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<http://www.counterpunch.org/sharon.html>

Return of the Terrorist

The Crimes
of Ariel Sharon

Some incorrigible optimists have suggested that only a right-wing extremist of the notoriety of Likud leader Ariel Sharon will have the credentials to broker any sort of lasting settlement with the Palestinians. Maybe so. History is not devoid of such examples. But Sharon?

Sharon's history offers a monochromatic record of moral corruption, with a documented record of war crimes going back to the early 1950s. He was born in 1928 and as a young man joined the Haganah, the underground military organization of Israel in its pre-state days.

In 1953 he was given command of Unit 101, whose mission is often described as that of retaliation against Arab attacks on Jewish villages.

In fact, as can be seen from two terrible onslaughts, one of them very well known, Unit 101's purpose was that of instilling terror by the infliction of discriminate, murderous violence not only on able bodied fighters but on the young, the old, the

helpless.

Sharon's first documented sortie in this role was in August of 1953 on the refugee camp of El-Bureig, south of Gaza.

An Israeli history of the 101 unit records 50 refugees as having been killed; other sources allege 15 or 20. Major-General Vagn Bennike, the UN commander, reported that "bombs were thrown" by Sharon's men "through the windows of huts in which the refugees were sleeping and, as they fled, they were attacked by small arms and automatic weapons".

In October of 1953 came the attack by Sharon's unit 101 on the Jordanian village of Qibya, whose "stain" Israel's foreign minister at the time, Moshe Sharett, confided to his diary "would stick to us and not be washed away for many years". He was wrong.

Though even strongly pro-Israel commentators in the West compared it to Lidice, Qibya and Sharon's role are scarcely evoked in the West today, least of all by journalists such as Deborah Sontag of the New York Times who recently wrote a whitewash of Sharon, describing him as "feisty", or the Washington Post's man in Jerusalem who fondly invoked him after his fateful excursion to the Holy Places in Jerusalem as "the portly old warrior".

Israeli historian Avi Shlaim describes the massacre thus: "Sharon's order was to penetrate Qibya, blow up houses and inflict heavy casualties on its inhabitants. His success in carrying out the order surpassed all expectations. The full and macabre story of what happened at Qibya was revealed only during the morning after the attack.

The village had been reduced to rubble: forty-five houses had been blown up, and sixty-nine civilians, two thirds of them women and children, had been killed. Sharon and his men claimed that they believed that all the inhabitants had run away and that they had no idea that anyone was hiding inside the houses."

The UN observer on the scene reached a different conclusion: "One story was repeated time after time: the bullet splintered door, the body sprawled across the threshold, indicating that the inhabitants had been forced by heavy fire to stay inside until their homes were blown up over them."

The slaughter in Qibya was described contemporaneously in a letter to the president of the United Nations Security Council dated 16 October 1953 (S/3113) from the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Jordan to the United States. On 14 October 1953 at 9:30 at night, he wrote, Israeli troops launched a battalion-scale attack on the village of Qibya in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (at the time the West Bank was annexed to Jordan).

According to the diplomat's account, Israeli forces had entered the village and systematically murdered all occupants of houses, using automatic weapons, grenades and incendiaries. On 14 October, the bodies of 42 Arab civilians had been recovered; several more bodies were still under the wreckage. Forty houses, the village school and a reservoir had been destroyed.

Quantities of unused explosives, bearing Israel army markings in Hebrew, had been found in the village. At about 3 a.m., to cover their withdrawal, Israeli support troops had begun shelling the neighbouring villages of Budrus and Shuqba from positions in Israel.

And what of Sharon's conduct when he was head of the Southern Command of Israel's Defense Forces in the early 1970s?

The Gaza "clearances" were vividly described by Phil Reeves in a piece in The London Independent on January 21 of this year.

"Thirty years have elapsed since Ariel Sharon, favourite to win Israel's forthcoming election, was the head of the Israel Defence Forces' southern command, charged with the task of 'pacifying' the recalcitrant Gaza Strip after the 1967 war. But the old men still remember it well. Especially the old men on Wreckage Street.

Until late 1970, Wreckage, or Had'd, Street wasn't a street, just one of scores of narrow, nameless alleys weaving through Gaza City's Beach Camp, a shantytown cluttered with low, two-roomed houses, built with UN aid for refugees from the 1948 war who then, as now, were waiting for the international community to settle their future. The street acquired its name after an unusually prolonged visit from Mr Sharon's soldiers. Their orders were to bulldoze hundreds of homes to carve a wide, straight street.

This would allow Israeli troops and their heavy armored vehicles to move easily through the camp, to exert control and hunt down men from the Palestinian Liberation Army.

"They came at night and began marking the houses they wanted to demolish with red paint,' said Ibrahim Ghanim, 70, a retired labourer. 'In the morning they came back, and ordered everyone to leave. I remember all the soldiers shouting at people, Yalla, yalla, yalla, yalla! They threw everyone's belongings into the street. Then Sharon brought in bulldozers and started flattening the street.

