

# Initial Outline for Source Research into the List of the Saved

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## **Abstract**

During the Second World War, the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern made strenuous efforts to save thousands of Jews by issuing them with falsified passports or certificates of citizenship of certain Latin American countries – primarily Paraguay, Honduras, Haiti and Peru.

The article presents the most important archival resources in which the Pilecki Institute, acting in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Bern, is currently conducting research with the objective of determining the actual number of persons saved and elaborating a list of the rescued.

The issue of saving persons of Jewish ethnic nationality during the Second World War is being researched by a great many scholars, and this fact is attested to by the sheer volume of publications printed both in Polish and other languages (Korboński, 2011; Stauffer, 2008; *Those who helped*, 1997; Friedenson & Kranzler, 1984; Eck, 1957). Numerous aspects still require in-depth analysis, for example the involvement of diplomats from the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern<sup>1</sup> in issuing falsified documents confirming citizenship of various Latin American states. Professional publications that would touch upon the details of the “passport operation” and at the same time expound the role played by Polish diplomats are few and far between. It is worth noting the article authored by Izaak Lewin<sup>2</sup> (Lewin, 1977), in which he described the actions undertaken by the Polish diplomatic missions in Bern and New York in order to save Jews, including providing Jewish organizations with access to diplomatic codes. He did not mention the process of generating the passports, only describing how these documents helped save lives.

Successive researchers took up the issue decades later, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, writing both scientific papers (Haska, 2015; Drywa, 2014; Zieliński, 2000) and journalistic articles popularizing the topic (Potocki & Parafianowicz, 2018, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; MacKinnon, 2017). They described the actions undertaken by Polish diplomats from the Legation in Switzerland, who arranged the “passport campaign” under the leadership of *Chargé d’Affaires* Aleksander Ładoś.<sup>3</sup> Although these texts concentrated on presenting the details of the operation, its sources of financing, and the leading participants and their involvement, to date no one has taken on

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- 1 The Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern during the Second World War comprised among others Aleksander Ładoś (1891–1963) – the *Chargé d’Affaires [ad interim]*, Konstanty Rokicki (1899–1958) – the Vice-Consul, Stefan Ryniewicz (1903–1988) – the Legation’s Counsellor, and Juliusz Kühl (1913–1985) – the *Attaché* of the Mission and its expert in charge of contacts with Jewish organizations. All of them cooperated closely with members of various Jewish organizations, among others with Abraham Silberschein and Chaim Eiss, in the production of false Latin American passports in order to help Jews in German-occupied countries.
  - 2 Izaak Lewin (1906–1996) – during the Second World War he was active in the United States and established direct contacts with the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York. He based his article in the main on correspondence sent to the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, and subsequently to the Polish Consulate in New York, by the Legation in Bern, which granted Jewish organizations access to its diplomatic codes.
  - 3 Aleksander Ładoś (1891–1963) – a political activist, journalist and diplomat. Born in Lwów, he worked for many years at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1919–1931). He was appointed Head of the Diplomatic Mission in Bern in the capacity of *Chargé d’Affaires [ad interim]* on 24 May 1940, and served until July 1945. After the War he lived in France. He returned to Poland in 1960 and settled in Warsaw. Aleksander Ładoś received the Order of Polonia Restituta, 1<sup>st</sup> Class, as well as a number of foreign awards. He died on 28 December 1963 in Warsaw and is buried at Powązki Cemetery.

the task of determining the exact number of people whom the campaign engaged. Furthermore, no research was conducted into the subsequent fates of the rescued Jews, and thus the precise number of those saved remained unknown. As a result, these articles were no more than an introduction to a fuller analysis.

The lack of in-depth research into the topic may be due to the fact that the operation itself was classified, while the method of distribution of passports was always a closely guarded secret. The challenge consists in the fact that sources are scattered and located not only in public archives around the globe, but also in private collections. It should further be stressed that when receiving doctored documents signed by the Consul of the country of which they were becoming “citizens”, the persons saved through the “passport operation” did not know to whom they owed their lives.

The first mention of the lack of proper research into the list of those saved by the passports and of the fact that many of the people involved in the operation have not yet been identified and described, with their role remaining unknown, was made by the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Swiss Federation, Dr. Jakub Kumoch, during his presentation on 4 February 2018 at the Memorial (Mémorial de la Shoah) in Paris (*Grupa berneńska*, 2018, p. 146).

