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Merton Council

Holocaust Memorial Day Agenda

Membership

Councillors:

Co-opted members:

Substitute Members:

Date: Thursday 27 January 2022

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Live streamed on Youtube

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed. For more information about the agenda please contact or telephone .

All Press contacts: communications@merton.gov.uk, 020 8545 3181

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Holocaust Memorial Day Agenda

27 January 2022

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Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. For further advice please speak with the Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership.

77th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and 27th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia

Welcome

By the Worshipful the Mayor of Merton
Councillor Michael Brunt

Memorial prayer

God full of compassion whose presence is over us, may the souls of our dead who have gone to their everlasting home with the holy and of Your presence.
Source pure on high who shine as the lights of heaven, find the safety and rest denied them on earth beneath the shelter of mercy, cover them in the shelter of Your wings forever and bind their souls into the gathering of life.

It is God who is their heritage.

May they be at peace in their place of rest.

Amen.

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים
המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת פני
השכינה במעלות קדושים
וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהרים
לנשמות ששה מליון אחינו
ואחיותינו שמתו על-קדוש השם.
ינוחו בשלום ובשלום שלא ידעו
בחייהם. אנא בעל הרחמים
הסתירם בסתר כנפיד לעולמים
וצרור בצרור החיים את-נשמתם:
יהיה הוא נחלתם וינוחו בשלום
על משכבם ונאמר אמן:

Wimbledon Synagogue Choir – directed by Sarit Aloni
Yitgadal (Chatzi Kadish - by Salomone Rossi):



By - Getty Images / Andrew Renneisen / Stringer

Holocaust Memorial Day is **One Day in January** that we put aside to come together to remember, to learn about the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, in the hope that there may be **One Day** in the future with no genocide. We learn more about the past, we empathise with others today, and we take action for a better future.

One Day in history

19 April 1943 - Nazi Germany had entered Poland four years earlier in 1939, and started establishing ghettos in spring 1940, to segregate, dehumanise and control the Jews. The largest of the ghettos was in Warsaw, where more than 400,000 Jews were crowded into 1.3 square miles of the city with poor sanitation, limited food and cramped conditions. It is estimated that more than 92,000 people died in the Warsaw ghetto because of the squalid conditions. On 19 April 1943, the Jewish inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto fought back against the Nazi Regime.

12 July 1995 in Bosnia against the backdrop of a war, after Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serb troops descended on the town of Srebrenica. They began separating Bosniak men from women and children despite the area having been designated by the UN as a 'safe area'. Over the next couple of days more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were murdered in and around Srebrenica. 12 July 1995 was the last day that many women saw their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers.

17 April 1975 - On this day the Khmer Rouge entered the Cambodian capital and Mardi Seng noted 'on that same bright, warm, glorious and victorious day, a new era began: not of peace and tranquillity, nor of hope and prosperity, but of suffering, torture, hunger, diseases, work camps, re-education, and systematic killing'. The arrival of the Khmer Rouge on 17 April 1975 brought five years of terror, with more than two million people murdered.

Read by the Worshipful the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Michael Brunt

Survivors of the Holocaust and of genocide often talk about the **One Day** when everything changed, sometimes for the worse and sometimes for better.

Iby Knill feels that from **One Day** to the next, everything changed and yet nothing had changed: ***'One day Gretl, my school friend...greeted me with an embrace. The next day she ran across the road and turned her head away so as not to acknowledge me.'***

Franziska Schwarz Mikus was sterilised by the Nazis because she was deaf, as part of their process of persecuting anyone who did not fit their ideal – in this case, because they believed that disabled people were imperfect and worthless. On that **One Day**, the Nazis took control of Franziska's body, of her life choices. The Nazis wanted to prevent people they deemed 'unfit' from being able to procreate. It has been estimated that between 1933 and 1939, 360,000 individuals were subjected to forced sterilisation, because they had physical or mental disabilities – or were perceived to have disabilities.

Following a civil war in 2003, which has left millions of people displaced, the Sudanese government has supported Arab militia who have destroyed hundreds of villages, and murdered thousands of people. Faiza was targeted by the Sudanese Government for supporting victims of the genocide, and so, she says:

'One Day I decided to leave my country. It was a hard decision, but there was no other way. I left my home, my friends, my people; I left all my belongings. There is a book on a table near my bed open to page 49 waiting for me.'

Read by Councillor Mark Allison, Leader of the Council

It may be hard to pick out just **One Day**, as for many, to keep going through each and every day was a huge struggle, with no end in sight and no glimmer of hope that the next day would be any better.

