

FINAL REPORT ON THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED AT THE OSA

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The Assembly of Captive European Nations was an organization created in 1954 under the aegis of the National Committee for a Free Europe in the United States. From its inception this Assembly represented the captive peoples of: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. However, the membership in the ACEN was not confined to the national representations (councils or committees in exile). The Assembly included Associative Member Organizations such as the Christian Democratic Union of Central Europe, International Center of Free Trade Unionists in Exile, International Peasant Union, Liberal Democratic Union of Central Eastern Europe, and Socialist Union of Central Eastern Europe. Officially sponsored by the FEC this organization repeatedly called for free elections and immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, which would provide for its “peaceful liberation”. ACEN addressed its appeals to the United Nations, the Council of Europe, both American and foreign governments.

While examining various archival collections pertaining to the ACEN's activities I realized that some of the remaining questions on this organization's operations could not be answered without consulting the collections held by the OSA. The purpose of the archival query that brought me to Budapest was threefold: to investigate the links between the ACEN and the RFE, to find biographical information on individual exiles involved in the Free Europe sponsored exile activities in the West, and to verify the effectiveness of ACEN's endeavors.

As suspected, the single most important collection that proved to be most useful was that of the RFE/RL Research Institute (OSA 300 series). Within the Subject Files Relating to Eastern Europe in the RFE's U.S. office series I have found a number of reports, evaluations prepared by the ACEN's staff (on economy, religion, political and cultural relations). Within the collections of national units (Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian), and in the Balkan section I have found many traces of the ACEN's members – both in the biographical and subject files. Furthermore, in order to find information on the exiles from the Baltic countries I have consulted the Soviet Red Archives. Overall, before I run a detailed analysis of the gathered material I can already say that not only were ACEN activities mentioned in RFE broadcasts, but also clippings from international press were collected on it. Moreover, the attitude towards the exile organizations was investigated with the refugees and visitors from behind the Iron Curtain. Although some of the material gathered in this collection covers periods later than the original ACEN's existence (ceased by 1972, continued independently of

American support until 1989), in many of the abovementioned collections I have discovered precious material for the epilogue of my book (obituaries, returns to the home country, Eastern European exchange of ideas and cooperation between opposition leaders from various countries of the region).

Apart from the RFE/RL RI, I found the collection of gen. Béla Király's papers (Collection of Documents Relating to Opposition and Emigration) a very valuable asset to my effort to learn more about the Hungarian émigré activities and organizations.

A collection of interviews relating to the RFE's history (video recordings by Fekete Doboz, 1996) was the biggest, positive surprise. Apart from the informative interview with James McCargar I have watched all of the other interviews in this series that were available in English – some of them truly precious as the interviewed people are now gone (most notably William Griffith, Cord Meyer).

However, my research did not stop there. With the kind help of the OSA archival staff (Clare Lewin and Csaba Szilagyi) I was able to find more relevant material. Most notably, I have examined the impressive collection of Claire de Hedervary. Within this meticulously described collection I have found a good number of documents prepared by the ACEN which I am planning to compare to their overall effort to cooperate with the U.N.'s special committee on Hungary. Naturally, I did not waste the opportunity to consult the book and periodical collections of the former RFE library.

Furthermore, thanks to the advice of Csaba Szilagyi, Gabriella Ivacs, Robert Parnica and Olga Zaslavskaya I was able to contact people (both involved in the émigré projects and scholars) exchanges of letters with whom proved to be vital for my project.

Overall, my stay at the OSA was very successful and enjoyable. The patient and professional help of the research room staff (Robert Parnica, Tari Ors Lehel and Tibor Szigeti) provided me with luxurious work conditions. Apart from the immediate research project, the hospitable OSA staff provided me with opportunities to participate in the various events organized by OSA and CEU (RFE workshop, Verzio film festival etc.) While in Budapest I consulted other archival collections as well, most notably the historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security (ABTL), and I have conducted an interview with dr. Janos Horvath.

I am indebted to my esteemed colleagues: Bela Nove – a fellow Visegrad scholar, and also to Juliane Debeusscher and Piotr Wciślik, discussions with whom were inspiring and helped me in re-formulating some of my earlier thesis. I would also like to express my gratitude to Katalin Gadoros for her kind care and attention.

Together with the discussion that followed my lecture at the CEU (The Cold War Victims or Weapons? The story of the Assembly of Captive European Nations) my book project

is now taking a more definite shape. I would like to thank my advisor: prof. Istvan Rev and prof. Marsha Siefert for their insightful comments and suggestions.

I look forward to maintaining of contacts with the OSA and CEU in the future, and – based on my experience with the OSA archival holdings - I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone conducting the research on Cold War Eastern Europe.

Thank You OSA! Thank You Visegrad Fund! Anna Mazurkiewicz

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Mazurkiewicz graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Gdańsk in 1999. Since that time she's been teaching Cold War History, U.S. and Polish History courses at her *alma mater*. In 2006 her doctoral dissertation received the main award of the Polish National Center for Culture. She's already published two books on the American response to the elections in Poland in 1947 and 1989; "*Dyplomacja Stanów Zjednoczonych wobec wyborów w Polsce w latach 1947 i 1989*" (Warsaw: Neriton, 2007) and "*Prasa amerykańska wobec wyborów w Polsce w latach 1947 i 1989*" (Gdańsk: University Press, 2009).

Her current interest focuses on the American policy towards the Eastern European exiles after World War II and examines aspects of the multiethnic cooperation among exiles in the United States. To date two texts on the abovementioned topics, in languages other than Polish, have already been published; one containing a brief overview of the history of the Assembly of Captive European Nations was published in an edited work: *Anti-Communist Minorities: The Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees in the United States*, ed. by Ieva Zake, (Palgrave Macmillan 2009) ISBN:0-230-60681-4; the other one on the Polish section of the Radio Free Europe was published in a German language yearbook devoted to the Polish-German relations: *Die „Stimme Freies Polen“ aus München. Radio Free Europe, die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik und die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen* [w:] „Inter Finitimos. Jahrbuch zur deutsch-polnischen Beziehungsgeschichte“, Vol.6, Berlin 2008, s.146-170, ISSN:0948-1818.

Mazurkiewicz is currently writing a monograph on the ACEN which she plans to have published in Poland by the end of 2011. The English version should be ready by the end of 2012.