

Thanks so much for getting in touch and the kind advice given. Please accept the following as my submission to the panel:

Att: Parliamentary committee

I am writing to you today in regards to the proposed federal parliament legislation to ban nazi symbols and related memorabilia.

I myself do trade in these items, which pay the wages of my 6 staff, 4 members of my immediate family, as well as the state and federal taxes I regularly pay as part of my business. I follow all the rules of this great country, I'm an ex-member of the A.D.F., hold both history and economics degrees, as well as 12 years experience as a secondary school teacher, and whilst I am a full time antique dealer now, I even find the time to help out at my kids primary school with their reading classes. Now, as part of this proposed law, I and every other person that deals in such memorabilia will soon be labelled as a criminal and face up to a year in prison.

Reading the brief statements the A.G. has made, I am rather shocked that dealers and collectors are being lumped into the same group as the alleged neo nazis that according to Mr. Drefus and Abramovich seem to think are clogging our streets with such hate and vitriol.

Whether I am right or wrong on these assumptions, it is rather strange that such 'umbrella' legislation is being talked about at all. We know that the various state and territory governments in Australia have either introduced such a ban or are talking about one, so why has this federal move been announced?

What I am far more interested in is the fact that such legislation may impact collectors of Third Reich memorabilia. I simply want to point out the facts as they stand and appeal to you for your help, in the right for us to collect legitimate historical items, as we have had the right to do so since the first the beginning of the Second World War, when that first German P.O.W. was liberated of his equipment and associated medals, awards, badges and freedom.

The arguments made by both state/territory and federal governments are that there is an increasing neo nazi 'hidden' society in this country. Whilst I am yet to see this, nor hear about it in detail, all I have seen lately is a bunch of black clad morons in Melbourne giving a Hitler salute at a pro trans rally. Honestly, is that what this is about, or are we not

being told the whole truth about this secret army of Hitlerite's who are ready to grab power from those who are soon to be banning just one more freedom which we, up until recently, had no idea that we could lose?

Then there is the Anti Defamation League, a private lobby group who claims to protect the freedoms and rights of individuals, not only are they not adhering to their own principles by pushing such a ban, whilst using the memory of our Australian military veterans to back up their ideological point of view. That irks me no end, given I and many of my customers, family and friends have a strong connection to the military and service. I'm sure many of you who either served or have had family members who have served this country in the fight for freedom of speech, association and the right to privacy, know that such statement and associations should not be used by these people, who have no connection to the military, and by using such terms as 'diggers' and 'Anzacs' in defence of their opinions can only anger and divide society.

My grandfather lost his brother to the Japanese during the last war and hated the Japanese with a passion. To hear my pop swear in public was a frightening occurrence, as it rarely happened, except the day he won the state territory bowls championship and flatly refused to accept the prize – a Toyota Corolla. Well, his opinions died with him, yet today our hatred of the Japanese is a thing of the past, now remembering, rather than hating, the generations of soldiers worldwide that went to war, fought, were wounded, scarred or killed. Forgotten. But apparently not so the Germans. Yes, some of them committed horrible atrocities, this is a well known fact, but out of 5 million German soldiers, sailors and airmen, were they all nazis? Many fought for their country, just like the Russians are fighting today, are they all brainwashed and committing war crimes? I don't know the answer, as there are two sides to every story/argument. What I do know is that if we ban the collecting of Third Reich memorabilia, you are not only banning the past, but you are also stopping the ordinary person from learning about what mistakes not to repeat in the future. This happens through education, talking and learning. Collecting is a just one, but very important part of learning journey.

Then there is the idea that neo nazis are infiltrating collectors' groups and turning bona fide collectors into neo nazis. What rubbish. I have in my many years of collecting and dealing in Third Reich memorabilia come across 3 known neo nazis. Just 3, who openly told me the usual garbage about the holocaust having never happened etc. Such people

are pointed at and ridiculed, rightly or wrongly, this is why we fought two world wars and a bunch of more questionable actions to promote the freedom of society and the safety of our friends and families. The argument that the collecting and trade of Third Reich memorabilia promotes Nazism and neo nazis is not one that holds water. If this was the case, the thousands of collectors of such historical memorabilia would be running around the streets terrorising people who they don't agree with – it's just a fantasy.

Now, the very brief statement by Dreyfus basically says that once legislation passes the parliament, there will be a 'Ban the Hakenkreuz, SS symbol and trade in nazi memorabilia'. The swastika and nazi salute will not be banned, as this is a matter for state and territory laws. Imprisonment of up to 12 months has been railed as a punishment. Well, if that is the case, then you may as well say that is an end to collecting Third Reich memorabilia, as well as any other memorabilia.

Having just come back from Germany recently, where the militaria fairs and coin sales allow the sale of Third Reich militaria, simply with a sticker covering the swastika makes me wonder why Dreyfus and the other allied politicians have not fact checked such occurrences. Whilst in Germany, I freely bought Third Reich medals, daggers, helmets, coins, badges and lots of other gear that underneath the little sticker showed a swastika. Now, you would have thought that a country like Germany this would not be allowed, but it is. It is illegal to display the swastika, so if it comes to a crunch, why not simply have this as the legislation? I'd support it, if it means that these Hitlerite's who are apparently threatening society are stopped from both wearing their offensive armbands and showing off their dodgy arm movements. If this legislation was passed in its current form, we would be the only country in the world to have such an extreme ban, which in my opinion, impacts not 1 or 2 people in the community, but many thousands.

I can certainly understand why such a ban on flying a nazi flag in public and wearing such offensive symbols needs to be restricted, however I cannot see how the private collecting and trading of such items needs to be criminalized. Without the items being traded, there is no point in collecting. Many of my clients who hold collections from thousands of dollars to millions of dollars are angry, concerned and feel that their time, effort and money spent has been a complete waste of time and are now asking me what future holds for what they thought of would be their nest egg or alternative superannuation fund. Please help!

I have uploaded a video of my brief arguments to youtube, just in case you were interested in seeing who I am and this may give you a visual insight into what is at stake here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXHhw_sEqdU&t=13s

Kind regards -

Jamey Blewitt

The Orders & Medal Research Society Member 7851

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