

WIDEN



THE LENS

ON

HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES

by Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich

A Learning & Discussion Guide by
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HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES

Written by Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich

Conceived and Directed by Moisés Kaufman

Creative Producer: Matt Joslyn

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Names in **BOLD CAPS** are characters/people as they are referred to in the play, followed by lines they speak *in italics*.

INTRODUCTION

HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES tells the story of an album of never-before-seen photographs of SS personnel at Auschwitz that arrives at the desk of a historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

It is a story of “investigations, the external historical one to identify the people, dates, and events occurring at the time the photo was taken, and the internal psychological search for motivations and explanations.” It raises difficult questions on painful topics, perhaps the most difficult and most essential ones we face.



Widen the Lens on Here There Are Blueberries expands on the experience of seeing the play by presenting topics related to the Holocaust, to encourage conversation and contemplation with others who have seen the play or on one's own.

The Holocaust, or Shoah, was the Nazi German enterprise during World War II that aimed to destroy all the Jews of Europe; in their dry terminology “the Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” While millions of others were also systematically murdered – the Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet POWs, the mentally and physically disabled, and others – Jews were the **focus of Nazi ideology and hatred**, and that of their multitude of collaborators.

Here There Are Blueberries focuses on specific events, personnel, and prisoners at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest and most notorious in the Nazi system of over 44,000 incarceration sites, including other killing centers. It also brilliantly explores the experiences of descendants of SS members and museum staff in a manner that uncovers in a new way the magnitude of the Final Solution.

In some other contexts, the word “Auschwitz” has occasionally become a proxy for “Holocaust.” But the Holocaust happened in innumerable ways, in addition to

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concentration camps, gas chambers, ghettos, and mass shootings. The inconceivable number of 6,000,000 Jewish victims can risk becoming a means to avoid the awareness that each of those six million was an individual who was dispossessed, deported, murdered, and desecrated. Equally as important are the stories of the innumerable survivors: the refugees, the hidden, the displaced, and those who lost everything *except* their lives, including every member of their family.

As one survivor has said, “No one came out of it without damage.”

As you explore that history and the topics that follow, keep in mind these enduring, fundamental questions: What is happening outside the frame of an image, and before and after the moment it was taken? How much information do you need before you “know” something? What is our responsibility to act once we know the truth?

While the facts of the devastation of the Holocaust are indisputable, the libraries are filled with opinions and debates about its causes, meanings, and outcomes. *Here There Are Blueberries* shows that history continues to be uncovered.

—

Conceived and directed by Moises Kaufman, *Here There Are Blueberries* was co-authored by Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich, and devised with Scott Barrow, Amy Marie Seidel, Frances Uku, Grant James Varjas, and members of Tectonic Theatre Project, Moisés Kaufman, Founder and Artistic Director; Matt Joslyn, Executive Director.

The world premiere of *Here There Are Blueberries* was produced in 2022 by La Jolla Playhouse, La Jolla, California. It was subsequently produced at the Shakespeare Theatre Center, Washington, DC, in 2023, and the New York Theatre Workshop, New York, NY, in 2024.

WHEN THERE ARE NO WORDS

“PICTURES OR IT DIDN’T HAPPEN” has become a common phrase and meme in social media, often employed as a way to challenge the most ordinary reports; it is also spoken with irony—*of course things happen that were not photographed*—but, regardless, it carries a dangerous subtext: with the prevalence of mobile phone cameras and video, and ways to distribute images instantaneously around the globe, have we become conditioned to believe an event cannot be *proven* without pictures?

Of course, there *are* words that describe the reality and the experiences of the Holocaust, words of memory and history. Our understanding of the Holocaust and Auschwitz is far greater because we have such a wealth of documentation, physical evidence, verbal accounts, and images, as much as any event in world history. And as with all history, the accounts and evidence continue to surface long after the events occurred, as is the case with the photographs in Karl Höcker’s personal photo album and the album of Auschwitz photos discovered by Lili Jacob, the subjects of *Here There Are Blueberries*.

When General Dwight Eisenhower [witnessed the Ohrdruf Concentration Camp](#) following its liberation by US Army forces, he immediately grasped the historical and moral importance of creating a record of it:

The things I saw beggar description. ... The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to “propaganda.”



Eisenhower called for members of Congress, movie makers, and journalists from the U.S. to witness and record the first-hand evidence of the horrors—and communicate it to the American public. Eisenhower knew even then that images, in addition to the words of victims and the liberators, were necessary proof of what was then unimaginable. He was

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more than prescient about the tendency to doubt—or even deny the reality of what so many suffered, and others witnessed, including himself.

The play *Here There Are Blueberries* invites the audience into the multi-step archival process of more closely examining what is in the frame of the photo—reading the image as closely as we would a painting or a work of literature—and then what is outside the frame, including what happened before, after, and while the photo was taken, all that the people shown smiling and playing are ignoring, pretending they didn't know what was just over the wall.

