

Covenant

Defining the Jewish People: Why Are This People and This Nation Different from All Other Peoples and Nations?

By Ami Isseroff*

Abstract: Ignoring historical records, genetic evidence and Jewish and Christian traditions, some Israeli academics and political commentators such as Shlomo Zand, Israel Yuval and their followers have built an elaborate case that there was never a Jewish exile, and that Jews are not descended from the ancient inhabitants of Israel and Judea. The heart of their claim, however, is the contention that the Jews are not a people, a political claim that is not really related to genetic or historical evidence. Their admitted purpose is to deny the right of self-determination to the Jewish people.

For almost all peoples of the world, the accepted definition of a nation is something like this, from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

People whose common identity creates a psychological bond and a political community. Their political identity usually comprises such characteristics as a common language, culture, ethnicity, and history.¹

For the Jewish people, for some reason, it is different. Why are this people and this nation different from all other nations and peoples?

Not every American is descended from George Washington, and most British people are not descended from Boadicea and her compatriots. The British monarchy is of German origin. President Sarkozy of France is not descended from Vercingetorix or his contemporaries. Barack Obama, running for president of the United States, is not a lineal descendent of either John Smith or Pocahontas. Nobody insists on pulling down the genes of every individual in every country to determine if their ancestors really belonged to their people.

Yet for the Jews, it is different. Of late, a variety of "wise men" (and women) have decided that every Jew must provide proof of descent from Abraham of Ur. Otherwise, it has been claimed, the Jewish people have no special title to the land of Israel.² Now this claim has been expanded. In his new book,³ *Matai ve'eych humzta ha'am hayehudi?* [When and how was the Jewish people invented?] Professor Shlomo Zand apparently claims that the Jews are not descendents of Abraham and King David. Therefore, he argues that there is no Jewish people and no Jewish nation at all. Zand's claim appears to be enthusiastically embraced by publicists including Tom Segev,⁴ Ofri Ilani⁵ and Yosef Gurevich.⁶ As he told interviewer Ofri Ilani:

[Ilani:] In effect you are saying that there is no such thing as a Jewish people.

[Zand:] I don't recognize an international people. I recognize 'the Yiddish people' that existed in Eastern Europe, which though it is not a nation can be seen as a Yiddishist civilization with a modern popular culture. I think that Jewish nationalism grew up in the context of this 'Yiddish people.' I also recognize the existence of an Israeli people, and do not deny its right to sovereignty. But Zionism and also Arab nationalism over the years are not prepared to recognize it.

It would seem that only Yiddish speaking Jews have a claim to Jewishness. Zand's book is already an Israeli bestseller in Hebrew, and is being published in French in September, 2008. As Tom Segev summarizes:

...Wrong, says the historian Shlomo Zand... There never was a Jewish people, only a Jewish religion, and the exile also never happened - hence there was no return. Zand rejects most of the stories of national-identity formation in the Bible, including the exodus from Egypt and, most satisfactorily, the horrors of the conquest under Joshua. It's all fiction and myth that served as an excuse for the establishment of the State of Israel, he asserts.

According to Zand, the Romans did not generally exile whole nations, and most of the Jews were permitted to remain in the country. The number of those exiled was at most tens of thousands. When the country was conquered by the Arabs, many of the Jews converted to Islam and were assimilated among the conquerors. It follows that the progenitors of the Palestinian Arabs were Jews. Zand did not invent this thesis; 30 years before the Declaration of Independence, it was espoused by David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Israel Belkind and others.

If the majority of the Jews were not exiled, how is it that so many of them reached almost every country on earth? Zand says they emigrated of their own volition or, if they were among those exiled to Babylon, remained there because they chose to. He hints that not only was the Roman exile of the Jews a "myth," but perhaps the Babylonian exile was as well, noting that only the Babylonian Talmud, but not the Jerusalem Talmud, lamented exile (Gurevich, 2008c). With Zand, Gurevich asks rhetorically if the Babylonian exile was a myth. Contrary to conventional belief, the Jewish religion tried to induce members of other faiths to become Jews, which explains how there came to be millions of Jews in the world.

