

alive, all trace of him has been lost. He has been reported to be held in Lebanon, by the Hizbullah, or in Iran. Campaigns on his behalf are regularly organized in Israel and Israel's intelligence services have been assigned the mission of finding Arad's place of detention. The kidnapping of Mustafa Dirani, one of the leaders of the AMAL Movement, by an Israeli command on 21 May 1994, aimed at finding out what happened to the Israeli pilot. Additionally, secret emissaries have often attempted to obtain information from the Iranian authorities about the missing airman.

SEE ALSO AMAL; Hizbullah; South Lebanon.

ARAFAT, YASIR (1929–2004): Chairman of al-Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and president of the Palestinian Authority. Yasir Arafat was born on 24 August 1929 in Jerusalem, Cairo, or the Gaza Strip, depending on which biography is consulted. (Arafat's full given name is Muhammad Abd al-Ra'uf al-Arafat al-Qudwa; "Yasir" is a childhood nickname. He is widely known as *al-Ikhityar*, "the Old Man.") His father was a merchant from Gaza and belonged to the Qudwa family, a branch of the Hussayni clan. Bereft of his mother when he was four years old, Arafat was raised in Jerusalem by his maternal uncle, Salim Abu Sa'id. Six years later he returned to Cairo to live with his father, who had married an Egyptian.

While a student he joined the Union of Palestinian Students. In June 1948, during the first conflict between the forces of the new State of Israel and the Arab armies, he joined the ranks of Palestinian groups in Gaza, where he played a modest role. Back in Egypt after the Arab defeat, he became in 1952 secretary general of the Union of Palestinian Students for Egypt and Gaza. In that context, he became friendly with Khalil al-Wazir, Khalid al-Hasan, and Salah Khalaf. Along with these men, who had close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, Arafat participated in the creation of the newspaper *The Voice of Palestine*. In 1955 he earned a degree in civil engineering from Cairo University, and was inducted into the Egyptian army in 1956 for the duration of the Suez War.

Arafat left Egypt the following year for Kuwait, where he first worked for the Kuwaiti government and later established a construction business, all the while continuing to militate for the Palestinian cause. In December 1959, with al-Wazir, al-Hasan, Khalaf, and Faruq Qaddumi, he founded the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, al-Fatah, whose doctrine called for the liberation of Palestine



YASIR ARAFAT. THE HEAD OF THE PLO SINCE 1969 AND PRESIDENT OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY SINCE 1996, ARAFAT SURVIVED NUMEROUS MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC FAILURES. HE WAS AWARDED A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IN 1995, BUT ISRAELI ATTACKS IN RESPONSE TO THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA MADE HIM ESSENTIALLY A PRISONER IN HIS MUCH-REDUCED COMPOUND IN RAMALLAH. (AP/ Wide World Photos)

as distinct from Arab unity, the ostensible goal of the Arab states. In 1962, as soon as Algeria was independent, Arafat initiated contacts with the leaders of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), who became supporters of al-Fatah. After much internal debate, al-Fatah on 1 January 1965 mounted its first (failed) attack inside Israel, carried out by al-Asifa (Fatah's military arm) led by Arafat under the *nom de guerre* of Abu Ammar ("[Father of] the Builder").

In 1966, with the cooperation of the Syrian government, al-Fatah launched some small-scale guerrilla attacks into Israel from that country, but Arafat was impatient with the restraints put on him by the Syrians, who jailed him at one point. The defeat of the Arab countries in the war of June 1967 led many Palestinians to join the ranks of al-Fatah. The success of the *fida'iyyun* (along with the Jordanian army) in

containing Israeli troops on 21 March 1968 at Karameh (Jordan) made Arafat the uncontested leader of the Palestinian resistance. On 4 February 1969, Arafat was elected president of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In October 1970, he became an undesirable in Jordan after the attempt to take power by the principal factions of the Palestinian resistance and the massacres of the Palestinians by Jordanian forces (Black September).

