

# Such A Parcel of Rogues . . .

Notes for an ongoing inquiry into the pernicious role of police and security service informers, infiltrators, agents of influence, malfeasors and traitors within the Spanish anarchist movement (1939-1975) — and any lessons to be learned thereof . . .

Cipriano Mera's challenge to Germinal Esgleas (1903–81) and Vicente Llansola (1915–96),  
11 September 1964



I, **Cipriano Mera\***, hereby impugn **Germinal Esgleas\*\***, general secretary of the Intercontinental Secretariat (SI) of the National Confederation of Labour of Spain in Exile (CNTE), on the following grounds:

**FIRST:** For deliberately accepting the position he currently holds, despite the fact that the Congress which appointed him rubber-stamped the performance of the DI Section (Interior Defence, the clandestine action planning section of the CNT-FAI-FIJL) — from which he later resigned — whereas he was knowingly at odds with said performance and with the aims and objectives of the aforementioned Section (the DI), and for exploiting his position — from within and without — deliberately to sabotage said Section, right from its inception.

**SECOND:** As the person primarily responsible for the majority of the problems that thwarted the normal coordination of activities under the Defence (DI) remit, and because of his determination to torpedo its operations, as evidenced by his resignation some months in advance of the Confederal Congress at which he knew he would be proposed as candidate for the post of general secretary, thereby pre-empting any scrutiny of his conduct in respect of his obligations as a member of the DI.

**THIRD:** For his breaches of every organisational norm of libertarian practice and his bolshevik chicanery while general secretary, from which position he prevented Defence business from being conducted in accordance with the rules; business that could have been cleared up and resolved to the advantage of the Libertarian Movement.

**FOURTH:** As the person responsible for the obstruction and undermining of the the 1961 resolutions regarding conspiratorial operations [in Spain]; for failing to answer the charges we presented to the Defence Commission, even though, at the thwarted face-to-face meeting (11 April 1964), we argued that our objections should be put to the Organisation so that the matter might be resolved, inasmuch as it flew in the face of all libertarian ethics for the impugned and interested parties to resolve this sensitive matter themselves.

**FIFTH:** As an accessory in the misuse of funds (the Pro-España funds) which are the property of the Organisation and of the Libertarian Movement, since, in his capacity as CNT representative, as general secretary, he has authorised monies from said funds to be spent on activities other than those for which they were raised under the accords and resolutions that came into effect in 1961, but which have been sabotaged under the current incumbent.

I also **IMPUGN Vicente Llansola\*\*\***, Coordinating Secretary of the Intercontinental Secretariat (SI)

**FIRST:** On the same five counts as Germinal Esgleas.

**SECOND:** For failing to abide by the accords of the Defence Commission by tendering his resignation, generating a serious issue of militant non-accountability, that assignment being a crucial one.

**THIRD:** For irresponsibility in the conduct of said crucial assignment, in that he took on the task voluntarily, and for misuse of funds relating to that crucial and un-implemented assignment [...]

Paris, 11 September 1964



\* **Cipriano Mera Sanz** (1897--1975), bricklayer and CNT militant imprisoned under the Republic for his role in the construction workers' strike in June 1936. Released by fellow workers during the fascist military rebellion, his column defeated the fascists at Guadalajara, Alcalá de Henares and Cuenca. As commander of the 14th Army Division (under General Miaja, O/C the Army of the Centre) he took part in the defence of Madrid, defeating the Italian Volunteer Corps at the Battle of Guadalajara (March 1937), possibly the greatest Republican military success of the Civil War, and the battle of Brunete (March 1937); later commanded the IVth Army Corps of the Centre. Extradited to Spain in 1942, he was condemned to death in 1943, a sentence later commuted to 30-years imprisonment, he was pardoned in 1946 and escaped to France where he worked as a bricklayer, and a militant activist, for the remainder of his life. In 1961, during the Limoges Congress, he played a key role in the setting up and running of Defensa Interior (DI), the CNT-FAI-FIJIJL clandestine operations section responsible for direct actions against the fascist regime, and for organising assassination attempts on Franco's life. Arrested and imprisoned by

the French authorities in September 1963 for his DI activities (a quid-pro-quo for the Francoist crackdown on the anti-De-Gaulle OAS Delta Commandos operating from Spain). In August 1965, during the Montpellier Congress (at which the émigré Toulouse leadership finally succeeded in officially winding-up the DI and ending all official and unofficial CNT involvement in the anti-Francoist resistance), Mera was falsely and maliciously accused by Vicente Llansola and Germinal Esgleas of defrauding the CNT of 5,000 pesetas, funds which had, in fact, been authorised by Llansola and Esgleas to be used as a bribe to get Octavio Alberola to withdraw from the clandestine struggle against Franco and return to Mexico. Cipriano Mera was officially expelled from the compromised Esgleas-Montseny-led CNT in 1970. Expulsion from the Esgleas-led CNT became a veritable badge of honour for anarchists of integrity committed to the struggle against Franco.