Who then are the real Jews? Zand says:

No population remains pure over a period of thousands of years. But the chances that the Palestinians are descendents of the ancient Judaic people are much greater than the chances that you or I are its descendents (Ilani, 2009).

Zand's claim is that the "real" Jews of the land of Israel were killed or were converted to Islam and Christianity following the Roman conquest, and the Jews of today are "impostors." Contrary to Jewish tradition and Roman historical reports, almost no Jews were exiled from the land. All the Jews of Europe, including the Sephardic Jews of Spain, were converts, according to Zand. The Ashkenazi Jews were descendents of Khazars, he claims. That is hardly a new claim⁷ and one that is not supported by the latest genetic evidence.⁸ Zand however, insists that this is not a reason to disinherit the Jews, though it discredits Zionism. The political motivations of his claims are self evident:

[Ilani] Why do you think the idea of the Khazar origins is so threatening?

[Zand] It is clear that the fear is of an undermining of the historic right to the land. The revelation that the Jews are not from Judea would ostensibly knock the legitimacy for our being here out from under us. Since the beginning of the period of decolonization, settlers have no longer been able to say simply: 'We came, we won and now we are here' the way the Americans, the whites in South Africa and the Australians said. There is a very deep fear that doubt will be cast on our right to exist.

[Ilani] Is there no justification for this fear?

[Zand] No. I don't think that the historical myth of the exile and the wanderings is the source of the legitimization for me being here, and therefore I don't mind believing that I am Khazar in my origins. I am not afraid of the undermining of our existence, because I think that the character of the State of Israel undermines it in a much more serious way. What would constitute the basis for our existence here is not mythological historical right, but rather would be for us to start to establish an open society here of all Israeli citizens (Ilani, 2008).

The Sephardic Jews, claims Zand, were converted "Berbers." Ironically, "Berber" is the racist name for the Amazigh and other native people of North Africa, conquered and suppressed by the Arab conquerors.

Zand falsely claims that Zionism insists that Jews are a "race," and then demolishes the straw man he created, in order to disprove "Zionism" as he interprets it:

In the Israeli discourse about roots there is a degree of perversion. This is an ethnocentric, biological, genetic discourse. But Israel has no existence as a Jewish state... (Ilani, 2008).

Zionism, though it sometimes borrowed the "race" terminology of various 19th century movements, never claimed to be based on the assumption that the Jewish people are a "pure race." This question was thoroughly and critically examined by Raphael Falk. Though Falk discusses the various references to race theory in Zionist writings, he notes that Zionism was not based on race theory.⁹

Zand asserts that the French, English and Germans only became peoples in the 19th century. If this were true, it would only prove that the Jews have a better claim on nationality than European nations. However, Henry the VIII and Elizabeth I as well as William Shakespeare would likely have been astonished at this news, though "Britain" came into being somewhat later. They were perfectly aware of the Norman, Saxon, Danish, Pictish and other "blood" in their ancestry, but that did not preclude forming a nation state. "Rule Britannia" was written in the 18th century and set to music in 1740.¹⁰ The Zionists, according to Zand, copied their blood myth from the Germans. But in the 1840s, when the first proto-Zionists wrote of return to Zion, the Greek model must have been foremost in their minds. Moses Hess, on the other hand, cites the Italian Risorgimento.¹¹

Hitler attempted the physical annihilation of the Jewish people through a racist doctrine. Zand and his followers seem to be trying to complete the process in another way. Zand is a long time communist, who used the "tried and true" method of inventing a dogma and then gathering evidence to support it. As he told *Ha'aretz* interviewer Ilani (Ilani, 2008):

My initial intention was to take certain kinds of modern historiographic materials and examine how they invented the 'figment' of the Jewish people.

As he began to gather the "evidence" to support his thesis, Zand convinced himself more and more of its truth. Zand's notion that modern Zionists "invented" the exile and the Jewish people requires one to posit that modern Zionists also invented most Jewish, Christian and Muslim writings about the history of the Jews produced in the last 1,800 years. Belief in the "myth" of Jewish origins in Zion is evident in the medieval poetry of Yehuda Halevi, the messianic movement of Shabtai Tzvi and myriad other sources. It was not Herzl in the nineteenth century who wrote:

How shall I render my vows and my bonds, while Zion still lies beneath the fetter of Edom, and I am in the chains of Arabia?

