



VOICES OF TEREZIN

The Theresienstadt Ghetto

A Study Guide

Inga Bunsch Sieminski

The Theresienstadt Ghetto: A Study Guide©

By Inga Bunsch Sieminski



Arrival of Jews at the Theresienstadt Ghetto

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Contents

DCPS Content Standards

<i>Social Studies</i>	4
<i>Arts: Theatre</i>	6
Terezin Background.....	8
Maps	10
Chronology.....	11
Terminology.....	16
Quotes.....	18
Rationale for Arts-Based Activities.....	28

Voices of Terezin

DCPS Learning and
Content Standards by
Subject and Grade
Level

Social Studies

Grade 10

World History and Geography II

10.5.4. Describe the conflicting aims and aspirations of the conferees at Versailles and the Versailles treaty's economic and moral effects on Germany.

10.5.10. Explain the widespread disillusionment with prewar institutions, authorities, and values that resulted in a void that was later filled by totalitarians. (P)

10.6. Students analyze the rise of fascism and totalitarianism after World War I.

10.6.3. Analyze the assumption of power by Adolf Hitler in Germany, the resulting acts of oppression and aggression, and the human costs of the totalitarian regime. (P, S)

10.7. Students describe the various causes and consequences of the global depression of the 1930s, and they analyze how governments responded to the Great Depression.

10.7.4. Describe how economic instability led to political instability in many parts of the world and helped to give rise to dictatorial regimes such as Adolf Hitler's in Germany and the military's in Japan. (P, E)

10.8. Students analyze the causes and course of World War II.

10.8.1. Compare the German, Italian, and Japanese drives for empire in the 1930s, including the 1937 Rape of Nanking, other atrocities in China, Italian invasion of Ethiopia, German militarism, and the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939. (G, P, M)

10.8.2. Explain the role of appeasement, nonintervention (isolationism), and the domestic distractions in Europe and the United States prior to the outbreak of World War II. (P)

10.8.3. Identify and locate the Allied and Axis powers and the major turning points of the war, the principal theaters of conflict, key strategic decisions, and the resulting war conferences and political resolutions, with emphasis on the importance of geographic factors. (G, P, M)

10.8.4. Describe the political, diplomatic, and military leaders during the war (e.g., Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Emperor Hirohito, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Douglas MacArthur, and Dwight Eisenhower). (P, M)

10.8.5. Explain the background of the Holocaust (including its roots in 19th century ideas about race and nation); the dehumanization of the Jews through law, attitude, and actions such as badging, ghettoization, and killing processes; and how the Nazi persecution of gypsies, homosexuals, and others who failed to meet the Aryan ideal.

10.8.6. Describe the human costs of the war, with particular attention to the civilian and military losses in Russia, Germany, Britain, the United States, China, and Japan. (S, M)

10.9. Students analyze the long-term military, economic, and political effects of the World War II.

10.9.4. Describe the nature of reconstruction in Asia and Europe after 1945 (e.g., purpose of Marshall Plan, creation of NATO, and division of Germany). (P, E, S)

10.9.5. Explain the significance and effects of the location and establishment of Israel on world affairs. (G, P)

10.9.7. Compare the economic and military power shifts caused by the war, including the Yalta Pact, the development of nuclear weapons, Soviet control over Eastern European nations, and the economic recoveries of Germany and Japan. (P, M, E)

10.10. Students explain the causes, major events, and global consequences of the Cold War.

10.10.1. Describe Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe, the 1956 uprising in Hungary, conflicts involving Berlin and the Berlin Wall, and the "Prague Spring." (G, P, M)

Grade 11

US History and Geography II

11.3.1. Identify the new sources of large-scale immigration and locate on a map their countries of origin and where they have tended to settle in large numbers (e.g., Italians, Jews, Poles, Slovaks, Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese). (G, E, S)

11.3.2. Explain the ways in which new social and economic patterns encourage assimilation of newcomers into the mainstream amid growing cultural diversity and how this relates to the new wave of nativism. (G, S)

11.8. Students analyze America's participation in World War II.

11.8.2. Explain the origins of American involvement in the war, with an emphasis on the events that precipitated the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the decision to join the Allies'

fight against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan for the freedom of those oppressed and attacked by these Axis nations. (P, M)

11.8.3. Trace the response of the administration to atrocities against Jews and other groups. (P, S)

11.8.6. Describe the constitutional issues and impact of events on the U.S. home front, including the internment of Japanese Americans (e.g., *Fred Korematsu v. United States of America*) and the restrictions on German and Italian resident aliens. (P, S)

Arts

Theatre

"High School Proficient"

HSP.1.1. Write and improvise dialogues and scenes that embody dramatic structure (e.g., exposition, complication, conflict, crisis, climax, and resolution).

HSP.1.5. Distinguish facial expression, physicality and gesture based on ones understanding of the character's inner life.

