

The various activities
of the International Tracing Service

The activities of the International Tracing Service are determined by the nature of the incoming inquiries. The number of these inquiries was always subject to fluctuations that were to a great extent to be expected, or for which an explanation could at least be found. However, if the numbers of inquiries received in each of the last years are compared, it can be observed that the reason for the fluctuations cannot be determined. The number of inquiries, subdivided according to categories or to countries of origin, in some cases vary continually, however in others remain constant.

The extraordinarily large numbers reached in 1973 and 1974 and partly in 1972 were due to the processing of the nominal lists of persons of Jewish faith, who at the beginning of the persecution were living on the territory of the present Federal Republic of Germany and in Berlin. The checking of these nominal lists is expected to be concluded towards the end of 1976 so that inquiries of this category (Memorial Books in remembrance of the victims of deportation) will not be so numerous from 1977 on.

At the time the International Tracing Service was established, the main task was to institute investigations for missing persons, that means to reunite families. Today these tracing inquiries represent 4% of all inquiries. During quite a long space of time, that is from 1954 to 1970, the requests for the issuing of certificates for purposes of indemnification comprised the largest number of requests. For some years, as could be foreseen, the number of these inquiries has steadily decreased for the reason that the deadline for indemnification has expired.

The number of inquiries according to categories is expressed by the following per cents:

- Requests for Certificates of Incarceration : 12%
- " " Certificates of Residence : 3%
- " " Death Certificates : 2%
- " " Medical Records and Medical Reports : 2%

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At the same time, the number of inquiries received in 1973 and 1974 and partly in 1975 were due to the processing of the national lists of persons of Jewish origin, who at the beginning of the persecution were living on the territory of the present Federal Republic of Germany and in Berlin. The check-

ing of these national lists is expected to be concluded towards the end of 1975. The number of inquiries of this category (Memorial Books in remembrance of the victims of deportation) will not be so numerous from 1977 on.

Since the time the International Tracing Service was established, the main task has been to institute investigations for missing persons, that means to request information. Today these tracing inquiries represent 4% of all inquiries. In a long space of time, that is from 1954 to 1970, the requests for tracing of certificates for purposes of indemnification comprised the largest number of requests. For some years, as could be foreseen, the number of these inquiries has steadily decreased for the reason that the dead-

line indemnification has expired. The number of inquiries according to categories is expressed by the following per cent:

Requests for Certificates of Incorporation	: 12%
" " Certificates of Residence	: 3%
" " Death Certificates	: 2%
" " Medical Records and Medical Reports	: 2%

- Requests for Photocopies	:	1%
- Inquiries " Documentary Evidence of Employment in connection with claims lodged for pensions	:	3%
- " " Memorial Books for the victims of deportation	:	61%
- " " from Archives and for Publications	:	2%
- " " Public Prosecutors	:	8%
- " " individuals	:	4%
- Requests of informative, historical and statistical nature	:	0,4%
- Miscellaneous	:	1%

The number of incoming cases received and processed coming from 40 countries all over the world, totalled 210.465 in 1974 (1973 : 221.860).

Within a period of 30 years, from 1945 to 1974, the number of incoming inquiries totals up to 3.864.863, whereas the outgoing replies reached a total of 5.381.414.

The requests from the Federal Republic of Germany are numerous (183.965). This is due to the checking of lists for the Memorial Book of Jewish victims. Moreover, a certain percentage of German inquiries, as for example requests for the issuing of death certificates and requests for information pertaining to pension matters, are submitted to the International Tracing Service from authorities and offices for persons living abroad. Included in this number are reports sent in reply to inquiries from the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, Moscow, which were forwarded to the International Tracing Service by the German Red Cross Tracing Services, Hamburg and Munich.

The second largest number of requests comes from Poland (15.345). Here concerned are inquirers who are predominately older and who request that certificates of incarceration or documentary evidence of employment be established for the purpose of obtaining pensions.

The inquiries coming from Switzerland, which is in third place, are almost exclusively from the Central Tracing Service of the International

12	Requests for photographs
32	Documents
17	Evidence of employment in connection with claims lodged for pensions
25	Memorial books for the victims of deportation
25	from Archives and for publications
82	Public Prosecutors
42	Individuals
0.12	State of administrative, historical and statistical nature
12	Information

The number of incoming cases received and processed during the period 1945 to 1974, totaled 210,485 in 1974 (1973 : 231,580).

Within a period of 30 years, from 1945 to 1974, the number of incoming cases total up to 2,584,852, whereas the outgoing replies reached a total of 2,321,414.

