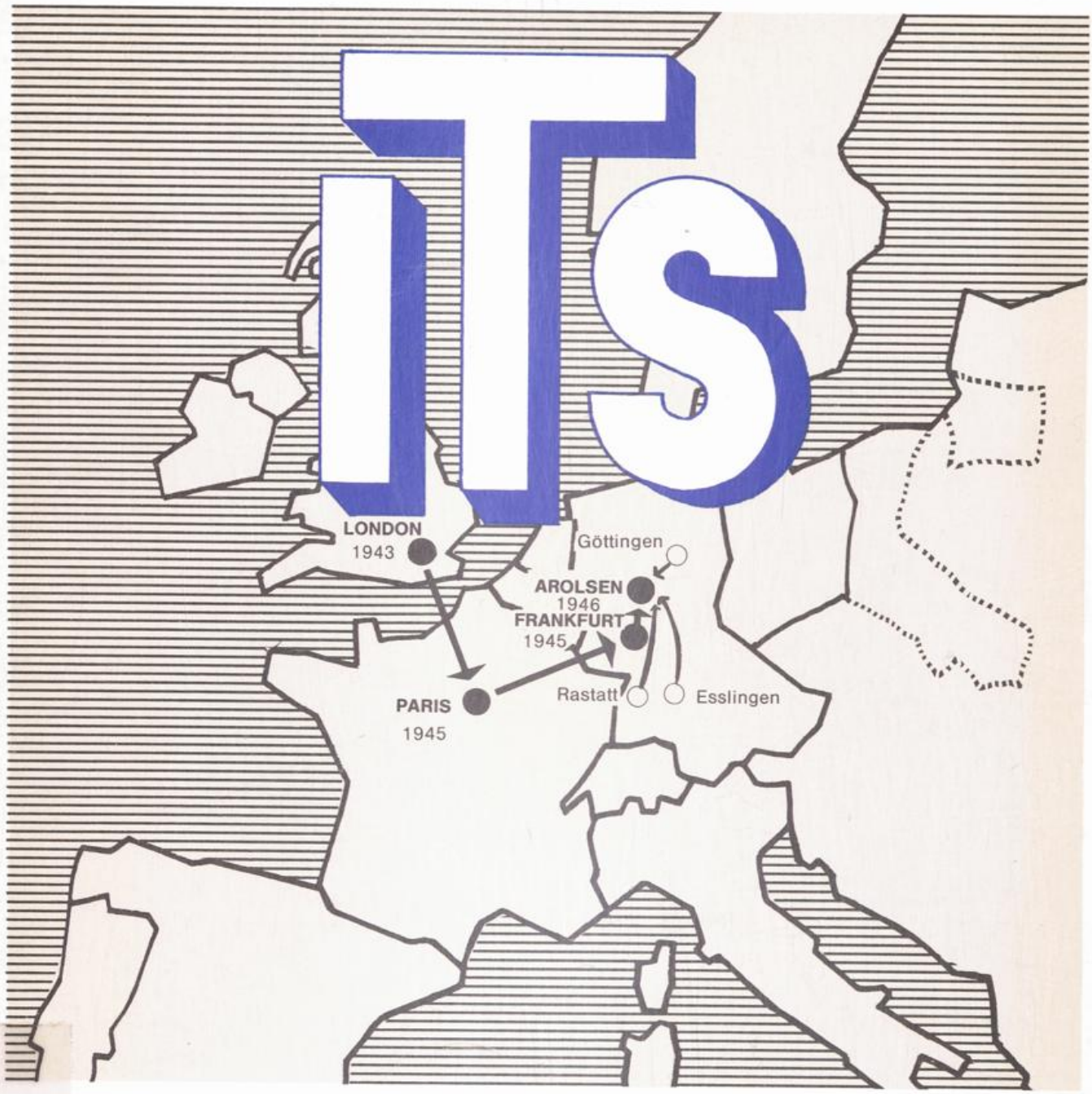

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE
SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES
INTERNATIONALER SUCHDIENST

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Preface

The following passage is taken from a 1976 publication on the International Tracing Service in Arolsen:

> "Even though the tragedy of the concentration camps has given rise to numerous publications, only very few people know the International Tracing Service (ITS), which since the end of the Second World War has been contributing to the humanitarian effort to aid the survivors of the Hitlerian concentration camps."