HSP.1.6. Explore interpersonal relationships among characters through exercises and scenes.

HSP.1.7. Collaborate on the development of original dramatic pieces leading to performance.

HSP.2.6. Create scenes incorporating sound, music, and voice.

HSP.3.3. Document observations and perceptions on how a specific actor used theatre techniques to convey meaning in his or her performances.

"High School Advanced"

HSA.1.1. Write a complete theatrical piece (e.g., one-act, 10-minute play, one person show) that embodies dramatic structure and includes complex characters with unique dialogue that motivates the action and explicates the conflict.

HSA.1.2. Incorporate metaphor, subtext, dramatic themes, and symbolic elements in original monologues and scenes to enhance plot and character.

HSA.2.4. Collaborate as directors and design team to research, develop, and convey unified production concepts for a performance.

HSA.3.2. Assess the intent, structure, and quality of informal and formal theatre productions.

HSA.3.4. Compare and contrast specific styles and forms of theatre such as naturalism, expressionism, and theatre of the absurd.

HSA.3.5. Evaluate the relevance of scripts using both adapted and original material.

HSA.4.1. Analyze the influence of traditional and nontraditional theatre, film, television, and electronic media on values and behaviors.

HSA.4.3. Create projects using tools, techniques, and processes from the study and practice of theatre, film/video, and electronic media to advance understanding of other subject areas.

Terezin Background

Introduction

Since the early 1600s, the area of the modern day Czech Republic had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled by the royal House of Hapsburg. Following the collapse of the Empire after World War I, the independent republic of Czechoslovakia was created in 1918. While Germany struggled with the aftermaths of the Treaty of Versailles, Czechoslovakia experienced, for the first time in its history, political autonomy.

The new country incorporated regions of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and the Carpathian Ruthenia. It provided rather extensive rights to its German, Hungarian, Polish and Ruthenian minorities, but did not afford actual territorial and political authority to them. This created tension among the minorities.

Adolf Hitler took advantage of this weakness and gained the largely German speaking Sudetenland in the Czech lands through the 1938 Munich Agreement. When Hitler broke the Agreement and marched into the remaining Czech lands, he ended the 20 year existence of the Czech Republic by naming the area a "Protectorate." As a result, Jewish populations began to fall prey to the same harsh treatment as in the Reich.

The Terezin Ghetto

In the late 18th century, Emperor Josef II of the Hapsburg Empire decided to build a walled city and fortress at the nexus of the Labe and Ohre rivers in order to maintain control of the waterways and deter invasions. Located roughly 40 miles northwest of modern-day Prague, the Nazis considered Terezin to be an ideal location for a concentration camp, which was established under SS commander Reinhard Heydrich in November of 1941.

After evicting all civilians and renaming the fortress "Theresienstadt Ghetto", the Nazis proceeded to turn Terezin into a work and transit camp for Jews and sympathizers. Even though Terezin was branded as a camp for "privileged" Jews--former civil servants and employees of the Third Reich, intellectuals, Jews married to Aryans, half-Jews, and war veterans, and the elderly--conditions were still dire. At its most crowded, 50,000 prisoners lived in Terezin, which was

originally meant to house no more than 6,000 people. Camp inmates were placed on a starvation diet of cabbage and potatoes, and were forced to work extraordinarily long days. While some inmates were condemned to hard labor, others documented the German war effort with intricate and elaborate written reports. The smallest mistakes, even a simple typographical error, were punishable by death. Due to the crowded, unhygienic, and harsh conditions, pandemics of fatal illnesses were common.

Despite this reality, Terezin became a dynamic center for artistic innovation and performance. Through concentrating the members of the Jewish *intellegencia* in one camp, the SS inadvertently created the circumstances for a wealth of cultural activities to take place. A multitude of actors, playwrights, dancers, musicians, visual artists, composers, writers, and scholars were imprisoned at Terezin. Committed to find meaning in their confinement, to develop creative ways to resist the Nazi regime, and to fulfill a “great hunger for culture in a place where there was not even enough bread to eat”¹, the artists at Terezin literally created works of art in order to survive. After long days of work and weak from hunger, Terezin's artist-inmates, both professionals and amateurs, rehearsed and performed.

While these activities were initially forbidden, the Nazis eventually used these artistic activities for their own ends. For example, in 1944, the Nazis hosted the International Red Cross at Terezin in a desperate attempt to quiet rumors from the international community about atrocities occurring in the camps. During the Red Cross visit, Terezin's artists were forced to mount theatrical performances and make a propagandist "documentary", portraying life at Terezin as luxurious and care-free.

This commoditization was not successful, however. The control of the Third Reich spiraled downward, and with the armistice in late April to early May of 1945, the SS fled Terezin and the International Red Cross stepped in with the assistance of Czech volunteers.² Due to an ongoing deadly typhus epidemic, all of Terezin's inhabitants were placed under strict quarantine and could not leave the camp immediately. However, by June, the camp was closed and all of the people who survived in Terezin had been repatriated to Germany or Austria.

