

Institute of National Remembrance

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The Official opening of “The Image of Treblinka in the Eyes of Samuel Willenberg” exhibition in Wrocław, 27 July 2022











The opening took place on Wednesday, 27 July 2022 at 5.00 p.m. The exhibition of Samuel Willenberg's sculptures was officially inaugurated by Karol Nawrocki, President of the IPN, and Marek Mutor, Ph.D., Director of the Zajezdnia History Center. Ada Krystyna Willenberg, the widow of the late Artist, acquainted the audience with the 15 exhibits.

The event was also attended by: Jarosław Obremski, Lower Silesian Voivode, Jana Orlowski - Deputy Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany in Wrocław, Adolf Juzwenko, Ph.D., Director of the National Ossoliński Institute, and Rafał Rogulski - Director of the European Network "Remembrance and Solidarity".

On opening the exhibition, Karol Nawrocki said:

"He that takes vengeance will suffer vengeance from the Lord, and he will firmly establish his sins". This is the Sirach's wisdom, but also the wisdom of Samuel Willenberg, a Polish Jew who was ready to defend the Republic of Poland in September 1939, when he became a volunteer into the Polish Army. Later, he became prisoner of the German death camp in Treblinka. Today, this camp, the site and the museum located there, is the largest cemetery of the citizens of the Republic of Poland in history. It is a place where 900,000 people were murdered in just one and a half years on 16 hectares. (...) Samuel Willenberg was consistent in his desire for freedom. In 1944 he joined the Warsaw Uprising and fought for Poland again ... and after 1945, as Sirach wrote, as he himself confessed, he did not demand revenge. He wanted truth, remembrance and justice.

Addressing Ada Willenberg, he remarked that she had also witnessed horrific crimes. Thanking for her trust bestowed on the IPN, Karol Nawrocki emphasized that:

The mission of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland and in the world is to save from oblivion. The memory of these 900,000, and each of them individually, should be preserved in the name of justice and a better future. We are referring about the past and history, in order to build a better world where the atrocities of war and death camps will never return.

The exhibition "The Image of Treblinka in the Eyes of Samuel Willenberg" is a project of the Institute of National Remembrance, started by the IPN Office of International Cooperation headed by Director Agnieszka Jędrzak.

The exhibition of Samuel Willenberg's 15 bronze sculptures depicting life in the German death camp in Treblinka was prepared as part of the

2020 International Holocaust Remembrance Day celebrations.

In 2020, the IPN brought these remarkable 15 sculptures from Israel, which constituted a huge logistical challenge. Despite the pandemic of 2020, we managed to carry out educational workshops for young people. Since that time, the classes have remained very popular and have also been prepared in an online format. The exhibition, supplemented by quotes from the Author's memoirs in English, Polish and Hebrew, has so far appeared in 15 locations throughout Poland, including the sites of former German concentration camps in Bełżec, Sobibór and Majdanek. The project is accompanied by multimedia productions, such as films and a virtual tour. The exhibition and accompanying screening of "Treblinka's Last Witness", a documentary film produced by and screened courtesy of WLRN Public Television for South Florida, which is a first-hand account of Samuel Willenberg's life as a Jewish prisoner of the death camp, can now be viewed in Wrocław.

The exhibition along with the educational project based on Willenberg's works has been possible thanks to the kindness and trust bestowed on the Institute by Ada Willenberg, who tirelessly continues her husband's work in the name of preserving the memory of the Holocaust and its victims.

Samuel Willenberg was a soldier in the Polish Army and the Home Army, as well as a participant of the Warsaw Uprising. After their leaving for Israel in 1950, he and his wife visited Poland on numerous occasions – often as guides for Israeli youth. They became spokespersons for good Polish-Jewish relations, hiding neither the

tragic nor the beautiful events linking the two groups of Polish citizens during the criminal German occupation of Poland.

After presenting the exhibition in a number of Polish towns and cities, the IPN intends to take the project to an international level in cooperation with Ms. Willenberg. We would like to present the collection in former German concentration camps and memorial sites in Germany. The German Embassy in Warsaw has already expressed their interest in this project. Subsequently, the exhibition would visit France and the USA. In addition, the Institute is counting on the support of the said project by organizations gathered in the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, headed by Marek Mutor, Ph.D. The Platform, of which the IPN is a founding member, brings together 68 institutions from around the world.

[An overview of the project](#)

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