As we are confronted by the confusion and distortions of social media. AI, and “deep fake,” how well we seek out, record, preserve, and make available other knowledge to believe what we see with our own eyes—and then widen our lenses to reveal what is beyond the frame of an image—will determine whether we build a society of compassion or one of cynicism.

SWITCHING OFF YOUR CONSCIENCE

MELITA MASCHMANN: *As the years went by, I grew better and better at switching off my conscience. It was the only way to prevent doubts. Doubts would have torn away my existence. Any recognition of horror became more and more dangerous to me.*

- Does fiercely suppressing empathy, hardening yourself against human suffering, or switching off your conscience make you, in part, responsible for the misery or horror suffered by others?
- Is some amount of “switching off” or “looking away” necessary for one’s own psychological well-being?

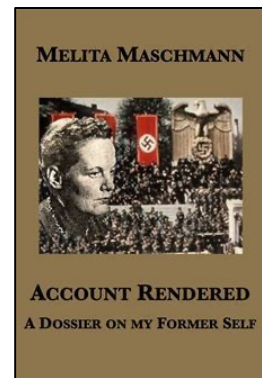
THE FRONTIER BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

MELITA MASCHMANN: *The frontier between good and evil can run straight through the middle of us without our being aware of this. The ghastly thing was it was not only gangsters and roughnecks, but decent, intelligent people who did this. Our great and terrible mistake was made up of countless small mistakes.*

- Do you think the “frontier between good and evil” runs straight through all of us? How wide is it?
- Is there a difference between “decent” and “intelligent”?
- What does it mean to be a “decent” person?

In 1963, Melita Maschmann published her memoir, written in the form of a letter to a real but unnamed Jewish friend from before the war, it became required reading in German high schools.

The English translation, [Account Rendered: A Dossier on My Former Self](#), was published in 2013, after Maschmann’s death. An article about her and the friend, “[I Was a Nazi, and Here’s Why](#),” appeared in the May 29, 2013, issue of *The New Yorker*.



- Do you believe we have former selves?

THEY LOOK NORMAL

JUDY COHEN (USHMM): *People called us and said - these people look normal... they look like us! One person even said, “I know I never could’ve been a Mengele. I know I never could’ve been a Höcker. But could I have been a Helferin [female auxiliary]?”*

- What images do you think people had in mind that did not look like them?

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- What are the dividing lines or stages between [Josef Mengele](#), Karl Höcker, and the young women in the picture eating blueberries?



PAWEŁ SAWICKI ([Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum](#)): *We were as shocked as everyone else. Because it makes us see the SS as people – and that is difficult for us... We want to think of them as monsters, so we don't have to look in the mirror.*

- Had you thought of the SS as monsters and now are forced to see them as people?
- If the SS are not monsters, who is?

PERPETRATORS, COLLABORATORS, ONLOOKERS

SARA BLOOMFIELD (USHMM): *You've got to get the visitor into the mind of the ordinary people who did this. To make genocide possible...there have to be perpetrators, collaborators, and onlookers.*

- Are there other categories? What are the definitions or the dividing lines?
- If we can apply one of those terms to a person, will they be that forever? Is that how they should always be labeled?

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- If the perpetrators, collaborators, and onlookers are human, when can we use the words “inhuman” or “inhumane”?



In the mid-1990s, a dispute among Holocaust scholars and historians arose regarding the issue (which was not entirely new) of whether the *primary* initiative of the Holocaust came, in its simplest terms, from above or below; whether the antisemitic ideology of Nazi leadership inspired its citizens to follow, or the leadership was driven by the historical antisemitism of its citizenry.

Although this is in some respects a scholarly debate, the underlying issues have implications for how we understand other genocides and hatreds, including contemporary antisemitism, in order to respond and ultimately prevent them on the ground.



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- Is there a difference between “guilt” and “responsibility”? Are there different degrees of each?
- How do you feel about collective guilt?
- Are there analogous issues in United States history?

More to Explore:

Browning, Christopher R. 2017. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. 1997. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage.

The “Willing Executioners”/ “Ordinary Men” Debate. (1996) Daniel J. Goldhagen; Christopher R. Browning; Leon Wieseltier. Introduction by Michael Berenbaum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Yahad-In Unum. “The Holocaust by Bullets.”

DESCENDANTS

IN *HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES*, three descendants of Nazi and SS officers feel the impact of uncovering the truth of their father’s or grandfather’s complicity in the Final Solution, as well as the years of lies and corrupt justifications they grew up hearing.

TRAUMA

TILMAN TAUBE makes it his mission to seek out other descendants of Nazis like himself, to have them come forward and tell their stories because “Those who say nothing...they transfer this trauma to the next generation.”

Leaving aside that you know what happens in the play:

- Do you believe Tilman’s commitment breaks some chain and avoids transferring trauma to future generations?
- What do you think of him actively seeking out others to do the same?

- Do you think it works?

WHAT DOES THE GOOD MATTER?

