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Multiculturalism as a political program in the state of Israel (on example of Ethiopian Jewish community)

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The article attempts to answer the question: "To what extent is modern Israeli society (and is it really) multicultural?", and therefore, could it pretend to be called democratic (in accordance to the human rights standards that are common today, at least in the West).

Of course, this issue is not limited to the problem of interaction between various national and ethno-confessional groups within Israeli society, as well as to their relationships with the state and quasi-state structures. However, this aspect is recognized as the most problematic for Israel, and is perceived as the main cause, if not the reason, for criticism of its "national" policy.

The goal of the study is to examine multiculturalism as a political program in the State of Israel (on example of Ethiopian Jewish community).

Without formulating our own definition of "multiculturalism" (and without choosing the existing ones), we applied the theoretical model of Ch. Inglis, which examines a society at three interrelated, but analytically different, levels: demographic-descriptive, ideological-normative and programmatic-political.

The example of Ethiopian Jewish community makes it clear that Israeli society at programmatic-political level could be considered as multicultural, but only if examination is limited to the Jewish sector, or even, in the future, the extended Jewish community of the country.

Classical Zionism always viewed Jewish historically-based cultural diversity as a threat to national unity, offering Israeli society its own version of a "melting pot" However, the influence of Zionist ideology on Israeli society is weakening, and even at the programmatic-political level, Israel's progress in creating a multicultural society has become more evident. The State of Israel is moving toward a policy of granting the special "preferential" rights to certain groups within the Jewish sector. These rights are granted sometimes directly (for example, through legislation or specific integration policy), and more often indirectly (through special programs whose recipients are not clearly stated, but are implied).

Key words: multiculturalism, political program, national group, religious group, (sub)ethnic group, Ethiopian Jews, "Falasha", "Beta Israel".

Introduction. Since the "Jewish state" has been established and even earlier, in the pre-state period, the leaders of the Zionist movement clearly understood and took into account the role of public opinion in foreign affairs, primarily, in the countries on whose position the realization of the Zionist project, its success and viability largely depended.

One of the problems, that today have the greatest impact on the perception of Israel abroad and, first of all, in Western liberal democracies, is the issue of Israel's (non)observance of the basic human and citizen rights and freedoms, primarily regarding to (representatives of) minorities. In response to ongoing and increasing criticism on Israeli domestic policy (e.g. [3; 14; 23]), the State of Israel, by its officials and "friends," persistently imagine itself as the only true democracy in the Middle East, as a liberal democracy like others, or even the democracy, superior to liberal democracies in some ways (e.g. [26; 31; 39]).

A distinctive feature of liberal democracies in the West in 1990s and 2000s was their general commitment, albeit usually quite limited or even purely

declarative, to the values and policy of multiculturalism. In any way, while "multiculturalism" have been universally recognized as an advanced ideology and political practice, the "Jewish state," its quasi-state institutions and many "advocates" in Israel and abroad tried to represent Israel as a multicultural state or, at least, as the state that moved in that direction.

For example, Israeli statesman and political scientist Shlomo Avineri argued that Israel's policy toward linguistic, cultural, religious, and national minorities is much more in line with the principles of multicultural democracy than the policy of such Western countries as France. While the State of Israel recognizes "internal" Arabs as a linguistic, cultural, and religious minority and provides broad collective rights to them, liberal republican France imposes a single linguistic-cultural model on the whole population of the country [35, p. 57].

Thus, the question is: "To what extent is modern Israeli society (and is it really) multicultural?", and therefore, could it pretend to be called democratic (in accordance to the human rights standards that are common today, at least in the West).

Of course, this issue is not limited to the problem of interaction between various national and ethno-confessional groups within Israeli society, as well as to their relationships with the state and quasi-state structures. However, this aspect is recognized as the most problematic for Israel, and is perceived as the main cause, if not the reason, for criticism of its “national” policy.

The goal of the study is to examine multiculturalism as a political program in the State of Israel (on example of Ethiopian Jewish community).

Literature review. Since the late 1990s-the early 2000s it has been published a number of scientific researches on the issue of multiculturalism in Israel and its various aspects, including national and ethno-confessional dimensions (e.g. M. Al-Haj [1], G. Ben-Porat [5], Y. Dahan and G. Levy [8], U. McGahern [28], and Y. Yonah [41]). However, the focus of research was usually too broad, or, in some cases (for example, in collective monograph, edited by A. Sagi and O. Nachtomy [34]), research was focused on the other multicultural issues.

