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## EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

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In addition to continuing its activities arising from the sequels of the Second World War and those in favour of some of the victims of the 1974 Cyprus conflict, the ICRC carried out numerous missions in most of the countries of Europe and in North America, with the purpose of improving its relations with National Societies and Governments, especially those taking part in its operations throughout the world, whether directly, by providing personnel, or indirectly, by providing financial support or aid in kind. ICRC representatives also attended several seminars and other events organized by the National Societies in those countries.

With a view to extending this policy of contacts, the President of the ICRC twice visited Italy, where he was received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Alessandro Pertini, and to Vatican City, where he was granted an audience with Pope John Paul II. On the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of the Austrian Red Cross, the President

travelled to Vienna. When he visited Paris, he was welcomed by M<sup>me</sup> Simone Veil, President of the European Parliament.

Various missions were carried out by members of the Committee, including:

— a visit to the USSR, where the ICRC delegation, headed by Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, Vice-President, was received by the leaders of the Soviet Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and by members of the Government, the armed forces and the academic world;

— a mission to Italy, where Dr. Athos Gallino held talks with leading officials of the Italian Red Cross and with several members of the Government.

Among the many personalities welcomed at ICRC headquarters in Geneva were the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Constantin Tsatsos, on 19 March, then, on 30 April, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and Northern

### THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

The International Tracing Service (ITS), established since 1946 in Arolsen, a small village near Cassel, in the Federal Republic of Germany, is engaged essentially in gathering, classifying, storing and using all documents relating to Germans and non-Germans who were held in the Nazi labour or concentration camps and to non-Germans displaced because of the Second World War. In particular, the ITS supplies to former victims or their families, who may wish to claim their rights to a pension or compensation, a certificate confirming that they were in a concentration or labour camp or that they worked as foreign labourers during the war, or that they were in a refugee camp immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The ITS also issues medical certificates and death certificates.

The ITS was created in London in 1943, when the Allied military authorities were making preliminary arrangements for administration of the civilian population as the continent of Europe was gradually liberated. In 1954, a Convention was signed by the United States, Great Britain and France settling certain questions arising from the war and the occupation. Under this Convention, the Federal Republic of Germany undertook to be responsible for continuing the work of the ITS, which until then had been operated by various military and civilian bodies. In 1955, with the agreement of the American, British and French Governments, the German Government requested the ICRC, as a neutral and impartial institution, to accept the direction and administration of the archives of the ITS. It was 25 years, therefore, in 1980, since the ICRC had been entrusted, by international agreement, with the management of the ITS.

The Service is paid for by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, which included the item in the budget of the Ministry of the Interior. Over the years, it has built up archives which, although they are acknowledged to be incomplete, contain documentation on about 12 million civilians, of different nationalities, who were victims of the Nazi regime. Since its inception, the International Tracing Service has dealt with requests concerning some 1.6 million cases.

The ITS publishes at Arolsen its own report of activities, from which we give the following excerpt of statistics: in 1980, to requests from 36 countries, the ITS provided 42,981 replies. These were based on information in its archives and comprised 6,973 imprisonment certificates, 3,395 certificates relating to labour during the war, 1,606 reports and certificates concerning periods in displaced persons' camps, 736 medical certificates and 480 death certificates, in addition to other documents.

Ireland, during her official visit to Switzerland. She was accompanied on her visit to the ICRC by Federal Counsellor Pierre Aubert, representatives of the Genevese authorities, and leading officials of various international organizations.

On most of these missions and during receptions at the headquarters, the President of the ICRC was assisted by Mr. Melchior Borsinger, delegate general for Europe and North America, who retired at the end of July 1980. To replace him, the ICRC appointed Mr. Frank Schmidt, formerly delegate general for Africa, who took up his new duties on 1 January 1981.

#### **Activities linked with the aftermath of the Second World War**

The ICRC performed a great deal of work in connection with the aftermath of the Second World War, both through the activities of its Central Tracing Agency (see also page 66) and through the International Tracing Service, ITS (see box).

Even today, 36 years after the end of hostilities, 33% of the volume of work performed by the CTA is concerned with the aftermath of the 1939-1945 war. In 1980, the "Europe zone" of the CTA received approximately 16,700 requests for searches or for certificates of captivity, sickness, hospitalization or death. The requests for searches related to former prisoners of war, deported persons, military and civilian, former internees, and persons who had left their countries before, during or after

the war and with whom the contact, once broken, had not been re-established. Overall, 20% of the cases dealt with during the year were successfully settled.

In addition, the CTA received many requests to reunite families, and in so doing it collaborates with the authorities and the Red Cross Societies in the countries concerned.

It may be noted, incidentally, that the CTA also dealt, in 1980, with a few cases arising out of the war of 1914-1918!

#### **Cyprus**

From 13 to 24 January 1980, the headquarters delegate in charge of activities connected with Cyprus went to the island on a new mission. She visited about 1,400 Greek Cypriots who had remained in the northern part of the island, under Turkish Cypriot rule, and contacted Turkish Cypriots living in southern Cyprus.

As in the previous year, the purpose of the mission was to inquire into the situation of these groups of people from the humanitarian viewpoint and to undertake any necessary representations to the competent authorities. The delegate discussed the problems she encountered with the representatives of the Cyprus Government, with the Turkish Cypriot authorities, with representatives of the United Nations Force and with the Cypriot Red Cross.