

WIDEN



THE LENS

ON

HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES

by Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich

by **JONATHAN FREUND**



HOLOCAUST THEATER
INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE



GEORGE FELDENKREIS PROGRAM
IN JUDAIC STUDIES

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HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES

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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

THE PLAY [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 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 mental 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 concentration camps, gas chambers, ghettos, and mass shootings, and the inconceivable number 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

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refugees, the hidden, the displaced, and those who lost everything *except* their lives, including every member of their family.

As one survivor 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.



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 outlandish claims; 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

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even then that images, in addition to the words of victims and the liberators, were necessary proof of what was then unimaginable. He was 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 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.*

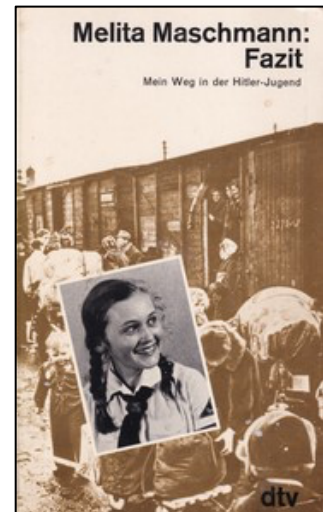
- Do you think the “frontier between good and evil” runs straight through all of us? How wide is it?
- Is there a difference between “decent” and “intelligent”?
- What does it mean to be a “decent” person?

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In 1963, Melita Maschmann published her memoir *Fazit: kein Rechtfertigungsversuch* (*Account Rendered: No Attempt at Justification*). 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.

An 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,](#)" appears 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?
- What are the dividing lines or stages between [Josef Mengele](#), Karl Höcker, and the young women 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, are they that forever? Is that how they should always be labeled?
- 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 in many 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:

[*Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*](#), by Christopher R. Browning. Harper Perennial; Revised edition, 2017.

[*Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*](#) by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. Vintage, 1997.

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

[Yahad-In Unum](https://www.yiu.ngo/en), “The Holocaust by Bullets,”
<https://www.yiu.ngo/en>.

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 make 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 own father, 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.”

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.

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Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg articulated a paradox of the Holocaust, in which "the innocent feel guilty and the guilty innocent," to which Michael Berenbaum has added, it is "the best of the descendants of perpetrators who feel responsible."

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

MEMORY IN GERMANY

Post-war and post-unification Germany has taken a 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.



It 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. It 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.

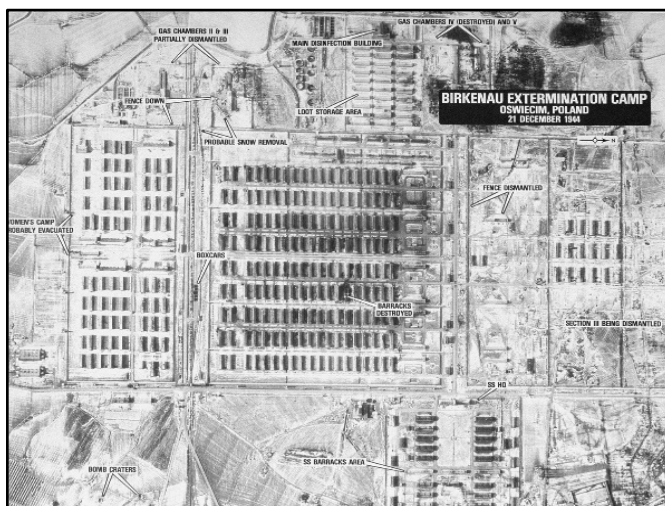
[Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist](#), by Eli Saslow. Anchor, 2019.

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

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of the 300 barracks in Birkenau seen in the reconnaissance photo. Lili Jacob and Karl Höcker may have heard or seen the prisoners' revolt, and this allied plane.

- 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 which 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/>

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 make 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.

- 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.htm),” U.S. Army Center of Military History,
<https://history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/wwii/special-features/VE-day/index.htm>

“[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 were 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 Auschwitz was a death camp from the beginning 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 prisoners 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, 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 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, who was captured by Israeli agents in 1960 living under an assumed name in Argentina. Eichmann had been in charge of transporting Jews from all over Europe to the killing centers, the process that made the mass murder of the Final Solution a reality. One of the most senior Nazi officials still at large, Eichmann was returned to Israel.

Eichmann’s 1961 trial was broadcast live around the world. Eichmann was found guilty of Crimes against the Jewish people and hanged. An enduring legacy of the trial is the many survivors who were able to tell their stories in public, in shocking and heartrending detail. Their memories—their testimonies—became a vital part of stirring public awareness and discussion of the Holocaust.

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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.

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

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

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, 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 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>

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[SlaveryStories.org](http://slaverystories.org)

<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 & 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, the Nazis marginalized Jews as soon as they gained power in 1933. They passed laws (based in part on 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.

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

Following the war, Holocaust deniers claimed it was a hoax, propaganda, even persecution of the defeated Germans. As the irrefutable facts grew, so-called “revisionists” claimed six million was an inflated number; Jews died but weren’t murdered; fraudulent science showed gas chambers were a myth; and even declared that Jews *created* the Holocaust to curry favor with the non-Jewish world and to make money.

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?



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- 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:

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

[A Convenient Hatred: The History of Antisemitism](#), by Phyllis Goldstein. Facing History and Ourselves, 2011.

