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leading university personalities particularly interested in humanitarian law.

At the end of the year, Mr. H. G. Beckh, delegate, also stopped in Yugoslavia where he met the heads of the Yugoslav Red Cross. In Belgrade he also met Mr. Popović, head of the department for the execution of sentences at the Secretariat of Internal Affairs, who informed him that the ICRC would be authorised to make further visits to Yugoslav prisons in the summer of 1965.

**Vatican.**—A delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Beckh, was received in private audience by His Holiness the Pope, who demonstrated his interest in the question of family reunions and visits in Berlin.

## **6. SPECIAL SERVICES**

### **Central Tracing Agency (Geneva)**

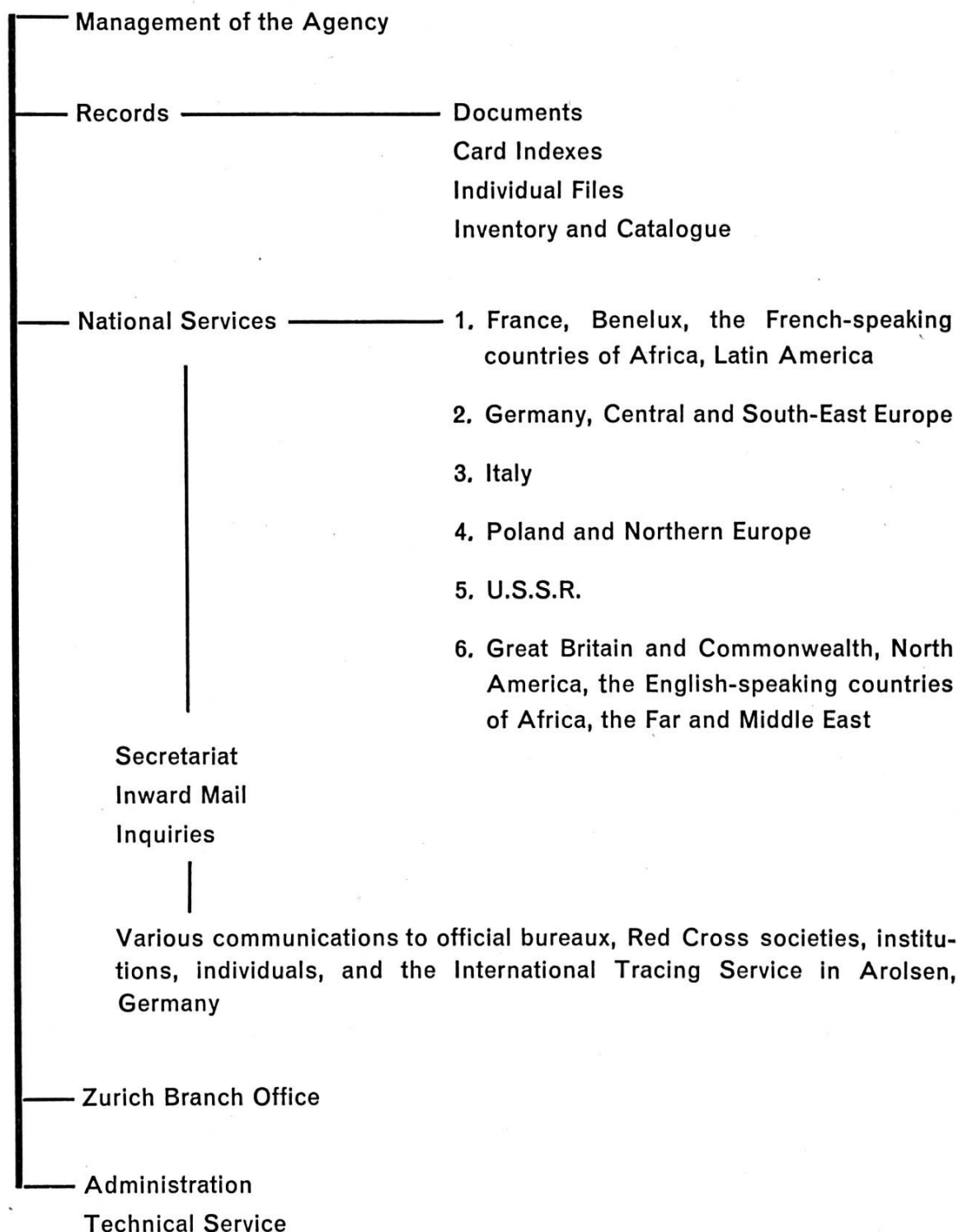
Even twenty years after the end of the Second World War, the activity of the Central Tracing Agency which was previously called the Central Prisoners of War Agency, continues unabated. This important branch of the ICRC in 1964 received 61,449 queries and communications of all sorts (as against 47,512 in 1963) whilst outgoing mail consisted of no less than 60,987 items as against 50,300 for the previous year.

