Holocaust Memorial Day 2011

Resources and Liturgical Material for Christian Services

churches.

nage: Jewish Holocaust Memorial in Montevideo, Uruguay

Produced jointly by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and the Council of Christians and Jews

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www.ccj.org.uk Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 Resources Pack	www.ctbi.org.uk
A Note from Director of Programmes at CCJ, Michael Wakelin	3
A History of Holocaust Memorial Day	4
Poetry Enemy Aliens by Wanda Barford	5
We Are The Shoes by Moshe Szulsztein, Yiddish Poet	5
Readings	
Nehemiah 8. 1-3, 5-6, 8-10	6
Psalm 19	6/7
1 Corinthians 12. 12-31a	7/8
Prayers	
A Prayer from the Jewish Community	
El Male Rachamim (Jewish Memorial Prayer for the Victims of the Holocaust)	9
A Prayer from the Concentration Camps	
A Prayer from Ravensbruck Concentration Camp	9
Prayers from the Christian Community	
Prayer of Penitence	9-10
Hymns	

By Gracious Powers So Wonderfully Sheltered by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Londonderry Aire) 11

Stories	12-14
Links and Useful Information	14

To Note When Using this Pack

This pack is intended to help churches explore the theme of untold stories further – including preaching and liturgical suggestions. Some congregations may have particular reasons for wishing to centre the service on a specific genocide (Armenia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia). In the Act of Commemoration, you might consider using a seventh candle or stone to commemorate these others.

Those organising and presiding should, however, **be cautious about making specific political statements or references to current events in ways which might prevent unity of worship**. Above all, we should avoid inviting judgements on others. Questions of our own responsibilities and the nature of humanity and society are the important issues. A Christian service which has genocide as its theme should, like all other services, combine elements of repentance with a desire to promote healing, completeness and reconciliation, as well as encouraging a prophetic desire for righteousness, justice and an end to fear.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 Resources Pack

"It is right to remember. We must remember the depths of evil to which human beings can sink; but also the insidious routes along which evil guides us to get us there. The Jews were blamed, first by a few and then by many; then they were mocked; then demonised, then segregated behind ghetto walls by the Nazis who were wishing they would just go away. And then, when they didn't, when they couldn't go away – the final solution. Yes, let us remember, repent and pray that human beings may never find themselves going down that

road again. Now we know where it leads. "

Right Reverend David W. Lacy, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (2006)

A Note from Director of Programmes at The Council of Christians and Jews, Michael Wakelin

Educational researcher Simone Schweber reported in an article on a Holocaust Education study in 2006 that individuals across the globe are suffering from 'Holocaust fatigue'¹; Schweber noted that, for many, the Holocaust has become over generalised and over familiar. Five years on, we live in a world that continues to play witness to atrocity, discrimination and the destruction of lives; the Christian community needs to carefully consider how the memories and stories of those who suffered during the Holocaust, Rwanda and Darfur (to name but a few) can be kept alive for generations to come. We, as Christians, have a responsibility to respect people from all faith, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Although Jesus and his followers were all Jewish, the Church's attitude towards Jewish people through most of our shared history has been scarred by teaching and tradition of anti-Judaism, paving the way for antisemitism in which many Christians participated. Holocaust Memorial Day provides opportunities not only for remembrance, but for reconciliation.

The Council of Christians and Jews (together with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) has compiled a set of resources, hymns and readings to accompany the 2011 theme of Holocaust Memorial Day: Untold Stories (chosen by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust). Many memories and stories have been shared by survivors of the Holocaust; let us strive to keep their and others' memories alive by reminding ourselves that some of the victims' stories will never be told. Let us reflect on those whose stories lie silent; let our reflections on the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides never cease to sadden us, anger us, and spur us into meet in dialogue with those of other religions and creeds. Let us not be fatigued.

Please feel free to use the poetry, prayers, readings and other material in this pack for services, meetings, fellowships or for any other setting you feel appropriate. It has been designed so that you can develop your own service using the material to help you to reflect. Other resources (pictures for use with music, a film about the Holocaust from Auschwitz and material from previous years) can be found on our website: <u>http://www.ccj.org.uk</u>

Michael Wakelin Director of Programmes, The Council of Christians and Jews

3

¹ Schweber, S 'Holocaust Fatigue?: Teaching it Today' Social Education 2006, p. 48

A History of Holocaust Memorial Day

Since 2001, the Government has invited British society to observe 27th January each year as Holocaust Memorial Day. This is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet troops on 27 January 1945.