The genocide in Rwanda lasted 100 days, beginning after the plane carrying the President was shot down on 6 April 1994. The genocide followed decades of tensions between Hutus and Tutsis. **Beatha Uwazaninka** recalls how, having watched fellow Tutsis around her being murdered, and on many occasions thinking she was going to be murdered, 'every one of those hundred days was dangerous'.

For many, one day was grindingly and dull like all the others, with no chance of improvement or change. **One Day** seemed to last for years, and 'every day of their life was a day of suffering and torment' (Chil Rajchman, The Last Jew of Treblinka).

Read by Councillor Nick McLean, Leader of the Conservative Group

Those who were targeted and persecuted held out for the **One Day** in the future when all their suffering would be over, hoping they would 'all see the day of liberation' (Elie Wiesel, Night).

On Holocaust Memorial Day we learn from genocide for a purpose – to build a better future. When we look ahead to 'one day with no genocide', what do we need to do today to achieve this? We can use this theme to motivate us to speak out when we see injustices, prejudices and identity-based violence.

On Holocaust Memorial Day 2022, this One Day, we will all come together in our communities, to learn from the Holocaust and genocides – for a better future.

Read by Councillor Peter Southgate, Leader of Merton Park Ward Independent Group

One Day is just a snapshot in time and therefore cannot give the full picture, the context, the background that is needed, but it can help bring a piece of the full picture to life. The age or gender of the victim, or their geographical location ensured that no **One Day** during the genocide was typical. The same date would be experienced very differently by Jews hiding in France, Jews incarcerated in Auschwitz, Jews awaiting their fate in Hungary, for example. For those who suffered for days, weeks, months, years focussing on just One Day is a starting point, a way in for us to learn more about what happened during the Holocaust and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Read by Councillor Jenifer Gould, Liberal Democrat Party

Wimbledon Synagogue Choir – directed by Sarit Aloni
Avinu Shebashamayim



In the UK, and around the world, millions of people face prejudice, discrimination and hostility simply because of their identity. Holocaust Memorial Day is a day of commemoration and action to challenge these attitudes and behaviours, in order to build a better future together.

The Holocaust and more recent genocides help us to learn for a purpose: to challenge present-day discrimination and hostility.

Today, the language of division, fear and prejudice is all too common – both online and in person around the UK. Police figures from England and Wales show hate crimes have risen year on year.

Anti-Gypsy, Roma and Traveller attitudes are prevalent, and members of the LGBTQI+ community continue to face hostile environments. Sexism, ageism, racism and disability discrimination are all forms of identity-based prejudice which need to be challenged.

We all have the power to make changes and take action to support those who face discrimination. From educating ourselves to better understand those who we perceive as different, to reporting hate crime if we see it, there are actions we can and must take to make our communities safer.

Read by Hannah Doody, Chief Executive, Merton Council

One person can make a difference by Gwyneth Lewis

The fight for justice starts and ends with me.

Truth is the sound of what I may say.

I can only be well when others are free

And right has a price I'm prepared to pay.

I refuse to be afraid

Of force or hatred.

I will pull their lies like weeds,

Plant gardens of more generous seeds.

If I turn my back and walk away

Who'll ask for others what I want for me?

I can only be well when others are free

And right has a price I'm prepared to pay.

Read by Chief Insp Barrie Capper, Metropolitan Police

Never again - Rachel Redhead

A silent scream lost in time

A shadow play in the dark

So many people lost now

Who can speak up for them

Shall I whisper in your ear

Can I shout in the street

Stand up and be counted

Who can speak out for them

Burial pits for broken lives

Never again can this happen

Broken up no more dreams

I tell you now: never again!

Jason Tough, Station Commander of Wimbledon Fire Station

Wimbledon Synagogue Choir – directed by Sarit Aloni
Avinu Malkeinu

Holocaust 1941 - 1945

The Holocaust was the attempt by the Nazis and their collaborators to murder all the Jews in Europe. From the time they assumed power in Germany, the Nazis used propaganda, persecution, and legislation to deny human and civil rights to German Jews. They used centuries of antisemitism as their foundation.

With the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 Germany invaded Poland, subjecting around two million Polish Jews to violence and forced labour. Thousands of Jews were murdered in the first months of the occupation. Shortly after the occupation Polish Jews were confined to particular neighbourhoods that came to be known as 'ghettos'. Living conditions in these ghettos were appalling – a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews. This approach was repeated across Eastern Europe in other countries occupied by the Nazis.

