

## ZIONIST REALITIES

*Debating Israel–Palestine*

**I**N DISCUSSING ‘SOLUTIONS’ for Israel/Palestine, it may be salutary to recall the famous assertion of the *Communist Manifesto*—that its theoretical conclusions ‘are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes’. From the outbreak of the first Intifada in December 1987, the real historical movement of the Palestinian liberation struggle has been directed towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. The PLO adopted this goal officially in 1988, but it was widely known that, despite its rhetoric, the two-state solution had been its real aim at least since 1974. The first Intifada resulted in the Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO, which launched a process often believed at the time to be leading towards the fulfilment of this goal. That process ended in failure, as we now know, for reasons that are still widely debated among observers and participants alike.<sup>1</sup>

While the first Intifada was an unarmed popular struggle, the second Intifada, which marked the end of the Oslo process in summer 2000, encountered a deliberately violent over-reaction by the Israeli military and turned into an armed rebellion.<sup>2</sup> In Israeli popular consciousness it has been characterized mostly by the suicide bombings of civilian targets inside Israel’s 1967 borders. This has caused a shift in the public mood of the Jewish-Israeli middle class—away from supporting the efforts to achieve security through peace and towards seeking security at all costs—and, in the eyes of some, legitimated Sharon’s brutal reoccupation of the

West Bank in April 2002. Although Sharon was officially committed to something called the Road Map—a commitment maintained by his heir apparent, Ehud Olmert—and in spite of the continuing charade called the Palestinian Authority, the prospects for a viable, sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza are practically non-existent (if they ever existed at all). As a result, the old PLO programme, of establishing one secular, democratic state in the entire territory of Mandatory Palestine has been revived, primarily among Palestinian intellectuals inside and outside the region.<sup>3</sup>

The merit of Virginia Tilley's *The One-State Solution* is to lay out, in a systematic way, many of the problems attendant upon the two-state plan.<sup>4</sup> Tilley's aim is to advance the discussion of the one-state solution in the us.<sup>5</sup> She attempts to do so by making two major arguments: (1) that the two-state solution is no longer a viable option, if it ever was, and (2) that the one-state solution 'would resolve the entire conflict in one magisterial gesture'. It would have to be magisterial indeed, because Tilley wants to see a state that would not only 'serve all its citizens equally', but also ensure that 'the Jewish national home can find a new and more secure configuration no longer requiring a Jewish majority or Jewish ethnic domination over the state'.<sup>6</sup> In other words, Tilley sets out to show

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Pressman, 'Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?', *International Security*, vol. 28, no. 2, Fall 2003, pp. 5–43; Arie Kacowicz, *Rashomon in Jerusalem: Mapping the Israeli Negotiators' Positions on the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, 1993–2001*, Leonard Davis Institute Occasional Papers no. 95, Jerusalem 2004.

<sup>2</sup> See Peled, 'Profits or Glory?', NLR 29, September–October 2004, pp. 47–70.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis see Tamar Hermann, 'The Bi-National Idea in Israel/Palestine', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2005, pp. 381–401. See also the exchange on binationalism in the *Boston Review*, vol. 26, no. 5, December 2001–January 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Tilley, *The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock*, Manchester 2005; henceforth *oss*.

<sup>5</sup> Tony Judt's endorsement on the cover signals the hope that the book will propel the debate over the one-state solution 'in this country'. In October 2003 Judt himself created an uproar among American Jewish *literati* by suggesting, in a *New York Review of Books* article, that since the two-state solution was no longer available, Israel would have to choose between two versions of the one-state solution: a bi-national democratic Jewish-Palestinian state, or cleansing Palestine of its Palestinian residents. Given this choice, the bi-national state was the only real option.

<sup>6</sup> *oss*, pp. 9, 12. Curiously, no similar concern for a Palestinian 'national home' is evinced by the author, bringing to mind the imbalance notoriously embedded in the mandate over Palestine given Great Britain by the League of Nations in 1922.

not only that the one-state solution is the only option for settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also that it should not be seen as a threat to the basic aim of Zionism—establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine.

