

IT IS NO DREAM: THE LIFE OF THEODOR HERZL

Documentary directed by Richard Trank

Produced by Richard Trank and Rabbi Marvin Hier

A Moriah Films Release

Opens in NY at the Quad on August 10, 2012

Opens in LA at the Laemmle Music Hall, Laemmle Town Center and
Edwards Westpark on August 17, 2012

In English
97 Minutes

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SYNOPSIS

It Is No Dream is a feature documentary that examines the life and times of Theodor Herzl, the journalist and playwright who was responsible for creating the political movement that led in 1948 to the creation of the Jewish state, Israel. It is the latest production of Moriah Films, the two-time Academy Award winning documentary film division of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, an international human rights organization and NGO with over 400,000 member families.

Narrated by Academy Award winner Ben Kingsley and starring Academy Award Winner Christoph Waltz as the voice of Theodor Herzl, *It Is No Dream* examines how Theodor Herzl, an assimilated Jew, born into a traditional but mostly non-religious family in Budapest in 1860, was changed by the trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus in Paris, which he covered as a journalist in 1895. Previously, he had advocated the mass conversion of Jews to Christianity as a solution to the growing anti-Semitism of Europe. However, after witnessing the court proceedings where Dreyfus was falsely convicted of treason and the anti-Jewish demonstrations of the French public, Herzl became convinced that the only answer to the anti-Semitism that was spreading across Europe was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the Biblical homeland of the Jewish people. He wrote a political treatise entitled “Der Judenstaat” or “The Jewish State” that became an international bestseller, laying out his ideas for creating a new Jewish state.

It Is No Dream opens as “Der Judenstaat” is published by a small bookseller in Vienna. His literary circle in Vienna has ridiculed him, many Jewish leaders in Europe and the US have condemned his ideas, and his friends and family are convinced that he has lost his grip on reality. However, a number of intellectuals, such as Max Nordau and religious leaders like the Chief Rabbis of Paris and Basel, have voiced their support for Herzl’s plan. In a short period of time, a grass roots movement of oppressed Jews in Russia, Poland and much of Eastern Europe have joined Herzl’s Zionist movement. In short order, the formerly assimilated Jew who wanted nothing more than to be a successful dramatist, is overseeing an organization with tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of supporters. He is holding audiences with the German Kaiser, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, high ranking British cabinet ministers and politicians, the Pope, the King of Italy and other personalities. He finds backing from the English branch of the Rothschild family, which originally rejected him. Yet, despite these successes, his mission was fraught with obstacles and frustration. He was taken advantage of by Ottoman officials with whom he was trying to negotiate a scheme for mass Jewish settlement in Palestine. After the infamous Kishiniev pogrom, when Great Britain offered Herzl territory in East Africa for a Jewish state as an alternative to Palestine, he was faced with angry opposition from the ranks of his Russian Jewish supporters. Herzl’s personal life was also difficult. His marriage was an unhappy one from the beginning. His health was extremely fragile leading to his untimely death at 44.

Using his own money, Theodor Herzl created the World Zionist Organization, which hundreds of thousands of people joined. He started a newspaper, “Die Welt” (“The World”), and went from ridicule and obscurity to becoming an internationally respected political leader in less than 9 years. Neglecting his health, his family and his career, Herzl inspired a movement, but died young. Some 52 years after completing “Der Judenstaat”, the modern state of Israel was established, an act that never would have occurred without the vision and the tenacity of this formerly assimilated Hungarian Jew who until his late twenties wanted nothing more than to be a successful playwright.

It Is No Dream follows Herzl as he meets with Kings, Prime Ministers, Ambassadors, a Sultan, a Pope and government ministers from Constantinople to St. Petersburg, from Paris to Berlin, from Vienna to Vilna. The film illustrates the dramatic stories of the Jews of Eastern Europe and Russia, victimized by pogroms and other anti-Jewish violence and decrees, who became the first and the strongest supporters of Herzl's movement. *It Is No Dream* also presents the recollections and memoirs of those Jews who, inspired by Theodor Herzl, decided to settle in Palestine in the 1890's and the early 1900's. It also highlights Zionists such as Max Nordau (best selling social critic), Chaim Weizmann (Israel's first President) and David Ben Gurion (Israel's first Prime Minister), who were early adherents to the cause. And it examines Herzl's vision for what the Jewish state would become and how he advocated peaceful co-existence between Jews and Arabs in Palestine.

It Is No Dream features rare archival film footage of the period and never before seen stills and artifacts. New material has also been shot in the places that Herzl lived and visited. Working with the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, the production team was given access to the original manuscripts of Herzl's plays, diaries and his handwritten version of "Der Judenstaat". A rare first edition of the booklet was also filmed for the documentary. Israeli President and Nobel laureate Shimon Peres appears in the film, discussing his recollections as a young boy growing up in a small Polish town about Herzl's importance in his upbringing and how his family was inspired by him to become Zionists and move to Palestine in 1934.

