December 2014

A Brief Historical Evolution of the International Tracing Service (ITS): The Largest Collection of Holocaust Related Documents

Kate Brunelle

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting

Part of the Archival Science Commons, Collection Development and Management Commons, Information Literacy Commons, Scholarly Communication Commons, and the Scholarly Publishing Commons

A Brief Historical Evolution of the International Tracing Service (ITS):
The Largest Collection of Holocaust Related Documents
By Kate Brunelle

Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections Research Paper
Based on Summer 2013 U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Archival Practicum
Advisor/Reader: Dr. Teresa S. Welsh

Introduction: What is the ITS?

Prior to the end of World War II and following the liberation of numerous concentration camps by Allied forces, there existed a need to provide services to refugees, victims, and displaced persons persecuted and oppressed by the National Socialist German Workers' Party in Germany. Millions of people of almost every European nationality had been displaced by World War II and many of them had been victims and were now survivors of the largest and most calculated mass genocide to date, the Holocaust. The Red Cross and Allied forces organized the enormous task of tracing these persons and attempting to reunite them with relatives.

It was because of this need that the International Tracing Service was eventually established out of a long line of predecessors. The International Tracing Service, or the ITS as it is most commonly referred to, began with a very clear mission:

> tracing missing persons and collecting, classifying, preserving, and rendering accessible to Governments and interested individuals the documents relating to Germans and non-Germans who were interned in National-Socialist concentration camps or to non-Germans who were displaced as a result of the Second World War. (cited in Belkin, 2007, p. CSR 1)

The ITS and its predecessors have been fulfilling this mission for over sixty years. In that time, the ITS has collected millions of pages of documentation related to World War II, victims and survivors of the Holocaust, Nazi records and documentation, and documentation on millions of other displaced persons. In addition, the ITS has been creating its own records related to this documentation.

The International Tracing Service is the largest repository for World War II records, including Holocaust records. However, it was not until recently that the ITS opened its records to researchers and institutions outside of Germany. Previously, survivors and others could write to the ITS and request information about themselves or others, but the response time was long, difficult, and often lacking in tangible results. With the opening of the ITS, people around the world have better access to the records for seemingly endless research.

Why is the ITS important?

Before a discussion of the history of the International Tracing Service can begin, it is important to explain why such an organization was needed in the first place. In 1933, about 9.5 million Jews lived in Europe and made up about 1.7 percent of the total European population. They lived in all parts of the continent though the largest populations could be found in Poland, Western Soviet Union, and other Eastern European countries (USHMM, 2012, Holocaust Encyclopedia, n.p.). As a direct result of the war and the Holocaust, two out of every three Jews in Europe had been killed for an estimated total of six million Jewish people. The 1950 Jewish population of Europe was 3.5 million after individual countries' Jewish populations had been decimated during the war and Holocaust; for instance, in Poland, nearly 3 million Jews found home in 1933, and in 1950, about 45,000 Jews could be found in the country.[1]

---

[1] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Jewish Population of Europe in 1945* and *Jewish Population of Europe in 1933: Population Data by Country* (2012), n.p.

Jews were not the only people targeted during World War II, however. An estimated six million non-Jewish people were also murdered during the Holocaust; homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies/Romas, the handicapped, political dissenters and others were arrested and murdered as well. Additionally, Soviet prisoners of war comprised the second largest group of Nazi victims with 5.7 million military personnel "collected" by the Nazis (USHMM, 2012, Holocaust Encyclopedia, n.p.). Nearly fifty-seven percent (57%) of these Soviet POWs were dead by the end of the war (Holborn, 1956).

Experts find it difficult to estimate the exact number of those killed or displaced during World War II and the Holocaust. Allied military authorities did their best to track the number of Displaced Persons (DPs) – those who had been forced to leave their homelands as a result of the war—in Europe after the war, but with constant movement, it was a challenging task. In 1946, it was estimated that 1,037,404 DPs could be found living in and out of camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy. Between July 1, 1947 and December 31, 1951, the International Relief Organization received 1,337,749 applications for assistance from DPs throughout Europe. In total, it was estimated that there were nearly 11 million non-German DPs in Europe at the end of World War II (Holburn, 1956).

DPs were from countries all over Europe and elsewhere, were of all ages, and affected by the war in different ways. With so many people searching for family members and constantly moving, the Allied Forces realized early that it would be necessary to develop a system of tracking individuals and attempting to reunite, resettle, and repatriate them. Thus, the need for an organized tracing service was recognized, and it would eventually come under the purview of the Red Cross and would be called the International Tracing Service.

History of the International Tracing Service
The Need for a Tracing Services
In 1933, Adolf Hitler and his Nationalist-Socialist Party officially obtained power in Germany; thus, a period of persecution and displacement for millions in Europe began. What began as a series of laws, known as the Nuremberg Laws, targeted at Jews and designed to restrict their rights and begin a long

reigning and systematic plan of persecution, turned into the most infamous act of genocide the world has ever known. In answer to what was referred to by the Nazi regime as the "Jewish Question," the "Final Solution" succeeded in establishing concrete anti-Semitic sentiment in Europe and resulted in the murder of millions of Jews throughout Europe. Jews were not the only European group targeted by Hitler's Party. Millions of non-Germans were deemed inferior and were also persecuted and murdered during the period between 1933 and 1945. Throughout World War II, political dissidents, prisoners, criminals, scholars, various religious sects, and others were rounded up, removed from their homes, and often murdered or sent to camps and ghettos throughout Europe (Holborn, 1956).

As a result of Nazi actions throughout this time period, millions of people became displaced during the war; others became refugees as war enveloped Europe and destruction befell the continent. In addition to being displaced and far from home, families had been torn apart during the War. Even once the War had ended the need to track and reunite families became an overwhelmingly important task. The Red Cross with the help of the Allied Forces therefore, established services to meet this need (Holborn, 1956).

History of the International Committee of the Red Cross' Efforts in War
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a long history with tracing services. It was this experience that helped influence the decision to place the ICRC in charge of administration and direction of the International Tracing Service. For the Red Cross, tracing services were first realized during the Franco-Russian War in 1870. It was during this war that the need for available information about families and prisoners of war was first realized. Many prisoners had been taken on both sides of the conflict and doctors found that "most of them were in a state of distress because their families had no idea whether they had been killed or taken prisoner" (ICRC, 2002, para. 1). The Red Cross established the Information Bureau of the International Relief Agency for Wounded and Sick Soldiers in Basel, Switzerland and began transmitting lists of prisoners. The Red

Cross was successful because of its position as a neutral entity in the war (ICRC, 2002, para. 2).

In 1877, the Red Cross again intervened on behalf prisoners of war during the Russo-Turkish War. But with war in the Balkans in 1912, the ICRC expanded its services. An agency was established in Belgrade which began facilitating the delivery of parcels and money to prisoners sent by family members. ICRC introduced "capture cards" to their humanitarian war efforts. Capture Cards became a link between prisoners of war and family members as they were filled out upon capture and forwarded onto the ICRC containing basic information about a prisoner of war like name, rank, address, and state of health. Capture cards were sent to "the five belligerent States" in attempts to gather "standard information on prisoners" (ICRC, 2002, para. 4). This work was facilitated by the Red Cross agencies in each of the five countries. It was also during this time when issues with language and phonetics were encountered. The Red Cross hired individuals to translate and decipher information (ICRC, 2002).

During World War I, the ICRC continued its use of capture cards and the transmitting of family parcels; it also set up the International Prisoners of War Agency after having already been tasked with such services by the International Red Cross during a world conference in 1912. During the war, the agency received an average of 30,000 letters a day and constantly increased its staff to meet demands. Throughout the war, the agency handled millions of messages and received 120,000 visitors related to tracing requests. Additionally, 7 million files were opened related to prisoners of war. The Agency also organized repatriation of victims of World War I (ICRC, 2002).

The ICRC gained more experience and enhanced its services with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. It was during this time that the ICRC experienced first-hand field work in tracing. However, during the Spanish Civil War, and most civil wars of the time, neither side was willing to accept the ICRC's help in exchanging information related to prisoners. Therefore, the ICRC began to obtain information about prisoners indirectly (through prison directors, camp commanders, and prisoners)

(ICRC, 2002, para. 13). It also began "tracing and mailing services for combatants and civilians," which was not questioned by either side of the conflict (ICRC, 2002). During the Spanish Civil War 30,000 files were opened by the Agency and were still being processed when World War II broke out (ICRC, 2002, para. 14).

Even before the war began, the ICRC set up a "commission of war work" to set the stage for resuming tracing services on a larger scale. This Commission met twenty-five times prior to the war in Europe. In September of 1939, the ICRC opened the Central Prisoners of War Agency. The Agency already knew that their work would be overwhelming as in the first few weeks of the war, 600,000 Polish troops were captured (ICRC, 2002, para. 16).

