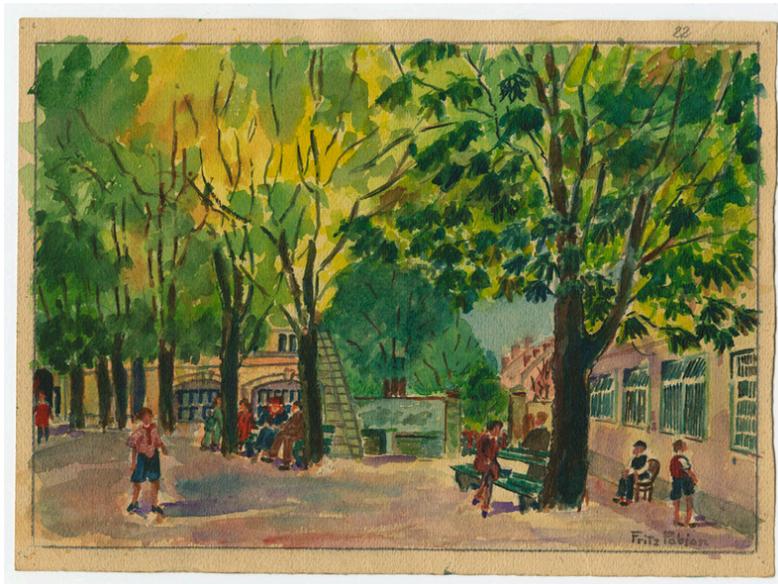




LAST STOP BEFORE THE LAST STOP

IS A PICTURE ALWAYS WORTH 1000 WORDS?

Through the analysis of film, art, and survivor testimonials, students will critically evaluate how the Nazi use of propaganda has impacted the historical narrative of events during the Holocaust. This lesson can be completed over the course of 1 to 2 class periods, depending on the level of depth the teacher would like to delve into, the number of archival materials used, and the use of extension activities.



Essential Questions:

- How do you critically evaluate the historical narrative of events that took place during the Holocaust?
- What are the techniques typically used in propaganda?
- How did explicit and implicit messages within Nazi propaganda influence people's beliefs, feelings, and actions?

Lesson Objectives (SWBAT):

- Explain how propaganda interplayed with the political, economic, and social context of the time to be effective
- Identify factors that influence the success of propaganda
- Analyze the consequences of Nazi propaganda
- Identify propaganda techniques still used today

Subjects

History
ELA
Art

Grades

9-12

Authors

Jessica McAuliffe
Victoria Kessler

EXTERNAL LINKS 

- [Leo Baeck Institute](#)
- [The Defiant Requiem Foundation - Education](#)
- USHMM [Path to Nazi Genocide](#)
- USHMM [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)
- Echoes and Reflections [Timeline of the Holocaust](#)
- [Theresienstadt: A Documentary Film, 1944](#)
- Yad Vashem [Artists of Terezin](#)
- Facing History and Ourselves [Preparing Students for Difficult Conversations](#)
- [Helpful directions for running a jigsaw](#)

Cover image:

Fabian, Fritz: *City Square, Theresienstadt*

Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute, 78.638

CONTEXT FOR THIS LESSON

The Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda was founded March 14, 1933, just six weeks after the Nazi rise to power. The Ministry was led by Joseph Goebbels, a former journalist, whose goal was to centralize and control all means of public information and entertainment. The Nazis created propaganda that would target specific groups, promote Nazi ideology, and encourage obedience to Nazi policies. This was done through use of different forms of media, including radio, print (newspapers, magazines, posters, literature), popular culture (music, theater), and film.

In 1944, due to pressure being exerted by the Danish government, the International Committee of the Red Cross was allowed to inspect the Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto to verify that Danish Jews there were not being mistreated. Before the visit, a policy of “beautification” was enacted - deportations to Auschwitz to deal with overcrowding, a swimming pool was built (that prisoners were not allowed to use), parks and gardens were laid out, barracks cleaned, etc.

After successfully convincing the Red Cross that treatment of prisoners at Terezín was humane, Nazi authorities used Terezín as the background for a propaganda film that could be shown more widely. The beautified image of Terezín became a means to deceive the world about the fate of European Jews.

The film's cast, musicians, and director, Kurt Geron, were all prisoners at Terezín. Immediately following completion of filming, deportations to Auschwitz intensified, and most of the “cast” were deported. Kurt Geron was sent to Auschwitz on the last train from Terezín on October 28, 1944, where he was immediately killed. The film itself was never publicly shown, and today it exists only in fragments.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Laptop, tablet, or other device that can be used to access materials digitally
- Copies of Worksheets 1-6 (found below)
- Transcription of excerpts from poems written by Else Dormitzer ([full artifact](#))
- Transcription of excerpt from Edith Kramer-Freund's *Journey to Freedom: From Prisoner in Theresienstadt to Refugee in Switzerland* ([full artifact](#))
- Transcription of excerpt from A Letter by Dr. Eric Nash ([full artifact](#))
- Transcription of excerpt from Charlotte Guthmann Opfermann's *Charlotte, A Holocaust Memoir: Remembering Theresienstadt* ([full artifact](#))
- Transcription of excerpt from Joseph W. Eaton's *Theresienstadt - P.O.E. for Death* ([full artifact](#))
- Copies of Art from Theresienstadt

LESSON SEQUENCE

WARM-UP & DISCUSSION

Each student should receive a copy of Worksheet 1 asking them to evaluate what they believe Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Propaganda Minister, meant when he said: "Tell a lie often enough and everyone will believe you."