It was not written in Zand's beloved Yiddish, either. It was Yehuda Halevi, the Spanish Jewish poet, who wrote it in Hebrew, about 800 years before the supposed "invention" of the Jewish nation by Zionists.¹²

The Puritan movement supported the restoration of the Jews from its inception. Other branches of Christianity likewise accepted the exile as fact, though they posited that it was punishment for rejection of Jesus as Messiah. If the exile of the Jews is all a myth, then it is a shared delusion of all of western civilization. Zand would have us reject this "myth."

When objective science drives policy, everyone benefits. When science is used to justify political dogma, or "scientific" research is directed to find an answer that suits politics, both science and mankind suffer.

Supporters of the Palestinian cause ridicule the 19th century slogan adopted by the Zionists, "A land without a people for a people without a land." The Arabs of Palestine are still outraged over the dictum of Golda Meir, "There are no Palestinians." Tom Segev, who wrote a glowing review of Zand's book, would never surely countenance the statement that there is no Palestinian Arab people. Nonetheless, Segev and other enthusiasts are willing to accept Zand's contention that there is no Jewish people.

Like Zand, Israel Yuval has insisted that there was no Jewish exile and no evidence for it. Yuval claims that Josephus, the Jewish historian, never mentions exile.¹³ Not by coincidence, Yuval, like Zand, has views concerning the Palestinian Arab question and feels the need to express them. Yuval, who is cited by Zand, writes:

On the one hand, I am a Zionist loyal to awareness of the need for the existence of the State of Israel. On the other hand, I am deeply troubled by the price paid by the Palestinians for the fulfillment of this dream. Like many others, I desperately seek a fair solution that will minimize the pain and suffering for both sides (Yuval, 2006).

Evidently, reviewers like Gurevich, Ilani and Segev, agree. It is fair to ask, would the political views of these authors change, or should they change, if irrefutable evidence were found to support one or another contention regarding the exile? Or is it more likely that their contentions regarding the exile are based on their political views? The nature of science and the nature of historiography are such that there is no "irrefutable" evidence that would ever be accepted by all parties. It appears that in this case, Zand, Yuval and their followers did not like the history, so they invented a new one to suit their political ideas.

Josephus Flavius himself was among the exiled Jews, though he was a voluntary exile, and therefore it is impossible to claim that he gives no evidence of the exile. In relating the fall of Jerusalem, Josephus states:

Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem].¹⁴

In a subsequent chapter, Josephus related that "many" captives were "destroyed" but others were exiled. Seven hundred were brought to Rome at the time and displayed in the triumph of Titus.¹⁵ This event, recorded by Josephus, was also recorded in the Arch of Titus in Rome. The famous relief on the arch shows both the spoils of the temple and, apparently, the captives. But Yosef Gurevich labels the Arch of Titus with the caption "Was there ever a Babylonian exile?" and Zand insists, according to Gurevich, that the spoils were carried by Roman soldiers (Gurevich, 2008c).



Figure 1. Detail from the arch of Titus in Rome from Gurevich (Gurevich, 2008c) with the Hebrew caption, "Galut Bavel, Zeh Haya?" (Babylonian Exile: Did it happen?)



Figure 2. Enlarged detail from the Arch of Titus, which commemorates the triumph of Vespasian and Titus over the Jews in 73 CE and the destruction of the Second Temple, and not the destruction of the First Temple and Babylonian exile, half a millennium earlier.

Josephus records nearly 100,000 captives after the fall of Jerusalem alone. These were presumably sold in local slave markets in various parts of the Middle East. How many centuries would be required before these captives accounted for millions of Jews? Zand claims that the logistics of the time did not permit massive deportations. Likewise, Zand insists that no Jew left Roman Palestine after the Bar Kochba revolt in 132-135, though they were forbidden to live in Jerusalem, and centers of Judaism moved to outlying districts. Rome abounded in slaves and gladiators and freedmen of every nationality in the empire: Greeks from Asia Minor as well as those from Greece, Gauls from Asia Minor, Gauls from Gaul, Africans, Syrians, Egyptians, Thracians, Britons, Germans, Goths, Arabs and Armenians. Thracians, Arabs and others came to be Roman emperors as well. Zand would have us believe that Jews alone were not transportable and did not leave their land for any reason.

