated officially on 16 April 1937.

get in and order us about'.<sup>7</sup> She exhorted *margaritas* to join SF but appears to have made little effort to ensure they did.<sup>8</sup> Although *margaritas* were placed where possible in SF posts of responsibility, Pilar complained constantly that the Traditionalist women did not co-operate.<sup>9</sup> The bad feeling was mutual. In the memory of one *margarita*: 'The Women's Section of the Falange was given every sort of help to develop and expand... We wanted to play a positive role in the postwar. Our suspicion that we were deliberately held down proved justified in the end. We were tolerated only while the war lasted.'<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Pilar acted as if SF still had overall control of nursing.<sup>11</sup> A conference report written months after its official restructuring described SF's continuing work in hospitals, announcing the formation of a separate laundries section with its own national leader and with no mention of either Fronts and Hospitals or the *margaritas* within them.<sup>12</sup>

The same strategy was used when, as a further consequence of Unification, SF's Youth Wing was amalgamated into the Falangist youth organisation. The only indication that a change had taken place was Pilar's re-naming of the youngest members as *margaritas*. In every other way, she continued as if nothing had happened. Diagrams of the Youth Wing's structure presented at the 1938 national conference made no mention of SF's new hierarchical dependence. Even when further legislation was introduced in 1940 which

<sup>7</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1938 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos, circulares, escritos*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 17, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> The absence of *margaritas* from any of the national level posts in SF was justified to the women of Navarre and the Basque country as the failure of their provincial hierarchies to suggest potential candidates. The response to Pilar's request for names was that either none had been sent or officials had stated that no member could work away from her local area. Pilar's speech to SF members and all the women of the Basque provinces and Navarre. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> For example a report by Pilar to the General Secretariat of the Movement of a correspondence between SF and Fronts and Hospitals over the alleged failure of the latter to give out the soldiers' Christmas boxes (*el aguinaldo del soldado*), provided by SF, at the right time. Fronts and Hospitals had responded vigorously, rejecting the help offered by SF and then submitting a complaint themselves to the Secretariat. Following that, SF had been asked to stop providing the boxes, a directive which prompted Pilar to write her own complaint about the situation. Letter from Pilar Primo de Rivera to the General Secretariat of the Movement, 30 January 1939. Archivo Documental de Asociación Nueva Andadura, carpeta 45-A, document 41.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Dolores Baleztena, head of the Pamplona *margaritas*, in R. Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, pp. 310-11. The determination of SF members to enter the ranks of the Fronts and Hospitals operation is noted in a local study of the female welfare operation in Málaga. E. Barranquero Texeira, 'La Sección Femenina. Análisis del trabajo realizado durante la guerra,' in (Autores Varios), *Las mujeres en Andalucía: actas del 2º encuentro interdisciplinar de estudios de la mujer en Andalucía*, (Málaga, Diputación Provincial Servicio de Publicaciones, 1993), p. 298.

<sup>11</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1992), p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> 'La labor realizada por las Secciones Femeninas de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. en las diversas dependencias sanitarias' in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 62 and pp. 35-9.

spelled out the subordination of Pilar to the overall (male) head of youth, SF did not advertise the fact.<sup>13</sup> Instead, Pilar constantly stressed the need to keep her youth members quite separate from the boys' equivalent organisation: 'Our training does not have the same features as the boys' section; it does not share its element of pre-military education but it does work effectively on the girls' youth groups.'<sup>14</sup>

As she was to do on many other issues, Pilar clung obstinately to her own beliefs. In this case, there were convincing contrary views. Both the head of the Youth Front, José Antonio Elola and the SF national youth leader, Julia Alcántara, believed that youth activities would retain more of their original spirit if they were organised jointly. But Pilar's tenacity and willingness to play a waiting game paid off. Julia Alcántara's difference of opinion with SF was interpreted as personal spite<sup>15</sup> and the youth section was fully restored to SF in 1945.<sup>16</sup>

Pilar's third battle was the bitterest, because it involved not only loss of power but personal rivalry. A welfare operation had been started in Valladolid at the beginning of the Civil War by Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, widow of the joint founder of the J.O.N.S., Onésimo Redondo.<sup>17</sup> Mercedes did not have the political pedigree of Pilar but was nonetheless a prominent figure in her own right. Onésimo had been an important colleague of José Antonio and Mercedes had been on social terms with key Falangists such as the writer and poet, Dionisio Ridruejo.<sup>18</sup> But her main political connections were with the working class Falangist groups of Valladolid, which had supported the leadership of Manuel Hedilla. There were both social and political differences between these Falangists and the legitimists around Pilar. It was the working-class base of Falangism which had been

<sup>13</sup> The Ley Fundacional del Frente de Juventudes of 6 December 1940 was a key piece of legislation for SF. It created a Youth Front, comprising a university students' section, and two sections for young people, (schools and the workplace). The Youth Front was given the mandate and the cash to put into place the doctrinal, religious, pre-military (in the case of girls, domestic) training deemed politically necessary. All young people, even if they were not members of the separate volunteer youth organisations, were thereby exposed to indoctrination by convinced Falangists. J. Sáez Marín, *El Frente de Juventudes: política de juventud en la España de la postguerra (1937-1960)*, (Madrid, Siglo veintiuno de España editores, 1988), pp. 78-81.

<sup>14</sup> D.N. de O.J., *Tardes de enseñanza: formación nacional-sindicalista*, (Madrid, Afrodiseo Aguado, 1939), pp. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> She resigned shortly after the final separation took place in 1945. Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994.

<sup>16</sup> Order of 24 January 1945.

<sup>17</sup> Her husband, Onésimo Redondo, had joined with Ramiro Ledesma Ramos to found the syndicalist movement which was principally in defence of the small farmers in Castile (the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista) in 1931. The J.O.N.S. fused with the Falange in 1933.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997.

associated with acts of violence and a generally more strident approach to campaigning in the pre-war Falange. Onésimo's co-leader of the J.O.N.S., Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, had been a founding member of Falange and one of its initial three-man leadership team, dropped from his post because of differences with José Antonio. His ambition for Falange was of a mass organisation, which as Sheelagh Ellwood has described, was 'capable of channelling the anti-bourgeois and patriotic energies of "people of all kinds"'.<sup>19</sup> It was in direct contrast to José Antonio's vision of a more selective party, where activists would 'act as the mailed fist of a small, "poetic" elite'.<sup>20</sup>

Mercedes' protagonism in Valladolid may well have appeared to Pilar as a re-opening of these factions in the Falange, particularly as she had been deputising as SF co-ordinator for the entire Nationalist zone. By the time Pilar arrived in Salamanca, Mercedes had officially started the Social Aid organisation (*Auxilio Social*) by opening a dining-room in Valladolid, organising fundraising and getting the permission of the military authorities to extend the initiative to Bilbao.<sup>21</sup>

Initially, Pilar gave no signs of resenting what had been done in her absence. According to Mercedes, her main concern when she arrived in Salamanca was the welfare of her brother and she had little energy to give to either Social Aid or SF.<sup>22</sup> But she did officially acknowledge the activities of Social Aid at SF's Salamanca conference in January 1937. However, she was selective with the information she gave and talked of Social Aid as if it were a component of SF.<sup>23</sup> Mercedes, who was at the conference, took exception to Social Aid being presented as part of the SF war effort, given that the previous month it had been officially sanctioned as a separate department of the Falange.

Political differences between the two women were underlined by their views of how welfare should be organised. Mercedes modelled her ideas largely on the Nazi welfare organisation and envisaged a pro-active Spanish equivalent, at the forefront of social and

<sup>19</sup> S. Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era: Falange Española de las JONS 1936-76* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1987), p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> J. Martínez de Bedoya, *Memorias desde mi aldea*, (Valladolid, Ambito, 1996), pp. 105-6.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997.

<sup>23</sup> Its initial name, Winter Aid (*Auxilio de Invierno*) was copied from the equivalent German organisation, *Winterhilfe*, which Sanz Bachiller's assistant and future husband, Javier Martínez de Bedoya, had seen while living in Heidelberg. J. Martínez de Bedoya, *Memorias*, p. 105.

health policies for Nationalist Spain.<sup>24</sup> The only volunteers at her disposal in the autumn of 1936 were the members of SF, who were willing but not organised and whose efforts at fundraising were inefficient.<sup>25</sup> By December 1936, she had established a hierarchy in which salaried provincial and local departmental heads ran the operation, helped by specialist staff. It was stipulated that the latter, at least at provincial level, should be men.<sup>26</sup> In Mercedes' vision of a paid team of male professionals, women would play their part but rarely at a managerial level.<sup>27</sup>

Pilar, on the other hand, saw welfare as an integral part of SF work, able to be managed in the same way, within existing structures. Her vision was of a national network of elites, trained in SF academies to enable them to direct untrained volunteers and oversee all programmes. Unlike the employees of Social Aid, their work would bring no financial advantage, and while they would work in collaboration with health professionals such as doctors, it would not be as underlings.

Frustration grew as Social Aid received increasing media attention and Mercedes was featured as prominently as Pilar in the Falangist press.<sup>28</sup> The situation came to a head in 1937 when Mercedes put forward a plan for increasing the number of staff in Social Aid's institutions. She had observed that fewer volunteers were coming forward than in the first months of the war. Her proposed solution was a compulsory female work scheme as an equivalent to military service. The idea found favour with Franco and the initial decree for the women's social service scheme bore Mercedes' name and that of Social

<sup>24</sup> In August 1937, Mercedes spent a month in Germany, studying the workings of the Nazi welfare organisation, the NS-Volkswohlfahrt (N.S.V.). M. Orduña Prada, *El Auxilio Social (1936-1940): la etapa fundacional y los primeros años*, (Madrid, Escuela Libre Editorial, 1996), p. 144. The N.S.V.'s (male) leadership had full responsibility for all social welfare projects, even when these were organised by other Nazi groups. It organised the Party nursing corps and employed women in a number of subsidiary roles. J. Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women*, (London, Croom Helm, 1981), p. 147.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Julio Ibáñez Rodrigo (Social Aid provincial leader for Salamanca 1937-39), 3 June 1995. He remembers that women left the collection boxes unopened for weeks and then took the money out without having it counted centrally. He confirms that Mercedes wanted men to run the operation.

<sup>26</sup> M. Orduña Prada, *El Auxilio Social*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>27</sup> By the end of May 1937, she had appointed a team of nine (of whom only one was a woman) to form a specialist national advisory group. J. Martínez de Bedoya, *Memorias*, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> From April to December 1939, the comings and goings of both women are reported in similar fashion in *Arriba*. For example, 29 April, 'Nuestras hermanas de yugo y flechas'; 8 July, 'La delegada nacional de Auxilio Social regresa a Madrid'; 28 September, 'Llega a Barcelona Pilar Primo de Rivera'.

Aid.<sup>29</sup> Predictably, Pilar declared herself totally opposed, believing that SF alone should be in charge of the mobilisation of the female population.

The dispute continued through the war and was not resolved until December 1939 when Franco signed over all responsibility for social service to SF. In the recollection of Mercedes, she and Pilar had much the same vision of what social service should consist of and the disagreement was over its control, not the detail. However, she would have liked to see a different model for training and had sketched out a plan for women from the country to share a three-month residential experience with women from the city. Purpose-built premises had been designed and plans were at an advanced stage when SF won its argument and was ceded the entire social service project. Pilar's objections had been so strongly and persistently voiced that the Secretary-General of the Movement, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, rang up Mercedes and told her she must give in to Pilar.<sup>30</sup>

The star of Mercedes was rapidly waning. Even after her loss of social service from the Social Aid organisation, it seemed she was a thorn in the side of more powerful political opponents, namely the legitimist group around Pilar Primo de Rivera and Ramón Serrano Suñer. This was in part because of her decision to re-marry. Her future husband, Javier Martínez de Bedoya, was Director-General for Social Welfare and worked with her in Social Aid. He had been a member of the J.O.N.S., a friend and colleague of Onésimo and was closely associated with the Valladolid wing of the Falange. Mercedes' marriage was interpreted as an act of disloyalty to her late husband and, by extension, to the Nationalist cause. Martínez de Bedoya was in any case on bad terms with the legitimists, believing them to blame for his having failed to secure a ministerial appointment.<sup>31</sup>

At the Social Aid December conference of 1939, Ramón Serrano Suñer delivered a

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997.

Social service as organised under Mercedes differed in some respects from its later manifestation under SF. The decree of 7 October 1937 established a six-month period of service as compulsory for single women between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five. A further decree (8 November 1937) elaborated on the conditions of service, regulations and exemptions. It made clear that although Social Aid processed all the applications and organised the detail of the placement, it had to go first via the provincial leader of SF. The service period was to be divided into two phases - theoretical (two months) and practical (four months). The theoretical component would be done residentially in specially-created residences belonging to Social Aid. The practical work was to be carried out in institutions of Social Aid, unless the woman was a member of SF, in which case she could choose to work in any of SF's departments. M. Orduña Prada, *El Auxilio Social*, pp. 179-208.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Martínez de Bedoya gave up both his job and his seat on the National Council when an offer of a ministerial post was suddenly withdrawn. J. Martínez de Bedoya, *Memorias*, p. 139.

speech criticising both its objectives and management style. By May the following year, Mercedes and Martínez de Bedoya had been replaced, with Social Aid emerging as an organisation with considerably less independence. Perhaps Martínez de Bedoya's assessment of the situation was right: 'Our wedding went down very badly with "the Falange of Madrid"; their anti-J.O.N.S. allergy broke out again and they were not content with the blow they had dealt me; now they were after Mercedes' head.'<sup>32</sup>

Following Serrano Suñer's attack, the Falangist press accused Social Aid of being 'an institution of scroungers' and a 'system of handouts' (*'institución de sopistas', 'sistema de la sopa boba'*).<sup>33</sup> What the effects of co-operation between Pilar and Mercedes would have produced can only be guessed at but in the memory of one of her staff, as soon as Mercedes left the scene, Social Aid dissolved 'like sugar in water'.<sup>34</sup>

Having eliminated her major rival, Pilar was only diverted from SF business when she perceived that Falangism was losing ground or under threat from other sectors in the regime. On these occasions, she put her weight behind the legitimist cause, arguing for the maintenance of the doctrine of José Antonio. This was the case in 1941, when the National Movement was seeking to extend its influence in the government. In response to pressure, Franco had appointed a Falangist, José Antonio Girón, to be Minister of Labour, but counterbalanced this by giving the post of Minister of the Interior to a military associate, Colonel Valentín Galarza. The move was regarded as insulting by Falangists, particularly as it was followed by further government appointments of non-Falangists. There followed a highly critical article in the Falangist press and the resignation of several provincial Falangist officials.<sup>35</sup> The affair sparked off incidents of civil unrest, awaking the ongoing tensions between the competing power groups of the Falange and the military. Pilar and her brother Miguel presented their resignations in protest at Franco's perceived abandonment of *joseantoniano* principles. 'I cannot carry on', she wrote, 'working on something which we are making people believe is the Falange and which in truth is not.'<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 142. Bedoya also recounts that Dionisio Ridruejo tried to act as mediator between them and the 'Madrid Falange', advising Mercedes to bow to Pilar's authority.

<sup>33</sup> Arriba, 17 January 1940, quoted in M. Orduña Prada, *El Auxilio Social*, p. 76.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Julio Ibáñez Rodrigo, 3 June 1995.

<sup>35</sup> S. Payne, *The Franco Regime*, pp. 286-7.

<sup>36</sup> Pilar's letter of resignation (undated) which she gave to Serrano Suñer, quoted in P. Preston, *Las tres Españas del 36*, p. 181.



The resignations were retracted only when Franco made two additional appointments of Falangists to his re-shuffled Cabinet.<sup>37</sup>

A broader threat to Falangism was posed with the Law of Succession of 1947. Of the four major pieces of legislation passed before the end of the 1940s to legitimise the regime, this was the only one to which SF reacted. Under this legislation Franco declared Spain a kingdom and gave himself the right to choose his own royal successor, who would be required to uphold the fundamental principles of the regime.<sup>38</sup> The Falange had always been anti-monarchical and as one of its songs declared: 'We don't want idiot kings governing us. What we want and what we shall get is the syndical state.'<sup>39</sup> As Sheelagh Ellwood has said, the Law of Succession was confirmation that Franco would not allow the Falange to be the primary element in the regime.<sup>40</sup> Coming ten years after the Decree of Unification, this was the second severe blow to SF's vision of 'God, Spain and its National-syndicalist Revolution' and in the memory of a past *mando*, caused more debate in SF than the end of the Second World War.<sup>41</sup> For Pilar, political doctrine was not a negotiable commodity. She had said two years previously: 'The terrible danger for the Falange is not that it will disappear but that it will become deformed... regarding doctrine one may or may not believe in it, but what one cannot do is amend it.'<sup>42</sup>

But rhetoric was worthless without support from Franco. SF's existence was built round the legitimacy of the regime under his leadership and this was the greater consideration. Pilar said little publicly about the succession but discussed it endlessly with her staff, particularly the provincial *mandos*.<sup>43</sup> Her eventual decision not to offer even token opposition was based on the rationale that the event was far-off. The recognition that Franco needed a successor and that a monarchy was preferable to a Republic outweighed the serious concerns about the Borbonic succession. There were hopes, too, that after the law had been passed, some sort of intermediary solution would be found. The consensus was that on the basis of what Franco had achieved already, he

<sup>37</sup> Miguel Primo de Rivera was appointed Minister of Agriculture and José Luis de Arrese became Secretary-General of Falange. In conjunction with Girón's move to the Ministry of Labour, these changes satisfied Pilar and she was persuaded to carry on. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>38</sup> P. Preston, *Franco*, (London, HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 566-7.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 24 October 1999.

<sup>40</sup> S. Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era*, p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>42</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1945 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 70.

<sup>43</sup> Interviews with Jesús Suevos, 26 October 1997; Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

deserved SF's support.<sup>44</sup> The national and provincial *mandos* accepted it unanimously and instructed members at local level to vote in favour in the referendum of 6 July 1947. As in 1937, pragmatism prevailed.

Another consideration was doubtless the knowledge that SF's ability to operate effectively depended primarily on its ability to attract funding. It had a base budget from the National Movement but most of its education and welfare programmes were funded either locally from Civil Governors or directly from ministries. This extra finance was in the form of agreements negotiated with government departments, by which SF was financed directly for fulfilling certain parts of agreed programmes.<sup>45</sup> This was doubly necessary from 1945 when the SF's budget, in common with all departments of the National Movement, was severely cut back.<sup>46</sup>

Person-to-person contacts were therefore of great importance for Pilar and national *mandos*, who had to argue their case for funding directly with ministers. There was no official channel for them to meet politicians: the procedure was one of informal approach, including, at times, reaching a minister by befriending his wife. When a proposal had been agreed by SF's national team, the member of the specialist staff (*regidora central*) concerned would contact the relevant minister or civil governor by letter. If the timing coincided with the national SF conference, all delegates would hear of the letter and its contents. The letter was followed by a personal visit by the *regidora*, often accompanied by Pilar or her deputy to negotiate a deal.<sup>47</sup> Negotiation and persuasion were the cornerstone of SF's dealings with its all-male colleagues, a point confirmed by a former member who says ironically that 'we believed in principle that it was better to talk than to come to blows'.<sup>48</sup> The same principle worked at an even less formal level, where Pilar used every opportunity to invite ministers to national conferences, to speak at La Mota and to be guest lecturers at the SF cultural centres (*Círculos Medina*).

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>45</sup> The programme of health visiting, (*divulgación*) for example, was run in collaboration with the Department of Health. The SF *divulgadoras* were under the direct supervision of local doctors. A further example was the partnership of SF and the Ministry of Agriculture in setting up the National Agricultural School in Aranjuez in 1950. The school trained women to work as specialists not only in SF training centres but in government agricultural posts. D.N. de la S.F. del Movimiento, Regiduría del Trabajo, *Escuela Nacional de instructoras rurales*, (Madrid, Magerit, 1970), n.p.

<sup>46</sup> Pilar reported a deficit of over 2 million pesetas to Franco and informed him that separate fundraising could not cover the deficit. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 188.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Vicky Eiroa, 23 October 1995.

Reciprocating, SF staff saw the need to accept and offer hospitality to civil governors in the course of their duties in the provinces.

With Franco himself, Pilar is said to have had very frequent, informal contact and a contemporary believes he talked more to her than to the Secretary-General of the Movement.<sup>49</sup> SF had no scheduled access to the Caudillo, but Pilar asked for an audience every time she wanted to discuss politics. Typically, this would be on the occasions when government seemed to be acting against Falangists, as for example in 1942 when Franco condemned a Falangist to death following his part in an attack on military personnel.<sup>50</sup> She met Franco frequently to discuss the attitudes and opinions of ministers, as evidenced in their response in parliament, all with the object of enlisting their support for SF projects. A change of government was always the basis for a discussion with Pilar, following which the *regidoras centrales* were called to a meeting and the contents of the interview with Franco relayed.<sup>51</sup> As part of the briefing, Pilar instructed them on the official line to take, particularly with regard to their colleagues in the provinces. It was here, in the national offices of SF in Almagro 36, that confidences were shared about the realities of the regime and in particular, the likely effect of newly-appointed ministers on its programmes.<sup>52</sup>

Past members are unanimous in their belief that Franco had a particular affection for SF which went beyond approval for its work. This included a high regard for Pilar, an attitude which seems mutual. The less than energetic attempts by Franco at the beginning of the war to rescue José Antonio from Alicante jail appear to have been interpreted by her as wholly positive and contemporaries have confirmed that she attached no blame to Franco

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>50</sup> On the occasion of a mass in the village of Begoña to commemorate the deaths of Traditionalist soldiers (*requetés*) in the Civil War, groups of Traditionalists and Falangists came into conflict. Tensions grew and a bomb was thrown by the Falangists at the crowd, wounding nearly one hundred bystanders. Among those present was General Varela, an outspoken critic of the Falange who demanded the court-martial of the thrower of the bomb. Franco rightly interpreted the incident as having repercussions beyond its immediate circumstances. In an attempt to maintain the power balance of the Army and the Falange, he ordered the execution of the Falangist culprit but also accepted the resignation of Varela. The Minister of the Interior, Colonel Valentín Galarza, who had supported Varela's insistence on the court-martial, was dismissed by Franco as part of his balancing act. P. Preston, *Franco*, pp. 465-8.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>52</sup> Despite his lack of any official vehicle for communication with SF, Franco is reported to have held opinions on aspects of their work. For example, at the 1961 National Council of the Falange, he urged them to consider if the time was not ripe for a reappraisal of the organisation of social service. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

for their failure.<sup>53</sup> The mutual regard was doubtless based on the carefully-measured requests made by Pilar, all of which were incontrovertibly in support of the pillars of the regime and ruffled no male feathers - the family, religion, the health of the nation and development of rural Spain. Even where an issue had the potential for being contentious (such as Pilar's complaints that the regime was discriminating against girls in the unequal provision of female places in sanatoria) and the perennial dissatisfaction with the designated budget, there was no challenge to underlying principles or doctrine.<sup>54</sup> On Franco's part, he officiated at the opening of the national schools and visited them all subsequently, always presiding at any award ceremony.<sup>55</sup> He is said to have enjoyed eating with SF staff and his head of security once remarked to a *mando* that it was only in the SF schools that he was not required to taste the food on Franco's behalf.<sup>56</sup>

Amid the worries about the declining support for Falangism, the 1940s also brought the greatest opportunities for SF to show its loyalty. In July 1941 Spanish troops went in support of Hitler's offensive on the Russian Front.<sup>57</sup> The Blue Division, so named because many were Falangists, were volunteers from the regular army and the Falange who believed that Spain should enter the Second World War on the side of the Axis. SF immediately aligned itself with the anti-communist rhetoric expressed and saw a chance to re-kindle the patriotic fervour of its response to 18 July. The organisation at home organised parcels, a correspondence service and help to the families left behind.<sup>58</sup> SF put its full weight behind the patriotic effort, with frequent articles in *Revista 'Y'* exhorting members to knit gloves and balaclavas and by organising a penfriend service to soldiers.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Interviews with Julio Ibáñez Rodrigo, 3 June 1995; Lula de Lara, 24 October 1995; José Utrera Molina, 29 May 1995; Marichu de la Mora, 27 October 1997.

<sup>54</sup> In 1946, there were two SF sanatoria, with capacity for around six hundred girls. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 185. In 1945, the equivalent male provision was nineteen establishments with capacity for nearly two thousand boys. D.N. del Frente de Juventudes, *Estaciones preventoriales - calendario que ha de regir en la campaña 1945*, (n.p., Asesoría de Sanidad, 1944 [?]), n.p.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>57</sup> The force of 18,946 volunteers left Madrid on July 13 and, after training in Germany, finally arrived at the Russian Front in October 1941. The Blue Division remained in Russia until its disbandment in November 1943. K-J. Ruhl, *Franco, Falange y Tercer Reich: España en la segunda guerra mundial*, (Madrid, Akal, 1986), pp. 25-6, p. 240.

<sup>58</sup> Pilar sent out instructions to all provinces that members were to start knitting and sewing, that they were to be in uniformed attendance at the station with presents for the departing soldiers and on alert for further instructions. Circular 180, Madrid 27 June from Pilar to provincial leaders, in *Revista 'Y'*, (August 1941).

<sup>59</sup> '¿Qué haces tú para la División Azul?' in *Revista 'Y'*, (September 1941).