At the same time, the case of Ethiopian Jews in Israel was usually viewed not in multicultural perspective, but in terms of “racism” and “discrimination” (e.g. A. Ben-David and A. T. Ben-Ari [4], S. Getahun and I. Keynan [15], F. A. Lazin [25], A. A. Takala [36], S. Zelalem [42]).

Methodological design. From a political and philosophical point of view, multiculturalism is not a clearly defined and delineated concept. In its most general form it has communitarian and liberal interpretations, based on different ideological and cognitive principles. At a lower level of abstraction, we can distinguish, for example, conservative, liberal, liberal left and critical-resistant forms of multiculturalism. Besides that, within the theory of multiculturalism we can distinguish much more conceptual approaches [29, p. 37].

Perhaps, it is difficult to define what “multiculturalism” essentially is: which of theoretical interpretations and approaches, within its framework, deserves more attention and further development, and which of political practices implements the ideals of multiculturalism to the greatest extent.

Answering this question, we, following Ch. Inglis, propose to differentiate Israeli society on three inter-related, but analytically different, levels: demographic-descriptive, ideological-normative and programmatic-political.

The demographic-descriptive level represents an existence of ethnically and/or racially different groups in the society and/or the state. Belonging to them plays a certain social role associated with perception of both cultural differences and forms of structural differentiation.

In ideological-normative sense, “multiculturalism” is a slogan and a model of political action based on sociological theorizing and ethical/philosophical con-

sideration of the place of different cultural identities in modern society. Multiculturalism as an ideology emphasizes that ensuring the right of individuals to preserve their culture should neither block their access to generally accepted values of the society, nor limit the compliance with constitutional principles regarding them. Such a policy, as the supporters of multiculturalism say, benefits both individuals and society, culturally enriching it and reducing its conflictness.

Finally, programmatic-political analysis concerns specific programs and political initiatives designed to respond ethnic and/or racial diversity of the society and/or the state [18, pp. 16–17].

Findings. If we consider multiculturalism as a synonym for the concept of “cultural diversity”, then modern Israel can confidently be called one of the most multicultural countries in the world.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the population of Israel (including Jewish settlers in the “territories”, but excluding non-citizen residents of the country) at the beginning of 2024 was about 9.9 million people. Jews made up about 7.247 million people or 73.2% of the country’s population, Arabs – about 2.089 million people or 21.1% of the country’s population and “others” – about 564 thousands or 5.7% of the country’s population [21].

However, if we take into account non-Jewish population of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank/Judea and Samaria, then at the end of 2023 there were additionally about 5.6 million people living in the country, the vast majority of whom were Palestinian Arabs. Thus, the total demographic weight of the Arab community, within the “Green Line” and in the “territories”, is as significant as the demographic weight of the Jewish community [30]. And yet, due to the uncertainty of Israel’s territorial borders and the status of Palestinians living in the “territories”, we shall not include them into Israel’s population, although we shall not lose sight on this issue.

The category of Israeli Arabs, albeit with important exceptions, implies Israeli Muslims (including Circassians), Arab Christians (including Armenians), and even Druze (despite the fact that in 1957 Israel recognized them as a special religious group, and in 1962, actually recognized them as a distinct national minority, separate from Israeli Arabs) [9, pp. 20-21; 19; 28].

Finally, the category of “others” in Israel usually includes all the citizens, who, from the State’s point of view, are neither Jews, nor Arabs. First of all, non-Arab Christians, Baha’is and, of course, a large group of citizens, who do not fall under the traditional definition of Jewishness (mostly, members of Jew’s families and non-halakhic Jews, quite often from the countries of the former USSR) [19].

Due to the composite demographic structure of the Jewish sector of the country, and in order to maintain civil peace and political stability, the State

of Israel, from the very moment of its foundation, had to recognize the special rights of some of the Jewish groups (both religious and (sub)ethnic).

The special rights of various, as they are imagined, (sub)ethnic groups of the Jewish people are recognized in Israel in a slightly different way than those of religious groups. First of all, we are talking about people, whose roots are in the Middle East and North Africa, the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. It is commonly believed that these groups have specific socio-economic and cultural-religious needs, which should be satisfied with an active assistance of the state.

