



Newcastle Celebrates 'The Dignity of Difference'

Tens of thousands of people from across the UK marked Holocaust Memorial Day this weekend, incorporating the theme 'The Dignity of Difference'. The national commemorative event was hosted by Newcastle, where a number of Ministers, Holocaust survivors and local children attended a powerful and moving ceremony at the Theatre Royal. Holocaust Memorial Day falls on the 27 January to mark the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Chief Rabbi and Cabinet Minister Ruth Kelly joined other speakers including Auschwitz Survivor Harry Nagelsztajn and Mary Blewitt, from the Rwandan Survivors Fund, to remember the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides, and to highlight the importance of respecting difference throughout society.

Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly said at the national event "The Holocaust sought to destroy Europe's Jewish communities. But it was an assault, too, against a mosaic of victims, equal in dignity, and united in difference. Above all, it was an attack our common humanity. That's why it's important for us all to remember and to come together."

The event focused on remembering victims of the Holocaust and the Nazi's racial policies, victims from genocides since the WW2 and concluded with an upbeat message of that aspiration to community cohesion in the modern world. The programme was made up of

personal testimony, song, poetry, music, film and speeches, including newly commissioned pieces.

Nick Joseph, CEO of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust said: "Sunday's national commemorative event provided a focus for us to remember the victims of the Holocaust and understand the lessons we can learn from this and other genocides. We have been overwhelmed by the interest and commitment from all sectors of society as well as the hundreds of local events that were organised around the UK to mark the day."

In addition, the following people took part in the event: Henry Goodman, Josette Bushell-Mingo, Tom Shakespeare, The Reverend Ceclia Eggleston, The Mostar Sinfonietta (formed after the war in Bosnia and with members from across the ethnic divide) and the Canning School Choir took part. For further information visit www.hmd.org.uk

Notes to Editor:

Holocaust Memorial Day

- Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is the 27 January every year, to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The United Kingdom national commemoration will be on 28 January in Newcastle upon Tyne. It will highlight the tragic results of prejudice and intolerance, through learning about the Holocaust, other victims of Nazi racial policies and genocides like those in Rwanda and Bosnia, and the situation in Darfur.
- In November 2005, the United Nations established Holocaust Memorial Day as a day of remembrance across the World.

- Further information can be found by visiting www.hmd.org.uk

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is a registered charity, established in 2005. Its objectives can be summarised as:

- To commemorate and remember the victims of the Holocaust; the persecution and mass murder of six million Jews.
- To commemorate and remember the victims of persecution and murder that resulted from the targeting of other groups of people by Nazi race policies. These include the Roma and Sinti, Black people, mentally and physically disabled people, lesbian and gay people and many of the Slavic peoples;
- To promote harmony between communities, including racial and religious harmony;
- To promote universal human rights;
- To promote equality and diversity and the elimination of discrimination by raising awareness of the causes and effects of racism and prejudice in society. This includes awareness of the impact of the Holocaust and other acts of systematic discrimination that leads to genocide.

Holocaust Memorial Day Theme 2007

- The 2007 theme paper is entitled 'The Dignity of Difference'. From that, a communications campaign has been devised and resources centred around the strap-line 'Same. But Different'
- 'Same. But Different' emphasises the benefits that a diverse and multicultural society can bring.