

THE SCALA FILE:

A CASE HISTORY OF STATE PROVOCATION



15 January, 1978: the Scala nightclub ablaze in Barcelona's Paseo de San Juan.

"The CNT has at all times called for investigations to focus on the instigators, believing these to be agents of the intelligence services and the state concerned to bring discredit upon the CNT at a time when it was spearheading opposition to the Moncloa Pact (Spain's Social Contract)."

(Solidaridad Obrera)

"The CNT reaffirms its claims that the Scala case was the brainchild of the Interior Ministry, concocted by the police and put into effect through the good offices of a police infiltrator/nark, Joaquin Gambin. Only an expose of all this implies could truly be considered worth of investigation."

(Ibid.)

"How can I (who was coerced into co-operating in a mission) be brought to trial without my superiors revealing the mission with which I had been entrusted?"

(Joaquin Gambin Hernandez, CAMBIO 16: 19.12.83).

The Act

At 1.15 p.m. on 15 January, 1978, shortly after a 10,000 strong CNT demonstration against the Moncloa labour agreements elsewhere in the city, several 'persons unknown' hurled molotov cocktails into the Scala nightclub in Barcelona's Paseo de San Juan. Four workers engaged in maintenance work in the club at the time were killed in the attack. Two of the dead, Ramon Egea and Diego Montero, belonged to the Socialist union UGT. The others, Juan Manuel Lopez and Bernabe Bravo Betarano, were members of the Anarchist union CNT, which had been demonstrating in the city that day. 75% of the nightclub's staff belonged to the CNT.

The police immediately announced that the attack had been carried out by a Commando composed of eight members of the CNT, FAI, and Anarchist Youth (FIJL). Within 12 hours of the fire-bombing, 150 libertarians had been arrested, and eight members of the CNT were named as being responsible for the attack on the Scala. Four of those named (Jose

Cuevos Carado, Luis Munoz Garcia, Arturo Palma Segua and Francirco Javier Caradas Garcon) had been amongst the first to be arrested. They would later be sentenced to a total of 52½ years in prison for the attack. Four more had managed to evade arrest and were declared in contempt of court, and were ordered to be tracked down and taken into custody. Three of them, Gonzalez Garcia, Martinez Perez, and Fortiz Gil succeeded in slipping out of the country into exile in Italy and France. Only the fourth, Joaquin Gambin Hernandez, remained within reach of the police. He was not arrested.

The arrests were the work of police Inspector Jose Maria Escuerdo Tejada, head of the Anti-Anarchist Squad of the Central Information Brigade in Madrid, with 18 years on the force. Escuerdo had flown to Barcelona within hours of the attack, to pull off the much publicised coup of getting the alleged perpetrators to confess in record time. What hardly anyone knew at the time was that his success was due to the shadowy work of an informer... Joaquin Gambin.

Why The CNT Was Blamed

The huge anarchist protest in Barcelona on the day of the Scala attack was the CNT's first public demonstration since being made legal as a union organisation. It had stubbornly persisted in clandestinity as the main source of anarchist resistance to Franco's military dictatorship since being outlawed at the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Despite a savage repression aimed at breaking the organised workers' movement, the CNT survived as an anarcho-syndicalist union, emerging as though "from the catacombs" (as the Times put it) after Franco's death in 1976, to the amazement of journalists and historians the world over, who for years had written off the anarchist movement in Spain as long since 'dead'. The CNT was the last union organisation to be legally recognised by Spain's new 'democracy', and in the first flush of joyful enthusiasm following Franco's death, swelled as an organisation to 300,000 members. By the time of the Scala attack, it was once again perceived by the Government as the one

only union which publicly opposed the consensus politics and anti-labour laws of the new democracy, which (like Franco before them) sought to incorporate the trade unions into the structure of the state, as agencies for managing the workforce and maintaining industrial peace.

The then Interior Minister, Rudolfo Martin Villa, frequently announced in public that the real threat to stability in Spain came not from "ETA and its bombs", but "the Confederal union card" of the CNT. After the Scala attack, he was unable to conceal his delight. Never having made a secret of his concern over the growing influence of the CNT, he stated at a press conference on 31 January, 1978, when the police had already named the alleged arsonists, "...this act by anarchist groups in Barcelona is of especial concern to me because they have always had a disturbing effect upon peaceful co-existence." The Scala outrage was the ideal opportunity for the Spanish Government to dismiss the intransigent anarchist union as being a collection of 'terrorists', and thus criminalise its opposition to the Moncloa Pact.

