



AND A CHILD
SHALL LEAD

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

FOR EDUCATORS

Dear Educator,

Welcome to Ovation Theatre Company's production of *And a Child Shall Lead!* Thank you for your support of our production—on behalf of the cast and crew, we are thrilled to present this to you. This is a powerful play filled with hope and beauty amidst the background of the sorrow and despair of the Holocaust. The production you will soon see is based on a true story, and the events and plot mirror those of history. Because this is such weighty subject matter, and because understanding the history is key to understanding the play, I have compiled a resource guide to help prepare your students for the show. Included in this guide is information about the ghetto-concentration camp at Terezín, where this show takes place, in addition to information about the underground magazine *Vedem* and the poetry which are so important to the play. Also included are actual poems and articles from the magazine written by the children of Terezín, as these are featured prominently in the production.

This guide was compiled with two main purposes: first, to tell the story of Terezín; and second, to tell this story as it relates to *And a Child Shall Lead*. Thus, all of the information and activities are relevant to developing a fuller understanding of the setting of the play and the play itself, so you may use any or all of it to prepare your students. Because you know your students best, feel free to adapt or modify the lessons and activities to give them the best possible experience.

If your students are unfamiliar with theatre etiquette, please have a conversation with them before seeing the performance about what it means to be a good audience member. This production will be performed in a unique black box theater with audience members seated on three sides of the stage. This is a small venue with approximately 140 seats. Because of the intimacy of the space, we ask the audience to eliminate extraneous noise. This means completely turning off all cell phones or other devices as well as refraining from eating or chewing gum in the theater and talking during the performance. In addition, we prohibit the taking of photos or videos, because these can be distracting to the actors and fellow audience members. Finally, because the entrances to the theater are used by the actors during the performance, we ask the audience to remain seated during Act I and Act II. With all this said, the audience is encouraged to laugh, clap, cry, and otherwise respond to the performance. Following the performance, you are invited to a talkback with members of the cast and creative team where you and your students will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

I hope you enjoy the show, and I cannot wait to present this beautiful play to you and your students!

Sincerely,

Tim Gore

Director and Curriculum Coordinator

AND A CHILD SHALL LEAD

Written by **Michael Slade**

ARTISTIC TEAM

Directed by **Tim Gore**

Stage Managed by **Betsy Brown**

Produced by **Ovation Theatre Company**

Set Design by **Tim Gore**

Set Construction by **Charlie Backman, Chris Lang, and Matt Sprague**

Costume Design by **Tim Gore and Meg Gore**

Props Coordination by **Cecilia Lomanno**

House Management by **Jenna Sullivan**

Vocal Coaching by **Betsy Brown**

Choreography by **Katy Gore**

Lighting Design by **Tim Gore**

Poster and Program Design by **Tim Gore**

Resource Guide Written and Compiled by **Tim Gore**

Business Management by **Dan Gore**

Resource Guide Design by **Tim Gore**

CAST

Miroslav Weiss **Sawyer Broderick**

Eva Hellerová **Cailean Anderson**

Pavel Hoffman **Landon Sprague**

Gabriela Winterová **Michaela Horan**

Alena Lederová **Mabel Backman**

Martin Löwy **Luke Thibodeau**

Erik Košek **Martin Moskowitz**

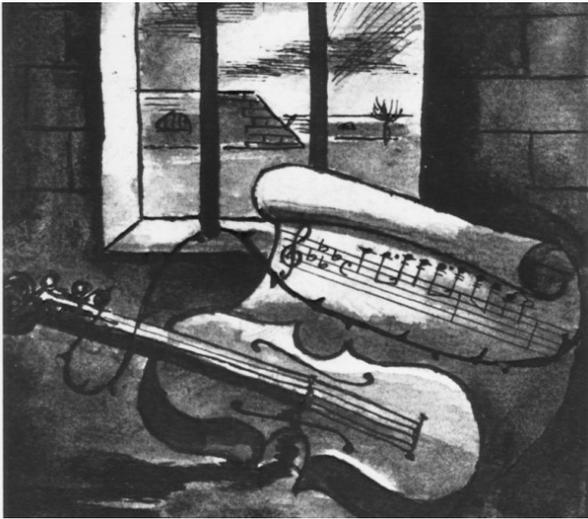
Jana Hellerová **Paige Lang**

CONTENTS



5 Terezín

9 In the Lead



14 Voices of Terezín

17 The Play



TEREZÍN

INSIDE THE WORLD OF *AND A CHILD SHALL LEAD*

Once an Austrian fortress, the city of Terezín (German: *Theresienstadt*) in modern-day Czech Republic became the site of a ghetto-labor camp under Nazi Germany. The camp would serve as a way-station for tens of thousands of Czech, German, Austrian, Dutch, and Danish Jews before the death camps (“The History of Terezín”).

