

Leaked report: Israel acknowledges Jews in fact Khazars; Secret plan for reverse migration to Ukraine

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Jerusalem and Zhitomir, 16 March/Adar II 14

(Our Russian and Ukrainian correspondents Hirsh Ostropoler and I. Z. Grosser-Spass also contributed to this story, delayed due to the crisis over the Crimean referendum.)

Fast-breaking Developments

Followers of Middle Eastern affairs know two things: always expect the unexpected, and never write off Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who has more political lives than the proverbial cat.

Only yesterday came news that [Syrian rebels plan to give Israel the Golan Heights](#) in exchange for creation of a no-fly zone against the Assad regime. In an even bolder move, it is now revealed, Israel will withdraw its settlers from communities beyond the settlement blocs—and relocate them at least temporarily to Ukraine. Ukraine made this arrangement on the basis of historic ties and in exchange for desperately needed military assistance against Russia. This surprising turn of events had an even more surprising origin: genetics, a field in which [Israeli scholars have long excelled](#).

A Warlike Turkic People—and a Mystery

It is well known that, sometime in the eighth to ninth centuries, the Khazars, a warlike Turkic people, converted to Judaism and ruled over a vast domain in what became southern Russia and Ukraine. What happened to them after the Russians destroyed that empire around the eleventh century has been a mystery. Many have speculated that the Khazars became the ancestors of Ashkenazi Jews.



The Khazar Empire, from M. J-H. Schnitzler's map of The Empire of Charlemagne and that of the Arabs, (Strasbourg, 1857)

Arabs have long cited the Khazar hypothesis in attempts to deny a Jewish historical claim to the land of Israel. During the UN debate over Palestine Partition, [Chaim Weizmann responded](#), sarcastically: "It is very strange. All my life I have been a Jew, felt like a Jew, and I now learn that I am a Khazar." In a more folksy vein, Prime Minister Golda Meir famously said: "Khazar, Schmar. There is no Khazar people. I knew no Khazars In Kiev. Or Milwaukee. Show me these Khazars of whom you speak."



a warlike people: Khazar battle axe, c. 7th-9th centuries

Contrarian Hungarian ex-communist and scientist Arthur Koestler brought the Khazar hypothesis to a wider audience with [The Thirteenth Tribe](#) (1976), in the hope that disproving a common Jewish “racial” identity would end antisemitism. Clearly, that hope has not been fulfilled. Most recently, left-wing Israeli historian Shlomo Sand’s [The Invention of the Jewish People](#) took Koestler’s thesis in a direction he had not intended, arguing that because Jews were a religious community descended from converts they do not constitute a nation or need a state of their own. Scientists, however, dismissed the Khazar hypothesis because [the genetic evidence did not add up](#). Until now. In 2012, Israeli researcher Eran Elhaik published a study claiming to prove that Khazar ancestry is the single largest element in the Ashkenazi gene pool. Sand declared himself vindicated, and progressive organs such as [Haaretz](#) and [The Forward](#) trumpeted the results.

Israel seems finally to have thrown in the towel. A blue-ribbon team of scholars from leading research institutions and museums has just issued a secret report to the government, acknowledging that European Jews are in fact Khazars. (Whether this would result in [yet another proposal to revise the words to “Hatikvah”](#) remains to be seen.) At first sight, this would seem to be the worst possible news, given the Prime Minister’s relentless insistence on the need for Palestinian recognition of Israel as a “Jewish state” and the stagnation of the peace talks. But others have underestimated him at their peril. An aide quipped, when life hands you an etrog, you build a sukkah.

Speaking off the record, he explained, “We first thought that admitting we are really Khazars was one way to get around Abbas’s insistence that [no Jew can remain in a Palestinian state](#). Maybe we were grasping at straws. But when he refused to accept that, it forced us to think about more creative solutions. The Ukrainian invitation for the Jews to return was a godsend. Relocating all the settlers within Israel in a short time would be difficult for reasons of logistics and economics. We certainly don’t want another *fashlan* like the expulsion of the settlers in the Gaza *Hitnatkut* [disengagement].

“We’re not talking about *all* the Ashkenazi Jews going back to Ukraine. Obviously that is not practical.

Speaking on deep background, a well-placed source in intelligence circles said: “We’re not talking about *all* the Ashkenazi Jews going back to Ukraine. Obviously that is not practical. The press as usual exaggerates and sensationalizes; this is why we need military censorship.”

Khazaria 2.0?