### *Settlement strategies*

Tilley's argument proceeds by elimination. She considers all hypothetically available options—ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians by Israel, continuation of the status quo, and several versions of the two-state solution—and, showing their deficiencies, concludes that the one-state solution is the only remaining option. She bases her conclusion about the impossibility of the two-state solution on two concrete premises:

1. Israel's 'settlement grid' in the West Bank is no longer removable;
2. Israel cannot, and therefore will not, give up the water resources that lie beneath the ground of the West Bank.

As Tilley documents, the 'settlement grid' includes not only the settlements themselves—a few of which are already fair-sized towns—but a whole network of connecting roads reserved for Israeli citizens only and, most recently, the Separation (in Afrikaans, *apartheid*) Wall as well. The grid was designed, in terms of its density and territorial dispersion, to make the occupation irreversible by fragmenting the territory of the potential Palestinian state and making the removal of the settlements impossible. The settlements are inhabited by over 200,000 people, plus another 200,000 in the area that Israel has already annexed as 'Jerusalem'. The half-million or so settlers are backed, politically, by a hinterland of supporters that is several times as large. Many of these supporters are relatives of the settlers or people who aspire to improve their economic conditions by moving to the West Bank, the only part of the Israeli 'control system' where the welfare state still exists.

Settling the Occupied Territories with Jews has been the major national project carried out by the Israeli state since 1967. In terms of its legitimation, there have been three phases: military, between 1967 and 1974; religious, between 1974 and 1977, when Gush Emunim was created in the wake of the 1973 Arab–Israeli war; and free-market, since Likud

came to power in 1977.<sup>7</sup> All Israeli state institutions, including Jewish national organizations like the Jewish Agency and Jewish National Fund, have participated in the settlement project, sometimes under various guises in order not to violate too openly the terms of American economic assistance or the tax-exempt status of American Jewish organizations. (It would be extremely naïve to believe that the American state was fooled by these disguises, but aside from President Bush Senior no us president has dared challenge the settlement activity.)

Tilley neglects to mention one of the most important institutions with a vested interest in the continued occupation, the Israeli military. Since 1967 the IDF (renamed IOF—Israel Occupation Forces—by some Israeli peace groups) has been, formally and effectively, the sovereign power in those parts of the Occupied Territories that have not been fully annexed to Israel. Managing these territories, with their millions of Palestinian residents, has required, in addition to intelligence and operational forces, a large civil affairs bureaucracy, sustained by huge budgets, where many military careers have been made. Relinquishing control over these territories would mean a great diminution of the military, even in strict numerical terms. Moreover, every advance towards peace, beginning with the accord with Egypt, has led to lower military spending relative to GNP, loss of military contracts and a reduction of the standing army. During the Oslo period there was talk of abolishing the draft and turning to a professional force, and even the idea of privatizing major military functions was raised. Finally, the prestige of the military, and the motivation to serve in it, experienced a marked decline.<sup>8</sup>

Given this set of vested interests in continuing the occupation, Tilley declares that: ‘Only a political will of iron—of some Israeli prime minister with an unassailable political base, able to muster the necessary resources and navigate the storms of controversy—could reverse the present trajectory towards annexation. Yet that will is conspicuously

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<sup>7</sup> Gush Emunim was established by students of Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook—the movement’s spiritual leader until 1981—in order to fight expected Israeli withdrawals after the 1973 war: they were closely associated with the National Religious Party. See Ian Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, New York 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Yoram Peri, ‘Civil–Military Relations in Israel in Crisis’, in Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari and Zeev Rosenhek, eds, *Military, State and Society in Israel*, New Brunswick, NJ 2001, pp. 107–36.

