

**Racialisation and Israel.**

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Today, in Israel there is a clear and pronounced racial divide between Jewish Israelis and both Israeli Palestinians and those actually from Palestine. Not only is there a distinct racial divide present in Israeli society, high levels of racial inequality and discrimination dominate Israeli civic life. These social issues are prominent in Israel because of various contributing factors but central to this problem is the ethnocentric nature of the state itself. The first section of this case study will address the issues of contemporary racial discrimination and divide in Israel. I will investigate the form in which racial discrimination manifests itself and the ways in which the Israeli government indirectly implements ethnocentric policies. As a frame of reference I shall briefly compare the situation in Israel to the South African apartheid to explore any possible similarities. Finally I intend to substantiate whether the Israeli public acts as an ideological accomplice in the ethnocentric attitude of the state.

The second section of this case study will address the historical causes of the ethnocentric nature of Israel, the context in which it was created and the ideology that created it- Zionism. I will give a relatively chronological account of the evolution of Zionist thought with respect to the concept of 'race' and heredity. I will examine the formative components of Zionism such as European nationalism, anti-Semitism and racial theory. I will be focusing on the racialization of Jews during this period, both by themselves and by the European powers and how this racialization affected their nationalist struggle and identity. The third section of my study will be an examination of the way in which Zionism chose to unify the Jewish people to effectively create a homogenous national identity. I plan to critically analyse the Zionist version of Jewish historiography to demonstrate how Zionist versions of Jewish genetic homogeneity, ancestry and Historiography have been fabricated in the name of nationalism. I intend on substantiating my argument by using a book called 'the invention of the Jewish people' to critically analyse a short history of the Jews called 'Jews, god and history' that preaches the Zionist version of Jewish history.

Since the early years of the state of Israel the Palestinians have been severely marginalised and discriminated against, this is centred on one main aspect of Israel's national policy: that it is the 'state of the Jewish people', as enshrined in Israeli law (Morris (1999), pp49-60). Although there are (arguably legitimate) issues to do with national security that pertain to the marginalisation of the Palestinian population I intend to demonstrate that these are nothing more than bi-products of Israeli Judeo-centrism. In this section I will expose the various ways in which the state of Israel discriminates against Israeli-Palestinians and how it benefits the state to implement these racist measures. The nature of Israel as 'the state of the Jewish people' is central to both the racialization of the Palestinians and the Jews; it has created a national identity that is exclusive as opposed to inclusive (Ram (2011), p27). This allows for the racialization of Palestinians as aliens and deprives them of a national identity in the country in which they live.

The perceived issue of national security in Israel is important to look at when investigating the issues of racialization and racial discrimination. Since 1954 the Israeli-Palestinian minority has been excluded from the armed forces including military service (Glaser (2003), p408), something which is compulsory for Jews, both men (3 years) and women (2 years). Although this issue has to do with national security, i.e. can the 'state of the Jewish people' rely on the Israeli-Arabs to protect its values and itself? It is also based on its exclusionary approach to statehood. The issue of Israeli-Palestinian exemption from military service offers a perfect example of the way in which Israeli racial discrimination operates (Glaser (2003), p408). The exclusion of the Israeli-Palestinians from the armed forces comes from a (arguably legitimate) fear for national security, this in turn is due to the Jewish values and nature of the state itself which are only identified with by Jews and therefore only defensible by Jews.

The fact that Israeli-Palestinians are exempt from military service is used by Israeli authorities and companies to discriminate against them. It excludes them from various monetary and other benefits available for ex-military personnel; it is also very common for employers to require military experience. This, essentially, provides a legal gateway for Jews to discriminate against Palestinians and exclude them from the civilian labour market (Glaser (2003), p408). In a 1995 survey 60.7% of Jews opposed military service for Israeli-Arabs, one could argue that this is a reflection of public national security fears (Ghanem (2001), p163). It was revealed that 54.3% are opposed to including Israeli-Arabs in military service even after peace is achieved with the Arab world (Ghanem (2001), p163). This exposes an extremely significant ethno-nationalist sentiment among the Jewish-Israeli population, the fact that 51.7% of Jews believe that the term 'Israeli' applies only to Jews and not to Arabs accentuates this feeling. Furthermore, 36.7% of Jews in Israel are unhappy with the very presence of Israeli-Arabs and support the Ultra-Zionist belief that the state should look to exploit any opportunity to encourage the Palestinian minority to emigrate (Ghanem (2001), p163).

