

Teaching about the Holocaust Across the Curriculum: Teaching Holocaust Literature



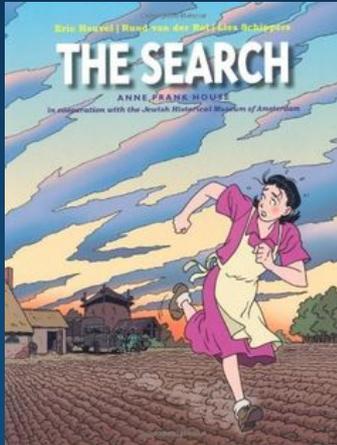
[Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)]

Why Teach Holocaust Literature?

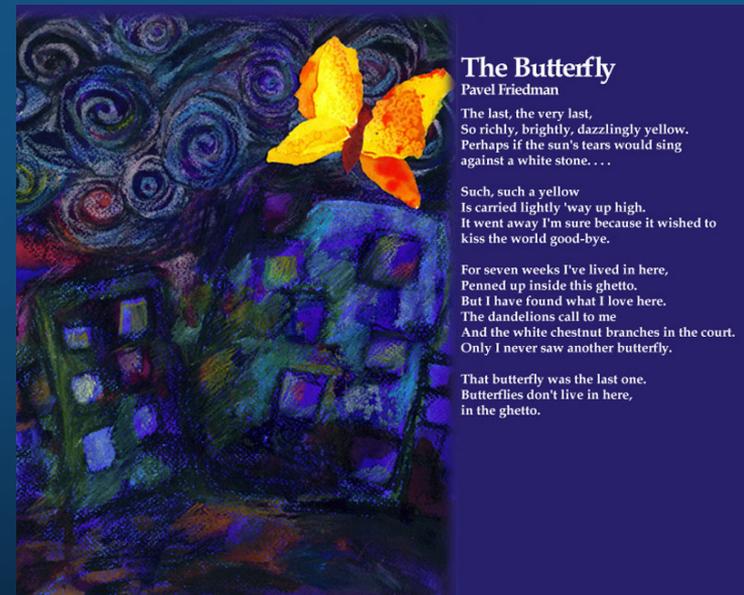
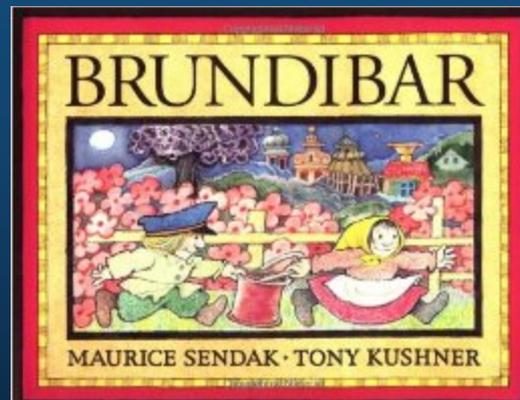
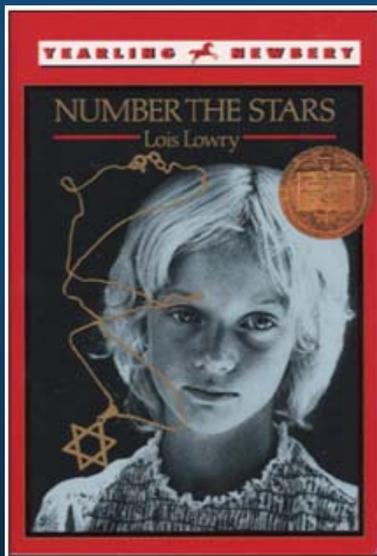
Holocaust literature may:

- Provide students with new perspectives and engage them in ways that textbooks and other traditional media cannot.
- Give a voice to the victims; they and the events in their lives can be seen from their perspective.
- Help students make personal connections through individual accounts.

Holocaust Literature Encompasses Various Literary Genres:



- Novels
- Graphic novels
- Short stories
- Drama
- Poetry
- Diaries
- Memoirs
- Allegory



The Butterfly Pavel Friedman

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone. . . .

Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
kiss the world good-bye.

For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned 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.

Holocaust Literature

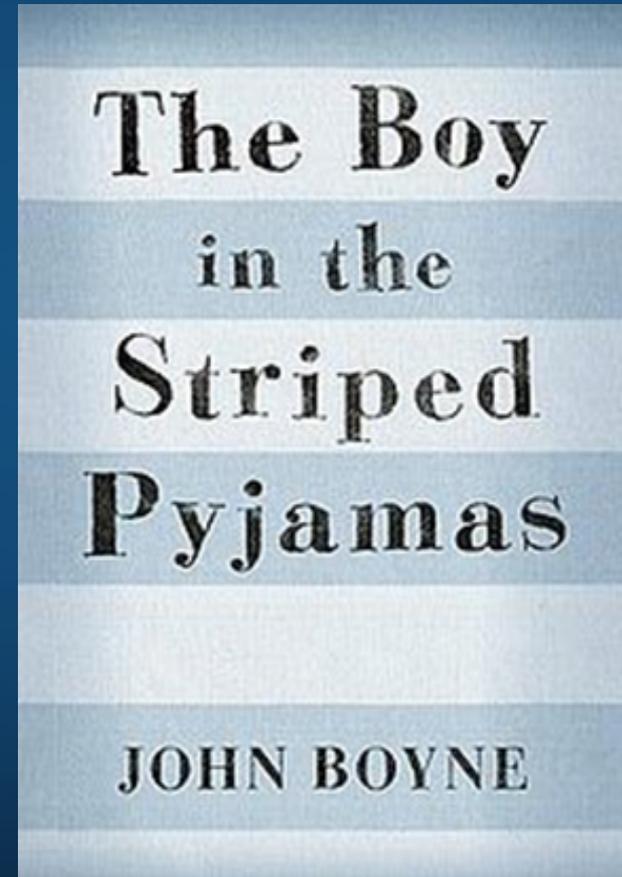
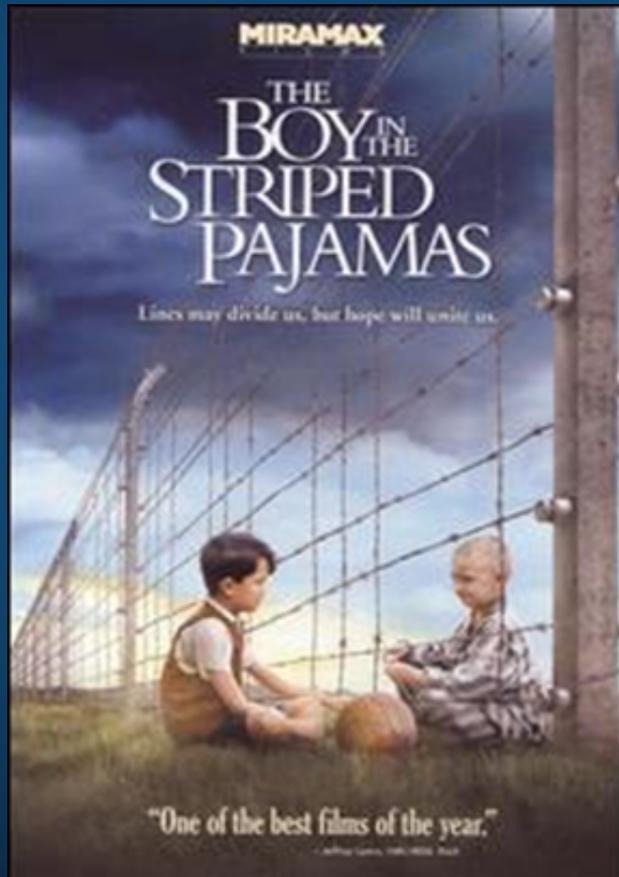
- Is based on real historical events
- Reveals truths about human nature
- Provides models of heroism and dignity
- Confronts the human capacity for evil
- Honestly characterizes the reality of the Holocaust

Studying Holocaust Literature helps students:

- Develop respect for human decency by comparing and contrasting the behaviors and decisions of the characters.
- Recognize heroes among the protagonists.
- Appreciate the dignity within the lives of the victims through their responses to their experiences.
- Recognize the roles chosen by or forced upon people: examine the choices and choiceless choices with which people were confronted.
- Analyze language used to deceive - euphemisms.

How to Choose Holocaust Literature

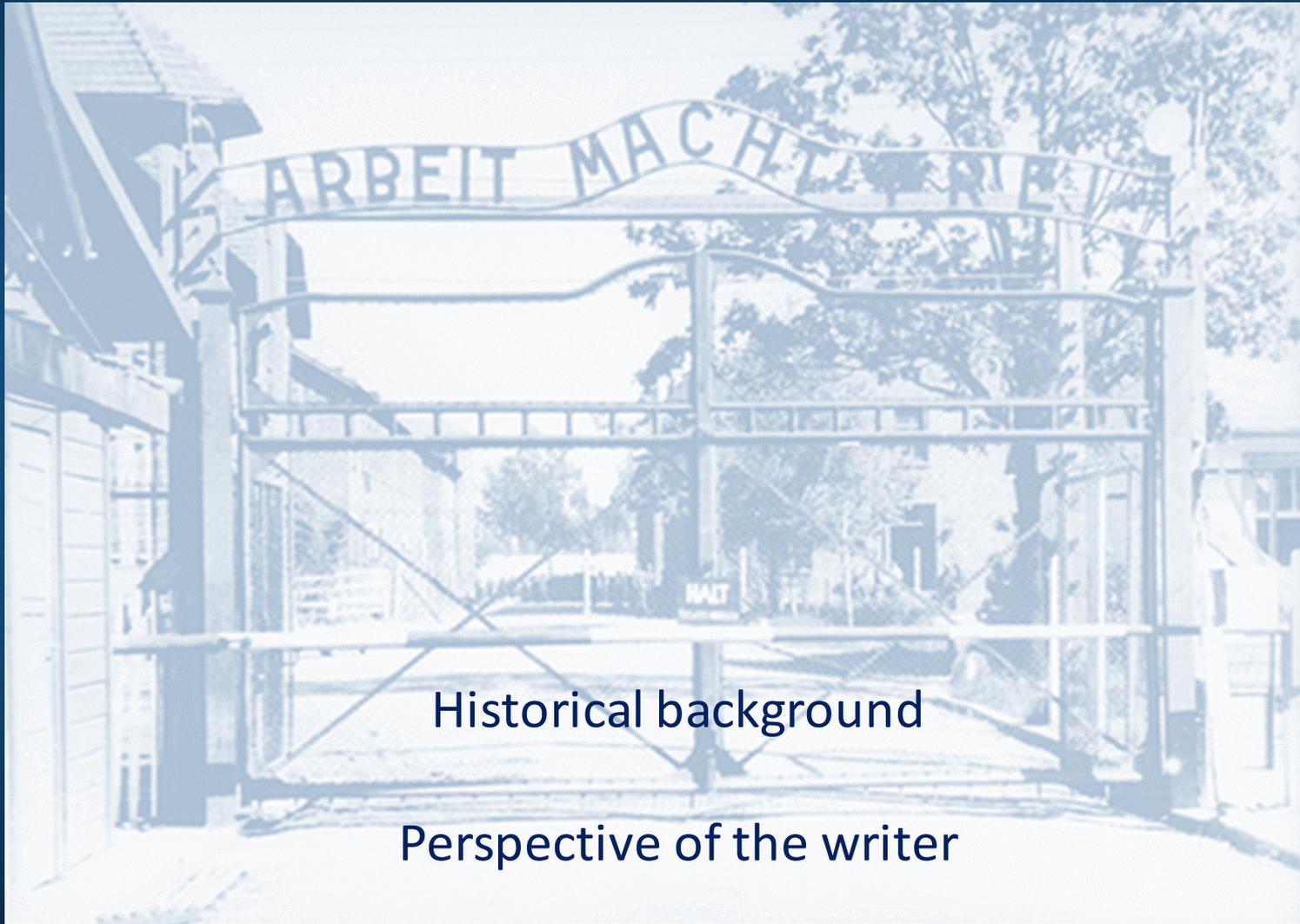
Is it historically accurate?



