

BALTIC MARCHING SEASON IS HERE AGAIN!

WILL ANY OTHER VOICES FROM THE WEST SAY NO?



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here: http://www.petitions24.com/stop_the_16_march_marches_and_latvians_revising_history

Time to call a halt...

Stop the 16 March marches and the twisting of history!

By Ruth Barnett MBE, Holocaust Educator and Author

16 February 2020

Humanity, the one human race, is denigrated by those of its members who try to avoid responsibility by covering up, denying and trying to re-write shameful parts of their history. Nearly all, if not all countries have some shameful history. It is time for an international 'amnesty' in which this is recognised and all past shame publicly acknowledged, so that we can all go forward accepting the truth of the past in order to create a better future.

Currently the Family of Nations on Planet Earth is the most dysfunctional family of all time. We have too many leaders at all levels, who should be role models and guardians of the truth, irresponsibly putting their greed for power and wealth before the interests of their people. We need a country like Latvia that

suffered and caused suffering in World War II, to lead the way by heralding the truth instead of glorifying atrocities.

Ruth Barnett MBE, Holocaust Educator and Author of:
Person of No Nationality, Jews & Gypsies, Why War?
Love, Hate & Indifference, Equality and Inequality
and *What Price for Justice: a Play in Two Acts*

Time to call a halt...

Stop the 16 March marches and the twisting of history!

By Graeme Atkinson anti-fascist journalist and internationalist 03.03.2019

Annually since 1998, in the centre of Riga, on 16 March, processions have been held to honour veterans of the Latvian Legion of the murderous Nazi Waffen SS for fighting the Allies in WWII.

And, through the media of Latvian government materials and state propaganda film footage, the role of the Latvian Legion is still apologised for or excused while the far-right National Alliance – which sits in the Latvian government – is again loudly demanding that the date be enshrined as an official national memorial day.

Not new: these events have received tacit (and sometimes explicit and public) support from state authorities, including, in 2012, Latvia's president himself and have been attended by members of the Latvian Parliament, members of the Riga City Council and officials of the Latvian defence ministry.

Documentary evidence of official complicity in Latvia's Day of National Shame is copious but astonishingly the ghastly charade of memorialising the SS in Riga, a European capital at the heart of NATO and the EU, goes on, attended by increasing numbers and attracting right-wing extremists and Hitler fans from across Europe, including the UK.

Despite the mounting international input, the rest of Europe just looks on at this unwholesome performance that lauds the members of a proven criminal organisation. It is surely time that Latvia, the UK government, the European Union, NATO and the international community showed some self-respect and pressed for a halt to it.

Robert Singer- World Jewish Congress- 17 March 2019

'All those who glorify Nazis and their collaborators by marching or otherwise are inciting hatred, plain and simple'

<http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/world-jewish-congress-calls-for-decisive-government-action-after-renewed-neo-nazi-marches-in-lithuania-and-latvia-3-0-2019?fbclid=IwAR3IsD1cFD-gaHuaaqCmTgVm9LY68hXkY2JjipRZsY3VQJc1KR9ttGY-BkY>

Amy Mills, a spokeswoman for Global Affairs Canada- 20 March 2019

"Canada is strongly opposed to the glorification of Nazism and all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and extremism," Mills said. "That is why we condemn the parade to commemorate the Latvian SS Brigade held in Latvia on March 16th."

<https://www.thewhig.com/news/canada/canada-condemns-annual-latvian-parade-that-honours-nazi-ss-unit/wcm/af72e844-544e-4c68-a07f-22fea885e3dd>

Michael Mostyn Chief Executive Officer of B'nai Brith Canada - 15 March 2019

"We must challenge those who distort historical records on governments, military units or organizations that fought with, supported or sympathized with the Nazis during World War II. This includes government leaders who acquiesce in, or fail to condemn, a process of Nazi glorification that amounts to Holocaust distortion. This cannot be tolerated."

<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/mostyn-as-holocaust-memories-fade-nazi-glorification-must-be-resisted>

UK MP GARETH THOMAS WRITES TO LATVIAN AMBASSADOR AND TO BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE **11 March 2016**



Cornelia Kerth, chair of the VVN-BdA protesting outside the Latvian embassy in Berlin on 15 March 2016 after having been prevented from boarding a flight to Riga from Berlin with Baltic Air earlier that same day. The VVN-BdA demanded that her five fellow protesters, who had been allowed to leave the country, only to be arrested on arrival at Riga airport and placed into a Latvian jail, be immediately released.