Many writers such as Uri Davis and Daryl J. Glaser have compared the Israeli system to the South African apartheid; I find this has provided useful insight into the situation in Israel. In an article on the subject, Glaser explains how in the apartheid government there was a vast bureaucratic apparatus in place to determine and manage the physical geography of African settlement (Glaser (2003), p406). Striking comparisons can be made in between this and the complete control of certain Israeli organizations over settlement in the land of Israel. Although Israel does not have branches of government explicitly devoted to ethnocentric settlement (otherwise known as racial segregation) it does delegate a significant amount of its duties to organizations such as The World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund (Davis (2003) pp40, 41, 42). A 1952 law made the WZO responsible for settlement projects throughout the state but made no overt reference to Jew or non-Jew; it so happens that the WZO is constitutionally restricted to promoting 'agricultural colonization based on Jewish labour' (Davis (2003), p43). Thus, delegating a state wide settlement project (of both Jewish and Palestinian-Israelis) to an organization that not only is obliged to discriminate against Israeli-Palestinians and prioritise Jewish settlements but is allowed to do so. Left to the WZO, the JNF and the JA, the settlement patterns in Israel are highly ethno-racially segregated, this is achieved by channelling Jews into existing and new settlements from which Arabs are barred (Glaser (2003), p409). It is evident that this racial segregation enables a general neglect of entire settlements; it is a fact that Arab villages and towns receive inferior educational, infrastructural and housing

services to Jewish settlements (Glaser (2003), p409). As a result, Arab localities in Israel are at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale, according to official statistics, roughly 60 per cent of the Arab-Israeli citizens live below the poverty line (Ghanem (2001), p177). Through an arrangement with the state, the JNF and the JA have effectively prevented Israel's Palestinian population from purchasing, leasing or using at least 75 per cent of Israeli land (Glaser (2003), p409). In fact, 39.4% of Jewish-Israelis actually support the expropriation of Arab land within the borders of Israel (meaning excluding the occupied territories) to benefit Jewish national development (Ghanem (2001), p163).

Although there are no Israeli laws demanding the mistreatment and neglect of Israeli-Palestinian interests, what Israeli law has done is endow Zionist institutions with the power to carry out exclusively Judeo-centric policies which result directly in the severe detriment of Israeli-Palestinian living conditions and thus effectively, by the state. This brings me back to my comparison of Apartheid south Africa and contemporary Israel; as Glaser puts it in his article 'The most obvious difference of fact seems the less morally relevant one: in south Africa such discrimination was built into law and explicit, in Israel the bulk of it is semi-formal or non-explicit.' (Glaser (2003), p409). Although all states are ethnocentric to an extent, whether it be promoting 'Britishness' or 'Frenchness', the level of ethnocentricity in Israel is incomparable to any other liberal democracy or even most nation states in the world and is integral to the deep seated 'racial' inequalities ever present in Israel. As we can see, whether officially or unofficially, the state does indeed pursue discriminatory policies against Israeli-Palestinians, at the very least its planning policy is designed to serve Jews and exclude Arabs (Ghanem (2001), p160). As a democracy, Israel's Jewish population has to reflect, to an extent, the ethnocentric attitude demonstrated by its government. The results of a survey conducted in 1995 reveals that 72.1%, of Jews believe that Israel is the homeland of the Jews and only the Jews (Ghanem (2001), p160), 74.1% agree that the state should prioritise its Jewish over its Arab citizens (Ghanem (2001), p160). An overwhelming 91.1% would oppose the replacement of the current Jewish-Zionist state with a consociational democracy in which Jews and Arabs are regarded as equal national groups with proportional representation in government as reflected in the share of the national population (Ghanem (2001), p163).