The requests from the Federal Republic of Germany are numerous. This is due to the checking of lists for the Memorial Book of victims. Moreover, a certain percentage of German inquiries, as for the issuing of death certificates and requests for information pertaining to pension matters, are submitted to the International Service from authorities and offices for persons living abroad. In this matter, reports sent in reply to inquiries from the Air Force of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, Moscow, which were forwarded to the International Tracing Service by the German Red Cross Tracing Service, Hamburg and Munich.

The second largest number of requests comes from Poland (15,342). Here concerned are inquiries who are predominantly older and who request that certificates of incarceration or documentary evidence of employment be established for the purpose of obtaining pensions.

The inquiries coming from Switzerland, which is in third place, are almost exclusively from the Central Tracing Service of the International

Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, as well as from the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the USSR which have been forwarded to the International Tracing Service by the Central Tracing Service.

The relatively large number of inquiries from the USA (2.199) are sent mainly by deportees, who emigrated there directly after the war.

For the other countries the total numbers of inquiries are as follows: Czechoslovakia (1.417), Yugoslavia (851), Israel (796), Italy (660), Austria (581), Netherlands (479), France (428), Great Britain (366) etc.

Besides its usual tasks, the International Tracing Service has in the course of the last years been involved regularly in special activities to which it had to devote much attention. One such activity was the problem of pseudo-medical experiments carried out in the concentration camps. The study of these cases was difficult and a very exact examination of documentary material had to be undertaken in order to clarify questions arising in numerous inquiries which were submitted to the International Tracing Service. Because of its special character this problem deserves that an entire chapter be devoted to it.

Administratively speaking, it should be mentioned that the International Tracing Service employs a total of 254 persons. The number of foreign employees totals 43; 17 nationalities are represented.

Pseudo-medical Experiments in the Concentration Camps

For many years the International Tracing Service was confronted with this afflicting problem, about which it practically knew nothing. Numerous inquiries, especially from Poland, arrived at its office concerning pseudo-medical experiments. The International Tracing Service has not confined itself to answering the questions raised. It has endeavoured to analyse the documents acquired pertaining thereto in order to be able to give a good general view of the type and scope of pseudo-medical experiments which were carried out in eight concentration camps (Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, Natzweiler and Schirmeck-Vorbruck, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen).

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The relatively large number of inquiries from the USA (2,192) are sent mainly by displaced persons who originated there directly after the war.

For the other countries the total numbers of inquiries are as follows: Czechoslovakia (2,017), Yugoslavia (661), Spain (300), Italy (589), Austria (475), France (428), Great Britain (366) etc.

In order to meet its main tasks, the International Tracing Service has in the last few years been involved regularly in special activities to which it has devoted much attention. One such activity was the problem of pseudo-

documents carried out in the concentration camps. The study of these documents was difficult and a very exact examination of documentary material had to be undertaken in order to clarify questions arising in numerous cases which were submitted to the International Tracing Service. Because of the special character this problem deserves that an entire chapter be devoted to it.

Particularly speaking, it should be mentioned that the International Tracing Service employs a total of 154 persons. The number of foreign employees totals 83; 17 nationalities are represented.

Pseudo-medical Experiments
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Thorough investigations were conducted in order to be able to ascertain the nature of the experiments carried out. Fourteen experiments, which are the subject of a study of 493 pages, were conducted only in the area of Concentration Camp Auschwitz. For completion of the documents the International Tracing Service was engaged in putting together the scattered records from different Archives in and outside of Germany.

Numerous pertinent works and documents originating from the period of the post-war trials were systematically collected and studied. On the other hand, it was possible in certain cases to question former prisoner physicians who could give their expert opinion and exact information concerning various questions.

Individual studies were made which revealed numerous particulars concerning the experiments, such as:

- the place of experiment
- the type of experiment
- the office that gave the order
- carried out by
- the date of experiment
- the number of persons who were victims of these experiments
- report on the carrying out of the experiment
- the victims and sequels of the experiment
- the evidence from the available CC-prisoners-documents
 - a) detention in concentration camps
 - b) presence in the experimental station
 - c) medical examinations of prisoners
 - d) names of victims
- General findings of the International Tracing Service and list of sources

This work is impeded by two factors: in the first place, the records of such experiments are only rarely preserved, and secondly the entries of these experiments were frequently made either with help of a numbers-code or in the form of abbreviations, the meaning of which could only be discovered by the International Tracing Service after tedious investigations.

Based on this, far more reports could now be made to inquiries which earlier had to be answered negatively. Information could be supplied, and numer-

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Furthermore, in most cases proof that an experiment had been conducted on a prisoner can only be furnished if the numbers of the block and room in which it took place are indicated.

The result of these particular studies will appear in the BOOK OF REFERENCE CONCERNING PLACES OF DETENTION.

This work was absolutely necessary, both to submit satisfactory replies to inquiries concerning pseudo-medical experiments, and to document as correctly as possible this particular chapter in the history of Nazi persecution.

