



**Keep the Memory Alive**

**Holocaust Memorial Day 2015  
Reading and Viewing Materials**

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# Holocaust Memorial Day 2015

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Watching a film or reading a book written about the Holocaust can be an ideal way to explore Holocaust Memorial Day.

A film showing can stimulate debate and assist with informal education as it can often be easier to empathise with characters (both historical and fictional) on screen rather than in a book. It is important if showing a film (rather than a documentary) to remember that it is unlikely to be fully historically accurate for reasons of artistic and time constraints. The showing of a feature film should only form part of an activity and should not become a substitute for further learning.

It is also important, if showing a film to an audience, to obtain permission from the copyright owner. For more information on how to do this, contact the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation or Filmbank.

This is a living document and the following books and films are suggestions only. If you would like to recommend a film/book, please email [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk) for your contribution to be included.

## The Holocaust

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis attempted to annihilate all of Europe's Jews. It is this event which we now refer to as The Holocaust or the *Shoah*, a variation on a Hebrew word. The Nazis spread their hatred through the use of propaganda and legislation designed to deny human rights to Jews and used centuries of anti-semitism as their foundation.

### Suggested reading

**Title:** Holocaust Memorial Day – Testimonials by UCU members  
**Author:** Various

**Synopsis:** A book of testimonials by UCU members and others who have survived genocide in Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur and Rwanda.  
[www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6442](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6442)

**Title:** I am Healthy and I Feel Fine  
**Author:** Marian Serejski

**Synopsis:** *I am Healthy and I Feel Fine* is the collected letters of a prisoner in Auschwitz. Marian Serejski, a university lecturer from Warsaw was imprisoned as a political prisoner in Auschwitz for 15 months in 1941 – 2. He was one of only 2,000 prisoners who would be released by the Nazi authorities voluntarily.

Surprisingly, letters and parcels from the prisoners' families were allowed to be delivered and prisoners were allowed to respond. All letters were censored by the camp authorities, so it was difficult for prisoners and their families to say what was really going on. Marian and his wife communicated in code – through the use of the character Henio. Henio was a character who, to the outside world seemed to be a separate person but in fact referred to Marian's middle name. Marian, his family and his letters survived Nazi persecution. His daughter, Krystyna has edited this book of his letters home.

**Title:** I Have Lived a Thousand Years  
**Author:** Livia Bitton-Jackson

**Synopsis:** *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* is the testimony of Holocaust survivor Livia Bitton-Jackson. It tells the story of Livia and her family and their deportation from Budapest to Auschwitz and the events which took place from then until liberation in 1945.

Livia Bitton-Jackson, born Elli Friedmann, was born in Czechoslovakia. She was 13 and living with her father, mother and her brother in Hungary when the Nazis invaded and brought in exclusionary laws and ordered their eventual deportation. Elli and her mother were sent to Auschwitz before being moved to Camp Plaszow, Augburg and finally Dachau. Elli survived with her mother and was eventually reunited with her brother. Her father died in Bergen-Belsen two weeks before liberation.

**Title:** **Zoli**  
**Author:** **Colum McCann**

**Synopsis:** *Zoli* by Colum McCann tells the story of a Gypsy poet and singer and her experiences of fascism, communism and exile from her Gypsy community. The novel is partly set during the Porrajmos, the Nazi attempt to eliminate Gypsies and their culture from Europe.

**Title:** **If This is a Man**  
**Author:** **Primo Levi**

**Synopsis:** *If This is a Man* is Primo Levi's memoir of his experiences in the Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz III. The book recounts not only the author's extraordinary survival of Auschwitz, but also explores the reasons behind the inhumanity of the Nazi concentration camp system.

**Title:** **Chasing Shadows**  
**Author:** **Rabbi Hugo Gryn**

**Synopsis:** *Chasing Shadows* is the memoir of Holocaust survivor Rabbi Hugo Gryn which follows his life from his happy childhood and prosperous family life in Berehovo in the Carpathian mountains (then in Czechoslovakia, now in Ukraine) to his experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau and as a slave labourer during the Holocaust.

**Title:** **Shoah (2007)**  
**Author:** **Claude Lanzmann**

**Synopsis:** *Shoah* is Claude Lanzmann's landmark documentary meditation on the Holocaust. Assembled from footage shot by the filmmaker during the 1970s and 1980s, it investigates the genocide at the level of experience: the geographical layout of the camps and the ghettos; the daily routines of imprisonment; the inexorable trauma of humiliation, punishment, extermination; and the fascinating insights of those who experienced these events first hand.