This statement is no less true today

- 40 years after the transfer of the International Tracing Service to Arolsen
- 30 years after the establishment of the International Commission for the International Tracing Service
- and 30 years after the International Committee of the Red Cross took over the direction and administration of the ITS

During all these years, this meritorious work in the service and in the interest of the former victims of the National-Socialist Regime, has been carried out with untiring zeal by the director of the ITS and his staff.

May the work be carried on successfully, through the anniversary year and all the years to come, until the humanitarian mandate has finally been fulfilled.

The acting Chairman
of the IC/ITS

Jean-Paul Munchen
Deputy Chief
of Protocol at the
Foreign Office of
the Grand Duchy
of Luxemburg

The Doyen of the IC/ITS

Professor
Fernand Erauw
Honorary Adviser
at the
Belgian
Audit Office

Arolsen, Summer of 1986

Origin of the International Tracing Service

During the Second World War, major population shifts took place in Europe, and the Jews and political opponents of the National-Socialist Regime were ruthlessly persecuted. As a result, countless families were torn apart.

In 1943 it became clear that there was an urgent need for an organization to trace missing persons and reunite families. Members of families often knew nothing of each other's whereabouts, nor whether their loved ones were well or even whether they were still alive. Parents and children were forcibly separated, fathers and mothers were taken away from their families for forced labour, and many people were murdered.

Individual answers were needed to the question of what had happened to millions of men, women and children of all ages, different races and nationalities.

The vast and complex task of registering data on those searching and those being sought, was made all the more difficult by the turmoil of the war. An attempt to help all these people was undertaken by the British Red Cross Society with the agreement of the Allied military authorities as early as 1943. It converted its Foreign Relations Department into a tracing bureau modelled on the Tracing Service of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, which already maintained an index of names. The programme was run by Major Eyre Carter of the Foreign Office Relief Department.

In early 1944, Sir Herbert Emmerson of the International Committee for Refugees called a meeting in London which was attended by representatives of the International Committee of the Red

Cross, the Foreign Relations Department of the British Red Cross and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). It was decided to assign UNRRA the task of setting up a very specific programme to deal with the problem. The programme was primarily concerned with citizens of Allied countries and involved:

- registering and tracing displaced persons, and
- reuniting families.

Following the transfer of the tracing bureau operated by the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) to the Combined Displaced Persons Executive (CDPX) in July 1945, the Allied Control Council on 17 September 1945 instructed UNRRA to establish a Central Tracing Bureau.

The Central Tracing Bureau was administered by UNRRA until 30 June 1947 when it was taken over by the International Refugee Organization (IRO). It was at this time that it received its present title:

International Tracing Service (ITS)

Direction of the International Tracing Service was assumed by the Allied High Commission for Germany (HICOG) on 1 April 1951.

When the abrogation of the Occupation Statute for the Federal Republic of Germany was being prepared in 1954, steps had to be taken to ensure that the International Tracing Service would continue to exist. In the same year, the so-called Paris Agreements were signed. These laid the groundwork for the Bonn Agreements between the Allied Western Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany which followed in 1955.

The International Committee of the Red Cross agreed in 1955 to accept charge of the administration and direction of the International Tracing Service. The director of the ITS is therefore delegated by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

At the same time, both the ruling and supervision of the ITS' work and responsibility for ensuring coordination between governments passed to an international commission composed of representatives from ten states. (see p. 11)

In addition the Federal Republic of Germany undertook to provide the ITS' annual budget from the budget of the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

This formula for running the ITS has stood the test of time:

Direction and Administration:	Ruling Body/ Supervision:	Budget:
International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva	International Commission for the International Tracing Service	Federal Republic of Germany

Although the tasks of the International Tracing Service have often been called into question, the continuing high number of incoming inquiries leave no doubt that the Service must carry on its work.

Task of the International Tracing Service

1. The sole idea behind the creation of the International Tracing Service was to help tracing missing persons from Allied countries and members of their families by registering them and attempting to reunite them. This has remained the guiding principle for all of the organizations which have directed the work of the International Tracing Service in the past 40 years.

2. These tasks are set out in the Bonn Agreements of 1955 as follows:

> The International Tracing Service was established for the purpose of tracing missing persons and collecting, classifying, preserving and rendering accessible to directly concerned individuals, the documents relating to Germans and non-Germans who were interned in National-Socialist concentration or labour camps, or to non-Germans, who were displaced as a result of the Second World War.

