

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANISATION  
INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE  
CHILD SEARCH BRANCH  
APO 154 US ARMY

HISTORY OF THE SEARCH FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Part I The Preamble. Gives an explanation of the problem and the categories of unaccompanied children dealt with. This part is compiled mainly from excerpts from original Nazi documents introduced as evidence in the International War Crime Trials at Nurnberg, Germany.

Part II Child Search Activities of UNRRA. This part is compiled from excerpts from the UNRRA Closure Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany, dated June 1947.

Part III Child Search Activities of the I.R.O. This part is compiled from excerpts from the Yearly and Quarterly Reports of the Child Search Branch of the International Tracing Service.

PREAMBLE

Since 1945, first UNRRA and then the I.R.O. have had to deal with the problem of unaccompanied children. This problem involves the finding of those innocent victims of Nazism, the kidnapped Allied children, as well as those non-German children who became displaced and unaccompanied as a result of the war, the identification of the children found, the establishment of their citizenship, their documentation, and, if necessary, the tracing of their families so that, in the end, they may be reunited with their parents or relatives.

These children fall into 5 categories:

- (1) Those children who were forcibly removed from their relatives and country of origin under the Nazi programme for the kidnapping of racially desirable children. The children concerned are mainly those from Eastern nations. The scheme originated with Himmler, Chief of the German S.S. who dealt with the matter in a document called "Reflections on the Treatment of Foreign Elements in the East". The part relating to the kidnapping of children reads as follows:

"One of the basic principles in the solution of these problems is the question of education and the sifting and selection of the youth. The non-German population of the East should have no schooling beyond 4 years elementary school. This elementary school should have the following objectives :

"The teaching of simple calculating up to 500 at the most, writing of the pupil's own name, the doctrine that it is a divine commandment to obey the

INTERNATIONAL RECOVERED ORPHANS  
INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE  
CHILD SEARCH BRANCH  
240 1st St. N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

HISTORY OF THE SEARCH FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Part I The Problem. Gives an explanation of the problem and the categories of unaccompanied children dealt with. This part is compiled mainly from excerpts from original West German reports furnished as evidence in the International War Crime Trials at Nuremberg, Germany.

Part II Child Search Activities of UNRRA. This part is compiled from excerpts from the UNRRA Child Search Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany, dated June 1947.

Part III Child Search Activities of the I.R.O. This part is compiled from excerpts from the Leahy and Gentry Reports of the Child Search Branch of the International Tracing Service.

APPENDIX

Since 1945, UNRRA and then the I.R.O. have had to deal with the problem of unaccompanied children. This problem involves the finding of those innocent victims of war, the kidnapped Allied children, as well as those non-German children who became displaced and unaccompanied as a result of the war, the identification of the children found, the establishment of their citizenship, their documentation, and, if necessary, the tracing of their families so that, in the end, they may be reunited with their parents or relatives.

These children fall into 2 categories:

- (1) These children who were forcibly removed from their relatives and country of origin under the Nazi program for the kidnapping of racially desirable children. The children concerned are mainly those from Eastern nations. The scheme originated with Himmler, Chief of the German S.S. who dealt with the matter in a document dated "Relinquents on the Treatment of Foreign Minors in the East". The part relating to the kidnapping of children reads as follows:

"One of the basic principles in the solution of these problems is the question of education and the raising and selection of the youth. The non-German population of the East should have no schooling beyond 4 years elementary school. This elementary school should have the following objectives:

"The teaching of simple calculating up to 500 of the most, writing of the pupil's own name, the doctrine that is a divine commandment to obey the

Germans and to be honest, diligent and well behaved. I do not see any necessity for reading.

"This should be the only type of school in the East. Parents who intend to provide better schooling for their children both in elementary school and later in a more advanced school will have to file application to that effect with the Higher SS and Police Leaders. Decision regarding this application will primarily depend upon the racial desirability of the child. Should it be decided that such a child is of our blood, the parents are to be told that the child will be sent to a German school and remain in Germany.

"Cruel and tragic as each individual case may be, this method is still the best and most human if, out of inner conviction, one rejects as un-German and impossible the Bolshevik method of psychic extermination of a people.

"The parents of children of good blood will be faced with the following alternatives: either they must surrender the child, in which case they will probably refrain from having more children thus eliminating the danger of inferior peoples of the East developing a group of leaders from people of good blood who, being our equals, may constitute a threat to us; or they may emigrate to Germany and become loyal citizens.

"Thus when the future and education of children depends upon their parents' loyalty, the parents will be easily influenced. In addition to the examination of the application for better schooling made by the parents, a thorough search will be made involving all 6 to 10 years olds throughout the General Government in order to separate racially desirable from racially undesirable elements. Those selected as racially desirable will be treated in the same manner as children accepted on the basis of their parents' application. Both sentiment and pure reasoning tell me that children should not be treated like lepers after they have entered Germany; when their names have been changed they should be treated carefully and considerately and included in German life. The children must not feel like outcasts for we have a profound faith in our own blood which has been absorbed into a foreign nationality through errors committed in the German history, and we are convinced that our philosophy of life and our ideals will find response in the souls of the children who are of the same race as we.

242

harmony and to be honest, diligent and self-disciplined. I do not see any necessity for reading.

"This should be the only type of school in the West. Parents who insist on providing better schooling for their children born in elementary school and later in a more advanced school will have to file application to that effect with the High ex ES and Police leaders. Decision regarding this application will primarily depend upon the racial desirability of the child. Should it be decided that such a child is of our blood, the parents are to be told that the child will be sent to a German school and remain in Germany.

"Cruel and tragic as each individual case may be, this method is still the best and most humane if, out of inner conviction, one rejects as un-German and inhumane the Bolshevik method of psychic extermination of a people.

"The parents of children of good blood will be faced with the following alternatives: either they must surrender the child, in which case they will probably remain from having more children thus eliminating the danger of inferior people of the last developing a group of leaders from people of good blood who, being our equals, may constitute a threat to us or they may migrate to Germany and become loyal citizens.

"Thus when the future and education of children depends upon their parents' loyalty, the parents will be easily influenced. In addition to the examination of the application for better schooling made by the parents, a thorough search will be made involving all 5 to 10 years olds throughout the General Government in order to separate racially desirable from racially undesirable elements. Those selected as racially desirable will be treated in the same manner as children accepted on the basis of their parents' application. Both countries should be reasoning that if their children should not be treated like lepers after they have entered Germany when their names have been changed they should be treated carefully and considered and included in German life. The children must not feel like outcasts for we have a profound faith in our own blood which has been absorbed into a foreign nationality through errors committed in the German history, and we are convinced that our philosophy of life and our ideals will find response in the souls of the children who are of the same race as we.

"Basic principles should be established for the use of teachers and Hitler youth leaders, and the mistake which was made in the case of the people from Alsace-Lorraine must never be repeated. On the one hand, the intention was to make Germans out of them, but, on the other hand, they were insulted at every opportunity through distrust and deflation of their human value, pride and honour. Name calling like "Pollack" or "Ukrainian" or similar epithets should be forbidden. Four years of preliminary schooling should be given and then it should be decided whether the children are to remain in the German public school or whether they should be sent to a National Political Educational Institution (Napola)."

Himmler's outline for the kidnapping of racially desirable children was put into operation by the S.S. Office of the Reichscommissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism. As an example we quote from Decree No. 67/1, which was signed by the Chief of the Office of the Reichscommissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism and deals with the germanisation of children from Polish families and Polish orphanages.

"The children whose racial characteristics point to nordic ancestry should be reclaimed for Germanism; therefore it is necessary that a racial and psychological selection be performed among those orphans who are in Polish orphanages or with Polish foster parents. The children recognised as valuable proponents of Germanism are to be germanised. The children would be racially examined by the Branch Office of the S.S. Main Race and Settlement Office in Litzmannstadt in order to establish their racial desirability. The Reichs-Protector of the Reichsgau Wartheland, emissary of the Reichs-Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism, will decide, on the basis of the examination results, which child is to be germanised. In all doubtful cases, I request that my Posen emissary contact the two reception agencies (Lebensborn e.V. and the Inspector of the German home schools.

"My emissary will report the racially desirable children who fall within the age group from 2 to 6 years, to the Lebensborn e.V. Lebensborn e.V. will first place the children in one of its children's homes. From there, Lebensborn e.V. will place the children with childless families of S.S. men for adoption at a later date.

"My Posen emissary will report all racially desirable children who fall within the age group from 6 to 12 years, to the Inspector of German home schools. The Inspector of German home schools will place these children in special home schools which will be able to comply with their needs. Children who leave the home school showing positive results are to be placed as foster children in rural communities of the German Reich proper. These children are to be treated like German children even before they receive their German citizenship.