On Holocaust Memorial Day itself, the BBC will be screening *Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann's acclaimed 10-hour documentary. Programmes will be aired on both BBC1 and BBC2 – see TV listings nearer to the day.

**Title:** **Hedwig and Bertie**  
**Author:** **Frieda Arkin**

**Synopsis:** It is the spring of 1939 Harry Eisenstein is jolted awake by the loud knock on the door. He is met by Hedwig Kessler, a tall, majestic woman with a strong German accent who contemptuously contemplates his small flat.

Harry has never met his German-Jewish cousins before who have somehow managed to escape Nazi Persecution in Berlin. We follow Hedwig and Berti through the meanderings of their own very distinct lives, from the arrival of an unanticipated child to resettling on an entirely new continent.

**Title:** **The Book Thief**  
**Author:** **Markus Zusak**

**Synopsis:** *The Book Thief* tells the story of Liesel Meminger, a nine-year old girl fostered by a family on Himmel Street, Molching, Germany in the late 1930s. Liesel's story includes her obsession with reading, her theft of books and the impact of the Second World War and anti-Jewish actions on the people of Himmel Street and is told to us by Death himself.

**Title:** **Night**  
**Author:** **Elie Wiesel**

**Synopsis:** *Night* is Elie Wiesel's memoir of his experience, as a young Orthodox Jew, of being sent with his family to the German concentration camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald during the Holocaust. Fifty years after being written, the 109-page volume, described as devastating in its simplicity, stands alongside Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man* and Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* as one of the most influential works of Holocaust literature.

**Title:** **Defiance: The Bielski Partisans**  
**Author:** **Nechama Tec**

**Synopsis:** *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* documents the largest armed rescue of Jews by Jews during World War II. After Hitler launches Operation Barbarossa and invades the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, multitudes of Jews find themselves facing certain death as the jaws of the Nazi juggernaut gobble up territory in Eastern Europe.

**Title:** **Person of no nationality**  
**Author:** **Ruth Barnett**

**Synopsis:** Berlin-born Ruth Barnett was sent to Britain in 1939 at the age of four by her parents to escape the Nazis as her father was Jewish. She grew up in rural southern England in foster families. Her search for her identity, her battles to become British and, later, Jewish, against her parents' wishes, and her account of how her early experiences shaped her career, make for a fascinating and moving story. She shows how it is possible to recover from trauma and become an inspiration to others.

### **Suggested viewing:**

**Title:** **UCU Holocaust Memorial Day Film**

**Synopsis:** UCU is very pleased to launch a web film to commemorate the memories of the many who were murdered during the Holocaust. Testimonials provided by UCU members whose family members were murdered during the Holocaust.  
[www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6442](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6442)

#### **Journeys to Safety: Memories of the Kindertransport**

We are pleased to release our second short film to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. Prior to World War II, many children made journeys through Europe to escape the Nazis and the growing wave of anti-Semitism. The memories of those who travelled to safety as part of the Kindertransport programme are shared. The film also marks the 75th Anniversary of the Kindertransport programme (1938 - 2013).

**Title:** **Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution**

**Synopsis:** This documentary series follows the trail of evil from the very first origins of Auschwitz as a place to hold Polish political prisoners, through the Nazi solution for what they called 'the Jewish problem', to the development of the camp as a mechanised factory for mass murder. It interweaves exceptional testimony from camp survivors and members of the SS with archive footage and reconstructions of some of the key decision-making moments.

**Title:** **Into the arms of strangers – stories of the Kindertransport**

**Synopsis:** Just prior to World War II, an extraordinary rescue operation aided the youngest victims of Nazi terror. Ten-thousand Jewish and other children were transported from German-held lands to foster homes and hostels in Great Britain. Some built new family ties. Some endured the Blitz. Some, amazingly,

found ways to liberate their own parents from Hitler's tyranny. And all have unforgettable stories to tell.