PETER WIRTHS is the son of Eduard Wirths, a Chief SS doctor at Auschwitz from 1942 to 1945, including during the time shown in the Höcker album and the one found by Lili Jacob, when Tilman Taube's grandfather was also there.

Peter says his father hated being at Auschwitz and wanted to leave, but his grandfather, a priest, and even an inmate begged him to stay because he was treating the prisoners kindly, even saving lives.

But Eduard Wirths was also one of the doctors who stood on the ramp and, with a wave of his hand, selected those prisoners who would be sent to forced labor and those who were sent to the gas chamber.

"So, what does it matter? The good things he did?" says Peter about his father.

- Do the good things Eduard Wirths did matter?
- Is it the people he helped survive, even for a short time, and those he sent to the gas chambers, the ones who should judge him?

Peter later says that when he visited Auschwitz, he asked himself what he would do in the situation his father was in—and perhaps what his father should have done. His answer is, "If a train comes, throw yourself on the tracks."

- How would you respond to Peter?
- Is "throwing yourself on the tracks" a good metaphor?
- Should we ever ask ourselves what we would have done at Auschwitz?

WHAT IF IT'S IN MY BLOOD?

RAINER HÖSS, grandson of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz-Birkenau, discovers the years of lies his family told, claiming ignorance about his grandfather. "They knew exactly what was going on, what happened on the other side of that wall."

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That knowledge, and the fear that he inherited that violence from his father and grandfather and was destined to be the kind of person the SS would have recruited, propels Rainer into a life of violence—until he realizes he is not doomed and has the power to change not just *how* he lives but *who* he is.



Rabbi Irving (“Yitz”) Greenberg articulated a paradox of the Holocaust, in which “the innocent feel guilty and the guilty innocent”; to which Dr. Michael Berenbaum has added, it is only “the best of the descendants of perpetrators who feel responsible.”

- How do we distinguish between trauma, guilt, and responsibility? Our ancestors’ and our own? What is in the blood, or DNA, and what isn’t?
- Are we ever responsible for what those who came before us did? How about atoning for acts we did not commit?

MEMORY IN GERMANY

Post-war and post-unification Germany has taken the lead in accepting responsibility for its crimes as a nation during and prior to the Holocaust, with mandatory education in which students confront the crimes and behavior of previous generations, including ancestors, committed in the name of national pride and other ideologies.

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Germany is arguably a model for other nations engaged in reconciling past acts of persecution, slavery, or genocide against other peoples, in ways other societies have not done so. The country has passed numerous laws against, for example, the display or wearing of any Nazi symbols, giving the “Sieg Heil” salute, saying “Heil Hitler,” and denying the Holocaust; all are crimes punishable by jail sentences.



- How could similar laws work under the U.S. Constitution, for example, regarding slavery, native peoples, wartime internees, immigrants, or others?
- Would you want to see similar laws or ordinances here, to prevent acts of antisemitism, racism, homophobia, or other forms of hatred and discrimination?

More to Explore:

[*Final Account*](#), directed by Luke Holland. Focus Features, 2020.

[*Germans & Jews*](#), directed by Janina Quint and Tal Recanati. First Run Features, 2016.

[“Monuments to the Unthinkable,”](#) by Clint Smith. *The Atlantic*, December 2022.

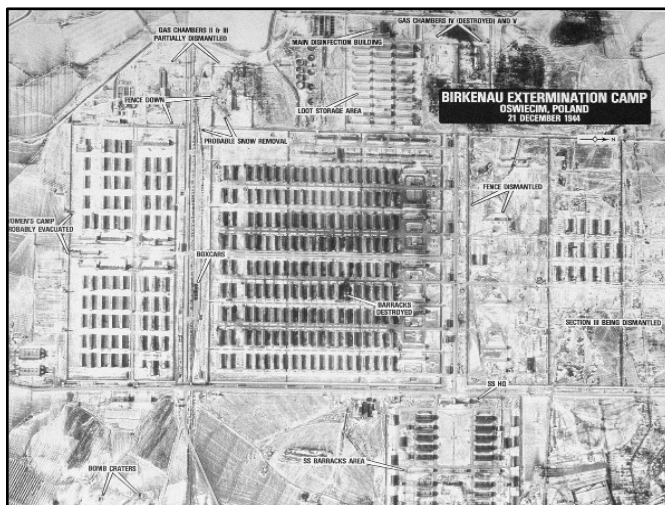
[*Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist*](#), by Eli Saslow. Anchor, 2019.

TAKEN AT THE SAME TIME

REBECCA ERBELDING (USHMM): *Karl Höcker arrived in Auschwitz on May 25th, 1944. Lili Jacob's transport arrived at Auschwitz one day later, on May 26th. The photographs in the Lili Jacob album were taken at the same time as the photos in the Höcker album.*

On March 19, 1944, the Germans invaded Hungary. Between May 15th and July 8th, 437,402 Jews were deported from Hungary primarily to Birkenau. Four out of five were sent directly to the gas chambers; the photographs in both albums were taken during the most intense period of the arrival and gassing of Hungarian Jews in Birkenau.