In June 2018, acting in cooperation with the Polish Embassy in Bern, the Pilecki Institute commenced work on determining the actual number (initially, even an estimate would have been acceptable) of those saved and elaborating a list. Research conducted thus far has focused exclusively on the passports and certificates of citizenship “issued” by the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern in cooperation with Abraham Silberschein<sup>4</sup> (who established the wartime RELICO Relief Committee<sup>5</sup>) and Chaim Eiss<sup>6</sup> (one of the founders and leaders of Agudat Yisrael<sup>7</sup>), and subsequently made available to Jews who were attempting to save their own lives and those of their loved ones.

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4 Adolf Henryk Silberschein (1882–1951) – a Polish lawyer of Jewish ethnicity, a Zionist, an activist of the Jewish World Congress, and the founder of the wartime RELICO Relief Committee.

5 RELICO (more fully: the Relief Committee for the War-Stricken Jewish Population, RELICO) was established in Geneva in September 1939 and financed by the Jewish World Congress.

6 Chaim Eiss (1876–1943) – one of the founders of Agudat Yisrael, and its representative in Switzerland.

7 Agudat Yisrael (Hebrew for “Union of Israel”) – an international ultra-Orthodox Jewish political party (cf. Żebrowski, 2003, pp. 49–51).

The process of acquiring Latin American passports for Jews and the practical results of the usage of these documents have been excellently illustrated by a cryptogram sent to Washington in May 1943 by Abraham Silberschein:<sup>8</sup>

The whole operation consists in using the services of Consuls of various Latin American states who are favorably disposed towards us – and in particular those of Paraguay and Honduras – to obtain passports; we retain these documents, while photocopies are sent back home; this saves people from certain death, for since they are “foreigners”, they are placed in special camps (the conditions are fairly good there), where they are to remain until the end of the War and where we can contact them by mail. We submit written obligations to the Consuls to the effect that the passport in question will only be used to save someone’s life, not for any other purpose. In this way we have saved, among others, Nathan Eck,<sup>9</sup> the wife of Professor Schorr<sup>10</sup> and her family, Rabbi Rappaport from Pińczów,<sup>11</sup> Fei-wel Stempel<sup>12</sup>, and a great many youths. [...] The campaign has the full support of the Polish Legation in Bern, which is doing everything in its power to assist us. [...] Copies sent to:

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- 8 Archive of Modern Records, Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern, file no. 2/495/0/-/330, Telegrams exchanged between the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern and the diplomatic missions of other countries. Ciphred correspondence book, sheets 127–128: Telegram to Washington, no. 11, of 12.05.1943.
  - 9 Nathan Eck (1896–1982) – a Holocaust researcher (Eck, 1957). He received a Paraguayan passport, thanks to which he initially ended up in a transit camp – not in a concentration camp. He was taken to Vittel, but deported to KL Auschwitz in May 1944. He managed to escape from the transport. After the War he commenced research into the Holocaust, and also into the saving of Jews through the use of Latin American passports.
  - 10 Mojżesz Schorr (1874–1941) – a Polish professor and historian of Jewish ethnic nationality. He specialized in Oriental studies and was one of the creators of the historiography of Polish Jews. He died in a forced labor camp in Uzbekistan.
  - 11 Szabse (Szapse) Rappaport (1899–1944) – a rabbi from Pińczów, he received Paraguayan documents which staved off his arrest by the Germans. In all probability he ended up in the internment camp in Vittel, from where he was sent to Auschwitz.
  - 12 Feiwel Stempel (1886–1944) – an industrialist, Member of the Polish Parliament in the years 1922–1927, and a member of the Central Board of Agudat Yisrael.

the Jewish World Congress,<sup>13</sup> to Weis,<sup>14</sup> Goldman<sup>15</sup> and Tartakower<sup>16</sup> with the words “Help broaden the campaign, for the very fate of «Sh'erit ha-Pletah» depends on its favorable outcome”.<sup>17</sup> I wholeheartedly support the request. Ładoś.<sup>18</sup>

The initial success of the campaign, namely the transferral of passport holders to internment camps, resulted in this method of action becoming popular amongst Jewish organizations, some of which tried to secure the necessary documents and supply them to those in need on their own initiative. Research conducted at the Pilecki Institute has focused on Paraguayan, Honduran, Haitian and Peruvian passports, which were doctored on the territory of Switzerland with the active participation of Polish diplomats. Analyses focus on documents of various origin, currently located in a host of archives scattered around the globe.

