

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/articles/7430,The-Council-to-Aid-Jews-Zegota.html>

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The Council to Aid Jews “Żegota”

The Council to Aid Jews with the Government Delegation for Poland, also called “Żegota”, was the only official state organisation helping Jews in Europe between the years 1939-1945.

RADA POMOCY ŻYDOM

ŻEGOTA

RADA POMOCY ŻYDOM THE COUNCIL FOR AID TO JEWS

Rada Pomocy Żydom kryptonim „Żegota” była unikalną, tajną organizacją afiliowaną przy polskich władzach. Jej celem było ratowanie żydowskich współobywateli, masowo mordowanych przez okupanta niemieckiego w latach II wojny światowej. Ryzykując własnym życiem, cywilni konspiratorzy ocalili z zagłady co najmniej kilka tysięcy osób.

The Council for Aid to Jews, codenamed “Żegota”, was a unique, secret organisation affiliated with the Polish authorities. Its goal was to rescue Jewish fellow citizens mass-murdered by the German occupier during the Second World War. Risking their own lives, civilian conspirators saved at least a few thousand people from extermination.



WYSTAWA PRZYGOTOWANA PRZEZ INSTYTUT PAMIĘCI NARODOWEJ
KOMISJĘ ŚCIGANIA ZBRODNI PRZECIWKO NARODOWI POLSKIEMU

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COMMISSION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF CRIMES AGAINST THE POLISH NATION

“The world is watching... and stays silent”

The organisation was created on September 27th 1942, in Warsaw, as the “Konrad Żegota” Committee of Social Help for the Jewish Population. At least several other, smaller initiatives contributed to its founding, especially the one started by Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, the president of the Catholic “Front for the Rebirth of Poland” (FOP) which, as a response to deportations of Jewish Varsovians to the gas chambers of Treblinka, wrote a “Protest”:

The world is watching this crime, which is more terrible than anything history has ever witnessed, and stays silent. (...) This silence can no longer be tolerated (...) It is despicable. No one should remain inert in the face of a crime. Who stays silent in the face of murder – becomes the murderer’s accomplice. Who does not condemn – gives allowance.

The smaller initiatives could expand their actions thanks to the support of the official Polish underground authorities. The decision of the chief administrator of the Government Delegation, Leopold Rutkowski (codename “Trojanowski”, “Muszyński”) to award the first subsidies for social organisations bringing aid to Jewish escapees from ghettos and creating networks of aid turned out to be crucial.

From that point on, it was possible to conduct a wider, international, well-organised operation. It was headed by the aforementioned Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and Wanda Krahelska-Filipowiczowa (from the Polish Democratic Organisation). Due to safety reasons, the only information in the underground press about the creation of the Commission was published on October 14th 1942 in the brochure of the Delegation “The Republic of Poland”. The announcement read as follows:

We were asked to announce, that as a result of a series of initiatives of the social Catholic and democratic organisations, the Committee of Social Help for the Jewish Population is being created to aid the Jews suffering from the barbaric treatment from the German hands. The Committee will be trying to, as much as it can in the reality of an occupied country, to bring aid to the victims of Nazi atrocities.

Read the [full text](#) on the IPN's NextStopHistory website.

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