

Institute of National Remembrance

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PRESS RELEASE

The Polish Institute of National Remembrance is helping to carry out the last will of the late Samuel Willenberg, who may most certainly be referred to as a hero of both the Polish and Jewish nations, especially taking into account his will to survive and continue the fight for freedom and his resounding spirit of reconciliation.









SAMUEL WILLENBERG

OSTATNI ŚWIADEK Z TREBLINKI THE LAST WITNESS OF TREBLINKA

Zdjęcie przedstawiające Samuela Willenberga osiem dni po ucieczce przed bunt w Treblinkie, zrobione na potrzeby wyrobienia fałszywych dokumentów. Źródło: Muzeum Treblinka.

The photo of Samuel Willenberg eight days after he ran away during the revolt in Treblinka, taken for the purpose of preparing false documents (courtesy of the Treblinka Museum).

הצילום תוכן זה נלקח מן האוסף "האדם האחרון" של מוזיאון טרבלinka.

Samuel Willenberg był jednym z 200 więźniów, którym 2 sierpnia 1943 r. udało się uciec z niemieckiego obozu zagłady w Treblinkie. W chwili śmierci w 2016 r. pozostawał ostatnim z żyjących ocalałych z buntu w Treblinkie.

Samuel Willenberg urodził się w 1923 r. w Częstochowie jako syn Maniefy z domu Popow i Pereca Willenberga. Miał dwie siostry: starszą Itę i młodszą Tamara.

W październiku 1942 r. przybył do obozu w Treblinkie w eskorcie 6 tysięcy Żydów deportowanych z getta w Warszawie. Większość została natychmiast wysłana na śmierć, który pozostał przy życiu.

W obozie Willenberg uzyskał z oddali znajomy głos jego nauczyciela historii – profesora Meringa. Mering przekonywał Samuela: „Ty jesteś odpowiedzialny za świat, coś tutaj widział, to będzie twoje zadanie”.

W Treblinkie do wybuchu buntu 2 sierpnia 1943 r. Willenberg widział przybycie transportów z Opatowa, w tym z Żydami Romów oraz chwilę później transport z Opatowa na śmierć. Los ten spotkał również jego siostry. Willenberg doświadczył ogromnej okrucieństwa i skrajnej wściekłości personelu SS i ukraińskich milicjantów.

Willenberg przetrwał, kres machines w bunt. Willenberg wziął

Samuel Willenberg was among 200 inmates who on 2 August 1943 succeeded in escaping from the Treblinka German extermination camp. At the moment of his death in 2016 he remained the last survivor of the rebellion in Treblinka.

Samuel Willenberg was born in 1923 in Częstochowa, Poland, the son of Maniefa, nee Popow, and Perec Willenberg; he had two sisters, his elder Ita and younger Tamara.

In October 1942 he arrived at the Treblinka camp in a transport of 6,000 Jews deported from the Opatów ghetto. Most perished immediately; he was the only one who remained alive.

On his first night in the camp, Willenberg heard "a familiar voice, as if from a great distance"; it was Professor Merring, his elementary school history teacher. That night Merring urged him, "you've got to escape from here and tell the world what you've seen. That will be your duty".

Willenberg was in Treblinka until the outbreak of the rebellion on 2 August 1943. He saw with his own eyes the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Jews and thousands of Roma and witnessed them being sent to death in the gas chambers; his own sisters Ita and Tamara were killed there. Willenberg himself suffered humiliation, violence, cruelty and extreme viciousness at the hands of the German SS staff and the Ukrainian "SS-Wachmänner" guards.

Inmates in the camp organized the rebellion with the







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seen. That will be your duty.

On 28 January 2020 the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw opened the exhibition of unique sculptures depicting one of the most tragic chapters in the history of the Holocaust, as well as scenes encountered by Samuel Willenberg, a witness to German crimes committed in Treblinka.

Despite the traumatic war experiences in German-occupied Poland, until the end of his life in 2016 Samuel Willenberg had the courage to return to his native country. Since leaving for Israel in 1950, he and his wife Krystyna have on numerous occasions traveled to Poland - either alone or as guides of Israeli youth. They became the spokespeople for good Polish-Jewish relations, openly talking about both the tragic and the beautiful events connecting these two groups of Polish citizens who had experienced the atrocities of German occupation. The Willenbergs are credible witnesses to the tragic fate of Polish citizens, especially of Jewish descent, during World War II.

The Institute's project aims to commemorate Holocaust victims. The opening of the exhibition of Samuel Willenberg's fifteen sculptures depicting everyday life in what can be described as hell on earth, has been prepared by the Institute as part of the celebrations of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The event took place one day after the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, the place symbolizing this tragic crime committed by the German Third Reich.



The sculptures will remain under the care of the Institute of National Remembrance for a year. From 29 January 2020, they will be available to the public at the Institute's "History Point" Educational Centre on Marszałkowska Str. in Warsaw. The exhibition will further visit Białystok, Częstochowa, Gdańsk, Kielce, Kraków, Lublin and Szczecin. The sculptures will also be the subject of educational workshops for both teachers and students.

The exhibition "**The Image of Treblinka in the Eyes of Samuel Willenberg**" is held under the National Patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda to mark the Centenary of Regaining Independence. The exhibition will be accompanied by the screening of the film ***Treblinka's Last Witness*** produced by WLRN, Public Television for South Florida.

The official opening of the exhibition took place on 28 January 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the IPN's "History Point" Educational Centre on 21/25 Marszałkowska Str. In Warsaw. The ceremony was preceded by a press conference at 12.00, at the same location.

More:

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/3447,Samuel-Willenberg-Everybody's-hero.html?search=11555665885>

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/3453,Treasures-of-memory-from-Treblinka.html?search=11555665885>

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/3555,A-Fighter-in-Hell-and-His-Unusual-Sculptures.html?search=11555665885>

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/3561,Treblinka-II-Extermination-Camp-July-1942-November-1943.html?search=11555665885>

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