
Rector of Charles University launched the annual Mene Tekel festival

This year's Mene Tekel festival focuses on the theme of intellectual resistance against totalitarian regimes. The ancient Karolinum, the headquarters of Charles University, was thus a perfect place for the launching ceremony. Members of the anticommunist resistance, political prisoners, their contemporaries and diplomats gathered in the mess hall along with children and students, who came to receive prizes in the competition Fighters Against the Totalitarian Regime As Seen By Children.



The event which marked the start of this year's Mene Tekel festival was the opening of the project In Despite of Political Terror, which consists of smaller but thematically connected exhibitions: Daughters of the Enemies of the State, The Pretty Girl from the Villa by the River, The Patriot's Tragedy, Witch-hunt Against the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in 1948-1960, Josef Cardinal Beran, Tito's Island of Terror, The Common Thread of Death, and Freedom and Its Lack in Us and Around Us.

Rector of Charles University Václav Hampl spoke at the opening, saying: "I am happy to see all these people whose enthusiasm, sense of justice and social responsibility will never let us forget the tragic moments and tragic periods of our history and who work on projects that serve as a warning against the wrong steps we could take." The rector finds the university a fitting place to launch especially this year's installment of the annual festival, as its main topic is the intellectual resistance. The aim of the project is to show the consequences of the communist regime's attitude towards human rights and personal freedoms on the examples of particular human stories.



"Visitors of the exhibition will be encouraged to think about our society and whether it really takes all the necessary steps to prevent such wrongs from happening", said the Rector Mr. Hampl. "Let us then pay respects to the victims of the totalitarian regime, whom this exhibition is dedicated to, but let us not be lulled by the thought that these times are long past. Let us not forget to track the problems we are experiencing here and now, so that we one day do not wake up in the past we though was behind us."

Also speaking was the president of the Confederation of Political Prisoners of the Czech Republic Ms. Naděžda Kavalírová, who, on behalf of the organizers, thanked the Rector of Charles University for providing the space for the project. "It is a great honor for me and for us, political prisoners, and I am very grateful for it", said Ms. Kavalírová.



The finale of the opening was dedicated to the youngest people in the crowd, who came to receive prizes in the art competition. "One of the main goals of the Mene Tekel project is to address the young generation and supplement the modern history classes," said the director of the festival, Ms. Daniela Řeřichová. That was the rationale of the Fighters

Against the Totalitarian Regime As Seen By Children competition, held under the auspices of the Deputy of the Mayor of Prague, Ms. Marie Kousalíková.

The exhibition will be open until March 6, 2010, daily from 10am to 6pm, and includes screening of documentary films. Entry is free of charge.

(Lucie Kettnerová)

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