missing.<sup>9</sup> However, the will was briefly present, in the person of Ariel Sharon, who demonstrated in Gaza that removing Jewish settlements from the Occupied Territories is an easy task for a leader who wants it to be done. Many observers agree that by splitting Likud—the political party he himself had brought together over thirty years ago—Sharon was suggesting that he planned to implement the Gaza model in parts of the West Bank. This would mean removing Jewish settlements and permanent military bases from about half of the West Bank—the area delimited by the Separation Wall on the west and the Jordan Valley, liberally defined, on the east. If Sharon’s plan were to be carried out by his successors, the only Jewish settlements that would remain in that area would be the large ‘settlement blocs’, which would be brought inside the Wall.

But, as Tilley might have argued, the removal of those settlements would not be done for the purpose of implementing the two-state solution. Sharon’s strategy of unilateral ‘disengagement’ was designed rather as a more effective method of controlling the West Bank. Efficient occupation, economical in terms of (Jewish) blood and money, is the current political preference of the Jewish-Israeli middle class, disillusioned by the second Intifada and no longer believing in the possibility of peace. Sharon was pursuing this strategy precisely in order to forestall the scenario that Tilley marshals to argue against the feasibility of the status quo:

Withering in their walled enclave, the Palestinian people will continue to resist conditions of daily misery and political destruction. And as their population grows rapidly within its sealed territorial vessel, the demographic, economic, and political pressures will build to critical mass. Juxtaposed in the highlands, pressed together cheek-by-jowl in gerrymandered borders, Jewish and Palestinian sectors [of the West Bank] cannot endure such pressures indefinitely. The formula is explosive, promising increasingly desperate acts of violence and possibly even mass insurrection by the Palestinians.<sup>10</sup>

With no permanent Israeli presence within the Palestinian enclave, however, and with a wall effectively separating that bantustan from Israel, the Palestinians would have no easy targets on which to vent their anger. An occasional suicide bomber or missile would not pose any problem for Israel.

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<sup>9</sup> oss, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> oss, p. 131.

Tilley's other argument for the non-feasibility of the two-state solution is that 'for Israel, it is the scarcity of water that most objectively precludes full Palestinian sovereignty in the West Bank'.<sup>11</sup> However, the scarcity of water is nothing but a red herring used by the Israeli right-wing to argue against the two-state solution, and it is quite surprising to see it repeated in this book. As many experts on the water issue would agree, Israel's and the region's water needs can now be easily and cheaply supplied through water recycling and desalination. Existing and planned desalination capacity in Israel is already at the level of 400 mcm (million cubic metres) per year, while the water Israel takes from the West Bank amounts to 500 mcm per year. Thus, in the words of one Israeli water expert, Shaul Arlosoroff,

The whole issue [between Israel and the Palestinians] is 100 mcm in the foreseeable future, and 100 mcm desalinated from the sea is \$100 million, \$100 million when Israel's GDP is already \$100 billion. That makes it 0.1 per cent of GDP. So from an economic or financial point of view, it's irrelevant, water is irrelevant.<sup>12</sup>

Israeli policy makers therefore no longer consider water a core issue for negotiations with the Palestinians (assuming such negotiations ever resume).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, to follow Tilley's logic, if Israel objected to Palestinian sovereignty in the West Bank for fear of losing control of its water, why would it agree to let the Palestinians gain sovereignty over the entire country, including its water resources, through their democratic majority in one secular, democratic state?