The culmination of ICRC's tracing service experience came together during World War II. It was during this war that the Agency received "modern technology" to do its work; photocopiers and calculators were introduced and proved to be vital tools for the work of the Agency. The Agency also swelled to 4,000 employees to assist in tracing, mailing, and other services (ICRC, 2002, para. 17). Capture cards continued to be used and were utilized by almost every warring state, which also proved beneficial to the work of the Agency. Capture cards often reached Geneva faster than official lists sent by those holding prisoners and often had fewer errors than the lists. As a result, families could be notified more quickly about their soldier's capture. While information was available from the western theater of the war, the eastern front was relatively quiet. Little information trickled in from the East because the Soviet Union and Germany had refused to sign agreements to exchange information on POWs, thus making it difficult for the Agency to provide services to the POWS and civilians in these areas. World War II served as a new milestone for the ICRC when for the first time, the ICRC specifically assisted Jews (ICRC, 2002).

The Agency handled more requests for aid during World War II than it had at any other time. The Agency distributed 36 million Red Cross parcels, 120 million letters between prisoners of war and family members, 23 million letters between civilians

throughout the European front, and reunited 700,000 people in Europe (ICRC, 2002, para. 23).

But the Agency's work was not finished with V-E Day. As the Allied Forces moved toward Berlin the millions of people who were still in need of support and services from the Red Cross became ever more apparent. Millions of people had been murdered, displaced, evacuated, deported, or forced to flee, which resulted in the separation of family members. The question of how to best service this specific group of refugees, victims, and survivors became an issue of concern for the Allies and would eventually result in the formation of the International Tracing Service with which the ICRC would have a direct relationship. The Agency's work with the victims of World War II would be long lasting. In 2002, twenty-five percent (25%) of the Agency's work continued to be related to World War II (ICRC, 2002).

After World War II, the ICRC was commended with a Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts in helping POWs; however, it received criticism for its lack of "enough" help for victims of the Holocaust. Still, the ICRC worked to improve laws related to targeting civilians during a war. This work involved participation in debates prohibiting area bombing and weapons of mass destruction after the use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan (ICRC, 2002).

The ICRC has continued its work since the end of World War II. Work was conducted in the Middle East, India and elsewhere. The Cold War provided a unique opportunity for the ICRC to become involved "as a neutral intermediary between East and West" (ICRC, 2010, para. 4). The ICRC was useful during the Greek Civil War, the Korean Conflict, the Suez Crisis, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. As places like French Indochina, Algeria, India, Africa, and the Dutch East Indies declared their independence from long time colonial powers, the ICRC provided aid and support. However, eventually the ICRC found that it was not alone in its humanitarian endeavors as new organizations emerged and "increasing media coverage of war" presented its own challenges for the ICRC (ICRC, 2010, para. 6). Today though, the ICRC continues its efforts of aiding prisoners, civilians, and victims of war.

Before the ITS

Even before the Allies had claimed victory in Europe, realization of the need for tracing services had already occurred. Families had been displaced and separated in a variety of ways throughout Europe and were not in contact with one another; often times they did not even know if family members were alive. The British Red Cross (BRC) Foreign Relations Department was the first organized attempt to assist these civilians affected by the war and/or persecuted by National Socialism. Major Eyrle Carter was in charge of the operation and would play a critical role in the further development of tracing services later on. The BRC turned itself into an informal tracing bureau modeled after the ICRC's bureau in Geneva and went to work setting up Displaced Person (DP) camps and attempting to reunite families across Europe. With years of experience, the ICRC provided a good example for the BRC and had already begun an index of names the BRC could utilize in its work. As the Allies began to push towards Berlin, the growing number of European civilians in need facilitated the necessity for a more organized and better equipped program for aid (ITS, 2009).

SHAEF

In 1944, a new organization that joined together and controlled operations for American and British forces in the European theater was formed. Located in London, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) was under the command of General Eisenhower and soon would take over the BRC's role in assisting civilians and maintaining tracing services (NARA, n.d.). SHAEF collected and collated information about slave laborers and refugees and worked to satisfy the "immediate needs of released prisoners and deportees" (ITS, 2009, p. 6).

SHAEF officials recognized the need for tracing services in 1944, as well. With so many refugees and displaced persons having been separated from family as well as in need of "civil status (widowhood, succession, and so on), and in matters of restitution and indemnification in order to support their claims" tracing services were necessary (Holborn, 1956, p. 329). A tracing system was established by SHAEF in cooperation with the registration of DPs with "DP2 cards". A tracing and locating unit was created under SHAEF, which collected "nominal rolls of

concentration camp inmates" to maintain "a central register of [sic] non-repatriable refugees and displaced persons" (Holborn, 1956, p. 329). The work done by this unit helped to establish a plan for tracing refugees that would be used by succeeding organizations.

SHAEF headquarters followed the front lines of the Allied forces making their way from London to Versailles and eventually to Frankfurt am Main, while refugee and DP numbers continued to rise (ITS, 2009, p. 6). SHAEF helped to repatriate seven million refugees from Germany, Austria, and Italy between May and September, 1945. But by the end of 1945, the need for an international organization was realized and SHAEF was replaced (Holborn, 1956).

UNRRA
Early in the war, Allied support for refugee and displaced persons was strong as the large number of such persons was realized and continued to grow. In November, 1942, President Roosevelt expressed his sentiments: "No one will go hungry or be without other means of livelihood in any territory occupied by the United Nations if it is humanly within our power to make the necessary supplies available to them" (Warhaftig, 1944, p. 6). It was the following November when the United Nations (UN) officially became involved in an organized way supporting the growing refugee problem in Europe and elsewhere. On November 9, 1943, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was created (Warhaftig, 1944, p. 7). "Its mission was to provide economic assistance to European nations after World War II and to repatriate and assist the refugees who would come under Allied control" (USHMM, 2012). UNRRA still functioned under SHAEF; however, as a separate entity it provided greater focus to tracing and assistance efforts.

UNRRA was "established for the purpose of remedying the calamities of WWII and of assisting in the restoration of normalcy" (Warhaftig, 1944, p. 7). UNRRA placed strong emphasis on "self-help" and the "active participation" in UNRRA by those whom it was supporting (Warhaftig, 1944, p. 12). It was believed that this kind of participation by refugees would result in a "speedy end to the postwar emergency situation." The Director General, Herbert

H. Lehman, pointed out that UNRRA's success was "measured by the speed with which it is able to liquidate itself" and relieve the refugee problem (as quoted in Warhaftig, 1944, p. 12).

The range of services available by UNRRA was defined in a UN agreement as:
> …Assistance in caring for and maintaining the records of persons found in any areas under the control of any of the United Nations who by reason of war have been displaced from their homes and in agreement with the appropriate governments, military authorities, or other agencies in securing their repatriation or return. (Warhaftig, 1950, p. 108)

UNRRA operated hundreds of DP camps throughout war-torn Europe where its primary function was to register the displaced persons coming into the camp with the purpose of assisting with tracing and reunification (ITS, 2009, p. 6 and USHMM, 2012). UNRRA's tracing efforts were extensive. Warhaftig points out that UNRRA realized the value in the Red Cross' work and "mention[ed] the advisability of collaborating with the International Red Cross which already possesses indexes containing some fifteen million names" in a report (1950, p. 157). UNRRA collected and disseminated detailed information related to DPs including numbers, location, and the physical condition of DPs. It collaborated with Jewish agencies and organizations to share and collect information related to Displaced Persons,"which would be very helpful in finding relatives, in accomplishing the reunions of families, and often in locating documents of identification" (Warhaftig, 1950, p. 157).

UNRRA also worked to create a unified system of identification records and preliminary papers "for displaced persons in transit." In association with other organizations – taking over the BRC's tracing operations - UNRRA helped to establish the tracing headquarters in Bad Arolsen, Germany. Much of this work would be used by future organizations to help alleviate the DP problem (Warhaftig, 1950, p. 157).

Tracing services was not the only support UNRRA provided refugees and DPs. It provided consumer goods: food, fuel, clothing, shelter, and medical

supplies; health and welfare assistance; rehabilitation of public utilities like water sanitation, power, transportation, communication, and assistance in acquiring the necessary materials for "the restoration of educational institutions" (Warhaftig, 1944, p. 65). Child care services were also provided. Children were given the "highest priority in all fields of relief" (Warhaftig, 1944, p. 83).

UNRRA supported and assisted thousands of refugees through all of its services, including tracing. For instance, the number of displaced persons receiving UNRRA assistance is detailed in Table 1 (Woodbridge, 1950, p. 422).

