

TERROR ALERT DOESN'T STOP CHABAD'S PRISON PROGRAMS

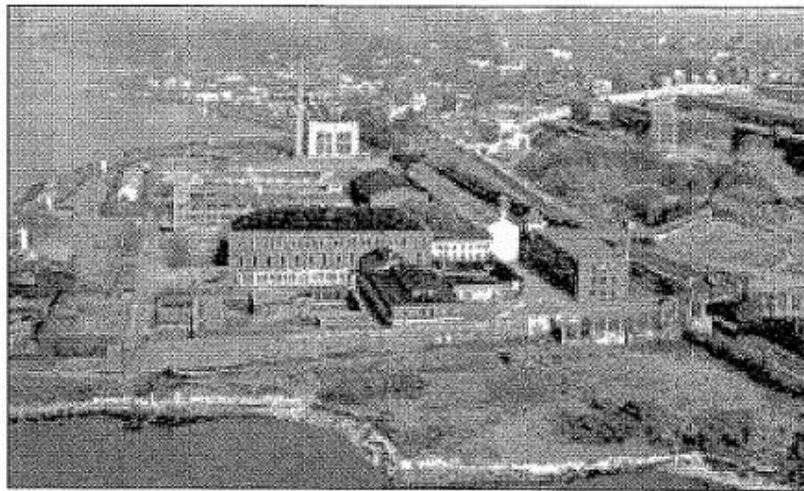
The names read like something out of a script. Sing Sing, Otisville, Orangeburg, Gowanda, Attica, Green Haven, Allenwood. They are names of prisons, state and federal in the NY regional area. In New York there are sixty-seven facilities State facilities. They are located in all parts of the state, from one end to the other. Some prisons are as far away as a eight hour drive from 770. During Chanukah Lubavitch Youth Organization visits all state and even some federal facilities, in order to bring the joy of Chanukah to those Jews that most others have forgotten.

On the first Sunday of Chanukah, the second candle, President Bush issued the most severe terror alert 'code orange' since September 11th. Rabbi Kasriel Kastel of Lubavitch Youth Organization had arranged for cars of volunteers to visit all sixty-seven State facilities during Chanukah, as he has done for over 30 years. These volunteers bring special kosher food and Chasidic joy to Jews spread out in these prisons.

But "code orange" meant that the volunteers would not be allowed into the facilities, one of the many precautions the state takes, whenever

the security code is upgraded. But Rabbi Kastel who has been doing this for many years knew that the Rebbe MH"M would never allow the "forgotten Jews" not have their Chanukah visits, code orange or no code orange.

So Rabbi Kastel contacted Rabbi Shmuel Spritzer who has been volunteering his time with Jewish prisoners across the United States.



Rabbi Spritzer immediately on Monday early morning called the Commissioner of New York State Department of Corrections and explained the problem. Commissioner Glenn Goord is in contact with Rabbi Spritzer on an ongoing basis and knows the good work Rabbi Spritzer does for the Rebbe MH"M. He told the rabbi that he "will get on it immediately" and by

10:07 am Monday morning, an email went out to all sixty-seven prisons in the State, with an order from the Commissioner to allow the Lubavitch volunteers in for Chanukah.

"I was tremendously relieved and pleased," said Rabbi Kastel. "The Chanukah program is eagerly anticipated by all of the Jewish inmates. We bring *menoras* and candles, dreidels and best of all, good kosher food for a truly traditional Chanukah party." Rabbi Kastel added that he and Rabbi Spritzer have always worked hand in hand and that this was not the first time Rabbi Spritzer "saved the day."

In addition to contact to all Jewish prisoners in the US, Rabbi Shmuel Spritzer with a team of other volunteer business people, also publish a monthly bulletin called *Reaching Out*, which they send free to all Jewish inmates even beyond the US. One inmate, when told of the terror threat said "I'm really glad they were able to get in. When Lubavitch comes, they do whatever it takes to make sure we have a real Jewish experience."