

The Importance of Humanitarian Aid During the Second World War: The Case of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross in France (1940-1945)*

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Abstract

This article analyse Joint Relief Commission's (JRC) humanitarian policies and practices of the International Red Cross, an instrument of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies to help civilian populations, particularly children and women, in different European countries during the Second World War. Through the case study of JRC's humanitarian aid in France between 1940-1945 and based on specific bibliography, documentary resources, archives and audio-visual collections of ICRC's library, the text reflects on the difficulties, importance and necessity of humanitarian policies and instruments favouring the most vulnerable groups during armed conflicts.

Resumo

A Importância da Ajuda Humanitária Durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial: o Caso da Comissão Conjunta de Ajuda da Cruz Vermelha Internacional em França (1940-1945)

Este artigo analisa as políticas e as ações humanitárias da Comissão de Assistência Conjunta da Cruz Vermelha Internacional, um instrumento dessa instituição e da Liga das Sociedades da Cruz Vermelha para ajudar as populações civis, em particular mulheres e crianças, em diferentes países europeus durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial. Através do estudo de caso da ajuda humanitária dessa Comissão em França entre 1940 e 1945 (baseado em bibliografia especializada, fontes documentais e audiovisuais do arquivo da Cruz Vermelha Internacional), o texto reflete as dificuldades, a importância e a necessidade de políticas humanitárias e de meios que ajudem os grupos mais vulneráveis durante os conflitos armados.

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Introduction

“Les civils, pauvre troupeau de femmes, d’enfants, de vieillards, d’impotents, de malades, sortis de toutes les classes sociales et mélangés tous dans la même infortune, ouvriers, commerçants, agriculteurs, pauvres hères, gens sans aveu, de même que rentiers, fonctionnaires, savants, professeurs, etc., tous, quels qu’ils aient été, sans défense aucune contre la fatalité qui les a atteints indistinctement, sont devenus du jour au lendemain, des épaves livrées sans défense à l’envahisseur, ou fuyant sur les grandes routes au-devant de l’inconnu.” (Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, 1921, p. 133).

The First World War (1914-1918) and its consequences, as well as the new contexts of violence from the *interbellum* period – civil wars, revolutions, and insurrections – represented new challenges for humanitarian organizations and demonstrated the risks that civilian populations had to face. What is more, they highlighted the existence of new categories of victims, such as civilian internees, deportees, refugees, political detainees and hostages, some of them unforeseen by existing international legislation (Palmieri, 2012, p. 8). As with previous conflicts, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), regarded as the preamble to the Second World War (1939-1945) and as the humanitarian field of acting, rehearsal, and improvisation, underlined once again that the lives of women, children, and the elderly, as well as those of the combatants, were in danger. The first world conflagration demonstrated the insufficient protection accorded by international law to civilian populations, including to the most vulnerable, victims of hostilities or enemy occupation (Becker, 2012). As mentioned in one of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reports on its activities during the Great War,

“Les victimes civiles de la guerre furent doublement victimes du fait qu’aucun traité ne les ayant protégées, leur sort a dépendu du bon plaisir des autorités militaires de l’armée envahissante; elles ont constitué bien plus du matériel à représailles et à mesures d’intimidation qu’une prise de guerre plus ou moins légitime, au bénéfice des conventions internationales existantes.” (Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, 1921, p. 133).

From 1939 on, these categories were to be affected even more by the advent of total war on land, sea, and air, with a modernization of combat techniques hitherto never tested. For this reason, this article seeks to reflect on the importance of humanitarian aid aimed at these vulnerable civilian victims through the study of the Joint Relief Commission’s (JRC) and its relief activities in Europe, particularly in France, during the Second World War. Given the scarce bibliography that exists on the subject¹, this analysis feeds on Archives du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge

1 The work of the JRC in France it was not the object of an exhaustive study, even though, it is worth mentioning some general references or from the point of view of the development of the International humanitarian law mentioned in Bugnion (1997, p. 824) and Plattner (1992, p. 288).

(ACICR) documentary funds and sub-funds, especially from the JRC, as well as each of the reports published by the ICRC on its activities between 1939 and 1945, and on the Joint Relief Commission².