Below we have outlined the first part of the description of archival records used as the basis for creating the so-called list of the saved, which is updated regularly.

### Archive of Modern Records

The fonds of the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern, 2/495/O, comprises 564 archival units. The files were handed over to the Archive of Modern Records by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in four parts, in the years 1964, 1976, 1978 and 1979. However, these units do not contain all the files generated by the said diplomatic mission. In 1945, the government of the Republic of Poland in London, in light of the threatened withdrawal of international recognition and possible liquidation of posts of the Ministry of Foreign

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- 13 Should be: World Jewish Congress (wjc) – an international federation of Jewish organizations and communes from 115 countries. The Congress strives to achieve an understanding between Jewish groups of different political views and religious orientations. It brings together organizations from North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Israel, and the Pacific region. The statutory tasks of the wjc include engaging in interdenominational dialog with Christians and Muslims. During the Second World War, the most important objectives of the wjc included informing governments, politicians and the mass media about the persecution and extermination of Jews, persuading the Allies to provide assistance to Jews and make attempts to save them, and also to provide support to those Jews who survived the Nazi terror.
- 14 Stephen Samuel Wise (1874–1949) – a rabbi, he was Chairman of the wjc in the years 1944–1949.
- 15 Nahum Goldmann (1895–1982) – a Lithuanian lawyer and philosopher of Jewish origin, he was one of the co-founders of the wjc and its Chairman in the period 1956–1968.
- 16 Arieħ Tartakower (1897–1982) – the General Secretary of the wjc from 1940 to 1945.
- 17 Sze'erit ha-Pleta [She'erit Ha-Pletah] – the surviving remnant.
- 18 Signed by Aleksander Ładoś.

Affairs, issued circular letters with instructions as to the procedure to be followed by its subordinate legations. Circulars nos. 16 of 27 February 1945, 42 of 21 June 1945 and 46 of 25 June 1945 ordered that special and secret funds, as well as materials “the disclosure of which – taking into consideration the possibility of their malicious interpretation – would be undesirable”, to be secured or destroyed.<sup>19</sup> The special and secret funds contained monies allocated to unofficial aid programs, of which the “passport operation” was one. It is highly probable that the concomitant remittances, if sent to institutions, organizations or private persons, would have contained information allowing the identification of their beneficiaries. The destruction of the financial documentation of individual diplomatic missions is a considerable hindrance to research, however fragmentary information concerning the topic in question can be found in other sources connected with the matter, such as those in the possession of Jewish organizations and persons who played a part in the “passport campaign”.<sup>20</sup>

Of the extant documents, the most informative are the cryptograms sent and received by the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern. These comprise 15 archival units containing telegrams from the years 1939–1945.<sup>21</sup>

During the Second World War, ciphered telegrams were practically the sole means of communication between Continental Europe and the rest of the world, especially as courier services had been all but stopped in November 1942, when the Third Reich occupied the free zone of France. Cryptograms were used to convey information from London to the Polish diplomatic posts still operating on the Continent, and also to send telegrams to the Polish Government-in-Exile. Furthermore, the Polish secret diplomatic code was used by Jewish organizations active in the United States and Europe. Its utilization was sanctioned by Aleksander Ładoś (Lewin, 1977, p. 88).

Among others, these telegrams contain requests for the issuance of Latin American passports, and further mention remittances made for this purpose, originating from Jewish organizations or private persons; they also inform of the people saved by the falsified documents made available by the legation.

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19 Archive of Modern Records, Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern, file no. 2/495/0/-/324, Telegrams sent by the (Polish) Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London to the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern. Ciphered correspondence book, sheet 214: Circular letter no. 42, dated 21.06.1945.

20 For example the Eiss Archive or the Abraham Silberschein Archive, discussed further on in the article.

21 Archive of Modern Records, Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern, file no. 2/495/0/317-332, Ciphered telegrams of the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern.

