

ADL's Foxman caught destabilizing Latvia

by Mark Burdman

Abraham Foxman, director of the U.S. Anti-Defamation League (ADL), has been caught red-handed in a nasty operation, carried out in conjunction with certain high-level Russian networks, to destabilize the Baltic nation of Latvia. According to the Nov. 26 *Jerusalem Post*, Foxman threw his support behind a story published in *Life* magazine purporting to document a massive rise of anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi activity in Latvia, the which story is now being revealed to be a giant fraud.

This would only be the latest, and one of the more egregious episodes in Foxman's career as a professional liar and black propagandist, and further exposes the ADL as an instrument for carrying out dirty East-West deals against sovereign nations. Top ADL bankroller and World Jewish Congress president Edgar Bronfman, of the Seagram's and DuPont interests, is notorious for his underhanded political and financial arrangements with the old communist nomenclaturas of the former East bloc.

The story was published in the December 1992 edition of *Life*. Written by Edward Barnes and based largely on information provided by the American Jewish Committee, the story claims that "a resurgent anti-Semitism is forcing the Jews of Latvia to run for their lives," supposedly proven by regular weekly flights of Latvian Jews to Israel. He also insists that "former Nazis and newly emboldened ultra-rightists . . . share a shocking desire to 'purify' the population [and are] battling in the nation's parliament to get the Russians out of the country, and, less openly, the Jews along with them." Among other assertions, Barnes claims that the Latvian capital of Riga is replete with swastika symbols hanging in shop windows, and that there is a resurgence of an old Waffen SS unit as part of Latvia's new Home Guard militia.

No sooner did the *Life* article hit the newsstands, than attention was drawn to it by the *Jerusalem Post* and other journals around the world. Foxman was quick to throw his support behind it. However, in late November, leading U.S. and Latvian Jewish spokesmen began to cast doubt on Barnes's piece, and the Latvian government published a fact-sheet on Dec. 1, issued through its embassy in Washington, which charged that Barnes has used "sensationalism and selective reporting to paint a highly distorted and factually unsubstantiated picture of life in Latvia. The article misrepresents Latvian government policy, exaggerates the role of fringe extremists, and uses the emotions of essentially one

woman to support its hysterical—and journalistically irresponsible—claim that 'a resurgent anti-Semitism is forcing the Jews of Latvia to run for their lives.' A close analysis of the article shows that this headline, like other similarly careless conclusions drawn in the text, is unsupported by any evidence provided in the text itself, and upon further analysis, has no basis in reality."

The Latvian government further stated that "the article argues that anti-Semitism among Latvians is growing, yet the author only talks to a handful of extremist members of right-wing fringe groups. This is comparable to interviewing only the KKK and using their activities to characterize the entire United States."

Latvian Jews disagree

Among Jewish organizations in the United States, some quickly distanced themselves from Foxman's line. Upon returning from Riga, where he met leaders of the representative body of Latvian Jews, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry's Nate Geller affirmed that the view of leading Latvian Jews is that "anti-Semitism is not now a major factor in Latvia. They have not seen violence against Jews or organized [neo-Nazi] rallies."

Disavowals came from other Latvian Jewish influentials. On Dec. 6, the *Jerusalem Post* published a followup article headlined "Head of Riga Jewish Community Disputes Anti-Semitism Reports." Latvian Jewish leader Gregory Kropnikov told the *Post* that "many statistics in the article were incorrect." He said that the number of Latvian Jews emigrating from Latvia is "20 times less" than the figure cited by Barnes. He especially disputed one of Barnes's more absurd claims, that Latvian Jews are heading east toward Russia, stressing that no Jew would seek Russia as a refuge. Further, Kropnikov challenged Barnes's claim that carpets bearing swastikas were being displayed in store windows in Riga, explaining that there is a traditional Latvian folk symbol of the "fire cross" that resembles a backward swastika, and which might have been mistaken for swastikas by the author.

Kropnikov stated bluntly: "We do not feel there is a simmering strain of anti-Semitism in this country. . . . I do not have a feeling of imminent social violence, general or anti-Semitic."

Latvian Jewish parliamentarian Ruta Marjasa told the Latvian daily newspaper *Diena* on Dec. 3 that the Barnes piece is "absolutely non-objective. . . . This is a case where truth has been mixed with lies, accuracy with fantasy."

So shaky is Barnes's account, one Latvian source told *EIR*, that *Life* is now planning to publish an apology. This source believes the story was planted by Russian military networks intent on halting the planned withdrawal of Russian units now stationed in Latvia, and who are thereby seeking to discredit Latvia internationally, especially by conducting the disinformation through certain nominally Jewish organizations in the West.