"Basic principles should be established for the use of language and Hitler youth leaders, and the attitude which was made in the case of the people from Alsace-Lorraine must never be repeated. On the one hand, the intention was to make Germans out of them, but on the other hand, they were treated as every opportunity through dis-trust and belittling of their human value, pride and honor. - Names calling like "Polack" or "Ukrainian" or similar epithets should be forbidden. Four years of preliminary school-ing should be given and then it should be decided whether the children are to remain in the German public school or whether they should be sent to a National Political Educational Institution (Nazi)."

Himmler's outline for the kidnapping of racially desirable children was put into operation by the S.S. Office of the Reichskommissariat for the Strengthening of Ger-mania. As an example we quote from Document No. 677, which was signed by the Chief of the Office of the Reichskommissariat for the Strengthening of Germanism and deals with the germanization of children from Polish families and other orphanages.

"The children whose racial characteristics point to a high ancestry should be retained for Germanization. Therefore it is necessary that a racial and psycho-logical selection be performed among those orphans who are in Polish orphanages or with Polish foster parents. The children recognized as valuable pro-geny of Germans are to be germanized. The children would be racially examined by the Branch Office of the S.S. Main Race and Settlement Office in Litzmannstadt in order to establish their racial desirability. The Reich-Proctor of the Reichsgau Wartheland, Ambassador of the Reich-Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism, will decide, on the basis of the examination results, which child is to be germanized. In all doubtful cases, I request that my Polish Embassy contact the two reception agencies (Lebensborn e.V. and the Inspector of the German Home Schools).

"My Embassy will report the racially desirable children who fall within the age group from 2 to 6 years, to the Lebensborn e.V. Lebensborn e.V. will first place the children in one of its children's homes. From there, Lebensborn e.V. will place the children with children's families of S.S. men for adoption at a later date.

"My Polish Embassy will report all racially desirable children who fall within the age group from 6 to 12 years, to the Inspector of German Home Schools. The Inspector of German Home Schools will place these children in special home schools which will be able to comply with their needs. Children who leave the home school showing positive results are to be placed in foster children in rural communities of the German Reich proper. These children are to be treated like German children even before they receive their German citizenship.

First all children who are located in former Polish orphanages will be X-rayed and quartered. The children now living with Polish foster parents will be examined after this action has been carried out. Any forewarning of the Polish foster parents is to be avoided; thus during the whole examination the point that the children will receive fellowships in schools or be sent to recreation camps, should be stressed. Children in the foster care of racially desirable families may, as well as the natural children of these families, be admitted to home schools upon application by the head of the family. Special care should be taken that the expression "racially desirable Polish children" does not reach the public and thus harm the children. The children are to be described as German orphans from the re-captured Eastern territories."

Even though the above decree deals mainly with the kidnapping of Polish orphans and Polish children with foster families, it was applied equally to children living with their own families. This becomes evident in a document originating from the German Ministry of the Interior and deals with the establishment of a special Registration Office in the German Children's Home which was used as a transit station for kidnapped children.

"Experience has taught us that Polish relatives or acquaintance of the children will make efforts to find their place of residence. This would be possible through enquiries from the local Police. Contact between the children and their relatives or old acquaintances is to be avoided, inasmuch as serious difficulties in the Germanisation process can be anticipated through the influence of these relatives.

"It is requested that a special Registration Office called "Polizeiliche Meldestelle II in Kalisch/Warthe-gau" be established. This matter is to be considered as confidential and is not to be published."

A further process of the germanisation of kidnapped children was the change of names, which is dealt with in instructions issued by the Chief of the S.S. Race and Settlement Office.

"Germanisation will be carried out in such a manner that the new name will not deviate too much from the existing name as to root and pronunciation. Where it is impossible to germanise existing names, new German names are to be chosen. Commonly used names (certainly without religious connotation) should be selected; names of a pronounced nordic character should not be used.

"Children must be in possession of their germanised names prior to being sent to institutions, particularly Lebensborn and Home Schools."

- (2) Those children who were born in Germany during the war to slave labourers and who were forcibly separated from their mothers. This was dealt with by

Dr. Kaltenbrunner

148

First all children who are located in former Polish territories will be registered and numbered. The children who live with Polish foster parents will be examined after this action has been carried out. Any forwarding of the Polish foster parents is to be prohibited. When during the whole examination the point that the children will receive Polish citizenship in schools or be sent to residential camps, should be stressed. Children in the foster care of socially desirable families may, as well as the natural children of these families, be admitted to these schools upon application by the head of the family. Special care should be taken that the expression "socially desirable Polish children" does not mean the public and that the children, who are to be described as German orphans from the so-called "Eastern Territories".