Over its four-year history, approximately 140,000 Jews came through the camp at Terezín. Of these, 90,000 were deported to death camps in the east, where nearly all of them were killed, and 33,000 perished in the camp. And of the 15,000 children of Terezín, fewer than 100 survived.

History and Occupation

Following the Munich Agreement of 1938, the Germans annexed the Sudetenland along the border of Czechoslovakia, and in March of 1939, the rest of the Czech provinces were occupied and organized into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. This included the city of Terezín, which then served as a Nazi military base until 1941. Reich Security Main Office Chief Reinhard Heydrich then tasked SS First Lieutenant Siegfried Seidl with reorganizing the city to function as the primary way-station for Jews of the Protectorate to be transported to the east. Seidl ordered the import of 1,000 Jews for labor to accomplish this task, and



on November 24, 1941, the first Jewish prisoners arrived in Terezín.

Under Heydrich’s command, Terezín served multiple purposes. The camp’s primary purpose was to serve as a way-station to the death camps. However, the camp also served as a destination for specific groups of Jews, primarily from Germany and the Protectorate. One such group was the elderly; because the general public was told that those deported to the east were used for productive labor, many were concerned as to the efficacy of labor provided by those over 65 years old. Heydrich’s solution was to have Terezín function as a “retirement settlement”, going so far as to market it as a “spa town”. For the same reasons, decorated or disabled veterans of World War I were also housed at Terezín.

Later, in order to maintain the German facade, another



A photograph of children in Terezín taken by the Red Cross on their visit in 1944

group of Jews was also deported to Terezín: prominent Jews, including artists or musicians. Deporting them to the east likely would have resulted in their deaths, possibly raising questions or concerns from citizens, domestic or abroad, who were familiar with them.

Of course, deportation to Terezín did not provide the safety promised by the Germans to many of the Jews. This was due



Terezín women preparing food outdoors

to the fact that the Germans intentionally made conditions poor to increase the death rate. Overcrowding, malnutrition, and the spread of diseases such as typhus resulted and did not spare the elderly, the veterans, or the celebrities (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Ghetto or Labor Camp?

While many sources call Terezín a ghetto, and many others call it a concentration camp, neither fully captures Terezín's unique role in Nazi Germany. Terezín had characteristics of a ghetto: a settlement area for Jews which functioned with some semblance of a city, including a (German-instituted) Jewish self-government, art and cultural events, and civilian clothing. However, forced labor, meager food rations, imports and deportations, the location, and the high death rate give Terezín characteristics of a concentration camp. In reality, the city was meant to function with all these purposes in mind. For that reason, the term "ghetto-labor camp" might be the most accurate description—however, even this does not encompass Terezín's role in German propaganda.

The German Facade

Propaganda was a main purpose of the Terezín settlement and another reason the camp was unique. The city was meant to serve as the "Model Jewish City"—the Germans

presented bright, happy images of Terezín to the outside world to show the purported kind treatment of the Jews in concentration and labor camps. For this reason, Terezín enjoyed several unique privileges. Children were separated from adults to remove them from potential despair or depression, and they were better housed and better fed than other residents. Art and music were sometimes allowed as well. However, these privileges were granted sparingly and under specific circumstances, such as the beautification campaign launched in 1944 in preparation for a visit from the Red Cross (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Terezín was also the subject of a propaganda film made in 1944. Jewish prisoner and former director and actor Kurt Geron was selected to direct the film, which was titled, “Terezín: A Documentary Film of the Jewish Resettlement”. However, it was often referred to as “The Führer Presents the Jews with a City”. The film highlighted the allegedly happy lives led by the Jews in Terezín, particularly the elderly and the children. It also benefited from the aforementioned beautification campaign.