The real reason the two-state solution is dead is much more straightforward than the ones adduced by Tilley: the Palestinians who fought for it, with the help of some Jews, were defeated. The Palestinian strategy, based to a large extent on the belief that the 'international community' (i.e., the US) would restrain Israel and not allow them to be totally defeated, collapsed on September 11, 2001. One of the more tragic shortcomings of the regime set up by the PLO was its total inability to mount a credible defence against Israel's invasion of the West Bank in 2002—

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<sup>11</sup> *oss*, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Jan Selby, *Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East: The Other Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, London 2003, p. 63; see also Jan Selby, 'The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East: Fantasies and Realities', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2005, pp. 329–49.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Selby, personal communication, 5 December 2005.

perhaps because it was still hampered by that belief. (The reason Israel did not reoccupy Gaza at that time was not only that Gaza could be more easily controlled from the outside, but also that the Israeli army expected tough resistance there.) Given the military reality on the ground, and the evaporation of international support for the Palestinians, the two-state solution is doomed, at least for the foreseeable future.<sup>14</sup>

### *Jewish national home*

While Tilley's discussion of the two-state solution is factual, her discussion of the one-state solution is declarative. Since, as she remarks (with some qualifications), the one state is already here, there is no point in talking about its 'feasibility'. The objective, rather, is to show that reconstituting that state as a secular democratic polity, with equal rights for all its citizens, could be compatible with the basic aims of Zionism. As Tilley puts it,

the Zionist project to rebuild a Jewish national home, in territory now carrying such resonance for Jewish religious and social tradition, is of such compelling psychological and political character that it must remain foundational to any lasting peace.<sup>15</sup>

It is foundational because no peaceful solution to the conflict is possible without the assent of at least a sizeable majority of Israeli Jews, practically all of whom are ardent Zionists.

Tilley seeks to convince her readers of the compatibility of Zionism and the one-state solution by arguing along two different lines: that in reality there is no reason to fear that under conditions of equal citizenship the Palestinian majority of the one state would wish to hinder the legitimate aims of Zionism; and that Zionist thinking itself is not necessarily inimical to the idea of one secular democratic state with the Palestinians.

Tilley is well aware of Israeli Jews' deep-seated fear that in a secular democratic Jewish-Palestinian state

a still-resentful and Judeophobic Palestinian majority would launch . . . [an] attack on Jewish interests and cultural life—e.g., by orchestrating massive Palestinian return, appropriating Jewish homes for returnees, progressively

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<sup>14</sup> Yezid Sayigh, 'The Palestinian Strategic Impasse', *Survival*, vol. 44, no. 4, Winter 2002–2003, pp. 7–21.

<sup>15</sup> *oss*, p. 13.

demoting Jewish cultural concerns, seizing control of holy sites, and otherwise callously eliminating the conditions for Jewish culture, economic security and the free expression of Jewish spiritual values and national life.<sup>16</sup>

To allay these fears, Tilley reassures her readers that a

lasting ethos of democracy runs deep and frames all Palestinian political discourse except the very recent and frightening rise of Islamic totalitarian doctrines. Indeed, because of this democratic tradition, Palestinians have admired Israel's democracy and hoped for something similar for the Palestinian state. The same democratic values now drive the shift among some Palestinians to favour the one-state solution, in the hope that the Palestinians' democratic values can find expression in Israel's ruggedly democratic institutions.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately for Tilley's argument—and for President Bush—Palestinian democracy is precisely the vehicle through which the 'frightening Islamic totalitarian' movement, Hamas, has just gained an absolute majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Tilley's second line of argument progresses through close textual analysis of various Zionist documents, especially the Jerusalem Programme adopted by the World Zionist Congress in 1968, in order to show that even according to these texts the legitimate aims of Zionism do not really require an ethnic Jewish state in order to be fulfilled.<sup>18</sup> This conclusion, Tilley claims, is shared by the 'growing "post-Zionist" movement . . . [in Israel that] is proposing a very different configuration of Jewish statehood that would not require a Jewish majority'.<sup>19</sup> As a member in good standing of this post-Zionist 'movement' myself—actually more of an intellectual mood than a movement—I am not aware of anyone who argues that Jewish statehood can exist without a Jewish majority. I am aware of people who say that the idea of a Jewish state should be abandoned altogether, for the sake of either liberal or multicultural democracy—usually within Israel's 1967 borders, at least as a first step—and of other people who say that the Jewish majority and Jewish state should be preserved,

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<sup>16</sup> *oss*, pp. 169.