What criteria should we use to determine which materials are age appropriate for our students?

- Are your students developmentally ready to encounter this piece of literature?
- Do the depictions respect the dignity of the victims?
- Do the depictions respect the sensibilities of your students?
- Have their parents been informed about the selections you have chosen?

Content, Context, Complexity



Historical background

Perspective of the writer

What is the setting of the work?



PLACE AND DATE

[Source: [USHMM](https://www.ushmm.org)]

What other historical events were taking place during that time?

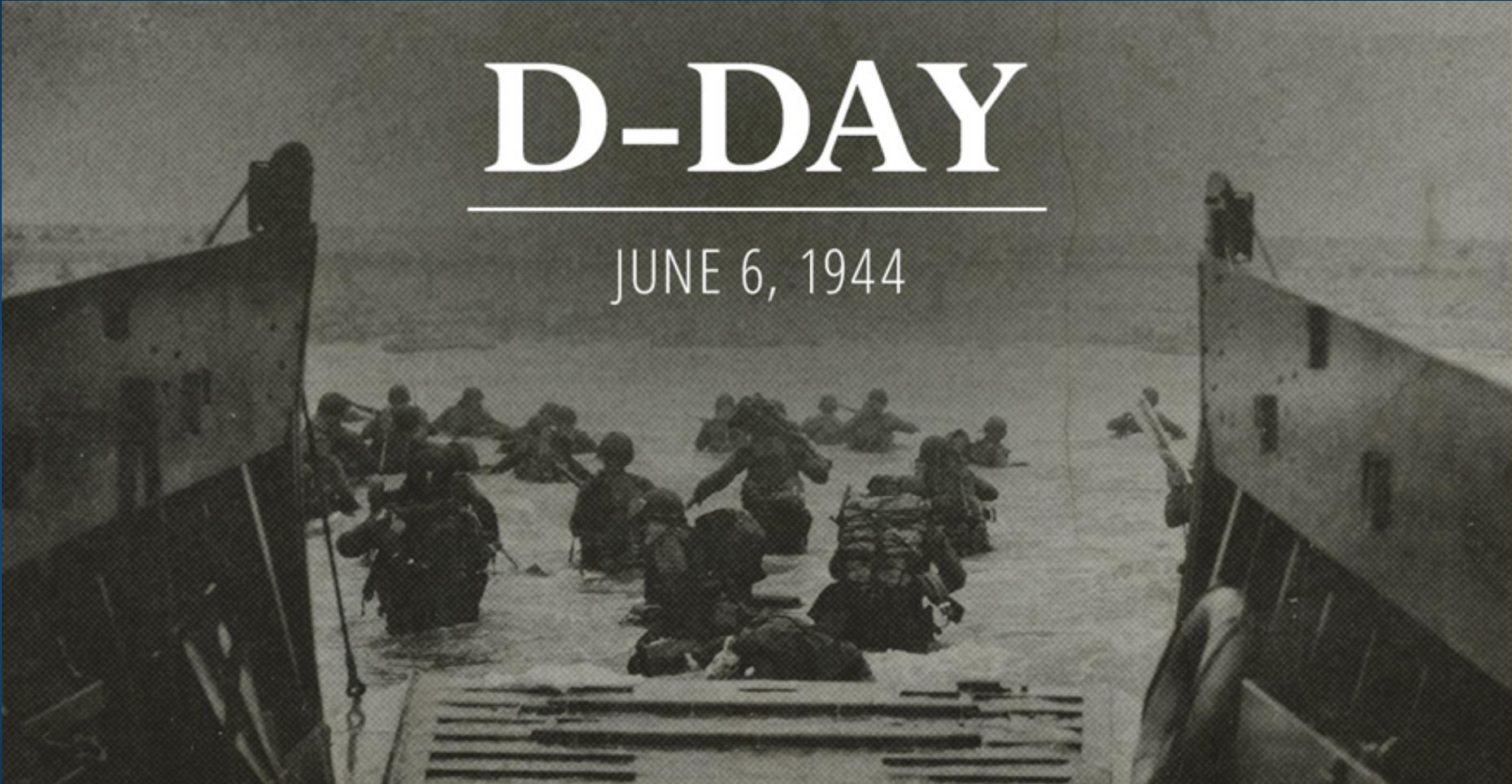


© Anne Frank Fonds, Basel

Tuesday, June 6, 1944
Great commotion in the 'Secret Annex'! Would the long-awaited liberation that has been talked of so much, but which still seems too wonderful, too much like a fairy tale, ever come true? Could we be granted victory this year, 1944? We don't know yet, but hope is revived within us; it gives us fresh courage, and makes us strong again.

D-DAY

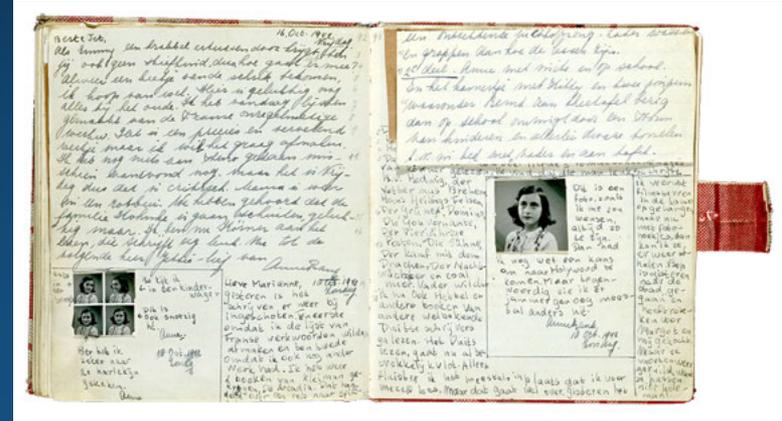
JUNE 6, 1944



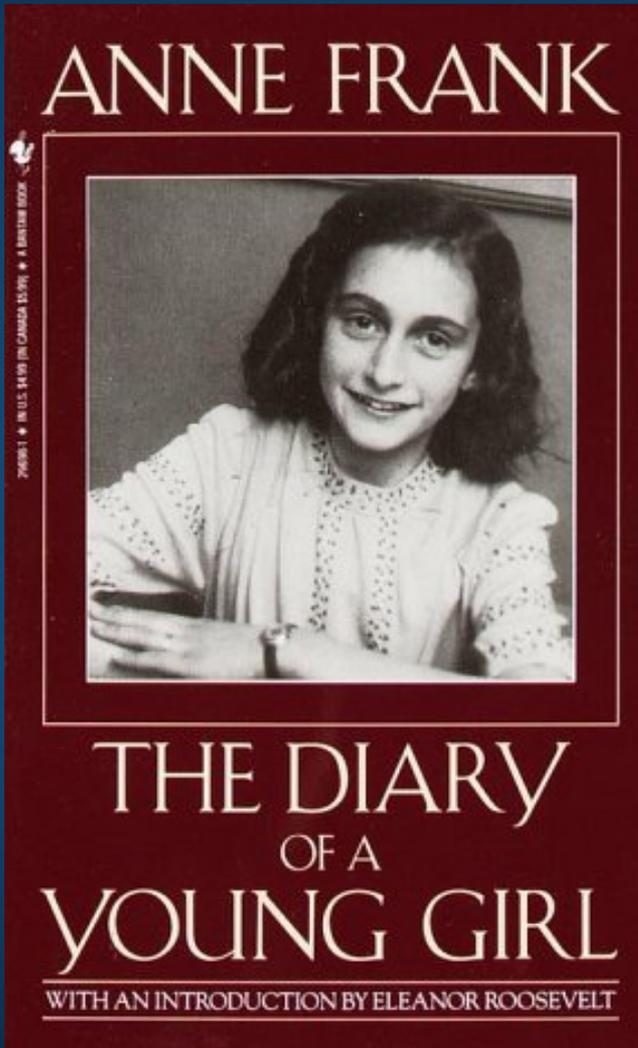
[Source: [U.S. Army](#)]

Writing in the Moment...

Copies of this book are available in all editions of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.



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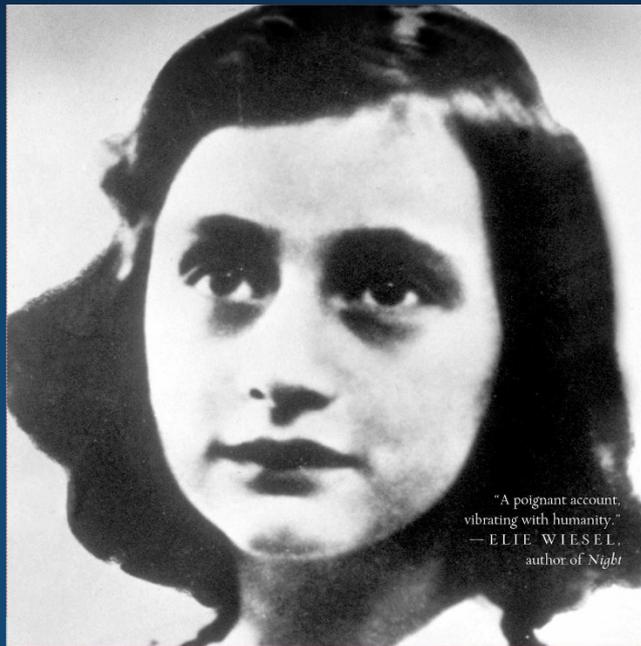
Geographical Context



[Source: [USHMM](https://www.ushmm.org)]

What may be problematic in teaching about the Holocaust using *The Diary of Anne Frank*?

- One of many diaries written by adolescents during the Holocaust.
- Often analyzed based on its universal themes.
- Tells of one type of Holocaust experience – children in hiding.
- Tells the history of the Holocaust in only one geographic location.
- Doesn't tell much about the discovery, arrest, deportation and death of Anne.
- Has been published in numerous editions.



"A poignant account,
vibrating with humanity."
— ELIE WIESEL,
author of *Night*

ANNE FRANK REMEMBERED

The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family

MIEP GIES *with* ALLISON LESLIE GOLD
HEROINE OF THE ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY
ANNE FRANK REMEMBERED

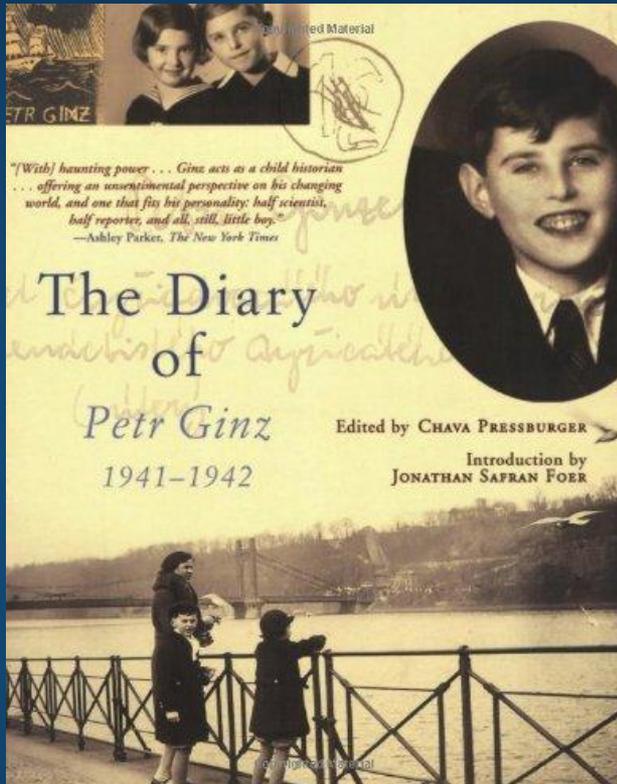
Copies of this book are available in the Pilot Program edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.