In particular, the making up and sending of parcels - a symbolic act of female solidarity - was a propaganda opportunity for the organisation. And given the food shortages and general hardship of 1941, the scale of the contents was also a statement of members' personal commitment.<sup>60</sup>

However, the most public statement of solidarity with the Blue Division was undoubtedly SF's sending of nurses to the Russian Front. Confirming the connection between service in Russia and the Nationalist cause, SF only accepted applications from members who had nursed in the Civil War.<sup>61</sup> An SF nurse who volunteered has confirmed the patriotic fervour among the women and remembers the farewell at Madrid station as 'an incredible experience'.<sup>62</sup>

With the Blue Division's recall, SF never again had such a platform to proclaim the centrality of Falangism to the legitimacy of Francoism. From 1943 it concentrated on local and provincial activities and projects which became, indirectly, the successes of the regime. The mass rally of 1944 in El Escorial was the last occasion when it could set out its stall nationally and present its activities as a political statement. It was a four-day event, a combination of public displays, marches, speeches and static exhibitions attended by 15,000 SF adult and youth members and a number of speakers, including Franco.<sup>63</sup> The tone of the literature set out the intent of the occasion:

The rally is not meant to be a comfortable experience or a pleasure trip; it is a material sacrifice imposed by the Falange for us to increase our spiritual strength. So we shall think the less of any comrade grumbling about the lack of facilities, because it will show that she still does not

<sup>60</sup> Each parcel contained knitted gloves and socks, balaclava, pullover, a copy of 'Prayers for the Front', photos of José Antonio and Franco, a picture of the Virgin, a Falange emblem, protective glasses, a medallion, a bottle each of brandy, anisette and wine, nougat, marzipan, toasted and sugared almonds, jam, tinned goods, soap, a comb and three packets of tobacco. 'El aguinaldo a la División Azul', in *Medina*, (30 November 1941).

<sup>61</sup> *Arriba*, 22 August 1941. However, SF protested that it was only allowed to send a small number (eighty-four). The Army trained and recruited many nurses directly. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 140.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Lucía del Día Valdeón, 28 October 1997.

<sup>63</sup> *Arriba*, 5 July, 7 July, 9 July 1944. The speakers (all male) were Falangists with responsibilities in the National Movement and members of the clergy. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., II *Concentración nacional de la Sección Femenina en El Escorial*, (Madrid [?], S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1944), p. 17.

understand what Falange stands for. Comrades will have enough food and sleep but nothing else. Life is a militia, to be lived in a pure spirit of service and sacrifice.<sup>64</sup>

The spirit of sacrifice is confirmed in the memory of a member who attended and whose food ration supplied by SF provincial office for the train journey to El Escorial (which took sixty hours) was two hard-boiled eggs and a small loaf. On arrival, after drill exercises for two hours in the sun and a compulsory sight-seeing visit to the El Escorial monastery, most of her travelling companions fainted from hunger.<sup>65</sup>

There were no more rallies, but SF played a continuing role as propagandist for the regime through its Foreign Service. This department of SF had been started during the Civil War to make contact with ex-patriates and sympathisers abroad. Foreign Service staff members entertained visiting dignitaries and provided a uniformed presence on ceremonial occasions. These low-key activities were sufficiently unthreatening for the regime to allow it to continue after the end of World War II, in contrast to the male Foreign Service, which was swiftly disbanded. But in 1948, SF's Foreign Service, on its own initiative, organised a tour to Argentina and Brazil of its best choir and dance teams (*coros y danzas*) to perform at embassies and cultural associations. In the memory of the first trip's organiser, there was both scepticism and indifference beforehand in circles beyond the National Movement, despite the fact that the tour was financed through SF existing budgets. But as participants socialised with ministers' wives, word spread that SF's songs and dances had succeeded in rekindling feelings of patriotism among Spaniards in exile.<sup>66</sup> The tour was reported in the press and ministers began to appreciate that SF could contribute to foreign relations. What had started out as a cultural event had become a propaganda triumph. In Pilar's mind, there was no doubt that the journey had established

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996. The incident was a considerable embarrassment to the organisers.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Mercedes Otero, 20 February 1996. She remembers the effect of a display of Spanish dances and music on an audience of exiled Spaniards in Colombia. Afterwards, at the invitation of the Colombian Embassy, the dancers persuaded their audience to have dinner with them. The following day, a number made applications at the Spanish Embassy for residency in Spain.

the *joseantoniano* understanding of Spanish nationhood (*hispanidad*).<sup>67</sup> As she told the SF conference in 1949:

We have made contact with the peoples of America because their lives are so important to us. Together we create *hispanidad*, that is to say we place more importance on eternal values than on the materialistic world which is in darkness. Furthermore, let us not limit the concept of unity of destiny to the regions of our nation. We should extend it to all nations of the globe which recognise the superiority of spiritual, eternal values.<sup>68</sup>

Judging folklore a safe outlet to express regional loyalties, Pilar projected the wearing of local costume and the singing of folk songs as contributing to pride in the diversity of the nation. As she told members shortly before the end of the Civil War, this was the key to regaining national unity:

When Catalans can sing the songs of Castile; when in Castile they know what *sardanas* are and that the *chistu* is a musical instrument<sup>69</sup>... when the songs of Galicia are known in the Levant; when fifty or sixty thousand voices join in the same song, then we shall have achieved unity among the people and the lands of Spain. And what happens with music, happens as well in the countryside and on the land; the land which gives us bread and oil, wine and honey. Spain would be incomplete geographically if it were just made up of the north or the south. Spaniards, too, are incomplete if they are attached to just one area of the land.<sup>70</sup>

The assertions of former members that there was no political motive in their encouragement of songs in Catalan, Basque and Galician cannot be taken seriously. In an

<sup>67</sup> A founder member of SF states that the original motive of *coros y danzas* was not political but that Pilar made the most of it. It became a political force once ministers realised that refugees had indeed been persuaded to return to Spain. Interview with Mercedes Fórmica, 22 February 1996.

<sup>68</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1949 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 107.

<sup>69</sup> The *sardana* is the most well-known traditional dance of Catalonia; the *chistu* is a traditional flute of the Basque Country.

<sup>70</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1939 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 25.

attempt to prevent separatist aspirations, there was a ban in public places and in print of peninsular languages other than Spanish. The *sardana*, regarded since the beginning of the century as a statement of Catalan nationalism, was included in the SF repertoire, and songs in the vernacular were published with no repercussions from government.<sup>71</sup> It was an obvious way in which SF could identify its doctrine with the principles of the Francoist State.

A further area in which SF could exercise social control was in its rural regeneration programme. The early Falange had made a commitment to rural communities, recognising the countryside as 'the permanent seed-bed of Spain'.<sup>72</sup> The Francoist Labour Charter of 1938 endorsed support for rural areas by promising protection for artisans and a small piece of land to peasant families.<sup>73</sup> Courses to train country women in rural industries had been started during the Civil War and by 1950 had been extended to all regions.<sup>74</sup> From 1944, SF's department of Town and Country developed rural employment opportunities in conjunction with the Syndical Organisation. One of its sections concentrated on recouping and teaching crafts such as lace-making and raffia work and then providing village women with materials and a market outlet. Craft instructors also worked in the department's agricultural schools and had a role in the travelling schools, which visited the neediest areas of the country.

The scale of the project was ambitious. Forgotten local crafts were re-introduced and in the new villages being built, SF advised on schemes that would make best use of local resources.<sup>75</sup> SF also operated with help from the Prado Museum in Madrid. Funded by the Ministry of Labour, seventy workshops were set up to train country women in specialist

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Viky Eiroa, 23 October 1995. The SF songbook included songs in Basque, Catalan, Galician and Mallorquín.

<sup>72</sup> Point 17, in 'Norma programática de la Falange', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, Textos de doctrina política, (Madrid, D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1966), p. 342.

<sup>73</sup> S. Payne, The Franco Regime, p. 184.

<sup>74</sup> The opening of the National Agricultural School in Aranjuez in 1950 was the final stage of the expansion. In the year of its opening, forty-five women started training as rural instructors. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Labor realizada en 1951, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1952), p. 43.

<sup>75</sup> A number of villages destroyed in the war were rebuilt to contain an agricultural school run by SF. In a different scheme, new villages were built in underdeveloped areas of the country, giving financial inducements to settle there and work the land. In each, SF ran a 'rural home' (*hogar rural*) on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture. It was a combined domestic and rural school, connecting the community with veterinary services, agricultural experts and doctors and was run by a rural instructor. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996. As Michael Richards notes, however, the scale of the colonisation programmes was small, with only 37,000 people relocated between 1939 and 1954. M. Richards, A Time of Silence, p. 141.



embroidery work, recreating designs that had survived only in museum exhibitions and old books. A team of specialists advised on authenticity and the goods were sold in provincial exhibitions, Medina Circles and even the State-run hotel chain, the *paradores*. The cost of materials was subsidised by the Ministry of Labour and the scheme was eventually incorporated into the State holding company, the National Institute of Industry.<sup>76</sup> The schemes fitted well with SF's idealised view of rural society and to her members, Pilar presented them as proof of women's ability to change lives:

With your efforts, the villages of Spain will be cleaner, happier, more educated; through your efforts, children will sing the old songs of your native soil in the squares and on the threshing-floors;... through your efforts women will again weave at their looms as they put their children to bed and make the meal for when their husband comes home.<sup>77</sup>

The public image that SF was able to convey via its *coros y danzas* and its rural regeneration programme was wholly positive, an important factor in its acceptance with conservative and monarchist sectors of the regime. The poor state of SF finances may also have helped the organisation indirectly to gain public credibility. Economy measures were built into the 'way of being' and SF was run with the make-and-mend mentality of the early post-war years, making a virtue of austerity and implicitly endorsing the regime's autarkic policies.<sup>78</sup> For Pilar, SF - its possessions as well as its organisation - was the patrimony of Spain, to be treated with respect, preserved and used appropriately for the glory of the nation. She told conference delegates in 1947 to 'take more care of each piece of furniture, each book, each pot, each uniform than if it were your own... everything that gets broken or damaged for no reason means a reduction in the activities of the SF'.<sup>79</sup> In

<sup>76</sup> The scheme continued for eight years after the dissolution of the National Movement in 1977. The former head of Town and Country asserts that the finished goods collected in 1985 were valued at 200 million pesetas (about £820,000). Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

<sup>77</sup> Pilar's speech at the first provincial conferences of SF, 1939, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 122.

<sup>78</sup> For example, the only way to get a new biro was to present the old one; youth members did not receive free uniforms as their male equivalents did. (Interviews with Andresa Enseñat and Adelaida del Pozo, 27 October 1994); minutes of meetings were written on the backs of envelopes. (Interview with Nieves Serrano, 19 February 1996).

<sup>79</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1947 SF national conference in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 92.

every detail, the daily running of SF was testimony to this doctrine and it gave an official minimum service life for each of its fittings, furniture and articles of clothing.<sup>80</sup> Constant underfunding was part of the equation of Falangism with the near impossible and Pilar told conference delegates in 1948 that they must work the miracle of the loaves and fishes with SF's money.<sup>81</sup> SF was meticulous in its accounting and behaved as if questions of money belonged to activities of a lower order.<sup>82</sup> The SF, paupers in the service of Spain, would be judged on their works.<sup>83</sup>

The context of this moral rectitude in the early postwar was a society in which corruption and black marketeering were widespread. The widespread poverty that its workers encountered in rural areas was an inevitable consequence of the low wage levels and poor working conditions imposed by employers and landowners.<sup>84</sup> Franco's policy of attempted economic self-sufficiency based on State controls of industry and agriculture was directly responsible for the widespread and severe food shortages affecting the civil population in both town and country up to the 1950s. However effective at a local level, SF's welfare and nutrition campaigns could not disguise the fact that the State food ration cards met dietary requirements for only three days of the week nor that many Spaniards literally starved to death.<sup>85</sup> Obtaining food on the black market (*estraperlo*) soon became essential for survival, however loud the official protests about the evils of the black marketeers. SF was in the curious position of administering relief to the poor and nutrition advice and teaching to the female population while its male counterparts in the National Movement were themselves responsible for the most institutionalised of the black

<sup>80</sup>For example, sheets and towels - five years, blankets - fifty years, cutlery - two hundred years. Reply to questionnaire to Asociación Nueva Andadura, January 1995.

<sup>81</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1948 SF national conference in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 106.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Vicky Eiroa, 23 October 1995.

<sup>83</sup> Pilar, for example, records in her memoirs sending back unused expenses to central government and is said to have insisted on paying for a lunch taken at an SF national school on the grounds that her visit was not an official one. Interview with Angela Garrido, 22 February 1996. Clergy and religious working for SF were not immune from its cautious housekeeping. In the memory of a former contributor to SF's religious programmes, lecture fees were not paid until the monk had presented three signatures to verify that it had taken place. Interview with Father Manuel Garrido, 27 July 1996.

<sup>84</sup> There was particular hardship for day labourers, whose wages declined by 40 per cent between the years 1940 and 1951 and for whom there was no guaranteed length of working day. E. Sevilla Guzmán y Manuel González de Molina, 'Política social agraria del primer franquismo', in J.L. García Delgado (ed.), *El primer franquismo: España durante la segunda guerra mundial*, (Madrid, Siglo veintiuno editores de España, 1989), p. 164.

<sup>85</sup> D. Ridruejo, *Escrito en España*, (Buenos Aires, Losada, 1962), p. 103; R. Abella, *Por el imperio hacia Dios: crónica de una posguerra 1939-55*, (Barcelona, Planeta, 1978), p. 117. The author believes that figures given elsewhere (30,000 deaths from starvation between the years 1940 and 1946) understate the problem.

market operations.<sup>86</sup>

SF's attitude to *estraperlo* was ambiguous in the extreme. Officially, it lent its voice to the public condemnation of the black marketeers, reflected by vitriolic articles in the Falangist daily paper, *Arriba* and its own *Revista 'Y'*.<sup>87</sup> It presented *estraperlo* as a crime perpetrated by individuals trying to cheat the State, never as a fraud so institutionalised that it had become an essential part of the economy.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, it acknowledged its existence by offering housewives recipes that could be made 'without ration cards or black market'.<sup>89</sup> In the memory of a national *mando*, each provincial branch instructed local leaders in combination with the local *divulgadora* to organise information campaigns and report suspicions to the mayor or civil governor.<sup>90</sup> But given the undoubted collusion of authorities, it must be assumed that such protests were largely symbolic. SF's rationalisation of the situation was to blame 'the enemies of Spain', which included 'reds' and Falangists unworthy of the name who 'are now in our midst but who left us alone when the wine at our table was vinegar and the bread was hard'.<sup>91</sup> This tacit acceptance of *estraperlo* was consistent with SF's usual stance of conciliation and practical help within a framework of total faith in its political masters. Past members have asserted that black marketeering never amounted to more than individual criminal acts committed by needy individuals.<sup>92</sup> Alleviating the poverty was seen as more productive than informing the

<sup>86</sup> In 1937, Franco's wartime government had set up a supply control system for wheat in the Nationalist zone to guarantee wheat prices for growers and ensure that the whole crop was distributed efficiently and sold at fixed prices. But the prices offered were so low that farmers began switching to more profitable crops or concealing some of their crop to sell at much higher prices to black marketeers. In the case of wheat, the black market exceeded the official supply. R. J. Harrison, *The Spanish Economy from the Civil War to the European Community, prepared for the Economic History Society by Joseph Harrison*, (London, Macmillan, 1993), p. 35. The scandal was that the black market operated through the collusion of those working directly in the State-controlled National Wheat Service and the Commission of Supplies and Transport, as well as people in positions of responsibility nearer the rural communities such as mayors and civil governors. C. Barciela, 'El mercado negro de productos agrarios en la posguerra 1939-53', in J. Fontana (ed.), *España bajo el franquismo*, (Barcelona, Grijalbo, 1984), p. 199.

<sup>87</sup> For example the leading article in *Arriba*, 18 January 1941 accused some of falsifying ration cards, thereby depriving 'the humble classes' of their bread ration. *Revista 'Y'*, (August 1941) took a similar stand, blaming shortages in Madrid on the fact that ration cards were not handed in when people died.

<sup>88</sup> What distinguished the Spanish black market was its duration, scale, degree of penetration into society and its widespread acceptance as an inevitable phenomenon. C. Barciela, 'La España del estraperlo' in J. L. García Delgado (ed.), *El primer franquismo*, p. 106.

<sup>89</sup> *Revista 'Y'*, (August 1942).

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>91</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1938 national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 18.

<sup>92</sup> Interviews with Jesús Suevos, 26 October 1997; Lucía del Día Valdeón, 28 October 1997; Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

authorities.<sup>93</sup>

SF programmes in the early post-war years totally supported the principles of autarky. The rationale behind its domestic training courses was that 'household economy should be in line with the national economy'.<sup>94</sup> Examples of practical help were the numerous articles in the organisation's journal on the subject of good housekeeping. From August 1939 articles such as 'Autarky and you' and 'The spiritual value of money' in *Revista 'Y'* explained the principles of the circulation of money and the effect of good housekeeping on the national economy.<sup>95</sup> These were accompanied by advice on how to make raffia shoes and fur coats, as well as suggestions for new food sources, such as beekeeping and even the cultivation of frogs.<sup>96</sup> Making economies was a fundamental political concern as well as a pragmatic necessity.

However, as in the case of *estraperlo*, SF's principles of good housekeeping were in marked contrast to activities within the National Movement, characterised as José Luis Delgado has said, by 'the asphyxiating control of bureaucracy and multiple administrative irregularities'.<sup>97</sup> There certainly seemed little possibility of personal gain within SF, where a directive from Pilar forbidding staff from giving or receiving presents was applied rigidly.<sup>98</sup> Male functionaries, on the other hand, were not above accepting wine or sausage in the course of their duties.<sup>99</sup>

The intent behind SF's rural initiatives and promotion of domestic skills was to cushion families from the worst of Francoist agricultural policies. As noted by Sevilla Guzmán and González de Medina, these amounted to 'agrarian fascism' by representing the

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997. SF put pressure on the civil authorities for goods confiscated to be given to Social Aid. She recalls one case of a woman trying to sell eggs and milk to a *mando*; the response was to give her money and direct her to the nearest Social Aid dining-room.

<sup>94</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1942 national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 53.

<sup>95</sup> *Revista 'Y'*, (October 1939, August 1939).

<sup>96</sup> *Revista 'Y'*, (July 1941, February 1941, May 1941, October 1941).

<sup>97</sup> J. L. García Delgado, 'Estancamiento industrial e intervencionismo' in J. Fontana (ed.), *España bajo el franquismo*, p. 185.

<sup>98</sup> Order circular no. 146, 15 March 1940, from the national office of SF stated: 'In recognition of the circumstances of Spain and because it is not in accordance with our style all provincial and local leaders are forbidden to give presents to their superiors. Equally, the national leader and her deputy or any other national *mando* will not accept presents given in the course of their inspections through the provinces.' P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 273. A teacher in the SF travelling school remembers villagers in Cuenca province deciding to offer them a share in the revenue from the annual cutting of pinewood. But the national office forbade the team from accepting it, even though the money would have been added to the budget of the travelling school. Interview with Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Mariti Calvo, 31 October 1996.

'sovereignty of the peasantry' as an idealised social entity while ensuring that the dominance of landowners continued and wages were kept very low.<sup>100</sup> The situation was worsened by the absence of paid employment possibilities for women. There was no equivalent to the cleaners and domestic servants employed in the cities, jobs which enabled women in many cases to hold the family together when the male wage was either inadequate or non-existent. Added to this were the effects of the repression on rural communities, whereby agricultural workers were not easily able to migrate to the cities to find better paid work. In this situation, female income was of inestimable value and regeneration schemes were an important safety-valve for the government, made all the more attractive, as with SF's Foreign Service propaganda, by their extreme cheapness. And the efficiency of SF was renowned.<sup>101</sup>

SF's programmes also helped to cushion the hardships in towns and cities, where working-class women were employed directly and, even more than their male equivalents, suffering the consequences of poor pay and conditions. The 1938 Labour Charter had removed many women from the workforce by forcing dismissal from certain job areas when women married. Subsequent welfare legislation discouraged female employment by the granting of subsidies and allowances to families where the wife was at home. But SF's interventionist techniques in the urban workplace brought it into conflict with both employers and government ministers. Rural women could be helped without upsetting anyone, but improvements to the lot of women in factories threatened to upset the balance of the male-dominated syndical organisation and with it, the *machista* framework of Francoist society.<sup>102</sup>

The other face of SF's humanitarianism was its role in the regime's control of the civil population. It was operating in a climate where a raft of legislation crushed any opposition to the regime and exacted the highest of prices for those who had been on the

<sup>100</sup> E. Sevilla Guzmán y M. González de Medina, 'Política social agraria del primer franquismo', in J. L. García Delgado (ed.), *El primer franquismo*, p. 163.

<sup>101</sup> Interviews with Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996; Carmen Martín Olmedo, 21 February 1996.

<sup>102</sup> The head of Town and Country remembers many battles, among them trying to persuade women workers to listen to and understand their labour rights, overcoming *machista* attitudes of employers who frequently insulted the female employees, removing the discriminatory requirement that women needed to present medical certificates before they could be employed. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

losing side of the war.<sup>103</sup> SF opposed reprisals and gave help to all comers but evidence is limited about the extent of its involvement in the repressive machinery of State.<sup>104</sup> One *mando* remembers that during the war, the local SF premises were the official venue for people to report suspicious behaviour or denounce a neighbour.<sup>105</sup> Another served in 1942 on a government panel, part of the National Movement's Information and Investigation department, denying that the work was prejudicial to the individuals being investigated.<sup>106</sup> A similar claim is made about SF's work with the Falange teachers' service (*Servicio Español del Magisterio*).<sup>107</sup> A former SF member whose husband was the head of this organisation states that many primary teachers who had worked in the Republican zone were defended by panels which had SF representation.<sup>108</sup> The fact that SF did offer genuine help in at least one case is confirmed by a contemporary whose mother (a primary teacher who had worked in the Republican zone) was facing a military court. SF provided statements of good conduct, although its members had never met his mother and knew nothing about her. Perhaps more significant, however, was the response from the Department of Education, who was under instructions to ignore SF testimonials because they were known to be statements of charity. The only statements accepted were from parish priests and other clergy.<sup>109</sup>

SF's longer-term involvement in the post-war repression appears to have been variable and dependent on the individual personality of the *mando*, not the previous

<sup>103</sup> The Law of Political Responsibilities, passed before the war had ended, criminalised political activities deemed to be against the National Movement retrospectively to 1934. All those who had worked in the Republic during the war years had to prove their political adhesion to the regime. Professional qualifications, as well as posts themselves were restored only when government panels were provided with statements of good conduct and recommendations from among the victors of the war. S. Payne, *The Franco Regime*, pp. 209-228.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994. She states that Pilar was against reprisals for religious reasons and that SF welcomed girls from both right-wing and left-wing backgrounds. The same point was made by the following: Teresa Loring, 27 October 1994; Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995; Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996; Carmen Martín Olmedo, 21 February 1996; Adelaida del Pozo, 27 May 1996.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996. It went on for a year at most and the informants, mostly children, were rewarded with sweets. It was not the SF local leader who carried out the investigations.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>107</sup> The S.E.M. was a section of the Falange's Education Department, set up in 1940 as the transmission-belt for the political indoctrination of primary teachers. It comprised a professional advisory section, a welfare department and a general register of teachers. *Anuario social de España 1941*, (Madrid, Hermosilla, 1941), pp. 720-22. S.E.M. membership was a guarantee of immunity from the effect of political denunciations. Interview with the former head of S.E.M., José María Gutiérrez del Castillo, 19 February 1996.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Carmen Martín Olmedo, 21 February 1996.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995.

political climate of the area. In Salamanca, for example, despite its importance as the first Francoist war headquarters, SF was not particularly strong after the war.<sup>110</sup> In Guadalajara, by contrast, 'it was a whole world'.<sup>111</sup> To claim, as past members have done, that they were at all times above the political considerations of the moment seems disingenuous, given that many ordinary members (if not many *mandos*) were married to functionaries and would have been direct beneficiaries of corruption within the Movement. On the other hand, it was no doubt expedient to distance themselves from political goings-on, particularly for those women dealing directly with the human problems derived from them.

It was certainly true that SF used control measures in order to impose its values and principles on the female population. Although past members strenuously deny that records kept on members were used in any negative way, recruitment and training literature continually emphasised their importance.<sup>112</sup> Access to SF promoted posts, grants or courses was via written recommendations and progress reports. Standard questionnaires asked for details on family background, personal character and religious and political reliability.<sup>113</sup> Personal files were 'the vital nerve of the Organisation'.<sup>114</sup>

A different kind of control was exercised by SF over the dispensing of its welfare programme. The teams of health visitors and travelling teachers going into the country areas had a brief to gather information about families' living conditions, religious observance and political status. There had been a precedent in the gathering of data set by Social Aid, whose early social visitors had taken in questionnaires to families, ostensibly to determine need. But questions included finding out if children were baptised and if couples were married. Information of this sort was handed to the parish priest.<sup>115</sup> Similar intervention was possible in a joint project with the Syndical Organisation in which SF administered a low-cost scheme for the buying of furniture for newly-weds, entailing an

<sup>110</sup> Interviews with Julio Ibañez Rodrigo, 3 June 1995; Puri Barrios, 31 October 1996.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Puri Barrios, 31 October 1996. She states that the Basque Country and Catalonia had strong SF leadership, a point confirmed by Mónica Plaza, (30 May 1996).

<sup>112</sup> Interviews with Andresa López Enseñat and Adelaida del Pozo, 27 October 1994.

<sup>113</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Personal: organización local*, (Madrid, Osca, 1962), p. 118.

<sup>114</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Historia y misión de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S.*, (Madrid, D.N. de Educación de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1944), n.p.