On 3 December, 1981, the grins must have frozen on the faces of Martin Villa and police Inspector Escuerdo. Joaquin Gambin was arrested by police after a brief gunfight in Valencia railway station, when a routine police check disturbed him in the act of trafficking in arms. Once in custody he tried to buy his freedom by threatening to produce documentary proof of his status as an informer for the intelligence services. The CNT's contention that Gambin was a paid police provocateur, and the real author of the Scala attack, suddenly gained public credibility.

But Gambin, 'Public Enemy No.1', the missing link in the Scala case, failed to carry out his threat. For the next two years his mouth remained shut as he sat in Alicante prison waiting for his words to result, as they had done in the past, in his protectors inside the Anti-Anarchist Squad coming to his rescue once again. Gambin's luck had finally run out. He had become too big a liability now even for Escuerdo. When, in December 1983, the penny finally dropped that his former employers had really cut him adrift, he finally began to give his own version of the Scala affair, and his career as a paid police agent, to the Spanish news magazine *Cambio 16* just a week before he was due to step into the dock and go on trial.

The Scala Provocateur

Joaquin Gambin Hernandez, alias 'El Grillo' (the Cricket), alias 'Cesar' (55), was first arrested at the age of 17. By the time he left prison in 1977 he had spent 28 years of his life at one time or another behind bars. On several occasions he took part in failed escape attempts whilst in prison, but strangely — despite establishing a name for himself with the press and inside the jails as a 'legendary' escaper — he was never punished for these supposed bids for freedom. Whilst in Barcelona's Modelo prison in 1977, he had met anarchist prisoners. Amongst them were Jose Cuevas and several other comrades who had been arrested in one of the regular police operations against the CNT and the libertarian movement in Catalonia.

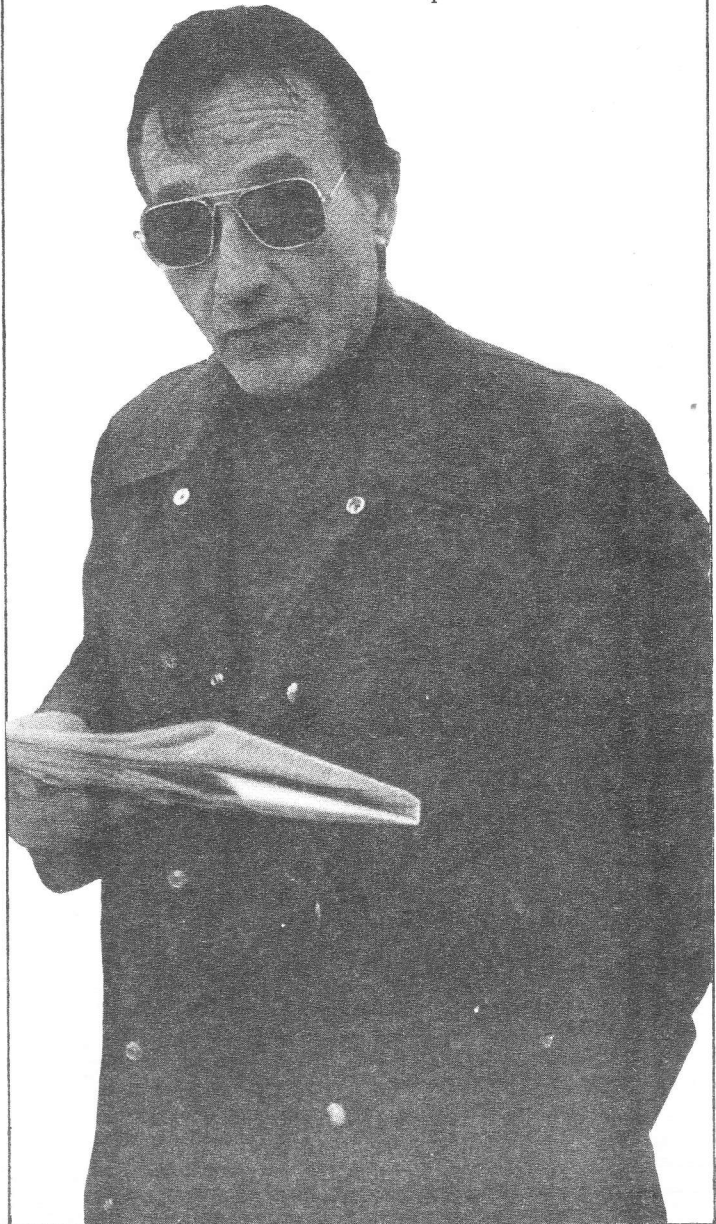
Gambin finished his sentence and was released, returning to his home town of Murcia. There he claims, he was approached by a police officer, Jose 'Pepe' Marin (a former Inspector with the Social Brigade, Spain's Special Branch) and offered a simple choice, "Either you co-operate with us", Marin told the ex-Con, "or we won't leave you in peace". In his interviews with *Cambio 16*, Gambin explained, "I had no way out. Naturally I preferred co-operation with the police to going back to jail and rot". A week later he claims he was introduced by Marin to Inspector Escuerdo (control No. A-1260-GO-7553), head of the Anti-Anarchist Squad in the Central Information Brigade, and Escuerdo gave him 30,000 pesetas for his services and the code name 'Cesar' under which he would work, and instructed him to infiltrate anarchist