After completion of the film, Geron and the cast and crew were deported to Auschwitz, where they perished in the gas chambers (Sigward).

Art and Culture

In an environment pervaded by fear and death, forms of art were often a means of expressing emotion or a welcome distraction from the circumstances. And thanks to Terezín’s role as a destination for prominent Jews, including artists and musicians, culture flourished inside the ghetto walls. Artists depicted scenes from Terezín or from memory. Music was written and operas were performed—most notably the children’s opera *Brundibár*. A library held more than 10,000

volumes written in Hebrew. Jews were even free to practice their religion and celebrate Hanukkah.

Poetry in particular was common, especially among the children. With the circumstances providing no shortage of subject material, many children translated their feelings and experiences into poetry. Many of these poems have been preserved, and the play *And a Child Shall Lead* features them quite prominently. In addition, both children and adults held poetry readings and recitations (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

For many in Terezín, art in all its forms was the only source of joy and the only escape from the surroundings. But the question remains: Why did the Germans allow the Jews’ culture to flourish the way it did? As part of the German



A Survivor's Words

Survivor of Terezín and Auschwitz H.G. Adler wrote a detailed history of Terezín, in which he was cynical of the citizens' propensity and desire for art and culture. He compares Terezín and Auschwitz:

"The deliberate deception of the Germans led to the self-delusion of the prisoners [of Terezín] . . . In Auschwitz sheer despair was supreme, and the reality of the situation was unambiguously recognized. And even if some vital, indestructible spark still flickered, or if a person could escape in spirit by some magical transformation into a more pleasant delusion, reality was nevertheless seen for what it was, and basically nobody was deceived. It was not that way in Terezín, where almost anything could be repressed, where illusion ran rampant and hope, merely dampened by anxiety, suffused everything that lay under thick fog."

propaganda campaign in Terezín, the Jewish self-government created a cultural department in an attempt to "normalize" conditions in Terezín—at least insofar as they were presented to the outside world. Public artistic performances and displays were permitted for propaganda purposes—"Concerts and plays that had been presented in attic lofts and courtyards were now performed in the halls of municipal buildings" (Lamberti 107). However, the individual creation of art and poetry was still punishable, and artists took great risks in creating these—those who were discovered were arrested or deported, and artist Otto Ungar's hand was crushed by an SS officer, leading to the amputation of two of his fingers (Lamberti 105).

The Red Cross Visit

Following the deportation of over 400 Danish Jews to Terezín, Danish government officials insisted in 1943 that

the Danish Red Cross visit the settlement area to report on the conditions (Berenbaum). Expecting to find deplorable conditions similar to those in overcrowded Polish ghettos, with people starving on the streets and heavy police presence, the Red Cross officials were shocked to find just the opposite. The Jews had sufficient living space and seemed to be well-fed. The children looked happy and were seen playing or performing in the children's opera *Brundibár*. A soccer game was being played in the town square and spectators were cheering loudly (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Of course, the scene presented to the Red Cross upon arrival in Terezín was not at all an accurate depiction of life in the camp. Upon Danish insistence of the visit, the German officials designed an elaborate beautification campaign, entitled "Operation Embellishment", to make the town look bright, cultured, and normal. Rose bushes and gardens were planted along the streets, and fresh coats of paint were applied to the barracks and housing. Fake shops and cafés were built ("The History of Terezín"). Over 7,500 Jews were deported out of Terezín to reduce overcrowding, and the top bunks in the barracks were removed, leaving only two bunks. On the day of the visit, many of the German officers dressed in civilian clothes and wore yellow stars and walked on the streets and throughout the city as the Red Cross passed by. "Mayor" Epstein, the head of the Jewish self-government, accompanied Terezín commandant SS First Lieutenant Karl Rahm along with the Red Cross to tour the town. The soccer match and opera performance were scheduled specially for the occasion (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

The propaganda was successful. The Red Cross issued a favorable report.

