

POPE NEVER “JOINED” HITLER YOUTH



Bill Donohue comments on scurrilous media coverage of the pope:

The following persons and media outlets erroneously said that Pope Benedict XVI “joined” the Hitler Youth, without ever noting that it was compulsory:

U.S.

AP Planner; John Patrick Shanley, *New York Times* blog; Huffington Post; *Philadelphia Daily News*; Regional News Network (it said his “defenders” argue he was drafted, implying that it is a rebuttable presumption); *Sun-Sentinel*; thepeoplesvoice.org; timminspress.com; *Washington Post*.

Canada

The Globe and Mail

England

BBC; *The Guardian*; *The Independent*; *Metro*; politics.co.uk

Ireland

Daily Mirror; *Irish Independent*

Here are the facts. Like all teenage boys in Nazi Germany, Joseph Ratzinger was forced to join the Hitler Youth. Unlike many others, he did not attend meetings and deserted when he was drafted into the German army. His refusal to attend meetings brought economic hardship to his family—it meant no discounts for school tuition. German left-wing intellectuals

like Günter Grass and Jürgen Habermas also were conscripted into the Hitler Youth, yet no one ever accused them of voluntarily joining.

Rabbi David Rosen, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, said it is “rubbish” to suggest that the pope willfully joined the Hitler Youth. Following a complaint by us, even Bill Maher apologized in 2008 for making this pernicious accusation. In short, it is despicable for these journalists to smear the pope as a Nazi sympathizer.