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# Ometz to ask comptroller to probe Welfare Ministry and NII on political appointments

• By GIL HOFFMAN

The Ometz organization, which promotes clean government, is to send a letter on Thursday to State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss asking him to investigate political appointments in the Welfare and Social Services Ministry and the National Insurance Institute, as well as the connections of top Histadrut officials to multi-millionaires.

Ometz Chairman Arye Avneri was responding to reports on Channels 2 and 10 on Tuesday night.

Channel 10 reported that Labor leadership candidate Isaac Herzog has used his post as welfare and social services minister to appoint many current and former Labor Party activists to government posts. The report stressed that none of the appointments were illegal.

Kadima MK Tzahi Hanegbi was acquitted last week on charges of making dozens of political appointments as environment minister.

The current and former Labor activists that the report said were appointed to political patronage positions connected to the ministry included former Labor Youth



ISAAC HERZOG  
(Ariel Jerozolimski)

leader Lior Strassberg, Rehovot Labor branch activists Asaf Schwartz and Benny Levine, and veteran party activist Dalia Krashevsky, who has been a party member for 50 years.

Herzog's office downplayed the report and stressed that the minister had not done anything even approaching illegal.

"This report was a devious attempt to connect coincidences," Herzog's office said. "Everyone was appointed legally through the proper tenders, filters, and search committees and everyone is qualified. We welcome any

check from any fair arbiter."

Meanwhile, Channel 2 reported that top officials in the Histadrut Labor Federation are receiving bloated salaries as directors of corporations owned by multimillionaires. The report said that this was problematic because the Histadrut serves as the representative of workers employed by these corporations.

The report cited former Labor MK Avi Yehezkel, who is now a Histadrut official but receives a hefty salary as a director of one of the companies owned by businessman Nochi Dankner, and Na'amat head Talia Livni, who is a director of a company owned by shipping tycoon Sami Ofer.

Both Yehezkel and Livni said they make sure to not be involved with matters involving the corporations in the Histadrut so there would be no conflict of interest. Livni said she was only on the board as a representative of the public and not an active member.

The Histadrut said in response that if any of their staff had a conflict of interest with a corporation's board of directors they would make them resign from the board.