Co-written and produced by two-time Academy Award winner Rabbi Marvin Hier and co-written, produced and directed by Academy Award winner Richard Trank, *It Is No Dream* is the twelfth production of Moriah Films and is slated for theatrical release in the Fall of 2012.

About Moriah Films

Moriah Films is a division of the Simon Wiesenthal Center which produces documentaries concerning human rights and the major events and personalities of 3,500 years of Jewish history.

Moriah Films has an unmatched track record, having produced ten critically acclaimed documentaries: *Genocide*, *Echoes That Remain*, *Liberation*, *The Long Way Home*, *In Search of Peace Part One: 1948-1967*, *Unlikely Heroes*, *Ever Again*, *Beautiful Music*, *I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life and Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal* and *Against the Tide*. Moriah was awarded the Oscar for Best Feature Documentary in 1981 for *Genocide* and, again, in 1997 for *The Long Way Home*.

Distinguished entertainment industry luminaries have narrated Moriah films, including Orson Welles, Sir Ben Kingsley, Elizabeth Taylor, Morgan Freeman, Michael York, Whoopi Goldberg, Nicole Kidman, Anne Bancroft, Brooke Shields, Kevin Costner, Michael Douglas, Dustin Hoffman and others. They have generously donated their talents.

Moriah Films has distribution rights throughout France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Portugal and the Benelux Countries (Holland, Belgium, Luxemborg). Moriah films have been televised throughout the Americas, including HBO, Discover, Starz and Showtime. Overseas, the documentaries have been aired on Channel 4 in England, State Television in the People's Republic of China, Russian TV, Japan NHK's and Israeli TV. The films are also distributed to universities and Hillel houses across the country.

The Moriah Films audience is larger and more diverse than ever – educating and impacting people worldwide.

RICHARD TRANK Biography and Filmography

Richard Trank is an Academy Award winning documentary filmmaker whose current feature documentary project is *It Is No Dream*. The latest production of Moriah Films of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, *It Is No Dream* tells the story of Theodor Herzl, the father of the modern state of Israel. Herzl, an assimilated, Budapest born Jew was a playwright and journalist whose life changed when he covered the Dreyfus trial in Paris in 1894. Watching a high ranking French military officer from a prominent Jewish family be falsely accused and tried for treason led Herzl to conclude that the only solution to the anti-Semitism that had ravaged Europe for centuries was for the Jewish people to establish their own state in their historic homeland in Palestine. He devoted the rest of his short life of 44 years to this goal. *It Is No Dream* follows Herzl as he meets with royalty, Prime Ministers, and even the Pope as he builds a political movement that becomes the most popular and largest within the international Jewish community. Narrated by Academy Award winner Sir Ben Kingsley and starring the voice of Academy Award winning actor Christoph Waltz reading the words of Theodor Herzl, *It Is No Dream* is directed by Trank, who also serves as the documentary's co-writer along with Rabbi Marvin Hier. In 1998, Trank and Hier won the Academy Award for the 1997 Feature Documentary, *The Long Way Home*.

In Fall 2010, Trank's feature documentary *Winston Churchill: Walking With Destiny*, narrated by Academy Award winner actor, Sir Ben Kingsley, was released in theatres across the United States. The film screened throughout 2011 and was one of the highest grossing theatrical documentaries of the year. Also a production of Moriah Films, *Winston Churchill: Walking With Destiny* focuses on Winston Churchill's years in the political wilderness, his early opposition to Adolf Hitler and Nazism, and his support for Jews under threat by the Nazi regime, and his return to government as Prime Minister in May 1940 by the demand of the British people. Sir Martin Gilbert, historical consultant for the film and Winston Churchill's official biographer, theorizes that Western Civilization as we know it was saved by Churchill during the period when he, alone among the world's leaders, stood up to Hitler and Nazism. He adds that had Churchill's warnings about Nazi Germany's racial policies towards Jews been heeded in the early 1930's, the Holocaust would never have occurred. As historian John Lukacs explains in the film, Winston Churchill did not win the war in 1940. The war was won once the Americans and the Soviets entered the battle in 1941. But Lukacs points out that in 1940, the war could have been lost if it was not for Churchill. Among those featured in the film are Winston S. Churchill (his grandson and namesake), Celia Sandys (one of his granddaughters), best selling author and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, singer and actress Dame Vera Lynn and many eyewitnesses who survived the Battle of Britain. Featuring rare stills and archival film footage, the documentary also includes newly filmed sequences at Churchill's country home, Chartwell, the War Cabinet Rooms, the Parliament, Dunkirk, among other locations. A cable TV and DVD release is scheduled for early 2012.