3. The activities of the International Tracing Service continue to be guided exclusively by humanitarian concerns. The preamble to the Agreement on the Relations between the International Commission for the International Tracing Service and the International Committee of the Red Cross contains the following:

> "Desiring that the future operations of the International Tracing Service shall be conducted in such a way that the information contained in the archives of the International Tracing Service shall, as hitherto, be freely available to directly concerned persons and authorities, for humanitarian purposes, ..."

Organizations in charge of the International Tracing Service

The division of Germany into four zones of occupation after the war and the diversity of occupying authorities and their organizations caused frequent changes in the direction of the International Tracing Service.

The list which appears below contains organizations which were dissolved after their original task had been completed.
In view of the Service's uncertain legal status, it was often difficult to proceed in a way which best advanced the interests of the former persecutees.
The fact that their interests were nevertheless served – and, as we can see today, well served – was not only due to far-sighted work methods and an excellent archival order of the very special kind of documents preserved here, but may also be explained by many different fortunate circumstances.

Many organizations and governments have time and again accepted responsibility for running the ITS, which underscores the importance attached to its continued existence. Their tireless commitment has ensured ongoing assistance for the former persecutees and their families.

Brief History:

Date	Organization responsible for ITS	Administration and direction
1943	Conversion of the Foreign Relations Department of the British Red Cross into a tracing bureau	Major Eyre Carter of the Foreign Office Relief Department
15.02.1944 to 30.06.1945	SHEAF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces)	Names unknown
01.07.1945 to 30.06.1947	UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration)	– Colonel J.R. Bowring Director of UNRRA CTB 1945 – 1947 – Roman P. Flohr Director of UNRRA CTB 1947
01.07.1947 to 30.03.1951	IRO (International Refugee Organization)	– Maurice C.A. Thudichum Director of the ITS 1947 – 1951
01.04.1951 to 05.05.1955	HICOG (Allied High Commission for Germany)	– Executive Board consisting of three members: Hugh G. Elbot (US-Representative and Chairman of this Executive Board) Jan Sconce, later Cyril L. Widger (British representatives) Armand E. Klein (French representative)
06.05.1955 to 05.06.1955	Cyril L. Widger remains in Arolsen as Director ad interim	
as of 06.06.1955	ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)	– E. Jaquet and M. Borsinger June 1955 – N. Burckhardt, Director July 1955 – 30.06.1970 – A. de Cocatrix, Director 01.07.1970 – 31.12.1977 – P. Zuger, Director 01.01.1978 – 31.10.1985 – Ch.-Cl. Biedermann, Director since 01.11.1985

Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces

On 15 February 1944, the newly established SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces) took over the Central Tracing Bureau, which had been set up at the British Red Cross, Foreign Relations Department, in 1943.
The SHAEF was established in order to replace the controlling organization, Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Command (COSSAC). The new headquarters had the task of co-ordinating the entire armed forces (army, navy and air force) of Great Britain, the USA and other allied nations, which had already been assembled in England since January 1942.

The seat of SHAEF was at London from February till August 1944, at Versailles from August 1944 to May 1945 and at Frankfurt on the Main from May till July 1945.

SHAEF was dissolved in July 1945.

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) which was established as early as 1943, took over responsibility for the Central Tracing Bureau on 1 July 1945. This organization had the task of caring for and repatriating millions of non-German refugees.

UNRRA was dissolved in 1947 when the majority of the refugees had been assisted and repatriated.

International Refugee Organization

The IRO (International Refugee Organization) was founded in 1947 and assigned the task of assisting millions of European refugees to emigrate to the United States, Canada, Australia, Israel etc.

UNRRA's tasks, including the running of the Central Tracing Bureau, were transferred to the IRO.

IRO was dissolved in 1951.

Allied High Commission for Germany

From 1949 to 1955, HICOG (Allied High Commission for Germany) with its three High Commissioners, was the three Western Powers' supreme ruling body for the Federal Republic of Germany and the sectors of Berlin under their control and, as such, was responsible for not only direction, but running the ITS from 1951 until the Federal Republic achieved full independence under international public law.

The International Commission for the International Tracing Service

The International Commission for the International Tracing Service is the ruling body and controls the execution of the mandate of the International Tracing Service since 1955. The Commission's members represent ten governments. They usually meet once a year and the member states take turn, in English alphabetical order, chairing the meetings.