Table 1. DPs Receiving Assistance

Date	Number of DPs receiving assistance
1945	742,199
March, 1946	863,539
June, 1946	801,092
September, 1946	803,717
December, 1946	746,283
March, 1947	720,604
June, 1947	642,749

In addition to the relief and rehabilitation services provided, UNRRA was arguably the most significant and certainly long-lasting tracing organization prior to the establishment of the ITS. Its history is documented within the ITS records themselves. UNRRA was maintained as the primary tracing force until 1947. It "assisted in the repatriation of millions of refugees...," managed DP camps, provided welfare assistance and health services, provided "vocational training and entertainment," and oversaw twenty-three "voluntary welfare agencies, including the Joint Distribution Committee, the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT), and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)" (USHMM, 2010). In post war operations, UNRRA granted independent volunteer agencies greater autonomy as the agency itself concentrated more on administrative tasks (though UNRRA continued its work with displaced persons and employed hundreds of them). UNRRA's efforts were so substantial the agency eventually ran out of money in 1947. Despite

this, UNRRA had greatly improved the DP problem, having assisted at least one million displaced persons and lightening the load for the succeeding agencies involved with tracing services (Warhaftig, 1944).

IRO
UNRRA was conceived as a temporary organization; however, UN members recognized that the matter of refugee and displaced persons would not be completely resolved. They argued that thousands of DPs would still exist once UNRRA shut down and that the "refugee problem was one which concerned all the UN" (Holborn, 1956, p. 29). Thus, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) took over operations when UNRRA ceased to exist.

Proposed during a United Nations committee meeting in San Francisco on May 7, 1945, it was decided that the DP problem was urgent and an overwhelming international concern. The main task of the international organization would be "to encourage and assist in every way possible their early return to their countries of origin" through repatriation, resettlement, or local settlement (Holborn, 1956, p. 33, 50). A draft constitution for the IRO was accepted by the UN General Assembly and the IRO began to take shape. The IRO was established as a temporary agency, and while no time limit for the life of the organization was set, it was generally understood that "no more than three years would be needed" (Holdborn, 1956, p. 47).

The IRO began its operations through an intermediary organization while UN members continued to argue over the financial ramifications of such an organization in July, 1947, after UNRRA's operations had ceased. It administered a network of DP camps and housing, where an estimated 1.5 million people were living, provided food, medical care, and other supplies to those in its care. Rehabilitation and retraining services were available to DPs, refugees and perhaps most notably, legal protection was secured and negotiations and transportation for resettlement were provided (The IRO began the largest mass transportation agency in the world during this time) (Holborn, 1956, p. 1). However, the IRO's immediate task was absolute; registration of refugees and DPs including gathering

"individual and family particulars for each applicant for assistance" (Holborn, 1956, p. 1).

In January, 1948, the IRO had taken over UNRRA headquarters and tracing bureau in Bad Arolsen, Germany and the International Tracing Service (ITS) was established there. It was proposed "to extend the mandate of the ITS to include as far as possible the tracing of all non-German nationals, and of such German nationals as would be eligible under the Constitution of the IRO, who have disappeared by reason of the War" (Holborn, 1956, p. 331). The ITS had two major responsibilities: to coordinate tracing activities globally and to reorganize and realign the former CTB (Central Tracing Bureau). However, the ITS would need to be turned over after IRO's operational time expired (Holborn, 1956).

The IRO was only expected to operate for a period of three years. In the end, the IRO operated on some level for about five years, ceasing operations after a UN committee meeting in 1952. The IRO had repatriated 72,834 DPs, resettled 1,038,750, and assisted 65,615 refugees "with limited opportunities for resettlement" (Holborn, 1956, pp. 361, 433). Eighteen UN governments had contributed over $400 million to the IRO, and the IRO was generally considered to be a successful organization. While the IRO ceased operations, the ITS would continue under the direction of the International Committee of the Red Cross (Holborn, 1956).

The ITS as Part of the Red Cross
The International Tracing Service officially came into existence through the International Refugee Organization in January, 1948. The ITS gathered documents from the German civil administration, national and international records of war crimes and criminals, and from existing agencies like the IRO and the many existing Jewish tracing and rehabilitation agencies. Military directives in 1946 had aided in compiling records related to UN nationals and in addition, the ITS devised a general coverage documents search plan where teams of ten to twenty ITS personnel would physically check and re-check hospitals, factories, prisons, registry offices, cemeteries, and other places throughout Europe to find materials beneficial to the ITS' tracing services.

Notable finds from these ITS teams included: the Gestapo and criminal police records in Wuerzburg, a card index found in Kassel containing 22 million names of workers, Gestapo records found in the basement of the Polizei-Praesidium in Karlsruhe, and 3,215 urns containing the ashes of inmates of Dachau concentration camp kept in the cellars of the Perlacher Forest Cemetery near Munich, which had never been reported. (Holborn, 1956, p. 333)

The ITS became its own official entity separate from the IRO in 1955 through the Bonn Agreements, which established the organization's mission and placed direct administration authority under the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (ITS, 2009, p. 6). The ITS continued to use the facilities previously established in Bad Arolsen, Germany as the home of both the accumulating archives and center for tracing services. Bad Arolsen had been chosen as the ideal location for tracing services by SHAEF in 1945 because "the town at Bad Arolsen is a suitable seat for the Central Tracing Bureau since it is located on the boundary of three zones it has not been destroyed and has good telegraph and telephone connections" (ITS, 1986, p. 28).

Bad Arolsen had also been the home of General and Prince Josias Waldeck of the Waffen-SS and the established buildings where the ITS made its home had previously been constructed for the purpose of an SS-Office School, administrative headquarters, and barracks. Making use of the space for tracing purposes could be conceived as an affront to both the Waldeck family and townspeople as well as a direct offense against former Nazi order (Megargee, 2009).

The Allies determined that the ITS would be financed by the German federal budget and the ICRC would be responsible for its administration, which would prove to be invaluable to the ITS due to its long history with tracing services and administrative abilities. An International Commission of ten countries (today eleven) would be responsible for the overall supervision of the ITS, meeting annually for this purpose. The ITS agreement was renewed in 1960 and extended indefinitely on May 5, 1965, "until the

ITS' humanitarian work has been completed" and has since continued its tracing work and collection of documentation for over sixty years in Bad Arolsen (ITS, 1986, p. 16).

The Holdings of the ITS
What is in the ITS Archives?

Once the ITS had been created and brought under the administration of the ICRC, in addition to tracing services it set about the task of collecting, preserving, analyzing, and holding documentation related to the millions of displaced persons of Europe (ITS, 2009, p. 5). In 1946, the Allies had ordered that "all German local authorities had to report the whereabouts of non-Germans and Jews during the second World War to the Allied tracing services" and two million lists with information about where they had lived, their employers, dates of employment, details on marriages and births, and the location of burial sites flooded into the tracing bureau (ITS, 2009, p. 9). In addition to these lists, and additional information that had been collected through the ITS' predecessors, DP registration cards were collected and held by the ITS. DP cards came in various formats and contained hospital records, emigration lists, questionnaires, and case files created by relief and aid organizations (ITS, 2009, p. 9). Also contained within the walls of many of the buildings in Bad Arolsen were the records created by Nazis (those that were not destroyed by the retreating army), discovered after the liberation of camps throughout Europe (Landler, 2007).

The ITS became a "document dump" for World War II and Holocaust related documents and records. The records have since been organized at the ITS into three primary groups: Concentration Camp Documents, Wartime Documents, and Post-War Documents (Biedermann, 2003, p. 28). Concentration Camp Documents refer to

> the registrations of persecutees in the early camps of the pre-war time, the concentration camps during the events themselves, up to the late liberation of Camp Mauthausen on 5th May 1945… as well as… registrations made by the Allies immediately after the liberation… (Biedermann, 2003, p. 29)

These records are broken down further into two categories, deportation records and prison records and take the form of documents: prisoners' personal cards and sheets, effects cards, infirmary cards, labor assignments, death certificates, inmate questionnaires, arrival lists, transport lists, extermination by camp physician lists, and more. It is important to note, however, that not all camps are represented within the records of "Concentration Camp Documents" because some camps did not have documentation or the documentation was destroyed prior to liberation (Biedermann, 2003).

Wartime Documents refer to those documents created during the war, excluding Concentration Camp Documents, that relate to "all registrations of persons who were recorded outside the already enumerated camps during the war" like "forced labourers [sic] who had to be registered according to the guidelines of the public registration system" (Biedermann, 2003, p. 35). This includes "two millions lists, 1.8 million individual documents and cards, 300,000 registrations of the Berlin Index, and 20,000 cards of the 'Organisation Todt.'" Wartime Documents are categorized by "individual documents" and "list material about deceased foreigners, graves of foreigners, and marriages of foreigners" (Biedermann, 2003, pp. 35-36).

Lastly, Post-War Documents refer to the registration of "former civilian persecutees of the National Socialist Regime" created by the ITS' predecessor relief organizations or others, specifically, the many Jewish assistance agencies established before, during, and after World War II and the Holocaust (Biedermann, 2003, p. 36). Categorized as either "individual documents" or "list material", Post-War Documents contain "DP-2 Index" and "CM-1" care and maintenance cards as well as "registration lists, repatriation lists, and emigration lists" totaling 3.5 million DP-2 cards, 350,000 CM-1 sheets, and 1.7 million pages of list material (Biedermann, 2003, p. 37).

