

“Forms of Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto”

We invite you to the second webinar organized by the Warsaw Ghetto Museum which took place on the 8th of June via Zoom. This time, Professor Michael Berenbaum from the American Jewish University talked about the forms of resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto.

One often encounters the widespread opinion that the Jewish community did not participate in fighting during the World War II. Relatively little is known about the fighting in the ghettos that took place already since June 1942. The symbol of the Jewish resistance movement during the World War II is undoubtedly the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – the largest armed uprising of the Jewish population during the World War II.

The Ghetto Uprising, commemorated today in several places in Warsaw, is one of the most symbolic and important events in the history of the Holocaust. In order to understand it, ideological issues are central: the defense of the honor of the Jewish people and the participation of Jews in the anti-fascist struggle for the liberation of Poland and Europe. Although the Ghetto Uprising occupies a special place in the national memory of Jews and Poles, it remains only one chapter in the history of Warsaw Jews during the German occupation. The military aspect of the uprising is most often described, but an equally important element of those days was the general resistance of the civilian population.

The Swiss Historian Werner Rings has said that there were three forms of resistance under German occupation in every land that preceded armed resistance: symbolic resistance, polemical resistance, and self-help. Prof. Michael Berenbaum will discuss the unique elements of these forms of resistance to German occupation in the Warsaw Ghetto and the significance of

the timing that led to the armed uprising. He will also consider the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising not just as history but as symbol and its enduring importance.

Michael Berenbaum is a writer, lecturer, and teacher consulting in the conceptual development of museums and the development of historical films. He is director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust at the American Jewish University (formerly the University of Judaism) where he is also a Professor of Jewish Studies. In the past he has served as the Weinstein Gold Distinguished Visiting Professor at Chapman University, the Podlich Distinguished Visitor at Claremont-McKenna College, the Ida E. King Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies at Richard Stockton College for 1999–2000 and the Strassler Family Distinguished Visiting Professor of Holocaust Studies at Clark University in 2000. Since 2021 he is an adviser for organising the permanent exhibition.

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