<sup>115</sup> 'La labor realizada por las Secciones Femeninas de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. en las diversas dependencias sanitarias', in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro primero)*, p. 37.

inspection of the home: 'The furniture will not belong to applicants until the last instalment has been paid and up to that time they will have to satisfy the network of inspectors that it is being well cared for and used properly.'<sup>116</sup> Intervention was also ensured in SF's issue of baby clothes and Moses baskets to needy families. The giving of the basket established a contact with a SF *mando* who could then exert pressure for the child to be christened and even, according to the propaganda, persuade the parents to choose a suitable name.<sup>117</sup>

The effect of SF's carrot-and-stick approach on the civil population is less easily gauged than the public perception that the organisation was always loyal to the regime. Its interventions were always politically motivated but stood out as being scrupulously honest in the years when much of the National Movement was patently neither. The transparency of its conduct was useful for its dealings with the Franco government, enabling SF to get much of what it wanted without threatening male sensitivities.

The fact that Pilar was also engaged in an ideological battle to preserve the legacy of her brother was largely unseen. It suited her purpose to present herself as above political considerations, even proclaiming on one occasion: 'Let us just get on with our own business and leave the men to sort out all the complications which governing the nation involves, because that is what they are called to do.'<sup>118</sup> But in the face of the rhetoric, Pilar used her influence as a leading legitimist to form alliances and get her own way. The nursing department she had so objected to was closed down after the Civil War, the youth section and social service were eventually returned to the SF fold and her main rival, Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, was removed from the scene.

Pilar's singlemindedness served her well in the political circumstances in which SF was operating. Just as she had ignored, or refused to accept, certain of the consequences of the Decree of Unification, she was not diverted in the post-war years from developing SF's programmes. Her political goal remained that of the social control of the female population, but the fact that SF's enthusiasm for Falangism also bound it to the corruption and cruelty of many of its adherents was simply not acknowledged. Under Pilar's

<sup>116</sup> 'Obra sindical del Ajuar', in *Revista 'Y'*, (June 1943).

<sup>117</sup> 'En la exposición de Bellas Artes: consideraciones sobre las canastillas, el amor, los niños y el matrimonio', in *Revista 'Y'*, (February 1942).

<sup>118</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1941 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 45.





leadership, SF managed to remain firmly within the regime and yet a step away from its worst excesses.

## Chapter Five

### Continuing the Revolution: SF 1945-59

As *Sección Femenina* (SF) prepared to face the 1950s, it had much cause for satisfaction. The nation had taken its first steps to recovery since the Civil War and the interventionary programmes of SF were giving way to more institutionalised welfare and education work. Its national training schools were fully operational and one had been relocated and expanded. SF's rural regeneration schemes were given new outlets by the Department of Syndicates and the Ministry of Housing. And the propaganda triumph of 1948, the performance of its choir and dance teams (*coros y danzas*) to foreign audiences, was scheduled to continue with further trips approved by central government.

But amid the optimism, the decade started with anxieties about how SF should develop as an organisation. Alongside the sense of achievement that programmes were expanding was a consciousness that the political doctrine was based on a memory and vision of the past. This chapter examines the difficulties this caused in the lower ranks of SF and how the organisation tried to re-present its identity while keeping faith with the values of the Civil War and the doctrine of José Antonio. It considers SF's continuing usefulness to the regime and the value placed on its work in financial terms, its contribution to social legislation affecting women in the 1950s and lastly, its impact on the female unaffiliated population.

At one level, it was the case that the Francoist vision of a regenerated Spain coincided broadly with the original ideas of José Antonio.<sup>1</sup> The basic tenets of the Falange, drafted in 1934, had been adopted with little alteration by Franco when he unified the parties of the Right in 1937. These included the vision of Spain as a 'unit of destiny in the universal order', staking a claim to Empire with her citizens united in the common aim of restoring wealth and influence to the nation.<sup>2</sup> There was, too, a call for a 'National Revolution' to bring this about, in which the style would be 'direct, ardent and combative', emphasising José Antonio's belief in life as a form of military service 'to be lived in a

<sup>1</sup> Although, as noted elsewhere, Franco ignored the more extreme of José Antonio's economic ideas such as nationalising the banks.

<sup>2</sup> 'Norma Programática de la Falange', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos de doctrina política*, (Madrid, D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1966), pp. 339-44.

pure spirit of service and sacrifice'.<sup>3</sup>

But the final point of Falangist doctrine, which had spelled out how the Revolution was to be made, was deleted by Franco when he adopted the Programmatic Points of the Falange as a basis for Unification. José Antonio had declared that the Falange intended to enter into few political pacts, and he also described how the Revolution would be made by the 'Conquest of the State'.<sup>4</sup> The removal of the final clause distanced Franco from anything more than a rhetorical commitment to the revolutionary potential of the Falange. In 1937, there was no thought of compulsorily involving the entire population in a process of political mobilisation. The newly unified parties of the Right were not about to carry through the *joseantoniano* idea of a mass penetration of society by elite members. Only in SF and, to a lesser extent, in the Youth Front of the National Movement, was it seriously proposed that society could be transformed by the rigorous imposition of political and social teachings.<sup>5</sup> In this vision of the Revolution, elite members (*mandos*) would work 'in tune with the historic destiny of the people, even where this is not in accordance with the wish of the masses'.<sup>6</sup>

SF's dynamism was initially helpful after the Civil War. The urgency of the problems it faced required its specialists to function as emergency aid providers, working to achieve measurable targets in child health, a reduction in infant mortality and improved domestic economies in the villages. But the work of SF staff was always in the context of the *joseantoniano* principles of the Falange Revolution and the overarching principles of Francoism. Their job, or 'mission' as it was described in SF literature, had many dimensions. Training manuals stressed the 'complete work' (*labor total*) expected of local specialists. The rural instructor, for example, had a specific teaching and advisory role in village and farming communities but also had to contribute to the 'moral, cultural and

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

<sup>4</sup> 'We will endeavour to triumph in the struggle using only the forces subject to our discipline. We shall make very few pacts. Only in the final push for the Conquest of the State will the leadership work towards the necessary collaboration, provided that our ascendancy is assured.' Point 27 of the 'Norma Programática de la Falange' quoted in R. Chueca, *El fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco: un estudio sobre FET-JONS*, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1983), p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> The Youth Front was one of the very few departments of the National Movement which was not primarily bureaucratic and which connected directly with both members and the unaffiliated. The content and style of training of youth leaders was similar to that of SF *mandos*. Interviews with Puri Barrios and Mariti Calvo, 31 October 1996.

<sup>6</sup> 'Acerca de la Revolución', in *Haz*, no. 9, 12 October 1934, in J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos*, p. 663.

recreational' development of rural families.<sup>7</sup> In the belief that *joseantoniano* doctrine provided a complete model for how people should run their lives, the rural instructor was required to organise exemplar leisure activities, such as 'best housewife' competitions and musical and drama contributions for local festivals.<sup>8</sup> There were other SF specialists to help, such as the local youth or physical education instructor, but in the context of the widespread rural poverty of the 1950s, the expectation must have seemed impossible to many.

Even by 1945, there were indications that the style and rhetoric of SF operations were out of step with the direction of the regime. Youth membership was falling, and in 1946 complaints from SF health workers (*divulgadoras*) were increasing. Like the rural instructors, their 'mission' had many facets and in the early years had no guaranteed payment. In the period between 1946 and 1951, a large number resigned, their situation illustrative of the difficulties faced by many SF staff.<sup>9</sup> The social problems which SF had tackled so energetically after the Civil War were no less urgent. But among the specialist *mandos*, particularly those working at local level, there was a sense that the wartime spirit in which the programmes had been spearheaded could not last forever. SF's operational style had no parallel outside the Falangist sector of the National Movement and was in contrast to the de-politicised subordination promoted by the authoritarian conservatives in the regime. Carlists, monarchists and Christian Democrats alike had no tradition of interventionary programmes or efforts to mobilise the general population, which was still in the grips of the post-war repression and economic hardship. As Dionisio Ridruejo commented on his return to Spain in 1951:

The conformism of the nation has made everyone used to the lack of

<sup>7</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Instructoras rurales de la Sección Femenina: reglamentación de sus servicios*, (Madrid, Vicente Rico, 1958), p.3. As noted in Chapter Two, the specialism of rural instructor was created after the opening of the first national agricultural school in 1950.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> The number of *divulgadoras* was at its highest in 1945, with 3,861 on active service. But there was a sharp drop the following year and by 1951 the total had fallen to 3,100. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Alcance y acción de la Sección Femenina*, (Madrid, Magerit, 1953), Anejo 4, p. 29. From 1944, *divulgadoras* were entitled to a monthly salary of between 75-100 pesetas, to be paid directly by the civil authorities and replacing the previous grace-and-favour arrangement. Carta Circular no. 28, Madrid 27 November 1944, from national head of Health and Welfare to provincial leaders. Archivo General de la Administración Civil del Estado, Sección Cultura, legajo 5066-7, no. IDD, 99.03.

information and the dogmatic asphyxiation of intellectual life... The nation is as quiet as the grave... The atmosphere, which you could describe as either relaxed, or morally deadened and apparently self-satisfied, is scarcely recognisable as belonging to the Spain I left.<sup>10</sup>

It was in these difficult political and social circumstances that SF staff were attempting to interest communities in the Falange Revolution and José Antonio. Parents in general wanted their daughters to study, not join a political youth group or go off to summer camp.<sup>11</sup> And whereas SF's programmes had the political and cultural legitimisation of the regime, *mandos* still had to face the barriers of a male-dominated and controlled society. The male population, particularly the authorities locally, did not uniformly welcome women arriving in villages 'with their luggage on their back, to save from death, ignorance and misery those souls forgotten by everyone except the Falange'.<sup>12</sup>

SF staff's qualities of inventiveness and persuasion were often more useful than political rhetoric in combating prejudice. The former national head of the travelling schools recalls the strategy used to ensure that male residents would come to the literacy classes and agricultural courses organised in the villages. The SF team was routinely ignored by all the men on arrival, and the staff's priority was to start cookery classes for the women. After a few days the men would begin to appreciate the improved catering at home. The *mandos* would then visit the local bar, where they were invariably the only females present. The men would get up as they came in and insist on paying. After this, staff knew that they could start their full programme of classes and that men would attend.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> D. Ridruejo, *Escrito en España*, (Buenos Aires, Losada, 1962), p. 32. As stated in Chapter Two, Dionisio Ridruejo was one of the Falangist intellectuals and was instrumental in the organisation of the early SF. His first post in the Falange was as provincial leader of Valladolid and following the Decree of Unification, he was appointed to the Falangist National Council (*Consejo Nacional*), its Political Committee (*Junta Política*) and the post of national head of propaganda. His political views changed, however, following his return from service in Russia with the Blue Division and a brief stay in Germany. In 1942, he resigned his membership of the Falange and editorship of the journal *Escorial*. Franco's response to his outspoken comments was to have him placed under house arrest and ban publication of three volumes of poetry. Restrictions were lifted on him in 1947 and he spent two and a half years in Italy. Once back in Spain, his continuing opposition to the regime was not tolerated and he was imprisoned twice. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-30.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Viky Eiroa, 23 October 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1952 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera*, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1952), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996.

But the price of carrying out successful programmes was the increasing sense of tiredness of the *mandos* responsible. By the early 1950s, there was a feeling in the service hierarchy at provincial and local level that realism should prevail and that social and educational outcomes should be made the priority. Orders coming from the national office were not always obeyed, and a double standard developed between the ideologues of Almagro 36, who clung rigidly to the original *joseantoniano* doctrine, and the staff on the ground.<sup>14</sup>

For Pilar, however, the separation of doctrine from SF's programmes was never a possibility. There was no thought of consciously going against the direction of the regime, which after 1945 was keen to present the National Movement as a broad-based party of State. SF had accepted this, understanding that the 1947 Law of Succession was necessary and also that the regime was becoming increasingly Catholic ('National Catholic') in its leanings. It was simply the case that Pilar believed utterly in the continuing basis for SF's moral authority. Nonetheless, at the 1952 SF conference, she acknowledged the crisis:

For some... we are the kind of ferocious tyranny which they classify as a totalitarian State... For others... we are admirable women, who for charitable reasons dedicate ourselves to alleviating need, to the point where for some Falangists, this should be the sole duty of the SF... Well, we are neither one thing nor the other; we are... the female part of a Political Movement, with its doctrinal core, which makes us live in a passionate will to serve and which has as its immediate objective the moral revolution. Because we know that by making the person, we make the Nation.<sup>15</sup>

In style, too, SF was incontrovertibly tied to the recent past. The early Falange had come into being as a protest against the Second Republic. The manner of its development, its conflict with Republican governments and its role in the Civil War were integral to its ideology. This was manifest in its oratory, which included calls to its supporters

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Viky Eiroa, 23 October 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1952 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera*, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1952), p. 4.

(*camaradas*), constant denunciations of its enemies and was both warlike and heavily sentimental. The rhetoric and symbolism which was so essential to SF's belief system was also largely the style of the Axis powers.

But while this and the political nature of SF's programmes made the job of *mandos* difficult, Pilar saw a way to impose the 'moral revolution' other than through propaganda and textbooks. Since its inception in 1938, the SF journal, *Revista 'Y'* had carried articles of general interest on careers and study, marriage and Francoist social and welfare legislation.<sup>16</sup> The opportunity came at the beginning of the decade to bring these issues to a more public forum and establish a role for SF as a national voice representing women's interests. From the contacts made during SF's visits to Latin America with its choirs and dance teams came the idea of hosting a conference for SF members and women from Spanish-speaking countries. The remit of the twelve-day SF Hispano-American conference which began in Madrid on 3 June 1951 was to discuss issues of interest to women, including employment, higher education and women's role in politics.<sup>17</sup> But perhaps inevitably, the conference opened up divisions in the thinking among the higher *mandos*. As noted in Chapter One, SF had a contradictory stance on paid female employment. There were clearly inequalities, lack of opportunities and discrimination but it was not clear how SF could champion employment rights without appearing to contradict the fundamental notion that women's principal role was as homemakers.

By the time of the conference, certain of the original *mandos* felt in any case that the moment was right to put pressure on ministers to improve employment legislation. The editor of an SF journal, Mercedes Fórmica, a founder member of SF, had been asked to prepare proposals on women's employment in Spain for one of the conference sessions. She prevailed on Pilar to add a section to those for discussion - the situation of women in

<sup>16</sup> For example, *Revista 'Y'*, 'Fuero del trabajo de la mujer', April 1938; 'La Ley sindical', February 1941; 'Usted quiere casarse, pero antes desea saber', April 1941; 'La mujer universitaria', March 1942; 'Préstamos de nupcialidad', August 1941; 'Pensamiento y trayectoria de las vidas de mujer', February 1942.

<sup>17</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1992), p. 254. There were delegates representing Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, the Philippines, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, Salvador, Uruguay, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. 479 members of SF attended. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Alcance y acción*, p. 79.

the liberal professions.<sup>18</sup> Mercedes Fórmica headed a team of eleven professional women at the Institute of Political Studies and over the following twenty-two months produced her report. To her astonishment, the document was withdrawn moments before it was due for presentation at the conference and Mercedes Fórmica told it had 'been lost'.<sup>19</sup>

The experience did not deflect Mercedes Fórmica from further contributions to legislative reform but it convinced her and others that SF was missing opportunities.<sup>20</sup> To her mind, SF should be building on its success and showing government it was time to put right the discrimination against women which the Second Republic had failed to address. It was a point of view which caused some *mandos*, including Mercedes Fórmica, to conclude that the criterion of family above all else would forever inform Pilar's way of thinking.<sup>21</sup>

Nonetheless, SF did campaign for changes to legislation on women's issues. The Hispano-American conference had set up a discussion panel to look at discriminatory female legislation and in 1952 a further forum, the First Congress of Justice and Law, took the discussions forward. Over the following six years, SF worked towards reform of the Civil Code and in 1958, the government announced sixty-six changes that would favour women.

Considering that Franco had re-established the Civil Code of 1889, under which married women were legally subordinate to their husbands and male adultery was condoned, the number of injustices to women were many. The sixty-six changes were an extremely modest first step to righting discrimination and did nothing to alter the premise that women were fundamentally dependent on men and that married women, in particular, were subject to their authority in family and property matters. They removed three major injustices: that a widow who remarried should not lose maternal authority over her

<sup>18</sup> Her ambition had been to enter the Diplomatic Service and she had earlier complained to the Minister of Justice (and Secretary-General of the National Movement), Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, of the unfairness of the system which debarred women from sitting professional competitive examinations. His reply was that she should have been a midwife. Interview with Mercedes Fórmica, 22 February 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Mercedes Fórmica, 22 February 1996. The detail of the incident is quoted in the introduction of one of her novels. M. Fórmica, *A instancia de parte*, (Madrid, Castalia, Instituto de la Mujer, 1991), pp. 36-8. To her even greater astonishment, she recognised the work of her team in the text of the draft of the Law of Political, Professional and Employment Rights of the Woman, presented to parliament by Pilar ten years later!

<sup>20</sup> She was largely responsible for the 1958 reforms to the Civil and Penal Code.

<sup>21</sup> The potential that Pilar had to bring on women's rights is corroborated by the former editor of *Revista 'Y'*, Marichu de la Mora. She recalls trying unsuccessfully with Mercedes Fórmica, Mercedes Sanz Bachiller and others to persuade Pilar to organise a national network of nurseries through SF. Interview with Marichu de la Mora, 27 October 1997.



existing children and secondly that a wife seeking legal separation should not automatically forfeit her family home, considered to be the husband's, and rights over her children. Even if the case went against her, she would be entitled to half the shared possessions and all her own. Finally, the distinction between male adultery and that of the woman was removed, both being considered a cause for legal separation.<sup>22</sup>

The second piece of legislation of the 1950s was unequivocally the product of SF intervention. Since the 1940s, the Town and Country department had been conscious of the precarious employment situation of domestic staff. They had access to certain SF facilities such as summer camps but the worry was the women were employed without entitlements to benefits, so that when they became too old to work, the family frequently dismissed them to face an old age with neither home nor pension. It took four years from 1955 before the government was persuaded to set up a social security scheme. The proposal had been drafted by the head of Town and Country and was finally due to go the Council of Ministers for discussion. It had been blocked at the first session because of lack of time and was due to be presented that day. At the last minute, the minister responsible, Fermín Sanz Orrio, called Mónica Plaza to his office and told her that it would not be presented for discussion because ministers' wives had heard the proposals and were objecting (on the grounds that the scheme would add to their wage bill for domestic servants). SF's response was to invite the ministers' wives, together with Doña Carmen, the wife of Franco, to a teaparty at the Medina Circle. In the presence of the bill's opponents, SF staff described the need for the legislation to Doña Carmen. She promised to tell her husband and the bill was passed unopposed at the next Council of Ministers.<sup>23</sup>

Although both pieces of legislation were undoubtedly important, it was not until the

<sup>22</sup> Article 168 was redrafted to: 'subsequent marriage of the father or mother will not affect paternal authority'. Article 1882 of the Law of Civil Proceedings redefined the marital home as 'the family home' and the wife was able to remain there and normally awarded custody of the children. Article 1413 was redrafted to ensure that the permission of the woman was granted before family property was disposed of. Article 105 removed the distinction between male and female adultery. T. Loring, 'Promoción político-social de la mujer durante los años del mandato de Franco', in (Autores Varios), Colección Azor de Estudios Contemporáneos, *El legado de Franco*, (Burgos, Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, 1993), pp. 593-4.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996. There was still some persuading to do in the wider community. Mónica Plaza set up telephone helplines and spoke on radio and television. In the first three months of its operation, 300,000 women had joined. Provincial and national committees were established to administer the scheme, including a team of inspectors (*Cuerpo de Visitadoras*) who visited homes where domestic staff were having problems. She remembers the struggle as one of the bitterest but the most worthwhile of her career. The scheme 'Montepío del Servicio Doméstico' was created by the decree of 17 March 1959.

1960s that SF intervention and pressure in government began to bring about major change.<sup>24</sup> Less controversial, and therefore more acceptable to SF was its contribution to the nation's culture. This was a role for SF which freed it from the direct transmission of political ideas yet which was in tune with the doctrine of José Antonio. And whereas its other programmes were targeted at the female population, involvement in culture was not gender-specific. Moreover, it aligned SF with elements of the male Falange, for whom a trademark of Falangism was intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness. And although, as Amando de Miguel has indicated, any 'liberalism' on the part of male Falangist intellectuals amounted to little more than a protest against the traditional cultural monopoly of culture by the Church, it was nonetheless an area where SF could be seen to represent the most 'modern' elements of Falangism.<sup>25</sup> Its Foreign Service re-opened the Madrid Lyceum and the Ladies' Residence, both closed at the beginning of the Civil War. Renamed the Medina Cultural Circle, the Lyceum was one of the very few places left after the war offering cultural events of quality. Its recitals and lectures attracted such writers and musicians that were still in circulation, helping to establish SF as a cultural bridge-head for the regime.<sup>26</sup>

SF's role was also in harmony with attempts of the regime to foster cultural links abroad to counter Spain's international isolation.<sup>27</sup> Its contacts with Latin America were particularly welcome as they fitted the concept of Spain as the 'spiritual axis of the hispanic world'<sup>28</sup> without this appearing a ridiculous aspiration following the Axis defeat. This had been a prime aim of the Hispano-American conference and there were a number of

<sup>24</sup> The Law of Political, Professional and Employment Rights of the Woman, passed on 22 July 1961, gave access to women to work in most fields, but still barred her from the Armed Forces and the judiciary and did not remove the need for her husband to give written permission for her to work. A decree seven months later gave women the right to continue working after marriage, leave (with State benefits) or take temporary leave of absence). M. A. Durán, El trabajo de la mujer en España, (Madrid, Tecnos, 1972), pp. 37-8.

<sup>25</sup> A. de Miguel, La sociología del franquismo - análisis ideológico de los ministros del régimen, (Barcelona, Euros, 1975), p. 195.

<sup>26</sup> Between 1951 and 1952, for example, there were ninety-three lectures and concerts. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Alcance y acción, p. 77. The Ladies' Residence was founded as an equivalent to the (male) Students' Residence (*Residencia de Estudiantes*). Its continuance under SF management is discussed in Chapter Six.

<sup>27</sup> Other examples were the annual celebration of Columbus Day (October 12) and the founding of the Institute of Hispanic Culture in 1946. S. Payne, The Franco Regime 1936-1975, (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 361. In November 1945, the U.S. ambassador left Madrid and the following year, the French government closed the border with Spain indefinitely. The British ambassador was recalled in December and in the same month the United Nations called for complete withdrawal of international relations. *Ibid.*, pp. 356-9. Spain's financial situation was greatly worsened by its exclusion for political reasons from the American aid of the Marshall Plan.

<sup>28</sup> 'Norma Programática de la Falange', in J.A. Primo de Rivera, Textos, p. 339.

outcomes. Six of the visiting countries decided to start their own cultural forums and from here came the idea of further collaboration and links between these and SF's Medina Circle.<sup>29</sup> Of these, the most significant were SF scholarships, enabling Latin American women to study for a year in Spain and, in some cases, for Spanish women to go there.<sup>30</sup>

The success of the Hispano-American conference encouraged the belief in SF that the regime valued its cultural initiatives and the *joseantoniano* doctrine which underpinned them. This was a conclusion which seemed justified by national events at the beginning of the 1950s. Amid the rhetoric and propaganda of the Civil War, the most serious attempt at an intellectual justification of the conflict had come from Falangists such as Dionisio Ridruejo and Antonio Tovar. At the beginning of the decade, politicians sympathetic to the early Falange re-presented this view. The idea that 'revolution' could be combined with 'restoration' as Sheelagh Ellwood has said, allowed for discussion of how the regime and its future as a monarchy could develop politically and culturally.<sup>31</sup> State propaganda idealised the nation as a unified, Catholic community, guided away from foreign danger by the wisdom of the Caudillo. The Fundamental Laws were in place, which defined Spain as a kingdom and set out a facade of democratic representation and a charter of rights for its citizens. Within this framework, encouragement could be given to academic endeavour and limited political discussion tolerated.

Optimism reigned in SF following appointments made in the Ministry of Education in 1951. The new minister, Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, was acutely aware of the need to improve the intellectual standards of higher education, which had been severely compromised by the Civil War. His appointment of the Falangists Pedro Laín Entralgo, Antonio Tovar and Torcuato Fernández Miranda to rectorships of universities was a mark of his faith in the National Movement as a vehicle for promoting the values of the regime.<sup>32</sup> In 1953, Falangists were told by the Secretary-General of the Movement: 'The Falange

<sup>29</sup> This also began the expansion of the Medina Circles in Spain. A further three were agreed immediately. Interview with Viky Eiroa, 17 February 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Grants were generally for higher degrees or specialist professional courses. They covered the costs of accommodation and excursions for a one-year period. Interview with Viky Eiroa, 23 October 1995. Between the years 1947 and 1952, SF gave a total of ninety grants. It received far fewer - seventeen between the years 1949 and 1952. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Alcance y acción*, p. 75.

<sup>31</sup> S. Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era: Falange Española de las JONS 1936-76* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1987), p. 105.

<sup>32</sup> J. Tusell, *Franco y los católicos: la política interior española entre 1945 y 1957*, (Madrid, Alianza, 1990), p. 311.

considers that... respect for intelligence is at the heart of Spanish intellectual tradition, the pinnacle of western culture and the quintessence of thinking and Catholic political tradition.<sup>33</sup> A further force for change came from Jorge Jordana, the new leader of the Movement's Students' Syndicate, the SEU (*sindicato español universitario*), which saw the need to encourage intellectual and cultural activity.<sup>34</sup> SF was very much in agreement. Through its operation of the Ladies' Residence and its own Students' Syndicate (SF-SEU), it felt a stake-holder in the debate on how universities should be run.