At the outbreak of the conflict in Europe in September 1939, humanitarian organizations like the ICRC had at their disposal international treaties such as the Geneva Conventions of 1864, 1906, and 1929 which, legally, were protecting the military, the sick, the wounded, the shipwrecked, and prisoners of war. Additionally, there was, in the field of the law of warfare, the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibited the use of chemical and toxic or other similar products. However, at that time, the civilian populations were deprived of any formalised legal basis which protected them by means of conventions and which facilitated relief actions in their favour. However, it is worth mentioning that after the outcome of First World War, in 1918, there were some initiatives to redress the most obvious legal loopholes that had become evident since 1914. Some examples are the 10th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent of 1921, at which the most important principle was the desire that governments reach an agreement to foresee possible breaks of economic blockades in favour of children, the elderly and sick people. Again, in 1930, during the 14th International Conference, it was decided to avoid hardships of civilian populations through a less strict form of blockade, by allowing the provision of materials aid. Furthermore, the following International Conference in 1934 adopted a new project which aimed to protect civilians. It was intended that this project be presented at the diplomatic conference of 1940. However, the outbreak and development of the war interrupted that work to establish the legal basis for civil protection³.

The Creation of the JRC

Given the new European circumstances marked by the advance of German troops and the Nazi occupation of a large part of Western Europe, the ICRC and the League of the Red Cross Societies attempted to alleviate the needs of those civilians most affected by war. From 1940 onwards, both institutions joined forces to create a joint body to develop relief movements in favour of civilians, especially children and women, victims of war. In October 1940, the name of “Joint Relief Commission”

2 Part of the material used for this reports has already been released during the war period in the *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge*. By way of example see: *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge* (1941a, pp. 659-671; 1941b, pp. 989-999; 1942a, pp. 18-19; 1945, pp. 549-564).

3 A more detailed description of the proposals made during the interwar period in order to remedy the existing loopholes in the International law on civilians protection can be found in Durand (1998, pp. 149-342) and Bugnion (2014, pp. 118-131).

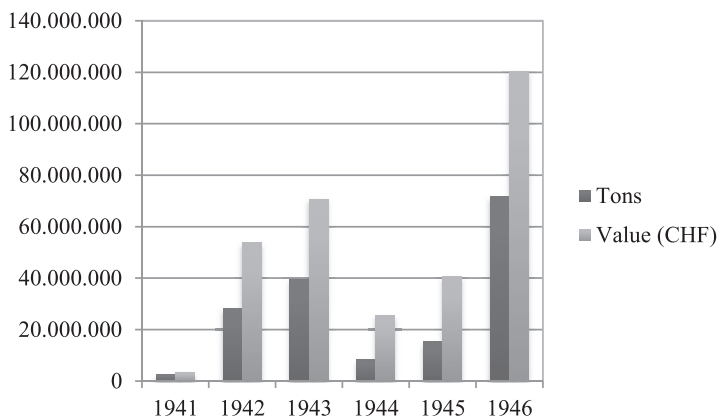
was pronounced for the first time. The JRC was formally established on the 23rd of July 1941, as a non-profit association, in which the ICRC and the League would take part as members (Commission Mixte de Secours, 1948, pp. 9-11). The foundations of the new organization were set down in the above-mentioned resolutions, in the activity of the Civil Section of the International Prisoners of War Agency, and aid actions carried out by the ICRC during the First World War and the interwar period. Other equally important pillars were the principles of both organizations, among them human well-being, the preservation of human dignity, and the statutes of the International Red Cross of 1929, whose article 9 set forth:

“The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies shall cooperate in matters touching upon the activities of both, and especially in regard to the endeavours of relief organizations in the event of national or international calamities”⁴.

During the war, the JRC turned into one of the main humanitarian instruments in Europe in the field of relief of the civil population due to the instruments that the founding members had provided. On one hand, the League maintained close contact with those National Societies that could offer financial donations and relief in the form of foodstuffs and materials. On the other hand, the ICRC was benefiting from universally-recognized prestige, being able to act in most of the belligerent countries with full authorization from the corresponding authorities, in addition to having delegations in different countries which were fundraising and intervening on the field.

