

# 1943

## WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

19 APRIL – 16 MAY 1943

1939

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

### CORE INFORMATION

16.11.1940

When the Germans established the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940, their initial aim was to separate the Jews from the city's other inhabitants. They eventually confined 450,000 people within the walls; almost a quarter of them died of disease and starvation. The ghetto was created in northern Warsaw (today's Muranów district). It comprised two parts, the so-called 'small ghetto' and the 'large ghetto'.

### PRECEDING EVENTS

22.07.1942

On 22 July 1942 the Germans began the *Grossaktion*, or mass extermination. Over the course of 43 days they deported 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka extermination camp and murdered them.

10.1942

In October 1942 the ghetto inhabitants decided they would rise up in arms if the deportations continued. By early 1943, before the uprising broke out, there were around 50,000 people still living in the ghetto, that is less than 10% of ghetto population at its peak in 1941.

### OUTCOME

16.05.1943

The fighters were defeated by the German soldiers, who were well-armed and trained, and the ghetto area was reduced to a sea of rubble. The fighters' resistance demonstrated their heroism, bravery and desperation. They decided on armed combat knowing that they would soon die, driven by a desire to avenge their loved ones.



## ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING

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### JEWISH FIGHTING ORGANIZATION

(Pol. Żydowska Organizacja  
Bojowa, ŻOB)

Formed by Zionist organizations – Hashomer  
Hatzair, Dror, Akiba, Gordonia, Poalej Zion  
Left, Poalej Zion Right, Hanoar Hatzioni –  
as well as Bund and the Polish Workers’  
Party (PPR)

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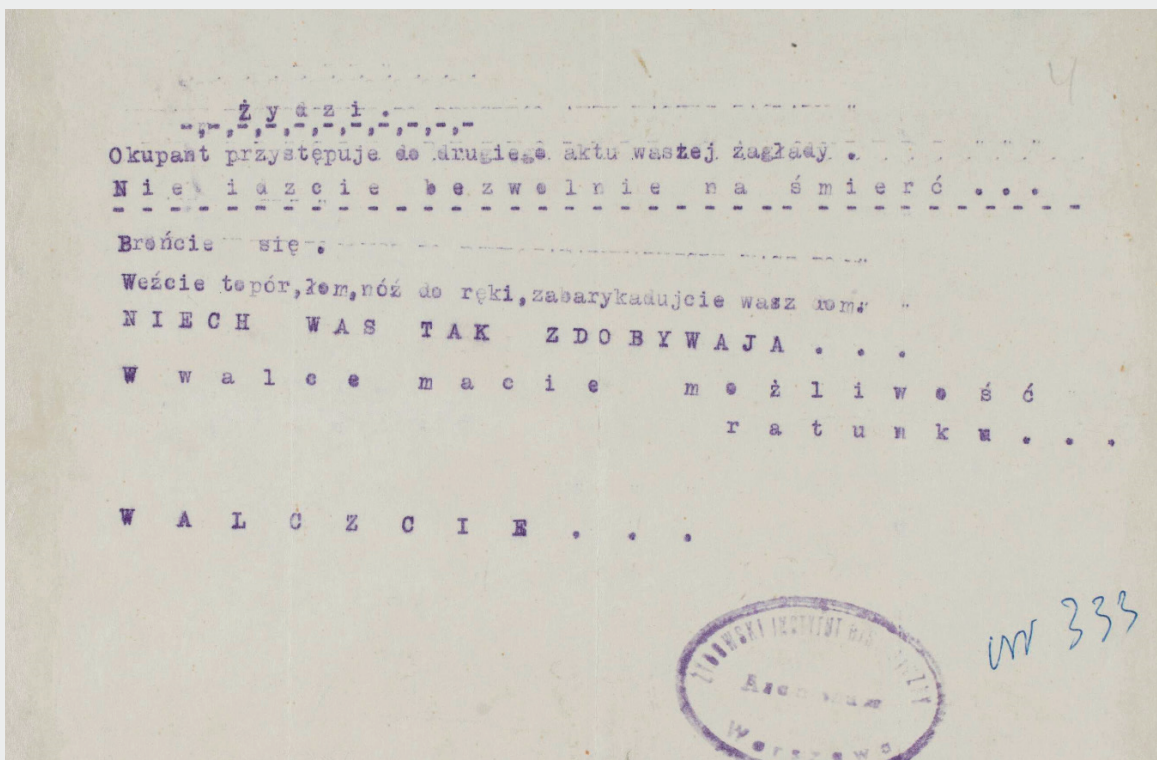
↓ Jews. The occupying power is commencing the  
second stage of Your annihilation. Don’t go to your  
deaths passively. Defend yourselves. Take an axe,  
crowbar, knife in hand, barricade your home. Let  
them conquer you like that... Fighting gives you  
a chance to survive... Fight...

