

Press Release (Post event)

Northern Ireland remembers The Holocaust

Sunday the 1st of May 2016 at 3pm heralded the first March of Life in the UK with more than 200 people marching through the streets of central Belfast to commemorate Yom HaShoah, Jewish Holocaust Remembrance Day. Due to the recent tensions in the British Labour Party on anti-Semitism many media and news agencies turned up to cover the Belfast event. The commemoration started with a solo violinist struggling to be heard over the Sunday afternoon traffic in Belfast's Victoria Street. Key Northern Ireland organizer Mike McNally addressed the participants and introduced the event and the Global aspects of the March of life movement.

“The concept behind this event is to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish community to commemorate the Shoah, (Holocaust), remembering those who perished and to pay tribute to the survivors, re-telling their stories, keeping their memory alive for generations to come. As friends of the Jewish people we are humbled and thankful for the spirit of survival against all odds that is expressed by those who lived through the Shoah. We want to say “Never Again”, to this atrocity and make a public declaration against modern anti-Semitism. We believe that events such as these are a declaration to the younger generations that we should never forget the Holocaust and should never be silent when hatred and bitterness are expressed against human kind by human kind. This lesson should never be forgotten.”

Lena Kinder, a German exchange student, studying in Dublin took to the podium and honored Ireland's Holocaust survivors by name before Lynn McNally from the organizer's read a witness account from the death camps written by the hand of a 14 year old Polish inmate. The March began at 3:20pm led by a large banner with the March of Life logo clearly visible followed by the Israel flag, flags of the European nations and participants of the event. The march proceeded through central Belfast to the finishing point at Belfast City Hall at 3:45pm. Many onlookers, realizing that the event commemorated the holocaust, joined the procession in support along the route. At Belfast City Hall the descendant of a Nazi perpetrator broke the silence of his family publicly, explaining how his Grandfather had been a Nazi SS Officer and a murderer. He then spoke out against anti-Semitism and Jew hatred in all its forms and proclaimed that he stood with Israel. Many of Northern Ireland's Jewish community attended the march along with the Christian Community and others. The event culminated with the singing of Hatikvah accompanied by a solo violin resonating over the busy streets of central Belfast at 4pm.

Later that evening a private memorial event was held at Belfast Castle. 100 members of both the Jewish and Christian communities attended with Rabbi David Singer of the Belfast community being invited as a Guest Speaker. Mr Melvyn Goldberger, a second-generation holocaust survivor was also invited to share the story of his father Otto Goldberger. This memorial was preceded by the lighting of six remembrance candles representing the 6 million+ Jews who perished in the Shoah and culminated with Rabbi Singer reciting the Aaronic Blessing.

Editors Footnote:-

The March of Life is an initiative by Jobst and Charlotte Bittner and TOS Ministries from Tübingen, Germany. Together with descendants of German Wehrmacht soldiers and members of the Nazi SS, they have organized memorial and reconciliation marches at sites of the Holocaust all over Europe. In 2011, the March of Life was honoured by the Israeli Knesset for its special efforts on behalf of Holocaust survivors. <http://www.marchoflife.org>

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