

City and soul

Sarajevo, Johannesburg, Jerusalem, Nicosia

Scott A. Bollens

These cities, encapsulating deep-rooted cleavages based on competing nationalisms and arguments over state legitimacy, constitute an essential analytical scale for studying contemporary intra-state patterns and processes of ethnic conflict, violence and their management. Amidst deep-rooted enmities, the basis for sustainable peace lies not just in reconstituting a legitimate and inclusive national-level government, but in reconciliation among communities and economic and social reconstruction at the local tier. The author's research on the role of ethnicity in urban development, and how urban peace-building may be possible amidst deep political conflict, took him to these politically contested cities in 1994, 1995 and 1999. These observations are from some of the over 100 interviews he conducted with urban policymakers, community leaders and city residents.

“We grew up during the war, but we don't know when”, states Jasmina Resulovic, 23-year-old Bosnian Muslim woman who lived in Sarajevo throughout the four-year siege of that city by Serb Militias which killed 11,000 people and destroyed or damaged 60% of the city's buildings.

An urban planner in Johannesburg, Dik Viljoen, states while sitting in his hillside estate atop the grime, soot and humanity of the black city below that apartheid was an “honest and serious attempt to provide opportunities for blacks to have their own areas and their own government, thereby taking them out of the political system.”

A veteran Israeli official in Jerusalem, Yethonathan Golani, who worked for 30 years for the state, explains that his leading motivation has been “the trauma of the holocaust, showing that we cannot trust anyone but ourselves”.

A Turkish Cypriot poetess, Neshe Yashin, travels thousands of miles so that she can bypass the 50 meter buffer zone that hermetically divides Turkish from Greek Cypriot in the city of Nicosia and the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

The emotional scars and physical separation one faces in the divided and politically contested cities of Sarajevo, Johannesburg, Jerusalem and Nicosia, present us with visions of ourselves in North America. These cities of ethnic and racial turmoil provide mirrors into the fear, separation, exclusivity and denial that coarse through our own cityscapes in America. We divide here too, but history, territoriality, and religion have less tangible effect on us. Rather we build walls to seal us from past histories and those basic human instincts that these cities must deal with daily.

These cities are very different, but they share a common sorrow. Every day the

people who live there must struggle for coexistence in the midst of intense and sometimes violent conflict. Studying cities that are stuck in the middle of ethnic conflict may at first appear parochial and antiquated in light of the oft-mentioned trends of globalization and modernization. Yet, cities tell us much about whom we are and what we aspire to. The walls and spaces that divide peoples in these famous polarized cities are present in our own backyard. These infamous cities tell us much about the way we in America build cities and make policy — issues of residential segregation of races and incomes, physical redevelopment of ethnically mixed areas, affirmative action, the design of public open space among diverse uses, and generally, how to build cities that have multiple group identities and competing claims on society's resources. Whether we are talking about Jerusalem, Los Angeles, Beirut or New York, city leaders and policymakers must emphasize not only the spatial layout of cities, but also be keenly aware of the complex social-psychological and identity needs of diverse ethnic groups within the urban region. It is not far fetched to draw the connections. The containment of moral responsibility on the part of city-builders in the USA for those low-income households displaced by urban revitalization projects bears an unsettling similarity to planners undertaking partisan strategies in politically contested cities.

Through its people, its neighbourhoods, its rituals, its crossroads and meeting places, a city tells us much about the soul of a society. Urban areas and their civilian populations are "soft, high-value" targets for broader conflict, witness Grozny in the Russian republic of Chechnya or Sarajevo in Bosnia. They can become important military and symbolic flashpoints of violence between ethnic groups seeking sovereignty, autonomy or independence. Cities are fragile organisms subject to economic stagnation, demographic disintegration and cultural suppression. They are sig-

nificant depositories of material, cultural and symbolic resources that often defy exclusive claims made on the city by single ethnic groups or leaders. They contain zones of intergroup proximity and intimacy. Cities are often located on the faultline between cultures — between modernizing societies and traditional cultures; between individual-based and community-based economies; between democracy and more authoritarian regimes; between old colonial governments and native populations.

Being exposed to these cities and their remarkable stories of organized hatred and individual perseverance makes one more human and less patient with research done from a safe theoretical or analytical distance. Division — whether it is physical or psychological — is an extremely difficult emotion that spawns hatred, grief, denial, depression and forgiveness. Thinking about the individuals I have talked to makes me want to cry over our ability to hurt one another, and to celebrate the human soul and its ability to persevere amid the trials of hatred.

*Sarajevo . . . the siege of the city by Bosnian Serb and Serbian Militias lasted 1395 days, from 2 May 1992 to 26 February 1996, killed 11,000 people, 1600 children and damaged or destroyed 60% of the city's buildings. Today, the political 'solution' and the 'peace' has an imposed feel and seems likely not sustainable in our lifetime. The Dayton accord institutionalizes a *de facto* partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina that the USA had stood steadfastly against. The autonomous Bosnian Serb entity of Republika Srpska created by Dayton comprises 49% of the country's territory, a reward for its ruthless fighting machine. There is 'peace' now in Sarajevo, but it is the peace of the cemetery, not people.*

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina is a special, transcendent place. Like Johannesburg and Beirut, how this city torn apart by strife is

physically reconstructed and socially reconstituted will play a key role in whether the larger region and nation will bear witness to a sustainable peace or a return to violence.

Sarajevo is the scene of a crime, a rape and devastation. It is an affront to humanity and rationality. Blown off limbs, punctured heads, humiliation, playgrounds and soccer fields turned into cemeteries because these were some of few areas that hillside snipers couldn't see, ice rink from 1984 Winter Olympics shelled and afire, building after building shattered and burnt. How, pray tell, do I describe photographs of this place to my six-year-old son? Should I?

It is now a different city, moving from a mixed ethnic population of 540,000 Bosnian Muslims (40%), Bosnian Serbs (30%) and Bosnian Croats (20%) in 1991 to an approximately 80% Muslim city today of about 340,000 population. Zeljko Komsic, president of Sarajevo's Municipal Council, states that, "divided city is a difficult term for us; we are the cruel victims of history". Although many Bosnian Serbs stayed in the city during the war in defence of the bombarded concept of multiethnicity, substantial numbers fled the city after Dayton fearing retaliation. Muslim refugees from ethnically cleansed eastern Bosnia (now Republika Srpska) currently inhabit shelled and burned-out flats in the city's worst war-torn neighbourhoods. Political graffiti is surprisingly limited in Sarajevo; when it is present it frequently asserts SDA—the Muslim's main Party of Democratic Action. The town of Pale, the headquarters of Bosnian Serb war leader Radovan Karadzic, stands 10 miles to the east of Sarajevo in the strange new political geography of Bosnia-Herzegovina. New canton (county) borders have been drawn on Sarajevo's side to accommodate the new jigsaw-like boundaries. The governor of the Sarajevo canton is Mustafa Mujezinovic, a large and demanding presence with a serious, gloomy demeanor that seems impenetrable. I wonder whether his gloom has more to do with what he has witnessed in his city or to the imposed artificiality and

perceived vulnerability of the boundaries that define his jurisdiction.