Even though their beginnings were modest due to the lack of funds, between 1941 and 1946, the JRC bought, sent, and distributed in Europe 165,256,256 tonnes of goods, totalling 314,251,522 Swiss francs. The following figure shows the annual volume of shipments – relatively small in 1941 (2,539,801 tonnes); in 1944 (8,201,803 tonnes); and 1945 (15,266,058 tonnes) – compared to the corresponding quantity in 1942 (28,035,470 tonnes); in 1943 (39,474,878 tonnes); and in 1946 (71,738,246 tonnes):

4 *Rapport interne sur l'activité de la Commission Mixte de Secours de la Croix-Rouge Internationale au cours de l'année 1941 et de la période janvier-avril 1942*, 7 Mai, 1942, pp. 3. O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR (Archives du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge). See also Durand (1983, p. 188).

Figure 1 – Humanitarian relief dispatched by the JRC in Europe (1941-1946)

Source: Elaboration by the author from Commission Mixte de Secours (1948).

During the period of 1941-1946, the humanitarian map of the association changed in accordance with the development of the war, the licenses and transport possibilities of the relief aid, the received donations, and the selection of the most pressing needs. A total of sixteen countries benefitted from the material, intellectual, medical and moral relief provided by the JRC. From 1941 to 1944, Western Europe received the majority of the goods shipped by the JRC, particularly, Belgium, France, and The Netherlands; in the North, Norway and Finland; in the East, Poland and, occasionally, the Baltic countries; and in the South, Greece and Yugoslavia, that is to say, the majority of those countries occupied by Axis forces.

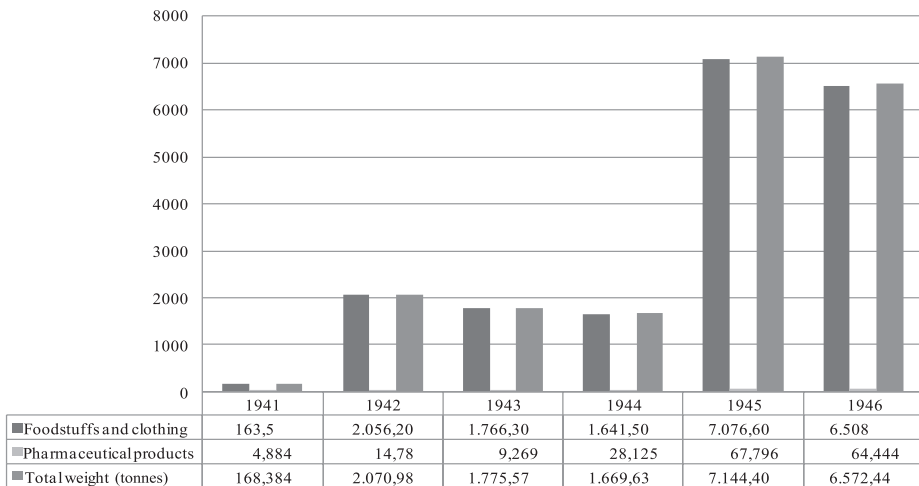
After the allied landing in Europe and the liberation of Rome and Athens, the table of relief distribution suffered slight modifications. For some months, humanitarian efforts focused on Holland, and the first shipments to Italy were made. France, Norway, and Poland remained the main beneficiaries of aid, whilst shipment to Greece, Yugoslavia, and Finland declined slightly. It was in 1945 when a fundamental change in the humanitarian policy occurred. In 1945, efforts became focused on middle and Eastern Europe, in countries like Romania, Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Yugoslavia, Germany, and Austria, all greatly weakened by the war. Despite this, until its dissolution in 1946, the JRC continued to send merchandises to western countries, thanks to the willingness of donors (Commission Mixte de Secours, 1948, pp. 127-129).

Humanitarian Aid of the JRC in France

In the light of the above mentioned, it can be observed that the humanitarian aid sent to France was a constant factor in JRC policy, reliably demonstrated by the

donations of the National Societies of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross Societies, governments, charitable organizations and various associations, foundations, and businessman and private citizens. The extensive documentation of the JRC preserved by ICRC, and the reports of the JRC and ICRC during the Second World War, allow us to reconstruct and quantify the humanitarian aid sent to France during that period and to find out about the organizations that made all this possible. From this data, it is clear that, between 1941 and 1946, France received a total of 19,471,398 tonnes of goods, worth 37,775,369 25 Swiss francs, almost 15% of the total aid distributed by the JRC throughout Europe (Commission Mixte de Secours, 1948 p. 340).

