

UPF Slovakia Screens *The Principle People* documentary on Unification Church persecution in Communist Slovakia

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Bratislava, Slovakia – On October 10, 1974, the Supreme Court of the Slovak Socialist Republic confirmed its verdict against the "Principle People," eighteen members of a new religion, the Unification Church.

On the fiftieth anniversary of this verdict, October 10, 2024, UPF-Slovakia organized an event in honor of these religious activists. This event concluded the exhibition "Principle People: History of an Unusual Story," which documented the largest political trial in communist Czechoslovakia after the Prague Spring.



The audience of fifty who gathered at the Peace Embassy enjoyed a varied program. Passages from the

indictment, the verdicts, and the defendants' statements were read aloud, recreating the spirit of the time. Two singers uplifted the atmosphere with popular protest songs. One of the speakers, Mr. Ján Figel', former EU commissioner and the first EU special envoy for freedom of religious belief, praised the young believers' integrity and upheld them as a good example in a time when moral principles were not frequently sustained under severe circumstances.



The Principle People movement thrived between 1970 and 1973. But in September 1973 a historic drama started to unfold when secret policemen raided apartments throughout the nation. Within a few weeks, nearly 200 people were interrogated, forty members of the movement prosecuted, and thirty imprisoned. In 1974 the courts sentenced twenty-eight members, who served a total of around fifty years in various prisons throughout Czechoslovakia.



Several of those who were convicted at that time were able to attend the event; others have passed away.

The highlight of the evening was the premiere of a documentary, "The Principle People: The Struggle for Truth and Justice," which includes interviews with former inmates, an especially brave defense lawyer

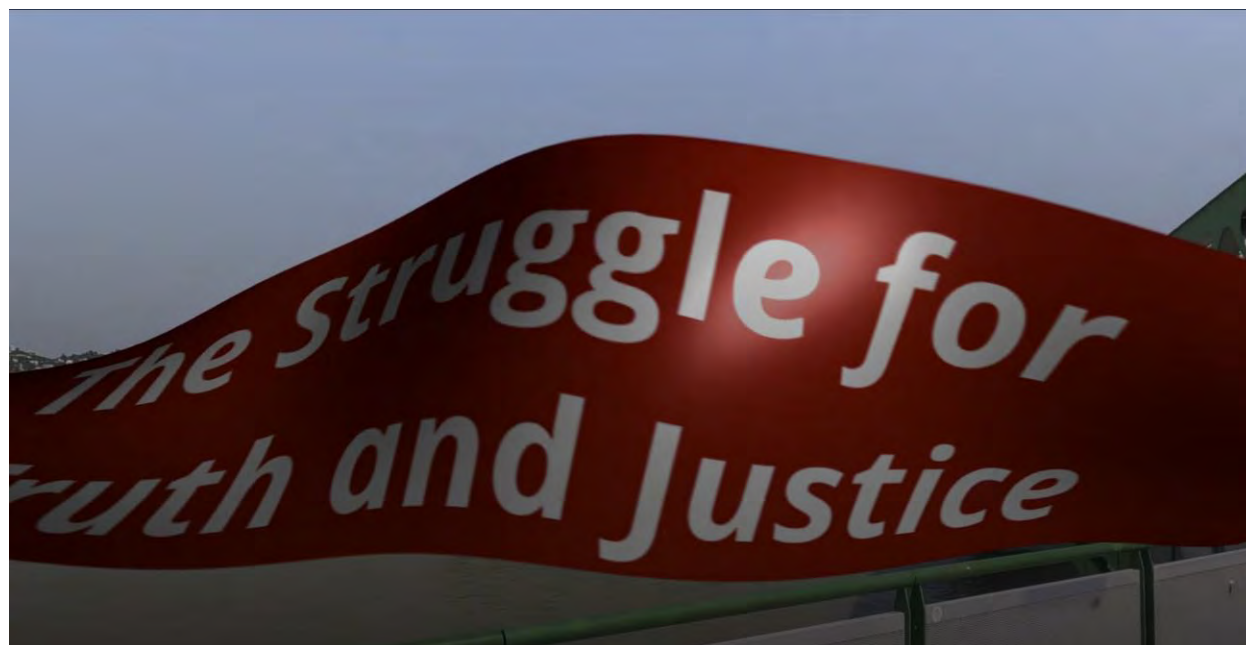
and a historian from the Slovak Nation's Memory Institute (UPN). Writer and director Ms. Barbara Grabner explained the great investment of time and effort required to make the documentary.



The film will be shown in Slovakia and abroad.

[Link](#) to the trailer:

drive.google.com/file/d/16MRRDro1t5kNQS7mc4h1ZzSRCw0M1zi/view?usp=share_link



The Principle People documentary