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From: People of the Books <jewishlibraries@gmail.com>
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To: webchair@ajlsc.org
Subject: People of the Books

People of the Books

AJL Western Regional Conference 2009 on Holocaust Literature

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On Sunday, February 1, 2009, seventy-seven people gave up watching part of the Superbowl to attend the 7th annual AJL Western Regional Conference on Jewish Literature for Children. This year the conference focused on using literature to teach about the Holocaust.

The morning started with coffee and rugellah. After all, what's a Jewish event without good food? Everyone registered in the library at the Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance and then heard a panel discussing using Holocaust literature. The panel was moderated by Adaire Klein, library director of the Wiesenthal Center. Other panelists were Lisa Silverman from Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, Hamida Bosmajian from the University of Seattle, Talma Shultz from Facing History and Ourselves, and Eric Sundquist from UCLA. Each panelists shared some information and then answered questions from the floor.

Everyone then toured the Museum of Tolerance exhibit on the Holocaust including a look at some of the archival materials and primary documents.

After lunch, attendees chose to go to one of the small group sessions:

Viewing the Holocaust Through the Lens of Literature with Hamida Basmajian and Eric Sundquist
or **Holocaust Literature as Part of the Curriculum in Elementary, Middle, and High School** with Lisa Silverman, Talma Shultz, and Adaire Klein.

The day concluded with an autograph and dessert party. Authors in attendance were Sonia Levitin, Susan Goldman Rubin, April Halprin Wayland, Sylvia Rouss, Gretchen Woelfle, Ann Stamper, Joan Stuchner, Karen Winnick, Erica Silverman, and Barbara Bietz.

A copy of the full program is below. The panel and one of the sessions was taped and will be available as a podcast shortly on the AJL web page.

B'shalom,
Susan Dubin
AJL President

**Jewish Literature for Children
Western Regional Conference
Sunday, February 1, 2009**

Sponsored by Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library, Association of Jewish Libraries,
Association of Jewish Libraries of Southern California, Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance,
UCLA Department of Jewish Studies

PROGRAM

9:00 – 4:00	Manuscript Consultations
9:00 – 9:30	Registration and coffee
9:30 – 9:35	Greetings and Introduction
9:35 – 10:45	Panel on Teaching the Holocaust through Literature

Adaire Klein, Moderator, is the founding Director of Library and Archival Services at the Simon Wiesenthal Center-Museum of Tolerance. She holds a B.A. in Hebrew Literature and a M.A. in Near Eastern and Judaic studies from Brandeis University.

Hamida Bosmajian, Professor Emerita of the English Department at Seattle University, is the author of *Sparing the Child. Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust* (Routledge , 2002) and *Metaphors of Evil. Contemporary German Literature and the Shadow of Nazism* (U. of Iowa Press, 1979). The Children’s Literature Association honored *Sparing the Child* with the ChLA Book Award in 2004.

Talma Shultz is an instructor and lecturer with *Facing History and Ourselves*, a nonprofit organization that offers teacher training programs for Middle School and High School Holocaust Education.

Lisa Silverman is the director of the Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library at Sinai Temple. She leads classes and book groups, along with organizing community programs on literature. She is the children’s editor of Jewish Book World magazine and also a reviewer of children’s literature for various other publications. She has often been a featured speaker at library conventions or literary conferences. She serves as a judge for the children’s division of the National Jewish Book Award and also for the “Once Upon a World” Book Award.

Eric J. Sundquist is the UCLA Foundation Professor of Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. Professor Sundquist received his B.A. from the University of Kansas and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. He has also taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and Vanderbilt University and is the author or editor of twelve books, the most recent of which are *King’s Dream* (2009); *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (2005), which received the Weinberg Judaic Studies Institute Book Award.

11:00 – 12:30	Museum Tour Everyone will go through a metal detector when entering the Museum. All bags and purses will be x-rayed. We ask that the following items not be brought to the Museum: cameras, food, candy, gum, beverages, sharp objects, mace and electronic devices.
12:45 – 1:45	Lunch
2:00 – 3:30	Small Group Sessions with Panel Members

I. Viewing the Holocaust Through the Lens of Literature: Hamida Basmajian and Eric Sundquist

FRAMING HOLOCAUST NARRATIVES AS CHILDREN’S LITERATURE— AUTHOR, GENRES, AND READERS: *Hamida Basmajian*

- o Perception of “Children’s Literature” as an academic field of study.
- o Authorial motivation to write Holocaust narratives as children’s literature.
- o Contexts and readers of Holocaust narratives for North American children and youths. The aim of testimony in the context of children’s literature.
- o Structures, Conventions, Genres—

- § The survivor journal, memoir, or autobiography as privileged form – ethos of the survivor as hero, the testimony of the survivor as victim.
- § Fictionalized autobiographies based on authorial childhood memory.
- § Fictional Holocaust narratives and acquired memory—possibilities and limitations.

The following narratives will be referred to as examples during this session: The Diary of Anne Frank, Ruth Minsky Sender *The Cage* and *The Holocaust Lady*, Carol Matas *Daniel's Story*, Gudrun Pausewang, *The Final Journey*, John Boyne, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, Doris Orgel, *The Devil in Vienna*, Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic* and *Briar Rose*. **There will also be some handouts helpful to teachers and librarians.**

ISSUES IN HOLOCAUST LITERATURE, THE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE: *Eric Sundquist*

- o Early responses, before “the Holocaust.” Hersey, Uris, and others.
 - o Priority of testimony and its relation to fiction. Elie Wiesel and others.
 - o The problem of authenticity and hoaxes. Kosinski, Wilkomirski and others.
 - o The Americanization of the Holocaust. Anne Frank’s Diary and others.
 - o Second-generation approaches. Philip Roth, Thane Rosenbaum, and others.
- Eric Sundquist will discuss the evolution of Holocaust literature, particularly from the American perspective, from the immediate aftermath of the war through late-twentieth-century responses by those of the second generation, including children of survivors. Issues to consider include the priority of testimony and its relation to fiction; the problem of authenticity and hoaxes; the “Americanization” of the Holocaust; and the self-reflexive and sometimes postmodern strategies of some second-generation writers.

II. Holocaust Literature as Part of the Curriculum in Elementary, Middle, and High School: Lisa Silverman, Talma Shultz, and Adaire Klein

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST USING PICTURE BOOKS: *Lisa Silverman*

Lisa Silverman has prepared an extensive annotated bibliography of illustrated books dealing with the Holocaust and will present a PowerPoint presentation examining the good and not-so-good literature of the genre. Grade appropriateness and literary value will be discussed.

FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES: A MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM: *Talma Shultz*

3:30 – 4:00 Autograph Party and Dessert

Please visit our Jewish Children’s Literature Marketplace and the Museum of Tolerance Gift Shop!

This conference has been made possible through the generous donations of Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library, The Association of Jewish Libraries, the Simon Wiesenthal Center-Museum of Tolerance, UCLA Department of Jewish Studies, and the authors, professors, and editors who have contributed their time and expertise.

****Manuscript Consultations available****