Figure 2 – Humanitarian relief dispatched by the JRC to France (1941-1946)



Source: Elaboration by the author from Commission Mixte de Secours (1948).

As can be seen from figure 2, the relief that was sent consisted of food, garments, textiles, medicaments and other pharmaceuticals. It included, too, building materials and tools, apart from spectacles, toys, dental prostheses and orthopaedic appliances, the latter, fruit of Swiss collections. The destinations of the humanitarian aid can be classified in three categories: to the French Red Cross (FRC), to the camps in the South of France, and to the aid organizations exercising their activities in certain towns or in a certain territory. In accordance with the founding principles of the JRC, the aid was allocated to groups of civilians. In the first place, to children, as is stipulated in *La contribution de la Commission Mixte de Secours à l'action d'entraide en faveur de l'enfance, des hébergés civils et des civils nécessiteux de France 1941-1944*, "children are always the most exposed group in a civilian population affected by

famine”⁵. To these can be added pregnant and breast-feeding women, the sick and the homeless and civilian internees⁶.

Based on the economic situation created by the blockade in Europe, by the decrease of resources because of the war, by the diminishing of farming production, by the great number of French prisoners of war held in Germany, by the rationing, by the holdings of the army of occupation, and by the severe food situation France was going through, the humanitarian aid started to flow in May, 1940. Another fundamental factor was the exodus of thousands and thousands of inhabitants from Holland, Belgium, and France, who, in their escape from German troops, tried to reach Southern France. Immediately, their situation drew the attention of ICRC and that of the League, who on May 23, 1940, made the following appeal to the National Societies of the Red Cross in neutral and non-belligerent countries:

“Some three million French, two million Belgian, seventy thousand Luxemburg and fifty thousand Dutch refugees or evacuees are in a serious state of destitution in France. The French Red Cross appeals to sister Societies for relief of people in distress. Needs are new clothes, shoes, layettes, bedding, kitchen utensils, minor surgical instruments, dressings, non-perishable foods, collapsible huts, textiles for workshops. Please send gifts in cash or kind to the Central Committee French Red Cross Paris and through the Véron transport agent for all ports.” (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1948b, p. 416).

Despite the fact that the JRC had not been formally established, during 1940 an appropriate quantity of humanitarian aid was sent to France, fruit of the received donations that followed the call previously made. The relief was as follows: 20 tonnes of condensed milk provided by ICRC; 33 tonnes of food and clothing from the Swiss Red Cross (SRC); 70 tonnes of food and clothing offered by Swiss donors; 45 tonnes of flour, a Yugoslavian Red Cross donation; 283 tonnes of condensed and powdered milk, an SRC’s donation; and 676 tonnes of food and 34 tonnes of clothing from diverse suppliers. All this aid was given to Belgian, Dutch, and French refugees who were seeking shelter in Southern France⁷. In this way, between July and August 1940, the JRC delivered 3,000 cartons of condensed milk, 12,000 kg of powdered milk and 5,000 packages of clothes and food, an ICRC’s donation. Added to this were 300 kg of medicaments, surgical instruments, and healing material, apart from an economical donation worth 265,000 Swiss francs, to the camps at Gurs, Vernet, and Argelès-sur-Mer that were inspected by a delegate of ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1948, p. 527).

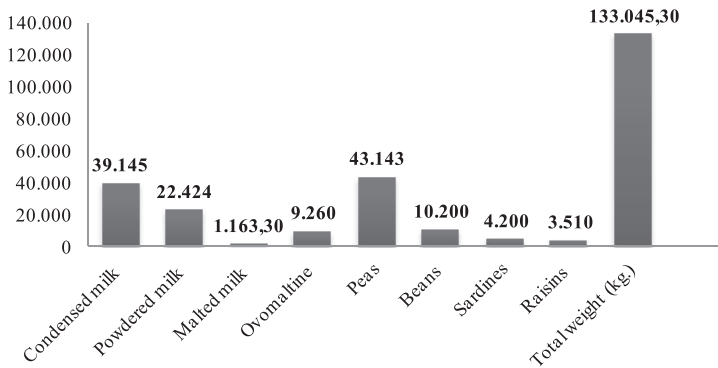
5 *La contribution de la Commission Mixte de Secours à l’action d’entraide en faveur de l’enfance, des hébergés civils et des civils nécessiteux de France 1941-1944*, pp. 3. O CMS F-13. Genève: ACICR.