There is a mass of other evidence to contradict the claims of Zand and Yuval that there was no Jewish Diaspora. For example, in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus relates a significant exile that is often ignored, the exile of Jews by Ptolemy Soter, who were freed by Ptolemy Philadelphus:

When Alexander had reigned twelve years, and after him Ptolemy Soter forty years, Philadelphus then took the kingdom of Egypt, and held it forty years within one. He procured the law to be interpreted, and set free those that were come from Jerusalem into Egypt, and were in slavery there, who were a hundred and twenty thousand.¹⁶

In the years 115-117, there was a revolt of overseas Jews that reached rather significant proportions. The revolt is recorded by Dio Cassius, who claims that over 400,000 people were killed. This may give some idea of the size of the Jewish communities in various countries at that time, though the accusation of cannibalism by Jews and other atrocities render his account suspect.¹⁷

The theory that European Ashkenazi Jews are descendents of Khazar converts was popularized by Arthur Koestler (Koestler, 1976). Genetic similarities between male Jews and Eastern Mediterranean populations, however, indicate that Jewish roots probably go back to the Middle East, rather than Central Asia.¹⁸ Studies of Kohanim, who claim descent from the family of the high priest, indicate a close genetic relationship between Kohanim of Jewish communities around the world.¹⁹ Zand does not apparently examine genetic evidence to prove that Yemenite Jews are unrelated to Europeans. For him, it is sufficient that they have different customs. Zand bases his disenfranchisement of the Jews on an argument about descent. It is therefore bizarre that he disinherits the Yemenites based on their different customs, and that none of the reviews of Zand's book or interviews with him discuss any of the genetic evidence at all. Zand is a professor of French history and cinema, but surely either he or his interviewers must have heard of the growing genetic evidence regarding the origins of the Jews as shown in the recent scientific studies cited above. There will probably never be evidence to prove that the Jews are all descended from Abraham, but the best interpretation of the current genetic data is that most Jews of different diasporas are at least genetically related to each other more than they are related to surrounding peoples, and probably arose from a population centered in the Middle East. (For an extensive critical review, see Falk, 2006).

Not surprisingly, those who insist on disinheriting the Jewish people have a ready answer should their racist genetic claims be refuted. They argue that studies that examine the genetic relatedness of Jews exemplify "Zionist elitist racism" (Qumsiyeh 2004,²⁰ for example) It would seem therefore, that if the "Zandinistas" have their way, the Jews are to be both disinherited and relieved of their right to self-determination, regardless of who their ancestors or relatives might be. The dispute, like the "debates" of the Middle Ages between priests and rabbis, has a predestined outcome: the Jews will lose.

Inferences about relatedness of populations and migration events are changing all the time, as more genetic mutations are tested in larger samples of different populations. Nor could such evidence, even if conclusive, ever be used to "prove" that a group is or is not a people. The best evidence indicates that all contemporary humans originated in Africa. That is scarcely sufficient basis for a European claim to colonize and dominate Africa. It is also certain that most of the ancestors of contemporary Americans, Australians, New Zealanders and white South Africans originated in Europe, but that is not a serious basis for evicting them from their new homes. Those who insist that the Jews are not a people will not be convinced by any genetic evidence. They can point out for example, that "Berbers" are descended in part from Carthaginians who originated in Phoenicia, and would therefore have a genetic makeup similar to the Arabs of Palestine. This could explain why Sephardic Jews, whom they claim are converted "Berbers," have genes similar to those of Palestinian Arabs and European Jews. They can also point to mitochondrial DNA studies, which may be variously interpreted to support a diverse and relatively recent ancestry for European Jewish women and various Jewish communities.²¹

As Zand points out, studies by Belkind²² and Ben-Tzvi²³ among others, argued that the Arabs of the land of Israel, as they were then called, were in part descended from Jews. This might account in part for genetic similarities²⁴ between Jews and Palestinian Arabs, provided that it is admitted that there was indeed a Jewish exile. This very same evidence is used by Tsvi Misinai²⁵ to argue for the opposing political position: that Israeli Jews should seek to reintegrate Arab Palestinians into the Jewish people. This same idea figures in a novel by A. B. Yehoshua, *Mr. Mani*. The main character, active during the British defeat of the Turks, and something of a political fanatic, tries to convince Arabs that they are Jews, and is met with incomprehension.²⁶