## Yad Vashem – Abraham Silberschein Archive

The Archives of the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem contain fonds M.20 – the Abraham Silberschein Archive (RELICO Archives, Geneva). Adolf Henryk Silberschein, also known as Abraham Silberschein, was born on 30 March 1882 in Lwów and died on 30 December 1951 in Geneva. A Polish lawyer of Jewish ethnic nationality, he was an activist of the World Jewish Congress, the representative of the Zionist movement in Poland, and a Member of the first Polish Parliament (1922–1927) convened after the country regained independence in 1918. He spent the War in Geneva, Switzerland, where in 1939 he set up the Relief Committee for the War-Stricken Jewish Population (RELICO). The primary objective of the Committee was to assist in the search for missing relatives and secure funds and legal aid for Jewish refugees.

The Silberschein Archive contains 243 archival units ordered thematically. Some of them comprise a few tomes. These documents originate from the years 1939–1951, and were elaborated in German, Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French and Polish. They include correspondence with Jewish organizations, governments of various countries, the International Red Cross, the Swiss police, and assorted consulates and embassies. Their subject matter concerns the plight of persons of Jewish ethnicity in countries occupied by the Third Reich, the organization of aid for them (drugs, parcels), and the production of documents (visas, etc.) that would allow them to leave the German sphere of jurisdiction.

As it transpired, this unit contains photocopies of passports of Latin American states, and also provisional certifications confirming the bestowment of citizenship (with passports to be issued at a later date). These documents are of Paraguayan, Honduran, Haitian and Peruvian origin. Other materials also turned out to be useful when compiling the list of those saved: a file, registers, and lists of persons drawn up by Silberschein and containing his handwritten notes and comments concerning the issuance and provision of passports or certificates to individual persons.

As regards Paraguayan and Honduran passports, Silberschein wrote down an instruction, the “Vorbereitungs Studien”<sup>22</sup> – Guidelines for registering Paraguayan and Honduran passports and certifications.<sup>23</sup> This document has allowed us to properly interpret his handwritten notes and understand how he designated the people figuring in his lists and registers. His analysis has made it easier to determine which documents were made out at whose request. A good example is the file<sup>24</sup> of persons from Kraków, Buczacz,

<sup>22</sup> German preparatory research.

<sup>23</sup> Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), M.20, Archives of A. Silberschein, Geneva (RELICO), Vol. 171, “Vorbereitungs Studien”.

<sup>24</sup> The YVA uses the term “File cards”, i.e. files, but this is a list of persons written down both by hand and on a typewriter, YVA, M.20, dossier 179.

Amsterdam, Warsaw, Będzin, Sosnowiec, Drohobycz, Przemyśl and other townships, to whom Honduran and Paraguayan passports were sent. This list contains 1,522 names with annotations made by Silberschein himself.<sup>25</sup>

His legacy also contains correspondence closely connected with the whole process of production of the passports. A good example is Silberschein's exchange of letters with Consul Konstanty Rokicki concerning Paraguayan passports,<sup>26</sup> or with Johann Schluchin<sup>27</sup> regarding Haitian certifications.<sup>28</sup>

Research has been further facilitated by documentation containing lists of prisoners from transit camps, among them Bergen Belsen<sup>29</sup> and Vittel,<sup>30</sup> who were in possession of passports. They were to be exchanged for Germans interned in the West. Correspondence with persons who received the Latin American passports is also extant.<sup>31</sup>

### Yad Vashem – The Dr. Nathan Eck Collection

The Archives of the Yad Vashem Institute also contain the Nathan Eck Collection.<sup>32</sup> This fonds contains 46 units with documents from the years 1938–1976. Nathan Eck (1896–1982), born in Janów, was a teacher, writer and activist of the Zionist youth organization “Gordonia”. In 1943, he received a Paraguayan passport. This ensured that he was deported to a transit camp, initially to Tittmoning and later to Vittel (Eck, 1957, p. 128). In May 1944 he managed to escape from a transport to KL Auschwitz, making his way to Paris, where he remained until the end of the War.

The legacy of Nathan Eck contains materials which he used in his research into the Holocaust in Poland and France. These are scientific articles, newspaper clippings, correspondence and documentation concerning the emigration of Jews who used foreign (including Latin American) passports.