There are also a great number of documents related to child tracing services, which have been an integral aspect of the Allies' tracing services since the beginning. Child tracing documents make up about three percent (3%) of the ITS holdings and are

comprised of documents like birth certificates, various registration lists, and search files (ITS, 2009, p. 10).

The ITS has created its own documents, which are preserved and held within the ITS archive. Paramount to these records is the Central Name Index (CNI), created by the staff of the ITS and critical in the research aspect of the ITS' work. The Central Name Index will be described in a later chapter. Some three million tracing files, or T/D files, have also been created by the ITS and these documents make up a portion of the holdings of the ITS (Biedermann, 2003).

In total, the ITS archives holds an extraordinary number of documents delivered to the ITS and created by a number of people, most notably the Nazis themselves. The ITS notes that the sheer number of documents "show[s] the painstaking care and the systematic approach taken by the National Socialists in their persecution and exploitation of millions of people" during the Second World War and Holocaust (ITS, 2009, p. 11). The holdings of the ITS, when placed end-to-end, extend sixteen miles and are held in six buildings worth of filing cabinets. The Central Name Index itself contains 50 million cards relating to 17.5 million people. There are 25,908 meters of written documents, 232,710 meters of microfilm, 106,870 microfiche, more than 3 million "correspondence files," and is comprised of about seventy-seven percent (77%) original documents and twenty-three percent (23%) copies (ITS, 2009, p. 9). Additionally, there are 150 million digital images in the archive. All of these documents are utilized in the daily work of the ITS and more recently, by international researchers who now have access to them at Bad Arolsen and institutions around the world (USHMM, 2008).

The ITS Records Structure
Due to the fact that the records created by the International Tracing Service were never expected to be used outside of the organization, the structure is unique. After obtaining millions of pages of documents after World War II, the Red Cross' ITS needed to find a way to organize and access them in an efficient way that provided fast and accurate tracing results. Perhaps the largest and most unique

records created by the ITS, the Central Name Index cards or CNI, does just that.

The Central Name Index works much like a physical library card catalog "yet whereas a catalog card references a book, only some CNI cards reference an original document" (Decker, 2011, p. 3). CNI cards were created from lists to reference an individual. When research was conducted on an individual, a reference CNI card was created for each reference in the original documents to that individual. As a result, many individuals have several CNI cards referencing themselves in original documents while others have very few or no CNI cards. In some instances, CNI cards reference more than one person, often family members (Decker, 2011). CNI cards also come in the form of "inquiry cards" created by the IRO and U.S. Army after the War when a request for tracing services was made by an individual or organization. These cards provide additional information useful in searching the ITS "database" (USHMM, n.d., p. 1).

It is important to note that CNI cards are not original World War II documents; they were created by the staff of the ITS for internal purposes only. There are more than 50 million CNI cards relating to 17.5 million people in the ITS records and these are the "key to the documents" (ITS, 2009, p. 10). CNI cards can contain a trove of information vital to conducting an ITS search. Cards may include dates, places of births, maiden names, parents' names (and mothers' maiden names), and paths of persecution and location immediately after the war. These cards also may contain reference information such as ordner number, seite number, (file and page numbers, respectively) and archival collection code numbers in order to help researchers find the specific original documents referenced (Decker, 2011).

When one searches through the electronic ITS database, the CNI is the first stop for a researcher as the CNI often provides the location of original documents pertaining to the individual being searched. It is important to note that the ITS "database" is not a traditional database in that it cannot be searched by the public and the records were not created to be machine readable. The electronic CNI database is arranged alphabetically and phonetically, meaning that names that sound the

same are grouped together, alphabetically (ITS, 2009, p. 10). The alphabetical list is also built off of the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex (D-M Soundex) which "uses a phonetic algorithm to match the information… by sound" (USHMM, *Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database*). This means that names are presented together in multiple spelling variations. Multiple and various spellings result from language differences as well as human error or preference. A CNI search can result in many different spellings of the same or similar names: a search for 'Silberman', for example, will also return results for 'Silverman,' 'Zylberman,' etc. (Decker, 2011, p. 5). Dozens of spellings can display in the results of the CNI for a name. For example, the D-M Soundex for the CNI contains 156 results for "Schwarz" and 849 results for "Abrahamovic" (ITS, 2009, p. 15). The cards also appear chronologically by birth date within the CNI, beginning with cards without dates. CNI cards take many formats but generally provide the same information, if it is known. It can prove exhausting to locate a specific individual without specific information such as date of birth, nationality or any other additional information.

CNI cards are not the only unique documents created by the ITS. Case files have been created for each requested search. These case files are referred to as Tracing and Documentation files (T/D) and are assigned a T/D number, generally in the order in which requests were received. Millions of T/D files have been created, however T/D files have not been created for every individual or even every individual with CNI cards. T/D files have only been created by the ITS when an external request for tracing services on an individual has been made. T/D files vary in size depending on the results of an ITS researcher's investigation and generally contain an inquiry card, with known vital statistics and path of persecution (though not always accurate), incoming correspondence and documentation – generally from the inquirer – and outgoing correspondence from the ITS – generally summarizing the findings associated with the inquiry. In early T/D files (chronologically), records and documentation was pooled from various locations and stored within a specific T/D file. T/D files continue to be created as new inquiries are made with the ITS though only about 300,000 T/D

files have been sent to the member country institutions (Decker, 2011).

The ITS has created dozens of additional records unique to the tracing service that relate to the original documents held by the archive. With these records the database of the ITS, which has so far been digitally sent to eight institutions around the world in International Committee (IC) member countries, are organized into various collections and indexed numerically. Utilizing the database takes a lot of practice, patience, a familiarity with the German language (as ITS-created documents as well as many original documents are in German). The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the United States' ITS repository, has worked exhaustively with ITS records to help in their use by creating finding aids and guides to the records since it began receiving them in 2007. A glossary of common terms has been created by an ITS researcher at USHMM to assist in the deciphering of the ITS database. Though this glossary continues to be enlarged and edited as necessary, it is available for use at http://itsrequest.ushmm.org/its/Glossary.pdf.

The ITS Today
Opening the Records to the World
Despite the "united" way the ITS came to be – through the work of the United Nations and Allied forces – the records have only been made accessible outside Bad Arolsen in the last seven years. Previously, only ITS staff had access to the documents and copies were made available to requesters (Yad Vashem in Israel was granted copies of millions of pages of documentation throughout the 1950s and 1960s). Paul Shapiro attests that governments sent documents to the ITS "precisely because… no one would ever see them" (Shapiro, 2009, p. 1).

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. leads the campaign to open the ITS records to the world. This campaign was met with many roadblocks, specifically from the ITS and the IC, which is responsible for overseeing the ITS, and longtime ITS Director Biedermann. After years of fighting, in 2006 the USHMM called for immediate access to the ITS records. However, before this could be done, the International Committee, comprised of eleven countries, needed to approve such a move (USHMM, *International Tracing Service Archive*).

In 1998, the USHMM and other Holocaust advocacy organizations began to pressure, through Congress, the International Committee to open the archives and "proposed that the issue be settled by majority vote" (Belkin, 2007, p. 8). Director Biedermann and several IC member countries "reportedly blocked passage of the proposal" citing privacy issues and the original Bonn Agreement mandate (Belkin, 2007, p. 8). The argument shifted to privacy when those opposed to the proposals argued that sensitive personal information would be released and would violate individual rights while those in support of the proposal argued that "the records provide unprecedented and invaluable first-hand documentation of the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime and should be opened as soon as possible to allow for research collaboration with the remaining survivors…" (Belkin, 2007, p. CSR-3-4).

In 2006, after years of negotiating and increased pressure, the IC unanimously "agreed to amend the 1955 Bonn Accords" and to open the ITS and make digital copies of the records. It also agreed to replace Director Biedermann, who vehemently opposed the proposal. The newly opened and digitized records would, however, only be made available to IC member countries and only one institution in each country could be the repository of the records and would not be made available on the Internet (Belkin, 2007). In 2007, the proposal and amended Bonn Accord were ratified by the IC and the USHMM received the first shipment of records from the ITS (USHMM, 2007).

With the opening of the ITS archives, the role of the tracing service changed. As a result, the ICRC no longer remained the most adequate organization to supervise ITS administration. In January, 2013, the ICRC withdrew its supervision from the ITS and the German Federal Archives took over as a partner organization to the ITS. The ICRC had traditionally appointed the directors of the ITS, but with new support, this job passed to the IC, who appointed the first U.S. director in 2012. Lastly, while the German federal budget continues to be responsible for primary funding of the ITS, the ITS now has the ability to fundraise both privately and publicly to assist in funding its work (ITS, 2011).

