

Sharon's U.S. Friends Try To Rescue Him

by Dean Andromidas

As indictments for fraud and bribe-taking are expected to be leveled against him, the U.S. supporters of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon have come to save his neck. Harvard law professor and darling of the Anti-Defamation League, Alan Dershowitz, has been deployed personally to lead a desperate attempt to get Sharon off the hook.

On Dec. 22, Dershowitz announced that he would be organizing an international legal team to defend Israeli real estate developer David Appel. Virtually unknown outside of Israel, Appel has been indicted for bribing several top Israeli government officials in order to further real estate development projects in Israel. Dershowitz told the Israeli press that he took on the case because Appel was the victim of one of the worst cases of civil liberties violations Dershowitz has ever seen.

But who is David Appel? Although Appel is an Israeli millionaire and certainly capable of paying Dershowitz's exorbitant legal fees, he is small change compared to Dershowitz's other clients. The reason is clear. *EIR* has detailed how Appel has been accused of standing at the center of a corrupt operation to funnel millions of dollars to fund the ruling Likud party through bribing top Likud politicians, including Sharon, Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and many others (see *EIR*, Dec. 26, 2003). Although the current indictment against Appel does not include Sharon's name, it was recently revealed in the Israeli press that the document will soon be "corrected" to include Sharon as well as his two sons, Gilad and Omri. This is the only reason Dershowitz took on this case.

The 'Dershowitz Show' Has Begun

In a press conference on Dec. 29, Dershowitz demonstrated how he will defend Appel by creating a media circus, exposing alleged persecution of his client by the Israeli prosecution and legal establishment. In reality, the move is to sabotage Appel's prosecution.

Dershowitz trumpeted that the police had wiretapped 72,000 Appel telephone calls. This is just Straussian sophistry. All the wiretaps were approved by the court; the number can be attributed to the fact that they were done, as is always the case, by automatic machines—not all of the calls were transcribed. Dershowitz cited a disputed report by Israeli Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein, who claimed chief of police investigations Moshe Mizrahi had committed certain irregularities in carrying out these wiretaps, and recom-



Lawyer Alan Dershowitz has rushed to Israel to defend real estate developer David Appel—and protect the Prime Minister.

mended Mizrahi's removal. Rubinstein's report was disputed by almost everyone else in his office, including Rubinstein's deputy, the State Attorney, Edna Arbel. Moreover, Rubinstein has been accused in the press of trying to sabotage this case, as he had done on more than one occasion with earlier cases levelled against Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In an example of the types of theatrics being used, Dershowitz said, "The only country in which I have ever seen abuses like this, has been when I represented Natan Sharansky in the Soviet Union, when Big Brother would tap every conversation of every dissident, every day." He went on to call the proceedings against Appel the "Dudi Show," using Appel's nickname. Dershowitz's performance was even a little too much for the *Jerusalem Post*, whose reporter called the proceedings, the "Dershowitz Show." The journalist pointed out that only a few weeks before this press conference, Appel had appeared on television threatening the police and prosecution that they would "pay" for their efforts to convict him. Yet at the Dershowitz press conference, Appel—his performance "well rehearsed" by Dershowitz—humbly said, "I speak with great pain not because of what they did to me, but because it shocks me to think that in this properly run country—this enlightened country, a country with heart, a country that cares about its citizens—that this country could wiretap 72,000 conversations. This is a crisis that is not for me to respond to, but you, the guardians of democracy, must wake up and say, 'Enough.'"

Dershowitz's media circus tactics might have served him well in such show trials as the O.J. Simpson murder trial, but trials in Israel are heard before a panel of professional judges, not juries. The State Attorney and the Justice Ministry refused to be provoked by Dershowitz's wild claims. The Justice Ministry simply released a terse statement saying, "The state prosecution conducts its cases in court and does not intend to be drawn into a media battle, even one as well covered as is the one being conducted by Mr. Appel and his attorneys. The way to address the indictment is in court, and that is the proper place to raise charges regarding evidence. . . . The prosecution

will respond to such complaints if and when they are raised in court.”

Who Is Alan Dershowitz?

Dershowitz represents the worst practitioners of sophistry in the American legal system. His deployment has nothing to do with his cleverness as an attorney, but is a signal that Sharon’s powerful American backers are prepared to act to save his neck. An Israeli political source told *EIR* that the Bush Administration, particularly the neo-conservative cabal loyal to Vice President Dick Cheney, wants Sharon to stay in power.

“They trust Sharon far more than Netanyahu,” the source said, alluding to the fact that Benjamin Netanyahu, who would most likely replace Sharon if he resigns, is too much of an opportunist to be trusted.