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- <sup>25</sup> YVA, M.20, dossier 179: File cards with personal information concerning 1,522 people from Kraków, Buczacz, Amsterdam, Warsaw, Będzin, Sosnowiec, Drohobycz, Przemyśl and other locations, to whom protective Honduran and Paraguayan passports were sent.
- <sup>26</sup> YVA, M.20, dossier 168, sheets 51, 55–58, 61, 63, 65, 71–76, 81–88, 90–92, 104, 127–128, 149–153.
- <sup>27</sup> Johann Schluchin (1880–?) – an employee of the Haitian Consulate in Zürich during the Second World War.
- <sup>28</sup> YVA, M.20, dossier 71, sheets 5, 9, 11, 25–33.
- <sup>29</sup> YVA, M.20, dossier 176: List of 646 Jews eligible for a change in Bergen Belsen, submitted by the Rescue Department of the World Jewish Congress. The list contains 646 names of persons holding citizenships of various Latin American countries.
- <sup>30</sup> YVA, M.20, dossier 70: Liste der am 16 Mai 1944 aus Vittel mit unbekanntem Ziel entfertnen Internierten. The list contains 290 names of persons holding citizenships of Latin American countries who were eligible for exchange.
- <sup>31</sup> YVA, M.20, dossier 162.
- <sup>32</sup> YVA, P.22, The Dr. Nathan Eck Collection – documents from the private archive of Dr. Nathan Eck.



The fonds also contains numerous accounts of persons who survived the Holocaust,<sup>33</sup> and were later gathered by Eck for the purposes of study. These materials were written in Yiddish, Hebrew, English, German, Polish, French, Italian and Spanish.

### Swiss Federal Archives

The Swiss archives are an invaluable resource for studies into the activities of the Polish Legation in Bern, and contain many documents which have not yet been properly analyzed by researchers. Work on these archives continues in progress. The most important are materials generated in the course of the Swiss police investigation into the participation in the “passport campaign” of the Paraguayan Consul in Switzerland, Rudolf Hügli,<sup>34</sup> the interview of Abraham Silberschein, and also the dossiers of Polish diplomats. These documents originate from 1942–1945, and were written mainly in German and French. The most numerous group of materials generated in the course of the investigation are interview reports of persons involved in the production and supply of the passports.<sup>35</sup> Of considerable importance for research is Hügli’s interview report of 22 May 1944, which provides some detail about cooperation with the Polish Embassy in Bern in the production of these doctored documents. Materials from the investigation also include the interview report of Juliusz Kühl, dated 22 May 1944, which contains information about the stages of falsification of the passports and the role played in the process by Konstanty Rokicki and Rudolf Hügli. Further, the case files contain lists of persons of Jewish nationality to whom certificates confirming Paraguayan citizenship were sent, together with their addresses<sup>36</sup> and the photographs necessary to produce the documents. In the majority of instances, each single photograph presents one person – there are 211 in total.

### The Eiss Archive

The Eiss Archive is the legacy of Chaim Yisroel Eiss. Chaim Eiss was born in 1876 in Ustrzyki, which he left in 1900 for Switzerland. He was one of the founders of Agudat Yisrael, an international ultra-Orthodox Jewish

<sup>33</sup> YVA, P.22, dossier 3, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Swiss Federal Archives in Bern, file no. E4320B#1990/266#4140\* – Hügli Rudolf, 1872 (1942–1952), and file no. E2001E#1000/1571#657\* – Hügli Rudolf, Honorar Konsul, Bern (1929–1944).

<sup>35</sup> Swiss Federal Archives, file no. E2001E#1000/1571#657\* – Hügli Rudolf, Honorar Konsul, Bern (1929–1944).

<sup>36</sup> An example would be List no. N Fol. 4 Polen and Lithuania, which contains the names of 65 persons together with their personal data and addresses.

organization, and its representative for Switzerland. In 1940, he took charge of coordinating and smuggling correspondence between ghettos in Poland and Aguda offices in London, New York and Istanbul. He took part in obtaining the Latin American passports, among others by securing the requisite funds; some of the activities which he undertook are referred to in his legacy. He died in 1943. For decades, the Eiss Archive was in the possession of his family. In 2018, it was handed over to the State Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum by Eiss' descendants, thanks to the assistance of Markus Blechner, the Honorary Consul in Zürich. From that time on, the Museum acts as the Archive's disposer.

The collection comprises some 429 documents from the years 1940–1943, which will be properly ordered at the location of their final storage. These materials were drawn up mainly in German and Polish.

Documents from the Eiss Archive can be divided into four parts: passports, correspondence, letters, and photographs. This division is conventional and has been introduced for the purposes of research conducted by the Pilecki Institute. The first part comprises eight falsified Paraguayan passports, written out in the hand of Consul Rokicki. One of them is severely damaged and has been removed for conservation. The other seven are booklets in A5 format, with inserts in the form of a folded A3 sheet, together with a glued photograph or photographs. It is worth noting that a single form could have contained the data of one to a few people (e.g. the passport of the Goldzweig family was issued for all five of its members).

