

Creating a “New Israel”, a Jewish State in Southeast Texas

The “Uganda Plan” Revisited? US Congressional Candidate Proposes Creation of Jewish Homeland in Southeast Texas

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A congressional candidate named Allan Levene is proposing a solution to Israel’s problem with the Palestinians (since 1948) by creating a second ‘Israeli’ state in Eastern Texas. Yes, you read this right. Eastern Texas. According to the Times of Israel, Mr. Levene’s idea would only work if “*eminent domain*” is established by the US government and if Israel withdraws to its pre-1967 borders. That would set the stage for a ‘*New Israel*’ within the United States:

The idea, briefly, is to take (through eminent domain) roughly 8,000 square miles of sparsely populated land bordering the Gulf of Mexico and give it to Israel as a second, non-contiguous part of the State of Israel. Israel would get the land only if it agrees to withdraw to its pre-1967 borders

I would be curious to see how Texans would react to a Jewish homeland in East Texas. Besides one of the largest pro-Israel organizations in the United States is located in San Antonio, Texas called ‘Christians United for Israel (CUFI)’ who wish to educate Christians on why they should support the State of Israel:

While millions of Christians support Israel, there are millions more who do not yet vocally stand up for the Jewish state. It is crucial to educate Christians on the Biblical and moral imperatives to support Israel and to build Christian support for Israel throughout America

If Levene’s plan follows through if he is elected to congress, Will Texans still support a state of Israel in their own backyard? But Levene says “*everybody wins*” if the US government agrees to partition the state of Texas:

Israel wins because it would gain a new, peaceful territory far from the strife of the Middle East, in a place where, as Levene suggests, “the climate is similar,” and Israel could “have access to the Gulf of Mexico for international trade.” The U.S. wins because it would no longer need to send Israel billions of dollars a year in foreign aid. Texas wins because of all the construction jobs from building an entirely new state within its borders. The Palestinians win because they get the West Bank, and because now Israel, too, gets to see just how fun it is to have a non-contiguous state. Everybody wins!

The father of modern-political Zionism and the founder of the State of Israel, Thomas Hertzl considered a number of locations including Uganda, Argentina and even Alaska to form a Zionist state of Israel. The Times of Israel also stated:

And, in fact, it's an idea with plenty of precedent. Theodor Herzl temporarily embraced a British proposal to establish a Jewish homeland in Uganda (though the backlash against the idea almost destroyed the Zionist movement). And in 1938-40, various plans were floated to settle European Jewish refugees in the Alaska territories - a notion that later inspired Michael Chabon's novel, "The Yiddish Policeman's Union."

This idea of a Jewish State besides one based in Palestine is not new. An interesting event took place in Basel, Switzerland on August 26th, 1903. Before the British government offered the country of Palestine to the Zionist political movement in 1948, a country in Africa called Uganda was on the list of possible future Jewish settlements known as the "Uganda Plan". Before Palestine was turned into the state of Israel, Uganda was seen as a possible home for the Jewish people who were persecuted in Russia. They were subject to anti-Jewish sentiments among the Russian population. Other areas in the world were also considered for a Jewish homeland including Patagonia in Southern part of Argentina.

In Joseph Telushkin's 'Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know about the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History' stated a historical fact that "*Britain stepped into the picture, offering Herzl land in the largely undeveloped area of Uganda (today, it would be considered an area of Kenya).*" The proposal was controversial to the Jewish community. The idea was rejected at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905. It is interesting to note that a small number of Jewish families did immigrate to Kenya before and after World War II, mostly in the capital of Nairobi. Today, there are a few hundred Kenyan Jews living in Nairobi.

It is hard to imagine the state of Israel in Africa. Besides, racism in Israel is comparable to Apartheid South Africa in the 1960's. With Ethiopian Black Jews living in Israel facing unprecedented levels of racism including the forced massed sterilizations on Ethiopian women according to a report conducted by Haaretz in 2012 reported that "*Women who immigrated from Ethiopia eight years ago say they were told they would not be allowed into Israel unless they agreed to be injected with the long-acting birth control drug Depo Provera, according to an investigative report aired Saturday on the Israel Educational Television program "Vacuum."* According to IRIN, a humanitarian news and analysis service launched by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2012, racism against Ethiopian Jews in Israel does exist:

An estimated 125,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel, but while they are supposed to be full citizens with equal rights, their community has continued to face widespread discrimination and socio-economic difficulties, according to its leaders. A recent decision - as reported by local media - by 120 homeowners not to sell or rent their apartments to Israeli-Ethiopian families has brought discrimination against Ethiopian Jews in Israel back into the spotlight.

Hundreds of Ethiopian Israelis took to the streets on 18 January to protest the move by landlords in the southern city of Kiryat Malakhi - Shay Sium's hometown.

It is an interesting part of history that forces to ask the question: What if Israel did make Uganda, a country in Eastern-Africa their home? If the Palestinians, Ethiopian and Sephardic Jews suffer from racism in modern-day Israel, imagine if Uganda was turned into a Jewish homeland? Would it have been another Palestine? "*Shall we choose Palestine or Argentina?* Thomas Hertzl wrote. Argentina? That would have been interesting, but Eastern Texas as the 'New Israel'? Would Texan's then be the new Palestinians? Creating a state

through “eminent domain” would treat the citizens of Texas as such. And it sure won’t be a good start to diplomatic relations. What is interesting about Allan Levene is that he is running for a congressional seat in two states, Hawaii and Georgia under the Republican Party, but not in the state of Texas.

Another very interesting note on Levene’s candidacy is that *“He also wants to put conspiracy theories to rest by investigating national catastrophes with not one, not two, but three separate commissions.”* I actually agree with his idea for new commissions, perhaps a new “911 commission?” Allan Levene’s proposal would not happen anytime soon, even if he is elected. But the real question we should ask is, would Washington and Brussels consider creating a ‘New Israel’ in Eastern Texas if a war were to take place in the Middle East resulting in the destruction of several countries including Israel? It does raise a serious debate.

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