Even though the above duties deal mainly with the kidnapping of Polish orphans and Polish children with their families, it was applied equally to children living with their own families. This becomes evident in a document originating from the German Ministry of the Interior and deals with the establishment of a special Registration Office in the German Children's Home which was used as a transit station for kidnapped children.

"Experience has taught us that Polish relatives or acquaintances of the children will make efforts to find their place of residence. This would be possible through contacts from the local Police. Contact between the children and their relatives or old acquaintances is to be avoided, inasmuch as serious difficulties in the Germanization process can be entailed through the influence of these relatives.

"It is requested that a special Registration Office called 'Polnische Kinderliste II' in 'Katholischer Kindergarten' be established. This matter is to be considered as confidential and is not to be published."

A further process of the Germanization of kidnapped children was the change of names, which is dealt with in instructions issued by the Chief of the S.S., Race and Settlement Office.

"Germanization will be carried out in such a manner that the new name will not deviate too much from the existing one as to root and pronunciation. Where it is impossible to Germanize existing names, new German names are to be chosen. Commonly used names (certainly without religious connotation) should be selected; names of a pronounced Nordic character should not be used.

"Children must be in possession of their Germanized names prior to being sent to institutions, particularly Lebensborn and Home-Schools."

(2) These children who were born in Germany during the war to slave laborers and who were forcibly separated from their mothers. This was dealt with by

Dr. Kaltenbrunner, the S.S. Chief of the German Police, under the subject "Treatment of pregnant foreign female labourers and children born by these labourers within the confines of the German Reich".

"The children born by foreign female labourers must in no case be cared for by German institutions, placed in German children's homes, or be permitted to grow up and be educated together with German children. Thus special institutions of the most primitive type for the care of babies (Ausländer Kinderpflegestätten) will be created in camps, where these foreign children will be cared for by female nationals of their respective countries.

"The necessity to prevent the loss of German blood to foreign nationalities is increased by losses incurred through the war. Thus it becomes necessary to accept children of foreign women who are of partly German or equally valuable blood and can be regarded as racially desirable from placement in those "Ausländer Kinderpflegestätten" and to save them for germanisation wherever possible, and education as German children. For this reason a racial examination is to be performed upon the fathers and mothers of children begotten by a German or a member of an equally valuable Germanic nationality.

"In cases where racially desirable offspring may be expected on the basis of racial as well as health examinations of the father and mother, the children will be placed in the care of the N.S.V. (National Socialist Welfare Organisation). The N.S.V. will place them in special children's homes for racially desirable foreign children or with foster families.

Acceptance of a racially desirable child into the care of N.S.V. or Lebensborn will, in most cases, necessitate its separation from the mother who must remain at her place of work. For this reason, the mother's consent will be necessary in cases of racially desirable children. The mother will be informed of the advantages but not of the aims of this process and will thus be inclined to consent. A plan is being considered under which the consent of Eastern female workers, workers from the General Government and Protectorates, will be considered unnecessary whenever indoctrination proves futile. Until further notice no measures will be taken in such cases. Mothers of racially desirable children who intend to return to their home countries with their children should be kept within the German Reich, whenever possible, by the Labour Allocation Administration on the basis of the labour draft. Where those efforts prove futile the children cannot be made to stay by means of force; different measures are under consideration in the case of Eastern female workers, workers from the General Government and Protectorates."

In practice

Dr. Reifschneider, the U.S. Chief of the German  
Police, under the heading "Treatment of German  
Foreign Born Children and Children Born by  
Foreign Parents within the Jurisdiction of the German  
State."

"The children born by foreign female  
parents who in no case are covered for by  
German legislation, placed in German  
children's homes, or are permitted to grow up and  
be educated together with German children. This  
special legislation of the most primitive type  
for the care of babies (Kinderkrippen-  
system) will be applied in cases, where these  
foreign children will be cared for by female  
nationality of their respective countries.

"The necessity to prevent the loss of  
German blood to foreign nationalities is  
increased by losses incurred through the war.  
This is because necessary to secure children  
of foreign women who are of partly German  
or equally valuable blood and not be regarded  
as racially desirable from placement in those  
"Asiatische Kinderkrippen" and to save  
them for Germanization wherever possible, and  
education as German children. For this reason  
a racial examination is to be performed upon  
the fathers and mothers of children brought  
by a German or a member of an equally valuable  
German nationality.

"In cases where racially desirable off-  
spring may be expected on the basis of racial  
as well as health examinations of the father  
and mother, the children will be placed in the  
care of the U.S.V. (National Socialist Welfare  
Organization). The U.S.V. will place them in  
special children's homes for racially desirable  
foreign children or into foster families.