The member states:	Representatives in 1986
Belgium:	Monsieur le Professeur Fernand Erauw Doyen de la CI/SIR Conseiller honoraire à la Cour des Comptes
France	Monsieur Laurent Stefanini Secrétaire des Affaires étrangères en poste au Ministère des Affaires étrangères
The Federal Republic of Germany	Dr. Karl Heinz Kunzmann Vortragender Legationsrat I. Klasse Auswärtiges Amt
Greece	Monsieur le Professeur Oreste Louridis Président de la Croix-Rouge hellénique
Israel	Herr Gesandter Botschaftsrat Israel Melamed Israelische Botschaft, Bonn
Italy	Dott. Aldo Dainotto Prefetto di 1a. classe Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Luxemburg	Monsieur Jean-Paul Munchen Directeur-adjoint du Protocole au Ministère des Affaires étrangères
The Netherlands	Mr. C.I.A. de Graaff Directie Algemene Zaken Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Great Britain	Miss C.A. Eniffer Royal British Embassy, Bonn
The United States of America	Mrs. Lillian P. Mullin Counselor for Consular Affairs Embassy of the United States of America, Bonn

In addition to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees sends a representative to the meetings of the International Commission. The UNHCR's current representative is René van Rooyen and that of the ICRC is Philipp Zuger.

Today France and Belgium still maintain liaison offices for the International Tracing Service. The current French liaison officer is Pierre Fassina and the Belgian officer is Serge Thiry.

The International Commission, which was created by the above-named member states on the basis of the Bonn Agreement of 6th May 1955, continues to have the task of ensuring the co-ordination between the governments concerned in questions involving the International Tracing Service and, in consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, of creating guidelines for the ITS.

At the Commission's annual meeting, the ITS director submits the following:

- the annual report,
- the next year's budget,
- the statement of income and expenditure for the previous year,
- current issues and activities requiring discussion.

The Commission adopts the budget and approves the annual report, which only then becomes official.
Discussions take place concerning outstanding issues and appropriate measures are decided on.

Minutes are kept of the International Commission's deliberations and copies of these minutes are forwarded to the governments of the member states.

From: Bundesanzeiger (Federal Gazette), edited by the Federal Ministry of Justice. Issue 7, Wednesday, 14 December 1955, Number 241.

Bekanntmachungen

Auswärtiges Amt

Bekanntmachung über das Abkommen über die Errichtung eines Internationalen Ausschusses für den Internationalen Suchdienst.

Vom 10. Dezember 1955.

Zwischen den Regierungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, des Königsreichs Belgien, der Französischen Republik, des Staates Israel, der Italienischen Republik, des Großherzogtums Luxemburg, des Königreichs der Niederlande, des Vereinigten Königreichs von Großbritannien und Nordirland und der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika ist in Bonn am 6. Juni 1955 ein Abkommen über die Errichtung eines Internationalen Ausschusses für den Internationalen Suchdienst unterzeichnet worden.

Das Abkommen, das am 5. Mai 1955 in Kraft getreten ist, wird nachstehend nebst Anlage und dazugehörigen Vereinbarungen veröffentlicht.

Bonn, den 10. Dezember 1955.

Der Bundesminister des Auswärtigen
In Vertretung
Hallstein

Bonn, den 6. Juni 1955

Seiner Exzellenz
dem Botschafter der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika
Herrn Dr. James B. Conant

Herr Botschafter,

Ich beehre mich, Ihnen vorzuschlagen, daß die Regierungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, der Französischen Republik, des Vereinigten Königreichs von Großbritannien und Nordirland und der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika am Tage des Inkrafttretens des Vertrages zur Regelung aus Krieg und Besatzung entstandener Fragen (in der gemäß Liste IV zu dem am 23. Oktober 1954 in Paris unterzeichneten Protokoll über die Beendigung des Besatzungsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland geänderten Fassung) die Verantwortung für die Leitung und Verwaltung des Internationalen Suchdienstes in Arolsen zum Zwecke der Fortführung der Arbeiten, die gegenwärtig von diesem Suchdienst durchgeführt werden, unbeschadet des Eigentumsrechtes an den Archiven und Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes, dem Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz für die Dauer von fünf Jahren übertragen und eine dementsprechende Vereinbarung mit der genannten Organisation treffen.

Die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist bereit, dem in der Anlage beigefügten Abkommen beizutreten, durch das ein Internationaler Ausschuß mit der Aufgabe eingesetzt wird, die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den beteiligten Regierungen in Fragen des Internationalen Suchdienstes zu gewährleisten und Richtlinien für die Arbeiten des Internationalen Suchdienstes aufzustellen.