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

[“Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism”](#) by Eric K. Ward. *Political Research Associates*, 2017.

<https://politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism>

[The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#), by Will Eisner. W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.



LEGACY

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?

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](#),

It is an error to imagine that civilization and savage cruelty are antitheses. Both creation and destruction are inseparable aspects of civilization.

Richard Rubenstein, [The Cunning of History](#)

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](#)

Each of us will arrive at our own answers about how we apply our experience for the benefit of future generations – and just as urgently for our present one.

In *Here There Are Blueberries*, Lili Jacobs's final words are these: *"I share this now because time passes on. And we all live in the world."*

This goal of this guide is not only to widen the lens on *Here There Are Blueberries* or the material and sources in these pages; it seeks to inspire you to continue widening the lens on your own and help determine the world in which we will live.



A SHORT LIST OF OTHER RESOURCES

[Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945: Abridged Edition](#), by Saul Friedlander. HarperCollins, 2009.

[Survival in Auschwitz](#) by Primo Levi. Simon & Schuster, 1995. [Orig. as: *Se questo è un uomo*, De Silva, 1947.]

[The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World](#), by Jonathan Freedland. HarperCollins, 2023.

[Nothing Makes You Free: Writings by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors](#), edited by Melvin Jules Bukiet. W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

"[Artists' Responses to the Holocaust](#)," Imperial War Museum.
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/artists-responses-to-the-holocaust>

"[Holocaust Theater Catalog](#): Theatre works relating to the Holocaust from 1933 to the present," National Jewish Theatre Foundation.
<https://htc.miami.edu>

[Enacting History: A Practical Guide to Teaching the Holocaust through Theater](#), by Mira Hirsch, Janet E. Rubin, and Arnold Mittelman

[Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and Holocaust](#), directed by Daniel Anker. Koch Lorber Films, 2009

[Night Will Fall](#), directed by André Singer, written by Lynette Singer. British Film Institute, 2014 and [German Concentration Camps Factual Survey](#), Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, 1945.

[The U.S. and the Holocaust](#), directed by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick & Sarah Botstein. PBS, 2022.

United Nations [Outreach Programme on the Holocaust](#)

[Holocaust Museums, Institutions, and Monuments in the United States](#)

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.
- 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

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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.

Among other restrictions, they 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 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 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

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Sam Stoller from the 100-meter relay team, 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.

1938

- March 11** German military 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.
- May 29** Hungary adopts anti-Jewish laws.
- July 6** 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.
- 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 valid unless stamped with a large "J" in red.
- November 9-10** Kristallnacht ("Night of Broken Glass") nationwide pogrom. Over 1,000 synagogues are burned or destroyed, 7,500 Jewish shops are looted, cemeteries are desecrated, 30,000

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male Jews ages 16-60 are sent to concentration camps, and at least 91 Jews are murdered.

Jewish community of Germany assessed a collective fine of one billion Reichsmarks (equivalent to \$7 billion in 2020) for destruction 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 will never be brought to a vote.

September 1 Germany invades Poland. Two days later, Britain and France declare war on Germany. Beginning of World War II.

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 Germany invades the Soviet Union

July *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads of SS soldiers, German police, and local auxiliaries) begin mass shootings in occupied Soviet Union

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

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- December 7** The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor.
- December 8** The United States declares war on Japan.
- December 8** Mass killing operations begin at Chelmno.
- December 12** Germany and Italy declare war on the United States; the U.S. enters World War II.

1942

- January 20** Wannsee Conference in Berlin. Heydrich convenes heads of Nazi party and German governmental ministries, occupation officials, and SS departments under his command, to coordinate the Final Solution through Adolf Eichmann.
- March 1** 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
- July 23** Gassing operations begin at Treblinka. More than 300,00 Jews are deported to the killing center over the next few months.
- 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.

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- May 15** Deportation of Hungarian Jews to Birkenau begins, including Lilli Jacob and her family.
- May 25** Karl Höcker arrives at Auschwitz
- May 26** Lilli 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
Heinz Baumkotter, Peter Wirth's grandfather, visits Auschwitz.
- October 7** Inmate 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 Lilli 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 Museum and Memorial 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. (See more at [What is Genocide?](#))

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 on the basis of 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 is 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.

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ABOUT THE PLAY

In 2007, a mysterious album featuring Nazi-era photographs arrived at the desk of a U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum archivist. As curators unraveled the shocking truth behind the images, the album soon made headlines and ignited a debate that reverberated far beyond the museum walls. Based on real events, *Here There Are Blueberries* tells the story of these historical photographs—what they reveal about the perpetrators of the Holocaust, and our own humanity.

Conceived and directed by 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.

The world premiere of *Here There Are Blueberries* was produced in 2022 by La Jolla Playhouse, La Jolla, California, Christopher Ashley, Artistic Director & Debby Buchholz, Managing Director.



SOURCES

The following are the sources I relied on for the majority of the text, in addition to those listed under each topic:

[United States Holocaust Museum and Memorial](#) and the [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)

The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, by Michael Berenbaum. Johns Hopkins University Press; Revised edition, 2006.

[Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center](#)

[Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum](#)

Why?: Explaining the Holocaust, by Peter Hayes; Revised edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

Here There Are Blueberries, by Moisés Kaufman & Amanda Gronich. Tectonic Theater Project, 2024.

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