¹ Platz, Naomi. "What You Need to Know about Terezin to Enrich Your Understanding of This Play." <http://www.lexhamarts.org/theater/200906/BackgroundInfo.htm>

² "Terezin/ Theresienstadt." Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team. <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/othercamps/terezin.html>

Terezin's Artistic Legacy

Among the contributions of Terezin's prisoners are some of the most notable and moving artistic works of the 20th century, many of which became lost after the Holocaust and are slowly being rediscovered. Even Terezin's children became part of this movement through writing poetry and drawing pictures. During its operation as a work camp, more than 12,000 children under the age of 15 passed through Terezin. While 90% of these children died during the Holocaust³, they leave their art behind.

*Voices of Terezin*⁴ celebrates and honors the legacy of all of the art made at the concentration camp. Through testimonials about the power of the arts, survivors' poetry, choral work of Terezin children's songs, and digital images of inmates' artwork, and through integrating one of Terezin's found, unpublished plays, *Smoke of Home*⁵, we embark on a journey of great importance. Through paying tribute we can see that for the Terezin inmates art was a strategy for survival. We can carry these implications with us into understandings of contemporary conflicts and genocides, and into reflecting on how we all live each day of our lives, individually and collectively.



<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/cz.htm>

³ Volkanova, Hana, ed. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp 1942–1944*. Pantheon Books: New York, 1993.

⁴ Conceived by Gail Humphries Mardirosian, with *Theatre in the Ghetto* by Barbara Oliver Korner, 2009

⁵ Zdenek Elias and Jiri Stein, transl. by Dorothy Elias

Chronology⁶

1938	October	Germany occupies the Sudetenland
1939	March	Germany occupies Bohemia and Moravia; both become the "Reich Protectorate."
	June	A decree defines "Jews," based on the Nuremberg racial laws. New regulations are enacted for the registration and liquidation of property and assets owned by Jews in the Protectorate.
	July	Jewish students are excluded from German-language public schools and high schools in the Protectorate. Jewish students in Czech-language schools are restricted to four percent numerous clauses of all matriculated students.
	August	Jews in provincial areas of the Protectorate are ordered to leave their homes and resettle in Prague within one year. A police decree prohibits Jews from using most restaurants and cafes. Subsequent prohibitions forbid Jews from using public swimming and sports facilities. Hospitals and homes for the aged are ordered to segregate Jewish and non-Jewish patients.
	September	Germany invades Poland
1940	January	A decree mandates the "elimination of Jews from the Protectorate economy," resulting in the "Aryanization" or liquidation of "Jewish enterprises."
	February	The Protectorate Administration in Prague excludes Jews from attending theater performances and movies.
	April	Germany occupies Denmark, invades Norway The Gestapo imposes a curfew between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. on Jews in the Protectorate.

⁶ Adapted from Dutlinger, Anne D., and Moravian College. Payne Gallery. *Art, Music, and Education as Strategies for Survival: Theresienstadt, 1941-45*. 1st ed. New York: Herodias. 2001.

	May	<p>Germany invades Western Europe</p> <p>The Netherlands surrenders to Germany</p> <p>Belgium surrenders to Germany</p> <p>Prague police prohibit Jews from using public parks and gardens in the city.</p>
	June	<p>France surrenders to Germany</p>
	October	<p>The Prague municipal administration decrees that Jews will not receive ration cards for clothing.</p>
1941	January	<p>The Protectorate Department of Agriculture refuses to issue Jews ration cards for apples. By 1942, these restrictions expand to include prohibitions on receiving rations of sugar, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, soap, and tobacco products.</p>
	June	<p>Germany invades the Soviet Union</p>
	September	<p>Jews are prohibited from using public libraries and lending libraries in the Protectorate. Later in the year, this decree is expanded to include museums, exhibitions, galleries, and archives.</p> <p>All Jews above the age of six in the Reich, including the Protectorate, are ordered to wear a six-pointed yellow Star of David, with the word “Jude” (“Jew”) in black calligraphy.</p>
	October	<p>Reinhard Heydrich, Adolf Eichmann, and six other members of the Nazi occupation staff meet in Prague to discuss the “solution of the Jewish problem” for the Protectorate. They decide to convert Terezin into a ghetto for Jewish deportees en route to the East.</p>
	November	<p>The first transport with 342 Jewish men from Prague arrives in Terezin as a construction labor detail, AK1 (Aufbaukommando).</p> <p>The first large transports of Jews from Prague, including the elderly, arrive in Terezin. Women and children are housed separately from men in the Dresden barracks.</p>