<sup>17</sup> *oss*, pp. 202–4. No evidence is supplied in support of this far-reaching assertion.

<sup>18</sup> *oss*, pp. 226–30. I doubt that the Jerusalem Programme has ever received such a close reading before, even from its authors.

<sup>19</sup> *oss*, p. 133.



but that Israel's Palestinian citizens should be treated more equally and the non-citizens should be set free.<sup>20</sup>

Looking to find historical roots for the (non-existent) position she attributes to the post-Zionists, Tilley calls in the usual gallery of suspects—Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber, Judah Magnes—all marginal Zionist figures (although, of course, not marginal at all in their respective fields of endeavour) who, in the context of the British Mandate and its twilight, tried to skirt around the issue of a Jewish state in order to avoid war with the Palestinians. But what Tilley glosses over is the fact that, at a time when Jews constituted less than a third of the population of the country, all of these people insisted on 'parity' between Jews and Palestinians in running their future common state, and that they were not willing to give up Jewish control over immigration and land purchases. As Arendt, who was probably the least Zionist of these figures, insisted in a fragment reproduced by Tilley herself, 'immigration to Palestine, limited in numbers and in time, is the only "irreducible minimum" in Jewish politics'.<sup>21</sup> This 'irreducible minimum' was too much for the Palestinians, however, which was the reason why none of the efforts cited by Tilley were ever able to recruit any Palestinians to their cause.<sup>22</sup>

Be that as it may, the contradiction between Zionism and the one-state solution cannot be resolved through textual analysis and creative interpretations of the various meanings of 'state' as against 'national home'. From a Jewish nationalist, that is, Zionist perspective, the one-state solution means the end of Zionism. There are strong moral arguments that could be used to justify why Zionism, a colonial settlement movement, should declare 'mission accomplished' and vacate the scene. This does not mean, of course, that history can, or should, be rolled back, or that the Jews can be justly expelled from Palestine (to Germany or Alaska, as the current Iranian president would have it). But adherents of the one-state solution should have the courage to face the fact that without Jewish domination of whatever portion of Palestine/Israel, there will be no Jewish national home. If the Palestinians had their way, the first thing

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<sup>20</sup> Uri Ram, 'Post-Zionist Studies of Israel: The First Decade', *Israel Studies Forum*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2005, pp. 51–74; Hermann, 'Bi-National Idea'.

<sup>21</sup> *oss*, p. 239.

<sup>22</sup> Palestinian indifference to the efforts of these writers might have deserved a comment from Tilley. See Hermann, 'Bi-National Idea', pp. 384–6.

they would do would be to abolish the Law of Return, or else balance it off with a law of return of their own. The next thing would be to demand, at least, their proportional share of the land: territory that used to be entirely their own and is now mostly defined, legally, as national Jewish land. Immigration and land were, historically, at the heart of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict and, as we saw, even the most liberal Zionists have considered Jewish control of these two resources vital for the existence of a Jewish national home. These people would hardly be persuaded by Tilley's argument that a Jewish national home could exist safely within a secular democratic state with a Palestinian majority.<sup>23</sup>

### *A de-Zionized state?*

In support of my claim about the incompatibility of Zionism and the one-state solution, I would like to examine, as a thought experiment, a much easier challenge—the establishment of a de-Zionized secular democratic state (a 'state of its citizens' in Israeli political parlance) *within* the boundaries of the sovereign State of Israel as presently constituted.

