
Interview: Pete McCloskey

ADL Settles Spying Case Rather Than Go To Trial

After nine years of litigation, in which the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep their files secret, the organization has suffered a major legal setback. In February 2002, an out-of-court settlement was reached, in which the ADL lost on the one issue that means more to it than millions of dollars. Many of the ADL's files, seized in



"Pete" McCloskey, Jr.

California criminal investigations that began in 1992, can now become public record, as a result of the determined effort of a small group of California peace activists, who sued the ADL over its illegal spying, and of the attorney for the plaintiffs, former U.S. Rep. Paul N. "Pete" McCloskey, Jr. (R-Calif.), who represented his San Francisco area district for 15 years. It would serve the public interest if, now, the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) were also to release the secret documents uncovered in its investigation of the ADL's illegal spying.

McCloskey spoke to EIR about some of the details of the landmark civil settlement. He underscored the significance of the settlement—particularly the fact that the plaintiffs are free to discuss the deposition testimony of the ADL's officers and secret agents. It had fought to prevent the release of any of its files from this case, and from the year-long SFPD probe of ADL spying. The ADL also agreed to pay \$178,000: each of three plaintiffs received \$50,000 in damages, and an additional \$28,000 in plaintiffs' costs was awarded. Jeffrey Steinberg conducted the interview shortly after the settlement.

EIR: This has been a long case, and several of the original plaintiffs have died. What is the most important thing that was accomplished here?

McCloskey: For years, the ADL wanted to make sure of one thing: that their files, which included records on Americans who were involved in anti-apartheid campaigns in South Africa, and Jewish Americans who were critical of hawkish Israelis, were *never* made available to the public.

That secrecy, over the years, gave the ADL the ability to *deny* their illegal activities; to claim that they were just

"journalists," and thereby continue their campaign. Now, with this settlement, it can be confirmed that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith *sold* and *gave* its illegally collected information, much of it illegally obtained from California law enforcement agencies, to foreign intelligence services—the Israeli Mossad, and the South African intelligence services during the period of the apartheid government.

EIR: What do you think is the most important information in those files?

McCloskey: When the San Francisco Police Department seized the files, under search warrant, of the ADL's chief spy, Roy Bullock, the police told us the files included detailed floor plans of the offices of Alex Odeh, the head of the southern California chapter of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, who was killed by a bomb attack on that office in 1985. Bullock had infiltrated the AADC and reportedly had an appointment to interview Odeh the day of his murder. Odeh was killed in a political terrorist act by people unknown who considered him an enemy. That murder was never solved, but it was believed by the FBI that the murder was done by Jewish activists who fled to Israel, which has refused to extradite them to the United States.

Bullock was the ADL's chief dirty tricks specialist for 30 years. Eleven banker's boxes full of Bullock files, confiscated in the SFPD raids, were said by police Captain Ron Roth to contain illegally obtained government information. Captain Roth also testified under oath that the ADL officials had lied about their activities in public statements.

The information on Alex Odeh is just an example, and a small part of what is in Bullock's files. Bullock was one of the ADL operatives who maintained, if you will, the ADL's enemies list.

It is of utmost public interest that the truth about these ADL activities come out into the public.

There is more to this. As a result of what we learned in this case, I believe that there is a strong case that the ADL should be made to register, under the Federal laws, as an agent of a foreign government—Israel. The head of the ADL's "Fact-Finding Division," the late Irwin Suall, testified under oath about his meetings with the head of the Israeli Mossad. Suall directed and controlled the activities of Bullock and other ADL spies.

Suall's deposition transcript was a closely guarded secret—now it can be made public.

EIR: There is also information about the ADL and South Africa that was in your case.

McCloskey: This is perhaps the most evil of the ADL's activities. The files document details of the ADL's sale of 29 separate intelligence reports to the intelligence service of South Africa, at the height of apartheid. The reports that the ADL sold were surveillance reports on anti-apartheid activists in Northern California. As your publication, *EIR*, has

reported, one of the targets of that ADL surveillance was a black South African, Chris Hani, who came to the United States for political meetings against apartheid. The United Nations had passed numerous resolutions against apartheid, and South Africa was flagrantly abusing them. Chris Hani was assassinated by South African intelligence service-run death squads. The South African government was well known for assassinations of anti-apartheid activists outside South Africa, and the Northern California citizens who supported Bishop Tutu's efforts were understandably afraid to travel outside the United States after being advised by the San Francisco police in early 1993 that they were on the ADL's blacklist.

