

# SHAHIDA PROFILE #8:

## EASY AND THE BULLDOZER

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The First Lebanon War was, perhaps, the most hopeless and dim-witted of Israel's wars, a cocktail of arrogance, ignorance and complete lack of understanding of the opponent. Ariel Sharon intended – as he told me in advance – to (a) destroy the PLO, (b) cause the Palestinian refugees to flee from Lebanon to Jordan, (c) drive the Syrians out of Lebanon, and (d) turn Lebanon into an Israeli protectorate. The results: (a) Arafat went to Tunis, and later, as the result of the First Intifada, returned to Palestine in triumph, (b) the Palestinian refugees remained in Lebanon, in spite of the Sabra and Shatila massacre that was intended to panic them into fleeing, (c) the Syrians remained in Lebanon for another twenty years, and (d) the Shiites, who had been downtrodden and beholden to Israel, became a powerful force in Lebanon and Israel's most determined foe.

Uri Avnery, *Gush Shalom* column 2008

Why do I see a peacock, this aging peacock, tottering with his ivory stick, armed with two revolvers, puffed up with pride, drunk with scorn, and fascinated with a crown of spittle?

Why do I see this aging peacock, thief of colored feathers, bribing me with an inhibited smile while planting a dagger in my spine?

...

Why do I see this aging peacock adorned with the shoe of a slaughtered horse, taking it for honor?

Why do I see this aging peacock armed with two revolvers: one for killing me and one for his own greedy butt?

Mahmoud Darwish, *Memory for Forgetfulness*

In 1928 one man was born Ariel Scheinermann in Kfar Malal, the son of Lithuanian immigrants to the British Mandate of Palestine. He later took the Hebrew name Sharon. Intimates called him "Arik" for short. He was tall, broad, and frankly fat, in that imposing manner associated with captains of industry. Photos throughout his life display a direct, authoritative stare; he was unquestionably a person few dared to disagree with, let alone oppose.

In 1929 another man was born Mohammed Abdel Rahman Abdel Raouf Arafat al-Qudwa al-Husseini, to Palestinian parents, although the location is variously disputed as Cairo, Gaza, or Jerusalem. As an adult he adopted Abu Ammar as his *nom de guerre*, as well as the nickname Yassir ("easy-going"), to be known internationally as Yassir Arafat. He was a bit short, a bit homely, but notable for a persuasive presence which in practice became commanding. Most photos show him smiling affably, but fail to capture the dominating factor.

Although to my knowledge they only met face to face once, in 1998, their entire lives intertwined to a frightening degree. In almost-exact parallel, each became a guerrilla fighter as a very young man; each became a politicized military leader, each became the unequivocal international symbol of his respective political goal, and each became a head of state. For half a century, without a pause, their personalities and decisions entered directly into local and international

policy, into climactic events, and into the international news media. Everything one did affected the other and led to a response. Born six months apart into one irreconcilable clash of interests, they died (or rather, Arafat died and Sharon suffered a stroke which reduced him to a vegetative state) almost as simultaneously, fourteen months apart, embroiled in that same clash.

In personality, they were nothing alike, as the nicknames I've chosen for the Profile title indicate. Arafat – weirdly, for someone so identified with a single national aim – was a chameleon, telling different people what they needed or wanted to know, shifting details or policies apparently at a whim, at least in the view of those who'd relied on one such promise. Perhaps this only made sense in terms of keeping a political movement alive among inconstant sponsors, representing geographically scattered people, and composed of intensely committed but divergent factions. By contrast, Sharon was indeed the Bulldozer, a militarist nationalist to the core, who never saw a problem that wasn't a nail to be hammered flat, and whose willingness to kill seemed to some observers an end in itself. Perhaps this only made sense given the core goals of political Zionism, or at least, Sharon himself considered this to be the case and that more liberalized or humanist interpretations were a mask worn by and for the squeamish.

What they shared was patience, to a degree that seems incompatible with the level of passion they held for their causes. It was manifested most in their willingness at different times to exert diplomacy and international negotiation toward their ends, although not with one another. That, and the basic understanding that they lived at war, and nothing else *but* war.