Sarajevo, like Jerusalem since 1948, is now a frontier city—an urban interstice—between opposing political territories. The boundaries between the Dayton-created Muslim-Croat Federation and Republika Srpska entities (in international speak, Inter-Entity Boundary Lines or IEBLs) are drawn just outside the city's southeastern parts and contain no checkpoints and no visible signs of differentiation, except for the Cyrillic written alphabet present in the Bosnian Serb entity. Indeed, in an affront to the logic of aggression, there is now new road-building to connect the two entities and the creation of 'universal licence plates' to facilitate auto travel from one part to the other. Was not land and its control what the heinous 1992–1995 Bosnia war was all about? Another crossing nearby, although also without checkpoint, reveals who is sponsoring this reconnection. Electronic monitoring and transportation vehicles of NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) are obvious and busy, contradicting the otherwise intended normalcy of the unmarked crossing. Do those now seeking connection believe that which was torn apart by war can be normalized four short years after slaughter? And is the absence of an armed border four years after war a good sign or a bad sign? Should its absence be treated as a sign of mutual tolerance or an indicator of an artificially imposed peace?

Andy Bearpark is head of the Reconstruction and Return Task Force of the United Nations (the *de facto* civilian government of Bosnia-Herzegovina). His Task Force is charged with easing the return of minorities to places of their former residence, meaning Muslims to Republika Srpska and Bosnian Serbs to Sarajevo and elsewhere in the "Federation". The dilemma faced by the United Nations (UN) is that such efforts may be consistent with morality, but in the circumstance of a new Balkan apartheid, they may be counterproductive to peace-building. Bearpark has over 25 years foreign experi-

ence dealing with places like Rwanda, Northern Iraq and Somalia. He talks in a way surprisingly straightforward and self-critical of the international community's role in post-war Bosnia. In a talk containing raw emotion and frustration, he says that in Bosnia the international community cannot force change; yet, the UN is increasingly forced, due to local disagreements, to impose new civilian laws pertaining to electoral representation, property ownership, economic reconstruction and return of displaced persons. While advocating democracy, the UN increasingly acts authoritarian. This inadvertently allows local officials to escape responsibility and retreat to tribalism. This dependent relationship of local leaders upon the international community in 1999 bears similarities with local leaders' relationship with Josip Tito, communist leader of Yugoslavia from the 1930s to his death in 1980.

There are heroes today. Jovan Divjak is a square-jawed, grey-haired man, solidly built, with a face etched in war. He is a retired general in the Bosnian Army and was in command of the forces defending the city of Sarajevo for over three years against Bosnian Serb militias and Serb paramilitaries. He is a believer in a multiethnic Bosnia and advocates for a return to the ethnically mixed Sarajevo of pre-1992. Most amazing about the man is this startling fact — he is a Bosnian Serb. We hear so often of those who play the ethnic card and manipulate identity to divide and conquer. Divjak, in contrast, is a living and vital example of someone who embodies the spirit of inter-ethnic tolerance.

Divjak is steadfast and determined in leading a tour of the city for political and community leaders from Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Nicosia and Barcelona. He spends time to clearly describe the logistics of the war and to show us the hubris left from the siege in the form of shot-out buildings and overflowing cemeteries. At the beginning of the siege in 1992, the aggressor forces surrounded Sarajevo with 260 tanks, 120 mortars, and vast numbers of rocket launchers, anti-aircraft machine guns, snipers and

machine guns. In contrast, the city's defenders were left with minimal arms for protection. Throughout the war, mortar shells of 82, 120, 150 and 250 millimetres shelled the city. Snipers using semi-automatic guns were deployed for most of the war in tall buildings within the occupied Grbavica neighbourhood of the city. Every day the city was hit by some 4000 shells on average; among the targets were hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, synagogues, maternity hospitals, libraries, museums, open-air and sheltered food markets, and any place where people stood in line for the limited supplies of food, bread and water.

Divjak is firm and unemotional in his recall. He is accompanied by a female translator who has frequently been by his side as he has described the war over the past three years to all those who are interested. When Divjak interjects how comfortable he is with her, it is the woman's moist eyes and momentary inner reflection that reveals the pain that must be present in constantly retelling the story of this savagery. In the midst of a military cemetery that used to be a playground where he took his grandchildren, Divjak breaks from our group to hug and console a mother remembering her son. As we walk through the city, many residents on the streets embrace him. They want to touch this man, to feel him, to thank him. It is clear that this man preserves in these people a valuable part of them, which struggles to survive amidst the emotional exhaustion and pain of ethnic hatred.

The retired general is heavy-hearted about the future of Bosnia. He dismisses the sustainability of the new internal boundaries of Bosnia-Herzegovina negotiated by Holbrooke, Milosevic, Tudjman and Izetbegovic in Dayton. The 49% of Bosnian land that is now the Bosnian Serb autonomous zone is indicative of a victorious campaign of war and ethnic cleansing. Divjak is concerned with the translation of this war and its meaning to today's youth; he asks, "are parents capable of excluding children from these manipulative mechanisms we play?" As



Figure 1 Sarajevo. At the frontline of the urban siege—Grbavica neighbourhood.

a parent of two young children, I would like to believe that I would rise above a contemporary struggle and pass along a brighter future for my children. Yet, this feels like a wish, not a genuine reaction. Are we perhaps mistaken to believe that pain and hatred should dissipate through the generations? Mistaken to believe that 40 years of Tito can dispel the pain and hatred experienced by Serbs, Croats and Muslims during World War II? Mistaken to believe that a decade of strong economic times in America can dispel the ethnic and racial tension that has existed in our cities? I must come to terms with my own gut reaction to what I hear and witness in the former Yugoslavia. If these terrible things were done to me and my family simply because of my ethnic identity, the most important task in my remaining life would be to tell my impressionable and curious son and daughter exactly what was done to me and by whom.

