

of becoming what I would so like to be, and what I could be, if ... there weren't any other people living in the world.

Yours, Anne

Afterword

Anne Frank's diary ends here. It is a work utterly complete in itself, and its eloquence requires no further comment. But the experiences Anne described become perhaps even more meaningful when seen in their immediate historical context. It is the purpose of this brief afterword to provide at least the outlines of that context and to bring Anne's own story to its conclusion.

I

The German Empire, which since the beginning of the twentieth century had been the strongest power in Europe, collapsed in 1918 as a result of its defeat in World War I. The Emperor, or Kaiser, fled to Holland and a group of democratic politicians in Berlin proclaimed the establishment of a German republic.

The leaders of the new republic sued for peace, and, in April 1919, sent a delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference. Contrary to their expectations, the German representatives were not permitted to help frame the Treaty of Versailles, by which peace was restored to Europe. Instead,

the victorious Allies—among them Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States—submitted the finished treaty to the German delegates who were told that if they did not sign, Germany would be invaded. The treaty placed upon Germany sole responsibility for the war. It stripped Germany of its overseas colonies and of valuable territories in Europe. It virtually disarmed the once great military power, and it demanded that Germany pay the cost of all civilian damage caused by the war. The leaders of the German republic had no choice but to accept these terms.

Within Germany, the Treaty of Versailles was the subject of widespread indignation. Many Germans thought that their nation was no more responsible for causing the war than any other and that Germany had been unfairly singled out for blame. Nationalists spread the false belief that republican politicians had administered a "stab in the back" to the undefeated German Army in November 1918, and branded these politicians the "November criminals." To many Germans this theory proved a comforting rationalization for their country's defeat.

The new German government, which became known as the Weimar Republic since its constitution was drawn up at Weimar, faced a number of serious problems. One of these problems was its identification with the unpopular Treaty of Versailles. Another was the fact that no political party was able to achieve a majority in the Reichstag, or parliament, so that the government was always a combination of several parties.

Opposition to the republic came from many quarters. Middle-class Germans who had lost everything in the inflation of the early 1920s blamed the republican government for their distress. Unemployed workers, impatient with the conservative republic, looked for solutions to their problems in radical movements of both the left and the right. Industrialists, landowners, and Army officers longed to replace the republic with a regime more in keep-

ing with the autocratic and militaristic traditions of the old empire.

Although there were also many in Germany who hoped that the experiment in democratic government would succeed, the years immediately following the war saw the establishment of a number of political parties dedicated to the destruction of the republic and the reversal of the Treaty of Versailles. One of these was the National Socialist German Workers'—or Nazi—Party. Like other extremist groups, the Nazis appealed to all sorts of discontented people—to demobilized soldiers and youthful idealists, to unemployed workmen hostile to "the interests," and to businessmen and property owners fearful of a Communist revolution, to cranks and criminals and outcasts of every kind. The Nazi program combined the strong appeals of nationalism and socialism. It promised to restore Germany's power through the establishment of a totalitarian state; it also promised to redistribute the national wealth and to provide jobs for everyone.

The man who became leader, or Führer, of the Nazi Party in 1921 was an Austrian-born former house painter named Adolf Hitler. Shrewd, fanatical, never hesitating to use lies or brute force to achieve his ends, Hitler had the ability to rouse an audience to hysterical enthusiasm. Hitler and the Nazis blamed the decline in Germany's power on Jews and radicals and preached the supremacy of the so-called German or Aryan race. The Germans, Hitler declared, were the "master race," creators of all civilization and fitted by nature to rule the world. To provide ample living space for this race, Hitler planned to expand Germany's frontiers in the east, carving out a great empire in Poland and Russia at the expense of the Slavic inhabitants of those lands. The Slavs, he said, were a subhuman people fit only to be slaves. In Hitler's New Order, they would either serve the "master race" or be exterminated.

During the 1920s the Nazis were prominent only in the

south German state of Bavaria. In the increasingly prosperous years between 1924 and 1929 most Germans regarded them as ruffians and clowns of no great importance. But with the onset of the worldwide depression in 1929, ever greater numbers of Germans began to listen to Hitler. His simplifications of complex issues satisfied them. His promise of a glorious national future appealed to their pride. His willingness to assume total responsibility if given total power relieved them of the unaccustomed burdens of citizenship in a democracy. In the elections of 1930 and 1932, the Nazis became the largest party in the Reichstag.