This activity of the Central Tracing Agency in connection with all conflicts and their aftermath is of considerable importance by reason of its humanitarian effects, in view of the fact that many archives in countries stricken by war were destroyed, so that the records held in Geneva are in many cases the only source of information available to former prisoners of war or other victims of hostilities. The Agency has already been the means of bringing comfort to millions of human beings to judge from the following figures : for the period from 1939-1945 alone, the Agency compiled 36 million index cards representing some 15 million individual cases.

Far from becoming any less useful in 1964, this card index relating to the Second World War was put to even greater use than in previous years. In fact, there are many veterans who are now

# The Central Tracing Agency

AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE I.C.R.C. IN GENEVA



approaching retiring age and who, in order to supplement pensions to which they are entitled are required to produce evidence that they were prisoners of war or interned civilians. Upon their request the Agency issues capture cards. In 1964 it issued 4,795 such cards to former prisoners of all sorts of nationalities.

Thus, work continues to be carried out more or less at full capacity in most of the services in the Central Tracing Agency.

Activity increased in the Italian section : it recorded 15,000 inquiries, that is to say, 10,000 more than in 1963. This increase was caused by the Italian Government's publication of its programme of compensation from funds made available for that purpose by the Federal Republic of Germany. In order to answer applicants wishing to justify their claims to pension, the Agency had to maintain close contact with the International Tracing Service in Arolsen.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the Central Tracing Agency's activity has not been immune to the influence of world events. It was particularly affected by the troubles which occurred in the Congo and which gave rise to several hundred inquiries from all over the world, from official government offices, private persons, economic undertakings, and religious groups. The inquiries received in connection with these events concerned people of every race and nationality. Below is a list of countries whose nationals were the subject of communications, tracing work and inquiries : Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Congo, Cyprus, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Great Britain and the Commonwealth, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, United Arab Republic, USA, Yugoslavia.

The Agency received 119 Telex messages from Leopoldville giving lists of people who were safe and sound, admitted to hospital, or reported missing, as well as 310 dead, of whom 210 were Belgian nationals.

As a result of the war in the Yemen, the Agency had many messages to convey between prisoners and their families. This was

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<sup>1</sup> See page 39.

particularly the case for Egyptian soldiers taken prisoner by the Yemeni royalists and for whom the ICRC was the only channel of communication enabling them to give a sign of life to their families.<sup>1</sup>

Again in Vietnam the Agency acted as an intermediary for the transmission of correspondence between the detainees and their families. However, efforts to contact the American nationals taken prisoner by the National Front of Liberation of South Vietnam had been unavailing by the end of the year.<sup>2</sup>

All this activity by the Agency necessitates its maintaining close co-operation with many national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Several of these, indeed, have their own tracing services or information bureaux whose card index systems are a source of information in innumerable cases and dovetail with those of the Agency in Geneva, thus enabling inquiries to be brought to a successful conclusion.

At this point mention should be made of the considerably improved co-operation with the National Societies of East European countries and particularly with the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Soviet Union in Moscow. Thanks to extensive correspondence between the Agency and the National Societies of these countries many family connections which had been lost, sometimes for years, and even since the 1917 revolution, were resumed. Many were the Russian emigrants who turned to the ICRC in the hope of establishing contact with their families in the USSR once again. Numerous inquiries came in from Moscow, sent by Soviet citizens seeking news of a relative who had gone abroad years ago.