Jasmina Resulovic and Arnan Velic are 23 and 22 years old. Jasmina is a short, round-faced, bespectacled young woman with contemporary flare. Arnan is a lean man, dark-



Figure 2 Sarajevo. Bosnian Army retired General Jovan Divjak in a military cemetery 1999.

featured and handsome. Jasmina says, “I guess by our parents’ birth we are Muslim”. Both are architecture students at University of Sarajevo. They both stayed in the city during the four years of war, Arnan fighting in the Bosnian Army for five months, and Jasmina mired with her parents and other family in a high-rise flat near the front lines of hand-to-hand fighting. During the war, they attended abbreviated ‘war school’ in lieu of high school. Since the war, they and a few other students now manage tours of the historic and war-affected city. I spend one and a half days with Jasmina and Arnan as they guide me around the city and I query them about the ‘indescribable’. They were 15 and 14 years old when the war started. They are now kids with the wisdom, sadness and perspective of adults. We stand for many quiet moments at the Vraca Monument on the hills overlooking new town Sarajevo. It is a remembrance of the power of brotherhood in the communist partisans’ successful crusade against fascism in World War II. Arnan finally speaks — “it’s unreal, it is like that war never took place; we learned nothing”. Their long stares at this monument also likely owe to this cruel fact—it was from within that monument celebrating interethnic unity that the heavy guns of the Serb militias were first fired from the hills at the Grbavica neighbourhood of the city below. For entertainment between gun fire, the militia men had erected a basketball backboard and hoop on one of the stone walls, knocking off thousands of small letters of the names of partisan fighters commemorated on the hills above Sarajevo.

It is a different life now. “Everyone was equal during the war”, says Jasmina, “now money follows money”. And in a cruel irony, Arnan painfully describes how “we are looked down now by those who left during the war and now are back with new cars and clothes. Sometimes I just want to strangle them”. Jasmina’s mother is a teacher and now makes about one-third of her pre-war wages. Her underemployed father now makes less than her mother does. When Jasmina was

able to work as a translator for seven days, she was embarrassed to take the wages back to her household because it was as much as her mother makes in one month.

Yet, Arnan’s and Jasmina’s story is not one of only despair. Arnan asserts “we’re not afraid of trying things now. If we fail, we fail, its OK. There is so much opportunity now, not compared to before the war, but in life generally. It is short and one must make the most of it”. It was not depressing during our time together to hear Jasmina and Arnan talk. Rather, hearing stories of how the human soul perseveres and matures seems affirmative of life. There is hope in despair, a spirit amid gloom. The simple ability to persevere, live, cope and grow amidst hatred is proof of light and love. Without the surrounding darkness, how would we know that we could illuminate each other and ourselves? After a day and one-half of touring war-stricken Sarajevo, I return to my hotel. At the reception desk is a gift T-shirt — of the cheap tourist type showing a leggy woman welcoming the viewer to Sarajevo — and a note from Arnan saying this is something that may help me remember my visit. I went back to my room, laid down and was flooded by the pain and the utter goodness of people living in inhumane places and times. A boy, now man, who has lived through hell thinks of giving to an American visitor. The kitschy nature of the gift makes it even more poignant. Sarajevo’s and Arnan’s story contains a rashly different plane of emotion that overwhelms and connects one to another.

Johannesburg . . . the durable knots of apartheid city building seem likely to continue for decades; the emotional pain for generations. The fragmented and distorted urban forms of apartheid are stark. The most luxurious suburbs on the African continent and downtown skyscrapers of iridescent modernity co-exist with planned geographies of poverty — townships and shantytowns of intentionally degraded living environments, poor infrastructure and social facilities. One such area is described

in the book *Mekbukhu* — “Mshenguville (Soweto) consisted of 31,254 jam-packed tin dwellings. The tin shacks lean virtually one against the other, with a mere passage between them. The settlement lacks streets and roads. Garbage piles up in every nook and cranny; a smell of poverty permeates the shantytown. It is overcrowded, squalid and ugly, yet it is also vibrant and irrepressible in its own sordid way.” The two million people in the urban region of Johannesburg were in the early 1990s approximately 60% black and 31% white. After the 1994 democratic elections, hope and opportunities for urban change co-existed with the awareness by policymakers of the difficulties of bettering the stark conditions of most black Africans.

Johannesburg produces a constant low-level nausea concerning the gross and inhumane inequalities of the human condition. For the first time in my life, I was a minority — a distinct, conspicuous one guilty by being white in South Africa. How was I to make sense of the overwhelming and rhythmic street scene of black people in this city, when most media portrayals of American cities suggest that blacks should be guarded against physically?

Whites in Johannesburg fear the avenging black, producing gates that separate houses from streets and even parts of houses from other parts. Gates provide a benign feeling of safety but also a dark reinforcement of the “other” as demon and threat. In the well-off ridgeline home we rented while in the city, there was a so-called “rape gate” in between the home’s living room and its sleeping quarters. It was there to block a successful intruder’s entryway into our bedroom at night. I recall the feeling that I was losing a bit of my humanity each of the 78 nights that I locked that gate. It made me feel more protected at night, but it didn’t make me feel better.

Racism with a professional and trained face seems more of an affront than working-class racism. My interview with Graeme

Hart, professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, felt like we were two teenagers huddling together to share nasty thoughts about the different-looking kids in our neighbourhood. His racism was depressing because his arguments were at times dressed up in the language of social science. He points out that the development level of any African country is best explained by the percentage white population in that country. “We’re the technocrats and the blacks aren’t. They have never demonstrated that capacity.” In terms of what to do with squatter and ‘informal’ settlements that spring up around Johannesburg, Hart quips that “it might be better to put something in the water”. As for the future, “if we play our cards right, we can still steer our own canoe even through these guys are now in control; blacks need us more than we need them”. The discussion with veteran planner, Dik Viljoen, feels more nuanced and regal, yet ultimately more distressing. He countered my portrayal of apartheid Johannesburg as a contested city; “under the old regime it was not contested; it is now under the new regime”. Unlike Jews who have a homeland where reside all things of cultural importance, the white Dutch-descendant Afrikaner in South Africa has no homeland elsewhere; there is nowhere else for him to turn. So, “the policy of separate development — call it apartheid if you wish — was an attempt to say, ‘we have to do something to give the African people sufficient rights so they can do their thing, so we can continue to do our own thing’”. This has a logic that seeks to entrap and soothe you before you wake up to the actual consequences. More telling is that neighbourhood dogs in Johannesburg bark ferociously at black people but not white. What was said to those dogs behind closed doors?