The Work of the ITS
The work performed by the ITS has changed in recent years. While originally the organization was tasked with searching for survivors and family members, that work only accounts for about thirty-seven percent of the work done by the ITS today. Today the work is more focused on restitution claims, supporting the work of organizations trying Nazi criminals in court, and regional commemoration work. Today, the ITS is also conducting work to make the records and archive more accessible to scholars and researchers. This process largely involves digitizing collections and working on preservation strategies (ITS, 2009).

The ITS recognizes its changing mission as well: "if to date the work of the tracing service has concentrated on tracking down the fate of individuals, the ITS is now gradually transforming into an important archive for research purposes" (ITS, 2009, p. 18). In November, 2007, the ITS archives were open to researchers around the world. Historians from universities and research institutions, genealogists, archivists, and others have been flocking to Bad Arolsen to make use of the unique records contained within the walls there. In 2007, the first year the archive was opened, 330 researchers came to Germany and an additional "3,000 submitted written requests to the archives" (ITS, 2009, p. 19). Since its opening, the archives have established an academic library to facilitate the number of researchers accessing the collections. The ITS attests that records available to researchers are unique in that they offer a non-traditional look at National Socialism – by concentrating primarily on the civilian victims. Genealogists also find the ITS records to be vitally important as they offer a formerly unavailable history of millions of Eastern Europeans, generally and specifically Jews (ITS, 2009).

Another critical role the ITS plays is to issue birth and death certificates for Holocaust victims. These certificates are used not only as official records of events but specifically in restitution claims. Such documents were created and issued for 950,000 requesters between 1999 and 2007 by former slave laborers for compensation (ITS, 2009 p. 15). ITS birth

and death certificates are recognized uniquely and globally and are official documents (ITS, 2009, p. 15).

The ITS has not given up all its tracing service work however. In 2011, the ITS received 12,941 requests, 3.5 percent of which came from survivors while 78 percent came from relatives of survivors, and the remainder of requests from researchers and journalists. These requests were made concerning 16,042 people from sixty-nine countries, but primarily from Germany, Russia, and the United States (ITS, 2011).

The ITS has long been criticized about the status of its tracing services since the end of the immediate post-war era. Due to the ITS insistence on secrecy and a closed archive, few people gained access to the records and the ITS was notoriously slow in its efforts to respond to requests for information. According to *60 Minutes*, in 2006 the ITS had a backlog of 400,000 requests for information and maintained a backlog under the leadership of Director Biedermann. The reluctance and lack of speed to respond to inquiries was the primary factor in the campaign to open the ITS records to outside organizations and researchers (Rosenbaum, 2007).

Still, the ITS maintains that it has processed about 12 million requests since it was taken over by the ICRC and "still helps to reunite 30-50 families per year. It gets about 1,000 requests per month from people trying to find out what happened to their ancestors in the war. Actual tracing requests involving survivors still account for around 3 percent of inquires (Crossland, 2012). This is in addition to the number of inquiries processed at the eight institutions around the world with digital access to most of the ITS collections. The ITS has "committed to responding to new requests within an eight-week period" (Belkin, 2007, p. 18). Tracing services continue to remain an important aspect of the work conducted at the ITS.

Preservation and Digitization at the ITS
According to Charles-Claude Biedermann (2003), former director of the ITS, the third mandate of the Bonn Agreements, which essentially established the primary tracing mission of the ITS, relates to preservation. While the ITS works to meet this mandate, it is faced with severe issues. As

Biedermann (2003) points out, all original documents housed in Bad Arolsen were created between 1933 and 1945 and the immediate post-war era. Therefore many of the documents were created on "'war paper' of particularly poor quality, which is ageing very fast" (p. 39).

Additionally, previous preservation "techniques" of long ago eras like lamination and "sealing of stocks" has resulted in damage to records that also needs to be contended with. The conservation needs include deacidification, delamination, and paper stabilization (the removal of adhesive tape, restoring ink corrosion, mildew control, etc.) (ITS, 2009). Biedermann (2003) offers a breakdown of the damage: "1,504,000 records are threatened by a loss of material due to mechanical damages, 1,200,200 documents were provided with adhesive tapes, 1,063,000 cases of metal contamination, 470,400 laminations, 12,000 poorly legible papers" (Biedermann, 2003, p. 40). He goes on to say that the "disintegration process is irreversible" and work needs to continue to preserve the records (p. 40).

Much of the work that is taking place at the ITS currently, involves digitization. This is in part for conservation reasons but also for access reasons. As Committee country institutions accept and make accessible ITS records, their primary format is digital. The ITS asserts that "electronic archives preserve the valuable original documents from further wear and tear through daily use" (ITS, 2009, p. 12).

As of 2009, about 70 percent of the ITS documents had been digitized by at least one hundred staff members at the ITS using fifteen customized scanners (ITS, 2009). Currently, the digital archives contain about 88 million images and six and a half terabytes of data, though there is still much work to be done (ITS, 2013). The ITS acknowledges that "a more detailed index and classification system of the documents" is necessary "to provide better access to the information in the archives" because it is not searchable by the public or outside of member institutions (ITS, 2009, p. 21). Creating finding aids, directories, and catalogs is a primary goal at the ITS.

USHMM Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center Work
USHMM and ITS Records

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum played an integral role in opening the archives at Bad Arolsen. The USHMM "led the years-long effort to make the documentation at ITS…accessible to survivors and others" by pushing at the highest levels for the International Committee to release the documents and make necessary changes to the Bonn Agreements of 1955 (USHMM, 2007, para. 4). The USHMM also fought to receive an exchange of documents prior to the final ratification of the Bonn Amendments so as to ensure access as soon as the amendments were ratified. The USHMM became one of the very first institutions to receive materials from the ITS in August, 2007. Since that time, the USHMM has been providing access to and conducting searches of the ITS records, free of charge for anyone submitting a request (USHMM, 2007).

The USHMM makes the ITS records accessible through the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center, which "collects and makes readily searchable the documentation needed to trace the fates of persons persecuted during the Holocaust" (USHMM, 2012, *Program Summary*, p. 1). The Resource Center is the USHMM's public portal to the ITS records and works daily responding to ITS related inquires and conducting searches for survivors, families, researchers, and others. In addition to serving an historical and genealogical purpose, the ITS records and the work conducted at the USHMM serve as the necessary documentation for compensation claims still filed by survivors and/or their families around the world (USHMM, 2012, *Program Summary*).

The Resource Center's specially trained staff has received more than 17,000 requests for information related to Holocaust victims since the ITS records were opened. These requests have come from seventy-one countries around the world and "11,000 of these from survivors and their families" (USHMM, 2012, *Program Summary*, p. 1). In addition to searches and making materials accessible, the staff at the Resource Center has been working with the ITS and with Yad Vashem – Israel's repository for ITS records – to develop ways to make the ITS materials

more accessible to the public. In their current state, the ITS records appear in over twenty-five languages, are often hand-written, were not created to be machine-readable, and are not organized in a searchable database. The USHMM, the ITS, and others, with support of the Claims Conference are creating the hardware and software necessary to make searching of the documents easier and are working to index and create finding aids to the 21,000 separate collections (USHMM, Sept. 2007, *Press Release*, para. 4; USHMM, Nov. 2007, *Press Release*, para. 7).

The Resource Center at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum works to keep the memory of survivors and victims alive and provides the public with unfiltered access to the primary source records found within the ITS archive available thus far.

Additional Resources for Searching

The Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum makes use of the ITS records in its possession every day to conduct searches for survivors and victims, for survivors' families, researchers, genealogists, and others. But the ITS records are not the only resource the Resource Center has at its disposal. The USHMM maintains its own searchable database of survivors through the *Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Holocaust Survivors*. The *Registry* contains more than 200,000 records which detail the stories and experiences of survivors and their families. The Registry is collected and maintained solely by the Museum. It is voluntary and routinely updated. Survivors and/or family members can register with the USHMM's *Registry* and the *Registry* is also a useful tool for conducting searches (USHMM, 2012, *Program Summary*).

The USHMM's *Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database* is also maintained and available through the Resource Center. The database is a work in progress and "centralizes information about the broadest spectrum of victims of Nazi persecution – from those who perished in camps and ghettos to forced laborers and other victims of Nazi persecution" (USHMM, 2012, *Program Summary*, p. 2). This database provides searchers with access to USHMM's vast collections as well as the collections

from additional institutions around the world. It is easily searchable from the Resource Center Web site and is often a starting point for searches (USHMM, 2012).

A number of additional resources and programs are available through the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center. These resources not only include those sponsored and/or made available by the Museum but also resources with no direct affiliation to the Museum like the archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Pages of Testimony, New York Public Library's digitized Yizkor Books, and others. There are many digitally accessible lists of names available online as well. The staff at the USHMM's Resource Center makes use of all of these resources and others to best serve the public and respond to inquiries. (ITS requests for information through USHMM can be made at http://www.ushmm.org/research/collections/resourcecenter/reference/)

Conclusion

World War II had a devastating impact on Europe. The number of people directly and indirectly affected by Nazi persecution and oppression reached well into the many millions at the end of the war. The Allied forces recognized early on that assistance was needed for these people and that assistance came in a variety of ways from food, clothing, and other necessities to resettlement and repatriation services and, perhaps most importantly to tracing services.

