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**MEDIA ADVISORY: 27 February 2020 Hebrew Union College,  
NYC**

**Polish diplomats in Bern tried to save 10,000  
Jews during Holocaust, new research reveals**

***Warsaw-based Pilecki Institute releases previously unknown details about The Ładoś List and the efforts to provide Jews with Latin American passports; English edition of research to be presented on 27 February in New York, under the patronage of the World Jewish Congress.***

**NEW YORK – Polish diplomats based in Bern, Switzerland during World War II attempted to save between 8,000 and 10,000 Jews from Nazi deportation by providing them with fake Latin American documents, new research undertaken by the Warsaw-based Pilecki Institute has revealed.**

The English version of the The Ładoś List, a comprehensive publication presenting previously unrevealed details about the Ładoś Group (also known as the Bernese Group), as well as a full index of the names of the 3,253 Jews who received or were meant to receive these documents, will be presented under the patronage of the World Jewish Congress on Thursday 27 February, at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, following its Polish-language premiere in December.

The publication of the Ładoś List, named for then-Polish Ambassador Aleksander Ładoś, who served in Switzerland 1940–45 and directed the forged certification efforts, is the result of two years of painstaking research conducted by the Pilecki Institute, together with the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, and the Polish Institute of National Remembrance. It is one of the most comprehensive Holocaust research projects conducted in recent years, and was made possible through the access to various reputable archives, including Bad Arolsen, Yad Vashem, the Polish Central Archives of Modern Records, and others, according to Pilecki Institute Director Dr. Wojciech Kozłowski said.

Between 26 and 46 percent of the 3,253 Jews who received the Polish-forged documents are confirmed to have survived the Holocaust, and several dozen of them are still alive. But the real number of the survivors is much larger, said Dr. Jakub Kumoch, Polish Ambassador to Switzerland and the editor of the study. "We estimate that the Ładoś group contributed to the rescue of between 2,000 and 3,000 people," Kumoch said, adding that thousands more Jews are believed to have benefited from these efforts, though their names remain undocumented.

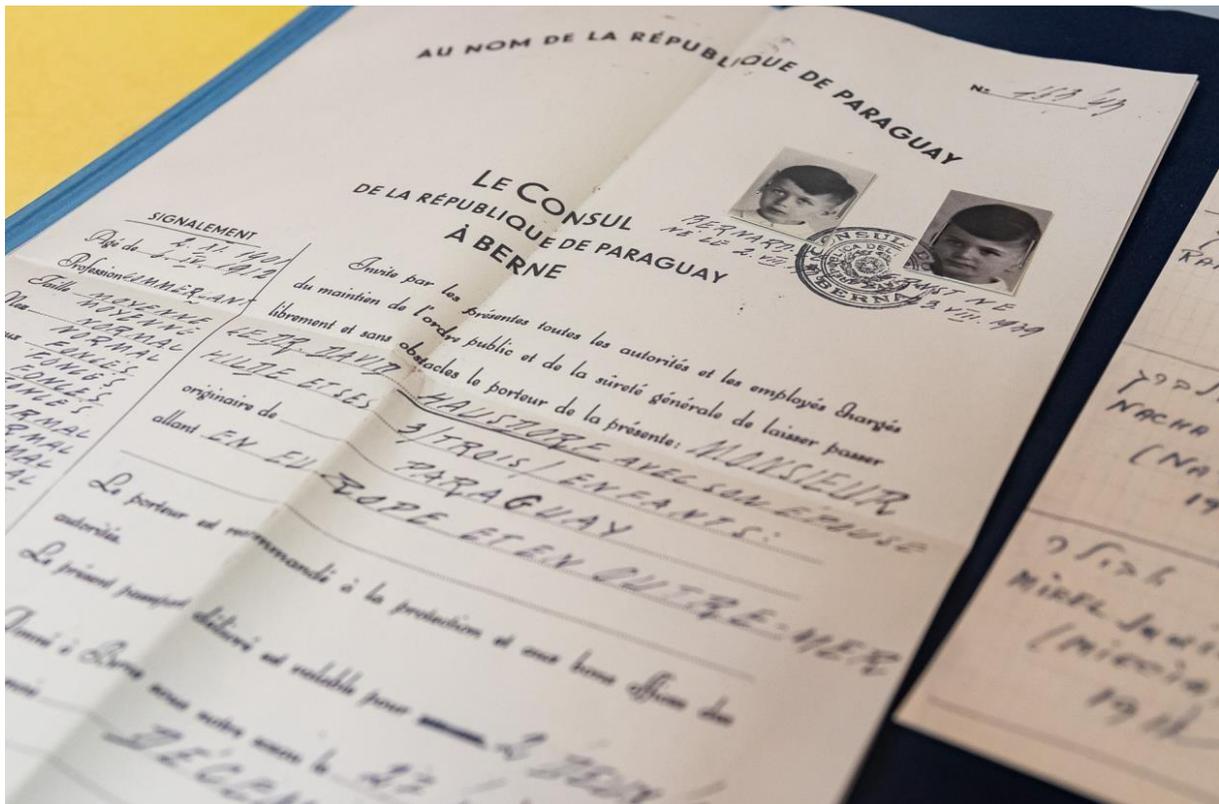
[The full index of Jews saved by the Ładoś Group can be viewed here](#)