Jewish Historical Institute, Ringelblum Archive,  
ref. no. ARG II 426 b.

### JEWISH MILITARY UNION

(Pol. Żydowski Związek Wojskowy, ŻZW)

Formed by Revisionist Zionists of the New  
Zionist Organization and Betar





# COURSE OF EVENTS

APRIL 1943

MAY 1943

## STAGE I (19–21 APRIL)

On 19 April ŻOB units under the command of Mordechai Anielewicz and ŻZW units led by Paweł Frenkel attacked armed German soldiers who had entered the ghetto. On the second or third day of combat the fighters raised two flags, one Polish and the other Jewish, in pl. Muranowski. The Germans were surprised by the scale of the resistance. When after three days the fighters ran out of ammunition, the ŻOB fighters went into hiding within the ghetto area, while those from ŻZW crossed to the so-called Aryan side, where virtually almost all of them perished.

The Polish underground observed the fighting in the ghetto. The Home Army and the Peoples' Guard (Polish military underground forces) made an unsuccessful attempt to support the fighters from outside the ghetto by breaching the wall in a number of places.

## STAGE II: APRIL–MAY

**The Germans set fire to the ghetto to force out the more than 40,000 Jews who were hiding in bunkers.**

The captured Jews were shot on the spot, sent to labour camps or deported to Treblinka.

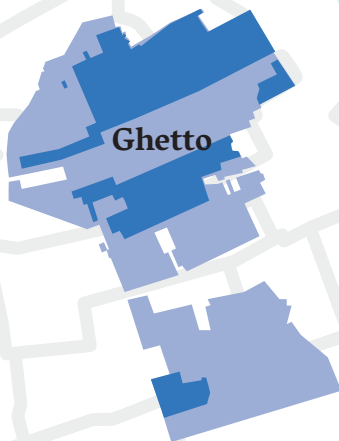
## STAGE III: MAY

On 8 May the Germans found the bunker at Miła 18 in which the ŻOB command (c. 100 fighters) were hiding together with their commander, Mordechai Anielewicz. A small number managed to escape, but the others, seeing no possibility of further resistance, committed group suicide. On 10 May two groups of fighters (c. 80 in all) tried to leave the burning ghetto via the sewers. Some from the first group managed to reach nearby forests, while the rest hid in Warsaw. All those in the second group perished in combat with the Germans.



The Germans did not sign a capitulation treaty with the fighters as they didn't view them as equals. On 16 May Jürgen Stroop, who was in charge of suppressing the uprising, blew up Warsaw's Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street to mark the end of Jewish presence in the city.



# MAP OF WARSAW



## Key

-  ghetto in 1940
-  ghetto during uprising



# FIGHTERS ENGAGED

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## FIGHTERS

**500** in ŻOB

**260** in ŻZW



= 100 soldiers



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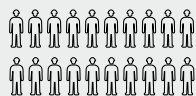
## GERMAN FORCES

**c. 2000**

mechanized infantry and  
cavalry; police units; artillery  
and combat engineers;  
auxiliary Ukrainian units