Each was a master of unconstructed power, based on himself as an individual, with a style best described as controlled chaos. Arafat was beyond doubt the single international face of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the political representative of Palestinian interests. But he practiced personal, even idiosyncratic control over information and authority at all times. Similarly, Sharon held Israeli military office and cabinet appointments throughout his life, including the Prime Ministership. But in those positions, and even as a military officer or as a minister without portfolio, he was notorious for setting and carrying out policies single-handed.

Strangely, in a conflict so rich in religious detail, both were merely observant in religion without invoking its content as a political tool or goal. In fact, their opposing goals were both secular and ethnic, and stated quite frankly: Sharon, to secure total authority for the European-derived community, through expulsion or extermination; Arafat's, to eliminate any such authority over the native population, through war or diplomacy or both. Both were willing to ally with and even to exploit those who did employ religious rhetoric, most famously Menachim Begin in Sharon's case, but you can search hard for any such talk or goal directly from Sharon and Arafat, and not find any.

	<b>International</b>	<b>Israel-Palestine</b>	<b>Arafat</b>	<b>Sharon</b>
1915	1915 Sykes-Picot Agreement 1917 Arab Revolt	1917 Balfour Declaration		
1920		1923 British Mandate for Palestine established		
1925			Born August 1929	Born February 1928
1930				
1935		1936-1939 Arab Revolt		1938 joins Hassadeh
1940				1942 joins Gada, then the Haganah
1945	1945 End of WWII	1945-47 Zionist Revolt		

		1947 Brit. Mandate dissolved 1947-49 Arab Wars 1948 Al-Naqba, State of Israel recognized		
1950		1955 Gaza shootings	1952 President of Union of Palestinian Students in Cairo	1948 IDF Commander 1952 Unit 101 1953 Qibya massacre
1955	1956 Suez War		1957 move to Kuwait 1959 Fatah founded	1956 Mitla incident
1960			1962 move to Syria	
1965	1967 Six Day War, then War of Attrition 1968 Battle of Karameh	1964 PLO founded 1967 Fatah joins PLO 1968 Rogers Plan		1969 IDF head of Southern Command
1970	1970 Black September 1972 Munich Massacre by BSO 1973 Yom Kippur War	1973 Geneva Conference 1973 PLO disbands BSO 1974 PNC first negotiations with Israel 1974 PLO joins Arab League	1969 Chairman of the PLO 1970 move to Tripoli and later Beirut 1974 UN “gun and olive branch” address	1971 Pacification of Gaza 1973 Helps found Likud 1973 Elected to Knesset, resigns 1974 1974 Relieved of military duty
1975	1975 Lebanese Civil War 1978 IDF invades Lebanon	1977 American-Soviet communiqué		1977 founds Shlomtzion; soon merges with Likud
1980	1982 IDF invades Lebanon Siege of Beirut	<b>1982 Sabra-Chatila massacre</b>	1982 move to Tunis	1981 Defense Minister 1983 Kahan Commission; forfeits Defense Ministry
1985	1985 Achille Lauro hijacking by PLF	1985 Operation Wooden Leg 1987-1989 First Intifada 1987 Hamas founded 1988 Abu Jihad killed 1988 Declaration of State of Palestine & acknowledgment of Israel		Minister without Portfolio
1990	1990 Ta'if Agreement 1991 First Gulf War	1990 PLF attack Tel Aviv 1991 Abu Iyyad killed 1991 Madrid Peace Conference 1993 Oslo Accords	1994 move to Gaza City 1994 Nobel Peace Prize, with Peres and Rabin	
1995	1996 Operation Grapes of Wrath	1995 Rabin assassinated		1996 Minister for Infrastructure 1999 Foreign Minister
2000		2000 Camp David / Taba 2000 Temple Mount incident 2000-2004 Second Intifada 2003 Road Map for Peace 2004 Bush-Sharon letter	Dies November 2004	2000 Head of Likud 2001 Prime Minister
2005	2006 IDF attack on Lebanon	2005 Settlement withdrawal from Gaza		2005 founds Kadima Stroke January 2006
2010		2008-09 Operation Cast Lead		

A couple of political clarifications of the above items reveal how thoroughly savvy each could be, underneath or hidden within the stereotyped features of their personalities.