1942	January	The first transport to the East departs Terezin for the Riga ghetto.
	February	All original inhabitants of Theresienstadt are ordered to move out of the town. Prague police headquarters prohibits Jews from using laundries and cleaners.
	April	Transports of Jewish men, women, and children to the East (Poland) continue. Those fit for labor are sent to labor camps; those considered unfit are killed.
	May	Reinhard Heydrich, Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, is ambushed near Prague by Czech partisans. He dies from his injuries.
	June	In reprisal for Heydrich's assassination, 199 male residents over the age of 15 in the village of Lidice are shot. Commandant Seidl has 30 men deported from Terezin to Lidice, where they are ordered to dig a mass grave. All buildings are destroyed with explosives. Transports of Jews from Berlin and Vienna arrive in Terezin.
	July	The children's homes L410 for Czech girls ages eight to sixteen and L417 for Czech boys ages ten to fifteen are opened in Terezin.
	August	Construction begins on a three kilometer rail spur connecting the Bauschowitz station with the Terezin ghetto, which will eventually eliminate the forced march for the Jewish deportees.
	September	A crematorium with four ovens is built to deal with the dead too numerous to bury according to Jewish tradition. During this month, 3,941 inmates die from inadequate shelter, hygiene, and food. All Jewish schools are closed in the Protectorate. The Protectorate Department of Education prohibits private lessons for Jewish children by paid and unpaid teachers.

	October	<p><i>Mischlinge</i> (part-Jews) of the first degree (non-practicing half-Jews with two Jewish grandparents not married to Jews) are barred from German and Czech language educational institutions, although they are still allowed in vocational, agricultural, and art schools with special permission issued by the Department of Education.</p> <p>The first transport is sent from Terezin to Auschwitz-Birkenau. During the next two years, a total of 25 transports with more than 44,000 prisoners are deported. Most of them are killed.</p>
1943	April	The first Jewish transports from the Netherlands arrive in Terezin.
	August	A transport of 1,260 children arrives from the liquidated Bialystok ghetto. They are held in isolation until being deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau together with 53 Terezin inmates who were assisting them
	October	The first transport of Danish Jews arrives in Terezin.
	December	On RSHA orders (Central Office of Reich Security), "beautification" of the Terezin ghetto begins for international visitors.
1944	June	An International Red Cross delegation comprised of two Danish officials and one Swiss representative, inspect the ghetto for six hours. The prisoners were instructed on how to "perform" a happy life and convey positive ghetto conditions.
	July	Several Jewish artists are arrested in the Small Fortress prison for distributing "atrocious propaganda" through their realistic artwork. After brutal interrogations and torture, they are deported to Auschwitz. Only two of them survive.
	August	A camera crew from a Prague newsreel company is ordered to shoot a propaganda film about Terezin, <i>Theresienstadt: A Documentary of the Jewish Settlement Territory</i> .
	November	In the wake of a losing war, Germans begin to dismantle gas chambers and crematoria in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Surviving prisoners are transferred to concentration camps in the Reich and the Terezin ghetto.

1945	January	Transports of several thousand German and Czech Jews from mixed marriages and part Jews (Mischlinge) arrive in Terezin.
	February	A transport of 1,200 Jews is released from Terezin on a transport to Switzerland. The construction of a gas chamber begins in Terezin.
	March	Adolf Eichman orders a new “beautification” of the ghetto for another inspection by the International Red Cross in April.
	April	Swedish Red Cross buses remove 423 Danish prisoners from Terezin for transfer to Sweden. About 15,000 prisoners from eastern concentration camps arrive in Terezin. A typhus epidemic begins.
	May	The International Red Cross assumes control of the Terezin ghetto and the Small Fortress prison. SS men leave Terezin. Soviet army tanks arrive and take control of Terezin. Approximately 30,000 prisoners are liberated, including those from evacuation transports.
	August	Repatriation of former prisoners from Terezin takes place.

Terminology⁷

Allies: The nations – the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union - that joined together in the war against Germany and its partners – Italy, Japan, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia – known as the Axis.

Anti-Semitism: Hatred of Jews; the term “anti-Semitism” was popularized in 1879 by the German journalist Wilhelm Marr.

Aryan: The Nazis applied the term to themselves as descendents of an ancient Indo-European people, claiming their “Aryan race” superior to all other racial groups. For the Nazis, the typical “Aryan” was blond, blue-eyed, and tall.

Auschwitz-Birkenau: The largest of the Nazi extermination camps in Poland, in which at least 1.1 million Jews were killed, mostly through gassing. Thousands of Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), Poles, Soviet prisoners, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses were also gassed at the camp.

Concentration Camp: A facility in which political prisoners, prisoners of war, or other perceived enemies are confined. The first concentration camp set up by the Nazis was Dachau in 1933. By the end of World War II there were thousands of camps. While these camps were not engaged in extermination, many prisoners were killed or died of starvation or disease.

Death Marches: Forced marches of concentration camp prisoners towards Germany. Death marches occurred toward

the end of the war, as camps were evacuated ahead of the advancing Allied troops.

