

Israel based on racism, discrimination

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Press TV has conducted an interview with Edward Corrigan, a political commentator in Ontario, to ask for his views on the beating of a Ethiopian Jew by the Israeli police.

The following is a rough transcription of the interview..

Press TV: First of all, I would like to get your opinion as to why you think that the police officer who was incriminated in the beating of the Ethiopian soldier was not charged?

Corrigan: Well, actually I have read in fact [that] the two officers involved were dismissed from their position so there may be contrary information. But there is a long history of racism and discrimination against the Ethiopian Jews in Israel; this goes back to 1984-85 I think. The so-called Operation Moses was bringing in Jews from Ethiopia to Israel. The Chief Rabbi recognized them as Jews, ordered that they undergo a ritual immersion to prove that they were Jewish. This is sort of the start of a long history of discrimination against Ethiopian Jews who of course are black.

Actually I would say they are not second-class citizens; they are third or fourth-class citizens. I think Arab Jews will be second-class citizens and Bene Israel Indian Jews would be third-class; Ethiopians are fourth-class.

There is a long pattern of violence against blacks in Israel. The black refugees from Ethiopia and Africa have been attacked repeatedly. They are detained in what amounts to a detention camp or concentration camp in the Negev and they have been beaten up for numerous times and there has been a lot of protests against these black refugees which are coming into Israel.

Now, a lot of Israelis don't differentiate between the blacks from Africa that are not Jewish, and of course the blacks who are Jewish. In fact this Israeli soldier, who is an Ethiopian who was beaten by the police and the video [of it] went viral, is a classic example where a lot of Israelis see themselves as white European Jews. They have racism against the Arab Jews, racism against Jews of other color, and this in part goes back to some of the myth that Israel was founded on and the European Jews see themselves as the direct descendants of the Jews from ancient Israel which of course is not true.

There has been a conversion over time, of many different groups of people and cultures and ethnic groups to Judaism; in fact, there are books written on Chinese Jews from China. But I think the pattern that the Israeli police attack these black refugee immigrants and also attack Palestinians, with a lot of violence and it takes not too many steps to start beating Israelis who happen to be Jewish and black at the same time.

Press TV: Indeed. Now you mentioned the Palestinians; many do say that the situation of the Ethiopian Israelis will not improve unless one does recognize the fact that the Israeli regime was inherently based on racism.

Corrigan: Well, I think that is the founding problem with Israel, that it is based on racism where Jews are given superior rights and Palestinians, unless they are Jews... and there were some Jewish Palestinians of course but they actually interestingly opposed the influx of European immigrants. But the foundation of the state is in fact on a series of myths and of course, what they think is Jewish. So

Ethiopian Jews are not considered true Jews by many Israelis [and] they are forced to go through special conversion rituals. Other people were forced to formally convert to Judaism as these Jewish Ethiopians had converted to Christianity [because] they were treated very badly.

There is a lot of racism, for example, the Israeli hospitals wouldn't accept Ethiopian blood. In fact when Ethiopian immigrants were coming to Israel, many of them were sterilized so they couldn't produce children. So this is actually a blatant violation of the Convention Against Genocide. It was obviously an attempt to prevent these black Ethiopian Jews from having children and that is not a well-publicized incident but nevertheless it is well-documented. In fact there was a reference to it in Haaretz this last month. There is an article written that talks about all the history of racism against the Ethiopian Jews and numerous other examples. So you have protests of Ethiopian Jews against police violence and the Ethiopian Jews are chanting that Baltimore has come to Israel; of course, a reference to the attacks on blacks in the United States.

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