In 1941, the systematic murder of Europe's Jews began – a plan known by the Nazis as 'The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem'. Death squads called Einsatzgruppen swept Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, killing Jews by firing squad. By the end of 1941 the first extermination camp, Chelmno in Poland, had been established, giving the Nazis their method to continue murdering on a giant scale between 1941 and 1945.

By the end of the Holocaust, six million Jewish men, women and children had been murdered in ghettos, mass-shootings, in concentration camps and extermination camps.

Read by Imam Nasim Bajwa, Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

Genocide in Cambodia 1975 – 1979

The fate of Cambodia shocked the world when the radical communist political party Khmer Rouge, under their leader Pol Pot, seized power in April 1975. The Khmer Rouge ruthlessly imposed an extremist programme to reconstruct Cambodia by creating a 'Year Zero'.

The population was made to work as labourers in one huge federation of collective farms. The inhabitants of towns and cities were forced to leave. No-one was spared: the ill, disabled, old and very young were also driven out, regardless of their physical condition. People who refused to leave, those who did not leave fast enough and those who would not obey orders were all murdered.

Ethnic minority groups were also targeted by the Khmer Rouge's racism, these included ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai people, and Cambodians with Chinese, Vietnamese or Thai ancestry. Religion was outlawed by the regime – half the Cham Muslim population was murdered, as were 8,000 Christians and Buddhism was eliminated from the country.

Those considered a threat to this new peasant class - including doctors, lawyers, teachers and even those who wore glasses were murdered. One Khmer Rouge slogan ran 'To spare you is no profit, to destroy you is no loss.'

Read by Geetha Maheshwaren, Shree Ghanapathy Temple

Genocide in Bosnia 1995

In July 1995, with the back-drop of the ongoing civil war, Bosnian Serb troops and paramilitaries led by Ratko Mladić descended on the town of Srebrenica and began shelling it. Around 8,000 Muslim men, and boys over 12 years old, were murdered in Srebrenica.

Following the disintegration of Yugoslavia into six states, Bosnia declared independence in 1992, which soon descended into civil war. The independence was resisted by the Bosnian Serbs who saw their future as part of the 'Greater Serbia'. Bosnia became the victim of the Bosnian Serbs determined for political domination, which it was prepared to achieve by isolating ethnic groups and, if necessary, exterminating them. The Bosnian war resulted in the death of around 100,000 people, and the displacement of over two million men, women and children.

Where do the displaced go when genocide ends? How can individuals and nations assist those refugees who have survived genocide but no place to return? In Bosnia, thousands of Muslim refugees found sanctuary in Europe, while others returned home. However, there remain villages in Bosnia that are impossible for Muslims to return to even now.

Read by Judith Freedman, Wimbledon District Synagogue

Rwanda 1994

In 100 days in 1994 approximately one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered in the Genocide in Rwanda. The genocide took place following decades of tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, and a recent history of persecution and discrimination against Tutsis.

On 6 April 1994 the plane carrying Rwanda's President was shot down. Extremist Hutu leaders accused Tutsis of killing the President, and Hutu civilians were told by radio and word of mouth that it was their duty to wipe out the Tutsis.

Despite its colossal scale, this genocide was carried out almost entirely by hand, usually using machetes and clubs. The men who had been trained to massacre were members of civilian death squads, the Interahamwe. The State provided support and organisation – politicians, officials, intellectuals and professional soldiers incited the killers to do their work. Local officials assisted in rounding up victims and making suitable places available for slaughter.

Tutsi men, women, children and babies were killed in their thousands in schools and churches. Frequently the killers were people they knew – neighbours, workmates, former friends, sometimes-even relatives through marriage.

Read by Farrukh Ahmed, Wimbledon Mosque



Darfur 2003 – present day

Darfur is a region in the west of Sudan, bordering Chad, in north-east Africa. Before the conflict, Darfur had an ethnically mixed population of around six million black Africans and Arabs.

In 2003, a civil war began in the region between the sedentary population of black African farmers and the lighter-skinned nomadic Arab population. The Sudanese Government has supported Arab militia – the Janjaweed – who have destroyed hundreds of villages and murdered thousands of people. These atrocities have been condemned as genocide by the International Criminal Court and several governments around the world.

The war has led to the deaths of between 200,000 and 400,000 civilians, although estimates vary greatly, and this figure could be much higher. International peacekeepers, aid agencies and the media have struggled to keep accurate records or find accurate information. Up to 2.6 million people are still displaced in Darfur. They have been forced to flee their homes to makeshift refugee camps in Darfur or Chad run by international aid agencies.