An even larger 95.5% oppose the idea of transforming Israel into a liberal democracy that doesn't recognise Jews and Arabs as separate Groups, allows them equal and free competition, the right to settle wherever they wish and intermarry; all of which are not allowed under the current Zionist regime. Nonetheless Israel is still considered a democracy, a democracy in which almost a third (30.9%) of the dominant ethno-cultural group believe that Israeli-Arabs should not even be able to vote in Knesset (Israeli parliament) elections (Ghanem (2001), p161). The law of return both embodies and perpetuates the ethnocentric nature of the state of Israel (Sand (2009), p291). It accords the option of citizenship to all Jews of the world but not to the children or grandchildren of the million odd Palestinians who fled in 1948 and are currently residing in refugee camps in Lebanon or living under the boot of the Israeli military in the occupied territories (Glaser (2003), p419).

As you can see the ethnocentric sentiment among Jewish-Israelis permeates all levels of society; governmental and public. I hope to have demonstrated how the racial discrimination against Palestinians in Israel is in fact just a bi-product of Zionist exclusivity. This indicates that the main issue to be focused on is the nature of this exclusivity, something that could also be characterised as self-racialization, which

seems to impede any kind of civic progress on the issue of racial inequality in Israel. The belief that Israel is the exclusive property of the Jewish people is a central concept in Zionist ideology and Zionism is in turn responsible for the very existence of Israel.

As a result, the next section of this case study will examine certain aspects of Zionist ideology which may have contributed to the ethnocentric national identity held by Jewish Israelis. I will begin by addressing certain contextual points about the origins of Zionism and the position held by Jews in Europe during this period. I plan to demonstrate how the cultural heritage of Zionism pertains directly to the development of the European era of nationalism. As a result I will attempt to demonstrate how the pattern of Zionist thinking reflected the logic of its European counterparts. I will then address the efforts of racialization made in regards to the Jews by themselves and by the European powers of the 20th century. All this will be done in the ultimate aim of establishing veritable links in between the evolution of Zionist ideology and the issue of ethnocentricity mentioned in section one. I will also attempt to demonstrate how Israel has fostered what Habermas calls a conventional national identity which demands loyalty to one particular group and as a result excludes others (Habermas (1989), p249-267).

The rise of nationalism in Europe in the 19th century and through to the 20th is an integral component in the creation of the Zionist movement. During this period Europe was in the midst of a definitive boundary setting process, culturally, linguistically and racially (Cohen (1992), p43). Nationalism searched to define what it was that constituted a nation and the identifying characteristics that delineated it. Language, religion etc. these cultural aspects did not seem determinative enough and as a result racial theory took prominence (Connor (1994), p4). Racial theory became a perfect way through which to interpret nationalism; it defined the identity of the nation in, what was thought to be, concrete (pseudo) biological terms. We must bear in mind that the concept of 'race' is an exclusionary one; it embodies the way in which groups demarcate themselves from others (Beramendi (1994), p38). The rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and the Nation state are inextricably linked. As explained in the previous paragraph the process of racialization was of a purely exclusionary nature. The tendency for Jewish communities to retain their communitarian and cultural identity led to the questioning of whether these 'aliens' constituted part of the nation; and if not, were they a potentially subversive presence (Dimont (1962), pp312-322). The Dreyfus affair in France embodied this nationalist predicament. A common neo-Marxist assertion about race is that it is nothing more than an ideological mask by which material economic relationships are hidden (Solomos, Back (1996), p8). This can account for the visceral rise of anti-Semitism in Germany post-WWI which, although multi-faceted, was primarily an expression of resentment at the privileged socio-economic position held by the Jews in Germany in a time of unprecedented economic stress (Wistrich (1991), pp70-74). The combination of the increasing prominence of racial theory and consequently mono-ethnic nationalism, and the legitimate economic friction present in central Europe are all contributing factors to both the holocaust and Zionist racial attitudes. Zionism came into existence as a political ideology in the late 19th and early 20th century, it acted as a response to the rise of anti-Semitism but more significantly the rise of European nationalism (Reich, et al (1993), p39). The position of the Jew in Europe over the course of this period was extremely precarious; their position as citizens was under fundamental review due to the identity politics present during this epoch (Cohen (1992), p43). Zionism was the Jewish reaction to these new pressures and influences and was part of the last wave of nationalist awakening in Europe

(Sand (2009), p252). We must bear in mind that the Jews of the 19th and early 20th centuries were culturally and linguistically extremely disparate groups which Zionism was attempting the impossible task of unifying (Sand (2009), p255). The Zionists encountered the same problem as the European nations did when attempting to define a veritable Jewish national identity. Similarly to the Europeans, the Zionists resorted to racial theory in the aim of homogenising the Jewish people (Sand (2009), p256).

