

Opponent's Report on M.A. diploma thesis of **Bc. Clémence-Julia MARTIN** *For a New Approach to the Czechoslovak Exile in Paris during the Normalisation through Oral Sources* (Prague, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Oral History and Contemporary History, 2020. 109 pages plus Appendices).

Clémence-Julia Martin has dealt in his M. A. diploma thesis with a topic, which has not been frequently focused by Czech contemporary historiography. Despite an obvious fact, that in the international historiography the cross-border migrations in the 20th and also in the 21st Century have taken an important part (or better said an “essence”) of the general historical narrative describing these periods, the majority of Czech historiographers are still standing on the “traditional” (conservative) positions. In major they are trying to map other *domestic* historical processes or events from the contemporary history of Czech Lands (rarely Czechoslovakia) with limited accent to reflect also the situation (and the personal or collective reflections) of people “temporarily” living in abroad. Not only from the reason, that the author of M. A. thesis is not a *Czech native* scholar, I appreciate her choice of topic very much – because from my perspective, it offers a great opportunity to broaden *our* (meant Czech) research horizons on this problematic and to show other directions.

After a very patient reading, the submitted M. A. thesis seems to me very well prepared and structured. In agree with the subject of her previous studies, the author's research is rooted in the methodology of oral history, what seems to me a very good decision – which differs her contribution to the common knowledge of Czech/Czechoslovak exile/emigration from the other approaches (e. g. sociological, ethnological/anthropological etc.). I am also appreciating Ms. Martin's effort to conclude the knowledge inherited in Francophone, but also in Czech secondary sources, which authors have been previously dealing with the topic of Czech/Czechoslovak exile/emigration staying and living in France during 19th and 20th Century. For a broadening the horizons of analysis and interpretations, it can be certainly recommended other published volumes (e. g. production of Slovak specialist on Czechoslovak-French relations in the modern and contemporary history, Pavol Petruf, or several books and articles of Martin Nekola, Czech historian specialized in post-1948 Czechoslovak and Eastern European exile movements; it can be recommended also other edited book of cited historian Bořivoj Čelovský *Emigranti* with edited correspondence of post-1948 emigrants, the edited and published diaries of Charter 77 exiled signatory, Ivanka Lefevre, or similarly the published memoirs of Czech film director, now semi-settled in France, Andrea Sedláčková), but the final sum of studied secondary sources or of the already published ones seems to me magnificent and very representative for the level of M. A. thesis.

The main contribution to the enrichment of historical knowledge about CS exile/emigration in France (or better said in Parisian metropolitan area) are her records, analysis and qualitative interpretations of five oral history interviews (done in two phases). All these interviews have been done in agree with approved oral history methodology and the author's analytic approaches and final conclusions seems to me very relevant. It also proposed the prospect comparison or a continuation of recording with other narrators in the future. Concerning the content of evaluated thesis, I would like to propose several questions/topics to debate:

- 1) The Czechoslovakia has been during all time of its existence a multinational state, and not only the political elites and a *state power* had to deal with the key issues of nationalism(s); my question is, how the author of thesis as a researcher, who was not born in Central Europe, has been perceiving this phenomenon (meant not only via oral history interviews, but also via her general knowledge – e. g. differences between Czechs, Slovaks, CS Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Roma people,...)? And more

concretely said – how the narrators of *Czech* origin have been perceiving Slovaks in abroad, and *vice versa*?

- 2) How has been perceived Czecho/Slovak emigrants (seen *through the eyes of narrators*) by other exiled/emigration communities settled in Paris or in France generally (e.g. coming from Eastern Europe, but also from other countries)?
- 3) What is author's opinion about the possibilities and ways of *incorporation/integration* of exiled/emigration narratives to the general historical *story* of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic/Slovakia? Do these *emigration* stories belong from her perspective much more to the Czech/Czechoslovak history, or to the history of France (as *hosting* country)? How the responsible authorities (e. g. historians, school teachers etc.) deal with these problems in her homeland country?

Seen from the perspective of formalities and despite a fact, that author is not native speaker neither in English, nor in Czech, the M. A. thesis is done very precisely and the author is proving his great ability to use foreign languages in the excellent level of academic research and writing. On base of the above expressed arguments, I can truly recommend Clémence-Julia Martin 's thesis for the official public disputation and I suggest the evaluation in the grade of 1 (“**excellent**”).

In Prague, September 9, 2020

doc. PhDr. Pavel Mücke, Ph.D.