

**The Address of Petr Papoušek  
on the Occasion of the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust  
and the Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity  
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,  
27 January 2021**

170265, a tattooed number on the forearm of a prisoner in the family camp of Terezín Jews in Auschwitz, a camp with an official designation BIIb. He was born in Prague in 1923 into a typical Czech Jewish family, which lived an assimilated life with a visit to the synagogue three times a year. Until 1939 his life unfolded like a life of other Czech Jews. The change that came with the arrival of the Nazis was swift and irreversible.

This year marks the 80th anniversary since all Jews in the territory of the Protectorate over the age of six had to pin a yellow star of David with a black inscription Jude, "Jew" on their clothes. The badge had to be placed on the left side of the chest at the height of the heart, and on all clothes to be clearly visible. So, the future Auschwitz prisoner number 170265 had to wear the star of David badge at first, then he was deprived of his civil rights, and later on he was sent to forced labor. In November 1941, he was transported to the Terezín ghetto, and finally, in December 1943, to the Auschwitz extermination camp. He always tried to preserve his humanity, which they tried to deprive him of. Most of his extended family was stripped of basic human dignity and murdered in the gas chambers.

In connection with the current pandemic situation, there are tendencies to equate today's time with the one we are talking about today. Prisoner 170265 would say something about it that I'd rather not even paraphrase. We live in a democratic society, we have freedom of speech, we can make free choices. Most of us realize that the current state is not simple, many people find themselves in life situations to which they are not accustomed. People lose their life's security and, with a sense of insecurity, succumb to conspiracy theories. Even so, it is impossible to compare the incomparable and to relativize the suffering of all those who were affected by Nazi oppression. It is necessary to know our past in order to learn and defend ourselves against all the manifestations that lead to, and end, in Auschwitz. Believe me, it is not about the current anti-epidemic measures, it is rather about the people who want to use today's state to spread their hateful ideas. Relativization goes hand in hand with the aforementioned conspiracy theories that are spread through social media by people whose goal is to establish the feeling that nothing is certain, and everything is possible. I would like to thank to all those who publicly define themselves against these manifestations, expose them and set the record straight.

A year ago, at this meeting, the Chairman of the Foundation for Holocaust Victims, Michal Klíma, criticized the fact that while we were commemorating the victims of Nazism, near to us, mugs with portraits of Hitler and other representatives of the Nazi regime were being sold in shops as souvenirs. I am glad that the Czech police have closed their investigation into this matter and charged one person and one company with supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms and disorderly conduct. The whole incident also led to the initiative of Jan Bartošek, an MP, who initiated an amendment to the law that would incorporate the sale of these items among the forms of distribution that are prohibited by law.

The Chamber of Deputies has already approved the proposal with a cross-party political support, and it is now heading to the Senate. I believe this is one of the essential small elements that form the basis defending our democracy. And it would be impossible without understanding our past.

The murdered and the survivors, among them the former prisoner number 170 265, Mr. Miloš Dobrý, my grandfather, were people just like us. Let us thank them for what they gave us, let us not forget and let us not be indifferent.