for the greater glory of his police handlers.

Around this time, in 1977, Gambin first applied to join the CNT in Murcia but was fobbed off by the organisation. Later he was admitted, despite suspicions that he was untrustworthy. Capitalising on the contacts he had made in prison, he followed Escuerdo's instructions and moved to Barcelona, where on 10 January, 1978, he turned up unannounced at the front door of Jose Cuevas, asking to be put up. There he met other anarchists, friends of Cuevas. Jose Cuevas and his friends were later the first to be arrested after Gambin staged the Scala bombing — Cuevas being picked up at an address known only to himself and Gambin. "For that information", Gambin told *Cambio 16*, "they gave me 100,000 pesetas as a special reward. They promised me the moon and stars but later I never saw a single peseta."

Some weeks after the Scala attack, when he was publicly being named as one of the authors of the outrage, and in theory wanted by the police, Gambin was summoned to Madrid to meet his police handlers. The Anti-Anarchist Squad had come under severe criticism for not managing to avert the bombing of the Scala that they themselves had conceived and commissioned! Gambin was informed that the police record had to be cleaned up — a new coup against the anarchists was needed to redeem their image.

Joaquin Gambin Hernandez.



Betrayer of the ERAT

A group of anarchist workers at the SEAT car factory in Barcelona had for some time been sustaining a pocket of resistance in the labour struggle going on at SEAT through armed expropriations. The group called itself ERAT, or *Workers' Revolutionary Support Army*. Gambin's new job for the police was to try and infiltrate the ERAT. A few days after his visit to the Anti-Anarchist Squad, Gambin was visited at Madrid's Cordoba boarding house by Inspector Escuerdo to work out the details of the plan of attack against the ERAT. Escuerdo paid Gambin 20,000 pesetas for expenses, finger-printed him and asked him for some photographs. A few hours later one of Escuerdo's men brought Gambin a brand new phoney police identity card with his picture and finger prints on it in the name of Joaquin Fernandez Sanz.



(Above) The Police identity card issued to Gambin.

Escuerdo instructed Gambin, according to his revelations to *Cambio 16*, in every detail. Things were arranged so that he would come into contact with Juan 'El Barbas', Gabriel Botifoll, and an office worker called Carlos, whom the police suspected of being the founders of ERAT.

Passing himself off to the militants of ERAT as a member of GRAPO, Gambin wormed his way into the group, and participated (with police knowledge) in a hold-up of the Catalana supermarket. He is also thought to have taken part in several more hold-ups at business and commercial undertakings carried out by ERAT.

Around this time rumours began to circulate in CNT circles that Gambin was a police infiltrator and provocateur whose task was to discredit the anarchist union. Inspector Escuerdo came to Barcelona and advised Gambin to carry a gun in his belt for personal safety. Gambin took the hint and became a walking arsenal. In April, 1978, Escuerdo returned to Barcelona to give Gambin last minute instructions. It was the eve of the police round-up of ERAT. Lest the magistrates might free some of the suspects for lack of evidence, Gambin was to plant a pistol and some money under the bed of Gabriel Botifoll, (1) whom the police would portray as the head of ERAT. In his typical self-pitying style, Gambin later complained to *Cambio 16*, "The 'bread', some 40,000 pesetas of it, I had to take out of my own pocket."

The round-up of the ERAT, coming on top of the Scala arrests, confirmed the suspicions of the anarchists in Catalonia beyond any doubt. A few days after the arrests of Gabriel Botifoll and the other alleged members of ERAT, the CNT circulated leaflets denouncing the 'police provocateur', and 'police nark', who was trying to apply the brake to the expansion of the libertarian movement. Compromised now in the eyes of the anarchists, and also wanted by the Spanish courts still for his involvement in the Scala outrage, Gambin forced a meeting with his police controllers. He was summoned to a rendezvous in the La Paloma cafe, opposite the DGS building in Madrid's Puerto del Sol. There, Escuerdo and his boss

Manuel Gomez de Sandoval, suggested that Gambin drop out of sight for a while. On a reference from Sandoval, Gambin found work at the start of the summer of 1978 in the Perret brothers pastry shop in Benicasim (Castellon).

'Dirty-War' Against the ETA

Meanwhile, the magistrate handling the Scala case had, faced with Gambin's absence, declared him in contempt and issued a warrant for his arrest. Once again the fugitive spy turned to Escuerdo for help. Escuerdo's advice "struck me as madness"; Gambin told *Cambio 16*. "They wanted me to go to the Basque country along with three other guys, to kill ETA members. But I sensed that this was a ploy to dispose of me and I made up my mind to get offside." From then on, he claims, the attitude of the Perret brothers (who were themselves deeply involved in the 'dirty war' against the ETA as agents of the police, as well as being closely tied to the Mafia) towards him changed for the worst. Despite Gambin's protestations of innocence, however, he did not reject this "madness" of Escuerdo quite so out of hand as his self-righteous interviews with *Cambi 16* suggest. Evidence exists that he and the Perret brothers were involved together in at least one armed attack on ETA supporters. The attack, on a bar in Hendayes in the South of France on 28 November, 1980, left two people dead and over 20 wounded. Clement and Gilbert Perret, certainly, were later to be bamed by French police as wanted for this attack, amongst a series carried out in France against the ETA.

"One day after Escuerdo was to phone me so that I could report to him everything that Clement and Gilbert had done", he told *Cambio 16*, "and about their connections with the (special) services a group of male and female police turned up at the pastry shop armed to the teeth. They were led by Antonio Gonzalez Pacheco, alias 'Billy el Nino' (Billy the Kid) who was wearing a track suit and never let go of a tennis bag in which he carried a machine gun." Gambin later discovered that the arrival of the police at the establishment had been for the purpose of protecting Clement and Gilbert Perret. There had been a tip-off that armed ETA groups were in the area, intent of disposing of them.

This was probably the real event that decided Gambin to decamp. "I asked them to pay me off and found, to my surprise that they did so without demur and, indeed, with a generosity. Hours later, when I tried to change a 1,000 peseta note to buy a beer I found that the notes were even phonier than the Perret brothers themselves. The same thing went for the 100 Franc notes they had given to me on the pretext that they had not got Spanish currency just then." What Gambin never found out, according to *Cambio 16*, was that the money with which the Mafiosi brothers Clement and Gilbert Perret paid him off so generously was part of a batch of 600 million counterfeit pesetas handed over in 1971 to "entrepreneurs" in Marseilles by Jose Miguel Benaran Ordenana (alias 'Argala'), a member of the ETA executive!

Obituaries and Arrests

Now out of pocket, with the anarchists reportedly on his trail and a warrant for his arrest hanging over his head, Gambin looked for a way out of his dilemma. News reached him of the death of an uncle, Joaquin Gambin Gonzalez (82). The informer was quick to seize on the opportunity to pass off the death as his own. On 5 March, 1979, Murcia's newspaper *Hoja de Lunes* carried an obituary notice asking for prayers for the soul of the deceased. However, the notice was adroitly manipulated to give the impression that the deceased had been that of the informer and spy Gambin. Members of the CNT who attended the funeral appeared to take the bait. Gambin was believed dead. From a hill top near the El Espinardo cemetery, the 'deceased' quietly watched his own funeral,

thinking himself safe. "It was what I had always wanted", Gambin recalled for *Cambio 16*, "to fade away leaving no trace."

The next day Gambin withdrew all his savings and visited a cosmetic surgeon to undergo surgery to his nose and face, and change his appearance. Then, as *Cambio 16* enigmatically put it, "availing of the connections he still had in certain political circles", he obtained a false identity card in the name of 'Manuel Garcia Gomez'. In May he travelled to Valladolid, then to Pamplona, Verona, and Madrid...then back to Barcelona and Seville.