Israel is defined, constitutionally, as a 'Jewish and democratic state'. A constitutional provision prohibits political parties that challenge either one of the two elements of this formula from participating in Knesset elections. (So far, the Supreme Court has prevented this ban from being implemented in the case of political parties challenging the Jewish element of this definition.) The most concrete expressions of Israel's character as a Jewish state are the Law of Return—that guarantees all Jews and their non-Jewish family members, down to the third generation, the right to immigrate to Israel and become citizens upon arrival—and the non-separation of church and state. In the 1990s, some movement could be discerned towards changing this definition, motivated by three kinds of considerations: the more liberal attitude towards Israel's Palestinian citizens displayed by the Rabin government (1992–95), which depended on their support in the Knesset; the growing tension between secular and ultra-orthodox Jews, primarily over the issue of the (non-) military service of the latter; and the fact that the share of non-Jews among immigrants from the former Soviet Union coming in under the Law of Return was rising rapidly. This movement culminated in the landmark decision

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<sup>23</sup> See Ian Lustick, 'The Cunning of History', *Boston Review*, vol. 26, no. 5, December 2001–January 2002.

of the Supreme Court in the Qaadan case, in 2000, that outlawed discrimination between Jewish and Palestinian citizens in the allocation of state lands. A few months later, the collapse of the Oslo process and the outbreak of the second Intifada brought the movement to an end.<sup>24</sup>

Palestinians currently comprise about 17 per cent of Israel's citizens, about the same ratio as in 1949. Still, the 'demographic problem', that is, the fear of Jewish Israelis that the Palestinians' higher birth rate will translate into a Palestinian majority within the State of Israel, is a prominent feature of the Jewish-Israeli public discourse. In attitude surveys conducted in 2004 by Sammy Smooha, the paramount sociologist of Jewish-Palestinian relations within Israel, two thirds of Jewish respondents expressed concern over this issue, and 94 per cent agreed that Israel should maintain its Jewish majority. Only 32 per cent agreed that the Palestinian citizens should be accorded equal rights even if they demand that Israel become a state of its citizens, and 81 per cent agreed that decisions about the character of the state and its borders should be made by a Jewish majority, not a majority of the citizenry.<sup>25</sup> In a survey of attitudes towards national security issues conducted by Asher Arian in 2003, 33 per cent of Jewish respondents were in favour of 'transferring' (i.e. expelling) Israel's Palestinian *citizens* from the country.<sup>26</sup>

Concern with the 'demographic problem' is not merely a feature of public opinion, moreover. It is shared by Jewish politicians, academics and public officials of all sorts, who obviously see the goal of maintaining a Jewish majority in the country as a legitimate focus of public policy. Alongside other measures designed to achieve that aim, in 2002 the government suspended Palestinian citizens' right of family unification if their family members, including spouses and children, were Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories. This was initially presented as a

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<sup>24</sup> High Court of Justice 6698/95; Yoav Peled and Doron Navot, 'Ethnic Democracy Revisited: On the State of Democracy in the Jewish State', *Israel Studies Forum*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2005, pp. 3–27. Concern over the possibility that, following a peace agreement with the Palestinians, Israel would turn into a 'state of its citizens' may have been partially responsible for the failure of the Oslo process. But this topic requires separate treatment.

<sup>25</sup> Sammy Smooha, *Madad yachasey yehudim-aravim be-yisrael* [Arab-Jewish Relations Index 2004], Haifa 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Asher Arian, *Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2003*, memo no. 67, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv 2003.

temporary measure, to stem the flow of Palestinian terrorists who allegedly entered Israel through the 'gate' of family unification. After the highly exaggerated nature of this claim was demonstrated in court, the truth was revealed—that the policy was intended to fight the 'demographic problem'—and the temporary order has been extended repeatedly. It will soon be replaced by a new citizenship and entry law that is being promulgated by a committee made up of deans of university law schools in Israel, working under the auspices of the National Security Council.