“Imagine young people would grow up with the feeling that you have to be a hero to do your human duty. I am afraid nobody would ever help other people, because who is a hero? I was just an ordinary housewife and secretary.”



[Source: [The Telegraph](#) via Associated Press]

Writing in the Moment...



Copies of this book are available in the Second and Third Editions of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.



Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, who carried a drawing by Petr Ginz into space.

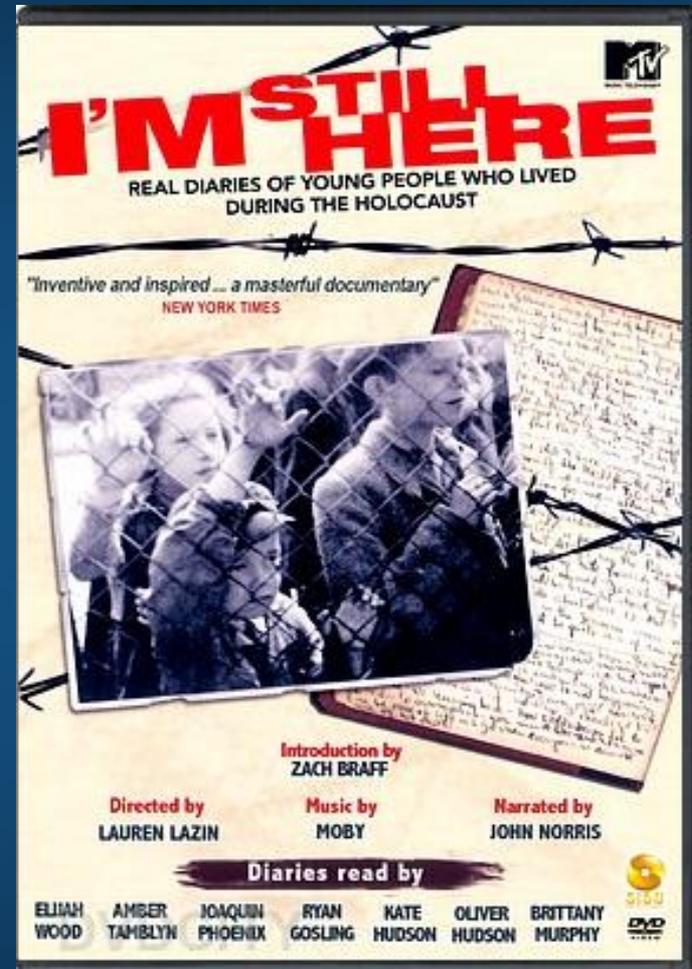
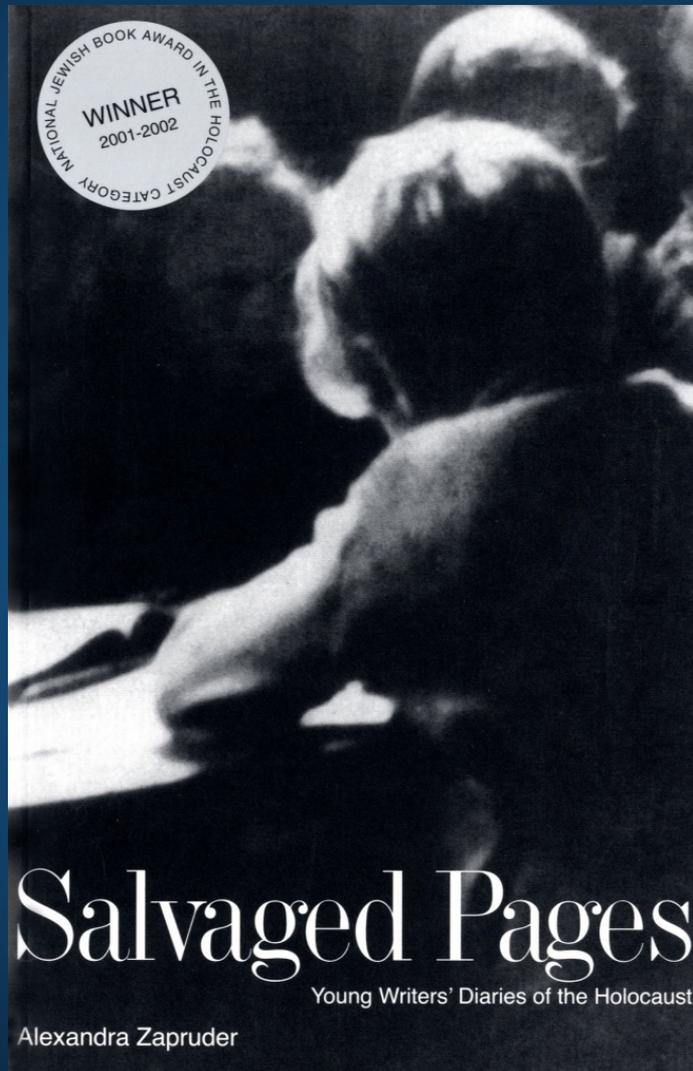
[Source: [NASA](#)]



Moon landscape, 1942-44, Theresienstadt.

[Source: [Yad Vashem, Art Museum Collection](#)]

Writing in the Moment...



Copies of this DVD are available in the Second and Third Editions of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.

Writing in the Moment...



[Source: [Film and Photo Archive, Yad Vashem](#)]

January 7, 1943

January 13, 1943

Moshe Flinker: Fear of Arrest and Deportation

pp. 110 – 111 Salvaged Pages

Geographical Context



[Source: [USHMM](#)]



Summer 1942: the Mechelen (Malines) transit camp after the arrival of those caught during the night.

[Source: [JMDV - Fonds Kummer](#)]

An open truck of an Antwerp moving company is loading Jewish men, women as well as children.

[Source: [CEGESOMA](#)]



May 27, 1944 – Birkenau, Poland: A group of Jews walking towards the gas chambers and crematoria 2 and 3.



Writing in the Moment...



-facinghistory.org

December 19, 1938

January 5, 1939

Klaus Langer:
Efforts to Emigrate from Germany
pp. 24 – 25 Salvaged Pages

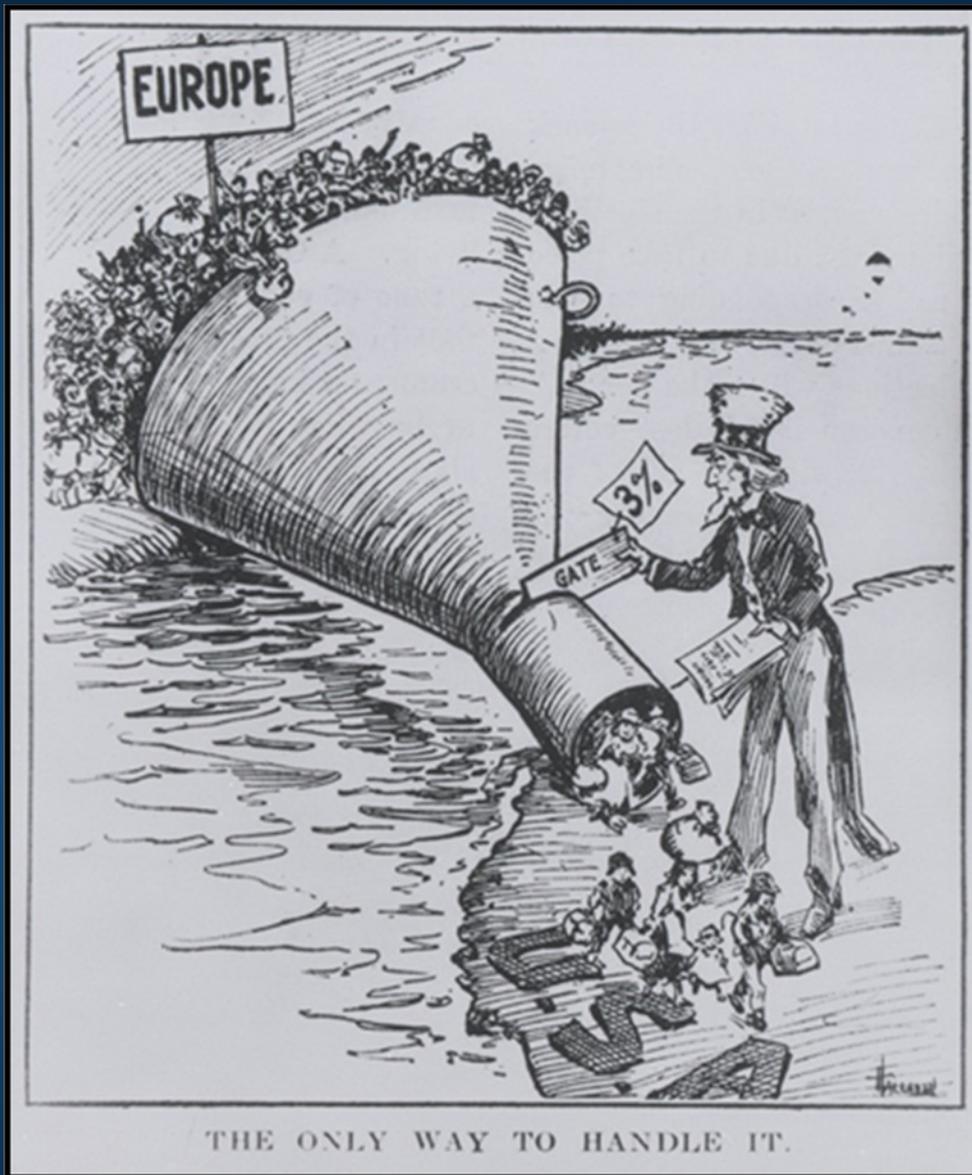


The synagogue in Essen, Germany,
burned during Kristallnacht,
November 9–10, 1938.
--Facing History and Ourselves



SS guards force Jews, arrested during Kristallnacht (the "Night of Broken Glass"), to march through the town of Baden-Baden, Germany. November 10, 1938.

— Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz



The Immigration Act of 1924 reduced the 1921 annual quota of immigrants allowed into the United States from 358,000 to 164,000.