<http://defendinghistory.com/80430-2/80430>

British MEP Richard Howitt, European Parliament Spokesperson on Human Rights, Issues Statement on Riga Waffen SS March Posted on 13 March 2014 by [Defending History](#)

Richard Howitt, British Labour Member of the European Parliament, and spokesperson for the European Parliament Human Rights Sub-Committee today issued the following text of his statement which will be read out in Riga this Sunday March 16th.

Today brings the seventeenth annual march in Riga, Latvia glorifying Waffen SS forces from the Nazi era which brought death and destruction to our continent and which today's European Union was supposed to consign to history.

I am pleased to hear that the Latvian Government has forbidden Ministers from attending the march this year, but condemn the Latvian High Court's decision of 2013, forcing the Riga Mayor to apologise for all the years of trying to ban it. Coming from Britain, I am saddened that the governing Conservative Party from my country chooses to ally itself in a common European Group with the Latvian "For Fatherland and Freedom Party," whose Member of the European Parliament is on record as supporting this sickening celebration, even supporting its previous status as a public holiday in the country.

I am also shocked at the report that the British Conservative MEP, who was head of his European group in 2012, is reported to have personally refused to sign the petition against the celebration, despite 7,000 people worldwide having done so. The party of Government of my country should not sit with a party which has proposed the Waffen SS troops be renamed "liberation fighters."

They are a scar on my own country.

What they should remember is that almost all of Latvia's 70,000 Jews were murdered during the Holocaust.

Whether local boys were forced to don the SS uniforms or were eager volunteers, celebration of their actions not only insults the memory of the victims but also honours Nazism itself.

Today, the British Labour Party stands with all victims of the Second World War, all who condemn fascism, all who oppose anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, to express our horror at those who seek to rewrite history in order to justify those who would spread bitterness, hate and division in a new century.

This year sees the 100 years centenary since the beginning of the First World War, and people throughout Europe will come together to remember the horrors of both wars of the twentieth century and celebrate the fact fascism was defeated and not victorious.

When survivors of Nazi concentration camps in 1945 stood holding signs saying "never again," they could not have foreseen what is happening today in Riga. These are the people we should be commemorating and this is the message we should remember.

RICHARD HOWITT MEP

The Board of Deputies of British Jews, Jewish Manifesto for the 2014 European Elections:

<https://www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/EUManifesto.pdf>

See in particular section 3, and Post-Holocaust Issues section 3.3 on Holocaust revisionism. p9

In Europe, the 2008 Prague Declaration caused alarm among many Jewish communities by conflating crimes under Soviet Communism with Nazi crimes. The concern here is that some countries have attempted to deflect attention from the complicity of their wartime governments in the Holocaust, using this as a cynical attempt to avoid liability for compensation to Jewish victims. The crimes that Communist governments committed against their people should be explored and the perpetrators prosecuted, but it is important that countries acknowledge their role in the Holocaust and do not attempt to dismiss a very troubled period in their history by reference to what happened under Communism.

At times, a related trope is that many leading Communists were Jews and so the Jews as a whole are complicit in the crimes of Communism. The rationale continues that, as such, Jews in general do not deserve sympathy or compensation for what they suffered during the Holocaust. But the fact that some Jews were leading Communists did not leave Jews – as a corporate entity – with the wealth of the subjugated people in the same way that Nazi expropriation of Jewish property remains in the hands of some states.

Commitment: MEPs should challenge their European colleagues on these narratives that seek to minimize or downplay the Holocaust.

Council of Europe (§ 87)

Report on Latvia by the ECRI calling a halt to all forms of Nazi glorification February 21, 2012:

<https://rm.coe.int/fourth-report-on-latvia/16808b58b6>

In the framework of its statutory activities, ECRI conducts country-by-country monitoring work, which analyses the situation in each of the member States regarding racism and intolerance and draws up suggestions and proposals for dealing with the problems identified. In the report on Latvia published on February 21, 2012 ECRI expresses concern as regards the authorisation of certain public events to

commemorate two incidents and the authorities' reaction in this connection. As concerns the first incident, every year, on 16 March, a gathering commemorating soldiers who fought in a Latvian unit of the Waffen SS is held in the centre of Riga. In this connection, ECRI regrets that, in spring 2010, an administrative district court overruled a decision of the Riga City Council 27 prohibiting this march. Moreover, ECRI is concerned that the speaker of the Latvian Parliament allegedly publicly expressed regret for the formal prohibition of this event and that certain MPs have voted for the restoration of March 16 as day of remembrance.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Jerusalem