IN THE LEAD

VEDEM AND THE REPUBLIC OF ŠKID

Behind closed doors, shutting out the oppressive eyes of the SS, the boys of the room called Home One in barrack L 417 wrote stories and poems and drew illustrations, all for their self-published weekly magazine they called *Vedem*, Czech for *In the Lead*. Each story was published under a pseudonym or nickname, keeping them anonymous in case a copy of their magazine should fall into German hands. Their work was meant to serve as an inspiration to themselves and to the other residents of Terezín.

Valtr Eisinger

Pseudonym: Tiny

As the tutor and head of Home One, Professor Valtr Eisinger (called “Tiny” due to his short stature) became the leader and father figure to the boys of L 417. He was selfless and fearless, willing to put his life in danger for the sake of the magazine. Zdeněk Ornest, a survivor of the war from Home One, notes that “[a]t the time we didn’t fully appreciate what the consequences [of writing the magazine] might have been . . . But it was certainly very, very dangerous for Eisinger” (Křížková 37).

The idea to call Home One “The Republic of Škid” (pronounced “shkid”) came from Eisinger, who took the acronym from the title of a book about a post-revolutionary

Russian orphanage entitled **Shkola imeni Dostoyevskovo**. Feeling a kinship with the boys of that story, Eisinger’s pupils took on the name for themselves, explaining it to outsiders as an acronym for “Škola I. Domov”, or “School First Home”.

This paints a picture of Eisinger’s relationship with the boys of Home One: one of love and respect. Ornest notes that he and his comrades were particularly enthralled with Eisinger’s storytelling, which would later manifest itself in several editorials written for *Vedem*.

Eisinger gained the boys’ trust almost as soon as he became head of Home One, thanks to his “tremendous altruism” and remarkably even temper—Kurt Jiří Kotouč, a survivor of Home One, like Ornest, notes that he and everyone matured greatly under Eisinger’s care (Křížková 38). Perhaps his greatest quality was his tolerance—not just of the myriad personalities and behavior of his pupils, but of all ideologies and philosophies. While he maintained a strong belief in a new, socially just world order, he encouraged the boys to form their own opinions. Believing that knowledge was prerequisite to opinion, he arranged for people of different viewpoints and ideologies to visit Home One and speak to the students. This encouragement of free thought, Ornest remarks, contributed not only to their own maturity but also

Editorial

FROM *VEDEM*

“Loonie” and “idiot” are the most frequently used terms in the vocabulary of Terezín boys. Lentil soup, youth leader, the hot weather, today’s football match, Madrich, the evening program, liver pate—everything is idiotic. The term loonie is applied to all the above mentioned human beings, including friends, siblings, mothers, and fathers. There is no hypocrisy here: the nine- or fifteen-year-old inhabitant of L 417 will calmly call his friend an idiot. The statement that a proposal, the Madrich’s order, a book written by an Olbracht, a Hostovský, a Poláček, is idiotic, is pronounced in a loud voice, with such certainty and matter-of-factness that it is persuasive.

You get used to these two words, and sooner or later they become a part of your vocabulary too, along with a number of other Terezín slang words that we shall discuss elsewhere.

Loonie and idiot. But there comes suddenly a sobering-up. You pass a building where faces old and young are pressed against barred windows—loonies. These pale and terrified faces have a common feature; I can’t quite express it—strange faces, but there is one I know

and it recognizes me. An older woman starts to laugh hysterically. Her front teeth are missing, she drools disgustingly. She hisses at me, I approach the window, she leans forward and passes me a crumpled, filthy piece of paper. Buy my slippers, buy my slippers, the woman offers in a desperate voice, the woman in whom I have recognized the mother of one of the boys from L 417. Four months ago she was a young, thirty-five-year-old woman, today she is old, gray-haired, and toothless. “I’m starving, I’m starving, buy my slippers...” she pleads, quite hoarse by now. But all I could hear at that moment was the clear, boyish voice of her son, a hundred strong, young voices, crying, “Loonie, Loonie!”

Boys, do you realize that every word has its meaning? You don’t refer to tall people as giants, to toddlers as dwarfs, to blond heads as canaries, to brunets as Schwarters. If you did, they would regard you as—**LOONIES!**

Boys, respect your comrades, respect yourselves. You are responsible not only for your actions, but also for your words. Every one of your mothers may one day have to sell slippers made of crumpled paper from behind the barred windows of the madhouse.