It is improbable that all the Arabs of the land of Israel are descended from ancient Jews. Some of the Arabs living between the Jordan and the Mediterranean are descendents of Africans, and particularly of African slaves.²⁷ Some of the Arabs were brought by the Turks in the late 19th century to repopulate Palestine, and an appreciable number apparently immigrated to Palestine during the Mandatory period.²⁸ Some, as noted by Belkind, can trace their ancestry back to Jews, though those Jewish ancestors are often Sephardic Jews who came from Spain after the Spanish Inquisition -- the same Jews that Zand insists are "Berbers."

Of the leading families of Palestine, the Nusseibeh family claims its ancestors came with Umar;²⁹ the Husseini family claims to have come with Saladin;³⁰ the Nashashibi are though to have come with the Mamelukes³¹; Dajani are a peninsular Arabian family that were awarded estates in Jerusalem in the 15th century.³² Among modern Palestinian Arab leaders, Izzedin al Qassam was Syrian, for example, and Fawzi al Qauqji was Lebanese.

None of the above, however, is relevant to current political realities. Modern Zionism did not succeed because it invented a myth about Jewish origins and then convinced the rest of the world of its truth, while rewriting all of previous history to make the record conform to a political idea. Modern Zionism succeeded in part because the Jews and the Christian world, whether pro-Zionist or not, always believed that the Jews originated in the land of Israel, and because the Jews have always believed they are a nation. After all, modern Zionism did not invent the term *am Yisrael*, the people of Israel, and modern Zionism did not originate the vow, "Next year in Jerusalem."

Actually, Zand is asking us to overlook the imaginary nature of his notions of history and science and accept them as fact in order to bring about a new and more just order in Israel, a paradise of democracy for all. That is the justification for his entire thesis, which should be judged on its merits:

What would constitute the basis for our existence here is not mythological historical right, but rather would be for us to start to establish an open society here of all Israeli citizens.

To my mind, a myth about the future is better than introverted mythologies of the past (Ilani, 2008).

Or, as others have said: "The end, comrades, justifies the means."³³ In Zand's utopia, why would Jews have a greater right to live in Israel, then to emigrate *en masse* and claim some land in Iowa, and establish an open society of all Israeli citizens there? Or perhaps Arabs and Jews should move to the former Jewish autonomous region of Birobidjan, established by Stalin. Indeed, why would I or anyone else want to live in Israel if we were convinced that we are not members of a Jewish nation?

Zand seems to contradict himself. He told Ofri Ilani:

I recognize one definition of a nation: a group of people that wants to live in sovereignty over itself (Ilani 2008).

The entire discourse about the historical origins of the Jews is therefore not relevant. But Zand, as noted, does not recognize that non-Yiddish speaking Jews are part of the Jewish people, even though they, together with other Jews, are a group of people that wants to live in sovereignty over itself, whereas the Israeli Arabs do not necessarily want to form such a group with the Jews. Neither the majority of the Jews, nor the majority of the Arabs, see themselves as members of an Israeli nation, as Zand admits, and neither would want to live in such a society. For the same reason, the quaint notion of inviting Arabs to join the Jewish people would not have many takers. A recent public opinion survey indicates that a majority of the Arab Palestinian people living in Gaza and the West Bank do not want a "secular democratic state of all its citizens." They want a state governed by religion, and they believe that religion should be the source of law. They also believe that the people should be the source of law, and see no contradiction.³⁴ These ideas are totally alien to Zand's thought. How could it be considered a democratic society if nobody supports it except the few individuals of Zand's persuasion? What would be the official language of such a society? If the majority of such a society indeed voted for a republic based on religion, and on that basis voted to expel all Jews except those whose ancestors lived here before 1917, or to abridge the rights of Jews, as the Hamas would want, would it be democratic?