The PLO had been founded in 1964 primarily through the Egyptian president, Gamel Abdel Nasser, to be led by Ahmed Shukeiri and to bleed off the potential dangers of a well-organized, independent national Palestinian movement, exactly as observed in such groups as Fatah. Only after Nasser's defeat in 1967 did Arafat's organization Fatah join the PLO and win Arafat its chairmanship in 1969 – thus neatly co-opting the organization designed to neuter it, and thereby acquiring its gloss of pan-Arabism and Third Way ideology that gave it curbside appeal throughout many nations.

Sharon's military record included more than one extreme incident, including the brutality of the special forces Unit 101 he founded and commanded. At one point even his own soldiers balked at his orders to kill noncombatants. After the Unit's actions in the village of Qibya in the West Bank in 1953, killing many villagers along with Arab Legion fighters, the unit was supposed to be disbanded – but instead, it was merged with another, and Sharon was given command over the new whole. Other incidents in the Suez Crisis and the Yom Kippur War demonstrated that he preferred to carry out his own military policy from the field, leading to the end of his military career. Although often scolded, he always just evaded indictment or dismissal.

All of this fed into the beginning of his political career, first as a founder of Likud, a hard-line militarist coalition of existing parties that would solidify into a major party of its own. When he was denied leadership of Likud and failed to find a home in any of the opposition parties, he founded the splinter party Shlomtzion, then leveraged the Knesset seats won by Shlomtzion into a re-merger with Likud to become a cabinet minister in Begin's new government. Somehow, although no one officially wanted him, he ended up being very nearly in charge.

Note as well the “quiet period” of the mid-1980s: each one had lost his base after 1983 and had to rebuild it in a new context, and each one capitalized upon the First Intifada in such a way as to eclipse it.

### **In Beirut**

Neither was Lebanese, but if I were artistically inclined and drew their lives as lines or some kind of moving sculpture in the air, those trajectories would be pulled to Lebanon and especially to Beirut, as if it were a gravity well, there to circle faster and faster, intertwining in ever-more complex patterns, culminating in atrocity and at least three nations' worth of political upheaval. Arafat proclaimed Beirut to be the Palestinian Stalingrad. Sharon planned for Operations Iron Fist and Iron Brain to destroy the Palestinians as a political force forever. Neither was successful, but what did happen redefined the entire conflict, and to a certain extent, the world.

What was the PLO doing in Beirut? The answer lies several stages back: the defeat of the Egyptian forces in 1967, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the subsequent further expulsion of Palestinians from those territories and Israel proper; and the rapid transformation of the PLO from a Nasserist client into an independent, recognized government-in-exile, as mentioned previously.

All of these events are a bit beyond the scope of this work, but the two most relevant pieces are also the most difficult to understand in the accounts I've found. The first is Black September in 1970, meaning the PLO's attempted *coup d'etat* in Jordan, their defeat there, and the

displacement (expulsion? retreat?) of the PLO leadership and military forces to Lebanon. In other words, not only did Lebanon receive its third wave of Palestinian refugees, but it also became the geographic home of a newly-defined and refined, nationalistic paramilitary force.

The second piece concerns the PLO in its dual, arguably contradictory roles as national representative and national liberator, especially since it included several independent groups, of which Fatah was only one. One significant faction retained very strong ties to the new Assad administration in Syria. Another was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by George Habash, also based out of Beirut, and also opposed to patronage by Nasser or any other national entity. The radically communist PFLP was also the primary rival for the leadership of the PLO, and emphatically not committed to the diplomacy track Arafat pursued.

Habash never fully broke with the PLO, but the PFLP frequently produced small breakaway movements such as the PFLP-General Command, the PFLP-Special Operations Group, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and even smaller breakaway groups from these as well as from Fatah. These groups perpetrated many of the famous bombings, airplane hijackings, kidnappings, and assassinations of the next decade. The PFLP remained connected to some of them in a coalition, the Rejectionist Front, as a deliberate counter to Arafat's policies. Therefore the constellation of militant Palestinian activity conducted in or directed from Lebanon was pretty broad, including the pro-Syrian branch, friendly with the new Assad regime there.