But by the early 1950s, there were many political currents within the National Movement, particularly in the universities. The modernising ideas of Jorge Jordana were acceptable to the majority of students, but some wanted greater reforms, especially with regard to the election of student representatives. There were other students who believed that Franco's policies (in particular the Law of Succession) had broken faith with the Nationalist cause. Finally, a minority of left-wingers opposed both Franco and the basis on which he had come to power.

SF centrally was informed of all developments in the universities through its staff members (*mandos*) who worked in the female section of SEU.<sup>35</sup> SF-SEU *mandos* regularly engaged in the types of cultural activity which Ruiz Giménez was trying to encourage. But apart from being an outlet for artistic and intellectual endeavour, SF-SEU was also the seed-bed for female political activity. Between 1951-4, the direction of the National Movement was much discussed among them. In 1953, there was still a feeling of optimism that Franco had recognised its potential for constructive help and that he was not allowing

<sup>33</sup> Secretary-General of the Movement's speech at the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. 1953 national conference, quoted in A. de Miguel, *La sociología del franquismo*, p. 195.

<sup>34</sup> Jorge Jordana was appointed head of SEU in 1951 with plans to make it more dynamic by extending its services, changing the voting procedures and encouraging debate and cultural initiatives. M. A. Ruiz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), 1939-1965*, (Madrid, Siglo veintiuno de España editores, 1996), pp. 247-9.

<sup>35</sup> The SF Students' Syndicate (*Regiduría de la Sección Femenina del S.E.U.*), unlike the Youth Wing and the social service programme, never became wholly independent of the overall Falange organisation, the SEU. Up to 1951, the national head, (*regidora central*) was hierarchically dependent on her male boss, the national leader of SEU. All SF *mandos* in the universities were appointed centrally, without reference to the student population. Each university district had its own *mando* (*regidora de distrito*), and local (female) leaders for faculties and courses where women students made up more than 30 per cent of the student body. Until 1951, they did not even have the right to take part in the election of the equivalent male *mandos*. After this date, there was a splitting of function, with SF taking overall responsibility but with a requirement to co-operate and liaise with the male SEU. Women students' rights increased further after 1953, when they were permitted to stand for positions in the SEU hierarchy, although these were largely limited to cultural rather than political responsibilities. M. A. Ruiz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU)*, p. 480, p. 482.

monarchists and conservatives to have the upper hand. But there was also an awareness that updating and greater efficiency were needed. SF-SEU *mandos* fully agreed with SEU's assessment that without a dynamic, up-to-date image, the National Movement would have no influence on the course of politics.<sup>36</sup>

There were two main views among SEU and SF-SEU members on how the original doctrine of José Antonio should best be preserved. The first wished to reinforce the values of the Civil War through an integrating approach, as Ruiz Carnicer has said 'to implant the regime on Spanish society with something more than repression and the power of the Army'.<sup>37</sup> The other view was more conservative, believing that values could only be maintained by excluding any opposition. SF overall was more inclined towards the first of these views. The policies of Ruiz Giménez to encourage cultural diversity within the universities had sat well with SF-SEU activities. In a broader sense, too, his views were in line with SF's belief in reconciliation of the victors and vanquished of the war and the power of *joseantoniano* doctrine as a unifying force.

SF's opinion changed, however, in 1954, when it became seriously worried by a number of incidents in the universities, interpreting them, as did Franco, as having wider significance. Problems had started when a SEU-led demonstration at the beginning of the year against the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Gibraltar led to the arrest of its organisers by the authorities and subsequent retaliation by students. The incident seriously dented SEU's claim to be the legitimate representative of patriotic feeling. It was now increasingly isolated, on the one hand visibly supporting the regime's anti-Gibraltar sentiment and on the other angering the authorities for having done so.

The effect of the Gibraltar incident was compounded by plans of Ruiz Giménez over the next two years to broaden the cultural base of the universities. Among them, his decision to organise a conference for young university writers alarmed the leadership of SEU, who was sure that such an event would be infiltrated by Communists. Having authorised the conference, Ruiz Giménez then sanctioned a planning forum, which soon became a venue for dissidents. Jorge Jordana resigned in protest and although his

<sup>36</sup> Three events that year gave a platform for debate on the National Movement: the first National Congress of Students (organised by SEU), a National Youth Conference and the first National Conference of F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

successor had the conference banned, the damage was done. The dissident students proposed an alternative student body, to be elected democratically and replacing SEU. This angered SEU supporters and they protested violently, causing material damage in the Law Faculty. This was followed two days later by a counter-demonstration in which a Falangist student was severely wounded. The fights and shootings so alarmed the authorities that they temporarily closed Madrid University, suspended two articles of the citizens' charter and arrested all those connected with the organisation of the congress. The dean and rector of Madrid University were dismissed, Ruiz Giménez resigned and even the Secretary-General of the Movement, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta - who had been abroad at the time of the incident - was replaced.

The events of 1956 took place after the SF conference, but from February, focused the minds of Pilar and the *mandos* on the future of SF. Those nearest to the crisis, SF-SEU *mandos*, had the widest divergence of opinions. Many thought that SEU had already gone too far in its attempts to modernise. Others thought the opposite, citing the need for new political textbooks and different teaching methods in SF.<sup>38</sup> And there was an underlying worry that events in the universities would compromise the position of the National Movement in the regime, inclining Franco to shift support to other sectors. Events seemed to be confirming this. The restoration of the monarchy had been brought a step nearer with the news that the young Juan Carlos was coming to live in Spain. SF now had to balance its commitment to the Falangist Revolution with its loyalty to Franco. Its support for the political ideals of SEU (particularly its anti-Gibraltar sentiments) and the cultural goals of Ruiz Giménez had to be set against the greater need to uphold stability of the regime.

A solution appeared to be offered to SF by Franco's own plans for the National Movement. The replacement for Fernández Cuesta, José Luis de Arrese, was given the task of rewriting its constitution and re-drafting the Fundamental Laws. Under Arrese's proposals, the original twenty-six Programmatic Points of the Movement lost all mention of its fascist past and emphasised the Catholic nature of the State, its natural unity and the primacy of family. Additionally, the proposed Organic Law of the Movement and the Law of

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Óliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.

Government Organisation greatly increased the powers of the National Movement, both in the short term and after Franco's death.<sup>39</sup>

For Pilar, Arrese's proposals were a potential solution. She had already accepted the need to re-present the teachings of José Antonio, telling members at the January conference of 1956: 'We must renew ourselves or die.'<sup>40</sup> Her hope was that a reformed, more powerful Movement would be able to contain the cross-currents within the regime and in a letter to members on 12 March she shared her feelings about the situation in the University:

These are the events which should make us think of our role in provoking the unrest but also in the terrible responsibility of opening the way to a pure and simple return to 1936. Can we take back control of the University? Following these events, two ministers have been replaced and it seems that at last Falange is to be given the political powers it has hitherto lacked. If it really can direct politics and conquer the State from above with the full responsibility of success and failure, it will be a good thing. But let us trust in the words of the Secretary-General in Valladolid and the confidence that the Caudillo has in the Falange.<sup>41</sup>

While it awaited the outcome of the Arrese proposals, SF made plans for its own reform, accepting Ruiz Giménez's principle that the regime needed further legitimisation than the memory of the Civil War. But there was no question of changing the elements of SF which were causing the real problems - namely the salary arrangements for its specialist staff, the overall rigidity of its hierarchy nor its determination to impose beliefs on the female population. The only proposals were a dilution of some of the political teaching to the unaffiliated and the removal of the more public signs of militarisation. In the reformed textbooks, the Civil War would be mentioned less and current issues would be emphasised. José Antonio's ideas would be a seamless whole with the policies of the

<sup>39</sup> S. Payne, *The Franco Regime*, pp. 446-7.

<sup>40</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1956 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera*, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1956), p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 313.

regime, and references to Empire would be no more than affirmations of spiritual solidarity with Latin America. The regime at La Mota would remain unchanged but the Falange salute and the regular wearing of uniform would go.

Arrese's proposals did not find approval with government and at first SF did not react, at least not publicly. In the memory of a *mando* close to Pilar, the subject was talked about but not discussed officially. SF had already made up its mind to go ahead with reforms, regardless of what was going on around it.<sup>42</sup> This independent line may also have been prompted by the knowledge that larger political moves were on the horizon. Major changes to the economy were about to be set in motion following the appointment of economic reformers to the Cabinet in 1957. The prospect of a free market economy was unwelcome to SF *mandos* because it would, they argued, promote materialistic values, making the sacrifices and spiritual values of *joseantoniano* doctrine ever more remote. These apprehensions were increased when Franco, reacting to the unpopularity of the Arrese proposals, removed key Falangists from the Cabinet. Arrese had been replaced as Secretary-General by José Solís Ruiz and one of SF's greatest allies, José Antonio Girón de Velasco, was dropped from his post of Minister of Labour.

The Cabinet changes provoked an immediate response within SF and a second set of proposals for reform. In December, all the national specialists (*regidoras centrales*) met to discuss how to respond to the new circumstances. One suggestion was to detach SF from the National Movement, making it a non-political association. A second was to remove all political content from its programmes, turning it into a purely professional and educational body. But the third proposal won most favour - change from within, involving a rationalisation and modernisation of all its departments.<sup>43</sup> The changes begun two years previously at the 1956 national conference were now continued at the national conference of 1958, held at La Mota.<sup>44</sup> The statement of Pilar that 'a new political age is beginning to

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997. In May 1958, the government published new Principles of the Movement, which replaced the original twenty-six Programmatic Points of F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. They confirmed SF's new direction, stating that the Movement was a 'communion' and defining the regime as a traditional, Catholic, social and representative monarchy. S. Payne, *The Franco Regime*, p. 455.

<sup>43</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, pp. 324-5.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996. The 1956 conference was known among *mandos* as the 'conference of liberalisation' (*el consejo de la apertura*).



dawn'<sup>45</sup> and her affirmations of support for SF's internal reforms were optimistic in the extreme:

We need to restate our position, giving it a broad enough base so that we do not end up as an exclusive group, but at the same time not dropping the important contributions we are making. We must make the adjustments necessary to our position, so that it is in line with a world that is moving on - that is our most urgent task.<sup>46</sup>

The hope in 1958 was that the strength and essential truth of the Falangist message could still have a resonance within the broad base that was the National Movement. In essence, that was the case, since the principles of good citizenship, Catholic values and service to the nation were uncontentious. But it was not clear how SF's definition of service fitted in. Its driving force went beyond a sense of duty and a desire to help. It was based on the *joseantoniano* vision of a Falangist Revolution to be put in place by a select minority who would dedicate their lives to the cause. On two counts - the need for suitable elites to carry out the Revolution and the assumption that the female civil population was itself under an obligation to receive its teachings - SF was incontrovertibly tied to the past. In this sense, talk of modernisation was futile.

A better marker of progress would probably have been scrutiny of how well its programmes had been accepted to date. It was the case that SF teachings were often met with indifference and even resistance by the unaffiliated majority of the population. Despite problems, however, SF never questioned the programmes nor its duty to transmit them. Instead, it blamed the *mandos*, whose various deficiencies in communicating doctrine were termed laziness, inefficiency or arrogance. But by 1956, even with SF's proposed modernised structure, Pilar admitted to her members that its powers of persuasion were unequal to the task: 'The majority of Spaniards have not wanted to understand us or have

<sup>45</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1958 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera*, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1958), p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

been incapable of doing so.<sup>47</sup> In the face of the nation's indifference, SF staff were 'like Don Quixotes, tilting at windmills'.<sup>48</sup>

Pilar was no doubt correct in her assessment, but it was also true that SF's work was always constrained by inadequate funding. The National Movement's budget in 1958 represented just 0.21 per cent of government spending, hardly a basis for making the Revolution.<sup>49</sup> The perennial lack of money was in that sense a political reality and a statement - however unwelcome - of the worth attached to the programmes. What the government gave with one hand, it appeared to take back with the other. After a one-off payment, it had not funded the youth programme after its separation from the Youth Front in 1945 and its support was largely in the form of concessions granted. These included a decree of 1952 requiring Civil Governors to make their welfare fund available for the use of SF and the agreement in 1948 that SF should be given premises either free or at a peppercorn rent.<sup>50</sup> Within its limitations, SF tried to make good the deficit. From 1952, for example, Pilar allowed schools, camps and sanatoria to accept donations.<sup>51</sup> Four years later, it introduced a monthly lodging fee for students in its national schools.<sup>52</sup> But despite these savings, the money was never enough.<sup>53</sup> The funding question could be seen as relative to the national economy, but the opposite view - that Franco traded on SF's goodwill and could have done more to support its programmes - seems more realistic.<sup>54</sup>

And at the end of the decade, perhaps the clearest proof to Pilar that Falangism was not valued was the news that a government decision had been taken to move José Antonio's remains from El Escorial, where he had been buried in 1939, to a new burial site in the recently-completed monument to the Nationalist dead of the Civil War, the Valley of the

<sup>47</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1956 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera, (n.p., S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1956), p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> The funding of the National Movement was always a tiny proportion of the State budget. Its highest funding was in 1945 when it accounted for 1.92 per cent of total State spending. This fell sharply to 0.38 per cent the following year. The 1958 figure is the lowest recorded. Source: *Presupuestos del Partido*, in R. Chueca, El fascismo, p. 203.

<sup>50</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, Crónica, p. 168; p. 265; p. 243; p. 242.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>52</sup> Circular no. 329, Regiduría Central de Personal. The initial sum of 350 pesetas was raised in line with the cost of living and enabled the schools to become self-financing. Reply to questionnaire to Asociación Nueva Andadura, January 1995.

<sup>53</sup> For 1968, however, the only year for which data is available, the base budget for SF was 287,743,503 pesetas. P. Primo de Rivera, Recuerdos de una vida, (Madrid, Dyrsa, 1983), p. 415. On the above figures (*Presupuestos del Partido* [1968], in R. Chueca, El fascismo, p. 203), this represented 47 per cent of the total budget of the National Movement. Funding from other ministries was on top of this sum.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.

Fallen. In her memoirs, she records her displeasure and the fact that she and her brother, Miguel, had decided to remove the body for a private family re-burial. The government's decision was interpreted by Falangists as the regime's rejection of *joseantoniano* doctrine. Contemporaries remember that Pilar's opposition was based on the fact that she felt that the Valley should be the burial place for men who had actually fought in the war.<sup>55</sup> But the heart of the controversy was that El Escorial contained the mausoleum of Spanish kings and queens. José Antonio's burial there in 1939 had been in recognition of his own political importance and was a symbolic connection between Falangism and past imperial glories. His removal in 1959 confirmed the remoteness of his doctrine and appeared to close the door finally on hopes of restoring Spanish influence abroad through the medium of *hispanidad*.<sup>56</sup>

The re-burial was discussed at the 1958 national conference at La Mota, where the Secretary-General of the National Movement, José Solís Ruiz, needed all his powers of persuasion to convince the assembled delegates that the decision was in their best interests. The Valley would provide a final resting place for the Founder that was removed from sectors of the regime who were critical of the Falange.<sup>57</sup> Franco's request to Miguel and Pilar represented it as the place 'among the heroes and martyrs of our Crusade... the place of honour that is his amidst our glorious Fallen'.<sup>58</sup> Their official reply was in apparent agreement, but Pilar's memoirs are more telling. She asserts that 'the removal and the way it was planned caused deep unrest among Falangists', confirming her previous worries about the state of the National Movement.<sup>59</sup> It was almost a resigning matter for Pilar. A *mando* close to the discussion recalls that she would certainly have presented her resignation from SF without the concession made by Franco that Falangists would be allowed to carry the coffin in the manner of the first funeral.<sup>60</sup>

The re-burial of José Antonio was perhaps SF's clearest indicator that its own Falangist Revolution was of no interest to the regime. There were also signs that SF's

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Teresa Loring, Adelaida del Pozo, Andresa López, Viky Eiroa, 27 May 1996.

<sup>56</sup> This was the interpretation of fervent Falangists. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 24 October 1999.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Puri Barrios, 31 October 1996. She recalls the reaction of a former *margarita* from the Basque provinces, who barracked Solís mercilessly.

<sup>58</sup> *Arriba*, 21 March 1959.

<sup>59</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos*, p. 230.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Viky Eiroa, 23 October 1995.

political message was simply not relevant to the female population. While it could claim that its Revolution had penetrated society, there was little evidence that the process had attracted many to its ranks. The organisation's propaganda gives abundant information on the detail of its programmes (numbers of baby baskets made, injections given, homes visited, library books borrowed and so on) but data on membership is scant and contradictory.<sup>61</sup> Most of the information relates to numbers of women and girls at the receiving end of the programmes, such as the numbers taught cookery, physical education and national-syndicalism. On this definition, as the facilities for each of these subjects were increased both materially and in terms of SF staff trained to teach them, the organisation could claim to be reaching an ever-larger audience. For example, in 1944, there were 6,776 schools where SF subjects were being taught. By 1951, this had risen to 12,888.<sup>62</sup> The number of girls being taught the subjects was increased correspondingly from 352,229 in 1944 to 624,968 in 1951.<sup>63</sup> But that was no indication of how many were led willingly towards greater involvement and on the question of full adult membership, (including the number of career *mandos*), information is scarce.

Official figures were frequently misleading. *Arriba*, for example, gave the female membership of the Youth Wing in 1941 as 278, 952 girls.<sup>64</sup> But this is widely at variance with SF's own figure for 1940 of 37,900 girls and may well have blurred the distinction between those required to receive the teachings and those who volunteered for more.<sup>65</sup> Although SF's figures for 1948 and 1951 were substantially higher, the numbers of girls

<sup>61</sup> Part of the problem was that membership of SF came to be increasingly irrelevant for all but women intending to be career *mandos*. During and just after the war, when women not in this category might join with the idea of offering part-time voluntary work, the membership category of adherent (*adherida*) had some significance. The imposition of social service largely overtook this, and as women were enrolled while they were doing their service, it is impossible to assess whether they would have joined anyway. Another factor was the requirement of membership as entry to many jobs: this effectively stripped the party card of any doctrinal significance for many women. Thirdly, as SF became absorbed into the fabric of the State, its schools and courses were increasingly open to all and membership became unnecessary for all but the *mandos*.

<sup>62</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Alcance y acción*, Anejo 2, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> *Arriba*, 31 December 1941, in R. Chueca, *El fascismo*, p. 311. The same source gives the male youth membership as 564,999. Even with these figures, membership of the male and female youth organisations represented only a tiny percentage of the juvenile population of 1940, (12.98 per cent and 7.69 per cent respectively). *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina, historia y organización*, (Madrid, F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1952), p. 63. On this calculation, (using R. Chueca's figure of 6,497,392 for the juvenile population of 1940), female youth membership in that year represented 0.58 per cent of that figure.

going on to become adult members were still very small.<sup>66</sup> With regard to social service, the official figures can be read several ways but even with the most positive interpretation, numbers are low.<sup>67</sup> Between 1938 and 1959, according to figures published by Pilar Primo de Rivera, the average number of women annually was only 31,962.<sup>68</sup> The actual figure for 1950 of 29,127 women represented just 2.4 per cent of the single female working population.<sup>69</sup> And as with youth membership, the experience of social service led few to continue their connections with SF.<sup>70</sup>

The other side of the coin was the 'value-added' dimension that SF contributed to Spanish society up to 1959. From its earliest days, it developed a twin role of organising its own social, welfare and educational activities as well as supporting women already in State employment. The perceived needs of post-war Spain were translated into new specialisms, many of which had no equivalent in any other part of the National Movement. This was the case with rural instructors, working alongside country women in villages and practical nurses and health visitors, who worked at a less specialised level than existing health professionals to fill a gap in preventive health and social care. In education, SF's instructors introduced physical education, music and domestic science to schools as well as teaching adult literacy. In each case, up to the early 1950s, these posts were filled on either a fully voluntary basis or with a token salary. Figures for 1948 show that there

<sup>66</sup> Youth membership - 1948 = 58,931; 1951 = 67,310. Numbers of youth members joining the adult organisation - 1948 = 4,025; 1951 = 3,450. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Labor realizada en 1948, (Madrid, Magerit, 1949), p. 40; S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Labor realizada en 1951, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1952), p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> For example, some data gives figures for certificates for completed service issued. Other data relates to numbers of women about to start or those half way through. The source quoted speaks ambiguously of the number of women 'registered' (*encuadradas*) yearly over a 22-year period. P. Primo de Rivera, La enseñanza doméstica como contribución al bienestar de la familia española, (Madrid, Comercial Española de Ediciones, 1961), p. 27. Another SF source for the years 1940-1952 gives a total figure of 277,979 women doing social service in these years. This is a yearly average of 23,164. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Alcance y acción, Anejo 1, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, La enseñanza doméstica, p. 27; 1950 census, quoted in C. Borderías, Entre líneas. Trabajo e identidad femenina en la España contemporánea - La Compañía Telefónica 1924-80, (Barcelona, Icaria, 1993), p. 67, p. 70. The Spanish term '*población activa*' is interpreted as those in work and those seeking it. The statistics refer to all single women of working age, whereas social service was limited to women under thirty-five.

<sup>70</sup> Social service completers going on to become adult members of SF - 1948 = 260; 1951 = 630. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Labor realizada en 1948, p. 17; S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Labor realizada en 1951, p. 20.

were 11,271 women working in the SF specialisms.<sup>71</sup> There was also an overlap between the functions of the specialist volunteers and women working in State education and health posts. During the 1950s, the distinction was increasingly lost as gradually, the levels of entry for SF specialisms went up. In 1951, the only year for which statistics are available, there were 6,293 SF specialist staff (*instructoras*) in schools teaching politics, physical education, domestic science and music. There were a further 939 serving teachers in salaried State posts, who were members of SF and teaching its prescribed subjects as part of their overall timetable.<sup>72</sup> Their affiliation to SF would entitle them to further training and commit them to extra-curricular activities with their pupils. In the course of the 1950s, this became more common as SF's training establishments offered an increasing number of courses leading to State qualifications, as well as its own lower level specialisms, such as *instructoras* and *divulgadoras*. This in turn led to even fewer boundaries between SF specialists and professional women whose training had been completed in one of its establishments. 'Membership' as such came to be rarely required for this latter category.

A further apparent indicator of SF's impact on society was its increased number of specialist establishments. What had started in 1942 with the opening of the first national school, La Mota, had expanded to provincial and local level training facilities in each of the educational and welfare areas.<sup>73</sup> Other premises included the domestic schools (*escuelas de hogar*), university residences (*colegios mayores*), junior residences (*colegios menores*), craft workshops (*talleres de artesanía*), agricultural schools (*granjas-escuelas*) and the local and provincial headquarters which were the base for many of SF's other activities,

<sup>71</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Labor realizada en 1948*, p. 16. The figures do not include women working in the political hierarchy (*mandos políticos*) as provincial and local leaders. In Pilar's memoirs, however, she states that there were 2,851 salaried political *mandos* in 1968. P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos*, p. 405. Assuming that the political *mando* total would not vary greatly (given that the provincial and regional structure was static), an estimate of SF staff membership in 1948 is c. 14,000. This figure (of whom between 4,000-5,000 were salaried), is also the recollection of a former national *mando*. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

<sup>72</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Labor realizada en 1951*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>73</sup> La Mota continued to be the training centre for higher-level *mandos* and hosted visitors, among them Juan Carlos, who visited shortly after his arrival in Spain. From 1947, it was also used as a summer camp in which SF-SEU members could complete their social service.

such as its youth and literacy programmes.<sup>74</sup> But as courses proliferated, so did bureaucracy. The national model for the running of provincial and local courses was in itself immobilist. Modifying norms of La Mota, Las Navas and Aranjuez for use elsewhere was never considered, as they had all been based on the 'invariable doctrine' of José Antonio.

The reality of SF's situation was that programmes started with the spirit and impetus of the Civil War were increasingly being delivered by staff who had not themselves lived through that war. There was no argument that the welfare and educational needs of the population were increasing, as urbanisation began and Spain took its first steps towards the economic boom of the 1960s. SF's continued involvement in rural communities, in the workplace and in all fields of education needed no justification. But its moral authority, based on a political doctrine of the 1930s, was increasingly seen as an ideal, attainable (and indeed desirable) only by those *mandos* who were at the apex of the hierarchical pyramid.

That was certainly the case up to the end of the 1950s. In a society where male authority and dominance were publicly acknowledged in the Labour Charter, welfare legislation and the doctrine of 'family, syndicate, town hall', SF promoted the woman from within that framework. In the 1940s, that meant predominantly basic education and training programmes, which did not challenge either family or political sensibilities, accepting that the pace of change had to be gradual.<sup>75</sup> In the context of the Falange Revolution, that did not remove the urgency of the task, but it was recognised that the approach had to be non-confrontational.

The balance between doctrinal purity and pragmatism that SF attempted to strike

<sup>74</sup> The first university residence ('Santa María de la Almudena' in Madrid) was opened in 1959. Junior colleges started in the 1950s, providing residential accommodation in towns to give access to secondary education for girls from rural areas. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 348, p. 344. SF local and provincial centres varied in size and scope. Villages frequently had no premises at all and SF activities centred round the local leader. In others, premises were shared with the male departments of the Movement in a 'Falange house' (*Casa de Falange*). Typically, SF had at least partial use of some or all the following: youth centre, offices, hall, library and classrooms. The premises were used jointly by SF's political *mandos* and their specialist colleagues. Interviews with Nuri Ogando, 23 February 1995; Puri Barrios, 31 October 1996; Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996.

