

Cardinal's rebuke of Jews draws criticism

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A Polish cardinal's remarks about Jews and the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz have sparked international criticism and calls for Pope John Paul II to intervene in the situation.

Two U.S. bishops, a Solidarity newspaper and international Jewish leaders were among those critical of remarks by Cardinal Jozef Glemp of Gniezno and Warsaw, Poland's primate.

His statements provoked a Jewish boycott of international ceremonies in Warsaw, Poland, to mark the 50th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland — the beginning of World War II.

In an Aug. 26 speech, Cardinal Glemp said the mass media in many countries were controlled by Jews and they were using that power to "spread anti-Polish feeling." With regard to a July incident in which seven New York Jews were beaten by Polish workers while trying to scale the

convent fence, the cardinal said the workers' action had ensured the lives of the nuns and prevented the convent's destruction.

New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor said he was "shocked" by Cardinal Glemp's remarks and urged the Polish church "to get on with their formal commitment" to move the convent.

Cardinal O'Connor said Cardinal Glemp's remarks gave the impression that he no longer intended to move the convent.

"I don't think that is right. I don't think that is just, and I don't think that it is charitable, and it certainly doesn't represent my position as a brother cardinal," he said.

In France, however, Cardinal Decourtray said Cardinal Glemp's statements were distorted by the press.

"The primate and the bishops of Poland cannot be accused of anti-Semitism," Cardinal Decourtray said in an Aug. 29 state-

ment.

Kalman Sultanik, a vice president of the New York-based World Jewish Congress, called Cardinal Glemp's remarks "grotesque and hate-filled." He said they revealed that "an ugly vein of anti-Semitism runs through the Polish church."

B'nai B'rith International President Seymour D. Reich said the cardinal's reference to Jewish control of the mass media was "classic, stereotypical anti-Semitism ... most unworthy of a representative of the Catholic Church."

Rabbi Avraham Weiss, the rabbi of the Bronx, who led the New York Jews as they climbed the fence at the convent in July, called Cardinal Glemp's comments "something out of the Middle Ages, a blood libel" and said he was also considering taking legal action.

Glen Richter, another of the protesters at the convent, said the cardinal's comments

about the protesters were "false and outrageous."

"We went there to talk to the nuns. When they refused to let us into the convent's grounds, we scaled the wall and stayed there to pray and study," he said.

As Jewish pressure mounted for the pope to directly intervene in the case, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said Aug. 26 that the pope had not become involved because he "respects local churches" and is "especially respectful of the local church from which he comes."

Pope John Paul was slated to send a message to the international ceremonies in Warsaw, scheduled Aug. 31 and Sept. 1. Cardinal Macharski left Rome Aug. 31 after meeting with the pope at Castel Gandolfo, but the Vatican did not say what the two had discussed.

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