



Anne Frank Newspaper

Anne Frank Day 12 June 2026

100th birthday of Margot Frank

Most people know Margot primarily as “Anne’s sister” and much of what we know about Margot comes from Anne’s descriptions. Not many know that Margot also kept a diary, but unlike Anne’s, it was lost. Her voice, her thoughts and her perspective are gone forever. Through photos, memories and letters we can today try to get to know Margot a bit better and share her story, who as many other teenagers with dreams and hopes for her future perished during the Holocaust. Let’s find out who Margot was:



On 16 February 1928, Margot Betti Frank was born as the first child of Otto and Edith Frank-Holländer in Frankfurt/Main, Germany. The young family lived with Margot’s grandmother Alice Frank. Later, the family moved to their own apartment in Marbachweg 307, Germany at the time struggled with the aftermath of the First World War and the economic crises, which also affected the Frank family. However, Margot’s mother later said that these years were among the happiest of her life.

When Margot was six years old (Anne four years old) Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP came to power in Germany. Her parents saw no future for their family in Germany anymore and started preparing for a life in Amsterdam, where they moved in December 1933.

After a period of many changes, life became more stable again. Margot started going to school, made a lot of friends. She was eager to learn and discover new hobbies, such as ice skating and alter swimming, rowing and tennis.



Margot and her friend Hetty Ludel.

For many decades now, Anne Frank’s diary has been read by teenagers and young adults around the world. Through each reader, Anne’s legacy lives on, and we can learn from her experiences of discrimination and injustice in society today. Together we can create a more just, discrimination-free society for all, which is as important as ever.

On 12 June, we celebrate Anne’s birthday with “Anne Frank Day”. This annual event provides opportunities for reflection and learning. We want to provide everyone who is interested in Anne, her family and the others in hiding with events and materials to encourage them to take time to discuss current issues and connect them with lessons from the past, to work together to create a better future for everyone.

As we engage with Anne’s story, we learn that she was a happy, versatile, restless and friendly girl who had many hobbies. She was lively and uninhibited. Sometimes she could be insufferable. She was often at the centre of the action, organising memorable events. But what do we know about her sister Margot?

This year would have been Margot’s 100th birthday. This anniversary gives us the chance to learn more about her life. What were her hobbies? What were her plans for the time after the war? What do we know about her time in hiding? By learning more about Margot, we can keep her memory alive and add another perspective to our knowledge.

In connection with Margot’s birthday anniversary, we would like to share the life story of Emílie Machálková, a survivor of the genocide of the Roma and Sinti, who would have as well celebrated her 100th birthday later this year. Her story provides us with an opportunity to learn more about the different layers of Nazi racial policies and it is also a testament to taking action against injustice despite personal risk.

Anne Frank Youth Network in Czechia

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In 1938, Margot got admitted to the Girl's Lyceum due to her excellent marks, which was only a ten-minute bicycle ride from their home in Merwedeplein, Amsterdam. She quickly made new friends and joined the drama club. In the meantime, the **oppression of Jews in Germany became more severe** and Margot was worried about her grandmother and uncles in Aachen. On the night of 9 to 10 November 1938, Jews were attacked all over Germany, with synagogues and shops destroyed. Her two uncles were also arrested. Later, Margot's grandmother and uncles managed to flee the country.

Try to find parts in Anne's diary in which she describes Margot. How does Anne write about her sister? Does the way she writes about Margot change over time?



Margot and her bike on Merwedeplein, May 1939.

In 1940, Germany invaded the Netherlands and brought with it uncertain times for the Frank family and many others. In the beginning they continued with their daily life, but slowly more and more anti-Jewish measures were introduced, **restricting the lives of Margot and her family.**

Things drastically changed, when **Margot received a call-up notice for a labour camp.** The family decided to go quickly into hiding. Margot and her family suddenly disappeared to the outside world. In the secret annex, they tried to keep up as much of a normal life as possible. **Margot studied a lot by herself and read books, mostly about religion and medicine.** After the war she wanted to study medicine to become a doctor. The family and four others in hiding were dependent on the help of employees and friends of Margot's father. They provided food, clothing, books and newspapers.

After more than two years, Margot and the others in hiding were discovered and arrested on 4 August 1944. According to one of the helpers, Victor Kugler, "Margot cried softly". Together with her family, the Van Pels family and Fritz Pfeffer, Margot was deported via Camp Westerbork to the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. On the platform in Auschwitz, men were separated from the women. This was the last time Margot would see her father. Otto Frank remembered: "I will remember the look in Margot's eyes for the rest of my life." On 30 October 1944, Margot and Anne were part of a group of women selected for forced labour in Bergen-Belsen. Edith was left behind in Auschwitz.

Margot Frank died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen. Most likely in February 1945 just before her 19th birthday (the exact date is unknown). Shortly after her death, her sister Anne died as well.