Tandi Klassen shows the scars and burns of apartheid on her face. She is a famous black African jazz singer. Her face is disfigured and beautiful, radiating both pain she can still feel and joy that she exudes more naturally. She has a quality of frenetic joy, as if she feels there is not enough time to make up for

apartheid and that she is going to get it all out as best she can. Truly a blessed experience watching her sing an improvised jazz standard to our then one-year-old son in the magnificent expanse of our home's backyard. The heart and soul become serene, making the gates of fear seem like a joke in very bad taste. It is surreal to drive her one late night to her home in a south Johannesburg township, passing through the boundaries of apartheid's spatial divides. Driving down a near-abandoned road lit with the orange glow of industrial standard lighting, turning into the dark and sleepy township, and entering Tandi's modest house and her world of love and thrill.

We travel into Soweto guided by Peter Weir. Soweto is an amalgamation of 29 black townships over 10 miles southwest of, and functionally disconnected from, white Johannesburg. Soweto is the largest black residential area in the country, with anywhere between 800,000 and 3 million inhabitants (since blacks were viewed as 'temporary' urban residents under apartheid, there was no reason to count). The tour is informative but distanced by the fact that Weir is white. He carries a gun; "I don't know whether it would make a difference". He also says that he is "told to stay on the main routes, so they can find us". A month earlier, we had spent a day in the Kwa-Mashu Township of Durham, guided by a local man named Nelson Zondi Mandla. The experience was intimate and intoxicating. As we craned our necks to get views out of the van of everything around us, we were answered back with smiles and waves from women wearing aprons caught in pose between household chores, young tykes leaning out of ramshackle windows, and tired soulful men. We received more waves and smiles that day in Kwa-Mashu than one receives in one year in suburban southern California. I slept closer to heaven that night.

Umunta ngumuntu ngabantu ('a person depends on persons to be a person') is a Xhosa concept that provides a window into the communitarian basis of native African

philosophy. It is directly in contrast to our western impulses toward individualism and stresses instead our dependence on others for our own development and fulfilment. Community does not lead to the blurring and blending of individual boundaries but rather to the deepening of self. In South Africa, a related concept, *ubuntu*, stresses the significance of group solidarity, human dignity, and humanity in surviving individual and community hardship. One feels the seductive pull of community in listening to apartheid struggle. Eric Molobi is the head of the Kagiso Trust in Johannesburg, which funds non-governmental and community-based organizations. He recalls the detentions, torture and legal blockades thrown at the group, stating that 'survival was an act of defiance and that to close down would have been a sign of defeat'. Patrick Flusk, from the 'coloured' township of Riverlea and representative in the new post-apartheid metropolitan government, suggests to his constituents "not to call me 'councillor' because that distances me from people; I always had an attitude toward that term. That's the activist part of me". Patrick is 31 years old with 17 years experience in political activities in the form of school boycotts and police detentions. Solidarity amidst survival is seductive—whether it is Muslims in Sarajevo, Catholics in Belfast, or blacks in America's cities.

Yet, allusions to community and group solidarity in glowing opposition to government cover over internal black divisions. The area known as Katorus in southern Johannesburg was a battlefield between hostel and township residents (aided and abetted by the white minority government) in the years leading up the 1994 elections. Four thousand youths were dogs of war, fighting as part of the African National Congress' "self defence units" or as the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party's "special protection units". With the election of 1994, states Themba Maluleke, the person charged with stabilizing and rebuilding the area for the new government, these youths (or 'amakosi') had their reason for



Figure 3 Johannesburg. Louis Botha Avenue 1995.

being abandoned. In physically reconstructing Katorus, Maluleke must rebuild lost souls and incorporate these youths into a process of normalization. In Soweto, competing political allegiances by blacks obstruct reconstruction. One channel for reconstruction is through religion, says Ishmael Mkhabela, a gentle and soft-spoken bear of a man who is director of the Interfaith Community Development Association. He was part of the “Black Consciousness” movement of Steve Biko in the 1970s and worked on issues of forced removal and the creation of rump native homelands. In the future, “it will not be whites and blacks, or political parties, coming together, but individuals in and across neighbourhoods cutting deals to work together”.

Harry Mashabela, the author of *Mekhubu*, expresses frustration over the lack of progress in government action since 1994. An older man with tired and experienced eyes, he does not like what he sees — “reconcilia-

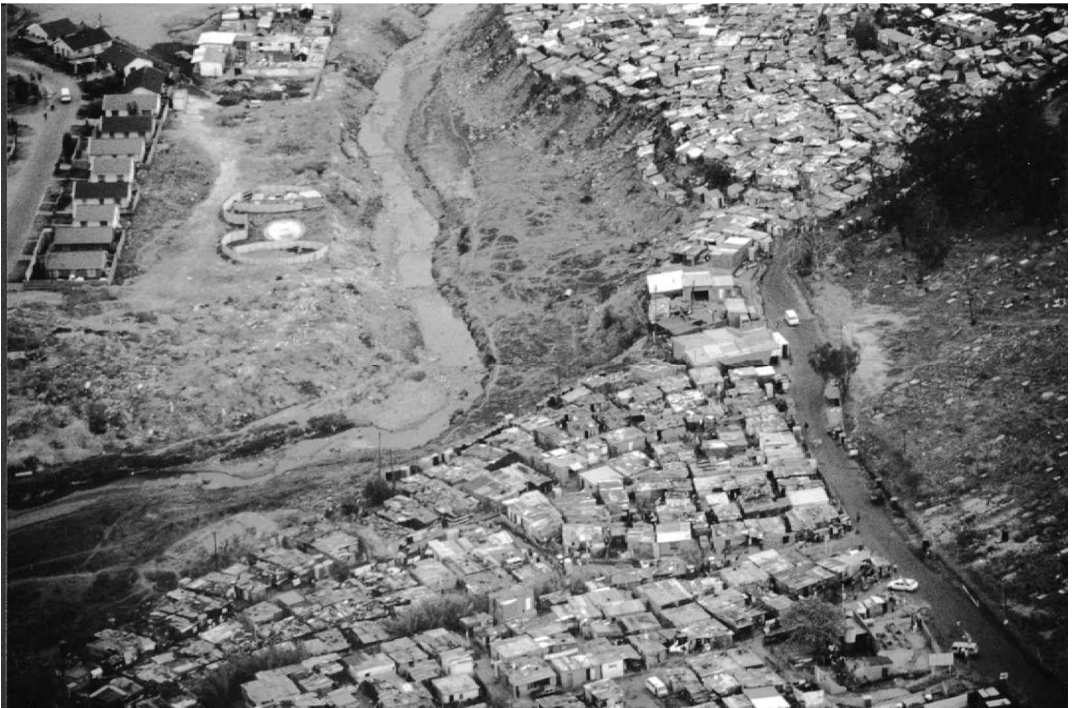


Figure 4 Johannesburg. Squatter shacks in Alexandra Township.

tion today seems to be condonement of further degradation of the black person". He laments, "our people who are in government today seem to forget where they come from". With liberation has come not major advancement in blacks' well-being but rather an erosion in traditional African communitarianism; "if you raise *ubuntu* now, people think you are crazy . . . 'you want us to go back to being primitive'".