On October 7, 1944, members of the Sonderkommando (prisoners assigned to the gas chambers) attacked the SS guards at Crematorium IV with axes, picks, and crowbars, and set barracks on fire. Most were machine-gunned by the SS.



In December 1944, this reconnaissance photo of the Auschwitz complex – one of many taken by the Allies – and the photo of Karl Höcker lighting candles on the Christmas tree featured in the play were taken within days of each other. Lili Jacob was a prisoner in one of the 300 barracks in Birkenau seen in the reconnaissance photo. Lili Jacob and Karl

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Höcker may have heard or seen the prisoners' revolt and the plane that took the aerial photo.

- How do these photos widen the lens on Auschwitz, the Holocaust, and *Here There Are Blueberries*?

Aerial photos, such as the one above, first came to public light in 1978, adding fuel to a passionate debate that actually began in 1944:

- Should the Allies have bombed Auschwitz or other concentration camps, or the rail lines leading to them?

More to Explore:

[“Aerial Photographs of Auschwitz,”](https://www.yadvashem.org/from-our-collections/auschwitz-aerial-photos.html) Yad Vashem.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/from-our-collections/auschwitz-aerial-photos.html>

[“Auschwitz Bombing Controversy: Could the Allies Have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau?”](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/could-the-allies-have-bombed-auschwitz-birkenau)
by Mitchell Bard. Jewish Virtual Library.

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/could-the-allies-have-bombed-auschwitz-birkenau>

[Secrets of the Dead: Bombing Auschwitz](https://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/bombing-auschwitz-wnrzgw/4740/), directed by Tim Dunn, written by Mark Hayhurst.
An Oxford Films production for the BBC, 2020.

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/bombing-auschwitz-wnrzgw/4740/>

[The Grey Zone](#), directed by Tim Blake Nelson, written by Miklos Nyiszli and Tim Blake Nelson. Lionsgate Films, 2002.

[Son of Saul](#), directed by László Nemes, written by László Nemes and Clara Royer. Sony Pictures Classics (US), 2015.

LIBERATION

THE SOVIET ARMY arrived in Auschwitz on January 27, 1945. German personnel had fled the camps 11 days earlier but not before sending some 60,000 prisoners on forced marches into Germany, on what became known as the death marches. They destroyed much of the evidence of their crimes, including the killing centers at Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka, and parts of Birkenau. In April and early May 1945, Allied soldiers who liberated the camps were among the first to create film and photographic records and give their accounts of the horrors they found.



While the prisoners had, in any true sense, been liberated, thousands still succumbed to disease while confined in DP (Displaced Persons) camps by the Allies. Survivors often speak of the nightmares and fear that never left them.

- What else could have been done or has been done, to continue the liberation not of the camps, but of the victims?

More to Explore:

“[Liberation of the Nazi Camps](https://history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/wwii/special-features/VE-day/index.html),” U.S. Army Center of Military History,
<https://history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/wwii/special-features/VE-day/index.html>

“[World War II Holocaust Images](https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/photographs/world-war-ii-holocaust-images),” Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library,
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/photographs/world-war-ii-holocaust-images>

“[Memory of the Camps](#),” Produced by Sergei Nolbandov, PBS Frontline, 2015

“[Why We Fight](#),” *Band of Brothers*, Episode 9, directed by David Frankel, written by John Orloff. HBO, 2001.

JUSTICE

SHORTLY AFTER GERMANY'S SURRENDER, the allied powers created the International Military Tribunal to try the highest-ranking German officials who had been captured for War Crimes as well as Crimes Against Humanity, commonly known as the Nuremberg Trials and Crimes Against the Peace.



There were multiple trials held at Nuremberg over several years. Judges were tried for their role in sentencing innocent people to death, physicians for medical experimentation on inmates, industrialists for their role in creating the military-industrial complex around the concentration and death camps and their use of and reliance upon slave labor. Almost two hundred defendants were tried; most were convicted. Fewer than fifty were sentenced to death. Many of those convicted returned to private life, while others escaped capture altogether.

In *Here There Are Blueberries*, in addition to the trial of Karl Höcker, Tilman Taube's grandfather Heinz Baumkötter is heard testifying that he knew from the beginning Auschwitz was a death camp because he was shown the gas chambers (Baumkötter also worked at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.)

From [TIME magazine's article](#) Baumkötter's trial in 1947:

"I accuse the Hitler system,' cried Sachsenhausen's Dr. Heinz Baumkötter. (He used to pour burning phosphorus on his patients, so that afterwards he could test the efficacy of burn salves.) "I accuse the system which made me—a harmless man by nature—into a criminal against humanity"... It was "monopoly capitalism," explained Defense Attorney Kasnatschejev, that was the real culprit. The [defendants] were instruments of forces beyond their control.



- Do you believe Baumkötter could have been a “harmless man by nature”?
- Is the Holocaust evidence that a system can turn a harmless man into a “criminal against humanity”?
- Was any perpetrator, collaborator, or onlooker in the Holocaust an “instrument of forces beyond their control”?

