



Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust

Ruth Thomson

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Through inmates' own voices and artwork, Terezín explores the lives of Jewish people in one of the most infamous of the Nazi transit camps.

Between 1941 and 1945, Nazi Germany turned the small town of Terezín, Czechoslovakia, into a ghetto, and then into a transit camp for thousands of Jewish people. It was a "show" camp, where inmates were forced to use their artistic talents to fool the world about the truth of gas chambers and horrific living conditions for imprisoned Jews. Here is their story, told through the firsthand accounts of those who were there. In this accessible, meticulously researched book, Ruth Thomson allows the inmates to speak for themselves through secret diary entries, artwork, and excerpts from memoirs and recordings narrated after the war. Terezín: Voices from the Holocaust is a moving portrait that shows the strength of the human will to endure, to create, and to survive.

Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust Details

Date : Published February 22nd 2011 by Candlewick Press (first published January 1st 2011)

ISBN : 9780763649630

Author : Ruth Thomson

Format : Hardcover 64 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, World War II, Holocaust, History, War

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From Reader Review Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust for online ebook

Amanda says

Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust was a really touching book for me. I have read a lot about the holocaust but I had never seen it done in so much of a picture book form as this one was done. The book was majority real life images and they would have captions or small paragraphs describing events. While the book was aimed at younger readers I still really found it intriguing and found myself reading through the whole book more than once. Stories of the holocaust are always really sad but this book was even more so because it was personal accounts and real images. While the images were real they were not too gruesome or brutal so you could definitely use it in a younger classroom. This would be a great introduction into the holocaust and a story that many different level of readers could enjoy and learn from.

Alex Tierney says

Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust is a book about what Jewish life was like in ghetto and transit camps. The ghetto was established in a small town called Terezin and renamed Theresienstadt by the Nazis. The book gives the basic facts of how the ghetto was established, how people managed to live there, what it was like specifically for the children, and how the Jews were systematically moved from there to death camps. It was a "show" camp, where inmates were forced to use their artistic talents to fool the world about the truth of gas chambers and horrific living conditions for imprisoned Jews. The book is explained through the words of the people who were actually there. Some were written during their internment and some later by survivors in their memoirs and testimonials.

The story is well written according to the guidelines in chapter 2. The setting is described very well and also has pictures and timelines to go along with the text to show what is happening. The characters are also depicted very well because most of what is in the book is first hand accounts of what happened in the town. The characters were able to share exactly how they felt and what they were doing. The plot of the story is well written. It describes the events in order and does with detail. The writer does bring the setting to life through the inclusion of authentic details. The writer adds many pictures, timelines, and maps that give great detail about the topic. The characters do behave in ways that are believable. The characters gives us their own thoughts and experiences about what was happening, so everything they say is believable. The conflicts in the story are plausible based on the time period because there was a point in time where the things in the book were happening in real life. The book is based off of things that happened in real life, so the events that happen in the book are plausible. The theme is still relevant for today's readers because the book is about the hardship and struggles that people in this town had to go through in order to survive.

I think that this book is a good way to show a simple version of the Holocaust so that young readers can understand what happened. The pictures, timelines, and maps were used very effectively and helped the story come alive. I would read this book in the classroom to inform my students of the Holocaust and the things that happened to the Jews. I would also talk to the students about discrimination and how it is wrong to hurt people just because they are different than you.

Ebookwormy1 says

Photographs and artwork complement a primary source account of the Nazi fabricated village of Terezin. The story of the village, renamed "Theresienstadt" and publicized as a "model Jewish settlement" to the world, is told in chronological order. First person accounts and artistic pieces, many from individuals who did not survive the war, were hidden away and brought forth after the horrors of war had ceased. The fabricated idealization of the the village is detailed, as well as the ongoing suffering of the adults and children who tried to find ways to live through it's abuses.