Arafat established himself in Lebanon, where he continued his struggle against Israel. On 26 October 1974 the Arab League, at its summit in Rabat (Morocco), proclaimed the PLO “the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.” On the following 13 November, invited by the United Nations to speak before the General Assembly, he was acclaimed by the delegates, except for the Israeli representatives, to whom he remarked: “I come carrying an olive branch and the rifle of a fighter for liberty; do not let the branch fall from my hand!” Established in Lebanon for almost fifteen years, the Palestinian resistance would come to constitute a veritable “state within a state,” discomfiting the Lebanese and Syrians as much as the Israelis. On 6 June 1982 the Israeli army launched a vast offensive against the Palestinians in Lebanon (Operation “Peace for Galilee”). After a number of confrontations with the Israelis—as well as with Lebanese militias, the Syrians, and other Palestinian factions—and abandoned on all sides, Arafat left Lebanon for the first time on 30 August 1982.

In March 1983, he presided over the Second Session of the Seventh Summit of Non-aligned Countries, which was held in New Delhi, India. At the meeting he also held discussions with Syrian president Hafiz el-Asad, with whom relations had been cold since Arafat’s departure from Lebanon. After the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982, he returned to Lebanon to stand by his supporters who had remained behind. Weakened militarily, and under powerful international pressure, Arafat agreed to leave Lebanon definitively with the PLO (20 December 1983), and to establish himself in Tunisia. But, in spite of the military defeat he had just suffered and his distance from the Israeli front, Arafat won a diplomatic victory through the approval of his action by the international community. Indeed, even before he left Lebanon, the Congress of the Palestine National Council (PNC), meeting in Algiers in February 1983, reelected him president of the executive committee of the PLO. The fact that elements of the Palestine movement belonged to the Socialist International

(SI) allowed the head of the PLO to broach a new diplomatic offensive, centered on the idea of the creation of a Jordanian-Palestinian federation.

On 1 October 1985, Arafat narrowly escaped death when his headquarters in Tunis was bombed by Israeli planes. In April 1988, while the Intifada persisted in the occupied territories, the assassination of Khalid al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), one of his close collaborators, in charge of operations in the occupied territories, isolated him further from the daily life of the Palestinians “from inside.” On 15 November 1988, at Arafat’s urging, the PNC, meeting in Algiers, issued a Proclamation of the State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital, and elected Arafat its president. This proclamation was, in part, an attempt by Arafat to gain control of the Intifada. The PNC also voted a reform of the PLO charter, renouncing the use of terror and recognizing United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for an international peace conference.

On 13 December 1988, Arafat gave a speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations, convening in Geneva, Switzerland, especially to hear him, in which he confirmed the PLO’s recognition of Israel’s right to exist and declared its renunciation of terrorism. These moves put the PLO in compliance with American conditions for discussions, which Arafat wanted, and the United States was prompted to call for a “substantive dialogue” with the PLO. By the beginning of 1990, opposition in the Palestinian movement between the “technocrats” in Tunis and the Palestinians inside Gaza and the West Bank had reached a boiling point. On 12 August 1990, ten days after Iraq invaded Kuwait—and in spite of the opposition of a majority of the members of al-Fatah and of the executive committee of the PLO—Arafat decided to support Iraq. In just a few days, the PLO and its leader lost the approval of the international community, as well as the financial backing of the Gulf countries. In January 1991, the assassination of his friend Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), in charge of security for al-Fatah, by a member of the Abu Nidal Group, increased this isolation. That October, the Madrid Peace Conference, under the sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, encouraged Arafat to look for a compromise with Israel. Between 21 and 25 March 1992, at the meeting of the Revolutionary Council of al-Fatah in Tunis, Arafat faced severe criticism of his leadership. On 7 April the airplane in which he was traveling crashed in the Libyan desert. Found safe and sound, he was hospitalized in Amman, where he designated a triumvirate composed of Faruq Qaddumi, Khalid

al-Hasan, and Mahmud Abbas to lead the PLO in the interim. Emerging unhurt from this accident, Arafat strengthened his position as uncontested leader of the PLO.