As students write, circulate to conference with students, asking students if they would be comfortable sharing their answers (this can first be done as a Turn-and-Talk).

MINI LESSON & WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Transition the lesson to explain that students will be learning about life in the Terezín ghetto. Hand out a copy of Worksheet 2: Film Viewing Notes to all students

As a class, watch the [1944 Propaganda film made for the Red Cross](#) from **8:37 until the end of video** (****Note for teachers there is a bathing scene with full body nudity directly before this selected clip**). Students should be recording in their graphic organizer.

After watching the film, provide students with a definition of propaganda and explain the different [types of propaganda](#) used

by the Nazi party. You may also show the students [a video from Yad Vashem](#) which serves as an introduction to Terezín.

Explain the context of the documentary clip you have just shown students. Included are prompts for discussion:

1. What was the context in which the message was spread?
2. Who was the intended audience? How does this impact the message?
3. How does the historical context of the propagandist impact your understanding of the message?
4. What impact do you think this message had at the time?

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Explain that students will examine different artifacts depicting life in Terezín. As students analyze these artifact sets, they will be working to evaluate the reality of life at Terezín compared to the image portrayed by Nazi propaganda.

INDEPENDENT WORK

Split students into small groups of 3 to 4. Distribute the artifacts to each of the “expert” groups and give them time to evaluate the materials. Each group of artifacts has an accompanying graphic organizer (Worksheets 3-5) to help students identify the type of information they are supposed to present to their peers.

***Note for teachers** - you do not have to use all provided artifacts. These are provided to allow you the ability to adjust the lesson for different classes.

You can make extra copies of the worksheets, make double-sided copies, or have students write on loose leaf for notes on more sources.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Once students have finished analyzing their artifacts in their small groups, students will [jigsaw](#) and present their artifacts to their classmates.

The other students should listen carefully, take notes on Worksheet 6, and ask clarifying questions.

INDEPENDENT WORK

Once students have completed the jigsaw, have them return to the opening question. Have them reflect on and evaluate their original response.

**WHOLE GROUP
DISCUSSION**

Guide a class discussion. You can extend the discussion using the following focus questions:

1. What was the lie? What was the truth?
2. Who believed these? What were the consequences?
3. How was your critical evaluation of historical narratives impacted by the perspective of sources?

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
& EXTENSION
ACTIVITIES**

Have your school's art teacher explain how to study and evaluate art.

Complete a Media Literacy Activity from the [We Teach NYC Media Literacy Toolkit](#)

KEY TERMS / VOCABULARY

ANTISEMITISM	Hostility toward or hatred of Jews as a religious or ethnic group, often accompanied by social, economic, or political discrimination
ARYAN	Term used in Nazi Germany to refer to non-Jewish and non-Roma (Gypsy) Caucasians. Northern Europeans with especially "Nordic" features such as blonde hair and blue eyes were considered by so-called race scientists to be the most superior of Aryans, members of a "master race".
BAVARIAN	The High German dialect of southern Bavaria and Austria
BEAUTIFICATION	Measures taken to disguise conditions in the Theresienstadt ghetto and to portray an atmosphere of normalcy
BONKES	Conjecture, based on rumor, premised on speculation, driven by fear and anxiety
EXCORIATED	To wear off the skin of or to censure scathingly
GHETTO	A confined area of a city in which members of a minority group are compelled to live
KADDISH	A Jewish prayer recited in the daily ritual of the synagogue and by mourners at public services after the death of a close relative
PROPAGANDA	Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause
INDOCTRINATION	To imbue with a usually partisan or sectarian opinion, point of view, or principle
JOSEPH GOEBBELS	Nazi politician, propagandist, and radical antisemite, was Reich Minister for Propaganda and Public
NATIONAL SOCIALISM	The body of political and economic doctrines held and put into effect by the Nazis in Germany from 1933 to 1945 including the totalitarian principle of government, predominance of especially Germanic groups assumed to be racially superior, and supremacy of the Führer
NACHSCHUB	Distributing leftover soup

POTEMKIN VILLAGE

An impressive facade or show designed to hide an undesirable fact or condition

**REICH MINISTRY OF
PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT
AND PROPAGANDA**

Also known simply as the Ministry of Propaganda, controlled the content of the press, literature, visual arts, film, theater, music and radio in Nazi Germany

RESETTLEMENT

A Nazi euphemism for deportation and murder

SCHUTZSTAFFEL (SS)

German abbreviation for Schutzstaffel (literally, protection squads). A paramilitary formation of the Nazi party initially created to serve as bodyguards to Hitler and other Nazi leaders. It later took charge of political intelligence gathering, the German police and the central security apparatus, the concentration camps, and the systematic mass murder of Jews and other victims.

TEREZÍN

A fortress town 30 miles north of Prague; This "camp-ghetto" existed for three and a half years, between November 24, 1941 and May 9, 1945. It was first used as a ghetto for Jews of Central and Western Europe, but its functions evolved into that of a concentration/transit camp.

