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An Herrn Dr. ...
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Arolsen, den 12. August 1941

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INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE
A R C H I V

E. Tiidma

ABSCHRIFT

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

UNRESTRICTED

GENERAL COUNCIL

GC/198

16 March 1951

Geneva

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

An Herrn Greulich

von G. Pechar

Arolsen, den 12. August 1966

In der Anlage erhalten Sie Fotokopien der bei
Fräulein E. Tiidma vorhandenen Kopie von

"The International Tracing Service
BRIEF REVIEW OF ITS HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES"

mit der Bitte, diese in der Hist. Abteilung
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ABSCHRIFT

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

UNRESTRICTED

GENERAL COUNCIL

GC/198
16 March 1951
Geneva
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SEVENTH SESSION

THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE
BRIEF REVIEW OF ITS HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES

(Submitted by the Director-General)

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1957, 1958

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THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

BRIEF REVIEW OF ITS HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Before the Seventh Session of the General Council convenes, the International Tracing Service, which came into existence as the UNRRA Central Tracing Bureau, will have been transferred from the control of the International Refugee Organization to that of the Allied High Commission. The latter authority, fully appreciating the importance of ensuring the security and preservation of the ITS records and the need to continue to make these available in the future as heretofore, has announced its willingness to accept full operational responsibility as from 1 April 1951.

2. It is with great satisfaction that the Director-General is able to report to the General Council this decision, and he has accordingly thought it appropriate to present to Member Governments a brief review of the history of the ITS and its activities during the period it has been the responsibility of the Organization.

B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3. The need to set up machinery for tracing missing persons was first considered in 1943 by the Committee on Displaced Populations of the Allied Post-war Requirements Bureau in London, especially in view of the vast displacements of

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population caused by various circumstances of World War II; in particular, by Nazi persecution of Jews and political opponents, together with the Nazi programme of slave labour. Tentative plans took shape to establish national tracing bureaux (NTB) in various European countries and to develop a central tracing service along the lines of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Prisoner-of-War Card Index.

4. During 1944 the military authorities in Europe became increasingly concerned about "communications to, from and about civilians in liberated areas". The Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) had directed that Displaced Persons be registered on DP.2 cards, and at that time the concept of tracing was to "marry" incoming enquiries against these registration cards. UNRRA was also concerned about this question and, when a tracing and locating unit was set up in May 1945 by SHAEF to collect nominal rolls of concentration camp inmates for onforwarding to the NTB, and also to maintain, by means of the DP.2 cards, a central register of non-repatriable refugees and displaced persons, UNRRA was asked to provide personnel to staff this unit. In June 1945 this unit moved with SHAEF Headquarters from Versailles to Frankfurt.

5. In July 1945, after the dissolution of SHAEF, the Combined Displaced Persons Executive (CDPX) announced the establishment of a central records office and a central tracing bureau, indicating that it would "in due course hand over this responsibility to UNRRA by agreement with all interested organizations".

A quadripartite working group was then set up by CDPX to consider the whole question of tracing. Their report was presented to the Prisoners-of-War, and Displaced Persons (PW and DP) Directorate on 13 September and finally accepted, with minor amendments, by the Coordinating Committee of the Control Commission of Germany on 17 September 1945. This document (CORC/P(45)54) represented the first official policy formulated for the tracing of missing persons and may be

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regarded as the charter of the UNRRA Central Tracing Bureau (CTB). The objectives, as laid down in this document, were to search for missing military and civilian persons of United Nations nationalities and establish the fate of those who would not be found; to locate; collect and preserve all available records regarding refugees and displaced persons in Germany; and to serve as a link to bring interested persons into communication with each other.

6. It was also recommended that each member of the United Nations that had not already established a tracing bureau be invited to do so and that each such bureau should receive all initial enquiries concerning its own nationals. Furthermore, the zonal search bureaux, which had already been established in each zone, should assume responsibility for the initiation of tracing and search in their respective zones, including the handling of all enquiries passed to them by the CTB. The zonal bureaux should operate under the complete jurisdiction of the respective zonal military commanders, subject only to the general policies of the Allied control council and the Central Tracing Policy Board. The CTB and associated Central Records Office, which was already in operation, should be placed at the disposal of the Allied Control Council to be operated by UNRRA under policies and directives issued by the Central Tracing Policy Board. The CTB should function as a central clearing house between the zonal and national bureaux.

