

*One single Anne Frank moves us more than the countless others who suffered just as she did  
but whose faces have remained in the shadows*  
Primo Levi

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### **@CaraAnneFrank**

An Instagram profile in Italian **@CaraAnneFrank** has also been created for the occasion of this documentary film release: like contemporary Kitties, we can all talk to Anne and the survivors telling them about our thoughts and our emotions on the theme of memory. This is an invitation addressed to students and readers on the occasion of the release of **#ANNEFRANK. PARALLEL STORIES**, which aims to highlight once again how absolutely contemporary the message and the testimony given by Anne, Arianna, Sarah, Helga, Andra and Tatiana is as a tool to decipher the current world and as an antidote against all forms of racism.

### **ANNE FRANK (1929-1945)**

Anne Frank was given a red and white diary by her father for her thirteenth birthday on 12th June 1942. Her last entry was written on 1st August 1944, three days before her arrest in the "Secret Annex", located at 263 Prinsengracht Street in Amsterdam. Miep Gies and Bep Voskuij, two of Otto Frank's workers, who helped hide them, found Anne Frank's diary after the family had been deported. Miep kept it in the hope that one day she would be able to return it to Anne. After the war, when she discovered that Anne had died in the concentration camp, Miep gave the notebooks to Anne's father, Otto, the only surviving member of the family, who decided to have them published. It was a painful decision to make, determined by the desire to grant his daughter's wish: "I want to go on living even after my death". Otto chose the title Anne herself would have wanted: "Het Achterhuis", 'The House Behind' (the secret, hiding place).

### **THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS**

**Helga Weiss** was born in the same year as Anne Frank. She spent her childhood in Prague until, aged 12, she was deported to the Terezin camp along with her entire family. This was followed by Auschwitz, Freiburg and Matthausen. Since she was a child Helga has kept a diary composed mainly of drawings, an idea suggested to her by her father who would always urge her to describe what she saw around her. She continued writing and drawing as a prisoner. Helga's diary was saved because she managed to give it to an uncle who hid it in a wall.

**Tatiana and Andra Bucci** are two sisters from Rijeka, Croatia. When they are arrested, together with their mother and a cousin, they were aged 4 and 6. First taken to Risiera di San Sabba concentration camp in Trieste, they were then deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. They were mistaken for twins and for this reason they were put in the shack for children destined for Dr. Mengele's experiments. They thought they were saved mainly thanks to the strong bond that united them. On 27th January 1945, when the Soviets arrived in Auschwitz, only 650 children of various nationalities were alive, of whom less than 50 under the age of 10. Among these survivors were Andra and Tatiana.

**Arianna Szörenyi** also lived in Rijeka. She had a Hungarian father, and a mother from Trieste in the N.E. Italian region of Friuli, where the family later moved to. She was eleven when she was deported and went through four concentration camps, from the Risiera di San Sabba to Bergen Belsen. She survived but lost seven members of her family. "One night I had to go out to the toilet and I met Irma Grese - I turned around and she had a gun pointed straight at me. I managed to make my way back to the Kinderblok, but I was so scared. Since then I've always tried to merge with the crowd, to hide as much as I can and I've succeeded."

**Sarah Montard** is of Polish origin and lives in Paris. After escaping the Vel d'Hiv roundup she went into hiding with her mother for two years until 1944 when she was reported, arrested and then deported to Auschwitz - Birkenau. "The worst, most terrible thing was the flame from the crematorium: night and day it rose and made a terrible noise, lighting up the sky that was pink with the flames. After what I experienced, I'm not afraid of anything anymore". Sarah was sixteen years old, and like Anne she was also at Bergen-Belsen.

**Doris Grozdanovičová**, born in the Czech Republic, was deported with her family to the ghetto-concentration camp of Terezin in January 1942. She was separated from her father and brother. Her grandmother died immediately after arrival and her mother also died of illness and from the hardships endured there. Her father was deported to Auschwitz and never returned from the camp. Doris survived Terezin, from the ages of 16 and 19, during which she took care of a flock of sheep. Her photo with the flock, taken by a worker in the ghetto, is a rare piece of evidence of life in Terezin that managed to escape the Nazi propaganda machine.