THERESIENSTADT

German name for Terezín (see above)

THIRD REICH

Term used to describe the Nazi regime in Germany from January 30, 1933, to May 8, 1945

WORKSHEET 1 DO NOW

Explain what you think Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Propaganda Minister, meant when he said: *“Tell a lie often enough and everyone will believe you.”* Use historical or current day examples to support your response. Be prepared to share your response with your classmates.



WORKSHEET 2 FILM VIEWING NOTES

While viewing the selection from the documentary, fill in the organizer below with specific examples you saw in the clip. After viewing the clip, answer the Reflection Question using evidence from your organizer. Be prepared to share with your classmates.

<p>Physical condition of individuals in film</p>	
<p>Emotions expressed by individuals in the film</p>	
<p>Activities individuals in the film are engaged in</p>	
<p>Objects you noticed throughout the camp</p>	
<p>Reflection Question: What is your overall impression of Terezín after viewing the clip?</p>	

WORKSHEET 3 EXPERT GROUP 1 - POETRY

As you analyze your assigned artifact, fill in the organizer below with specific examples. After your analysis, answer the Reflection Questions using evidence from your organizer. Be prepared to share with your classmates.

<p>Physical condition of individuals</p>	
<p>Emotions expressed by individuals</p>	
<p>Activities individuals are engaged in</p>	
<p>Objects described throughout the camp</p>	
<p>1. What is your overall impression of Terezín after analyzing these artifacts?</p> <p>2. How do these artifacts compare with the impression created by the propaganda film of life at Terezín?</p>	

WORKSHEET 4 EXPERT GROUP 2 - MEMOIRS

As you analyze your assigned artifact, fill in the organizer below with specific examples. After your analysis, answer the Reflection Questions using evidence from your organizer. Be prepared to share with your classmates.

<p>Physical condition of individuals</p>	
<p>Emotions expressed by individuals</p>	
<p>Activities individuals are engaged in</p>	
<p>Objects described throughout the camp</p>	
<p>3. What is your overall impression of Terezín after analyzing these artifacts?</p>	
<p>4. How do these artifacts compare with the impression created by the propaganda film of life at Terezín?</p>	

WORKSHEET 5 EXPERT GROUP 3 - ART

As you analyze your assigned artifact, fill in the organizer below with specific examples. After your analysis, answer the Reflection Questions using evidence from your organizer. Be prepared to share with your classmates.

Physical condition of individuals	
Emotions expressed by individuals	
Activities individuals are engaged in	
Objects described throughout the camp	
5. What is your overall impression of Terezín after analyzing these artifacts?	
6. How do these artifacts compare with the impression created by the propaganda film of life at Terezín?	

WORKSHEET 6 LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

In your new groups, each expert is going to present on the artifact they studied. Once the first expert has gone, the others in the group take their turns. When you aren't presenting, make sure to listen carefully, take notes, and ask lots of questions.

	EXPERT 1 TOPIC:	EXPERT 2 TOPIC:
What details about life at Terezín stood out the most?		
Were there any similarities noticed to the documentary clip?		
What differences were noticed compared to the documentary clip?		

TRANSCRIPTIONS POETRY OF TEREZÍN



Photo of Else
Dormitzer, circa 1930.
Forum for Jewish
History and Culture

Transcriptions of excerpts from poems written by Else Dormitzer while living in the Terezín ghetto. The typed poems below include any original misspellings and grammatical errors.

After Kristallnacht, Else Dormitzer emigrated with her husband to the Netherlands to live with her daughter in 1939. In 1943, the Dormitzers were deported from there to the Terezín concentration camp, where her husband soon died. Else Dormitzer survived and processes her concentration camp experiences in a volume of poetry. After the war she moved to England.

REINFORCEMENTS

“Nachschub”-- the distribution of left-over soup was called “Nachschub” or “Reinforcements.” One stood in line for hours, mostly in vain.

Snow and ice, wet tempest and hail,
On the skittery streets gaunt figures group
Holding a tin mug in their hands;
To bring back to the barrack-wail.
They shuggle along with their cans,
Each from the horror and fear pale:
Will there be a little soup?
We really need it just to have breath,
Can we get it without docketts?
In every case they holler, “wait, wait;”
They wait in hollow sockets
Of silence, slowly the seconds sweat.
Warm your hands, stretch your limbs
Stamp up and down without a feed.

Between stomach noises you hear men roar
like rockets,
Beastly ones who, to satisfy their dope-
Lids rush for power, need
To be cruel to those who wait and wait.
It’s two on the clock – it’s not too late
To see or smell the steaming pot.
Then an order crows in the distance:
“Today there are no reinforcements.”
The beast on duty drives off the lot,
They turn away without resistance
Back to their cells
And when next day comes they beg again
for portions
On their way to the place of skulls.

CENSUS

On the 11 November 1943 the whole Jewish population of Theresienstadt had to wait outside for 12 hours without food or drink in order to be counted. Since every ghetto inhabitant had already been registered countless times before, it was yet another form of torture.

Dense crowds proceed at dawn
Through Theresienstadt's still empty streets
Five abreast curving around corners into squares.
The best checks if anybody has stumbled.
Today God's chosen people are being numbered!

You see each kind of person,
Only the sick are allowed to stay behind,
At five o'clock the order went out to herd –
No one exempted, into one place:
The lame lead the blind, everyone's excoriated.
Today God's chosen people are being recorded!