There is some debate about the labeling of the place, whether to go with ghetto or concentration camp. Certainly the experiences of the residents and the death rates justify the concentration camp label. However, while disease was allowed to decimate them, rations kept residents malnourished, and individuals were cremated after death, transport to camps further east for extermination was the highest source of fatalities. In the end, the name isn't as relevant as the memorial to those whose voices speak beyond their lives.

The lack of the horrific mass murder of groups of people makes the Theresienstadt experience more approachable for younger students who are initially encountering the atrocities of the holocaust. While fears and rumors abounded at Terezin about the fate of those forced onto the transports, those imprisoned in Terezin simply didn't know what happened to those who went - except that they never returned. As a result, this collection of witnesses wrestles with the unknown, without accounting the brutal realities of Auschwitz (though Auschwitz consumed more inmates from Theresienstadt than any other death camps).

This is an excellent and highly recommended resource, but if you are sharing it with a young student, make sure to take the time to discuss the heavy material with them to aide in their processing the world we live in. Clearly, mankind has a sin problem with which readers, as those to whom we are listening, will wrestle. Both groups, those from the past and today, need to be reminded of the redemption of the LORD through Jesus Christ when encountering this chapter of our human experience.

Also see "A Cat with the Yellow Star: Coming of Age in Terezin" by Susan Goldman Rubin with Ela Weissberger, which accounts the life story of survivor Weissberger:
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2...>

Erin says

Ruth Thomson dives into the depths of one of the concentration camps during the Second World War. The concentration camp that she refers to is in the town of Terezin, Czechoslovakia. In this particular camp, artists and talented patrons were residence. Nazi's used these people to entertain the population of Germany by making charts, posters, and official reports. The prisoners were somewhat entertained by themselves, through the secret performances given by the musicians and actors that were also prisoners there. However, Thomson dives further into the quality of life that these prisoners had to endure. Through the diary entries and stories passed down, the real details about illness, starvation, and hardships that one had to endure.

The book presents all accurate and authentic information about this concentration camp. The details and descriptions about the performances were all told through authentic informants, as well as the details about the haunting hardships. The author does an impeccable job of displaying this information in an informative, unbiased way. The information is presented in an organized way that makes the uncovering of the details of this concentration camp understandable to many readers. By describing the harsh tales in a sequential way,

the text is presented as organized. The format and the design of the book is presented in a way that provides interest to the readers. It is accessible and easily understandable as well as appealing. The author's writing style presents the stories and diary entries in a way that is detailed yet clear. It generates curiosity, interest, and sympathy as well as empathy in the readers.

I was astounded about the amount of information I learned through this children's book. It gave details about the horrific events that the prisoners of Terezin had to endure. I felt honest empathy to the characters that Thomson discusses, and then I felt instant sympathy for them. I felt that the events and details described in the story were harsh and somewhat concerning for young children. However, I feel that the book is an excellent tool for teachers to use when talking about the Holocaust. Reading this book can be an excellent way for students to understand this complicated topic. It also provides a factual story that students and teachers can use to create story stretchers and activities.

Kiera Burnett says

Summary and Critique:

This is the story of how one town in the Czech Republic was turned into holding grounds for Jewish people before they left for the death camps during the Holocaust. It focuses on the daily lives of the people and the culture they developed. This book is superbly written and could not be improved upon. Throughout, Thompson drives this piece through quotes and anecdotes of those who did and did not survive the Holocaust. This personal focus allows the reader to experience an honest account of the Holocaust from the perspective of Jewish prisoners.

Classroom use:

I would use this alongside *Hitler Youth: Growing up in Hitler's Shadow* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti to allow children to conduct their own research and explore perspectives outside of the one presented in many textbooks. These two selections work perfectly together.

Genre: Informational Books

Format: Chapter book with pictures

Reading level: Grades 7-9

Theme: Survival, Transformation

Topic: Holocaust

Gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status: This book focuses on the Jewish role in the Holocaust and the culture these men, women, and children developed.

