

KGB boss says Robert Maxwell was the second Kissinger

by Mark Burdman

On the evening of July 28, Germany's ARD television network broadcast an extraordinary documentary on the life and death of the late Robert Maxwell, the British publishing magnate and sleazy wheeler-and-dealer who died under mysterious circumstances, his body found floating in the waters off Tenerife in the Canary Islands, on Nov. 5, 1991. The show, "Man Overboard," was co-produced by the firm Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, headquartered in Leipzig in eastern Germany, and Austria's Oesterreicher Rundfunk. It relied primarily on interviews with senior officials of the former Soviet KGB and GRU intelligence services, who helped build the case that the circumstances of Maxwell's death must have been intimately linked to efforts to cover up sensitive Soviet Communist Party capital flight and capital transfer to the West in the last days of the U.S.S.R.

The most revealing characterization of the nature of the Maxwell beast was provided by Stanislav Sorokin, identified as a KGB colonel responsible for "special tasks," who had used the Soviet copyright organization VAAP as a cover for his activities. Sorokin stated: "I would say that he was used by higher-ups, just as the Americans used Kissinger as a messenger or ambassador. Maxwell left England and brought with him a message from Thatcher—an unofficial one. He left Gorbachov to go to America, and tried to bring with him a message from Gorbachov."

A former press spokesman of Maxwell's at the Mirror chain of newspapers, Roy Cole, told the filmmakers: "There is no doubt that Mr. Maxwell saw himself as a type of new version of Henry Kissinger, and certainly played the role of an international Mr. Fix-It."

Sorokin's comparison to Kissinger appears on the broadcast immediately after a segment showing Maxwell's prominent role in last-minute efforts to stop German reunification. He is portrayed at a press conference, in the late 1980s, announcing the release of a laudatory English-language biography of East German dictator Erich Honecker. Maxwell is shown praising the "colossal" achievements of communist East Germany, and exchanging kisses with Honecker. In October 1989, he is telling German journalists that "German reunification is out of the question." This was only one month before the collapse of the Berlin Wall! This places Maxwell's efforts in tandem with those of then-British Prime Minister

Margaret Thatcher, who was frantically trying to prevent German reunification.

Stanislav Sorokin was one of several top-level former Soviet intelligence and political insiders who freely commented on Maxwell during the broadcast. For their own reasons, these Russians are evidently intent on provoking an international discussion of, and investigation into, the mysteries of capital flight operations out of the U.S.S.R. in the late 1980s-early 1990s. Former Soviet KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, a partner of Maxwell in numerous underhanded ventures who went to jail for his role in the failed August 1991 putsch against Gorbachov, suggests in the concluding moments of the broadcast, that "the English-American [sic] secret services, who are experienced enough, could, if they want to, find the truth. That is, if they want to. I consider it possible, that more things will still come to the surface."

Such a possibility should cause particular discomfort in places like Minnesota, where Maxwell was active in his later days. He joined Mikhail Gorbachov, for whom he served as a special adviser, in trips there, to establish a "Gorbachov-Maxwell Institute." Was that, in fact, a cover for money-laundering and capital flight operations out of the Soviet Union?

A view into the underworld

The ARD broadcast is of great strategic significance. As underscored by the designation "another Kissinger," Maxwell was a special operative of the "Yalta system," working in the interface of the governments, intelligence services, and enterprises of several nations, including Great Britain, Israel, the Soviet Union, the United States, and various countries of the East bloc. The show characterizes him as "a man of many faces," who was working for several different parties at the same time, and who "liked giving each side the feeling that he was their man." Another of his "partners" in Soviet escapades, Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, who also went to jail for his role in the failed August 1991 coup, suggests in the concluding moments of the broadcast, that Maxwell's death was probably arranged by more than one side in the old Cold War arrangements.

Maxwell, indeed, would best be seen as one of the central figures in the underworld that flourished, in different parts of

the world, in the environment nurtured by George Bush and his friends in the intelligence services and among the “junk-bond” and “asset-stripping” culture of the 1980s. Other names in this sordid complex would include Kissinger, Armand Hammer, and Sir Jimmy Goldsmith. In fact, Maxwell, Goldsmith, and Hammer shared a common lawyer in France, Samuel Pisar.