On 27 October, Gambin tried to embezzle money from the Elche Branch of the Banco Exterior de Espana but was caught by the police in possession of a revolver and phoney papers, and his real identity discovered. As soon as he reached the prison he sent off two telegrams: one to Jose Maria Escuerdo at the Fraud Squad of the Bank of Spain, and the other to Manuel Gomez de Sandoval, head of the Central Information Brigade. The effect was miraculous. Weeks later the order for his arrest for terrorism was cancelled, as was the charge of defrauding the Bank of Spain, and he was released on a surety of 50,000 pesetas.

Gambin now supervised his own funeral for a second time. On 24 July, 1980, the Basque newspaper *Egin* carried an item distributed by the Efe News Agency in Catalonia, reporting that an 'Autonomous Libertarian Commando' had executed Joaquin Hernandez, alias 'El Grillo', in the South of France. "We killed him for a provocateur and a police nark", said the communique published in the pro-ETA *Egin*, "and for implicating revolutionary workers' organisations in police frame-ups like the Scala case."

Gambin admitted to *Cambio 16*, "The item, which the press carried at that time was supplied to the Efe agency by myself, capitalising upon a trip to Andorra, where I was spotted by

some old acquaintances from the CNT".

Nothing more was heard of Gambin following his second 'death' until 3 December, 1981, when he was stopped by the police in Valencia railway station on suspicion of trafficking in arms. He did not give up quietly and was wounded in the back near the spine, and in the ankle before being arrested. Police found he was carrying no less than five hand-guns! Gambin was back in prison, but it was only after *Cambio 16*, which had spent some months investigating the Scala case, discovered that the informer was still alive, and was the same man as arrested in the Valencia railway station shoot-out, that the authorities publicly acknowledged the identity of the man they had arrested as Gambin, the wanted Scala bomber. Once again, Gambin began firing-off letters and telegrams to his former protectors in the police, threatening to reveal his collaboration with the Anti-Anarchist Squad, backed up by a file of documentary evidence of his secret service: telegrams, counterfeit money, photographs, phoney national identity papers, and other papers supplied to him by the police. But this time his threats fell on deaf ears.

From his self-imposed maximum security cell in Barcelona's Modelo prison, Gambin explained his decision to finally talk on the eve of his overdue trial for participation in the Scala attack:

Cambio 16: "Why have you decided to talk after so many years?"

Gambin: "Because they have washed their hands of me. For the past 59 months I clung to the hope that the police bosses who signed me up would get me out of this jam. It is not in their interests to turn their backs on me. So, for these five years of bumming around, constantly on the move from one spot to another like a beast at bay, I lived with the fixation that in the end the cops Escuerdo and Sandoval would come to my aid. But when I was arrested in Valencia and found that

Gambin (right) with the Perret brothers. Gilbert Perret has since been executed by ETA.



nobody was answering my letters and telegrams, the bubble burst. I am not about to take the rap for murder. Joaquin Gambin Hernandez's hands are not stained with blood."

Cambio 16: "Why did you ask for a top-security cell?"

Gambin: "Because they want me dead. They've put a price on my head. I am under threat on every side. To the anarchists I am a monstrous nark, the Scala "provocateur" and the Mafia wants to stop my mouth lest I squeal about the police's dirty linen. But what hunger failed to do over a 30 year period will not be managed by a group of anarchists or four cops either. Either I talk or I peg out."



Joaquín Gambin Hernández

The End Of The Road

The second Scala trial opened amid tight security in December, 1983. In answer to a call by the CNT, about 100 members of the union gathered outside the Palace of Justice in Barcelona, despite police harassment, carrying placards reading, "schemes against the CNT are being hatched in the Ministry of the Interior. The Scala case is a police frame-up."

Giving evidence, Gambin claimed in his defence "...I had been charged by the police to keep an eye on the anarchist groups in Barcelona."

Jose Cuevas, one of those who had been railroaded in the first trial on the basis of Gambin's information to the Anti-Anarchist Squad, was brought from his prison cell to give evidence for the prosecution. Despite repeated attempts from the bench to silence him he stated to the court, "Gambin arrived at my home with two suitcases and a satchel and told me that he was a commercial traveller for a firm selling industrial parts for fridges. In the tan satchel, he was carrying a queer device which he told me was a sample he used in his work. He also offered me a .38 revolver which I refused because I had no need of any gun."