Hitler's most virulent racial attacks were directed against the Jews. Despite the many distinguished contributions Jews had made to German life over the centuries, Hitler's propaganda described them as an alien, inferior race. Not only were they non-Aryan, he said, but they were the originators of all those doctrines hostile to Nazi aims—Communism, pacifism, internationalism, Christianity. In Hitler's view, as long as Jews remained in Germany, they were a constant source of ideological infection and a threat to German racial purity.

The racial theories Hitler adopted, like his nationalism, had deep roots in the German past and appealed strongly to many Germans. After 1930, the 1000-year-old Jewish community in Germany, numbering half a million people, watched the rapid rise of the Nazis with mixed disbelief and foreboding.

On January 30, 1933, the aged president of the republic, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, appointed Hitler Chancellor of Germany. Hitler proceeded to bring the republic to an end and to establish in Germany a totalitarian regime. Shortly after becoming Chancellor, Hitler demanded that the Reichstag grant him emergency powers for four years. On March 23 the Reichstag gave in to his demands, and then dissolved itself. Thereafter Hitler ruled by decree. All political parties but the Nazis were

outlawed. Churches, labor unions, youth organizations became organs of the state. Every medium of communication—radio, newspapers, motion pictures, books—was used to manipulate public opinion. The majority of Germans supported Hitler or acquiesced in his government, though many were disturbed by his methods. Those who did not support him were suppressed by Storm Troopers or by the dreaded secret police, the Gestapo. Midnight arrests, beatings, and torture at the hands of the Gestapo, imprisonment without trial in concentration camps soon silenced most of Hitler's opponents, or drove them underground.

Hitler did not long delay putting into effect his anti-Jewish program. Jews were promptly dismissed from public office and the civil service. They were not allowed to teach in schools or universities or to work in journalism, radio, the movies, or the theater. Later they were barred from practicing law or medicine or engaging in business. Even private employment was increasingly denied them, so that many lost all means of livelihood. Both by law and by unofficial police terror, Jews were segregated from their Aryan neighbors. Jewish children could not attend schools with Aryans. Jews were forbidden to marry or employ Aryans. Many stores and shops refused to serve Jews or hotels to accommodate them. Emigration, which had been relatively easy for Jews at first, was made increasingly difficult. Many of those who managed to escape from Germany in later years were compelled to leave all their possessions behind.

In September 1939 Hitler launched in the east the war for which he had been preparing since soon after becoming Chancellor. Convinced at last that appeasement of the German dictator would lead only to further aggression, England and France declared war and prepared for the inevitable attack in the west. In eighteen days the German Army, spearheaded by tanks and dive bombers, conquered

Poland. In April 1940, the Germans seized Denmark and invaded Norway. On May 10 Hitler struck in the west. Within a few days his armies had crushed neutral Holland and Belgium and were pouring into France. Unable to withstand the highly mobilized German assault, France surrendered on June 22. The British miraculously rescued their badly mauled expeditionary force from the beaches at Dunkirk and made preparations for the expected German invasion of England. Hitler was now master of most of Europe, and, in June 1941, after unsuccessfully attempting to bomb Britain into submission, Germany attacked the Soviet Union despite the non-aggression pact that Hitler had signed with Stalin in 1939.

Nazi-dominated Europe was a virtual slave empire. On farms and in factories, hungry populations toiled for their Nazi overlords. Thousands of men and women were taken to Germany as slave laborers. The Germans dealt ruthlessly with resistance. The shooting of a German soldier or policeman was avenged by the slaughter of hostages. Captured partisans were tortured and killed in Gestapo prisons. Listening to British broadcasts or possession of anti-German literature were made crimes punishable by imprisonment and death.

Everywhere in conquered Europe the German occupation forces vigorously implemented Hitler's racial policies. For the "Jewish question," as he called it, Hitler adopted the "final solution"—extermination. Special SS (Elite Guard) units following in the wake of the German Army in Russia killed hundreds of thousands of Jews. To deal with the Jews of occupied Europe, the Germans created an efficient apparatus that rounded up Jews and transported them to special extermination camps, many of them in Poland. There the prisoners were worked to exhaustion before being shot or gassed. To Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Chelmo, but especially to Auschwitz, the long, slow trains began to move in 1941, carrying their wretched human

freight to destruction. Before the Nazi nightmare had passed, an estimated six million Jews—men, women, and children—had been systematically murdered. Millions of non-Jews in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, and elsewhere, most of them Slavs, were also victims of the Nazis.