The idea of a national Holocaust commemoration was proposed with three broad and interrelated aims in mind:

- to commemorate the Holocaust or Shoah, the murder by the Nazis and their agents of six million Jews and millions of Gypsies, Slavs, Russian POWs, the physically and mentally disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and other people belonging to minority groups;

- to acknowledge the repeated occurrences of genocide around the world since 1945 (In 2004 the national focus was on Rwanda);

- to renew the commitment of British people to combat racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia, and to work for an inclusive, caring and open society.

All of these aims are important for all of society. For those of us who seek to take the Gospel seriously, Holocaust Memorial Day will provide a particularly valuable opportunity for churches to reflect on some of the core concerns of Christian faith in the light of world history.

Although the remit of the day is wide-reaching, its focus remains the central event we call the Holocaust. This is intended to root the day in historical fact, especially concerning an event which cast a gigantic shadow over European history. Although many others perished as a result of Nazi actions, this time provides an opportunity to consider the fate of European Jewry in particular, for whom Hitler and others reserved a special hatred, and which was almost entirely wiped out.

However, Holocaust Memorial Day is also intended to provide opportunity for reflection on issues raised by all atrocities, especially those events officially designated as genocides, such as Bosnia and Cambodia. The mass murder of millions of people of different ethnic, cultural, religious and political groups in more than one genocide provided the darkest side of twentieth-century human history. Christians have also been among the perpetrators of genocide, as well as among the bystanders and, indeed, the victims. Holocaust Memorial Day can give us cause to remember the reality that evil is still powerful in our world. It can strengthen our resolve to protect every community of God's people from ethnic cleansing and elimination.

Poetry

Enemy Aliens Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia 1940 - Wanda Barford, Sweet Wine and Bitter Herbs

Wanda Barford is a member of Hampstead CCJ, a local branch of the Council of Christians and Jews. A Sephardi Jew from the Italian-controlled island of Rhodes, her family suffered the consequences of the Nazi regime's far reaching powers. This poem is part of her family's story.

Only on Tuesdays did she wear a hat, Pinned at a jaunty angle to her nose, The veil draped softly underneath her chin; And the gloves too, though soon the need arose To take one off and press her thumb down on the pad.

From behind his desk, the policeman called out The list of rules: no groups of more than six; Report same day each week; do *not* stray out of bounds; 'and Madame (leaning forward) no funny tricks or you'll join the other Eytie internees.'

Father in his spotless suit was affronted: The fingerprint pad was the same They used for common criminal. All day He bore a weight, a sense of shame That made him stern and grey.

Once the Day of Atonement fell on a Tuesday And registration held off a day or two. 'You're a Friendly Alien now,' the policeman said, 'we know you're not Italian but a Jew.' Father was relieved, but saw his 'Eytie' friends behind barbed wire.

(Reproduced with permission, Copyright Wanda Barford/Flambard Press)

We Are The Shoes - Moshe Szulsztein, Yiddish Poet

We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses. We are shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers From Prague, Paris and Amsterdam, And because we are only made of fabric and leather And not of blood and flesh, Each one of us avoided the hellfire

(Courtesy of Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, http://www.hmd.org.uk)

Readings

Rabbi Barry Marcus (Central London Synagogue) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have helped to compile these readings.

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Nehemiah 8. 1-3, 5-6, 8-10

¹all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ²Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁸So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

Psalm 19

- ¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- ² Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.
- ³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
- their voice is not heard;
- ⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

- ⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
- ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes; ⁹ the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.
¹² But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;⁻ do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,

and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you,O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

1 Corinthians 12. 12-31a

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think

Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 Resources Pack

www.ctbi.org.uk

less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.



Prayers

A Prayer From the Jewish Community

El Male Rachamim (Jewish Memorial Prayer for the Victims of the Holocaust)

O God, Who art full of compassion, who dwellest on high, grant perfect rest in Thy Divine Presence to all the souls of our holy and pure brethren whose blood was spilt by the murderers in Auschwitz, Belzec, Bergen Belsen, Dachau, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka and other extermination camps in Europe; who were killed, strangled, burned and buried alive for the sanctification for Thy Name. For whose souls we now pray. May their resting place be in the Garden of Eden, may the Master of Mercy shelter them in the shadow of His wings for eternity; and may he bind their souls in the Bond of Live. HASHEM is their heritage, and may they repose in peace in their resting places. Now let us say: Amen

(Courtesy of Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Hebrew Version at: http://www.hmd.org.uk/assets/downloads/1251970755-326.pdf)

A Prayer From the Concentration Camps

A Prayer from Ravensbruck Concentration Camp

O Lord,
Remember not only the men and women of good will,
But those of ill will.
But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted upon us;
Remember the fruits we have brought
Thanks to this suffering –
Our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, our courage,
Our generosity, the greatness of heart
Which has grown out of all this;
And when they come to the judgement,
Let all the fruits which we have borne
Be their forgiveness.