Die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland wird dem Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz für die Dauer von fünf Jahren jährlich einen Betrag zur Verfügung stellen, der den erforderlichen Aufwendungen des Internationalen Suchdienstes entspricht und nach oben hin durch den im Haushaltsplan des Internationalen Suchdienstes in Arolsen für das Rechnungsjahr 1954/55 veranschlagten Betrag begrenzt wird. Sollten aber durch unvorhergesehene Ereignisse Aufwendungen entstehen, die nicht durch den vorstehend genannten Betrag oder durch Einsparungen an anderer Stelle des Haushalts des Internationalen Suchdienstes gedeckt werden können, ohne daß die wirksame Fortführung der dem Internationalen Suchdienst obliegenden Aufgaben in Frage gestellt wird, so werden die Regierungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, der Französischen Republik, des Vereinigten Königreichs von Großbritannien und Nordirland und der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika über die zur Abhilfe zu treffenden Maßnahmen beraten.

Die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland geht hierbei davon aus, daß die obenerwähnten Maßnahmen dem in Artikel 1 d, Siebenter Teil des genannten Vertrages, zum Ausdruck gebrachten Willen der Vertragspartner entsprechen und daß die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ihre Verpflichtungen aus dem angeführten Artikel erfüllt, solange sie jährlich an das Internationale Komitee vom Roten Kreuz für die Fortführung der Arbeiten des Internationalen Suchdienstes einen Betrag entsprechend der obenerwähnten Regelung bezahlt.

Die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist bereit, mit den Regierungen der Französischen Republik, des Vereinigten Königreichs von Großbritannien und Nordirland und der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika spätestens vier Jahre nach Inkrafttreten des genannten Vertrages über die weitere Durchführung des Artikels 1 d, Siebenter Teil dieses Vertrages, insbesondere über die Fortdauer oder Änderung dieser Abmachungen zu beraten. Ferner soll dann geprüft werden, ob die Archive und die Unterlagen in Arolsen bleiben oder an den Sitz des Internationalen Komitees vom Roten Kreuz oder an einen anderen Ort überführt werden sollen. Die im Internationalen Ausschuß vertretenen anderen Regierungen werden eingeladen, ihre Ansicht zu den in Frage stehenden Problemen zu äußern.

Die obenerwähnten Abmachungen sind für die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland annehmbar. Wenn sie auch für die Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika annehmbar sind, beehre ich mich, Ihnen vorzuschlagen, diese Note und Ihre zustimmende Antwort als eine zwischen den beiden Regierungen in dieser Frage getroffene Vereinbarung zu betrachten.

Genehmigen Sie, Herr Botschafter, den Ausdruck meiner ausgezeichneten Hochachtung.

gez. Adenauer

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

BULLETIN No. 89

20. Juni 1955

Am 6. Juni 1955 ist in Bonn von neun interessierten Maechten das Abkommen ueber die Errichtung eines Internationalen Ausschusses fuer den Internationalen Suchdienst unterzeichnet worden.

Gleichzeitig wurde die Verantwortung fuer die Leitung und Verwaltung des Internationalen Suchdienstes zunaechst fuer die Dauer von fuenf Jahren dem Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz uebertragen. Die Uebernahme des Internationalen Suchdienstes kann jedoch erst geschehen, wenn der vom Internationalen Komitee vorgesehene Direktor in sein Amt eingesetzt wird.

In der gegenwaertigen Interims-Periode wird der Internationale Suchdienst wie bisher unter der Leitung des Unterzeichneten weitergefuehrt.

Die seit einiger Zeit in Arolsen weilende Uebernahmekommission des Internationalen Komitee's vom Roten Kreuz, bestehend aus den Herren AMMANN, BORSINGER und JAQUET, hat die Aufgabe, die baldmoeglichste Amtseinsetzung des Direktors vom Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz vorzubereiten.

Es wird an dieser Stelle die von der Uebernahmekommission den Sektionschefs des Internationalen Suchdienstes gegebene Zusicherung wiederholt, wonach grundsaetzlich in der Weiterfuehrung des Dienstes keine Aenderungen erfolgen werden.

C.L. Widger
Direktor ad interim

The International Committee of the Red Cross, responsible for the direction and administration of the International Tracing Service

On 5 May 1955, the Occupation Statute was abrogated in the Federal Republic of Germany, which had been established in 1949. It was thus no longer possible for any Allied authorities to continue to direct the work of the International Tracing Service.