Her father Otto was the only one of the eight people in hiding who survived the Holocaust. During his journey home from Auschwitz, he heard that his wife Edith had died. Otto continued to search for his daughters, but on 18 July 1945, he received news that they had died as well. After the war, he sought out Margot's friends. Jette Frijda told him: "**My friendship with Margot will always remain a beautiful memory.**"

Margot's life was cut short. About what her future could have looked like, her friend Barbara said: "**I don't know what she would have done. But whatever it was, she would have done it brilliantly.**"

Why do you think we should learn about Margot's life?

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Genocide of Roma and Sinti

The Forgotten Genocide: The Fate of Roma and Sinti During the Holocaust

The genocide of Roma and Sinti during World War II represents one of the darkest chapters of Nazi history. Often overshadowed by the Shoah (the genocide of European Jews), this systematic persecution was driven by the same Nazi racial ideology that labeled certain groups as "racially inferior" and "unworthy of life".

A Targeted People

Nazi ideology categorized Roma and Sinti as "racial gypsies" or "mixed-race" ("míšenci"), viewing them as "foreign" ("artfremde") and "less developed". They were victims of deep-seated, traditional prejudices - antiganism - which the Nazis weaponized to justify systematic mass murder.

The Mechanisms of Genocide

The persecution evolved over time, mirroring the "Final Solution" for Jewish populations. The methods included:

- **Mass Murder:** Execution in gas chambers.
- **Forced Labor:** Inhuman work in concentration camps that frequently led to death.
- **Forced Sterilization:** Used as a genocidal tool to prevent future generations.
- **Einsatzgruppen:** In Eastern territories and the Soviet Union, "death squads" murdered Roma and Sinti in "wild," lawless massacres.

Tragedy in the Czech Lands

The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was treated as part of the German "Reich," meaning Nazi plans were executed here with brutal efficiency.

- **Local Concentration Camps:** Between 1942 and 1943, roughly 2,700 men, women, and children were imprisoned in camps at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu. Nearly 540 died in these camps due to catastrophic living conditions.
- **Deportation to Auschwitz:** Starting in March 1943, approximately 4,500 people were sent in mass transports to the "gypsy camp" at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the majority perished.
- **The Scale of Loss:** Out of more than 5,000 Roma and Sinti from the current Czech Republic who were targeted, only about 600 survived to return in 1945.

The Bitter Return

Those who survived the camps returned to a world where they had nothing. Their homes were often destroyed, and their property had been stolen or sold in public auctions. They entered the post-war era with broken health and no place to call home.

A Note on Language

In historical documents, the term "gypsy" ("cikán") was used by the Nazis to categorize people regardless of how they identified themselves. Today, this word is often considered a discriminatory slur. It is only used in research and memorials to accurately reflect the language of the racial laws and the ideology of the perpetrators.

Inside the Lety Memorial.



Have you visited the memorial in Lety u Písku or in Hodonín u Kunštátu, or the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno? Do you know what measures excluded Roma and Sinti from society? And what role did the 1927 law play in this?

Have you heard the story of Josef Sérinka, the so-called "Black Partisan"? Do you know which camp he managed to escape from before becoming a partisan?

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The Life of Emílie Machálková



17 year old Emílie.

The life of **Emílie Machálková** (1926–2017), born Holomková, serves as a profound testament to the "female voices of war" and the multi-layered forms of civil resistance against Nazi racial persecution. Her story highlights how individual and family courage, supported by community solidarity, could preserve human life during the genocide of Roma and Sinti in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

Family Background and Early Persecution

Emílie was born into the prestigious Holomek family, a Moravian Romani clan well-integrated into the region. Her uncle, Tomáš Holomek, was the first Romani university student in Czechoslovakia. After 1939, however, the family was subjected to increasingly brutal anti-Roma measures. For the teenage Emílie, daily life became a psychological burden, especially commuting to work with an ID card marked with a "Z" for Zigeuner (Gypsy). She recalled the harassment on trains: "They shouted at me. I was fifteen or sixteen years old... They yelled at me in German, in Czech, how is it that I am traveling among people and not in a cattle wagon among cattle?"

The Intervention of Mayor Josef Kilián

In March 1943, mass deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau began. Emílie's immediate family was already on their way to the station when they were saved by the Nesovice mayor, Josef Kilián, who had spent three days bribing and negotiating with the Gestapo. He told them: "Don't cry, you aren't going anywhere. For three days I let myself be kicked from door to door at the Gestapo, but I will not send my citizens to their death."