Why does Zand deny that the Jews of Israel (as opposed to the Arabs of Israel) are a people according to his criterion? He told Ilani:

But most of the Jews in the world have no desire to live in the State of Israel, even though nothing is preventing them from doing so. Therefore, they cannot be seen as a nation (Ilani 2008).

This is a peculiar idea. There are probably more people of Irish descent living in the United States than there are in Ireland, and most do not want to return to live in Ireland, but nobody has claimed, on that basis, that the Irish people have no right to self determination or that there is no Irish people. But it is in fact this contention, that the Jews are not a people, and not the elaborate "historical" mythology that Zand constructed, that is at the heart of his argument and that of his followers.

Zand is concerned for the rights of Arab citizens of Israel, but has no regard for the rights of non-Yiddish speaking Jews. As noted above, he told Ofri Ilani:

I don't recognize an international people. I recognize 'the Yiddish people' that existed in Eastern Europe, which though it is not a nation can be seen as a Yiddishist civilization with a modern popular culture. I think that Jewish nationalism grew up in the context of this 'Yiddish people' (Ilani, 2008).

Zand has created a new myth. Historically, Yiddish was spoken by orthodox traditional Jews of Europe in the framework of their rabbinically dominated ghetto society, which was hardly modern. The Yiddishist society that Zand apparently has in mind is either the secular culture of the enlightenment, which was often, in fact, based largely around Hebrew, or the artificial culture of the Jewish Bund which was created after the rise of Zionism and in reaction to it, and which was virtually annihilated by Stalin and Hitler. The latter had nothing in common with traditional Judaism. Yehuda Halevi, Ibn Gabirol and Maimonides, were not part of our people according to Zand, as they spoke no Yiddish. Zand thereby disinherits the Jews of Iraq and Persia and Spain and Yemen and North Africa.

The most opinionated, racist and elitist Ashkenazi Mapai stalwart, the worst fictional stereotype that could be invented by the antisemitic enemies of Zionism, would never have dared to attempt such a feat! Rabbi Alkalai, a forerunner of the Zionist movement, a Sephardic Jew of Salonika who did not speak any Yiddish, has no place in Zand's concept of the Jewish people and no part in Israel. The Meyuhas family of Tiberias and Jerusalem originated in Spain. Its illustrious members aided Eliezer Ben Yehuda in reviving the Hebrew language, staffed the Palestine Post and performed many services for the Zionist movement and the state of Israel. Zand insists that they have no part in Israel and no place in Judah. Presumably, they were all "Berbers." They are to be excluded from peoplehood along with prominent Israeli singer, Shoshana Damari, former president Yitzhak Navon, former minister of police Shlomo Hillel and millions of others. That is Zands' utopia.

This is the rosy future for which we must give up the "myth" of the Jewish people. As with all such democratic utopias, we would all be obliged to be voluntarily enthusiastic about the Zand future, whether we liked it or not.

Surprisingly, Zand does not recommend a single state between the Jordan and the sea, which would be one logical outcome of his ideas. Secular democracy need only apply to Israel within the borders of the Green Line. The Arabs of Palestine will have a separate state where they are free to express their nationality according to whatever myths please them. Surprisingly, too, Zand is afraid that his book will be translated into Arabic in an unauthorized version and "misinterpreted" as denying Jews (or we who pretend to be Jews) any rights in the land of Israel. He doesn't want to destroy Israel, he only wants to make it democratic (Gurevich, 2008a). In the process, the Jews would be denied not only the right to self-determination, but even the right to claim peoplehood. Only the Arabs of the land of Israel will be able to form their own exclusivist Arab state. Presumably all the Yemenites, Sephardi "Berbers," Ethiopians and other Jews who are not privileged to be part of the Yiddishist culture and do not support the ideology of the Bund will gravitate to this Arabic state and would be received by them with open arms, provided only that they accept the religion of the prophet. Zand should be more afraid of an authorized and correct translation. Given that Zand insists that the Jewish people is a lie invented by Zionists in the nineteenth century, or alternatively by compilers of the Babylonian Talmud, what other possible interpretation or implications can there be for his work, than that the so-called Jews should go back where they came from?