Inquiries undertaken by the Agency in response to these requests were frequently successful, thereby giving joy to the people concerned, some of whom made a point of conveying their feelings to the ICRC. As an example, we may quote two tracing cases which were successful :

A Russian emigrant, Mr. V., had been without news of his family since 1918. He had left his parents, 4 brothers and 2 sisters in their homeland and had given them no sign of life. At the

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<sup>1</sup> See page 7 above.

<sup>2</sup> See page 27.

beginning of 1964 he finally decided to attempt to resume his contact with them and he was advised by the Soviet consulate in Paris to write to the ICRC. On receiving Mr. V.'s inquiry, the Central Tracing Agency sent a message to the address in the USSR which he had given. A neighbour replied saying that V.'s parents had been dead for several years, that 2 brothers were killed during the war, but that two other brothers and the two sisters were still alive. All four had left their native village but the Agency succeeded in tracing them and making contact with them. It shortly afterwards received a letter from one of the brothers in which he expressed his joy on learning that the missing member of the family, about whom he had known nothing for so long, was still alive. In this way these brothers and sisters who had not seen or heard from each other for 47 years were able to correspond, thanks to the ICRC, which received from Mr. V. a moving testimony of gratitude.

The second example concerns Mrs. Olga D. who, with her mother, her three sisters and her brother, lived in a village in the Ukraine. As the family originally came from Germany the occupation authorities sent it back to Germany in 1943 and the son was drafted into the Wehrmacht. The mother and her four daughters had to go their separate ways to earn a living. At the end of the war Olga returned to the USSR, married and settled far from her native village. In March 1964, the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva received, through the intermediary of the Soviet Red Cross, an inquiry from Olga who wished to know if the members of her family, of whom she had been without news since 1945, were still alive. Painstaking investigation revealed that one of the sisters, Martha, had migrated to Canada immediately after the war, had married in that country and had been joined by her mother, her sister Alma and her brother Jonat. She had also kept in touch with her fourth sister who had settled in California. Thus, in spite of the fact that inquiries were hampered by the changed names of the sisters who had married in the meantime, and despite the fact that they were so far afield, one being in the USSR and the others in America, family ties were renewed after they had been severed for 19 years.



We would recall that there is a branch of the Central Tracing Agency in Zurich which continues to fulfil a very useful role. At the end of the war this branch, the largest and oldest in Switzerland outside Geneva, employed 330 people. Since that time, thanks to the support given by the town of Zurich which provides premises free of charge, this branch has unceasingly carried out a by no means inconsiderable task and one which is necessary in view of the shortage of personnel at the ICRC headquarters. In 1964 there were only two paid employees in the Zurich branch assisted by several voluntary workers.

### **International Tracing Service (Arolsen)**

The International Tracing Service (ITS) at Arolsen (near Kassel in the Federal Republic of Germany) works in close co-operation with the Central Tracing Agency and is still the most important source of documentary material on the plight of displaced persons, deportees or persons reported missing during the Second World War, both in Germany and in countries which were occupied by the German Army. The ITS is managed by the ICRC pursuant to agreements signed in Bonn on June 6, 1955 and renewed on May 12, 1960.

The activity of the ITS, like that of the Central Tracing Agency, has increased by comparison with the previous year. This increase, which in particular concerned requests for certificates of detention, was due mainly to the German Federal Government's decision to broaden its programme of compensation to victims of the National Socialist regime.

The ITS continued its other routine tasks, such as searches in its card indexes, the preparation of a revised edition of the catalogue of camps and prisons, and the checking of deaths of Soviet nationals according to the lists of casualties. It also received new documents, notably a list of detainees who had been in the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, and a large number of clinical records concerning displaced persons in Bavaria.

Total requests for inquiries and certificates received by the ITS in 1964 amounted to 197,805 (as against 100,799 in 1963);

it issued 208,500 (158,498 in 1963) certificates and positive reports. It also published its own quarterly reports with complete statistical data.

