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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 23 June 2023 12:11 PM
To: Committee, PJCIS (REPS)
Subject: Proposed ban of legitimate military antique / militaria trading

Categories: [REDACTED]

Ti whom this may concern

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm a 39-year-old collector of militaria.

I hold three undergraduate degrees from Monash University in Law, Music and Arts with a major (one of many others) in 20th Century Military History. I also hold a Master's degree from Monash University in Sociology and presented a dissertation on the meaning of gender and sexuality in contemporary societies.

I have a mixed composition in terms of my ancestry, but I feel it is important to note that I am a descendent of Hungarian-Jewish novelist, philosopher and social realist, Zsigmond Móricz.

My Great Grandfather was a WW2 hero and veteran. As a locomotive engineer, he disobeyed orders during the war and defected with a locomotive pulling dozens of wagons destined to a concentration camp, saving many hundreds of Jewish lives.

Dozens of my ancestors died during the war, not for political point scoring or virtue signalling, but because there was no other choice. This was an existential crisis and a cataclysmic event which even now reverberates throughout my inner core and DNA.

I would also like to point out that the two most prominent collectors and dealers of WW2 Nazi memorabilia in the USA are Jewish: Mr. Jason Burrmeister and Mr. Craig Gottlieb.

I am a historian and academic of military gallantry awards from WW2, many of which are German. Not because I am an extremist, not because I endorse Nazi ideology, but because they are symbols of the defeat of a great existential threat.

I write regarding concerns over what I and many others would consider to be an unfair potential ban upon the lawful trade in legitimate WW2 military antique and militaria items including WW2 German artefacts.

The pursuit and limitation of modern extremist groups is to be applauded, and should be supported, whether they be religious or political in nature, but banning the sale and trade of WW2 artefacts will serve only to harm a great deal of genuine militaria collectors and dealers. Such items are quite harmless in the hands of legitimate collectors, historians and dealers.

Perhaps license and regulate this trade by all means, but to ban it outright seems quite excessive and harmful only to legitimate businesses and collectors.

Banning modern manufactured banners, replicas, T Shirts, hate websites etc used by these groups does makes sense, but harmless collectors do collect and study period German WW2 militaria for many genuine reasons, and also need to add to or occasionally thin out or reduce a collection as does any other collector of historical artefacts or antiques. Hence genuine dealers exist to facilitate this process.

Amongst the reasons people collect are:

Many WW2 German items are legitimate veteran bring backs by Allied troops (both of my Grandfathers brought back items such as this from WW2 that I possess in my own collection). To the vast majority these represent items of a defeated ideology and foe of WW2, and proof that the crimes they committed as indoctrinated / fixated militaries actually did occur.

As part of a general collection of WW2 Militaria collectors and museums wish to feature items of those we fought and defeated, hence Imperial Japan, Fascist Italy and WW2 Germany. Occasionally people need to facilitate the sale or circulation of such items.

The collecting and study of actual artefacts, books and items of that era make it impossible to deny that it occurred, and the dangers of the ideology arising again, and so help to preserve the history of the era. Dangerous revisionists can't deny it occurred when the artefacts, books and badges physically exist.

Legitimate militaria dealers help collectors to circulate items as would dealers in any other medium for historic artefacts. Many of my friends are also of Jewish heritage, and so I take the rise of extremist groups quite seriously indeed, but do not see a ban on legitimate businesses for collectors as useful as per the above reasons.

I would respectfully request and suggest careful consideration for treating actual historical artefacts and those who act as legitimate dealers in them differently to harmful extremists who of course need to be pursued. Perhaps license and regulate, but not ban.

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