In his book *The Cunning of History*, Richard Rubenstein says of the Nuremberg trials that the Allies avenged wrongs done to themselves. “Those who had the power could avenge. The Jews had no power and the interest of the Allies in acting on their behalf diminished radically” during the Cold War (the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States from 1946 to the late 1980s). American attention was shifted to this power struggle and the US wanted to appeal to the German people to become part of the West and to align themselves with the Soviet Union.

- What do you make of Rubenstein’s perspective?

ADOLF EICHMANN



Adolf Eichmann was captured by Israeli agents in 1960, living under an assumed name in Argentina. Eichmann had been an SS officer. He planned the January 1942 [Wannsee Conference](#), at which the “Final Solution” of the Jews was planned, and was tasked with managing the logistics involved in the mass deportation of millions of Jews to ghettos and [Nazi extermination camps](#) across Europe, the process that made possible the mass murder the Final Solution envisioned. One of the most senior Nazi officials still at large after the war, Eichmann was captured by Mossad agents in May, 1960, and brought to Israel to stand trial.

Eichmann’s 1961 trial in Jerusalem was broadcast live around the world. Eichmann was found guilty of crimes against the Jewish people and hanged – the only defendant to ever receive the death penalty in an Israeli court. One enduring legacy of the trial is the testimony of the many survivors who told stories in public, in shocking and heartrending detail. Their memories—their testimonies—were a vital component in creating public

awareness of their experiences and beginning a broader and deeper discussion of the Holocaust.

More to Explore:

"[Nuremberg Trials Project](https://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu)," Harvard Law School Library. <https://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu>

"[The Nuremberg Trials](#)," American Experience, PBS, 2006.

[Conspiracy](#), directed by Frank Pierson, written by Loring Mandel. HBO, 2001

[The Devil's Confession: The Lost Eichmann Tapes](#), directed by Yariv Mozer, written by Yariv Mozer. and Kobi Sitt. KAN Israeli Public Broadcasting and MGM Television, 2021.

[The Adolf Eichmann Trial](#), directed by Michaël Prazan, written by Michaël Prazan and Annette Wieviorka. Kuiv, 2011

Lipstadt, Deborah E. 2011, [The Eichmann Trial](#), New York: Penguin Random House.

TESTIMONY

THE DEEPLY MOVING STORY Lili Jacob tells in *Here There Are Blueberries* is a climactic moment. The testimonies of survivors and witnesses have become an essential part of Holocaust history and our knowledge of it. They are as important as the physical, documentary, and archaeological materials.



- Try to imagine our knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust if we weren't able to see and hear from the people involved.
- Try the same for other historical events if we *did* have similar written or oral accounts of them.
- What current or recent events would we benefit from through visual and oral testimony?
- With the prevalence of smart phones, we can photograph and share events as they are happening. How does this change our response of what is happening.

More to Explore:

[USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive](https://vha.usc.edu/home). <https://vha.usc.edu/home>

[SlaveryStories.org](http://slaverystories.org/home). <http://slaverystories.org/home>

[Native Truths: Our Voices, Our Stories](https://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibitions/native-truths-our-voices-our-stories). Field Museum.

<https://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibitions/native-truths-our-voices-our-stories>

HOLOCAUST DENIAL AND ANTISEMITISM

HOLOCAUST DENIAL is a conspiracy theory rooted in ancient antisemitic conspiracy theories and tropes of Jews as devious evil threats to society who hide their true aims and power. The history of antisemitism—hostility, prejudice, or hatred of Jews—its forms and consequences are topics larger than the Holocaust itself.

Racial antisemitism was the foundation of the Final Solution. As shown in the Timeline below, the Nazis marginalized Jews as soon as they gained power in 1933. They passed laws (based in part on the Jim Crow laws against Black people in the American South) to segregate Jews from German society and the German people, years before they began systematically murdering them.

16% OF HOLOCAUST-RELATED POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE HOLOCAUST DENIAL OR DISTORTION.

Stay aware and [#ProtectTheFacts.](#)

Denying the Holocaust began while it was still happening: mass graves dug up so bodies could be burned, gas chambers blown up, documents destroyed, prisoners shot or forced on death marches; Nazi military and civilian leaders denied involvement or claimed ignorance.

As the irrefutable facts grew, so-called “revisionists” claimed the number of six million victims was an inflated number; Jews died, for instance of sickness, but weren’t murdered; fraudulent science claimed gas chambers were a myth, a way to persecute the defeated Germans. Some Holocaust denial organizations assert that Jews fabricated or even *created* the Holocaust to curry favor with the non-Jewish world, make money, or further their supposed conspiracy of global control.

Here There Are Blueberries combats Holocaust denial—including the psychological denial of perpetrators—by making us part of the investigation of photographs from Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the private responses and public decisions of those who encounter it.