Remember, at the time of this ADL activity in the early 1990s, prior to December 1992, Israel and South Africa intelligence services worked closely together. Because of each country's refusal to abide by UN Security Council resolutions—Resolution 242 in the case of Israel, and apartheid in the case of racist South Africa—the two were outcast nations in certain respects and worked together. So, I was also alarmed that the files showed that there was some indication that the ADL was *receiving* information—that is, intelligence requirements—from Israel, a foreign government, requests for information about American citizens, and using those requests to activate their spying.

EIR: One example of that involved your wife, Helen McCloskey, is that correct?

McCloskey: That is true. When the San Francisco Police Department opened the case against the ADL and the ADL's agent inside the police intelligence division—officer Tom Gerard—the head of the investigation into the ADL/Gerard spying, Captain Willet, contacted me, and told me, “Your wife is one of the people in the files.”

The fact that a file on my wife was found in the ADL's San Francisco office is *substantive proof* that the Israelis not only receive information from the ADL, but provide information to the ADL to try to discredit American citizens who opposed Israel's injustices toward the Palestinians and/or apartheid in South Africa.

What had happened was that in 1989, Helen McCloskey, and two other young American women, visited Jordan, and crossed over the Allenby Bridge into the West Bank. My wife had gone to school in America with Queen Noor of Jordan, the wife of the late King Hussein. Two of the people with my wife were Americans, married to American citizens. One of them had an Arab-sounding name. At the Israeli checkpoint, the American-Arab woman was pulled aside, made to strip, and apparently orifice-searched, insulted, and berated in the process. The extraordinary thing about this 1989 incident was that Captain Willet told me that it was described in the ADL's San Francisco file on Helen, obtained by the police search warrant in 1993.

As a result of that incident, Helen McCloskey got into the

ADL's Bullock files. The ADL was getting names from Israeli intelligence of people who were critical of Israeli actions. The ADL's goal is to punish, or bring to shame anybody who is put on their list of critics of these policies. We actually have that in the testimony of another ADL operative, Richard Hirschhaut, who admitted that one-quarter to one-half of the ADL's efforts from 1988-93 were devoted to targetting and harassing critics of Israel and South Africa.

But what sticks in my mind as the worst of this, is selling of this surveillance information to South African intelligence. The ADL claims to be dedicated to “anti-discrimination,” not only of Jewish people but of African-Americans.

EIR: The ADL has always said that claims about their spying are lies, lies, lies.

McCloskey: That's the most important thing about this settlement. Hopefully, the San Francisco police will now make public those eleven boxes of secret and illegally obtained information that the ADL had collected.

One of the items that is most noteworthy in this respect is the affidavit of San Francisco Police Department officer Ron Roth, after the ADL issued press releases and other public statements about the San Francisco police probe that were deliberately deceitful.

There is much to be said about the ADL's activities. How ADL agent Bullock infiltrated the home of Steve Zeltzer, a Jewish labor leader who campaigned against apartheid, where Bullock posed as a supporter of the anti-racist cause, and used that information. How prominent American Jews were surveilled, spied on, including Yigal Arens, the son of Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens—[he] was one of the targets of the ADL.

Two of the original plaintiffs were radio or TV commentators who literally lost their jobs as a result of ADL-generated pressure on their employers. Both have since passed away, as did prominent reporter Nick Thommesch, who first broke the story of Israel's violation of its sworn treaty with the U.S. that it would never use U.S.-supplied cluster bombs against civilians—a charge that Israeli government officials staunchly denied for weeks before finally admitting their deliberate deceit. Thommesch later died under mysterious conditions that have yet to be explained.

I'm convinced more than ever that the ADL should be made to register as an agent of a foreign government. They should not be receiving tax-exempt contributions from U.S. citizens.

We settled this case, after nine years, because it was time, the remaining plaintiffs believed, to get on with our lives. There is still unfinished business, however.

At the final signing of the settlement, the ADL's young lawyer, David Goldstein, an American, said laughingly to me, “Aren't you glad now that we bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor?” The reactor was bombed by the Israeli Air Force 21 years ago in 1981. I asked him who he meant by “we.”