He did the whole lot, almost in one day. And the soldiers would beat people, can you imagine? Soldiers with guns, beating little kids!' By the time the Israeli army's work was done, hundreds of homes were destroyed, not only on Wreckage Street but throughout the camp, as Sharon ploughed out a grid of wide security roads.

Many of the refugees took shelter in schools, or squeezed into the already badly over-crowded homes of relatives. Other families, usually those with a Palestinian political activist, were loaded into trucks and taken to exile in a town in the heart of the Sinai Desert, then controlled by Israel."

As Reeves reported, the devastation of Beach Camp was far from the exception. "In August 1971 alone, troops under Mr Sharon's command destroyed some 2,000 homes in the Gaza Strip, uprooting 16,000 people for the second time in their lives. Hundreds of young Palestinian men were arrested and deported to Jordan and Lebanon.

Six hundred relatives of suspected guerrillas were exiled to Sinai. In the second half of 1971, 104 guerrillas were assassinated. 'The policy at that time was not to arrest suspects, but to assassinate them', said Raji Sourani, director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza City".

Israeli complacency leading to their initial defeat by the Egyptians in the 1973 war was in part nurtured by the supposed impregnability of the "Bar Lev line" constructed by Sharon on the east bank of the Suez canal. The Egyptians pierced the line without undue difficulty.

In 1981 Sharon, then minister of defense, paid a visit to Israel's good friend, President Mobutu of Zaire. Lunching on Mobutu's yacht the Israeli party was asked by their host to use their good offices to get the US Congress to be more forthcoming with aid. This the Israelis managed to accomplish. As a quid pro quo Mobutu reestablished diplomatic relations with Israel.

This was not Sharon's only contact with Africa. Among friends he relays fond memories of trips to Angola to observe and advise the South African forces then fighting in support of the murderous CIA stooge Jonas Savimbi.

As defense minister in Menachem Begin's second government, Sharon was the commander who led the full dress 1982 assault on Lebanon, with the express design of destroying the PLO, driving as many Palestinians as possible to Jordan and making Lebanon a client state of Israel.

It was a war plan that cost untold suffering, around 20,000 Palestinian and Lebanese lives, and also the deaths of over one thousand Israeli soldiers. The Israelis bombed civilian populations at will. Sharon also oversaw the infamous massacres at Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps.

The Lebanese government counted 762 bodies recovered and a further 1,200 buried privately by relatives. However, the Middle East may have been spared worse, thanks to Menachem Begin. Just as the '82 war was getting under way, Sharon approached Begin, then Prime Minister, and suggested that Begin cede control over Israel's nuclear trigger to him. Begin had just enough sense to refuse.

The slaughter in the two contiguous camps at Sabra and Shatilla took place from 6:00 at night on September 16, 1982 until 8:00 in the morning on September 18, 1982, in an area under the control of the Israel Defense Forces. The perpetrators were members of the Phalange militia, the Lebanese force that was armed by and closely allied with Israel since the onset of Lebanon's civil war in 1975.

The victims during the 62-hour rampage included infants, children, women (including pregnant women), and the elderly, some of whom were mutilated or disemboweled before or after they were killed.

An official Israeli commission of inquiry - chaired by Yitzhak Kahan, president of Israel's Supreme Court - investigated the massacre, and in February 1983 publicly released its findings (without Appendix B, which remains secret until now).

Amid desperate attempts to cover up the evidence of direct knowledge of what was going on by Israeli military personnel, the Kahan Commission found itself compelled to find that Ariel Sharon, among other Israelis, had responsibility for the massacre.

The commission's report stated: "It is our view that responsibility is to be imputed to the Minister of Defense for having disregarded ["entirely cognizant of" would have been a better choice of words] the danger of acts of vengeance and bloodshed by the Phalangists against the population of the refugee camps, and having failed [i.e. "eagerly taken this into consideration"] to take this danger into account when he decided to have the Phalangists enter the camps. In addition, responsibility is to be imputed to the Minister of Defense for not ordering appropriate measures for preventing or reducing the danger of massacre as a condition for the Phalangists' entry into the camps.

These blunders constitute the

non-fulfillment of a duty with which the Defense Minister was charged". (For those who want to refresh their memories of Operation Peace for Galilee, of the massacres and the Kahan coverup we recommend Noam Chomsky's The Fateful Triangle.)

Sharon refused to resign. Finally, on February 14, 1983, he was relieved of his duties as defense minister, though he remained in the cabinet as minister without portfolio.

Sharon's career was in eclipse, but he continued to burnish his credentials as a Likud ultra. Sharon has always been against any sort of peace deal, unless on terms entirely impossible for Palestinians to accept.

As Nehemia Strasler outlined in Ha'aretz on January 18 of this year, in 1979, as a member of Begin's cabinet, he voted against a peace treaty with Egypt. In 1985 he voted against the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the so-called security zone in Southern Lebanon.

In 1991 he opposed Israel's participation in the Madrid peace conference. In 1993 he voted No in the Knesset on the Oslo agreement. The following year he abstained in the Knesset on a vote over a peace treaty with Jordan.

He voted against the Hebron agreement in 1997 and objected to the way in which the withdrawal from southern Lebanon was conducted.

As Begin's minister of agriculture in the late 1970s he established many of the West Bank settlements that are now a major obstruction to any peace deal.