The 1980s was the decade of the notorious Iran-Contra arms-for-drugs arrangements. It was also a decade that saw the deaths of numerous important figures, including Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme (Feb. 28, 1986), Schleswig-Holstein Gov. Uwe Barschel (October 1987), and Deutsche Bank’s chairman of the board Alfred Herrhausen (November 1989), who were removed in order to protect the Iran-Contra and/or “Yalta” relationships.

It is to be hoped that, in the post-Bush era, and with a Clinton administration having a different strategic-political perspective, the sordid truths of that decade will come to light. The ARD broadcast should be of great help in that respect.

‘In Moscow, they are convinced it was murder’

The July 28 show begins with footage about Maxwell’s death. The “official verdict” was death by heart attack. Those Britons interviewed by filmmakers Christina Wilkening and Sylvia Kauffeldt refuse to endorse the hypothesis that Maxwell was murdered; the theory that he died by “accident or suicide” still predominates in London, they stress. By contrast, both KGB Col. Stanislav Sorokin and GRU Col. Yevgeny Solovyov (who also used the VAAP copyright agency as a cover), immediately exclude the possibility of suicide. Sorokin affirms: “I think that was probably a so-called ‘murder on order.’ It was all professionally done and was covered up as a suicide.” “In Moscow,” Wilkening and Kauffeldt say, “they are convinced it was murder.”

Overall, the KGB officers show a willingness to provide the authors with exclusive information. For example, they provide numerous leads about Maxwell’s ties to Israel. By contrast, leading Israelis refused to be interviewed by the authors; former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir suddenly cancelled an interview the day before it was to have taken place. The “Israeli connection” is obviously of great importance. The show depicts Maxwell’s funeral and burial, on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

‘Where is the money coming from?’

To get to the truth about Maxwell, one has to begin with his past. Wilkening and Kauffeldt begin with his birth in 1923, in a Jewish family in the town of Solotovino, in what was then Czechoslovakia. His family was later murdered by the Nazis. Evidently, the “Czech angle” was always of great importance. GRU man Sviridov affirms that Maxwell never forgot that he was “born on Slavic soil.” A British collabora-



“A man of many faces” : Robert Maxwell in Washington, May 1991.

tor of Maxwell, Roy Greenslade, affirms that he was “treated like a king in the East. Every time he returned from Bulgaria, he had a new medal, a new order.”

So the story goes, Maxwell fled, during the war, to England via Hungary. He entered the Royal Army in 1944, and soon became a “major in the English MI-5 secret service.” He received the British Military Cross medal, and then, by 1947, he held the important post of press officer for the British Control Commission in Berlin, responsible for issuing licenses. He made his first money buying and selling licenses and financial transactions between postwar Germany and the victorious powers. He then became the representative in London for the reorganized Friedrich Springer Verlag publishing house. This gave him, and the British, access to the important scientific publications that Springer had published in pre-war years. In 1949, he bought Pergamon Press, a British publishing house specializing in scientific books.

By the winter of 1956, Maxwell had gained extraordinary access in Moscow to the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the VAAP. (Aside from what is indicated by the biographical references to Solovyov and Sorokin above, it should be stressed that the VAAP was of enormous importance for KGB disinformation and other operations. Its head from 1973-82 was Boris Pankin, who was Soviet ambassador to Sweden at the time of the assassination of Olof Palme, and a

key figure in attempts to blame that act on Lyndon LaRouche and associates. Background on the VAAP can be found in the October 1986 *EIR* Special Report, "A Classical KGB Disinformation Campaign: Who Killed Olof Palme?")

One of the individuals with whom he worked at the time, Yuri Gradov, recounts his early meetings with Maxwell, commenting, "I thought to myself, where is the money coming from?"

According to Wilkening and Kauffeldt, Maxwell's interest in sensitive scientific themes "caught the attention of the Soviet secret services," and he was assigned three top intelligence contacts: Solovyov and Sorokin, as well as Feliks Sviridov, a GRU colonel specializing in American affairs. The boss at VAAP, Ter Gaserjansk, who dealt extensively with him, expresses surprise that Maxwell published only *two* of the 73 documents he received as per signed contracts with VAAP.