The second part of the Archive contains Eiss' correspondence, conducted among others with Konstanty Rokicki concerning the issuance of passports and the sending of lists with names, and with Abraham Silberschein on the topic of Paraguayan passports. It also contains postcards sent by private individuals from the General Government with requests for, for example, food parcels. This part may also be taken to include confirmations of remittances sent by and to Chaim Eiss, which passed through the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Bern.

The third part comprises lists of names and addresses. These are numbered (although they have not been arranged chronologically) and contain primarily the data of persons of Jewish origin, such as the list of Czechoslovakian Jews deported during the War to the Warsaw Ghetto.<sup>37</sup> Another example is the list of orphans from the Warsaw Ghetto,<sup>38</sup> for whom it was necessary to obtain material assistance, or the list of persons incarcerated at KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. In total, these documents mention 4,536 names

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<sup>37</sup> Federation of Czechoslovakian Jews: List no. 1 (Polish ghetto) – containing 255 names with address data (Eiss Archive).

<sup>38</sup> Liste der Waisen in Warschau – containing 229 names with address data (Eiss Archive).

of persons scattered around various locations (ghettos, camps) or working for various organizations.<sup>39</sup> Some of the lists include only names and surnames, however the majority also contain precise address data.

The final part comprises photographs sent to Chaim Eiss for the production of passports. The photographs have been described with names and surnames, usually accompanied by a date of birth and sometimes by an address. These are not typical passport photographs in the present-day meaning of the term. They include photographs of entire families for whom documents were to be made out. There are 115 photographs in all, presenting 164 people.

The opportunity of exploring Chaim Yisroel Eiss' legacy has allowed us to broaden our knowledge of the "passport operation", and also supplement the list of those saved.

### Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute

The search for persons from the list of those saved is also conducted in the Archives of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. The Institute was formally established in 1947 following the transformation of the Central Jewish Historical Commission, which was one of the departments of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (Skibińska, 2007). The Archives of the Institute contain the largest collection in Poland of documents pertaining to the history of Polish Jews – particularly as regards the period of the Second World War and the postwar fates of those who survived the Holocaust. They include, among others, Registration Cards of Jews Who Survived the Holocaust, dated 1945–1951 and created by the Department of Registration and Statistics of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland,<sup>40</sup> a Collection of Accounts of Jews Who Survived the Holocaust,<sup>41</sup> and a Collection of Memoirs of Jews Who Survived the Holocaust.<sup>42</sup> Fonds in the Institute's Archives are thoroughly annotated and have detailed catalogs complete with personal and geographical indexes. Of considerable assistance is the electronic database, which is available on the spot. The Collection of Accounts of Jews Who Survived the Holocaust and the memoirs also have printed inventory books. Preliminary research conducted in the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in connection with studies into the list of the saved concerns Jews of Polish nationality.

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<sup>39</sup> List of Veteran Zionist Holland – two lists, the first contains 58 names with address data, and the second 170 names with address data (Eiss Archive).

<sup>40</sup> Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, file no. 303/V/425.

<sup>41</sup> Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, fonds no. 301.

<sup>42</sup> Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, fonds no. 302.

The Pilecki Institute is also conducting preliminary research in the database of the International Tracing Service (ITS) at Bad Arolsen in Germany, which was made available to the Institute of National Remembrance in 2009. This store of data is the largest collection in the world of digitized documents concerning persons persecuted by the Third Reich. The ITS was established in order to search for and register persons who were reported missing in the course of the Second World War.

The database is made up of three basic parts. The first, “Incarceration and persecution”, is a collection of camp, prison, investigative and court materials. It includes information on the topic of KL Dachau, KL Buchenwald and KL Mauthausen, and also about intermediate camps, such as Bergen-Belsen in Germany and Drancy in France. Among others, it contains scans of prisoner records, and transport lists of persons arriving at or being deported from individual camps. Documents from KL Auschwitz-Birkenau available in this store are copies of documents preserved at the State Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and in archives in Moscow; unfortunately, the majority of materials were destroyed before liberation of the camp (Ryżko & Żuławnik, 2018, p. 116). The archival materials gathered in this part are the most significant as regards searches for persons of Jewish nationality who were interned in various camps on the occupied territories. They allow us to trace the fates of individuals, and in particular to determine from and to which camp or ghetto persons were transported and what happened with them later. They also contain information about the last facility in which individuals found themselves, whether for example this was a functioning concentration camp or a liberated camp.

