

MASSANA BANCELLS, Marcelino.(angles)

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Berga 1918-1981

Orphaned at the age of five, his early childhood was spent in Líñas and, from the age of seven, he attended a religious college in Solsona (spending the summers in Berga) under the supervision of his uncle, a priest. He left the college at 13, spent a year in Sallent and eventually started his working life at 14 as apprentice in a machine shop. by 1934 he was a textile machinist and he joined the CNT the following year. Come the fascist revolt, he joined the Berga militias' committee and in August, having enlisted with the Tierra y Libertad column, he fought for a short time on the Madrid front; he returned to Catalonia and joined the Hilario Zamora column and, after it was amalgamated, served with its successor, the 25th Division, with whose 118th Brigade he fought in Aragon from October 1936 up until the end of the civil war (as a lieutenant from April 1938 on). The end of the war caught him in Alicante, where began his odyssey through concentration camps and jails (Albatera, Bétera, Porta Coeli, Manresa, Barcelona, Madrid). Released on licence in 1942, he went underground after a few months after refusing to do his army service; he walked all the way from Barcelona to Berga, lived as a peasant farmer in Aviá and Organyà, contacted the smugglers in the area and became an expert in border crossings. In 1944 he was living in Tarascón and organised a guerrilla campaign that he was to keep up until 1950 with great shrewdness and consistency (he was living in Toulouse from 1947), until he found himself caught up in a clash with French customs officers and called it a day. Initially his problems with the French government earned him a month in prison, but, following pressures brought to bear by the Francoists (who pressed for his extradition) he was imprisoned again and then committed to Deux Sebres and Leucamp up until 1956. Released in 1956 he moved to Paris to work as a mechanic and gardener and, having fallen ill, he drifted away from activism and resisted pressure first from Sabaté and then (in the early 1960s) from Mera, Alberola and García Oliver to rejoin the armed struggle. Eventually he moved to his present home in Languedoc and after the CNT was relaunched he joined the Barcelona metalworkers' union. His tremendous prestige derives from his intense struggle against Franco in 1944-50, years when he carried out countless operations in the Catalan Pyrenees (blowing up electricity pylons, carrying out expropriations, making border crossings with documents, weapons and other fighters, etc.) , frequently in the company of Vila Capdevila, Senzill, Antonio Sánchez, Puig Torres, Pons, Dot, Saborit, Saturnino Sanz, Pérez Pedrero, Adrover, Massip, Crespo, Benítez, F. Martínez, Arcos, M. Sabaté, Pepe Blanco, etc. especially in 1949 when he was frenetically active in the Manresa-San Vicente de Castellat-Rocafort comarca, enjoying considerable popular support. The work he did for the Libertarian Youth members involved in the publication of the clandestine Ruta likewise seems significant. Massana is one of the greatest of the anti-Franco guerrillas, on a par with Sabaté, Vila Capdevila and Facerías. Curiously enough, he did not die in combat, in spite of the length of the time he was active.