



**Starting in 1951, CNT militants such as Josep Lluís Faceries, Francisco Sabaté Llopart “el Quico” (died in Sant Celoni on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1960) and Ramon Vila Capdevila led what was known as the “armed opposition to the Franco regime”. They operated in the cities (robberies, underground propaganda, sabotage, etc.) and sought support in rural areas before fleeing across the border to France**

### The last journey

On December 31<sup>st</sup> 1959 Quico Sabaté crossed the border near the Hostal de la Muga with a group of libertarian resistance fighters: Antoni Miracle Guitart, Martín Ruiz Montoya, Rogelio Madrigal Torres and Francisco Conesa Alcaraz. After a night of merrymaking the guerrillas were spotted by two Civil Guards on patrol at the Casot de Falgàs, in the LLadò municipality. After a shootout the group fled. The police force was quickly mobilised and a lot of outposts were put on alert. On day 3 the anarchists were located and surrounded by the Civil Guard at Mas Clarà, in the municipality of Sarrià de Ter. Sabaté was the only one to escape the ambush of Civil Guards, the rest died during the early hours of January 4<sup>th</sup>. Sabaté walked all night; during the day of the 4<sup>th</sup> he must have stayed hidden and he then continued to advance after dark. On the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> he arrived at Fornells de la Selva train station. The 1104 express train from Portbou pulled in at 6 in the morning. Sabaté climbed into the engine room and intimidated the drivers. At Maçanet, the steam engine was replaced by an electric engine. Sabaté got inside the locomotive and was found out by the engine drivers once the train had got started. Before it pulled into Sant Celoni station, at Carrer Roger de Flor (photo1), Sabaté stopped the train and got off. The engine drivers notified the station master and he in turn called the

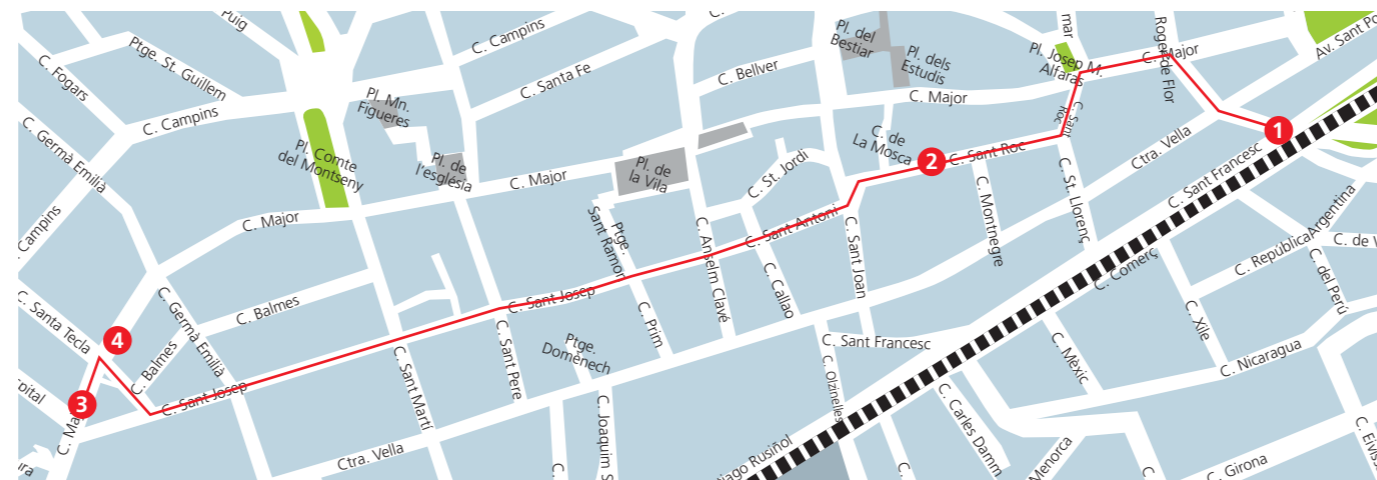
Civil Guard. Sabaté stopped the farmer Josep Vives (photo 2) and asked him where he could find a doctor. He replied that in Sant Celoni there was a doctor called Barri Nolasca on the other side of town. Sabaté got onto the farmer’s cart and he took him to Carrer Sant Roc. Walking along Carrer Sant Josep he asked a woman where the doctor’s surgery was. Very close to Carrer José Antonio (today the Carrer Major), they didn’t open the surgery door to him. Sabaté rang the door of a neighbour and asked her if she would let him in to shave. She answered that she couldn’t open because she was sick in bed. He then knocked on the door of another family (photo 3). The father didn’t let him in. Sabaté’s appearance, unshaven as he was with blood stains on his clothes, did not inspire trust. The two men got into a fight and pushed each other down



1- The place where Francisco Sabaté got off the 1104 train



2- Mr Vives Bonamusa picks up Sabaté in his cart



4 - The photographer Jaume March showing the photo of Sabaté lying dead in Carrer Santa Tecla

the street to Carrer Santa Tecla. Amidst all the shouting, the vice deputy of the armed citizen's militia, Abel Rocha, arrived on the scene and shot at Sabaté. The bullet hit the neighbour in the back. He loosened his grip on “el Quico” who managed to pull himself away after biting the man’s hand. That’s when Abel Rocha fired his machine gun against Quico Sabaté. As he fell, Sabaté fired two shots at the armed militia man: one hit him in the knee and the other in the chest where he kept a hand grenade that saved his life. Soon after that the Civil Guard arrived along with the other militia man on patrol, Josep Sibina “Pitu”, who emptied the cartridge of his gun into Sabaté’s head, disfiguring his face. The CNT militant’s corpse lay all morning covered with a sheet in Carrer Santa Tecla. The town photographer, Jaume March, (photo 4) was called upon by the Civil Guard to photograph the corpse. The negatives were confiscated as soon as they were developed.



3 - The corner of Carrer Santa Tecla and Carrer Major (formerly Carrer José Antonio) where Quico Sabaté was shot dead

The newspapers on January 6<sup>th</sup> gave full spread coverage to the death and life of Francisco Sabaté alias “el Quico”. Here are two of the front headlines; one is from issue 401 of the paper *El caso* by the journalist Enrique Rubio and the headline of *La Vanguardia*: “Yesterday, the forces of law and order shot the famous bandit Francisco Sabaté Llopart”.