Mothers push prams,
Fathers carry puny sons.
The elderly drag along on crutches or just sticks.
The census taker begins his meticulous task:
The pale sun is peeled from the clouds and plundered.
Today the chosen people are being numbered!

Finally the counting place is reached!
In an arch we move across Bauschwitz earth,
No chair, no store or bench to sit on.
No wall to lean your back on:
Stand in hundreds, the command to the frozen.
So today they can count more easily the chosen!

Basic modest needs plague us.
Hunger rampages through our stomachs.
Nothing hot is offered, not a drop of water.
Our faces grow pale and dribbly.
Frost and deprivation have us routed.
Today the chosen people are being counted!

Hour after hour slips by...
The bare earth is the only place to sit,
Despair and diarrhea mix
And some pass out or pass on:
There we lie stretched out like the dead.
Today the chosen people are being read!

Night is like a corpse, no star in the sky!
Desperate, everyone asks the other:
"Will we stay here till tomorrow?"
Trembling, quailing, fretting, fainting,
Those usually brave find optimism numbed.
Today the chosen people are being numbered!

Finally the order barks: what relief,
"The Jew can go back to the ghetto!"
Scurry, push, elbow, shove, curse;
and parents shrink towards children, children peer
For parents – again to quarters, nobody at play.
The chosen people were counted today!

TRANSCRIPTIONS MEMOIRS OF TEREZÍN

DR. EDITH KRAMER-FREUND

Below is an excerpt from Edith Kramer-Freund's *Journey To Freedom: From Prisoner in Theresienstadt to Refugee in Switzerland*. The typed excerpt includes any original misspellings and grammatical errors.

Edith Kramer-Freund studied medicine in Germany. In March 1942 she was sent to Posen, Germany to treat women prisoners at Fort Radziwill. She was later accused of sabotage and arrested by the Gestapo in 1943. She was imprisoned in Posen, Berlin-Alexanderplatz, and then Terezín.

Sunday, 5th February 1945, 4 p.m.

...18 months had passed since I arrived in Theresienstadt. Suddenly the rumour spread like wildfire that a transport would leave for Switzerland within 3 days. We should either volunteer for enrolment or sign a declaration that we refuse.

The mere word transport carried a shocking meaning for all of us. Our life in Theresienstadt was constantly overshadowed by our imaginings about transport to the East. What a deportation like that meant we could at first only guess. However at the end of 1944 new-arrivals from other concentration camps confirmed the terrible truth that the destination was to be Auschwitz and that nearly everybody would be sent to the gas chambers.

Regarding the transport in question we were very sceptical as we suspected it to be one of the many infamous lies of the Gestapo. Had not the camp commander Rahm promised there would not be any more transports after the 28th of October 1944? True, he succeeded in deceiving the International Red Cross. When they inspected Theresienstadt in June 1944. Rahm had ordered to "beautify" the Ghetto. He set up dining rooms, a coffee house, childrens play ground etc. and erected facades in front of the shabby buildings thus creating a "Potemkin Village". The whole spook was removed at once after the departure of the commission and the unfortunate ones who had been forced to take part in the deception sent to the gas chambers. Strange enough the Red Cross did not see through these tricks. But we knew that Rahm could not be trusted and that he was a dangerous liar.

Nor did we believe that the transport would really go to Switzerland. It was not the first time that this country was named as destination. 1000 orphans arrived in the Ghetto from Bialystok one and a half years before, half starved creatures whose parents had been killed

in front of them. They were lodged in special quarters and treated with unusual care by order of the Gestapo. These children were sent away after months, allegedly to Switzerland, but we never heard of them again. We learned later that they had been gassed in Auschwitz. Apparently an agreement existed with Switzerland to accept these children but had to be cancelled at the last moment.

We had secret radio receivers built into bedsteads and knew that the war was nearing its end. Soon the Russians would come and our liberation would follow.

Life in Theresienstadt had become more bearable after the deportation of 19,000 people who had been sent to the East a few months ago. The maximum number of 50,000 people was reduced to 11,000. Sad as it was, more room was available, food became less scarce and there was more fuel. Food parcels for the deportees were distributed amongst us, provided the Gestapo had not stolen them.

For that reason many refused to take the risk and preferred to wait in Theresienstadt until the end of the war. As far as the Czechs were concerned most of them reasoned that they wanted to remain in their country to be able to return home quickly.

Others tried - as I did - to look upon the situation realistically. We too believed in the final victory of the Allies. But we were not convinced that this would mean our liberation. We thought it was to be expected that the Nazis would kill us all beforehand in order to extinguish the witnesses of their crimes. Various signs in this direction already existed. One of these was the removal of 20,000 so called "urns" in November 1944. These urns were actually miserable paper bags on which the names of the deceased had been inscribed. They had been stowed away opposite the mortuary outside the Ghetto and were the only remembrance we had of our beloved ones. They were loaded on the trucks upon order of the Gestapo and thrown into the river Eger. At least that was what we guessed.

A few weeks later another step to erase the past followed: Documents, card indexes etc. which had been kept so carefully, were burnt. Was it not logical that one would do away with humans also? Fearfully we also remembered the so called "Census" in the year 1943. Then, on a cold November day we were all chased into a valley outside the Ghetto. On the surrounding hills stood armed soldiers. It was not until midnight that we could return to our barracks. Was it not a dress rehearsal to try in which way the Nazis could kill us all in the shortest of time?