Solovyov insists, on camera, that Maxwell was *not* a KGB agent, but implies that he may have been an agent of the Israeli Mossad. Along parallel lines, Sorokin provides evidence that Maxwell was a critical liaison between the Soviets and Israelis. He reveals the contents of a letter, intimate in tone, that he wrote in 1991 to David Kimche, one of the directors of the Mossad, requesting the help of "David" to provide assistance for three TV employees working on "the Robert Maxwell Project." Wilkening and Kauffeldt express astonishment that such a friendly tone would prevail in a letter between two supposedly enemy intelligence services, those of the Soviet Union and Israel.

Maxwell, together with a Bulgarian communist named Ognan Doinov, built business connections to Israel's military-scientific establishment. He developed close connections to the firm of Shaul Eisenberg and his brother, as well as to leading figures across the Israeli political spectrum. Such were his relations with the Soviets, that he was able to bring 105 Soviet Jewish nuclear physicists and computer scientists to Israel in 1983-84, at a time when such emigration was extremely restricted. These Soviet Jews were settled in a housing complex in the Negev Desert that had been built for workers at the Israeli nuclear center of Dimona. Clearly, from the evidence provided on the show, Maxwell was a player in the development of Israel's nuclear capabilities.

'A mysterious series of suicides'

By the winter of 1990, Maxwell's focal point of activity shifted, as the situation in the Soviet Union dramatically worsened. The economy was unwinding, and the mafia growing more powerful. The population was becoming more restless, but the western bankers were insisting on immediate repayment of \$15 billion, out of the total \$32 billion Soviet foreign debt. Then-Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov arranged for Maxwell to be "our agent" in a vast scheme to get money to bail out the Soviet Union. Maxwell got involved in ever-crazier transactions, ending up looting the pension funds of

his own firms in London, in order to keep liquidity flowing into Moscow. He also became involved in elaborate secondary debt market transactions with countries such as Ethiopia that were heavily indebted to the U.S.S.R.

Maxwell himself became visibly more nervous, restricting his business discussions to the closest circles around him, mainly on his yacht. All his meetings were protected by armed Mossad guards.

However, Maxwell's frantic efforts collapsed with the failed Soviet coup. "His taskmasters Valentin Pavlov and Vladimir Kryuchkov were arrested," and the new Yeltsin regime launched an investigation into the documents pertaining to the management of funds belonging to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). "After this action, there occurred a mysterious series of suicides. Seven leading members of the CPSU, responsible above all for the finances of the party and each aware of the [Maxwell] deals of billions, were found dead." This was followed by other, probably "assisted" suicides, including:

- Aug. 23, Interior Minister Boris Pugo, former KGB chief in Latvia;
- Aug. 24, Nikolai Krushchina, responsible for currency transactions in the Soviet Communist Party, reported to have jumped out of a window;
- Aug. 25, Chief of the General Staff Sergei Akhromeyev.

State Wilkening and Kauffeldt: "Ten weeks later, Maxwell died. The doctors insist: He was already dead before he fell into the water."

The story does not end there, however. Tipped off by Russian sources that they should look into affairs in Vienna, where Interpol has been "on the track of the billion-dollar deals," Wilkening and Kauffeldt investigate the Vienna offices of a firm called Nordex, which has offices around the world, and which maintains a respectable facade, but is obviously a venture tied up with vast capital flight operations out of Russia. It was founded with approval of what was then the Soviet Latvian government, at the time when Boris Pugo was KGB chief in Riga. Its head, Grigory Luchansky, is from Riga, a former leader of the Komsomol (communist youth) there. And, capping it all off, the filmmakers managed to film Robert Maxwell's sons Ian and Kevin, together with their father's Bulgarian business partner Doinov, at a meeting in Vienna with Luchansky and others, in *recent weeks*—indicating that the deals are continuing to the present day.

As the filmmakers note in conclusion, the legal suit against Ian and Kevin Maxwell, for malfeasances pertaining to the Maxwell fortune, begins this autumn in London. Wilkening and Kauffeldt say that the likelihood of the truth coming out is, however, only slight. Their concluding words: "If Maxwell didn't fall into the water, then *profis* [professionals] were at work, who operate somewhere in the gray zone between secret services and the mafia. And, for the large sums of money they get, they do a good job."