

Will Brave Israeli Leaders Emerge To Challenge Sharon's Fascism?

by Dean Andromidas

The Oct. 30 collapse of the government of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and the prospect of new elections, puts Israel at a crossroads. Either Israel allows Sharon to usher in a new Middle East war and the destruction of the state of Israel, or leaders will emerge who are courageous enough to reopen the way toward peace with the Palestinians. The "national unity" coalition, led by Sharon's Likud Party, fell when the Labor Party ministers, led by Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, resigned.

The Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* in its lead editorial on Nov. 6 welcomed the demise of Sharon's "terrible government," summing up his manifest policy failures: "The war he declared against the Palestinian Authority exacted the largest blood price that Israel has paid since the Lebanon War. Its relations with its neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, hit a new nadir. His evasion of every initiative for resuming diplomatic activity and the continued expansion of the settlements eroded Israel's status in Europe. The security deterioration and the diplomatic standstill raised the unemployment rate, reduced economic activity, impaired growth, and also recently effected the country's international credit rating." The outgoing "national unity" coalition "will be remembered as one of the worst governments in Israel's history," *Ha'aretz* concluded.

Sharon continues to hold full powers for the next 90 days, until new elections are held at the end of January or beginning of February. He is free to do anything the Bush Administration asks of him, or anything he thinks he can get away with. Israeli security sources point to the fact that Sharon and his generals still want to expand their operations against the Palestinians, including a full-scale invasion of the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, if the United States launches a war against Iraq, Sharon would be in a better position politically to carry out his "final solution": the expulsion of the Palestinians and their "transfer" across the Jordan River.

The Interim Government

Sharon has reorganized his "caretaker" government in order to facilitate such a project. He has named former military Chief of Staff Gen. Shaul Mofaz as Defense Minister, replacing the Labor Party's Binyamin Ben-Eliezer. Mofaz, who left the military less than four months ago, was one of the most hard-line officers, and had called for declaring the Palestinian Authority an "enemy entity" and for the expulsion or elimination of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Ara-



Benjamin Netanyahu, the Foreign Minister in Ariel Sharon's interim government, is challenging Sharon for the leadership of the Likud Party.

fat. Scotland Yard is currently investigating Mofaz for war crimes against Palestinian civilians, pursuant to a complaint filed before a British court under the Geneva Conventions. Behind Mofaz, is his hand-picked successor, Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, who considers Palestinians a "cancer."

Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been named Foreign Minister, even though he is Sharon's political rival in the upcoming race for the leadership of the Likud Party. Netanyahu could serve Sharon well, because of the tremendous backing he enjoys among American Christian Zionists and the war party in the Bush Administration.

In his first interview since becoming Foreign Minister, Netanyahu told the *Jerusalem Post* (Nov. 7), "The Palestinians don't have the right to determine their own leadership." After all, he added, doesn't "America have the right to intervene in the leadership of the Iraqi people?" He pointed to his friendship with President George Bush and his advisers, whom he said he has known "for the last 20 years." Netanyahu took some credit for the U.S. administration's hard-line policies: "This administration does not believe in the power of paper contracts with dictators. It believes in deterrence and the use of power to roll back aggression if deterrence fails. This is exactly what I have been arguing for many years, regarding our relations with our neighbors. So there is an



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. His government, described by an Israeli newspaper as "one of the worst governments in Israel's history," collapsed in October; he is now gathering forces for a new regime, even worse than the last one.

intellectual and personal conviviality here that is very natural and obvious to me. I know the U.S. and I know Washington and I know this administration."

Sharon Needs a New War

Sharon's best option for staying in power is a new war. If the United States attacks Iraq prior to the Israeli election date, the elections will be postponed until the crisis ends—that is, if it ends. For this reason, there is talk of holding elections within 30 days, in an attempt to ensure Sharon's leadership of the Likud Party, and then to form a new national unity government with the Labor Party. The object would be to have an emergency government in place, for the opening of U.S. hostilities against Iraq.