The International Tracing Service was born out of the Allies attempts at assisting DPs and victims of World War II and the Holocaust in the post-war period. Having found its way through various organizations supported by the United Nations like SHAEF, UNRRA, and the IRO, the ITS eventually came to not only be the primary tracing service agency for victims of the World War II and the Holocaust but also the "dumping ground" for millions of pages of primary source documentation related to Nazi persecution and its victims.

While under the direction of the Red Cross, the ITS maintained its records through the second half of the twentieth century, as a protector of the documentation and as a tracing organization, helping millions of survivors reunite with family. But as the survivor generation ages and more years separate the past from the present, the mission of the ITS changed. After much controversy and hard work from organizations like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the closed records of the ITS have become public and have found their way into a limited number of repositories around the world. The new mission of the ITS focuses more on research and preservation than on tracing and with free access to the records researchers, historians, genealogists, families, and others are making use of the invaluable primary sources found within the ITS archive.

As the ITS work continues, more focus will be placed on conservation and preservation of the records. Digitization efforts have been in effect in recent years and staff at the ITS, USHMM, Yad Vashem, and elsewhere are working to maintain the physical integrity of the records for future use and provide better accessibility to the records.

Today, anyone can have access to the ITS records. These records provide a unique, one-of-a-kind glimpse into the experiences of World War II and Holocaust victims and paint a real story of what Nazi persecution really entailed.

****

Case Study: "Ms. R."[2]

Research is conducted using the International Tracing Service at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum every day. More than 17,000 requests for information have been made, in fact. There are many layers involved in a search and many resources to utilize. The staff at the USHMM Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center is specially trained to use the ITS records effectively and to search for and provide answers about the victims of Nazi persecution.

---

[2] "Ms. R." gave written permission to publish her family's names related historic documents in this study.

In the spring of 2013, "Ms. R" walked into the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center to conduct her own name search for her father, Herman Chodes. She was not surprised when she did not find any useful information as she had not been able to find anything she did not already know in many years. Prepared to leave, she decided to check with the reference desk and this stop would lead to a "mountain" of information.

The initial reference interview led to immediate results. "Ms. R" explained that her father was a survivor, had been in one camp, Auschwitz, and had lived in Łódź, Poland. She also knew her father had had a family before the war but she did not know anything about them, not even their names. "Ms. R" said that her father had not spoken much about his experiences and since his death she had not been able to find out much information. "Ms. R" sat down and together we searched for Herman Cwi Chodes in the ITS records. Through the Central Name Index (CNI) "Ms. R" identified her father's index card which provided a T/D number (Figure 1).

Figure 1. ITS Index Card

Inquiry Card Hermann Cwi Chodes, 0.1/17011300/ ITS Digital Archive. Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on [April 13, 2013].

Herman's index card provided much more than the important T/D number; his date of birth, parents' names, his post-war locations, and path of persecution, which indicated that not only had he been in Auschwitz, he had also been in Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen, were also found on this card.

Next, Herman's T/D file was digitally "pulled" using the ITS and "Ms. R" was able to hold it in her hands.

Herman's T/D file was relatively small but provided "Ms. R" with more information than she had before like including her father's occupation, her grandparents' names, etc., but still, there was no mention of his lost family.
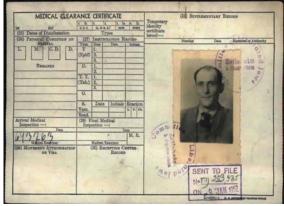
Using the ITS Displaced Persons records, three DP registration cards were found for Cwi Chodes (Figures 2 and 3) and "Ms. R" immediately recognized her father's picture on one.

Figure 2. DP Registration Card 1

Allied Expeditionary Forces Displaced Person Registration Record, 3.1.1.1/ 66784303_0_1/ ITS Digital Archive. Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on [April 13, 2013].

Figure 3. DP Registration Card 2

Allied Expeditionary Forces Displaced Person Registration, 3.1.1.1/ 66784303_0_2/ ITS Digital Archive. Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on [April 22, 2013].

Still wanting to know about her father's first family but short on time, "Ms. R" left that day with the new documents about her father and a promise from the Resource Center for further research into her father's family.

The Chodes/Hodes/Hudes Family
To begin to search for Herman's missing family, a quick search through the CNI for the name "Chodes" and appropriate birth years, trying to locate

Herman's children, was unsuccessful. There were children with the correct surname but no further information stuck out to assume they were of any relation to Herman. Many of the results from the ITS are based on a researcher's assumption and intuition due to the fact that birth dates, birth places, and alternative name spellings are rampant within the records. Without more specific information like first names or birth years, it is difficult to narrow down who is who. It is important to keep an open mind and look for links and to make logical assumptions when researching Holocaust victims (or anyone in many cases).

During another search, another CNI card for Herman was found; this time it provided the next big clue: his wife's name. Herman made a request for a death certificate for his wife, Nadzia Winter, to the ITS and a T/D file was created. In discovering the name Nadzia Winter, a number of additional search avenues opened up. First on the list was to locate Nadzia's T/D file, number 217537.

Using the ITS database, Nadzia Winter's T/D file was found however it was small as the ITS never found anything concrete related to her. In fact, most of the information found in her T/D file was information that was provided by Herman; however, Nadzia's mother's name was found in this file: Ester Winter nee Steinmann - another clue in the search.

It did not take long for the ITS search for Nadzia and her children to be exhausted, especially when Bad Arolsen had conducted its own search and found nothing; therefore, new resources needed to be used. To start, the Łódź Directory and JewishGen.org were utilized. While it may seem redundant to use both resources as they contain essentially the same information, the useful aspect of the print resource, kept in the Survivors and Victims Resource Center, is that when one searches for a surname one can also find all of the people with that name who lived at the same address. Using both, a search was conducted for Chodes, Hodes, and Hudes. Neither Herman nor Nadzia were found but there were a number of others many of whom lived at the same address. In fact, it was possible to piece together entire families based solely on the surname and addresses.

The next alternative resource was Yad Vashem's Pages of Testimony database. This database is part of the Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names and holds records for victims and survivors and was created from registrations and search requests made by family members or others. Again a search was done by surname as well as by location, date, and first name, and a Page of Testimony for Cwi Hudes was found. Cwi was an alternative name Herman allegedly went by and the birth year for Cwi was close enough (1915) to be plausible (again this is where discrepancies in vital information is evidenced). Even more of a coincidence was that Cwi's wife's name was listed as Nadezhda Eizen. Hinda Hudes Mitzenmakher submitted Cwi's Page of Testimony to Yad Vashem and she listed herself as his sister. She also listed their parents' names, Abraham and Ester - though these names differed from those listed on Herman's CNI card. Much of the information provided by Hinda was too much of a coincidence to ignore. While this may not have been "my" Herman, maybe he was related. "Ms. R." was emailed to find out whether she knew of any aunts, but she said she did not. Nevertheless, the information from Cwi's card was useful to continue the search.

Back in the CNI, a search was conducted for members of Cwi/Herman's family. It is important to note that searches for Gidalja and Szajndla Chodes, the names Herman provided for his parents, did not yield any results. A search for Cwi and Hinda's parents was more successful. CNI cards for Abram(ham) Hudes were found, though not for Ester. Hinda Hudes Micenmacher was also found (Hinda also has a T/D file however USHMM does not have this file yet and therefore it could not be accessed during this search). Hinda submitted Pages of Testimony for six family members including another brother, for whom no ITS records were found, and her mother and father-in-law. No search was done for Hinda's husband's family as it did not directly relate to the search for Herman and there was still doubt that Cwi and Herman were one in the same.

