

## ***Open Society Archives: An Overview***

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The Open Society Archives, established in 1995 by George Soros, actively acquires, preserves and makes available research resources in the area of Communism and Cold War, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe in the period after World War II and Human Rights issues and movements in the twentieth century, as well as records that document the philanthropic activities of the Soros Foundation network, including the Archives and the Central European University. It also provides record management services to the Soros Foundation network organizations.

The Archives organizes public lectures and exhibitions, provides research fellowships and professional archival training opportunities (an annual Summer University course is intended to support professional archivists in the region).

The principal holdings currently comprise:

- Records of the Research Institute of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
- Records of the Open Media and Research Institute
- Samizdat publications, both those collected by RFE/RL and from other sources such as Gabor Demsky, one of the most important Hungarian Samizdat publishers in the 1980s.
- Research files of the Index on Censorship, consisting of press clippings arranged by country and selected journals from human rights organizations.
- a small but growing collection of audio-visual materials from organizations in the Soros foundation network and other sources.

In addition, the Archives' library holds more than 3000 different periodical titles, primarily dating from the past half century. A related book collection from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is located in the adjacent library of Central European University.

The Open Society Archives is an open access facility. Anyone may apply to use the archives and the associated, non-circulating library. The research rooms located at Oktober 6.

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<sup>1</sup>First published in: Eduard Muehle (ed.): Vom Instrument der Partei zur "Vierten Gewalt", Marburg 1997, 273-278.

u. 12, are open to researchers Monday through Friday from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m. Archives staff are available in the research rooms to assist researchers in finding and using relevant materials. Researchers are encouraged to contact the archives before their visit to help ensure that each visit is as productive as possible.

The services can be accessed in a variety of ways: by telephone, email, fax in person. Researchers can view the growing set of electronic finding aids by visiting the

OSA Web site at:	<a href="http://www.osa.ceu.hu">http://www.osa.ceu.hu</a>
Mailing address:	Open Society Archives, Budapest 62, Pf. 458, 1396
Telephone inquiries:	(36-1) 327-3250
FAX:	(36-1) 327-3260
Electronic mail:	Archives@ceu.hu

Because of their special interest in the context of this volume, the records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty will be described below in some detail.

### **Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**

Originally Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL) were separate entities. Radio Free Europe, founded in 1949, went on the air in 1950, and soon was broadcasting to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and (briefly) Albania.

Radio Liberty began broadcasting in Russian on March 1, 1953. Other language services followed, and Radio Liberty ultimately broadcast in more than a dozen languages spoken in the U.S.S.R.

The headquarters of the Radios were located in New York City, but the operations were largely in Munich. In 1976 the two Radios merged as RFE/RL.

The roots of the Research Institute (established on November 15, 1990, and dissolved on December 31, 1994) date back to the very beginnings of the Radios in the early 1950s. When the two Radios merged as RFE/RL in 1976, they each continued to maintain a research department. These departments combined to form the Institute, which inherited all of the research resources of the previous departments. The organization of the records reflects the original separation of the two research departments.

The Research Institute had four parts: Analytical Research Department, Media and Opinion Research Department, Publications Department and Information Resources Department.

Through agreement with RFE/RL in 1994, the records of the Research Institute were deposited with Open Society Archives. The corporate records remain with the Radios, as do the tapes and scripts of broadcasts.

The Analytical Research Department produced daily, weekly, biweekly, and specialty analyses as well as program briefs. A set of the published products of the Department and its predecessors is available in the Archives on microfiche. Individual analysts sometimes maintained working files, which became part of the records of this department. Records of some analysts are in the Archives.

The Media and Opinion Research Department dates from the early efforts of the two Radios to find out who was listening to the broadcasts. By 1956 Radio Liberty launched a separate Audience Research division. This became the Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (SAAOR) department, located in Paris. Radio Free Europe, too, had an East European Audience and Opinion Research (EEAOR) department, located in Munich and dating from the early 1960s. The departments conducted interviews with travelers, both to

and from the region, and with emigrants to form a broad picture of who listened to which broadcasts, where, how, when, and why. A set of the publications is in the Archives.

The Publication Department of the Research Institute was responsible for editing, producing and distributing the Institute's books and periodicals, both in print and electronically. It also published newsletters and brochures drawing on the Research Institute's materials. The Research Institute's Publications Division was the successor to the publishing activities of both Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, and some of the publications continued through various reorganizations within the Radios. Also within this body of publications are publications of the predecessors and early support organizations affiliated with the Radios.

The Information Resources Department included the RFE/RL Library, the East European Archives (including Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish and Romanian units and the Polish Samizdat unit), the Slavic, Baltic and Eurasian Archives (consisting of the Soviet ("Red") Archives, the Samizdat Archives, and the Soviet Monitoring operations). The records pertaining to one unit generally include Subject files, Biographical files, Abstracts of Media Reports, Radio and Television Monitoring, Press summaries and Press surveys.

The Department also maintained the records of the Radios' efforts to monitor opinions and events in countries to which the Radios did not broadcast, with particular emphasis on the activities of Communist parties (Albania, Yugoslavia).

The vast majority of the records of the Information Resource Department are press clippings from western and eastern periodicals.

### **The Polish Unit**

The Polish records in the Open Society Archives originated from two separate Radio Free Europe (RFE) administrative units: the Polish Research and Analysis Section of the Research Institute of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), and the Polish Underground Publications Unit. Both served the Radio's broadcasting purposes. Although functionally separate, the units often exchanged materials.

