Peace-Making in Divided Societies

The Israel-South Africa Analogy

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Preface

The Human Sciences Research Council publishes a number of Occasional Papers series. These are designed to be quick, convenient vehicles for making timely contributions to debates, disseminating interim research findings and otherwise engaging with the broader research community. Authors invite comments and suggestions from readers.

About the Author

Heribert Adam, a political sociologist at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, was born in Germany and educated at the Frankfurt School. Professor Adam has published extensively on socio-political developments in South Africa and comparative ethnic conflicts. He served as President of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Ethnic, Minority and Race Relations, was awarded the 1998 Konrad Adenauer Prize of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

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Executive Summary

Analogies with the South African case are increasingly applied to Israel/Palestine for two different purposes: to denounce Israel as the last apartheid state that deserves to be sanctioned or boycotted, and to hold South Africa up as an inspiring example of a peaceful settlement for the Middle East. This essay does not seek to contribute to the Middle East propaganda war, but probes analytically the model character of the South African case. In order to forestall an impending civil war, South Africans negotiated an exemplary settlement of a seemingly intractable ethno-racial conflict. What lessons can be drawn from this 'negotiated revolution' for the unresolved Israel-Palestinian conflict? Can the South African 'miracle' be replicated in the Middle East?

In addressing such questions, six elements of the conflict in both contexts are compared: economic interdependence, religious divisions, third party intervention, leadership, political culture and violence. On most counts, the differences between apartheid and the situation in Israel outweigh the similarities that could facilitate conditions to a negotiated compromise. Above all, opponents in South Africa finally realized that neither side could defeat the other, short of the destruction of the country. This perception of stalemate, as a precondition for negotiating in good faith, is missing in the Middle East. Peace-making resulted in an inclusive democracy in South Africa, while territorial separation of the adversaries in two states is widely hailed as the solution in Israel/Palestine. However, despite some promising attempts at Taba in January 2001, the opponents have been so far unable to reach a final agreement on the return of refugees, borders and settlers, and the status of Jerusalem. Contrasting insights from very different solutions to a communal conflict shed light on the nature of ethnicity and on the limits of negotiation politics.

Peace-Making in Divided Societies

The Israel-South Africa Analogy

Conceptual clarifications: The purpose of the Israel-South Africa analogy

Comparisons between South Africa and Israel have been employed for three different but interrelated purposes. The first purpose is to contrast forms of domination and resistance of a subjugated population. The second is to focus on ideological similarities, as expressed in the equation of Zionism with racism or the self-concept of some Afrikaners and Jews as 'God's Chosen People'. The third is to draw strategic lessons from the negotiated settlement in South Africa for the unresolved conflict in the Middle East.

The colonial analogy Academic comparisons of domination and resistance mostly invoke the notion of settler societies. Alien intruders conquer and displace an indigenous population. They act on behalf of a metropolitan power. The colonial analogy has inspired both Palestinian and South African black resistance. However, settlers also develop their own interests, independent of and often against their sponsor abroad. The colonial concept leaves unanswered, when and how settlers become indigenous. Yet the right of settlers to coexist with displaced people in the same land has long been conceded by

mainstream Palestinian leaders and confirmed by the African National Congress's (ANC) Freedom Charter of 1955. Disputed issues are the terms of coexistence, the meaning of equal citizenship and how to redress the legacy of past injustice.[1] The notion of 'settler societies' carries explanatory weight only if their varieties are distinguished. As Donald Akenson has pointed out, 'there is scarcely a society in Europe or North and South America that is not a settler society' (*Journal of Military History,* 65, 2001: 571).

Emphasizing the similarities between apartheid and Israeli forms of domination has the effect of delegitimizing Israeli governance. After fascism and African decolonization, the apartheid regime constituted an international pariah state, and equating the Jewish treatment of Palestinians with Bantustans and the suppression of national liberation casts the Jewish state in a similar pariah role. Already in the 1980s, prominent Israelis such as Shlomo Avineri (*Jerusalem Post*, December 16 1988) warned that continued control over the West Bank and Gaza 'means continued oppression of a million-and-a-half Palestinians and a slow "South Africanization" of Israel'. More recently, Ian Buruma (*The Guardian*, July 23 2002), who doubts the validity of the comparison, nevertheless diagnoses that 'Israel, in many respects, has become the South Africa of today. It is the litmus test of one's progressive credentials', similar to the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, Vietnam in the 60s, Chile in the 70s and apartheid in the 80s.

The Israeli sociologist Avishai Ehrlich (Personal Communication, 23 May 2002) has pointed to the difference between Zionism and other nationalisms:

> Zionism is an oddity among modern nationalisms – it did not just call for self-determination in the place where its 'nationals' resided, but shifted its imagined community to a different place. Zionism is thus a colonizatory ideology and project.

However, while all other European colonizations were driven primarily by economic motives, the original Labour Zionists

moved elsewhere because of persecution and vulnerability. It makes little difference to the displaced indigenous people whether colonization comes out of necessity or out of greed. The newcomers, however, acquire a different relationship to the land, because they have no homeland to return to, unlike economic colonizers. Moreover, once the quest for a safe territory is focused on an imagined ancestral homeland, the guilt of alien intruders is removed. In their self-deception, Zionists now reclaimed the land 'by right' of return. The later religious zealots of Gush Enumin even invoke divine destiny in occupying their outposts in Eretz Israel. Whatever the historical differences between Zionism and Afrikaner nationalism, their adherents share the notion of their current residential territory as their only homeland, regardless of whether this is accepted by their neighbours.

The Zionist project was further strengthened demographically and ideologically by the expulsion of Jews from Arab countries. This expulsion was in response to the establishment of Israel. These low-status Sephardics and their descendants form the backbone of anti-Arab hostility. These voters for right-wing parties deeply resent their double discrimination by Ashkenazi insiders and Arab outsiders. If there ever is return of, reconciliation with, or compensation for displaced Palestinians, an acknowledgement of displaced Jews must be part of the new justice. Similarly, the social base for right-wing Afrikaner parties was predominantly rural people, the lower echelons of the civil service and the remnants of the Afrikaner working class – all sections that were dropped from state protection by an increasingly self-confident bureaucratic bourgeoisie.

The apartheid analogy In the ideological battle for legitimacy, most Jewish analysts view their relationship with the Palestinians not as a colonial one, but as a conflict between two competing national entities. In their self-concept, Zionists are simply returning to their ancestral homeland from which they were dispersed two millennia ago. Originally most did

not intend to exploit native labour and resources, as colonizers do. As is well known, deep splits about the tradeoffs for peace and security, religious notions of sacred places, and the nature of national identity, divide Israeli society. Similar deep cleavages occurred when Afrikaner nationalists were confronted with the pressure for reform. Inexplicable perceptions may be labelled false, mythical, irrational or illegitimate. However, since people give meaning to their lives and interpret their worlds through these diverse ideological prisms, they are real and have to be taken seriously. People act on the basis of their belief systems.

Probably the only unifying conviction across a deeply divided political spectrum in Israel concerns the preservation of a Jewish state as a response to historical anti-Semitism. Such endorsements of an official ethnic state defy many prescriptions of multicultural citizenship in a liberal democracy. As a perceived sanctuary and guarantor of ethnic survival in a hostile neighbourhood, however, it is based on the trauma of collective victimhood. The legacy of the Holocaust cannot be compared with Afrikaner anxieties. From the experience of victimization emanates the tendency to reject any criticism of Israeli policy by outsiders as anti-Semitism.

Understandable outrage about the Israeli occupation and Sharon's hard line policies may well have triggered latent anti-Semites to express their bigotry openly. Anti-Jewish attitudes sometimes hide under the guise of pro-Palestinian empathy. Therefore, the clear distinction between despicable anti-Jewish sentiments and legitimate criticism of Israeli policy has to be made and underscored. The robust debate among the global Jewish community itself about Israeli policies demonstrates this distinction. Outside commentators should be sensitive to fuelling anti-Semitism which often reveals itself in the almost automatic ascription of negative features to Jewish activities. Jewish names are automatically associated with conspiracies or powerful lobbies. When the Jewish state as a collective is singled out as the only violator of human rights among dozens of ruthless dictatorships (as happened during the United

Nations [UN] Durban conference on racism in 2001), this appears as yet another variation of anti-Semitism. Even the Czarist forgery, 'The Protocol of the Elders of Zion', together with medieval-style blood libels, are frequently resurrected in the discourse of the Arab world. Government-controlled television regularly broadcasts inflammatory sermons in hundreds of mosques, praying 'to destroy tyrannical Jews, humiliate infidels, give victory to the *mujahidin* everywhere and liberate the Al-Aqsa mosque from the hands of the usurpers'. Shlomo Avineri (*New York Review*, July 18 2002: 62) has asked: 'When suicide bombers receive official state burials by the Palestinian Authority, with a Palestinian police guard of honor, are declared national heroes and their biographies are taught in Palestinian schools as role models – what exactly should the liberal intelligentsia's politically correct response be?'

Strategic implications Avineri's rhetorical puzzle raises several strategic questions. More than 600 prominent Palestinians who signed an appeal against such counter-productive 'military operations which target civilians in Israel' (*Al-Quds*, June 21 2002; *New York Review*, August 15 2002: 53) point out that they 'kill all possibility for the two peoples to live in peace side by side in two neighboring countries.' Answering Avineri can perhaps be best expressed in what morally aware intellectuals should not do: reinforce the mutual cycle of violence by supporting a policy of escalating revenge, demonize opponents without understanding the historical context of the conflicts, or abandon communication and negotiations until the antagonist surrenders to enunciated conditions.

In positive terms, liberal intellectuals can demystify collective stereotypes about the enemy. They can question their own mythologies of justified action and moral self-righteousness. They can learn realistic lessons from conflicts elsewhere without falling into the trap of uncritically emulating strategies by adopting simplistic comparisons. This danger is exemplified by the calls for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions, or Desmond Tutu's advice to repeat against Israel the

'divestment movement of the 1980s against apartheid. This falsely assumes that the end of apartheid resulted largely from international pressure. A similar problematic optimism is contained in Tony Judt's (*New York Review of Books*, May 9 2002: 4) exhortation:

> Following fifty years of vicious repression and exploitation, white South Africans handed over power to a black majority who replaced them without violence or revenge. Is the Middle East so different?

Yes, it is. The difference is vast and lies specifically in South Africa's economic interdependence, which contrasts with separation in the Middle East; in religion as a moral unifier, which contrasts with religion as a divisive force for competing claims; in moral isolation and erosion, which contrasts with international support; in a mutual perception of stalemate, which contrasts with a conviction of victory; in the utter illegitimacy of institutionalized racial discrimination, which contrasts with the more legitimate ethnic maintenance. After all, most of those who advocate apartheid-style sanctions against Israel wish to preserve the Jewish state, in contrast to the anti-apartheid movement, which rightly aimed at abolishing the whole system of state governance.

Without abandoning moral judgments or even outrage, intellectuals can propagate painful realism, eschew wishful thinking and discern a politically feasible compromise solution rather than some morally desirable utopia. Informed by the particularities and uniqueness of each conflict, policy advisers and opinion makers should not fall into the trap of uncritically emulating recommended strategies. In their political support, they could show critical solidarity, rather than following a 'correct line' without question. If this is the lesson to be drawn from analogies with South Africa, then Ian Buruma is wrong when he states that 'the comparison with South Africa is intellectually lazy, morally questionable, and possibly even mendacious.' Aware of the above-noted differences, probing the

Israel-South Africa analogy does furnish insights into conflict resolution and obstacles to a negotiated settlement, while at the same time revealing the limits of such comparisons.

The relevance of the Middle East for South Africa

Apart from the moral and political issues at stake, developments in the Middle East affect South Africa for three main reasons. The first reason is that increased polarization in Israel/Palestine could potentially spill over into inter-group relations in South Africa. Traditionally strong identifications with Israel by the 80 000 anxious Jewish South Africans is resented by the eight times stronger Muslim community that champions – with equal fervour – the Palestinian cause. Such conflicts could threaten South Africa's hard-won social cohesion. What progress has been made in harmonious race relations, reconciliation and national unity, could be undermined by new partisan stances, triggered from the outside.

In this vein, a respected mainstream religious body, the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), announced in March 2002 that it had abandoned its conciliatory stance on the Middle East conflict and now supported the Islamic groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah, although the MJC also notes it does not support terrorism. 'We recognize those groups as legitimate freedom fighters for the liberation of Palestine. We view them in the same light as people view the role of the ANC and PAC in the liberation struggle of this country', the MJC's deputy president, Moulana Ighsaan Hendricks, is quoted as saying (*Sunday Argus*, March 17 2002: 21). In response, Philip Krawitz, chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' Cape Council, pointed out that the supported organizations 'by their words and deeds have made it clear that their aim is not to come to any final status agreement with Israel but to destroy Israel altogether' by any means necessary. He could have also stressed that the ANC never condoned, let alone glorified attacks on civilians, although civilian deaths did occur during

the anti-apartheid struggle. The Hamas goal of eliminating the Jewish state as well as the organisation's sectarian anti-Semitism would also run counter to the widely accepted South African government policy that peace in the Middle East necessitates creating a Palestinian state, existing side by side with the state of Israel in security with its neighbours. 'The Board believes that the conflict in the Middle East should remain there and not negatively impact on the good relations between Muslims and Jews in South Africa' (*Sunday Argus*, 17 March 2002).

With instant global communication, however, political emotions cannot be confined to one place. They easily jump borders, as dozens of placard demonstrations, protest marches and prayer sessions in South Africa have shown. In such a charged atmosphere the more violent methods of Middle East confrontations may also find emulators in South Africa. These prospects were somewhat diffused by the publicity surrounding a manifesto 'Not in our name', initiated by Minister Ronnie Kasrils and ANC MLA Max Ozinsky. The initiative demonstrated that Jewishness comprises diverse positions in a wide spectrum of opinion.[2] With its direct criticism of Israeli policy, however, it disturbed the supposed Jewish consensus and led to a robust debate within the community. The overwhelming majority of South African Jews dissociated themselves from Kasril's document, which attracted only 300 signatures. Kasril's stance is, however, unequivocally supported by the ANC. The ANC's Gauteng general secretary, David Makhura, called the reoccupation of Palestinian-controlled territories 'a blatant violation of human rights', amounting to 'an act of state terrorism by the Israeli government' (*Business Day*, 10 April 2002, Editorial). Other commentators have remarked on the contradiction that the South African government criticizes Israel, but is not prepared to apply the same standards of behaviour to its neighbour Zimbabwe.