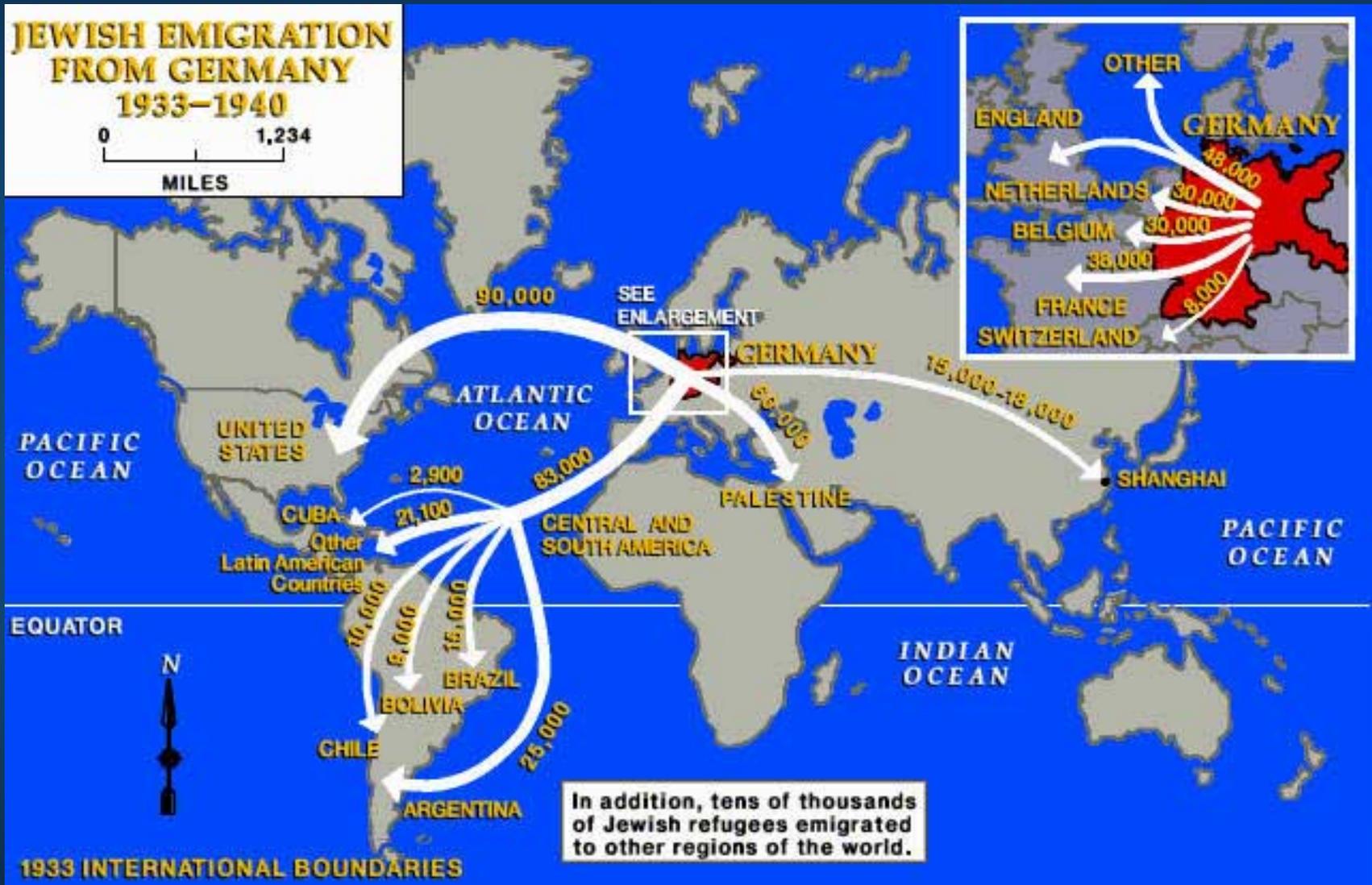
The new law cut the quota for northern and western European countries by 29 percent, but slashed that for southern and eastern Europe by 87 percent.

Image Citation: American Isolationism Cartoon, 1921 (Library of Congress)

Documentation required by the United States government for applicants seeking an entry visa during the 1930s and 1940s. (More specifically, the criteria represent those for German-Jewish applicants.)

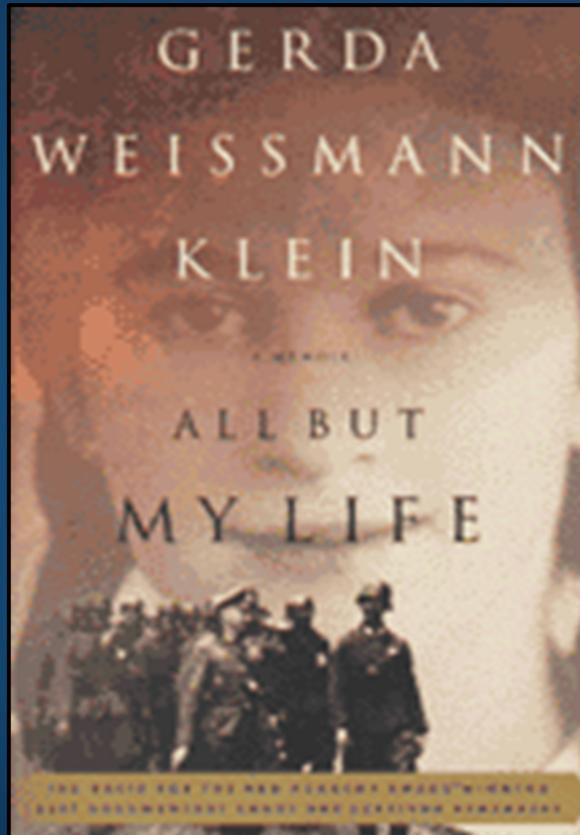
- Visa Application (five copies)
- Birth Certificate (two copies; quotas were assigned by country of birth)
- The Quota Number must have been reached (This established the person's place on the waiting list to enter the United States.)
- A Certificate of Good Conduct from German police authorities, including two copies respectively of the following:
 - Police dossier
 - Prison record
 - Military record
- Other government records about the individual
- Affidavits of Good Conduct (required after September 1940)
- Proof that the applicant passed a Physical Examination at the U.S. Consulate
- Proof of Permission To Leave Germany (imposed September 30, 1939)
- Proof that the prospective immigrant had Booked Passage to the Western Hemisphere (required after September 1939)
- Two Sponsors ("affiants"); close relatives of prospective immigrants were preferred. The sponsors must have been American citizens or have had permanent resident status, and they must have filled out an Affidavit of Support and Sponsorship (six copies notarized), as well as provided:
 - Certified copy of their most recent Federal tax return
 - Affidavit from a bank regarding their accounts
 - Affidavit from any other responsible person regarding other assets (an affidavit from the sponsor's employer or a statement of commercial rating)

Geographical Context



Memory and Reflection

Copies of the One Survivor Remembers activity kit which includes the film is available in the Third Edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.

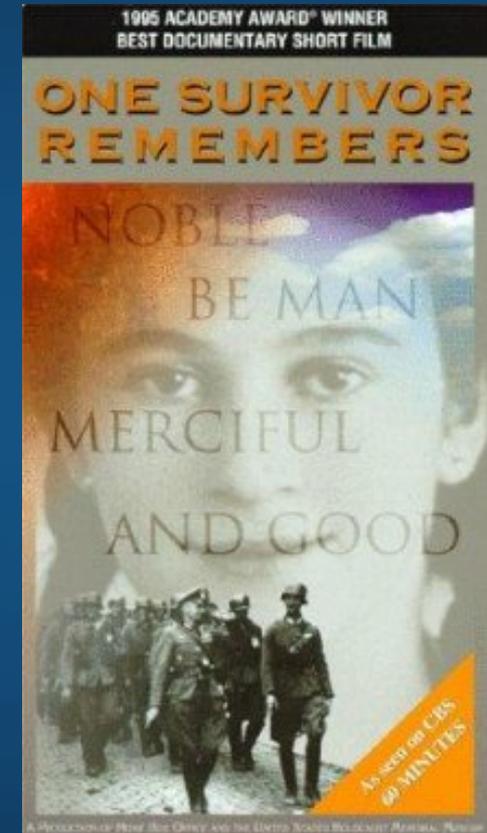


"Ise, a childhood friend of mine, once found a raspberry in the concentration camp and carried it in her pocket all day to present to me that night on a leaf. Imagine a world in which your entire possession is one raspberry and you give it to your friend."

- Gerda Weissmann Klein



Testimony from Gerda and her husband, Kurt Klein, is available on [the workshop resource page](#).

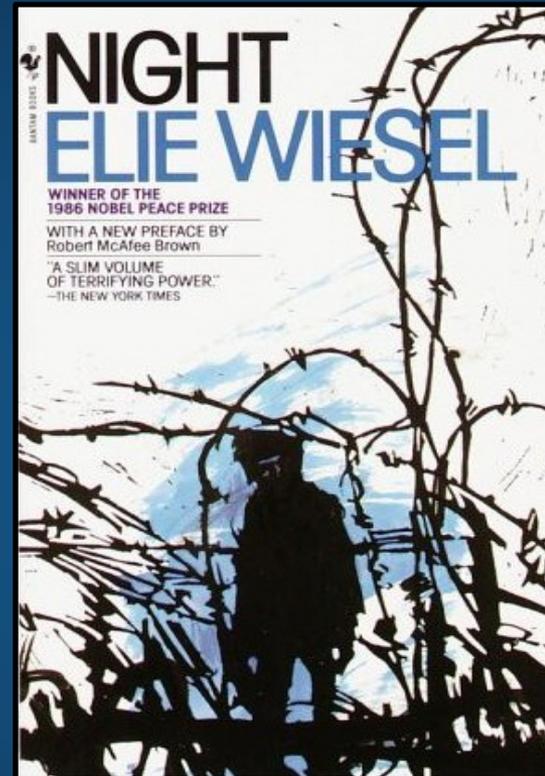


Memory and Reflection

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.

- Elie Wiesel



Copies of this book are available in the Pilot Program, Second Edition and Third Edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.



Elie Wiesel, as a child with his mother and sisters.
--American Academy of Achievement, Courtesy of Elie Wiesel

Geographical Context



[Source: [USHMM](#)]



A transport of Hungarian Jews lines up for selection at Auschwitz. Poland, May 1944.
— Yad Vashem Photo Archives



Jewish slave labor at the Auschwitz/Monowitz Buna plant
--Holocaust Research Project



Buchenwald, Germany, Groups of Inmates Returning to the Camp from Forced Labor Detachments
--Yad Vashem Photo Archive



Former prisoners of the "little camp" in Buchenwald stare out from the wooden bunks in which they slept three to a "bed." Elie Wiesel is pictured in the second row of bunks, seventh from the left, next to the vertical beam. Buchenwald, Germany, April 16, 1945.
— National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.; US Holocaust Memorial Museum

What might be problematic about teaching Night?

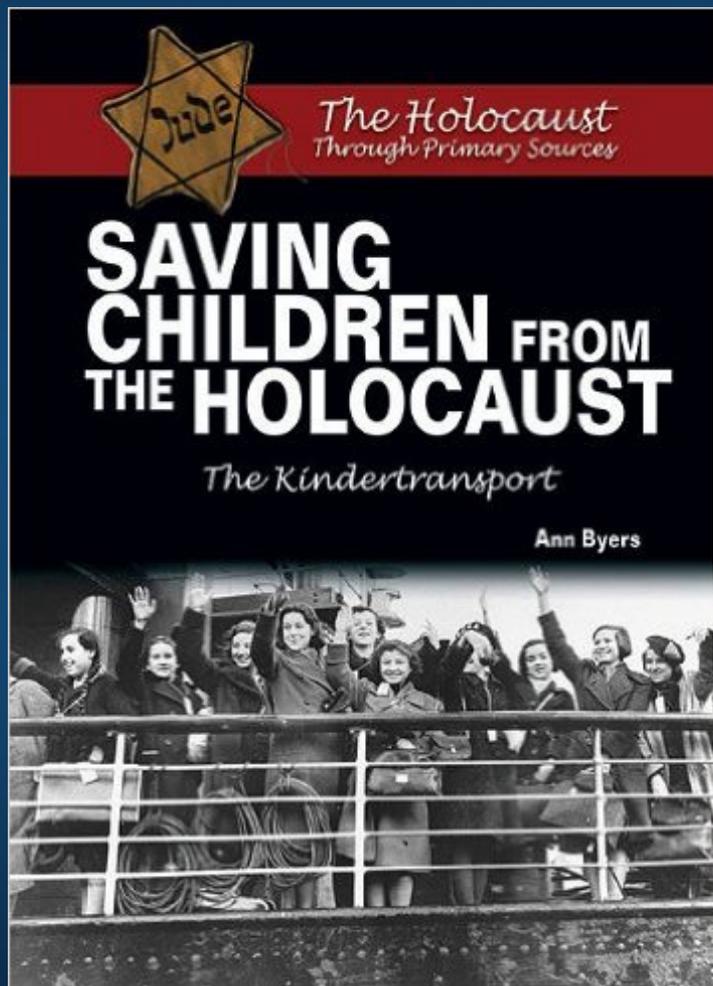
- Descriptions are sometimes graphic and may be disturbing to students.
- The relationship between Elie and his father devolves as Elie fights for his own survival.
- The events of the Holocaust do not effect Elie and his family until spring, 1944.