—Pepek

to the magazine that was to come.

Josef Stiasny

Pseudonym: Pepek

As assistant to Valtr Eisinger, Josef Stiasny (“Pepek”) was well-loved and admired by his students. His storytelling, like Eisinger’s, was noteworthy, and his editorials were fascinatingly philosophical. Kotouč recalls seeing Stiasny as “a very dear person and an understanding friend” (Křížková 138). Others saw him this way as well—Stiasny could often be seen talking to a group of boys about various problems and offering solutions, always kind and never forceful. Kotouč notes that the boys felt so comfortable with him that they

would confide in him whatever they felt. Stiasny’s gentle reproach is evident throughout his editorials.

Petr Ginz

Pseudonym: nz

Petr Ginz was the extremely bright and charismatic leader of the boys. “He was a boy everybody just had to like”, according to Kotouč (Křížková 62). Gifted in writing, editing, and overall leadership, Ginz spearheaded the idea for the magazine and later the magazine itself, taking on the role of editor. While *Vedem* was supported by Eisinger and Stiasny, it was Ginz’s creation and passion. These qualities and efforts became the inspiration for Miroslav’s character in *And a Child Shall Lead*.

Ginz's situation in the camp was unique; unlike most of the boys, his parents remained in Prague when he was deported. For this reason, he frequently received parcels from home and sometimes was able to send a letter to Prague (although the letters had to be written in German, of which Ginz did not have extensive knowledge). In fact, Ornest notes that the only time Ginz was not working on the magazine was when he was opening his latest parcel. The others were often envious and liked to poke fun at him for it, but Ginz enjoyed it and typically shared his gifts. Kotouč remembers that despite his envy, Ginz was "altogether a wonderful fellow" (Křížková 62).

Ginz's past experience in editing a magazine in Prague before being transported to Terezín helped him run Vedem with efficiency. Both Kotouč and Ornest note that it was Ginz's persistence that allowed the boys to release an issue every Friday. Ginz also took on the role of convincing the others to write, draw, or contribute in any way to the magazine. As Kotouč says, "He extracted contributions in any way he could. He browbeat, he appealed to people's consciences, and sometimes, to save the situation, he wrote the entire issue himself under various pseudonyms. He was completely

Rambles Through Terezín

FROM *VEDEM*

A room in the entrails of the Kavalír barracks [home for the aged prisoners] with the stink of the latrines, bad light, physical and mental muck. The only worry is to eat one's fill, to sleep enough and...? What more? An intellectual life? Can anything else exist in these underground burrows but a mere animal instinct to satisfy bodily needs? And yet it is possible! The seed of creative thought does not perish in mud like a star shining in the dark.

This is exemplified by the blind artist Berthold Ordner. One day Jiříček Schubert and I went to see him so that I could write about him for our magazine. We quickly introduced ourselves and then I asked him to tell me something about himself. Unfortunately he spoke German so that I did not understand him too well.

"Ever since I was young," he told us, "I was receptive to anything occurring before my eyes. When my blindness came, I had to give up drawing. I could not see what I was drawing, nor could I feel and touch it. In short, I lacked the third dimension. So I turned to wire." And with these words, he took from his shelf a wonderful peacock made of thin brass wire. I could not admire the beautiful lines and the workmanship of the piece enough. The eyes on the peacock's tail were fashioned from a piece of wire twisted into a spiral.

"How do you go about your work?" I asked.

"I first shape the frame, and when it seems right to me I work out the details, the muscles, etc., with thin wire."

"How can you remember the shapes of your subjects so accurately after not having seen them for more than twenty-five years?"

"It's only thanks to memory. I can recall the objects I saw in my youth and now, twenty years later, I shape them as I understood them at the time. It is a method similar to what the expressionists use. Look at a house, then fashion it mainly in terms of its contours and shape. Colors are of secondary importance. This is what I do,

» *continued on next page*



A photo of Petr Ginz taken a few years before his deportation to Terezín.

» *continued from previous page*

only the interval between observing the model and recreating it is somewhat longer. Twenty-five years! So much has changed in the meantime! I used to exhibit my works in America, France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and elsewhere. Museums fought over my creations. And now here in Terezín I suffer from hunger, I haven't enough wire to work."

