

Documentary Evidence

The USFET Order and its implementation by the German authorities resulted in the preparation and forwarding to the U.S. Zone Bureau of two categories (II and III) of information listed under eleven forms. These forms had to be filled by the Germans in several copies, divided by nationalities. Generally speaking the forms under Category II listed Non-Germans who had lived in the Zone or still lived there, had died, married or had been born in the Zone during the war years, while Category III consisted of inventories of personal effects, medical records, judicial records, politicals, social security, employment records etc... Category I consisted of lists of documents no longer available to German authorities.

Land Bavaria officials at first misinterpreted the instructions and in August 1946 the whole operation had to begin anew. Even then the results were poor until December 1946, when it was decided that German checkers, familiar with the work, should be attached to each Land-kreis to control the returns of the local officials under the guidance of Field Personnel paid by the U.S. Zone Bureau.

Land Württemberg-Baden proceeded more rapidly by using a very simple method. The officials merely bundled up all the documents of hospitals, prisons, employment offices etc. and sent them to the Bureau which soon had some 40 or 50 tons to classify.

Land Hesse did not forward originals but proceeded to make extracts of these. There also the Order was misinterpreted and the work had eventually to be repeated.

As late as January 30, 1947 the PW and DP Division of OMGUS, realizing that the USFET Directive was not properly complied with, issued instructions to the offices of Military Government in the US Zone in which it was repeated that the US Zonal Tracing Bureau "is to be assisted in its efforts to search out individuals" and that "In the interest of uniformity it is desired that the Minister Presidents submit to this office through the Landerrat, not later than February 15, 1947 a plan for the accomplishment of the objectives contained in subject directive".

Undoubtedly

ER. MOC. 887

Background

The USPT Order and its implementation by the German authorities resulted in the organization and forwarding to the U.S. Zone Bureau of two categories (I and II) of information listed under eleven forms. These forms had to be filled by the Germans in several copies, divided by nationality. Generally speaking the forms under Category II listed Non-Germans who had lived in the Zone or still lived there, had died, married or had been born in the Zone during the war years, while Category III concerned information of personal effects, medical records, judicial records, political, social security, employment records etc. Category I consisted of lists of documents no longer available to German authorities.

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As late as January 30, 1947 the IV and IV Division of COMUS, realizing that the USPT Directive was not properly complied with, issued instructions to the offices of Military Government in the US Zone in which it was repeated that the US Social Trading Bureau "is to be assisted in its efforts to search out individuals" and that "in the interest of uniformity it is desired that the Military Government submit to this office through the Bureau, not later than February 15, 1947 a plan for the accomplishment of the objectives contained in subject Directive".

Unsubstantiated
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Undoubtedly a sincere effort was made by the higher German officials to correct the existing faults in the system of reporting and improvements were expected when a new bomb shell disrupted the ponderous operation.

In June 1947, after a meeting held in Frankfurt between representatives of OMGUS, EUCOM, the U.S. Zone Bureau and the German Officials, the Germans were told that UNRRA would cease to exist on July 1, and that IRO had not committed itself to continue Tracing Operations. They were also told to hold on to the information they gathered until further notice. As a result of this the Germans became thoroughly confused, many of the checkers were dismissed and the entire program was nearly wrecked.

The U.S. Zone Bureau and its Field Officers rushed the processing of the information already secured and catalogued all documents at hand in preparation for their return to the Germans.

After July 1, 1947, when it was known that PCIRO intended to maintain a Tracing Service, operations were resumed gradually and with some difficulty, new directives were issued by the Laender who, because they did not wish to repeat the errors of the past, this time listed by names all the sources of information, which had to report, as well as the documents they were to send to the Central collecting point in the Land.

The U.S. Zone Bureau listed then, preparatory to the checking of these returns, more than 150,000 sources and proceeded to check the information sent by each with that sent by related sources to insure its completeness and accuracy until it became practically impossible for the Germans to forget a name.

In this manner and thanks to the accurate checking and the constant reminders sent by the Bureau, the U.S. Zone Bureau and its successor, the U.S. Zone Division of ITS eventually processed and sent to ITS HQ., to the US Documents Center and to National Tracing Bureaux more than 17 million individual information.

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Undoubtedly a similar effort was made by the higher German officials to correct the existing errors in the system of reporting and investigations were expected when a new book shall circulate the program operation.