An important baseline that defines an ethno-cultural diversity of Israeli Jews is, despite some terminological confusion and lack of clarity in definitions, the “Ashkenazi”/“Mizrahi” axis. In modern Israeli society the term “Ashkenazi” most often refers to Jews of European origin, while the term “Mizrahi” or “Sephardi” refers to Jews from the Middle East and North Africa [5]. However, it should not be forgotten that in modern Israel such concepts as “Western”/“Oriental” Jews and “Ashkenazi”/“Sephardi”, although overlapping, are not identical [2, p. 154].

The historical division into “Ashkenazi”/“Sephardi” is not legally enshrined in Israel nowhere, except only one specific area – religious. In Israel there are two Chief Rabbis: “Ashkenazi” and “Sephardic”/“Rishon LeZion”. There are two “city rabbis” in each of four major cities. The Chief Rabbinate Council of Israel (as well as its Electoral Assembly) consist of an equal number of representatives from each of these communities [7].

Classical Zionism views the historically natural cultural diversity of Jewish people as a threat to national unity, offering Israeli society its own version of a “melting pot”. In particular, at the dawn of Israeli statehood, it was adopted the course toward cultural assimilation and modernization of “Oriental” Jews in Israel. However, in practice, this course was accompanied with social marginalization of “Oriental” Jews, much more impressive and distinct from those of “new immigrants” from Europe and America [8, pp. 427–428].

It is believed, that the Black Jews in Ethiopia, named by their Christian environment “Falasha” (“Aliens” – a status that disqualified them from owning land), for centuries lived in isolation from the other Jewish communities. This version of “Falasha’s” roots is more or less generally accepted, and is based mostly on their specific religious practice and tradition, that are grounded on the Torah, but not familiar with the Talmud [42, pp. 1–2]. Nevertheless, the versions of the “Beta Israel’s” (“House of Israel’s”) origin, as they prefer to be called today, are quite contradictory and insufficiently substantiated. Even their belonging to the Jewish people (both in religious and ethnic sense) is still disputed [22].

But, one way or another, in 1973, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel Ovadia Yosef, recognized

“Falasha” as the integral part of the Jewish people, the descendants of the lost tribe of Dan. Due to the possible persecution of “Falasha” in politically unstable Ethiopia, it was proposed to return them to their historical homeland immediately. However, due to Yom Kippur War in October 1973, Ethiopia severed diplomatic relations with Israel and the process of evacuation of Ethiopian Jews to Israel was postponed [33, pp. 155–156].

The mass repatriation of “Falasha” began only 11 years later and now is considered almost complete. Most Ethiopian Jews immigrated to the country during two resettlement programs: “Operation Moses” (which began in 1984 and peaked the same year) and “Operation Solomon” (which began in the early 1990s and peaked in 1991). In the mid-2000s, the repatriation from Ethiopia to Israel decreased significantly, and in recent years this process has affected mainly “Falash Mura” – “Falasha’s” Christian relatives, who were granted the right to immigrate to the country under the family reunification process [27].

As a result, according to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, by the end of 2017, about 87,000 Jews had come to Israel from Ethiopia and another 61,700, whose fathers were from Ethiopia, were born in Israel. The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics defines Ethiopian-Jewish origin as the (sub)ethnicity of the father. Thus, the total number of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, at the end of 2017, was about 148,700 people [38, p. 3].

According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2020 there were already 155,300 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel: about 87,500 of them were born in Ethiopia, and another 67,800, whose fathers were from Ethiopia, were born in Israel [13]. At the same time, according to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2024 there were already 177,300 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel: about 93,400 of them were born in Ethiopia, and another 84,200 were native-born [20]. This dynamic means an almost complete cessation of the Jewish immigration from Ethiopia to Israel and the population growth of Ethiopian Jewish community due to natural growth.

The data, published by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics in 2020, reveals deep and persistent socio-economic gaps between Ethiopian Jews and the entire Jewish population of the country, namely in the areas of employment, social security and education. For example, every third Ethiopian Jew, at the moment, was registered in the state’s social services – that was 2.5 times more than among the entire Jewish population [13].

Unlike “Mizrahi”, who had repatriated *en masse* in a rather difficult and tense time for Israel, Ethiopian Jews have arrived in the country in relatively economically prosperous and politically stable 1980s and 1990s. By that time, the Jewish state had already practically abandoned the policy of a “melting pot”, demonstrating greater sensitivity to specific cultural

and socio-economic needs of various (sub)ethnic groups of the Jewish people. Nevertheless, “Falasha”, like “Mizrahi” before, faced specific difficulties of integration and even discrimination in Israel.

