

International Visegrad Fund Scholarship at Open Society Archives
Final Report

Submitted by: **Prof. PhDr. Milada Polišíenská, CSc.**
Anglo-American University, Prague, Czech Republic
26 June 2017

Term of scholarship at OSA: **April 18 – May 31** (with the interruption between May 2 and May 23 due to Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, President's Collegium and Board of Trustees Meeting).

Advisor: Andras Mink, Ph.D.

Project proposal - summary of the research goal

My research project at OSA aimed towards a completion of my major goal which is to publish in English a scholarly monograph on life and work of a Czech journalist, sincere democrat, anticommunist and human rights activist **Josef Josten** (1913-1985), examined against the backdrop of struggles of members of democratic exile movement from communist Czechoslovakia.

Josef Josten, a young journalist of Jewish origin in *Lidové noviny*, escaped from occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939 and joined the Czechoslovak military units in Great Britain. After Second World War he worked in the Press Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and after the communist take over in February 1948 he escaped in England. He was one of the most active members of Czechoslovak exile movement. He run uninterruptedly for forty years an independent Free Czechoslovakia Information Service and under its umbrella published regularly bulletins *Features and News From Behind the Iron Curtain*, organized a number of anticommunist campaigns and helped the refugees from Czechoslovakia. Very important was in 1980's his support provided to Václav Havel, Charter 77 members and to people unjustly persecuted. This was done through British Committee for the Unjustly Prosecuted which Josten established in 1979. For his work, he was named Member of British Empire and was awarded a Merit Medal in memoriam by Václav Havel.

The Central European University Press is interested to publish this monograph. The Czech version of this book has been already published by Libri in 2009 (its title translated in English is *Forgotten „enemy“ Josef Josten. Free Czechoslovakia Information Service, 1948-1985*). However,

for the publication in English, I rewrote and revised the monograph substantially and the research in OSA has been part of this revision.

Josten was throughout his life in exile in frequent contacts with the Czechoslovaks working in RFE/RL. He exchanged letters particularly with Ferdinand Peroutka, Jaroslav Stránský, Lubor Zink, and also with other members of Czechoslovak desk. Josten personal papers that I examined earlier (at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and with Josten family in London) reveal professional and personal relations, friendships, sometimes disagreements and struggles. Josten sent his *Features and News from behind the Iron Curtain* to RFE, struggled to have his contributions accepted for broadcasting, received for certain period information from RFE/RL for his bulletins.

For an objective picture I needed to verify the information collected earlier and compare them with RFE information and test them this way. I needed to examine the funds of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty from 1949 to 1985 and search for documents related to Josef Josten and to his cooperation with RFE/RL. I didn't do it earlier for the Czech study on Josten and saw it as a gap which needed to be filled.

In addition, I particularly needed to find out whether and how RFE reported about Josten's campaigns – Birbed Wire Campaign in 1962, Czechoslovak Writers Manifesto in 1967 and later, about a number of other events, and particularly on British Committee for Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted and its achievements. I hoped that the examination of RFE records would be an important contribution to the quality of the monograph.

Reserch results

I examined the following boxes where I was hoping to find documents related to my research topic, and searched in the encrypted Telex Communication between Free Europe Committee New York and Radio Free Europe Munich which were recommended to me by the OSA staff.

Subfond	HU OSA Identifier	Unit, Department	Boxes
Free Europe Committee	298-3-2	Free Europe Publications	1, 2
East European Research and Analysis Department	300-2-3	Subject Files Relating to Czechoslovakia	9, 26
Media and Opinion Research Department	300-6-1	Administrative Files	1-11
Publication Department	300-8-24	News from Behind the Iron Curtain	

Czechoslovak Unit	300-30-1	Card Index to the Subject Files	1
	300-30-5	Propaganda-exhibitions; Resistance	1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9
	300-30-6	Exile organizations abroad; Exile: personalities; Exile: Refugees and Emigrants; Exile: Refugees and Emigrants; Exile: Literature and Newspapers; Exile: Western Stations, Radio Free Europe	67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75
	300-30-7	Exile Organizations Abroad; Exile: Personalities; Exile: Refugees and Emigrants; Exile: Communist Espionage of Exiles; Exile: Literature and Newspapers; Exile: RFE and Western Stations	271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281-289
	300-30-8	Border Zones: Escapes; Exile (all files); Resistance, Criticism: VONS; Resistance, Criticism: Espionage	7, 20, 45
	300-30-9	Politics: Československá strana socialistická	68, 69
	300-30-10	United Kingdom, 1967 - 1988	1
	300-30-11	United Kingdom, 1967-1976	51-53
	300-30-12	United Kingdom, 1977-1985	87-89
	300-30-16	Index to Biographical Files	1
	300-30-19		26,73,80, 81, 94
	300-30-20		2, 3, 5, 6
	Encrypted Telex Communication between Free Europe Committee New York and Radio Free Europe Munich/Josef Josten, Jaroslav Kazan-Komárek, Jaroslav Javorský, Jaroslav Stránský		

My research results did not bring as many documents specifically on Josef Josten, his campaigns and activities, as I hoped to find. As I understand, this was mainly due to the nature of documents available in the Open Society Archives in Budapest, and very likely an additional research at the Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace would be useful. However, I went through a substantial part of documents of Czechoslovakia from East European Research and Analysis Department and from Czechoslovak Unit, examined also many other boxes and went through materials of Radio Liberty in selected years. This gave me a good understanding of operations of RFE/RL in Munich and I was able to place Jostens struggles for cooperation in a specific context.

Summary of work and results of research

1. The research shows that Josef Josten's cooperation with RFE/RL was not of that value as he always presented and that his campaigns (such as Barbed Wire Campaign-1962, Czechoslovak Writers Manifesto -1967 and others) were not reported by RFE/RL, and the RFE/RL staff was cautious and reserved about them. Also Josten's bulletins were not subject of RFE/RL reporting.
2. The understanding of functioning of RFE/RL resulting from my research will be used in the monograph.
3. Experience with the materials available in the Open Society Archives is very important for me. As advisor of M.A. Theses I would like to guide my students to the topics which they could support by their research at OSA.
4. As a Visegrad scholar, I presented on May 30, 2017 on my research topic, on my findings and experience in the OSA archives. In the following days, I had several informal conversations with OSA researchers and staff experts about various issues of my research.
5. I had a consultation with Krisztina Kós and Nora Vörös (CEU Press) about the manuscript of the book.
6. At present time, the book manuscript is complete and is about to be submitted to the translator.
7. Even it was not part of my research, I used the opportunity of my stay in Budapest and had meetings with the Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs Prof. Zsolt Enyedi, with the Head of the Department of History Prof. Matthias Riedl and with the CEU President and Rector Prof. Michael Ignatieff. Anglo-American University where I am Professor and Provost is a university with international composition of faculty, administration and students, with English as language of instruction and with Czech and American accreditation. I and my colleagues at AAU in Prague are very worried about the future of CEU and I was very honored to bring to Prof. Ignatieff a letter of support from the AAU President Petr J. Pajas.

My scholarship at OSA was a great research experience, it contributed importantly to my book on Josef Josten within the larger context of anti communist exile from Czechoslovakia, strengthened the sympathies between the CEU and AAU and I am deeply convinced that it fulfilled its goals. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the OSA archivist and other staff members, and particularly to Katalin Gadoros, who was of great help and support.

