

# THE AGENCY'S GAZETTE

1870-2020

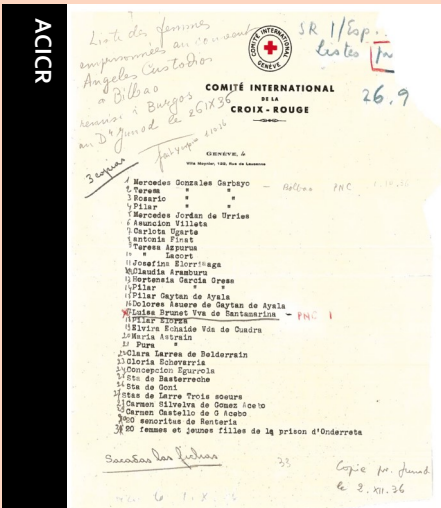
150 YEARS FIGHTING FOR MORE HUMANITY IN WAR

6 October 1936, the first time in...

## ... Spain

**A**ngels in disguise | Just three months after the start of the Spanish Civil War, Marcel Junod and Daniel Clouzot were the first delegates to visit prisons in Spain. One of the places they visited was a convent called Los Angeles Custodios (The Guardian Angels!), which the Basque authorities had converted into a place of detention for nationalist women. A couple of weeks before visiting the convent, Junod had reached

**J**unod sees red | On his first visit to the convent, Junod found that the women were housed “in satisfactory conditions” because there were no more than “two detainees per cell”. These were encouraging findings from a delegate who, in his report to the Commission for Spain, wrote of his concern about “(red) republican women rushing to the prison”; women who had “ridiculed and threatened to kill” the nationalist detainees following the first nationalist bombing raid on Bilbao.



Women evacuated aboard an English torpedo boat

List of women detained at Los Angeles Custodios convent (established before Marcel Junod's visit)

agreements with both the nationalists and the republicans, so he thought he would be able to evacuate a group of 160 nationalist women. But he had not considered that he now needed authorization from the new president of the Basque government, after the region was granted a statute of autonomy on 1 October.

In the end, 130 women were evacuated to Saint-Jean-de-Luz during the night of 10 to 11 October on two British destroyers, the Exmouth and the Esk, before being sent to Irun as part of an exchange. The only thing that Junod received in exchange, however, was a sense of frustration, because the nationalists were not gracious enough to hand over the same number of Basques. For the nationalist women, their release proved to be doubly lucky. They avoided being detained in the unsanitary holds of prison ships anchored in the bay of Las Arenas, and they were not at the convent on 4 January 1937 when dozens of detainees were murdered in retaliation for the bombing raids on Bilbao... ■ IME, DPM & DGON



The convent converted into a women's prison