As may be easily understood the conclusions of these studies, which are of scientific nature, can only be provisional. The greatest attention will be paid to each piece of new information which could change these conclusions and it shall be most carefully attended to that, if necessary, it appears in the Book of Reference.

It should be specified that the documents concerning cases of illness are not only useful in order to ascertain and to confirm the rights of the victims of pseudo-medical experiments, but also to produce the necessary evidence for obtaining pensions.

Physicians also discover useful information therein for ascertaining illnesses of former prisoners, in order to prescribe suitable medical treatment for them.

Acquisition of New Documents

The acquisition of new documents has always been one of the main activities of the International Tracing Service whose documentation, although very voluminous, shows many gaps. In the course of the last decades, the International Tracing Service has acquired a considerable number of documents of various types and origin.

The efforts and the visits made by the International Tracing Service in the last years to different authorities and institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany and abroad are directly related to the finding of new documentary material.

The acquired documentary material has made it possible to clarify the fate of numerous missing persons. Proof of deaths is often concerned here. Based on this, far more reports could now be made to inquiries which earlier had to be answered negatively, information could be supplied, and numer-

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ous certificates of incarceration or excerpts from documents could be established.

The acquisition of some documents is especially interesting. So it is worth mentioning for example that the records acquired from The State Museum Lublin-Majdanek help to supplement the very limited documentary material of this extermination camp.

The death books (e.g. from Dachau and Flossenbürg) which have been made available to the International Tracing Service by the registry offices for microfilming are of particular interest because they contain more exact information than that given in the documents of the concentration camps, and facilitate the identification of prisoners.

The information brought by the nominal lists of former workers is highly interesting for the purpose of obtaining pensions.

Further documents of general and historical nature mainly pertaining to questions about camps and also to measures of persecution in the occupied territories were also put at disposal (e.g. by the "Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen" in Ludwigsburg). This documentation is of basic significance for the final REGISTER OF PLACES OF DETENTION and for the BOOK OF REFERENCE CONCERNING PLACES OF DETENTION.

In the course of 1974, the acquisition of new documents reached a never before seen volume since the beginning of the activities of the International Tracing Service. Not only the volume should be mentioned, but also the importance of this new documentary material should be stressed, as it contains 285.282 names. In 1973 a total of 232.250 names of persons appeared in the newly acquired documents, that is more than one half million in 2 years.

Taking into consideration the volume of the documentary material acquired in 1974, it can be presumed that today there are still many unexamined documents.

The International Tracing Service can only express its hope that the existence of any such document which could be made available or photocopied be called to its attention.

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In order to understand the volume of this entire documentation, it suffices to know, that the linear measuring carried out at the end of 1971 amounted to 16.970 metres.

The New Geneva Conventions

Directly after World War II, the International Committee of the Red Cross undertook steps to proceed not only with the revision of the Geneva Conventions of 1929 but also and above all with the conclusion of a Convention for the civilian population. Furthermore, the consequences of the persecution, which is one of the greatest tragedies of all times, made the creation of such a Convention necessary.

The preparatory work carried out with the co-operation of governmental experts lasted four years. At the end of a diplomatic conference of 4 1/2 months, the authorized representatives of approximately 60 countries signed, on 12th August 1949, this fundamental charter for the well-being of humanity called the "GENEVA CONVENTIONS". These four Conventions ensure a better protection of victims of military conflicts: the first concerns the wounded and sick in the armed forces; the second, the victims of war at sea; the third, the prisoners of war; and the fourth, entirely new, the civilian persons.

The CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN PERSONS IN TIME OF WAR stipulates that each civilian, deprived of his freedom for any reason whatsoever, is entitled to treatment equal to that of the prisoners of war, and that the camps for civilian persons must remain open for delegates of the Protecting Power and of the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is high time, that persons not directly taking part in hostilities be respected, protected and humanely treated.

The GENEVA CONVENTIONS incarnate the very ideal of the Red Cross. They are a protest of the spirit against unbridled violence and they make a pressing appeal to the world for peace. Should nations unfortunately once more take up arms, the Conventions will undoubtedly be the last rampart of civilization.

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Conclusion

Every person who visits the International Tracing Service will admit that it is an institution unique of its kind. The work carried out there - which is in fact the daily gas of the indexes of death - is exceedingly meritorious.

The steady acquisition of new records has led to the largest collection of documentary material of the persecution era existing in the world. It is exactly the documentation center of the concentration camps which the International Tracing Service should be called.

For this reason the value and the necessity of these archives, which should show not only the tragedy but also the history of the deportation, should be maintained.

It is finally not a compelling humanitarian task regarding all those who are victims in the world of concentration camps to perpetuate the remem-

Albert de Goetz
Director of the ITS