Black immigrants, who arrived from pre-industrial villages of Ethiopia to post-industrial, highly urbanized, previously racially homogeneous Israel, faced specific problems of absorption. These problems should not be seen only as a result of the wrong integration policy or racial discrimination. Although race was (and certainly is) a stigmatizing feature of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, it would be wrong to say that this feature was the only that determined their low socio-economic status and marginal position in the Jewish sector of the country.

The key problem of the absorption of “Falasha” was that the “cultural baggage” they took from Ethiopia to Israel was significantly different (or seemed to be significantly different) from both, the dominant culture of the “host society” and the culture of any other group, which have ever repatriated to Israel. An older generation of the “Beta Israel”, for the most part, was not only bad educated, but also elementarily illiterate. That objectively limited “Falasha’s” potential of integration into Israeli society. However, even with regard to younger generation of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, prejudices and negative stereotypes persist. They are based primarily on “Falasha’s” African roots (that in Israeli public opinion are associated not only and not so much with the race, but with the ingrained idea of general backwardness of African countries) [4].

The biased attitude towards “Falasha” was (and still is) openly paternalistic. For example, Ethiopian Jews were not included in the so-called direct absorption program, which in the late 1980s became an alternative to the direct participation of the state (and quasi-state institutions) in solving the main integration problems of repatriates. The responsible government officials and representatives of the Jewish Agency considered “Falasha” to be insufficiently educated and professionally prepared to participate in this program and, in general, incapable of taking full responsibility for their future [25, pp. 11–13].

At the same time, the state and the other political actors spent many times more money on absorption of each Ethiopian Jew than on absorption of any other repatriate, including those from the countries of the former Soviet Union, whose mass arrival coincided with “Operation Moses”. The immigrants from Ethiopia were given not only the opportunity to attend Hebrew courses free and receive free medical care, but also a number of other important benefits, including housing subsidies. Housing subsidies for Ethiopian Jews usually were almost four times bigger than those for the so-called Russians. Thus, the absolute majority of “Falasha” were given impressive grants for purchasing housing (that cover almost its entire cost) [33, pp. 157–158]. As a result, almost all Ethiopian Jews,

except those who have arrived in recent years, were able to move into their own apartments or houses quite quickly. However, these apartments or houses were located on the outskirts – in the outlying suburbs or the so-called development towns [33, pp. 157–158; 38, pp. 4–9].

At the same time, some of the problems that Ethiopian Jews face in Israel stem from inability or unwillingness of the Chief Rabbinate (and the state, that closely associated with it) to fully recognize the special religious practice of the “Beta Israel”, which is quite different from the Talmudic Rabbinic tradition [42, p. 2].

In 1973 the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel Ovadia Yosef recognized the right of “Falasha” to repatriate to Israel in accordance with the Law of Return (this right for Ethiopian Jews was officially approved later in 1976 by Israeli Ministry of Interior). However, Ovadia Yosef pointed out the necessity for a symbolic conversion of Ethiopian Jews to Judaism (thereby anticipating the questions of their personal status) [25, pp. 13–14].

At first, “Falasha” readily underwent “giyur” in Israel, but afterwards, an increasing number of repatriates from Ethiopia refused to undergo this procedure. This procedure, in fact, meant for them that up until that point they (and their ancestors) were not full-fledged Jews [37]. As a result, under the pressure from the “Beta Israel” community, as well as from the liberal-secular press and public, sympathetic to them, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel recognized Jewishness of “Falasha” to a large extent [33, p. 169].

For a long time, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel refused to recognize religious leaders of “Falasha”, the so-called “kessim”, as the Jewish spiritual leaders or rabbis [42, pp. 2–3]. However, in 2018, The Ministerial Committee on the Integration of Israeli Citizens of Ethiopian Origin, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, announced a reform. Within its framework, “kessim” will not be equated with rabbis, but will receive the official status of spiritual leaders of the “Beta Israel” community. “Kessim” will also be integrated into the state system of religious services and will become the “Beta Israel” representatives in religious councils [17]. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu noted in this regard, that: “The heritage of Israel is a mosaic of many communities. This community has a special status precisely because it has preserved the heritage of Israel with complete detachment [to other Jewish communities]” [17].