U.S. President Barack Obama (3rd from L), German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Buchenwald concentration camp survivor Elie Wiesel (R) and International Buchenwald Committee President Bertrand Herz (L) visit the former Buchenwald concentration camp on June 5, 2009 near Weimar, Germany.
–Getty Images, Europe

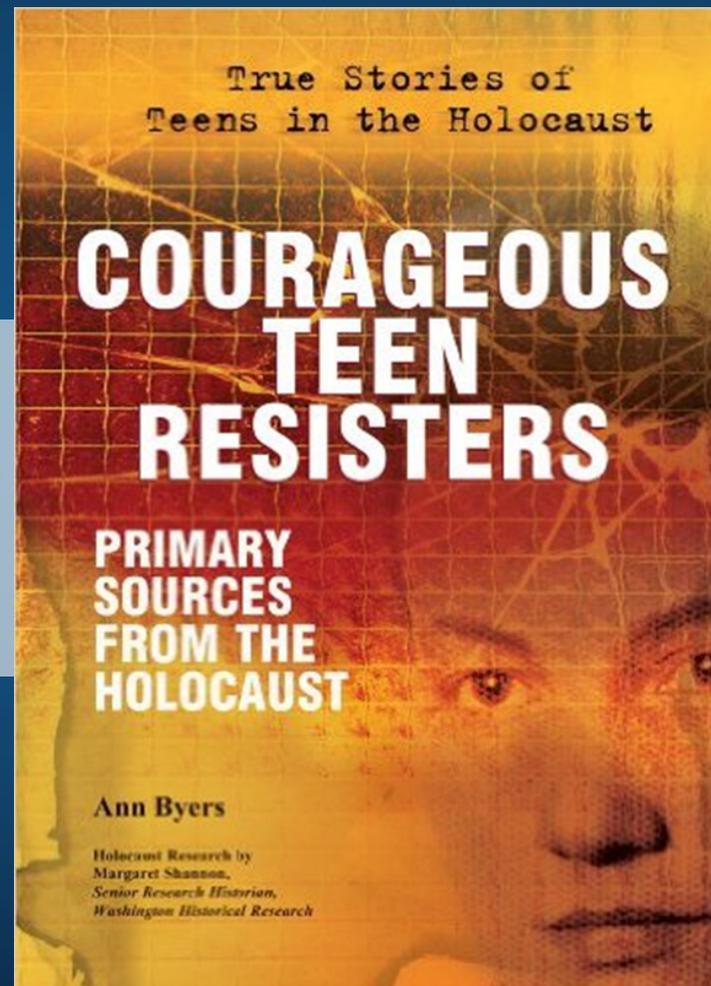
Primary Sources

RESCUE



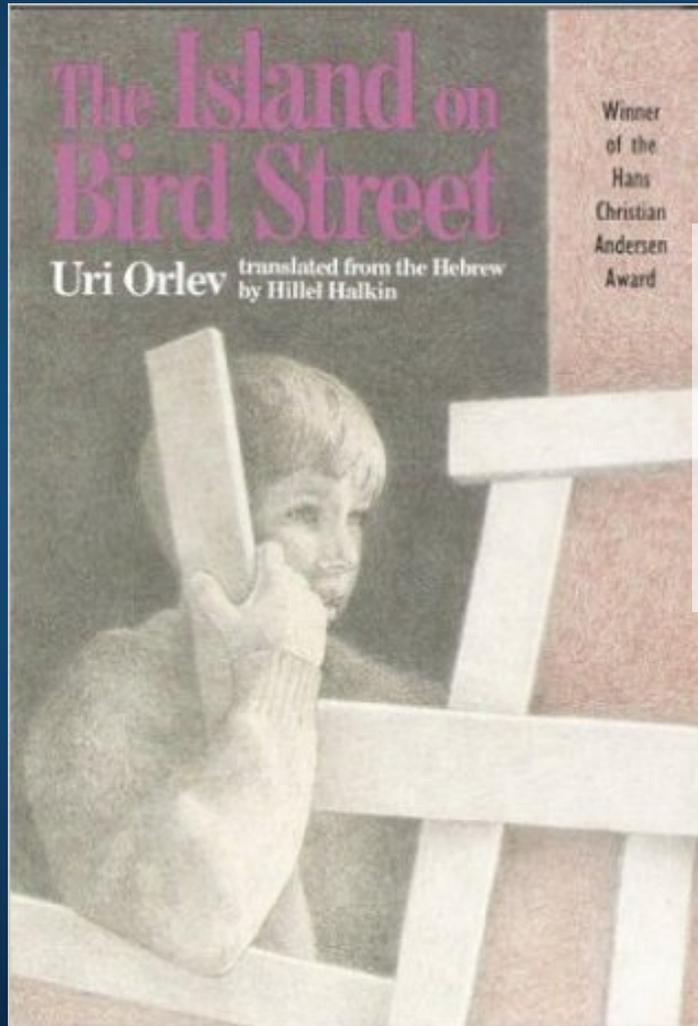
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RESISTANCE

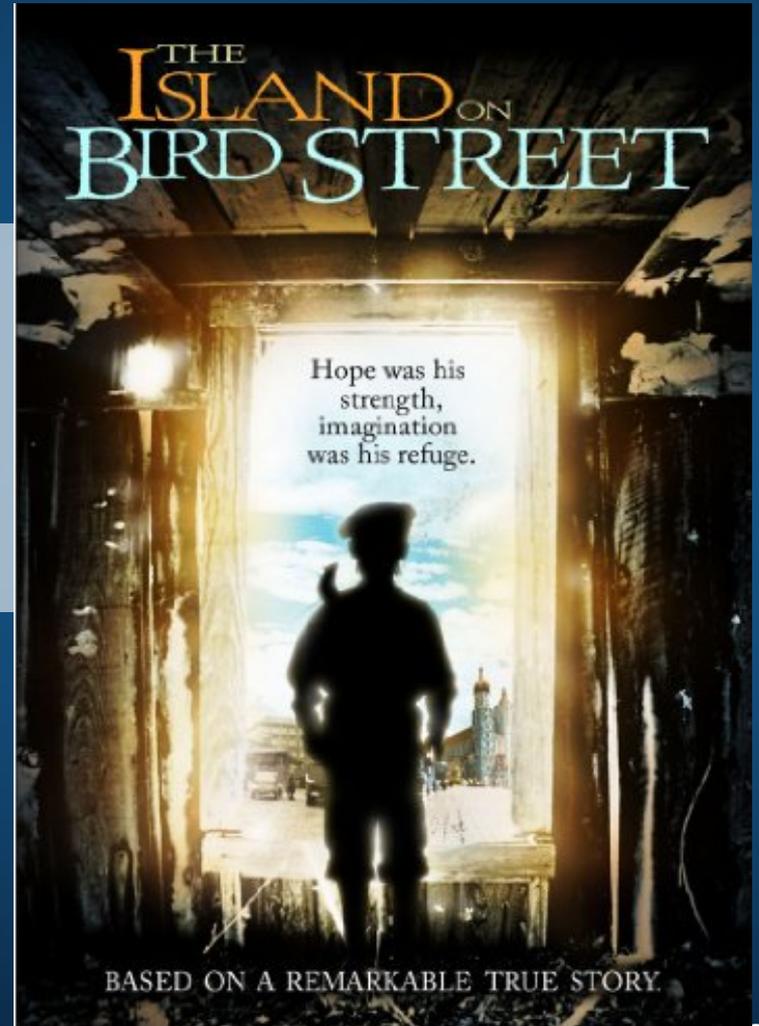


Semi Autobiographical Novel

Resilience and Resourcefulness



Copies of this book are available in the Second Edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.



Uri Orlev



Uri Orlev, speaking at Yad Vashem
--Yad Vashem Photo Archives

Uri Orlev, born Jerzy Henryk Orłowski, was born in Warsaw, Poland, the son of a physician. During World War II he lived in the Warsaw Ghetto until his mother was killed by the Nazis, and he was then sent to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. After the war he moved to Israel. He began writing children's literature in 1976 and has since published over 30 books, which are often biographical. His books have been translated from Hebrew into 36 languages.



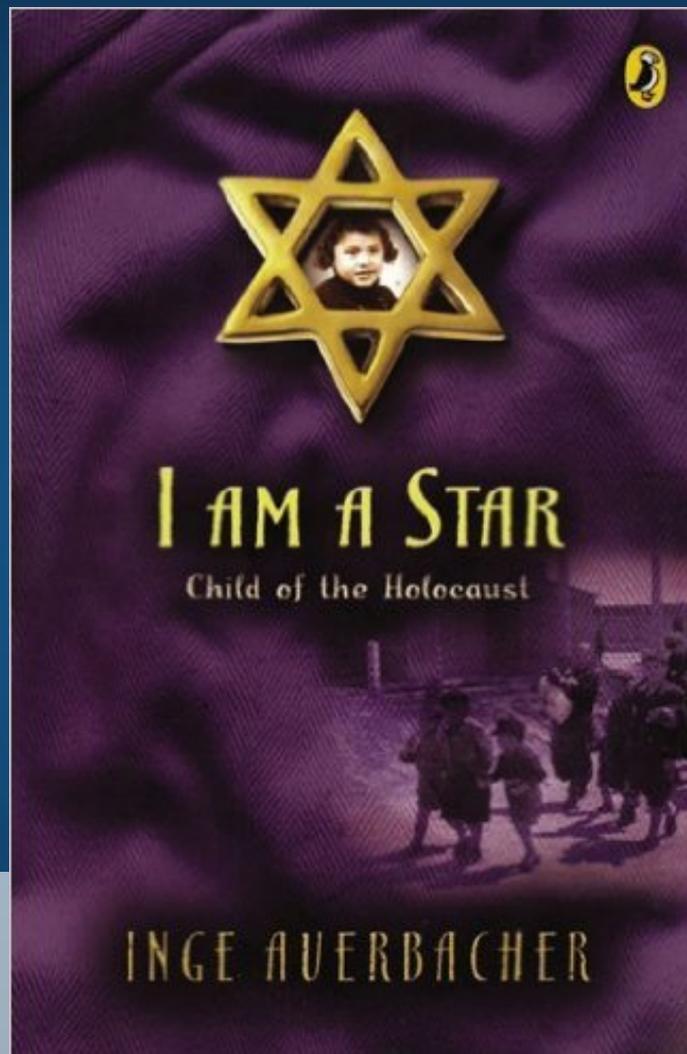
This photo in the Northwestern University Library exhibit shows Jewish immigrants arriving in Palestine in 1945, including a 14-year-old Uri Orlev (at right), not long after being liberated from Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Memoir



An ID card for Inge Aueberbacher is included in the set of ID Cards.

Copies of this book are available in the Pilot Program, Second Edition and Third Edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.

