

Politicians take part in Holocaust march

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

A group of Canadian politicians led by Vaughan Mayor Michael Di Biase wrapped up a week-long trip to Nazi concentration camps in Poland Friday.

The March of the Living event marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of prisoners from the death camps.

The group, which included York Region chairperson Bill Fisch and Thornhill Councillor Alan Shefman, visited the Majdanek, Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps.

The York contingent marched with 18,000 people, including two dozen Canadian politicians, from the Auschwitz train station to the Birkenau camp in a silent tribute to the prisoners who perished and those who survived the death marches of 1945.

"This trip was truly a moving experience," Mr. Di Biase said in a statement sent home.

"One can look at all the photographs in books and watch as many movies as they want, but you cannot feel the full impact until you stand

next to the ovens in the crematoriums that were used to destroy the bodies of the millions that were murdered in the Holocaust."

The trip was arranged to help politicians understand the Holocaust and encourage schools to enhance studies about Second World War atrocities.

Mr. Di Biase was asked by the United Israel Appeals Federations of Canada and March of the Living Canada to lead the Canadian delegation because of Vaughan's large Jewish community.

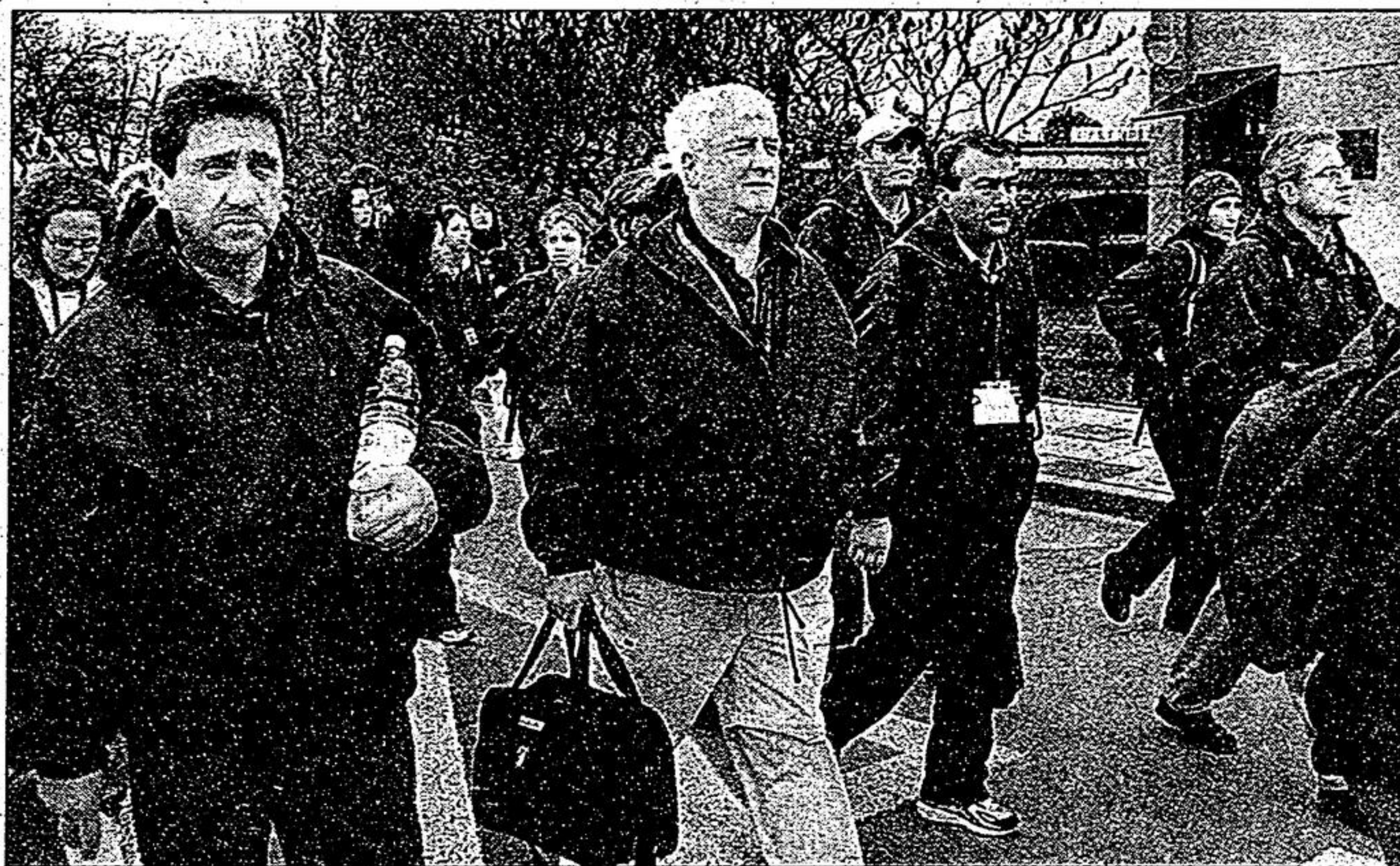
"In a city as diverse as Vaughan, we must learn about the past of our residents," Mr. Di Biase said in the statement.

