



Patron, HM the Queen

Dedication to Holocaust Memorial Day

London, 18th January 2006

First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Cardiff Council Leader Rodney Berman signed a Book of Commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day, at a special ceremony in Cardiff on Wednesday 18 January.

Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust Dr Stephen Smith and Chief Executive Nick Joseph presented the book at the ceremony, which took place at the Raoul Wallenberg Memorial in Cathays Park, Cardiff.

In signing the book they made a pledge to ensure that the victims of the Holocaust, and of all genocide, are never forgotten, and that the causes and consequences of the Holocaust are understood by future generations. They also acknowledged mankind's shared responsibility in fighting against genocide, anti-Semitism, racism xenophobia and all other types of discrimination.

Cardiff Council, the Welsh Assembly and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust are jointly hosting the sixth annual event for Holocaust Memorial Day at the Wales Millennium Centre on January 26. It will mark the first time for Wales to host the national UK commemoration.

With a theme of One Person Can Make A Difference, the event in Cardiff has been created by renowned theatre director and founder of the English Shakespeare Company, Michael Bogdanov.

Rhodri Morgan said: "The purpose of Holocaust Memorial Day is to ensure that the Holocaust's horrendous crimes against humanity are never forgotten, and its relevance for each new generation is fully understood. This national commemoration event in Cardiff will make a difference because it will help promote a democratic and tolerant society that respects and celebrates diversity, and free of the evils of prejudice and racism."

Cardiff Council Leader Cllr Rodney Berman said, "I am honoured that Cardiff Council has been chosen to host the sixth annual UK Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration event. It is an incredibly important occasion and it is a privilege for us to be allowed to show our respects for all those people who did make a difference during this dark period in our history."

Dr Stephen Smith, Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, said: "The Trust is delighted that Wales is hosting the National event this year. The Book of Commitment serves as a link between each city that hosts the national event, and reminds us of the important place the annual commemorations now hold in all communities. It is particularly fitting that the ceremony should take place at the memorial to Raoul Wallenberg, who was instrumental in saving thousands of lives between 1939-45, at considerable risk to himself."

Ends

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Notes to editors

About Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day has been an annual event in the UK since 2001. On 1st November 2005, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution designating 27th January as the annual Holocaust Memorial Day. It is held each year on the 27th January to coincide with the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The purpose of the day is to commemorate all victims of Nazi persecution and to show that the events of the Holocaust remain relevant to everyone in the UK today. At least 16 countries will mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2006 across Europe, including Germany, Italy and France.

The purpose of Holocaust Memorial Day is to remember and learn from the lessons of the past. It provides a way into discussing difficult issues such as racism, xenophobia, discrimination and bigotry against the few by the many - across different faiths and diverse communities.

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity to commemorate all those who were victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, as well as the victims of racism and discrimination in other genocides.

The 2006 National Event will be hosted in Cardiff on the 26th January, on the eve of HMD, to respect the Jewish Sabbath, as the 27th falls on a Friday. The theme for HMD 2006 is, "One Person Can Make a Difference".

About The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

The Home Office has handed day-to-day responsibility for Holocaust Memorial Day to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. HM the Queen is patron of the Trust, which is an independent

charitable organisation responsible for taking forward the delivery of Holocaust Memorial Day from 2006 onwards. The Trustees are Dr Stephen Smith, Professor David Cesarani, Jane Clements, Paula Cowan, Louise Ellman MP, Jack Gilbert, Henry Grunwald QC, Agnes Grunwald-Spier, Judith Hassan, Ben Helfgott, Fahmia Huda, Rabbi Barry Marcus, Karen Pollock, and David Russell.

Raoul Wallenberg (born August 4, 1912, in Stockholm, Sweden) was a Swedish diplomat and a member of the influential Swedish Wallenberg family. As a partner at The Central European Trading Company he was allowed to travel Europe, and as a Legation Counsellor in Budapest, he used his diplomatic status to save Hungarian Jews during the later stages of World War II.

Wallenberg issued temporary Swedish "protective passports", the Schutz-pass, which claimed that the bearers were Swedish subjects awaiting repatriation. He also negotiated with Nazi officials, such as Adolf Eichmann, for the cancellation of deportations, and is thought to have saved the lives of between 20,000 and 100,000 Jews.