II

Anne Frank was born on June 12, 1929 in the historic German city of Frankfurt. Frankfurt owed much of its commercial and cultural pre-eminence to its Jewish community, of which the Franks were members; the founders of the great Jewish banking family, the Rothschilds, had been natives of Frankfurt. Anne's father, Otto Frank, a respected businessman, could trace his family in the city's archives back to the seventeenth century. For Anne and her older sister Margot, the world of early childhood was a secure place inhabited by loving parents, relatives, and nurses.

Beyond the nursery, beyond the comfortable five-room flat on Ganghoferstrasse, the world was not so pleasant. Otto Frank did not wait for the full force of Nazi persecution to make itself felt. In the summer of 1933 the Franks left Frankfurt. Mrs. Frank with the two girls joined her mother in Aachen, near the Belgian border. Otto Frank went directly to Holland, where he established himself in a food products business. For centuries Holland had provided a refuge for the persecuted. In the 1930s it received many German Jews as it had welcomed French Huguenots in the sixteenth century and English Puritans in the seventeenth. By the spring of 1934, the Franks were reunited and settled in Amsterdam.

During the next few years, while crisis followed crisis and the threat of a second world war increased, Anne Frank lived happily in Amsterdam like any Dutch girl. She

attended the Montessori School, had a host of friends, and discovered with delight that boys liked her.

But all of this began to change once the Germans invaded Holland in 1940. Shortly after the invasion Queen Wilhelmina and her cabinet escaped to England, where they formed a government in exile to cooperate with the Allies. Occupied Holland was ruled by a German high commissioner, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, who would one day be hanged as a major war criminal. The Germans terrorized and exploited Holland as they did other conquered countries. They banned listening to Allied broadcasts, muzzled the press, and suppressed political parties and trade unions. They closed the universities and imprisoned the country's political, military, and intellectual leaders. Thousands of persons were sent to Germany as slave laborers. As the resistance movement grew stronger, the Germans exacted savage reprisals. In Holland, as elsewhere, they imposed harsh anti-Jewish measures. Despite strikes and protests by the brave Dutch, the roundup and deportation of Jews to extermination camps began.

For Anne Frank, life under the German occupation was at first not greatly different from what it had been before. She was compelled to leave the Montessori School and to attend the Jewish Lyceum. But she still had her family and friends, and she was absorbed in the experiences of everyday life. The growing number of anti-Jewish decrees did not weigh heavily upon her.

Her father, however, perceived the direction of events clearly enough. In February 1941 the Nazis launched their first roundup of Jews in Amsterdam. Those arrested were taken to reception camps at Westerbork and Vught and from there shipped eastward into Germany. As the roundups continued, Otto Frank made plans for his family's safety. He had been forced by a German decree to leave his business, but his Dutch associates and employees remained loyal friends. Secretly, a group of rooms at the top

and back of the building on the Prinsengracht Canal that served as a warehouse and office for the business was prepared as a hiding place. On July 5, 1942, the Germans summoned sixteen-year-old Margot to report for deportation. The following morning the Franks slipped away from their home and went into hiding in the "secret annexe." They were soon joined there by a business associate of Otto Frank, Mr. Van Daan, and by the latter's wife and fifteen-year-old son Peter. Later, they invited an elderly dentist, Albert Dussel, to share their refuge.

The eight Jews in the "secret annexe" remained quiet during the day while business was conducted as usual in the lower part of the building. They stirred only at night when the building was deserted. Their friends in the office below—Mr. Koophuis and Mr. Kraler, Miep Van Santen and Elli Vossen—kept their secret, brought food and even gifts, provided what news they could of events in the city. That news, in the fall of 1942, was terrifying. The roundup and deportation of Jews from Holland was proceeding according to plan.

When the Franks went into hiding, Germany was at the height of its conquests. Hitler's empire extended from the English Channel deep into Russia, from the Arctic Circle to North Africa. Gradually, the tide began to turn. In the fall of 1942, the German advance into Russia was checked at Stalingrad. At the same time, in North Africa, the British drove the Germans back from Egypt and, with their French and American allies—the United States having entered the war in December 1941—landed in Morocco and Algeria to the rear of the German forces. While the Russians counterattacked along the eastern front in 1943, the western Allies cleared Africa of Hitler's Afrika Korps, conquered Sicily, and invaded Italy, toppling Hitler's Fascist partner, Benito Mussolini. Daily, Allied air raids over Europe grew in intensity. In June 1944 came the long-awaited Allied invasion of France. For two long years the little

group in the "secret annexe" followed these events over their illegal radio. Joyfully, they looked forward to the day when the Germans would be driven from Holland and they could emerge from hiding.