TRANSCRIPTIONS MEMOIRS OF TEREZÍN

DR. ERIC NASH

Below is an excerpt from a letter written by Dr. Eric Nash in September 1945 while in Prague. The typed excerpt includes any original misspellings and grammatical errors.

In 1942, Dr. Eric Nash and much of his family were deported to Terezín where the family survived for two and a half years. His son was born there just a few days after their arrival. In October 1944, they were transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. His wife and son perished there. Nash stayed at Auschwitz for only six days before being shipped to the Dachau labor camp. The American army liberated Nash after he had endured seven days on the infamous Dachau death march.

... We never saw them again. My mother is supposed to have died in Auschwitz on January 18, 1945, of exhaustion and hunger. Although I had, at greatest risk, sent a letter home immediately after her departure and had packages sent to her on a regular basis, she naturally never received any of these. About Mother Knoll I know nothing at all, except that she lost her life, somehow, at Auschwitz.

None of this we knew at the time. We lived in sorrow, but in the constant hope that we would find our mothers again. Our child helped us a great deal in coping with all this. Because the two mothers were gone, there was more food for Erna and the little one. Furthermore, the ghetto was transformed into a showcase. For the benefit of foreign visitors, there was feverish construction of baths, theaters, concert halls, football and athletic fields, nurseries, parks, and much more – Potemkin villages with the same old misery in the background. Nonetheless, life became somewhat more bearable, the transports departed less frequently, and liberation came closer every day.

When I think of it now, I must say this was some of my happiest time. We had a room, even if it was just a stable. We had enough to eat, even if it was just bread and potatoes. We were very well dressed; clothes were plentiful in Theresienstadt. There were wonderful concerts and stage presentations. I had my profession. We had the most wonderful child you could imagine. We loved each other very much, perhaps even more than in our earlier youth in Vienna...

 [Watch the excerpt from Dr. Nash's Shoah testimony describing life in Theresienstadt](#)

TRANSCRIPTIONS MEMOIRS OF TEREZÍN

CHARLOTTE GUTHMANN OPFERMANN

Below is an excerpt from *Charlotte, A Holocaust Memoir: Remembering Theresienstadt* by Charlotte Guthmann Opfermann, shared with Robert A. Warren. The typed excerpt includes any original misspellings and grammatical errors.

... In the spring of 1944, we were delighted to discover that our barracks was to be fumigated to rid us, at least temporarily of the awful vermin which infested every room, every bed, every square inch of space, including the dreaded bedbugs. The size of a small fingernail, you could feel them crawling over you at night, biting, making even one's sleeping moments disagreeable. Short of killing them by the thousands, the only mildly effective remedy was to keep the light on, since the little beasts were nocturnal creatures and shunned illumination. So our barracks were fumigated with a potent insecticide known as Zyklon-B. At the time, of course, it was unknown to us that the Nazis were using the very same gas to 'fumigate' the gas chambers of Auschwitz in their attempt to kill what they viewed as another kind of insect, "Jewish vermin unworthy of life."

Then, much to our amazement, we were handed buckets, scrub brushes, mops and rags, and ordered to clean the streets, sidewalks and house fronts on the planned route of what was to be a forthcoming tour by personnel of the Red Cross. The SS wanted the streets in the 'Jewish Settlement' to look well scrubbed, cheerful, flower-decorated, a scene straight out of a Bavarian village picture postcard. The work was difficult and dirty, but at first we did think that we were helping ourselves, so it was not an entirely unpleasant experience. We were naive enough to believe that things simply were getting better, that as the inevitable end of the war drew nearer the SS administration was making an attempt to ease our lot in order to make themselves look better. Slowly, however, word began to spread that we were preparing for an inspection by the International Red Cross. As one might imagine, the Ghetto's Bonkes mechanism promptly went into high gear.

First, there was construction of a small music pavilion. Next followed the removal of most of the barriers that cluttered the interior of the Ghetto and which kept us out of the parks and other open spaces. Then came the construction of the children's pavilion and the opening of various 'shops,' stores which in fact were stocked with clothing and other items looted from incoming transports. Although it took weeks for it to penetrate, the entire charade consisted of nothing more than the elaborate construction of a Potemkin village. What we did not know was that as early as November 1943, Adolf Eichmann had given the International Red Cross provisional permission to visit the Ghetto, a reluctant decision precipitated in large part by

the arrival of the first of three groups of Danish Jews in October 1943. Shortly thereafter, the SS launched a Stadtverschönerung, a city beautification project. In February 1944, Anton Burger was replaced as Kommandant by SS Captain Karl Rahm. Allegedly, at least one reason for the change was that Burger had shown inadequate enthusiasm for preparing the Ghetto for the forthcoming IRC inspection. Rahm, however, was determined to make a sterling impression on our visitors, and eventually put nearly the entire inmate population to work readying Theresienstadt for the big day.

As the inspection drew nearer, our most presentable children, which is to say the best looking, least Semitic appearing kids, were outfitted in 'new' clothes obtained from the Ghetto's Kleiderkammer, a large storehouse which contained all the Ghetto's confiscated goods, mostly clothing taken from the incoming transports, all of which had been carefully searched for concealed contraband – jewelry, money and such – and then stored prior to shipment back to Germany. Even though the clothes were used, most of the children hadn't seen anything like them in two or three years. They could barely contain their excitement. It was all very difficult to process and accept. It was as if the most imaginative Bonkes was suddenly becoming reality!