**Title:** **Wilfrid Israel – The Saviour from Berlin**

**Synopsis:** Wilfrid Israel – The Saviour from Berlin tells the remarkable story of Wilfrid Israel who saved the lives of Jewish employees and paid them a salary for two years following as well as the many children who he organised to travel to safety on the Kindertransport. [www.wilfridisraelfilm.org](http://www.wilfridisraelfilm.org)

**Title:** **Commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day**

**Synopsis:** The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has a number of small films on their website for quiet reflection. The films not only cover the Holocaust but subsequent genocides and include personal testimonies from survivors. <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/films>

## Subsequent Genocides

### Armenia

Between 1915 and 1918, the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire were systematically persecuted, deported from their homes and murdered. Following the Balkan War and start of the First World War, Armenian men, women and children were expelled and exterminated in an attempt to destroy their very existence.

**Title:** **Black Dog of Fate**

**Author:** **Peter Balakian**

**Synopsis:** *Black Dog of Fate* is the memoir of Armenian-American poet Peter Balakian. Through recollections of the many upheavals of sub-urban America in the 1950s and 60s, Balakian reveals how he came to understand his family's experiences in the Armenian atrocities of 1915-1918.

*Black Dog of Fate* is an engrossing journey of self-discovery that demonstrates how events of the past can direct our lives today. As Peter grows, he engages with sports, romance and the political radicalism of the times, but ultimately it is his families past sufferings that most impact his adult life.

**Title:** **The Betrayed**

**Synopsis:** A 40 minute BBC documentary which explores some of the issues surrounding the Ottoman Empire's attempt to destroy its Armenian population. The film is shown in four parts

**Warning: Distressing scenes**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhpvnL1YjdI&list=PL05CD46A253C290B5>

### Bosnia

In the late-1980's, the heterogeneous Yugoslav federation began to cleave along ethnic lines. Civil war erupted in 1992 against a backdrop of increasingly nationalist politics, including the idea of "Greater Serbia". Between 1992 and 1995, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks soldiers and paramilitaries used widespread use of rape, torture and forcible displacement against civilians.

The actions of some Serb units were particularly heinous, featuring attempts to eliminate non-Serb culture, a tactic soon to be known as "ethnic cleansing". Across Bosnia and Herzegovina civilians were herded into camps as small scale massacres were committed. The most notorious of these was the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995, when more than 7,500 Bosniak men and boys in the U.N.-safe area, were executed by forces under General Radko Mladic.

## Suggested reading

**Title:** **Keep the Memory Alive**  
**Author:** **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and UCU**

**Synopsis:** An overview of Bosnian genocide including a testimony from Safet Vukalić, a survivor of the Holocaust

**Title:** **The Cellist of Sarajevo**  
**Author:** **Steven Galloway**

**Synopsis:** *The Cellist of Sarajevo* is a novel which follows the lives of three inhabitants of Sarajevo during the Siege of Sarajevo which lasted from April 1992 to February 1996

**Title:** **Bluebird**  
**Author:** **Vesna Maric**

**Synopsis:** *Bluebird* is a memoir by a Bosnian Refugee, Vesna Maric who was 16 at the start of the war. After convincing her mother to let her leave, Vesna is sent on a coach journey with her sister to Britain. From this time until she gained asylum in 1996, she learns a lot about herself and the differences between the two cultures.

**Title:** **Bosnia: A Short History**  
**Author:** **Noel Malcolm**

**Synopsis:** Malcolm contends that "ethnic cleansing" is not a by-product of the mid-90's war but a central element in the Serbian goal of creating homogeneous Serb enclaves that eventually will join together in a Greater Serbia. He reaches back to Turkish occupation, Austro-Hungarian rule, both world wars and the era of Stalinist oppression under Toti in order to explain the origins of conflict in Bosnia.

**Title:** **The War is Dead, Long Live the War: Bosnia: the Reckoning**  
**Author:** **Ed Vulliamy**

**Synopsis:** The year 2012 marks the twentieth anniversary of the onset of the worst carnage to blight Europe since the days of the Third Reich - the Bosnian War. A hurricane of violence was unleashed by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in pursuit of a 'Greater Serbia'.

Milosevic and his ally Radovan Karadzic required the annihilation of all Bosniaks, Croats and other peoples though either death or enforced deportation and of any trace of their existence destroyed. The campaign of 'ethnic cleansing' was infamous: the destruction of entire towns and villages, the deportation of some two million people, the massacre at Srebrenica and, perhaps most tragically, the use of concentration and death camps in our lifetime.