\*\* **Germinal Esgleas**, General Secretary of the Executive Council of the MLE (Spanish Libertarian Movement), a bureaucratic administration that was the brainchild of the 'prominent leaders' of the émigré CNT committees (Esgleas, Federica Montseny, Mariano Rodriguez Vazquez, et al) which divided the post-Civil War libertarian movement and ensured the Organisation remained passive in exile and neutered inside Spain. Esgleas and Montseny's ideological mantra was that defeat had been due to the CNT-FAI having abandoned its anarchist principles and collaborating with political parties and the Republican government, a policy they had been primarily responsible for implementing at the expense of the rank-and-file of their own members, the social revolution and any chance of victory in the war, plus the cost of the lives of thousands of anarchists murdered in the purges and deliberately suicidal military operations conducted during the premiership of Juan Negrín. Elected General Secretary of the National Committee of the CNT in Exile in 1945, Esgleas, a far from charismatic Machiavellian, occupied many positions of considerable influence within the CNT for more than 30 years after Liberation of France (including the post

of General Secretary of the CNT's Intercontinental Secretariat). Not a great public speaker, writer or activist, his influence was largely due to his backroom political manoeuvres — and of course to the influence of his wife, the equally reprehensible and pernicious Federica Montseny, former Minister of Health and co-instigator of the Executive Committee of the General Council of the MLE.

Despite Esgleas's — and his cohorts' — totally artificial commitment to a policy of 'non-collaboration', in December 1952 Esgleas was deep in negotiations with Izquierda Republicana, POUM, Union Republicana, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, and the Partido Republicano Federal (but NOT the communists of the PCE or the trade unionists of the UGT) proposing the formation of an FAE (Spanish Antifascist Front), item 1 of the agenda of which was "to step up the fight against the ruling tyranny in Spain". The document in question, signed by Esgleas, actually speaks of the Front being formed "with or without the UGT".

As far as Esgleas and Montseny's 'principled stand' against political collaboration with other exiled anti-Francoist institutions, including the CNT inside Spain, in 1945, when José Giral y Pereira, the prime minister of the Spanish Republican government in exile, invited CNT nominees to join his administration in Mexico, four names went forward from the CNT: two from the National Committee inside Spain and two from the exile leadership in Toulouse. The first two nominees were Federica Montseny and H M Prieto (outside Spain) and José Sancho and José M Leyva (inside Spain). Enrique Marco Nadal (a former secretary of the clandestine National Committee inside Spain who was betrayed and spent 17 years in Franco's jails) speculated that had Giral settled for Montseny instead of Prieto, the Esgleas-Montseny duo might not have had their sudden epiphany about reverting to pure principles. On the day Leyva and Prieto took up their portfolios in Mexico, *CNT*, the official organ of the CNT-in-exile edited by Esgleas's partner Federica Montseny, dismissed them (somewhat ironically) as: "...two ex-workers who represent nobody but themselves".



\*\*\* **Vicente Llansola Renau**, a supporter of the Esgleas line and, from 1945 to 1949, a member of the Toulouse-based Defence Commission (DC), the body responsible for coordinating, funding and provisioning all urban and rural guerrilla operations inside Spain. There are good reasons to believe the DC had been compromised and infiltrated by the Francoist intelligence services (as had the Toulouse-based National Committee of the CNT by *both* the Spanish *and* French security services). Many of the guerrilla and liaison missions into Spain were seriously compromised, especially between the spring of 1949 and the summer of 1950 when the majority of the groups and their support networks inside Spain were effectively eliminated. Ángel Fernández, for example, one of many comrades who fell into Civil Guard and police ambushes that year, reported that the Civil Guard officer who interrogated him had portrait photographs of each of the nine comrades arrested with him (five of whom were shot in May 1950), photographs taken specifically for that journey and which could *only* have come from the Defence Commission. In 1961, Llansola and Esgleas were two of the seven-man CNT-FAI-FIJIJL committee responsible for oversight of

the clandestine DI Section. Esgleas was responsible for propaganda while Llansola was ostensibly responsible, initially, for organising the attempts on Franco's life, attempts which were *never made* until after Toulouse disassociated the official CNT/MLE from the DI, leaving operational control in the hands of Cipriano Mera and Octavio Alberola.

Esgleas and Montseny's 35 years of treachery and betrayal of the CNT and its militants operating inside Spain is explored in considerable detail in volumes 1 to 3 of *Pistoleros!* *The Chronicles of Farquhar McHarg*, published by **ChristieBooks**

