

Anniversary at the International Tracing Service

Twenty-five years ago the International Committee of the Red Cross took over the management of the International Tracing Service, founded at the end of the Second World War by the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States. A short ceremony, attended by some 250 staff members of the ITS, marked this anniversary, at the beginning of June, at Arolsen.

The task of the ITS is to gather and transmit all the information it can obtain from the most various sources on civilian victims of the national socialist regime during the Second World War. Today, still, it conducts innumerable inquiries at the request of the authorities, Red Cross Societies and individual persons to trace missing people and to establish certificates of kinship or death, or certificates enabling persons to obtain pensions or compensations. In its archives are documents concerning about ten million civilians of various nationalities, and in the course of twenty-five years of activity under the management of the ICRC, an estimated 1,600,000 cases have been solved by the Service. The work of the ITS is parallel to that of the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva, which deals with victims of war; it is therefore easy to understand why both institutions are under the authority of the ICRC.

On the occasion of this 25th anniversary, the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany wrote to the President of the ICRC and to the Director of the ITS expressing their gratitude for the work done by the ITS.

Brochure on the ICRC

The ICRC has recently issued the second edition (June 1980) of its illustrated brochure entitled "Presenting the ICRC". It is intended for the general public and gives in its twenty pages an overall picture of the ICRC and its activities. The brochure, which is available in six languages—Arabic, English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish—has been sent to National Societies, to be used by them in connection with their information and public relations work. Further copies may be obtained on request.