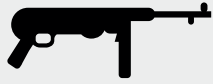
= 100 soldiers



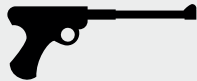


## WEAPONS EMPLOYED

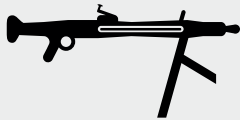
### GERMAN FORCES



**1,174**  
rifles



**135**  
semi-automatic  
guns



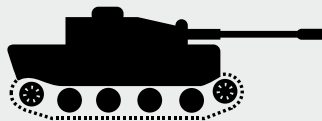
**69**  
light machine guns



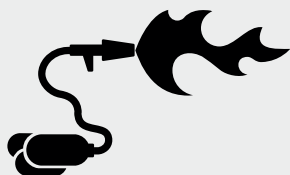
**13**  
heavy machine guns



**3**  
self-propelled  
artillery guns



unknown  
number of  
artillery, tanks



unknown  
number of  
flame throwers

### FIGHTERS

each fighter  
armed with  
a hand gun



**2,000**  
hand grenades



**10**  
rifles



**1**  
machine gun  
(ŻZW)



**2**  
landmines  
deployed



unknown number  
of Molotov  
cocktails



unknown number  
of handmade hand  
grenades





# CASUALTIES AND LOSSES



= 100 dead



= 100 deported

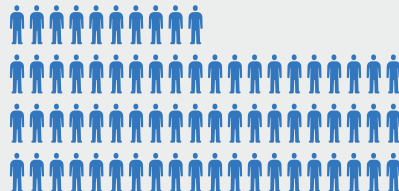


= 100 dead

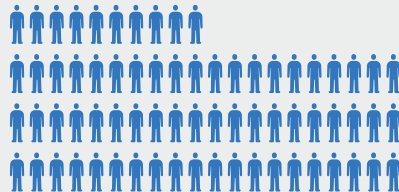
## JEWS

(The numbers below represent both civilians and fighters)

**c. 7,000**  
executed in the ghetto



**c. 7,000**  
transported to Treblinka  
extermination camp



**c. 6,000**  
killed in combat  
or in the bunkers



**c. 36,000**  
deported  
to labour camps



## GERMAN FORCES

**16** dead



**85** wounded



## KEY FIGURES



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### **Mordechai Anielewicz**

**(1919-1943)**

member of Hashomer Hatzair, leader of the Ghetto Uprising,  
member of ŻOB (Jewish Fighting Organisation)

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### **Zivia Lubetkin**

**(1914-1978)**

co-foundress of ŻOB (Jewish Fighting Organisation), escaped the ghetto through the sewers on 10 May; fought in the Warsaw Rising

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### **Marek Edelman**

**(1919-2009)**

member of Bund, the last leader of the Ghetto Uprising;  
fought in the Warsaw Rising

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### **Simcha Rotem, nom de guerre 'Kazik'**

**(1924-2018)**

masterminded an escape from the ghetto through the sewers on 10 May; fought in the Warsaw Rising

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### **Paweł Frenkel**

**(1920-1943)**

member of Betar,  
commander of ŻZW (Jewish Military Union)





# PHOTOGRAPHY



Stroop Report – Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Apartment building burns during suppression of Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

[https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Stroop\\_Report\\_-\\_Warsaw\\_Ghetto\\_Uprising\\_-\\_26552.jpg](https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Stroop_Report_-_Warsaw_Ghetto_Uprising_-_26552.jpg)



Stroop Report – Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Jews forced out from a bunker by German Waffen-SS soldiers.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Getto\\_warszawskie#/media/File:Stroop\\_Report\\_-\\_Warsaw\\_Ghetto\\_Uprising\\_11.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Getto_warszawskie#/media/File:Stroop_Report_-_Warsaw_Ghetto_Uprising_11.jpg)

Warsaw Ghetto destroyed by Germans, 1945.

**Photograph by Zbyszko Siemaszko of Central Photographic Agency (CAF) in Warsaw.**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Warsaw\\_Ghetto\\_destroyed\\_by\\_Germans,\\_1945.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Warsaw_Ghetto_destroyed_by_Germans,_1945.jpg)



European Network  
Remembrance  
and Solidarity



Warsaw  
Rising  
Museum

יידישער **JEWISH**  
היסטאָרישער **HISTORICAL**  
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Infographic developed within the project  
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[www.hi-storylessons.eu](http://www.hi-storylessons.eu)  
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