

## **Lib Dem MP David Ward could be kicked out of party after suggesting 'the Jews' had not learned the lessons of the Holocaust**

- **Bradford East MP condemned for linking Israeli treatment of Palestine with WWII 'death camps'**
- **Party enforcers demand a meeting next week to discuss his future**
- **Holocaust Educational Trust slams 'sickening' comments on MP's website**

By Tamara Cohen and Matt Chorley



Lib Dem MP David Ward has been summoned to meet party enforcers next week to explain the comments about the Holocaust he posted on his website

A Liberal Democrat MP faces expulsion from the party for saying 'the Jews' had not learned from the murder of six million in the Holocaust, in their treatment of the Palestinian people. David Ward, MP for Bradford East, wrote on his own website that he was 'saddened' that they 'could within a few years of liberation from the death camps be inflicting atrocities on Palestinians...on a daily basis.'

He defended his comments in interviews saying they were a 'just a statement of fact and said 'it appears that the suffering by the Jews has not transformed their views on how others should be treated.' His remarks were made ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day on Sunday, although Mr Ward who said he had attended events to remember its victims and had visited Auschwitz twice.

He has been summoned to a meeting with party whips on Monday, but today insisted he did stand by the statement and its timing and claimed it was 'regrettable' he had been reprimanded.

Mr Ward wrote yesterday: 'Having visited Auschwitz twice – once with my family and once with local schools – I am saddened that the Jews, who suffered unbelievable levels of persecution during the Holocaust, could within a few years of liberation from the death camps be inflicting atrocities on Palestinians in the new State of Israel and continue to do so on a daily basis in the West Bank and Gaza.'

A Liberal Democrat spokesman said: 'This is a matter we take extremely seriously. The Liberal Democrats deeply regret and condemn the statement issued by David Ward and his use of language which is unacceptable.'

Holocaust Memorial Day marks the 68th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, where more than one million people, mostly Jews, were killed – many shot, starved or victims of the gas chambers. Homosexuals, political dissidents and the handicapped were also victims.



This week Prime Minister David Cameron signed a book of remembrance to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in Downing Street



Horror: Holocaust Memorial Day marks the 68th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, where more than one million people, mostly Jews, were killed

The MP, who said he had attended a Holocaust memorial event in Bradford yesterday which was 'extremely moving' said he hoped the chief whip would respect his views.

In an interview yesterday he said: 'What better day to raise the issue of learning from one of the worst examples of inhumanity.' He told The Commentator website: 'It appears that the suffering by the Jews has not transformed their views on how others should be treated.'

On his website, Mr Ward said he had 'signed a Book of Commitment in the House of Commons, in doing so pledging his commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day' and describes Auschwitz as 'the Nazi concentration and extermination camp which is the site of the largest mass murder in history.'

Karen Pollock, chief executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said: 'I am deeply saddened that at this sombre time, when we remember those who were murdered by the Nazis, Mr Ward has deliberately abused the memory of the Holocaust causing deep pain and offence - these comments are sickening and unacceptable and have no place in British politics.'



Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg is understood to be furious with Mr Ward and condemned his remarks

Jon Benjamin, chief executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said: 'We are outraged and shocked at these offensive comments about Jewish victims of the Holocaust and the suggestion that Jews should have learned a lesson from the experience.'

'For an MP to have made such comments on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day is even more distasteful, and we welcome the fact that the Liberal Democrats have sought to disassociate the party from David Ward's comments.'

Tory MP Robert Halfon said his comments were 'a tragic trivialisation of real evil.' He said 'It should be remembered that Israel withdrew from Gaza completely and yet has faced a barrage of 7000+ missiles from Hamas and been the victim of hundreds of terrorist suicide bombers and been attacked by all its neighbours in 1948, 1967 and 1973.' Mr Ward has previously described Israel as an 'apartheid regime'. Liberal Democrat Baroness Jenny Tonge has twice been fired from the frontbench for her anti-Israel comments.

In 2004, she claimed she might become a suicide bomber if she lived in the West Bank or Gaza, and was sacked as the party's spokesman on children's issues.

She was sacked as health spokesman in 2010 for accusing Israeli soldiers of harvesting body parts in Haiti while doing humanitarian work after the earthquake, and this year said 'Israel is not going to be there forever.'