<sup>75</sup> This is the view of former national *mandos* Mónica Plaza (interview 30 May 1996), Viky Eiroa (interview 17 February 1998) and Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth (interview 19 February 1998). Viky Eiroa disputes the claim that Pilar did not support nurseries, citing the examples of those provided at each of the SF's centres in villages rebuilt after the war.

was not an easy one. SF's internal reforms did not change the moral base on which its programmes were based and were largely cosmetic. Pilar's stance, which she maintained to the end of the 1950s, was that promotion of the woman was primarily in relation to her duties at home. There was room for debate and manoeuvre, particularly round the question of work, but faced with the possibility of moving more radically, she chose to contain change within the framework of the authority structure imposed by the State.

By the end of the decade, this position was less tenable. The National Movement had been increasingly sidelined and the basis for *joseantoniano* doctrine - the memory of the Civil War - was growing remote. Factors that had nothing to do with the Falangist Revolution were driving the pace of change. Improvements to the economy in conjunction with changing employment patterns for women were forcing the need for further legislative reform on their behalf. For SF, the gap between rhetoric and reality was growing. Its promotion of women according to *joseantoniano* principles did not match their emerging needs. As it struggled at the end of the 1950s to reconcile the two, there was a recognition that it would need to be bolder in approach and demands. In the following decade, SF campaigned strongly for equality of opportunity in all fields, and underplayed the domestic message of earlier years. Its contributions to political debate henceforth were more public and outspoken but it made little difference to the membership base, its funding or the relationship with the regime.



## Chapter Six

### Gender, class and the SF *mandos*

Although *Sección Femenina* (SF) judged itself on its output of work and its penetration into Spanish society, its legacy may come to be gauged more in terms of the organisation's impact on the lives of its staff members. As previously stated, its legislative successes in the 1950s were slight and, while its wartime relief effort was impressive, it was not the only contributor. But for its members and particularly the elites (*mandos*), SF gave opportunities for a way of life that was rare in the Franco regime before the 1960s, when the development of mass tourism heralded social and economic changes for Spanish women. Prior to that, for the majority of women, the goal of marriage, children and domesticity remained uncontested and indeed supported by Francoist legislation which through the Labour Charter of 1938 had sought to 'liberate the married woman from the workshop and the factory'.<sup>1</sup> The activities of the *mandos*, on the other hand, allowed certain freedoms while remaining publicly acceptable.

The lifestyle of *mandos* characterised the ambiguity inherent in SF as an organisation which contained genuinely modernising elements within an ideology which sought to turn the clock back for women. As discussed in Chapter Three, this was in part because the political and religious views of SF *mandos* led them to present and express themselves in ways different from women in other non-Falangist organisations. But the main contradiction lay in the fact that the Francoist state, in common with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, had entrusted implementation of its gender policies to women themselves. As in the German *Frauenschaft* and the Italian *Fasci Femminile*, it was SF's predominantly upper and middle class women who were mobilised by the state to impose its reforms. The *mandos* of SF, therefore, had a powerful leadership role which was in direct contrast to the message of female subordination and submission which they preached. Domesticity and wifely virtues were to be taught by women who were usually unmarried, often working away from home and always under the direction of SF, not their families. The only way this was possible was for SF propaganda to present *mandos* as alternative versions of

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<sup>1</sup> Dr J. Bosch Marín, 'El Fuero del Trabajo y la mujer', in *Revista 'Y'* (April 1938).

wives, mothers and daughters: they combined specialist knowledge of 'women's concerns' with demonstrable self-sacrifice with which all women could empathise. That was the rhetoric but the reality was frequently different, especially after 1945, when SF programmes became more complex and diverse. The gulf between the married woman at home and the *mando* widened as elites became specialists in their own right and were often highly mobile. Typically, they operated in many locations and frequently changed specialisms in the course of their career. This chapter is concerned with the self-perceptions of *mandos* and the ambiguity of their role both in the early years, when SF was very much guided and influenced by men and later, when it relied far less on male 'experts'. It will assess how influence and power were exercised in *mandos'* lives and gauge the degree to which SF postings and lifestyle up to 1959 paved the way for the changing role of women in the later years of the regime.

Related to the self-perception of *mandos* was the question of social class within SF. Roger Griffin's description of fascist ultranationalism as 'populist in intent and rhetoric, yet elitist in practice' applies equally well to the organisation and workings of the staff corps of SF.<sup>2</sup> Given that the earliest members were, without exception, from the wealthy and upper classes, it is not surprising that SF's norms borrowed from that tradition.<sup>3</sup> Its principles of home management, etiquette and table manners derived from those of such families as the Primo de Rivera's, which was wealthy, valued domestic efficiency and prudence and was concerned for external appearances. Similarly, its subsequent patronage of the arts probably owed as much to remembered cultural norms as to adherence to Falangism.<sup>4</sup> But the other side of the coin was SF's identification with the populism of the Falange, based on the belief that the movement transcended social class and that its message spoke most clearly to the dispossessed. Alongside its bourgeois values, therefore, was an

<sup>2</sup> R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, (London, Routledge, 1991), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> The seven founder members in 1934 were upper-class, wealthy women, all close in some way to the Primo de Rivera family. Pilar became the national leader, a friend, Dora Máqueda her deputy. A further friend, Luisa María de Aramburu was appointed provincial leader of Madrid, with Pilar's cousin, Inés, as her deputy. The other three were a further cousin, Dolores and personal friends María Luisa Bonifaz and Marjorie Munden. The latter was an Englishwoman whom Pilar describes in her memoirs as 'closely linked to the family' and for whose son José Antonio acted as godfather. P. Primo de Rivera, *Recuerdos de una vida*, (Madrid, Dyrsa, 1983), p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> No. 24 of the 1934 Programmatic Points stated: 'Culture will be organised so that no talent will be wasted through lack of financial resources. All deserving cases will have easy access even to higher education.' J.A. Primo de Rivera, *Textos de doctrina política*, (Madrid, D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1966), p. 344.

attempt at inclusiveness, expressed mostly symbolically. The wearing of uniform, the mode of address '*camarada*' (comrade) and thrift practised by all as an identification with the poorest in society reinforced the point. SF, at least in its early days, had only upper-class women in its staff ranks, but claimed to understand the problems of the poorest. This chapter will examine how the reality of SF career structure matched this rhetoric and whether the organisation's claim that it promoted the cause of all women was a just one.

The first women of SF were such a small group that their stated intent of 'preaching, educating and showing by example' was not possible until the membership base had increased.<sup>5</sup> By 1937, Pilar was exhorting her early *mandos* to reject the old class bias when choosing their deputies and assistants:

When you appoint your local leaders... consider only their personal circumstances and pay no attention to their names or positions... Don't allow yourself to be influenced by their family background, or personal friendship or dislike. Above all, don't fall into the old, unjust system of 'recommendations', which the Falange is pledged to abolish.<sup>6</sup>

But reality did not match the rhetoric. The quickest way to spread the membership base from Madrid was to recruit women from similar backgrounds in the provinces and following a recruitment visit by Pilar and her deputy in 1935, women were enlisted who were already connected in some way to the Falangist cause. Commonly, this was because their father or brother was a member or, in the case of women undergraduates, because they were in contact with Falangist activists in the universities.<sup>7</sup> Angela Ridruejo, the sister of the Falangist propagandist and a friend of José Antonio, was persuaded to establish and run the SF provincial office in Segovia. In Valladolid, the appointment of Rosario Pereda as provincial leader of SF was instigated by the founder of the J.O.N.S., Onésimo

<sup>5</sup> Manifesto of SF (1934), in M. Gallego Méndez, *Mujer, Falange y franquismo*, (Madrid, Taurus, 1983), p. 212.

<sup>6</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1937 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos, circulares, escritos*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> For example, in Santiago, one of the first areas to be organised, two of the three students recruited, Viky Eiroa and Pilar Lago, progressed rapidly to national postings in the SF Foreign Service and the department of Town and Country respectively.

Redondo.<sup>8</sup> Even after the outbreak of the Civil War, SF staff appointments continued to be made from the same social class, with women such as María Moscardó and Josefina Arraiza Goñi becoming provincial leaders.<sup>9</sup> This extended to lesser-ranking posts and was particularly noticeable in nursing, where it continued after the war and operated as a selection mechanism for the Blue Division, where there was real competition to be accepted.<sup>10</sup>

But the war years began to change the social base of the staff corps as existing provincial leaders had jurisdiction over women offering to help SF as part of the Nationalist effort. As well as channelling the efforts of true volunteers, the organisation also controlled the State social service programme. From both sources came new members, women who wanted more involvement and whose social and cultural backgrounds were varied. To these, at the end of the war, were added women for whom membership of SF was a security measure to escape a doubtful past. By this time, the first training schools were in operation, including the Málaga school for *mandos*, which set out norms and standards that transcended class boundaries ‘for all SF *mandos*, so that they may have unity of style and unity of thought’.<sup>11</sup> The concept of leadership as a higher calling was translated into a programme of political and domestic teaching, conceived by Pilar’s elites and now regarded as the mechanism for transforming recruits of any class into staff members.

Pilar assured her members that SF was a meritocracy:

For the National-syndicalist State there are just two kinds of citizen: those who work and who are worthy of our full consideration, and those who are lazy and who will never be granted any privilege... The *camaradas* with the spirit of National-syndicalism... who are clever and want to be useful, who are morally above reproach, they will be the ones given positions of responsibility in our organisation. You know that among us, nobody gets on

<sup>8</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, ‘Historia de la Sección Femenina’, in *Revista ‘Y’*, (September 1938).

<sup>9</sup> María Moscardó was the daughter of the Army General made famous by his defence of the Toledo military academy in the Civil War. Josefina Arraiza Goñi later married José Antonio Elola, the Falangist who became head of the Youth Front.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with José María Gutiérrez, 19 February 1996. The nurses were all volunteers and from the highest social class.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Escuela de Jefes’, in *Revista ‘Y’*, (July-August, 1938).

because of who their parents were: it is individual effort that counts.<sup>12</sup>

But in reality, it was far more likely to be women from the higher social classes who continued to occupy the staff positions.<sup>13</sup> To a degree, the candidates were self-selecting - they had to be of a certain educational standard and be sufficiently secure financially to work either for nothing or for the pocket money paid by SF. One past member, however, is of the opinion that elitism always played a part in staff appointments. She realised that her unsuccessful applications for posts were the consequence of her modest social background. Despite the fact that her father had been a Falangist and she a youth member and then a primary teacher, she was not accepted as a *mando* for many years.<sup>14</sup>

Within the hierarchies themselves, there were subtleties of rank, despite the proclaimed equality of the twin structure.<sup>15</sup> The founding elite members had had the task of organising the territorial structure and their first recruits in the provinces did the same. This original ('political') hierarchy continued to be the managerial arm of SF and each provincial leader (*delegada provincial*) and her deputy (*secretaria provincial*) were in this sense the direct representatives of Pilar. The fifty-one provincial leaders and deputies worked with considerable autonomy during the year, managing their own office and responsible for the equivalent operation at local level in each village and urban district. At each SF national conference, however, they were a block presence noted for their sharp tongues and political awareness. Falangist guest speakers would be heckled if they could not answer questions to their satisfaction.<sup>16</sup> From 1952, their reports on the work of the province became more central to the structure of the conferences, as less time was devoted to hearing male speakers. Increasingly, they were the activists of SF, in close contact during the year with their subordinates in the villages and hence in a strong

<sup>12</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1939 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Interviews with Sebastián Barrueco, 27 October 1995; Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995; Marichu de la Mora, 27 October 1997. All agree that SF *mandos* in the early years were predominantly from the wealthier classes.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996. In her memory, it was educated families whose daughters got the jobs and whose children were admitted to summer camps. Poor people were helped charitably through the dining rooms of Social Aid, but for those in between, there was no chance of a post. In her opinion, this changed as the operation expanded and SF needed more staff. Another former member recalls how she was given a first staff posting on the strength of being a graduate. Interview with Puri Barrios, 31 October 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Their basic structure is described in Chapter Two and in Annexe 2.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Vicky Eiroa, 23 October 1995.

position to know how programmes were really faring. Even more strikingly, as the only women in the male world of political and civic influence, their daily work involved mayors, priests, the Civil Governor and Falangists.

The political hierarchy also operated at local level but with differences. The local leader (*delegada local*) was less concerned with the administration and dogma of SF programmes than with how to make them work. The local office held files and records and was the point of contact for village members of SF. But the local leader was also likely to spend considerable time with unaffiliated women, promoting the courses and services provided by SF staff in the second (specialist) hierarchy, the instructors and health workers. In villages, the two hierarchies worked as a team and the SF local premises were typically both the membership office and its teaching base.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the remoteness of many of the villages, local leaders were connected with the political and ideological core of SF through the hierarchy of the provincial office. The same was not necessarily true with the local service staff. The work of instructors and welfare workers had little in common with that of their desk-bound superiors in the provincial offices of each SF specialism. It was not even necessary for many local service staff to be members of SF, since all but the posts of youth instructor and teacher of political education were open to any woman qualified.<sup>18</sup> Arguably, they had the hardest jobs and yet, in SF terms, they were on the lowest rung of the organisation.

But at the apex of the service hierarchy, *mandos* needed the full range of managerial skills. Whereas provincial leaders were responsible only to Pilar, the service hierarchy had a further layer of bureaucracy. The national service staff (*regidoras centrales*) each had her office alongside that of Pilar in the Madrid premises at Almagro 36. Together with Pilar, they comprised what SF called *La Nacional* (national office), a term signifying not just the premises but the rank and solidarity of the team working there. The shared understanding of what this meant had been determined at the same time and for the same reasons as the political hierarchy and the earliest *regidoras centrales* were the personal

<sup>17</sup> Similar arrangements applied in urban areas, which were divided into districts, each with its own local leader (*jefe de distrito*) responsible for members and activities.

<sup>18</sup> Although all accepting posts had to sign a declaration of compliance with the aims of the organisation. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Personal: organización local*, (Madrid, Osca, 1962), p. 100.

friends and social circle of Pilar.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, it was these women, more than the scattered provincial leaders, who formed the true elite group around Pilar. Working in *La Nacional*, they were nearer her both physically and (in SF terms) hierarchically than the women of the political hierarchy.

In terms of social class, the baseline began to change as unaffiliated young professionals joined the service hierarchy and worked their way up the ranks. This was most marked in SF's health programmes, where the specialism of health visitor (*divulgadora*) was created in 1940. Initially, this work was carried out entirely in village communities by local girls who had volunteered for the six-week course. They were typically the daughters of middle and lower middle class families, such as those of the village doctor or schoolmaster.<sup>20</sup> The SF post gave status and authority without uprooting girls from their families.<sup>21</sup> Similar opportunities existed with the posts of rural instructors (*instructoras rurales*), where women with no more than basic education could train for a career.

The same principle held good for better-educated women who combined a career in teaching with work for SF. This included primary-trained teachers and graduates, all of whom would have been exposed to SF teachings and could elect to teach in SF training establishments either full or part time.<sup>22</sup> For this group, certainly up to the mid-1950s, service with SF was less a new opportunity than an employment outlet for existing women graduates and education professionals.<sup>23</sup>

The impact of promotions coming from a widened social base was seen from the mid-fifties. By this time in the service hierarchy, women were working at provincial level who had been promoted from local posts on their merits and by dint of attendance at

<sup>19</sup> The first *regidoras centrales* included a further sister of Dionisio Ridruejo, Laly, as head of Administration, a cousin of Pilar's, Lula de Lara, as head of Culture, and family friend and former girlfriend of José Antonio, Carmen Werner, as head of the Youth Wing.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Teresa Loring 27 October 1994.

<sup>21</sup> In the memory of one past member, the experience of training (especially in Madrid) profoundly affected many village girls, causing them eventually to leave home and seek a post in the capital. Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Via the social service teaching programme; (for primary staff) the compulsory teachers' course; (for graduates) through membership of the compulsory student body, SEU.

<sup>23</sup> After this time, SF began to work actively to increase educational opportunities for girls from poorer families, particularly in rural communities. SF junior residences (*colegios menores*), which enabled girls from the country to attend city secondary schools where they could sit for the school-leavers' examination, were expanded in 1960 with funding from the National Movement. There were eventually twenty-two over the country. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1992), p. 348.

higher-ranking courses. From a modest educational base, they had qualified to operate in a wider sphere. From here, it was theoretically possible to progress to a place in the national office.<sup>24</sup> This was probably the exception rather than the rule, but the increasingly mixed social provenance of SF teachers caused upsets in some convent schools. Private primary and secondary schools, described by Frances Lannon as 'the most favoured institutions of the Catholic revival'<sup>25</sup> and bastions of class difference, were now forced to accept SF teaching staff whose social background was more modest than that of their fee-paying pupils. As one mother superior said dismissively, 'the SF is very populist'.<sup>26</sup>

In *La Nacional*, however, status and rank translated into a flexible and developmental professional role. The first team of *regidoras centrales* encapsulated the paradox of the SF elites: they were preaching the cause of social justice from their own base of privilege and in the context of the Franco regime. But additionally, they were responsible for planning the detail of specialist educational and health programmes and then directing the professionals operating them. Most were graduates and all had passed through the SF training course for *mandos* but few were specialists. Indeed, the common pattern was for these *mandos* to move between specialisms, underlining the importance of their political commitment and, by implication, reducing the status of the trained professionals under them.

The career route in SF was not rigidly set as belonging to one or the other hierarchy. *Mandos* often moved between the two, with the post of provincial leader a common stepping-stone to a posting in the national office. In observing career patterns of national staff, their apparent versatility in heading diverse specialisms is striking.<sup>27</sup> Their changing roles and readiness to move locations distinguished them from colleagues

<sup>24</sup> Although none of the women interviewed were promoted through this route.

<sup>25</sup> F. Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875-1975*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998. She recalls one *mando* who was criticised by her former convent teacher for her decision to work full-time for SF, as signifying a drop in social status. In another Madrid convent, SF teachers were admitted only if they had been former pupils.

<sup>27</sup> An example is Viky Eiroa, whose final post was as principal of the SF university residence (*colegio mayor*) in Madrid. After graduation and a spell as local leader during the war, she worked as an administrator in the national office. She was then appointed national head of the SF Foreign Service. This involved her in work in Latin America and included management of the choirs and dances foreign visits. Teresa Loring, Pilar's final deputy leader, worked first as a nurse before becoming a teacher trainer in youth work, then in health care. Next, she was appointed principal of the first teacher training establishment, Las Navas, then was asked to take a demotion to provincial leader. From here she was promoted directly to the post of national deputy of SF.



lower down the ranks who remained in one sphere of work and often, one geographical area. In this latter category were many of the provincial leaders. Having achieved a position of influence, these women frequently stayed in the same post for twenty years or more. Their immobility doubtless contributed to the public perception of *mandos* as pillars of authority in local communities rather than as leaders of the 'Falangist Revolution'.<sup>28</sup>

But while most *mandos* continued to come from privileged backgrounds, SF emphasised only the unifying, populist thrust of their training, designed to persuade women to embrace service as an alternative way of life. The idea that service could be an end in itself took shape with the 1942 opening of La Mota, the academy which qualified women to apply for posts at provincial and national level in both hierarchies. The national standards for leadership it set were an indication of how much the organisation had changed since 1934. From its original team of volunteer elites, close to Pilar and all from the higher classes, staff would henceforth have to pass through La Mota. Regardless of political pedigree, wealth and connections, candidates had to prove individual suitability.

At one level, the qualification bar of La Mota was a public affirmation of Falangist populism, rewarding and nurturing talent. At another, it reflected concerns that opportunism might dilute SF's dynamism, continuing Pilar's determination that SF should not be used to escape from a doubtful past. But in terms of the social class of higher *mandos*, the existence of La Mota did little to change the status quo. The issue was not the training mechanism but the absence of salary.

The financial status of *mandos'* posts encapsulated the contradiction between the rhetoric of Falangist populism and the bourgeois values underpinning it. The fact that it was almost voluntary service distanced it from connotations of paid female employment. Women working with SF were not the destroyers of the family unit nor the strident feminists of the Second Republic. In 1939, there were just forty-nine paid staff of SF.<sup>29</sup> Although this soon increased to include provincial leaders, salary levels remained so low that *mandos* in both hierarchies needed independent means, a supportive family or a second

<sup>28</sup> One provincial leader of twenty years' standing, when challenged to explain why she had not given up her post to a younger woman, pointed to the deficiencies of all potential replacements. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998.

<sup>29</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 106. These included Pilar, her deputy, five national heads of specialist departments and office staff. The sums were tiny - 1,000 pesetas for Pilar, 800 for her deputy and 500 for the national staff.

job to make ends meet. In the service hierarchy, provincial and national *mandos* were the only ones paid anything from SF's budget. The local staff worked either on a voluntary basis or were paid from other sources.<sup>30</sup> But however they were funded, *mandos* received very little. In 1956, for example, the salary of a provincial specialist leader (300 pesetas monthly) compared poorly with that of a maid in Madrid (350 pesetas plus keep).<sup>31</sup> The requirement that *mandos* should be below the age of thirty-five for active service (*militancia*) effectively barred poorer women who had become financially independent at a later date.<sup>32</sup>

Salary levels were to an extent dictated by the overall poor finances of the Falange, but according to one past member, Pilar was never keen in any case for *mandos* to work outside SF.<sup>33</sup> This stance aligned her with bourgeois opinion which equated paid work with need and preferred to see middle-class women in voluntary activities for Church and country. In this context, the state of the Falange's finances enabled a construct of *mandos'* jobs as both 'real' employment and yet unthreatening to the status quo.

Low salaries denoted a general acceptance of work as 'sacrificial' and were especially significant for the higher *mandos*. Their posts were potentially the most controversial, being both openly political and carrying most authority. And despite their titles as specialists in social service, culture and aspects of education, *mandos* were a long way from working in the caring, supportive roles which SF propaganda deemed so suitable for women. While the lower *mandos* carried out their teaching and nursing duties, those at

<sup>30</sup> The *divulgadoras*, as previously noted, were funded from 1944 from local town halls and earned a monthly average of 75 pesetas. The instructors (*instructoras elementales*) who taught basic level SF courses to voluntary groups such as youth members were never paid. Those with more qualifications (*instructoras generales*), who taught the SF curriculum in schools, were paid by the schools from the point when the subjects became compulsory. The typical pattern was for these staff to work part-time in a number of schools and be paid a small amount by each. The average total monthly salary for this was between 200-300 pesetas. The rural instructors were a case apart. Short agricultural courses were initially run as part of SF's programmes organised by local political leaders and in the SF travelling schools. The SF national agricultural school was set up in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture to train women to work in a more specialist role. Once qualified, these rural instructors (*instructoras rurales*) were paid by the ministry and typically worked on one of their rural regeneration schemes. Salaries in the 1950s were between 200-400 pesetas monthly. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 7 November 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996; M. Kenny, *A Spanish Tapestry*, (London, Cohen and West, 1961), p. 177.

<sup>32</sup> Circular no. 99, 24 June 1938 from P. Primo de Rivera to provincial leaders, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, pp. 266-7. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that the age bar was dropped in the 1950s, when SF was keen to encourage new blood and hold on to its experts.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996. The issue was brought to the attention of the 1956 SF national conference, where it was decided to increase salaries. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, pp. 305-6.

higher levels were engaged in managerial and administrative tasks which were high-profile and frequently brought them into conflict with men.

The national level salaries were paid less for specialist knowledge than for general managerial ability. The departments were wide-ranging and service *mandos* at national level were not limited by their prior qualifications to working in a specified area. They frequently changed departments and often held widely differing responsibilities. Implicit in this was the understanding that all work was underpinned by political conviction. In this sense, *mandos'* most important function was their moral authority. Their specialism was less important than who they were and what they stood for.

The basis for the authority of the *mandos* shifted as SF developed its own identity. In its earliest days before the Civil War, it had defined itself largely in relationship to the male Falange. Its 1937 statutes had declared that woman's mission was 'to serve as the perfect complement of man' and that SF would bring 'an essentially feminine sense and style to the virile work of the Falange, in order to assist, complement and complete that work'.<sup>34</sup> But expansion and bureaucratisation altered the dynamic of SF and this was mirrored in the conferences. At the earliest of these, *mandos* were a largely passive audience, listening to expositions of the teachings of José Antonio delivered by male speakers such as the paediatrician, Dr Luque or the religious adviser, Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel.<sup>35</sup> But by the early 1950s, the annual forum had become the platform for *mandos* of both hierarchies to report on progress and debate problems. Male advice on the interpretation of Falangism had given way to practical considerations of how each department and province was faring. *Mandos* needed the ability to compile annual reports as well as the confidence to deliver speeches and argue their corner. Having been told by Pilar at the 1941 conference that they were not to become orators ('We do not want to make... female orators of you. There could be nothing further from what we stand for than the former woman in parliament, bawling her head off on stage to get votes'<sup>36</sup>), their job increasingly required them to be something very similar.

<sup>34</sup> S.F. de F.E. de las J.O.N.S., *Estatutos*, (Salamanca, Imp. Cervantes, n.d.), pp. 3-4.

<sup>35</sup> This was clearly the case up to 1942, the last year for which full details of the conferences were printed. At the 1951 conference, each *regidora central* gave an account of her national department and later that year, it was decided that subsequent conferences would centre round reports delivered by provincial leaders. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 251 and p. 263.

<sup>36</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1941 SF national conference, in *Discursos*, p. 45.

