

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/10662,The-official-unveiling-of-a-commemorative-plaque-devoted-to-Perec-and-Samuel-Wil.html>

02.05.2024, 16:16

01.08.2023

The official unveiling of a commemorative plaque devoted to Perec and Samuel Willenberg took place at 60 Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw, on 1 August 2023, the 79th anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising.

















The plaque, in Polish, English and Hebrew, presenting the figures of

both Perec Willenberg, an artist, painter and art educator, and his son, Samuel, a prisoner and survivor of the Treblinka II German extermination camp and a fighter in the Warsaw Uprising links three important dates in 2023. They are the 80th anniversary of both the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the prisoners' revolt at Treblinka, and the 79th anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising on 1 August.

60 Marszałkowska Street is also symbolic, for it was on the basement wall of this building that Perec Willenberg drew an image of the Merciful Christ during the Warsaw Uprising, which the tenants believed had saved the building from being destroyed during the war. This is also where Samuel Willenberg visited his father after escaping from Treblinka.

The guest of honour at the event was Ada Krystyna Willenberg, the widow of the late Samuel Willenberg.

The ceremony, organized by the Institute of National Remembrance in cooperation with the tenants of 60 Marszałkowska Street, took place on 1 August 2023 in Warsaw. The plaque was officially unveiled by the Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Mateusz Szpytma Ph.D., His Excellency Yakov Livne the Ambassador of Israel to Poland, Ada Krystyna Willenberg, Michael Schudrich, the Chief Rabbi of Poland and Tomasz Sitarski, representing the tenants of the building. Małgorzata Kidawa-Błonska, the Deputy speaker of the Polish Sejm was also present at the event.

Deputy President Szpytma pointed out that:

"We are meeting here today to honor two Polish Jews - father and son - Perec and Samuel Willenberg. Perec Willenberg was an excellent artist, the creator of many synagogue drawings during the Second Polish Republic, in Opatów, Piotrków and other places throughout Poland.

Samuel Willenberg fought in the defensive war of 1939, and later experienced the horrors of the Holocaust and became a witness to the terror of the Treblinka extermination camp. He was one of the few who survived the Holocaust and took part the revolt.

The twentieth century, especially the Second world War and the Holocaust left millions of innocent victims in its aftermath. It our role and at the same time our honorable duty to never forget. We are carrying this memory as a tribute to the deceased but also for the sake of future generations that will be the next to carry it. The plaque founded by the IPN is devoted to both artists and their achievements for both our nations. It is a symbol of our gratitude for their contribution to our common Polish -Jewish history.

Israeli Ambassador to Poland Yacov Livne said: today we have the opportunity to remember our common Polish and Jewish heroes. Before the war and the Holocaust, one-third of the population was Jewish. The Germans and their collaborators who murdered the Jews also wanted to kill their memory. During communism, the killing of this memory and the denial that the Holocaust ever happened continued. Therefore, in my opinion, the first generation living in a truly free and independent Poland has a special duty to tell the story of the thriving Jewish life in Warsaw before the war, which at the time had the second largest Jewish population. We can't bring the dead back to life, but we can honor and commemorate them and what they did".

After commemorative speeches were given wreaths were laid also on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, Minister Jarosław Sellin, Voivode of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship and the gathered guests.

The event was organized by the IPN Office of International Cooperation and the Office of Commemorating the struggle and Martyrdom.

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