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Press Release

Berlin 1937 – In the shadow of things to come

First exhibition in the newly designed basement floor of the Märkisches Museum

The special exhibition “Berlin 1937 – In the shadow of things to come” examines life in Germany’s capital during the year 1937 in a redesigned and reconceived exhibition space at the Märkisches Museum. “Berlin 1937” is the first event marking the fulfilment of a pledge made by the Stadtmuseum Berlin in its 2016 strategy for the future: to realise more exhibitions based on historically and politically relevant topics.

The central feature of the exhibition is a critical analysis of how everyday life in the city was influenced by the Nazi dictatorship. Over a period of ten months, this special exhibition will serve as a stand-alone complement to the many events in documentation centres and memorial sites in Berlin that are dedicated to this topic. In 1937, the Nazi regime had completed a period of power consolidation and was yet to begin preparing for war – it was a phase of relative calm for Germany both domestically and in international relations. This comparatively uneventful time is the focus of the exhibition’s analytical depiction of everyday life in the city.

The exhibition has been conceived as a walk-around tour that encompasses views of the urban landscape, representations of everyday life, special displays, places of fear and historical themes on a wide range of subjects. More than 50 original objects, some displayed for the very first time, help tell the story of everyday life in the capital and the people who experienced it. Tablet computers provide in-depth content about each object: historical photos, documents and film clips offer a broader context, giving viewers compact and diverse background information. Diaries, letters, articles and eye-witness accounts offer a personal view of Berlin life in 1937.

Among the objects is a unique exhibit found nowhere else in the world: parts of a showcase in which the Nazi publication “Der Stürmer” was displayed. Alongside pages from the newspaper, the original panels show anti-Semitic slogans, caricatures and derisive rhymes. In 2015, this unique object was discovered in the attic of a restaurant due for demolition in Berlin-Schmöckwitz. It was subsequently entrusted to the House of the Wannsee Conference memorial and educational centre. It is now on public view for the first time at the Märkisches Museum.



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The museum itself is also an object of critical reflection. In 1937, the Märkisches Museum took part in Berlin's 700-year anniversary celebrations, which were exploited by the Nazi regime. "To date, Nazi history has not played significant enough a role in the Märkisches Museum's exhibitions. It is time that the Stadtmuseum Berlin confronts this era more intensively, as well as other historical and political events and topics", says Director Paul Spies. "On the one hand, our visitors expect it. On the other hand, such exhibitions help us fulfil our educational role and the fundamental goals of our work. Now more than ever, it is important that the Stadtmuseum Berlin deals with relevant topics, provides answers, asks questions and creates room for dialogue, exchange and participation. This is especially important in times when facts, values and political positions are changing and society is in the midst of a transformation". An advisory board of experts and the Centrum Judaicum have helped to make the exhibition possible.

Accompanying programme and publications

The exhibition is supplemented with a diverse accompanying programme. One of the highlights is the staging of PRIVATOPER BERLIN, which features banned music from the 1930s, in the Märkisches Museum's Great Hall. The Chronik Berlin 1937 blog will provide historical facts and details that expand on the topics covered in the exhibition. Students from the Public History Master's programme at Freie Universität Berlin are working together with the Stadtmuseum Berlin to oversee the exhibition. A work titled "Berlin 1937 – im Schatten von morgen" is being published by Verlag M on the occasion of the exhibition, and the book "Berlin 1937/1947" featuring photographs by Harry Croner will also be available.

An exhibition in cooperation with the Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum.

MÄRKISCHES MUSEUM | Stadtmuseum Berlin

Address	Am Köllnischen Park 5 10179 Berlin
Infoline	Tel. (030) 24 002-162 info@stadtmuseum.de
Duration	04/05/2017 to 14/01/2018
Opening hours	Tue. – Sun. 10 am – 6:00 pm
Admission	6.00 / concessions 4.00 euros free entry every first Wednesday of the month free entry for registered school classes and under-18s
Public tours	06 + 20/05 + 17/06/2017 4:00 pm
Catalogue	Berlin 1937 – im Schatten von morgen
Price: 18.90 euros	Ed.: Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin (Verlag M) 180 pages, 199 illus., ISBN 978-3-939254-43-0
Further information	www.stadtmuseum.de/berlin-1937

Partners

Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum
בית הכנסת החדש ברלין – צנטרום יודאיכום