His present position? Not another square inch of land for Palestinians on the West Bank.

He will agree to a Palestinian state on the existing areas presently under either total or partial Palestinian control, amounting to merely 42 per cent of the West Bank. Israel will retain control of the highways across the West Bank and the water sources. All settlements will stay in place with access by the IDF to them.

Jerusalem will remain under Israeli sovereignty and he plans to continue building around the city. The Golan heights would remain under Israel's control.

It can be strongly argued that Sharon represents the long-term policy of all Israeli governments, without any obscuring fluff or verbal embroidery. For example: Ben-Gurion approved the terror missions of Unit 101. Every Israeli government has condoned settlements and building around Jerusalem. It was Labor's Ehud Barak who okayed the military escort for Sharon on his provocative sortie that sparked the second Intifada and Barak who has overseen the lethal military repression of recent months. But that doesn't diminish Sharon's sinister shadow across the past half century.

That shadow is better evoked by Palestinians and Lebanese grieving for the dead, the maimed, the displaced, or by a young Israeli woman, Ilil Komey, 16, who confronted Sharon recently when he visited her agricultural high school outside Beersheva. "I think you sent my father into Lebanon", Ilil said. "Ariel Sharon, I accuse you of having made me suffer for 16 some odd years. I accuse you of having made my father suffer for over 16 years. I accuse you of a lot of things that made a lot of people suffer in this country. I don't think that you can now be elected as prime minister".

Ilil was wrong. He's there. And now the bloodbath will begin. CP

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Katied Couric waxes sentimental over Ariel Sharon on TV this morning comparing him to Bush the rancher, brush cutter etc..

Reality is that Sharon was one of the first terrorists. He terrorised Palestinians for 60 years with explosions and violent death.

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There's no way to whitewash Sharon's past, but we are in store for the sappiest example of US journalism we've seen in a while..

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Al-Watan, July 27, 2002 (Qatar)

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That's him..

I'm not so keen on listing someone's offenses in neon, but its going to be hard to stomach watching the media paint Ariel Sharon as a great man of peace.

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It would make me nauseous, that's why I will not watch. They do have their job cut out for them.

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I won't be able to watch either.

I was hopeful that he might try to do the right thing.. at least in part.. now in his last days, but now its too late..

Israel has been stirring the pot in the ME for 60 years and on the dole.. repeatedly refused peace negotiations and now Sharon is a "hero"?

He's a hero that haunted the US congress with an armload of dossiers demanding the US take out Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya while demanding MORE US foreign aid.

I guess we'll see just how stupid Americans really are.

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 **Re: The Crimes of Ariel Sharon: Return of the Terrorist**  [To: [Kudzu](#) | Post [294301942](#), reply to [294301916](#)] (Score: 2)

Quote:

I guess we'll see just how stupid Americans really are.

Unfortunately, we will. 😊

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I'd like to see a tv documentary shown about all of this, complete with reconstructed scenes. Thankfully, the UK media have been slightly less biased than the their US counterparts. But I don't hold out much hope for a real expose of the one of the greatest war criminals of the late 20th century. The difference with Sharon is that he can be directly linked to war crimes



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because he gave the orders and may even have joined in.

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Won't happen, Basil.. No one is going to take a critical look at Sharon's life.. Its too bloody.

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Re: The Crimes of Ariel Sharon: Retun of the Terrorist [To: [basil](#) | Post [294302390](#), reply to [294302031](#)] (Score: 1)

Begin was wanted by the Crown for the king david bombing right up untill he was electd Prime minister then all was forgotten. Never say that video either.

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Re: The Crimes of Ariel Sharon: Retun of the Terrorist [To: [croc](#) | Post [294302521](#), reply to [294302390](#)] (Score: 2)

Actually there was a very good documentary mini-series made by the BBC about 2 years ago. What you want is episode 2 of [Empire Warriors](#). I have it but I don't know where you'll be able to find it now, even the BBC are reluctant to mention it.

Quote:

Particularly interesting are the Jewish terrorists who murdered more than a hundred civilians in the King David Hotel bombing. Now, of course, they're heroes of Israel and in light of the suicide bombings in modern Palestine, it seems ironic to hear them explain how they had no choice but to resort to terrorism. The British were unable to deal with the Israelis' brand of terrorism which proved particularly brutal at times, but learned from this and other experiences and had some surprising successes in some of their later wars on terror.

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 **Re: The Crimes of Ariel Sharon: Return of the Terrorist**  [To: [Kudzu](#) | Post [294302924](#), reply to [294301820](#)] (Score: 2)

Quote:

There's no way to whitewash Sharon's past, but we are in store for the sappiest example of US journalism we've seen in a while..

Its already out there. Supposedly, *in his twilight years, he's had "a change of heart"*. (In the blackmail scheme, it must be written somewhere he was to be cast as an illustrious peacemaker.) However, to get to that mental place, you'd have to have presupposed there existed a real evil that led to a changing of heart. Couric did that, inadvertently, as will all who succumb to public relations' history revisions. This leaves the truth intact, albeit coded, for future historians adept at reading between the lines.

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