Ashley Reed says

This book was one that was haunting yet extremely informative about how the Jewish people were treated during World War 2. This picture book was one of the 2012 honor books for the Orbis Pictus award. Throughout the entire book we get to learn about the ghettos that the Jews were sent too. Before Auschwitz, the Jews would be sent to live in these ghettos that were filled with starvation, death and disease but the rest of the world was shown that these ghettos were actually Jewish Spas. This book explains all the deception and manipulation that was involved with the Nazi party during World War 2. Even though this book is one that talks about something so dark in history it is something that the world needs to know about, I know that I personally never learned about the ghettos and how the world was manipulated into thinking the Jews were being treated well. I think that this book is a great to have older kids read when they are

learning about the Holocaust and World War 2.

Abby Bauernfeind says

This book addresses the presence of different types of camps that are filled with many of the same horrors associated with the Nazi reign, but contain strikingly different information. Thomson uses expository style and diary entries combined with pictures and art pieces to exemplify the devastating conditions of the camp. The reader is brought through the timeline of events in the camp as it transitioned from ghetto to transit camp and eventually a ruse to defend so called "Jewish settlements." The book contains primary source and secondary source information that indicate the research put into the book is accurate and thoughtful. Accuracy is also supported by a bibliography at the end of the book, a timeline of events and a note from Thomson that illustrates how she chose what to include. The effectiveness of accurate facts is furthered by Thomson as she does not solely rely on the primary source diary writing pieces but instead combines them with primary source art pieces that depict the details of the writing. The writing is more personal as Thomson is able to use excerpts to personalize and truly personify the facts associated with the camp.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Thomson's introduction to Terezin, the concentration camp, is aimed at upper elementary to middle school children, and avoids some of the more horrific details of life there, yet making it plain that life there was unpleasant. Photos and artwork drawn by people at Terezin accompany descriptions of various aspects of life there as well as plentiful quotes from survivors. Thomson covers the history of the camp from its inception to the liberation of the prisoners by the Russians, and provides photos of what it looks like today.

I wish someone in the Red Cross had been able to see beneath the facade that the Nazis created for their visit. That bothered me the most of anything in the book. The constant lies--such evil. I'm glad someone survived to tell the truth, but I wish it had been many, many more.

Recommended.

Lisa Vegan says

I've read so many books about Theresienstadt, the "model ghetto" concentration camp the Nazis set up for Jews, a large preponderance of them artists, musicians, etc. skilled in the arts. This is a new book for older children. It's a good introduction to Terezin/Theresienstadt and to the Holocaust too.

It's very well structured, told mostly in chronological order. It's told mostly by fairly short quotes from those imprisoned there, some who survived, many who did not, who either died there or were murdered in other concentration camps after deportation from this ghetto camp.

The photos are wonderful, some art done by the prisoners is shown, and at the end of the book there is a rather thorough timeline, a glossary, and a list of sources.

This might not be the very best book about this place that I've read, but it is an excellent overview of what

happened at Terezin and it's recounted in a chillingly effective manner both because the reader learns what happens as time goes on, just the way the victims did, and because the people who were affected there get to tell what happened in their own words.

They didn't need photoshop or any particular technology back then to be skilled liars about what was truly going on, just diabolical planning and intent. Stupid Red Cross!!!

Erin says

This book tells the story of the town Terezin in what is now the Czech Republic, it was named Theresienstadt by the Nazis when it was turned into a ghetto and transport camp for Jews during the Holocaust. The camp's history is told by Thomson and accompanied by personal accounts and artwork from the Terezin victims themselves. Many of the Jews sent to Terezin were middle-class professionals, some of which were established artists who secretly made drawings of the suffering that took place at the camp. Their artwork was later discovered after the war ended, telling a dramatic and horrifying tale of the tens of thousands of prisoners who suffered there. At one point the Nazi's turned the camp into a "show" camp to deter suspicion about the treatment of the Jews and the existence of death camps, their ruse worked and even a propaganda movie was later filmed at the camp in the same effort. Thomson's book will appeal to young readers interested in learning about the atrocities of the Holocaust. Like much documentation on the Holocaust, much of the story seems so unbelievable that the reader is made to wish it were so. Readers will be struck by the illustrations and other primary documents and photos included throughout the book. It is obvious Thomson put much research and planning into the book and its layout in order to make it accessible and engaging to younger readers. The timeline at the end of the book helps readers understand Terezin's place within the context of the War and the Holocaust. For me, the personal accounts and the artwork of the Terezin prisoners themselves were the most powerful part of the book, their words and pictures were captivating, and I am sure this aspect will appeal to young readers the most as well. This book should definitely be included in Holocaust collections in school and public libraries; it is suitable for younger and older readers alike.

