

# The Schindler from Sabadell



To the left, the son and daughters of the Boers and to the right the two grandchildren of Josep Maria Marcet yesterday in a factory.

Lights and shades of Josep Maria Marcet, a Franco adherent mayor of Sabadell, who strongly repressed the republicans, but rescued four Jews

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Josep Maria Marcet, the mayor of Sabadell between 1940 and 1960, during the hardest years of Franco's dictatorship, was a multifaceted person. This textile businessman is accused of having played an intense treatment of the local administration and a hard repression of Republican officials during the early years of his rule. In May of this year, the municipal government of Sabadell (La Crida, ERC, Unitat pel Canvi i Guanyem Sabadell), moved the monument dedicated to the mayor Marcet out the square of the same name and announced that it would change its name, following the plan of historical memory and because they do not want "any vestige and homage to Franco's memory in the streets of Sabadell".

However, according to what has been now made known, Marcet became also a little Schindler, as he was the clue to the rescue of two Jewish couples from Holland. The Boers and the Adelaar, on their escape from the Nazis, crossed the Spanish border through the Pyrenees near the end of 1942. Yesterday, the public Dutch television filmed the emotional encounter of the three children of the Boers couple -Yvette, André and Marion- and the two grandchildren of Marcet - Francesc, Olga and

Anna - in an old textile factory of Sabadell. Their emotional embrace would have never taken place without the intervention of Josep Maria Marcet and another textile businessman of Sabadell, Feliu Barnola.

This meeting was also attended by a member of the Barnola Fund, Dr. Pere Obiols, and the historian Josep Calvet. It was the latter, who made the research and documented the escape of the four Jews, and how Marcet and Barnola could help them to take a ship and start a new life in the USA.

Everything was discovered in 1998, when the Boers brothers found a mute and black-and-white film from 1939 of the wedding of their parents, Barend Boers and Mimi Dwinger. This film was found in a forgotten suitcase of the lady, who had recently died. The Boers were members of the Jewish community from Friesland, a region in North of Holland, that was totally erased during the Holocaust, including their ancestral habitudes and a particular Yiddish dialect. The Boers brothers delivered the film to the Frisian Film Archive, and this fact brought about the interest of the Dutch means, because the Boers and the Adelaar were some of the few surviving Jews from Friesland. This was the reason of the Dutch television report.

After months of negotiations, yesterday the story was rebuilt. The Boers couple had a textile factory in Holland and there was a commercial relationship with Feliu Barnola, whom they helped to escape from Spain when the Civil War broke out. The industrialist, who was a friend of Marcet, repaid to them this favor when it was they who had to escape. The two couples managed to illegally cross the Pyrenees in September 1942. The Guardia Civil arrested them: the women were liberated and the men were put in prison at Sant Pau de Segúries (Ripollès). "They asked for help to Feliu Barnola, and this one did it to Marcet, who sent his personal secretary to the governor of Girona, asking for their release", writes historian Calvet. The police transferred the two Dutch people to the concentration camp of Miranda de Ebro, open from 1937 to 1947, where 100,000 prisoners were kept in precarious conditions. Once more, Marcet asked for help to the Foreign minister, count of Jordana, for their release. With the quibble of a medical report where it was said that Boers was sick, it was possible to get his release. "It is really exceptional that a high political member of the Franco's regim, such as Marcet, helped to release some Jewish people that were totally unknown to him. This is an extraordinary action that I did not find in the hundreds of documents that I have been investigating for years", affirms the historian.

André Boers showed his thankfulness to the Marcet family for the work of their grandfather: "What is here important is the persons and not the ideologies. There is still hope."