The second way in which developments in the Middle East affect South Africa is that South African politicians are eager to share the lessons of peaceful conflict resolution, and Middle

Eastern activists often visit South Africa to learn from the anti-apartheid struggle. South African politicians justifiably pride themselves on their negotiated settlement. In May 2002, a contingent of Israeli reservists who refused military service in the occupied territories met with members of the former 'End Conscription Campaign to learn from their tactics. At a January 2002 conference near Cape Town, President Mbeki and other leading members of the old and new order spent three days conveying to four Palestinian ministers and several former Israeli office-holders the secrets of the South African success story. Unfortunately, no current Israeli authorities attended, and the exercise therefore remained without impact. Two months later, when the ANC chief negotiator Cyril Ramaphosa was nominated as a member of a UN team to investigate the human rights situation in the occupied territories, all editorials wallowed in praise and celebrated the wise choice.

> Given the seemingly intractable problems SA faced prior to Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990, and the manner in which we resolved them, our citizens are especially well placed to share experiences with Palestinians and Israelis (*Business Day*, 10 April 2002).

South Africa was again ready to solve the unsolvable. There is nothing wrong with such idealistic optimism, except that it may foster illusions. The underlying assumption that the SA model of conflict resolution readily lends itself to export ignores unique historical circumstances. It may actually retard necessary new solutions by clinging to processes of negotiation that may not work in another context. Therefore, a more nuanced understanding of differences and similarities may enhance new approaches.

The third way in which developments in the Middle East affect South Africa is that, apart from the SA government's increased role in international forums, the post-apartheid state frequently hosts international conferences, at which controversial global issues dominate the agenda. On such occasions,

public opinion is often mobilized with slogans and simplistic analogies. A prime example was the UN 'World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances' in Durban in September 2001. A majority of the 10 000 delegates and non-governmental organisation (NGO) participants endorsed the long-discarded notion that 'Zionism is racism'. They were unable to distinguish Jewish nationalism (Zionism) from apartheid racism. Serious discussions of anti-Semitism as a classical form of historical racism were broken up by enraged activists, who considered any mention of the Holocaust as an apology for Israel. When such arguments originate from states that suppress their own minorities and ignore fundamental human rights, the hypocrisy appalls.

On the other hand, ardent supporters of Israel equate any criticism of Israeli policy with anti-Semitism. It is still not commonly understood, as Naomi Klein (*Globe & Mail*, 24 April 2002) has rightly stressed, that 'it is possible to criticize Israel while forcefully condemning the rise of anti-Semitism'. Since Israeli policy exploits the justified anxiety about anti-Semitism and dwells on the fear of another Holocaust, it would seem particularly strategic to leave no doubts as to where critics stand on this issue and the legitimacy of the Jewish state as a historical sanctuary. By omitting or downplaying the historical trauma of a long prosecuted people, merely because Israeli lobby groups use that legacy for their own purposes, the critics of Israeli policy play into the hands of hardline opponents.

Against this background, the following analysis attempts to raise the level of political literacy by probing some commonly held stereotypes and false analogies on both sides. Israeli policy on the West Bank cannot be compared with the Nazi occupation of France, as some Palestinians assert, nor is Arafat another Hitler, as some Israelis insist. Above all, this analysis will question the now conventional wisdom on the left, namely that current Israeli designs for the occupied territories amount to a Bantustan policy. On the contrary, it is argued, the Sharon government practises forms of direct colonization and territorial annexation, perhaps aiming even at the ultimate

expulsion of the subject population, that has little in common with the designs for South African 'homelands'. At the same time, the simplistic equations of Palestinian resistance strategies with South African liberation struggles are critiqued not only for their counter-productive ineffectiveness, but also for their inexcusable harming of innocent civilians. In short, by looking at the Middle East conflict through South African lenses and experiences, a better comparative understanding of two major global predicaments may be achieved. There are lessons for Israeli/Palestinian peace activists, and South Africans may gain a more realistic appreciation of their accomplishments by revisiting the falsely labelled 'miracle'. How was it possible to overcome the many hurdles to a negotiated settlement in South Africa and to defy the widespread predictions of a blood bath in a racial civil war? What follows revisits the facilitating preconditions for, as well as the obstacles to, South African reconciliation in order to discern how far they apply to the Middle East. No blueprints or solutions are offered, yet clarifying the issues comparatively could prove helpful for achieving the desired outcomes.

Following I.W. Zartman's (1997, 2000, 2001) extensive work, much of the literature on negotiations is dominated by an abstract discussion of the 'ripeness' of a conflict to be settled. Some authors construct complex mathematical dyads of 'bilateral reciprocity' (Goldstein et al., 2001), others emphasize threat perceptions (Lieberfeld, 1999) in 'mutually hurting' or bearable stalemates that affect morale maintenance and 'battle fatigue' (Rothstein, 1999). While valuing such refined conceptualizations, this analysis tries to apply them to the historical backgrounds in South Africa and Israel/Palestine. Extensive personal exposure through participant observation of the South African transition and teaching in the Middle East has confirmed the limits of rational choice approaches and cost-benefit calculations to the analysis of ethnic conflicts. As aptly formulated by Rothstein (1999: 47):

> What is missing from interest-based analysis is the emotional depth of the conflict, the intensity of hatred, mistrust, and contempt that has developed and deepened over time.

While not abandoning the focus on underlying interests, this account highlights why animosity has deepened in Israel/Palestine but diminished in South Africa, with a particular emphasis on the role of violence. As noted previously, this study focuses on six areas of comparison: economic interdependence, religion, third-party intervention, leadership, political culture and violence. In all six areas the differences between apartheid South Africa and Israel/Palestine outweigh the similarities. These six conditions may have favoured peace building in South Africa but mostly they serve as impediments to compromise in the Middle East. Nevertheless, it would be unjustified to conclude that the Middle East cannot learn lessons from the South African negotiation process. For a small minority of Jews and Palestinians, the most crucial achievement of the South African settlement – an inclusive, democratic, secular, common state – stands as a utopian ideal. However, the vast majority of Jewish and Palestinian nationalists now favour partition into two nation states. This solution is the opposite of the South African settlement and, one would expect on first reflection, is easier to achieve than peaceful coexistence in an integrated state. However, there is strong disagreement as to what constitutes a viable Palestinian state, what are legitimate security and identity concerns and what amounts to a fair compromise in a long-standing conflict in which both hostile peoples have rights to ancestral land, sacred places and scarce resources.

Economic interdependence

The power imbalance is the most striking aspect in both the South African and Israeli conflicts. In economic terms, both Palestinians[3] and South African blacks are far weaker than their

wealthier and resource-rich antagonists. Common asymmetrical power notwithstanding, the difference between Jewish Israelis and South African whites, however, lies in the extent of their dependence on their opponents. The Israeli economy can do without Palestinian labour. Only in agriculture and construction do Palestinian workers constitute a significant minority. Even in these sectors they are easily substituted with Asian and Balkan guest workers. The frequent closures of Gaza and the West Bank harmed mainly one side: the Palestinian economy grew more impoverished and individual Palestinian commuters suffered disproportionately by being cut off from their livelihood. Economic collective punishment inconvenienced only a few Israeli employers, but caused considerable hardship to Palestinians.

In contrast, frequent strikes and lockouts in apartheid South Africa affected both sides. In terms of lost production and profits, white-owned businesses were arguably more affected than unpaid workers, for whom survival along the bare poverty line had become a way of life anyway. Banning unions and strikes, however, ceased to be options after the mid-1970s, when Natal employers were confronted with leaderless strikers, despite the outlawing of strikes. The Wiehan Commission reluctantly legalized unions, because business and the state needed a credible negotiating partner in order to facilitate stability and predictability.

The subsequent emergence of a strong union movement socialized South Africa in negotiation politics. Trade-offs were practised and the art of compromise was learned through hundreds of labour confrontations every year. Politicized unions served as substitutes for outlawed political organizations and their role therefore extended beyond bread and butter issues. Political and community concerns figured as prominently as wages and dismissals on union agendas. As a result, the welfare of workers beyond the factory gates also became a concern for employers. They adopted the notion of corporate social responsibility, in part to generate a positive public image in the competition to look 'progressive', and in part to

cultivate a contented labour force. Many businesses attempted to prevent a spillover of the chaotic township conditions into their enterprises. This meant intervening with local police officials or protest organizers when too many 'stay at home' calls curbed production. Some companies provided company housing, day care or bursaries for the children of selected employees. When a firm has invested heavily in the training of its skilled personnel, it cannot afford to replace them in a crisis. Despite implacable antagonism, the groundwork for consensual decision-making and hard bargaining was born out of necessity in the course of two decades of escalating labour confrontations.

In the immediate post-Oslo years, the Palestinian economy also improved considerably. The spectre of a Palestinian state encouraged investment and trade and increased integration with the Israeli economy. However, the economic optimism was soon stifled by the political regression through settler expansionism, Rabin's assassination and a corresponding Palestinian impatience about Israeli intransigence on the promised state.

In contrast to the current deteriorating Palestinian economic situation, the huge black-white wage gap in South Africa had narrowed somewhat long before equality of opportunity and equity legislation aimed at reversing the privilege of the 'historically advantaged'. With black purchasing power rising and a better-educated lower middle class gradually increasing in a society in which the proportion of whites had shrunk to 11 per cent, the economic absurdity of racial discrimination became ever more obvious. No company could justify paying differential salaries based on skin colour to employees with the same qualifications. Individual productivity, which depends in part on identification with a firm and its work requirements, is undermined by alienated and discontented employees.

All-white companies, squeezed between the political intransigence of the state and the militancy of workers, had to act as honest brokers, even if their own sympathies lay elsewhere.

While South African business managers met this challenge to varying degrees, most were aware that in the delicate political climate negotiated compromises proved superior to unilateral dictates. In a gradual learning process both sides realized that even unfavourable judgements of a Labour Court were preferable to bloody street confrontations. Bargaining was institutionalized and became a legitimate form of conflict resolution long before legalized racism was abolished.

In short, mutual dependency limited ruthlessness on both sides. Despite disparities in power, the powerless disenfranchised could exercise the non-violent pressure that Palestinians lack. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, two separate economies survive side by side; South Africa has only one integrated economy that forces antagonists to coexist with one another reluctantly, even if their attitudes favour separation. While Palestinian economic dependence on Israel has increased since 1967, this has been a comparatively one-sided process that mostly benefited Israel by creating new markets, consumers and taxpayers in the occupied territories. Palestinians working in Israel constituted around six per cent of all employees in Israel but amounted to about 36 per cent of the Palestinian workforce by the late 1980s. Therefore, work prohibitions in Israel have hurt the Palestinians disproportionately.

Economic interdependence ultimately defeated partition in South Africa. Both conservative *Boerestaat* (Afrikaner state) advocates and Zulu traditionalists flirted with the Palestinian/Jewish option of secession. The grand apartheid model of different homelands for different ethnic groups presented such a blueprint. All ultimately faltered on their problematic economic feasibility. Attaching ethnicity to territory by attempting to create halfway homogeneous new states would have meant the forced removal of millions of people.

While such an outcome was not inconceivable, as the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and elsewhere has shown, the dispersed Afrikaners preferred a racial compromise that allowed them to maintain their material security. In contrast to Israel, the South African historic compromise was also enabled by the increased

self-confidence of a ruling Afrikaner group that had economically drawn even with its historic English victor through state patronage. Afrikanerdom thus shed the victim mentality that a collective self-perception still cultivates in Israel.

Unifying versus divisive religion

Opting for an inclusive state in South Africa was facilitated by the absence of religious tensions that would seem a major obstacle for a secularized common Jewish/Palestinian entity in the Middle East. While the conflict in the Middle East is not primarily about religious differences, leaders on both sides legitimize their actions and mobilize influential constituencies in the name of religion and historical religious persecution. Influential sections on both sides claim each other's territory as sacred ancestral ground. The stronger party monopolizes scarce water resources and fertile land. In South Africa, the ownership and control of ample space never acquired the same conflictual dimension as in a densely populated small terrain bestowed with cherished landmarks and mythical meanings.

Unlike Jews in Israel, whites under apartheid rarely felt existentially threatened. To be sure, various anxieties about black rule prevailed, particularly among the less educated. Concern about physical safety and molestation of white women ranked high. Among the elite and better-off, however, fear about losing political power was more equated with material redistribution, declining living standards and reverse discrimination (Hugo, 1989). Among Afrikaners, 'survival' meant more protection of the Afrikaner language and culture and a 'civilized' way of life. Collective annihilation rarely figured in the Afrikaner discourse. Although Afrikaners were defeated and severely mistreated in the Anglo-Boer war at the turn of the century, this loss never constituted quite the same historical trauma as anti-Semitism has for Jews. The British scorched-earth policy and the internment camps for the Boer

civilian population cannot be compared with the Nazi death factories, although the label 'concentration camps' is often used for both.

The Zionist quest for a Jewish homeland preceded Hitler and the Dreyfus affair in France and took off after the 1881 pogroms in Russia and the Ukraine with subsequent immigration into British Palestine. However, Nazi actions led to instant recognition of the new Jewish state in 1948, even by Stalin, who wanted to weaken British dominance in the Middle East. While Jews were direct victims of the Nazis, the Palestinians they displaced may be considered indirect casualties of the German atrocities as well. The near extermination of European Jews confirmed the previous Zionist critique of Jewish vulnerability and cemented the founding rationale for the sanctuary in British Palestine. Without this nightmarish past and its later religious overtones, Jewish nationalism might have developed the same type of pragmatic accommodation of adversaries that Afrikaner nationalism eventually achieved. Instead, initially secular, even 'socialist' Zionism was increasingly identified with expansion, new territory and symbolic sites, legitimized with religious mythology, in contrast to the expedient turn of Afrikaner nationalism. While both Jews and Afrikaners claimed to be God's chosen people (Akenson, 1991), the Calvinist version sometimes had a hollow ring to it and was increasingly less credible even to its own ideologues.

