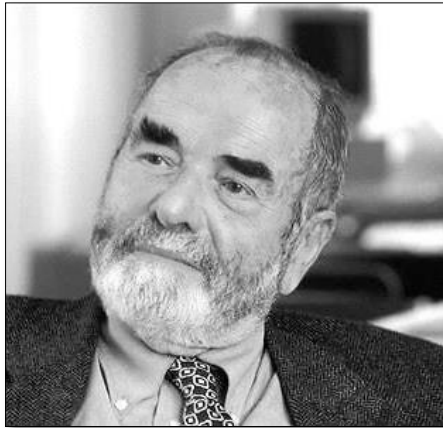


PAVEL TIGRID

“Pavel Tigríd was a person that united – in a particular way – principles with politeness, decency, open-mindedness, and a sincere interest in the opinions of the other. I feel that Pavel Tigríd goes on living not only as a name, idea, and a principle, but also as a challenge – a challenge for all of us to try to combine open-mindedness, curiosity, decency, and a gentleman’s manners with principles.”

Václav Havel



Pavel Tigríd, born Pavel Schönfeld, was a Czech opinion journalist, writer, and politician. He was born on 27th October 1917 in Prague into a Jewish family. His father baptised him as a Catholic. The family roots of Pavel Schönfeld were linked to writers Antal Stašek and Ivan Olbracht. He attended a grammar school in Prague, and studied at the Faculty of Law at Charles University. During his studies, he started to be interested in journalism, publishing his first articles in the Student’s Magazine.

The First Exile

In March 1939, Tigríd went into exile for the first time – to London. At the beginning, he lived by manual work, being a warehouseman and a waiter; from 1940, he worked as a BBC broadcaster, and, later, as an editor of *Voice of Free Czechoslovakia*, a radio programme of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. As editors were required to get pseudonyms – in order for their Protectorate relatives to remain safe – he changed his surname to Tigríd. He got inspired by the memory of his school years, when he distorted the name of the Tigris River into Tigríd. After the war, he had the surname confirmed officially. During his first exile, he published a cultural revue intended to introduce Czechoslovak culture to the Western world (there appeared, for instance, translation excerpts from the books of Jaroslav Seifert or Vladislav Vančura).

In June 1945, Tigríd came back to his homeland. After the arrival, he learned that almost no one from his family was alive; the only survivor was his sister, who had emigrated to the US. On the basis of his political stance, he rejected the job offer of the Czechoslovak Radio Company – offered by Václav Kopecký – and accepted the post at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time, he met Ivana Myšková, who had been recommended to him by his friends as a secretary. In 1947, he married her, and she became not only the mother of their three children – daughters Deborah and Kateřina, and son Gregory – but also his lifelong support and co-worker.

The Second Exile

It was very soon that Pavel Tigrid was forced, due to his audacious articles in the Christian Democratic press, to leave the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He turned into a great enemy of Communists, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Not long before his arrest in February 1948, he managed to go for a coverage trip to Germany. It was, therefore, at least his wife that was punished by custody; fortunately, after being released in September 1948, she succeeded in leaving the country and reuniting her husband. In Germany, Pavel Tigrid took part in exile broadcasts, being in charge of the Munich division of Free Europe for a short time, too. Due to his clashes with its NY headquarters (namely, with Ferdinand Peroutka), he was forced to quit his position. Together with his wife, he moved house to the US and worked there, for a couple of years, as a waiter in a Brooklyn-based bar. At the same time, he studied and wrote articles for *Voice of America* and exile magazines.

The critical period of Paul Tigrid's life came in 1956, when he founded *Testimony*, the exile quarterly for politics and culture. Three years after its foundation, he was deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship, and in 1960, he transferred the magazine headquarters to Paris. In a short period of time, *Testimony* developed into the most important Czechoslovak-exile periodical, appearing in 93 issues within the scope of 36 years of its existence. Due to *Testimony*, Paul Tigrid came to be the most dangerous exile figure for the Czechoslovak totalitarian regime. The Communists were bothered not only by the "ideological diversion" he was carrying out, but also by the leaks of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Central Committee's classified files that *Testimony* kept publishing. In the "Normalization" period, the magazine served, besides other functions, as a platform for the Dissident Movement.

Return to Czechoslovakia

As late as at the close of 1987, Pavel Tigrid presupposed the totalitarian system would hold on in the USSR-oriented states for another thirty years. This was one of his happy life mistakes – it was not later than in 1989 that he came back to Czechoslovakia, on the very day of Václav Havel's presidential inauguration. He worked as a presidential advisor, and in the 1994–1996 period, he served as the Minister of Culture. In 1995, he pushed through the restoration of the State Award for Literature and the State Award for Translation. After his failure in the 1996 Senate election, he continued to work for the President's chancellery, focusing on the issue of Czech-German relations.

Although after the Velvet Revolution the existence of *Testimony* came to an end, Tigrid did not stop practising journalism – he published articles in many papers and commented on important topics on the radio. In the Czech Republic, his books were published, such as *Political Emigration in the Nuclear Age*, and *A Pocket Guidebook of an Intelligent Woman Following Her Own Destiny*. In the post-1989 era, he lived to gain many an award, including the highest French and German orders of merit (The Legion of Honour, The Great Cross of Merit with the Star of the Order of Merit), and the Order of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, bestowed on him by Václav Havel.

Up to 1998, Pavel Tigrid had alternated his Prague and France homes; in his last years, he dwelled in his house at Héricy, near Paris. On 31st August 2003, he decided to pass away, after ceasing to take his essential medication. His ability to unite and bridge differences was symbolically expressed by the painting of the Star of David and the Christian Cross which was presented on his coffin. This man of honour was buried at Héricy.