

SOME JEWS AND MUSLIMS INSULT POPE

After Pope Benedict XVI spoke at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, the chairman of the Directorate, Avner Shalev, said that while the pope's visit was "important," he regretted that the pope never mentioned anti-Semitism nor the Nazis. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chairman of the Yad Vashem Council and Tel Aviv's chief rabbi, said the pope's speech was "devoid of any compassion, any regret." Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin accused the pope of not asking for "forgiveness," noting that the pope's (coerced) membership in the Hitler Youth means he carries "baggage."

Following the pope's visit to Yad Vashem, Palestinian leader Sheik Taysir Tamimi forced his way to the pulpit at an interreligious event asking the pope to fight for "a just peace for a Palestinian state and for Israel to stop killing women and children and destroying mosques as she did in Gaza"; he asked the pope to "pressure the Israeli government to stop its aggression against the Palestinian people."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"When the pope spoke at Yad Vashem, he said he had come 'to stand in silence before this monument, erected to honor the memory of the millions of Jews killed in the horrific tragedy of the Shoah.' Didn't Avner Shalev hear that? Or how about these words from the pope? 'May the names of these victims never perish! May their suffering never be denied, belittled or forgotten!' Rabbi Lau, never one to miss an opportunity to say it's never enough, embarrassed his cohorts when he said that the pope's speech was devoid of compassion. As for Rivlin, he should know that it is not the pope who needs to apologize for the crimes of the Nazis—indeed he was victimized by them. Some baggage!

“The Vatican quickly condemned Sheik Tamimi’s hate speech, as it should have. Where are all the Muslim leaders condemning it? There is a time and a place for everything—and this was wrong on both counts. To exploit the pope’s journey for peace by beckoning him to bash Jews shows how utterly futile it is to have an interreligious meeting with some people. Evidently, Tamimi doesn’t get what ‘Never Again’ really means.”