In keeping with the current climate, Zionism transformed Judaism from a rich and varied religious culture into something hermetic, comparable to the German 'volk' or Polish 'narod' (Sand (2009), p255). Zionism from its inception was an ethnocentric nationalist movement, a reflection of the European nationalism which had inspired it, self-determined and galvanised by its own myths of homogeneity (Sand (2009), p256). Because, culturally Jews could not claim homogeneity, even among Ashkenazim, the Zionist movement was forced to find solace in the booming intellectual discipline of racial theory. The ultimate aim of this was to substantiate their claim to direct descent from the ancient Judeans thus justifying their claim to national self-determination in Palestine (Sand (2009), p257).

Books like Raphael Falk's 'Zionism and the biology of the Jews' and Arthur Ruppin's 'the sociology of the Jews' belonged to what Shlomo Sand calls the Jewish blood theory (Sand (2009), pp262-267). Within Jewish blood theory there was, however, a spectrum of thought ranging from those who believed the Jews to be an entirely pure race, not having mixed with gentiles since the time of Titus, for example Dr. Elias Auerbach (Sand (2009), p266). To men like Aaron Sandler who acknowledged the non-existence of pure races but argued that Jews had retained a degree of racial homogeneity since antiquity and did constitute a racial entity (Sand (2009), p266). In any case, to reiterate, the objective of Jewish blood theory was always ultimately to substantiate the Zionist assertion made about Jewish heredity in the final aim of legitimising national self-determination in Palestine (Sand (2009), pp258-268). I must stress that Zionism was, at the time, an almost exclusively Ashkenazi phenomenon and as a result, confusingly, Eurocentric. Zionist thinkers like Arthur Ruppin even utilised theories of social-Darwinism to account for various aspects of differentiation within the 'Jewish race'. He claimed that the historic struggle of European Jewry explained the superior intellectual activity of Ashkenazim over Sephardim (Sand (2009), p263). The British Zionist Nathan Salaman, a die-hard eugenicist, went even further and claimed that '...The true Jew is the European Ashkenazi' because their 'fairness sprang from the ancient Philistines who were absorbed by the Jewish nation in antiquity' (Sand (2009), p267). This was in opposition to the swarthy Sephardim whom he accused of having had their genes diluted by mixing with their neighbours, hence the dark complexion (Sand (2009), p267). This demonstrates to what extent Zionism was steeped in both European nationalist tradition and racial theory. The prominence of racial theory in the Zionist camp was simply a reflection of the prominence of racial theory in the rest of Europe. Notably by the Germans; particularly since the rise to power of the Nazis, anti-Semitism was now being reinforced with 'science'.

The Nazi Holocaust in Europe was the zenith of European anti-Semitism. The development of such a high degree of anti-Semitism was due to the development of extreme ethno nationalism in Germany; strengthened by racial theory. As a result, German eugenicists began to racially profile the Jewish 'race', tailored to Hitler's own, entirely scientifically uninformed, assertions made in Mein Kampf (Burrin (1994) pp25-40). Racial unity was now being imposed on the Jews of Europe from the

