

XAN-516

8 June 1981

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2004 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM:

[IMS/FPLG]

SUBJECT: Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri to Interview and Depose Defector Imants Lesinskis

	TRAVEL PROGRAM
	ABSTRACT
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SG/USSR	FILE CHANGED TO DIVISION OR STAFF

1. On 3 June 1981 two meetings were held in the Federal Building, St. Louis, Missouri to debrief and depose Imants Lesinskis, former Latvian Journalist and KGB co-optee, who defected in New York City in September 1978. Attending both meetings with Mr. Lesinskis were:

DOJ/OSI Attorneys

DDO

OGC

Neil Sher (Deputy Director, OSI)  
Michael Wolfe  
Rodney Smith

[IMS/FPLG]  
[DCD/HQS.]

In addition to the above, the following persons attended the second meeting with Mr. Lesinskis: Mr. Ivars Berzins, Attorney for Karl Linnas, one of the individuals being prosecuted as an alleged Nazi war criminal by the DOJ/OSI and [employee of CIA Office of Personnel and a certified court reporter, who transcribed Mr. Lesinskis' deposition.

2. The first meeting consisted of an exhaustive interview of Mr. Lesinskis by Mr. Wolfe of any possible knowledge Mr. Lesinskis might have which might be pertinent to the DOJ/OSI proposed prosecution of Liudas Kairys, an Estonian emigre who the DOJ/OSI alleges was a guard at a Nazi concentration camp in Poland. In substance, Mr. Lesinskis stated that he did not know Mr. Kairys; had never heard of him before; had no knowledge of Nazi concentration camps in Poland; had no knowledge of any Soviet/Estonian disinformation campaigns which might have been mounted against Kairys; and, in fact had no knowledge of any disinformation campaigns that might have been mounted against any Estonians. The DOJ/OSI had a number of documents purportedly concerning Mr. Kairys' Nazi activities which had been supplied by the Soviet government. Mr. Lesinskis' was asked numerous questions re their authenticity, but he had never seen any documents like them and could make no judgements, although he seemed convinced that the Soviets would fabricate such things. The DOJ/OSI attorneys tried very hard to change that conviction, with no visible success.

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Mr. Sher talked at length about the difference between propaganda (which DOJ/OSI would NOT use) and actual archival documents which DOJ/OSI believed to be authentic and which they would use in court.

3. The second meeting, held in the afternoon, was convened for the purpose of deposing Mr. Lesinskis. This deposition was requested by Mr. Ivars Berzins, Attorney for Karl Linnas, a Lithuanian emigre who is also being prosecuted by the DOJ/OSI. Mr. Lesinskis does not know Mr. Linnas nor does he have any information concerning any disinformation campaign conducted against Linnas. Mr. Berzins had with him several documents concerning other Latvian emigre groups which Mr. Lesinskis identified as Soviet forgeries, but Mr. Berzins had nothing concerning Lithuanians. Berzins questions covered the same general grounds as the DOJ/OSI interview in the morning, but with the emphasis on implying that ANYTHING the Soviets might provide was probably forged.

4. N.B. I have just been informed by [ ] that the attorneys for Liudas Kairys also want to interview, and possibly depose Mr. Lesinskis as well as Ladislav Bittman, Czech defector whom we resettled under a new identity and who is now teaching at Boston University. We can probably anticipate that a number of the Eastern Europeans being prosecuted by the DOJ/OSI will be demanding access to Lesinskis.

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