



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Richard Mottram Esq
Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
SW1 2HB

Prime Minister

This seems to me
a dangerous suggestion, where
we were to clear first with
the German Government that
they would not take offence (and
trying to clear it with the German
Government might itself cause offence).

28 February 1985

FERR

Also - we should then
need to have the
French, Russian, Polish
etc etc. no

1.3.

Dear Richard,

VE-DAY CELEBRATIONS

I attach a letter which Lord Gowrie has received from Bernard Levin suggesting that survivors of the German Resistance and the 20th July bomb-plot, and the widows and children of those involved, should be invited to the VE-day celebrations. (The reason why Mr Levin has approached Lord Gowrie in particular on this is that Lady Gowrie is the daughter of the Count von der Schulenburg).

Lord Gowrie strongly supports Mr Levin's suggestion for the reasons mentioned in the letter. I understand that MOD are taking the lead in making the arrangements for the celebrations and should therefore be grateful if you would put the suggestion to your Secretary of State and let me know the result.

I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard (FCO), Charles Powell (No 10) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
Paul Thomas

PAUL THOMAS
Private Secretary



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

4 March 1985

VE-DAY CELEBRATIONS

The Prime Minister has seen Paul Thomas' letter of 28 February to you enclosing one from Mr Bernard Levin.

The Prime Minister understands why Mr Levin should propose that survivors of the German Resistance should be invited to the VE-day celebrations. But she thinks that the implications would need to be carefully thought through. It would be difficult, for example, to invite this group without also inviting representatives of the French Resistance. And this would lead on to other groups who would need to be considered. The Prime Minister fears that this would lead into areas which would be very controversial in the countries concerned and which also goes outside the concept that this is our own national commemoration.

I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Paul Thomas (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

88



MO 27/5/1

NBPM

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~230722~~ 218 2111/3

21st March 1985

Dear Paul

VE-DAY CELEBRATIONS

I am sorry not to have replied before now to your letter of 28th February to Richard Mottram, concerning Mr Bernard Levin's proposals about attendance at the VE-day celebrations.

I have delayed responding until my Secretary of State had an opportunity to consider the overall question of who might be invited to attend the service to be held at Westminster Abbey on 8th May, to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Lord Gowrie will by now have seen a copy of Mr Heseltine's minute of 19th March to the Prime Minister. This records his view that there should not be any representation from overseas, a category which would include Mr Levin's nominees. As Robin Butler pointed out in his letter of 4th March, an invitation to one overseas group could well make it difficult to avoid inviting others, shifting the balance towards an international commemoration which would present further problems.

I attach a draft which Lord Gowrie may wish to use in replying to Mr Levin.

I am copying this letter to Robin Butler (No 10), Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Sir Robert Armstrong's Office).

Yours ever
Simon Lowe
(S H LOWE)

P Thomas Esq
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office

DRAFT REPLY FROM LORD GOWRIE TO MR BERNARD LEVIN

Thank you for your letter of 26 February, about participation in the service which is planned to mark the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Whilst I fully appreciate the reasoning behind your suggestion, one of the guiding principles we have adopted in looking at the 8 May service is that it should be our own national commemoration. With the exception of representatives from Embassies and High Commissions in London, we shall be looking for the widest possible participation from those within this country, in all walks of life, who contributed to victory. We shall look to the Ambassadors and High Commissioners to represent fellow countrymen who played their part in this endeavour.

I hope that you will appreciate why we have been unable to take on your suggestion. We shall, of course, be seeking to stress the themes of reconciliation and reconstruction and our thoughts will also be with those who have made such an important contribution in this area.

Dajence Oct 84

VE DAY



22 MAR 1985

10 DEVONSHIRE PLACE,
LONDON, WIN 1PB.
01-935 0046.

26th February 1985

Dear Greg

You will realise in a few lines why I am writing to you though it is far removed from your Ministerial responsibilities.

Amid the various arguments about the celebrations of VE-day, mainly over whether the Russians should be invited, there is one group that I think certainly should. There are a few (inevitably very few) survivors of the German Resistance and the 20th July bomb-plot; there are a few widows, together with their sons and daughters. One of these last is the son of Claus von Stauffenberg, who is a Colonel in the Bundeswehr, and another is Manfred Rommel, son of the general, who is now Mayor of Stuttgart, and who recently said (in public) 'Thank God we lost the war.' There is also the son of Count Moltke. (And of course the daughter of Count von der Schulenburg is alive and flourishing.) Would it not be a striking act of recognition of those who died in Germany to help bring about an Allied victory if these representatives, or some of them, were to be in the Abbey (I assume there will be an Abbey service) or at some other function of the celebrations? Not long ago, there was a friendly meeting between Manfred Rommel and Monty's son; I cannot imagine a more fitting sight, nor one calculated to stress the theme of reconciliation, than those two sitting side by side in the Abbey.

FROM BERNARD LEVIN

FROM BERNARD LEVIN

- 2 -

If you think there is merit in the suggestion (it came originally from that admirable man Herbert Sulzbach, who has spent his life in the cause of reconciliation) you will know best how to move it into the right areas. I thought of flying a kite in my Times column; if you think that that would help, or on the contrary hinder, I would be glad to hear.

All good wishes

Yours ever
Bernard

The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Gowrie,
34 King Street,
Covent Garden,
London WC2.

P.S. The Imogen Cooper series got off to a good start I thought.

Defense : 10/64
VE Day

51 MAR 1965