Despite its denominational diversity and widespread adherence, religion in South Africa served as a point of commonality for blacks and whites alike. Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in ecclesiastical garb, successfully mobilized Christian ontology for reconciliation through his Truth Commission, in which theological assumptions about healing and forgiveness predominated. Previously, Catholic Archbishop Denis Hurley, in Durban, and the Council of (Protestant) Churches played a prominent role in opposing apartheid, often joined at protest marches by Cape Town's imams and occasionally even a maverick rabbi. Prominent Dutch-Reformed

church ministers, such as Beyers Naude, had already defected to the other side. Even the main Calvinist churches, after an agonizing decade-long debate, eventually declared apartheid a sin and heresy. This amounted to an ideological death knell for racial minority rule long before it was formally abolished in 1994.

In Israel, on the other hand, a religious minority of about 20 per cent holds the balance of power. Orthodox Jews of widely different outlooks have succeeded in imposing religious prescriptions on a multi-religious state that defines itself officially as Jewish, although the majority of Jewish Israelis are non-observant and one million Israeli citizens of Arab descent (18 per cent) belong to Muslim, Christian or Druse denominations. Confronted with an equally adamant religious adversary in the Muslims, symbolic sites like the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall beneath it have become an uncompromising battleground. Instead of internationalizing Jerusalem by granting all religions access to holy sites, both Jews and Muslims insist on exclusive sovereignty. For example, during the July 2000 Camp David talks between Clinton, Barak and Arafat on who should control Haram el Sharif or the Temple Mount, two participants (Malley and Agha, 2001: 71) report that:

> ...the Americans spent countless hours seeking imaginative formulations to finesse the issue of which party would enjoy sovereignty over this sacred place – a coalition of nations, the United Nations, the Security Council, even God himself was proposed. In the end, the Palestinians would have nothing of it; the agreement had to give them sovereignty, or there would be no agreement at all.

The creeping Jewish annexation of East Jerusalem after 1967, several attempts by Jewish extremists to blow up the Islamic holy site and rebuild the Temple on its ancient revered location, or Sharon's provocative, electioneering September 2000 march onto sacred Muslim ground, inflamed Arab opinion more than any economic discrimination.[4]

Compared with the vexed question of the return of Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem may not be the most difficult question to resolve. Avishai Margalit's (*The New York Review*, September 21 2000: 6) statement is doubtful: 'The core now concerns neither the Palestinian refugees nor the Jewish settlers. It does not involve the issues of security and water. It is Jerusalem'. However, Jerusalem embodies a nationalist commitment and historical identity for both sides, which has no equivalent in South Africa. The politicization of archaeology can illustrate this antiquarian competition about the 'symbolic heart' of the Middle East conflict. Neil Silberman (2001) has shown how legitimate archaeological research and preservation efforts were exploited by both sides for partisan ends. In 1996, with predictable deadly consequences, Prime Minister Netanyahu opened the Western Wall tunnels, the outlet of which was in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. He declared the tunnels 'the bedrock of our national existence'. Palestinians considered such politically inspired acts further evidence of 'Judaization' and added their own damage through unprofessional large-scale excavation work in the context of the renovation of a mosque in the underground halls of 'Solomon's Stables'. Silberman (2001: 502) writes that instead of attempting to understand 'the natural process of demolition, eradication, rebuilding, evasion and ideological reinterpretation that has permitted ancient rulers and modern groups to claim exclusive possession', archeologists joined the fray of partisan memory. Instrumental in the struggle for Jerusalem's past, a seemingly objective science exacerbates rather than ameliorates a nationalist dispute. Silberman (2001: 503) concludes:

> The digging continues. Claims and counterclaims about exclusive historical 'ownership' weave together the random acts of violence in a bloody fabric of bifurcated collective memory.

Both sides remain prisoners of their mythologized past. No such disputed holy ground exists in South Africa. Even during the of ethnic cleansing of integrated city neighbourhoods during

the late 1960s through the Group Areas Act, the bulldozers that demolished the alleged slum areas of District Six in Cape Town or Cato Manor in Durban left the mosques, churches and Hindu temples standing amidst the deserted debris. Rudimentary respect for other beliefs characterized the Calvinist and Huguenot traditions, perhaps due to their own origin as persecuted heretics in 17th century Europe. Afrikaner nationalism, its many intolerances notwithstanding, lacked the manifest destiny elements of ultra-orthodox Judaism. In contrast to the non-proselytizing Jews, Calvinism as a missionary enterprise also had to cultivate minimal empathy for its coloured 'sister' congregations. As a political justification for segregation, a Calvinist nationalism developed more into a blueprint of expedience than a dogmatic ideology of dedication. This is not to suggest that mainstream Calvinism practised religious tolerance or Christian moral equality in its treatment of difference. Paternalistic tutelage towards blacks, if not outright scientific racism, inspired the original formulations of apartheid.

The absence of religious friction should not be ascribed to an intrinsically more tolerant Christianity, but a more watered-down, worldly, secularized and universalistic form of religious morality in South Africa, particularly in its Anglican and Methodist versions. In Jerusalem, on the other hand, as Pierre van den Berghe has pointed out (Personal correspondence, 31 December 2001):

> You have the perfect meeting ground for all the religiously committed fundamentalists of the three most intolerant religions in the world. This is not limited to Jewish and Muslim believers. Just look at the disputes between Catholics, Orthodox, Armenians, Copts, etc. within the confines of the Holy Sepulcher and other fetishized places. Give them AK-47s, and they would start shooting at each other too.

The relative absence of anti-Muslim outbursts after the September 11 events can be attributed, in part, to the high degree of secularization, i.e. religious indifference in the

Western world, although official exhortations for tolerance were also a factor.

Israeli sociologists, such as Sammy Smooha (1997), once predicted a similar decline of religious influence and the spread of individualistic, hedonistic and materialistic attitudes. Instead, the power of the religious bloc has substantially increased, despite the influx of one million largely secular Russian immigrants. In the three-tiered educational system – state/secular, state/religious and autonomous ultra-orthodox schools – 40 per cent of the entire Jewish school population are currently exposed to religious instruction and indoctrination. The 380 000 settlers, many of whom were born in the United States or Europe and a fanatical minority of whom consider themselves occupying ancient Judea and Samaria, have extended their stranglehold over the land as well as increased their political influence with the shift to the right by the Israeli electorate. Half of these settlers live in more affordable housing in annexed territory adjoining Jerusalem.

Since the steadily dwindling two main parties, Likud and Labour, need coalition partners, even a Labour-led government would now be deadlocked on compromises with the Palestinians. The Israeli electoral system of proportional representation allows small sectarian parties to blackmail the bigger blocs, usually only for educational subsidies, but often for divisive ideological concessions. The clear example of this predicament is the faster expansion of settlements under the Labour government of Ehud Barak than under the tenure of his right-wing predecessor, Netanyahu. In an interview with Benny Morris, Barak himself has conceded that this was done in order to 'mollify the Israeli right' which he needed to be quiescent (*The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002: 42–45).

In Israel, the degree of religiosity correlates strongly with antagonism towards Arabs (Ehrlich, 2001). It also serves as a better indicator of 'left' and 'right' self-identification than economic policy preference. Statistically, the more orthodox and religious individual voters are, the less trust they express

in Palestinians and the more they reject the entire peace process ('land for peace'). Many in the orthodox religious parties (Shas, NRP, Agudat Israel, comprising about 20 per cent of the electorate) would rather contemplate civil war than allow meaningful concessions. The Israeli sociologist Avishai Ehrlich (2001: 26) concludes: 'The strength of the religious community within the electorate has been the major cause for the inability of Israel to offer the requisite conditions for a historic compromise.' A Jewish internal struggle between the secular and the religious was supposed to be triggered by the seemingly inevitable peace process and the dismantling of settlements. Instead, the very peace process has been abandoned for the time being, resulting in a grand coalition unity government.

In South Africa, the ultra-right conservative parties (Conservative Party [CP], Afrikaner Weerstands Beweging [AWB], Freedom Front [FF]) were the equivalent of the religious right in Israel. However, they could never block the National Party (NP) politically. The NP always enjoyed a majority, narrowly within the Afrikaner electorate and nationally with the growing support of more liberal English voters. Religiosity did not correlate with party support or 'right-left' orientations in South Africa. In addition, the former Westminster 'winner-takes-all' electoral system facilitated a strong and stable ruling party that could ignore its opposition as long as it held the majority in parliament. A reforming National Party could easily substitute its defecting right-wing constituency with conservative English voters.

In short, while religion played a unifying role in settling the South African conflict peacefully, religion divides intransigent adherents in the Middle East. Religious absolutes negate the very idea of bargaining. The South African strife was about relative power and privilege, which allowed trade-offs. In conflicts perceived as being about fundamental values, the negotiation of compromises is much more difficult. The conflict becomes more intractable, unless solved by the total defeat of one opponent or intervention by a strong outside force.

Unlike in apartheid South Africa with its openly racist regime, negotiations about Israel always contain the 'burden of history'. Narratives about Jewish ancient rights over places of veneration or Muslim relations with the crusaders draw on deep historical and mythical wells that did not burden South African negotiations. Ever since the Balfour Declaration, the Zionist movement has been able to mobilize Western support with such religious references and holy monuments. Afrikaner Calvinism lacked these antecedents, despite the feeble invocation of biblical support for racial segregation. In the US, evangelical Republicans support Israel more strongly than any other social grouping, while secular Democrats lean towards the Palestinian cause with a slight majority. In contrast, mobilized Christian constituencies in the US were more likely to oppose apartheid domination than to weigh in on behalf of the supposed 'bastion of Western Christian civilization'.

Third party intervention

A crucial difference between the South African and Israeli conflicts obviously lies in the different outside support. In terms of global legitimacy Israel differs fundamentally from the pariah apartheid state. Apartheid faced a hostile world opinion, although it enjoyed subterfuge assistance from key powers. Thatcher's Britain, the Swiss banks and German car manufacturers never stopped investing in or trading with the apartheid state. Since the mid-197Os, Israel itself cultivated close military and technical links with the pariah state.5 After the Organization of African Unity (OAU) turned its back against Israel, Rabin even invited the Nazi-supporter Vorster for a state visit. Apartheid's foreign supporters, however, had to conceal their ties or justify them with promoting reform through economic growth. Under pressure from various domestic constituencies, even the Reagan administration reluctantly embraced the sanctions movement in 1988. 'Constructive engagement', as the controversial policy was

labelled, continued but with more sticks than carrots. In short, apartheid South Africa lacked a supportive diaspora or protective kin-state that would lend assistance to domestic policy.

Much has been written about the fluctuating degrees of support that Israel receives, particularly from the US, regardless of the administration in charge in Washington. The diaspora nationalism and emotional ties with the Jewish state run so deep that they almost define who is a Jew and who has abandoned this ethnic self-conception among 'Jews' abroad. Among the many committed, support of Israel does not depend on Israeli policy or the party in power but is unconditional and total. Israeli behaviour may even be severely criticized, but that does not detract from the underlying identification when called upon to take sides. None of this supportive relationship characterizes South African white expatriates. On the contrary, they were often found amongst the apartheid opposition or were motivated to migrate due to dissatisfaction with South Africa's political system or high crime rate. In contrast, outside support for Israel is motivated by a shared belief in the need for a Jewish state.

From the global legitimacy of a struggle against the South African pariah state, emanated the certainty of eventual victory. This clarity about the outcome of a common democratic state was backed by the power of numbers. The end of white minority rule might take some time, but was widely considered inevitable. Even the Afrikaner rulers conceded the need for permanent reform in order to postpone the loss of power. In contrast, the outcome of the Middle East conflict remains uncertain, particularly for Palestinians. Possible scenarios range from expulsion, to ongoing subjugation, to two states, to a common multicultural democracy. The uncertainty weakens resistance. With a perceived gloomy future ahead, many professional Palestinians have elected to emigrate. A few thousand South African political activists exiled themselves, but only temporarily. While many members of the three minority groups left, few of the African majority sought permanent betterment abroad. Emigration of scarce skills constitutes an important part

of the rising costs of an ongoing conflict. However, in Israel, those costs are ameliorated by subsidies and some immigration. As long as the US bankrolls the Jewish client state, material losses from an ongoing war are bearable. What ultimately enticed the Afrikaner bourgeoisie to reconsider its racist policies and embrace meaningful negotiations is likely to have a limited impact in Israel.

Whether a state faces a hostile or supportive diaspora does not necessarily determine whether there will be negotiated or confrontational conflict management. In the South African case, economic sanctions are often overestimated as causal factors of compromise. Withdrawal of foreign firms initially even strengthened domestic intransigence, as the absconding companies were bought out by South African capital at bargain prices. Many local firms acted as less generous employers since they were under less scrutiny for good corporate citizenship. Boycotts of South African goods abroad were easily circumvented by false labelling, establishing subsidiaries in neighbouring countries or developing new markets in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, following the virtual closure of traditional export destinations in Western Europe and North America. The boycott was estimated to add an average export tax of 10 per cent on commodities, which South African businesses considered bearable. Sanctions hurt most when they blocked access to capital markets abroad. The public and private sectors' inability to raise long-term foreign loans hampered the development of infrastructural projects and added to domestic inflation. The widespread foreign perception of South Africa as a potentially unstable high-risk economy also undermined domestic economic confidence. It was in this psychological realm, rather than through unbearable cost increases, that sanction contributed to a readiness to entertain negotiated solutions to escalating unrest. Paradoxically, the moral sanction of ostracism by supposedly anti-Communist Western allies bothered the Afrikaner politicians more than the economic losses. Sanctions did not achieve the expected deepening split between business and government.

On the contrary, since apartheid South Africa could now be viewed as truly under siege by a hostile outside world, the more liberal business section was pressured to join in to beat sanctions as a patriotic duty. Most corporate leaders duly complied.

