

Gen. Ze'evi Lived And Died By The Sword

by Scott Thompson

On Feb. 27, 1988, early in the first Intifada, retired Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Gen. Rechavam Ze'evi formed the "Committee for the Mass Expulsion of Arabs" (CMEA). Through the CMEA, General Ze'evi became notorious for his "transfer" policy to remove all Palestinians ("lice," to the general) from Israel *and* the Occupied Territories. One CMEA spokesman ranted: "Israel must act toward the Arabs the same way Germany acted toward Poland in World War II." By 1995, after the Oslo peace accord, Ze'evi's "Nazi transfer" rhetoric was widely believed to be part of the atmospherics that led to the assassination on Nov. 4, of Israeli Prime Minister Yizhak Rabin—by fanatical elements within the settlers movement, the IDF, and the domestic intelligence agency, Shin Bet.

Born in Jerusalem in 1926, the future IDF Maj. Gen. Ze'evi (a.k.a. "Gandhi") served in the Palmakh and Haganah during the Israeli War of Independence. He remained in military service till 1974, rising through the ranks to becoming Chief of the IDF Operations Division.

From 1974-77, Ze'evi was adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Between 1974 and 1976, he advised the Prime Minister on Warfare Against Terrorism (a.k.a. "Terror Against Terror"). He set his office up at the Lion of Judah Post, keeping live Ethiopian lions at the entrance. Reliable sources report that Ze'evi not only carried out "preventive" assassinations, but threw Palestinian prisoners out of helicopters into the Mediterranean. Among the terror squads he deployed at that time were, allegedly, those of Rabbi Meir Kahane, himself later assassinated.

Leaving official Israeli government capacities in 1977, General Ze'evi established the business front known as the Consultative Agency for the Fight Against Terrorism in Ecuador. In South America, he was deeply involved, with Ariel Sharon, in deals with cocaine traffickers operating inside and outside governments. Arriving in Ecuador with his former military subordinate, Betsalel Mizrahi—reportedly one of the "godfathers" of the Israeli Mafia—Ze'evi tried to sell big-ticket arms like the Kfir jet, just months after the Pentagon had vetoed Israeli Defense Ministry (IDM) attempts to sell the jet to Ecuador.

Between 1977 and 1980, Ze'evi was frequently in Central and South America arranging arms deals on behalf of the IDM to several nations. In August 1980, after the coup d'état in Bolivia by the "Cocaine Colonels," Ze'evi negotiated a huge arms package with the government, which controlled the co-

caine traffic. Ze'evi was alleged, through such operations, to be in league with the Israeli mafia. He worked closely with Gen. Ariel Sharon, for example in a big 1980 arms sale to Honduras.

These Israeli arms-for-drugs deals were later part of the Nicaraguan Contra operations overseen by Vice President George H.W. Bush under Executive Order 12333.

Ze'evi returned to Israel in 1980, becoming a consultant to the Justice Ministry and the Police Department—despite protests from Israeli police-linked journalists and Knesset (parliament) member Ehud Olmert, that Ze'evi was one of the "godfathers" of the Israeli mafia. His operations in Ibero-America continued. On Sept. 18, 1989, the security services of Colombia, investigating the assassination of Colombian Presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán, requested the extradition of Israeli Reserves Lt. Col. Yair Klein. Klein, among others, had been documented as having trained the Medellín cocaine cartel's assassination squads that killed Galán. Ze'evi was one of the foremost of the active and former IDF leaders linked to Klein's business front Hod Hyanit ("Spearhead"), that had contracted with the Medellín Cartel.

In 1988, Ze'evi entered politics, forming the Moledet ("Homeland") Party, and was its elected representative in the Knesset, on the racist policy of ridding Israel of the "Arab lice."

'Deep Moral Contamination'

In January 1992, Ze'evi was appointed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as Minister Without Portfolio, assigned to form a ministerial committee on defense and security issues. The French daily *Le Monde* reported that Benny Begin, the son of Menachem Begin, called the appointment of Ze'evi a "deep moral contamination." But Ze'evi's call for mass transfer (expulsion) of Palestinians was shared by then-Housing Minister Gen. Ariel Sharon. On July 30, 1997, when Benjamin Netanyahu was Prime Minister and twin bombings had taken place, killing 18 Israelis, *SNS News* in Jerusalem reported Moledet Party leader Ze'evi calling for immediately building a Jewish housing project in Arab East Jerusalem's Ras al-Amud area. The project had been planned by Meyer Lansky's onetime bagman, Irving Moskowitz, a U.S. multi-millionaire.

On April 22, 1998, Prime Minister Netanyahu "sent a message" indicating his hard-line policies by asking Ze'evi to join his coalition government.

In the 1999 elections, Ze'evi was elected on the joint National Unity ticket, which held seven seats in the Knesset. And, in March 2001, Prime Minister Sharon appointed him Minister of Tourism. He was a determined opponent of peace, and of a Palestinian state; as reported in the Oct. 2, 2001 *New York Times*, Ze'evi was quoted about Palestinian President Yasser Arafat: "I don't say we eliminate him physically, but send him a one-way ticket to Tunis. . . . If he resists and his capture requires physical elimination, I'm not a vegetarian."