## Cambodia

When the Khmer Rouge took control of the Cambodian government in 1975, they declared the beginning of a new age dedicated to a peasant-oriented society. After outlawing education, religion, healthcare and technology, the Khmer Rouge ordered the evacuation of Cambodia's cities and forced these residents to labor without adequate food or rest. At the same time as summarily executing those who were unable to keep up, the Khmer Rouge began to target suspected political dissidents.

These citizens, including doctors, teachers and those suspected of being educated were singled out for torture at the notorious Tuol Sleng prison. In four years, between 1.7 and 2 million Cambodians died in the Khmer Rouge's 'Killing Fields'.

**Title:** **From Phnom Penh to Paradise**  
**Author:** **Var Hong Ashe**

**Synopsis:** A testimony from a survivor of the genocide in Cambodia. In *From Phnom Penh to Paradise*, Var Hong Ashe talks about the atrocities she and her family faced as the Khmer Rouge took power. Starting from the evacuation from the cities to the countryside to her eventual survivor and finding refuge in England, Var's story shows us how her faith and belief in other helped her survive.

**Title:** **Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields: Memoirs by Survivors**  
**Author:** **Dith Pran**

**Synopsis:** Dith Pran, the Cambodian photojournalist portrayed by Haing S. Ngor in *The Killing Fields*, compiled this collection of eyewitness accounts to the genocide perpetrated by Pol Pot's regime from 1975 to 1979. All of the survivors who recount their stories here were children when the Khmer Rouge took power.

**Title:** **To The End of Hell**  
**Author:** **Denise Affonço**

**Synopsis:** *'To The End of Hell'* is the testimony of Denise Affonço who survived the genocide in Cambodia. In the book, she talks about being forcibly removed from the city to the country, her forced labour and the separation from her son. She writes movingly about the murder of her friends and relatives and about her survival.

**Title:** **When Broken Glass Floats**  
**Author:** **Chanrithy Him**

**Synopsis:** *'When Broken Glass Floats'* tells the true story of a 10 year old girl who has been forcibly removed from her home in Phnom Penh, Cambodia along with her entire family in the wake of the successful coup by the Khmer Rouge.

### Suggested viewing:

**Title:** **The Killing Fields**

**Synopsis:** This 1984 drama concerns the real-life relationship between New York Times reporter Sidney Schanberg and his Cambodian assistant Dith Pran (Haing S. Ngor), the latter left at the mercy of the Khmer Rouge after Schanberg—who chose to stay after American evacuation but was booted out—failed to get him safe passage.



## Darfur

Sudan, the largest country in North Africa, is the location of two conflicts that feature large levels of targeted harm against civilians.

Since 2003, the genocidal conflict in Darfur has devastated millions of non-combatant civilians and resulted in the death of at least 200,000 people. As of 2010, Sudan continues to direct its troops and proxy Janjaweed militias to systematically destroy the livelihoods of Darfuris by bombing and burning villages, looting economic resources, and murdering, raping, and torturing non-combatant civilians.

The Darfur conflict has displaced over 2.7 million people within Sudan, with an additional 250,000 crossing the border into Chad.

The actions of the Sudanese government, particularly the expulsion of 13 international aid groups in March 2009, continue to affect those who have sought safety in towns and displaced persons camps.

Currently Sudan features two large peacekeeping missions, UNAMID, tasked with bringing peace and protecting civilians in Sudan's western Darfur region and UNMIS, designated to ensure the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the demobilization of former combatants in South Sudan.

**Title:**            **The Translator**  
**Author:**        **Daoud Hari**

**Synopsis:**    ***The Translator*** is the testimony of Daoud Hari, a Darfuri survivor who now lives in the U.S. His book tells of the destruction of his village, his subsequent work in helping refugees fleeing the genocide and in helping journalists from across the world enter into Darfur to report on the genocide.

**Title:**            **Tears of the Desert**  
**Author:**        **Halima Bashir**

**Synopsis:**    ***'Tears of the Desert'*** is the memoir by Halima Bashir, a survivor of the genocide in Darfur. In this book she talks about growing up in a village in Darfur, about the persecution of her tribe – the Zaghawa tribes by the Arab Sudanese government.