In short, if applied unwisely, outside pressures for a negotiated settlement can sometimes be counter-productive. Sanctions can help solidify a fragmented regime when they contribute to poverty and unemployment. Cultural and academic boycotts, for example, assist the work of the censor in authoritarian environments. Instead of opening minds to progressive alternatives and new visions, they serve simply to assuage the moral egos of their sponsors. Paradoxically, the sports boycott applied the most successful pressure, as sports-obsessed South Africans quickly integrated segregated teams in order to make them acceptable for international competitions. Successful sports integration, however, is also the least consequential in socio-political terms.

Stanley Cohen (2001: 146) writes that 'the essence of white consciousness in apartheid South Africa was a continuous shutting out of what seemed "obvious" to any outsider'. If 'shutting out' implies a conscious effort to repress contradictory information, the statement is problematic. On the contrary, at least the elite of regime apologists showed a keen interest in what the maligned opposition was arguing, particularly when it was written in Afrikaans. One could visit government offices in Pretoria for interviews, and senior bureaucrats or generals often had Hermann Giliomee and Andre du Toit's *Die Suid-Afrikaan* or Max du Preez's *Vrye Weeksblad* on their desks. Since the critical views were expressed by respectable fellow Afrikaners (and not by despised English liberals), they weighed more heavily, particularly since a compliant party media hardly ever exposed government scandals. The successful patient erosion of a political hegemony by ethnic insiders cannot be quantified and also has never been recognized by the new rulers. Israeli and Palestinian peace activists can draw

important lessons from this precedent. Those with the most impact on recalcitrant regimes are neither the 'moral crusaders' who merely express outrage, and ridicule and condemn the political actors, nor the 'polarizing militants' who have joined the 'enemy camp' unreservedly. Their critical line is predictable and instantly dismissed. Yet when a 'strategic dissenter' speaks out and engages the regime apologists with feasible alternatives and their own moral follies, the critique originates from a creditable source and hits home.

Critical visitors and outsiders who cannot be instantly labelled 'supporters' or 'opponents' can play a similar subversive role. For the colonized minds of apartheid South Africans – Afrikaners and blacks alike – anything imported from abroad, from fashion to academic expertise, carried a mythical quality and undeserved prestige. Most of the ethnic Afrikaner intelligentsia were keen to have their world views of 'the communist threat' or the fickle nature of hostile world opinion or the 'moral decay of liberal America' confirmed by the foreign visitor. There was little cognitive retreat from disturbing news – the average Afrikaner adult did not mind plainly discussing delicate subjects with visitors or even admitting their own racist atrocities. Non-South Africans were generally viewed as biased or mislead, and National Party supporters went out of their way to enlighten the assumed ignorant foreigners and show them 'the real South Africa'. Unfortunately, few liberal intellectuals from abroad took the opportunity to engage their hosts critically. Instead of sowing doubts and shattering the complacent myths of apartheid indoctrination, they boycotted the pariah state. Reaffirming their own purity and pseudo-radical credentials seemed more important to many foreign academics than achieving an impact. The underlying assumption that racist and fascist minds were totally closed, overlooked the quest for moral recognition by a shunned outcast people. Similar to the uncritical solidarity groups on pilgrimage to Israel, conservative foreigners filled the need of justifying the unjustifiable. Paradoxically, when liberal intellectuals broke the ill-considered cultural boycott, as did the renowned

Irish academic Connor Cruise O'Brien in 1987, they were hounded out of South Africa by the very activists whose cause they supported.

Can the outside pressure for a negotiated settlement in South Africa provide any lessons for negotiating a compromise in Israel? It is difficult to envision a worldwide sanction movement against Israeli intransigence on Palestinian rights or against the Palestinian campaign of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians. Palestinians, however, risk being abandoned by outside powers. Since 1972, half of all Security Council resolutions on Palestine have been vetoed by the US, including resolutions ordering Israel to stop building illegal Jewish settlements on occupied land or proposals to dispatch UN monitors (Helm, 2001). The American and Canadian press are less critical of Israel than the Israeli media that is much more geared to the conflict. As Edward Said and Peter Novick (1999) have shown, Israel skillfully exploits Western guilt and devotes significant resources ('Hasbarah') to deflect and neutralize criticism by invoking the Holocaust or by tweaking the uneasy conscience of diaspora Jews for abandoning the homeland.

Israel's dependence on US backing makes it acutely vulnerable to outside dictates. A reduction of the $3 billion annual US aid (one sixth of total US foreign aid) would severely hurt the Jewish state. While not exactly in a total patron-client relationship, the self-declared Western outpost has to take shifting Washington policies seriously. Despite its overwhelming military superiority, Israel always has to weigh its military measures against its impact on world opinion. As underdogs, Palestinians do enjoy some global empathy beyond the Arab world, particularly in Europe, and especially after the military invasion and reoccupation of Palestinian territory in 2002.

Many analysts have pointed out how poorly the Palestinian case is represented in the Western media. Lamenting the bias of the media or blaming an all-powerful Jewish lobby overlooks the Arab/Palestinian failure to mount a persuasive educational campaign. Edward Said (*Sunday Times*, 14 April 2002) has rightly argued that a 'Palestinian victory will be won

in the US'. Said suggests that Palestinians have 'not at all understood the politics of nonviolence' or grasped the 'immense, diffusionary, insistent and repetitive power of the images broadcast by CNN'. Instead of trying to influence public opinion abroad, the Palestinian voices have berated, caricatured or begged America, according to Said, 'cursing it in one breath, asking for help in another, all in miserably inadequate, fractured English'. Saddled with the stigma of terrorists, Sharon has succeeded in making Arafat into a local Bin Laden. The Israeli state not only claims military but also propa-gandistic superiority in this global fight against terrorism, although many Israelis complain about a hostile foreign media, particularly in Europe. There is a *'Mitleidseffekt'* (empathy) for Palestinians which has nothing to do with anti-Semitism, but has reduced the moral standing of Israel.

In contrast, the South African liberation movements slowly captured world opinion, although they also had to overcome the ingrained, unspoken racist scepticism in a black-white imagery. Against these odds, the ANC succeeded in mobilizing even conservatives in Europe and North America to isolate the apartheid government as a morally unacceptable regime. This almost universal condemnation owes much to the politics of inclusion and non-racialism that the ANC espouses. The Palestinians have not convincingly communicated their policy of coexistence, and according to Said, 'neither have we understood the power of trying to address Israelis directly, the way the ANC addressed the white South Africans'. Here lies a clear lesson to be drawn.

Short of an unlikely military intervention, South Africa remained relatively immune to imposed outside prescriptions. Like the conflicts in Northern Ireland or other marginalized areas, apartheid also ranked low in terms of global geo-political importance. But in the Middle East, access to oil and the West's standing in the Arab/Islamic world is at stake, now particularly crucial in terms of the fragile post September 11 global coalition against terrorism. In the ideological competition of the Cold War, apartheid's racial capitalism remained a

mere embarrassment to the West. With the end of that era and its proxy wars, Africa receded in geo-political significance. Meanwhile, the unresolved Israel/Palestinian crisis and the instability of autocratic Arabic regimes advanced on the world agenda.

Andre Jacquet, a veteran South African diplomat deeply involved in negotiations on Namibian independence in 1990, made the point that 'the Namibian solution was crucial for the subsequent settlement in South Africa. It convinced the hard-liners in Pretoria that you could talk to "terrorists" and achieve a mutually satisfactory result' (personal conversations, 25 November 2001). The recognition accord between Egypt (Sadat) and Israel (Begin) might have had a similar demonstrative effect, particularly for the hostile Arab rejectionists. However, the subsequent assassination of Sadat by Islamic extremists only confirmed that peace overtures enjoyed little support in Egypt, let alone in other Arab states. In the wake of the accord many curious Israelis travelled to Cairo for the first time, but few Egyptians reciprocated and the anti-Zionist sloganeering in the public discourse was soon revived.

The end of the Cold War affected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict differently and less directly, while it was decisive in spurring South African negotiations. The collapse of the Soviet Union deprived the ANC of diplomatic and Eastern bloc military support, forcing it to refocus on the political road to power. Perceiving a weakened ANC, Afrikaner elites negotiated because they anticipated a declining power base, combined with a shrinking demographic ratio, and intended to use their remaining strength to secure a good deal and orderly transition. In the Middle East, Israel's overwhelming military superiority has removed any incentive for meaningful compromise, despite an increasing sense of personal insecurity. Similarly, the historic 1993 Oslo accord came about, in part, because the Palestinian cause had been weakened by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) support of Iraq during the Gulf War and the withdrawal of Russia from Syria.

Israel's history and location in the Arab world and the presence of Palestinian refugees in many countries, made the Middle East conflict an international issue, requiring an international solution beyond a mere Israeli settlement. South Africa, in contrast, was widely perceived as a national, one-country problem. South Africa solved its transition with minimal outside interference. Once negotiations had started, both the ANC and the National Party shunned international mediation and arbitration.[6] Many European states assisted the struggling democracy movement with financial subsidies which sometimes went directly to the ANC or to thinly disguised front organisations. However, European assistance never approached the magnitude of American aid to Israel or the annual $250 million European Union (EU) contribution in addition to Arab funds to the Palestinian Authority. Outside help for the anti-apartheid movement proved most useful in areas such as providing for the legal defence of political activists on trial, the direct support of small NGOs and alternative media outlets, and the occasional provision of conference support, such as for the important ANC/Afrikaner conference at Dakar in 1987. This type of tangible assistance by sympathetic governments and foreign philanthropists, such as George Soros, strengthened South Africa's civil society and provided psychological encouragement in a hostile domestic climate. Frequently, however, well-intentioned foreign donors trusted their clients blindly and failed to insist on proper standards of accountability. This oversight encouraged corruption as well as a tendency to neglect reliance on internal support. The eclipse of Arafat's Palestinian Authority by Hamas stems partly from similar widespread fiscal irregularities and abuse of power, as a result of which the welfare services of Hamas now outperform those of the official institutions.

For foreign supporters of open and democratic societies, the lessons from South Africa lie in resisting the easy route of channelling funds to government and official institutions. Instead, democratic grassroots organisations should be sought

out for direct support that comes without imperialist dictates but with firm insistence on transparency and accountability.

Embattled leadership in controversial compromises

In South Africa, the middle ground always enjoyed majority support among whites and blacks alike. The white ultra-right slogan 'bullets instead of ballots' had been as marginalized as the Pan African Congress/Azanian People's Liberation Army (PAC/APLA) call for 'one settler one bullet', despite the ongoing mobilization for armed struggle by the ANC.

How a moderate leadership can minimize the ever-present danger of outbidding depends equally on its own performance and on the behaviour of the opponent. Negotiation leaders must maintain credibility with their constituency in order to sell a controversial compromise. In South Africa, de Klerk secured the consent of his white constituency for negotiations through a referendum on 17 March 1992. A surprising 68,7 per cent of South Africa's whites supported a negotiated abolition of their minority rule through a likely non-racial majority rule, although they had no inkling how much white power their trusted government would eventually agree to relinquish. The National Party campaign slogan 'negotiation yes, surrender no', was cleverly crafted to give the leadership an open-ended mandate. They disagreed among themselves about what was open for negotiations, how long the process should last, who the interlocutors should be, and how it would all end. Vague notions were floating around, including a rotating black and white presidency, consociational power-sharing and constitutionally entrenched ethnic group rights. In the end, none of these minority guarantees materialized or even mattered. More important was the mandate that de Klerk had sought and received. The historical success of the party stalwart de Klerk lies in defeating hard line rivals and preventing a mutiny among sections of his security establishment and the threatened civil service. De Klerk could invoke legitimacy within the Afrikaner

constituency among whom the National Party held a slight majority at all times. This was helped by the conservative image that de Klerk had acquired in the past.

The authoritarian Afrikaner culture places great trust in legitimate ethnic leaders, unlike the more quarrelsome, individualistic and fragmented Jewish political scene. Even most disaffected right-wingers would respect the legitimacy of democratically elected incumbents of office, despite their deep disenchantment and distrust. A few months before de Klerk unbanned the liberation movements, little breakdown of ethnic cohesion had taken place. A comprehensive survey among several thousand white Afrikaans and English students across the country by Stellenbosch political scientist Jannie Gagiano (1990: 191–208) in mid-1989 revealed solid sympathy towards public authority with only six per cent of Afrikaans-speaking whites unsympathetic, as opposed to 41 per cent of English-speakers. Less than 10 per cent of Afrikaans males (as opposed to 35,5% of English-speakers) would consider refusing to do military service and only six per cent of Afrikaners expressed unsympathetic attitudes towards the security establishment (21 per cent among English students). What Gagiano calls the 'repression potential' amounted to more than 90 per cent among Afrikaners and the author concludes: 'The state need have no inordinate fear that repression will be seriously resisted by strategic sections within the white community'. Gagiano, unfortunately does not explain what accounts for the 'symbolically very significant and previously unthinkable defections from the Afrikaner community to the ranks of the liberation movements' within the course of a year. Following trustingly a political leadership by ethnic conformists, regardless of major policy changes, would seem to provide a large part of the answer. If that is the case, the quality and vision of leaders in ethnic democracies would appear far more important than sociologists commonly tend to admit, although successful leaders must also be in tune with major material and ideal interests of their constituencies.

The ANC also enjoyed the advantage of relative internal cohesion, partly based on an authoritarian organisational exile culture and partly on the unblemished reputation of honoured leaders. Nelson Mandela, who had been imprisoned for so long; Joe Slovo, a demonized, life-long communist, or Cyril Ramaphosa, a savvy negotiator with impeccable militant union credentials: in popular perceptions, these men would never betray the struggle. Their judgement carried weight with a sceptical constituency. Even when they declared controversial decisions non-negotiable, as Mandela did on several occasions, their authority did not suffer. The cessation of the armed struggle or, later, the dramatic shift in economic policy from social-democratic to neo-liberal principles could only be managed by strong leadership. Such leadership required a willingness to marginalize internal democracy and minimize the input of civil society in government decisions. These turn-arounds were facilitated by the alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), both of which could credibly present controversial concessions as interim stages in the ongoing political struggle to achieve a socialist society. In this regard, ANC conservatives benefited from the communists at least as much as the weakened left relied on the government payroll for individual careers and legislative pacifiers in the form of protective labour laws for collective justification.

In contrast, the Palestinian negotiators at the 2000 Camp David meetings lacked cohesion, despite the far more autocratic Palestinian Authority structures. Malley and Agha (2001: 71) in their participatory analysis report that tensions among the dozen Palestinian negotiators, never far from the surface, had grown as the stakes rose, with the possibility of a final deal and the coming struggle for succession.

> The negotiators looked over their shoulders, fearful of adopting positions that would undermine them back home. Appearing to act disparately and without a central purpose, each Palestinian negotiator gave pre-eminence to a particular issue, making

> virtually impossible the kinds of trade-offs that, inevitably, a compromise would entail.

Neither the ANC negotiators nor their NP counterparts with their 1992 mandate were plagued by similar concerns about rival actors. Both used the lurking presence of extremists to propagate the advantages of their own moderation. If parties to negotiations must avoid treating the adversary as a monolithic entity with no internal politics, the ANC and NP were far more successful at this than the Middle East combatants. The Palestinians failed to exploit deep cleavages in the Israeli political system and the Jewish state always holds 'Palestinians' collectively responsible, as if the leadership could control every individual.

Within both the ANC and the PLO simmered a cleavage between exiles and internal activists. The split proved deeper in the Palestinian camp than in the ANC. With the return of the exiles to South Africa in 1990, local resistance groups were reluctantly dissolved, marginalized or co-opted into an essentially exile-dominated leadership. At all times the locals had taken their cues from Lusaka and deferred to the leadership abroad, apart from the 1979 split by Buthelezi's Inkatha movement which henceforth competed with the ANC as a separate, independent organisation.

In the Palestinian case, the relationship between exiles and internals proved the reverse. Internal opposition influenced the leadership in Tunisia much more profoundly. When the 'Tunisians' returned in 1994, as part of the new Palestinian Authority (PA) under the Oslo accord, they frequently clashed with the indigenous resistance. Their suffering under curfews and 'administrative detention' was contrasted with the luxury lives of the exiles in Tunisian villas. Although Arafat offered senior indigenous members positions in the PA security apparatus, some refused to give up their guns. The 'Fatah Hawks' in Nablus, for example, carried on independently, even though they had marched beneath Arafat's picture before. The new

Palestinian Authority lacked the legitimacy to reign in dissidents from its own ranks, let alone more militant groups. In addition, initially rival sectarian organizations like Hamas were secretly supported by the US and Israel as a counterweight against the then more threatening nationalist and secular PLO.

In contrast, the ANC, particularly with an icon like Mandela at the head, could discipline opposing forces with its sheer moral weight of struggle credentials. Unlike the corrupt, autocratic and opportunistic PLO in power, the new ANC office-holders could invoke wide legitimacy in their struggle with the old bureaucracy. In both cases though, the virtues of exile survival (secrecy, distrust, conspiracy) do not easily transform into democratic habits of transparency, accountability and mandate politics. Much of the problematic patronage and cronyism of undeserving individuals in both the ANC and PLO can be attributed to loyalties and habits formed in exile.

The hardening and softening of political cultures

As a catchphrase for many of the issues analyzed, political culture comprises collective attitudes, inter-group relations, hegemonic discourses and cultural traditions that deserve special attention as facilitators of and obstacles to negotiations.

At the grassroots level, a striking paradox marks the two political cultures under study. In integrated Israel, an external observer would soon note a relative lack of personal contact between the adversaries. The segregated South Africa of the apartheid era, on the other hand, was characterized by comparatively close personal interactions. After the unification of Jerusalem, writes Amos Elon (2001: 10), 'between Palestinians and Jews there was little if any social intercourse, no intermarriage, no economic cooperation to speak of except, perhaps, in the underworld or between the Israeli security services and their paid collaborators and spies'. In South Africa, most white households employ black servants; many have their children looked after by an African nanny; most menial work is done

by blacks; the black elite always sent their offspring to integrated 'white' private schools and the country's universities increasingly reflect the racial mix of their surroundings. Even the tribal colleges for specific ethnic groups were dominated by white staff. While this inter-racial intimacy in the workplace never approached equal status contact, mutual familiarity softened attitudes, blocked demonization of the other and gave rise to a prevailing paternalism on the part of the dominant group. Paternalistic condescension towards racialized childlike underlings differs from the chauvinistic social distance and mutual animosity characteristic of relations between Jews and Palestinians. While the Israeli and Palestinian leaders negotiate as formal equals, elite perceptions and street sentiments differ much more than in South Africa. Nationalist indoctrination also hampers the possibility of accepting painful trade-offs.

Apartheid rulers were always aware that a political – not military – solution would ultimately have to be found. This was the case even at the height of the war against the exiled ANC during the 1980s, when the military itself preached the doctrine that the fight against the 'total onslaught' is 80 per cent political and 20 per cent military. Despite the everyday brutality of racial humiliation, official policy aimed to win the 'hearts and minds' of moderate blacks through economic betterment schemes. In contrast, the right-of-centre Israeli parties view Palestinians as a collective threat, meting out collective punishment which forces a unity on the adversary that apartheid rulers tried to avoid at all costs. In 1988, General CJ Lloyd, the Secretary of the South African State Security Council, stressed that in 'eliminating' the small number of ANC revolutionaries in the townships the security forces must take care not to 'incur the wrath of the masses' by harming uncommitted, non-revolutionary members of the community 'by accident'.

Like the Peace Now movement in Israel, South Africa's liberal anti-apartheid opposition always advocated political appeasement through negotiations. However, unlike the Israeli left, this small opposition succeeded in instilling an increasing

sense of moral doubt and even illegitimacy among leading National Party supporters. The Israeli peace camp, on the other hand, shares the same sense of ethnic identity and nationalism as the rest of the country, an identification that the white, mostly English, opposition never shared with the Afrikaner ruling party in South Africa. The majority of the 40 per cent English-speaking whites perceived the Afrikaner government almost as a foreign ethnic ruling class from whose racial policies they benefited and for whom many voted, but with whom they had little else in common. In this ideological identification with their state lies one of the crucial differences between the anti-apartheid and internal Israeli opposition. For example, the English-speaking youth, who chose the path of conscientious objection to compulsory military service rejected the entire racial system. The few hundred who risk jail in Israel by refusing to serve in the occupied territories are still firm in their Zionism and would defend Israel proper at any time, if the state's survival were threatened. They are soldiers who have served before, with many holding rank. Unlike the South African activists in the End Conscription Campaign, the Israeli objectors cannot be accused of opportunistic cowardice, although they are denounced as traitors in Israel. Their impact lies not in weakening the Israeli military but in reviving the credibility of Israel in the perception of disillusioned Palestinians. As Steven Friedman (*Cape Times*, 28 February 2002) has perceptively commented: 'Just as whites refusing to fight for apartheid may have strengthened the black leadership's non-racialism, so the Israeli objectors may send a message to Palestinians who see Israelis purely as occupiers.' Michael Sfard, a lawyer for the protesting conscripts, has vividly described the brutalization of a society that similarly plagued some South Africans who refused to serve in the army. It is worth quoting the essential moral concerns of the ostracized dissidents at length:

> The occupation corrupted Israeli culture, it eroded our code of ethics, and it even contaminated the Hebrew language. In the

> name of the fight against the murderous and unforgivable terror that struck Israeli cities and towns we grew accustomed to manning check-points in which thousands of Palestinians are being detained for hours and humiliated by young soldiers. We grew accustomed to pointing our rifles at children and women. We became tolerant to large-scale demolition of houses ('surface uncovering in military jargon'). Finally we accepted a state-sponsored policy of assassinations, neatly labelled by Israeli spokesmen as 'focused prevention'. We learned how to distinguish between roads for settlers (Jews) and roads for 'locals' (Palestinians), and we were asked to implement discriminatory laws for the sake of illegal settlements that have trapped our country in an endless messianic war. A war which the vast majority of Iraelis never wanted. As soldiers who witnessed, first-hand, the corrosive effect of the occupation on ordinary Israelis and Palestinians we could no longer bear its destructive implications for what we were raised to believe were Israeli values – respect for human life and dignity. The occupation chiselled out unequal relations between Palestinians and Israelis. It planted in many a seed of racism against Arabs (*The Observer*, 19 May 2002).

Academic rational choice analysts often overestimate cost-benefit calculations and underrate the moral unease which also motivates people to strive for alternatives despite pressure to conform.

Some of the brightest Afrikaner academics defected from the ruling camp early on and a vague feeling of guilt among the politically conscious always paralleled feudal labour exploitation. In what is arguably the best account of the complex South African transition, Patti Waldmeier (1997: 30) perhaps over-generalizes, but diagnoses correctly:

> By the mid-1970s, Afrikaners had begun to recognize the impossibilities foisted on them by apartheid. They were motivated, at least in part, by morality. Gently, almost imperceptibly, apartheid had begun to prick the Afrikaner conscience; the spiritual comfort vital to the national psyche had been disturbed.

This unease under pressure to justify the unjustifiable, ultimately culminated in a slow erosion of the will to rule

without substantial reforms. When these attempts of reformist co-option through a Tricameral Parliament in 1982 proved counter-productive, the spectre of a genuine democracy emerged.

In Israel, a collective guilt towards stateless Palestinians in the occupied territories is either totally absent or overwhelmed by a collective sense of victimhood through Palestinian terrorism and threats to Israel's very existence. The Israeli journalist and reputed author, Amos Elon, (2001: 11) points out that 'among Israelis there is only very rarely a shadow of guilt over the fact that their astounding material, social, and international success had come at the price of rendering millions of Palestinians homeless.' Most Israelis would reject this direct attribution of their higher living standards to the displacement of Palestinians. The links between the privileges of a ruling group and the disadvantages of the rest are much clearer in South Africa. Indeed, early Zionists shunned employing non-Jewish labour and aimed at an economically self-reliant community until Dayan officially lifted the taboo on hiring Palestinian labour in the 1970s. Among 'post-Zionist' intellectuals there exists also a genuine desire to work for a fair deal for Palestinians, similar to the few Afrikaner voices that called for 'rule with justice'. With heightened polarization, however, such reasoning becomes increasingly marginalized and stigmatized as fraternizing with the mortal enemy. Elon speaks of a 'moral myopia', that is unable to resolve the painful paradox of steadily increasing military power and steadily decreasing national security. When two irreconcilable chauvinisms confront each other, neither side acknowledges the harm caused by their own stance.

Afrikaners were as dispersed inside South Africa as Jews in the global diaspora. Not one of the 300 magisterial districts in apartheid South Africa contained an Afrikaner majority. They also entertained anxieties about a future under black rule, and a minority seriously flirted with establishing a 'volksstaat' along the Jewish model. The dream failed to garner support not only because of economic interdependence. Unlike

diaspora Jews, the ruling Afrikaners did not feel particularly vulnerable and had not faced persecution from blacks. Despite all the anxieties about 'black numbers swamping whites', 'white women being molested' or 'administrative chaos erupting', the Afrikaner paternalistic mindset did not believe that blacks collectively were inclined to or even capable of seriously harming their white overlords. To be sure, there was the occasional bombing of Wimpy Bars and supermarkets or mines on remote farm roads. Many civilians were maimed when the airforce headquarters in a busy Pretoria street were targeted or later when a black fringe-group attacked a Cape Town church. Still, most Afrikaners dismissed the 'armed struggle' as the work of a few misguided communist terrorists. The signs of growing militancy did not shake the average bystander out of the customary complacency. Unlike Israelis, average Afrikaners hardly lived on the edge in their cocooned suburbs. They continued to attend the Saturday afternoon rugby games and trusted their government to handle the occasional disturbances. Personal security was perceived as protection from individual black criminals rather than the rage of an entire population as in Israel. When, during a provocative invasion of Bophutatswana, a few surrendering white right-wingers were finally shot in revenge by black policemen before rolling cameras, the event caused a traumatizing shock in the Afrikaner community.

It is the differential experience of vulnerability between Zionists and Afrikaner nationalists that accounts, in part, for the different responses of separate versus common states. As obvious beneficiaries of racial minority rule, Afrikaners could hardly portray themselves as victims, the way both Israelis and Palestinians sanctify victimhood. Israelis are far more convinced of their own rationalizations than Afrikaner nationalists ever were. Suzanne Goldenberg, a long-time foreign correspondent, (*Globe & Mail*, 17 August 2002: F4) observes that 'Israelis and Palestinians appear to suffer not from doubts, but from certainties'. Afrikaners never idealized their society or elevated their army into a 'moral force' the

way Israelis think their country operates on higher ethical standards.

One of the world's leading criminologists, Stanley Cohen, (2001) in his perceptive book *States of Denial*, has compared different bystander motivations under Nazi rule, in Communist Eastern Europe and in Israel and South Africa. Unlike the compliance out of fear in the totalitarian Nazi and communist regimes, Cohen diagnoses as voluntary the conformity with government policy in the ethnic democracies of Israel and white South Africa. 'But denial of the injustices and injuries inflicted on the Palestinians is built into the social fabric. The Jewish public's assent to official propaganda, myth and self-righteousness results from willing identification' (Cohen: 157). The real threat to life and limb though suicide bombers has, of course, reinforced a 'defensive self-image and a character armour of insecurity and permanent victimhood'. Cohen (2001: 165) traces the different idioms of denial in Israel that afflict even critical visitors: 'The same American Jews who are outspoken critics of human rights violations everywhere from El Salvador to Tibet now change from sophisticated observers into dumbed-down collective victims. Their fellow Jews who criticize the Israeli treatment of Palestinians too strongly or openly are denounced as "self-hating Jews" or as having a "Diaspora mentality".'

Arthur (1996: 96) writing about the Anglo-Irish peace process, illustrates how communities can become prisoners of their past by cultivating a 'narcissism of victimization.' Arthur talks about a 'victim-bonded society in which memories of past injustice and humiliation are so firmly entrenched in both communities and the sense of entrapment so complete that the hunger strikers (of 1980–81) are a metaphor for the entrapment of the larger society'. It would seem that a similar insistence on victimhood is shared by Israeli and Palestinian societies in their insistence on their exclusive suffering. In such a situation, people are unable to develop an 'anticipatory memory', which the South African parties achieved by projecting images of future liberation from past conflicts.

