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The British Mandate Period in Palestine Through the Eyes of Cartoons

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Abstract

The British Empire began to take exploratory steps and develop various considerations regarding the Middle East in the nineteenth century. Although Britain's strategies were not aimed at establishing a colony in the region, the foundations of British policy were designed to promote economic interests and manage imperial policy. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I caused not only dramatic changes in the Arab geography but also established a new regional order in these lands. Britain played a dominant role in shaping the future of Palestine by the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration. The British Mandate for Palestine lasted until 14 May 1948, leading to the first Arab-Israeli War, which was a major moment as tensions escalated, and Britain stood at the crossroads. Political cartoons have undergone a significant development in Britain since the early nineteenth century, and the developments in the Middle East have always attracted great attention from the public. Illustrations were a showcase of how domestic politics was perceived, and they were intimately linked to foreign policy. This study analyses the course of the British Mandate for Palestine until the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and the British approach to the conflict by focusing on the representation of the related subjects in political cartoons. In particular, it explores how the images provided the readers with visible critiques of the British government and to what extent they offered new insights into their political stance.

Keywords: British Mandate for Palestine, *the Evening Standard*, British Political Cartoons, Balfour Declaration, *British Sentinel*

Karikatürlerin Gözünden Filistin'de İngiliz Mandası Dönemi

Özet

Britanya İmparatorluğu, on dokuzuncu yüzyılda Orta Doğu'ya yönelik ilk deneysel adımlarını atmaya ve değerlendirmeler geliştirmeye başlamıştı. Britanya'nın stratejileri bölgede doğrudan bir sömürge kurulmasını hedeflemese de, politikasının kökenleri ekonomik çıkarları desteklemek ve imparatorluk politikasını yönetmek üzere tasarlanmıştı. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndaki çözülüşü, yalnızca Arap coğrafyasında dramatik değişikliklere neden olmakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda bu topraklarda yeni bir bölgesel düzenin de kurulmasına yol açmıştır.

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Britanya, gizli Sykes-Picot Antlaşması ve Balfour Deklarasyonu ile Filistin'in geleceğinin şekillenmesinde baskın bir rol oynamıştır. Filistin'deki İngiliz Mandası, 14 Mayıs 1948'e kadar sürmüş, gerginlikler tırmanarak Britanya'nın bir kavşak noktasında durduğu ilk Arap-İsrail Savaşı'na yol açmıştır. Siyasi karikatürler Britanya'da on dokuzuncu yüzyılın başlarından itibaren önemli ölçüde gelişmiş ve Orta Doğu'daki gelişmeler halkın ciddi derecede ilgisini çekmiştir. İllüstrasyonlar iç politikanın nasıl algılandığının ve dış politikayla nasıl sıkı sıkıya bağlantılı olduğunun bir göstergesidir. Bu çalışmada, Filistin'deki İngiliz Mandası dönemi 1948 Arap-İsrail Savaşı'na kadar değerlendirilecek ve bu süreçteki olaylara İngiliz yönetiminin yaklaşımları siyasi karikatürlerin temsili üzerinden incelenecektir. Görsellerin İngiliz hükümetine yönelik eleştirileri ne derecede görünür kıldığı ve okurların siyasi duruşları hakkında ne ölçüde yeni bakış açıları sağladığı analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Filistin Mandası, *Evening Standard* Gazetesi, İngiliz Siyasi Karikatürleri, Balfour Deklarasyonu, *British Sentinel* Dergisi

