

The speech of President of Warsaw Rafał Trzaskowski at the 80th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising ceremony in Warsaw

The unimaginable tragedy of the Holocaust, the tragedy of the Warsaw Ghetto, is also a huge tragedy for Warsaw, our beloved city.

One-third of all inhabitants of Warsaw before World War II were Jewish. A few years before the war, Gęsia and Nalewki streets were teeming with life. Unfortunately, there are very little material memorabilia of our Jewish fellow citizens. Although the most spirited of Warsaw's districts, Szmulowizna, which would not exist if it wasn't for Szmul Zbytkower, holds up bravely.

The common heritage of Poles and Jews can be seen at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. This is a very important place for all of us because it shows a thousand years of shared history. It shows that the history of our two nations is in fact inseparable, that it merges into one, just as Warsaw's Jewish and Polish communities used to interpenetrate.

By committing a horrific murder of Jews, the Germans tore a part of Warsaw's heart out of our chests. But the traces of Jewish Warsaw are still alive in us, in Varsovians. In language, in sensitivity, in the kitchen. They still live in us.

I grew up in a house at Freta and Franciszkańska Streets. During the war, my family yard was separated by a Ghetto wall. Communities that used to live together were forcibly divided.

But Jewish Warsaw still lives in us. Almost every Varsovian has a *kiepeta*, a bit of chutzpah, he is not impressed by *blichtr*, he is not afraid of *rejwach*, and he feels best – that is simply *git* – in his own *ferajna*. After all, these are words from Yiddish that have become so deeply rooted in our mother tongue. From childhood, we were led by hand by Polish Jews – Jan Brzechwa, Julian Tuwim. When we fell in love for the first time – we recited Leśmian's poems.

We often wonder why the Ghetto Uprising broke out in Warsaw. How is it that later the Warsaw Uprising broke out here? Because that's how Varsovians are. Reckless. Strong. Always fighting for dignity.

Thank you to Professor Marian Turski. For the testimony. We need such authorities so much. The professor clearly said that for all of us, the eleventh commandment should be: "Do not be indifferent."

After all that has happened, anti-Semitism has no place in Warsaw, in Poland, in Europe and in the world. There should also be no room for intolerance. This is the message that flows from the Warsaw Ghetto that all of us, Varsovians, carry in our hearts. Warsaw must be a free, tolerant city where all minorities feel comfortable. Where no one is allowed to be attacked.

We, Varsovians, miss our Jewish sisters and brothers who were murdered every day. How much more diverse, richer, and wiser we would be if not for this terrible tragedy. We will always remember. We will always miss you.

Warsaw was doomed to death and total destruction. And that is why when we see Ukrainian cities that are being sentenced to death today, we stand in solidarity. We believe that, just like Warsaw, Mariupol, Kharkiv and other cities of Ukraine will rise from the ashes like a phoenix. Let's listen to one more message coming from the Warsaw Ghetto. May crime always be punished.