"When the police arrested me, they showed me the .38 and the tan satchel as well as a sketch of the device inside in order to give me to understand their connection with Gambin. On the sketch was written 'Scala, army material'. Those items were never seen again. How come?"

"I have been sentenced to 17 years on the strength of a statement signed under torture, in the absence of all proof. The courts had no desire to investigate..."

(Solidaridad Obrera, January 1984).

The phoney national identity card issued in the name of 'Joaquin Fernandez Sanz', plus postal receipts and certificates

addressed to the police commissioner, were also introduced in court as evidence of Gambin having been in the pay of the police.

Gambin was found guilty of charges of manufacturing explosives and attending a demonstration whilst bearing arms, and sentenced to seven years in prison, despite the fact that the prosecution had asked that he be sentenced to 16 years. Shortly after the verdict, Gambin told *Cambio 16*, "I'm completely flummoxed. The police forced me to work among the terrorist groups on their behalf. They told me I had to play along so as not to arouse suspicions, and now they're putting me away for having done what they asked."

Solidaridad Obrera commented: "This 'little angel' who boasts 32 guilty verdicts, not counting the one which concerns us here, has confessed to being a paid police informer with phoney documents issued through official channels and that he infiltrated Catalan anarchist groups whose break-up he contrived back in 1977; after the Scala episode — still not cleared up, even after two trials — he vanished, only to reappear some months later as infiltrator and betrayer of the ERAT, for which he admits to having been paid a sum of 20,000 pesetas by the Anti-Anarchist Squad Inspector, Jose Maria Escuerdo Tejedo."

Solidaridad Obrera, January 1984)

CNT Issues Writ Against The Police

In January 1984 *Solidaridad Obrera* announced: "The General Secretary of the CNT in Catalonia announced in a recent press conference (23 December, 1983) the union's intention to issue a writ against the police, on the basis that the finding handed down by the No.3 section of Barcelona Provincial High Court, dated 17 December '83, expressly acknowledges Joaquin Gambin Hernandez's status as a police informer, this having been accepted as evidence during the trial by the prosecution in the shape of a false identity card issued to Gambin by the police in order to facilitate him in his tasks as a paid police infiltrator.

"Although the CNT considers Gambin to have been the instigator of the manufacture of explosives, this contention has been repudiated by the prosecuting counsel, given that acceptance of it would mean that others condemned would be criminally liable (they are already in custody) since the appeal for a non-trial submitted at the time by the defence was not granted.

"Quite apart from the productivity of his 'work', the use of an informer may be interpreted as a breach of Article 18 of the Constitution which defines the integrity and confidentiality of legally constituted individuals, physical or legal, such as the CNT. In this instance, the police...by recourse to a paid intermediary...made illicit entry into the union, something

The CNT denounces the Scala frame-up.



otherwise impossible (barring a court order) given the legal status of the organisation. The crime of illicit entry was affected through a malicious individual and this sham constitutes a punishable act.

"Asked by reporters why the CNT did not bring a private action in the Gambin case, the General Secretary stated that the opportunity was missed in the days when Jose Bondia (1) (ex-Secretary of the National Committee now expelled from the organisation in Catalonia) turned it down on the basis of negotiations he was conducting off his own bat with the Socialist administration with the aim of securing the release of libertarian prisoners...negotiations which, naturally, proved fruitless."

Solidaridad Obrera, No.140, January, 1984)

As for Jesus Fortes Gil, another accused in the Scala case, arrested in Rome in January 1982 and extradited to Spain at the beginning of 1985, despite a widespread campaign waged by the international anarchist movement, he was finally freed on bail after nearly three years of imprisonment. Maite Fabres, also imprisoned in the case, was released without explanation. Both are victims of a judicial farce. (2)

And What Of Escuerdo?

Jose Maria Escuerdo Tejada, the gifted disciple of 'supercop' Roberto Conesa, enjoyed more luck than his puppet Gambin. Far from being drummed out of the force, as befell others from the 'Conesa school' of policing, Escuerdo profited from the PSOE's accession to power. Rafael del Rio, the new Director General of police, spotted him during his time at police HQ in Barcelona and appointed him head of the Central Information Brigade. The Socialists had elevated one of the principal culprits of the Scala outrage to the position of number two in the anti-terrorist drive.