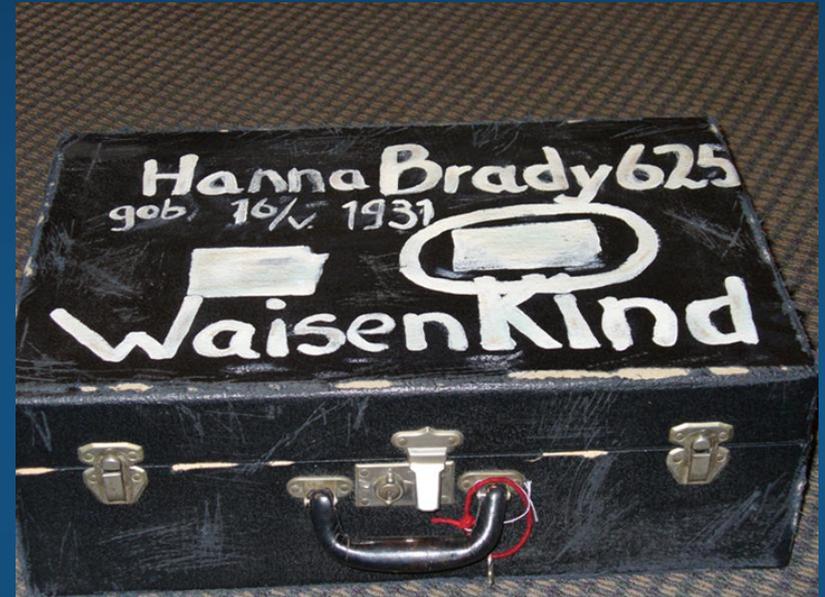
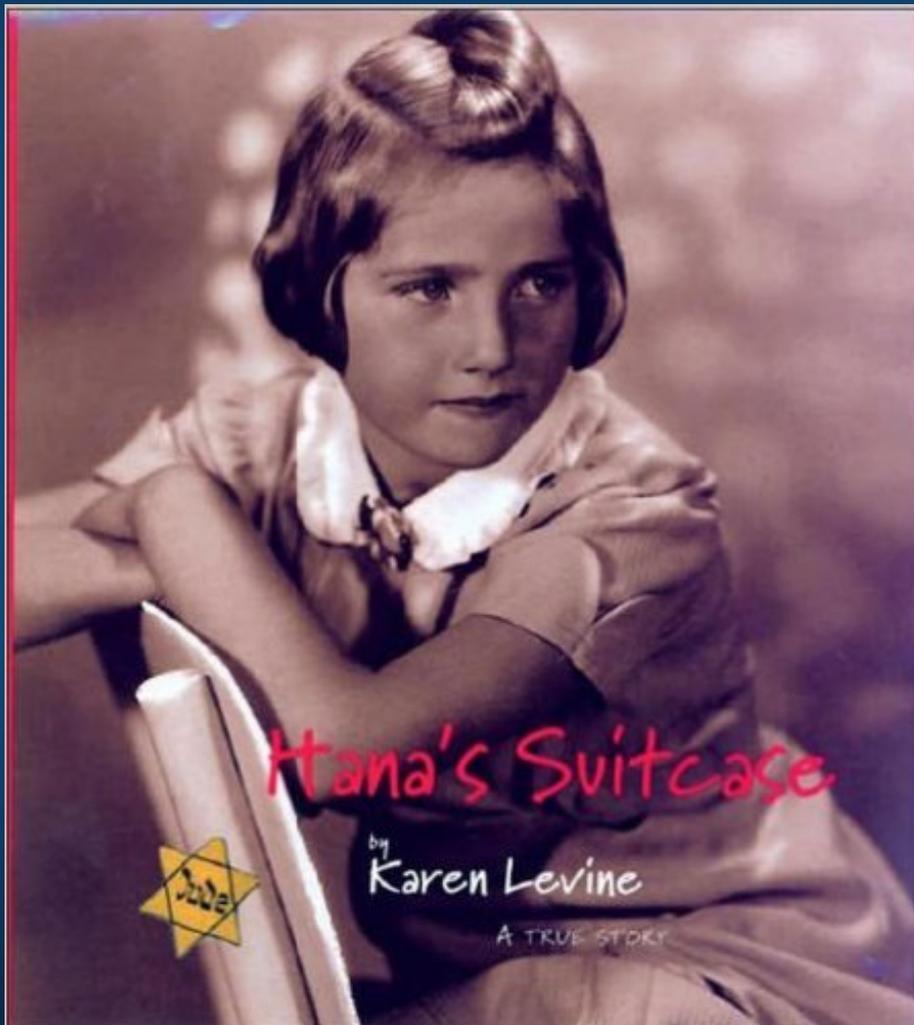




Inge and her doll
--Photos courtesy of Holland & Knight Holocaust Remembrance Project

Non-Fiction

Courage and Perseverance



www.mhmc.ca

Copies of this book are available in the Third Edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.

Waisenkind: orphan child

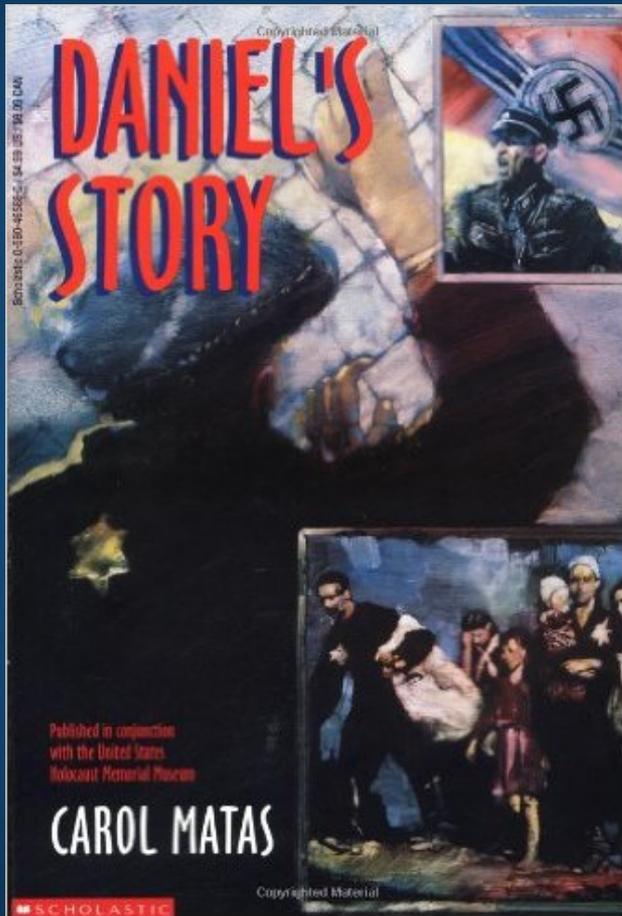


--Photo courtesy of Getty Images



--Photo courtesy of calbright.pbworks.com

Historical Fiction



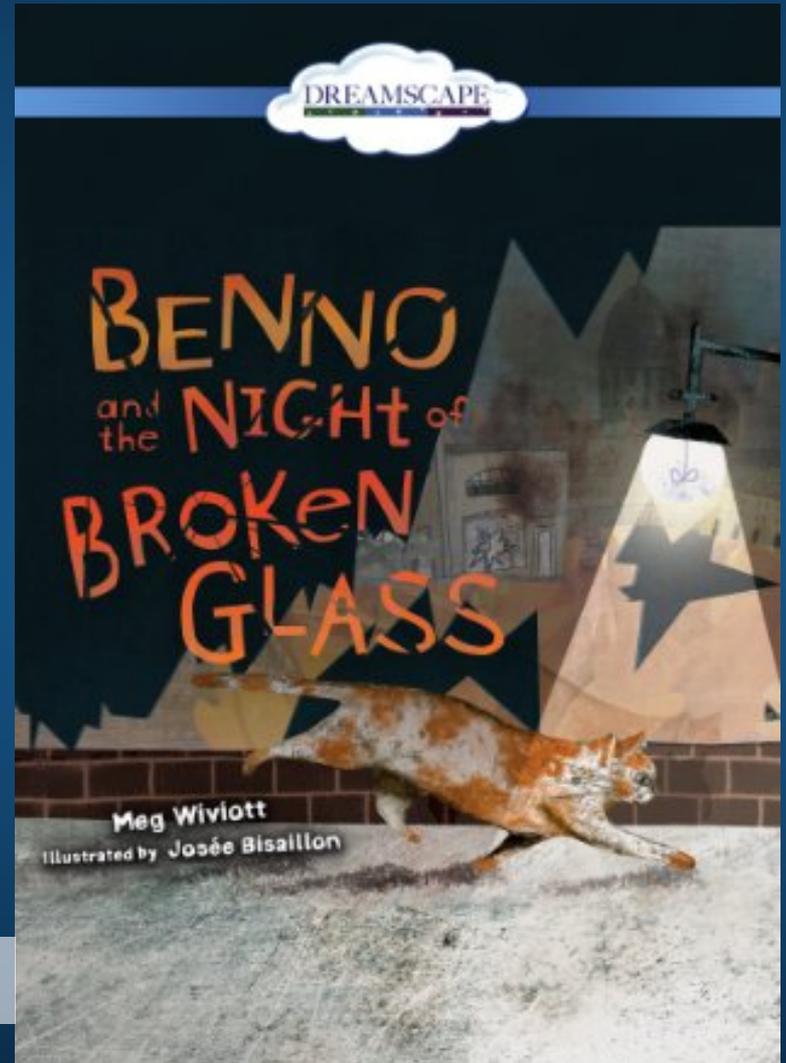
--USHMM Collections

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Historical Fiction



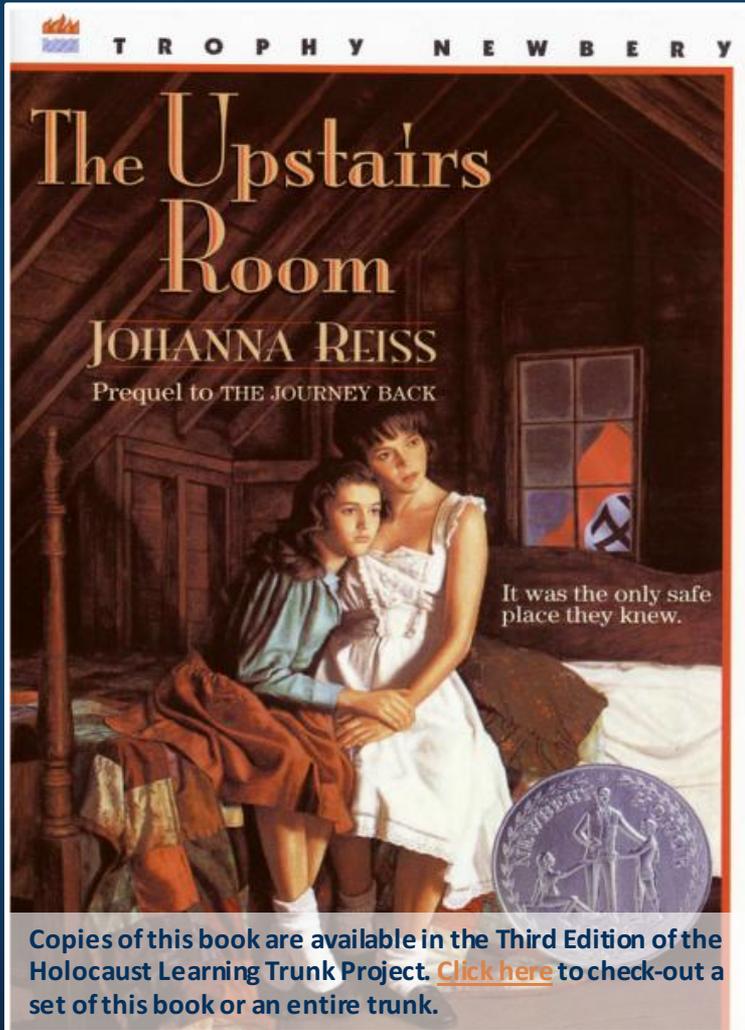
Shattered storefront of a Jewish-owned shop destroyed during Kristallnacht (the "Night of Broken Glass"). Berlin, Germany, November 10, 1938.
-- National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.