One may ask as well what the IDF was doing in Beirut in 1982, or rather, why this Israeli military extension and commitment was so radically elevated from the bombing raids and lesser incursions of the past decade. Israel's political leadership had undergone a radical reconstruction in the 1977 elections, such that the Israeli Labour Party (often just "Labour," formerly Mapai, short for "Workers' Party of Eretz Israel") was out for the first time in the state's history. It had never managed to hold to a coherent governing plan without David Ben-Gurion. Now it was the Likud's turn, verbalizing a potent combination of military might, entitled victimhood, and religious righteousness. Regarding Lebanon, the PLO's relative autonomy there and the deeply-unpopular international actions of the various splinter groups offered the chance to attack it directly, previously not a practical option.

But more subtly, and linked to longer-term interests and plans, the Likud leadership saw its chance to establish a client state. The resurrection of the Kata'ib and the political fortunes of the Gemayel family were a dedicated Israeli project beginning early in the 1970s, according to Yehoshafat Harkabi in *Israel's Fateful Hour*. (On-and-off Maronite-Zionist relations go back to the 1920s.) Following the 1977 peace treaty with Egypt, Begin and his administration cultivated the Kata'ib, including arming and training the Phalange as well as setting up as many pre-invasion agreements with Bashir Gemayel as possible. The idea was to bring to power a client party which would then broker a peace treaty and act effectively as a proxy. Black September had set up these goals, and the invasion, like clockwork. Insofar as American administrations were informed of this plan, it was spun as "pro-Christian" and conciliatory.

Simultaneously, the Likud administration escalated the ongoing operations toward Lebanon, most dramatically at first by invading in 1978 (Operation Litani) and establishing the Southern Liberation Army as a proxy in the South. The IDF withdrew in response to UN Security Council Resolution 425. After that, the Likud administration tried hard to lure the PLO into direct retaliation in order to gain international credit for the next planned invasion. Typical exchanges include shooting down two Syrian helicopters over Beka'a Valley, as they were "off to kill Christians" (if so, so what?) and then conceding they weren't doing that after all; and provoking

ten days of artillery combat across the border, including 300 deaths in an air raid on Beirut. This latter led U.S. ambassador Philip Habib to enforce a vaguely-worded ceasefire, which IDF Chief of Staff Rafi Eitan later admitted stalled out a planned invasion in July of 1981.

If one examines the PLO strictly by that name and in that command hierarchy, then the organization can be said to honor the ceasefire. However, five Palestinian guerrillas from Jordan planted mines in the West Bank, leading the IDF to mobilize for invasion, then to draw down due to popular opposition in Israel and disapproval from the U.S. Then the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factions (another PFLP splinter group) assassinated the Israeli Second Secretary in Paris, and the same happened again. When an IDF officer in Hadaad-land was killed by a landmine the IDF retaliated with an air raid all along coast from Sidon to Beirut, which for some reason was not denounced as breaking the cease-fire. A few weeks later, someone set a bomb in Jerusalem which killed two Jewish children, leading to another air raid reprisal in Lebanon. In this case, the PLO demonstrated its capacity to retaliate by deliberately missing multiple Israeli civilian villages with shells fired over the border.

The official moment for Begin's declaration of war finally came when a hit squad of the Fatah Revolutionary Council attempted to assassinate and wounded the Israeli ambassador to Britain, Schlomo Argov. This may rank as the single least credible *casus belli* in world history, as this organization, led by Abu Nidal and with ties to Iraq, was radically opposed to Fatah and the PLO and had even made attempts upon Arafat's life. It is more likely that this event coincided with a green light, or at least lack of a red light, provided by then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

The first Israeli reprisal was to bomb Sabra and Chatila, beginning an exchange of cross-border PLO artillery vs. IDF air raids. The actual invasion occurred June 6, 1982, at first a reprise of the 1978 invasion, by tank and truck up the coastal highway and by sea to establish a beachhead landing further north. In planning this operation was named "Little Pines" and given the media name "Peace for Galilee." However, as the "Little" implies, a further planned operation called "Big Pines" was ready, and soon, Sharon and compliant commanders put it into action to penetrate to Beirut, quite independently from the rest of the Israeli government including Begin. This was more than mere mission creep: Sharon used the official operation as cover for implementing the one he really wanted.

The PLA fighters made little or no attempt to hold the South, offering only some harassment as they retreated to Beirut. Certain holdout positions such as Beaufort Castle were demolished and rapidly taken. The Syrian positions at the "red line," including the best anti-aircraft defenses the Soviets had to offer, were similarly destroyed – as it turned out later, according to Seymour Hersh in *The Price of Power*, because the Begin administration received full satellite intelligence from the U.S., in an unprecedented degree of generosity from the Reagan administration. The Syrian forces retreated swiftly, to remain only at certain northern and eastern Lebanese positions well out of the range of the IDF investment of Beirut.