Time is working against Sharon. The collapse of the economy and the social suffering it is causing—which caused the collapse of the previous coalition government—will be the major issue in the election campaign. Therefore, Sharon desperately needs a war to rally the electorate. As a form of blackmail, Sharon is asking his "good friend" President George Bush for \$10 billion in loan guarantees, to ensure that Sharon doesn't launch World War III by nuking Iraq. With such a promise, he hopes to stave off a collapse of Israel sovereign credit rating, and the collapse of the economy as a whole.

The polls point to a victory for the right, including 33 Knesset (Parliament) seats for the Likud, which, along with the other right-wing parties, could form a coalition of 67 mandates out of the 120-seat Knesset. If this comes to pass, Israel will become an openly fascist state, and march toward a war that will lead to its own destruction. All the other factions that would support a Likud government are as bad as Sharon, if not worse.

Among these parties are the National Religious Party, a

religious-messianic Zionist party currently under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Effie Eitam (ret.), who is called a fascist even by his own colleagues, and sees himself as Israel's budding Benito Mussolini. As Infrastructure Minister in Sharon's government, he has been pouring millions of shekels into the settlements. Other parties include the Shas, the populist party of the ultra-Orthodox sects, which is now giving unprecedented support to the settlements. Another group is National Union-Yisreal Beitenu, which includes the Moledet party, which openly supports Palestinian "transfer." These factions already control over one-third of the Knesset, despite the fact that in any European country they would be considered ethnocentric extremists, fascists, or even neo-Nazis.

Choice Before the Labor Party

For the Labor Party, these elections will be a moment of truth. Either a leadership emerges that can take up the legacy of assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's fight for peace, or Labor will continue a policy that is leading not only to its own destruction as a political force, but the destruction of Israel as a nation.

Despite the fact that all the polls show that Sharon and his cronies will be leading the next government, the crisis—moral, economic, and political—is so deep that, given the proper leadership, an upset is possible. This was suggested by political commentator Gideon Samet in *Ha'aretz* on Nov. 6. Samet pointed to the fact that upsets occur "because of underground, hidden, but powerful forces in a confused and disappointed society." Samet added that despite the veering to the right, "the majority of Israelis are consistently opposed to the frenzies of the right." Labor's leadership must decide whether "to be a broken ratings machine that constantly checks to see what the polls say, or a courageous group led by someone who can tell the people (and particularly himself), like Rabin, 'I will navigate' without fearing the results." He wrote that Labor has to "tell the truth to the street. . . . Israel can only change with a new national effort to reach an agreement with the Palestinians." As "Rabin's legacy" should show, "it is the national necessity—political, economic, and social—for a daring move toward solving the conflict." He wrote that Labor Party Chairman Ben-Eliezer must be replaced in the party elections, so as to prevent the departure of "Labor's best and brightest."



Binyamin Ben-Eliezer

The Labor Party is split between those demanding a return to pro-peace policies, and those who spent the last 20 months serving as Sharon's partner to war crimes in the national unity government. The latter included Shimon Peres, as well as Ben-Eliezer, who faces a tough challenge from party rivals,

Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzna and Knesset member Haim Ramon. Mitzna, a former Army officer who wants to renew the policies of Rabin, appears to be the leader in the polls. If he wins in the Nov. 19 party primaries, it will be a political earthquake. Mitzna's supporters hope that he could lead the party to victory, or at least present a viable opposition.

Speaking at a meeting of his Sharhar movement following the fall of Sharon's government, Labor Party member and architect of the Oslo peace accords, Yossi Beilin, presented an optimistic assessment. He said that if Ben-Eliezer is replaced by Mitzna or Ramon, Labor should establish a joint electoral slate with the pro-peace Meretz party. Such an alliance, Beilin believes, could receive the most Knesset seats in the next elections, and be invited to form a government.

Beilin recalled that in 1991, Labor was trailing behind Likud by 20 points in the polls, while the debate within the Labor Party was over who would be a better opposition leader, Yitzhak Rabin or Shimon Peres. When the elections came around, Labor won, Rabin became Prime Minister, and Israel entered a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Beilin predicted that, once stripped of the camouflage provided by the Labor ministers, the true nature of the Sharon government will become more evident to all, and support for the right is likely to decline, as it did in 1992.

