

# First, ex-leader falls asleep at Holocaust event... then he defends Hitler's fascist ally Silvio: Mussolini 'did good'



SILVIO BERLUSCONI fell asleep at a Holocaust memorial event – then woke up to tell reporters the dictator who imposed Italy's anti-Jewish laws 'did good'. The former Italian prime minister deserves to be prosecuted for promoting fascism, opponents said, after his outburst yesterday at the ceremony in Milan. The gaffe-prone billionaire said bars on Jews joining certain professions and going to university 'came within' Italy's alliance with Nazi Germany.

Benito Mussolini sided with Hitler at

by TARIQ TAHIR

the time as it looked as if the führer would conquer Europe, he argued. 'The racial laws are the worst fault of Mussolini who, in so many other aspects, did good,' Mr Berlusconi said.

Centre-left politician Rosy Bindi said: 'Only Berlusconi's political cynicism, combined with the worst historic revisionism, could separate the shame of the racist laws from the fascist dictatorship.'

Mr Berlusconi, who is to fight elections

next month, has defended Mussolini in the past and once headed a coalition government which included the neo-fascist National Alliance party. The 76-year-old hit the headlines in 2008 when he described Barack Obama as 'suntanned'.

Meanwhile, Bradford East Lib Dem MP David Ward has apologised for his use of language after accusing 'the Jews' of inflicting atrocities on Palestinians.

He said he was 'trying to make clear that everybody needs to learn the lessons of the Holocaust'.

Dropping off: Mr Berlusconi naps at the Holocaust ceremony in Milan  
PICTURE: AP

## Nation pauses to recall millions killed by Hitler

THE millions of Jews and other victims killed during the Holocaust were honoured yesterday.

They were remembered at about 1,500 ceremonies across Britain, 68 years after the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland was liberated on January 27, 1945.

In London, survivor Ben Helfgott lit candles at the Millennium Bridge as a choir sang a specially composed song called Bridge Of Voice.

'A whole people was destroyed even though they didn't do anything wrong,' said Mr Helfgott, 83, who is

president of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

'It was terrible – I remember people being murdered, beaten up, people in hunger. It is impossible to describe what I saw.'

A second memorial event will see 500 genocide survivors join politicians, young people and religious leaders at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in London today.

It will feature contributions from survivors of both the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide of 1994.



Lost faces: Candles light up a picture of Holocaust victims in Moscow PICTURE: REUTERS




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