"Do you still mind being blind?" I asked him.

"Sometimes, when I am thinking, I do not miss my sight at all. At such moments, in my mind, I leave the filth here completely behind. These are my happiest moments."

I looked at him in admiration. But then Jiříček the Joker glanced at his watch and realized with terror that it was already eight o'clock. We quickly took our leave of the blind artist (he promised to look us up sometime) and hurried out. We welcomed the fresh air after the fusty atmosphere in the depth of the Kavalír barracks and soon we safely reached our home.

—nz

Leader

FROM *VEDEM*

Yes, I take refuge in a leading article as the last possible experiment to justify myself in your eyes—the public. I don't write to achieve my reputation as a poet, but because I cannot express myself in any other way. I cannot express myself in any other way because circumstances once taught me and compelled me to do so. It happened in the orphanage. I was a somewhat spoiled child of strange opinions and manners, raised in luxury and contemptuous of the poor beggarly riff-raff. When I came to the orphanage my reputation preceded me, and then accompanied me like an identification tag for the five years I was there. I had to confide in someone, so I confided in paper. Paper is silent, it can take anything. I could pour out my anger, I could weep, and I could rejoice. I know from experience that when a person has a sincere friend to whom he can air his complaints, he does not write poems, at least not poems about his own personality, or only very few. For me,

wrapped up in the work" (Křížková 64). In addition to these methods, Ginz would often barter items from his parcels for contributions. Ornest says that for Ginz, the magazine was a matter of personal pride—that Ginz "devoted all his time to it. Every day, all week long, he worked on the next issue" (Křížková 64). It is even more impressive to note that in the absence of a typewriter, with the occasional help of one volunteer, Ginz transcribed every copy by hand.

Hanuš Hachenburg

Pseudonym: Ha-

Hanuš Hachenburg was the resident poet of the Republic of Škid; although many of the boys wrote poems, including Ornest, Hachenburg was the most prolific. He was often quiet and reserved, and he writes that he did not intend for everyone to fully understand his poems, but that he rather used poetry as a means of expressing himself.

poems are what friends are to other people. They are what I cannot tell anyone, because they would laugh at me. The incomprehensibility of my former poems was intentional. I wrote them so that not everyone would be able to understand them, penetrate them, and then laugh at me. I wrote them so they could only be fully understood by someone who was somewhat like me, or who had had similar experiences. I am not giving you a guide to understanding my poems. But I hope that after you have read these few lines and some of the little verses of mine that follow, I will have succeeded, not in becoming popular, but perhaps in coming closer to people of my age, something I have longed for over the last five years.

—Ha-

VOICES OF TEREZÍN

THE POETRY OF CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST

For many in Terezín, art was a welcome escape from the ghetto walls. For others, it was a means of self-expression. Still others saw it as a way of documenting their own history, meant to be preserved for the future.

Encouraged by adult tutors or leaders, many of the children wrote their own poetry. Many authors used pseudonyms, similar to the magazine *Vedem*, and for the same reason. Their words tell a thousand stories—of sorrow, of fear, of beauty, and of hope. Most of all, these poems allow us, so many years later, to glimpse the world through their eyes.

Following are a few of the poems written by the residents of Terezín (Volavková).

The Butterfly

BY PAVEL FRIEDMANN

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 here, in the ghetto.

At Terezín

BY TEDDY

When a new child comes
Everything seems strange to him.
What, on the ground I have to lie?
Eat black potatoes? No! Not I!
I've got to stay? It's dirty here!
The floor—why, look, it's dirt, I fear!
And I'm supposed to sleep on it?
I'll get all dirty!

Here the sound of shouting, cries,
And oh, so many flies,
Everyone knows flies carry disease.
Oooh, something bit me! Wasn't that a bedbug?
Here in Terezín, life is hell,
And when I'll go home again, I can't yet tell.

Terezín

BY MIF

The heaviest wheel rolls across our foreheads
To bury itself deep somewhere inside our memories.

We've suffered more than enough,
Here in this clot of grief and shame,
Wanting a badge of blindness
To be a proof for their own children.

A fourth year of waiting, like standing above a swamp
From which any moment might gush forth a spring.