Deportation: Removing people from their homes. Jews were transferred to ghettos or camps, usually in train cattle cars without windows, food, water, or toilets. Many people died during deportation.

Displaced Person Camp: A camp set up after World War II for survivors from concentration camps and others whose homes were destroyed. Thousands of people remained in camps for several years until they could immigrate to the new State of Israel, the United States, or other Western countries.

“Final Solution of the Jewish Question”: The Nazi code name for their plan to eliminate all European Jews. The plan was coordinated in January 1942, at a Nazi conference near Lake Wannsee outside of Berlin.

Gas Chambers: Specially constructed bath houses in the six Nazi extermination camps in Poland. Victims were crowded into the rooms and died from deadly Zyklon B gas streaming out of the shower heads.

Genocide: A word first used in 1944 to describe an official governmental policy of killing an entire people.

Gestapo: Short for the German *Geheime Staatspolizei* (secret state police). This police force was known for its brutal methods and became the main instrument of Hitler’s anti-Jewish policies.

Ghetto: The term probably originates from a 1516 walled-in area in Venice, Italy (Geto Nuovo), where Jews were forced to live.

⁷ Adapted from the Teacher’s Guide *Meeting Hate with Humanity: Life During the Holocaust*. Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York.

Eventually the term was used for all closed-in quarters where Jews lived separately from other populations.

During World War II, the Nazis created Jewish ghettos throughout Europe to facilitate the separation and deportation of Jews to the camps.

Hebrew: The ancient language of the Jewish people, used for prayer and study. It is now the official language of the State of Israel.

Hitler, Adolf: (1889-1945) Nazi party leader and German chancellor, who placed anti-Semitism at the center of Nazi politics.

He committed suicide in his Berlin underground bunker, as Allied troops were approaching the city.

Holocaust: A word of Greek origin meaning complete destruction, especially by fire. It is used to describe the murder of European Jewry. The Hebrew word for Holocaust is *Shoah*, meaning catastrophe, destruction, or disaster.

Liberators: Soldiers and staff of the Allied Armed Forces who reached the various concentration camps toward the end of World War II in 1945. They cared for the prisoners until they could return home or went to Displaced Persons camps.

Nazi: A member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party that took political control of Germany under Adolf Hitler in 1933.

Nuremberg Laws: Two laws issued in 1935 to exclude from German life people whom the Nazis considered alien. The first law removed German citizenship from "non-Aryans", and the second law prohibited them from marrying Germans.

The term "non-Aryan" was applied to Jews and all non-Germanic peoples,

including Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), and African-Germans.

Partisan: A member of an organized fighting group that attacks the enemy within occupied territory. During World War II, partisans fought Nazi occupying forces by harassing and killing Nazis and sabotaging their war efforts.

Propaganda: Materials created and disseminated to influence public opinion or to spread false information.

Rabbi: A Jewish religious leader trained in Jewish law. The term comes from the Hebrew word for "my teacher."

Roma and Sinti: A nomadic ethnic group that originated in India and has lived in Western Europe since the 15th century. They are referred to as "Gypsies", a name given to them by Europeans, who mistakenly believed they came from Egypt.

Shabbat: The Jewish Sabbath, which begins on Friday evening and ends on Saturday night. It is a day of spiritual rest and reflection.

SS: Specially chosen Nazi troops, assigned to the brutal tasks of implementing the "Final Solution." The term stands for the German "Schutzstaffel," which means "protection unit."

Theresienstadt: A ghetto established in 1941 in the Czech town of Terezin. The Nazis planned it as a model settlement, to create propaganda for the world about how well they treated the Jews. Many well-known Jews were sent to Theresienstadt, including artists and writers,

Despite the horrible living conditions and the constant fear of deportation, inmates struggled to maintain an active cultural life.

Most of the ghetto's prisoners were eventually deported to Auschwitz.

QUOTES

From: We Are Children Just the Same

Vedem – “In the Lead” – the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezin⁸

The Jewish Council of Elders (“Aeltestenrat”) was set up to give the appearance of the ghetto’s self-administration by the Jews. Functioning under strict daily SS orders, the Council was responsible for all internal affairs, including the welfare of the children and youth,

The Elders made great efforts to keep the intellectual vitality of the ghetto community alive. While cultural and artistic expression was tolerated by the Nazi within the “Freizeitgestaltung” (leisure time activities), education had to be pursued secretly.

On arrival in the ghetto, families were separated and men, women, and children housed in different barracks. Much care was taken to mitigate the fate of the children. Boys lived in building L 417, the former town school, in ten separate rooms called “homes.” Tutors selected by the Elders secretly taught the older children and provided intellectual stimulation through discussions, readings, and cultural activities.

The secret magazine *Vedem* (“In the Lead”) was published in “Home no. 1.”

