

## The Holocaust in the Czech Media – A Workshop for Journalists

Three thousand seven hundred and ninety two Czech and Moravian Jews from the Terezín family camp were murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of March 8 – 9, 1944. This was the largest mass murder of Czechoslovak citizens in the Second World War. We believe this sad anniversary is a good opportunity to reflect upon the representation of the Holocaust (Shoah) in the Czech media and on how specialized memory and educational institutions can contribute to a better understanding of the topic and improve the quality of journalistic writing on it.



You are cordially invited to the Workshop for Journalists, which takes place within the framework of our project supported by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in cooperation with the USC Shoah Foundation. The workshop will follow the opening of the Memorial of Shoah Victims in the Pinkas Synagogue, to which there will be free access on Sunday March 8, 2015.

Department for Education and Culture, Jewish Museum in Prague,  
Maiselova 15  
Prague 1  
**Monday March 9, 2015**

09:00-09:05

### **Introduction**

Leo Pavlát, Director of the Jewish Museum in Prague.

09:05-10:15

### **Lecture: What We Do (Not) Want to Know about the Holocaust? Reflection on Anniversaries and Media Representation of the Holocaust**

Michal Frankl, Jewish Museum in Prague

Are some topics on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust more popular and others omitted in the Czech media? Why? Do we prefer emotive, non-problematic topics? Do we need an anniversary in order to inform people about the Holocaust? In this reflection based on his own work in the sphere of 'Public History' (as it is called in Anglo-Saxon countries), Michal Frankl will attempt to analyze, at least partially, the media coverage in the Czech Republic of the Holocaust.

10:30-11:45

### **Workshop: Detective Investigation into Forgotten Destinies**

Judita Matyášová, Lidové noviny

Sometimes it is a mere coincidence. A brief reference or a photograph in a family album, and you are on the trail of an interesting destiny. War stories, the fate of emigrants, and intergenerational

projects where young people research life in their villages in the '50s are some of the topics covered. Workshop participants will find out how exciting it can be to search the archives or where they can find useful information for their articles. They will also discover why an interview with a witness of historical events is different from more standard encounters and how to prepare for it.

12:00-13:00: Lunch

13:00-14:15

**Lecture: Do Journalists Assist in the Persistence of Anti-Semitic Stereotypes?**

Martin Šmok, USC Shoah Foundation

Is it possible that, in their choice of topics and use of racist terminology, the media unknowingly participates in maintaining anti-Semitic stereotypes? To what extent is the media affected by residues of the anti-Semitic propaganda existing in collective, historical memory? Who decides who is or is not Jewish? Who is a Zionist and how was this term perceived by Communist propaganda? How can we work with the memories of witnesses without losing their context and meaning? Possible answers will be illustrated by specific examples.

14:30-15:30

**Discussion: We Have Many Stories, but is Anyone Actually Interested?**

There are countless private and state institutions in the Czech Republic dealing with the documentation and commemoration of historical events. Every month these institutions issue press releases about their activities to journalists. But how is one to deal with this information overload? Which institution has information on refugees, and who might know something about Shoah? Let's talk about what topics are interesting to journalists and in what form they need to learn about them. The discussion will be attended by journalists and representatives of selected memory institutions – the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Malach Centre for Visual History and the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes.

Moderated by Petr Brod.