7. On 18 October 1945 this approved policy was submitted to UNRRA, which then gave "authority to proceed and carry out the task". In February 1946 UNRRA formulated its tracing policy "to accept responsibility for tracing persons falling under the definition of the Council Resolutions as eligible for UNRRA care. This included persons receiving care from UNRRA in Germany, persons eligible for but not in receipt of such care, and persons technically eligible for such care but now dead". UNRRA could not accept responsibility for tracing

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any Germans, except victims of Nazi persecution. Accordingly, the central headquarters of the CTB was established at Arolsen, Germany, together with the UNRRA Headquarters.

8. In January 1947, with the end of UNRRA in sight, retrenchment in activities consequently necessary, and the transfer of UNRRA Headquarters to Paris imminent, the future of the CTB was reviewed. The PW & DP Directorate stated its requirements to be first of all the completion of the work of the records branch, including child tracing; and, secondly, mass tracing through newspapers and radio in order that information so obtained could be passed to the NTB. The arrangement finally adopted was that of decentralising to the zonal tracing bureaux individual and child tracing, while retaining in Arolsen a central records office and mass tracing. This plan went into effect in February 1947, and UNRRA undertook to continue the operation until the cessation of UNRRA operations on 30 June of that year.

C. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

9. During the First Part of the First Session of the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization in February 1947, the Executive Secretary was instructed "to proceed to the study of the special problem raised by the continuation of the activities of the CTB after 30 June 1947 and to put forward all necessary plans on this subject in connection with the entry into operation of the IRO".

c. In May of the same year the Preparatory Commission further examined the question and, "convinced of the supreme importance of the tracing of missing persons" resolved "to ensure the continuation of tracing activities by means of an International Tracing Bureau, taking into consideration..." that its "scheme would be closely modelled on the proposals of the Conference of National Tracing Bureaux held in Brussels on 15 September 1946". These proposals for the continuation on

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a European scale of the activities already organised by the CTB in Germany had also obtained the support of the recent Conference of the National Tracing Bureaux held in Prague on 3 March 1947. As a consequence, the UNRRA CTB was taken over by PCIRO as from 1 July 1947. As recommended by the Executive Secretary, the activities of the CTB were to be centered on three main functions;

- (1) collective search,
- (2) formation of a library and catalogue,
- (3) tracing on an international scale,

while the NTB were to continue the individual tracing of their respective nationals and the CTB was to be responsible for co-ordinating the work of the NTB.

11. In implementing the resolution just mentioned, the Executive Secretary enlisted the help of the ICRC and requested the secondment of their senior tracing expert, Mr. Maurice Thudichum. This was agreed and a report prepared which was presented to the Preparatory Commission in October 1947. The Executive Secretary was then directed to convert into an International Tracing Service "the present Central Tracing Bureau, its staff, facilities and functions... and to extend the mandate of the ITS to include as far as possible the tracing of all non-German nationals, and of such German nationals as would be eligible under the Constitution of IRO, who have disappeared by reason of the war".

12. All interested Governments whether or not member of the Preparatory Commission, as well as voluntary societies engaged in tracing work, were to be invited to relate their tracing activities to the work of the ITS and arrangements were to be made for the exchange of basic tracing information.

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13. Interested countries were to be notified that, in view of the non-permanent character of the IRO, the ITS could continue to function for a maximum of two or three years and would, during that period, so organise its work as to make feasible the turning over to some more long-term body such tracing functions as remained incomplete as the conclusion of its own activities.
14. Negotiations were to begin with the occupation authorities for the amalgamation and full subordination of the zonal tracing bureaux to the ITS, as well as for arrangements for the collections of necessary documents held by the military authorities or otherwise to be found in the occupational areas; and for suitable arrangements whereby the headquarters might remain in Germany.
15. On 1 January 1948, under the direction of Mr. Thudichum, the International Tracing Service came into being. At this point there were two major jobs to be done: co-ordination of international tracing activities, and re-organisation and re-alignment of the former CTB and zonal bureaux. Contacts were made with all the countries primarily interested in tracing. Liaison officers from France, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Luxembourg, who had previously been attached to the CTB, were transferred to the ITS headquarters, and logistical support was given them. (It is to be noted that the ITS held two international tracing conferences in Arolsen in 1948 and 1949).
16. Agreement was then obtained from the United States military authorities for the ITS headquarters to remain in Arolsen. This central headquarters was to be responsible for all policy planning, liaison with NTB and tracing agencies, and the direction and supervision of zonal field offices. Here was to be centralized individual tracing activities; mass tracing; and the processing, distribution and preservation of documents received from other agencies or collected in the field.
17. It was decided to set up ITS zonal divisions in the British and United States

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Zones of Germany to act as central agents for collecting material in their respective areas and undertake tracing on individual cases as requested by headquarters. Each zone was divided into a certain number of areas with tracing search teams attached.