However, the problem of leadership in the “Beta Israel” community is connected, in general, with the loss of patriarchal way of life and hierarchy, that were familiar to repatriates from Ethiopia. The role of *pater familias* among Ethiopian Jews, after their mass immigration to Israel, has significantly devalued. This devaluating, as it was before in the case of “mizrahi”, had a negative impact on the families and children of Ethiopian Jews [33, pp. 158–163].

According to data, in 2000 the unemployment rate among “Falasha men” was 38%, while among Ethiopian women it was much higher – 63%. In 2016 these figures were 20% and 26%, respectively. And although the unemployment rate among “Falasha men” has significantly decreased over the years, the number of working women of Ethiopian origin has increased even more significantly [10]. In addition, it is common for a younger Ethiopian wife to integrate much better and faster into the “host society”, and in particular into the Israeli labor market, than for the Ethiopian husband [33, pp. 158–159].

The change in previously familiar gender roles in the “Beta Israel” community (which can be judged by a number of other indicators) largely explains the huge percentage of divorces and single-parent families among Ethiopian Jews. In general, these indicators in 2016 turned out to be more than twice higher than among the extended Jewish community of the country) [38, pp. 8–10].

The crisis of the family institution in the “Beta Israel” community has a negative impact on the younger generation of Ethiopian Jews and, in particular, on their educational level [33, pp. 158–164]. While the main indicators of “Falasha’s” academic performance is gradually improving, they are still below or significantly below average in the Hebrew-speaking education system (excluding ultra-Orthodox sector). Educational gap between schoolchildren and students of Ethiopian origin and the others in Hebrew-speaking education system is being narrowed, but the problem still exists, even for the second generation of repatriates of Ethiopian origin – those who were born in Israel [32; 38, pp. 13–16]. At the same time, it should be noted that the evident progress, observed in educational area, would hardly be possible without significant assistance from the state and other institutions, that allocate impressive funds to support schoolchildren and students of Ethiopian origin [33, pp. 159–164].

The process of liberalization in education, which reached its peak in the mid-1990s (largely under the influence of mass immigration from the former Soviet Union), did not bypass “Sephardic” Jews (including the “Beta Israel” community). In response to the creation of specialized, essentially private schools for their children by “Russians” and privileged strata of long-time Israelis, “Kedma” movement and Ultra-Orthodox “Sephardic” party Shas proposed two educational alternatives for “Sephardic” children. “Kedma” movement aimed to support high schools in poor neighborhoods and “development towns”, that, through the application of new principles of multicultural and individualized education, had to reveal the potential of “Sephardic” children [40]. Despite the same target audience, the main goal of Shas educational system (created separately from that for Ultra-Orthodox sector) is to form and maintain a specific identity, an integral part of which supposed to be

a commitment to both religious and (sub)ethnic values, and, more importantly, the recognition of the key role of religious leaders in the life of “Sephardic” community [8, pp. 429–434].

Military service is a key sign of a “true” membership in Israeli society, and if, for example, a certain group is exempted from military service, it is (and is perceived) peripheral in Israel. In particular, in modern Israel many benefits concerning employment, housing, higher education, etc. are provided only to those, who were involved in military service [6]. So, it’s no wonder, that to improve their social status, Ethiopian Israelis, both men and women, make up a disproportionately high number of soldiers, including combat brigades [11]. However, Ethiopian Jews are still underrepresented on high-status positions in Israel Defense Forces and are channeled into simple, low-skilled assignments [15, pp. 22–23].

The relationship between the “Beta Israel” community and law enforcement authorities is, maybe, the most sensitive and complex issue for both, the “Beta Israel” community and Israeli Jewish community in general. While this relationship has developed and changed over the years, it could be mainly characterized by mutual misunderstanding and communication difficulties [12; 36, pp. 153–154].

For example, a 1997 survey found, that young Ethiopian Israelis have been experienced in unjustified police stops or searches more than 2 times more often than non-Ethiopian youth. At the same time, the reports of police violence against Ethiopian Israelis, that began to appear, confirmed that, deepening distrust between the “Beta Israel” community and law enforcement authorities [36, p. 153].

In response to police discriminatory treatment and even police violence against young Ethiopian Israelis, in 2006 and 2015 there were some significant waves of demonstrations and protests, that brought increased public attention on the issue [12; 36, pp. 153–154]. Trying to improve relations with the “Beta Israel” community, Israel Police announced series of trainings and forums for dialogue, increased number of police officers of Ethiopian Jewish origin and organized many other activities, but the impact of these measures was quite limited [36, pp. 153–154].