On 6 June 1955, Konrad Adenauer, the then Federal Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote to Paul Ruegger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, asking the International Committee of the Red Cross to assume, initially for a period of five years, the direction and administration of the International Tracing Service "for purposes of continuance of the work which the International Tracing Service presently carries out".
The ICRC agreed to this request.

A formal agreement was worked out specifying that attention to the humanitarian aspect of the work was the primary condition for its success.

In addition, it was agreed that the director of the ITS would be delegated by the ICRC and that he would be able to consult any number of ICRC staff in the accomplishment of his task.

This agreement was renewed in 1960 after it had been verified that the need for an ICRC role, that is, a 'humanitarian element', still existed.

An agreement extending the ICRC's mandate for an indefinite period, i.e. until the ITS' humanitarian work had been completed, came into force on 5 May 1965.

As a neutral and impartial institution, the International Committee of the Red Cross ensures that the work is purely humanitarian in nature and carried out in the interests of the former persecutees.

In the name of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the General-Director, Jacques Moreillon, controls that the humanitarian mandate undertaken, which, pursuant to the Bonn Agreements, is the basis for the work of the International Tracing Service, is observed.

The ICRC's presence at the International Tracing Service is invaluable for the issuing of certificates and reports, as these are then accorded undisputed recognition by the over 40 countries from which the International Tracing Service receives inquiries concerning pensions and compensation.

Address by Chancellor Adenauer
at the ceremony in Bonn, Monday, 6 June 1955

Ansprache des Herrn Bundeskanzlers

aus Anlass der Unterzeichnung von

Vereinbarungen ueber den Internationalen

Suchdienst.

Exzellenz,

Ich darf meiner aufrichtigen Genugtuung darueber Ausdruck verleihen, dass es in freundschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit gelungen ist, die mit der Fortfuehrung der Arbeiten des Internationalen Suchdienstes zusammenhaengenden Fragen in einer fuer alle Beteiligten zufriedenstellenden Weise zu loesen. Die Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes geben Auskunft ueber eine leidvolle und schmerzliche Vergangenheit und sie mahnen uns, stets der Opfer dieser unheilvollen Zeit zu gedenken. Wir wissen, dass sich in Deutschland und in einer Reihe von anderen Laendern eine grosse Zahl von Menschen schmerzlich an das ihnen und ihren Angehoerigen zugefuegte Leid erinnern und die Taetigkeit des Internationalen Suchdienstes mit regem Interesse verfolgen. Die Uebergabe der Verwaltung des Internationalen Suchdienstes an das Internationale Komitee vom Roten Kreuz scheint mir daher eine besonders glueckliche Regelung zu sein. Die Bereitwilligkeit des Internationalen Komitees vom Roten Kreuz, diese Aufgabe im Geiste der Genfer Konventionen zu uebernehmen, hat uns diese Loesung moeglich gemacht. Es draengt mich daher in dieser Stunde, dem Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz und seinem Praesidenten meinen tiefempfundenen Dank zum Ausdruck zu bringen.

Address by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross at the ceremony in Bonn of 6 June 1955

Ansprache Präsident Rueggers aus Anlass der Unterzeichnung von Vereinbarungen über den Internationalen Suchdienst

Herr Bundeskanzler,

Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und die hier durch ihre bevollmächtigten Botschafter und Gesandte vertretenen acht Mächte beauftragen das Internationale Komitee vom Roten Kreuz in Genf mit einer neuen und grossen Aufgabe.

Das Internationale Komitee übernimmt diese Aufgabe in der Überzeugung, dass die soeben unterzeichneten Vereinbarungen einen weitern Schritt zur Stärkung des internationalen humanitären Rechts im Geiste der Genfer Konventionen darstellen.

Das Internationale Komitee vom Roten Kreuz dankt Ihnen, Herr Bundeskanzler, und dankt Ihnen, meine Herren Botschafter und Minister, für das Vertrauen, das Sie in unsere Institution setzen. Im Namen des Internationalen Komitees vom Roten Kreuz versichere ich Ihnen, dass wir unsere Aufgabe getreu unserer Tradition und im Bewusstsein der völligen Neutralität und Unabhängigkeit unserer Institution erfüllen werden.