16.03.1999

'Although these units were not involved in crimes against humanity, many of their soldiers had previously served in the Latvian security police and had actively participated in the mass murder of civilians, primarily Jews... The stubborn insistence of Latvia's SS Legion veterans to conduct a public march to glorify their role as combatants on behalf of the Third Reich is a clear indication that many Latvians have still not internalised the lessons of WWII... not one of the numerous Latvian killers who collaborated with the Nazis has been brought to justice since Latvia obtained its independence, far too many Latvians feel free to identify with those who fought alongside the perpetrators of the Holocaust rather than with its victims'.

At the Nuremberg trials of 30 September 1946, it was crystal clear: there were no heroes among the SS; there were no divisions that were deemed better than others but rather the SS as a whole was defined as a “criminal organisation.”

Stated the Nuremberg judgment and worth quoting at length:

“Much of the evidence and the argument has centred around the question of whether membership in these organizations was or was not voluntary; in this case, it seems to the Tribunal to be quite beside the point. For this alleged criminal organization has one characteristic, a controlling one, which sharply distinguishes it.... When an individual became a

member of the SS, for instance, he did so voluntarily or otherwise, but certainly with the knowledge that he was joining something. Many of these men have made a mockery of the soldier's oath of obedience to military orders. When it suits their defense they say they had to obey; when, confronted with Hitler's brutal crimes, which are shown to have been within their general knowledge, they say they disobeyed. The truth is that they actively participated in all these crimes, or sat silent and acquiescent, witnessing the commission of crimes on a scale larger and more shocking than the world has ever had the misfortune to know. This must be said."

For Further Information See:

- <http://stop16marchinriga.blogspot.com/>
- <http://defendinghistory.com/category/riga-waffen-ss-marches?order=asc>
- https://www.academia.edu/41705648/List_of_Published_Articles_by_Monica_Low_1

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Photo to the Left

Monica Lowenberg in silent protest at the legionnaires march 16 March 2012, Riga Latvia PHOTO: COURTESY OF DEFENDING [HISTORY.COM](http://defendinghistory.com)
<http://defendinghistory.com/category/lowenberg-monica>

Centre Photo

From left to right **Monica Lowenberg** (UK), **Helmut Scholz**, (Germany, MEP), **Joel Rubinfeld**, president of the European Jewish Parliament (Belgium), **Efraim Zuroff**, Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (Israel), **Tatjana Ždanoka** (Tatyana Zhdanok), EP deputy (Latvia), **Janis Kuzins**, Chairman of the Board for Associated Diversified Trade Unions (Latvia), **Joseph Koren**, president of the association "Latvia without Nazism" (Latvia), **Hermann Dvorzak**, leader of the European Social Forum (Austria), laying down a wreath to the victims of Nazism 16 March 2012, Riga Latvia PHOTO: COURTESY OF DEFENDING [HISTORY.COM](http://defendinghistory.com)

<http://defendinghistory.com/1500-honor-the-waffen-ss-at-rigas-liberty-monument-event-is-praised-by-latvian-president-condemned-by-the-european-commission/32654>

Photo to the Right

Volker Beck gives a speech of support to protesters at the Latvian Embassy in Berlin on the eve of the 2017 annual Waffen SS march in central Riga to his left Dr Hans Coppi, VVN Berlin PHOTO: LOTHAR EBERHARDT.
<http://defendinghistory.com/german-member-of-parliament-volker-beck-joins-protest-at-the-latvian-embassy-in-berlin/87225>

WHAT IS MARCH 16TH IN LATVIA? by Monica Lowenberg

First published as

Latvia's difficult legacy What is March 16th? by Monica Lowenberg published by the Holocaust Educational Trust and Second Generation Network, Voices April 2012

Each year since 1998, former Latvian SS veterans have, on the 16th March, been marching in the centre of the capital city of Riga, accompanied by supporters of all generations, to commemorate and herald their fallen colleagues as war 'heroes'. The marches have over the years increased in alarming numbers and have frequently been, and continue to be supported by Latvian officials.

