

# International Tracing Service (ITS)

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or the United Arab Republic ; 285 new cases were dealt with in 1959 and departures of 396 stateless families were placed on record.

\* \* \*

The other sections of the Central Agency continued their work on a variable but, on the whole, useful scale. As the nature of their work, described in our report for 1958, has not changed, it is not referred to here.

### **INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (ITS) IN AROLSSEN**

Since 1955 <sup>1</sup> the ICRC has been entrusted with the administration of the International Tracing Service in Arolsen (German Federal Republic) which is the most important centre of information on persons deported, displaced or missing in Germany and the countries occupied by the German forces during the Second World War. The work of this Service was still considerable in 1959 although there was a slight decrease in the number of cases dealt with. It mainly consisted of supplying individual applicants and German administrative bodies with the documents required for the payment of compensation to victims of the national-socialist regime in accordance with the legislation in force in the Federal Republic.

In 1959 the ITS received 125,871 applications (154,581 in 1958) which included :

- 64,280 requests for certificates to obtain compensation ;
- 38,540 individual enquiries and requests for photostat copies of medical records ;
- 22,885 applications for death certificates ;
- 166 requests for information of a historical or statistical nature.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annual Reports for previous years.

The ITS issued 320,072 documents (383,023 in 1958) including :

- 85,116 positive or negative replies to individual enquiries and requests for photostat copies of medical records and death certificates ;
- 234,956 certificates or reports concerning requests for documents to obtain compensation, including 24,279 certificates of imprisonment, 35,574 certificates of residence, 74,552 temporary reports, 100,385 negative replies and 166 reports of a historical or statistical nature.

About 10,000 requests for information and certificates were received each month compared with a former average of 25,000 for a similar period.

The central card-index was supplemented by 719,275 new cards (644,817 in 1958) and 725,601 cards were classified (478,901 in 1958).

These figures only give a cursory impression of the work of the ITS since each applicant raises a problem, often of a complex nature, which necessitates laborious searches in various sections of the vast archives in Arolsen. These archives (carefully assembled and classified since the end of the war) are continually being added to when new documents are made available. The results were good in 1959 as the documents collected enabled 370,000 new names to be recorded. As customary all the documents were analysed and the information was placed on index-cards and duly filed. Most of the documents were acquired through the State Museum in Oswiecim (Auschwitz), visited by a mission of the ITS in 1958.

It will be recalled that the ITS is administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross in accordance with the agreement signed in Bonn (June 6, 1955) for a period of five years. The tasks of the ITS are important and numerous and as it seems to be necessary to give it the means of continuing its work, negotiations are at present being pursued for the renewal of the agreement of 1955 which expires on May 5, 1960.