

27 January 2024

Holocaust Memorial Day: Fragility of Freedom

On Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January), PCS joins others around the world in remembering the millions of victims of the Holocaust – and the fragility of our freedoms.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is an international day on 27 January when we remember the 6 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of people murdered under Nazi persecution of other groups, in addition to more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

It takes place on 27 January to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

On HMD 2024, we reflect on how freedom is fragile and vulnerable to abuse.

As we come together in communities around the UK, let's pledge not to take our freedoms for granted, and consider what we can do to strengthen freedoms around the world.

Remembrance is vital in a world scarred by genocide.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 also marks the 30th anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. 49 years after the Holocaust ended, 19 years after the genocide in Cambodia, the world stood by as Hutu extremists shattered the fragile freedom in Rwanda, following decades of tension and violence, culminating in the murder of over one million Tutsis in just one hundred days.

Here in the UK, and around the world, millions of people face prejudice, discrimination and hostility simply because of their identity.

Holocaust Memorial Day charges us to recommit as a trade union to bringing our collective efforts to bear to challenge antisemitism, intolerance and the politics of division and hate.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, trade unionists were amongst the first groups to be targeted for persecution by the Nazi regime.

Today, trade union members continue to speak out and combat hatred, prejudice and discrimination. The trade union movement prioritises international solidarity and political education. Trade unions are vital to rooting out racism and antisemitism in our own organisations and in wider society.

When we learn about the Holocaust and more recent genocides we 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. The far-right, which targets people based on identity-based prejudice, need to be challenged.

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.

In recent years we've seen the dreadful persecution of many groups. These situations, and many more, demand our attention and action.

To learn more about the Holocaust and other more recent genocides, please [visit the Holocaust Memorial Trust website](#).

Reps and members can [read more on the importance of challenging and rooting out antisemitism on PCS Knowledge](#) (login required).