What this little thought experiment has revealed, I believe, is that, faced with the choice between Israel being Jewish and it being democratic, the vast majority of Israeli Jews would opt for a Jewish, non-democratic state over a democratic, non-Jewish state. In 1995, at the height of the Oslo process, Smooha indeed found that 58 per cent of his Jewish respondents expressed precisely this preference.<sup>27</sup> And this within the boundaries of the State of Israel as presently constituted, with a 17 per cent Palestinian minority. It is not hard to imagine what their attitude would be towards the possibility of a democratic state where Palestinians would constitute a majority, if not immediately, then within very few years.

Support for the one-state solution does not exist, at least as an organized political force, among Israel's Palestinian citizens either. All three Palestinian political parties currently represented in the Knesset demand that Israel be made into a state of its citizens, and all of them support the two-state solution. In the citizen-Palestinian public, nearly 90 per cent support both the 'state of its citizens' and the bi-national options for pre-1967 Israel, while close to a third support the establishment of a *Palestinian* state in all of mandatory Palestine. As for the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, when asked, in September 2005, whether, after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, they would support 'creating joint political institutions [with Israel] designed eventually to lead to a confederate system', over 60 per cent opposed this option and only 35 per cent were in favour of it. The ratio was exactly reversed when respondents were asked about recognition by Israel and Palestine of each other as a Jewish and a Palestinian state respectively, after all outstanding issues between them had been settled. Tilley's

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<sup>27</sup> Sammy Smooha, 'The Israelization of the Collective Identity and the Political Orientation of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel: A Re-examination', in Elie Rekhess, ed., *Ha-aravim ba-politika ha-yisraelit: dilemot shel zehut* [The Arabs in Israeli Politics], Tel Aviv 1998, pp. 51–2.

own figures indicate that from 2000 to 2003 only between a quarter and a third of Palestinian respondents favoured the one-state solution. In other words, by a 2:1 majority, at least, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories oppose any kind of political affiliation with Israel and support the separate existence of Israel as a *Jewish* state, once peace between the two states is concluded.<sup>28</sup>

### *Maxima and minima*

While Tilley's book should be praised for raising a question that certainly deserves serious consideration, there is something misleading in her depiction of both the one-state and two-state options of rearranging Israeli-Palestinian relations as 'solutions', as if they aim to solve the same problem. The two-state option aims to solve the problem of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and its denial of all human, civil and national rights to their Palestinian inhabitants. The one-state option does not call for the solution of this problem, but rather of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict in general. It seeks to solve it by undoing the 1947 UN Partition Plan and transforming the 40-year-old Israeli 'control system' into a real state, where all citizens enjoy at least a modicum of equal rights. To put it differently, the one-state option does not seek to solve the problem of 1967; it seeks to solve that of 1948 by accepting the occupation of 1967 and redefining its character. To be honest about it, it should be admitted that this calls for a much more radical rearrangement of the pieces on the chessboard than simply ending the 1967 occupation.

Tilley tries to deal with the radical nature of her proposal by using a best-case scenario to describe the outcome she favours—the one-state solution—and a worst-case scenario for the one she dislikes: the two-state solution. For example, in arguing that the two-state solution is not practicable, she cites the number of settlers that would have to be evacuated in order to implement it as 400,000—an impossible task. In reality, the last two two-state solutions that were offered—the Clinton and Geneva plans—as well as the agreement that was reportedly reached in Taba, in the very last days of Ehud Barak's ministry, when it was already too late, would have involved the removal of only

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<sup>28</sup> Oss, Appendix B, pp. 241–2; Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Survey Research Unit, poll no. 17, 7–9 September 2005, pp. 12, 16. Israeli attitude surveys don't even ask about the one-state solution.

80,000 settlers. The rest would have stayed where they are, with territorial exchanges (at the rate of 1:1 according to the Geneva plan) between Israel and Palestine, to compensate the latter for the territory that would be retained by the former.