outside. The mono-ethnic nationalism present in the 'pure' unified Aryan Germany of the Nazis did not allow room for the Jews (Bauman (1989), pp92, 93). Nazi characterisations of the Jewish 'race' were intensely pejorative and the basis for the worst ever incidence of mass murder in human history- the holocaust. Up until the tragic consequences of German racial theory were revealed to the world over the course of the allied advance into Germany, there was not much to distinguish the Zionist race theorists from the German. In fact, Arthur Ruppin, a prominent Zionist and race theorist maintained academic ties with German eugenicists even after the rise of Nazism, he even travelled to Germany to visit Hans Gunther the 'pope' of racial theory; he himself part of the Nazi party since 1932 (Sand (2009), p265). A Jew of Czech-German origin and a committed Zionist by the name of Hans Kohn, one of the fathers of the academic study of nationalism, developed a theory to explain the appearance of ethno-nationalism in central and Eastern Europe. He theorised that national identity in Central and Eastern Europe could be traced back to the Napoleonic invasions and therefore preceded the consolidation of a modern state apparatus (Sand (2009), pp45, 46, 47). As opposed to what he called 'western nationalism' which had been created by the traditions of the enlightenment: liberalism and individualism (Sand (2009), pp45, 46, 47). Kohn believed that this had allowed for these countries to develop into liberal democracies and foster an inclusive national identity based on loyalty to the modern state apparatus (Sand (2009), pp45, 46, 47). According to Kohn, the fact that national identity had developed in Central and Eastern Europe before the modern state apparatus meant that their sense of national identity was drawn from elsewhere. From what preceded the definition of a state as a political entity: the 'ethnos' and the idea of ancestral kinship (Sand (2009), pp45, 46, 47). The expressions of nationalism above, conceptualised by Kohn, have all produced national identities which conform to Habermas' conventional identification paradigm.

The conclusion I draw from this is that when lacking the appropriately powerful and self-confident political institutions to define a nation, a nation looks towards an alternative source of national identity, in this case: 'race'. Although Hans Kohn's 'dichotomic theory' was without doubt created chiefly as a reaction to the rise of Nazism (Sand (2009), p47) it does provide useful tools of analysis. It is no coincidence that Zionism was born in the lands in between Vienna and Odessa (Sand (2009), p252), the lands which Kohn conceptualised as the 'Eastern' model of nationalism. The lands in which ethno biological, ethno religious and importantly, ethnically exclusive national identities developed (Sand (2009), p47). As demonstrated in earlier paragraphs, Zionism took on very similar characteristics: the focus on 'race' as a way to substantiate ancestral kinship and subsequently legitimise the exclusive right of the Jewish people to 'Eretz Israel'

After the end of the Second World War and after the horrifying consequences of Nazi racial theory had been revealed to the world, racial theory was discredited as an academic discipline. Although the Zionists had now lost a potent tool of nationalist legitimation, the last few decades of self-racialization had, had their desired effect. Moreover, the enormous cultural trauma of the holocaust had infused the Ashkenazi Jews, now making Aliyah (immigrating) to Palestine in the thousands, with an incredible impetus of self-determination. Although the use of racial theory was now out of the question; the belief in Jewish homogenous ancestry remained central to the legitimacy of Jewish claims to nationhood in Palestine. As a result, Zionism turned to another academic discipline to authenticate their homogenous racial heritage: history. Zionism created a meta-narrative of Jewish historiography to

corroborate their claims of ethnic homogeneity and consequently their exclusive right to 'Eretz Israel'. I will be dealing with this topic in the next section of this case study. I intend to demonstrate how this final phase of Zionist ideology has brought the state of Israel to where it is today in terms of the issue of ethnocentricity discussed in section one. Whether Zionism employed racial theory or historiography to legitimise their claims to ethnocentric nationhood, and once attained, reinforce these claims, is irrelevant. The means are immaterial when the ends are one and the same; racial homogeneity is implicit in the Zionist construction of Jewish historiography. Ben Zion Dinur was the father of Zionist historiography; he created a historiographical paradigm that was completely congruent with Zionist ideological imperatives (Ram (2011), p12). Dinur was a lecturer in Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he was granted professorship in 1948 (the year of Israeli independence); he was also acutely aware of his role as a historian in the creation of a national narrative (Ram (2011), p12). Together with other Zionist historians, Dinur definitively revolutionised Jewish historiography, its purpose was clearly announced in the statement of objectives of the journal 'Zion': '...Jewish history is consolidated by a homogeneous unity which engulfs all periods and all places.' (Baer & Dinur (1935), p1).