18. In the British Zone, the IPS division came into being in March 1948 and was established at Goettingen. This entailed closing down and taking over the records of the 55th British Search Bureau (the holding unit of the Control Commission for Germany), which has been in existence since August 1947 and was the last successor of the original zonal bureau.
19. In the United States Zone, the former UNRRA and PCIRO United States zonal tracing bureau was taken over on 1 April 1948 and finally set up at Esslingen.
20. In the French Zone, since tracing activities had always been conducted by the French military authorities at Rastatt, this arrangement was continued on a basis of close collaboration with the ITS. In Berlin the original CTB Liaison Office, situated in the United States Sector, was absorbed by the ITS and continued as a collecting and distributing office for the three Western sectors, as well as maintaining liaison with the Soviet Sector and Soviet Zone.
21. The year 1948, therefore, represented the first part of what can be called a three-year plan. It was a period of re-organization, consolidation and co-ordination, entailing considerable re-equipment in terms of personnel and materials.
22. The year of greatest harvest was 1949. Search plans were in full swing and the processing of documents was accelerated, resulting in the largest number of positive results ever recorded. Full co-operation existed between the ITS and the NTB and tracing agencies; the maximum assistance was afforded by the occupying

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authorities; and German officials in general understood the work of the ITS and were helpful.

23. Also during this year the expanded Child Search Programme was launched by the ITS. Its mandate was to find and identify the maximum number of displaced children in the minimum amount of time, as well as to locate the relatives of these children. The method adopted to achieve this task in Germany was known as the Limited Registration Plan, which is described later in this paper.

D. ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

24. Although it was necessary to begin as early as 1949 planning for the eventual transfer of the ITS to some other body, the volume of work in progress remained undiminished until the spring of 1950; and even despite the curtailments that finally became unavoidable the most important activities have been continued.

25. Apart from, and in addition to, the accomplishments of the UNRRA CTB and agencies working with it, which were considerable, the accomplishments of the ITS during the three-year period ending 31 December 1950, greatly contributed to by the work of the various liaison offices attached to the ITS, are most impressive. The most noteworthy of these accomplishments and the methods by which they were achieved are the following:

Collecting and processing of records.

26. Already by the end of 1947 a vast accumulation of material had been collected by the CTB and zonal tracing bureaux and was in course of processing. Most of this material had been assembled as a result of the military directives issued in 1946, which required the Germans to report and return records concerning UN nationals, though it was found that such reporting was often extremely inaccurate and incomplete. In order, therefore, to ensure a thorough documents search and

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leave no source unexplored, a general coverage documents search plan was instituted. This was carried out by the IFS zonal divisions operating through teams, numbering from 10 to 20 persons, which were attached to the various IRO area installations. In the British Zone the plan was to check the material already received against records held by the Germans and so ascertain the discrepancies, as well as obtain information hitherto unknown. Consequently, it was necessary to undertake a comprehensive recombining and physical rechecking on a geographical basis, of hospitals, factories, prisons, registry offices, cemeteries, etc. Upon location this material was acquired, or, where this was not possible, copied on the spot by mobile photostat teams. Some idea of the work entailed is illustrated by the fact that 1,570 hospitals and 248 prisons had to be visited. In the United States Zone, apart from a physical rechecking of graves, the system employed was to check the returns from "sources", such as hospitals, factories, prisons, etc., of which there were approximately 168,000.

27. The second main source for procuring information on displaced persons, refugees and victims of the Nazi regime, was from records held by the occupying authorities (Documents Centres, War Crimes, etc.) who held title to these records by virtue of capture. Such records comprise concentration camp documents, transport lists, interrogations of Nazi personnel, etc. Permission had to be obtained by the IFS to procure the loan of this material. Unfortunately, most of it could be released to the IFS only after the end of the War Crimes trials, thus recording the work of the IFS by two to three years.

28. The third source of information was from IRO, i.e., registration cards of persons eligible under the IRO mandate, together with nominal rolls giving the present disposition of movements (repatriation, resettlement, etc.)

