



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ambassador Andris Teikmanis
Embassy of the Republic of Latvia
45 Nottingham Place
London
W1U 5LY

11 March 2016

Your Excellency,

Re: Legionnaire Remembrance Day events

I am writing to you regarding the events planned to mark Legionnaire Remembrance Day on 16th March.

I understand there will be two pro-SS marches in Riga on 16th March, and it has been reported that a number of MPs from the National Alliance party plan to attend. It is disappointing that after an absence of two years, MPs have decided to resume their participation in these events which glorify the actions of the Waffen SS during World War II.

My constituent, Monica Lowenberg, has campaigned tirelessly having set up a petition in 2012 which was signed by more than 7,000 people worldwide to protest against these marches. Of Latvia's pre-war Jewish population, almost 90% - 70,000 people - were murdered. Ms Lowenberg's uncle, Paul Theodor Lowenberg was sent to the Riga Ghetto in October 1941 at the age of 19.

I share my constituents concern that by celebrating and glorifying the actions of those who joined the Latvian SS, whether they were forcibly conscripted or a minority who were enthusiastic volunteers, Nazism is honoured whilst the victims are dishonoured. Such celebrations also give credence to those who are seeking to use a false reading of history to create division, bitterness and hatred for their own ends today.

I would be grateful for your comments on the planned events to mark Legionnaire Remembrance Day on 16th March. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gareth Thomas".

Gareth Thomas MP
Harrow West