Much has been written about the International Red Cross inspection that occurred on June 23, 1944. I will leave it to the historians to discuss, dissect and analyze the events of that day. Some say that the Red Cross personnel – consisting of two Danes, led by a Swiss, Maurice Rossell, the deputy head of the International Red Cross' Berlin office – were entirely taken in (my view, personally). Others contend that our visitors only appeared to be persuaded that the Ghetto was, in fact, "Hitler's Gift to the Jews" in order to protect the inhabitants against future retaliation (this was the post-war, self-serving view of the inspection team). Whatever the case, the L414 children did their small bit to make the day a success, although the bulk of the building's residents, including most of the staff, were kept well out of sight in the barracks under house arrest, threatened with dire consequences if we dared to show ourselves during the inspection tour, or even to be seen at a window as the inspection team passed by.

Several of our children from L414 had been carefully coached for their participation in the big event, right down to 'spontaneously' addressing SS Captain Rahm as "Uncle Rahm" when they greeted him on the street. We would all have burst our sides laughing if it weren't so pathetic and potentially dangerous in the event a slip-up (after all, no one, ever, addressed an SS officer, let alone the Camp Kommandant, unless they were spoken to first or were intent on joining the next Abtransporte East). One of our charges, Katie, a darling girl of seven or eight, featuring luminous dark hair with a natural streak of white right down the middle of it and big eyes, beautiful skin and even features, was rehearsed to greet Dr. Rossell as the senior Red Cross representative. In a famous picture taken by our visitors that day which is

reproduced in many of the texts which have discussed Theresienstadt generally and the Red Cross inspection in particular, there she is, leaning lightly against her somewhat older sister for support, gracefully performing her duty. (I later heard that both sisters survived and immigrated to Sweden after the war.)

It seemed that we passed our inspection (or that the Nazis' passed theirs, however one wishes to look at it). In the weeks that followed, many of the inspection's attractions were removed. Practically all of the children's toys which had been passed out were reclaimed, as was most of the newly issued clothing. There were some residual benefits, however: our barracks area was clean for the first time in years and our rooms were relatively free of vermin; the music pavilion remained standing and in use (although I never attended any concerts or other cultural presentations there – no time, too much effort); best of all, many of the barricades, which made foot traffic within the Ghetto so burdensome, remained down, thus allowing improved freedom of movement with a far greater economy of effort.

...

TRANSCRIPTIONS MEMOIRS OF TEREZÍN

JOSEPH P. EATON

Below is an excerpt from Dr. Joseph P. Eaton's eyewitness report of the liberated Terezín. The typed excerpt includes any original misspellings and grammatical errors.

Dr. Eaton was born Josef Wechsler in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1919. In 1934, Eaton and one of his brothers were sent to the U.S. as part of a children's transport. He was drafted into the Army in 1943 and as a native German speaker, he was trained as an intelligence analyst in a psychological operations unit, which operated radio and print communications in Germany. He also is credited with assisting efforts to help Jewish Holocaust survivors escape Europe and with helping to reunite families by carrying letters from survivors to relatives in the United States.

The Facade

Outwardly it was a charitable institution. The Germans called it "Reichsaltersheim für Juden" (Reichshome for Jews). Behind this facade they built a concentration camp, where 40,000 were made to die "natural" deaths and 90,000 others transported unobtrusively to extermination centers. Theresienstadt was one of the few concentration camps open to the inspection of the International Red Cross. It was a "model" ghetto, designed to counteract the unpleasant reports that were trickling out of the darkness that was German occupied Europe - reports that seemed so incredible that few people wanted to believe them. For the SS troops in charge it was a model too, a model for experimentation with an artificial human society. And they played with it, like children play with dolls or tin soldiers.

...

Officially Theresienstadt was to be a self-administered Jewish ghetto, where elderly Jews from every part of the world could finish their lives in peace and dignity, isolated from the rest of society. Modern bakeries were installed. A slaughterhouse, drug-store, restaurant, a theater, even a concert hall - There was a bank and special Theresienstadt currency. Beautiful playgrounds were built for the children, most of whom died later in a gas-chamber in Poland. When a Red Cross inspection was expected, the food improved suddenly. In the crowded barracks, the first floors would be nearly emptied of inmates to present an impression of spaciousness. The second and third floors would then be all the more crowded by those evacuated from the first. A few rooms were particularly well furnished, like show cases.

The Reality

Not many people were taken in by this propagandistic facade. Many of the elderly people, who were transported to Theresienstadt from every part of western Europe, arrived there

more dead than alive. Traveling in cattle cars, often for days, perhaps even weeks, without food, warmth or sanitary facilities, many died of exhaustion soon after they reached their destination. Their welcome was not conducive to a recuperation. Their baggage was confiscated at once, to be returned two weeks later. It was searched and the content partially confiscated by the SS, either for its own use or for sale in the stores of Theresienstadt. Without any opportunity to change their clothes, sleeping on tripledecker beds, as closely cramped as books in a shelf, only the more healthy could survive. The horse drawn hearse could accommodate 37 bodies on shelves at one time.