'Rocinante'

Scala File - Footnotes

(1) Jose Bondia was removed as Secretary of the CNT-AIT National Committee in January 1983 for maintaining secret contact with the so-called 'renovated CNT', or *Renovadas*, (an anti-AIT grouping that left the CNT-AIT to form its own union in December 1979); and with the 'Socialist' government and PSOE at an executive level. Bondia stole micro-film of the CNT-AIT archives, failed to return video recordings of a CNT-AIT National Plenum, and left the union with a debt of £40,000. He is now a prominent opponent of the CNT-AIT within the phoney "reunified CNT", formed by the *Renovadas* and a motley collection of people expelled from the CNT-AIT, at a State-sponsored congress in Madrid (protected by 200 national Police) during June 1984.

The timing of the 'split' in the CNT in 1979 takes on a greater significance when seen against the background of the Scala provocation, and the much-quoted anti-CNT statements of the then Interior Minister Martin Villa. Is it mere coincidence that the split at the CNT's 5th Congress (ostensibly over the question of whether the union should participate in elections to the Government created *Comites de Empresa* - works councils - which are viewed by the CNT-AIT as tantamount to integration into the capitalist system, along the lines of the old fascist syndicates of the CNS under Franco) should come so close on the heels of a police conspiracy conceived in the Interior Ministry, and whose chief perpetrators enjoyed the patronage of the Socialist Administration; the purpose of which was to portray the CNT's opposition to the Moncloa Pact as being the work of "terrorists"? Both the government of the PSOE and the press have cynically manipulated the emergence of the *Renovadas* to weaken the CNT-AIT's opposition to the new anti-labour laws, and have used the existence of 'two CNTs' also as an excuse for not repaying to the CNT-AIT the nearly £12m "Patrimony" owing to it as compensation for property and other assets stolen from the union by Franco at the end of the Civil War. Interestingly enough, the head of the *Renovadas* entertainment union, Casas (an ex-member of the CNS, Franco's vertical union) is a known friend of Martin Villa, Interior Minister at the time of the Scala case.

Besides Bondia, many of the other leading authors of the *Renovada* breakaway from the CNT-AIT can be clearly identified with various Catholic, Trotskyist, or pro-government groups which flocked into the CNT in the period of the union's rapid expansion following the death of Franco. Carlos Ramos, former general secretary of the *Renovadas* was a member of *Accion Catholica*, a Jesuit organisation opposed to the AIT which puts forward the idea of the CNT affiliating with the Christian Labour International, CMT. Ramos is now "Secretary of Patrimony" in the "reunified CNT". Also prominent in the "reunified CNT" is Luis Altabelle, another leading member of *Accion Catholica*; Jose M. Berro, second General Secretary of the *Renovadas* and formerly a member of the Trotskyist group *Liberacion*; and Antonio Perez Canales, one-time secretary of the CNT-AIT National Committee, but a



Joaquín Gambín Hernández

former member of *Accion Comunista* and a veteran of the Communist union CC.OO. Carlos Martinez, the *Renovadas* first General Secretary, has now openly joined the ruling socialist party PSOE and its trade union the UGT, along with other ex-members of the *Renovadas* in Valencia.

(2) A recent issue of *Solidaridad Obrera*, organ of the CNT-AIT in Catalonia, carried a communique issued by the CNT-AIT Regional Prisoners Committee concerning the Scala case:

Press Comminque That The Other Papers Don't Want To Publish

A tiny note in just one Barcelona paper informed the public on 11 May of the suspension of the action brought against comrade Jesus E. Fortes Gil for alleged involvement in the Scala fire.

Nothing referred to "the administrative error" which resulted in this comrade staying imprisoned for three long years. Three years in which Maite Fabres was illegally detained as well as two others for the same reasons; that is the painful price that we defenceless citizens have to pay to the State's whims.

The press faithfully reflects its subordination to the public and economic powers by covering with a simple note such a criminal fact as a person losing three years of his/her life for the shameful interests of the State. Interests that, as we see once more, don't stop at whatever abuse, be it individual or collective.

Nevertheless, from now on, we will carry on denouncing those outrages and we will carry on calling for freedom of those still suffering the indiscriminate persecution of the administration. To be precise, those who are still suffering now the lack of freedom for something committed by the security services of the State and police: and who are oaying for it in a Kafkaesque way are:

Arturo Palma
Jose Cuevas
Javier Canadas

Permanente Pro-Presos
CNT-AIT
Regional Catana
15 May 1985

(Solidaridad Obrera No.160, May 1985)