All Jews who wish to return would be welcomed back without condition as citizens, the more so if they take part in the promised infusion of massive Israeli military assistance, including troops, equipment, and construction of new bases. If the initial transfer works, other West Bank settlers would be encouraged to relocate to Ukraine, as well. After Ukraine, bolstered by this support, reestablishes control over all its territory, the current Autonomous Republic of Crimea would once again become [an autonomous Jewish domain](#). The small-scale successor to the medieval empire of Khazaria (as the peninsula, too, was once known) would be called, in Yiddish, Chazerai.



the Khazar Empire, map of Europe in the Age of Charles the Great, from Karl von Spruner, Historisch-geographischer Hand-Atlas (Gotha, 1854)

the Khazars did not have to live within ‘Auschwitz borders.’”

“As you know,” the spokesman continued, “the Prime Minister has said time and again: we are a proud and ancient people whose history here goes back 4,000 years. The same is true of the Khazars: just back in Europe and not quite as long. But look at the map: the Khazars did not have to live within ‘Auschwitz borders.’”



no “Auschwitz borders”: the great extent of the Khazar Empire (pink, at right) is readily apparent in this map of Europe circa 800, by Monin (Paris, 1841). Compare with Charlemagne’s empire (pink, at left)

“As the Prime Minister has said, no one will tell Jews where they may or may not live on the historic territory of their existence as a sovereign people. He is willing to make painful sacrifices for peace, even if that means giving up part of our biblical homeland in Judea and Samaria. But then you have to expect us to exercise our historical rights somewhere else. We decided this will be on the shores of the Black Sea, where we were an autochthonous people for more than 2000 years. Even the great non-Zionist historian [Simon Dubnow said we had the right to colonize Crimea](#). It’s in all the history books. You can look it up.”

Old-New Land?



Black Sea, showing Khazar presence in Crimea and coastal regions: Rigobert Bonne, Imperii Romani Distracta. Pars Orientalis, (Paris, 1780). Note Ukraine and Kiev at upper left. At right: Caspian Sea, also labeled, as was the custom, as the Khazar Sea

“We’d like to think of it as sort of a homeland-away-from-home,” added the anonymous intelligence source. “Or the original one,” he said with a wink. “After all, Herzl wrote about the [Old-New Land](#), didn’t he? And the transition shouldn’t be too difficult for the settlers because, you know, they’ll still get to feel as if they are pioneers: experience danger, construct new housing, carry weapons. The women can continue to wear scarves on their heads, and the food won’t be very different from what they already eat.” In retrospect, we should have seen this coming, said a venerable State Department Arabist, ticking off the signs on his fingers: a little-noticed report that Russia was [cracking down on Israeli smuggling of Khazar artifacts](#), the decisions of both [Spain](#) and [Portugal](#) to give citizenship to descendants of their expelled Jews, as well as evidence that former [IDF soldiers were already leading militias in support of the Ukrainian government](#). And now, also maybe the possibility that the [missing Malaysian jet was diverted to Central Asia](#).

A veteran Middle East journalist said: “It’s problematic, but in a perverse way, brilliant. In one fell swoop, Bibi has managed to confound friend and foe alike. He’s put the ball back in the Palestinians’ court and relieved the pressure from the Americans without actually making any real concessions. Meanwhile, by lining up with the Syrian rebels and Ukraine, as well as Georgia and Azerbaijan, he compensates for the loss of the

Turkish alliance and puts pressure on both Assad and Iran. And [the new Cypriot-Israeli gas deal](#) props up Ukraine and weakens the economic leverage of both the Russians and the Gulf oil states. Just brilliant.”

Reactions from around the world

Given the confluence of the weekend and the Purim and Saint Patrick’s Day holidays, reporters scrambled to get responses. Reactions from around the world trickled in.

- Members of the YESHA Council of settlers, some of them evidently the worse for wear after too much festival [slivovitz](#), were caught completely off-guard. Always wary of Netanyahu, whom they regard as a slick opportunist rather than reliable ideological ally, they refused to comment until they had further assessed the situation.

Most of the hastily offered reactions fell into the predictable categories.

- Right-wing antisemitic groups pounced on the story as vindication of their [conspiracy theories](#), claiming that this was the culmination of the Jews’ centuries-old plan to avenge the defeat of Khazaria by the Russians in the Middle Ages, a reprise of [Israel’s support for Georgia in 2008](#). “Jews have memories as long as their noses,” one declared.

a continuum of conquest and cruelty?

- From Ramallah, a Fatah spokesman said the offer was a start but did not go nearly far enough toward satisfying Palestinian demands. Holding up an image of a Khazar warrior from an archaeological artifact, he explained:

There is a continuum of conquest and cruelty. It’s very simple, genetics does not lie. We see the results today: the Zionist regime and brutal Occupation Forces are descended from warlike barbarians. Palestinians are descended from peaceful pastoralists, in fact, from the ancient Israelites that you have falsely claimed as your ancestors. By the way, it is not true, however, that [your ancestors ever had a temple in Jerusalem](#).