6 *Commission Mixte de Secours de la Croix-Rouge Internationale. Viores et Vêtements: Envois en France 1941-1942-1943*, pp. 2. O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR

7 *Correspondance générale concernant les activités de la CMS en 1940*. O CMS B-034. Genève: ACICR.

Although at the beginning this aid was very modest, in the upcoming years the volume assigned to France increased considerably, reaching its peak in 1945. Between 1941 and 1944, the JRC dispatched an approximate total of 3,673,621 kg of food, of which 133,045.30 kg in 1941, among dairy products, vegetables, sardines, and raisins.

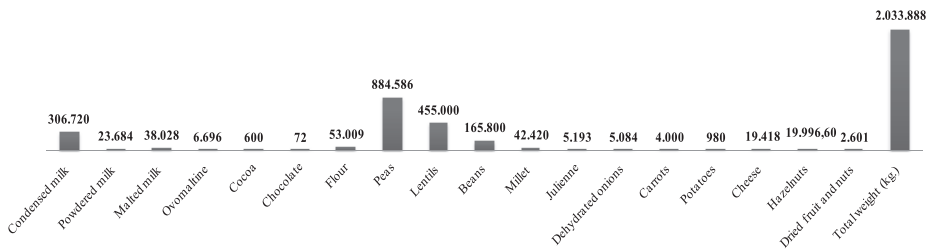
Figure 3 – Relief supplies dispatched by the JRC to France (1941)



Source: Elaboration by the author from *Vivres et vêtements: Envois en France 1941-1942-1943*, O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR.

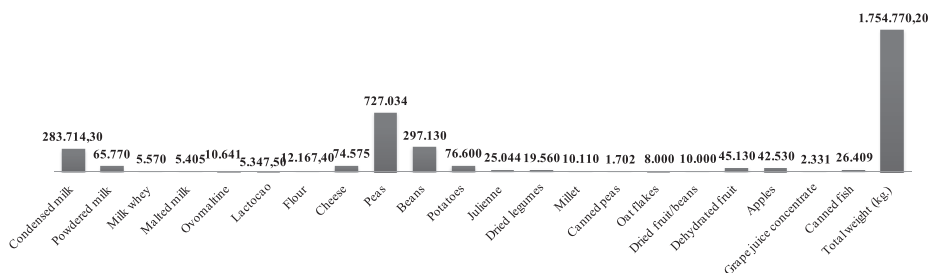
Compared to the previous year, the aid dispatched in 1942 was 15 times greater and varied, with a total of 2,033,888 kg, of which must be highlighted the large quantity of milk, peas, beans, and lentils.

Figure 4 – Relief supplies dispatched by the JRC to France (1942)



Source: Elaboration by the author from *Vivres et vêtements: Envois en France 1941-1942-1943*, O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR.

In the upcoming years, this aid was constant, up to 1,754,770.20 kg in 1943 and 1,582,408.50 kg in 1944, prevailing once more milk and vegetables, in addition to varied quantities of sardines and canned milk.

Figure 5 – Relief supplies dispatched by the JRC to France (1943)

Source: Elaboration by the author from *Vivres et vêtements. Envois en France 1941-1942-1943*, O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR.

According to the previous figures and the following table, the quantity of condensed milk that was received and delivered was one of the greatest, together with other foodstuffs, like peas, in spite of the fact that, of course, the volume of the freight depended on its availability in the market, purchasing opportunities, transport and transit through Europe.

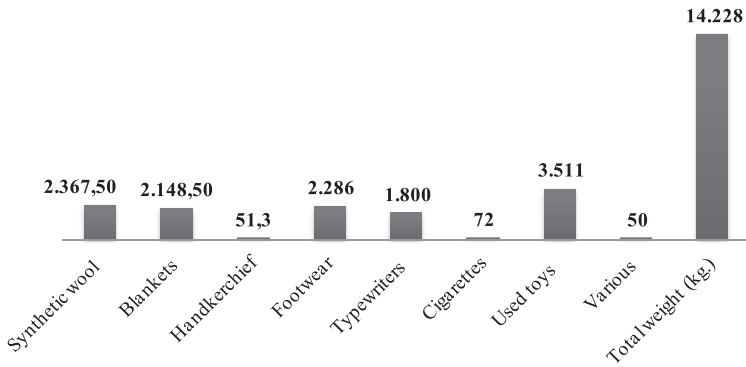
Table 1 – Relief supplies dispatched by the JRC to France (1944)