In 2009, Trank wrote the screenplay and directed *Against The Tide*, narrated by Academy Award winning actor Dustin Hoffman. *Against The Tide* examines the conflict that erupted in the American Jewish community in the late 1930's and 40's over the best means to rescue the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. It tells the little known story of Peter Bergson, who stood up against the American Jewish leadership and the Roosevelt Administration in his tireless efforts to save the Jews of Europe. The documentary, which is a production of Moriah Films, the documentary film division of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, also looks at how European Jews

desperately tried to get the word to the outside world about what was happening to them to no avail. Shot on location in England, Germany, and Israel and featuring a never before seen interview with Bergson filmed by Claude Lanzmann (*Shoah*), the film also includes an original score composed and conducted by Emmy and Grammy Award winner Lee Holdridge. The screenplay for *Against The Tide* was nominated by the Writers Guild of America for Best Original Documentary Screenplay.

In 2007, Trank directed, wrote and produced *I Have Never Forgotten You*, a comprehensive look at the life and legacy of Simon Wiesenthal, the famed Nazi hunter and humanitarian who died in 2005. Narrated by Academy Award winning actress Nicole Kidman, it features interviews with longtime Wiesenthal associates, government leaders from around the world, friends and family members. Wiesenthal's only child, Pauline, appears in the film giving her very first interview about her mother and father and their almost 70 year relationship. *I Have Never Forgotten You* was a selection of the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival, the Vienna International Film Festival, the Seattle International Film Festival as well as the Tribeca Film Festival where it was one of the top 10 films in the Audience Award category. It also won the Audience Award at the Cinevegas Film Festival and a Special Mention at the Jerusalem International Film Festival. *I Have Never Forgotten You* had successful theatrical releases in US, the UK, France, Germany and Austria and has been a best selling DVD in North America, Europe and Australia. It is currently available on DVD through Starz Entertainment, which owns its broadcast rights as well.

In 2006, Trank wrote, produced and directed *Ever Again*, which examines the resurgence of anti-semitism in Europe and its connection to international terrorism. *Ever Again* is narrated by Kevin Costner and was released in the US by Rocky Mountain Films in December 2006 and was the selection of a number of film festivals in North America and Europe. In early 2005, Trank completed production on *Beautiful Music*, the first short subject documentary produced by Moriah Films and the winner of the 2005 Hollywood Film Festival for Best Documentary. Narrated by Brooke Shields, *Beautiful Music* tells the emotional story of the relationship between an Orthodox Jewish music teacher and her blind and autistic Palestinian student. In 2004, Trank wrote and directed *Unlikely Heroes*, narrated by Sir Ben Kingsley, chronicling seven extraordinary people who either resisted or defied the Nazis during the Holocaust. *Unlikely Heroes* was a selection of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival as well as the Hollywood Film Festival, among others. In 2001, Trank wrote and directed *In Search of Peace, Part One: 1948-1967*, an exploration of the first decades of Israel's existence, narrated by Michael Douglas. *In Search of Peace* was featured at film festivals throughout North America, South America, Europe, Israel and South Africa.

Throughout the 1980's, Trank was an accomplished producer of radio news and public affairs programming, having written and produced more than 5,000 one minute radio features and more than 300 half-hour radio documentaries aired nationally by the **Public Affairs Broadcast Group**. In 1990, he co-produced the documentary *Echoes That Remain*, about life in pre-WWII Eastern Europe, narrated by Martin Landau and Miriam Margolyes. The film won the 1992 Houston International Film Festival's Gold Jury Award. In 1994, he was the Executive Producer of *Liberation*, the inaugural production of Moriah Films. Narrated by Sir Ben Kingsley, Whoopi Goldberg, Sir Patrick Stewart, and Miriam Margolyes, the documentary tells the story of the liberation of Europe and Hitler's death camps by the Allies. Screened at the 1995 Berlin International Film Festival, among others, it was selected by the State of Israel as its official film

commemorating the 50th anniversary of VE Day. In 1997, he produced ***The Long Way Home***. Narrated by Morgan Freeman, the film examines the period between 1945-48, when the survivors of the Holocaust rebuilt their lives and helped to create the state of Israel. In addition to the Oscar, ***The Long Way Home***, was selected as part of the documentary competition at the Sundance Film Festival and won the Golden Hugo at the Chicago Film Festival. The film has also been broadcast on Showtime and the Sundance Channel.