Die weitgehende Hilfe und Unterstützung, die uns von der Bundesrepublik Deutschland gemeinsam mit acht anderen Nationen in unserer Arbeit gewährt wird, lässt unsere Institution nicht daran zweifeln, dass der Internationale Suchdienst in Zukunft unter unserer Leitung jene humanitären Verpflichtungen erfüllen kann, die von dieser Organisation erwartet werden.

Gestatten Sie mir, Herr Bundeskanzler, beizufügen, wie sehr es uns erfreut hat, von Ihnen zu vernehmen, dass die getroffene Regelung Ihnen als eine ~~besonders~~ glückliche erscheint. Für Ihr hohes und persönliches Interesse an dieser Frage möchte ich Ihnen namens des Internationalen Komitees besonders danken.

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

BULLETIN Nr. 90

Arolsen, den 26. Juli 1955

AN ALLE MITARBEITER

Unter Bezugnahme auf Bulletin Nr. 89 vom 20. Juni 1955 moechte ich Ihnen nunmehr zur Kenntnis bringen, dass Herr N. Burckhardt vom Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz seine Taetigkeit als Direktor des Internationalen Suchdienstes uebernommen hat.

Der Unterzeichnete wird die Funktion eines stellvertretenden Direktors ausueben.

Herr Borsinger, Mitglied der Delegation des Internationalen Komitees vom Roten Kreuz in Arolsen, hat am 20. ds. Mts. seine Heimreise nach Genf angetreten, und Herr Haas wird voruebergehend dessen Taetigkeit weiterfuehren.

C.L. Widger
Direktor ad interim

Federal Ministry of the Interior

Under the Paris Agreements, the Federal Republic of Germany assumed the obligation of providing the necessary funds for the work of the International Tracing Service to continue. From 1955 to 1969, the Minister for Expellees, Refugees and Victims of War looked after the interests of the ITS. Since 1969, it has been the Federal Ministry of the Interior which has had this responsibility, including provision of funds.

The Section for Expellees, Refugees and Victims of War in the Federal Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the International Tracing Service. The ITS not only refers to it concerning its budget but also turns to it in matters of access to archives in the Federal Republic. Manfred Meissner, Superior Counsellor in the Section, is the person there who, since July 1978, has handled all matters concerning the ITS.

The archives of the International Tracing Service

The ITS' archives today contain 17,118 linear metres of documents. In accordance with its mandate, the International Tracing Service has collected since it was established all available personal data on the former persecutees of the National-Socialist Regime.
Since the beginning, processing the massive number of documents on hand and putting them in a very specific archival order has been an enormous task. A system had to be set up which made it possible to draw all the relevant information on a given individual easily and quickly from all the different documents and lists. This need gave birth to a system, still in use today, consisting of placing the index cards in a central index of names arranged in alphabetic/phonetic order.

The Central Index of Names is still growing and now contains about 43 million reference cards, established in card-indexing. It serves as the key to the ITS' archives.

Administration records from 1951 show that about 100 persons from the typing pool alone were at that time working on the transfer of names and dates from the many tonnes of material onto individual reference cards. A circular of 25 June 1951 from the Chief of Documentation Division ***"To all typing-pool employees"*** is a good explanation of why this work was and still is a prerequisite for effective evaluation:

The following are excerpts from that circular:

"Most of you have been sitting in the same room for months, amid the clatter of typewriters, filling out little cards. You must sometimes find this work monotonous. You probably often wonder what all this is for, what purpose these cards could possibly serve, what will become of them and what role they will play in the work of the ITS.

The answer is simple:

Without these cards and without you to prepare them, we would not be an international tracing service and the ITS would not be able to answer the thousands of requests which pour in every month. The ITS would be hard put to trace anyone, and the many tonnes of documents so carefully filed away in Records Branch would be almost completely useless. You, with your clattering typewriters, are the ones who draw the millions of names and pieces of information out of those documents.

As you know, we have obtained documents from the most varied sources, lists from German civilian offices, the confiscated files and records of the concentration camps from the War Crimes Teams, others from pastors and priests, from prisons, factories, hospitals and many organizations which were active in Germany during or after the War and had contact with non-Germans who were deported from their countries of origin, arrested or otherwise persecuted, or who simply came to work here.

Of the millions so far from home, many are still missing, and their families have asked the ITS to trace them. Others have returned home but they or their governments require certification that they were held prisoner or came here voluntarily. Some have a rightful claim to compensation, others do not; some must substantiate their claims while in other cases claims must be rejected; some people have emigrated and are still being sought by their families.