- What is it about the Holocaust that makes it a target of denial, while other historical events with less evidence are accepted without question?
- How do we “teach” or “learn” about the Holocaust and antisemitism – including outside of school? (Only 23 U.S. states [require Holocaust education](#), as of 2024.)
- How do we balance the testimony and memory of witnesses to a historical event with the visual and documentary evidence? Which is more powerful?

More to Explore:

Lipstadt, Deborah E. 1994. [Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory](#). New York: Penguin Random House.

Facing History and Ourselves. 2011. “[A Convenient Hatred: The History of Antisemitism](#)”.
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/convenient-hatred-history-antisemitism>

Berenbaum, Michael, ed. 2008. [Not Your Father's Antisemitism: Hatred of the Jews in the 21st Century](#). MN: Paragon House.

Ward, Eric K. 2017. “[Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism](#).” *Political Research Associates*.
<https://politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism>

Eisner, Will. 2005. *The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. New York: W.W. Norton.

[Key Holocaust Denial Tropes](#), ADL

<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/key-holocaust-denial-tropes>



LEGACY

To enter into the Holocaust is to risk enormous disillusionment with human beings and to awaken deep anxiety about how badly things can go wrong in this world.

Peter Hayes, [Why? Explaining the Meaning of the Holocaust](#),

From scholars, philosophers, poets, and artists—those who were there and those who were not—we hear the urgency of memory, its agony and anguish, its meaning and the absence of meaning. To live in our age, one must face the void.

Michael Berenbaum, [The World Must Know](#)

I share this now because time passes on. And we all live in the world.

Lili Jacob, *Here There Are Blueberries*

HOW DO WE MEET the challenges of disillusionment and anxiety; cruelty and destruction; and the urgency of memory? What lessons and legacies will we make of the Holocaust? Each of us will arrive at our own answers about how to apply our experience for the benefit of future generations – and just as urgently, for our present one.

SOURCES

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TIMELINE

This timeline focuses on selected events and people related to the story of the Holocaust and Auschwitz, including as told in *Here There Are Blueberries*. Adapted from timelines at [Echoes & Reflections](#) and the [USHMM](#).

1933

January 30 Adolf [Hitler](#) appointed chancellor of Germany.

February 27 The [Reichstag](#), the German parliament building, is burned down. Basic civil rights are replaced by a state of emergency that lasts until the end of the war.

March 22 [Dachau](#) concentration camp established. It continues to function until liberated by American forces in 1945.

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- March 24** The [Enabling Act](#) allows the Nazi-led government to enact laws by circumventing the democratic process.
- April 1** Nationwide [boycott of Jewish-owned businesses](#).
- April 7** [Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service](#) bars Jews from the civil service.
- April 25** [Law against Overcrowding in Schools](#) and Universities establishes strict quotas limiting the number of Jewish students in public schools.
- May 10** University students and their professors [burn thousands of books](#) by Jewish and “un-German” authors, as well as those considered decadent and immoral.
- July 14** [Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases](#) requires forced sterilization of people with physical and mental disabilities.
- July 14** The Nazi government declares Germany a [one-party state](#).
- November 24** [Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals](#) permits courts to order indefinite imprisonment.

1934

- August 2** German President von Hindenburg [dies](#). Hitler becomes the president.
- August 19** Hitler abolishes the office of president, cementing his rule as dictator of Nazi Germany – the Fuhrer.

1935

- June 28** [Paragraph 175](#) of the criminal code is amended to criminalize homosexuality.
- September 15** The [Nuremberg Race Laws](#) — the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor — define Jews as a distinct non-white race, based on the “blood” inherited from their grandparents, forming the basis for legal persecution and segregation of all Jews, regardless of religious belief or personal conviction.

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Among other restrictions, these laws strip Jews of German citizenship, ban marriages and sexual intercourse between Jews and people of German blood, and prohibit mixed-race couples from having children. Jewish households are forbidden to employ German women under age 45.

1936

- March 7** German army enters the Rhineland in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
- June 6** [Decree on Combating the Gypsy Plague](#) leads to the roundup and imprisonment of Roma and Sinti people in Berlin.
- July** [Sachsenhausen](#) concentration camp opens.
- August 1** [1936 Olympic Games](#) open in Berlin. Prior to the opening of the games, the Nazi government removes anti-Jewish signs and restricts all anti-Jewish activity in order to hide its racist and militaristic character.
- August 3** Black American sprinter [Jesse Owens](#) wins the 100-meter dash, the first of his four gold medals. Avery Brundage, head of the US Olympic Committee benches [Jewish sprinters](#) Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller from the 100-meter relay team, a move widely believed to avoid embarrassing Hitler.

1937

- July 15** [Buchenwald](#) concentration camp opens, near Weimar, Germany
- November 8** The antisemitic exhibition, "[The Eternal Jew](#)," opens in Munich, depicting stereotypical images of Jews and promoting charges of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. It eventually travels to Berlin, Vienna, and other cities. In 1940, a [Nazi propaganda film](#) under the same title is released.