Trank earned his BA degree at the University of California, Berkeley and did graduate work at the University of Southern California. He serves as Executive Producer of **Moriah Films** and has been the Center's Media Projects Director since 1984. He also serves as the Executive Producer of the films for the Center's Museum of Tolerance. His wife, Kathy, is the Vice President of Finance for Danjaq, LLC, which produces the James Bond series of action films. His son, Joshua, is a film editor and his daughter, Emma, recently graduated with honors and distinctions from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with a degree in Dramatic Writing.

RABBI MARVIN HIER

Founder and Dean ◇ Simon Wiesenthal Center ◇ Museum of Tolerance

In 1977, Rabbi Hier came to Los Angeles to create the Simon Wiesenthal Center, named in honor of famed Nazi hunter, Simon Wiesenthal. Under his leadership, the Center has become one of the foremost Jewish human rights agencies in the world, with a constituency of more than 400,000 families, and offices throughout the United States, in Canada, Europe, Israel and Argentina. In 1993, an article in the *Los Angeles Times* noted that Rabbi Hier had made the Wiesenthal Center, “the most visible Jewish organization in the world” and, in 2007, and again in, 2008, an article in *Newsweek* named him the “Most Influential Rabbi in America.”

The Center’s educational arm, The Museum of Tolerance, opened in February 1993 to worldwide acclaim. Founded to challenge visitors to confront bigotry and racism and to understand the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts, the Museum hosts over a half million visitors a year, including 110,000 students. Because of the success of its diversity training programs, the New York Tolerance Center opened in Manhattan in February 2004. The Wiesenthal Center is also in the process of creating the Center for Human Dignity-Museum of Tolerance Jerusalem, located in the heart of the city.

Rabbi Hier is the founder of Moriah, the Center’s documentary film division, and has been the recipient of two Academy Awards™. Since 1981, he has been a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Noted for his powerful oratory, his views on issues of the day are regularly sought by the international media and his editorials have appeared in newspapers across the United States and in Israel. Rabbi Hier meets regularly with world leaders to discuss the Center’s agenda – a wide range of issues including worldwide anti-semitism and hate, the resurgence of neo-Nazism and international terrorism, standing with Israel, defending the safety of Jews worldwide, and teaching the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations.

In 1992 and again in 2003, Rabbi Hier keynoted historic conferences on anti-semitism and the struggle for tolerance which were co-sponsored by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the Wiesenthal Center, both convened at UNESCO’s international headquarters in Paris. In 2005, Rabbi Hier led a delegation to the Vatican to participate in a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI to urge him to lead a “Coalition of Good” to combat Iranian threats, suicide bombers and international terrorism. “The greatest threat to mankind comes not from secularists and atheists, but from religious fanatics and zealots,” he said. In 2003, he met with Pope John Paul II. At the private audience, he spoke about the worldwide threat of anti-semitism and terrorism and the Center’s campaign to make suicide bombing a crime against humanity. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, his dialogue with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl led to a critical debate on German reunification and the need for “deutsche memory.”

As founder of Moriah Films, Rabbi Hier has been the recipient of two Academy Awards™ - in 1997 as co-producer of *The Long Way Home* and in 1981, as co-producer and co-writer for *Genocide*. He has also written and co-produced the award-winning *Echoes That Remain, Liberation, In Search of Peace, Unlikely Heroes, Beautiful Music, Ever Again, Against the Tide, and I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life and Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal*. Moriah's latest production, *Winston Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, is narrated by Academy Award™ winner Sir Ben Kingsley. It focuses on the years 1940 and 1941 when the Swastika flew over continental Europe and also highlights Churchill's early opposition to Hitler and his support for Jews under threat by the Nazis. Currently in production is a film on the Father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl.

Under his direction, the Center has served as consultant to Steven Spielberg's epic *Schindler's List* and ABC Television's miniseries adaptation of Herman Wouk's novel, *War and Remembrance*, among others.

He is the recipient of an honorary degree and many awards - among them, a Doctorate from Yeshiva University (2004) and France's *Chevalier dans l'Ordre National du Merite* (1993).

Main Credits:

Narrated by
SIR BEN KINGSLEY

Starring
CHRISTOPH WALTZ
As the voice of Theodor Herzl

Directed by
RICHARD TRANK

Produced by
RABBI MARVIN HIER & RICHARD TRANK

Screenplay by
RICHARD TRANK

Based on Original Material
Written by
RICHARD TRANK & RABBI MARVIN HIER

Edited by
NIMROD EREZ

Director of Photography
JEFFREY VICTOR

Original Music Composed and Conducted By
LEE HOLDRIDGE

Co-Producer
KATRIN OSMIALOWSKI

Sound Design
MARK FRIEDMAN

Associate Producers
JASON SPIRA-BAUER
AVIVA C. WEINSTEIN