

approach maintained by the opposition, including and most notably the ANC leaders released after 25 years in prison, and Nelson Mandela, the paramount leader, who remains in custody. The total lack of rancour and the spirit of reconciliation exhibited by these people is so exceptional that hope is possible for an enduring resolution in South Africa even with the huge obstacles of institutionalized racism and race privilege still to be overcome.

There is also hope in the fact that the non-violent pressure of the outside world, through significant economic and other sanctions, has reinforced internal pressures to the point of making basic change more possible – a fact that is clear in spite of some of the lingering debates among some Western leaders. Backsliding or blockages are entirely possible, of course, in which case these pressures may yet have to be intensified.

The Middle East

1989 saw no reduction in the bitter and longstanding Arab-Israeli conflict, with the Palestinian uprising or *intifada* in the occupied territories continuing to result in widespread casualties and disorder, to focus world attention and considerable sympathy on the Palestinians' cause, and to provoke profound disquiet and debate among Israelis. Reflecting a new level of Palestinian optimism and confidence, Yasser Arafat and the PLO were prepared to accept a resolution to moderate the organization's territorial demands and its refusal to accept the state of Israel, saying in French that the PLO charter is "caduque" (obsolete). The PLO was able to establish a more formal and high-level dialogue with Western countries including the US (on 14 December 1988) and much later (on 30 March 1989) with Canada, but efforts to gain further formal recognition in key international organizations for the "State of Palestine" (declared in November 1988) were met with firm opposition and blocked by the US.

The Israeli cabinet came forward in mid-year with a peace plan based on the election of Arab spokesmen (excluding the PLO) who would then negotiate for measures of autonomy. Sometimes heated debate around this proposal between the Israeli and American governments, and then with others concerned, stretched over the following months without any resolution by year-end, but with Egypt coming to support a modified version and attempting to gain acceptance by the PLO. Although there is some hope in these developments, it remains clear that there is profound fear among many Israelis (beyond the extremists who promote annexation and deportation) as to the