On March 16th, 2011 in the heart of NATO, in an EU country, in Riga, more than 2,500 people, (75% of them under the age of 30), gathered to pay tribute to Latvians who fought on the side of Nazi Germany in Waffen SS detachments during World War II. Amongst them a large number of neo-Nazi activists from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany, Norway and Denmark and Latvian officials and MEP members. Over the years the marches have been attended by the Latvian Chief-of-Staff, Secretary of Defense, members of the Seim and current and former ministers and officials. They herald the Latvian SS veterans as war heroes and freedom fighters as they claim they fought in German ranks to hold back a greater evil, the Soviet Union. Many Latvians believe that the Latvian Waffen SS legion could not have played a role in the Holocaust as it was not officially formed until 1943 when nearly all of Latvian Jewry had already been murdered. However, a substantial amount of evidence including a series of personal accounts and confirmation received from the trial of German Nazi Adolph Eichmann, supports that unknown numbers of Latvian Waffen SS soldiers had indeed been previously involved in the murder of Jews as auxiliary police between 1941 and 1942. 90 percent of Latvia's pre-war Jewish population, were killed in 1941-42, only one in ten survived. Approximately 67,000 Jews were living in Latvia at the time of the Nazi invasion in July 1941. Approximately 62,000 of them were killed during the Nazi occupation. About 30,000 Jews were killed already by mid-August 1941. The main agents of this murder were small German military units joined by the so-called Arājs Commando and assisted by Latvian auxiliary police, which consisted mainly of volunteers. In late 1941 approximately an additional 30,000 Latvian Jews were killed in a carefully organised execution also aided by Latvian police and Arājs Commando in Rumbula forest, just outside the capital city of Rīga. After this, about 25,000 European Jews were brought to the Riga Ghetto by train and at least half of them were murdered by mid-1942.

Shamefully forgotten is the fact that not one of the numerous Latvian killers who collaborated with the Nazis has been brought to justice since Latvia obtained its independence. Killers who prior to joining the legion in 1943 had been part of 16 auxiliary police (SD) battalions that had previously taken an active part in the liquidating of ghettos in Latvia, Belarus and Poland, as well as in the destruction of civilian villages in Belarus and Russia's Pskov region. Killers who before joining the legion had been in the 'Arājs Team' led by Viktor Arājs, comprising of up to 1,500 Latvian men, known worldwide as the active performers of the Holocaust in Europe, executioners of Latvian, Vilna, Warsaw and many Byelorussian ghettos.

During World War II, the Nazis created 37 divisions of Waffen Schutzstaffel (Waffen SS) of which only 12 were comprised exclusively by Germans. Most of the members of the divisions were recruited among the so-called «Aryan» populations of the occupied or annexed countries. Although the

Latvians were not all considered «Aryan», they were massively recruited. Out of 900,000 Waffen SS, almost 150,000 were Latvians thus being the largest foreign contingent while their country, Latvia, only had two million inhabitants. The Latvians were mainly placed in the 15th Infantry Division, which became the most decorated non-German Waffen SS unit. It was the 15th infantry division who entrenched themselves in Berlin and engaged in the last military actions of the Third Reich.

The Latvian legion formed in the winter of 1943 was, under Hitler's orders, formally established on March 16th 1944. There is consensus amongst all Latvian historians that the day marks the only time, the two Divisions of the Legion (15th and 19th) fought together against the Red Army. Therefore, by making the 16th March a day to remember war dead, Latvians, (despite Latvian official protestations to the contrary), are making the day when Latvian volunteers fought in the 15th and 19th divisions of the SS an act of commemoration. As Israeli/Jewish critics have commented even if one takes the stance that the Latvian legionnaires were not criminals and that they were forced to fight for the Nazis, to commemorate the Legion is far from being a positive act and a far cry from a policy to GLORIFY them. Glorification of pro-Nazi armed forces during World War II has no place in a European Union / NATO / OSCE country.

Despite condemnation from the international community and reports from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance that in 2008 explicitly stated, *'All attempts to commemorate persons who fought in the Waffen SS and collaborate with the Nazis should be condemned. Any gathering or march legitimising in any way Nazism should be banned'*, in January this year, many Latvian policymakers expressed their respect and admiration of former SS veterans. Political party "Visu Latviiyay!" announced that it is preparing a bill declaring the veterans of the SS Legion as national liberation movement fighters. Under the bill, former SS soldiers in Latvia will enjoy many benefits and advantages, in contrast to the veterans of the Allied forces who fought against Nazism.