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June 1998

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Cesar Terron Abad (1915–1941)

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Cesar Terron was born in Fabero (Leon province) in 1915. He was active in the CNT in the miners' union, the largest local union. In Fabero the CNT was the predominant trade union organisation. It had its own local on the road between Otero and Naraguantes and an *ateneo* complete with arts group and workers' co-operative.¹ Cesar Terron was the local federation's treasurer. Also active in Fabero in the same miners' union was Serafin Fernandez Ramon (*El Santeiro*) who distinguished himself in the guerrilla war against Franco. More of him later.

Come the anarchist uprising of December 1933 in the province of Leon, the Fabero miners seized the town and declared libertarian communism. They seized a gunpowder store and, armed and with plenty of dynamite charges, they set off for La Vega de Espinareda where they surrounded the Civil Guard barracks. The occupants offered resistance and the barracks were destroyed by dynamite. Two Guards were injured and the rest surrendered. The miners

¹ *Historia del anarquismo leones*, CNT, Leon, 1993, pp.105 and 176

then set out for Arqansa and Cacabelos, but there they were fought off.² Cesar Terron was arrested for his part in these events.

During the civil war he served as a captain with the 210th Battalion of the 192nd Brigade under the anarcho-syndicalist Higinio Carrocera, serving with the Machine Gun Company, 63 of the 124 men of which came from Leon. They included the likes of Ramiro Perez Granja (lieutenant also from Fabero); Manuel Alfonso Montes (captain) from Paradeseca; Manuel Rubio Lopez (sergeant) from Valla de Finollado; Santos Blanco Rodriguez (sergeant) from Vega de Espinareda; Luis Martinez Rodriguez (sergeant) from Fabero. The 210th Battalion distinguished itself in the battle at El Mazuco, taking heavy casualties.³

Right after the loss of Asturias in October 1937, Cesar Terron made his way homewards with a band of 37 men, six of whom stuck with him: they were Eusebio Garcia Garcia, Ramiro Perez Granja, Antonio Vega Guerrero (*Rizoso*) a Leones born in 1917 in San Juan de la Mata, two men from Fontoria (Ubaldo and Luis), plus an Asturian, *El Maestro*. The band settled in the Fabero district and had hide-outs in the Sierra de Ancars; its raids took it as far as Lugo and Asturias. There were other bands of “runaways” operating in the Sierra de Ancares. The biggest was the group of Serafin Fernandez Ramon (*El Santeiro*).

Aguado Sanchez is very curt in his references to Cesar Terron:⁴

In 1938 Cesar Terron's group was set up in the Fabero and Valle de Ancares districts. Comprising six escapees from the collapsed Asturian front, it marauded north of Ponferrada as far as the ports of Cienfuegos and Leitariegos. They carried out hold-ups in San Martin de Moreda and

² Joaquin Arraras *Historia de la Segunda Republica Espanola* Madrid 1969 Tomo II, p.255

³ *Historia del anarquismo leones*. p.176.

⁴ Francisco Aguado Sanchez *El maquis en Espana*, Editorial San Martin, Madrid, 1975, p.664

Bustarga. In Fresnedo they murdered the parish priest. In 1940 in Villar de Otero Cesar Terron was hunted down. One of the bandits gave himself up to the authorities. The others decided to 'offer their services' to the 'Pataciegos'

The Pataciegos band had been set up by the brothers Salvador, Demetrio and Pedro Voces Canonica, known as the 'Pataciegos' brothers.

Approaching the Villar de Otero (Leon) district in search of food supplies — there being lots of sheep in the area — Cesar Terron's group was apparently spotted by intelligence agents. The guerrillas' families who, it was thought, (correctly) were helping them with supplies, were forced to choose between 'voluntarily' moving into Leon or going to prison.

The band retreated into Asturias to escape from the dragnet and in Llandeo they freed Jose Fernandez Perez from capture by a Civil Guard patrol. One Guard died in the skirmish.⁵ The Cesar Terron group was hotly pursued following the death of the Fresnedo parish priest, Juan Alvarado Garcia, on 30 August 1938. The guerrillas accused him of having incited the Falangists of Toreno to kill the Finlledo teacher Manuel Perez Abad, uncle of Cesar Terron, who had been *paseado* (taken for a ride and murdered) on 2 September 1936.

The pursuit of the band was stepped up even further after the killing of an army officer in Vega de Espinareda on 2 July 1940.

In the Fabero district there were repeated clashes with mixed patrols of Civil Guards, troops and Falangists. The noose was tightening day by day on Cesar Terron. At the same time his support was shrinking and several townspeople were jailed on charges of having aided and abetted him.

In the end the band was tracked down to the Villar de Otero hills and a heavy gun-battle erupted. Cesar Terron died when a bullet

⁵ Secundino Serrano *La guerrilla anti-franquista el Leon (1936-1951)*, siglo XXI Editores, 1988, p143

struck him in the head. This was on 21 July 1940. His comrades got away.

Cesar Terron carried on him a notebook in which he used to jot down the operations of his band and this was seized by the Civil Guard when he was killed. It must be filed away in some Civil Guard archive collection and access to it would make it possible to reconstruct his entire guerrilla career.

El Maestro then took command of the band. On 18 February 1941, there was a battle in a pinewood in the vicinity of Caneda (Leon) in which El Maestro and two of his guerrillas died. On the other side, Civil Guard Nicasio Gonzalez Arias from Castejeira-Sober (Lugo) was killed. One of the dead guerrillas was identified as Brindis Mauriz Rodriguez, a 40 year old farmer from Paradeseca, whilst the other was Luis from Montoria.

Later Eusebio Garcia Garcia gave himself up. Ramiro Perez Granja was arrested in his home in Fabero but died on the journey to Villafranca from the treatment he received. The two surviving members of the band, Antonio Vega Guerrero (*Rizoso*) and Joaquin Lage Fernandez (*El Xoqui*) joined the group led by Serafin Fernandez Ramon (*El Santeiro*).