**Fanny Hochbaum**, born in Paris, was one of thousands of Jewish children who went into hiding during the war. The family sent her away in an attempt to save her from deportation. She says this about herself: "I am a child in hiding, bearing witness to the memory of my grandfather, who died of hunger in the Lodz ghetto; of my father, who was deported on Convoy nr. 4 and returned; of my husband's father, who was savagely murdered and drowned by the 'kapos' at Auschwitz. I tell the story of the Holocaust... I even make children laugh. Madame - they tell me – you tell us about the Holocaust but you don't frighten us. That's not why I tell you about it, I do it so you too can say that it's not a story, it's not a legend, it's the truth". She has since moved to live in Israel.

## **HISTORIANS AND EXPERTS**

### **Marcello Pezzetti**

Historian at the Cdec (Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation), member of the historical commission of the 'Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah' in Paris, on the council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum Centrum Edukacji and Italian delegate on the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust, Remembrance and Research (Ihra).

### **Michel Berenbaum**

Rabbi, historian, and university professor at the American Jewish University of Los Angeles, at Yale University in Florida, at George Washington University in Maryland, an expert in Holocaust studies. He has written numerous books and produced several films and documentaries that have won an Academy Award and an Emmy Award. He has served as deputy director of the President's Commission on the Holocaust (1979-1980), was director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) project (1988-1993) and director of the Holocaust Research Institute (1993-1997) of the USHMM. From 1997 to 1999, he served as President and CEO of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. He is currently director of the Sigi Ziering Institute.

### **Francesca Dego**

Internationally renowned violinist, 30-year-old Francesca graduated from the Conservatory of Music in Milan, and has performed in major national and international orchestras. Her family history is marked by the loss of 46 relatives who never returned from Auschwitz. She has collaborated with other violinists to give voice to the violins of the Holocaust.

### **Nathalie Zajde,**

She is a French professor of Clinical Psychology (PhD in 1993), Child Psychopathology and Paediatrics. As a specialist in psychotrauma she created the first discussion groups in France for the survivors and children of the survivors of the Holocaust. She has published four books on the psychology and psychopathology of Holocaust survivors and their descendants, "Enfants de survivants" (1993), and "Guérir de la Shoah" (2005) éditions Odile Jacob Paris, "Les enfants cachés en France." Paris, Odile Jacob.

### **Simon Daval**

Photographer. In a photographic report, he has retraced the journey of the deportation of French Jews, from Drancy to Auschwitz.

### **Yves Kugelmann**

Journalist – and member of the Anne Frank Fonds, Basel.

### **Alain Granat**

Director of Online Magazine JewPop, Paris.

### **Ronald Leopold**

Historian and Director of the Anne Frank Huis, Amsterdam.

## PLACES FEATURED IN THE FILM

**Bergen-Belsen, Germany:** the camp where Anne Frank and her sister Margot died within days of one another in February 1945, shortly before liberation by British troops, was a Nazi concentration camp in Lower Saxony. Bergen-Belsen was used until 1943 as a prisoner of war camp, and subsequently also as an internment camp for Jews, common criminals, political prisoners, gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals. Between 1943 and 1945 it is estimated that about 50,000 people died in the camp, of which more than 35,000 of typhus in the first five months of 1945. A total of more than 70,000 people died in the camp. When the camp was liberated, the facilities had to be burned by British soldiers in order to combat the typhus epidemic and lice infestation. It took weeks to bring the situation under control, weeks during which the deaths of more than 13,000 former prisoners, now too weak to survive, could not be avoided. Although the SS had tried to hide evidence of their inhumane practices by destroying documents and forcing the prisoners to bury or burn the corpses of their comrades to ashes, the grounds of the concentration camp were still littered with thousands of corpses when, on April 15th, 1945, British troops took possession of them. Now Bergen-Belsen is a cemetery scattered with mass graves with gravestones in memory of some of the victims, and among these are those bearing the names of Anne and Margot Frank. Next to the camp, a memorial retraces the history of the camp and of the atrocities committed there.