In June 1947, after a meeting held in Washington between representatives of GERS, IUSCH, the U.S. Zone Bureau and the German officials, the Germans were told that IUSCH would cease to exist on July 1, and that IUSCH had not completed itself to continue Traveling Operations. They were also told to hold on to the information they gathered until further notice. As a result of this the German program thoroughly confused, many of the checkers were assigned and the entire program was nearly wrecked.

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required, because a number of original documents sent in 1946 and 1947 were still in the hands of ITS, it was decided that all these originals should be returned to them and that, in exchange, they would deliver to ITS U.S. Zone one 3x5 card recording the name of each person concerned, together with an indication of the type and number of documents concerning this person, which were held by German offices.

This resulted in the receipt by ITS of more than 3 1/2 million cards in duplicate which could be inserted in the Master Index of ITS HQ or forwarded to the National Tracing Bureau concerned.

Concentration Camps Records

At the liberation of the Concentration Camp of Dachau on April 29, 1945 many of the files of the camp which were kept by prisoners employed by the registration office, were hidden and saved from destruction. The files of the prisoners of this famous camp were at the disposition of the War Crime Tribunal but the personal information they contained was made available to the ex-inmates, their Government, families or friends by the prisoners, who had saved the documents and which now, with the agreement of the occupation authorities called themselves "The International Information Office". Because the funds available to the I.I.O. were limited, a number of more or less legal transactions were entered into by it which soon brought it into disrepute, and in August 1946 the organization was ordered to transfer all its documents to the U.S. Zone Tracing Bureau. In this manner the Bureau came in possession of the first set of Concentration Camp records it was to gather and exploit. A part of the original documents of Concentration Camp Buchenwald was obtained from the U.S. Document Center in Wiesbaden and added to the collection. Documents from the camp of Flossenbürg and photocopies of original death lists from Mauthausen were obtained through the Documents Center 3rd Army and the War Crime Tribunal in Dachau.

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This resulted in the receipt by ICS of more than 375 million cards in duplicate which could be inserted in the Master Index of ICS HQ or forwarded to the National Trading Bureau concerned.

Concentration Camp Records

At the liberation of the Concentration Camp of Dachau on April 29, 1945 many of the files of the camp which were kept by prisoners employed by the registration office, were hidden and saved from destruction. The files of the prisoners of this famous camp were at the disposition of the War Crime Tribunal but the personal information they contained was made available to the ex-inmates, their Government, families or friends by the prisoners, who had saved the documents and which now, with the agreement of the cooperation authorities called themselves "The International Information Office". Because the funds available to the I.C.O. were limited, a number of cards or less legal transcriptions were entered into it which were brought in into Dachau, and in August 1946 the organization was ordered to transfer all its documents to the U.S. Zone Trading Bureau. In this manner the Bureau came in possession of the first set of Concentration Camp records it was to gather and exploit. A part of the original documents of Concentration Camp Buchenwald was obtained from the U.S. Document Center in Wiesbaden and added to the collection. Documents from the camp of Flossenbürg and photocopies of original death lists from Mauthausen were obtained through the Document Center 3rd Army and the War Crime Tribunal in Dachau.

At the end of 1947 a large shipment of original records of these same camps, consisting of 126 crates, was received

from the U.S. Document Center at Oberursel near Frankfurt and additional Mauthausen documents were found in Munich in December 1948. In this manner the U.S. Zone Bureau obtained gradually most of the documents necessary to answer the majority of the questions which could be posed concerning the incarceration and the ultimate fate of the prisoners of all camps which had been liberated by the US Army.

These documents, when added to those already on file with the Headquarters of ITS, constituted the largest and most complete collection of original CC records in Europe. It served not only to answer thousands of questions concerning the prisoners but was to be used eventually as a basis for the issuance of Certificates of Incarceration accepted in German Courts of Redress and led to the establishment of a special German Federal Recorder's Office in Arolsen.

Graves Recheck

This third program of the US Zone Bureau resulted from the search by Field Tracers for odds and ends of documentation and bits of information which could neither be found among the documentary evidence sent by the Germans nor the concentration camp records. This search often led to graves which had not been reported by the German authorities or whose occupants could not be identified. Liaison Officers attached to the Bureau as Field Tracers were finding graves of their nationals of which the local authorities professed to have no knowledge or which were explained by the fact that thousands of Concentration Camp inmates who died during their transfer from camp to camp towards the end of the war or during their return to their homes at liberation, were hastily buried in the fields or the woods by their friends or the local inhabitants, often without any ready means of identification.