Condensed milk	704,786.70	Julienne	68,275
Powdered milk	30,840	Oranges	10,000
Biomalt	16,415	Apples	107,320
Ovomaltine	16,000	Dried fruit and nuts	16,020
Hacosan	15,923.40	Dried legumes	3,599
Milk whey	2,300	Flour	75,275
Lactocao	1,819.50	Tomato paste	1,364
Sugar	60,610	Bouillon	10,100
Pasta	9,060	Cénovis	131
Cheese	27,303	Bread	1,500
Potatoes	194,442	Marmalade	650
Dehydrated potatoes	5,500	Canned meats	1,406.40
Millet	25,513	Sausages	495
Lentils	5,000	Sardines	9,800
Peas	20,481	Canned peas	210
Steamed beans	350	Total weight (kg.)	1,582,408.50
Beans	139,920		

Source: Elaboration by the author from *Envois effectués par la Commission Mixte de Secours de la Croix-Rouge Internationale en France. 1944*, O CMS D-147. Genève: ACICR.

Together with foodstuffs, other aids equally important to those civilians in greatest need and most affected by the war were the textiles:

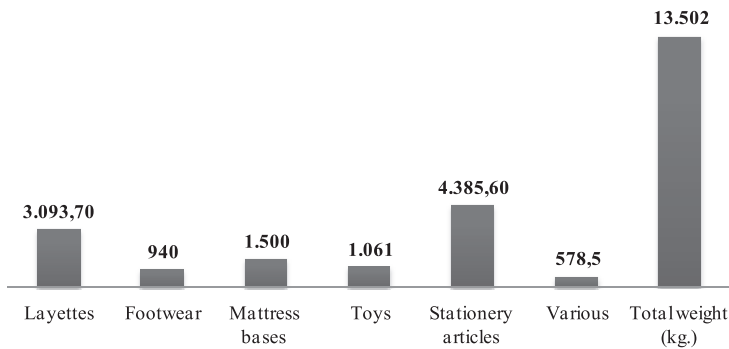
Figure 6 – Textiles, clothing, and various articles dispatched by the JRC to France (1942)



Source: Elaboration by the author from *Vivres et vêtements. Envois en France 1941-1942-1943*, O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR.

From 1942 to 1944, the JRC made a number of shipments to relieve the shortage of clothing, footwear, blankets, and other supplies like layettes, mattress bases, household goods, typewriters, toys, and cigarettes.

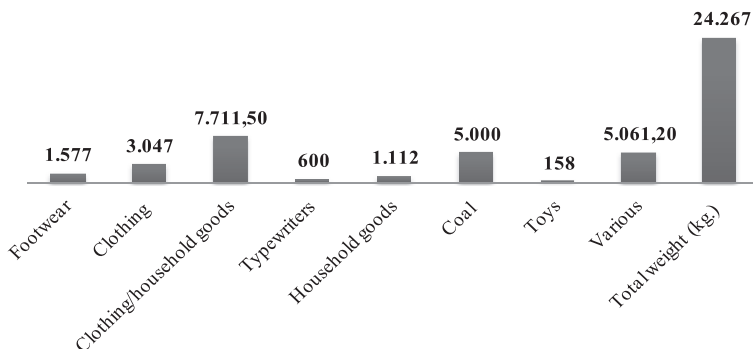
Figure 7 – Textiles, clothing, and various articles dispatched by the JRC to France (1943)



Source: Elaboration by the author from *Vivres et vêtements. Envois en France 1941-1942-1943*, O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR.

The figures 6 and 7, as well as the one below, show that the total amount that was sent between 1942 and 1944 increased to 51,997 tonnes.