Acknowledging past crimes by all parties, including themselves, inaugurated a necessary break with a deadening past.

In Israel, the military and politics are closely intertwined. Battle heroes frequently become prime ministers (Rabin, Barak, Sharon), and politicians depend on their security advisors. In a society under siege, the high status of military leaders comes as no surprise. That does not mean that all generals are uncompromisingly hawkish. In fact, Labour Party affinities once dominated in the secular Israeli top military hierarchy, with few sympathies for religious nationalists. Often the generals stopped the more extreme zealots from further inflaming Palestinian militancy and undermining Israeli security. The former generals Rabin and Barak advocated the greatest concessions to the Palestinians. In South Africa, too, it was the former head of the army, Constand Viljoen, who almost single-handedly averted civil war by persuading large sections of his military men to join him in the political route for the realization of the dream of an Afrikaner homeland. Having experienced the horrors of war first-hand, military leaders are often more pragmatic than civilian ideologues when it comes to avoiding casualties in renewed conflicts. Had the Afrikaner military leadership not succeeded in reigning in the band of 2 000 ultra-right-wingers who invaded Bophutatswana to set up an anti-ANC base, or had Mandela failed to calm the black rage after Chris Hani's assassination over Easter 1993, the country may have well descended into civil war. In short, the South African opponents intentionally assisted each other in achieving a peaceful outcome. In the Middle East, war-mongering factions on both sides intentionally sabotage peace efforts.

Apartheid South Africa was always dominated by civilian politicians. Even under President PW Botha, who as a former Minister of Defence relied on the military as his main support base and employed a hardline military man (Malan) as his own defence minister, generals carried out political decisions but hardly shaped them. A British tradition of apolitical military professionalism prevailed. With the exception of General

Smuts before 1948 and Constand Viljoen as party leader in the post–apartheid era, no Afrikaner military figure switched into politics in modern times, let alone sat in the cabinet. While Afrikaner lawyers, civil servants, academics and churchmen in the top echelons of the National Party listened to the police and military advice and gave these institutions a free hand to pursue the enemies of the state, security issues did not necessarily top the political agenda, even at the height of township confrontations. Economic cost-benefit calculations were at least equally important, as white privilege depended on black labour and investment perceptions abroad. In white South Africa, racial animosity and prejudice steadily softened with rising costs, as dozens of opinion surveys during the 1970s and 80s revealed. With military superiority and solid outside support in the face of suicide missions and a seemingly self-destructive adversary, Israeli attitudes hardened. Both apartheid South Africa and Israel have rightly been described as 'societies under siege'. South African whites broke out of their siege mentality by embracing risky negotiations. Israel, faced with a more existential threat, a more uncompromising adversary and strong outside endorsement, has united in rejecting further compromises in a political culture of defiance.

With a series of wars against neighbouring Arab states behind them and ongoing warfare against Palestinian insurgents, the Israeli military holds a different perception of the enemy than their apartheid counterparts did. For the SA generals, the ANC was a remote and elusive opponent; for the Israelis, Arabs are an immediate and visible threat. After General Meiring took over from Kat Liebenberg as chief of the South African Defence Force (SADF) in October 1993, the generals (James Kriel, Joffel van der Westhuizen and Kat Liebenberg) tried to restart the deadlocked Codesa negotiations by talking to their ANC counterparts from Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) for the first time. Meiring reminisces condescendingly about the 'very friendly' talks:

> We as the military never really fought with them. There was the odd occasion where we bombed a place in Maputo and a base near Lusaka but we never fought them in battle. They were hit and run, they came and placed mines and they were really terrorists at the time in that they instigated terror amongst the black population … so we actually assisted the police in many cases in maintaining law and order, more than anything else. We had a good intelligence situation about them, but there was no occasion when we fought the ANC. It wasn't the same thing as meeting with SWAPO. With the ANC, we had an open mind. We had the mindset – okay, this is going to happen, so let's go and talk to them. Kat was instigating and we were towing along. It was strange, but it wasn't completely out of this world ... They were very easy to get on with, especially Modise. Some were sharp and intelligent others not… (Hamann, 2001: 225–6).

The relatively low level of violence in the South African case, compared with the Middle East, obviously minimized 'hard feelings'. So did the inevitability of transition, although the military hierarchy also weighed up the coup option. Like the *Wehrmacht* did in Nazi Germany, the SA military bathed in the myth that the police did the dirty work while their hands were clean. Above all, the intense infighting amongst the military brass and the three intelligence services as well as the rifts and resentments between the politicians and the generals during the transition period, facilitated the relatively smooth handover of power. It is doubtful that the much better integrated Israeli military/political hierarchy would ever concede as easily as the apartheid regime did. On the other hand, the Israeli military is more susceptible and dependent on its US sponsors than its apartheid counterparts were.

Violence, deterrence and the psychic energy of martyrdom

A vital precondition for the South African negotiations was sharing a perception of stalemate. Both sides realized that they could not defeat each other militarily, save by destroying the

country in a drawn-out civil war. In Israel, both antagonists propagate the illusion of victory. In the words of Sharon: 'The Palestinians should be hit very hard, because if they don't feel they have been defeated, it will be impossible to return to the negotiating table' (*Cape Times*, 5 March 2002). This perspective implies that the opponent may only negotiate terms dictated by the victor.

Palestinians, too, falsely assume that the Israeli retreat from Lebanon can be repeated, because the opponent will not tolerate casualties for long. As the *London Independent* (6 March 2002) comments: 'Palestinian fighters detect a growing despair among ordinary Israelis at the unending carnage. And as they see Sharon's poll rating tumble, they sense that their tactics are working.' However, with each suicide bombing Sharon's ratings strengthened. Because Palestinians have essentially lost the half-century battle against the Zionist state in their midst, bearing this loss is compensated by phantom victories through martyrdom.

Hobbes reasoned that the authority of the state, which citizens bestow on their government, is ultimately grounded in their fear of death. Hobbes's assumed initial human condition of war by everyone against everyone ('bellum omnes contra omnium'; 'homo homini lupus est') is prevented by the state's monopoly of force. A strong state disciplines people into compliance with state-enforced laws which guarantee collective security. This deterrence, however, does not work if lawbreakers do not fear death and other reasons for compliance, such as ideological identification, are absent. Where martyrdom is a reward, suicide bombers are not deterred; on the contrary, they are encouraged to commit the ultimate sacrifice for their cause. Such indoctrination cancels out the normal human fear of death. The state's most powerful weapons are rendered powerless when a community celebrates martyred teenagers as heroes.

Suicide of committed political activists is culture specific. It differs widely in Asia, Europe, South Africa or the Middle East.[7] During the 30 year long armed struggle against apartheid,

nobody ever committed suicide for the political cause, although the security police presented many of their assassinations as suicide cases. By policy, not lack of capacity, no prominent apartheid leader was ever assassinated by the ANC. Apartheid agents, however, actively targeted prominent opposition activists, including white academics at home and abroad (Rick Turner, David Webster, Ruth First, Albie Sachs). The ANC leadership at least wanted to distinguish itself from its PAC/APLA competition in what an operative once called 'a civilized struggle', that distinguished between active combatants and innocent civilians, occasional remote-controlled car bombs and landmines notwithstanding. White casualties of the armed struggle constituted a miniscule proportion of the thousands killed before and during the transition. Indeed, whites hardly cared about the black dead. Had there been any more bombings like the Kenilworth Church bombing, which anyway was carried out by an unrepresentative group late in the transition period, it is doubtful that de Klerk would have received the high endorsement in the referendum for negotiations. Unlike the PAC, the ANC was able to control its radical violent faction to a large extent. A good example was the reigning in of Chris Hani and his close friend Steve Tshwete, the number two and number three in Umkhonto we Sizwe, in 1988. They spoke about the need to take the war in South Africa into white areas and turn the country into a wasteland by attacking soft targets. The ANC had always claimed that this contradicted official policy. One account of the infighting (Ellis and Sechaba, 1992: 181) states: 'Unusually for a man who generally refrained from internal quarrels, (ANC President) Tambo publicly repudiated the line advanced by Hani and Tshwete … saying that the two were speaking in their personal capacities only. In July he fired Tshwete from the position of Umkhonto we Sizwe Political Commissar.'

In contrast, like the September 11 attacks, Palestinian suicide bombers indiscriminately target civilians. State deterrence is undermined by the increased privatization of violence in so-called failed or weak states. Where warlords or terror

networks have replaced effective governments, it is allegiance to their laws and expectations that provides collective protection. The proliferation of small arms in private hands enables deadly feuds according to Hobbes's assumption.

The interstate wars of the 19th and 20th centuries, the wars of liberation from colonial rule, the struggle to end racism in South Africa or the Cold War between communism and capitalism, all ended with the collapse of one system and a distinct new order through a truce or negotiated settlement. No similar clear end can be envisaged for the new ethno-ideological strife, because mutually exclusive claims for sacred territory or ideological hegemony cannot be settled by a peace treaty. For the foreseeable future a Hobbesian state of nature has reasserted itself and the psychic energy of martyrdom persists. State counter-terror provides no lasting solution to the grievances of marginalized, dispossessed peoples.

Continued expansion of Jewish settlements in the territories under successive Israeli governments and denial of viable Palestinian statehood has politicized and radicalized the population. Instead of responding politically with Gandhian non-violence, where Israel is most vulnerable, the Palestinian leadership enacted another counterproductive intifada where Israel has unquestioned superiority. Intifada violence leads to almost automatic reprisals. The second Intifada was also no longer perceived as a struggle of unarmed people, that had once split Israeli opinion. Instead, attacks by agents of a Palestinian semi-state created an unprecedented solidarity with the settlers. In terms of assessing the impact of armed struggle on world and domestic opinion, the ANC (and even the disarming Irish Republican Army [IRA]) proved much more adept than their Palestinian counterparts.

The Israeli government makes negotiation dependent on 'no violence' by Palestinians. Similarly, the hardline South African president PW Botha made the release of Mandela contingent on his renunciation of the armed struggle, a condition the political prisoner wisely rejected. A unilateral declaration

of truce as a precondition for negotiations by an insurgent movement hands extremists a veto over negotiations. Moderates seeking negotiation are thus undermined by uncompromising militants who can start a new cycle of confrontation at any time. Successful negotiations ultimately threaten the extremist position. In turn, the pressure on official leaders to control violent hardliners increases, and if they accede, they are further delegitimized among enraged sections of their community. This is the dilemma facing Yasser Arafat. 'His people, under bombardment, are balking at the occupied being asked to provide security for the occupier,' observes the *Economist* (8 December 2001). Even when the battered PA undertook feeble attempts to control the violence, Israeli actions have undermined it several times by targeting prominent leaders. A baffled *Guardian Weekly* (27 June–3 July 2002) correspondent in Ramallah reports that 'the latest Israeli attacks seemed an almost wilful provocation to the militant Palestinian factions just as Mr. Arafat was preparing to risk moving against Hamas for ignoring his orders to stop their attacks.'

A route-map to peace-making: rescuing negotiations

In the predicament between a shrinking middle ground and strengthened extremists on both sides, several steps are necessary to rescue negotiations. They could be labelled unconditional talks, third party intervention, credible leadership and inclusive negotiations. The South African experience in the four realms can be applied to the Middle East.

Unconditional open-ended negotiations should be started even in the absence of any trust between the parties. Enemies, not friends, need to agree on rules of coexistence. Increased trust is the outcome, not a precondition of negotiations. Likewise, cessation of hostilities is the intended result but not a requirement for negotiations. That was also the lesson of the Northern Ireland fragile compromise between Republicans and Unionists in the absence of IRA disarmament. In South

Africa, too, the armed struggle, massacres, bombings and regular shootouts accompanied negotiations, until the very day of the first non-racial elections in April 1994.

Third party intervention may be useful and necessary to bring the parties to the table. Outside pressure on both sides can assist if the outside party carries weight with both sides, even if it is perceived as relatively partial, as the US is in the case of Israel. Promises of financial incentives after a settlement or as rewards for interim compromises may also be required. In South Africa, neither side sought direct foreign mediation but the expectations of the country's major trading partners were obvious. In the Middle East, this role as interlocutor clearly falls to the US and to a lesser extent to the EU and Arab States. Yet, without a prior US decision to lean on Israel to settle with the Palestinians, no progress is likely, as the Palestinians are unable to achieve it on their own. In turn, the unwillingness of the Palestinian leadership to align itself with US compromises and their insistence on maximalist positions, reinforces the Israeli conviction that their adversary's only interest is delegitimizing the very existence of the Jewish state.

Michael Ignatieff (*National Post*, 23 April 2002) went as far as to recommend a US imposed solution.

> The time for endless negotiation between the parties is past: It is time to say that … the United Nations, with funding from Europe, will establish a transitional administration to help the Palestinian state back on its feet and then prepare the ground for new elections before exiting; and, most of all, the United States must then commit its own troops, and those of willing allies, not to police a ceasefire, but to enforce the solution that provides security for both populations.

Similarly, Tony Judt (*New York Review of Books*, 18 July 2002: 64) probably expresses a widespread liberal external opinion: 'There is only one possible peaceful outcome, everyone involved knows what it entails, and it is going to have to be

imposed from the outside, the sooner the better.' In reality, however, the US president gave Palestinians the choice to either stick with their current leadership or recreate themselves on US terms, before the US would contemplate a provisional Palestinian state. This dictate pre-empts democratic elections by predetermining which outcome is acceptable. It shuts down negotiations and allows the militants on both sides to shape the events with more tragedies.

Apart from such unwillingness of outside patrons to impose a settlement, third parties may also be incapable of forcing Israel into a solution that a majority opposes. As Meron Benvenisti (1990: 126) pointed out long ago:

> The price of refusing to accede to the Partition Resolution of 1947 at the time was that Israel in the meanwhile has become a vital independent actor with impressive manoeuvrability in the international arena. If in 1947 (Palestinian) independence was achievable in an international forum, that same independence is now obtainable only from the Israelis, who occupy the land with overwhelming force.

The view of Israel as a 'US corporation turned into a state', fully manipulable by external diplomatic activity, ignores the simultaneous autonomy of the client state.

During the likely breakdown of negotiations, popular expectations of gains have to be created by moderate leaders who undercut their uncompromising competitors. People must perceive an inspiring outcome to look forward to, in order to back compromises. In South Africa, such prospects had to rescue an abandoned process on several occasions. After the Boipatong massacre, the Bisho shooting and the assassination of Chris Hani at Easter 1993, the negotiating leaders stepped back from the brink of civil war by agreeing to new compromises. The new compromises were: sunset clauses for civil servants, compulsory power-sharing for five years, entrenching constitutional principles and, above all, agreeing on an election date, even if no agreement on major constitu-

tional principles had been reached. Since the much-desired election date could not be postponed without risking major upheaval, rules of the crucial election and its aftermath also had to be eventually agreed upon. With an election looming, the ongoing violence at least became clearly unjustified, because the gains expected from an election outweighed those expected from further confrontations.

As already discussed, the stature and savvy of South African leaders contributed to their being trusted by a doubtful constituency. Although not great orators, Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo and Mac Maharaj, had acquired a mystique as impeccable foes of a system under which they had suffered much, whether in prison or in exile. Such widely recognized united leadership is lacking among Palestinians and Israelis alike. Both are relatively fragmented camps with internecine struggles more intense than those within either the National Party or the ANC. On the other hand, repression and crises create new leaders and elevate old ones whose greatest danger is perceived co-option. Israel rescued Arafat from this fate by beleaguering him in Ramallah. One day it may well be necessary for Israel to negotiate in good faith with Palestinian activists who are jailed as terrorists. Most independence leaders in Africa went this route. More often than realized, activists aim at bombing their way to the negotiating table.

The mutual indemnity agreed upon by the South African opponents recognized this reality. The imaginative amnesty provisions of the Truth and Reconciliation Act (TRC) did not exculpate both sides from human rights violations, but made it possible (after disclosure) to coexist without mutual retribution despite unforgivable abuses. The Middle East is one of the few ethnic conflicts where neither side is interested in an impartial historical accounting through a TRC, because both are dogmatically convinced of the exclusive legitimacy of their own truth and moral fortitude.

Negotiations must include leaders of all factions willing to participate, rather than 'await the outcome of the necessary

civil war among Palestinians', as William Safire recommends (*New York Times*, 3 December 2001: A23). Encouraging a civil war among opponents, as some third force elements attempted in South Africa and some Israelis contemplate, may weaken an opponent, but the destruction and brutalisation caused, also affect the victor. After free political activity was allowed in 1990 in South Africa, the intra-black political violence caused 14 000 deaths, more than the entire anti-apartheid struggle together. At the same time it destabilized the new order through a heightened and widespread sense of insecurity.

It is vital to include all actors who are capable of upsetting a compromise in the negotiations. The two main South African parties included the smaller actors, such as Buthelezi's Inkatha Party, the Pan African Congress, and the liberal Democratic Party, only nominally in the so-called multilateral negotiations about the new constitution. When 'sufficient consensus' was reached between the ANC and the NP in essentially bilateral negotiations, this consensus was imposed on the smaller parties by inviting them to rubberstamp it. As a result, Inkatha opted out of negotiations, threatened to boycott the elections and almost derailed the process before being persuaded to join at the last minute. Likewise, agreements reached by the leadership of the ANC and NP were imposed on their constituencies with little input from the grassroots. Thus, South African democracy was paradoxically born autocratically. This unnatural birth survived because of healthy parental authority. It is doubtful that such controversial compromises could be sustained in the Middle East, unless a final peace agreement is supported by an all-party coalition on both sides.

Conclusion: visions of endgame

On the two assumptions that no military solution is possible in the Middle East conflict and that no solution is likely to be imposed, it would be logical that sooner or later the

adversaries will have to negotiate seriously again. Four basic positions enjoy fluctuating constituency support.

Islamic extremist positions The Islamist extremist camp considers the very existence of a Jewish state on Muslim soil an insult to the faith. It aims at the defeat of a colonizing intruder and the restoration of a pre-Zionist Palestine. It is clear that this position, which has long been discredited among responsible Palestinians themselves, has no chance of success. Nevertheless, it necessitates continued Israeli vigilance and military readiness, which are inimical to peaceful coexistence and mutual trust.

Unlike South Africa, this extremist position is reinforced by an international support group. The destruction of the Jewish state is part of the declared goal of many Muslim states that sponsor their own anti-Israeli guerillas (Hezbollah-Iran) or train and finance Palestinian suicide activists. In this vein, Iran's influential former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani exhorts crowds in Teheran: 'The establishment of Israel is the most hideous occurrence in history. The Islamic world will not tolerate the continued existence of Israel in the region and will vomit it out from its midst' (*National Post*, 28 December 2001). If states that massacre their own minorities, such as Iran, Iraq or Syria, acquire weapons of mass destruction, the Jewish state is indeed highly vulnerable and World War III could be triggered.

In contrast, after the end of the Cold War, all foreign allies of the ANC urged the movement to compromise and withdrew active military sponsorship. While the support of the Palestinian cause occurs mostly for domestic political reasons or even represents a pretence rather than empathy for the Palestinians (who are resented throughout the Arab world, similar to Jews in the West), such hostility towards Israel may well continue even after a Palestinian-Jewish settlement.

The overdue democratization of the Arab world would be unlikely to change attitudes towards Israel, but could even

increase open hostility. Replacing corrupt autocrats through genuine popular involvement is likely to result in Islamists taking over. As long as the Arab population is indoctrinated by clerics in pursuit of 'an assault on imperialist world Zionism', the sentiment of the street nullifies pacts of negotiating leaders. Does this predicament make a settlement superfluous? On the contrary, Israel has an additional reason to secure the loyalty of the Palestinian population under its control.

The Israeli peace camp is constantly undermined not by what the Palestinian leadership is saying, but what Arab opinion locally and abroad is really thinking. Bernie Susser has commented that for Israeli doves, surveys on Arab attitudes towards Israel make for sombre and gloomy reading. When Palestinian factions insist on a full return of all refugees to their places of origin, the existence of a Jewish Israel is indeed denied. When moderate Palestinians counsel compromise, they are denounced. Others keep silent for fear of marginalizing themselves in Palestinian politics.

The anti-apartheid camp always enjoyed a more robust debate about strategy and goals. While the exiled ANC, and particularly its Stalinist South African Communist Party (SACP) wing, also attempted to impose a correct line on its constituency, the appropriateness of sanctions or the use of violence was always openly challenged by moderate black parties (eg. IFP) or white liberals (eg. PFP) with legitimate opposition credentials.

Unlike Palestinian militant attitudes ahead of an accommodating leadership, popular sentiment in South Africa, on the whole, tended more towards compromise than the ANC/UDF leadership cared to admit at times. When the crunch of real trade-offs arrived, the South African negotiators not only enjoyed relatively uncontested credentials, but closely echoed popular attitudes. Palestinian leaders face the challenge not only of internal cohesion, but also of educating an embittered constituency in accepting necessary compromises.

Jewish extremist positions Jewish extremists mirror their Islamic counterparts. They come in two versions: those aiming at the ultimate forced 'transfer' of Palestinians from the occupied territories and those creating ghetto-like conditions of colonial domination that motivates many Palestinians to emigrate voluntarily or acquiesce in a second class status. The minority Moledet party in Sharon's coalition openly advocates another *nakba* (catastrophe) and seems to be gaining steam with every bloody incident. This renewed expulsion would be possible only in the context of another major war. Therefore, these right-wingers prefer dealing with their extremist counterparts in Hamas and Jihad, whose terrorism legitimizes extremist counter-terror. When fundamentalist extremists are the Palestinian representatives, it diminishes European support and guarantees that the US will never spring a 'surprise' compromise on an unwilling Israeli government. Tanya Reinhart (*Tikkun*, 17.2, March/April 2002) comments: 'It is easier to justify even the worst acts of oppression when the enemy is a fanatical Muslim organisation'. A step in this direction is the destruction and delegitimizing of the Palestinian Authority. Most of the settler population strongly supports this vision. Already the Sharon government has targeted the infrastructure of the rudimentary Palestinian state. Even before the April 2002 large scale invasion of the territories, sewage plants, radio towers and power facilities were bombed, the Central Statistics Bureau ransacked, the runway of the only airport bulldozed, irrigation systems destroyed and more Palestinian orchards uprooted.

However, the full destruction of Palestinian self-rule and eventual expulsion incurs costs and political risks. As Avishai Ehrlich has pointed out, Israel cannot afford to draw comparisons with the Serbian persecution of Albanians in Kosovo and provoke an international response. Therefore, the Bantustan option of minimizing effective Palestinian statehood to dispersed smaller parts of the West Bank and Gaza and reversing the Oslo accord, appeals to influential Israeli planners.

The lethal attacks by Intifada activists and Palestinian Authority complicity provide the rationale for an ever-tighter containment.

The apartheid government pursued the opposite strategy of subsidizing and building homelands and township administrations so that blacks would administer their own poverty and police themselves. Black activists tried to destroy these 'institutions of the oppressed' in order to make the country ungovernable. In its attempt to dismember the social fabric of Palestinian society and atomize the population, Sharon's direct domination is more excessive than the more sophisticated apartheid strategy.

The Bantustan analogy applies only in a geographical sense in as far as non-contingent patches of land are labelled a viable state. Michael Ignatieff (*National Post*, April 23 2002), describing the view from a helicopter over the West Bank, observed:

> I knew I was not looking down at a state or the beginnings of one, but at a Bantustan, one of those pseudo-states created in the dying years of apartheid to keep the African population under control.

However, Bantustans were neither established at the end of apartheid, nor only for control purposes. From the outset of Afrikaner social engineering, pseudo- independent 'homelands' formed the core of apartheid rationalization as the abandonment of colonialism and the advent of African self-determination. As reservoirs of cheap labour and dumping grounds for surplus people, Bantustans saved the social costs of old age, unemployment and education. Huge amounts of taxes were poured into wasteful rural bureaucracies to give the ethnic states a semblance of viability and respectability.

Israel has pursued the opposite strategy of colonial policing. Instead of strengthening the Palestinian Authority to deliver services and control its population, thereby contributing to the security of the Jewish state, it has deliberately weakened, frustrated and continuously undermined the rudi-

mentary state. As Ignatieff (*National Post*, 23 April 2002) has rightly pointed out:

> [The Palestinian Authority] failed because Israel never allowed it to become a state. When authorities cannot become competent states, when they cannot meet the needs of their people, they can only survive by playing to the longing of their populations to counter humiliation by acts of suicidal revenge.

In contrast to the rural, impoverished South African Bantustans, the West Bank is inhabited by an educated, far more urbanized and developed population. With such favourable preconditions for statehood as well as resistance in place, imprisoning a people in several enclaves where they manage their 'own affairs' has to fail. The indirect rule failed under better conditions in South Africa. With reluctant clients in the form of Palestinian Authority nationalists and opportunists, policing from the outside by an occupation army and invading settlers faces much greater problems than apartheid South Africa ever experienced with its remote Transkei or Bophutatswana, ruled by dependent clients. Faced with this treatment, extremist organisations will only gain more support by providing social services as well as suicide bombers, who view their vile methods as the last resort of the weak and desperate. In this 'Lebanonization' of Israel, Anthony Lewis (*The New York Review*, April 25 2002: 4) has written: 'Every assassination, every smashed refugee camp brings new recruits to the Palestinian organizations that target Israelis'.

The problem with the current and future disentanglement lies in exacerbating the tensions and violence of an unsustainable status quo. More land seizure by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) for security zones and fences, more restrictions on Palestinian movements, and, above all, fewer economic opportunities create new frustrations and rage. Increased economic integration facilitated the South African settlement. Economic interdependence forced the South African antagonists to compromise. The opposite strategies of disentanglement create

more impoverishment for one side which has nothing to lose. In this climate of hopelessness, likely unpredictable atrocities can derail all rational deals and shift populations to all-out confrontations. Even if most parties want to avoid costly direct reoccupation, there is little time to counter the escalation of conflicts.

Two-state positions In theory, two-state advocates constitute the overwhelming majority of Jews and Palestinians, but they disagree about borders, Jerusalem, the return of Palestinian refugees and settlers behind the Green Line. The official Palestinian position is to insist on the right of return of all refugees, although compensation for most or a symbolic return of older people only, is also envisaged. Furthermore, 97 per cent of the occupied territories are expected to form a viable Palestinian state, compared with the 40 per cent of territory under Palestinian Authority control after the mutual recognition in the Oslo Accord of 1993.

In the historic Oslo accord, a transitional period was agreed upon during which Israel would gradually transfer land in the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinian Authority until a permanent peace was established in final status negotiations. Barak and Clinton aimed at such a final settlement in the hastily called Camp David and Taba negotiations during the last weeks of the two leaders' terms of office. The talks failed, even though Barak had offered up to 93 per cent of occupied land and the Palestinians were prepared to accept the principle of Israeli annexation of some of the West Bank settlements in exchange for an equivalent transfer of Israeli land to the Palestinians. Informed observers (Sontag, 2001; Malley and Agha, 2001) blamed the negotiation strategies of all three parties for the failure, not only the intransigent, incoherent behaviour of the Palestinian delegation, as has become conventional wisdom.[8] It is also doubtful that Barak would have received Knesset approval for his plan the failure of which is now blamed solely on the Palestinians. If the Palestinians had accepted the 'generous' Barak offer, a Palestinian 'state' would have consisted of three

separate West Bank cantons and the distant Gaza Strip, all encircled by Israeli troops without a common border with Jordan or Egypt and totally dependent on Israel for power, water and jobs. Any Palestinian leader would have faced a revolt by militants in his own ranks for agreeing to such a non-contiguous and non-viable Bantustan. Arafat's reported question to Clinton is therefore understandable: 'Do you want to attend my funeral?' And yet, with further mutual concessions at Taba, both negotiating teams agreed to the statement: 'The sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli election.'

