

## Helmut Kohl at Yad Vashem (1984)

### Abstract

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On January 24, 1984, Helmut Kohl became the second sitting Federal Chancellor to visit Israel. At the time, there was much talk about potential German arms exports to Saudi Arabia. All of Israel's political parties were strongly opposed to such exports, and the issue dominated discussions during Kohl's trip. Following a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, Kohl gave a speech in the Knesset. He spoke of the "mercy of late birth" ["Gnade der späten Geburt"], which had prevented him from incurring guilt during the National Socialist regime. His words were mistaken as an attempt at exoneration, and Kohl's visit, in the words of Asher Ben Nathan, the first Israeli Ambassador to West Germany, left a "bad aftertaste."

### Source

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Source: Helmut Kohl visits the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem. Date: January 1984. Photo: IN-Press, Bundesbildstelle. Photo: IN-Press/Bundesbildstelle. Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Fotodienst 2 – 1988/ no. 2474.

Courtesy of the German Information Center

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