1938

- March 11** German annexation of Austria, the [Anschluss](#), integrates the country into the German Reich. Austrian Nazis immediately enact Germany's antisemitic laws and will eventually fight on the side of Germany in World War II and participate in the Holocaust.

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- May 29** Hungary adopts [laws](#) based on Nuremberg Race Laws.
- July 6** The [Evian Conference](#) in France. Delegates from thirty-two countries, including the U.S., meet for a week in response to the growing crisis of Jewish refugees. Other than the Dominican Republic, no country agrees to ease its immigration restrictions and allow Jewish refugees in.
- August 17** [Law for the Alteration of Family and Personal Names](#) requires Jewish men to add the middle name "Israel" and women to add "Sara".
- September 29** The [Munich Agreement](#). Leaders of Italy, Great Britain, and France allow Germany to annex the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia in exchange for Hitler's pledge of peace for the rest of Europe.
- October 5** German passports of Jews will no longer be valid unless stamped with a [large "J" in red](#).
- November 9-10** [Kristallnacht](#) ("Night of Broken Glass") nationwide pogrom. Over 1,000 synagogues burned or destroyed, 7,500 Jewish shops looted, cemeteries desecrated, 30,000 male Jews ages 16-60 are sent to concentration camps, and at least 91 Jews are murdered.
- The Jewish community of Germany assessed a collective fine of one billion Reichsmarks (equivalent to \$7 billion in 2020) for the damages caused by the pogrom of Kristallnacht.
- November 12** Decree on the [Elimination of the Jews from Economic Life](#) forbids Jews in Germany from owning businesses and engaging in trade or services of any kind.

1939

- January 30** In a speech at the Reichstag, [Hitler declares](#) that war will result in the "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."
- February 9** [Wagner-Rogers Bill](#) proposed in the U.S. Congress would permit the entry of 20,000 refugee children from German territory. The bill was never brought to a vote.
- September 1** [Germany invades Poland](#). Two days later, Britain and France declare war on Germany, beginning World War II.

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October Germany begins its [T-4 program](#) for the euthanasia of those with mental or physical disability.

1940

May 20 [Auschwitz \(I\)](#) concentration camp established in German occupied Poland.

November 15 [Warsaw ghetto](#) sealed by 11-foot wall topped with barbed wire.

1941

March 3 [Krakow ghetto](#) established for 15,000-20,000 Jews.

June 22 [Operation Barbarossa](#): Germany invades the Soviet Union

July [Einsatzgruppen](#) (mobile killing squads of SS soldiers, German police, and local auxiliaries) begin mass shootings in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union. ("The Holocaust by Bullets")

July 31 Hermann Göring authorizes Heydrich to coordinate resources of the Reich for a "[solution of the Jewish Question](#)" throughout Europe.

December 7 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.

December 8 The United States declares war on Japan.

December 8 Mass killing operations begin at [Chelmno](#) killing center.

December 12 Germany and Italy declare war on the United States; the U.S. enters World War II.

1942

January 20 The [Wannsee Conference](#) in Berlin. Heydrich convenes heads of the Nazi party and German governmental ministries, occupation officials,, and SS departments under his command, to coordinate the Final Solution through Adolf Eichmann.

March 1 The [Auschwitz-Birkenau](#) killing center opens.

March 17 First Jewish communities are deported to [Belzec](#) killing center, beginning mass killings there.

May 3 Regular deportations and mass killing at [Sobibor](#) begin.

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- July 23** First transport to [Treblinka II](#) killing center.
- December 17** Allied nations issue a [declaration](#) stating that German authorities are committing mass murder of Jews.
- 1943**
- April 19-May** [Warsaw Ghetto Uprising](#).
- June 21** Heinrich Himmler orders the [liquidation of all Jewish ghettos](#) in Poland and the Soviet Union.
- August 2** Armed [uprising by Jewish prisoners](#) at Treblinka.
- October 14** Jewish [prisoners' revolt](#) at Sobibor.
- 1944**
- January 16** President Roosevelt and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau meet to discuss rescue of Jews from Europe.
- January 22** Creation of U.S. [War Refugee Board](#).
- March 19** German troops occupy their ally Hungary.
- May 15** [Deportation of Hungarian Jews](#) to Birkenau begins, including Lili Jacob and her family.
- May 25** [Karl Höcker](#) arrives at Auschwitz.
- May 26** Lili Jacob and family arrive at Birkenau. She is the only one of her family who survives
- June 6** D-Day: Allied invasion of Normandy on the French coast.
- June 18** [Auschwitz report detailing killing operations](#) and written by two escaped prisoners made public in Europe and the U.S.
- June 21** Date on page one of the Höcker Photo Album; Karl Höcker is promoted to First Lieutenant.
- July 23** Russians liberate [Majdanek](#) killing center.
- Dr. Heinz Baumkötter, Peter Wirth's grandfather, visits Auschwitz.
- October 7** Prisoner [revolt at Auschwitz-Birkenau](#). Crematorium IV blown up.
- November 25** Himmler orders [demolition](#) of Auschwitz-Birkenau gas chambers and crematoria.
- December** Höcker Album: Photos of Höcker lighting candles on Christmas tree.