In many ways, politically empowered black Africans are like swimmers who have been under water for 50 years, emerge to the surface and are told to swim the backstroke at Olympian level. The substantial personal and organizational skills black Africans learned in the struggle must now be translated to the skills of governance in repairing a torn city's fabric and souls. "One underestimates the kind of black hole created by the collapse of an empire", observes Monty Narsoo, Indian housing director of the Johannesburg region. He contrasts South Africa, where political democracy must be developed before economic growth, with South Korea, where authoritarian systems that stimulated economic growth only now are loosening. "We cannot compete with Koreas and the Malaysias out there", contends Narsoo, "but I prefer it our way . . . a rambling, shambling democracy that will get its act together sometime down the line". Molobi of the Kagiso Trust observes that "we are on unknown terrain and have limited experience working with and for government, so it is really a first shot". Connecting communities and government in the future will likely be done by people such as Tshipso Mashinini, a young, cigarette-smoking deputy director in the Johannesburg's Urbanization Department. Born in the Jabava neighbourhood of Soweto, his personal history includes trade union and community organizing in the face of apartheid. He can talk both languages—that of the community in articulating needs, and that of government in portraying its rules and imperatives. In the early years of post-apartheid, this combination of experiences was rare, and Mashinini

admits, "nobody has been trained in doing the work that we do". Yet, these efforts at community participation and mediation will likely be essential to assure that the future physical and human development of South Africa's cities counteract, not solidify, apartheid geographies.

Compared to the other cities in this paper, Johannesburg may contain the most self-reinforcing faultline—a clash between European and African culture, North versus South, 'modern' versus 'primitive', individualism versus communitarianism. It is a conflict that comes down irreducibly to race and our racism.

Jerusalem . . . this city of over 600,000 residents is a site of demographic, physical and political competition. The social and political geography of Jerusalem has included between 1920 and 1948 a multicultural mosaic under British control and two-sided physical partitioning between 1948 and 1967 into Israeli and Jordanian-controlled components. Since 1967, it has been an Israeli-controlled municipality three times the area of the pre-1967 city (due to unilateral annexation) and encompassing formerly Arab East Jerusalem. The international status of East Jerusalem today remains as 'occupied' territory. Jewish demographic advantage (of approximately 70–30%) within the Israeli-defined city borders translates into Jewish control of the city council and mayor's office. Arabs resist participating in municipal elections they deem illegitimate.

Israel has created over the past 30 years an urban landscape of visible and stark inequalities, Jewish–Arab residential interfaces vulnerable to conflict, and *de facto* division. "From the very first, all major development represented politically and strategically motivated planning", admits Israel Kimhi (city planner, Jerusalem, 1963–1986). Equating demographic dominance with political control, large Jewish communities have been built in strategic locations throughout the annexed

and disputed municipal area. Of the approximately 27 square miles unilaterally annexed after the 1967 war, approximately 33% has been expropriated by the Israeli government and neighbourhoods built in these areas in “east” Jerusalem are homes today to approximately 160,000 Jewish residents. At the same time, Israeli planners have curtailed the growth of Palestinian neighbourhoods through land expropriation, restrictive environmentally based “green area zoning”, road construction that fragments Arab neighbourhoods, “hidden guidelines” within Israeli plans that cap building volume in some areas, and the intentional absence of plans in others. The cumulative impact of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian growth is that only 11% of annexed east Jerusalem in 1995 was vacant land where the Israeli government allowed Palestinian development.

Although lacking a physical partition since 1967, Jerusalem is a city functionally and psychologically divided. Michael Romann describes this as “living together separately”. Neighbourhood-level residential segregation is almost total. Separate business districts, public transportation systems, and educational and medical facilities are maintained. Feelings of frustration and community depletion were the norm as one walked through east Jerusalem in 1995. Ibrahim Dakkak, long-time east Jerusalem resident and community leader asserts, “Palestinians in Jerusalem are seen as a problem, a historical mistake, an unwanted child”. Lacking a legitimate source of urban governance, the city’s Arab residents are a community being constantly re-charged with anger and hatred. Michael Warshawski is director of an Arab–Jewish non-governmental organization. He asserts that, “in my nightmares, I see Jerusalem as a Jewish city with a Palestinian ghetto—depoliticized, demobilized and criminalized”. Jan Abu-Shahrah, a Palestinian human rights advocate, concludes that the “decimation and breaking up of East Jerusalem has left no feeling of community, of common history, common future, common cause”.

Despite the constant tension of living in Jerusalem, I experience a sense of intimacy shared by Jews and Palestinians, akin to a war between brothers in a long family battle, a knowing about each other amidst conflict. There are progressive Israeli voices in Jerusalem who stress the need for some mutual accommodation with their Arab co-residents. Yet, they are tired and frustrated, weighed down and ultimately captured by the recent historical consciousness of the Jew in the 20th century. Indeed, can we reasonably expect Israel to create a socially just Jerusalem that is inclusive of a threatening Arab population?

I meet Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem and prolific author on city development and politics, in the serene setting of his peaceful flat in the Talbieh neighbourhood of west Jerusalem. He is sulky, depressed and thoughtful—“I am only an observer now. I’m tired. I can only write and try to be provocative. But I am pessimistic. I’ve done what I can do”. Benvenisti was chief deputy under liberal mayor Teddy Kollek, who held power in the city for 27 years (1967–1993). As a Labour politician, Kollek championed equality and fairness of treatment toward Arab residents and mutual co-existence of the two groups. Yet, at the same time, Jewish–Arab spending ratios reflected gross inequalities in public spending for roads, water, sewer and other urban infrastructure. According to many, Kollek created a better political atmosphere but in practice carried out the Israeli stamp on Jerusalem.

Benvenisti recalls bitterly that social justice goals were not carried out, stating that “Kollek never fought for anything”. Another insider at the time, Sarah Kaminker, suggests that the political coalition that held together the Kollek regime “brought in liberal constituencies that facilitated the long-term maintenance of a strategic and ideologically based planning approach”. She feels that Kollek’s “was not a liberal administration as far as the Arabs were concerned”. Elinoar Barzacchi, city engineer under Kollek, states

that “we should have treated the Arabs in east Jerusalem as equal Israel citizens; give and take from them everything like we do Jews. Bridging of the east–west gap in living conditions should have been done quickly. The line today is still there and that is our worst failure”.