From *Vedem*:

Interview of two surviving teenage boys from Home no.1

Kurt: “It may seem incredible, but the magazine was all our own idea ... Every Friday night we would sit around the table, or find room on the bunks, whatever, and then anyone who had written something during the week would read his contribution.”

Zdenek: “The magazine was never actually published in the true sense of the word. We simply read it aloud every Friday night.”

Marie: “Why did you call your magazine *Vedem* – ‘In the Lead?’?”

Zdenek: “Home Number One was always first. Home Number One will always be so!”

⁸ Krížková, Marie Ruth, et al. We Are Children Just the Same : Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995.

“Old ones go
And young ones go.
Healthy ones go,
And sick ones go,
Not knowing if they will survive.”
(“Untitled” by Zdeněk Weinberger”)

Hanus Hachenburg, age 14

“What am I?
Who are my people,
Wandering child that I am?
Are ghetto walls my homeland?
Or is it a ripening land
Going somewhere, small, beautiful?
Is Bohemia my homeland, or the world?”

As a 14-year old boy, Hanus Hachenburg was deported from Terezin to Auschwitz-Birkenau, along with his mother. According to verbal reports by former fellow prisoners, he continued to write poems for a while. There is no further written information.

“And my last thought before falling asleep is: What will tomorrow bring?”
(“Two Recollections” by Rudolf Laub)

“... Look bravely forward, swallow all your sorrow,
Even though its bitterness might make us choke.
Do not be broken in this tattered labyrinth,
A dream will always end when we awake.”
(“Avowal” by Zdeněk Ornest)

“But anyone who worked with the children of Terezin knew full well that sometimes there was a strange light in the eyes of a child, a look full of so many ‘whys,’ to which no caretaker knew the answer. He knew that the children woke up at night, staring into the empty darkness, and he sometimes heard their quiet sobs, and knew there was no cure.”

(Zeek Shek’s deposition)

“I envy you a little warmth, my friends,
When, numb with cold, I crawl out of my bed,
When nothing else but coldness could I feel
Still wrapt in all the lovely dreams I had,
No wish have I to wash under the cold tap
Slowly I drown, not in my shame, but filth.
Oh, lovely warmth, oh warmth so dearly purchased,
I want to warm myself in your kind lap.
And when at last, with heavy heart, I wake,
And know that I am starving, I would weep
For all the hope that I must now abandon.
I only want to sleep and sleep and sleep.”

(“Just a Little Warmth” by Zdeněk Ornest)

“... Mrs. Bachnerová got the corridor beautifully clean (poor woman, she had to use cold water), so don’t hesitate to strew pieces of paper or dirty bandages about. It won’t look so monotonous ...”

(“Motto: Destroy Whatever You Can - A Terezin Proverb?” by Leo Demner)

From: I Never Saw Another Butterfly⁹

The Girls' Home was in building L 410. While most of them perished, their story is told through the many drawings and poems.

Their teacher was Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. She was a Viennese artist who was deported to Terezin in 1942. She provided secret art lessons as a way to help children deal with their emotions in the ghetto.

Before she was taken away to Auschwitz, she gave one of the tutors in the barracks two suitcases filled with 4,500 drawings. The drawings survived. Friedl did not.

“Everything leans, like tottering, hunched old women...

This evening I walked along the street of death.”

(“The Closed Town” Anonymous)

“We got used to it that from time to time, one thousand unhappy souls would come here and that, from time to time, another thousand unhappy souls would go away...”

(Petr Fischl age 15, perished in Auschwitz 1944)

“Death, after all, claims everyone,

You find it everywhere.

It catches up with even those

Who wear their noses in the air.

The whole, wide world is ruled

With a certain justice, so

That helps perhaps to sweeten

The poor man's pain and woe.”

(“It All Depends On How You Look At It” by Miroslav Kosek;
perished in Auschwitz at age 12)

⁹ Volavková, Hana, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum., and Statni zidovske muzeum (Czech Republic). *I Never Saw Another Butterfly : Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezín Concentration Camp, 1942-1944.* Expanded 2nd ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1993.

“And the cannons don’t scream and the guns don’t bark
And you don’t see blood here.
Nothing, only silent hunger.
Children steal the bread here and ask and ask
and ask
And all would wish to sleep, keep silent, and just go to sleep again...”
(“Terezin” by Mif 1944)

“I was once a little child...
But now I am no more a child
For I have learned to hate.”
(“Terezin” by Hanuš Hachenburg; died in Auschwitz at age 14)

“All that is left is a few lines scribbled on the wall of the barracks...”
(“Lights Out” from the diary of Helga Weissová; survived)

“Food is such a luxury here . . .
. . . “I’d like to stay here, a small patient,
Waiting the doctor’s daily round,
Until, after a long, long time, I’d be well again.
Then I’d like to live and go back home again.”
(“Pain Strikes Sparks on Me, The Pain of Terezin”
by Anonymous)

“Your forehead was as heavy as the heavens before it rains.”
(“Concert in the Old School Garret” by Anonymous)

“ . . . For seven weeks I’ve lived here,
Pinned up inside this ghetto.
But I have found what I love here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut branches in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.
That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don’t live in here,
in the ghetto.”