As each German community communicated the list of foreign graves in its territory, the list was passed to the Field "Tracer" of the territory concerned who, almost invariably, reported the existence of additional graves or

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As each German community examined the list of foreign graves in its territory, the list was passed to the Field Tracer of the territory concerned who, almost invariably, reported the existence of additional graves or

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corrected the information given by the Germans.

In this manner each Land, each Kreis, each community was combed until all missing graves had been recorded with the result that thousands of additional graves were found and accurately located.

Personnel and Administration

The UNRRA U.S. Zone Bureau of Documents & Tracing was established in January 1946 at the request of the U.S. Element Allied Control Commission for Germany but its function and administrative policies were delineated only on April 30, 1946 by UNRRA US Zone Administrative Order Nr. 56.

The Bureau was responsible for

- a) The tracing of Allied nationals and persecutes of the Nazi regime.
- b) Was to engage in the search for legal documentary evidence of Allied nationals.

The Bureau Director was responsible only to the UNRRA Zone Director and the US Forces were to maintain a Liaison Officer whose duty it was to supervise all other attached Liaison Officers whatever their nationality.

The Bureau had three Divisions:

- Individual Tracing Service,
- Documentary Evidence,
- Allied Government Liaison.

There was also a Child Search Branch, a function of UNRRA HQs loosely attached to the Division of Documentary Evidence, and which was entrusted with the task of extracting for UNRRA HQs from the documentation received, anything pertaining to children.

The Field Operations of the Bureau were planned to conform with the established political subdivisions of the US Zone of occupation. Each Land had a Field Office, except Bavaria which had two, North Bavaria and South Bavaria. The four field offices called Branches were located in:

- Wiesbaden for Hesse,
- Stuttgart for Württemberg-Baden,
- Ansbach for Northern Bavaria,
- Munich for Southern Bavaria.

Branch Chiefs were responsible for all activities in their

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Evangelical and Administrative

The U.S. Army U.S. Zone Bureau of Evangelical & Training
was established in January 1946 at the request of the
U.S. President Allied Control Commission for Germany but
its location and administrative policies were delineated
only on April 20, 1946 by U.S. Army Zone Administrative
Order No. 25.

The Bureau was responsible for

- a) The tracing of Allied captives and prisoners
of the Nazi regime.
- b) Was to engage in the search for legal documentary
evidence of Allied captives.

The Bureau Director was responsible only to the USARMC
Zone Director and the US Forces were to maintain a Liaison
Officer whose duty it was to supervise all other attached
Liaison Officers whatever their nationality.

The Bureau had three Divisions:

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- Documentary Evidence
- Allied Government Liaison

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four Field Offices called Branches were located at:

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- Stuttgart for Württemberg-Baden,
- Aachen for Northern Bavaria,
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their territory, including those of the attached Allied Liaison Officers. Branches, in turn, were subdivided for working purposes in Land Divisions or Regierungsbezirke. An UNRRA employee or an attached Liaison Officer was responsible for each of these subdivisions.

This division and redivision of responsibility was not calculated to obtain the best possible results or to maintain the highest degree of discipline, particularly in view of the fact that so many of the men in charge of Subdivisions were foreign officers, some of whom gave only lip service to UNRRA and the Tracing Bureau, because they were primarily interested in the finding of their own nationals.

In March 1947 the U.S. Zone Bureau closed its branches in Munich, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden and Ansbach, leaving only processing units in Ansbach and Stuttgart. In May 1947 UNRRA Admin. Order Nr. 246 cancelled Order Nr. 56 previously mentioned, and merged the Child Search Division, a function of UNRRA Zone HQs with the Bureau of Documents and Tracing which then became the Zone HQs Tracing & Child Search Division.

At the same time it was decided that the functions of Child Search, which until then had also dealt with the care of the children found, would be limited to tracing them. This simplified the operation of the Bureau and gradually helped to reestablish good relations with officers of Military Government who had often complained of the methods used by some of the Child Search people in the field.