Ehud Olmert, Likud mayor since 1993, professes more forcefully and adamantly than Kollek that Jerusalem is a Jewish city. He states unequivocally that, “Jerusalem was, never ceased to be, continues to be, and will forever remain the undivided capital of only the state of Israel and the Jewish people”. Despite this stern and unaccommodating stance, the Olmert administration has been cognizant of the potentially negative effects on Israel’s political claims of the historic and current service and spending differentials. It sees increased spending in Arab neighbourhoods as a way to secure continued Jewish control over the city. Ilan Cohen, Jerusalem city manager, acknowl-

edges that “imbalances make it harder for Israel to say ‘the city is unified’”.

A common, defining, characteristic of divided cities is the significant presence of borders—real and perceptual. Competition for land and territory in contested cities creates the need for politically constructed boundaries and borders which separate ethnic groups. These boundaries separate people but paradoxically bring them together. Political lines demarcate ownership amidst contested space, but also can become places of encounter due to the same competition that spawned the borders in the first place. In the Damascus Gate ‘seam area’ in Jerusalem, Arab labour and trucks now establish themselves there looking for Jewish construction jobs. Outside the 1967 outer boundary of Israeli-defined Jerusalem is the burgeoning Arab settlement of A-Ram, whose growth can be attributed to its ability to act as a safety net for Arabs unable to live in restricted Jerusalem. The Israeli-delineated



Figure 5 Jerusalem. Jewish Quarter in Old City—Israeli army soldiers and orthodox Jew.



Figure 6 Jerusalem. A common sight in west Jerusalem—Israeli army soldiers.

border, meant to separate peoples, actually draws the two sides closer in space due to land use competition over Jerusalem. Borders in contested cities illuminate a strange world of separateness and connection; or in the words of Meron Benvenisti, the existence of ‘intimate enemies’.

Political control amidst ambiguous borders also is elusive, points out Michael Romann of Tel-Aviv University. In an effort to politically control an antagonistic group, a governing regime will often seek to penetrate that group’s territory in the urban arena. In the short term, this action increases the vulnerability of the aggressor, requiring further penetration at greater and greater geographic scales in endeavours to increase perceived security. In the Jerusalem case, as Israel wins the numbers game within its defined city, its attention increasingly becomes focused on the urban region and larger West Bank where the numbers game is not in Israel’s favour. Trying to establish

political control through territorial claims at one scale of geography spawns needs for further territorial aggrandizement, an endless cycle alternating between political consolidation and disequilibrium.

In Jerusalem, this time in the Arab part, I am confronted after I give a seminar presentation by the leader of a Palestinian non-governmental organization, Mahdi Abdul Hadi: “based on your research on Israel’s Jerusalem policies, what would you recommend that the Palestinian strategy be to counter them?” The audience patiently and respectfully waits for my reply and I cannot come up with an alternative to confrontational, even violent, overtures. As I look at my ideals of human co-existence shattered on the ground, I feel a warm emotional embrace by the audience of my acceptance of the harsh realities. I am not different from human beings anywhere that are deprived of basic rights, needs and dignity.

I take an Arab taxi and cross the *de facto* international border that separates Israeli-defined Jerusalem from the “West Bank”. The taxi leaves us in the wrong place for my interview in the city of Ramallah, less than 10 miles north of the Israeli borders of Jerusalem. Shopkeepers help me find the proper direction, and other, younger men gather to listen. They are curious about why I am there on a busy Ramallah street corner; many express a deep friendship with Americans that I honestly do not think is there on our part (or at least our official government policies do not support such a claim.)

One senses in the Arab West Bank in 1995 psychological exhaustion and depletion. Rami Abdulhadi, a mechanical engineer, describes how the last 30 years of occupation have deprived Palestinian people of the opportunity to develop a framework of public interest; absent this framework, self-interest has risen above public interest. The Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR) was established as a conduit for foreign assistance pursuant to the 1993 Israeli–Palestinian peace accord. Due to restrictions by Israel, its headquarters cannot be located within Israeli-defined Jerusalem. Instead, it is located about 500 feet outside the municipal border in A-Ram, a bizarre political geography characteristic of disputed cities. Samir Abdallah has a PhD degree in economics and is director of economic policy. A gracious man, he nonetheless takes the governing Palestinian National Authority to task, asserting that a “one-man show is not the way to build a civil and modern economic society”. I travel back inside Israeli-defined Jerusalem to the Arab village of Shoafat and interview Maher Doudi, American-educated project officer for a non-governmental organization. He expresses frustration with Palestinian leadership (“flag-waving will not put food on the table”) and describes how Islamists are filling the vacuum by responding to the economic needs of the average person.

Abdallah and Doudi represent a class of well-educated Palestinian professionals important to state building and society building. It appears that democracy and human rights are essential for bringing back the many well-trained and well-educated Palestinians who emigrated during the long years of occupation, and for retaining those that are now here. This emerging and politically moderate professional class is in the middle, frustrated with the remote leadership of the PNA but not aligned with the Islamists’ view of a religious society. In Jerusalem, the power of the old guard of community and religious leadership has been in decline since 1990. Yet, an alternative local leadership has yet to emerge. Much of the younger generation gained experience during the *intifada* (1987–1990); according to community elder Ibrahim Dakkak, they “don’t know how to deal with local issues, but are interested in nationalist issues”. At the same time, due to Israeli restrictions on institution building in the city, the Palestinian professional class has been unable to nurture the type of community governance that would hold this important moderate group together. Ironically, unilateral Israeli actions that restrict the development of civil society in Arab Jerusalem may be creating the very outcome—an authoritarian and radicalized Palestinian presence on its doorstep—that these restrictive policies have been seeking to avoid.

“It’s all about identity”, states Nehemia Friedland, a specialist in terrorist situations and professor of psychology at Tel Aviv University. And ethnic and communal identity is at its most unclear in Jerusalem. There is not the tacit acceptance by Arabs of Israeli sovereignty as occurs within a Tel Aviv or Nazareth. At the same time, open hostility and confrontation between the two sides seen in the West Bank is less likely in Jerusalem because both sides are aware of its detrimental impacts on the city’s economic well-being. Friedland suggests that tension increases when identity boundaries become fuzzy and permeable. Thus, in Jerusalem, there must be a clear demarcation of the

Jewish and Arab parts of the city in order to maintain identity boundaries, with ethnic symbols and segregation condoned as ways to build and reinforce group identity.