Acts of Spontaneous and Calculated Resistance

Emílie and her family repeatedly risked their lives to save others:

- **Saving Růženka:** On the eve of her relatives' deportation, Emílie spontaneously decided to take her three-year-old cousin, Růženka, into her own care. She told her relatives: "So don't take Růženka from me, I'll take her home". Růženka survived the war, though she suffered lifelong health consequences from the trauma of the separation.
- **Hiding Relatives:** The family house in Nesovice became a secret asylum. They hid their grandmother, Terezie, and other fugitives—including a cousin who escaped from forced labor and a Greek prisoner—behind a cupboard in a small room during Gestapo searches.
- **Refusal of Sterilization:** In 1944, Emílie received a summons for forced sterilization to ensure the "inferior Gypsy race" would no longer reproduce. Frightened and weeping, she sought help from her employer and went into hiding in a cellar in Olomouc for four months. This act is characterized as a specific form of female resistance against Nazi intervention in bodily integrity and the future of Romani women.



Do you know about other stories in which people were saved from persecution? What do they have in common or are they different from each other?



The Orphaned Cousin Růženka.

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Post-War Legacy and Cultural Memory

After the war, Emilie married Jan Machálek and raised four children. She became a renowned Romani singer, performing traditional songs and the "lamenting song" Aušvicate hi kher báro (In Auschwitz there is a large house), which served as a musical memorial to the relatives she lost in the Holocaust.

In her later years, she became a vital carrier of historical memory, giving lectures to thousands of students through projects like "Vanished Roma and Roma Today". For her bravery and educational work, she received several honors, including the Václav Benda Award and the Memorial Medal of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. Her life's philosophy focused on human character over ethnicity:

"If a person wants to achieve something through their diligence and honesty, it does not matter if they are white, black or yellow... only when everyone is tolerant, self-critical and recognizes truth from lies and justice from evil, will the world be fine."

Emilie Machálková is awarded the "For Freedom and Democracy" Medal (2012).



Do you want to know more about Emilie Machálková?

Check out the article about her by historian Michal Schuster and her life story on Memory of Nations.

"So don't take Růženka away from me..."
The story of Emilie Machálková
by Michal Schuster



Emilie Machálková
Memory of Nations



Aušvicate hi kher baro, odoj phandlo mro pirano. Bešel bešel, gondofinel he pre mande pobisterel.

Khatar Ruska balval phurdel, mro pirano už man mukhel. Mukhel, mukhel pharipnaha, naši phendom „Ačh Devleha!"

O, tu kalo čirikloro, lidža mange mro liloro. Lidža lidža mra romňake, hoj som phandlo Aušvicate.

Andro lagri bokha bare he so te chan amen nane. Aňi oda koter maro, o blokariš bibachtalo.

Sako dīves amen maren, andre bufi amen traden. Kas kamel, mukhel khere, phenel lake „Pašiv tele."

Až me jekhvar khere džava, le blokariš našavava. Le blokariš našavava, štabinisten me pekava.

Kana maro jon, ulaven, na den amen, so patrinel. Te me jekhvar khere džava, le blokariš našavava.

There's a large building in Auschwitz, That's where my beloved sits. Oh, he sits and sits, contemplating. And he is forgetting me.

A wind is blowing from Russia, My beloved is leaving me. He is leaving, leaving with sorrow, that he could not even say „Goodbye!"

Oh black bird, Carry my letter. Carry it, carry it to my woman, I am sitting in Auschwitz.

In Auschwitz there is a lot of hunger And there isn't for us anything to eat. Not even a piece of bread, The block elder (Blockältester) is evil.

He beats us every day, drives us to work. He leaves whoever he wants at home, tells „Lie down."

When I go home one day, I'll kill the block elder. I'll kill the block elder, I'll roast the room orderly duty (Stubendienst).

When I eat bread, I steal, they don't give us what's ours. When I go home one day, I'll kill the block elder.

Scan the QR code and listen to Emilie Machálková sing.



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Anne Frank Youth Network in Czechia

EDUCATE. EMPOWER. REPEAT.

We are a global network of young changemakers. Join us in promoting equal rights and active citizenship, and building a future free of discrimination, prejudice and injustice.

Inspired by Anne Frank's diary and life story, our work connects young people, providing us all with the tools to take action and realize our own projects to create meaningful social change. The Anne Frank Youth Network is an initiative developed by the Anne Frank House. The local partner organisation is Antikomplex - hnutí proti xenofobii.

What we do

- Creating a network of like-minded young people to exchange ideas, thoughts and to support each other.
- Organising events to talk about current issues of our time.
- Providing members with tools and skills they need to take action and stand up for a cause.
- Empowering members to create their own projects in their communities.
- Connecting members with young people from Central Europe and all around the world.

Scan the QR code and follow our social media to be up to date for upcoming events and news!



JOIN US

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Zdroje textů:

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- holocaust.cz, <https://holocaust.cz/dejiny/pronasledovani-a-genocida-romu/>
- Michal Schuster, Antikomplex, <https://antikomplex.cz/2026/04/24/tak-ruzenku-mne-neberte/>

Photo sources:

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