That investment was run practically solely by Ariel Sharon as the rest of the Israeli administration scrambled to figure out what its army was doing. It was called Operation Iron Fist, ringing Beirut with IDF positions including its headquarters in East Beirut, tightening the blockade and control of electricity and water, and scaling up the sonic-boom attacks and bombing of the western half of the city to a scarcely-conceivable degree. This prompted Arafat's statement that Beirut would be the "Palestinian Leningrad," which did not in turn prompt much enthusiasm from the Palestinians of the camps. Still, he had a point. The PLA positions in West Beirut including the camps were not giving way and indeed remained intact in the face of the bombing, which was also swiftly garnering criticism abroad, including from the Israeli populace. Those positions were

also deathtraps for ground troops, and neither the IDF leadership nor that of the Phalange were willing to go in hand-to-hand, although each did urge the other to do so.

All of which brings us to the most consequential moment: when Ambassador Habib promised Arafat that if the PLO left Beirut, the refugee camps' inhabitants' safety would be guaranteed by the United States. The intent of the U.S. administration seems to have been first to stop the most brutal fighting between external or at least non-Lebanese actors, and second to provide the opportunity for both Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to declare victory to their constituents and withdraw. Arafat agreed and the PLO fighters were transported to Tunis, in Tunisia.

The planned political wing of the Likud's plan moved swiftly into action, to get Bashir Gemayel elected president, which was supported as well by the U.S. in the name of "stability." He was the single person bidding for the office, so the votes were effectively yes vs. no. The election was notably crooked even for Lebanon, including a considerable record of bribes and some reluctant delegates being located and brought to the process by the scruff of the neck. On August 23, Bashir was elected president to the joy of hard-core Maronites and their allies; this seemed at last to spell full Phalangist victory in the clashes begun back in 1975, and finally with the support of a powerful foreign ally.

There is, however, more than one way to vote. On September 14, Bashir was assassinated by a bomb set in the Kata'ib headquarters in Ashrafiyeh, along with 26 party members. Who did it is anyone's guess.

(Interestingly, Bashir may not have been quite the puppet the Israeli administration desired. He balked at signing the much-hoped-for peace treaty when Begin treated him as a lackey and set conditions such as getting the Syrian forces out of Lebanon entirely. His brother Amin would similarly refuse Syrian direction occasionally.)

Two days later came Operation Iron Brain, as organized, overseen, and directed on the ground by the IDF, as planned in detail by Ariel Sharon. They trucked in over a thousand enraged, drugged-up, and heavily-armed Phalangists, releasing them into the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in 150-man pulses. They then surrounded the camps, lighting flares all night, each night, to light the attackers' way. No one learned of the ensuing massacres for at least two days, as the IDF was also blocking anyone from escaping the camps, which were not walled. For three days the killing continued.

It was not a matter of fighting a battle or even of lining people up and shooting them. None of the victims were armed. They included very few fighting men, if any. Old people, wounded convalescents, and children were shot at will. People were hacked apart with axes, tied with barbed wire, and burned to death for hours. Women were repeatedly raped and shot. Pregnant women were slashed open and their fetuses mutilated. The bodies piled up, either tossed together in the streets or huddled together where people had tried to group up in hiding. Many of them were quickly bulldozed into mass graves at the nearby stadium and elsewhere, which is why the death toll varies by account, or more accurately, by the accumulating addition of data, to a current estimate around three thousand.

The assassination and the massacres changed everything. Arafat's already-dubious triumphant relocation to Tunis now appeared to be cowardly abandonment of the helpless; his role as leader of the Palestinian government-in-exile could not possibly be more revealed as a pipe dream. Sharon's warrior-patriotism now appeared to be sadistic, calculating barbarity, and the IDF's image of "purity of arms" was revealed to be mere propaganda. The Kata'ib's western-friendly,

Christian, presidential image now appeared to be blood-maddened savagery, the very picture of the historical Crusader butchery whose sanitized rhetoric they had adopted. The image of Palestinians as terrorists with knives in their teeth was confronted by the dead faces and dismembered bodies.