After the Israeli elections of June 1992 in which a Labor government headed by Yitzhak Rabin was returned, Arafat authorized secret talks with the Israelis, which were held in Norway. In February 1993 the formal negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords began; Arafat also kept these secret from most of the PLO leadership. The chief negotiator was Mahmud Abbas. During that spring, finding himself once more severely criticized by his closest collaborators, he was saved from discredit by the intensification of the Intifada in the occupied territories. On 9 September 1993, after months of secret negotiations, Arafat won one of his greatest political victories, recognition of the PLO by Israel, with the signature in Washington, D.C., on 13 September, of an Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles (DOP) on provisional autonomy for the Palestinian territories. On this occasion, Arafat and Rabin exchanged a "historic" televised handshake before the entire world. On 4 May 1994, in Cairo, the two men signed an agreement on the application of Palestinian autonomy. On 1 July, Arafat left Tunis to settle in Gaza, from where he would direct the setting up of the provisional autonomy of the Palestinian territories, guaranteed by the Oslo Accords. That 14 October, together with Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Arafat received the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the spring of 1995, Arafat launched an appeal for national dialogue, in a vain effort to gain the support of all the Palestinian factions for the application of the Oslo Accords. On 20 January 1996, with more than 80 percent of the votes, Arafat was elected president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which would be responsible for administering the partial autonomy of the Palestinian territories. The results of these elections strengthened his position in the context of negotiations with Israel on the final status of the territories. In May 1996, the coming to power in Israel of the leader of Likud, Benjamin Netanyahu, an opponent of the Oslo Accords, led to a stalling of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for a period of several months. On 4 May 1999, in the middle of another Israeli election campaign, Arafat refrained from proclaiming the creation of a Palestinian state, as the Oslo Accords entitled him to do, to avoid encouraging the reelection of the leader of Likud. The failure on the ground of these agreements affected his credibility in the Palestinian population, particularly among the young of al-Fatah.

On 22 March 2000, Arafat welcomed Pope John Paul II, on pilgrimage to Bethlehem. During the course of the spring and the summer, he traveled to Europe and Asia, around the Middle East, and into Africa. In July, under the sponsorship of the United States, he participated in a mini-summit with Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak (at Camp David), a meeting that was in principle aimed at coming to an agreement on the final status of the occupied territories. The conversations were interrupted because of the obstacle constituted by the question of Jerusalem. The following September, Arafat refrained once more from proclaiming the creation of the Palestinian State, this time not to hamper the actions of the leader of the Israeli government, whose political situation was very fragile.

In September 2000 the al-Aqsa Intifada began. In January 2001, as it intensified and as both the Barak government and the Clinton administration were in their last days, Arafat accepted an invitation to travel to Washington for negotiations aimed at restarting the peace process. These also failed. A few weeks later, the coming to power of Ariel Sharon in Israel and the determination of young Palestinians to continue the Intifada once more blocked the situation. On 15 October 2001, a month after the attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States, while the Intifada was continuing in the occupied territories, Arafat went to London, where he talked with British prime minister Tony Blair, who reaffirmed his support for a "viable Palestinian state." Referring to the American strikes in Afghanistan, the president of the Palestinian Authority declared that they were caused by "a war against terror and not by a war against Arabs, Muslims, or Islam." Divided between the opinions he had expressed publicly and his need for Western backing of the Palestinian cause, Arafat lent his support to the United States for its military operation against the Taliban.

At the beginning of December 2001, as the terrorist acts of HAMAS and Islamic Jihad against Israel were intensifying, Arafat was obliged to withdraw into his offices at Ramallah. The Israeli government decided to isolate him from his popular base by launching military attacks against the political structures of the Palestinian Authority as well as the economic infrastructure of the West Bank and Gaza. With the anti-Israel attacks continuing, the United States lent its support to the government of Ariel Sharon, while threatening to close the PLO offices in Washington. Arafat has essentially been a prisoner in his Ramallah compound (much reduced by Israeli attacks) ever since.

