
The Malach Visual History Centre Marks One Year of Existence

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PRAGUE – The Malach Visual History Centre was launched at the end of January 2010. The department is one three European access points to the large digital archive of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Containing 52,000 audiovisual recordings of interviews whose subject matter spans almost the complete 20th century history, the archive is fully accessible at the centre through an online interface. On the occasion of the Malach Centre's first anniversary, a conference will be held on Friday January 28th, 2011 scheduled to start at 9 am at the refectory of the Charles University Faculty of Mathematics and Physics on Prague's Malostranské náměstí. The conference will include an overview of the centre's activities in 2010, an outlook for the future as well as visitors' evaluation. In the afternoon, participants will have a chance to visit the Malach Centre and have a try at working with the Visual History Archive themselves.

For almost a year, Charles University has provided access to a large archive of audiovisual material featuring almost 52,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses. The recordings had been made since the mid-1990s in 56 countries and in 32 different languages. Users can search and watch the testimonies they are interested in using an index containing 55,000 different keywords. Thanks to a sophisticated user interface, the relevant testimonies and their parts can be found quickly. More than 500 interviews in Czech are available at the Malach Centre with an average length of two hours as well as a comparable volume of interviews in Slovak.

"During the first year of its operation, the Malach Visual History Centre served mainly university students who used the archive for their bachelor, master and doctoral theses," the Centre's coordinator Jakub Mlynář says. "During 2010, many high school and university teachers paid us a visit along with their students. Another large group of visitors were family members of the witnesses who came to the Centre to look for details of their family history. Every last Tuesday of the month, we organize public screenings of documentaries about 20th-century history," Mlynář says.



In May 2010, the Centre launched its [website](#) providing information about the Malach Visual History Centre as well as suggesting various possibilities of using the material available in the Visual History Archive. "The most visited section has for long been the one dedicated to schools and teachers. It features information about the educational materials that are available and can be immediately applied in classes. A downloadable short edited compilation of testimonies given by the survivors of the liberation of the Terezín concentration camp can also be used for educational purposes," Mlynář says. Besides, the Malach Centre participates in the "Daniel" art competition organized by the Education Ministry's National Institute of Children and Youth for older primary school children. An international discussion forum was established in mid-last year at <http://vhaacademicnetwork.ning.com> for teachers and academics to be able to share their experience with using visual history in research and education.

On Friday, January 28, 2011, an annual conference will be held at the refectory of the Charles University Faculty of Mathematics and Physics on 25 Malostranské náměstí. It will include an overview of the Malach VHC's activities in 2010, an outlook for the future, a summary of the possible ways of using oral history in education as well as reflections of some the visitors. Speeches will be given by the Catholic priest and author Marek Orko Vácha, Michal Frankl of the Jewish Museum in Prague and other participants. The programme will feature an extract from the children's opera Brundibár performed by a children's choir from the primary artistic school in Jaroměř and a performance by primary school pupils taking part in the "Neighbours Who Disappeared" project. In the afternoon, participants will have a chance to visit the Malach Centre and have a try at working with the Visual History Archive which is accessible there.

If you would like to take part in the conference or receive more information, please contact:

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