"The past must help us better (understand) the future. We must never forget that we are truly a nation of understanding and tolerance. We must do everything in our power to ensure such atrocities never happen again."

The federation is subsidizing the trip, with the participants paying \$1,000 each in additional expenses.

Taxpayers are not contributing to the cost of the trip.

York Region chairperson Bill Fisch (from left) joins Cornwall, P.E.I. Mayor Jack Kelly, Vaughan Mayor Michael Di Biase and Councillor Alan Shefman in the March of the Living to the Birkenau death camp in Poland Thursday. A group of Canadian politicians led by Mr. Di Biase wrapped up a week-long trip to Nazi concentration camps Friday.





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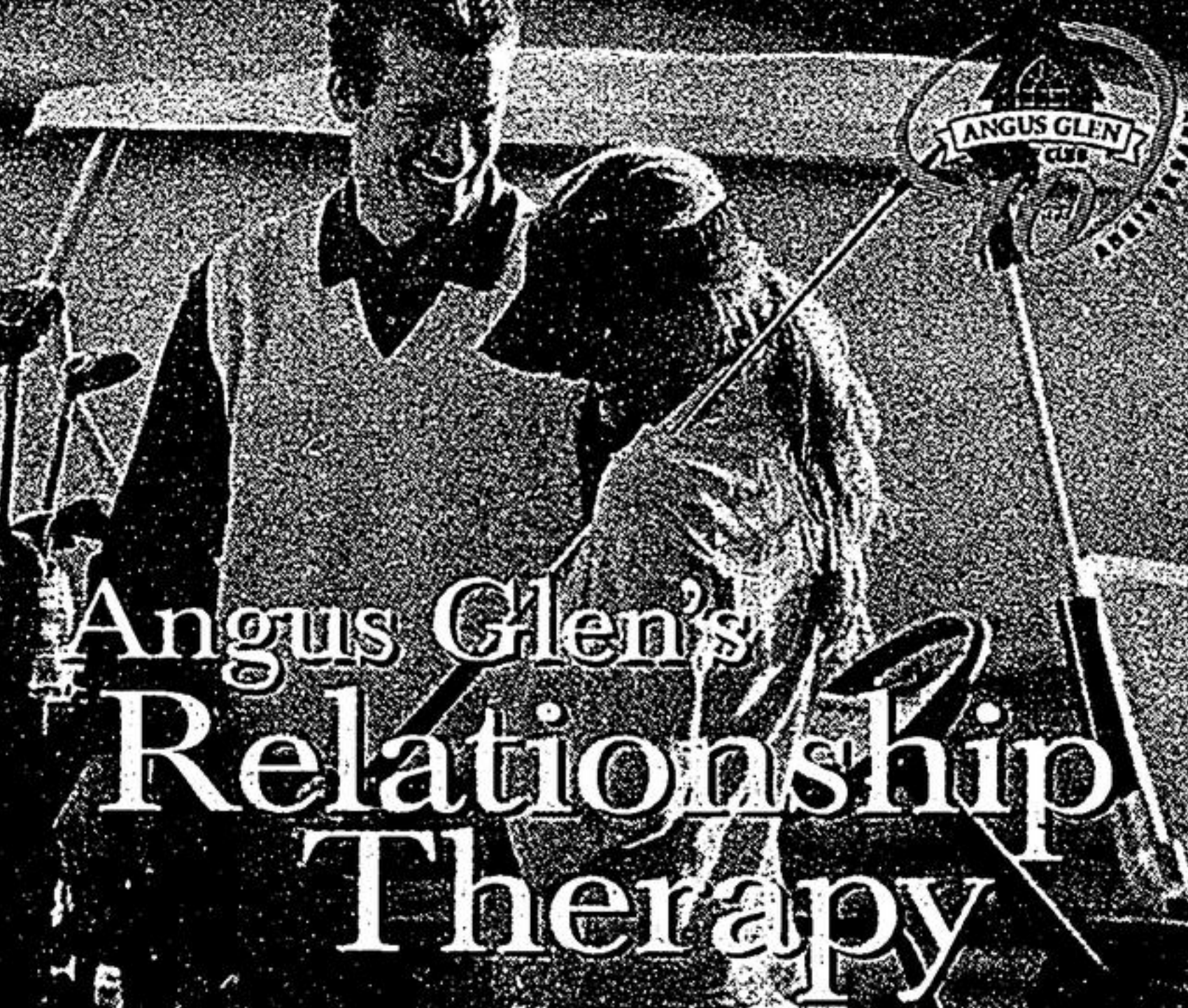
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