Sandi Rossman says

I reviewed this book for the informational category (junior book project). This book won a NCTE Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children. It was a 2012 Honor Book.

This book takes readers back to a horrific time and place in history: Terezin, Czechoslovakia during the Holocaust. This book takes a personal look at the atrocities that occurred there and lets the people who were imprisoned there finally have a voice. This book shares actual artwork and diary entries of imprisoned Jews along with factual information about this bleak time in history.

The pictures in this book set it apart from others. The book presents actual artwork created by Jews imprisoned in the camp and authentic pictures from that time period.. The pictures and illustrations create a somber mood and take the reader back to a terrifying ordeal that needs to be discussed so it doesn't repeat itself in the future. Reading the entries from actual people from the camps is like being given a picture of what really happened.

The author does an excellent job of balancing factual information about this time in history with actual diary entries and quotes from people who were actually in the camp. The author covers a wide array of topics in

the book including Hitler, life in Terezin, children, and the end of the war. Even though so much information is covered, the overall organization of the topics makes the book feel cohesive: it begins with Hitler's rise to power and moves through to the end of the war.

Both the timeline and glossary at the end of the book would be helpful for students. The timeline helps students keep historical events in chronological order while the glossary defines the basic terminology that students must have in order to talk or read about this point in history.

My personal reaction to this book is that it humanizes every person who was in that particular camp. I have read other books about concentration camps, death camps, and the Holocaust. However, I have never read one that made me think about the individuals who were in those camps. This book shed new light on the subject for me.

I will use this book in the classroom when I have students read The Diary of Anne Frank. Students usually think that Anne Frank was the only Jewish person that was affected; this book can help students understand the time period, historical facts, and that countless people faced atrocities just like Anne Frank did. I would use this book in conjunction with another book I found in the library when I was looking for this one: ... I never saw another butterfly (a book of children's drawings and poems from Terezin concentration camps, 1942-1944). Together, these books will help students see the bigger picture of how many people were affected. I would ask students to draw pictures and write poems to explain their own feelings after reading about the Holocaust.

Melissa says

Audience: Intermediate and older

Genre: Nonfiction

Awards: NCTE ORBIS PICTUS AWARD Outstanding Nonfiction for Children, Honor book for 2012.

Review: From an adult perspective, this book was amazing. There are many books about the Holocaust, but this is the first book I have read that included so much artwork. I had never heard of Terezin. Most of the nonfiction Holocaust books I have read cover the subject in general with information and images from around Nazi controlled Europe. However, *Terezin Voices From the Holocaust* mainly focuses on life in the city of Terezin and Czechoslovakia during the rise of Hitler and when Terezin becomes a Jewish ghetto. The book includes first person accounts, pictures, and artwork of the Jews housed at Terezin. The most maddening part of reading this book is the information regarding the complete cover-up orchestrated by the Nazis to prepare for the Red Cross visit requested by the Danish government.

This book has moving accounts of the survivors. The most poignant being the one on page 57 subtitled, *Disposing of the Ashes*. The artwork and pictures are abundant in the book and add to comprehension. At Terezin, there was a wealth of art hidden before some of the Jewish artists were sent to their deaths. These primary source pictures can create meaningful discussion. If I were to use this book with 4th- 6th graders, I would use selected passages and of course there would need to be critical vocabulary discussed and background knowledge developed.

