

# WGM Permanent Exhibition – Introduction

## video

**We invite you to watch the video about the Warsaw Ghetto Museum permanent exhibition.**

The mission of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum (WGM) is to tell the story of life, resistance, and death in the Warsaw Ghetto. We will do this by introducing the stories of ordinary people who, faced with death and oppression on an unprecedented scale, tried not only to survive but also to continue to take part in communal and cultural life, ceremonies, and religious rites, all the while remaining faithful to fundamental human values. Our aim is also to preserve the memory of the founders of the Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital, its doctors, and nurses, and to integrate the history of the Jewish tragedy with that of the destruction of Warsaw, the city where the former took place. Therefore, WGM must convey a historical and educational message that brings together Jewish, Polish, and universal themes and combines historical and visual aspects.

Our goal is to construct a compelling picture of the life and death of the largest pre-1939 Jewish community in Europe while contributing an original perspective to the history of the Holocaust in Poland under German occupation from 1939 to 1945. The WGM narrative is based on a historiographical approach integrating the tragic history of Polish Jews during the Holocaust with Polish history and the fate of the Polish people under German occupation. For this reason, the history of Warsaw's Jews during the Holocaust is presented as a significant part of the history of the occupied city, a city divided and reorganized in line with the racial policies of the German occupiers.

The WGM narrative focuses on the life of Jews in the ghetto and their efforts to preserve their way of life, culture, and values, regardless of the restrictions imposed on them by the Germans. It

describes the liquidation of the ghetto, even though extermination as such and the story of the death camp at Treblinka are not its central focus. The section dealing with Jewish resistance emphasizes the wide-ranging efforts of the Jewish community during the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. This part of the story connects with WGM's main narrative goal as a museum devoted to the history of Jews as individuals, families, and a community under German occupation.

□□ The lives of the approximately 450,000 Jews locked up in the ghetto will be presented within the context of the occupied city, where non-Jews, i.e., Poles, still lived on the other side of the ghetto wall. Just like during the pre-war period, it is impossible to describe and understand the condition of the Jews in the ghetto in isolation from the fate of the broader city where they lived. Although the ghetto walls established a clear and drastic divide between Jews and Poles, they did not cleave history in twain, as both nations continued to inhabit the same city during the occupation, even if their fates eventually turned out very different. Therefore, a critical matter for WGM is to recount the history of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto in such a way as to ensure that the Jewish and Polish stories remain in meaningful dialogue. It is worth emphasizing that the museum is housed in a building whose history embodies the existence of that encounter.

WGM is located in the capital of post-communist democratic Poland, a member of the European Union. Therefore, WGM must address the Jewish, Polish, and universal significance of the crimes committed by Nazi Germany. WGM sees its educational and memorial mission in commemorating the Jewish tragedy while integrating it into a broad universal and humanistic context, i.e., remembering the victims of other modern genocides and crimes against humanity. The museum will commemorate the other victims (Poles, Roma people, concentration camp inmates, homosexuals, Soviet POWs, and other victims of 20th-century genocides and war crimes) in a memorial installation located in the final section of the exhibition.

***Prof. Daniel Blatman***

---

**Publication date:** 2022-09-05

**Print date:** 2023-05-28 13:13

**Source:** <http://1943.pl/en/artykul/permanent-exhibition-video/>