Even for elites operating in the early atmosphere of deference to the male Falange, there was a clear contradiction between the Falangist message of female submission and the requirements placed on the deliverers of that message. From the outset, they had needed to be propagandists, pressing the unaffiliated into voluntary action and relying on their own resources to do the work. In SF, doctrine justified active service as 'the supreme office, which calls us to the highest sacrifice'.<sup>37</sup> Confusingly, this was seen as somehow compatible with a vision of woman as man's assistant, and members were exhorted to keep out of the limelight: 'Your work should be silent. The less that is seen and heard of *Secciones Femeninas*, the better. Contact with politics should not lead to your getting mixed up in intrigue and cunning, which are not becoming to women.'<sup>38</sup>

The contradiction remained, but the dynamic shifted as *mandos* took to themselves more responsibilities. Pilar's battles in the 1940s to take control of the female youth programme, Social Aid and social service reinforced the point. By 1945, SF was less an offshoot of the National Movement than a separate sphere in which the controlling group of women worked without reference to men. There was now even less reason for *mandos* to bow to male authority. When they were dealing with men, it was more likely be in a public arena and as equals. In these forums, *mandos* needed all the intellectual and managerial skills they could summon.<sup>39</sup>

Some early *mandos* saw the potential for SF's separate frame of reference as a career opportunity. The admission of women to the Falangist students' syndicate (SEU) in 1935 gave women such as Mercedes Fórmica a platform for political involvement. Under the banner of SEU, she started the campaign to identify the role and rights of Falangist women students, which would develop into the summer camps and political education programmes of the post-war years. Her identification with Falangism was channelled into contentious, difficult work, where she encountered at first hand the prejudices of male

<sup>37</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1940 SF national conference. Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>38</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1941 SF national conference. Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>39</sup> For example, from 1945, the Town and Country department began to work directly with the National Movement's Syndical Organisation. This meant that representatives (*enlaces*) of SF working women sat on syndical committees with their male counterparts. Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

Falangists and the limitations of Pilar Primo de Rivera's vision for university women.<sup>40</sup> She left SEU and a subsequent post as editor of the magazine *Medina* in pursuit of her own legal and literary career, determined to continue in her own right what she considered as the 'incomplete work' of SF.

The experience of Mercedes Fórmica was shared by a number of early *mandos*, who came from the same social background as the founder members but did not stay in the organisation.<sup>41</sup> The cultural credentials of SF and in particular, its contribution to the intellectual wing of the Falange in wartime, were attractive to aspiring journalists such as Marichu de la Mora.<sup>42</sup> Its first publication, the monthly journal *Revista 'Y'*, carried material by Falangist writers and poets such as Eugenio D'Ors, Dionisio Ridruejo and Eugenio Montes. For Marichu de la Mora, becoming a *mando* gave access to that world and specifically to opportunities for work in her chosen field. Her posts as head of the press and propaganda department and subsequent editorship of *Revista 'Y'* were stepping-stones in her own career. When the opportunities had been exploited, she left to make a career outside.

For other women, employment in specialist departments gave opportunities to pursue personal interests and ideas. This was the case with Mercedes Otero, whose post in SF's Foreign Service required her to organise and lead a choir and dances visit to Wales at the age of nineteen. The specialist knowledge about dance she gained on this and a Latin American tour with choir and dances led to a job outside SF as consultant to a film director. From here, she became a script assistant and remained within the film industry for the next twelve years.<sup>43</sup>

For these three women the attractions of the staff corps were measured in terms of personal outcomes and none felt a conflict of loyalties when they took their talents elsewhere. Similarly, there were non-political reasons why aspiring teachers and nurses might choose an SF academy in which to train. The course for primary teachers at Las

<sup>40</sup> An account of Mercedes Fórmica's experience of working with Pilar is given in Chapter Five. Part of her frustration was that she felt that Pilar was less accepting of university women than José Antonio had been. Interview with Mercedes Fórmica, 22 February 1996.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, who was briefly a provincial leader in SF but for whom membership was far less important than her work in setting up Social Aid. Interview with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, 29 May 1997.

<sup>42</sup> Marichu de la Mora is the grand-daughter of Antonio Maura, (leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister from 1907-9). Interview with Marichu de la Mora, 27 October 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Mercedes Otero, 20 February 1996.

Navas, for example, had a high reputation in its own right and was always over-subscribed.<sup>44</sup> There were grants for the highest-performing students and the course included cultural visits and a ski trip. Training in an SF academy equipped future teachers to offer extra-curricular activities such as carol competitions, school plays and gym displays.<sup>45</sup> Such work was officially credited to teachers' service records by the local SF. There was no payment, but such service would count in the teacher's favour when she was applying for a transfer.<sup>46</sup>

But for many who passed through Las Navas and other SF academies, their level of involvement never grew after the initial training. The organisation had provided their professional base and while they might well offer time and expertise in the service of their local SF, the majority would not move to a full-time career in either of the hierarchies. Alongside these women, however, was a smaller number for whom a career in the caring professions was not enough. For them, the staff corps of SF gave access to a certain lifestyle, seen as attractive and desirable. Reasons for joining had much to do with their perceptions of the role in society played by *mandos* and how this could fulfil personal ambitions.

Part of the attraction of SF was its engagement with the rebuilding of Spain. In the organicist world view of the regime and SF within it, Spain was an ailing nation, in need of 'new' and 'modern' solutions to replace the status quo of the Second Republic. In this sense, as Rita Felski has noted, modernity was 'synonymous with the repudiation of the past and a commitment to change and the values of the future'.<sup>47</sup> For SF, whose discourse polarised the failures of pre-Civil War Spain and the projected successes of the Falangist Revolution, the main problem of the nation - and particularly its womenfolk - was ignorance, the legacy of failed parliamentary systems. The single most important task of the *mandos* was to eradicate this through education. As Pilar said in 1940:

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 27 October 1994. Two further SF schools opened in Madrid in 1959 and became the country's main specialist teacher training centres for physical education and domestic science and for courses in health specialisms. L. Suárez Fernández, *Crónica*, p. 344.

<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996, Angelina Garrido, 22 February 1996.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Andresa López Enseñat, 27 May 1996.

<sup>47</sup> R. Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 13.

The majority of women in Spain are either uneducated or their education has shortcomings... This ignorance prevents them... from recognising the most basic of women's duties to men, to their country and to God. Of course, they are not to blame. It is the fault of the old, worn-out system... which gave them the vote in the elections and wanted to flatter them but was incapable of educating them.<sup>48</sup>

There was little in substance of SF programmes which was genuinely new. The motive for the introduction of domestic subjects and physical education was to equip pupils for marriage and motherhood. And underneath the rhetoric proclaiming that education was needed for all, SF varied the tone and message of that education. To working-class women, *mandos* taught the virtues of domesticity in the utmost detail through the social service programme. By contrast, SF's equivalent course for university students - the *mandos* of the future - paid only lip-service to practicalities and concentrated on political matters.<sup>49</sup>

Similar class divisions were drawn in SF's approach to culture. The libraries of SF would supply a controlled and restricted diet of leisure reading in accordance with the official view of the populace as being 'minors in need of supervision', as Helen Graham has said.<sup>50</sup> *Mandos* were warned at the 1941 SF conference: 'Together with our request that women should read, we emphasise the enormous danger that certain books can hold... You cannot give everyone who wants to read a free choice of book.'<sup>51</sup>

But there was no attempt to control higher culture, as demonstrated by SF's involvement with the Madrid Ladies' Residence (*Residencia de Señoritas*). From its heyday during the Second Republic, it was closed at the beginning of the Civil War and its founder, María de Maeztu, left the country. It was re-opened in 1940 by SF and was soon under the principalship of one of the first *mandos*, Viky Eiroa. Incredibly, given the narrowness of the official line on women's culture, the Residence picked up where it had left off. That

<sup>48</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1940 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 34.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998. She remembers that there was a running battle between the *mandos* at the SEU summer camps and SF leaders in the vicinity who had overall control of the premises. It was felt that SEU camp residents never took sufficient care of the furniture.

<sup>50</sup> H. Graham, 'Gender and the State: Women in the 1940s', in H. Graham and J. Labanyi (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, (Oxford, O.U.P., 1995), p. 185.

<sup>51</sup> J. Lasso de la Vega's speech at the 1941 SF national conference, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales (libro segundo)*, (S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 147.

Viky Eiroa continued both its spirit and routines is confirmed by a student who stayed there under both regimes.<sup>52</sup>

The social background and age of the *mandos* had its effect, too, in public perceptions of their role. In many cases, their upbringing had equipped them with experience of charity work or managing household staff. Their ensuing organisational skills were often seen as bossiness by those outside.<sup>53</sup> As SF became more powerful, with its role in education and its control of social service, there was the potential for abuse of the authority that members had been given. This was in contravention of the SF concept of leadership, which preached transmission of political truths through camaraderie and silent example-setting. Nonetheless, it was apparently the case that the social service attendance rules and the sanctions for non-compliance were interpreted according to the strictness of the local *mando*.<sup>54</sup> As SF women continued in post, in many cases for their whole working life, it also became harder to sustain the fiction of leaders as eternally young. SF youth instructors were exhorted to project themselves as youthful and fashionable, far removed from the stereotypical image of a teacher: 'You must be young for your age and for your temperament, so that *flechas* (youth members) never see their teachers as grumpy, with their hair a mess and wearing glasses, like teachers we have all known and who spoiled our childhood.'<sup>55</sup>

Defying reality, SF retained its construct of the *mando* as the possessor of eternal youth and vigour. Consciously or not, the working conditions of staff at the national office appear to have informed the rest of the organisation and norms of dress and behaviour were understood and widespread. SF uniform was worn by all ranks in *La Nacional* up to 1956.<sup>56</sup> Its plain, tailored look together with other manifestations of modernity such as the short hairstyles and make-up worn by many staff summed up the contradictory self-image of the *mando* as both a leader of women and yet a champion of their inferior role. She was dressed to work, unconstrained by fussy clothes, mobile and active. But the uniform could also be read as an assimilation of women's subordination, a projection of modesty and service to

<sup>52</sup> Interview with María Luisa Oliveros, 18 February 1998. She was not a member of SF.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Sebastián Barrueco, 27 October 1995.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996.

<sup>55</sup> Pilar's speech to provincial youth workers, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 179.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.



the common cause. Like the conditions of employment, it distinguished its wearers as different from but unthreatening to the status quo.

The dress code and general demeanour of the *mandos* epitomised José Antonio's remark that Spain itself should be 'joyful and dressed in short skirts' and dated back to SF's earliest days.<sup>57</sup> Its origins may well have reflected SF's early desire to be associated with and yet separate from the male Falange, but however it developed, style (*estilo*) became SF's main statement of populism. It was an amalgam of dress code and comportment which summed up *mandos* and the work they were doing.<sup>58</sup> The essence of *estilo* was a mixture of unobtrusive efficiency and a directness in personal dealings, both of which set *mandos* apart from other women, particularly those in traditional Catholic circles. It was an indicator that the femininity and high moral standards expected by Francoist society were compatible with an active and campaigning life style, a combination rarely seen outside SF. When combined with behavioural norms, the 'way of being' (*manera de ser*), Pilar went so far as to claim that style became an observable phenomenon: 'Once your "way of being" as Catholic Falangists is achieved, your Falangist style will show through.'<sup>59</sup> In Pilar's understanding, style was observable not just by physical appearance but by voice, conversation, relationships and way of working. Principles governing style were enumerated in SF training literature. Moral rectitude and sobriety of manner were essential: *mandos* had to be above reproach and resolute in their work and private life. They would be distinguished by joy and 'tranquility in their decisions and calm even in their outer bearing'.<sup>60</sup>

Understanding and acceptance of style was a prerequisite for admission to the staff corps. Style was a core concept, a truth that remained unaltered in the life of SF and was such a reliable signifier of talent and potential that it appeared as a category on testimonials and personal files. 'Does she possess Falangist style and way of being?' was among the questions that provincial leaders had to answer on the official forms recommending women for *mandos'* posts.<sup>61</sup> For *mandos*, it was the defining and unchanging

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Enrique de Aguinaga, 22 February 1996.

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996; Enrique de Aguinaga, 22 February 1996.

<sup>59</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1942 national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, *Discursos*, p. 49.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>61</sup> D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Personal: organización. Delegación provincial*, (Madrid [?], S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], n.d.), p. 130. Information was also sought on depth of religious faith and the candidate's personal appearance.

badge of belonging to SF, observable to outsiders but attainable only by the initiated. It was visible to all, but its core meaning, origin and manner of acquisition could not be understood by anyone not trained for leadership at SF's national academy.

SF style was the external sign of the world-view shared by all *mandos*. Apart from their ideological beliefs, membership of the staff corps was understood to entail a corporate way of working towards the goal of the Falangist Revolution. It was this shared identity translated into working routines and patterns which distinguished *mandos* from those on the periphery such as the teachers and nurses often described as 'working with the SF'. Hierarchical progression within the *mandos* signified, among other things, working more closely around the ideological core of SF - Pilar's team at Almagro 36.

Perhaps even more significant was the fact of the staff corps's existence as a community without men. In this respect, the development of SF had always been contradictory as being outwardly dependent on men but actually self-sufficient. Its original *raison d'être* of assisting men in all their endeavours had quickly been overtaken by the agenda of women's issues. The task of educating the female population had few reference points with men. The proclaimed camaraderie with male colleagues in the National Movement was largely symbolic and the relationship with ministers and Franco was one of negotiation and persuasion, attempting to keep the SF agenda at the forefront of politics.

There were undoubtedly attractions for women in entering this exclusively female world. First was the encouragement and companionship implicit in the separateness of the career structure and working conditions. The fact that they were paid so little gave them a certain moral superiority, a fact reinforced by SF's guidance manual for local leaders:

*Camaradas* must have a magnificent record proving their spirit and selflessness. Salaries are too small to be considered a living wage for members. They are no more than a small gratuity to help financially... Only certain posts are salaried and then only after (*camaradas*) have shown their spirit by working without payment.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Personal: organización local, p. 83.

The exclusivity of the separate sphere of the staff corps also permitted a different kind of working relationship with the men. SF was only a constituent part of the National Movement and its leadership was hierarchically beneath that of its head, the Secretary-General. In practice, however, the distinction seems to have been lost on the civil population, particularly as it was frequently the SF which was the more active.<sup>63</sup> *Mandos* in the political hierarchy connected directly with offices in the National Movement's bureaucracy and in some areas shared premises. There was a need to work with the 'kings of the village', the priest, doctor, schoolteacher and mayor.<sup>64</sup> In the service hierarchy, *mandos* in the travelling schools did likewise, and also had to relate to the working men of the village, persuading them to come to literacy and other classes. By the 1960s, when women could be elected to the Francoist parliament as 'family representatives' and there were more women in the workplace, the presence and intervention of such *mandos* was less exceptional. Before this time, they stood out in a male-dominated society as the only women exercising moral and political authority.

The other side of the coin was how *mandos* were perceived by those men who were in contact with them. From those least in the know about what the job entailed, their forthrightness and determination were often interpreted as indicators of lesbianism or at the very least denoting a masculine, military style.<sup>65</sup> One provincial newspaper editor was in no doubt about the authority wielded by SF staff. After he had reduced his paper's coverage of an SF conference to make room for a story about a royal hunting party in the vicinity, the provincial leader accused him of being a communist and communicated this to the Civil Governor.<sup>66</sup> Those nearer the core of SF, whether through experience of working with them or because they were married to *mandos*, are predictably more charitable. In the words of one such husband, the fact that they were mobile, well-travelled and sports-loving gave them 'the label of modernity'.<sup>67</sup>

Central to the separateness of the staff corps from the rest of the female population was the *mandos'* ability to live a professional life, with certain social outlets, without the

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Enrique de Aguinaga, 22 February 1996. He tells the story of a messenger boy looking for the National Movement's offices by asking the way to 'the men's *Sección Femenina*'.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Conchita Valladolid Barazal, 27 October 1995.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996; interview with Sebastián Barrueco, 27 October 1995.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Enrique de Aguinaga, 22 February 1996.

need for marriage. The official line set in the 1930s that all *mandos* had to be unmarried was dropped as SF realised that this was less important than members' readiness to serve and their personal qualities. Nonetheless, there was a widespread public perception that all *mandos* were unmarried and unmarriedable. The initials of SF's widest-reaching programme, the social service scheme (SS), were said to stand for 'permanent spinsters' (*siempre solteras*).<sup>68</sup> Within SF, too, it was understood that very many staff members would remain unmarried. As one local leader recalls: 'The real *mandos* were always single.'<sup>69</sup>

But in reality, the *mandos* were not a homogeneous group of single women. The earliest staff included those whose fiancés and husbands had been killed in action.<sup>70</sup> Others in the early years, including some of the most influential *mandos*, did leave to marry. Some continued to work after marriage and others returned to active service once their children were older.<sup>71</sup> Particularly in the immediate post-war years, the closed world of the staff corps could offer an alternative existence for those denied a conventional family life. The designing of the training schools and camps as 'Falangist homes' underlined SF's idealised vision of the body of *mandos* as a united family. As the national editorial team of the magazine *Revista 'Y'* claimed for its readers: 'We will all help each other, we will all protect each other, and as there is strength in unity, there will be nothing and no-one able to resist the overwhelming mass of women who have understood the meaning of the word solidarity.'<sup>72</sup> Even after the immediate postwar, it continued to be the case that while the public may have believed otherwise, there was no bar to *mandos*' marrying and many did so. In some cases, their post in SF had brought them into contact with their future partner, although the opposite point of view - that there was no time for a social life -

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Nuri Ogando, 23 February 1995.

<sup>70</sup> Viky Eiroa, (national leader, Foreign Service) for example, lost her fiancé in the war. Julia Alcántara (national leader, Youth Wing) and Mercedes Sanz Bachiller (head, Social Aid) were war widows.

<sup>71</sup> For example, Carmen Werner left her post as national leader of the Youth Wing to marry in 1941. 'Carmen Werner se ha casado', in *Revista 'Y'*, (August 1941). She returned later to work for SF. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998. Carmen Olmedo, who joined SF in 1934, continued to work as head of the Madrid Cultural Circle after her marriage. Interview with Carmen Olmedo, 21 February 1996.

<sup>72</sup> '¿Qué duda tienes?' in *Revista 'Y'*, (February, 1938).

held good for many.<sup>73</sup>

However significant the differences in their reasons for joining the staff and whether or not they married, *mandos* throughout the regime shared an understanding of their postings on both an intellectual and emotional level. Their belief in the legitimacy of the Falangist cause, confidence in their own abilities and an acceptance that work for SF was a form of service was common to all. To those outside, especially men, this was often perceived in a negative way. By the 1950s, it was common for higher *mandos* to be university graduates, and their added political awareness gained from SF courses gave them an academic edge which scared off many men.<sup>74</sup> But just as commonly, it was the women who made no effort to find a partner because they were fully engaged with their life as a *mando*.<sup>75</sup>

Certain aspects of postings gave obvious freedoms and increased confidence to the post-holders. Being mobile was a necessary requirement for *mandos*, who regularly attended conferences or courses and made frequent job moves.<sup>76</sup> Residence at summer camps was, in its own way, a holiday and work with choirs and dances led routinely to travel around and outside Spain. In the immediate postwar, when Spain's infrastructure was at its poorest and daily life very hard for the majority, *mandos'* posts opened up possibilities of leisure and travel that had no equivalent outside. Also significant was the social network of women with shared interests. Residential courses and the daily routines of SF offices often spilled over into social activities. Working lunches, political discussions and shared journeys, for example, blurred the distinction between work and leisure. Particularly for staff in *La Nacional*, their work and social calendar was centred round the office, which had around one hundred permanent staff working through the year. Here, groups of between ten and fifteen women worked as departmental teams with frequent intervention from Pilar, whose dynamism gave pace and a measure of unpredictability to

<sup>73</sup> Carmen Olmedo met her husband, who was head of the Youth Front, through her SF superior. Interview with Carmen Olmedo, 21 February 1996. The Falangist minister, Antonio Tovar, married the national head of Social Service, Consuelo Larrucea, 1942. The wedding was held in the chapel of La Mota. 'Boda en un castillo de leyenda', in *Revista 'Y'*, (August 1942).

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996. In her memory, it was even rarer for non-graduate men to marry any SF *mando*.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Puri Barrios, 31 October 1996.

<sup>76</sup> For example, a *mando* in her twenties required by SF to set up a provincial youth department in Albacete just after the end of the Civil War, travelled for thirty-eight hours on a cattle truck shared with prisoners on their way to a concentration camp. Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994.

the working day and whose idiosyncracies were a further bond among her team.<sup>77</sup>

Less measurable was how *mandos* perceived their self-worth and their pride in belonging to an elite. There was an acceptance of a renunciation of self, as evidenced by the need to be moved, promoted or demoted according to the needs of the organisation. They felt themselves stake-holders in the future of Spain, making an explicit connection between the nation's future and their own programmes.<sup>78</sup> And while the nature of their job required them to show tact and diplomacy, they were also at times outspoken and controversial. *Mandos* seem to have relished their encounters with mother superiors, government ministers or anyone failing to implement social justice as conceived by SF.<sup>79</sup> Such conflicts proclaimed their duty to defend Falangism against 'injury, irony or malice' and more significantly, underlined their own resilience and eloquence.<sup>80</sup>

But there was a fine line to be drawn between *mandos'* personal development and SF's tolerance of their individuality. The organisation was big enough for personality conflicts to be resolved often by voluntary transfers but women who challenged the status quo of SF could not survive in post. Thus, for example, a local leader could go against policy in matters of detail in the cause of Falangism.<sup>81</sup> Open defiance, however, brought expulsion even when the behaviour of the *mando* was entirely well-meaning.<sup>82</sup> And on occasions the organisation showed a curious lack of trust in its elites, as for example at the

<sup>77</sup> For example, one *mando* was called to Pilar's office, given a hat from the cupboard and required to accompany her there and then to the wedding of a minister's son. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 19 February 1998. Also remembered are Pilar's obsession with timekeeping (interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996) and her complete absence of dress sense. Interviews with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994; Teresa Loring, 27 October 1994; Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995; Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996; Carmen Osuña Castelló, 31 July 1996.

<sup>78</sup> Examples cited by former *mandos* include Prince Juan Carlos' visits to La Mota, the continuing existence of Cultural Circles in Latin America, the founding of the girls' school later attended by the two daughters of Juan Carlos and the gratitude of villagers to the staff of SF travelling schools. Interviews with Antonia Ortolá, 3 August 1994; Viky Eiroa, 31 May 1995; Mercedes Otero, 20 February 1996; Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996.

<sup>79</sup> Interviews with Maruja Martín Sierra, 21 February 1996; Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996; Carmina Carpintero, 23 February 1996; Mónica Plaza, 29 October 1997.

<sup>80</sup> S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Enciclopedia elemental*, (Madrid, E. Giménez, 1959), p. 156.

<sup>81</sup> The case in point was a local leader's refusal to deny aid to a pregnant woman on the grounds that she was unmarried. Interview with Nuri Ogando, 23 February 1995.

<sup>82</sup> A *mando* was asked to admit the general public, including well-to-do women, to one of the training courses she ran regularly for factory women and maids. She was told that under this arrangement, the general public would come in via the main door and the others would enter separately. She refused to run the course under these conditions and handed over the keys of the hall to her provincial superior. The provincial *mando* made out a disciplinary report which led to exposure in the newspaper and her dismissal. Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996. This incident took place in the late 1960s. One *mando* had taken to heart Pilar's oft-expressed doubts about continuing as leader of SF and made the suggestion at a national conference that there should be a secret vote to reaffirm her continuance. This caused an uproar and she was forgiven only because she was deemed young and naïve. Interview with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 22 February 1996. This took place at the Pontevedra conference in 1964.

referendum to ratify the Law of Succession in 1947, when local *mandos* were issued with voting forms that were already filled in.<sup>83</sup>

Yet despite the shifting social base of the *mandos* and the changing political climate, the motivation for joining the staff corps appears to have remained constant. The core beliefs in José Antonio, the potential greatness of Spain and their own ability to make a valid contribution to the development of the nation did not alter, even at the end of the 1950s. In one sense, this was surprising, given the difference between the conditions during and after the Civil War and the relative prosperity twenty years on. But however much living standards were improving, they did not challenge the basis on which the *mandos* found their abiding sense of self-worth. The distinctive world of which they were part was a private sphere, with its own codes, rituals and conventions. The fact of belonging allowed women a separate frame of reference from that of their family and other commitments. From a public perspective, the memory of what SF had contributed in the early postwar kept its credentials intact. *Mandos* continued to enjoy the respect, if not always the full understanding, of the public at large.

Arguably, the closed world of the *mandos* was full of contradictions, the greatest of which was that their lifestyle was in direct contrast to the gender ideology they were responsible for implementing. In the SF understanding, militarism, youth and energy embodied the values of José Antonio, particularly social justice. The prominence of *mandos* in local communities, their often vociferous stand on issues and their general air of confidence as seen by the general public vindicated this. But the self-worth they projected was derived very largely from the framework in which they were doing their job. The singular conditions for employment allowed *mandos* to do 'real' work in terms of personal satisfaction while ensuring that the job was not a conventionally paid position. This allowed women the sociability and opportunities of an ideal workplace while safeguarding them from the charge of being intellectuals or feminists. Although they were not salaried in the accepted sense, they enjoyed the freedom of movement, social outlets and public platforms that were simply unavailable to women in the more conventional private sphere of the home.

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Rosalía Pemán, 30 July 1996.

The contradictions inherent in the lives of *mandos* were also illustrative of SF's status as an organisation with potentially modernising elements within a regime which based its legitimacy on an idealised view of the past and sought to eradicate the emancipatory and reforming efforts of the Second Republic. The essential incompatibility of SF's position was understood and rationalised within the organisation as being part of the 'Falangist Revolution'. But ironically, the corner-stones of that Revolution were no more than a veneer. Social justice as a classless concept did not exist within SF. The principles of the domestic and social skills programmes were firmly centred round middle-class values of thrift, prudence and keeping up appearances. The 'Falange Revolution' had less to do with radical change than with equipping women to operate better within their domestic sphere. And even the basis on which SF *mandos* were appointed was never truly classless. SF inclusiveness was largely symbolic, confined to the understanding and interpretation of *estilo*, the camaraderie of the national team and the endless propaganda which proclaimed SF as an organisation which reached out to all women.