**Title:**            **The Devil Came on Horseback: Bearing Witness to the Genocide in Darfur (Book / Film)**  
**Author:**        **Brian Steidle and Gretchen Steidle Wallace**

**Synopsis:**    ***'The Devil Came on Horseback'*** exposes the tragedy taking place in Darfur as seen through the eyes of an American witness who has since returned to the US to take action to stop it. Using the exclusive photographs and first hand testimony of former U.S. Marine Captain Brian Steidle, *'The Devil Came on Horseback'* takes the viewer on an emotionally charged journey into the heart of Darfur, Sudan, where an Arab run government is systematically executing a plan to rid the province of its black African citizens. As an official military observer, Steidle had access to parts of the country that no journalist could penetrate.

**Title:**            **Darfur: A New History of a Long War (African Arguments): A Short History of a Long War**  
**Author:**        **Julie Flint and Alex de Waal**

**Synopsis:**    ***'Darfur: A Short History of a Long War'*** is the definitive guide to the conflict. The book provides a short history of the region, and traces the

origins, organization and ideology of the infamous Janjawiid and other rebel groups, including the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement. It also analyses the confused responses of the Sudanese government and African Union. This new, thoroughly updated edition also features a powerful analysis of how the conflict has been received in the international community, the halting peace talks and attempts at peacekeeping.

## Rwanda

The Rwandan Genocide was the slaughter of an estimated 1 million Tutsis and some moderate Hutus, during a period of 100 days from 7th April to 16th July 1994.

The genocide had been in planning for a number of years, and was mostly carried out by two extremist Hutu militia groups, the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi, against Tutsi and some moderate Hutus across Rwanda. Nowhere was left unaffected.

### Suggested reading

**Title:** **We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families**

**Author:** **Philip Gourevitch**

**Synopsis:** A first person account by Philip Gourevitch of the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide which is based on interviews with survivors and perpetrators.

The book takes its title from a note seeking help sent by a group of pastors to the President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Churches' operations in western Rwanda.

**Title:** **You Alone May Live**

**Author:** **Mary K. Blewitt**

**Synopsis:** Is the 2010 memoir of Mary K. Blewitt OBE, founder of Survivors Fund (SURF), a charity that works to improve the lives of survivors of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994.

By recounting her experiences that led her to be at the heart of assisting survivors in the aftermath of the genocide, Mary Blewitt reveals both the extraordinary suffering of those who survived genocide and how she was compelled to help them.

**Title:** **Speak Rwanda**

**Author:** **Julian Pierce**

**Synopsis:** **'Speak Rwanda'** is Julian Pierce's debut novel about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Pierce chooses not to see from the largely observational role of international workers, but instead focuses on the genocide from 10 different Rwandan perspectives. Amongst the characters are Tutsi victims and Hutu *genocidaires*, civilians and soldiers, adults and children. By choosing these intertwining narratives, Pierce is able to present both the intense violence of the genocide and the reactions and motivations for perpetrators, victims and bystanders.

### Suggested Viewing

**Title:** **Sometimes in April (2005)**

**Synopsis:** **'Sometimes in April'** depicts the story of Rwanda's genocide, not only as it occurred in 1994 but also as the country was still experiencing healing and

justice in 2004. The story follows two Hutu brothers – Augustine and Honore – through the genocide. The film begins with Augustine as a school teacher in April 2004 10 years after the genocide began, teaching his class about the atrocities.

We also learn that Honore is being tried by the International Crimes Tribunal for his role as an influential radio personality, encouraging and inciting Hutus to murder Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Most of the film is told as flashbacks, focusing on the stories of Augustine, his wife and two sons in Kigali, and a teacher in a Catholic school who is trying to protect Augustine's daughter and the other students.

**Title:** **Shake hands with the Devil**

**Synopsis:** In 1994, word began to spread around the globe of an incomprehensible tragedy unfolding in the small African nation of Rwanda.

In a period of just 100 days, the country's Hutu extremists had executed more than 800,000 Tutsis with ruthless efficiency. Genocide had once again blighted the world.

**Title:** **Shooting Dogs**

**Synopsis:** In April, 1994, the aeroplane of the Hutu President of Rwanda crashes and Hutu militias slaughter the Tutsi population. In the Ecole Technique Officielle, the Catholic priest Christopher and the idealistic English teacher Joe Connor lodge two thousand and five hundred Rwandans survivors in the school under the protection of the UN Belgian force and under siege of the Hutu militia.



**HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY 27/1**