

# **“There Was a Wall”. 80th anniversary of the closure of the Warsaw Ghetto**

**On 16 November it will be 80 years since the Warsaw Ghetto borders had been closed. The Warsaw Ghetto Museum in cooperation with the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and with the support of its patrons, recalls that date. The anniversary events are accompanied by the social campaign “There Was a Wall”, under the honorary patronage of the President of the Capital City of Warsaw**

**2 November 2020**

## **HISTORY**

The decision to build walls enclosing the Jewish quarter in Warsaw was made in March 1940. By doing so, the Germans wanted to hermetically seal off the “area at risk of an epidemic” as this part of the city was referred to. In mid-November, a wall-encircled ghetto was established in the very heart of Warsaw. The Germans officially called it Jüdische Wohnbezirk (the Jewish residential quarter). Its borders were closed during the night of 15 to 16 November 1940. In cooperation with the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland, the Warsaw Ghetto Museum prepared a series of events and publications presenting the historical background and the reality of the residents and the abruptly divided city.

## **THE MAIN EVENT**

**16 November**

On the 80. anniversary of the closure of the Warsaw Ghetto walls, the Director of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, Albert Stankowski and the President of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland, Artur Hofman, would like to invite you to the ceremony of lighting candles by the ghetto wall.

**location:** H. Sienkiewicz Secondary High School at ul. Sienna 53, 1.00 PM – 4.00 PM Due to safety procedures related to the pandemic, the number of attendees is limited. The event will be broadcast on: [www.1943.pl](http://www.1943.pl) and [www.tskz.pl](http://www.tskz.pl) as well as social networking profiles of the organizers.

## **OUTDOOR EXHIBITION**

**“Every Third of Us”** is an outdoor exhibition prepared on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the Outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the 80th anniversary of the Closure of the Ghetto Borders. **location:** plac Grzybowski (from the side of ul. Próźna) **from 22 July – 30**

**November 2020**

More than 70 archival photographs with historical commentaries, presented on 20 boards, show the normal day in the life of the Warsaw Ghetto. The displayed reproductions of photographs come from the collections of the most important institutions conducting research on Holocaust, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Jewish Historical Institute as well as the German Bundesarchiv and Austrian National Library. The exhibition is dominated by portraits and long shots depicting everyday crowds in the streets and markets of the Ghetto. It shows people organising self-aid, creating art, working and praying. Apart from the scenes from everyday Ghetto life, the “Every third of us” exhibition presents major historical events such as the great deportation action or the uprising of 1943. It also discusses various examples of social and economic life, from the organisation of home committees or charitable institutions to smuggling – an important element of the Ghetto economy. Before September 1939, 370,000 Jews constituted one-third of the capital’s population. Two worlds, Polish and Jewish, differing in their religion, clothing, language and customs, coexisted in one city. The Jews lived everywhere in the city, but most of them resided in

the area of Gęsia, Świętojerska and Nalewek streets. For the German occupier, it justified the creation of a confined quarter in this very area – the largest ghetto in occupied Europe. The exhibition is also available online

at: [https://www.canva.com/design/DAD5mWfdzkg/JpULVu4IzIP\\_cvqxefs\\_lw/view?utm\\_content=DAD5mWfdzkg&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAD5mWfdzkg/JpULVu4IzIP_cvqxefs_lw/view?utm_content=DAD5mWfdzkg&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)

## **ACCOMPANYING EVENTS**

**On 14 November**

**“We are secluded and separated from the world, banished from the human society“.**

Seminar for teachers.

**location: Przystanek Historia (History Station), ul. Marszałkowska 21/25, 9.30**

Topics of presentations:

1. “The conquerors of life”. Selected aspects of everyday life of girls and women in the Warsaw Ghetto.” Dr Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, Head of the Scientific Department of WGM.
2. “Treasures of culture and the Warsaw Ghetto.” Dr Jacek Konik, researcher at WGM.
3. “The cultural life in the Warsaw Ghetto” . Dr Wiesława Młynarczyk, educator at WGM
4. “Religious life in the Warsaw Ghetto”. Dr Halina Postek – Head of Education at WGM

Attendance in person by invitation, following the rules of sanitary regime. (It is uncertain yet whether it will be held online or partially online) The conference will be broadcast online on the social networking profiles of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum and History Station.

## **PRESS CONFERENCES**

**12 November**

Press conference of the Institute of National Remembrance and the Warsaw Ghetto Museum during which the Institute will deposit the original "Stroop Report" with the WGM for the purposes of the permanent exhibition.

**location:** History Station, ul. Marszałkowska 21/25, 12.00 PM

Attendance in person (hosts and journalists) by invitation, following the rules of sanitary regime. The conference will be broadcast online on the social networking profiles of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum and History Station. The Stroop Report was written in May 1943 by the commander of the German liquidation forces, a war criminal, responsible for the bloody suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The document, prepared in three versions, was drawn up for Heinrich Himmler. The 75-page report presents the German version of the events that took place during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It contains descriptions and photographs.

## **16 November**

Press conference of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum and the Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodship during which the act of purchase of the former Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital for the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, will be signed.

**location:** Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital, ul. Sienna 60, 12.00 PM

The conference will be broadcast online on the social networking profiles of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum and the Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodship.

**Due to the increased epidemic risk, the organizers inform that the above plans may be changed.**

## **SOCIAL CAMPAIGN**

The events are accompanied by a social campaign entitled “There was a Wall”. Throughout the entire November, posters and videoclips will be distributed in the urban space and means of communication. The campaign is carried out under the honorary patronage of the President of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski.

## **ONLINE EVENTS**

### **EDUCATIONAL SERIES**

**“The Ghetto in the Literature”** – a film series of reportages presenting four publications: “To Outwit God” by H. Krall; “Conversations with an executioner” by K. Moczarski; “Campo di Fiori” by Cz. Miłosz and “Memories. My version” by I. W. Kornblum. The project was based on the idea and scenario of Dr Wiesława Młynarczyk from the Education Department of WMG. It involved Director Paweł Passini and young people from the “U Machulskich” Theatre Club. The aim of the project is to depict the ghetto from three perspectives: of the victim, executioner and a witness – either involved or indifferent. In each episode, the protagonists learn about a setting, confronting it with today’s Warsaw, and interpret literary texts.

#### **Premiere:**

**18 November; 25 November; 2 November**

**9 November “Varsavianistic Walks along the Traces of the Ghetto”** – a film series of 16 columns showing the history of places and people associated with them

The series will present: Umschlagplatz, Kopiec Anielewicza, the Statue of Szmul Zygielbojm, the Monument of the Ghetto Heroes, Plac Grzybowski, ul. Mariańska and the Nursing School; the Nożyk Synagogue; the Great Synagogue in Tłomackie; ul. Nalewki; the Femina Cinema Theatre; the Courts in Leszno, ul. Chłodna; Ul. Waliców, the Jewish Cemetery and the Bersohn Bauman Children’s Hospital – where the permanent exhibition of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum will be

located. The walks will be guided by Hanna Dzielińska – Hanka Warszawianka – a journalist and a tourist guide.

**premiere: 19, 20, 26, 27 November, 3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31 December 2020; 3, 10 January 2021**

**“The Message”** – the series of films entitled “The Message” and “The Message 2” was created thanks to the materials collected by WGM during the implementation of the project entitled “Home Army and the tragedy of the Polish Jews” (the “Independent” programme). Fragments of witnesses’ accounts which were left out of the project were used to create eight episodes divided into two parts: in the first part the interviewees talk about the pre-war, Jewish Warsaw, while in the second one they discuss the tragic history of the Warsaw Ghetto.

**premiere: 17 and 24 November; 1,8,15, 22, 29 Dec 2020; 15 Jan 2021**

**“There Was a Wall”** – it is a 10-episode series of film columns, created with the use of fragments of films from the Archive of Spoken History of the Warsaw Uprising Museum. Conversations with civilian Varsovians and veteran soldiers bring closer the time when, in the fall of 1940, the residents of Warsaw became separated by the wall. The Warsaw Uprising Museum made its archives available within the framework of its cooperation with the Warsaw Ghetto Museum.

**Premiere: 29,30 October ; 2,3,4,5,6,9,10,12,13 November 2020**

## **EXHIBITIONS**

**“Wall/s”** – is an online multimedia project composed of a series of essays prepared by scholars and people of art working on the subject of the Holocaust. The project opens with a text by the Head Historian of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, Daniel Blatman. The topic of the image of the wall in Polish literature was taken up by Sławomir Buryła. The image of the wall in visual arts is described in Eleonora Jedlińska’s essay. Bartosz Kwieciński discusses the topic of the wall in films. In his personal and emotional text, Paweł Passini asks: “how is it possible that the ghetto

wall was built 80 years ago?" and "why didn't anyone react?".The essays are complemented by a film entitled "Walls", directed by Rafał Kosewski, an employee of the Exhibitions Department. The screenplay is an adaptation of an essay written in the ghetto by Yitzhak Berenstein, entitled "Ściany" ("Walls").

**"The Warsaw Ghetto. People, places, events"** – is an online exhibition presenting various aspects of artistic and cultural life of the ghetto. The premiere publication was devoted to issues from the field of art, music and theatre. The first installment, entitled "Around the szop of Abraham Ostrzega", focuses on presenting the activity of the whetstone factory run by the famous sculptor, Abraham Ostrzega, as well as profiles of the artists employed at the facility. The exhibition will be organised periodically. Its subsequent installments will present other protagonists and problems. The curator of the exhibition is Magdalena Piecyk.

<https://1943.pl/wystawy/wirtualna-wystawa-ludzie-miejsca-wydarzenia/>

### **Co-organizers**

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland

### **Partners**

Samorząd Województwa Mazowieckiego, the Association of Jewish Communities in Poland, the Jewish Community in Warsaw, the Nissenbaum Foundation, the Foundation for the Protection of Jewish Heritage, Chabad Lubawicz, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, the World War II Museum, the Gross-Rosen Museum in Rogoźnica, the Museum of the History of Poland, the Independence Museum, the Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews during World War II in Markowa, the Warsaw Uprising Museum, the Treblinka Museum, the Museum of Warsaw, the National Museum in Majdanek, the Institute of National Remembrance, the Pilecki Institute, the European Network Remembrance & Solidarity (ENRS), the National Library

### **Media patronages:**

Rzeczpospolita, Plus Minus Rzeczpospolita, Słowo Żydowskie, Mówią Wieki, TVP Historia, dzieje.pl, Polskie Radio.

Miłka Skalska, press spokeswoman, Head of Communication Department

Photo Poster by Andrzej Wąsik (WGM)

