

Ian S. Lustick, *Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), pp. 194.

by *Menachem Klein*

This is a book of great intellectual honesty and courage. From the late 1960s until a decade ago Ian Lustick, a highly respected political sciences professor at the University of Pennsylvania, was an active advocate for the Two-States Solution (hereafter TSS), but today sees it as “a dead solution walking” as he titles chapter four. Thus, the book is both an academic analysis of what went wrong with the TSS and a personal account.

The book is short: 194 pages of which 41 are endnotes and references that show the author’s wide knowledge and the extensive research he put into writing it.

In chapter one, the author presents the negative outcomes of the “iron wall” that the Zionist project successfully established. By the “iron wall,” Israel imposes itself on the Arabs. However, there is a cost for the Zionist historical success. The “iron wall” that protects Israel from its Arab neighbors also divides it from seeing new realities developing on the Arab side and identifying peace opportunities.

Chapter two is dedicated to the high cost of what the author calls “Holocaustia,” a destructive collective memory that rules over Jewish self-identity. Right-wing politicians manipulate the Holocaust memory and move it from history to the present day and from Nazi Germany to radical Arab and Muslim countries. This determines the way in which an imminent existential threat is perceived.

In chapter three Lustick discusses how the Israeli lobby in the US succeeded in blocking any American policy that Israel opposes. Serving as Israel’s long arm, the lobby rooted into the US political system and society has created the notion that criticizing Israel’s policy towards the Palestinians equals anti-Semitism. Consequently, Lustick concludes, the Israeli left is wrong assuming that the US will “save Israel from itself.” Moreover, the problem is not just with Israel’s policy, the author argues: “it is with the Zionist political formula” (p. 82). Unfortunately,

Lustick does not explain if his personal account leads him to endorse post-Zionism or whether he calls for a replacement of the “iron wall” with another Zionist model: for instance, the multi-ethnic state that Jabotinsky, who developed the “iron wall” concept, supported once the “wall” had achieved its goal.

Chapter four has two parts. The first, based on Karel Popper and Thomas Kuhn, is a theoretical discussion on paradigms and their possible pathological outcomes. Thereafter, the vast majority of the chapter sums up the rise and fall of the TSS. Lustick recalls the well-known arguments in favor of the TSS: the destructive results of Israeli settlements in heavily populated Palestinian territories, the need to maintain Israel both Jewish and democratic, and keep the US on its side. Interestingly, the author skips the issue of the Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war. TSS supporters disregard or underestimate this issue, as if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict limited to the occupation of 1967 territories. Israeli hawks rightly raise this issue against TSS advocates. Lustick could have used this point to show another weakness of the TSS.

In chapter five, Lustick’s contribution to the long list of publications on the future of Israeli-Palestinian relations, the author looks at the one-state reality (OSR) that Israel created between Jordan and the Mediterranean. Israel rules exclusively over this area. Arabs living there, both inside Israeli internationally recognized sovereign area and the occupied territories, “have different access to the Israeli political arena and experience the power of the Israeli state differently” (p. 123). The de-facto annexation creates a growing demographic problem for Israel. Between Jordan and the Mediterranean, there is an equal number of Jews and Palestinians. Wishing to preserve its superiority and the Jewish State concept, in the twenty-first century Israel developed an apartheid-style ruling system based on ethnicity rather than skin color that provides Jews with more civil rights and access to state resources. It should be noted, that from the Jewish State perspective, Israeli Arabs are no less a burden than those living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Together they form up half of the population that challenges Israel’s claim to be the only democracy in the Middle East. The OSR pushes Israel further away from the liberal democratic model. It is not by chance that Israel faces a democracy deficit.

Circumstances today are vastly different than they were half a century ago, when negotiations toward a TSS were first suggested. Radically different conditions require different strategies, and they are not likely to come from Leaders of organizations whose *raison d'être* has been tied to the TSS [...] the struggle for peace *between* Jews and Arabs can no longer be separated from the struggle for equality *of* Jews and Arabs” (pp. 125-126).

According to Lustick a single shared state is unachievable through negotiations between Jewish and Arab representatives as is the TSS. Instead, he offers a bottom-up long-distance journey of building Jewish-Arab political alliances, “reducing political inequality, highlighting and mitigating social and economic discrimination and insisting on equal protection of all citizens’ lives and property” (pp. 131-132). He favors “getting somewhere better than ‘here’” over “how to get ‘there’” (p. 138). Indeed, the March 2020 Israeli elections signaled the development of this track when unprecedented number of leftist Zionist Jews voted for the Arab Joint List helping it to achieve 15 seats in the Knesset. West Bank Palestinians discuss the option of abandoning the TSS and struggle for getting full civil rights from Israel. One can just imagine what would happen if both Jewish and Arab citizens were to join the West Bankers.

Finally, three critical points. First, Lustick relates to the OSR as a paradigm equivalent to the TSS one. He does not discuss the option that the OSR replaced peace negotiation as the tool to achieve TSS. Theoretically, Palestinian struggle for equal rights, with the help of progressive Jews, may lead Israeli Jews to prefer the TSS over a bi-national state.

Second, Lustick writes on “the law of unintended consequences” (p. 140). However, what for a social scientist looks like a law, for historians is obvious. Quite often history is made by unpredicted and unintended consequences.

Third, the Palestinians as an active agent are missing from the author’s analysis although they have a share in the demise of the TSS, at least by maintaining the split between Fatah rule in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza Strip.

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