But on August 4, 1944, following information provided by a Dutch informer, the Gestapo penetrated into the Franks' hiding place. The eight Jews, together with Mr. Koophuis and Mr. Kraler, were taken to Gestapo headquarters in Amsterdam. After a few weeks' imprisonment, Mr. Koophuis was released for medical care. Mr. Kraler spent eight months in a forced labor camp. The Franks, the Van Daans, and Mr. Dussel were sent to Westerbork.

On September 3, the day the Allies captured Brussels, these eight were among the last shipment of a thousand Jews to leave Holland. The prisoners were herded aboard a freight train, seventy-five people to a car. The cars, each with only a small, barred window high on one side, were sealed. For three days and nights the train wandered eastward across Germany, often stopping, backing, detouring. On the third night it reached Auschwitz in Poland. In the glare of searchlights, watched by black-uniformed SS men tightly reining their police dogs, the Jews left the train. On the platform men and women were separated. It was the last Otto Frank saw of his family.

At Auschwitz the healthier prisoners, their heads shaved, worked twelve hours a day digging sod, driven relentlessly by the sadistic *Kapos*, criminals who served the SS as labor overseers. At night they were locked into crowded barracks. Outside the windows they could see the sky glow red above the crematories.

Through the research of Ernst Schnabel, a German writer whose book *Anne Frank, A Portrait in Courage* was published in 1958, some of the events of the last few months of Anne's life have been reconstructed. Auschwitz, a former inmate told Mr. Schnabel, was "a fantastically well-organized, spick-and-span hell. The food was bad, but

it was distributed regularly. We kept our barracks so clean that you could have eaten off the floor. Anyone who died in the barracks was taken away first thing in the morning. Anyone who fell ill disappeared also. Those who were gassed did not scream. They just were no longer there. The crematories smoked, but we received our rations and had roll calls. The SS harassed us at roll call and kept guard with machine guns from the watchtowers, and the camp fences were charged with high-tension electricity, but we could wash every day and sometimes even take showers. If you could forget the gas chambers, you could manage to live."

The prisoners moved like sleep walkers, half dead, protected somehow from seeing anything, from feeling anything. "But Anne had no such protection," another survivor recalled. "I can still see her standing at the door and looking down the camp street as a herd of naked gypsy girls was driven by to the crematory, and Anne watched them go and cried. And she cried also when we marched past the Hungarian children who had already been waiting half a day in the rain in front of the gas chambers because it was not yet their turn. And Anne nudged me and said: 'Look, look. Their eyes . . .'"

In October 1944 Anne, Margot, and Mrs. Van Daan were among a group of the youngest and strongest women selected to be moved to Belsen in Germany. Left alone, refusing to eat, her mind wandering, Mrs. Frank died in the infirmary barracks at Auschwitz on January 6, 1945. Otto Frank, in the men's camp, saw Mr. Van Daan taken off to be gassed. Mr. Dussel was sent back to Germany and died in the Neuengamme camp. When the SS abandoned Auschwitz, in February 1945, to escape the advancing Russians, they took Peter Van Daan with them on the winter march to the west; he was never heard from again. Otto Frank survived to be liberated by the Russians.

Belsen, Anne discovered, was different from Auschwitz.

There was no organization, no roll call, no food or water, only the barren, frozen heath and the starving people looking like ghosts. By January 1945 the Allies had reached the Rhine, but at Belsen typhus raged and hope was dead.

At Belsen, Anne found her school friend, Lies Goossens. "I waited shivering in the darkness," Lies related of the night when Anne was brought to her. "It took a long time. But suddenly I heard a voice: 'Lies, Lies? Where are you?'"

"It was Anne, and I ran in the direction of the voice, and then I saw her beyond the barbed wire. She was in rags. I saw her emaciated, sunken face in the darkness. Her eyes were very large. We cried and cried, for now there was only the barbed wire between us, nothing more. And no longer any difference in our fates.

"I told Anne that my mother had died and my father was dying, and Anne told me that she knew nothing about her father, but that her mother had stayed behind in Auschwitz. Only Margot was still with her, but she was already very sick. They had met up with Mrs. Van Daan again only after their arrival here in Belsen."

Mrs. Van Daan died at Belsen, but no witness marked the date. Margot died at the end of February or beginning of March 1945. "Anne, who was already sick at the time," recalled a survivor, "was not informed of her sister's death; but after a few days she sensed it, and soon afterwards she died, peacefully, feeling that nothing bad was happening to her." She was not yet sixteen.

III

In May 1945 the war ended. Months later, Otto Frank returned to Amsterdam by way of Odessa and Marseilles.

