

Israel's Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians

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Introduction

The carving of Palestine to create a 'Jewish State', Israel, on the ideological framework of ethno-religious nationalism (Zionism) has resulted in extensive displacement, refugees, and violence. Since Israel's creation, the national ideology of Zionism has been employed through international law, territorial expansion, non-Jewish dispossession and removal, and discriminatory immigration laws to secure a 'Jewish State' through the mass influx of Jews from around the diaspora to Palestine. This mechanism to secure a 'Jewish

State' is significantly accelerated through discriminatory immigration policies; the Law of Return, or *Aliyah*, invites Jews around the world to settle in Israel and receive full Israeli citizenship, denying this process to non-Jews (Kaplan 1090). Therefore, the phenomena of creating a 'Jewish State' and its relationship to the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians will be examined through this research question: How does *Aliyah* contribute to the ethno-religious cleansing of Palestinians?



Sarhan, Shareef. "Scenes From the Gaza Crisis." Flickr; United Nations, 2014, https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/14852082802.



"Gaza Strip." Pixabay, 2018, <https://pixabay.com/photos/gaza-strip-palestine-3829414/>.

Method

This research question is addressed through a historical analysis of primary and secondary sources on the Israel-Palestine conflict, including: demographic statistics, state policies, legal documents, court cases, literature, religious texts, and non-governmental documentation of human rights abuses. The following practices central to Israel's ethnic cleansing were analyzed from the above sources:

discriminatory policies, population removal, replacement, and territorial expansion. This research is presented through a contextual history of the *Aliyah* immigration law alongside the examination of its role in Israel's active ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. A critical examination of sources was also conducted to avoid bias on this controversial topic, and this research includes Israeli, Palestinian, and external sources.

PALESTINIAN LOSS OF LAND 1946-2010



The first image shows the demographics of the Jewish Population in Palestine while the images of 1947, 1967, and 2010 show territory under Israel and Palestine's control. The 2010 image does not reflect Israel's illegal occupation of all of what was once Palestine, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. "Palestinian Loss of Land 1946 - 2010." Wikipedia Commons, 2014, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestinian-loss-of-land-1946-2010.jpg.

Evidence

Prior to the 19th century, the territory of Palestine was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and inhabited by a multicultural population with the following demographics: 86 percent Muslim, 10 percent Christian, and 4 percent Jewish. Since the 1948 founding of Israel and Israel's subsequent occupation of Gaza and the West Bank in 1967, approximately half the Palestinians of pre-1948 Palestine were displaced (McCarthy 35). This displacement has occurred alongside the immigration of approximately 3.3 million Jews to Israel since 1948 under the *Aliyah* immigration policy, with Jews constituting 74.1% of Israel's citizenry today (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics). Israel's creation of refugees continues to occur through land confiscation, home demolitions, discriminatory immigration laws, territorial expansion, and forcible population transfer (Alfarez 211).

This mechanism to secure a 'Jewish State' is significantly accelerated through discriminatory immigration policies: the Law of Return, or *Aliyah*, invites Jews around the world to settle in Israel and receive full Israeli citizenship, denying this process to non-Jews (Kaplan 1090). According to Israeli immigration laws, displaced Palestinians are prohibited from returning to their homes, joining their families in Israel or the occupied territories, and even from entering the expanding borders of Israel (Kaplan 1092). Israel encourages the mass migrations of Jews to Israel, providing financial incentives, settlement packages, and even territorial benefits to live in illegally occupied land in Palestinian territory, removing and pushing Palestinian people out of geographic regions. In turn, the spatial distribution of *Aliyah* immigrants dispossesses Palestinian people from Palestinian land. In fact, Israel reached the status of the highest immigration rate in the world in proportion to its size in the 1990s (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics). The Law of Return is still upheld today, with the Zionist national aim to create and preserve a homogeneous ethno-religious 'Jewish State' in Israel.

The carving of Palestine to create a 'Jewish State', Israel, on the ideological framework of ethno-religious nationalism resulted in extensive displacement, refugees, and violence. Since Israel's creation, millions of Palestinians have been forcibly removed from their homes, displaced, rendered refugees, and currently exist under severe Israeli military occupation. Yet, from the Balfour Declaration to the Oslo Accords, all efforts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have used a framework to meet Israel's ever-expanding territorial and security interests, ignoring the human rights principles to which both sides should be held.

Conclusions

The discriminatory *Aliyah* immigration policy has significantly intensified Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians through population removal, replacement, and territorial expansion. The notion of the legal framework of *Aliyah* is based on the Zionist religious justification to a territory that people already exist in and coincides with the employment of ethnic cleansing to 'make room' for a 'Jewish State'; a notion faced with a contradictory reality of diverse religious and ethnic existence in the territory of Israel and Palestine. A sustainable framework for peace in the Israel-Palestine conflict must address the ethnic cleansing qualities of the *Aliyah* immigration law, Israel's state removal and exclusion of Palestinians through discriminatory laws and include the human rights standards to which Palestinians and Israelis may coexist.

Works Cited

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