A new budget was then established to include personnel transferred from the Child Search Units of UNRRA HQ to the Bureau. This budget was based on a personnel establishment composed of 34 International employees, 83 class II, 21 Allied Liaison Officers, 18 voluntary agency employees plus other personnel for a total of 239 employees. On March 4, 1946 the personnel Budget for the Zone included 59 International employees paid by UNRRA. In the second quarter 1946 the Director of the Bureau had insisted that he needed 76 International Employees.

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Their territory, including those of the attached United States Officers. However, in some cases, were included for working purposes in Land Division or Headquarters alike. An UNRRA employee or an attached United States Officer was responsible for each of these subdivisions.

This division and relation of responsibility was not calculated to obtain the best possible results or to maintain the highest degree of discipline, particularly in view of the fact that so many of the men in charge of Subdivisions were foreign officers, some of whom gave only lip service to UNRRA and the Training Bureau, because they were primarily interested in the training of their own soldiers.

In March 1947 the U.S. Zone Bureau closed its branches in Munich, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden and Frankfurt, leaving only processing units in Aachen and Stuttgart. In May 1947 UNRRA Admin. Order No. 248 cancelled Order No. 26 previously mentioned, and merged the Child Search Division, a function of UNRRA Zone HQs with the Bureau of Investments and Training which then became the Zone HQs Training & Child Search Division.

At the same time it was decided that the functions of Child Search, which until then had been dealt with the care of the children found, would be limited to training them. This simplified the operation of the Bureau and probably helped to reestablish good relations with officers of the Military Government who had often complained of the methods used by some of the Child Search people in the field.

A new budget was then established to include personnel transferred from the Child Search Unit of UNRRA HQ to the Bureau. This budget was based on a personnel establishment composed of 24 International employees, 82 class II, 27 Allied Nations Officers, 75 voluntary agency employees plus other personnel for a total of 239 employees. On March 4, 1946 the personnel budget for the Zone included 89 International employees paid by UNRRA. In the second quarter 1946 the Director of the Bureau had indicated that he needed 75 International Employees.

Although

Although the International Tracing Service assumed control of the U.S. Zone Tracing Child Search Bureau during the closing days of 1947, it was not until the middle of April 1948 that the Chief of the new Division, Mr. A.J. Wittamer, who was until then Chief of Records Branch at ITS HQ., took charge of the U.S. Zone HQ. and the Field Teams attached to it.

Zone HQs were then in Esslingen near Stuttgart and some 20 smaller offices scattered throughout the Zone were occupied by Field Tracing Officers and their staff composed of IRO and voluntary society personnel, particularly Polish Red Cross employees.

The Division had a total of 205 employees, including those in the Field, and the Administration of HQs as well as that of the Field Teams was done by the IRO areas to which they were administratively attached. Transport facilities consisted of a few vehicles belonging to the areas concerned.

At HQ the work was divided between the Documentary Evidence Section, the Concentration Camps Section, the Tracing Section and the Child Search Branch. These branches and sections were theoretically represented in the Field but most of the work of the teams was done for the benefit of the Child Search Branch.

After the first and immediate reorganization, the Tracing Section became an integral part of the Tracing Branch at ITS HQs in Arolsen, although remaining in Esslingen until it could clear up the backlog of its cases. The Documentary Evidence and the Concentration Camps Section were amalgamated later and field personnel was instructed to give priority to Tracing Cases and Documentary Searches and to handle only Child Tracing until a new Child Search Organization could be created.

During the first month under the new management of ITS a new system of administration was developed getting its directives from ITS HQ rather than from IRO Zone HQs or areas, vehicles were obtained and the change over from an independent organization which had used its own methods for more than 2 years to a Division of ITS with new channels and procedures was completed.

The task was complicated by the transfer of certain

Although the International Trading Service assumed control of the U.S. Zone Trading Office Search Bureau during the closing days of 1947, it was not until the middle of April 1948 that the Chief of the new Division, Mr. A. L. Wilcox, who was until then Chief of Records Branch at ITS HQ, took charge of the U.S. Zone HQ and the Field Teams attached to it.

Zone HQ was then in Eastgate near Stuttgart and some 30 smaller offices scattered throughout the Zone were occupied by Field Trading Officers and their staff composed of ITO and voluntary security personnel, particularly British Red Cross employees.