(Found on a piece of wrapping paper beside the body of a dead child at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp)

(Courtesy of Holocaust Memorial Day Trust)

Prayers from the Christian Community

Prayer of Penitence

Leader: God spoke through the prophet Amos: Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:23,24) For sins which we ourselves have committed and for sins of omission,

for sins of our hands and sins of our hearts,

for the hurt we have caused you and our neighbours through ignorance or indifference (Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Abraham,

We ask your forgiveness

For failure to see your image in someone who is different

(Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Sarah,

We ask your forgiveness

For putting our own welfare and social comfort above the basic needs of others (Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Jacob,

We ask your forgiveness

For our reluctance to get involved

(Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Rachel,

We ask your forgiveness

For being grateful that we are in some way superior to another

(Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Leah,

We ask your forgiveness

For teaching that it is better to receive than to give

(Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Sinai,

We ask your forgiveness

For the failure of your Church to be light in the darkness (Pause briefly for silent reflection) O God of Calvary,

We ask your forgiveness

Hymns

By Gracious Powers So Wonderfully Sheltered by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Translated by Fred Pratt Green) (to the Tune of Londonderry Air]

By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered and confidently waiting come what may, we know that God is with us night and morning, and never fails to meet us each new day.

Yet are our hearts by their old foe tormented Still evil days bring burdens hard to bear; O give our frightened souls the sure salvation For which, O Lord, you taught us to prepare.

And when the cup you give is full to brimming With bitter suffering, hard to understand, we take it gladly, trusting though with trembling, out of so good and so beloved a hand.

If once again, in this mixed world, you give us The joy we had, the brightness of your sun, We shall recall what we have learned through sorrow, And dedicate our lives to you alone.

Now as your silence deeply spreads around us, open our ears to hear your children raise from all the world, from every nation round us, to you their universal hymn of praise.

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer (February 4, 1906 – April 9, 1945) was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian. A vocal opponent of Nazism, he was executed for his views at Flossenbürg concentration camp.

Stories

All stories are taken from *Chasing Shadows* by Hugo Gryn. Hugo was a leading voice in interfaith dialogue. Born into a Jewish family in Czechoslovakia, Hugo's family were taken to Auschwitz in 1944; only Hugo and his mother survived the concentration camp. A well known figure in the Jewish community, his story addresses issues of isolation, faith and the future.

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On Faith in Auschwitz:

Chasing Shadows 20:20 Hindsight (pp. 250-251)

Those much older than me – grandparents, uncles, aunts – had already perished at Auschwitz and certainly all those who were younger than me. Nor did I know if my mother or anyone else in the family was still alive – much less where they might be. There was certainly no one left of family and friends.

... Two contradictory emotions governed much of my inner life. That I was innocent and that I was abandoned. They came to a head a few weeks later on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. A day we had spent in the synagogue as far back as I could remember. We knew the date. One that day in 1944, I was at my place of work. Like many others, I fasted and cleared a little hiding place for myself amongst the stacks of insulation boards. I spent most of the usual working day there, not even emerging for the thin soup given to us at midday. I tried to remember as many of the prayers as I could and recited them, even singing the Kol Nidre, asking for God's forgiveness for promises made and not kept. But eventually I dissolved in crying. I must have sobbed for hours. Never before or since have I cried with such intensity and then I seemed to be granted a curious inner peace. Something of it is still with me. I believe God was also crying. And I understood a bit of the revelation that is implicit in Auschwitz. It is about man and his idols. God, the God of Abraham, could not abandon me, only I could abandon God. I would like you to understand that in that builder's yard on that Day of Atonement, I found God. But not the God I had childishly clung to until those jet streams dissolved over Auschwitz. People sometimes ask me 'Where was God in Auschwitz?' I believe that God was there Himself – violated and blasphemed. The real question is 'Where was man in Auschwitz?'