Following the protests, in early 2016 an inter-ministerial committee, headed by Justice Ministry Director-General Emmy Palmor, was established [16; 36, pp. 153–154]. The Palmor report, released in July 2016, found that Ethiopian Israelis have been experiencing institutional and individual discrimination for years, particularly from Israel Police. In 2015 the percentage of indictments, issued against Ethiopian Israelis, was more than twice their proportion in the population, while in case of minors the proportion was even bigger – 4 times more than their proportion in the population [12]. Statistical data from recent years continue to indicate significant gaps in

these areas between Ethiopian Israelis and Israelis in general, however these gaps are gradually narrowing [36, p. 154].

In early 2026 at a meeting of the Knesset's Special Committee for Oversight of Barrier Removal Processes Police spokesperson Aryeh Doron noted that Israel Police had established a unit dedicated to building ties with Ethiopian Jewish community, as well as a dedicated officer for Ethiopian Jewish community in every police station in Israel [24]. He also said that, "both, the minister and the police commissioner supported the law to expunge criminal records for Israelis of Ethiopian descent" [24].

In July 2024 Israel's parliament voted for the law, which, in words of Religious Zionist Party MK Moshe Solomon, "is the correction of a historic wrong", "so that all citizens grow up here in a place of equal opportunity for all" [12]. Charges of disorderly conduct and similar offenses, preceding October 31, 2020, will be erased from the records of Ethiopian Israelis, even in closed cases and for cases, in which the suspect was convicted. if they do not have additional criminal charges against them and if they were not given a custodial sentence for the charge [12].

Conclusions. Without formulating our own definition of "multiculturalism" (and without choosing the existing ones), we applied the theoretical model of Ch. Inglis, which examines a society at three inter-related, but analytically different, levels: demographic-descriptive, ideological-normative and programmatic-political.

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Мультикультуралізм як політична програма в Державі Ізраїль (на прикладі громади ефіопських євреїв)

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У статті зроблено спробу відповісти на питання: «Наскільки сучасне ізраїльське суспільство є (і чи справді воно є) мультикультурним?», і, отже, чи може воно претендувати на те, аби називатися демократичним (відповідно до стандартів прав людини, які є поширеними сьогодні, принаймні на Заході).

Звісно, це питання не обмежується проблемою взаємодії різних національних та етноконфесійних груп всередині ізраїльського суспільства, а також їхніми взаємовідносинами з державою та квазідержавними структурами. Однак, цей аспект визнається найбільш проблематичним для Ізраїлю та сприймається як головна підстава, якщо не причина, критики його «національної» політики.

Метою дослідження є аналіз мультикультуралізму як політичної програми в Державі Ізраїль (на прикладі громади ефіопських євреїв).

Не формулюючи власного визначення «мультикультуралізму» (і не обираючи вже існуючі), ми застосували теоретичну модель Ч. Інгліс, яка розглядає суспільство на трьох взаємопов'язаних, але аналітично різних рівнях: демографічно-описовому, ідеологічно-нормативному та програмно-політичному.

Приклад громади ефіопських євреїв чітко показує, що ізраїльське суспільство на програмно-політичному рівні можна вважати мультикультурним, але лише за умови, що розгляд обмежується єврейським сектором або навіть, у майбутньому, розширеною єврейською громадою країни.

Класичний сіонізм завжди розглядав єврейське історично обґрунтоване культурне різноманіття як загрозу національній єдності, пропонуючи ізраїльському суспільству власну версію «правильного тигля». Однак вплив сіоністської ідеології на ізраїльське суспільство послаблюється, і навіть на програмно-політичному рівні прогрес Ізраїлю у створенні мультикультурного суспільства стає більш очевидним. Держава Ізраїль рухається до політики надання спеціальних «преференційних» прав певним групам єврейського сектору. Ці права надаються іноді безпосередньо (зокрема через законодавство або специфічну інтеграційну політику), або частіше опосередковано (через спеціальні програми, одержувачі яких чітко не вказані, але мають на увазі).

Ключові слова: мультикультуралізм, політична програма, національна група, релігійна група, (суб)етнічна група, ефіопські євреї, «фалаши», «Бета-Ізраель».

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