The ITS can reply to these requests only if it is able to find the information from the hundreds of tonnes of documents in its archives. And it is able to find that information because you have already taken it from the documents and transferred it clearly and legibly onto cards."

These lines are just as valid today as they were 35 years ago. How many tonnes of documents have been added to the ITS' archives since can only be guessed at. The exactness of classification work has therefore become even more important because an error in copying onto one of the cards can make the search for information on an individual a hopeless task.

We take great pride in the fact that at ITS, we have meanwhile attained a highly professional degree of archival classification and that we have also achieved a high standard in technical record management.


BUCHENWALD
BUCHENWALD
FLOSSENBURG
MAUTHAUSEN

The staff of the International Tracing Service

The personnel of the ITS has constantly changed both in number and nationality throughout its history. In the first few years after the War, almost all nationalities which had been drawn into Germany by the War were represented in the Service. Today, the ITS-personnel includes people of 12 different national origins.

In 1945, the Service employed 200 persons. By 1951 there were 1,100 but within the following year the number had shrunk back to 250. It has since remained fairly constant and today, following government post cutbacks which also have affected the ITS since 1982, there are 212.5 permanent posts. Owing to the fact that some persons at ITS are employed on a part-time and half-time basis, the total personnel strength adds up to 244.

Apart from the regular personnel, various people have been employed at the ITS over the last ten years as part of a provision of work programme. The duration and strength of these programmes vary.

In addition, there has been provision for the hiring by ITS of two trainees in 1984, of four in 1985 and as from 1986 of eight trainees. These young people follow a training programme for clerical assistants with a final examination at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Kassel.

Personnel funds are paid out of the budget provided by the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

The salaries have been governed since 1955 by the TVAL (standard wage agreement on working conditions with the Allied forces stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany). The salaries of the German personnel had already been paid according to this standard wage agreement since 1 May 1948, when it was drawn up for German civilians employed by the Allies. The TVAL was amended again in December 1966 and the present agreement is entitled TVAL II.

Until 1955, even the number of hours worked per week varied greatly according to the particular ITS-direction at the time. On the back of a pre – 1955 application form were the words: "The working hours shall be settled in keeping with the regulations of the occupying power". They started at 44, went down to 40, then up to 48 and finally back down to 40 hours a week. After 1955, they remained at 40 until 1 January 1986. The present standard agreement fixes the hours worked per week at 38.5.

Premises of the International Tracing Service

The ITS has had to change location several times. After London, Versailles and Frankfurt, Arolsen was proposed by Colonel Bowring at a meeting on 21 November 1945: "The town of Arolsen is a suitable seat for the Central Tracing Bureau, since it is located on the boundary of three zones, has not been destroyed and has good telegraph and telephone connections."

The UNRRA Central Office was transferred from Frankfurt to Arolsen from 3 to 6 January 1946.

In Arolsen the personnel was housed in different buildings:

local high school
in the present town hall
the "new castle" (now Schlosshotel)
the spa building (now Kurhaushotel)
the Belgian Officers' Mess
"Unter den Eichen" (now the state planning department and building control office)
what is now the Belgian army barracks.

Beginning in 1948, the records and documents were collected by the three Western occupying powers for the International Tracing Service.
Responsible for this in the individual zones were:

US Headquarters in Esslingen,
British Headquarters in Göttingen
and French Headquarters in Rastatt.

After repeated discussions as to whether to relocate the ITS in other cities (including possibly Berlin), it was decided in the early

50s that it should remain permanently in Arolsen and that a building there be provided for the Service.

Since 1952, the ITS' address has been Grosse Allee 5 – 9 in Arolsen where it is housed in a specially constructed building.

The archives grew steadily, requiring more and more space. A house in Wetterburgerstrasse 4 was therefore rented from 1 November 1973 to 31 January 1982.

In 1978, a plan was drawn up to renovate the entire main building. The building itself, the offices and equipment all needed thorough refurbishing. A total of 4.1 million Deutschmarks were spent completely modernizing the ITS.

As entire sections and their documents had to be moved out to accommodate the renovation work, the Haus am Park, which was empty at the time and just a short distance from the main building, was rented in 1980. This allowed the ongoing evaluation work of the ITS to continue unhindered. After the sections concerned had moved back to the main building, the Haus am Park was also renovated and today replaces the house in Wetterburgerstrasse as an annex to the ITS.