The Ładoś Group assisted Jews from all over Europe, though the majority of the passports identified and documented in the research were used by Jews in occupied Poland, the Netherlands, and to some extent, Germany, according to Monika Maniewska, a Pilecki Institute archivist and co-author of The Ładoś List. Since its premiere in Poland last December, a number of people have come forward to confirm the details revealed. The English edition, which includes the life stories of more than 50 survivors, was first presented last week in London, at the Wiener Holocaust Library. The research will also be presented in West Hartford, Connecticut at the Mandell JCC Innovation Center on 28 February, following the 27 February event in New York.

WJC Associate Executive Vice President and General Counsel Menachem Rosensaft, whose father Josef (Józef) Rosensaft was among the Jews saved through a forged certificate of Paraguayan nationality, praised these efforts in a February 2019 [op-ed in Tablet Magazine](#), in which he wrote: "We cannot and must not overlook those Poles who killed Jews or handed them over to the Germans to be killed, or who profited shamelessly from the ghettoization and deportation of their Jewish compatriots. At the same time, however, it is equally critical to emphasize that there were thousands of Poles who risked their lives to hide and save Jews, and that the London-based Polish government in exile was one of European Jewry's few allies during the Holocaust years."

### **Background on The Ładoś List**

The list of Jews who were saved by the Ładoś Group includes several heroes of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, including Zivia Lubetkin and Yitzchak Zuckerman, as well as leaders of the Jewish resistance from Slovakia, France, and Italy. Among the thousands of survivors were also Mirjam Finkelstein, mother of British politician and associate editor of The Times, Lord Daniel Finkelstein, who recounted his family's story during the English premiere in London, as well as the best friend of Anne Frank, Hannah "Hanneli" Goslar.



Forged Paraguayan documentation, prepared by the Ładoś Group. Photo credit: Courtesy of Pilecki Institute

Ambassador Ładoś, who represented the London-based Polish government in exile during the Nazi German occupation, authorized his diplomats to fabricate documents from third-party countries in an attempt to help rescue at least some of the more than 3.5 million Jews living in Poland at the time. The operation was made possible through close and loyal cooperation between the Polish Legation, the World Jewish Congress, and Agudath Yisrael (who funded the efforts), under the direct protection of Ładoś, and with the support of the Government of Poland and private individuals.

The Ładoś documents aimed to protect the Jews in possession from being deported to the Nazi German death camps. The documents were sent to citizens of more than a dozen European states interred in concentration camps and ghettos across occupied Poland and the Netherlands. Nearly half of the passports and citizenship certificates were forged by Ładoś's vice-consul, Konstanty Rokicki, with the help of his deputy, Stefan Ryniewicz, and a Jewish employee of the embassy, Juliusz Kühl.

Additional personal documents, passports, and certificates ascribed to Honduras, Haiti, and Peru were also illegally purchased from the honorary consuls of these countries, with authorization by Ładoś, and two Jewish members of the Ładoś Group: Abraham Silberschein, representing the World Jewish Congress, and Chaim Eiss, representing Agudath Yisrael, who were the driving

forces on behalf of Jewish organizations at the time. In 1943, the Government of Poland gave its full support to the operation, pressuring Latin American states to recognize these forged documents for humanitarian reasons.

Pilecki Institute Director Kozłowski said that although 3,253 names of Jews who received these documents have been confirmed, some 5,000–7,000 are still unknown. “We sincerely hope to receive the help of Jewish communities worldwide to find out the identities of these additional people. We believe that there is no further possibility to identify any other names by archival research. During the last two years the authors have done really very much. Now it’s time for the families of survivors and victims to tell their story,” Kozłowski said.

Journalists and media representatives are invited to RSVP to the contacts below

### **About the World Jewish Congress**

The World Jewish Congress (WJC), founded in Geneva in 1936, is the international organization representing Jewish communities in 100 countries to governments, parliaments and international organizations.

### **About the Pilecki Institute**

The Warsaw-based Pilecki Institute was established to facilitate the interdisciplinary and international analysis of issues and developments of key importance to the political history of the 20th century, namely the Nazi and Soviet totalitarian regimes and the global consequences of their actions.

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