### **More subtleties**

Sharon and Arafat also present the most ambiguous and internally contradictory political reputations in modern history. It's not surprising that each was and is demonized by his opposition, with Sharon called the Butcher of Beirut by Palestinians, or the Bulldozer in reference to his military tactics, and with Arafat called the father of terrorism, as well as any stripe of sexual deviant you can think of, by Israelis. But also, Sharon is both revered and vilified by Israelis, and Arafat is both revered and vilified by Palestinians, at different times and for different reasons for each. During the middle 1980s especially, it seemed as if each had reached the limits of his influence and failed, to retire in disgrace – and then reappeared, more powerful than ever. Internationally speaking, each has been condemned as a fiend and praised as a great man of peace, back and forth, bewilderingly.

Who despises these two men and why? Let me count the ways ...

By hard-line militant Palestinians, Arafat was hated for favoring a diplomatic strategy over continued militancy in the early 1970s, even as this strategy was disregarded by Israeli and American analysis as a cover for the actions of splinter groups as the decade continued. This pattern recurred: Arafat doing something negotiatory, losing a certain degree of respect and support from the base, and also being mistrusted by those he sought to negotiate with. It happened again in 1988 when in the Palestinian Declaration of Independence, he acknowledged the existence of Israel and shifted the mandate of the PLO to establishing a neighbor state rather than eliminating the Zionist one; and again in 1993 and especially soon afterwards, regarding the Oslo Accords. But he has his share of detractors from the moderate wing of Palestinian activists as well, especially his advocacy for Saddam Hussein's administration during the First Gulf War in 1991. Was he a popinjay who succeeded or a heroic patriot who failed?

Sharon's negative reputations are even more confusing. He was denounced as a monster by activist Israelis in 1982 and 1983, and after the verdict of the Kahan Commission, removed from the Minister of Defense, although only for "indirect responsibility" (whatever that is), characteristically dodging outright punishment. After his return to political power in the late 1990s, hard-line Orthodox militarists in Israel vilified him for pulling settlements out of Gaza, and mainstream media across Europe and the U.S. hailed him as a peacemaker, yet clearly that action was a precursor to the assault on Gaza by the IDF, arguably one of the harshest military actions against a civilian population on record, making a hash of both reactions. Was he a founding father who brought realism to the vision, or a barely-restrained butcher?

Even their deaths are problematic. Arafat's is characteristically shrouded in confusion and controversy. Was he assassinated? His family and aides as well as Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery insist he was, yet the Israeli government, usually quick to claim its kills, remains silent. A clumsy attempt to claim he died of AIDS fell apart upon scrutiny. As for Sharon, again characteristically, he seems unstoppable. His body is still breathing at the time of this writing, providing a kind of morbid symbol for the way militant, ethnic Zionism still prevails in Israel, if your mind turns that way, and as symbolized in a disturbing life-size simulacrum sculpture by Noam Braslavsky. And have their deaths, or the equivalent, brought the beginning to an end to

the conflict, or are their replacements best understood as stunted perpetrators of the conflict, repeating caricatures and fragments of the course Sharon and Arafat had created between them?

And finally, without both of them, there would be no Hezbollah. The PLO's entry into Beirut had energized the nation's Shi'a in two contrasting ways: opportunity for dissent via *fedayeen* militancy, and occasion for resentment toward the Palestinian excesses toward the Lebanese. The IDF's assaults on the south, in conjunction with those of the SLA, provoked the populace and provided an enemy. These were the foundation. Syrian and Iranian training and funding only provided the means.

## References

Arafat's chameleon-like qualities are endlessly baffling to biographers, as many of their titles indicate: Janet Wallach, *Arafat: In the Eyes of the Beholder*; Andrew Gowers and Tony Walker, *Behind the Myth*; Alan Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker?*; Said K. Aburish, *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator*; and Danny Rubenstein and Dan Leon, *The Mystery of Arafat*. It's essential to keep the time of writing in mind when reading any of these. See also Helena Cobban, *The Palestine Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics*; Efraim Karsh, *Arafat's War*, for the post-2000 hard-line Israeli position; Barry M. Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*; and especially the relevant chapters in Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, which instead of wrestling with psychology places Arafat's career into the larger context of Palestinian representation throughout the twentieth century.