But the class base of the *mandos* and their message and the sometimes unflattering public image they conveyed are less significant than the personal outcomes for those involved. SF service provided, in a limited and controlled way, some of the benefits of employment and continuing education that future generations of women would take for granted. The independence gained was a double-edged sword. The *mando's* lifestyle distanced her from the majority of her sex, whose prime goals were marriage and motherhood. Men might value her companionship and conversation but were relatively unlikely to consider her as a marriage partner. The regime publicly praised SF work yet the *mando* earned tiny amounts. In the end, the drawbacks were less important than the belief that she was participating in a work of national importance and her own sense of satisfaction.



## CONCLUSION

The significance of *Sección Femenina* (SF) to the Francoist State and the lives of Spanish women and girls up to 1959 is measurable both in terms of what it did and how its programmes were received. But although it operated as part of the regime's bureaucratic framework, SF was unlike any other section of the National Movement. Its ideological roots pre-dated Franco and were set firmly in the Falange party of José Antonio. When the Falange became the administrative framework of the Nationalist State following the Decree of Unification in 1937, SF continued to operate in the spirit and style of José Antonio, interpreting its task quite literally as the 'Falangist Revolution'.

This gave SF a unique place in the coalition of right-wing groups which formed the Francoist alliance. As part of the original Falange, it had been involved in the diffusion of propaganda and projection of the core values behind the uprising. And after Unification, despite the weakening of the Falange, SF continued in its role of propagandist as if nothing had changed. Throughout the regime, it operated on the basis that Falangism and Francoism were one and the same thing.

The reality was different. The party apparatus of the National Movement was rapidly bureaucratised, membership was often no more than a formality for appointments and corruption and self-interest grew. But SF was able to counter this by evolving from being an off-shoot of Falange to becoming its 'ideological reserve'. The contrast outside the Falangist arm of the Nationalist Movement was even stronger. Conservative monarchists, the Church and the Army had no wish to encourage the mobilisation of any part of the population. For these groups, identification with Falangism amounted to no more than a sharing of the rhetoric and a common rejection of the politics of the Second Republic.

It was therefore the case that while SF was in tune with the broad political principles of the Nationalist cause and, by extension, of the regime, it had its own clearly defined ways of attaining them. SF's operational style, its structures and its ideological base were rooted in the doctrine of José Antonio. The pre-war Falange had borrowed rhetoric and aesthetics from the Nazi and Fascist models, and SF built on these to establish its separate identity.

This was most evident between 1939 and 1942, the years when the contrast was considerable between SF's operational style and that of other sectors of the regime. It was also between 1939 and 1942 when two more of SF's 'fascist credentials' were most marked. In these years, it was most active in its attempts to mobilise women. The early *mandos* were charged with the task of starting all areas of SF activity across the nation. In this time, SF began its social service programme, domestic schools, youth activities, camps, choirs and welfare visitors scheme. Formal training of *mandos*, started during the Civil War, was now producing trained women who could take on posts of responsibility as provincial leaders and specialists. And it was in these years, too, that the utopian vision of the Falangist Revolution was at its height. Many young recruits were given huge responsibilities and those involved saw themselves as the pioneers.<sup>1</sup> And when the ideas had yet to be tried, SF was helped in its vision by the 'poetic' Falangists such as Dionisio Ridruejo, by the cult of José Antonio, and by the whiff of the revolutionary socialising potential of the Third Reich. In the words of SF's former national head of the Youth Wing: 'The nation couldn't function with our theories but it was so beautiful and so incredible.'<sup>2</sup>

And apart from its borrowings from foreign fascist models, there were many senses in which SF operations projected a modernising, dynamic image, pointing the contrast with reactionary sectors of the regime. As previously noted, José Antonio was attributed with wanting a 'joyful and short-skirted Spain' ('*una España alegre y faldicorta.*')<sup>3</sup> and SF's programmes were a mixture of inventions and borrowings built round these statements. The domestic, political and religious teachings delivered the serious element, while SF's choirs and dances, camps and gymnastics emphasised a counter image of youth and vitality. At a symbolic level, too, SF's verbal signs - the use of the words *camarada* (comrade) and *tú* (you) replacing more formal ways of address, signalled SF's self-image as an inclusive community defending the interests of women. And SF's track record of good housekeeping reinforced the point. There were no hidden corners of corruption or ways of using the posts available to secure personal fortunes, unlike the party administrators of the National

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994; interview with Teresa Loring, 27 October 1994. She remembers going to villages as one of the first *divulgadoras*, trying to persuade mothers to accept vaccinations for their children.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Julia Alcántara, 26 October 1994.

<sup>3</sup> F. Ximénez de Sandoval, *José Antonio - biografía*, 2ª edición, (Madrid, Lazareno-Echaniz, 1940), p. 601.

Movement directly involved in the supply chain of black market produce in the years of *estraperlo*.

SF dynamism was evident, too, in the way it chose to interpret Franco's mandate of 1939. Up to this point, SF's existence was bound to the fortunes of the male Falange. In SF's own creation of its history, the period from 1934-1936 was its 'pre-time', the years it shared with José Antonio.<sup>4</sup> In the following years of the Civil War, SF came nearest to being a traditional aid provider, working alongside men and in their shadow. But the 1939 mandate gave SF an independent role and henceforth it was able to justify all its actions, attitudes and programmes as part of the instructions received from Franco to 'reconquer the home... to educate Spanish women and children... to make women healthy, strong and free'.<sup>5</sup> José Antonio had repeatedly listed the ills of Spain and, in the SF understanding, his words had been vindicated by the Nationalist uprising. The perceived extent of the 'ignorance' of Spaniards which had caused them to have faith in parliamentary systems required the drastic solutions of the compulsory teaching programmes and intervention into the private lives of the female population.

More problematical from the regime's point of view was the way in which SF's dynamic, modernising image was applied to its vision of women and their role in the New State. There was nothing controversial in the SF interpretation of how women should contribute to the rebuilding of Spain after the Civil War. Franco's mandate was a statement that women should be restored to the home, reinforcing the patriarchal authority of the regime via their roles as wives, mothers and home-makers. Their capacity to do so, went the argument, was enhanced through the domestic and childcare programmes. But, as had been the case in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the entrusting of this to an elite group of women, predominantly from the middle and upper classes, led to ambiguities and contradictions.

Foremost among these was the ideological motivation of SF's elite members. Their political and religious training stressed the populist origins of Falangism and their 'mission' to reach out to the poorest sectors of society. SF presented itself as an

<sup>4</sup> P. Primo de Rivera, 'Historia de la Sección Femenina', in *Revista 'Y'* (February, March [?], April, May, June, July-August, September, October, December 1938); *Revista 'Y'* (January-May 1939).

<sup>5</sup> Franco's speech at the Medina rally 1939, in S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., Consejos nacionales (libro primero), (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 99.

organisation in which merit and effort were rewarded and 'old-style' preferment was at an end. As Pilar told members in 1938: 'In the Falange, there are no privileged groups. With us... it's the woman who works hardest, the cleverest, most disciplined, whatever her background and whatever her name.'<sup>6</sup> But although privilege was seen as the antithesis of José Antonio's social justice, SF did not criticise personal wealth, capitalism nor the existence of the aristocracy. And while SF's credentials as a meritocracy were strengthened following the opening of La Mota, it remained the case that the founder members had all come from the circle of acquaintances round the Madrid Falange. The populist rhetoric of José Antonio was in the context of his own privileged background, and was founded on the belief in a small, powerful elite force whose efforts would transform society. In this, SF was characteristic of other fascist organisations, claiming to be populist but in reality led by elites.

But in one important sense, SF populism was understood and interpreted by SF *mandos* at a deeper level. Whereas outside SF, women of similar economic and cultural backgrounds continued to base their world-view on bourgeois and Catholic norms, *mandos* had a different self-image. SF disdained the perceived lifestyle of wealthy women, to whom it attributed a range of negative character qualities such as shallowness of thought, passivity and general lack of drive. It hated the idea that women from moneyed backgrounds felt owed a living and could fall back on the efforts of others without contributing. SF's dislike found a particular focus in their practice of Catholicism, where external trappings were felt to disguise an absence of sincerity. For SF, therefore, religion came to have more significance than as a component of Falangism. The study and practice of Catholic liturgy and dogma became the channel through which *mandos* could best express their distance from old-style beliefs and codes of behaviour. By adopting the Benedictine style of worship, SF was expressing the spirit, if not the words, of *joseantoniano* doctrine.

In the SF belief system, it was a moral duty to hold an informed opinion about religion. Admitting to being non-practising was more honourable than going to church for

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<sup>6</sup> Pilar's speech at the 1938 SF national conference, in P. Primo de Rivera, Discursos, circulares, escritos, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d.), p. 17.

the sake of appearances. Whereas outside SF, women's practice of Catholicism was associated with a long-established female role model of submission and self-effacement, within the organisation it appeared to encourage precisely the opposite.

And the contradictory self-image of SF *mandos* as both accepting of a deeply patriarchal political system while themselves exercising a degree of authority was mirrored in the way SF nationally related to politicians. In this, Pilar's early support for Franco won for SF considerable operational support, even though SF was subordinate to and dependent on the Secretary-General of the Movement, and, ultimately, to Franco. Its task was made easier by Pilar's own political importance as sister of José Antonio. This had early been acknowledged by Franco when he appointed her to the party executive and as first member of the National Council established in 1937, a position she held throughout her political life.<sup>8</sup>

SF managed to follow its own agenda through a combination of Pilar's obstinacy and SF's own separateness, which ensured it could function with a minimum of interference from male politicians. In contrast with the early days of the organisation, when SF was very much in the shadow of the male Falange, from 1937 Pilar carved out territory for SF which would secure it maximum autonomy. Publicly, she supported the requirements of Unification, welcoming the Traditionalist women (*margaritas*), while ensuring that they posed no threat to SF's programmes. And while SF and the Youth Front shared much ideologically, collaboration with male colleagues was a second best to full control of the girls' programmes, which was achieved in 1945. When interference was in the form of a rival organisation, as in the case of Social Aid, Pilar used her political influence to deal with the threat. Her interventions led to the removal of Mercedes Sanz Bachiller from her post and the expansion of SF operations to include social service. The later appointments of male advisers to the SF national team were made for similar reasons. The presence of Luis Agosti and Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel ensured that Establishment critics would find it hard to mount a fundamental challenge to SF's programmes, even where there were local problems. And the internal workings of SF were kept so separate that even if anyone had wished to interfere, it is difficult to know how they would have done so.

<sup>8</sup> P. Preston, Las tres Españas del 36, (Barcelona, Plaza y Janés, 1999), p. 169.

SF autonomy and influence were, of course, relative concepts. With the exception of Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, Pilar was the only female member of the National Council until the 1960s, a reflection of the deeply patriarchal nature of Francoist political structures, but SF certainly made the most of what influence it had.<sup>9</sup> *Mandos* in Pilar's national team at Almagro 36 were close to the political realities of the day. They knew whom to approach in government, which ministers could be manipulated and which, in their understanding were 'unreliable'. Increasingly in *La Nacional*, staff were graduates and their time in SF-SEU gave them a political awareness as sharp as that of any of their male colleagues. The specificity of their programmes and SF's physical surroundings at Almagro 36 encouraged *mandos* to have their own political agenda, judging the impact of national events and planning their strategies accordingly. Whereas in the Civil War before Unification, Pilar's flat in Salamanca had been the centre of legitimist activity, the focal point was now SF's national office.

Outside the national team, however, direct involvement and even political awareness were variable. At the rank of local leader and local specialist, there was likely to be little understanding of SF's balancing act with government. For the lower *mandos*, the programmes of SF were based on self-evident 'truths': that the Civil War had been necessary, that Spain (and particularly its women) were in ignorance, and that SF had the task of completing the 'unfinished mission' of José Antonio. There was a correspondingly simplistic understanding of *joseantoniano* doctrine. As one such former *mando* explained: 'José Antonio wanted to improve the education of women so he invented *Sección Femenina*.'<sup>10</sup>

There also existed a contradiction and a tension within SF itself as to how it should use the political process to advance the cause of women. On the one hand was the experience and dynamism of the national team, who had been instrumental in setting up the early programmes and establishing SF provincially and at local level. Added to these were women who had worked on SF editorial boards and in its press and propaganda operation. Among these members there was a feeling that SF should be more outspoken on the issue of women in the workplace. There was no disagreement on SF's official line, namely that work was a financial necessity for many. But some *mandos* believed that this should have been more

<sup>9</sup> Mercedes lost her seat when she relinquished control of Social Aid.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Nuri Ogando, 23 February 1995.

clearly articulated and that SF as a potential campaigning force for the recognition of rights of working women was slow to seize the initiative.

Against this was Pilar's own stance on the work-home debate and, more generally, on women's role in society. Apart from her thinking on SF's religious profile and identity, her views were essentially conservative. When innovations threatened to upset the power balance in government ( for example when Mercedes proposed nurseries for working mothers), she remained cautious. The price was the defection of some of her ablest members.

The strength of arguments and the intellectual capacity of *mandos* always carried less weight than the will of Pilar and her capacity to win the loyalty of her members. That is not to say that she was not influenced by the team of women round her. But ultimately, the identification of Pilar as the ideological core of SF ensured that her will would prevail.

Pilar's own inconsistencies were also those of SF in general. Her personal appearance was so bizarre that in the memory of one *mando*, it had a bad effect on SF's national image.<sup>11</sup> And assuming that the reason for her shabbiness was a busy schedule and the absorbing nature of her work, she gave the lie to the SF role model of the woman who could emerge from the home without losing her femininity. It is debatable whether anyone on the national team had much time to practise their domestic skills or indeed, that they regarded themselves as subordinate to men. On the occasions when *mandos* deferred to male authority, it was likely to be a considered strategy or pragmatism, but never a lack of nerve.

But Pilar's eccentricities in no way detracted from her position at the core of the SF belief system. José Antonio's teachings were fundamental to an understanding of Falangism, and the leadership of Pilar was understood to be inseparable from the workings and operations of SF. This second core belief found its fullest expression in the training courses at La Mota, soon an essential rite of passage for prospective staff members. Its classes gave *mandos* a better intellectual understanding of Falangism, but through its invented traditions and the actual or remembered presence of Pilar, they also experienced

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Carmen Osuña Castelló, 31 July 1996. Darned stockings, a hanging hem and old knitted jumpers are remembered. Interviews with Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth, 24 October 1999; Teresa Loring, 27 October 1994.

its symbolic and emotional base.

How SF was thought of by politicians and the nation as a whole is a wider issue. Franco publicly supported its initiatives while always keeping it short of money. The revolutionary fervour which accompanied its programmes presented no threats to the power balance maintained in the regime. On the contrary, SF's imposed school curriculum and the efficiency of its interventions were both control mechanisms and stabilisers in the years when Spain was at its poorest. Domestic programmes, regeneration and welfare schemes cushioned the disastrous effects of the regime's imposition of autarky. And the fact that SF distanced itself from the early postwar culture of reprisals and violence established its humanitarian credentials and earned it respect.

Among the unaffiliated, the diversity of women's and girls' life situations caused them to experience SF in a number of ways. Factors such as economic and marital state, familial political background and even geographical area determined the degree of acceptance with which SF teachings were received and the likelihood of their wanting to become a member. Perceptions of the wider community, too, were not uniform, and changed as the regime moved from the bleakness and hardships of the 1940s to the slowly improving economic climate of the following decade. It was the case that SF's imposed teachings brought benefits to some. Exposure to domestic teachings, for example, could lead to training as a *divulgadora*. Girls who showed aptitude academically were able to apply for grants from SF for further study. And for many girls in the 1940s, an SF youth camp was the nearest to a holiday they were likely to experience. But the positive aspects of compulsion could not mask the flawed logic of the SF Revolution, which attempted to impose norms and values on women in the cause of national regeneration.

Early memories of those loosely connected to SF are also those of the Civil War itself and the early postwar. In these years, perceptions are linked to how SF responded to the hunger, poverty and social conditions of the times.<sup>12</sup> Its programmes were an integral part of the regime's efforts to impose strict social control and a set of moral values on the female population. Outright opposition was therefore as unlikely and as dangerous as other forms of resistance to the regime. But at an individual level, it was possible to ignore the

<sup>12</sup> Interviews with Enrique de Sena, 3 June 1995; Julio Ibáñez Rodrigo, 3 June 1995; Sebastián Barrueco, 27 October 1995.



political connotations and take part in SF activities for the material benefits they brought. Women could choose not to enrol for welfare benefit schemes or attend courses other than those prescribed for social service, and as one former primary school teacher recalled, it was not possible for SF to recruit her compulsorily into the Falangist Teachers' Service, even though it would have liked to do so.<sup>13</sup>

SF's collaboration with the health authorities produced measurable results, but it is more difficult to assess the impact of its compulsory education programmes on the unaffiliated population. Overall, however, it appears that few women wanted to involve themselves further with SF.<sup>14</sup> Statistics for 1948 and 1951, for example, show that just a few hundred women in these years became full SF members as a result of doing social service.<sup>15</sup> Equally, the low annual figures recorded for completion of social service (despite the fact that it was compulsory, at least in theory), indicate that very many women were simply not interested.<sup>16</sup>

This may have been because SF increasingly became part of the bureaucratic framework of the State. In many towns and villages, SF headquarters were a room in the local Falange centre and the only reason for many women to pass through their doors was to register for social service. Those who were least likely to have contact were women from the wealthy classes, who were not intending to work and who could therefore escape social service relatively easily. For these women, unless they had a political interest in SF and perhaps an ambition to be a *mando*, their experience of SF was largely through their schooling. Even here, the degree of direct contact was variable. It was the case that all schoolgirls had to study the SF curriculum of domestic subjects, politics and physical education and that textbooks in these subjects were SF publications. But the women teaching them were not all *mandos*. In the 1950s, it was common for SF's subjects to be taught by mainstream teachers whose only connection with SF was an accreditation to teach

<sup>13</sup> Interview with María Luisa Oliveros, 18 February 1998.

<sup>14</sup> For example, SF literature of 1958 takes credit for the fall in infant mortality (defined as death within twelve months of birth) from 142 per thousand in 1940, to 62 per thousand in 1951 and 47 per thousand in 1958. D.N. de la S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Nociones de puericultura postnatal*, (Madrid, Ruan, 1958), pp. 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> As noted in Chapter Five, the numbers were 260 and 630 respectively. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Labor realizada en 1948*, (Madrid, Magerit, 1949), p. 17; S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Labor realizada en 1951*, (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. [?], 1952), p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> As noted in Chapter Five, annual figures for social service were on average 23,164 for the years between 1940 and 1952. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *Alcance y acción de la Sección Femenina*, (Madrid, Magerit, 1953), Anejo 1, p. 15.

its curriculum. These staff had completed training with SF but were not its elite members.

A further complicating factor in assessing how many women were involved at any level with SF was the shifting definition and understanding of the term 'membership'. Data surrounding this is scarce and often contradictory or ambiguous, but it was the case that SF increasingly defined itself in terms of its elite members (*mandos*), the staff carrying out the programmes and organising the local and provincial SF centres. Whereas this group was identifiable by rank and status within SF, others termed as members (*afiliadas*) were less homogeneous. Up to the end of the 1940s, SF appears to have followed the rest of the Falange in its designation of members as either 'active' (*militantes*) or 'passive' (*adheridas*). This latter category was a statement of adhesion to the regime, a necessary formality for any State post, at least up to the end of the 1940s. But the implications of signing the SF promise and carrying the Party card appear to have varied according to the times. One nurse-practitioner interviewed, for example, did not need SF membership in 1946 for employment in the Falange-owned Mother and Baby Home in Salamanca, although this had been required of her sister four years earlier in the same post.<sup>17</sup> In her understanding, membership of SF for employment purposes was never more than a formality, which eventually was not required. Those more involved with SF rationalise the membership question, denying that it was ever part of the Franco mandate.<sup>18</sup> As the influence of the Falange declined in the regime, this was no doubt a pragmatic stance. In any case, by the 1950s SF had spread its wings to the extent that its training establishments were increasingly part of mainstream provision. Its penetration of society was, in its own eyes, less measurable by membership than the fact that SF's moral and cultural standards were embedded in colleges, institutes and university residences throughout Spain.<sup>19</sup>

From a position where SF's militarism and operational style stood out against the more conservative sectors of the regime, by the 1950s, the contrast was less marked. After 1945, when the regime in general became more explicitly National-Catholic, SF's

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Rosa Valladolid Barazal, 27 October 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mónica Plaza, 30 May 1996.

<sup>19</sup> For example, a government-run nurse training school had SF teachers on its staff to teach the political, domestic and physical education courses which were an integral part of its curriculum. Dr J. Turegano, *La enfermera y la Escuela Nacional de instructoras sanitarias*, (Madrid, Dirección General de Sanidad, 1953), p. 14.

ceremonial presence was less central to its image than its role as provider of services within health, welfare, education and employment. With this came a certain merging of SF's ideology with the views of other sectors. It was not that SF changed its views but rather that its original position on issues regarding women came to be the mainstream of public opinion. Its early articles on work for example, while stressing the domestic ideal, also acknowledged the problems and attractions of the workplace. Views expressed in the 1938 issues of *Revista 'Y'* would not have been out of place twenty years later. Similarly, its early differences with the Church were less significant than its support for religion as an important part of women's education.

But despite SF's expansion, bureaucratisation and its cautious overall attitude to change, the constancy of its presence and the singlemindedness of its staff kept women's issues alive in the regime. The changes to the Civil Code and the pensions of domestic workers were small in comparison to the overall injustices of life for women in the regime, but would not have happened without the intervention of SF. To achieve even this degree of lasting change in the context of the regime's patriarchal vision of women's place in society was testimony to the constancy of SF's presence and the singlemindedness of its national *mandos*.

The fact that SF set out to assert the social and familial importance of the woman, defining both her role and the character qualities needed to fulfil it, was a necessary prelude to the larger changes in legislation which happened in the following decade. The endless repetition of SF's vision for women via propaganda, courses and the intervention of *mandos* set the scene for wider debates in later years, with SF established by then as the principal channel for representing women's issues. Pilar's pace of change which she set for SF was irritating for the more progressive members, but given the forces of reaction within the regime, was realistic.

For *mandos*, work with SF allowed them to derive esteem without the need to be either a wife or a mother. For this group, the existence of SF both in early and later periods of the regime gave opportunities which otherwise would not have existed. But in this, as with a consideration of the effect of SF's welfare and humanitarian programmes, it

must be remembered that the total number of *mandos* was just 15,000.<sup>20</sup> However dynamic and efficient their programmes, with just this number of staff, their impact had its limits. Equally, although *mandos* enjoyed different lifestyles, freedoms and working practices, these were the preserve of only a minority of women.

Since Spain's return to democracy, the detail of SF's programmes has been largely forgotten and the basis of its moral authority discredited. Despite the fact that much of its work was humanitarian, that it frequently operated on its own initiative and was free of the regime's corruption, SF's public adhesion to Francoism has remained its identity tag. Any assessment of SF's own achievements, however, must take into account its unusual position as an organisation which retained genuinely fascist elements throughout the Franco regime. Its vision for women, although derived in part from role models of the Golden Age, was based on its judgment of the needs of the present. Its desire to return women to the home was matched with the aim of showing the choices within that role that were possible with self-help and a willingness to learn. In this sense, SF was forward-looking and its work in rural communities an example of how women could, by their own efforts, improve their standard of living.

Amid the contradictions and ambiguities of SF, the basis of its ideology was its most constant and enduring feature. The inherent impossibility of the Falangist Revolution did not diminish the personal fulfilment of those working at its core and continued to be a lived reality for *mandos* long after the rest of the regime had consigned Falangism to history and was shaping a different kind of future. In the words of a former *mando*: 'We struggled so that everyone else would have things, but we got nothing ourselves.'<sup>21</sup> That was in part true. SF's elite members earned little, had autonomy only in their own field and limited influence outside the organisation. In the course of the 1950s, *mandos* readily acknowledged that the task of convincing the unaffiliated was becoming harder. But no-one in the higher ranks of SF challenged the basis for their work, and the legacy of José Antonio and the leadership of Pilar continued as unalterable truths.

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<sup>20</sup> As noted in Chapter Five, the estimate of 15,000 is based on figures given in 1968 by Pilar Primo de Rivera and the recollections of a former *mando*.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Oliva Tomé Lambea, 21 February 1996.

## Appendix

### The oral sources of the thesis

My original research plan for this thesis was to examine the contrast between the rhetoric of SF's agenda for women and the reality of its implementation in the context of the early postwar. In particular, I wanted to explore the lifestyle of elite members, to determine how work for SF might challenge traditional gender roles and how members conceptualised their own contribution to the organisation. Through personal contacts in and around Salamanca, I intended to interview women who had implemented Franco's mandate through SF's educational programmes as well as women with experience of the organisation through social service, the school curriculum or the necessity of carrying the party card in the 1940s.

But as I made a preliminary exploration of written sources, I was struck by the complexity of both SF's staff hierarchies and its ideological origins. Concentrating on the 'flat' regional structure would have been to ignore the political, social and religious influences working at different times and in differing ways on the development of SF. Despite the availability of potential interviewees in Salamanca, therefore, I decided that the nuances and inconsistencies of SF's ideological message could only be explored satisfactorily with reference to the national team and over a greater time span than I had originally envisaged.

This was confirmed after early contact with the body of SF's former members, the Asociación Nueva Andadura. The association has premises in Madrid and around six hundred members nationally. At the time of my first visit in 1994, it housed a library and private archive and teams of its members had recently completed an 'official' chronicle of SF.<sup>1</sup> As I realised that I would be able to speak directly to many women who had been part of Pilar Primo de Rivera's national team, I made the decision to change the focus of the thesis.