On Christianity, Judaism and the Future after the Holocaust:

Chasing Shadows

20:20 Hindsight pp. 253-255

While the Shoah marks the virtual destruction of Jewish life in Europe, it is certainly for Christians a disaster: it is the ultimate betrayal of the values for which Christianity stands. And for the academic institutions of Europe, the judiciary, industry, business, trade unions, educators. Because all parts of society colluded in one way or another. There was a natural inclination to sweep things under the carpet, but in the end, unless you confront these very dark and destructive bits in your history, and consciously try to make amends, and to mend the nastiness that is in you, it is likely to have a kind of underground life and crop up all sorts of unexpected and inconvenient moments.

We must begin earnestly and without much more hesitation to understand what happened at Auschwitz, Warsaw, Dachau. Our generation will never come to terms with this and yet we must clear the way so that the wounds may gradually heal. We have to do protracted battle with out experiences and with our memories, to make sense of them if we can; to impress our fellow men with our terrible knowledge, lest we or our children or our children's children be doomed to suffer the agonies of its recurrence.

Just as creation itself is an ongoing process, so – I believe – is revelation. Here and there is a fresh glimpse of God and if you subject human history to a spiritual scrutiny, there are revelations about the state of morality as well. There *was* revelation at Auschwitz – of a dreadful and devastating sort. Of what happens when a principle of evil is harnessed to up-to-date technology, and in an atmosphere that is denuded of morality.

Ideas for Services: The excerpt below could be used as a meditation alongside the 10 Commandments

Chasing Shadows

20:20 Hindsight pp. 253-255

In the intervening years, I have often thought how Auschwitz-Birkenau was the denial and the perversion of all the Ten Commandments, which stand for what we have come to call the Judaeo-Christian spiritual tradition and morality – and one of the pillars of Western civilisation. In that Nazi empire, with its direct links between the pomp of Berlin and Berchtesgaden (where so many of Europe's leaders came to be entertained by Hitler and to applaud his plans and programme) and the unspeakable terror of the camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen, it was clear that:

I God was replaced by a Fuhrer and his minions who claimed for themselves the power of life and death.

II They fashioned countless idols of silver and gold and filled their world with the sight of swastikas, the sound of *Heil Hitler!* and the smell of burning corpses.

III They swore falsely and made lies an instrument of state policy.

IV They created camps of slavery in which the hours of light were spent in forced labour and the darkness filled with loneliness and relentless hunger. In some of the camps I inhabited, the few workless hours were set aside for ritual punishment beatings.

V Children were made to watch the humiliation and debasement of their parents – and parents had children torn from their arms. Families were desecrated.

VI Murder was at the heart of that culture, and killers were promoted and honoured.

VII There was a reward for the betrayal of relationships and sexual abuse was rife.

VIII Stealing and looting were sanctioned on every level of Nazidom right down to gold teeth and fillings extracted from corpses.

IX Truth was the first and permanent casualty of the system.

X Covetousness, envy and unchecked greed become part of the way of life. Neither person, nor property were respected. The spoilers' appetite for spoils knew no limits.

Ideas, Links and Further Resources

For Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 CCJ has made available a range of resources, including a meditative soundscape (at http://www.ccj.org.uk/Holocaust-Memorial-Day) filmed at Auschwitz. Please feel free to use this film as a reflection point of during intercessory prayers or Acts of Commemoration; establish an area in your church or meeting room where people can light a candle or place a pebble during the film.



Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of links to help your develop your service for Holocaust Memorial Day:

<u>http://www.hmd.org.uk</u> – Holocaust Memorial Day site, The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust This site has a wealth of resources, pictures and case studies, all of which are free to use.

http://www.ccj.org.uk – The Council of Christians and Jews

In addition to resources for Holocaust Memorial Day, this site provides information about the work of the Council of Christians and Jews in promoting grass-roots dialogue between Jews and Christians through local branches and unique projects, tackling antisemitism and intolerance.

http://www.ctbi.org.uk – Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

The ecumenical organisation bringing together England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland produces a wide range of resources for use in combating racial injustice and for promoting dialogue between those of different faiths.

http://www.ushmm.org/ - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Hosts information about the Holocaust, Darfur, Rwanda, Bosnia and other genocides.

http://www.yomhashoah.org.uk - Yom HaShoah Annual Jewish Remembrance Day for Victims of the Holocaust

Places to Visit Holocaust Centre, Beth Shalom - Nottingham www.bethshalom.com

Holocaust Memorial Day Event – Jewish Museum, London http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/?unique_name=whats-on&item=199

Manchester Jewish Museum http://www.mjm.org.uk/