Figure 5. Łódź Directory

Hudes	Abram			//1891	AGENT	SIEGFR 65	3	JULIUSZ 28		WYM 18.5.43 BIER 12	
Hudes	Abram			//1891	AGENT	SIEGFRIED 65 3		JULJUSZA 28		ABG. 18.5.43 BIER 12	
Hudes	Alta			14/ 7/1906		SULZF 32	44				
Hudes	Alta			27/8/1907	HAUSFRAU	SULZF 32/34	44	HRUBJESIOW			
Hudes	Alta			27/8/1907	HAUSTOCHTER		SULZF 32	44	HORNBJESZOF		
Hudes	Aron			//1924	SCHUELER	SIEGFR 65	3	DIETRICH 8		AG 30.9.423	
Hudes	Benjamin			29/ 1/1912	SCHNEIDER	HOLZ 16	43	KURZE 8	31.7.42		
Hudes	Chaim	Ber		25/9/1870	OFENSAETZER		SULZF 7	40	ALEXHOF 10	AUSG 10.9.42	
Hudes	Chaim	Eliahu		//1915	SCHUHMACHER		SULZF 32	44		A.G.	
Hudes	Chaim	Eljahu		//1915	HUTMACHER		SULZF 32/34	44	HRUBJESIOW	WYM 25.5.41	A.G.
Hudes	Chana			25/4/1875	HAUSFRAU	SULZF 32/34	44	HRUBJESIOW		GEST 6.11.42	
Hudes	Estera	Chaja		//1892	HAUSFRAU	BIER 12	7	SIEGFRIED 65		A.G. 19.5.43	
Hudes	Fajga	Laja		//1860		MATROSEN 77		MUEHL 19		GEST 22.5.42	
Hudes	Frajda			11/7/1905		HOHENS 42	51				
Hudes	Hersz	Aron		30/11/1908	MUTZENMACHER		SIEGFR 65	3	ZD WOLA	WYM 18.5.43 BIER 12	
Hudes	Hersz	Aron		30/11/1908	MUEZENMACHER		ALEXHOF 12	7	SULZF 64		
Hudes	Hersz	Aron		30/11/1908	ARBEITER	HOLZ 21	8	BIER 12	UMG 14.11.43		
Hudes	Hersz	Aron		30/11/1908	MITZENMACHER		SIEGFRIED 65 3		ZD WOLA	ABG. 23.5.43 KELM 41	
Hudes	Icek	Icko		//1875	ZDUN	SULZF 32/34	44	HRUBJESIOW		GEST 2.6.42	
Hudes	Luzer			8/8/1930		HOHENS 42	51				
Hudes	Marjem	Cyrla		//1914	ARBEITERIN	SIEGFR 65	3	CRANACH 12		GEST 31.7.42	
Hudes	Masza			//1911	ARBEITERIN	HOLZ 16	43	KURZE 8	31.7.42		
Hudes	Mendel			//1912	FRISEUR	STORCHEN 6	23		WYM 8.11.41 ALEXHOF 28		
Hudes	Micenmacher	Chana		14/3/1933		HOHENS 42	51				
Hudes	Mindel				FRISEUR	ALEXHOF 28	93	LINDEN 57			
Hudes	Pomeranc	Estera	Chaja	//1892	HAUSFRAU	SIEGFRIED 65 3		JULJUSZA 28		ABG. 18.5.43 BIER 12	
Hudes	Rywka			//1932	SCHUELERIN		MATROSEN 46	13	OST 27		
Hudes	Szmul	Lajb		23/ 4/1940	KIND	HOLZ 16	43	KURZE 8	31.7.42		
Hudes	Zlata			15/4/1874	HAUSFRAU	SULZF 7	40	NEUSTADT 19			
Hudes	Zlata			15/4/1874	HAUSFRAU	SULZF 7	40	NEUSTADT 15			

Next, the Łódź Directory provided listings for "Hudes" and Abram, Ester, and several Hudes Mitzenmacher's were found living with or near each other (Yad Vashem, 1940, 1994, p. 953).

It seemed safe to say Cwi's family had been found, though he was not found on this page. Without knowing whether Cwi and Herman were the same Steinmann Winter by Herman in Nadzia's T/D file. A CNI search for Ester Steinmann was unsuccessful but Ester Winter was found with the maiden name of Eisenkopf. Eisenkopf presented another strange coincidence in the search because Hinda had listed Nadezhda's maiden name as Eizen. It is not implausible that Eisenkopf and Eizen were the same family due to the discrepancies in the records. Ester Eisenkopf Winter had a T/D file, number 607342, which was unavailable at USHMM and could not be used for the search but a place and year of birth (1877, possible with Nadzia having been born around 1910) were available as well as a path of persecution that listed the Krakow Ghetto. Again, alternative resources needed to be used to find Ester Eisenkopf Winter. Using the USHMM archives, a collection of Krakow Ghetto registration forms was used and yielded two potential results: Ester Eisen and Estera Winter (RG-15.058). These cards did not provide enough additional information to narrow "Ester(a) Eisen/Winter" down any further. Using the Łódź Directory and searching for "Winter" three names were found relating to Ester Winter though Nadzia was not there. The search again came to a dead end with remaining questions.

person and having heard from "Ms. R" that she was not aware of any "Herman siblings," the search related to Hinda and Cwi was ended and would be picked it up again if "Ms. R" found merit to it.
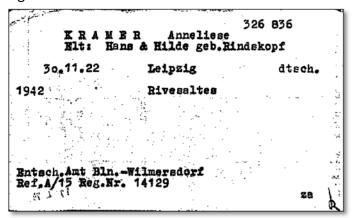
The Winter/Eizen Coincidence
Moving on in the search for Herman's family, the next search was for Nadzia's mother, listed as Ester

"Ms. R.'s" Mother
Having exhausted the available resources and with so many assumptions and coincidences that needed "Ms. R.'s" input, the search moved on to "Ms. R.'s" mother. Herman Chodes met Anneliese Kremer in a DP camp after the war. They were married (which is presumably why Herman requested a death certificate for Nadzia) and eventually immigrated to the United States.

In searching for Anneliese Kremer, the CNI was again the first entry point. Several CNI cards for a German Anneliese Kramer born in 1922 were found (Figure 6). Many of the CNI cards for Anneliese indexed records of prisoners from various locations including Dusseldorf and Oberhausen. Anneliese's parents' names were found, Hans and Hilde (Rindskopf) Kramer as well as a T/D file number, though this file is not yet in the possession of USHMM and could not be accessed for the search (ITS)

Figure 6. CNI Card

Inquiry Card Anneliese Kramer, 0.1/ 28807917/ ITS Digital Archive. Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on [April 22, 2013]

After searching for Anneliese in the CNI, DP records were searched but did not provide any results. Therefore additional resources were once again used. Ancestry.com (Figure 7) provided records for both Herman and Anneliese Chodes including a petition for naturalization and two ship manifests, one from 1950 and another from 1954, though only the latter has Anneliese's name as well (Ancestry.com, 2010).

After locating the appropriate documents for Anneliese, the CNI was used for Hans and Hilde Kramer (Figure 8). Again, both Hans and Hilde were found to have a number of CNI cards and were also found on transport lists from Drancy to Auschwitz.

Hans and Hilde Kramer also had T/D files (#'s: 26484 and 26485). USHMM has both of these T/D files and

they provided information about Hans and Hilde's paths of persecution, birth places, and parents' names. They did not, however, provide a definitive answer as to their fate.

Reporting Back
With the Kramer family wrapped up and more input from "Ms. R." regarding the Chodes/Hudes connection, it was time to send "Ms. R." the results of her search. After drafting an email detailing the search process, results, and the connections in regards to the various coincidences of the search (ie: Nadzia Winter and Nadezhda, etc.) "Ms. R." was sent a considerable envelope with 124 pages of results related to her search and an informal summary of each document was provided in an inventory (Appendix).

Conclusion
It was a couple of weeks later when an email was received from "Ms. R." in regards to the results of her father's search. She was very appreciative of the work that was done to find records about her father and his family. She indicated her surprise that there was no record of his children and also that she had learned things she had not known before; for instance, Herman was in three camps not one, his wife's name, and that her own middle name was a variation of Ester.

Figure 7. Ship Manifest from Ancestry.com

Figure 8. CNI Card

Convoi du 5 Octobre 1942, 1.1.9.13/ 11187328/ ITS Digital Archive. Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on [April 22, 2013].

Unfortunately, "Ms. R" also acknowledged that the research conducted on Anneliese Kramer was not accurate. She stated that her mother's birth year was 1920 and that her parents' names were Peter or Niklaus and Katerina Knott. This confusion provides an excellent example into the challenges of finding the correct people when names are repeated and birth years changed, and few specifics remain the same throughout the search. A new search for the correct Kremer family was later conducted for "Ms. R."

In response to "Ms. R.'s" surprise to lack of information regarding her half siblings, it was explained that there were many plausible reasons for a lack of records. To begin with, Herman Chodes "knew" his family had been murdered in the Łódź Ghetto; therefore, he would have had no reason to search for them after the war. When Herman requested a death certificate for Nadzia, presumably to marry Anneliese Kremer, he would have had no reason to request certificates for the children because they would not have any effect on his second marriage. Also, because the children were so young, it is highly probable that they were killed without any record whatsoever. It is curious, however, that there is no record of Herman Chodes or Nadzia Chodes living in Łódź and no records for the names Herman provided for his family.

"Ms. R." did not indicate whether she was aware of or agreed with the Hinda Hudes Micenmacher connection, though seemed to have taken it at face value, based on her response about her own middle name.

