

Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, January 13, 2014

Mr. Marcin Chumiecki
Director of the Polish Mission
Orchard Lake Schools
USA

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are commemorating the 69th anniversary of the liberation of the largest German Nazi concentration and extermination camp: Auschwitz-Birkenau. Within those who perished there were over 1 million European Jews, but also tens of thousands of Poles, over twenty thousand Sinti and Roma, over fifteen thousand Soviet prisoners of war and more than twenty thousand other innocent people.

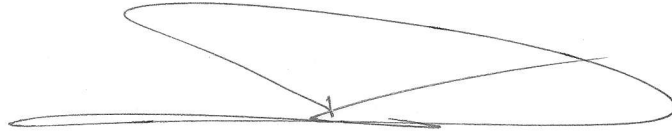
Today the Memorial constitutes the world's largest symbol of the man's fall, symbol of martyrdom of innocent people and so many tragedies resulting from the system politics of contempt and hatred which characterized the German III Reich. The post-camp remains teach us also something else pointing to the incredible capability of a tormented man to try to keep their dignity even in the worst conditions. Each effort of illegal art being created in the camp conditions was so meaningful. The artistic expression, as one of the deepest manifestation of humanity, showed the absurdity of the racial theory and politics. Perhaps this is why it was – except for its few functional types – completely prohibited in the camps. Art was not included in the contemporary division into Übermenschen, human beings and Untermenschen. It escaped the ideological discipline.

The „Forbidden Art” exhibition presents the selected works of art created in German camps, mainly in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Due to the extraordinary help of the Polish Mission in Orchard Lake it has already been shown in a few significant places such as: Wayne State University in Detroit, Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, Los Angeles University UCLA, Beth Shalom Synagogue in Las Vegas as well as Park East Synagogue in New York. It has just returned to Orchard Lake, so that it could - at the anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz - bear testimony of the reserves of humanity that did not allow the SS members - in those darkest times - make people compelled.

The Auschwitz liberation day i.e. January 27, was established 9 years ago the remembrance day of the victims of Shoah by the United Nations General Assembly.

I wish all the gathered celebrating the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz so that the remembrance that has been woken up once in their hearts and minds could become a foundation of our world being created without pathologies, contempt and hatred.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping loop that crosses itself, followed by a horizontal line.

Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński