

Conference: Voices of Freedom – Western Interference?

60 Years of Radio Free Europe in Munich and Prague

April 28-30, 2011

Organization: Prof. Dr. Martin Schulze Wessel, Dr. Zuzana Jürgens, Dr. Robert Luft
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“Volá hlas svobodného Československa, rozhlasová stanice Svobodná Evropa... (Here is the voice of free Czechoslovakia, Radio Free Europe...)” – with these words, the American radio station, Radio Free Europe (RFE), began regular broadcasting from Munich on 1 May 1951. Its broadcasting services to other Eastern European countries followed in quick succession. Today RFE/RL continues to broadcast from Prague to several Arabic, Asian, and CIS states.

Against the background of discussions between “East” and “West”, between “free democracies” and socialist “people’s republics”, post-war radio broadcasters gained a new significance. In contrast to the traditional media, radio waves could penetrate the “Iron Curtain”. As a relatively new medium, radio assumed a new role as a mediator of information, worldviews, opinions, and rumour across state borders and the Cold War divide in 1950s Europe – similar to the internet today. Radio Free Europe shaped “images” of the “East” and the “West” in both East and West, and can thus be seen as an important and abiding protagonist in the Cold War.

On the occasion of Radio Free Europe’s sixtieth anniversary, the Czech Center and Collegium Carolinum in Munich and the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague (ÚSTR) organize an international conference in Munich on April 28-30, 2011. Researchers from the U.S., Germany, East Central Europe and Scandinavia will present their latest works on RFE’s activities and structures, as well as on the reception and role this broadcasting station played during the Cold War era. Moreover, a panel discussion (“International Broadcasting Today”), two round table discussions with contemporary witnesses and a film screening will be part of the conference.

The conference and the two round table discussions will take place at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, 80539 München, Senatssaal. The panel discussion will be held on Friday, April 29, 8 pm, at the America House, Karolinenplatz 3, 80333 München. The film screening will take place on Saturday, April 30, 6 pm, at the Neues Arena Kino, Hans-Sachs-Str. 7, 80469 München.

The conference is held under the honorary patronage of Horst *Seehofer*, Minister President of Bavaria, and Karel *Schwarzenberg*, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Please register in advance:

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