29. Once assembled, all record material had to be sorted into appropriate categories

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collated (i.e., all information concerning the same person brought together, irrespective of the source); copied, where necessary; distributed to outside agencies; and carded for inclusion into the master card index to form a permanent reference against which to answer incoming enquiries.

30. Meanwhile, the ITS Headquarters, where all this information was finally integrated, was collecting, exchanging and centralizing information of vital importance from NTB and tracing agencies in many other countries. (It frequently happened, for example, that the missing data essential to complete records of a particular concentration camp were found partly in one country, partly in another.) Engaged on the records work described above in the peak period of 1949 were 667 personnel of which 11 were international.

31. Through these activities 100 tons of documents were collected, involving 20,110,875 Allied nationals. The distribution of records to NTB and other tracing agencies has involved more than 1,000,000 pages of documents and nearly 1,000,000 persons. The checking of individual graves of Allied nationals yielded information on 155,093 persons. On the basis of records in possession of the ITS, 721 notifications of death were issued and 13,774 certificates of incarceration, particularly valuable to persons claiming indemnification. It may truly be said that, by the distribution of this material, hundred of thousands of enquiries were stopped at the source. These records have not only helped countries concerned to establish the place of residence and the civil status of their nationals and assisted in the reconstruction of vital statistics, but also, by the location of graves, helped the repatriation work of the various graves commissions.

32. The ITS also published a two-volume catalogue (821 pages) and a 152-page supplement of concentration camps and commandos operated by the Nazis in Germany,

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Austria and occupied territories. This catalogue was especially useful to Allied governments in determining the categories of those of their nationals who were imprisoned and claim compensation.

33. Further, the ITS constitutes the main source of providing documentary evidence on the basis of which the German Civil Registration Office (Sonderstandesamt), established at the ITS Headquarters in 1949, issues certificates of death for persons who died in German concentration camps, as well as the registration of births which occurred in camps and Lebensborn homes. Altogether, 1,990 death certificates have been issued.

34. The comprehensive documentary activities mentioned above, have built up the most extensive collection of its kind in the world. It has become, even for the Germans, one of the most authoritative and authentic sources against which the justness of claims made by former concentration camp inmates and prisoners for indemnification can be certified. (At the present time the ITS is rechecking, on behalf of the State of Bavaria, 40,000 such claims.)

Master Index and Individual Tracing.

35. The core of the ITS, however, is the master card index. This is arranged in an alphabetical/phonetic system, which was adopted in 1949 and based on the phonetic principles developed by the ICRC. By this means all variations of the spelling of one particular name are brought together. (There are, for instance, 77 different spellings for the name KUBNEZOW.) As a result of the introduction of this system 20,000 cases were solved. This index contains individual information extracted from the documents already mentioned; a register of most of the refugees and displaced persons from UNRRA days up to the present; and notes of all incoming enquiries.

36. At the beginning of 1948, this index contained 1,976,499 cards; by the end of

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1950 it contained 10,538,358; and 28,000 new cards are inserted daily. On 1 January 1948 personnel engaged in this activity numbered 29 (1 international). By 1 January 1951 there were 185 (2 international).

37. It is against this master index that all incoming enquiries are checked. Formerly (until the cessation of individual tracing in March 1950), if no information was obtained the enquiry was routed to the appropriate NTB or tracing agency. If the last known whereabouts of the missing person was in Germany, the enquiry was sent to the zone concerned, where physical field search was undertaken. The information thus obtained was already to ITS Headquarters for onforwarding to the enquirer. During this period the ITS was in contact with more than 100 NTB and tracing agencies in 35 countries. This correspondence was conducted in six languages and was often extremely time-consuming, sometimes involving as many as twelve actions on one case. After March 1950, "individual tracing" as such was ended and enquiries were answered only on the basis of information held by the ITS. Altogether nearly 220,303 individual tracing requests emanating from approximately 100 countries were handled from 1 January 1948 to 1 January 1951. The fate of more than 26,797 missing persons was positively established, and tentatively of a further 18,997. Those cases on which no information has been received are not closed. They remain open in the master index until such time as some information is forthcoming, and as the processing of documents proceeds more and more of these cases can be solved.

38. In addition, the records from certain tracing agencies which had ceased activities (Central Location Index, American Joint Distribution Committee, etc.) were integrated into the files of the ITS. These amounted to approximately 200,000 and resulted in many locations and the obviation of a considerable amount of duplication in tracing work.

