



Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Mirek Topolánek

It would be hard to find someone who had less to do with politics than Jan Patočka. This philosopher, who experienced both fascist and communist oppression, kept his distance from major ideologies all his life. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, even thirty years after his death Patočka's legacy remains very much alive for those who administrate public matters.

Patočka defended the natural world of instincts and inclinations against the world of artificial engineered constructions. He professed platonic care of the soul as the cornerstone of European identity and uniqueness as opposed to the modern rationalism of enlightenment. At a time of general moral relativism, he advocated a return to values worth dying for.

These are undoubtedly values on which a municipality, a state, Europe can and should stand. And no matter how much any politician strives to adapt and construe them within the scope of his ideology, their original meaning should not be twisted.

Nevertheless, Jan Patočka, the apolitical platonic philosopher, became heavily involved in politic events towards the end of his life. His moral and civic message in the texts of Charter 77 is all the stronger in that it comes from a man who consistently shied away from power struggles all his life. It was his interest in human rights denied by the communist regime that led to his political engagement. Today these rights are enshrined in the Constitution. However, it is the obligation of democratic politicians to ensure that, in all cases, they are always rigorously respected in practice.

On the thirtieth anniversary of Jan Patočka's death, I bow to his memory and place a flower on his grave.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Topolánek'.