"Ms. R.'s" search provides an excellent example of the work that is done in the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center. Searches are conducted every day for people with all kinds of Holocaust connections, whether they are survivors themselves, the children or grandchildren of Holocaust victims, or even researchers. It is not always an exact science to search for an individual using the ITS records and in most instances, additional resources are used as well. Due to discrepancies in the records, researchers often need to "guess and check", make assumptions, use their intuition, or make educated hypotheses regarding their searches. War time documentation sometimes does not exist at all for individuals and therefore, often times, researchers yield very little or no results at all.

The ITS serves as a vast resource for primary source documents of the Holocaust and can be accessed in the United States via the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

References
Ancestry.com. (2010). *New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957* [database on-line]. Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc.

Belkin, P. (2007). *CRS report of Congress: opening of the International Tracing Service's*

Holocaust-Era archives in Bad Arolsen, Germany. Retrieved February 15, 2013, from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22638.pdf

Biedermann, C. (2003). *60 years of history and benefit of the personal documentary material about the former civilian persecutes of the National Socialist regime preserved in Bad Arolsen*. Bad Arolsen: The International Tracing Service.

Crossland, D. (2012). Reorganizing a vast archive: Holocaust tracing services still reuniting families. *Spiegel Online International*. Retrieved February 11, 2013, from http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/holocaust-tracing-service-in-bad-arolsen-still-reunited-survivors-a-869289.html

Decker, J. (2011). *CNI cards: the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Retrieved February 14, 2013, from http://wiki.ushmm.org/itstools/uploads/Site/CardGuide7.18%2021%20April%202011.pdf

Holborn, L. W. (1956). *The International Refugee Organization: A specialized agency of the United Nations: Its history and work 1946-1952*. London: Oxford University Press.

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2002). *History of the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC*. Retrieved February 12, 2013, from http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jqrj.htm

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2010). *1945-1965: Two decades of challenges*. Retrieved February 12, 2013, from http://www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/history/since-1945/overview-since-1945.htm

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2012). *Convention (III) relative to the treatment of prisoners of war. Geneva, 12 August 1949*. Retrieved February 13, 2013, from http://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/9ac284404d38ed2bc1256311002afd89/256a5a5274f4d436c12563cd0051b04d

International Tracing Service. *Central Name Index*. Retrieved from OusArchive at U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

International Tracing Service. (1986). *International Tracing Service. Service International de Recherches. Internationaler Suchdienst.* Arolsen: The International Tracing Service.

International Tracing Service. (2009). An introduction to the International Tracing Service. Bad Arolsen: The International Tracing Service.

International Tracing Service. (2011). *57 years under the direction of the ICRC: annual report. Bad Arolsen: International Tracing Service*. Retrieved February 11, 2013, from http://www.its-arolsen.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/jahresberichte/ITS_AnnualReport_2011.pdf

International Tracing Service. (2013). *Preservation of the documents*. Retrieved February 14, 2013, from http://www.its-arolsen.org/en/archives/preservation/preservation-of-the-documents/index.html#c2883

Landler, M. (2007). Documents from vast Nazi archive to made available to scholars. *NY Times.com*. Retrieved February 11, 2013, from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/16/world/europe/16nazi.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&

Megargee, G. P. (2009). *Encyclopedia of Camps and ghettos, 1933-1945. Volume 1: Early camps, youth camps, and concentration camps and subcamps under the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA)*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Yad Vashem Organization of Former Residents of Lodz in Israel: Organization of Former Residents of Lodz in Israel & Yad va-shem rashut ha-zikaron la-Sho'ah vela-gevurah. (1940/1994). *Lodz-names: List of the ghetto inhabitants 1940-1944*. Jerusalem: RG-15.058, *Registration Forms for Jewish Inhabitants of Kraków*, Poland, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. Retrieved April, 2013, from

http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504385

Rosenbaum, M. (Producer). (2007). *Hitler's secret archive* [Television broadcast.] Washington, DC: CBS News – 60 Minutes. http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=2972691n

USHMM. (n.d.). Central Name Index: Inquiry cards. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from http://itsrequest.ushmm.org/its/Central_Names_Index.pdf

USHMM. (2007, August). United States Holocaust Memorial Museum receives first shipment of records from International Tracing Service. *Press Release*. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/archives/detail.php?category=07-its&content=2007-08-21

USHMM. (2007, September). Joint statement by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and International Tracing Service. *Press Release*. Retrieved February 23, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/archives/detail.php?category=07-its&content=2007-09-05

USHMM. (2007, November). United States Holocaust Memorial Museum welcomes completion of ratification process opening International Tracing Service Archive. *Press Release*. Retrieved February 23, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/archives/detail.php?category=07-its&content=2007-11-28

USHMM. (2008, January). United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to begin providing Holocaust survivors information from International Tracing Service Archive. *Press Release*. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/archives/detail.php?category=07-its&content=2008-01-17

USHMM. (2008). *International Tracing Service Archive: frequently asked questions*. Retrieved February 11, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/its/faq/

USHMM. (2012). Jewish population of Europe in 1933: Population data by country. *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005161

USHMM. (2012). Jewish population of Europe in 1945. *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005687

USHMM. (2012). Nazi persecution of Soviet prisoners of war. *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007178

USHMM. (2012). Program summary. *Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center*.

USHMM. (2013). Mission statement. Retrieved June 28, 2013, from http://www.ushmm.org/museum/mission/

Warhaftig, Z. (1944). *Relief and rehabilitation: Implications of the UNRRA program for Jewish needs*. New York: International Press.

Woodbridge, G. (1950). *UNRRA: The history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*. New York: Columbia University.

Appendix
1. Index cards for Herman (Cwi) Chodes from ITS (2 pages)
2. Index card from ITS with:
    - T/D #: 253935
    - Parents' names
    - Path of persecution
    - Post war path
3. T/D file (2)
4. DP records (post war) (3)
5. Petition for naturalization (from Ancestry.com)
6. Ship manifests from 1950/1954 (from Ancestry.com) (2 pages)
7. Index card for Nadzia Winter Chodes from ITS with (2 pages):

- T/D # 217537
- Lasts known news
- request for death certificate

8. T/D file for Nadzia Winter Chodes with:
    - Mother's name: Ester Winter (Steinmann)
    - No results
9. Index card for Anneliese Kramer
10. Index card of prisoners from Dusseldorf dates: 17.8.1933-16.10.1946
11. Index card of prisoners from Oberhausen dates: 17.1.1938-19.3.1945
12. Index cards from the detention center at Duisburg-Hamborn dates: 2.9.1936-16.8.1946
13. Index card for Anneliese Kramer with:
    - T/D #: 326836 (USHMM does not have this file but it can be requested from ITS)*
14. Index card for Anneliese Kramer
15. Index card for Anneliese Kramer with:
    - Parents' names: Hans and Hilde Kramer - T/D #'s: 26484-26485
16. Index card for Anneliese Kramer with address
17. Index card for Hans Kramer with:
    - T/D #: 26484
    - Path of persecution
18. Hans and Hilde Kramer on transport list 5.10.1942
19. Hans and Hilde Kramer on transport list from Drancy to Auschwitz 3.11.1942
20. Hans and Hilde Kramer on transport list from Drancy to Auschwitz 3/4.11.1942
21. T/D File # 26484 for Hans Kramer
22. Index card for Hilde Rindskopf Kramer with:
    - T/D #: 326729 (USHMM does not have this file but it can be requested from ITS)*
    - Path of persecution
23. Hildegard Kremer on name list for prisoners who died at Dusseldorf detention center
24. T/D File 26485 (duplicate records with # 26484)
25. Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony regarding Cwi Hudes with:
    - Parents' names
    - Spouses' name: Nadezhda Eizen
    - Submitted by sister, Hinda Mitzenmakher
26. Index card for Hinda Hudes Micenmacher with:
    - T/D #: 676428 (USHMM does not have this file but it can be requested from ITS)*
    - Parents' names
    - Path of persecution

27. Index cards for Abram(ham) Hudes (2 pages)
    - More cards are available for Abraham Hudes
28. Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony submitted by Hinda Mitzenmakher (6 pages)
    - With additional information related to Hudes family and those Hinda Mitzenmakher was searching for
    - Each entry is 2 pages
29. Lodz "Directory" page for Hudes family including:
    - Date of birth
    - Addresses
    - Date of death
30. Henryk Hodys found on list of workers from Lodz Ghetto
31. Lodz "Directory" page for Winter (3 pages)
    - 3 names highlighted all residing at the same address beginning with presumed mother Ester
    - Records for Fajga Winter (2 pages)
32. Index card for Ester Eisenkopf Winter with:
    - T/D #: 607342 (USHMM does not have this file but it can be requested from ITS)*
    - Path of persecution (Krakow Ghetto)
    - Year of birth (1877)
    - Place of birth (Niegow)
33. "Registration" forms from the Krakow Ghetto (2 pages)
    - 1 form for Ester Eisen
    - 1 form for Estera Winter

* T/D files can be requested from the International Tracing Service using the email address: email[at]its-arolsen.org. The ITS Web site is: http://www.its-arolsen.org/en/homepage/index.html