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Letter to the President of the ICRC

Twenty-five years ago last June the International Tracing Service (ITS), in Arolsen, was placed under the management of the ICRC. As a supplement to the notice which appeared on that occasion in the July-August issue of International Review we are happy to publish a letter sent to the President of the ICRC by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Dear Sir,

The 6 June 1980 was the 25th anniversary of the day when the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, complying with the wish expressed by the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States of America, took over the management of the International Tracing Service in Arolsen. The ICRC has thus responsibly led this most important institution and conducted its activities through more than two-thirds of its existence.

Working unobtrusively and almost unnoticed by the general public the International Tracing Service has achieved most extraordinary results. It has solved about 1.6 million individual cases, which is an indication of the scope of its activities. Innumerable destinies could be unraveled and clarified only with the help of new archive material which the International Red Cross had gathered thanks to connections established throughout the world with people from countries involved in the Second World War.

On behalf of my Government I wish to thank the International Committee of the Red Cross for the trustworthy and responsible work it has accomplished over a quarter of a century for the benefit of victims of national-socialist tyranny.

The Federal Republic of Germany stands firmly by its commitment to ensure the continuation of the tasks undertaken by the International Tracing Service.

The Government of the Federal Republic will continue giving as much moral and financial support as possible to the activities carried out by the Service. The information still stored in its archives on about 10 million people of various nationalities who became the victims of tyranny and concerning whom no one has so far instigated an inquiry must on no account fall into oblivion.

I can assure you that my Government highly appreciates the ICRC's willingness to continue assuming responsibility for the International Tracing Service.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Bonn, 16 June 1980

World Congress on Prostheses in Bologna

The third World Congress of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) and the International Association of Orthotists and Prosthetists (INTERBOR) was held in Bologna from 28 September to 4 October 1980. In addition to some 1,500 visitors, the Congress was attended by most of the world's orthopedic technicians and surgeons and the heads of firms specialized in orthopedic equipment.

The ICRC, which is active in several areas of the world helping disabled victims of war, was invited to take part in this Congress to inform participants of its activities and to compare its experience of orthopedics in the developing countries with that of other organizations.

The ICRC representatives gave the Congress an account of ICRC and Swiss Red Cross activities over the past few years, describing in particular the ongoing programmes in Lebanon (implemented by the Swiss Red Cross), Angola and Ethiopia (ICRC), where workshops have been set up, local staff trained to manufacture and adapt prostheses, and some 1,500 amputees and paraplegics fitted with prostheses.