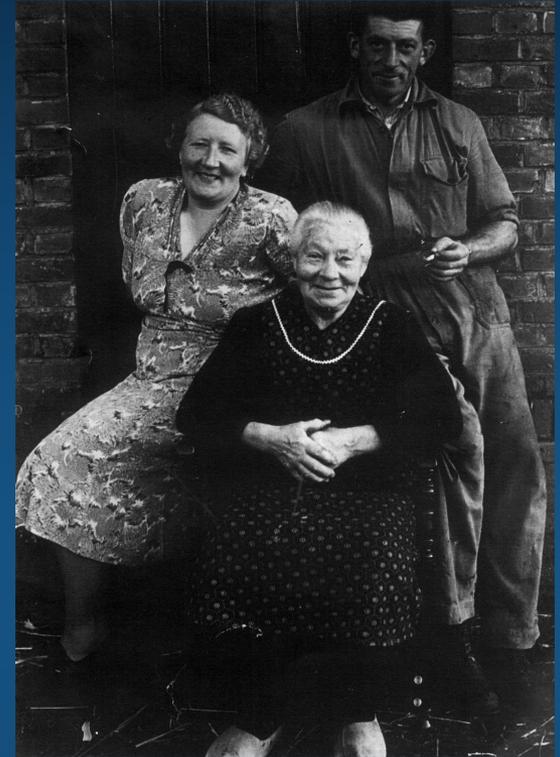
Copies of this book are available in the Third Edition of the Holocaust Learning Trunk Project. [Click here](#) to check-out a set of this book or an entire trunk.

Semi-Autobiographical Novel

Hiding



--Photos courtesy of Johanna Reiss



The rescuers and their house,
--Yad Vashem

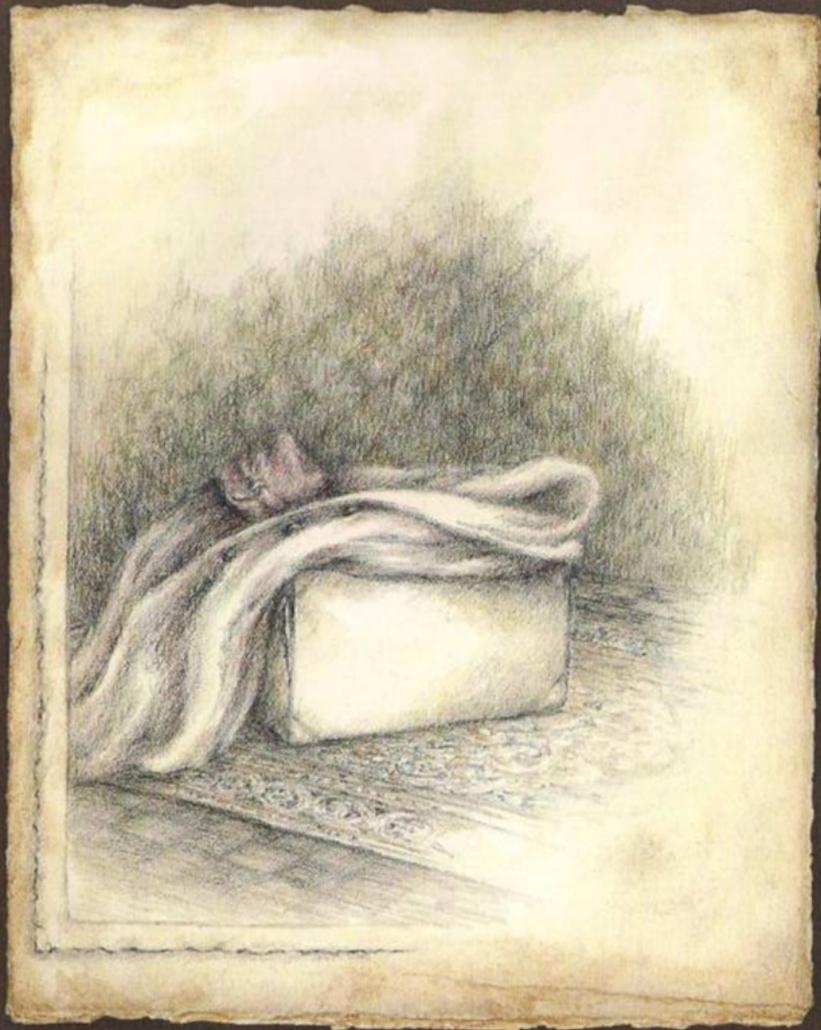


Poetry

Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat?



written and illustrated by
Nancy Patz



I wonder if she wore it the day she left home the last time, that cold, cold day in Amsterdam—

that cold, cruel day in Amsterdam when the Jews were herded together and arrested in the Square.

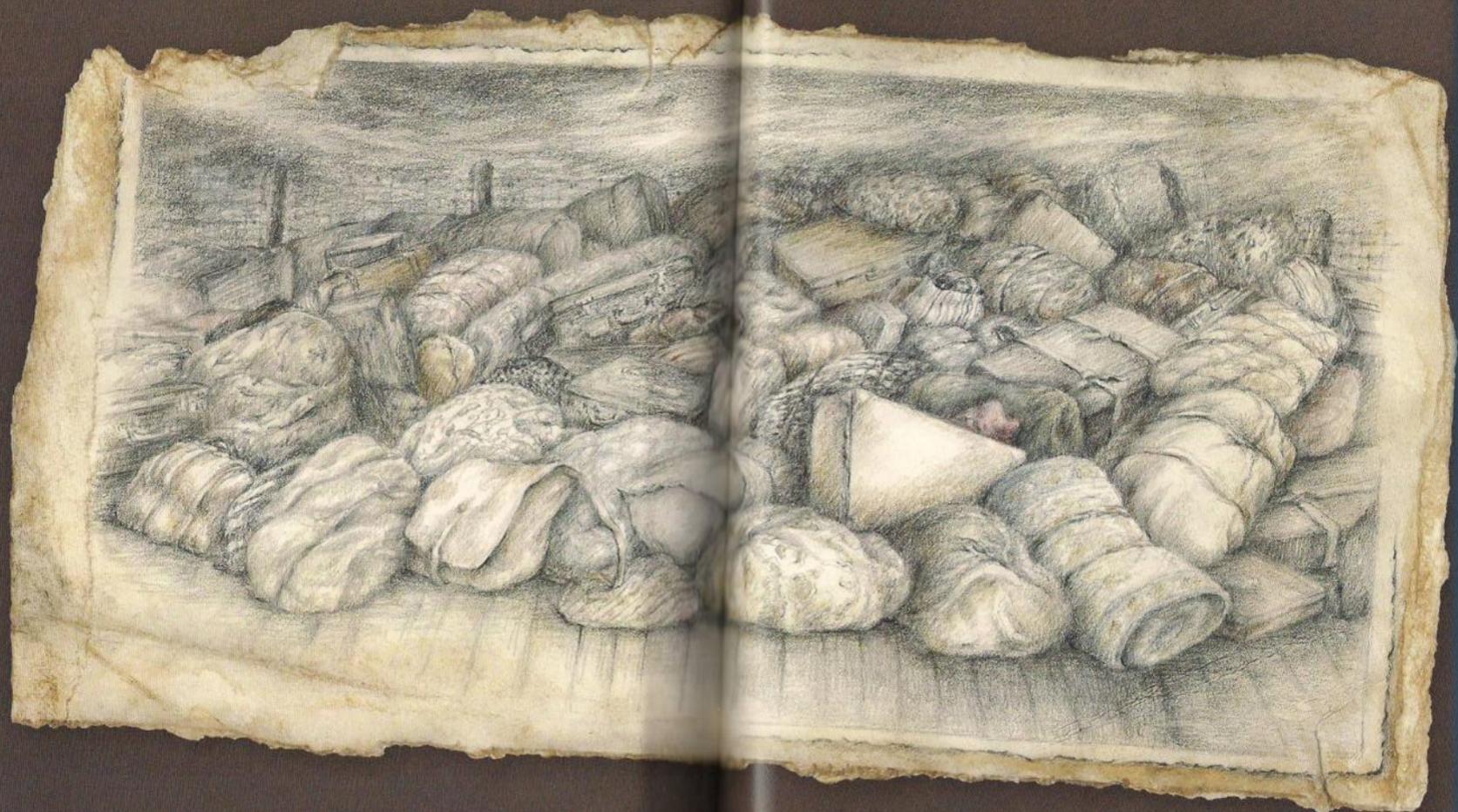


How could she know what to pack in her suitcase?

Or how many sweaters to put on each of her children...

Was she pulled from her family and lined up to be photographed—

from the side, from the front, and then with her hat on her head?

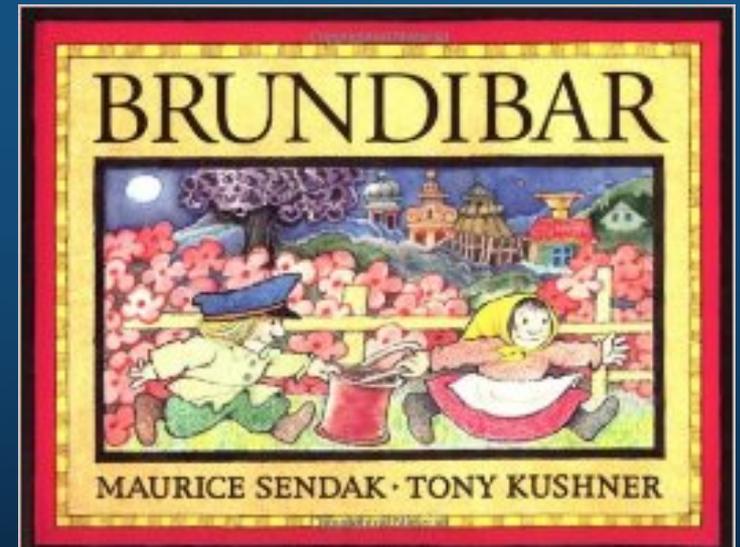


It might have been my mother's hat.
It could have been my hat.
Or yours.

Allegory



Terezin performance of Brundibar
--National Film Archive, Czech Republic





A photograph of Jewish children in the Theresienstadt ghetto taken during an inspection by the International Red Cross. Prior to this visit, the ghetto was "beautified" in order to deceive the visitors. Czechoslovakia, June 23, 1944.

— Comite International de la Croix Rouge



Terezin 1942: Children's Deportation -- a drypoint etching by Leo Haas.

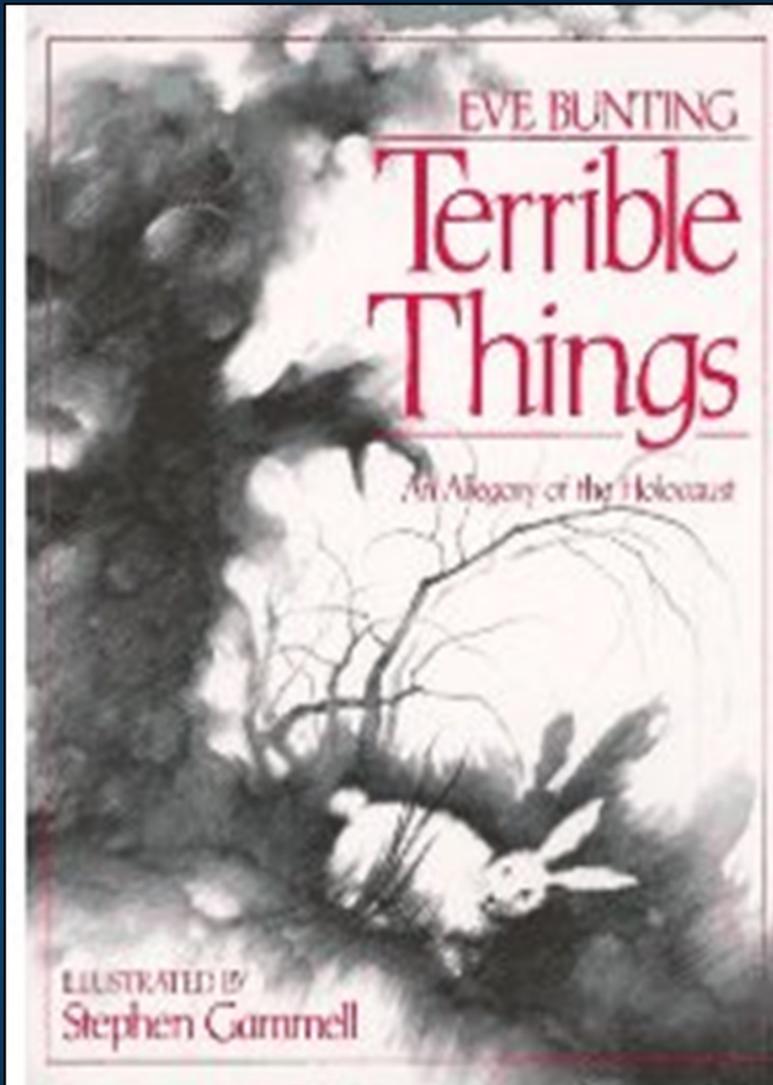
The etching was made in the Terezin (Theresienstadt) ghetto and is in the Art Collection of the Ghetto Fighters' House.