In mid-October 2004, Arafat's health, which had been slowly deteriorating for some time, became markedly worse. Increasingly weak with an unknown illness, on 29 October he was allowed to leave his compound in Ramallah for the first time since the Israeli assault in 2002 to seek medical help. Helicoptered by the Jordanian government to a waiting plane sent for him by French president Jacques Chirac, he was taken to a military hospital outside Paris specializing in blood disorders. The cause of his illness remained unknown in early November when he lapsed into a coma.

SEE ALSO Aqsa Intifada, al-; Barak, Ehud; Black September 1970; Fatah, al-; Gaza Strip; HAMAS; Hasan, Khalid al-; Intifada (1987–1993); Khalaf, Salah; Madrid Conference; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Oslo Accords; Palestine Liberation Organization; Palestinian Authority; Qaddumi, Faruq; Sharon, Ariel; Suez Crisis; Wazir, Khalil al-.

ARAMAIC: Northern Semitic language spoken mainly during antiquity. A language close to Hebrew and Phoenician, Aramaic also resembled Arabic. In its beginnings Aramaic was the language of nomadic tribes—referred to in Akkadian texts under the name of Ahlamou as early as the fourteenth century B.C.E.—who lived in Upper Mesopotamia, then in the territories of contemporary Syria and Lebanon. By the tenth century B.C.E., the Aramaeans had started creating small states, Bit-Adini and Damascus among them, which came into conflict with the Israelites and the Assyrians. In the third century C.E. Aramaic divided into two dialects: Eastern, or Syriac; and Western Aramaic, or the language of the Targum. Aramaic was spoken and written up to the seventh century C.E., when the Aramaeans were conquered and deported by the Arabs. According to Biblical tradition, Shem's son Aram is the eponymous ancestor of the Aramaeans.

ARCHAEOLOGY: Since the nineteenth century, Palestinian archeology has been one of the major preoccupations of Jews, anxious to find in recent discoveries evidence to confirm Biblical writings. Jews and Muslims alike expect to find an answer to the question: "Who are the real inheritors of the Land of Palestine?" Ever since the creation of the State of Israel, archaeological discoveries have been thought by some to grant preemptory rights to descendants of the Biblical Hebrews over the Promised Land. Therefore, archaeology, considered a kind of national sport in Israel, has become a priority issue in national



THE SCROLL OF THE RULE. THESE FRAGMENTS—PART OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS—WERE WRITTEN IN ARAMAIC, WHICH SERVED AS A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST (AMONG MANY OTHERS, IT WAS THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS). WITH THE RISE OF ISLAM, IT WAS SUPPLANTED BY ARABIC, THOUGH MODERN FORMS OF ARAMAIC ARE STILL IN USE TODAY. (© *West Semitic Research/Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation/Corbis*)

politics—both on the Israeli and on the Palestinian side—and, therefore, also plays an important role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

SEE ALSO Hebrew.

ARD AL-MUQADDASA, AL-: Arabic term meaning "Holy Land" and used to designate Palestine.

ARENS, MOSHE (1925–): Israeli politician and cabinet minister. Born in Lithuania in 1925, Moshe Arens immigrated to the United States in 1939, then to Israel in 1948. He studied mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and aeronautical engineering at the California Institute of Technology. Arens was a professor of aeronautical engineering at Haifa University from 1959 to 1961, then served as vice president for engineering at Israeli Aircraft Industries from 1962 until 1971. First elected to the Knesset in 1974, he served as chairman of the foreign affairs and security committee from 1977 to 1982 and was considered a hawk regarding Israeli security. Arens served as ambassador to the United States from 1982 to 1983, then returned to Israel to replace Ariel Sharon as defense minister. In the National Unity government (1984–1986) Arens served as minister without portfolio, then from 1988 to 1990 was foreign minister. In 1990 he was again appointed minister of defense, serving until 1992, at