Miep and Elli gave him the notebooks and papers in Anne's handwriting that they had found strewn over the floor of the "secret annexe" after the Gestapo had gone. These were Anne's diary, stories, and sketches. They were all that remained.

At first Otto Frank had copies of the diary privately circulated as a memorial to his family. It was a Dutch university professor who urged formal publication of the book, and with only slight excisions by Mr. Frank *Het Achterhuis* (*The Secret Annexe*) was published in Amsterdam by Contact Publishers in June 1947. The book soon went through several editions. In 1950 it was published in Germany by the Heidelberg firm of Lambert Schneider. The first printing was only 4500 copies, and many booksellers were actually afraid to show it in their windows; but the book caught on rapidly, and sales of the pocket edition, published by S. Fischer Verlag, totaled 900,000. In 1950 the diary was published in France; in 1952, in England and the United States under the title *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. Now, twenty years after its original publication, the book has been translated into thirty-one languages, including Bengali, Slovene, and Esperanto. It has been published in thirty countries, and has sold more than one million copies in hard-cover alone. In the United States the diary and *The Works of Anne Frank*, both published by Doubleday & Company, have sold well over 150,000 copies and the Pocket Book edition of the diary has sold almost four million copies. The diary was also distributed by the Teen Age Book Club and the Book Find Club and was reprinted in the Modern Library. It was serialized by an American newspaper syndicate with an estimated audience of ten million readers, and millions more read it when it was condensed in *Omnibook* and *Compact* magazines. A German translation of the book has been used in the United States as a school reader, and a large-type edition has been published by Franklin Watts, Inc.

In 1955 a play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett based on the diary and called simply *The Diary of Anne Frank* opened at the Cort Theatre in New York. A great success, it received the Pulitzer Prize, the Critics Circle Prize, and the Antoinette Perry Award for 1956. On October 1, 1956, *The Diary of Anne Frank* opened simultaneously in seven German cities. Audiences there greeted it in stunned silence. The play released a wave of emotion that finally broke through the silence with which Germans had treated the Nazi period. For the first time there were widespread expressions of guilt and shame for what Germans had done to the Jews only a few years before.

In Amsterdam, Queen Juliana attended the play's opening on November 27. This was the city where the events of the play had actually occurred, and many Netherlands who had lost families and friends in the extermination of the Dutch Jews were in the audience. "There were audible sobs," the *New York Times* correspondent reported, "and one strangled cry as the drama struck its climax and conclusion—the sound of the Germans hammering at the door of the hideout. The audience sat in silence for several minutes after the curtain went down and then rose as the royal party left. There was no applause."

In the United States, *The Diary of Anne Frank* was made into a motion picture in 1959 and adapted for television in 1967.

But still the story was not finished. With the passing of the years, more and more details of Anne Frank's life became known. In 1958 Ernst Schnabel published his moving book for which he interviewed forty-two people who had known Anne or whose lives had touched hers. In 1963 a Viennese police inspector, Karl Silberbauer, was identified as the Gestapo sergeant who had arrested the Franks in 1944. Silberbauer protested that he had merely followed orders. He was suspended from his post but was later acquitted of the charge of having concealed his past. In Jan-

uary 1966, the Nazi police chief in the Netherlands during World War II, former SS lieutenant general Wilhelm Harster, together with two former aides, was arrested in Munich. The three were charged with having directed the deportation of nearly 100,000 Dutch Jews to Auschwitz. One of their victims had been Anne Frank. At their trial a year later, a former SS major, Wilhelm Zopf, testified that the Franks' betrayer—probably an employee in the warehouse—had received the usual reward of five gulden (about \$1.40) for each of the persons taken from the "secret annexe." The German court sentenced Harster to fifteen years in prison, his accomplices to nine years and five years.

Anne Frank's wish—"I want to go on living even after my death"—has come true. Today the Anne Frank Foundation maintains the building on the Prinsengracht Canal where the Franks hid for twenty-five months as a memorial to Anne Frank. Each year the house is visited by thousands of people from all over the world. The Foundation is also working toward the future by helping to promote better understanding among young people from every part of the world. To this end it has established the International Youth Center, which serves as a meeting place for young people and which holds lectures, discussions, and conferences covering a wide range of international problems.

The Montessori School in Amsterdam is now the Anne Frank school. There are other memorials to her in Germany, Israel, and elsewhere to atone for the unmarked grave at Belsen. But above all, the diary remains. "Her voice was preserved," Ernst Schnabel wrote, "out of the millions that were silenced, this voice no louder than a child's whisper. . . . It has outlasted the shouts of the murderers and has soared above the voices of time."