Otto Unger: Children Transport, Terezin 1943



A drawing of the Theresienstadt Ghetto by Leo Haas



Allegory

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Socialist.*

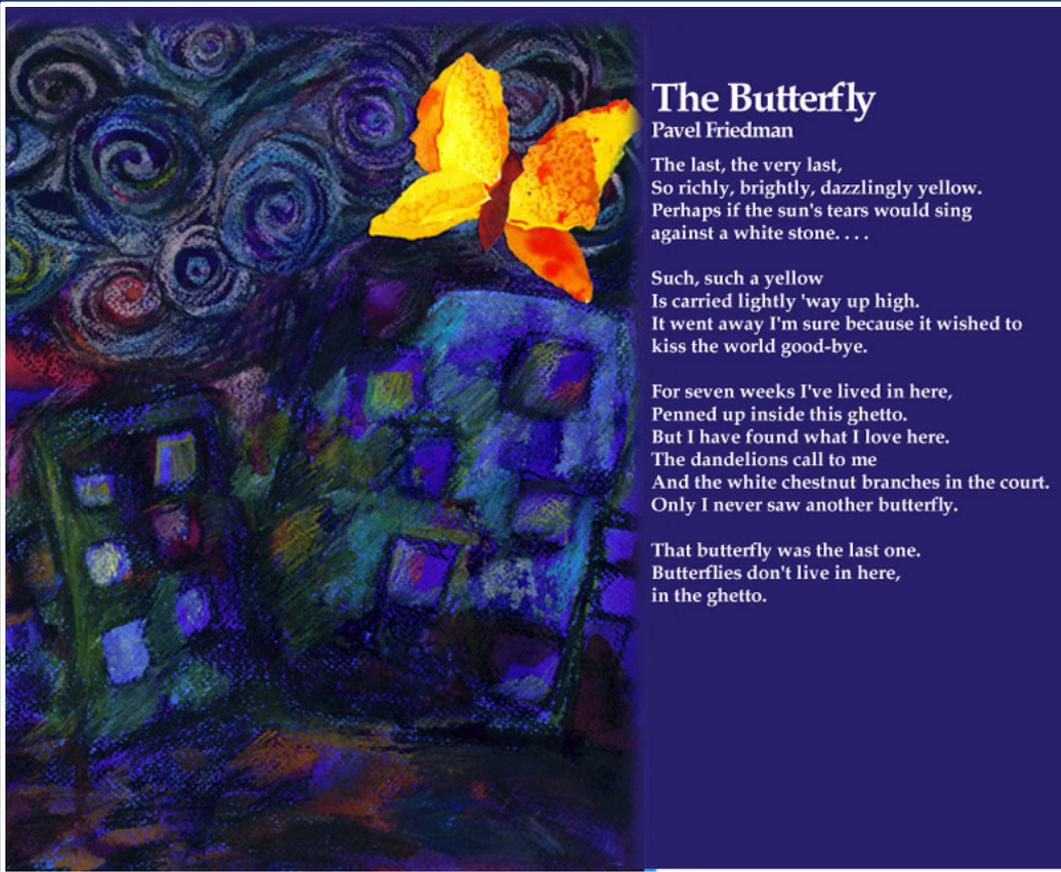
*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak
out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak
for me.*

--MARTIN NIEMÖLLER

Poetry and Art



The Butterfly

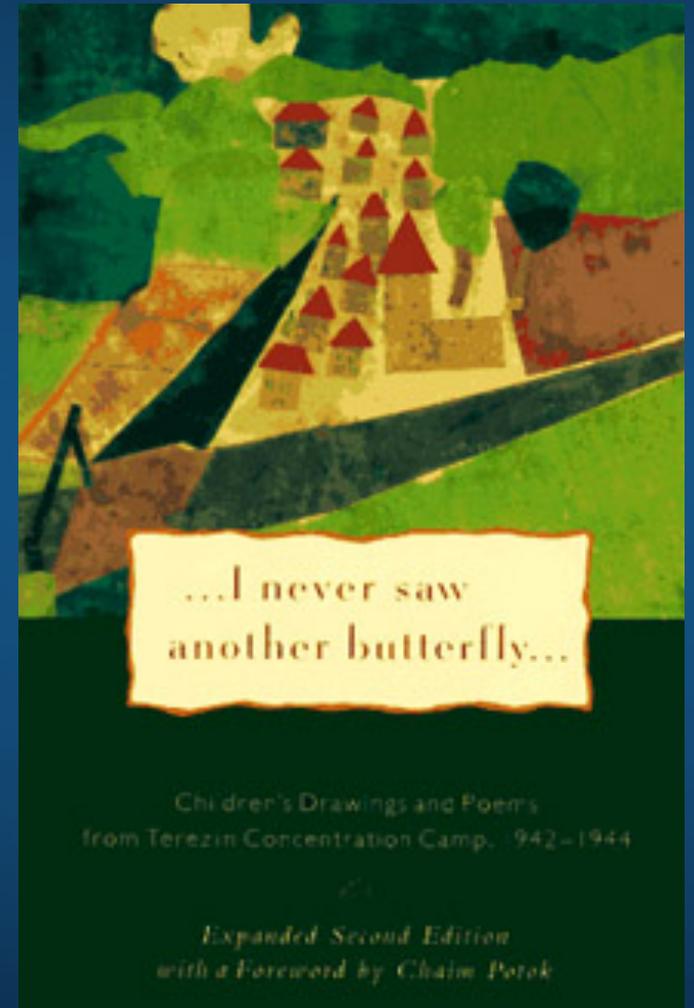
Pavel Friedman

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone. . . .

Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
kiss the world good-bye.

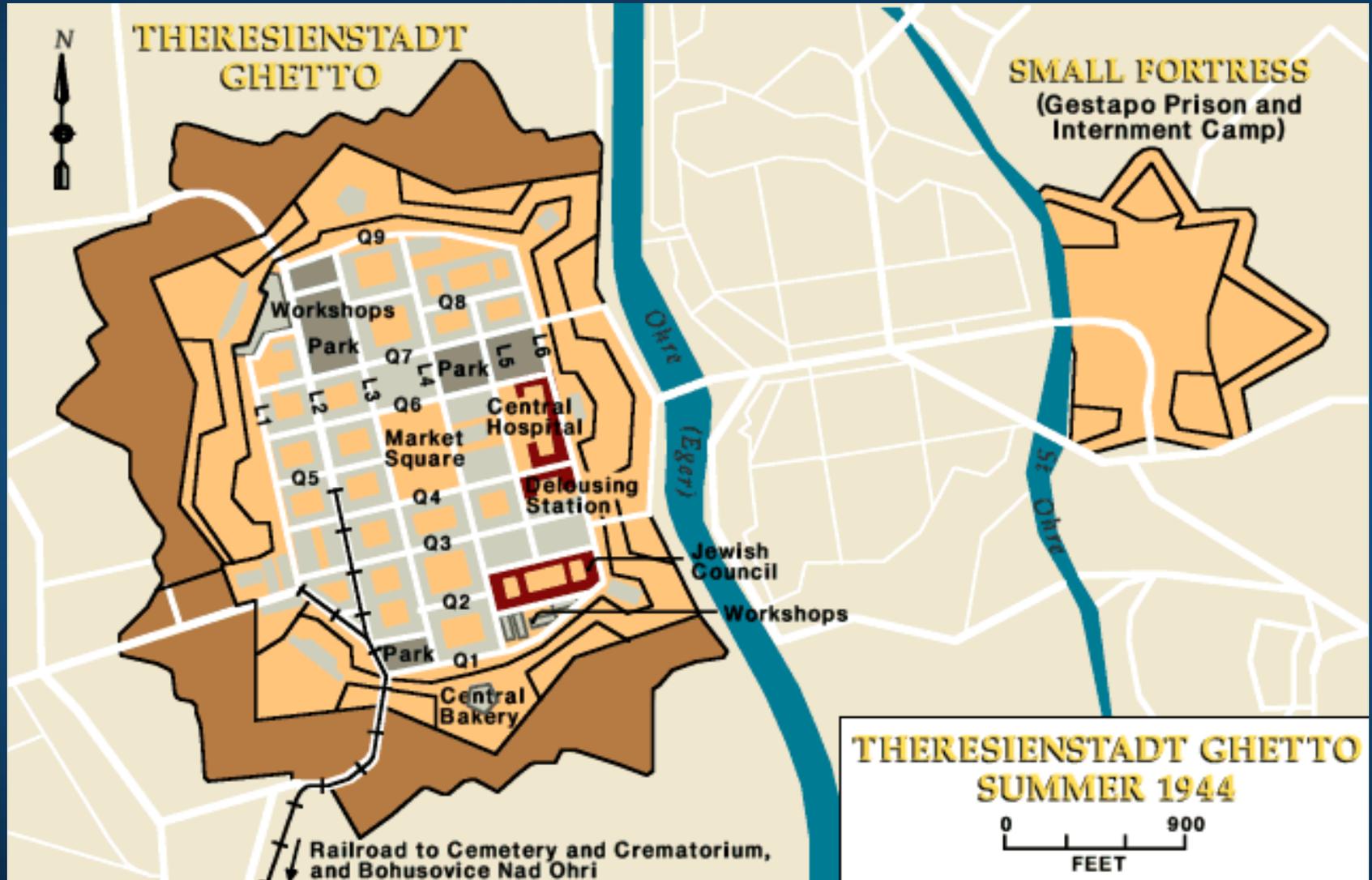
For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto.
But I have found what I love here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut branches in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
in the ghetto.



--Yad Vashem

Terezin Theresienstadt



Poetry



When Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek camps, they discovered huge mounds of shoes, hundreds of thousands of pairs, but very few living prisoners. At the sight of these inanimate witnesses, veteran CBS News correspondent Edward R. Murrow commented, “One shoe, two shoes, a dozen shoes, yes.

But how can you describe several thousand shoes?”

—United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

I SAW A MOUNTAIN

Hear! Hear the march.
Hear the shuffle of the shoes left behind –that which remained.
From small, from large, from each and every one.
Make way for the rows – for the pairs,
For the generations – for the years.
The shoe army – it moves and moves.

“We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses.
We are shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers.
From Prague, Paris and Amsterdam.
And because we are only made of stuff and leather
And not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire.

Moses Schulstein, translated by Mindele Wajsman and Bea Stadler

--Photo courtesy of USHMM