Assertion

“The Palestinians are the descendants of the Canaanites, who lived in Palestine around 5,000 years ago and still inhabit it today.” This was claimed by Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, at the UN Security Council in 2018.



View of the Old City of Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock ©Neal E. Johnson Unsplash

The facts

The myth of Canaanite origin established the Palestinians’ claim to the territory of historical Palestine, i.e. the territory of today’s state of Israel, the Gaza Strip and West Bank as well as parts of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. According to this myth, the ancestors of the Palestinians were tribes who migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the territories of present-day Syria, Lebanon, northern Iraq, Jordan and Israel, where they created a Canaanite language and culture.

It is well documented that Jews have been living in the region since the Late Bronze

Age. The beginning of Jewish history in this area can be dated to around 1300 BC, while the Arabic language and culture only spread from the Arabian Peninsula to the then Christian, Byzantine Palestine in the 7th century AD with the emergence of Islam.

Moreover, claims based on a time 5,000 years ago are not only legally irrelevant, but also politically irrelevant.

Further information

History tells us that the Arabic language and culture did not expand until the 7th century AD, but it did so rapidly. Only a few years after the death of the Prophet Mohammed (632 AD), the Arabs had brought large parts of the Mediterranean world and the Orient under the rule of Islam from Medina.

Genetics tells us that the population group referred to in the biblical texts as Canaanites from the southern Levant, historical Palestine, can be traced back genetically to two origins:

– People who originally lived in the region

– People who had moved from the Caucasus/Zagros Mountains region

Both population groups mixed in roughly equal proportions. People related to these individuals contributed to all of today's Levantine populations. They are therefore also ancestors of today's Jews. (See genetic analysis study "The Genomic History of the Bronze Age Southern Levant"; published in 2020 in the renowned journal "Cell").

Assertion

The founding of Israel in 1948 led to the expulsion of the Palestinians, the Nakba, which roughly translates as catastrophe.

The facts

This narrative turns the truth on its head. It was the war of aggression by the Arab armies against the newly founded state of Israel that led to around 700,000 to 750,000 Arabs leaving the area, fleeing or being expelled. Others stayed and became Israelis. The refugees were not integrated by the neighboring Arab countries, but permanently housed in camps. On the other hand, around 900,000 Jews have been expelled from the Arab states since 1948.

Further information

The Arab war of aggression in 1948 was not only the reason for the expulsion and flight of 700,000 to 750,000 Arabs from the area that is now Israel, but it is also the reason why the Arab state planned by the UN in the West Bank and Gaza was not founded.

The regular armies of the Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq launched the war of aggression shortly after midnight on May 15, just a few hours after David Ben Gurion had announced the founding of Israel on May 14. The war lasted around a year. Israel clearly won the war and expanded its territory by a third compared to the UN partition plan of November 1947.

The UN partition plan had envisaged the establishment of a Jewish state on 56 percent of the British Mandate territory west of the Jordan River and an Arab state on 43 percent. (Today’s Jordan to the east of the Jordan River had already been separated from the original British Mandate territory in 1923).

According to the partition plan, Jerusalem was to be administered as an “international zone”. The new Jewish state and the new Arab state were to form an economic union and were to be given a democratic constitution.

The Jewish side agreed to the plan, the Arab side rejected it.

Assertion

The attack on the newly founded Israel was driven by hatred of Jews.

The facts

This assertion is correct. Hatred of Jews has always been an integral part of Islam (see the chapter “Persecution of Jews from Muhammad to the present day”). One of the main warmongers against the new Jewish state of Israel decided by the UN was the former Nazi collaborator and inveterate Jew-hater Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem. The Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt in 1928 and from which Hamas emerged in Gaza in 1987, also vehemently supported the destruction of Israel. The Muslim Brotherhood is also anti-Semitic through and through. Until 1939, it had supported the Nazi regime in Germany, which persecuted the Jews, with funds. In 1948, the Muslim Brotherhood was the largest anti-Jewish mass movement in the world with more than one million members.

Further information

The Mufti of Jerusalem enjoyed hero status in parts of the Arab population. He saw the United Nations as an organization dominated by “imperialist interests”. He saw the UN partition resolution of 1947 as an “international conspiracy, carried out by the Americans, the Russians and the British under the influence of Zionism.”

The Muslim Brotherhood created “an atmosphere in which war seemed the only logical and natural course of action”, wrote Middle East historian Thomas Mayer. No Arab leader could resist this mood of war and at the same time hope to stay alive, let alone in power.

However, the Arab League repeatedly opposed an invasion by regular Arab armies. “We will never think of entering an official war,” declared General Muhammad Haidar, Egypt’s Minister of Defense, at the beginning of May 1948.

However, on May 12, 1948, Egypt, the most important state in the Arab world, gave in to pressure from the street. Three days later, the invasion of the Arab armies began with the well-known catastrophic consequences for the Jews and Arabs living on Israeli territory.

Today, individual Arab actors are questioning the wrong decision of 1948. For example, Nabil ‘Amr, a former minister of the Palestinian Authority. “Seven decades after the Arabs and Palestinians rejected the partition plan, the question arises as to

whether they did the right or wrong thing," he wrote in April 2019.

Assertion

The historic Palestine of 1917 has been reduced step by step as a result of "compromises" in 1937, 1947 and 1967, until only small, disjointed areas remain in 2020. The Palestinians are paying an immense price for the establishment and growth of Israel. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas showed five maps to the UN Security Council in February 2020 to prove how Palestine has been gradually stolen from the Palestinians.

The facts

Mahmoud Abbas' graphic has been circulating in the media and even at universities for years. But it is false and manipulative. Firstly, the maps suggest that a sovereign state of "Palestine" existed in 1917. The fact is that an independent Palestine has never existed to this day. This is in contrast to Jewish states in Judea and Samaria (today's West Bank), which have been inhabited by Jews since biblical times and were home to the kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Further information

The Jewish states of Judah and Israel were later conquered by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Mongols and Turks. After around 400 years of Ottoman rule, the southern Levant became a colony of Great Britain in 1918, which established the Mandate of Palestine there.

It was the Romans who, after conquering the Jewish kingdoms of Judah and Israel in 70 AD, renamed them "Palestine". This was intended to erase the Jewish connection to the region of Judah and Israel.

In addition, Abbas' graphic completely ignores the fact that the region of Palestine originally comprised not only the territory of present-day Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, but also what is now Jordan to the east of the Jordan River. At 98,400 square kilometers, this area made up around 75 percent of Palestine and became the autonomous territory of Transjordan in 1921 at the instigation of the British.

In 1946, the independent Arab-Palestinian state of Transjordan was proclaimed, while territories covering less than 33,000 square kilometers, or about 25 percent of Palestinian territory west of the Jordan River, were reserved for Jewish settlement and the future Jewish state.

With the partition of West Palestine under the UN Partition Plan of 1947, the Jewish territory was limited to around 56 percent of West Palestine. This corresponds to approximately 14 percent of the total area of the original British Mandate of Palestine. 86 percent of the Mandate territory went to the Arabs. The UN partition plan therefore did not favor the Jews over the Arabs, as is often falsely claimed.

The Jewish side was also always willing to compromise

It has offered the Palestinians their own state five times. But five times they have refused and decided they would rather expel all Jews.

1936
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peel-Kommission

1947
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Partition_Plan_for_Palestine

1949
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ost-Jerusalem_unter_jordanischer_Besatzung

1967 6-day war
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sechstagekrieg

1967 Arab Summit in Sudan
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1967_Arab_League_summit

2000 Ehud Barak
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David_II

2008 Ehud Olmert
https://www.mena-watch.com/peace plan