

Holocaust Query Draws 5 Year University Suspension

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LYON, FRANCE (Reuters) - A French university said Friday it would suspend a professor for five years after he questioned whether the Nazis used gas chambers in the Holocaust.

Bruno Gollnisch, No. 2 in the National Front party of extreme-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, already faces a legal probe in France after he questioned how Nazis used the gas chambers and how many Jews were killed.

Lyon University, which is named after Jean Moulin, the hero of the French Resistance murdered by the Nazis in 1943, said Gollnisch would be suspended from his functions as professor of Japanese civilization for five years.

Gollnisch told a news conference Oct. 11 that he recognized gas chambers existed but said he thought historians had yet to decide whether they were actually used to kill Jews.

He called for an open debate about whether the total number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was 6 million as stated.

French Jewish organizations and anti-racism groups have condemned Gollnisch's remarks.

Gollnisch told reporters Friday he was the victim of a "real witch hunt" and blamed pressure from the government for his suspension.

French prosecutors have opened an investigation into Gollnisch, which focuses on "denying crimes against humanity."

France's anti-racism laws have made denying the Holocaust a crime, punishable by fines and prison.

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