The lampoon from *Memory for Forgetfulness* which I chose to open this profile does not explicitly name Arafat as its target; that is my own interpretation as a reader.

Many writers have claimed that the various rivals to and splinter groups from Fatah or the PLO were false fronts created by Arafat to carry out terrorism as a shadow policy while he publicly pretended to be the peacemaker. This simplification is sometimes flatly inaccurate, especially regarding the PFLP. However, it is widely-held and persistent and has been historically significant, especially in Begin's public *casus belli* for the 1982 invasion ("They're all PLO!" he exclaimed). The most controversial example is the tiny Black September Organization which carried out the Munich Massacre in 1974, with multiple details on both sides of the issue; the simplified front-for-PLO interpretation is found in George Jonas, *Vengeance*, and in the film version, *Munich*.

Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars 1949-1956*, unflinchingly describes and documents the actions of Unit 101 and Sharon himself in Qibya. Uzi Benzimann, *Sharon: An Israeli Caesar*, addresses the same period and convincingly documents a portrait that can only be described as a high-functioning homicidal maniac. Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel*, includes an anonymous interview in the late 1970s with a rancher who was later revealed to be Sharon; he is quite explicit in his intent to expel or exterminate the Palestinian presence from the entirety of Eretz Israel, citing European settlers and the Native Americans as his model. Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon War*, dissects Sharon's co-opting of the levers of government in order to run the 1982 invasion practically single-handed and presents a convincing case that he planned to lay siege to Beirut and eradicate the PLO from the start. It's grim reading in the post-9/11 context of Dick Cheney's vice-presidency, especially considering that Sharon and Cheney were close confidantes. John Boykin, *Cursed is the Peacemaker*, describes how Sharon actively sabotaged U.S. mediation, as well as using it as cover for violent escalation even against Begin and the other members of the Israeli administration. Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: The Real Legacy of Ariel*

*Sharon*, presents the case that Sharon's Prime Ministership was no less destructive to Palestinian interests than his military career, contrary to media analysis during that time.

More standard biographical work, most of it adulatory, may be found in Uri Dan, *Ariel Sharon: An Intimate Portrait*; Ariel Sharon, with David Chanoff, *Warrior: The Autobiography of Ariel Sharon*, in which he dismisses even the hint of responsibility for the Sabra-Chatila massacre; Nir Hefez and Gadi Bloom, *Ariel Sharon: A Life*; and Freddy Eytan, *Ariel Sharon: A Life in Times of Turmoil*.

Menachem Begin resigned from his office in August-September of 1983 and lived effectively in seclusion until his death in 1992. He is also the subject of multiple biographies and political analyses.

The assassination of Bashir Gemayel was probably the most game-changing moment of the civil war, as it left Kata'ib, U.S., and Israeli policies high and dry. It has been dramatized and analyzed repeatedly from multiple viewpoints and with multiple agendas. Mayn Katz, *Song of Spies*, asserts that the assassin was Habib Shartouni of the Syrian Socialist National Party, but that particular work is an egregious and obvious Aman propaganda job posing as a tell-all novel, and the author is admittedly pseudonymous. No journalist or historian supports this claim, not even the most pro-Israeli.

The Sabra and Chatila massacre, as well as the later and terrible events at the Bourj al-Brajneh camp, are rightly placed as one of the most concentrated and cold-blooded atrocities in modern history, and have been reviewed in multiple investigations and accounts. Robert Fisk's description of entering the camps in *Pity the Nation* is beyond my power to summarize and Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, presents the author's horror and moral recoil; this book is representative of Friedman's earlier career, much different from his later works as summarized by Belén Fernández in *The Imperial Messenger*. Dr. Swee Ai Chang, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (yes, the same title) is pure Witness literature, as one of the few surgeons directly involved in coping with the massacre; see also Pauline Cutting, *Children of the Siege*, for the events at Bourj al-Brajneh. Selim Nassib, *Beirut: Frontline Story*, presents a photojournalist account of every nuance of the politics on the ground as well as images that no one should rightly see, but also that, having seen them, no one should rightly forget. Of the event's depictions in literature, Rawi Hage, *DeNiro's Game*, is one of the few told from the viewpoint of a young Maronite. The recent film *Waltzing with Bashir* concerns Israeli complicity in the events.