**Westerbork Transit Camp, Holland** was an internment and transit camp during World War II. More than 100,000 Dutch Jews and Gypsies were gathered there to be transported to other concentration camps. The Frank family also went to Westerbork before being moved to Auschwitz and then to Bergen-Belsen for Anne and Margot. Westerbork is located near the town of Assen, not far from the German border. From Westerbork internees were mostly transported to the extermination camps of Auschwitz and Sobibor on Polish territory, to the German concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen and to the "model" ghetto of Theresienstadt in what is now the Czech Republic. This "transit" involved about 107,000 individuals and of these, after the end of the war, only 5,200 remained alive, literally "re-emerging" mostly from just the camps of Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt. 93 rail convoys were organized for their transport. The largest, most moving monument in the Westerbork camp is the one located on the former parade ground, consisting of an impressive number of 102,000 red bricks, one for each of the victims. Each brick has a symbol at the top that for the Jews is the star of David, while for the Roma, also expelled from Dutch territory, the symbol is a flame. Etty Hillesum, Edith Stein and Anne Frank were prisoners at Westerbork: none of the three survived the Holocaust.

**Holocaust Memorial Centre, Skopje, North Macedonia:** the setting for an interview with one of the greatest Holocaust historians, Michael Berenbaum. The American professor set up the new memorial dedicated to the memory of the Macedonian Jews who perished. The Skopje Holocaust Memorial is probably the most important in Eastern Europe. The most striking aspect is how vibrant and active it is, keeping in constant contact with the Yad Vashem Museum and launching very important educational initiatives to make the history of the Macedonian Jewish community known to younger generations in Macedonia. The history of the Macedonian Jews culminated in the tragic fate they succumbed to during the Nazi period under Bulgarian occupation. It was the Bulgarian troops who allowed passage for the Nazis to enter the country, which proved fatal for the Macedonian Jewish community. Of the approximately 8,000 Jews residing there before Nazism, only 350 survived, many of them emigrating to Israel: almost 90% lost their lives during the Holocaust. Many Jews were killed in the Treblinka camp, where they arrived after six days of travel in unspeakable conditions to be immediately exterminated in the gas chambers.

**Holocaust Memorial, Milan, Italy:** a museum area dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust victims in Italy. It is located under the Central Station, at street level, in front of the former Royal Post Office building, and was conceived with the aim of "creating a place of memory and a place for dialogue and encounter between different religions, ethnic groups and cultures". From the so-called "Platform or Track 21", where previously only postal trains were loaded and unloaded, hundreds of Jews, partisans and political deportees were loaded onto cattle wagons headed for the concentration camps of Auschwitz - Birkenau, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbruck, Flossenbug, Fossoli and Bolzano. We know the exact number of RSHA (Reich Main Security office) convoys departing from Track 21: there were 20 (12 Jews only, 5 political and 3 mixed). While only fragments of information remain about the deportees (for example, we know for certain that a convoy left in January 1944 with 605 passengers, and the fate that befell them). Today, the Memorial is a place of memory and meeting for the survivors of the Nazi extermination, as well as a formative place for new generations. Here Andra and Tatiana Bucci, survivors of the camps, were interviewed as well as one of the greatest experts on the Holocaust, Marcello Pezzetti.

**Holocaust Museum, Paris, France:** a place dedicated to the memory of 76,000 French Jews deported by the Germans to Nazi concentration camps during World War II. It has the first as well as the most important collection of archives on the Holocaust in Europe, with over a million records and books on the subject, accessible to everyone. It is the largest European centre for preservation, research, and spreading awareness of Holocaust Remembrance. We visited it while the intergenerational forum of the children of the Holocaust was taking place – it was an extraordinary moment with survivors, families and new generations meeting to exchange views in one of the most moving, vibrant places in the battle against oblivion, discrimination and racism.

**Holocaust Memorial, Drancy, France:** is named after the North-Eastern suburb of Paris where the camp was located. The area was chosen in August 1941 by the French collaborationist authorities as an internment camp for foreign Jews in France, under the general control of German Security Police. Later, in June 1942, it became the main transit camp for the deportation of Jews from France. From July 1, 1943, the Germans began running the camp directly until its liberation in August 1944. Almost all of the Jews deported from France passed through the Drancy transit camp. About 70,000 prisoners were held between August 1941 and August 1944. With the exception of a small number (mostly members of the French resistance), the vast majority of prisoners were Jewish. Only a few hundred prisoners were able to obtain release during the first year of the camp's existence. Many died of suffering and hardship or illness. There were 64,759 deportees in 64 transport convoys: about 61,000 to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Added to the survivors from the extermination camps are the 1,500 prisoners present at the camp during liberation. Among the victims there were also about 6,000 children, often the first to be separated from their parents and sent to their deaths.