Peoplehood is based on personal and collective identity, which is a function of personal choice, not genetics or belief in myths or facts. The choice of identity determines the myths or history that people will believe. If people believe myths or facts about flying horses, converted "Berbers," Joshua and the walls of Jericho or other myths, it is because they choose to believe them, as they reinforce their identity and the choices they have made, and not the other way round. The Jews who vowed "Next year in Jerusalem" for 2,000 years, obviously felt they are part of a Jewish nation, "Am Yisrael," regardless of whether or not they were all lineal descendents of Abraham.

Israeli democracy is problematic. The political systems of neighboring states are certainly no less problematic. Jewish criteria for deciding who is a Jew based on maternal inheritance and Israeli criteria that are based on a Jewish grandparent are equally arbitrary and capricious. However, the way to correct all these problems is not to erase three thousand years of history or to deny the right of self-determination to the Jewish people or the Arabs of Palestine. The secular democratic Yiddishist state of all its citizens will put all its citizens in a miserable state. Injustices cannot be corrected by falsehoods and worse injustices.

About the Author

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NOTES

¹ See <http://www.answers.com/nation&r=67>, definition of "Nation."

- ² E.g.: "Are the Jews a Nation?" http://biblebelievers.org.au/ij_ch4.htm; Mazin B. Qumzieh, "Biology and Ideology," in *Sharing the Land of Canaan* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), chapter 3.
- ³ Shlomo Zand, *Matai ve'Eych Humtza Ha'Am HaYehudi?* [When and How was the Jewish People Invented?] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2008). French translation: Shlomo Sand, *Comment le peuple juif fut inventé* (Paris: Fayard, 2008). He also has some articles that summarize his ideas in English and French: See <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2008/08/SAND/16205> and <http://mondediplo.com/2008/09/07israel>.
- ⁴ Tom Segev, "An Invention Called 'The Jewish People,'" *Haaretz*, March 1, 2008, <http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/959229.html>.
- ⁵ Ofri Ilani, "Shattering a 'National Mythology,'" *Haaretz*, March 21, 2008.
- ⁶ Yosef Gurevich, "Be'eyropa Himzeinu et Ha'Am HaYehudi," [In Europe We Invented the Jewish People] *Nana*, March 21, 2008. (Gurevich, 2008a); Yosef Gurevich, "Ein Davar Kazeh Am Yehudi, Part 1," [There Is No Such Thing as the Jewish People Part 1] *Scoop*, March 24, 2008, <http://scoop.co.il/article.html?id=15143> (Gurevich, 2008b); Yosef Gurevich, "Ein Davar Kazeh Am Yehudi, Part 2," [There Is No Such Thing as the Jewish People Part 2] *Scoop*, March 25, 2008, <http://scoop.co.il/scoop/article.html?id=15177> (Gurevich, 2008c).
- ⁷ Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe* (New York: Random House, 1976).
- ⁸ Ami Isseroff, "Are Ashkenazi Jews Descended from Khazars and Does it Matter?" <http://www.zionism-israel.com/issues/khazars.html>.
- ⁹ Raphael Falk, *Tziyonut Vehabiologia shel HaYehudim* [Zionism and the Biology of the Jews] (Tel Aviv: Ressler, 2006).
- ¹⁰ "Rule Britannia"—words by James Thompson (1700-1748)—was put to music by Thomas Arne (1740) according to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_Britannia.

- ¹¹ Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question* (1862), http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Moses_Hess_Rome_and_Jerusalem.htm.
- ¹² Yehuda Halevy, "My Heart is in the East, and I am at the Ends of the West," c. 1120. Hebrew and English versions of this poem are available online at: <http://www.zionism-israel.com/yehudalevi.htm>.
- ¹³ Israel Jacob Yuval, "The Myth of the Jewish Exile from the Land of Israel: A Demonstration of Irenic Scholarship," *Common Knowledge*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 16-33.
- ¹⁴ Josephus Flavius, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, 9:3, <http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/war-6.htm>.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Book 7, <http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/war-7.htm>.
- ¹⁶ Josephus Flavius, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 12, 1:1.
- ¹⁷ Dio Cassius, *Roman History (Epitome)*, 68:32, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/68*.html.