Appearance of a racially desirable child  
into the care of U.S.V. or Lebensborn will, in  
most cases, necessitate its separation from  
the mother who must remain at her place of  
work. For this reason, the mother's consent will  
be necessary in cases of racially desirable  
children. The mother will be informed of the  
advantages but not of the aims of this process  
and will thus be inclined to consent. A plan  
is being considered under which the consent of  
Foreign female workers, workers from the General  
Government and Protectorates, will be considered  
unnecessary whenever indoctrination proves futile.  
Until further notice no measures will be taken  
in such cases. Mothers of racially desirable  
children who intend to return to their home  
countries with their children should be kept  
within the German Reich, whenever possible, by  
the Labor Allocation Administration on the  
basis of the labor draft. Where those efforts  
prove futile the children cannot be made to stay  
by means of force; different measures are under  
consideration in the case of Eastern female work-  
ers, workers from the General Government and  
Protectorates."

In practice, children born to foreign workers in Germany were separated from their mothers either with or without their consent. In most cases this consent was obtained under pressure by the S.S. Security Police. Children termed as racially undesirable, who were sent to the Auelländer Kinderpflegestätten, died in almost all cases, either due to malnutrition or mistreatment. Proof of this was established during the War Crim Trials. In our work we are mainly concerned with those children of slave labourers who were termed "racially desirable" and kept alive for the purpose of germanisation.

- (3) Children who were separated from their relatives and native country through war action.
- (4) "Non Aryan children", who were declared racially undesirable by the Nazis. These children were liberated from Concentration Camps or were found hidden in religious institutions and by the civilian population of many countries. This group consists mainly of Jewish children. At the time of the liberation, unaccompanied Jewish children were found in Concentration Camps in Germany and Austria. The greatest problem in connection with Jewish children however was that caused by the infiltration, shortly after the war, of large numbers into Germany from the Eastern countries.
- (5) Children who were born to D.P.s during and after the war and who have been abandoned. These are, in most cases, illegitimate children who have been abandoned, either through economic pressure or in the case of the repatriation of the mother, because the family at home did not know about the existence of the child or, in the case of resettlement, because in the early stages of resettlement, unwed mothers were not accepted with children. Very often these children are looked for later because, either the economic situation of the mother has improved, or she has told her family about her illegitimate child and they are willing to receive the child, or she has been sufficiently well established in a new country to take care of her child.

Germany was the main point of search for children but the chief sources were found in other countries, Austria, for example, was a source for many children who were brought or evacuated from the Baltic, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Regrettably, however, as yet the occupying Powers did not appreciate the importance of centralising and preserving all relevant documents and records from the four Zones of Germany. Records with invaluable information were unwittingly destroyed or turned back to German sources.

The Child Search Teams carefully combed German institutions and, by this means, discovered many United Nations' children. Most of the children thus located, however, were those who had been evacuated into Germany, were born in Germany or had been brought in directly with their families and later separated from them. The children who had been stolen from their families in their home countries under the Nazi programme of Germanisation accounted for the majority of uncollected cases. These children were known to be living in German families as German children and they could only be found by discovering and studying documents and records which might reveal the disposition

In practice, children born to foreign workers in Germany were separated from their mothers either with or without their consent. In most cases this consent was obtained under pressure by the U.S. Security Forces. Children termed as "racially undesirable" and were sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau-Großa, then in almost all cases, either due to misadventure or mistreatment. Proof of fact was established during the War Crime Trials. In our work we are mainly concerned with those children of slave laborers who were termed "racially desirable" and kept alive for the purpose of Germanization.

(2) Children who were separated from their relatives and native country through war action.

(A) "The Syrian children", who were declared racially undesirable by the Nazis. These children were liberated from Concentration Camps or were found hidden in religious institutions not by the civilian population of many countries. This group consists mainly of Jewish children. At the time of the liberation, unaccompanied Jewish children were found in Concentration Camps in Germany and Austria. The greatest problem in connection with Jewish children however was that caused by the influxion, shortly after the war, of large numbers into Germany from the Eastern countries.

(3) Children who were born to U.S. airmen and after the war and have been abandoned. These are, in most cases, illegitimate children who have been abandoned, either through economic pressure or in the case of the repatriation of the mother, because the family at home did not know about the existence of the child or, in the case of repatriation, because in the early stages of repatriation, unaccompanied children are looked for later because, either the economic situation of the mother has improved, or she has told her family about her illegitimate child and they are willing to receive the child, or she has been sufficiently well established in a new country to take care of her child.