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39. On 1 January 1948, there were 48 persons (5 international); in 1949, 108 (17 international) and on 1 July 1950, 78 (3 international) engaged in this activity.

40. For those "desperate" cases, where all other tracing action had failed to produce positive results, the last resort was mass tracing, which consists of publicising by means of newspapers, radio, cinema slides and search lists the names and data concerning missing persons. From 1948 until its cessation in March 1950, this branch publicised 560,000 names through the media of 154 different language newspapers in Germany and other countries; radio stations in Germany and elsewhere; cinema slides; and the distribution of approximately 1,000 weekly search lists sent out to IRO camps, agencies in Germany, Austria, Italy and to NTS and other tracing agencies elsewhere. A total of 7,000 positive locations resulted from these activities.

41. In 1949 there was a total of 20 persons (1 international). This activity ceased in March 1950.

42. Total personnel engaged in the various activities described above increased and then decreased, as the following figures indicate:

On 1.1.48	267	(36 international)
On 1.1.49	1,135	(108 international)
On 1.1.50	1,789	(141 international)
On 1.1.51	1,037	(29 international)

E. CHILD SEARCH.

43. The search for unaccompanied children first began in 1945 under the aegis of UNRRA. At that time this activity comprised a search for displaced children (conducted independently in each zone) on a mass basis without previous identification of individuals. This was carried out by teams which, district by district,

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visited children's institutions, child welfare agencies, schools, hospitals, etc.

Child Tracing on the other hand, carried out by the UNRRA CTB, denoted the individual efforts made to find identified children for whom individual tracing requests had been received; and also to trace the relatives of children located by the Child Search teams.

44. As the problem unfolded itself through search and tracing, there were revealed five main categories of unaccompanied children:

- (1) Those kidnapped by the Nazis for Germanization,
- (2) Those born in Germany to forced labourers and forcibly separated from their mothers,
- (3) Those separated from their relatives and country of origin as the result of hostilities,
- (4) "Non-Aryan" children declared racially undesirable by the Nazis, and
- (5) Children born to displaced persons during and after the war and abandoned.

45. Through UNRRA Child Search/Tracing activities many hundreds of children were discovered. In view of the unprecedented fluctuation of population, however, and since the children were frequently intentionally moved in order to avoid detection, the methods up to 1947 were not considered the most accurate nor the most efficient.

46. When PCIRO decided in 1948 to sponsor Child Search, it was on a centralized basis with the objective of finding the maximum number of children in the minimum amount of time. Accordingly, Child Search and Child Tracing activities were merged.

47. The system finally adopted in 1948 which went into operation in 1949, was the

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Limited Registration Plan carried out in the three zones of Western Germany and Western sectors of Berlin. This Plan involved an investigation of the principal sources from which the missing children were likely to be found, i.e., records of institutions, foster families and adoptions. The total number of children's cases reported amounted to 343,057 (191,199 in institutions, 130,682 in foster homes, 21,176 adopted).

48. The next step was to register those children likely to be eligible for IRO services, establish their identity and nationality if possible, and initiate tracing for their relatives if no enquiry was held on file in the children's master index. Upon further investigation many children were found to be German, while the nationality of others was not determinable.

49. The "germanized" children were difficult to discover as their names, birth-dates and nationalities had usually been completely obliterated. They had been subjected to intensive German doctrinization and, in the case of smaller children, no longer remembered their rightful parents nor the country of their origin. Such children could only be found by detective search for documents which might reveal the identity and subsequent disposal made of these children during the Nazi regime. After further investigation and screening, a total of 4,000 children were finally registered by Child Search, their cases being passed to IRO field offices for determination of eligibility. When accepted by IRO the children became the responsibility of IRO child welfare officers, who initiated social investigations preparatory to making final plans for their future permanent establishment.

50. At the same time as the Limited Registration Plan was being carried out, individual enquiries were still being received. These amounted to 5,576, comprising 46 nationalities and emanating from 27 different countries, from

1 January 1949 to 1 January 1951. They were handled in the same way as adult enquiries. Altogether, a total of 4,808 cases were solved by Child Search and Child Tracing during 1949/50.

51. On 1 January 1948, the total Child Search/Tracing staff amounted to 11 (2 international); by 1 January 1950, 386 (59 international); and by 1 January 1951 it had been reduced to 20 (1 international).

F. CURTAILMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND PLANS FOR TRANSFER

52. By the autumn of 1949, it had become increasingly urgent to find a successor organization to be responsible for the continuation of the activities of the ITS. IRO was scheduled to terminate operations in June 1950, by which time the main work of the ITS was not likely to be completed. Western European countries in particular were extremely anxious that valuable information concerning their nationals should not be lost to them, such information being essential for indemnification and other purposes, such as succession, remarriage, etc.

53. The Director-General was directed by the General Council to "re-examine in detail the programme and budget of the ITS and to effect the maximum possible savings and simplification of operations in order that the main documentation functions of the service may be completed by 30 June 1950 within the limits of the funds allocated", and, further, "to negotiate with interested governments and with occupation authorities for the transfer by 30 June 1950 of the then remaining tracing functions of the International Tracing Service to governments or to another international or intergovernmental body".

54. During the first quarter of 1950 every effort was made within the ITS to implement the first part of these instructions. Mass tracing was closed down as

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answered only on the basis of records held by the ITS.

55. In the meantime, in response to an instruction from the council at its Third (Special) Session, the Director-General had been discussing with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the possibility of that body taking over responsibility for the ITS, at least custody of the archives and certain essential functions. Accordingly, the ICRC sent an investigating mission to ITS Headquarters. These negotiations led to no positive result, however, principally because the ICRC felt unable to take on certain essential operational functions that could not be completed by 30 June 1950.

56. In view of the failure of the possibility of turning over responsibility for the ITS to the ICRC; the fact that the life of the organization had been extended through a supplementary period; and that the organization was able to make certain savings in the funds allocated for the ITS, it was found practical to extend the activities of the ITS beyond 30 June on a reduced scale. It would thus be possible to complete the most important tasks and provide time for further negotiations concerning the future of the ITS.

57. At the Fifth Session of the General Council, in March 1950, the need was again stressed to supply the NTF with material concerning their nationals; and the Director-General was instructed to make provision in the Plan of Expenditure for the Supplementary Period of the IRO of the necessary funds for the maintenance at Arosen after 1 July 1950 of a reduced IRO supervisory staff, provided that such provision not exceed the amount of the savings which could be made in the sum allocated in the Plan of Expenditure for 1949-1950 for the ITS, including Child Search; and to enter into negotiations with the High Commission in Germany with a view to arranging for the taking over at a date as early as possible before 31 March 1951 of the operations of the ITS.

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58. Drastic reductions had to be made in the Child Search Programme immediately. After 1 April 1950 no further children were registered, although the work of identifying and documenting children already found continued until 31 August. After that date the Child Search Headquarters (Esslingen) was liquidated and all records removed to Arolsen. Incoming enquiries were handled on the same basis as those for adults.

59. In all sections of the ITS plans were made immediately to reduce personnel, meanwhile concentrating on the major work of processing material for the NTBs. International staff, which totalled 144 on 1 January 1950, numbered only 30 by December of that year, and indigenous personnel 1,113 as against 1,912. The Berlin Liaison Office had already been closed. The United States Zone division was closed down in September and the British Zone division in December, leaving only field representatives with a very reduced staff to complete the work of locating and checking graves. Records from these field offices were transferred to ITS headquarters at Arolsen.

G. TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY

60. In September 1950 the Allied High Commission, having been approached regarding the take-over of the ITS, agreed in principle to assume responsibility as of 1 January 1951 and set up a working committee composed of British, French and United States representatives to negotiate the transfer. Although the collection of documents had in the main been completed, there still remained a considerable amount of processing to be done. In order, therefore, to be able to take over the ITS and complete this work so that ultimately the service would represent an information centre only, the High Commission proposed to take over operational responsibility as from 1 April 1951, provided that IRO send eight tracing experts, the cost of whose services would be borne by the IRO, to be attached to the ITS

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for a period of six months. IRO agreed to this arrangement since the sum involved was within the savings effected for the ITS 1949/50 financial year and which had been brought forward for ITS expenditure during the year 1950/51. Further, IRO offered to place at the disposal of the Allied High Commission such office supplies, transport and other IRO equipment as would be necessary to continue the operation. By the middle of February 1951, these negotiations had been satisfactorily concluded.

H. CONCLUSION

61. The Director-General feels certain that Member Governments take the greatest satisfaction in having been associated with work of such great humanitarian significance. The importance of feeding and clothing refugees and re-establishing them firmly is evident; what is perhaps not so evident, and yet perhaps of equal importance, has been the effects on the morale of these unhappy people of successful tracing and reuniting of lost relatives.