**Theresienstadt Ghetto and Concentration Camp, Czech Republic:** was an internment and deportation facility used by German forces during the Second World War between 24th November 1941 and 9th May 1945. Incorporated by the Third Reich in 1938, the city, 60 km from Prague, is known for having gathered in the camp "the greatest artists, the flower of Mittel-European Jewish intellectuals, painters, writers, and musicians" with "a strong presence of children." Presented by Nazi propaganda as an "exemplary Jewish settlement", it was in fact a place to gather and sort prisoners to be sent mainly to the extermination camps of Treblinka and Auschwitz. According to data confirmed by the Yad Vashem Institute, based on a total of "155,000 Jews who passed through Theresienstadt until its liberation, on May 8, 1945, 35,440 perished in the ghetto and 88,000 were deported" to be exterminated. The final count (arrivals and deaths) also includes the approximately 15,000 Jews who arrived at the camp in the final two to three weeks, transferred from other concentration camps. Doris Grozdanovičová spent her youth in Theresienstadt: today, at over 93 years of age, she is one of the people who can bear testimony to what life was like in the ghetto.

**Museum of the Resistance and Deportation, Besançon La Citadelle, France:** founded in 1971 by Denise Lorach, a surviving deportee. The Museum houses permanent exhibitions, a large archive of documents and many images including thousands of negatives, microfilms and audio tapes. Here we met Simon Daval who, together with his fellow photographer Francois Lami, retraced the journey of the death of French Jews from Drancy to Auschwitz.

**Auschwitz Concentration and Extermination Camp:** is, in everyone's imagination, the embodiment of the Holocaust death camp. It was initially built as a concentration and sorting camp for Polish prisoners. A second and a third camp, Birkenau and Monowitz, were built followed by other camps. Counting the sub-camps, Auschwitz in 1945 totalled at least 45 other small concentration camps and then mass extermination facilities to which hundreds of thousands of people were deported. At Auschwitz the first gas chamber and the crematoria have been preserved intact. Other four gas chambers were located in Birkenau. There were also 2 more. One and a half million Jews died there before the camp was liberated by Soviet troops on 27th January 1945. After it was shut down, the Auschwitz concentration camp became a symbolic place, dedicated to the memory of the victims. It has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979. Anne Frank and her family passed through this camp, but also some of the survivors who are the protagonists of the documentary.

**Pinkas Synagogue and Jewish Cemetery in Prague, Czech Republic:** Helga Weiss, one of the survivors of the Holocaust taking part in this documentary, is from Prague, the city where the filming of the historic Pinkas synagogue took place, its walls covered with the names of thousands of victims of Nazi extermination and the gravesite of the Jewish cemetery. The Pinkas Synagogue is part of the Jewish Museum in Prague and, since the middle of the last century, has served as a memorial for Holocaust victims in the Czech Republic. The walls inside the synagogue are covered with inscriptions: the names of the approximately 80,000 Czech Jews who did not survive Nazi extermination during the Second World War. The names are arranged in alphabetical order according to the Czech country they came from and, in most cases, are

accompanied by two dates: date of birth and the date of last information received. The Pinkas Synagogue, first Renaissance and then Gothic, is located in the Jewish Cemetery district.

**Portuguese Synagogue Amsterdam, Holland:** built in the centre of Amsterdam in 1675, it was at the time the largest synagogue in the world. For Dutch Jews and exiles, it was a landmark. The building is still used today as a place of worship. Since its consecration in 1675, no electrical or heating system has ever been installed there; the only artificial light comes from the 1,000 candles that adorn the many brass chandeliers. Sand on the wooden floor serves to protect it from dirt. The Portuguese synagogue is an integral part of the Jewish cultural district of Amsterdam.

**Anne Frank House Amsterdam, Holland:** the house where the Frank family and four other people lived in hiding for more than two years to escape the Nazis, is a place of memory and meeting for millions of young people who not only want to know about the story of little Anne, but about the millions of people who were exterminated simply because they were Jews.

**Anne Frank Fonds, Basel, Switzerland:** the foundation set up by Otto Frank to commemorate the story of his family and his daughter Anne. Otto Frank, the only one of the eight guests from the secret refuge to survive the concentration camps, later settled in Switzerland where he set up the foundation dedicated to his daughter.