The great advantage of the one-state solution would be its shifting of the grounds of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from an ethno-national confrontation to one over civil rights and equal citizenship. Conceivably, this could change the nature of the conflict from a zero-sum to a positive-sum game. However, Tilley fails to emphasize that the stability of the future secular, democratic Israeli-Palestinian state would not only depend on it being truly democratic, but also on the strictest constitutional separation between state and religion, in a society where religious prejudices run very high. Not even the most liberal and anti-clerical Zionists in Israel currently agree to the separation of church and state (because they realize this would mean the end of the Jewish state) and, among the Palestinians, the emergence of Hamas as the predominant political force makes adherence to this demand even less likely.

### *Ethnicity and class*

The obvious model for the transformation of the Israeli control system into a secular, democratic state is the transition experienced by South Africa. Tilley has an ambivalent attitude towards the value of the South African experience as a model for Israel/Palestine, dismissing it at one point as irrelevant, but repeatedly referring to it nonetheless. Mona Younis, a Palestinian historian sceptical of the two-state solution, has written an important book comparing the South African and Palestinian national liberation movements.<sup>29</sup> Based, indeed, on the 'actual relations springing from an existing class struggle' in both Mandatory Palestine and present-day Israel and the Occupied Territories, Younis's work uses class analysis to explore the similarities and differences between the South African and Israeli-Palestinian experiences. Her analysis yields a very powerful and cogent thesis regarding the success and failure of the ANC and the PLO, respectively, to achieve their stated goals: establishing democratic, non-sectarian states in all of the territories of their respective homelands.

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<sup>29</sup> Mona Younis, *Liberation and Democratization: The South African and Palestinian National Movements*, Minneapolis 2000.

Younis's thesis is that the different outcomes of the two national struggles are to be explained by the relative strength of the two working classes in their respective national movements. In South Africa, whites had no choice but to incorporate Africans as workers into the national economy, resulting in the undermining of traditional African social structures and the emergence of a powerful African working class, capable of seriously disrupting the South African economy. It was the involvement of this African working class in the struggle for national liberation that ensured its democratic character and, ultimately, its political (but, so far, not economic) success.

In Palestine, on the other hand, the Zionist colonial settlers were able to largely exclude Palestinians from their economy, and later on from their state as well, and to include them only very partially (and, we now know, temporarily), after that state had extended its borders in 1967. Thus while the Palestinian population was largely proletarianized, it did not develop into a cohesive, conscious, independent working class. The Palestinian national struggle has been led, therefore, by the (exiled) Palestinian middle class and has drawn its cadres mostly from the refugee population. This social character of the movement is what has doomed it to failure.

Younis's clear-headed analysis is based on the realistic premise that the one-state solution contradicts the most essential aims of Zionism and would have to be imposed on the Zionists in order to be implemented. She does not rely on rhetorical platitudes in order to square the circle of this reality and, given the relation of forces, the conclusion to be drawn from her work is a very pessimistic one.

This brings me to what I think is the greatest weakness of Tilley's book—its divorce from social reality. She concentrates on the Israeli side of the conflict, leaving the discussion of the Palestinian side to others, 'not least because the project is particularly challenging' (unlike the discussion of Israel, one would presume).<sup>30</sup> On the Israeli side, she rightly seeks to refute what she calls 'mytho-histories' that prevail among her intended audience, but she probably realizes that the reading public does not have the patience for a real analysis of Israeli society and its problems. So her treatment of Israel is no less mythical. The Israel that emerges from the book is not a real society, with real history, real social

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 16.

conflicts, real capabilities, and real social forces contending for power. It is an ethereal entity, whose character can be deciphered and, more importantly, transformed, through the correct interpretation of texts. If her readers could only be persuaded of the true nature of Zionism, by fully understanding the Jerusalem Program, and of the Palestinians' sincere commitment to democracy, for which not even textual evidence is produced, then peace would descend upon the Holy Land in 'one magisterial gesture'. Perhaps it would also descend upon American college campuses, where the Zionists are currently conducting a McCarthy-style crusade against all heretics who stray from their line. Unfortunately, real political life is a little more complicated than that.