62. In conclusion the Director-General would like to call attention to gracious tributes paid to the services rendered by the ITS in the form of messages from Belgium, Canada, France, Denmark, England, Israel, Netherlands, South Africa and Sweden. Furthermore, the Council of the Netherlands Red Cross has awarded to the Director of the ITS and the British and United States zonal division chief its decoration "pro merito". The Director-General himself would like to commend most highly Mr. Thudichum and the entire ITS staff for their very considerable achievements during the last three years, particularly taking into account the great difficulties which had to be faced and overcome.

63. On behalf of members of the ITS staff, as well as on his own behalf, the Director-General wishes also to express to the Allied High Commission and its Working Committee his deep appreciation of their understanding and co-operation, which has made possible and facilitated the transfer of the ITS, thereby saving

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these activities from total liquidation, and to those organizations and individuals who, in the past as well as now, have given their assistance in the execution of this important work of tracing.

Die Richtigkeit der Abschrift bescheinigt:

Für den Geschäftsführer des ITS

Dr. W. MOSSA

Arolsen, den 7. April 1953

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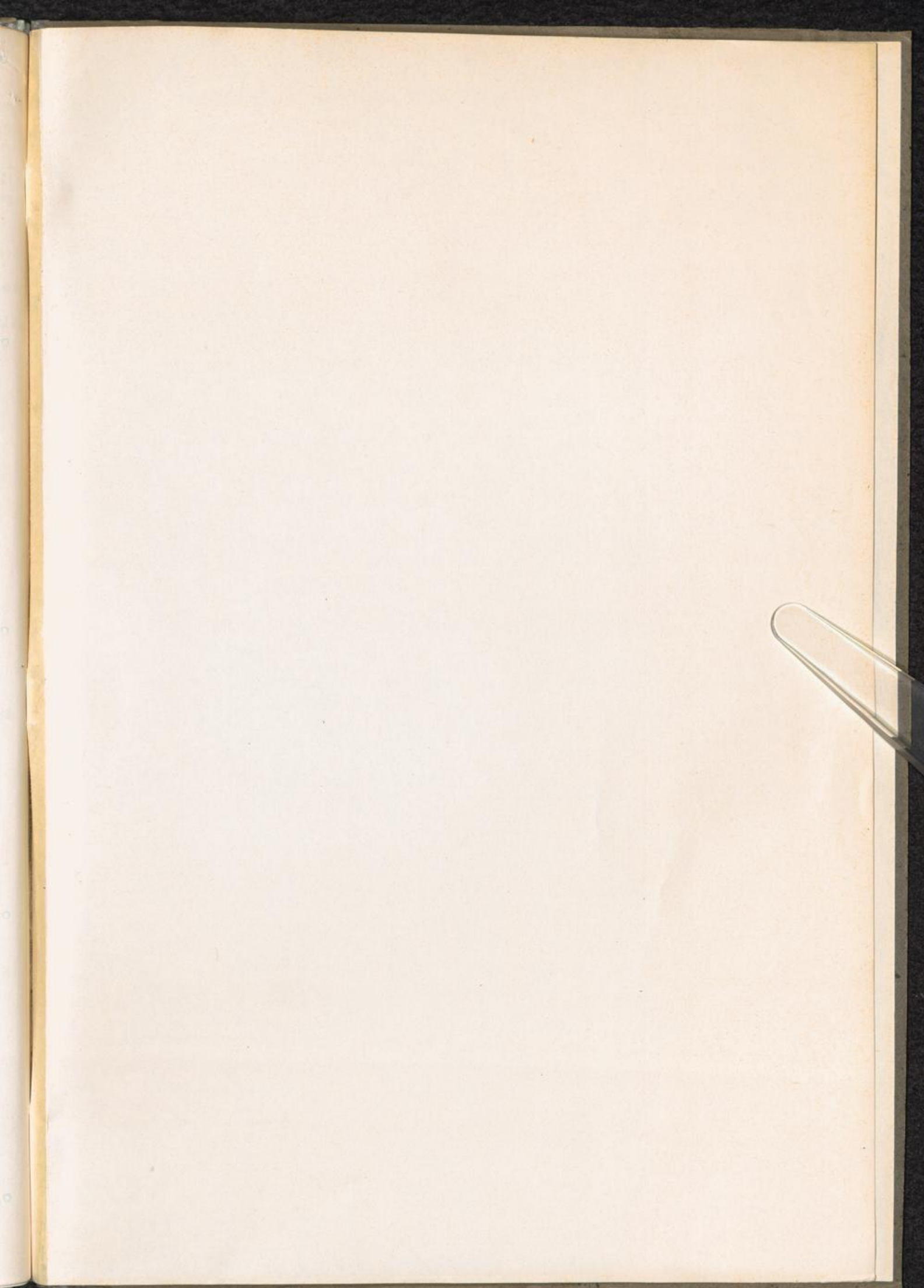
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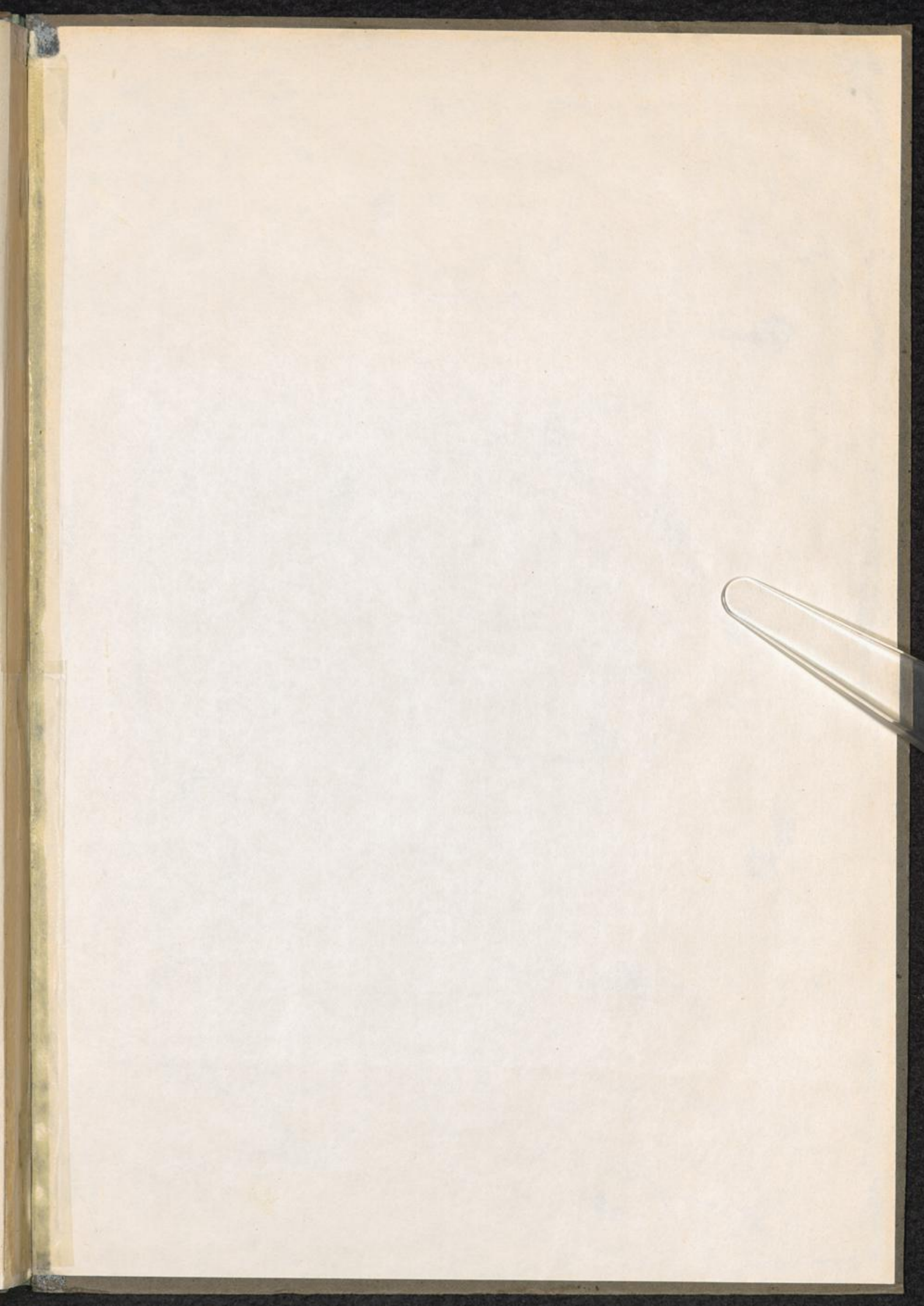
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