The second part is a collection of materials concerning persons registered and employed on the territory of the Third Reich, mainly foreign forced laborers. It includes scans of original documents drawn up during the War, such as labor cards, POW identification cards, and also death registers together with information about places of interment.

The third part comprises archival materials relating to persons who after the Second World War found themselves outside their homeland, first and foremost on the territory of the former Reich – the so-called DPs (Displaced Persons). Here we find data pertaining to Jewish émigrés, including documentation generated by the charitable American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Further, this part contains a database of surviving Jews registered with the Central Committee of Jews in Poland in the years 1945–1947. It encompasses personal data, addresses of residence from before the outbreak of war in 1939, and addresses current at the time of registration. The originals of the lists can be found at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Additionally, it includes the documentation gathered by the office involved in searching for children reported missing during the War, and in providing aid to orphans on the territory of Germany (Ryżko & Żuławnik, 2018, p. 116).

The Bad Arolsen database is quite comprehensive, and can be accessed through a number of search engines. The search method is somewhat complicated, however, with documents being available mainly in German, although some have been written in French, Polish and English. The language in which individual documents were written depended on the country of origin of the person who was tracing the fate of his or her family, or looking for confirmation of the detention of relatives in a German camp. Access to this database has made it possible to determine the life stories of many from the list of the saved.

### Further Preliminary Archival Research

Preliminary research is conducted on an ongoing basis at Yad Vashem – both directly at the Institute, and in its collections and databases available online. A great deal of information – in addition to that which may be found in the Silberschein and Nathan Eck fonds – is also gathered in the collections of Jewish organizations which assisted people of this ethnicity during the German occupation (among others Chaim Pazner – W.R.B.<sup>43</sup> Archive,<sup>44</sup> RELICO, World Jewish Congress, Geneva<sup>45</sup>) and in the writings of private historians and researchers studying the topic of saving Jews (for example the Dr. Mark Dworzecki Archive<sup>46</sup>).

Also other fonds at Yad Vashem may contain individual documents with indirect information concerning the “passport campaign”. Particularly researchers involved with this topic must display intuition in their quest for information. Furthermore, preliminary research is being conducted in other Israeli archives, too, for example in the Ghetto Fighters’ House Archives, the Moreshet Archive at the Mordechai Anielewicz Memorial Holocaust Study and Research Center, and at the Massuah Museum. At the same time, numerous studies focus on collections located in the United States, among others at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research or the Yeshiva University Archives in New York.

### Problems of Research

Due to the fact that they are scattered all over the world, gaining access to many of the materials is very time-consuming. Not all archives are available

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<sup>43</sup> War Refugee Board.

<sup>44</sup> YVA, P.12, War Refugee Board Archive in Washington D.C.

<sup>45</sup> YVA, M.7, RELICO – Relief Committee for the War-Stricken Jewish Population – World Jewish Congress – Geneva.

<sup>46</sup> YVA, P.10, Dr. Mark Dworzecki Archive.

on-line, and for this reason preliminary research must be performed in person. Finally, these documents have been written in a host of different languages.

Creating a list of persons who were saved presents us with numerous difficulties. One of them is the frequent appearance of certain names or various methods of their inscription. Additionally, the original wordings of many were noted down in Yiddish. While transliterating their own names into the official languages of their countries of residence, the applicants themselves wrote them variously. It is sometimes the case that names and surnames are not accompanied by any additional personal data. Thus, searches in databases are problematic – for example, the popular Jewish name “Schwarz Moses” has more than 600 entries in the Bad Arolsen database alone.

Frequently, the lack of any living witnesses does not allow us to confirm whether a document made out in Bern actually reached its addressee and was made use of. Many people changed their names and surnames after the War (e.g. after leaving for Israel or the United States). For this reason, the fates of a great many holders of Latin American documents are and in all certainty will remain unknown.

Currently, the list of those who were issued a passport or a certificate confirming citizenship of Paraguay contains more than 1,300 names. The persons who figure on it were not only Jews – Polish citizens – but also Dutch, German and Czechoslovak nationals. The list is still incomplete, and preliminary research is ongoing. The results of further research will be presented in successive articles.

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