### **Training of Medical Personnel and Relief to War Disabled**

By virtue of Article 4 (e) of its statutes, the ICRC in readiness for any possible conflicts " shall contribute to the preparation and development of medical personnel and medical equipment, in co-operation with the Red Cross organisations, the medical services of the armed forces, and other competent authorities." The Medical Personnel Section therefore endeavours to collect all available information on medical personnel in all countries in respect of organisation, recruitment, training and mobilisation to meet emergencies. It maintains frequent contact with the League of Red Cross Societies in this connection, in conformity with its agreement with the League.

In this field, in 1964, Miss Anny Pfirter, who is in charge of this service, carried out several missions to nursing schools and associations in various countries. She organised seminars intended primarily to make the Geneva Conventions more widely known. Participants studied situations with which military medical personnel might be faced in the event of conflict, bearing in mind their rights and duties as defined by the Conventions.

A nursing instructor, Miss Eveline Darbre, assistant to the head of this service, carried out a mission to the ICRC Field Hospital at Uqhd in the North of the Yemen from August to November. In particular she was entrusted with the task of training Yemeni nursing assistants.

Generally speaking, the Service was in close contact with the nursing world. It participated in the General Assembly of the WHO in March and in the work of the Leagues' Consultative Committee on Nursing in July. It received visits at the headquarters of the ICRC from a great many nurses and nursing students. In addition its correspondence was considerable and it replied to many requests for information.



On page 14 an account is given of the ICRC's mission to the Yemen in which will be found details on the activity carried out by this Service for the benefit of the war disabled.

### **Assistance to the victims of pseudo-medical experiments**

The ICRC, which had agreed to act as intermediary for the remittance of the financial assistance offered by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to victims of pseudo-medical experiments in German concentration camps under the National Socialist regime, received a great many applications for compensation in 1964. They came from Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In co-operation with the Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned, the Committee medically examined each case. Seventy claims were kept on file for submission to the Neutral Commission responsible for deciding the validity of claims and which was scheduled to meet in March 1965.

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# SUMMARY

## TABLE OF ICRC RELIEF ACTIONS IN 1964

(Material Relief is but one of many aspects of the ICRC's humanitarian activity)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Category of Persons assisted</i>	<i>Value in Swiss francs</i>
<i>Brazil . . . . .</i>	Detainees . . . . .	900
<i>Cyprus . . . . .</i>	Victims of events . . . . .	93,600
<i>Congo: Albertville and Stanleyville . . .</i>	Victims of events . . . . .	53,600
<i>Cuba . . . . .</i>	Detainees . . . . .	1,100
<i>Hungary . . . . .</i>	Disabled (for manufacture of artificial limbs) . . . . .	12,500
	Civilian population (sick) . . . . .	12,900
<i>Laos . . . . .</i>	Refugees . . . . .	78,000
<i>Morocco . . . . .</i>	Prisoners . . . . .	51,320
<i>Poland . . . . .</i>	Civilian population (sick) . . . . .	23,700
<i>South Vietnam . .</i>	Internees . . . . .	25,730
	Homeless . . . . .	1,730
<i>Yemen (Republic)</i>	Victims of the conflict . . . . .	83,000
<i>Yemen (Royalist) .</i>	Prisoners . . . . .	13,500
<i>Yugoslavia . . . .</i>	Homeless . . . . .	1,800
<i>Miscellaneous . . .</i>	Detainees, refugees, sick, etc. . . . .	101,350
	TOTAL	554,730
<i>Yemen</i>		
<i>Overheads for the field hospital at Uqhd (North Yemen) for 1964 amounted to . . . . .</i>		994,571
<i>Nepal</i>		
<i>Foodstuffs distributed to refugees by Swiss Red Cross and "l'Aide suisse aux pays extra-européens", under the respon- sibility of the ICRC . . . . .</i>		360,000
<i>In total the ICRC transmitted and distributed material relief and dispensed medical attention to a value of . . . . .</i>		1,909,301