A Wartime Diary:

On August 4th, 1944, Nazi soldiers burst into an attic over a warehouse in Amsterdam, Holland. An informer had told them that eight Jewish people were hiding there. The Nazis found the Frank family and eight other Jews. They had hidden in these cramped quarters for two years. While searching the attic, the sergeant picked up Mr. Frank’s briefcase and asked if there were any jewels in it. Mr. Frank said that it contained only papers. Disappointed, the Nazi soldier threw the papers onto the floor. The little group that has spent twenty-five months in the attic was sent off to concentration camps.

But there remained on the floor the diary of a thirteen-year-old girl, Anne Frank. At the time, she and her family were in hiding. Anne had been describing the isolation and constant fear in which they lived. In 1945, Anne died at the age of fifteen in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Canadian soldiers helped liberate the camp at the end of the war, but it was too late for Anne and thousands of other Jewish people who died in that concentration camp.

Anne Frank’s diary was discovered and published. It remains one of the most moving stories of a young Jewish girl and her will to survive the Nazi persecutions. The following two passages from her diary tell part of her ordeal:

20 June 1942:

*After May 1940 the good times were few and far between: first there was the war, then the capitulation and then the arrival of the Germans, which is when the trouble started for the Jews.  Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees: Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were required to turn in their bicycles; Jews were forbidden to use streetcars; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3 and 5 P.M.; Jews were required to frequent only Jewish-owned barbershops and beauty parlors; Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between 8 P.M. and 6 A.M.; Jews were forbidden to go to theaters, movies or any other forms of entertainment; Jews were forbidden to go rowing; Jews were forbidden to take part in any athletic activity in public; Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8 P.M.; Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes. Jews were required to attend Jewish schools, etc.*

9 October 1942

*Our many Jewish friends are being taken away by the dozen. These people are treated by the SS without a shred of decency, being loaded into cattle trucks and sent to Westerbork, the big Jewish camp. Westerbork sounds terrible; only one washing cubicle for a hundred people and not nearly enough lavatories … It is impossible to escape; most of the people in the camp are branded by their shaved heads … we assume that most of them are murdered. The English radio speaks of their being gassed.*

Analysis Question:

1. Define “persecution.” List 3 types of persecution that Anne Frank describes in the excerpts from her diary.



Above: Anne Frank at Her Desk