Strange as it may seem, most of the inmates do not stress these hardships as much as one might expect. "It was a model camp, things were relatively bearable" they said. They have a perspective that is based on a comparison with the horrors of Buchenwald, with Auschwitz, with Maidanek. In Theresienstadt nobody was beaten to death, gassed or subjected to inhuman labors. (Except that 11 young people were hanged at one time for having tried to write to their relatives "illegally" that they were alive). The Jewish Community had its own inner administration, which was closely supervised by the SS. At the top was the Council of Elders, appointed by the SS. Hospitals, policemen, bakers, welfare officials, everything existed that would be found in a normally organized community. They even had acres of farm land and their own livestock. "They were always sad, our jewish horses and cows, they walked as listlessly as we did", was the comment of one of the inmates.

Persons capable of performing work were assigned to different jobs - to the kitchens, the hospitals, the farms, the workshops and the factories, often producing choice articles of furniture and decorations for the SS guards. The will to live and survive among the inmates was great. Former lawyers, merchants and intellectuals, none of them young, built a sewage system, a railroad, a sanitary water system, often with little more than their bare hands. The utmost care was taken to prevent epidemics by keeping the crowded rooms and hallways meticulously clean. No easy task with one toilet for as many as 150 persons, many of them old and infirm. Smoking was definitely forbidden - But the SS did a booming business by selling cigarettes in the Ghetto. Another important taboo was that of having children.

Those who survived the first few weeks in Theresienstadt and had time to adjust their minds and bodies to the meagre rations and the life of sardines in a can, began to recover their spirit. They held on to life, waiting for the day of liberation. Many could not wait long enough. From time to time, deportations were ordered, when possible on Jewish holidays. As a result, 90,000 persons went through Theresienstadt during its four years of existence, usually to the notorious Auschwitz extermination camp in Poland. Few of those deported have survived.

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Fritz Fabian, 1877-1967](#)

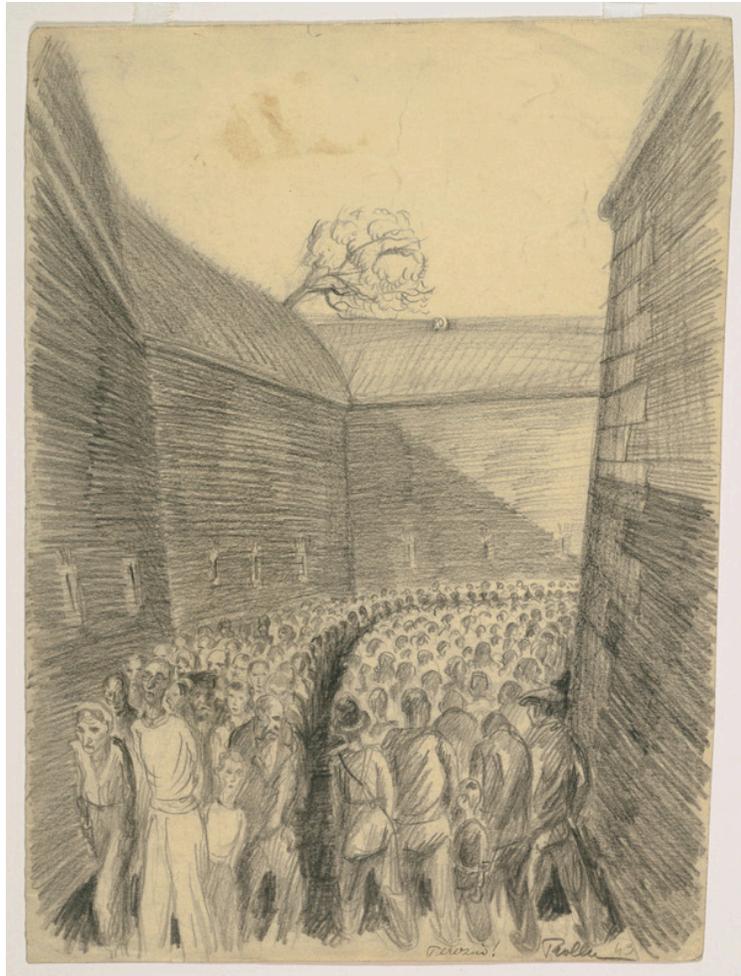
Title: Fortification gate

Date Created: 1944

Summary: Gate resembling a triumphal arch, is set among lawn beds and shade trees, here shown in bright sunlight. Child standing in foreground, couple sitting on bench on right. This painting was created for the 1944 International Red Cross visit to Theresienstadt.

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Norbert Troller, 1896-1981](#)

Title: Terezin (50,000 Jews trapped)

Date Created: 1943

Summary: Two tightly packed crowds of people of all ages moving in opposite directions, between large stone walls. This drawing was created by Troller in secret and not approved by the camp's Nazi administration.