Read by Alison Wallace, Wimbledon Quakers

Anti-Gypsy, Roma and Traveller attitudes are prevalent, and members of the LGBTQI+ community continue to face hostile environments. Sexism, ageism, racism and disability discrimination are all forms of identity-based prejudice which need to be challenged.

We all have the power to make changes and take action to support those who face discrimination. From educating ourselves to better understand those who we perceive as different, to reporting hate crime if we see it, there are actions we can and must take to make our communities safer.

Identity-based persecution takes place on a daily basis, in all corners of the world. Discriminatory legislation, social attitudes vilifying minorities and mass internment of specific groups are all too common.

Read by Sandra Sinclair, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voice



Wimbledon Synagogue Choir - directed by Sarit Aloni
Adonai Roi

First they came - Pastor Martin Niemoller

First, they came for the communists,
But I didn't speak out because I wasn't communist.
Then they came for the socialists,
But I didn't speak out because I wasn't a socialist,
Then they came for the trade unionists,
But I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for me,
And there was no one left to speak for me.

Read by Pinar Engincan -Chair Merton Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Forum

Colours – by Michaela Rugwizangoga

Red, Blue, Yellow
Green, White, Purple
Jasmine, Orange, Azure
Old pallor's,
Make way for new homes
A future spread with colours
A horizon without sorrow
Here ends our pain.
Here begins life

Read by David Jenkins, Trustee of Merton Centre for Independent Living



Racism – Rose Young (aged 8)

If hate was an animal,
It would be a green eyed python

If hate was a place,
It would be the bottom of the ocean

If hate was an illness,
It would be the black plague

If love was a season,
It would be a warm summer

If love was a food,
It would be a birthday cake with six candles

Love is like a big fat juicy yellow mango

Read by Simon Shimmens, Chief Executive Officer, Merton Connected

**Generation2Generation presentation by:
David Wirth**

**Wimbledon Synagogue Choir - directed by Sarit Aloni
Mim'amakim**

Concluding prayers

**Rabbi Adrian Schell, Wimbledon District Synagogue
&
Reverend Alison Judge, Mayor's Chaplain**



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Warsaw Ghetto fighters surrendering © Wiener Library



If we don't save our history, it will perish

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**London Borough of Merton Holocaust Memorial Day
Civic Event Thursday 27 January 2022
7:00 pm until 9:00 pm
Order of Service**

1	Welcome by the Worshipful the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Michael Brunt
2	Memorial prayer from Rabbi Adrian Schell - Wimbledon Synagogue
3	Recording of Wimbledon Synagogue Choir, directed by Sarit Aloni - Yitgadal (Chatzi Kadish - by Salomone Rossi):
4	Reading by the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Michael Brunt
5	Reading by Councillor Mark Allison, Leader of the Council
6	Reading by Councillor Nick McLean, Leader of the Opposition
7	Reading by Councillor Peter Southgate, Leader of Merton Park Ward Independent Group
8	Reading by Councillor Jenifer Gould, Liberal Democrats
9	Recording of Wimbledon Synagogue Choir – directed by Sarit Aloni - Avinu Shebashamayim
10	Reading by Hannah Doody, Chief Executive Merton Council
11	Reading by Chief Inspector Barrie Capper, Metropolitan Police Service
12	Reading by Jason Tough, Station Commander of Wimbledon Fire Station

13	Recording of Wimbledon Synagogue Choir, directed by Sarit Aloni - Avinu Malkeinu
14	Reading by Imam Nasim Bajwa, Ahmadiyya Muslim Association
15	Reading by Geetha Maheshwaren, Shree Ghanapathy Temple
16	Reading by Judith Freedman, Wimbledon District Synagogue
17	Reading by Farrukh Ahmed, Wimbledon Mosque
18	Reading by Ali Wallace, Wimbledon Quakers
19	Reading by Sandra Sinclair, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Voice
20	Recording of Synagogue Choir, directed by Sarit Aloni - Adonai Roi
21	Reading by Pinar Engincan, Chair Merton Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Forum
22	Reading by David Jenkins, Trustee of Merton Centre for Independent Living
23	Reading by Simon Shimmens, Chief Executive of Merton Connected
24	Presentation by David Wirth from Generation2Generation UK
25	Recording of Wimbledon Synagogue Choir, directed by Sarit Aloni -Mim'amakim
26	Concluding Prayers by Rabbi Adrian Schell - Wimbledon Synagogue and Reverend Alison Judge – Mayor's Chaplain