



**WETA, Hirsch Stern Productions and Story Syndicate
Partner to Develop a New Film on the History of Anti-Semitism**

*Feature-Length Documentary to be Directed by
Award-Winning Filmmaker Maxim Pozdorovkin*

[October 17, 2019; Arlington, VA] – WETA Washington, D.C., Hirsch Stern Productions, and Story Syndicate today announce a co-production partnership to develop a feature-length documentary film by Sundance Film Festival-winning director Maxim Pozdorovkin, along with a public engagement, communications and education initiative designed to raise awareness about the history of anti-Semitism. The film will target a theatrical release in 2021 and a broadcast date on public television in 2022.

Far Right movements are riding a wave of popularity that is unprecedented since the end of World War II. The U.S. Jewish community experienced near-historic levels of anti-Semitism in 2018, including a doubling of anti-Semitic assaults and the single deadliest attack against the Jewish community in American history. With this new wave of nationalism comes a very specific hatred: anti-Semitism. How did this deep-seated hatred even start in the first place? And how did it grow? And given what we know from the past, what does it mean when, once again, we see anti-Semitism on the rise?

This feature film examines the myths, conspiracies and historic flashpoints that have fueled anti-Semitism for millennia.

Anti-Semitism has traveled across centuries and continents, mutating with the pulse of human history, with stories of hatred and political convenience, of rebels and reactionaries, of scapegoats and powerful forces eager to demonize this outsider people for their own gain.

The film will approach this epic history through very human stories of ancient and modern Jewish families from different political persuasions, classes and nationalities. As we follow the evolution of this man-made curse, we will live within the dramatic stories of families unwittingly enmeshed in the grandest of all schemes to destroy the Jewish people. The history of anti-Semitism is a story of the world's revolutions and repressions, economic upheavals and human catastrophes. The film is also a history of human resilience as refracted through the incredible and intimate personal stories of generations of families who fight to survive.

“WETA is proud to partner with Hirsch/Stern Productions and Story Syndicate, along with director Maxim Pozdorovkin, to produce a dynamic feature film designed to expose the horrible myths of anti-Semitism from ancient times to today,” said Jeff Bieber, WETA Vice President of Content Development and Production.

“There is no better time than this exact moment in our shared human history to expose to the world the many historical incidents, lies and myths that have festered and evolved into the explosive anti-Semitism that we see today,” said Caroline Hirsch and Allison Maher Stern of Hirsch Stern Productions. “Now is the time to put a spotlight on who, what, why and where it all began, and we feel that this film will accomplish this.”

“Every generation needs to forge its own understanding of — and fight its own battle against — the prejudices that plague us all,” said Dan Cogan of Story Syndicate. “We could not be more excited to team with WETA, Allison Stern and Caroline Hirsch to bring Max Pozdorovkin’s visionary re-imagining of the forces behind the age-old, protean scourge of anti-Semitism to the screen. It will be unlike any film on the topic ever made before.”

“Drawing on archives, unpublished memoirs, and never before seen personal correspondences, the film will tell the story of anti-Semitism as a series of interconnected personal histories, of lives caught up in an evolving conspiracy,” said director Maxim Pozdorovkin. “A project of such monumental scale can only succeed as a true team effort. It is my absolute privilege to be working with Story Syndicate, WETA, and Hirsch Stern Productions to bring this ever-timely story to life.”

WETA Washington, DC, Hirsch Stern Productions, and Story Syndicate will continue research and development on the film into the following year.

For more information, please visit weta.org. Press materials and photography can be found at weta.org/press.

###

About WETA

WETA is the leading public broadcasting company in the nation’s capital, serving Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia with educational initiatives and with high-quality programming on WETA Television and Classical WETA 90.9 FM. For national PBS audiences, WETA Washington, D.C., is one of the largest-producing stations of new content for public television in the United States, with news and public affairs programs including *PBS NewsHour* and *Washington Week*; films by Ken Burns such as *The Civil War* and *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*; and performance specials from the White House, the U.S. Capitol, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at www.weta.org. On social media, visit www.facebook.com/wetatvfm on Facebook or follow @WETAtvfm on Twitter.

About Hirsch Stern Productions

In 2018, Caroline Hirsch, founder and owner of Carolines on Broadway and the New York Comedy Festival, and Allison Maher Stern, Primetime Emmy® award-winning producer of Kurt Vonnegut's "Displaced Person" on PBS's acclaimed series *American Playhouse*, partnered to form Hirsch Stern Productions for the purpose of bringing the history of anti-Semitism to film as a documentary production.

About Story Syndicate

Led by award-winning filmmakers Liz Garbus and Dan Cogan, Story Syndicate is dedicated to bringing together a diverse group of storytellers to create groundbreaking films, series, and podcasts based on real-life stories.

Press Contacts

Olivia Wong, WETA Director of Public Relations, 703.998.2086, owong@weta.org