Meanwhile, the rivers flow another way,
Another way,
Not letting you die, not letting you live.

And the cannons don't scream and the guns don't bark
And you don't see blood here.
Nothing, only silent hunger.
Children steal the bread here and ask and ask and ask
And all would wish to sleep, keep silent, and just to go to
sleep again...

The heaviest wheel rolls across our foreheads
To bury itself deep somewhere inside our memories.

Birdsong

ANONYMOUS

He doesn't know the world at all
Who stays in his nest and doesn't go out.
He doesn't know what birds know best
Nor what I want to sing about,
That the world is full of loveliness.

When dewdrops sparkle in the grass
And earth's aflood with morning light,
A blackbird sings upon a bush
To greet the dawning after night.
Then I know how fine it is to be alive.

Hey, try to open up your heart
To beauty; go to the woods someday
And weave a wreath of memory there.
Then if the tears obscure your way
You'll know how wonderful it is to be alive.

Birdsong II

ANONYMOUS

This poem was written as a response to "Birdsong"; by a different author.

The poor thing stands there vainly,
Vainly he strains his voice.
Perhaps he'll die. Then can you say
How beautiful is the world today?

Tears

BY ALENA SYNKOVÁ

And thereafter come...
tears,
without them
there is no life.
Tears—
inspired by grief
tears
that fall like rain.

I'd Like to Go Alone

BY ALENA SYNKOVÁ

I'd like to go away alone
Where there are other, nicer people,
Somewhere into the far unknown,
There, where no one kills another.

Maybe more of us,
A thousand strong,
Will reach this goal
Before too long.

»» ACTIVITY

Your Voice

The children of Terezín used poetry to express their emotions, describe their lives, or inspire or entertain others. Imagine yourself in Terezín, and ask yourself the following questions:

- What are surroundings like?
- What kinds of people do you see on the streets?
- Who is in the camp with you?
- What events have you experienced?
- What was your life like before being deported?
- How do you feel about your life now?

Jot down a few answers to these questions, and then use the space below to write a poem describing your experiences or feelings in the camp.

Title: _____

THE PLAY

Set in Terezín, beginning in 1942, the play *And a Child Shall Lead* is a realistic depiction of the lives of the children who lived there. The play encompasses many of the events and ideas previously mentioned in this resource guide.

Poetry is featured prominently throughout the show. Seventeen of the poems from Terezín are included in the script and delivered as monologues by the characters. These poems were specifically selected by the playwright to reveal the characters' personalities, thoughts, and circumstances. The timing of each poem in the play and the person delivering it were intentional decisions. Not only do these poems provide an added layer of beauty to the show, they also establish the setting, allow for reflection, and serve as an important connection between the play and the historical events it portrays.

The creation of the newspaper *Vedem* was a poignant part of life in Terezín, and this too becomes part of the plot of *And a Child Shall Lead*. Several of the actual articles written for the newspaper have been written into the script, delivered as monologues like the poetry. In addition, the newspaper's inception and publication are featured.

Following is a description of each of the characters in the play. Page numbers refer to the Playscripts, Inc. version of *And a Child Shall Lead*, written by Michael Slade.

Miroslav Weiss

Age: 15

Modeled after Petr Ginz, the character of Miroslav is a natural leader and father figure to the children of the barracks. He spearheads the creation of the newspaper *Vedem*.

"The Germans make their propaganda movies, and show them to the world. And the world chooses to believe their lies. No one is going to magically come to our rescue . . . So it's up to us! Skits and games aren't enough. These are our lives! This is our future! We have to fight back in whatever ways we can!" (34).

Eva Hellerová

Age: 14

As Jana's older sister, Eva takes on a motherly role in the barracks, looking out for the safety and protection of the children. This is often difficult for her, and she longs for the simpler times of her childhood.

"I was once a little child, three years ago. That child who longed for other worlds. But now I am no longer a child, for I have learned to hate. I am a grown-up person now, I have known fear" (71).

Pavel Hoffman

Age: 14

Pavel is often aloof and sometimes does not feel part of the family the others have created. He is skeptical of Miroslav's

enthusiasm and would rather wait out the war in safety than take the risks Miroslav presents.

