
ISRAEL

The 'suicide' of banker Yaacov Levinson

by Mark Burdman

Israelis will undoubtedly be discussing for weeks to come the apparent suicide of Israeli banker Yaacov Levinson on Feb. 22. Preliminary evidence leads to the suspicion that, if he was not murdered outright, Levinson was driven to kill himself by an insidious campaign of innuendoes and gossip by agents of the Soviet KGB and friends of Henry Kissinger, united in their common antagonism to Israel's sovereignty.

'An economic Gaullist'

Levinson was the builder of the banking empire of Bank Hapoalim and until his death the chief official in the Ampal (American-Palestine) Corporation, a key institution historically for funneling money from U.S. supporters to Israel for investment projects into the Israeli state. He was known as "an economic Gaullist in an Israeli context," a man who favored growth-oriented capital investment and high-technology projects, including ambitious construction projects.

In this sense, Levinson was the heir of a dirigist tradition associated with the Israeli "Old Guard" of the late Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, who knew that Israel could only develop through centrally deployed funding of desert irrigation, city-building, and other capital-intensive projects.

Levinson was regarded as a point of potential resistance to the austerity onslaught of Finance Minister Yigal Cohen-Orgad under pressure from the U.S. State Department, the International Monetary Fund, and the pro-Nazi Bank for International Settlements. He was being mooted as finance minister should the Labour Party return to power and should he overcome his own reluctance to assume government positions.

Budget-cutting mania

The day of Levinson's "suicide" was also the day of the announcement by Cohen-Orgad of cuts in Israel's budgets, including slashes in vital sectors like defense and welfare, so that Israel can repay its foreign debt of (by conservative estimates) \$22 billion. The international elites associated with Kissinger would want Levinson's death to be a "message" that the old days of production and "making the deserts bloom" are over.

"His death is a catastrophe," an Israeli in Europe told *EIR*

Feb. 23. "He could have been the one man to slow the slide of the Israeli economy into disaster."

Since the first weeks of 1984, Levinson had been hounded on never-substantiated charges that he had engaged in financial irregularities as head of Ampal. Tel Aviv gossip circuits are buzzing with talk of intrigues by anti-Levinson forces within Ampal and Hevrat Ovdim, the holding company for the industrial empire of the Histadrut national trade union confederation. More interesting, however, is that the main tormentor of Levinson had been journalist Uri Avnery, editor of the pornographic *Hoalem Hazeh* scandal sheet and a man who maintains very close channels to the Soviet KGB.

An Israeli military intelligence source told *EIR* Feb. 23: "When you think of Levinson being dead, think of all the trips Uri Avnery has made to Moscow." A source linked to the Israeli Foreign Ministry told *EIR* the same day: "I wouldn't be at all surprised if Avnery is an agent of the KGB. He's a major crook and I wouldn't put anything past him."

The U.S.S.R. and Kissinger

The Soviets, for reasons of ideology and global strategy, would like nothing more than to punish Israel by weakening forces committed to a nationalist economic perspective. Duped individuals both within Israel and in the Jewish communities outside Israel have been harboring delusions, in the days following Chernenko's accession to power in Moscow, about a strategic "deal" to be reached with Moscow, premised on the Soviets opening the valves of Jewish emigration from the U.S.S.R., but the heightening pitch of anti-Semitism in the first weeks of 1984 should be a better clue to how the Moscow military junta ultimately wants to handle the Jewish state.

Again, it may be coincidence, but the reports of Levinson's suicide broke simultaneously with reports received by *EIR* that Dr. Henry Kissinger had arrived in Moscow on or about Feb. 20.

In May 1984, Henry Kissinger is due to keynote the hallmark Israeli economic event of the year: the Jerusalem Economic Conference, co-sponsored by the Israeli Finance Ministry, the Israeli Ministry of Economic Coordination, and other Israeli ministries. The conference will nominally focus on the theme of "high technology for Israel," but the perspective of Kissinger and his State Department epigones is that this translates into making Israel a "high-tech" imitation of Hong Kong surviving on the basis of the arms-sale programs implied by the development of Israel's Lavie jet.

Any idea of Israel following in Japan's footsteps and integrating its economic development into the spinoffs of the U.S. beam-weapon program is violently opposed by Kissinger and his allies.

The co-keynoter of the May conference will be Lawrence Klein, a member of the genocidal Club of Rome and top economist at the Wharton School in Pennsylvania. Kissinger, Klein, and their ilk are committed economic Schachtians, in the tradition that led Germany toward the Holocaust.