I will use, as an example of the extent of this Zionist meta-narrative, the question of the Jewish Khazars; which most modern historians credit for the historically large demographic presence of Jews in Eastern Europe (Sand (2009), pp238-249). In the 8th century AD a Turkic people, the Khazars, an empire based in between the Volga and the Dnieper converted to Judaism. Arthur Koestler, the writer of 'The Thirteenth Tribe' had this to say: '[T]he large majority of surviving Jews in the world is of Eastern European- and thus perhaps mainly of Khazar- origin. If so, this would mean that their ancestors came not from the Jordan but from the Volga, not from Canaan but from the Caucasus...and that genetically they are more closely related to the Hun, Uigur and Magyar tribes than to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob' (Sand (2009), p239). Although there have been barely any archaeological efforts to discover the truth about such historical assertions, principally due to the problems any such archaeological confirmation would cause the Zionist historical narrative (Sand (2009), p247). There is much philological evidence that points towards the Khazars accounting for the demographic boom of Eastern European Jewry and not, eastern migration of West German Jewish settlers as proposed by the Zionist sponsored historiographical narrative (Sand (2009), pp245, 246; Dimont (1962), p342).

Lack of archaeological confirmation notwithstanding, Khazaria seems to hold secrets of Jewish history that Zionists do not wish to acknowledge. A book called 'Jews, God and History' by Max I. Dimont who recounts a 'short history of the Jews' which is consistent with the Zionist narrative says this of the Khazars: 'The fact that the Tartars were converted to Judaism in no way changed their Tartaric habits or nature' (Dimont (1962), p342). Of their legacy Dimont writes 'And so it came about that the former Jewish Kingdom of Khazar became part of Mother Russia, and its people made the sign of the cross to the Russian orthodox formula...instead of bowing reverently to the Hebrew shema yisroel' (Dimont (1962), p342). The implication here being that the descendants of the converted Jews of Khazaria now constitute elements of the Russian nation and not of modern day eastern European Jewry. Arthur Koestler was set upon by the Zionist establishment historians for the proliferation of these ideas and accused of being a 'self-hating Jew' (Sand (2009), p240). The fact is that this thesis of Jewish historiography predates the Zionist

narrative and harks back to 1867 and the great Jewish scholar Abraham Harkavy (Sand (2009), p241).

To prevent the propagation of subversive historiographical evidences such as those presented in the previous paragraph; Ben Zion Dinur became the Israeli minister of education and culture in 1951, and in 1953 he brought before the Knesset a motion for the Law of State Education (Ram (2011), p19). This meant the establishment of a unified, centrally planned education system; among other things, the Zionist historiographical narrative was integrated into the Israeli education system (Ram (2011), p19). The Zionist historiographical paradigm is essentially a teleological depiction of Jewish history. It portrays the establishment of the state of Israel as a pre-determined result of all Jewish history and its culmination (Ram (2011), p24). This has created the historiographical illusion that Jews are the modern day descendants of the ancient Hebrew nation, returned home. This is called a destination oriented historiography.

The objective of this inculcation, as explained in the parliamentary transcriptions of 1953, is so that 'each one of its citizens regards the state as being part of his own personal being' (Ram (2011), p20). Yet, if the history of the state of Israel is exclusively that of one residing group then the marginalisation of other groups is inevitable. The eminent German sociologist Jurgen Habermas theorises that this destination oriented historiography produces, what he calls a conventional national identity which demands loyalty to one particular group and as explained at the end of section one, excludes others (Habermas (1989), p249-267). To me, Habermas' conceptualisation seems to explain the emergence of such high levels of ethnocentricity in Israeli society and uncovers it as the root of the prominent racial issues with which it is gripped.

I conclude that the issues of racial inequality in modern day Israel, as shown to pertain to the ethnocentric nature of the state, are the bi-products of the Zionist legacy that was so integral to the formation of Israel in 1948 and before. I hope to have demonstrated that the formative factors of Zionism such as the imitation of Eastern and Central European nationalism as conceptualised by Hans Kohn, racial theory and eventually historiographical narrative have shaped the identity politics of Israel. This producing, as conceptualised by Habermas, 'conventional identity' among the Jewish-Israeli population and thus the ethnocentric root of all the racial inequalities presented in section one.

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