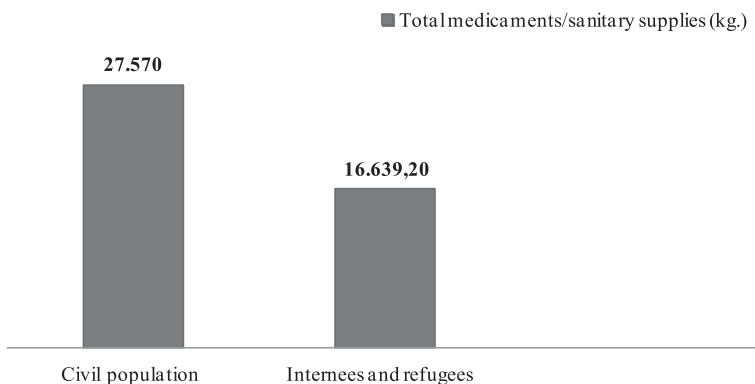
Figure 8 – Clothing and various articles dispatched by the JRC to France (1944)



Source: Elaboration by the author from *Envois effectués par la Commission Mixte de Secours de la Croix-Rouge Internationale en France. 1944*, O CMS D-147. Genève: ACICR.

Besides the above-mentioned shipments, there were the medicaments and sanitary supplies provided to the French civilian population, internees, and refugees in the concentration camps of France by the JRC, during the war period, a total of 44,209.2 kg:

Figure 9 – Medicines and sanitary supplies provided by the JRC to France (1941-1944)



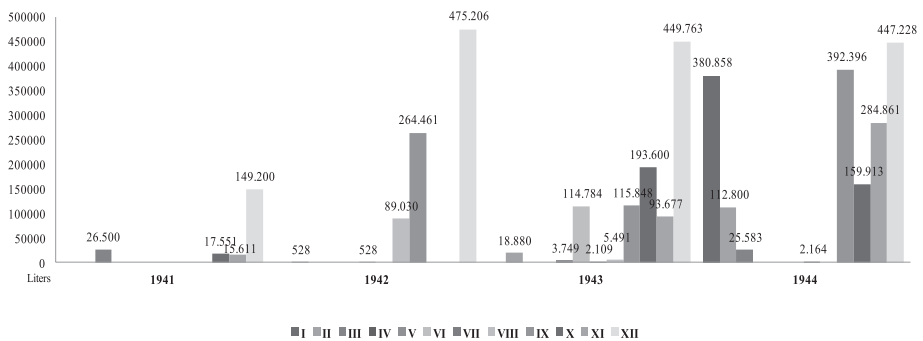
Source: Elaboration by the author from *Medicaments. Envois en France 1941-1942-1943-1944*, O CMS B-033. Genève: ACICR.

Through these figures and tables, it has been possible to quantify and to detail the humanitarian aid provided by the JRC thanks to the collaborations and donations of a number of organizations and associations of various types. From 1941 to 1946,

Colis Suisse (Zurich), the Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants (Geneva), First Church of Christ, Scientist (Geneva), American Friends Service Committee, Civil Service International, Conseil Oecuménique des Églises, Caritas, Secours Quaker, among many others (Commission Mixte de Secours, 1948, pp. 335-336), collaborated and donated funds. Nonetheless, the detailed analysis of shipments and of the contributions of the donors shows a considerable increase since 1942, thanks to the goods purchased in Switzerland by the Swiss Red Cross-Children's Aid (Croix-Rouge Suisse-Secours aux Enfants). From 1942 to 1944, the JRC was in charge of obtaining export licenses and arranging dispatches to different European countries on behalf of the Swiss Red Cross-Children's Aid. Accordingly, the SRC contribution to provide supplies to Europe in that period was of 2,071 tonnes of goods. By way of example, in 1943, the main beneficiary of the SRC aid was France, with goods valued at more than one million Swiss francs addressed to the delegations and deposits of the SRC in the French territory for distribution to maternity hospitals, nurseries, colleges and school canteens (*Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge*, 1942, pp. 348-355; 1942a, pp. 516-521).

It is well-known that the main beneficiaries of the SRC's aid were children, and it is for this reason that a large amount of the funds had been used to buy milk and other dairy products. The following figure shows the quantity of milk the JRC dispatched, which also includes the SRC's shipment:

Figure 10 – Condensed milk and powdered milk dispatched monthly by the JRC (1941-1944)



Source: Elaboration by the author from O CMS D-147. Genève: ACICR.

