

The world has gone ill. Common sense and responsibility demand us to take every possible measure to overcome the disease. Over 1.3 million people have been infected, almost 76 thousand died. Almost everyone in this world faces the consequences of this global pandemic. Every day, we have to deal with the inconveniences, nuisances and restrictions caused by it.

75 years ago the world was ill as well. The smoke coming out of the chimneys was one of the symptoms of that disease, also here, from where I am writing to you, then called Konzentrationslager Stutthof. Here, in the name of a delirious ideology, thousands of people gave their lives and those who survived left scarred with unimaginable suffering.

On the 9th of May, as we do every year we were supposed to arrive at the Monument of Fight and Martyrdom to commemorate those who here, in this camp, experienced evil that could not be comprehended by others. To meet in the presence of the Witnesses of History, their Families and others who come here to understand Stutthof.

For many months, we have been preparing for this year's anniversary. We intended it to be exceptional, for everyone to remember it for a long time. We applied and received the National Patronage of President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda in Century of Independence. With indispensable military leaders from Gdańsk, we assured the honorary assistance of The Representative Honour Guard Regiment and Orchestra of the Polish Navy. Our requests to the religious communities for ecumenical prayers are never denied. We have provided the musical setting, as well as two temporary exhibitions of our own and one in cooperation with the Faculty of Architecture of Warsaw University of Technology. We were supposed to honour the dependable Friends of our institution and our most meritorious Employees. However, most importantly, we ensured that a former female prisoner liberated from her oppressors on the 9th of May 1945 was among the Witnesses of History, who speak by the Monument each year.

Such a ceremony will not take place on the 9th of May 2020. Or rather it will not take place in the form with which we are familiar, or according to the schedule we prepared. We must concede and acknowledge that except for isolation, patience is also another factor leading to limiting the spread of the disease. The chances that everything will be back to what we are used to within a month are negligible.

This year's 9th of May, however, will not pass without our offer for you to participate in the commemoration. We are preparing for that, about which we will be informing in posts labelled with the hashtag #Stutthof75. For us, this is an exam in creativity and responsibility for the time of the crisis.

But today, stay healthy and keep your serenity for which Mr Felicjan Łada often appealed to us. He, like not many others, knew what he was talking about...

With regards,
Piotr Tarnowski
Director of the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo

#stayathome #Stutthof75