Dershowitz’s deployment represents a direct intervention by these forces to get Israel to subvert its own juridical system. This intimidation comes exactly at the time when a significant section, if not the majority, of the Israeli political-security establishment has come to the conclusion that Sharon is leading Israel into political, economic, and strategic disaster. Dershowitz is a key figure in the circles backing Sharon, and the list of his clients says a lot in this regard. They include mega-fraudster Michael Milken, Christian fundi-fraudster Jim Bakker, and other very monied clients. More significant are another set which includes convicted spy for Israel Jonathan Pollard, the fascist late Rabbi Meir Kahane, and former Soviet *refusenik* Nathan Sharansky. The latter, a cabinet minister in Sharon’s government, has become one of Israel’s most right-wing politicians, and maintains very close personal ties with Vice President Cheney, whom he often meets when he visits Washington.

In 1983, Dershowitz won the Anti-Defamation League’s William O. Douglas Award for his “compassionate, eloquent leadership and persistent advocacy in the struggle for civil and human rights.” Dershowitz gave evidence of “compassion” in an op-ed in the March 11, 2002 *Jerusalem Post*, where he presented his own anti-terror strategy for Israel. Going beyond the brutal collective punishment tactics of Sharon’s generals, he proposed that Israel announce a “4- or 5-day” moratorium on retaliatory attacks against Palestinian “terrorist attacks,” in order “to give the Palestinian leadership an opportunity to respond to the new policy.” After that, Israel “will announce precisely what it will do in response to the next act of terrorism. For example, it could announce the first act of terrorism following the moratorium will result in the destruction of a small village which has been used as a base for terrorist operations. The residents would be given 24 hours to leave, and then troops will come in and bulldoze all of the buildings.” Dershowitz called on Israel to publish a list of such targets. He also called for the annexation of a certain amount of Palestinian territory after each attack.

Dershowitz has followed up this op-ed with a book. Entitled *The Case for Israel*, it turns reality upside-down and

defends every brutal action of Sharon’s government against the Palestinians. The book has been thoroughly documented as a plagiarized fraud by Norman Finkelstein, author of *Holocaust Industry: The Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, and *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*.

Labor’s Right Wing Aids Sharon

Israeli politics suffers from the same sort of treachery seen in the United States in the top leadership of the Democratic Party, particularly those in control of the Democratic Leadership Council, which is financed by the notorious financier Michael Steinhardt. This is reflected in Israel by the treacherous role of the right wing of the Israeli Labor Party, which spent two years serving in a national unity government led by Sharon.

Now it seems that circles associated with the Labor right wing are seeking to help bail out Sharon. This is seen in the fact that a new member of Dershowitz’s team is Israeli lawyer Eldad Yaniv, and the public relations for Appel is being handled by Tal Zilberstein. Both worked for former Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and were instrumental in aiding Barak in his effort to sabotage the Camp David talks during the Clinton Administration. It should be noted that since Camp David, Barak has been claiming that he “unmasked” the “true face” of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. Barak has constantly attacked Arafat ever since, and most recently attacked the Geneva Accord peace initiative.

Zilberstein was the campaign advisor for Barak and was the Israeli partner of the Democratic Party-linked public relations firm of James Carville, Robert Shrum, and Stanley Greenberg. He was also head of various non-profit organizations which were alleged to have illegally funnelled money into the Barak campaign from the United States. This was never criminally investigated, nor was it ever revealed who in the United States actually gave the donations to the Barak campaign.

Yaniv was also the lawyer for Labor Party member Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, who was minister of defense in Sharon’s first government and thus shares full complicity in Sharon’s crimes. Yaniv represented Ben-Eliezer in a legal case against Avraham Burg over Burg’s election as Labor Party chairman two years ago. Burg, who is pro-peace and one of the key initiators of the Geneva Accord, lost that case.

Another lawyer for Appel is Moshe Yisrael, who had been the lawyer for Russian mafia kingpin Zvi Ben-Ari, a.k.a. Gregory Lerner. *EIR* has documented how Ben-Ari was part of the dirty-money apparatus financing the Likud (“Are ‘Mega’ Bucks Helping Sharon Steal Israeli Elections?” *EIR*, Jan. 31, 2003). Yisrael represented Ben-Ari in a plea bargain over indictments for fraud and attempted bribery.

Among those Ben-Ari is accused of trying to bribe were Natan Sharansky and Shimon Peres, until 2002 Sharon’s Foreign Minister and Labor Party coalition partner. The plea bargain prevented the case from going to court and prevented much embarrassing information from coming out.