In the end, one learns in Jerusalem about what can and cannot be achieved through political power supported by military strength. Israeli policy has likely strengthened her ability to control Jerusalem politically, yet it has weakened her moral and authentic hold on the city. In this endless struggle for political control, Israel will need to construct further Jewish developments in contested zones as a way to regulate an urban fabric of complex ethnic geographies and unstable Jewish-Arab residential interfaces. Yet such actions further manipulate ethnic geographies, create new spatial axes of tension and deepen the grounds for conflict.

Partisanship in a contested city appears a fallacy, in that its very 'success' in Jerusalem—in creating urban conditions of domination and subjugation—leads to an urban and regional instability that is corrosive of Israel's genuine control of the city. Interface areas between Jewish and Arab neighbourhoods created through partisan planning are signposts of territoriality and segregation, leaving legacies of disparity and relative deprivation to Palestinians much as apartheid cities have done to black South Africans. The Jerusalem of subordination and inequality created by Israeli policy over the past 30 years has produced a destabilized urban system that will likely buttress Israeli arguments during uncertain peace-building for the renewed implementation of partisan planning so as to protect and solidify Jewish neighbourhoods. This internal and self-fulfilling logic of Israel's partisan policymaking stands as the biggest impediment to a shared and equitable peace in the Holy City.

Nicosia . . . all the appearances of peace, yet every north-south street is disconnected by camouflaged sandbags and barbed wire. Southern Nicosia is the capital city and seat of government of the Republic of Cyprus, the part of the island

*inhabited by Greek Cypriots. Northern Nicosia is the capital of the Turkish Cypriot "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", declared in 1983 but unrecognized internationally. The Turkish army in Cyprus since its invasion (peace operation) in 1974 controls that part of the island. An estimated 175,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced from the north; about 40,000 Turkish Cypriots from south to north. The city is separated by the Green Line, a UN-maintained buffer zone, established during the 1974 war but built upon ethnic demarcation lines first drawn in the early 1960s. Intercommunal violence in 1958 and 1964 had necessitated foreign intervention and *de facto* ethnic enclaves as ways to stabilize the strife-torn city. Today, lacking special permission, none of the 650,000 Greek Cypriots may enter the north and none of the 190,000 Turkish Cypriots may enter the south.*

Neshe Yashin has the petiteness and gentleness of a poet and the strength of a warrior. The 40-year-old Turkish Cypriot, educated in Ankara with experience as a journalist, has for the past two years chosen "to live with the enemy". This is a rarity in hermetically sealed Nicosia and Cyprus. She "chose" to do this as a way to show her displeasure with the false choice of a divided country enforced by 50,000 Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot and UN soldiers. "Why did I do this?", Yashin asks, "this was not a choice because I am against the choice". She goes from one side of the divide to the other by flying from northern Nicosia to Istanbul, Turkey; from there to Athens, Greece; then to Greek Cyprus and southern Nicosia. The change of three planes is needed to cross a distance of about 150 feet, "the longest 50 meters in the world". Yashin sees her role as helping reconciliation in Cyprus through the giving of speeches in schools and villages in the south, through her participation in a weekly radio show, and through her poetry. For her own understanding since living in the south, "it is more painful to live in a divided city when I also empathize with the other

and appreciate their pain and suffering as well. Seeing the victimization of Greek Cypriots changed the image of the enemy inside me". She has a clear sense about which are the real enemies of peace—"the problem about ethnic conflicts is that they create a stratum that benefit from the conflict. We can call these conflict breeders. Conflict is their income and their identity".

In Nicosia, both sides seem victims and both sides seem perpetrators. Turkish Cypriot residents view the 1960s period of ethnic harassment and forced enclaves as a period of disunity and the period since 1974 as one of hope and stability. Greek Cypriot residents look back at the 1960s as a time of unity and the post-1974 period as a time of disaster and division. Similar to Jews and Arabs in the Middle East and Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, both sides' perceptions comprise a 'double minority syndrome'. Turkish Cypriots feel like a minority in the face of the substantial Greek Cypriot majority on the island; Greek Cypriots feel a threatened minority in the face of the combined interests of Turkish Cypriots and mainland Turkey 40 miles from the shores of northern Cyprus. The perception of threat in contested cities and societies seems to magnify one's own ethnic identity, leaving no space for the complex character of the other; it becomes simplified, darkened and conspiratorial.

One gets the sense that this physical partition does not represent an equilibrium and sustainable state of affairs. Yet, it has been this way for 25 years. I pass from one side to the other—thanks to a day pass orchestrated by a Fulbright Fellow in Nicosia. It seems surreal—the different symbols, uniforms, the guns pointed at each other, the smile of the Turkish Cypriot soldier as the van pulls up to the checkbooth for the checking of papers. From the top of the Saray Hotel in Northern Nicosia, the view is startling—the two halves of the old city within the Venetian walls could not be more different—the Turkish Cypriot side is green, human scale, low rise; the Greek Cypriot side is slick, bustling and modern.

Turkish-controlled Cyprus is not as well off economically as Greek Cyprus, but surprises me because it does not feel depleted and disembowelled like the West Bank did when I travelled across the Israeli border in 1994. I cannot imagine advocating a dividing wall between Israel and a new state of Palestine; yet, the 25 years of separateness on Cyprus seems to have protected a group identity and nurtured a society in the north in a way not seen for West Bank Palestinians under Israeli control.

There are heroes today. Lellos Demetriades has been mayor of Greek Cypriot Nicosia for 27 years, a warm and gracious man, colourful and outspoken, with a gleam in his eyes as he walks around his city. I met him first in Salzburg, Austria in 1987, observing him and his Turkish Cypriot mayor counterpart, Mustafa Akinci, talking and sharing, remote from the cameras and the attention of nationalists on the island, like the intimate friends that they were. Such friendship produced something amazing—the development in the 1980s, under the auspices of the UN Development Programme, of a Nicosia Master Plan that disregards the dividing line and plans for the city as a hypothetical unified entity. It has facilitated the European Union-funded development of pedestrian areas in the commercial and historic centres on both sides of the line in ways that would enable them to be connected in the future.

Demetriades is more the showman, the consummate host who makes sure everyone's needs are tended to; Akinci is more low-key but also warm and affable. For 13 years, these two men met once a week in Nicosia, Akinci driving through two checkpoints in a UN-escorted car to have lunch at Demetriades' home in the south. People do, and can, make a difference amidst conflict, acting either as the 'conflict breeders' fingered by Ms Yashin or as peace brokers in the case of the leaders Demetriades and Akinci. While Demetriades remains as mayor in the south, Akinci has moved on. The current leader of the northern side is Semi Bora, a young and likeable



Figure 7 Nicosia. Looking north from Turkish Cypriot side at the buffer zone.