'A Lost Country Without a Soul'

What are the "hidden, but powerful forces" which have to be mobilized, for such a shift to occur? These are not reflected in polls or, unfortunately, in the statements of politicians, but come to the fore at discussions in cafés, living rooms—and at funerals.

The funeral of Israeli soldier Tamir Masad, who died in a recent suicide bombing, provided an insight into these "powerful forces." *Ha'aretz* on Nov. 1 told how Masad was from the kibbutz movement, which is a very important political component of the Labor Party, as well as the bedrock upon which the state of Israel was built. Although the 41-year-old reservist was able to kill the Palestinian suicide bomber, he himself was killed, when another soldier shot at the bomber, only to hit the explosives belt and ignite its deadly charge. As is often the case, Masad, who leaves behind a wife and three children, was against the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The eulogy was delivered by Gavri Bargil, the secretary of the kibbutz movement. At the end of his eulogy he departed from the tradition that forbids political statements at such events, and declared: "Go in peace Tamir. Go in peace from a lost country without a soul, a country that consumes its

inhabitants and long ago lost its direction and its way."

Masad's kibbutz is filled with veterans of all of Israel's wars, and his father was a retired officer. One of his father's old comrades said: "This isn't the state for which we fought. Look around at what's happening and you'll see a state that exists only for the ultra-Orthodox and the Jewish settlers in the territories. There aren't any more just struggles, there aren't just wars—there's only an effort to keep giving to two sectors who have destroyed Israeli society. I don't understand any government that's prepared to deal with a handful of settlers. Tamir died for love of the land, because that's the way he was educated. But this isn't the state he dreamt of."

Another old comrade, Yaakov Levitan, said, "I'm asking what the point of this war is. There's no point to this state the way it exists now. Where is 'Arik' Sharon leading us? This whole war has no direction. Our struggle with the Palestinians needs a diplomatic solution, and therefore all of Sharon's method of force won't help. It will just mean more people dead."

Masad's own comrades spoke of the war in Lebanon in 1982, where one of their number, Raz Gutterman, was killed. At that time, Gutterman's father wrote an open letter to the architects of that war, especially Sharon. It is a letter whose truth cries out even now, 20 years later: "This is how you have murdered Raz," the father wrote. "This is how you have put an end to a chain of Jewish generations, ancient and ancient in suffering, that no foe has succeeded in cutting down before you. How many scores of years would it have taken for the terrorists to have murdered and injured as many Israeli Defense Forces soldiers as this cursed war has? How much bereavement and grief have you succeeded in sowing? . . . May you be relentlessly pursued by my abysmal grief, the grief of a father in Israel whose world has crashed around him and taken away his reason for living. Asleep and awake, the mark of Cain will be on your brow eternally."

Remembering Rabin

On the evening of Nov. 2, one hundred thousand Israelis gathered in Rabin Square, in Tel Aviv, to commemorate the seventh anniversary of Rabin's assassination. The huge number is a clear statement, that a renewal of Rabin's policies would have great support.

In *Ha'aretz* on Nov. 4, Moshe Negbi, a legal commentator and senior lecturer at Hebrew University, reminded his readers that on May 29, 1992, over a year before the Oslo Accords, the *Davar* daily published an evaluation of the situation by a "senior Labor member," who said, "Any Israeli leader who signs an agreement with the Palestinians while his government rests on Arab votes will end up like Sadat, Allah have mercy on his soul."

Negbi wrote that Rabin did not give in to this threat, even when radical rabbis proclaimed religious edicts calling for his murder. "The rabbis who gave Yigal Amir [the murderer of Rabin] 'backing' with their rulings are not 'merely' inciters and rebellion-mongers; they are murderers in the full sense



Amram Mitzna

of the word. Every first-year law student learns that one who incites or solicits another to commit a crime, which is then committed, is a full accomplice—legally and morally—to the crime. In other words, those rabbis are murderers”—yet they are still free.