(“The Butterfly” by Pavel Friedman, 4.6. 1942; perished in
Auschwitz 1944 at age 13)

From: The Terezin Diary of Gonda Redlich¹⁰

Gonda Redlich whose hidden diary was discovered in 1967, arrived in 1941 with credentials as a 25 year old educator of the Zionist youth movement Maccabi Hatzair. He was chosen by the Jewish Council of Elders in Terezin to be responsible for the Youth Welfare Department and the 15,000 children in the ghetto.

Eventually, his wife also arrived on a transport. After the birth of their son, Dan, in March 1944, Gonda Redlich began a second diary dedicated to him.

Of the 15,000 children, 100 children survived the war. Of the total population of 140,000 just 17,000 were alive at the liberation by the Red Army on May 8, 1945.

From the diary:

January 10, 1942 ... An order of the day: nine men were hanged. The reason for the order: they insulted German honor.

February 14, 1942 ... The lines of people are like deaf mutes during the time when coffins are taken out of the barracks. It really is one of the strongest impressions in Terezin.

February 22, 1942 ... Yesterday there was a children's play. The children are great actors and I liked their songs.

March 17, 1942 ... What do you tell a child that steals coal? The child sees everyone stealing and loses all sense of morality.

August 20, 1942 ... Very hot. Yesterday, they stripped the clothes from women that came from Germany and checked them naked. Maybe they wanted to find gold or silver. They thoroughly check the transport which will leave the ghetto, until few retained anything but the clothes on their backs.

June 17, 1943 ... If you go to the place where food is distributed, you will always witness the same scene. People ask for soup, which is only warm water.

October 6, 1944 [last entry in the diary for Dan] ... What is going to happen? Tomorrow, we travel, my son. We will travel on a transport like thousands before us. As usual, we did not register for the transport. They put us in without a reason. But never mind, my son, it is nothing. All of our family already left in the last weeks. Your uncle went, your aunt, and also your beloved grandmother... We hope to see her there.... They send small children, and their prams are left here. Separated families. On one transport a father goes. On another, a son. And on a third, the mother ...

Tomorrow we go, too, my son. Hopefully, the time of our redemption is near.

¹⁰ Redlikh, Egon, and Saul S. Friedman. The Terezin Diary of Gonda Redlich. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1992.

From: My Lucky Star
By Zdenka Fantlova¹¹

Zdenka Fantlova was brought up in a Jewish family in prewar Czechoslovakia. She was nineteen when she and her family were sent to Theresienstadt. Fantlova's entire family perished in the Holocaust.

At the end of the war, after a grueling 300 mile death march, she was rescued by an unknown British Army officer in the Bergen-Belsen camp and sent to Sweden for recuperation under the care of the International Red Cross. She now lives in London.

She begins her book by trying to reconcile her memories of "home" with what she finds during a return visit after World War II.

"Home? Why, naturally. Home is forever. The firm ground beneath our feet, certainty and order, now and forever. The whole family together. There is no other way of life. Or is there?"

"Time itself seems unreal. Do we merely flutter along like leaves blown at random? Do we feel at home only when we have firm ground underfoot and a loved one by our side?"

"She feels like someone waking from a dream, confused about who she is, needing to wait a little for the scattered pieces of her life to settle in their right places."

"How did it all happen? Where were we before we came here? Where did it all start?"

During her elementary school years, Fantlova's father bought a leather-bound blank book and wrote bits of wisdom in it. She asked her school teacher to add to it.

"Never envy, never slander, never despair,
wish well to all, work hard, and hope."

"Just keep calm. Remember, calmness is strength."

"Life hastens on, and we are scarce aware
how, pace by pace, we too are hastening . . .
those dear ones who loved us – these alone
always, and gratefully, we shall recall."

"Never say something's too hard to learn. Tell yourself that if a circus elephant can learn to walk on bottles, you can train yourself to do anything. If you really want to, that is."

¹¹ Fantlová, Zdenka. My Lucky Star. 1st ed. New York ; London: Herodias, 2001.

“Never try to have too much of anything in life...just see that you have what you need and a little more. That’s good enough. When you die, all you will take with you is what you’ve given to other people.”

“You’ll meet all sorts during your life. Form your own judgment about them—not by how they earn their money but by what they spend it on.”

“Look around you, observe, learn, and educate yourself. We are put here to develop and perfect ourselves as much as we can, not to climb social ladders. They don’t lead anywhere. Remember, if a dwarf climbs even to the highest mountaintop, he is still a dwarf.”

Shortly before Fantlova’s family was deported to the Terezin ghetto, a new family moved into her neighborhood in Prague, including Arnost, “a striking young man.”