Since Oslo, and contrary to the later Mitchell recommendation to freeze settlements, Israel continued with new settlements and not only allowed 'natural' expansion. The increase of the settler population since Oslo has destroyed the trust-building measures envisaged in the accord and clearly signalled to the Palestinians that Israel is intent on annexing rather than conceding the remaining 22 per cent of Mandate Palestine for a viable state. Almost unnoticed, 400 km of bypass roads were constructed which sliced up Palestinian land, restricted movements, uprooted traditional agriculture and caged in Palestinians in such a way that it makes Bophutatswana look attractive. With the ascendancy of Sharon, the mutual tit-for-tat reprisals assumed their lethal dynamic, so that a large proportion of Palestinians now endorse suicide attacks. In as much as the liberation movements in South Africa never recognized the nine 'homelands' offered, so Palestinians are unlikely to accept a rump-state in the West Bank and Gaza with fenced-in ghettoes of non-contingent territory.

When Egypt and the PLO finally recognized Israel, it happened out of expediency and necessity, not because it confirmed the moral legitimacy of the Jewish state. Agreeing to Israel's existence was conceding defeat. The continuing war of words at least relieved the painful terms of surrender in the reality of a lost struggle. In the imagination of the vanquished,

the victims always remained the moral victors. 'Bearing this in mind explains the Palestinian's view that Oslo itself is the historic compromise – an agreement to concede 78% of mandatory Palestine to Israel' (Malley and Agha, 2001: 70). Therefore, when Israel was 'offering' land, being 'generous' or 'making concessions' it added insult to injury: 'in a single stroke both affirming Israel's right and denying the Palestinians'. For the Palestinians, land was not given but given back' (ibid.).

Applying these sensitivities to South Africa, a different assessment of the historic compromise can be found. Unlike Palestinians, blacks could feel themselves to be victors. It was the colonized who could now prove generous to the settlers[9] who accepted them as white Africans, provided they shared their spoils and regarded everybody as equals. In contrast, among Palestinian intellectuals the Oslo accord is widely perceived as merely a technical document that postpones the most acute issues. With a 'newer jargon for the older occupation', Andre Mazawi noted (Personal correspondence, 16 January 2002), Oslo amounts to 'a negotiated colonizing de-colonization'. Nobody could argue this for the South African political transition. It put the black majority in charge of the state, although the colonial unequal economic relations remained at the core of the compromise. In the end, South African whites were defeated politically (not militarily), although they were able to negotiate the terms of their defeat. By contrast, there is no prospect that Palestinians could defeat Israel. In this respect, Palestinian negotiators resemble South African whites rather than blacks.

With the reversal of political power in the offing, South African whites could no longer dictate the terms but had to deal with an equal partner. There are no equal parties in the Middle East. Unlike the Israeli attitude of supremacy when dealing with the adversary, South African whites, at least in public, easily slipped into a discourse of deference to the new power holders who continued to struggle with the legacy of racism. Nevertheless, with white economic power intact, a black bourgeoisie in office tied to economic growth and in the

private sector vying for personal enrichment (Adam, Slabbert and Moodley, 1997), the historic compromise was sealed to mutual satisfaction. This sense of victory – or a win-win situation for both sides – that made the abolition of apartheid such a celebrated event despite the continuing economic inequality, will not necessarily be achieved through the creation of a Palestinian mini-state, unless other Palestinian demands (return of refugees, East Jerusalem, settler presence) are also satisfactorily addressed.

In the South African tradition of trade-offs, there could be a gradual abandonment of illegal settlements in the occupied territories in exchange for the Palestinian abandonment of the right of return of refugees to Israel. Together with foreign financial assistance for both sides, Palestinian refugees could move into Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza while Jewish settlers would receive generous assistance for reintegration into Israel proper. Jewish settlers willing to reside in a Palestinian state could be granted the same citizenship rights as Palestinians in Israel. The existence of each group's minority in the other state could guarantee as well as encourage improvements for the two 'hostage' populations.

A multicultural liberal democracy? The fourth vision of a denationalized Western liberal democracy would have to be preceded by a redefinition of individual identity on both sides, for which the nationalist mobilization and collective stereotyping of the other undermines all prospects at present. Even the PLO abandoned this position long ago and for Jewish nationalists it implies the demographic capture and abandonment of a Jewish state. Instead of the apartheid model of partition that 'relieves' the Jewish state of its conquered population and implants newcomers in their midst, very few now advocate this option of a common secular, bi-cultural state, where Jews and Palestinians reside in multicultural harmony. Yet emulating the new South Africa of inclusiveness would also be the most economically beneficial option for both sides, in line

with progressive global trends to separate cultural from political identity. Already one million Palestinians with Israeli citizenship live in Israel proper with a tolerable level of animosity, except that they are by definition second-class citizens in an officially Jewish state. Incorporating their stateless counterparts in the West Bank and Gaza would alter the Jewish numerical majority and entail a significant change in the character of the state. Cultural Judaism would have to be distinguished from political 'Israeliness'. Nationalists reject this vision outright, and in light of such strong feelings, the idea is indeed unrealistic and utopian. Just as many Palestinians find themselves unwilling to compromise about perceived 'basic rights'[10], so most Jewish Israelis are unable to shed the Zionist dogma of an ethnic state.

In economic terms and following the EU model, another interim solution could be a Benelux-type entity that includes Jordan with its majority Palestinian population, in addition to a Palestinian state and Israel. In a tri-national confederation like this, Israel would not have hegemony demographically, but benefit from being incorporated into the Middle East, while a Palestinian state and Jordan would benefit from Israeli know-how and capital. The Jordanian Hashemite rulers would also enjoy a built-in balance against a potential Palestinian take-over. Given the unequal power relationship, however, such an economic-political union could also be perceived as Israeli imperialism, just as the South African dominance of its surrounding states is resented as 'big brother' rule.

In an ethnically neutral Jewish/Arab union, both ethnic groups would still preserve their cultural identity which would be officially recognized and subsidized, as in other multinational states. But politically, the new entity would be neither a Muslim Palestine nor a Jewish Israel. Both victimized people could still worship as they desire, educate their children in separate schools and have Hebrew and Arabic recognized in an officially bilingual state. If Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus and agnostics can live together harmoniously as equal citizens

in South Africa, why should this not be possible in a society where both peoples have legitimate claims to share the land?

This vision is unlikely to make it onto the next agenda of negotiations. More dead will be counted and battle lines frozen after mutual exhaustion, more professionals on both sides will emigrate, more tourists will stay away and a fatal image of a region in decline will emerge in the meantime. Some have argued that both Israel and its Arab neighbours require a perpetual state of semi-war in order to prevent their internal cleavages from exploding. This is a cynical assessment, although the historical reality would seem to confirm it.

Israel was founded as the sanctuary of persecuted Jews the world over. A state of permanent war, however, implies that the sanctuary is constantly threatened. With anti-Semitism on the wane, at least in North America, the diaspora ironically is now the safe haven, while Jews in the sanctuary are in jeopardy. The continued occupation of Palestinian territory and the extension of settlements has substantially contributed to this insecurity, although it is not the sole cause of Arab hostility. This is all the more reason for the sanctuary to restore its pre-1967 borders by accommodating its Palestinian neighbours with their own state and resettling most settlers. However, in as much as a common, bi-national state may be a distant dream, so peace through separation also denies political and social realities. Perhaps the emergence of new identities within an enlarged EU may point to the possibility of overcoming the ethno-nationalist enmity, just as Europe has finally transcended its intra-European warfare of the last century.

Notes

1 There is a rich polemical and academic literature on the comparison of Israel and South Africa as 'settler societies'. Comparative accounts range from Donald Akenson's thoughtful *God's People*, 1992 to the atheoretical and disjointed mere chronology of Thomas Mitchell, *Native vs. Settler*, 2000. See also: Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial Settler State?*, 1973; Ibrahim Abu-Lughod and Baha Abu-Laban, (eds), *Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World*, 1974; R.P. Stevens and A.M. Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa*, 1976; and the most scholarly comparison of British-Irish, French-Algerian and Israeli-Palestinian relations by Ian Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Territories*, 1993. See also the insightful collection of essays on Northern Ireland, *Israel and South Africa* by Hermann Giliomee and Jannie Gagiano, (eds), *The Elusive Search for Peace*, 1990.

2 According to Ghaith Al-Omari, a Palestinian legal advisor: 'This declaration has been of immeasurable benefit to the Palestinian peace camp. It has given us ammunition to counter extremists within our midst who attempt to characterize the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as an eternal one between Muslims and Jews'.

3 In this analysis 'Palestinians' refers to the 3,5 million stateless Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza and not the 1 million Israeli citizens of Arab origin in Israel who are also Palestinian.

4 For an excellent recent history of the contested city see Wasserstein (2001). The early Zionists from Theodor Herzl to Israel's first president Chaim Weizmann disliked Jerusalem as a place of religious fanatics and favoured a secular 'state for Jews' as distinct from a Jewish state. The early Zionists also accepted Jerusalem as an international UN city under the partition plan, which the Arabs rejected.

5 There is ample scholarly documentation of the close military ties and political cooperation between Israel and apartheid South Africa, explicitly acknowledged by both South African and Israeli officials. Two books stand out: James Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, 1984, by a former defence correspondent and senior executive with the London Sunday Times and by US researcher and later ambassador Benjamin M. Joseph, *Besieged Bedfellows*, 1988.

6 An Inkatha inspired attempt to have an international commission under Henry Kissinger pronounce on a dispute about federalism quickly ended with the departure of the foreigners after three days in the country, as did a previous futile mission by a Commonwealth 'Eminent Persons Group' to get negotiations under way in the first place.

7 Tamil Tigers use suicide bombers, often less suspect women, to assassinate political opponents. Tiger activists swallow cyanide capsules before they are about to be captured. Hence, Sri Lankan authorities are unable to torture information out of their captives. Japanese Kamikaze fighters volunteered to cause havoc among the US Pacific fleet. Jailed IRA guerrillas starved themselves to death in order to publicize their cause. Much debated force-feeding only heightened resistance politics.

8 For an insightful analysis of the issues and dynamics of the failed negotiations see also the long interview of former Israeli Foreign Minister and Negotiator Shlomo Ben-Ami by Ari Shavit and the critique of Ben-Ami by Uri Avnery in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, XXXI, 2, Winter 2002, 152–164.

9 The frequently employed settler-native dichotomy is not unproblematic for an analysis of contemporary divided societies, because it falsely assumes a continuing colonial relationship with the respective differential

moral standing. As previously pointed out, there is also no objective criteria by which it can be decided when a newcomer becomes indigenous in the competition for entitlements, based on ancestral arrival in an area. If applied to contemporary immigrant societies, latecomers and recent migrants would be permanently disadvantaged, compared with earlier migrants. Such scepticism does not deny the historical record of colonial settler exploitation and dispossession of indigenous people and the legacy of conquest. On this issue see the informative article by Mahmood Mamdani (2001). The Palestinian definition of a colonial conflict in the Middle East, as opposed to the Jewish nationalist discourse, also obstructs compromises, because liberation means departure of the colonial intruder and implicitly denies the right of Jewish 'settler' presence in Palestinian 'native' territory. In South Africa, only the PAC applied the colonial analogy while the ANC fudged the issue with the theory of 'domestic/internal colonialism', in which Europeans belonged to the land, as long as they changed their colonial habits.

10 For example, in a typical maximalist stance, The National Society for the Defense of the Internally Displaced in Israel, condemned Sari Nusseibeh for suggesting that negotiated compromises on the right of return should be considered. 'We, the displaced in our homeland, reaffirm the right of return of all refugees and displaced wherever they are now, each person to his village or town. We reject all substitutes, including compensation, re-settlement and exchange of territory or populations.'

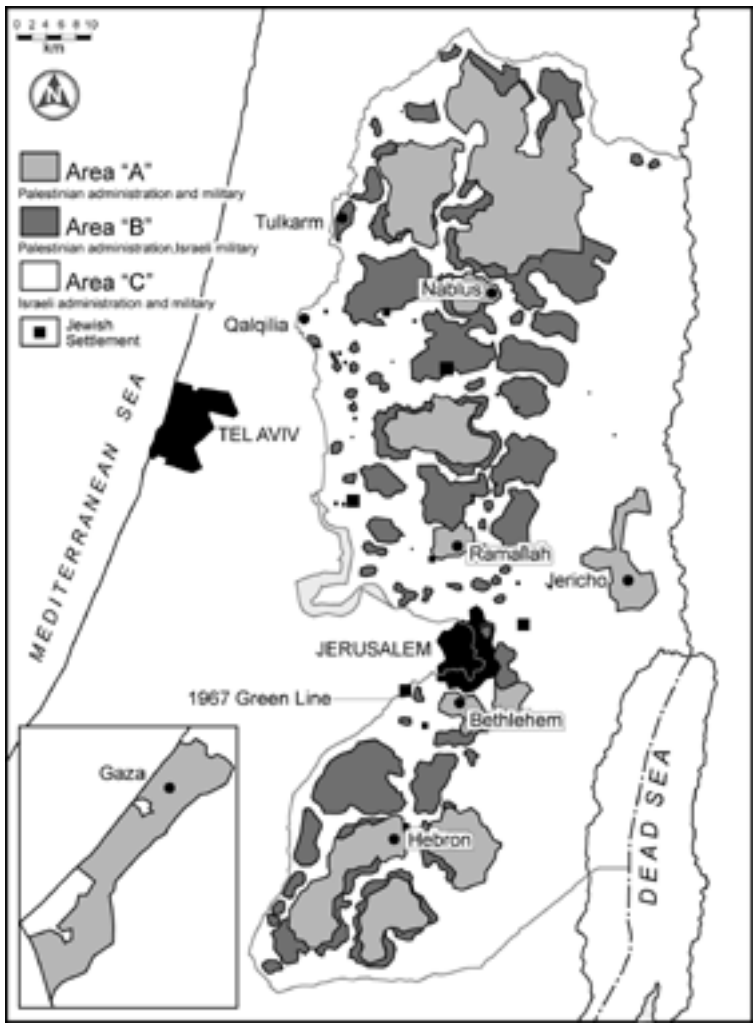

Figure 1: Map of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

Figure 2: Map of South Africa showing provincial boundaries after 1994

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