The Polish Research and Analysis Section began operating in the 1950s. Researchers acquired and arranged a set of reference materials for the Voice of Free Poland, which started broadcasting on May 3, 1952. The Section followed the administrative changes within the RFE research and analysis structure. Its responsibility was to present a complete picture of life in Poland, with all its different aspects. Numerous series covered political, economic, and social topics. The Subject and Polish Radio Monitoring file series are the largest; nevertheless, such small series as Biographical files and materials on Polish defectors are of great research value.

The Polish Underground Publications Unit was set up in March 1984. The Unit's initial purpose was to manage the Polish underground publications, already accumulated by RFE, as well as to acquire new ones. Eventually, the collection became the second largest of its kind outside Poland (after the Hoover Institute's holdings). The unit also produced publications such as the Polish Independent Press Summary every two weeks and the monthly Polish Independent Press Review.

### **The Czechoslovak Unit**

Czechoslovakia was one of the original countries to which RFE beamed broadcasts. The Czechoslovak desk, like other programming units, was supported by the News and Information Services Department, which was in turn made up of four sections: Monitoring,

the Field Officer, The Central Newsroom and Research and Evaluation. In the latter, a research unit on Czechoslovakia assembled files for use by the programs and editors. In 1974 the Czech unit became part of the Research and Analysis Department which, in 1990 became part of the RFE/RL Research Institute.

A card catalogue was started in the early 1950's in order to systematize exact references to the resources of collected information. The collecting of clippings, news releases, newspapers and the periodicals and the preparation of reports and analysis covered both general topics and specialties such as Communist Party, Foreign Relations, Culture and coverage of anniversaries of the Prague Spring.

The Dissent files include periodicals and underground cultural journals focused on the younger intellectual alternative generation, typewritten essays produced by the dissident activists and writers (for example Ludvík Vaculík). A substantial part of these files are the samples of Charter 77 documents and reports on the activities of political opposition in Czechoslovakia.

Of special interest in the Czechoslovak materials are microfilms of Czechoslovak "items" from the 1950' and 1960's. An "item" in RFE was an interview or report on events in a country to which the Radios broadcast; the interviewer or report was evaluated for reliability and, if considered useful for the Radios, was duplicated and distributed, at which point it was an "item." The Czechoslovak "items" are reproduced on rolls of microfilm, the originals were apparently destroyed.

### **The Slavic, Baltic and Eurasian Archive. The Soviet "Red" Archives**

The Soviet "Red" Archives were gathered by the staff of the Research Institute of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) to support the Radio's broadcasting operation. Radio Liberty began broadcasting on March 1, 1953, from Munich. Originally, the Research section, which created the Soviet "Red" Archives, fell administratively under the jurisdiction of the Radio Liberty Information Department, along with Soviet Monitoring, and the Library. Members of the Research section were assigned to review Soviet and Western newspapers and journals (approximately 40 at that time period) and write abstracts of significant articles. The name "Red" Archives was given to the records and to the staff maintaining them several years later. The Radio Liberty Information Department became the Soviet Research Department in the early 1960's and the number of different news sources within responsibility of and reviewed by the staff grew to over 500.

The Soviet Samizdat Archive Unit was created in 1971 as a separate entity from the Soviet "Red" Archives, although still within the Research Department. By 1971 the Research Department reported to the Director of the Program Policy Division. In 1976, Radio Liberty was merged with Radio Free Europe and the Research Department became the Research on Soviet Affairs Department.

In November 1990, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty's research activities were integrated into the newly formed Research Institute, a separate division of RFE/RL. Within the Institute, the Information Resources Department was divided into several parts, including the Eastern European Archives, the Soviet "Red" Archives, Soviet Monitoring, the Library and Soviet Samizdat. In 1992, the Soviet "Red" Archives, the Soviet Monitoring, and the Soviet Samizdat were incorporated into one Slavic, Baltic, and Eurasian Archive.

The Soviet "Red" Archives consists of eight series. The staff of the Soviet "Red" Archives filed material according to an Old Subject Code series created in 1953 with roughly 8000 subject categories. As changes began to take place in the USSR, the subject codes were modified and new subjects were added. In 1992, a "New Subject Code" was created. The purpose of this new code was to create a single subject code for use across the entire Slavic,

Baltic, and Eurasian Archives. Items were still added into the original subject code until 1994, but these were deemed historical in nature. The two subject series contain newspaper clippings, news agency releases, excerpts of Radio Liberty Research Reports, transcripts of Radio Liberty programs and of monitoring the Moscow Radio and (though rarely) copies of articles from scientific publications. The files include extensive information related to governmental bodies and institutions, military affairs, the Communist Party and its Central Committee, space projects, literary activities, religion, agriculture and industry in the U.S.S.R. Of particular interest are materials on samizdat publications, emigration, standard of living and nationalities.

The Biographical series contains newspaper clippings, news agency releases, excerpts from Moscow Radio broadcasting and copies of articles and books written by the people monitored. Persons included were prominent Soviet government and Communist Party officials, famous dissidents, intellectuals and political figures in the U.S.S.R. Files relating to Josif Stalin, Mihail Gorbachev, Nikita Krushev, Leonid Breznev, Eduard Schevardnadze, and Aleksander Solchenicyn are particularly extensive.

The New Code Republics File series contains newspaper clippings, news agency releases, excerpts from Radio Liberty research publications, transcripts of monitoring of the former Soviet media, VOA (Voice of America) and Radio Liberty programs, articles from scholarly reviews, and copies of samizdat documents and materials about each former Soviet republic. Particularly extensive is the information about Russia. Prior to 1992, information concerning the republics may be found in the Old Code Subject File.