Then: Khazarian barbarian. Warrior with prisoner, image from archaeological object.
[source: Wikimedia Commons]

Now: Israeli border policeman with Palestinian protester
[source: Amnesty International]

- The famously reliable unofficial intelligence website DAFTKAfile admitted:

Boy, are our faces red. We were caught flat-footed and thought that the return to Spain and Portugal was the real story. Obviously, that was an impeccably planned and clever feint to distract attention from the coming revolution in Ukraine. Nicely played, Mossad.

- Prolific blogger Richard Sliverstein, whose knowledge of Jewish culture and uncanny ability to ferret out military secrets regularly provoke astonishment even among his critics, commented:

Frankly, I'm surprised that my Mossad sources did not get this story to me first. But I've been up against a deadline for an essay on the kabbalistic significance of sesame seeds, the main ingredient in hummus, so I haven't caught up on my email. But, do I feel vindicated? Well, yes, but it's scant satisfaction. I've been saying for years that the Jews are descended from Mongol-Tatar Khazars, but it has barely made a dent in the propaganda armor of these Zionist hasbaroid dolts.

- An official of a leading human-rights NGO said:

Evacuating illegal settlements must be a part of any peace deal, but first forcing settlers to leave Palestine and then resettling them in Ukraine may be a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We'll see what the [ICC](#) has to say about this. And if they think they can be even more [trigger-happy](#) in Ukraine than the West Bank, they have another thing coming.

- Ultra-Ultra-Orthodox spokesman Menuchem Yontef (formerly of Inowracław) welcomed the news:

We reject the Zionist state, which is illegitimate until Mashiach comes. We don't care where we live as long as we can study the Torah and obey its commandments in full. However, we refuse to serve in the military there as well as here. And—we also want subsidies. That is G-d's will.

- The spokeswoman for a delegation of Episcopalian peace activists, reached after the [Christ at the Checkpoint conference in Bethlehem](#), said, with tears in her eyes:

We applaud this consistency of principle. If only all Jews would think like Menuchem Yontef—in fact, I'd like to call them “Menuchem Yontef Jews”: “M. Y. Jews,” for short—then antisemitism would disappear and members of all three Abrahamic faiths would

again live together peacefully here as they did before the advent of Zionism. The nation-state is a relic of the nineteenth century, which has caused untold suffering. The most urgent task for world peace is the immediate creation of a free and sovereign Palestine.

- Noted academic and theorist Judith Buntler mused:

It may seem like a paradox to establish alterity or 'interruption' at the heart of ethical relations. But to know that we have first to consider what such terms mean. One might argue that the distinctive trait of Khazarian identity is that it is interrupted by alterity, that the relation to the gentile defines not only its diasporic situation, but one of its most fundamental ethical relations. Although such a statement may well be true (meaning that it belongs to a set of statements that are true), it manages to reserve alterity as a predicate of a prior subject. The relation to alterity becomes one predicate of 'being Khazarian.' It is quite another thing to understand that very relationship as challenging the idea of 'Khazarian' as a static sort of being, one that is adequately described as a subject. . . . coexistence projects can only begin with the dismantling of political Zionism.

not the "two-state solution" they expected?

- Anti-Israel BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) leader Ali Abubinomial put it more simply. Pounding his desk, he fumed, "So, Israel *and* Khazaria? *This* is what the Zionists mean by a 'two-state solution'?! Do the math! Has no one read my book?"

- Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) called an emergency meeting to establish ties with the [Pecheneg](#) Liberation Organization (PLO), saying, "Pechenegs should not pay the price for European antisemitism." The new solidarity group, "Students for Pechenegs in Ukraine" (SPUK), proclaimed as its motto: "From the Black to the Caspian Sea, We're Gonna Find Somebody to Free!"

- For his part, peace activist and former East Jerusalem administrator Myron Benvenuti responded with equanimity: "I've got nothing to worry about: I'm Sephardic and my family has lived here for centuries. Anyway, if I have to go somewhere else, it's going to be Spain, not Ukraine: more sunshine, less gunfire."

The consensus of the broad majority of “Middle Israel,” which feels that Netanyahu is not doing enough for peace but also questions the sincerity of the Palestinians, is skeptical and despairing. One woman said, in frustration: We all long for an agreement but just cannot see how to achieve it. For now, all we can see is this Chazerai.

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Update March 17:

Latest reports, including Vladimir Putin’s recognition of Crimea as a “[sovereign and independent state](#),” and the estimate that [relocation of Israeli settlers in any peace agreement would cost \\$10 billion](#), confirm the details of the above story. Ed.