Another example of solidarity with the French children's situation was that of the Etchéa Foundation, a group of French residents of Egypt, which, between 1943 and 1945, donated a large quantity of money to the JRC. Thanks to the funds deposited, the JRC bought and distributed more than 100 tonnes of condensed milk, with or

without sugar, to babies, children, pregnant and lactating women from the Mediterranean coast, particularly to those affected by the war and who did not benefit from such aid. Thus, since October 1943 until early 1945, more than 80,000 children from Marseille and the Departments of Alpes-Maritimes and of Var were aided by the JRC in collaboration with the French Red Cross⁸.

In 1944, the humanitarian map spread with the foundation of Don Suisse pour les victimes de la guerre which bound the humanitarian aid to seventeen European countries. Like the SRC, from 1944 to 1946 the Don Suisse established a very close relationship with the JRC. This latter was the responsible of obtaining information concerning the zones most affected by war, and the necessities of the population, organizing the shipments and transport on the behalf of Don Suisse. As a result, through previous agreements, the JRC dispatched around 60,000 tonnes of priority aid (food, clothing, medicaments, barracks, and furnishings), and indirect aid (tools, surgical instruments, base hospitals, equipment for reconstruction, wood, etc.). Don Suisse's contribution to the struggle of the French population against hunger, hardships, and diseases increased to 10,000 tonnes of freight, France being the third most relieved country, after Germany and Austria (Commission Mixte de Secours, 1948, pp. 192-195).

Conclusion

The JRC was an instrument not only for the League and the ICRC to alleviate the pressing needs of the most disadvantaged populations. Since its foundation, the JRC has become a potent intermediary between donors of various kinds and the recipients of the humanitarian aid. The partnership created in 1941 was, clearly, an effective tool for the humanitarian organizations to locate, purchase, and transport goods throughout Europe. The strength of its founders, in particular of the ICRC, allowed it to overcome, on many occasions, the blockade and counter-blockade, obtaining the corresponding transit and distribution licenses, especially of Nazi Germany, considering that until 1944 the occupied countries represented the epicentre of the humanitarian aid.

In the role of an auxiliary body and compared to the Relief Division's supplies traffic to the POWs and civilian internees of ICRC, the JRC's contribution was very modest. In fact, the civilians received only a 10.6% of the total weight of the supplies destined to the prisoners of war and civilian internees. Although modest, the relief operations made through the JRC itself contributed to saving the lives and helped survive thousands and thousands of children and women who sometimes

8 *Rapport sur la distribution de lait aux enfants du Sud de la France grâce au don de la Fondation Etchéa.* O CMS D-143. Genève: ACICR; *Les dons de la Fondation Etchéa au profit de l'enfance française.* O CMS D-146. Genève: ACICR.

were found in extreme situations as a consequence of the war. Without the help and collaboration of the humanitarian organizations, many of them had become victims of famine and epidemics. In this sense, the JRC was the foremost organization in its sole purpose of relieving civilians, particularly children and women, during a large-scale conflict.

The experience acquired in the field, as well as the lessons learned in the past for that present by the players on the humanitarian stage, made favourable the future of humanitarian aid and the strengthening of international humanitarian law. As with the Great War, the Second World War demonstrated once more that civilians “were certainly ‘in the war’ and exposed to the same dangers as the combatants, sometimes worse” (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012, p. 30). It also revealed the existing loopholes in the field of humanitarian law, as stipulated in the ICRC report on its activity during the Second World War:

“The Geneva Convention gives guarantees to the wounded and sick of the armed forces – just as to their adversaries – that their lives will be protected and that they will have the right to proper care; the Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war watches over the physical and moral situation of those in captivity. The terms of these instruments declare the absolute inviolability of an enemy who is no longer fit for combat and give recognition to the dignity of the human personality. Protection of the civil population must rest on these same principles. The same applies to the endeavours made by the Red Cross to bring relief supplies of all kinds – foodstuffs, clothing and indispensable medicaments – to women, children and old people in occupied territories. Safeguarding of children is the last line which the Red Cross must defend, if war is not to mean utter destruction of mankind.” (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1948a, pp. 689-690).

Four years after the dissolution of the JRC, the fourth Geneva Convention, which related to the Protection of Civilian Populations in time of war, entered into force. It was something completely new and an extension of the existing regulations for the protection of civilian populations, victims of war, a field which so far had not been touched.

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