

## II

### *Fascism in Spain*

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#### 8. *The Falange Española*

It was not until the early 1930's that authentically fascist movements appeared on the scene in Spain, a country that was beginning to move awkwardly from a feudalistic agrarian economy into the first stages of a semi-industrialized society. The emergence of various extremist movements of the radical right was brought about by the cumulative impact of several developments during the preceding decade. These included the Moroccan rebellion of the early 1920's and the resultant military dictatorship in Spain; the pervasive economic depression that began in 1929; the political ferment that overthrew King Alfonso XIII in April, 1931, and inaugurated the anticlerical Second Republic; and the growing schism within the Spanish revolutionary syndicalist movement. The latter current had attracted considerable support in Catalonia and other parts of Spain during the previous generation; and just as had already been the case in Italy, its left wing was now moving increasingly in the direction of Marxian communism, while its right wing was assuming a nationalistic and fascist-like posture.

A clear example of this effort to persuade anarcho-syndicalists to adopt a program of "national syndicalism" was to be seen in March, 1931. At that time Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, a young Castilian postal clerk and ex-student of the University of Madrid who had recently spent some time in Germany, where he was impressed by Hitler's National Socialist party (and even went so far as to affect Hitler's hair style), founded a short-lived, anti-Marxist weekly paper entitled *La Conquista del Estado* (The Conquest of the State). He called for the creation of "military-type teams without hypocrisy before the rifle's barrel."<sup>1</sup> Then, three months later, in Valladolid, a twenty-five-year-old man of rural background (and a paid organizer of the sugar-beet growers there), Onésimo Redondo Ortega, founded a somewhat similar group with a weekly newspaper, *Libertad*. Strongly clerical and anti-Semitic, Redondo also found much to admire in Hitler's youth movement, which he had observed at first hand at the University of

1. *Historia de la Cruzada Española*, ed. by Joaquín Arrarás (Madrid, 1939-43), Vol. III, p. 423.