"We're going to stop breaking the rules. We're going to stop this stupid school. We're going to stop giving them reasons to kill us" (22).

Gabriela Winterová

Age: 12

Gabriela has a bright personality and loves music. She is trusting and kind and sees the best in people. Gabriela is very willing to help—sometimes to a fault.

"Dear Diary, this morning I stood looking out at the countryside through the fortress walls. The blue of the river, the red, yellow and purple of the spring wildflowers and butterflies . . . But closer, I saw a group of adult prisoners being marched away from the walls. I don't know where . . . Some of the prisoners were crying. They were all so thin and grey. Will I look like that soon too? . . . Later, I heard gunshots in the distance. Maybe the guards were shooting rabbits" (27-28)

Alena Lederová

Age: 11

Alena is often misunderstood. She doesn't fully comprehend her circumstances, but she knows that there may not be a happy ending. She deeply misses her home and often uses poetry to express her feelings.

"When I grow up, I'm going to be a Nazi. Then I'll be treated well" (26).

Martin Löwy

Age: 10

Martin comes from a rich background. When he first arrives in Terezín, his naïveté makes him a target of teasing and bullying. To escape, he turns to art and creates drawings, sometimes of his surroundings, sometimes from memory.

"You don't understand. I want to speak to someone in charge. I'm Martin Löwy. I didn't do anything wrong. They came to our house. They chased away the servants . . . I got separated from my parents. I tried to tell them, but no one would listen. I was pushed into a boxcar with all these people I didn't even know. They closed the doors. The train started moving, and when it stopped, we were here. It's a mistake" (17-18).

Erik Košek

Age: 8

Erik is fiery and bold. He is unafraid to stand up for what is right, and wants nothing more than to fight back against his oppressors. He looks up to and idolizes Miroslav.

"I don't care about my stupid writing. I care about fighting back . . . With whatever I can. Rocks, sticks...my fists" (68).

Jana Hellerová

Age: 6

As the youngest in the camp, Jana relies on the others, particularly her older sister Eva, for comfort and guidance. She struggles to grasp the concept of death and does not understand that she is not living a normal childhood.

"I saw an old man sitting on the ground . . . He was very old. And very skinny . . . He only had one tooth . . . He was trying to eat some crusts of bread. Only he couldn't because the bread was too hard for that one tooth to chew. But he kept trying. I told him some of my teeth fell out, too. But that Eva said new ones would grow" (58-59).

SOURCES

- Berenbaum, Michael. "Theresienstadt." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 20 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/place/Theresienstadt. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.
- Fritta, Bedrich. *Violin and Sheet Music Behind Bars*. 1943. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt-cultural-life?series=18010. Accessed 4 Jan. 2020.
- "The History of Terezín." *Terezín: Children of the Holocaust*, www.terezin.org/the-history-of-terezin. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.
- International Red Cross. *Jewish Children in Terezín*. 23 June 1944. *Terezín: Children of the Holocaust*, www.terezin.org/the-history-of-terezin. Accessed 4 Jan. 2020.
- Křížková, Marie Růt, et al., compilers. *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 2013.
- Lamberti, Marjorie. "Making Art in the Terezin Concentration Camp." *New England Review (1990-)*, vol. 17, no. 4, 1995, pp. 104–111. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40243120.
- "Map: Terezin, Czech Republic." *The Defiant Requiem Foundation*, 17 Mar. 2017, www.defiantrequiem.org/concert-performances/defiant-requiem/acclaim/httpwww-chicagotribune-comentertainmentmusicreich/. Accessed 4 Jan. 2020.
- Petr Ginz. *Holocaust.cz*, 19 July 2011, www.holocaust.cz/en/history/people/petr-ginz-2/. Accessed 31 Dec. 2019.
- Preparing food in Theresienstadt*. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt-concentrationtransit-camp-for-german-and-austrian-jews?series=18010. Accessed 4 Jan. 2020.
- Sigward, Daniel. *Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Brookline, Facing History and Ourselves, 2017.
- Slade, Michael. *And a Child Shall Lead*. Playscripts, Inc., 2007. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. "Theresienstadt." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.
- Volavková, Hana, editor. *I never saw another butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezín Concentration Camp, 1942-1944*. New York, Schocken Books, 1993.