Norbert Troller's Caption: "50,000 Jews trapped in the ramparts of ghetto-kiz fortress Terezin"

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Fritz Fabian, 1877-1967](#)

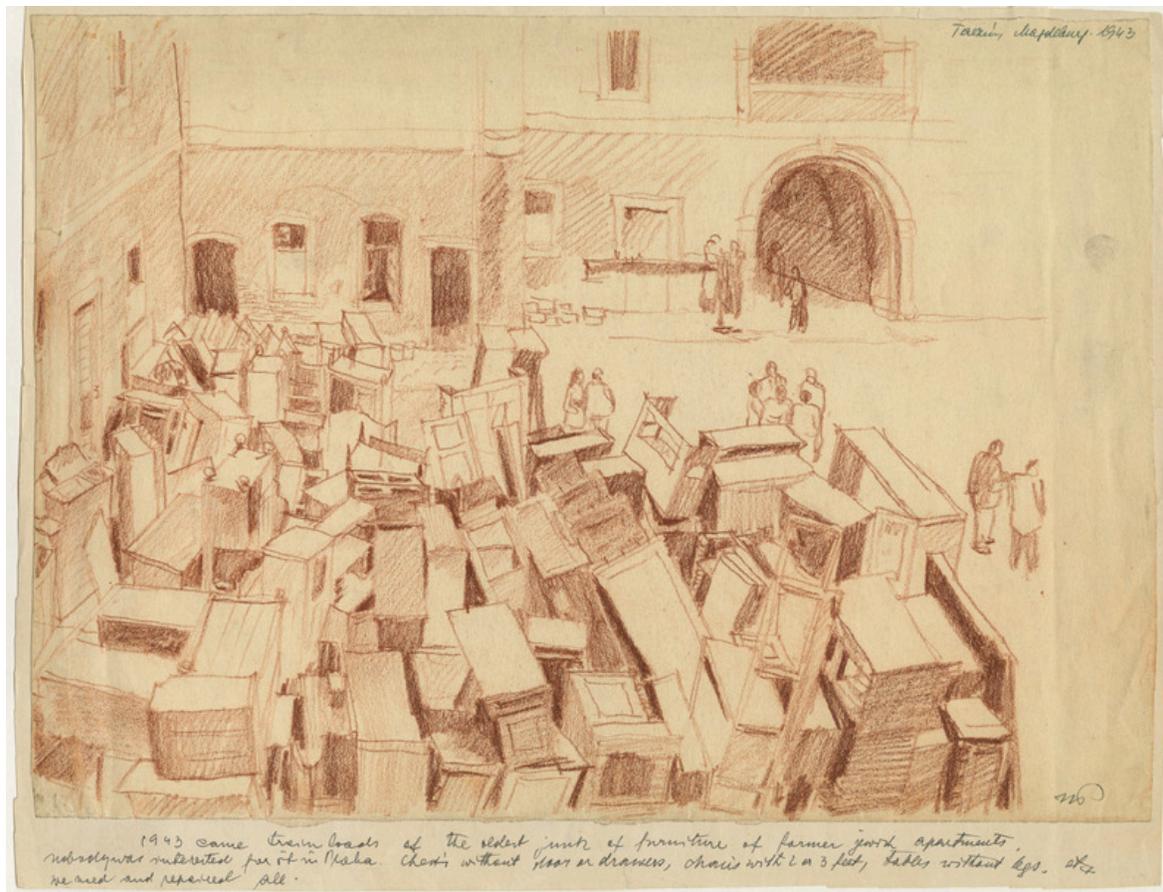
Title: Courtyard in Theresienstadt

Date Created: circa 1944

Summary: A bright, clean courtyard with a building with green trim surrounding it. People are sitting around, sunning themselves, including a woman with a baby stroller. This image was likely made for the 1944 International Red Cross visit to Theresienstadt.

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Norbert Troller. 1896-1981](#)

Title: Terezin (Junk furniture)

Date Created: 1943

Summary: Courtyard filled with furniture. Caption in margin along bottom reads: "1943, came trainloads of the oldest junk furniture of former Jewish apartments, nobody was interested in it in Praha. Chests without doors or drawers, chairs with 2 or 3 feet, tables without legs etc. We used and repaired all."

Troller's Caption: "Disintegrating furniture taken from abandoned Jewish apartments in Prague and dumped in a courtyard of one of the barracks."

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Fritz Fabian, 1877-1967](#)

Title: City Square, Theresienstadt

Date Created: 1944

Summary: A colorful scene of a plaza with people sitting on benches and strolling. The plaza is full of leafy trees. This painting was created for the 1944 International Red Cross visit to Theresienstadt.

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Norbert Troller, 1896-1981](#)

Title: Terezin: Starving people

Date Created: 1942

Summary: Group of people leaning over in two different directions. This drawing was created by Troller in secret and not approved by the camp's Nazi administration.

Troller's Caption: "A sad, tragic daily occurrence, old people -always starved -throw themselves over the heaps of kitchen refuse, decaying vegetable, potato peels, which they devoured. They die of diarrhea within 2 weeks."

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Fritz Fabian, 1877-1967](#)

Title: Courtyards, Theresienstadt

Date Created: circa 1944

Summary: Courts created in open spaces in the back of a few low houses in zig-zag formation, with greenery and children on a bench. This painting was created for the 1944 International Red Cross visit to Theresienstadt.

ARTIFACTS

ART OF TEREZÍN



Artist: [Henry Behr, 1897-1981](#)

Title: Theresienstadt, Men's Quarters, L-306

Date Created: 1944

Summary: The interior of the bunk room, which held 90 men, where the artists were quartered. It shows the bunks and hanging laundry. A woman weeps next to one of the bunks.

Behr's Caption: "A woman in the foreground is grieving for her dead husband."
Signed and dated lower right.