For me, this was a superb nonfiction book that could be used with mature, intermediate readers.

Discussion Questions relating to Blooms Taxonomy

Level 1, Remembering

Why did the Germans choose the city of Terezin to become a Ghetto for Czechoslovakia's Jews?

Level 2, Understanding

The Nuremberg Laws, passed by Germany in 1935, stripped Jews of many rights such as citizenship, the right to marry a non-Jew, and to work in their professions. Find examples from the section, How Life Changed for Czech Jews, on page 9, to show how these laws were carried out in Nazi controlled Czechoslovakia.

Level 3, Applying

Read the section sub titled, Getting Ready for Transport on page 12. Imagine you were given only a day's notice to pack two suitcases weighing up to 50 kilograms (about 100 pounds). You also have to carry them yourself. You have no idea if you will ever return to your home. What would you take and why?

Level 4, Analyzing

Use a T-Chart to compare and contrast Bedrich Fritta's official print titled *Building Barracks* done for the Nazis versus the private print titled *Life in Terezin* that Fritta drew secretly at night. See page 17 for the artwork. Consider making a list of the characteristics of each print.

Level 5, Evaluating

During the Nazi occupation of Europe, no one believed or proved the terrible things the Nazis perpetrated against the Jews until after the Germans lost the war. Put the Red Cross on trial. Did they do a good job of checking out the conditions in the Ghetto of Terezin after the Danish king requested a visit by them? See pages 45-51?

Level 6, Creating

Terezin, Voices from the Holocaust frequently refers to many sicknesses and diseases suffered by the Jews living in the ghetto. One quote says. "The Germans were terrified of typhus..." Research typhus and its effect during the Holocaust. What other diseases killed Jews during this time?

Edward Sullivan says

The story of the Nazi's "model concentration camp" told through quotes from people imprisoned there and many visual artifacts (reproduced in color), including art work created by prisoners. An excellent textual and visual documentary, and an important addition to Holocaust literature for young people.

Lisa Campbell says

Lisa Campbell

Information Book

The book chronicles the lives of the Jews sent to Terezin, Czechoslovakia during the Holocaust. Terezin was a

transportation camp that was a stopover for many during the deportation of Jews to the death camps. Inside Terezin, artists were forced to create propaganda for the Nazi's but secretly recorded the horrors they were suffering with their art. Using first hand accounts and the recovered artwork of the artists, this book relays the harsh realities that existed. Terezin was a "show camp" for the Nazi's which they would exhibit to organizations such as the Red Cross to show that the conditions were not as harsh as rumored. Of course it was all a facade. Of the 15,000 children that passed through Terezin, less than 100 survived the end of the war. In total over 86,000 were transported from Terezin to the death camps and less than 3000 survived. Those in Terezin found comfort where they could, holding secret concerts, readings and art. As one survivor put it, "I can assure you, if anyone is ever in a lurch, poetry, theater and music are the only answers for survival." Of all the artists that worked at Terezin, only one survived. After the war Leo Haas returned to the camp and was able to retrieve the hidden art works that make up the majority of the book.

This would be an inspiring book for any teen about true survival. It shows that even in the darkest circumstances, art has the power to change lives and uplift souls. I would recommend this to anyone wanting to know more about the Holocaust.

Courtney Antonson says

This book takes the reader through the timeline of the Holocaust and World War Two and gives information about important aspects of those two things. The special part about this book is that each page gives the headline with facts and information and then there are stories in quotes from people who survived the war and Holocaust. This is the part of the book that makes the books information feel real and gives a lot more detail because there are quotes and stories from survivors who were at the site of these events. The book describes in detail different parts of the Holocaust such as the Ghettos, deportations, Transports, etc. in order of time. Within each section there are in depth descriptions about other aspects of those sections and stories from survivors. This is a great book to use in the classroom to teach students about the Holocaust and war. It is easy to follow along and read so it is a great book for students and teachers to use.