1945

- January 17** SS units begin [final evacuation and death march](#) of prisoners from Auschwitz complex, including Lili Jacob.
- Karl Höcker and family leave Auschwitz
- January 27** Soviet forces [liberate Auschwitz](#).
- April 4** U.S. forces [liberate Ohrdruf](#).
- April 11** Prisoners at [Buchenwald](#) take control of camp prior to U.S. forces arrival.
- April 12** US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies.
- April 15** British forces [liberate Bergen-Belsen](#).
- April 29** U.S. troops [liberate Dachau](#).
- April 30** [Hitler commits suicide](#) in his bunker in Berlin.
- May 7** Germany surrenders. End of World War II in Europe.
- November 21** [Nuremberg War Crimes Trials](#) begin

1965

Karl Höcker is sentenced to seven years.

1950

Höcker is released on parole.

1980

“[Auschwitz Album](#)”, discovered by Lili Jacob, is donated to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

2007

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum receives donation of [Karl Höcker Album](#).

THE TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE

The word “genocide” has become widely used and defined by whomever uses it, often for political or ideological reasons, or applied to conditions that, however horrible, may not rise to the legal definition of genocide. The term was created by historian Polish refugee-Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin in 1944, to describe the Nazi policies of systematic murder during the Holocaust. Genocide was established as an international crime by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1948.

In 2012, Prof. Gregory Stanton, founder of Genocide Watch, identified the following “[Ten Stages of Genocide](#)” as a formula for recognizing the process by which societies engage in genocide and a tool for preventing it.

1. CLASSIFICATION

Groups in a position of power will categorize people according to ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality employing an “us versus them” mentality.

Prevention: Create universalistic institutions that foster social cohesion.

2. SYMBOLIZATION

People are identified as Jews, Roma, or Tutsis, etc., and made to stand out from others with certain colors or symbolic articles of clothing.

Prevention: Ban the symbols and hate speech and all clothing meant to discriminate against groups.

3. DISCRIMINATION

A dominant group uses laws, customs, and political power to deny the rights of other groups. The powerless group may not be granted full civil rights or even citizenship.

Prevention: Ensure full political empowerment and citizenship rights for all groups in a society. Discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, race or religion should be outlawed.

4. DEHUMANIZATION

The diminished value of the discriminated group is communicated through propaganda. Parallels are drawn with animals, insects, or diseases.

Prevention: Promptly denounce and punish perpetrators and make hate crimes and speech culturally unacceptable. Sanction all incitements to commit genocide.

5. ORGANIZATION

A state, its army or militia design genocidal killing plans.

Prevention: Outlaw membership in these militias and sanction their leaders. Impose arms embargoes on the countries involved and create commissions of inquiry.

6. POLARIZATION

Propaganda employed to amplify the differences between groups. Interactions between groups are prohibited, and the moderate members of the group in power are killed.

Prevention: Protect these moderate members and human rights groups. Seize the assets of the oppressors and refuse their access to international travel.

7. PREPARATION

The victims are identified, separated, and forced to wear symbols. Deportations, isolation, and forcible starvation. Death lists are drawn up.

Prevention: Humanitarian aid armed international interventions or major support for the victims to ensure their ability to defend themselves.

8. PERSECUTION

Victims are identified and isolated based on their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are drawn up. In state sponsored genocides, members of victim groups may be forced to wear identifying symbols. Their property is often expropriated.

Prevention: Regional organizations and the international community must mobilize themselves to assist or help the victims.

9. EXTERMINATION

The massacres begin. The perpetrators see their actions as “extermination” since they do not consider their victims to be entirely human.

Prevention: Only large-scale armed interventions can stop genocide. The international community must support the operations by providing air transport, equipment, and financial support.

10. DENIAL

The perpetrators of the genocide deny having committed their crimes. Victims are often blamed. Evidence is hidden and witnesses are intimidated.

Prevention: An international tribunal or national court must prosecute the criminals. Public education.

Widen the Lens on Here There Are Blueberries



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As this guide was being completed, the [CBS “60 Minutes” season finale](#), on May 19, 2024, featured Anderson Cooper’s profile on the Höcker Album and the *Helferinnen*, and his conversation with *Here There Are Blueberries* co-authors Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich to discuss the journey of the play’s development, and the questions at the center of the process. *Click below to watch.*



Widen the Lens on Here There Are Blueberries complements a guide devised by Dr. Rebecca Erbelding, the USHMM archivist who led the [investigation into the Höcker Album](#).

Rebecca Erbelding’s discussion guide:

https://vault.ushmm.org/adaptivemedia/rendition/id_9d2343d65b7e2ed1ff315a9b33cdb307af6bd9d.

The play’s website: <https://www.heretherareblueberries.com/home-main#home>

Additional materials about the play: <https://www.heretherareblueberries.com/further-learning>

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