“One glance and lightning struck—love at first sight and quite inevitable. From that day on we met as often as we could.”

“Love would overcome all obstacles.”

“The outside world vanished. All we had was love, wild, eager, intoxicating, endless...If only that night could have gone on forever. We pledged to each other our eternal love and imagined our future together, after the war, as soon as peace came. The next day we rode home, still in a dream.”

“Life began to seem absurd, yet the thought that he was sleeping only a short distance away, thinking about me as I was about him, warmed my heart.”

Late one night in the fall of 1941, the door bell rang. A friend of her father’s warned them of the upcoming transports to the east and offered to hide some of their belongings in his house. In January 1942, several Jewish families, including hers and Arnost’s, were ordered to report for deportation to Terezín.

“The barracks seemed to vanish along with the Germans, Terezin, and the world itself. Here, together, one soul, one body alone in the universe.”

“There was no time for tears and personal woes. A collective tragedy had descended on us all, like some natural disaster that forces people together. All that remained was hope and the determination to survive.”

“Many people had a deep yearning to express themselves artistically; both in words and music, and the rest welcomed the results with gratitude as a compensation for their

confinement. Every cultural event buoyed up their hopes and morale and reinforced their faith in human values.”

“Everyone gave their best, whatever their ability. There were no names in neon lights, no fame, no fortune—only the satisfaction of a job well done and the appreciation of a grateful audience. To this end professionals and amateurs worked hand in hand, free of envy and self-importance.”

“The Czech theatre in the ghetto was no mere entertainment, or social distraction, but a living torch that showed people the way ahead and lent them spiritual strength and hope. For many, cultural experience became more important than a ration of bread.”

A 25 year old writer, composer, actor, clown, Karel Svenk, had written a political satire for the inmates. The closing song was adopted by performers and spectators as the Terezin “anthem”:

“Where there’s a will there’s always a way
So hand in hand we start,
Whatever the trials of the day
There’s laughter in our heart.”

“To find scapegoat for all the misrule and shortages they have caused, they pick on one group of people who can be blamed for everything.”

After the war, in Sweden:

“Everyone we met was kind and full of compassion, even though they could hardly conceive of what conditions we had come from and what we had endured.”

Fantlova decided not to find out where and how her father had died. She wanted to remember him the way she had last seen him being led off by the Gestapo, tipping his hat and saying:

“Just keep calm. Remember, calmness is strength.”

RATIONALE FOR ARTS-BASED ACTIVITIES

The goal of arts-based activities is to add experiential depth to intellectual content.

When students actively participate in dramatic role play or visual expression, they experience a form of psychological identification that allows for access to the historical past. Becoming emotionally involved prepares learners to engage the mind, which – under careful guidance by the instructor - leads to reflection and cognitive analysis.¹²

Tools of the arts naturally connect with several pedagogical learning theories, e.g. Jerome Bruner’s discovery learning in cultural context; Vygotsky’s social interaction as key to learning; and John Dewey’s learning process from personal experience to progressive growth. “Art,” Dewey says in *Art as Experience*, “is a quality of doing.” When students actively engage in creating art, they take ownership of their own personal growth.

Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) illustrates how the mechanism of making art connects to cognitive development.¹³

Gardner addresses the fact that people learn differently and use a variety of “entry points” for new information. By presenting subjects in multiple ways, e.g. visually, kinesthetically, musically etc., students with different learning styles are not “left behind.” More learners in the classroom are engaged, and improved comprehension and individualized critical thinking take place.

¹² Belarie Zatzman, "Drama Activities and the Study of the Holocaust." Samuel Totten and Stephen Feinberg, *Teaching and Studying the Holocaust* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001).

¹³ Gardner, Howard. *Intelligence Reframed : Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999.

The following descriptions of MIs may serve as indicators to evaluate how each intelligence is used as an entry point for knowledge:¹⁴

- Linguistic:** in words - reading, writing, telling stories, playing word games
- Logical/Mathematical:** by reasoning - experimenting, questioning, figuring out logical puzzles, calculating, sequencing
- Spatial:** in images and pictures - designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling
- Musical:** via rhythms and melodies - singing, whistling, humming, tapping feet and hands, listening
- Bodily/Kinesthetic:** through somatic sensations - dancing, running, jumping, building, touching, gesturing, using sign language
- Interpersonal:** by bouncing ideas off other people - leading, organizing, relating, manipulating, mediating, partying, interacting socially
- Intrapersonal:** in relation to personal needs, feelings, goals - meditating, dreaming, planning, reflecting
- Naturalist:** through nature and natural forms - playing with pets, gardening, investigating nature, raising animals, caring for planet earth and the environment

“...important materials can be taught in many ways, thereby activating a range of intelligences and consolidating the learning.”

Howard Gardner,
*Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons
in Theory and Practice*, 2006.

¹⁴ Armstrong, Thomas, and ebrary Inc. *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2000.