With the help of Nueva Andadura, I was able to interview four former national heads of SF's twelve specialist departments and many more working on national teams. In all, nineteen of the forty-five people interviewed were introduced to me by Nueva Andadura and

<sup>1</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo, (Madrid, Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1991).

a further three interviews resulted from the personal intervention of two of these first interviewees. Most of the remaining twenty-three interviewees were introduced to me by friends in Spain and Britain. The largest number was from Salamanca, where I interviewed not only SF elites but also women health professionals marginally involved with SF and men with knowledge of SF in the early postwar. I wanted to spread the interviewing base beyond Madrid and Salamanca, and consequently followed up contacts in Zaragoza, Santiago de Compostela, the province of León and Toledo. Two of my interviews with former SF national staff members were the result of chance encounters in Spain. They talked to me with no prior introduction or involvement of a third party.

All interviews were conducted through the 'life-story' model, allowing interviewees to tell their own story but using prompts and pre-prepared questions to guide them.<sup>2</sup> This was a decision taken after my first interview, when I had prepared a longer and more specific list of questions. I received detailed answers to all my points but the acquisition of facts was at the cost of understanding the individual's feelings and emotions. From then on, I limited questions to open-ended invitations to tell me about early life, education, political background and reasons for becoming involved with SF. In most cases, this led to an account of their career both within SF and after the break-up of the regime. In the case of elite members, I asked further questions about their dealings with and experience of Pilar and their knowledge of La Mota.

I prefaced all interviews with a short explanation of who I was and what I was aiming to do. In the case of interviewees secured by Nueva Andadura, this was sufficient for us to begin the discussion. Indeed, Nueva Andadura always provided a third person as the intermediary between interviewer and interviewee. This person generally remained for the first five minutes of the interview. Where the contact was through my own friends, however, I was usually on my own. I had to justify and explain my motives and at times, interviewees required reassurance. One former member agreed to be interviewed only if she were sent a transcript of the conversation. On another occasion, I was required to give two names of people in the area willing to vouch for my integrity before the interviewee agreed to see me. The two families I cited were phoned. In two instances, despite written

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<sup>2</sup> A schedule for questions was devised on the principles described in P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (2nd ed.), (Oxford, O.U.P., 1988), pp. 202-3.

assurances about me given by close friends, interviewees cancelled at the last moment.

In the case of the male interviewees, life-stories were usually more focused on the elements which had involved SF and were generally less chronological than those of the women. Although my introduction to these interviews was the same, the men tended to begin with their direct experiences of SF and return to earlier experiences when they were reflecting on the significance of particular events. One, for example, talked late on in the interview about his wife, reflecting how she corresponded to the propaganda image of SF women. Another male interviewee, after discussing at length the profile and importance of SF in the Civil War and early postwar, personalised the contradictions in Falangist ideology by describing his own reactions to an enforced stay at a summer camp.

I did, however, conduct ten follow-up interviews, in each case because during their 'life-story' account, it was clear that interviewees had more information about specific areas of SF operations. I used these interviews primarily to supplement written sources but they were also useful to cross-reference information given by other interviewees. In the areas of SF's religious programme, its twin hierarchies and its work in the rural areas, for example, I was given detailed accounts of SF practice. This was invaluable in helping me to evaluate the accuracy of SF 'official' literature and statistics, particularly in relation to SF's operations at local level.

A benefit of having a large pool of interviewees was the number of personal narratives obtained from various age groups. Nineteen of the forty-five had experienced the Civil War as adults, and a further seven had had some involvement in youth activities in the war years. Of the remainder, around half had spent their most productive time with SF in the 1950s, while for the youngest group, this was when they began their connections with SF. Having decided to limit the time frame of the thesis to 1959, I could not fully use the material that these younger ex-members gave me. Although I conducted the interviews in the same way, I tried with these interviewees to find out more about their early experiences through supplementary questions at the end.

The dynamics and success of each interview depended on a number of factors. Firstly was the question of my own credibility with the person to be interviewed. When I was visiting interviewees in their own homes, the length of my introduction depended on the

ground work that my contact had done. In general, women who had been on the fringes of SF were less amenable than those who had been heavily involved. Those who had left SF tended to query my motives and stressed the insignificance of their time with SF in relation to the rest of their lives. There was a general reluctance within this group to allow me to tape the interview, although in each case I persuaded them on the grounds of my limitations as a non-native speaker of Spanish.

A number of other interviewees prefaced the interview with a lengthy account of SF's operations, in particular its welfare work and role in preserving the folk culture of Spain. This was all the more reason for adhering to the 'life-story' model of interview so that we could move quickly from the general to the particular. It was noticeable that their need to speak to me in such terms diminished as I could show detailed knowledge of SF. This group of women commonly also gave a self-justification of their own experiences within SF and expressed anger as they described Spain's return to democracy and with it the demise of SF.

A second factor was the presence of other people at the interviews. Occasionally, a husband, wife or sibling would present themselves mid-way through the discussion, which invariably resulted in the rhythm of the conversation being broken. It was then harder to regain the focus, and even if the other party provided further facts, it was no compensation for the changed atmosphere in the room. On other occasions, a second (or third) person was there from the beginning and 'shared' the interview. This made transcription much harder, and time within the interview was lost to internal disputes about the information and memories.

The third factor was the physical surroundings of the interview. Those conducted at the premises of Nueva Andadura were technically the most efficient, because a quiet room and optimum recording facilities were guaranteed. But there was a great deal to be gained by interviewing in members' own houses. The addresses themselves, particularly those in the centre of Madrid, were an indicator of the social status of the interviewees. In general, too, interviewees were relaxed and their home environment was often full of visual clues to their feelings about their past life. Photographs of Pilar and José Antonio, for example, were prominently displayed in many sitting-rooms, as were SF awards and decorations. The readiness with which photo albums, press cuttings and SF memorabilia were produced in



some homes was as powerful a comment as anything said in the interview. On one occasion, as I waited for an ex-member in her place of work, I was able to observe her interactions with colleagues and her personal style, both of which subsequently informed a number of my questions. Infrequently, I had to conduct interviews at venues such as bars, restaurants or social clubs. The noise levels and distractions always made these occasions more difficult, although less so if it was a follow-up interview, by which time I had already established a relationship with the person to be interviewed.

With the exception of the first, and the final two interviews (conducted in Britain in informal conditions), each was taperecorded (with the prior agreement of the interviewee). With three exceptions, the interviews lasted between fifty and ninety minutes. All but the final two were transcribed and in every case this was done within a week of the interview. With the exception of my discussion with Monsignor Ronald Hishon, all interviews were in Castilian Spanish.

The interviews were conducted mainly through three one-week visits in each year between 1994 and 1999. The availability of interviewees did not always coincide with my own targets for completing chapters of the thesis. There were therefore two stages in my analysis of the interview material. Following the research visit, I transcribed each block of interviews and analysed them individually and collectively. First, I went through each highlighting detail which could be added to existing knowledge. This was copied across to other documents on, for example, 'membership' or 'relations with Pilar' or 'career progression'. I then re-read each interview separately, trying to see it as a complete narrative and considering the flaws and strengths in my interviewing technique. It was on the basis of this that I decided to send one questionnaire to Nueva Andadura and in another case, to clarify a piece of information on the telephone. Although there was not necessarily any prior link between the interviews I had conducted in any one week, I considered each block as a whole and attempted to see connections, similarities and inconsistencies in the set of narratives. In this category was the use of language, (repeated phrases, preferred adjectives, the speed and flow of sentences), and more generally, subjects on which interviewees said little. Sometimes it was helpful to record this in the same way as I had done with more concrete information, but mostly it informed me of what my next set of

interviews should attempt to do. In the case of SF collusion in the black market of the 1940s, for example, information was not readily forthcoming. I therefore added this as a specific question in my next block of interviews to be asked of all *mandos* who could possibly have known anything.

The second stage of analysis was to use the full set of interviews as part of the information source for the writing of the thesis. For each chapter, this involved a full re-reading of each interview and a more systematic recording of information in each. Facts given in interviews were cross-checked with secondary sources. Opinions and anecdotes were grouped and their frequency noted. Some interview material previously considered to be worth inclusion was discarded because it could not be verified via other interviews or through secondary sources. At the point where information was recorded systematically, I found several significant gaps both in information given and in my understanding of what had been said. In this category were the relationship between SF and Acción Católica, between SF and the male Falange and the effect on SF and the Falange of the Axis defeat. It was at this point that I planned follow-up visits to clarify my thinking. In two areas, follow-up interviews changed my thinking significantly. I found that when talking about SF's connections with women's organisations in Nazi Germany, there were gaps in personal narratives, instances of justification of events and a general reluctance to follow up issues. This led me to a more detailed search of press and journal accounts than I would otherwise have made. With regard to SF's role in the repression, however, follow-up interviews confirmed earlier information. Interviewees talked frankly about their perceptions of the time, their understanding of *estraperlo* and how SF regarded it. The consistency of these narratives and the willingness of those interviewed to talk about the issues led me to accept that SF *mandos* were not participants in the Francoist agenda of annihilating all possible opposition and, as far as can be judged, were outside the regime's corruption.

Although the thesis draws also on written sources, the context and verification of the oral testimonies has been essential. Paying attention to why certain topics (their contribution to the welfare and education programmes, their belief in Falangism) appear so important to former SF members has required me to understand the greater truth behind the individual accounts, namely members' collective sense of being ignored, forgotten and

discredited. It was in this knowledge that I always invited comments from interviewees on political aspects of their role within SF or the regime. It was surprising, therefore, to realise that very few could tell me anything about the politics of the regime. Only at national level did staff have either knowledge or involvement and even among this group, political memories for most were suppressed or very dim. Politics was relevant mainly in terms of their own contribution and a general sense of 'rightness' of the regime, but its nuances did not usually impact upon staff members.

The quality of the information was best when personal memories and recollections of SF were voiced.<sup>3</sup> Where interviewees moved from the particular to the general, their information often sounded like political propaganda. This was the case when former SF members spoke of Madrid at the time of the Popular Front elections, the actions of the Communists in the war or made general comments on the Franco regime. It was more impressive when they coincided on points of detail, such as the money they earned, their impressions of Pilar, the regime at the training schools or their reasons for joining SF.

Information was less reliable when applied to events which were neither recurrent or consistently remembered. This was the case with one interviewee who, in the course of describing her experiences in Germany, had difficulty separating the content of two distinct visits. In other cases, the detail of information was less valuable than its emotional memory and context. In this category were the many anecdotes about Pilar's personal appearance, important for what they say about her relationship with members. Relevant here, too, was the story of one young member's journey in the Civil War to take up a post in Nationalist territory. Her recall of the physical conditions of the journey - sharing a closed train compartment with Republican prisoners - is of symbolic importance, remembered as being the start of her role within Falangism.

I brought no pre-conceived ideas to the interviews of what might be considered 'off-limits' but soon understood that details of personal or sexual history or members' sexuality would not be readily given. On the few occasions when interviewees volunteered information about boyfriends or fiancées, they equally clearly closed the topic. When invited to comment generally on marriages or relationships of SF members, they were similarly laconic. Such

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<sup>3</sup> As Paul Thompson notes, memory is more likely to be reliable when dealing with practical matters than in recalling past attitudes. P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 112.

silences as there were tended to occur during interviews with older members, especially when recalling events of the Civil War and the loss of family members.

The need to avoid bias has been a constant concern. As I transcribed my first interview in 1994, I realised that the questions I had asked had been in part a reflection of the values of the friend who had secured me the contact. I had, in fact, pre-judged the areas on which information might have been forthcoming. But the major potential pitfall was the fact that the interviewing pool was predominantly SF elites and their sympathisers. This reflected the contacts I was able to make and the access allowed me. I always hoped to find women with different experiences of SF, particularly those at the receiving end of its welfare work in the 'liberated' territories. The nearest I came was interviewing two professional women who had worked in the Nationalist zone. Each had refused to join SF and was prepared to discuss her dislike of SF style and methods. Within the ranks of SF members, I interviewed three who had resigned their posts and one who had been expelled. I was also keen to balance the views of the many national staff available for interview with those of SF staff in the lower ranks. The need to do this became obvious as I was gradually made aware of the nuances of social rank and self-esteem within SF's twin hierarchies. The most important interviews in this context were those with local leaders in the province of León and in Santiago de Compostela. I actively sought interviews with men, but those willing to be interviewed were from similar social and political backgrounds as the women. Only in one case did I secure an interview with someone who was openly critical of Falange and the Nationalist cause. Wherever possible I used information from all non-members of SF both to add detail and to corroborate other material. Fifteen of the forty-five people interviewed were in this category.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, there was a balance to be found between accepting the help of Nueva Andadura and setting my own parameters for the conduct of the interviews and use of the information. In an attempt to avoid the charge of bias, I wrote to them in the first year of research indicating the major focus of the thesis and later talked to them in person about each of the chapter themes. I shared with them my concern that information about SF needed validating from as many sources as possible, and was very pleased when, in response, they arranged

<sup>4</sup> Five women who had never joined SF, four men who had held posts in the Falange, a further three who had experienced the Civil War in the Nationalist zone and three clergymen.

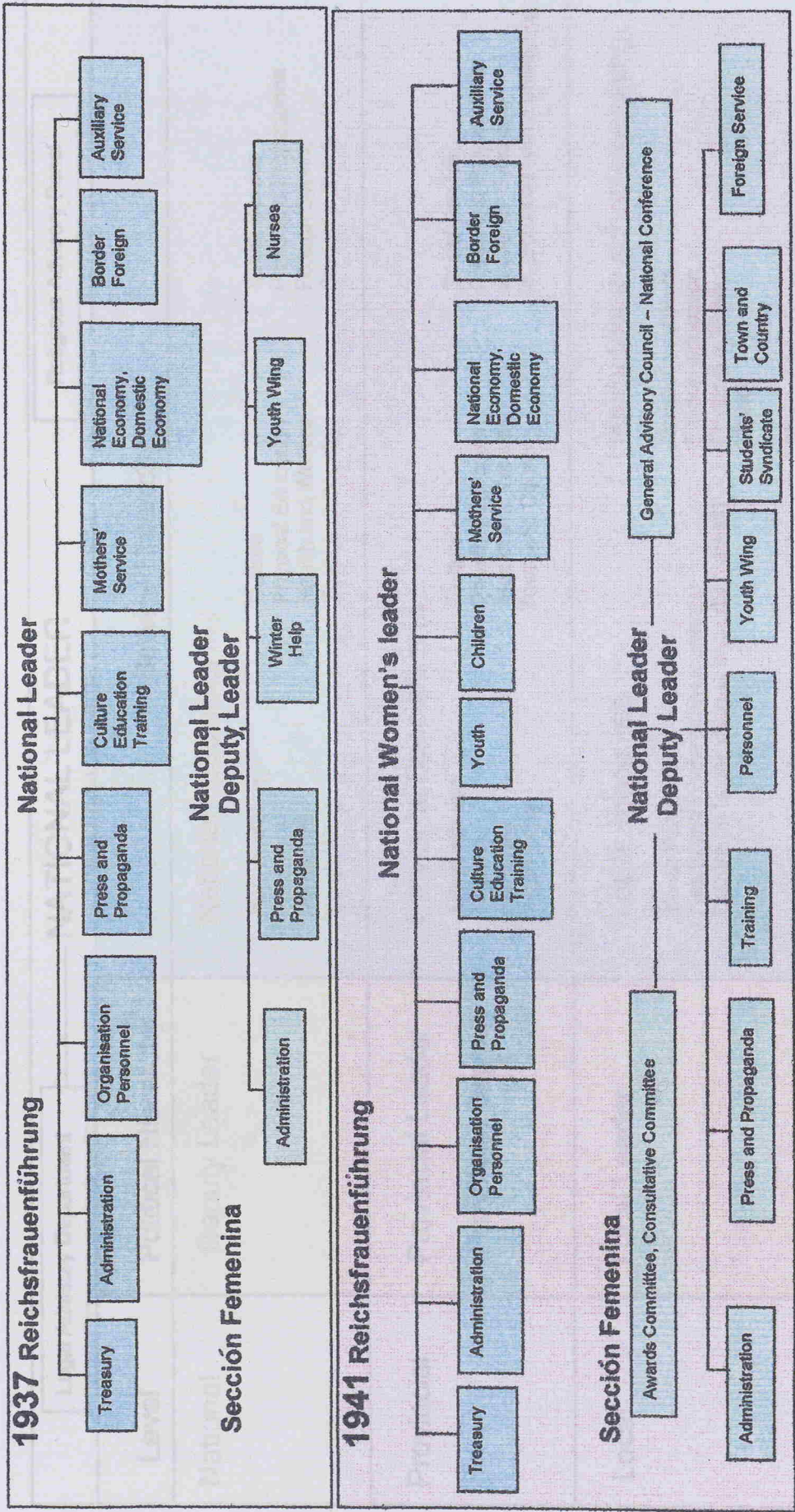
(*inter alia*) an interview with the most openly critical former *mando*, Mercedes Fórmica.

Shortly before completion of my interviewing, Nueva Andadura made public its archive, which is now lodged in the Real Academia de la Historia. Future researchers will be able to study and copy documents to which I had only periodic access.<sup>5</sup> The difficulties I faced obtaining information were an early talking point with former SF staff and broke down many barriers. Numerous informal conversations took place as I worked in the private archive or were held over the telephone, often from Britain. These are unrecorded in the thesis but have been instrumental in forming my thoughts.

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<sup>5</sup> The main archive for SF is housed in the Archivo General de la Administración in Alcalá de Henares. Detailed cataloguing of the nine hundred archive boxes of SF files, correspondence and propaganda has yet to be undertaken. It was in knowledge of the impenetrability of the SF information in Alcalá that Nueva Andadura decided to give its own archive to the Real Academia.

**Annexe 1**  
**DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS OF GERMANY AND SPAIN 1937 AND 1941**



Sources: J. Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women*, (London, Croom Helm, 1981), Appendices 2 and 3.  
 S.F. de F.E.T. y las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales* (libro primero), (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d), p. 13.  
 S.F. de F.E.T. y las J.O.N.S., *Consejos nacionales* (libro segundo), (Madrid, S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., n.d), p. 123.



# Annexe 2

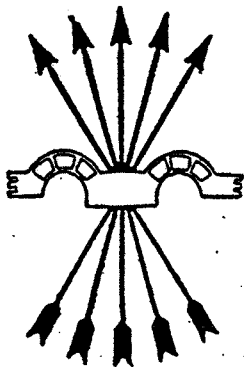
## THE TWIN HIERARCHIES OF SECCION FEMENINA (SF) IN 1952

Legal Advisory Department		NATIONAL LEADER (Pilar Primo de Rivera)		Religious Advisory Panel
Level	Political Hierarchy	Service Hierarchy		
National	Deputy Leader	<b>National Specialists in :</b> Administration Training Personnel Youth Wing  Culture Physical Education Health and Welfare Town and Country  Social Service Press and Propaganda Foreign Service Students' Syndicate		
Provincial	Provincial Leader Provincial Deputy	<b>Provincial Specialists in :</b> Administration Training Personnel Youth Wing  Culture Physical Education Health and Welfare Town and Country  Social Service Press and Propaganda Students' Syndicate (in provinces with a university)		
Local	Local Leader	<b>Local Specialists in:</b> Youth Wing Health and Welfare ( <i>divulgadoras</i> ) Culture (in larger villages and urban areas)  <b>Instructors in schools teaching:</b> Domestic subjects Political education Physical education Music  <b>Rural Instructors</b>		

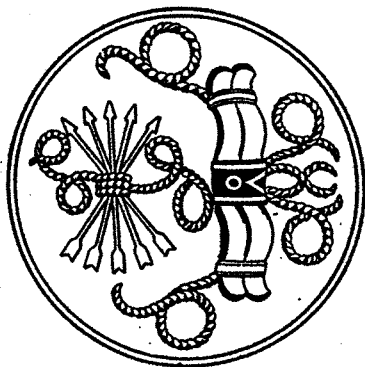
SOURCES: F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., *La Sección Femenina: historia y organización*, (Madrid. S.F. de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1952), pp. 23-4; index.  
 Lolita Bermudez Caffete-Orth.

**Annexe 3**

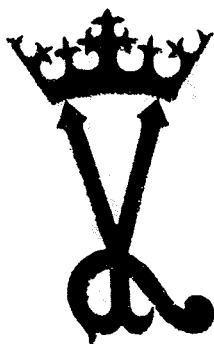
**EMBLEMS AND INSIGNIA OF *SECCIÓN FEMENINA* (SF)**



a) the Falangist yoke and arrows



b) the SF yoke and arrows



c) the Isabelline monogram 'Y'



SENIOR NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL 'JOSE ANTONIO'

CASTLE OF LA MOTA, MEDINA DEL CAMPO



Fig. 1: Exterior aspect



Annexe 4 (cont.)



Fig. 2: Reception lounge



Fig. 3: Refectory

Photographs: K. Richmond, October 1994.



Annexe 5

TRAINING CENTRES OF SF IN 1952

Key:

National Schools

Regional Schools

Other establishments

**SENIOR TRAINING SCHOOL**  
'Escuela Mayor de Mandos José Antonio'  
Castle of La Mota, Medina del Campo  
  
courses for:  
~ mandos of both hierarchies at national and provincial level  
~ heads of SF residential centres  
~ social service students

**TRAINING COLLEGE**  
'Escuela Nacional de Instructoras Generales'  
Las Navas del Marqués  
  
courses for:  
~ general instructors  
~ social service students

**AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**  
'Escuela Nacional de Orientación Rural Onésimo Redondo'  
Aranjuez  
  
courses for:  
~ rural instructors  
~ heads of agricultural schools  
~ social service students

**SPECIALIST TRAINING COLLEGE**  
'Escuela Nacional de Especialidades Santa Teresa'  
Barcelona  
  
courses for:  
~ teacher training (music, PE, domestic subjects)  
~ nurse training  
~ social service students

**OTHER STAFF TRAINING SCHOOLS**  
  
courses for:  
~ local leaders and specialists  
~ local health workers  
~ instructors (preliminary qualifications) of domestic subjects, youth, PE, music

**DOMESTIC SCHOOLS**  
  
courses for:  
~ schoolgirls  
~ SF members  
~ women in domestic service  
~ social service students

**SF CENTRES**  
  
courses for:  
~ members

**YOUTH CENTRES**  
  
courses for:  
~ youth members

**SANATORIA**  
  
courses for:  
~ youth members

**AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS**  
  
courses for:  
~ daughters of labourers

**LITERACY SCHOOLS**  
  
courses for:  
~ members  
~ schoolgirls  
~ working women  
~ social service students

**SUMMER CAMPS**  
  
courses for:  
~ youth members  
~ working women  
~ social service students  
(SEU)

**TRAVELLING SCHOOLS**  
  
courses for:  
~ youth members  
~ members  
~ villagers

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##### SF national staff

Julia Alcántara Rocafort	head, Youth Wing.
Lolita Bermúdez Cañete-Orth	head, Students' Syndicate.
Carmina Carpintero	national team, travelling schools.
Viky Eiroa	head, Foreign Service; principal, Ladies' Residence.
Mercedes Fórmica	editor, <i>Medina</i> .
Lula de Lara	head, Culture.
Andresa López Enseñat	principal, Las Navas.
Teresa Loring	SF national deputy leader.
Carmen Martín Olmedo	head, Medina Cultural Circle.
Marichu de la Mora	editor, <i>Revista 'Y'</i> .
Mercedes Otero	deputy head, Culture.
Mónica Plaza	head, Town and Country.
Adelaida del Pozo	national team, Culture.
Mercedes Sanz Bachiller	head, Social Aid.
Oliva Tomé Lambea	national team, Training.

##### SF provincial and local staff

Puri Barrios	SF provincial leader (Salamanca).
Mariti Calvo	provincial head, Students' Syndicate (Salamanca).
Lucía del Día Valdeón	SF local leader (Toledo); nurse in Blue Division.
Angelina Garrido	teacher trainer, Las Navas.
Maruja Martín Sierra	physical education teacher.
Carmen Moreno de Vega	SF provincial leader (Salamanca).
Nuri Ogando	SF local leader (La Bañeza, León).
Antonia Ortolá	domestic science teacher, La Mota.
Carmen Osuña Castelló	physical education teacher (Santiago de Compostela).
Rosalía Pemán	local head, Town and Country (Santiago de Compostela).
Margarita Pérez-Urria Baqueiro	teacher, travelling schools.
Nieves Serrano	provincial head, Culture (Palencia).

### Falangists

José María Gutiérrez del Castillo	head, teachers' service (SEM); Blue Division.
Julio Ibáñez Rodrigo	provincial leader, Social Aid (Salamanca).
Jesús Suevos	Director-general, television and radio.
José María Utrera Molina	Secretary-general, National Movement.

### Women with connections with or recollections of SF

Petra Bondía Román	doctor (Salamanca).
María Teresa de la Fuente Vera	social service (Madrid).
María Jesús García	physical education teacher (Zaragoza).
Carmen Michalska	social service (Madrid).
María Luisa Oliveros	social service (Madrid); student in Ladies' Residence.
Conchita Valladolid Barazal	midwife (Salamanca).
Luisa Valladolid Barazal	nurse-practitioner (Salamanca).
Rosa Valladolid Barazal	nurse-practitioner (Salamanca).

### Men with connections with or recollections of SF

Enrique de Aguinaga	journalist (Madrid).
Sebastián Barrueco	corporal, working in military court (Salamanca).
Father Manuel Garrido	Benedictine, (Silos and Valle de los Caídos).
Father Manuel González	priest, Ermita de San Isidro (Madrid).
Msgr. Ronald Hishon	rector, St Alban's College (Valladolid).
Enrique de Sena	editor (Salamanca).

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