¹⁸ A. Nebel, D. Filon, B. Brinkmann, P.P. Majumder, M. Faerman, A. Oppenheim, "The Y Chromosome Pool of Jews as Part of the Genetic Landscape of the Middle East," *Am. J. Hum. Genet.*, Vol. 69 (2001), pp. 1095–1112, PMID 11573163,

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¹⁹ K. Skorecki, S. Selig, S. Blazer, R. Bradman, N. Bradman, P.J. Waburton, M. Ismajlowicz, M.F. Hammer, "Y Chromosomes of Jewish Priests," *Nature*, Vol. 385, No. 32 (1997), PMID 8985243. See also M.G. Thomas, K. Skorecki, H. Ben-Ami, T. Parfitt, N. Bradman, D.B. Goldstein, "Origins of Old Testament Priests," *Nature*, Vol. 394 (1998), pp. 138-40, PMID 9671297.

²⁰ Qumsiyeh and others have used the word racist many times and they refer to what they claims is genetic evidence. Qumsiyeh is a professor of genetics. Some articles to consider: "'Jewgenics': Is This the Crap Zionism is Based On?" November 3, 2007, <http://desertpeace.blogspot.com/2007/11/jewgenics-is-this-crap-zionism-is-based.html>; "Other Jewish Contributions to Modern Racist Currents," <http://www.jewishtribalreview.org/17racis.htm>.

²¹ M.G. Thomas, M.E. Weale, A.L. Jones, M. Richards, A. Smith, N. Redhead, A. Torrioni, R. Scozzari, F. Gatrix, A. Tarekegn, J. Wilson, C. Capelli, N. Bradman, D.B. Goldstein, "Founding Mothers of Jewish Communities: Geographically Separated Jewish Groups Were Independently Founded by Very Few Female Ancestors," *Am J Hum Genet.*, Vol. 70 (2002), pp. 1411-20.

²² Israel Belkind, *Arabs in the Land of Israel* (Tel Aviv: Hermon Publishing, 1969).

²³ Yitzhak Ben Tzvi, *Uchlusyey Artzeinu* [Populations of Our Land] (Warsaw: The Labor Committee of Brit Hanoar and the World HeHalutz Center, 1932).

²⁴ A. Nebel, D. Filon, D. Weiss, M. Weale, M. Faerman, A. Oppenheim, M. Thomas, "High-Resolution Y Chromosome Haplotypes of Israeli and Palestinian Arabs Reveal Geographic Substructure and Substantial Overlap with Haplotypes of Jews," *Hum Genet.*, Vol. 107 (2000), pp. 630–41.

²⁵ Tsvi Misinai, *Brother Shall Not Lift Sword Against Brother* (Tel Aviv: Liad Publishing, 2008).

²⁶ A.B. Yehoshua, *Mr. Mani* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

²⁷ Susan Beckerleg, "Hidden History, Secret Present: The Origins and Status of African Palestinians," translated by Salah Al Zaroo, <http://members.tripod.com/~yajaffar/african.html>.

²⁸ Arie Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession: Jewish Land-Settlement and the Arabs, 1878-1948*. (London: Transaction Publishers, 1984).

²⁹ Nusseibeh Family Web site, <http://www.nuseibehfamily.net/forward.htm>.

³⁰ Danny Rubinstein, "A Victory for the Hebronites," *Haaretz*, June 6, 2001.

³¹ "Nashashibi Family History," http://jerusalemmites.org/people_and_land/families/1.htm.

³² Mohammed S. Dajani, "The Dajani Family," <http://www.bigdreamsmallhope.com/aboutus.html>.

³³ "The end justifies the means" is often attributed to Machiavelli, apparently falsely. However, it was a communist dictum. It appears in an ironic context in *Darkness at Noon* (New York: Macmillan, 1941) by Arthur Koestler: "Politics can be relatively fair in the breathing spaces of history; at its critical turning points there is no other rule possible than the old one, that the end justifies the means." Trotsky defended the thesis. He wrote: "A means can be justified only by its end." Leon Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 5th edition, 1973), p. 48,

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1938/1938-mor.htm>.

³⁴ Hans-Georg Fleck, "Public Perceptions Towards Liberal Values in Palestine, Near East Consulting Survey," commissioned by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty in cooperation with the Freedom Forum, (Palestinian Territories: January, 2008),

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