Figure 8 Nicosia. Lellos Demetriades, mayor of divided Nicosia for the past three decades.

39-year-old man who began his presentation at an international conference in Sarajevo by distributing a small souvenir flag of the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, not an auspicious start in developing strategies for urban peace-making. I did not feel Bora was a nationalist at heart, but rather playing a role choreographed by someone else. Bora’s greenness makes one think he will excel at the easier and inviting use of subtly delivered nationalist rhetoric rather than at the patient and incremental understanding that is essential for peace brokering in a divided city.

The physical partitioning of Nicosia cleanly separates opposing sides. Some feel that this may be a solution to ethnic conflict because it allows self-sufficiency and self-confidence to build on both sides that could then set the basis for collaboration among equals to meet basic urban needs. *De facto* sovereignty over the city is divided and ethnic groups are isolated from one another as a means to allow time for each to regroup. Yet, one must contemplate whether the cost

of this physical separation — the death of the city's soul — is a worthy sacrifice in pursuing this risky enterprise.

Two personal experiences with “bicommunal” efforts to create a politically shared Cyprus confuse me. In Nicosia, I am part of a UN-sponsored conference intended to bring Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot city-builders together to examine the “revitalization of historic cities”. The conference's name is intentionally non-controversial to increase the chances that both sides will be allowed to come by their respective governments to the barbed-wired and UN-maintained Ledra Hotel conference site within the buffer zone. Despite this effort at innocuousness, Turkish Cypriots are not allowed to come by their governing regime because bicommunal meetings are perceived frequently by that side as disguised efforts at the re-unification of the island. UN officials start off the conference with well-rehearsed monologues that are vacuous commendations of their peace-building efforts. Then, at the first scheduled morning break in the proceedings, these suits and dresses get up and leave after wishing us all the best in our endeavours.

My other bicommunal experience occurs off-island in southern California. There, 10 Greek Cypriots and 10 Turkish Cypriots — lawyers, judges, police officials — gather to learn about how the administration of justice can take place under a federal solution to the island's sovereignty. Such a solution is the official stand of the USA. It would provide some autonomy to the Turkish Cypriots (more than is acceptable to Greek Cypriots) while providing for some central governmental functions (more than is acceptable to Turkish Cypriots). Efforts to hold such meetings on the island within the buffer zone have become increasingly difficult due to the intransigence of the Turkish Cypriot national leader. Thus, the only way for the American sponsors to accomplish this gathering was to arrange for offshore meetings like this one (and others in Oslo and Jerusalem). The Cypriot meeting participants were warm and cordial, at times

laughing at the absurdity of their condition and bending over backward to accommodate each other. At this professional level, and among a group that favours a shared political co-existence on the island, there was hope for a way forward.

The static and semi-permanent feel of the ethnic buffer line in Nicosia belies the pain in people's hearts and souls. When I ask in the Nicosia conference whether the division is politically sustainable, one Greek Cypriot professional rises to his feet wavering in nervousness and with tears in his eyes, and says why it cannot be and that the pain of loss inside him is unsustainable. Afterwards, I am admonished by a Greek Cypriot woman, who asserts, “look what you did bringing up this question — whether Nicosia is sustainable as is — you people come in here and just don't know what you are doing asking such”. I start to withdraw emotionally. Then, I come forward to the gentleman and I enter into a mutual hug because it is too important to our basic humanity not to.

History weighs down hard and heavy on Sarajevo, Jerusalem, Nicosia and Johannesburg. These cities share a common sorrow of tormented pasts and unpredictable, turbulent futures.

Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert explains a quality of that city shared by other politically contested cities — that “when you debate the control of Jerusalem, you debate not just the present and the future, but also the past”. And Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai described a common feeling in these cities — “The air above Jerusalem is filled with prayers and dreams. Like the air above cities with heavy industry, hard to breathe”. While history weighs heavily and must assuredly be accounted for in contested cities, it must also assuredly not be used as an armament. Ricardo Perez Casado, former administrator of the European Union in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina tells us why — “if we evoke history as a weapon, it is always the citizens

who lose". It seems that one cannot solve these conflicts without reference to history, yet there must be an 'intentional forgetfulness', or more majestically stated, a forgiveness, concerning past injustices and harms in order for societies and cities to move away progressively from conflict.

The 'no-man's lands', buffer zones and peace lines that inhumanely divide contested cities seem, on the one hand, to be intractable urban fixtures; yet, on the other hand, they show a significant ability to evolve as places and symbols, and to perform important roles in stitching together torn cities. The Berlin Wall evolves into a Mecca of capitalist building at Potsdamer Platz. The 'green line' in Nicosia still divides that capital but is now really green, with trees and shrubs untouched for 25 years growing up and filling in the buffer zone. In Sarajevo, one of the few places in the city where you found a growing stand of trees after the war was along the former line of hostility between Serb militias and the Bosnian Army in the Grbavica neighbourhood. These trees existed because the constant sniping and bombing along the front lines prevented the cutting of trees for fuel so widespread elsewhere in the city. The physical barrier that divided Jewish from Arab Jerusalem between 1949 and 1967 is now, just north of the Old City, a major road and meeting place for Israeli truck drivers looking for cheap Arab labour. And in Johannesburg, the apartheid system of land use separation created buffer zones to segregate white from black and produced a 'white'

inner city of ample public services and low-density development. Ironically, these spatial legacies of urban apartheid provide golden opportunities, not to be found in normal cities, for restructuring and eradicating the city's landscape of racial hate.

Divided cities challenge us to confront whether we are hopeful or pessimistic about our ability to get along together. A puzzle faced by policymakers in multicultural cities — whether Beirut or Detroit, Sarajevo or New York, Nicosia or Miami, Montreal or Johannesburg — is a basic one that forces us to confront our own beliefs and predilections. In an urban situation where there are antagonistic, or potentially antagonistic, ethnic or racial groups, do city-builders encourage these groups to live together and interact, or do they facilitate the development of ethnically segregated neighbourhoods and districts? Decisions such as these will send emotive symbols to future generations about what we either aspire to in hope or accept in resignation.

Scott A. Bollens is Professor and Chairman, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of California, Irvine. He is author of On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000) and Urban Peace-building in Divided Societies: Belfast and Johannesburg (Oxford, UK and Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).