Negbi warned, “A society and state in which those responsible for the murder of a Prime Minister are walking free, and the authorities are afraid of them, instead of the other way round—is beyond redemption.”

The question is, can a pro-peace candidate, not only win but survive to carry out his policy? It is obvious that if there is to be peace in Israel and the Middle East, it is necessary to have the support of the Presidency of the United States. But that power is being channelled in another direction.

Sharon’s Government

A Rogues’ Gallery of Fascist War Criminals

by Scott Thompson

On Oct. 28, the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* published an extraordinary commentary by Knesset Member and Meretz party head Yossi Sarid, “Before Jewish Fascism Takes Over.” It warned that the Ariel Sharon-led radical right wing in Israel was evolving into a full-blown fascist movement. Drawing a parallel between the Sharonists in Israel today, and the Jewish Zealots who burned Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Commonwealth during the First Century A.D., Sarid all but urged armed resistance to the Jewish fascists, who were at that moment creating a caretaker government under Prime Minister Sharon, following the collapse of Sharon’s “national unity” government, and pending the results of new elections in early 2003 (see accompanying article). “If today’s zealots continue on the path of their ancestors,” Sarid wrote, “I’m not sure the opposing camp will continue the tradition of surrender and panic exhibited by the moderates of the Second Commonwealth. We have the right of self-defense from the likes of [new Infrastructure Minister] Effi Eitam, his rabbis and pupils, before they bring down the horrors upon us, before Jewish fascism runs over us all.”

The Sharon-Netanyahu interim government is a nest of fascist evil, which could easily bring the Mideast to war before new elections occur. The validity of Sarid’s warnings was underlined when newly appointed Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz was warned not to travel through Great Britain en route home to Israel, to avoid being arrested, and sent to The Hague for war crimes prosecution before the International Criminal Court. *Ha’aretz* reported on Oct. 31 that British lawyer Imran

Khan had filed a 17-page dossier with prosecutors, demanding Mofaz’s arrest for violating the Geneva Convention, by ordering targeted assassinations, wanton property destruction, and murders of innocent women and children.

As you will see in the profiles below, every single member of the interim Sharon regime is a hardened war criminal, who could and should be put on trial before an appropriately convened “Nuremberg II” tribunal. Both Sharon and his interim Foreign Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, are longstanding criminals, whose policy is the Nazi-modelled “ethnic cleansing” of all Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and their mass transfer across the Jordan River. Their battle cry is “Jordan is Palestine,” and they have devised a series of murderous counterinsurgency programs to exterminate the legitimate Palestinian leadership.

The Fascist Seven

Maj. Gen. Meir Dagan

(ret.) (a.k.a. “Dracula” and “Hitler”). On Sept. 9, 2002, Sharon named Dagan to head the Mossad, Israel’s foreign intelligence service, suggesting that Sharon was contemplating a revival of “Operation Caesarea,” an assassination program that dates back to the 1970s. Dagan, who had been a Sharon protégé in the military, demonstrated his loyalty by defying orders from then-Prime Minister and Defense Minister Menachem Begin, being the first to drive his tank into Beirut, Lebanon, although Begin had issued explicit orders for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to stop at the Litani River. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Dagan ran “Operation Caesarea,” whereby, in Gaza and Lebanon, his 40-man hit squad of IDF commandos would frequently disguise themselves as Palestinians and assassinate Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders. (Often, the targets of these assassinations were moderate Palestinians, who were more open to peace talks.) When Sharon was Defense Minister, and again since he became Prime Minister in March 2001, these assassination squads have been given a free hand, with over 60 known assassinations during his Prime Ministership alone.

But in early 1994, Dagan—as the newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* exposed on Oct. 24, 1997—threatened then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with insubordination in a closed-door meeting of IDF generals with Rabin. “Don’t take it for granted that soldiers will obey orders to withdraw from the [occupied] territories,” Dagan warned.

Dagan succeeded “Dirty Rafi” Eytan as head of “Terror Against Terror,” and was terrorism adviser to Prime Ministers Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, and Sharon. It was Dagan and Sharon who were responsible for bringing Hamas’ spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, back to Gaza from his impris-



Meir Dagan