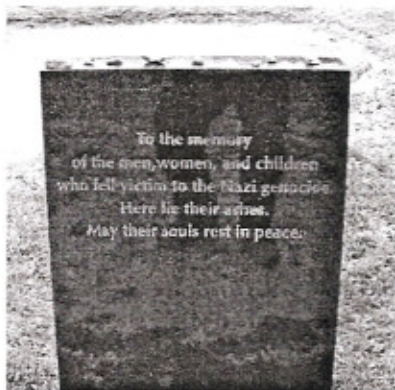


A COMMUNITY WOKEN UP BY A VISIT TO POLAND

Manchester's first community-wide, one-day trip to Poland—organised by Lubavitch South Manchester—has proved to be an outstanding success. A 737 aircraft was specially chartered to fly participants from Manchester to Crakow on Thursday 26 June. They visited Birkenau/Auschwitz, Schindler's factory and the synagogue in Crakow. Participants ranged in age from 14 to mid-seventies and came from as far as Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool and Blackpool to share in a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



91 year old Auschwitz survivor Leon Greenman accompanied the group and related his experiences of surviving slave labour and starvation in the camps. His wife Esther, baby son Barrie, sister and 60 members of his family were gassed by the Nazis in Auschwitz. Whilst there, he promised G-d that if he survived he would tell the outside world of what happened inside the concentration camps. Mr Greenman has dedicated his life to relating his story, lecturing all over the country as part of his

mission to combat racism. In 1998 he received an OBE from her Majesty the Queen for his contribution to the Holocaust Education in Britain.

The trip was the brainchild of Rabbi Dovid Jaffe of Lubavitch South Manchester. Having been nervous for many years about how he would react to visiting Poland, Rabbi Jaffe finally made the decision to organise the trip when he was approached independently by Barry Brownleader and Stuart Marks on the same Shabbat at Shule.

Speaking of the effect of the trip on his own life and attitude, he added: "Seeing the camps at first hand brought into sharp focus the importance of finding every Jew and galvanising him or her to respond to what Hitler did. I understand now that every single day is important in achieving that goal."

The effects of the trip on the wider community, too, have proved to be profound and long lasting. Lubavitch's 'Mitzvah Mission' - which encouraged every participant to respond to what they had experienced by pledging their commitment to a regular mitzvah—has reaped extraordinary results. It has spurred previously disinterested individuals to visit their parents more regularly, attend Shule, light shabbos candles and put on tefillin.

It was not only members of the Jewish Community who joined in this wake-up call. Deborah Murray, a practicing Christian from Lymm who participated in the trip, commented: "Too many people live their whole lives inside their comfort zones. I strongly believe that, every now and then, we all need to step out of our comfort zones and see for



ourselves what atrocious things men can do—and have done—to their fellow men."

Despite the appalling nature of the atrocities they learnt about, the trip was far from all doom and gloom. Rabbi Jaffe concluded: "The visit to Poland was a life-challenging-and life-affirming-experience for everyone who participated. We've been overwhelmed by the response to this project and we now plan to run the trips on an annual basis."