The Division had a total of 305 employees, including those in the Field, and the administration of HQ as well as that of the Field Teams was done by the ITO areas to which they were administratively attached. Transport facilities consisted of a few vehicles belonging to the areas concerned.

At HQ the work was divided between the Documentary Evidence Section, the Concentration Camps Section, the Trading Section and the Child Search Branch. These branches and sections were theoretically represented in the Field but most of the work of the teams was done for the benefit of the Child Search Branch.

After the first and immediate reorganization, the Trading Section became an integral part of the Trading Branch at ITS HQ in Aachen, although remaining in Eastgate until it could clear up the backlog of its cases. The Documentary Evidence and the Concentration Camps Section were amalgamated later and Field personnel was instructed to give priority to Trading Cases and Documentary Searches and to handle only Child Trading until a new Child Search Organization could be created.

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The task was complicated by the transfer of certain

IRO responsibilities to ITS, the establishment of new lines of responsibilities or new channels of procurement and the rapid increase of the ITS personnel in the Zone due to the establishment at ITS U.S. Zone Headquarters of the new Child Search Branch which placed its own personnel in the field and attached it to the existing teams.

At the end of 1948 the Division had a staff of 207, including 151 indigenous employees of the Child Search Branch. It had 33 vehicles and a well staffed and smoothly working office in each of the seven IRO areas of the Zone as well as Branch Offices in many sub-areas.

In January 1949 the Tracing Section left for Arolsen and shipped all its cases to ITS HQ. At the same time plans were made for the transfer to Headquarters Arolsen of the entire Concentration Camps Section with its 30 tons of original concentration camps records. The transfer was actually accomplished during May and June 1949 with a minimum of difficulties and without seriously handicapping the work of the section, which at the same time transferred 30 of its employees to Arolsen.

In the Field also a number of changes had been forced on ITS because of the retrenchments made by IRO. Offices had to be consolidated or relocated, often on very short notice.

On October 1, 1949 the chief of the Division became once again Chief of Records at ITS HQs in Arolsen, dividing his time between the two offices, an arrangement which was to last one year.

At the end of 1949 the Zone Division had succeeded in maintaining itself in most of the locations it occupied in 1948, had found office space and billets for the rapidly increasing personnel of the Child Search Branch which had forced an increase in personnel from the 205 employed on April 1, 1948 at Headquarters; and in the field, to a number of 396 at Headquarters alone with an additional 104 Zone Tracing & Documents and 65 Child Search Employees in the Field, i.e. a total of 565 persons. It had a total of 64 vehicles.

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On October 1, 1943 the chief of the Division became once again Chief of Records at HQ in Berlin, dividing his time between the two offices, an arrangement which was to last one year.

At the end of 1943 the Zone Division had succeeded in maintaining itself in most of the locations it occupied in 1943, had found office space and utilities for the rapidly increasing personnel of the Child Search Branch which had forced an increase in personnel from the 202 employed on April 1, 1943 at Headquarters and in the field, to a number of 326 at Headquarters alone with an additional 104 Zone Training & Documents and 62 Child Search Employees in the field, i.e. a total of 388 persons. It had a total of 61 vehicles.

The first few months of 1944 saw a gradual reduction of the personnel, as the various tasks of the Child Search Branch

were completed or eliminated, Field Operations of Child Search were sharply curtailed and the Field employees of Tracing & Documents Branch intensified the work of graves recheck in order to complete it before October 1, 1950, the date set for the dissolution of the US Zone Division. The number of vehicles was also sharply reduced and, at the beginning of August 1950 preparations were made to recall all remaining field teams and to dispose of their equipment. On September 1st began the closure operations which meant the termination of most of the employees (except the few who could be transferred to Arolsen) the return to Headquarters of all office equipment and the crating of the approximately 30 tons of records, fixtures and supplies remaining in Esslingen. With the help of the PW & DP Division of the US Element of the High Commission for Germany a contract was entered into with a German firm of movers to transport all this material by road to Arolsen.

The move was completed before October 1st, 1950 date on which the U.S. Zone Division of ITS ceased to exist as an entity and its records and functions were amalgamated with those of the ITS HQs.

APPENDIX : Copy of USFET Order of January 8, 1946.

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APPENDIX : Copy of USSR Order of January 8, 1948.