Introduction

According to Roland Barthes, "narrative begins with human history itself, and there is no nation in the world without a narrative."[1] Semiology aims to unravel the universe of meanings related to objects and behaviour in all areas of culture. Ferdinand de Saussure states that the semiotics can be considered a method of conveying information through signs in social life.[2] Political cartoons, which can also be seen as a narrative art, contain symbols, discourse and humour, exaggerated and sarcastic descriptions, and messages regarding the current state of political affairs. The visual power of cartoons leads the audience to approach events with a narrative illusion. Streicher suggests "the theoretical understanding of political cartoons must include making sense of the images that are ultimately the means of persuasion expressed as the language of the cartoon."[3] A single drawing written in a non-realistic or semi-realistic style can instantly create a greater impact on a person's inner world than a long text. The rhetorical devices of cartoons include analogy, sarcasm, symbolism, exaggeration, and metaphors, which can also be considered important elements of propaganda. Harold D. Lasswell argues that "propaganda is the management of collective attitudes through the manipulation of significant symbols."[4] Metaphors in cartoons, especially through sarcasm and imagery, culturally interact with actors and social events. Ivor Armstrong Richards also treats metaphor as a philosophical issue by saying, "two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is resultant from their interaction."[5] This synergy of philosophy, science of symbolism, and propaganda serve as a framework of mobilising the

1 Roland Barthes, *Göstergebilim Serüveni* (İstanbul: Yapıkredi Yayınları, 2023), 101.
2 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Genel Dilbilim Dersleri* translated by Berke Vardar (Ankara: Birey ve Toplum, 1985), 18.
3 Lawrence H. Streicher, "On a Theory of Political Caricature," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 9 (1967): 427-445.
4 Harold D. Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," *American Political Science Review* 21, no. 3 (1927): 627.
5 Ivor Armstrong Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 93.

public sphere. Josh Greenberg further "places political cartoons on the grounds of political legitimacy on which certain things can be said, and others cannot be said."[6]

The nineteenth century was not only a period that marked the highest stage of colonialism and imperialist policies subsequent to the rapid development of industrialisation. The British Empire's economic prosperity and peace encouraged the public to engage in political activism and civil engagement in foreign issues both nationally and globally. By the 1830s, the Victorian press with daily newspapers, magazines, and periodicals dramatically emerged, which also gave rise to political parodies and caricatures. This process "set the foundation of a society", as John Stuart Mill believes, "by hundreds of thousands, in the age of newspapers, railways, and the electric telegraph."[7]

The British Consulate in Jerusalem in 1838 can be seen as the beginning of British influence on the path to the establishment of the state of Israel.[8] Social Darwinism and "Biblical Orientalism", according to Lorenzo Kamel, frame the imperial attitudes towards Palestine since the 1830s.[9] The perceptions of the "othering" of the Palestinians and other ethnic groups in the Middle East were heavily triggered by dramatic discourses and evangelical narratives in British literature. In the meantime, the Egyptian crisis, which also involved the Palestinian region, was considered an opportunity by the British Zionists, who began to gain significant power to return the Jews to Palestine. This plan was also turned into a political document by the instructions sent by Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston to British Ambassador in Istanbul Lord Ponsonby on 11 August 1840. This was also a turning point in terms of the stages of the issue of Jewish immigration to Palestine. Political representations were strongly included in British newspapers and literature. These were not only a part of the British cultural imperial process but also "a transformation tool for the legitimisation of British political claims on the region."[10] Gabriel Polley states that the process leading to the British mandate for Palestine was managed jointly by Zionists and Evangelists.[11] He further argues that "the colonisation of Palestine has its roots deep in the nineteenth century, with Western Evangelicals who first cast the Holy Land as an area to be possessed by empire, then began to devise schemes for its settler colonisation, and finally started to implement them."[12] According to Eitan Bar-Yosef, this imperial discourse of the Orient and the British representations of the Holy Land must be analysed in a different dimension. Bar-Yosef suggests Palestine "is a 'there' which is already a 'here'; a land which, like 'this dear old England', belongs, a priori, 'to you and to me.'"[13] As the

6 Josh Greenberg, "Framing and temporality in political cartoons: A critical analysis of visual news discourse," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 2, no. 39 (2002): 181-184.

7 John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, & Representative Government*, ed. A.D. Lindsay (London: Dent Press, 1931), 147.

8 Nurcan Özkaplan Yurdakul, "Kudüs'te İngiliz Konsolosluğundan İsrail Devleti'ne," in ed. Mensur Akgün, *Tarih ile Mitler Arasında Kudüs* (İstanbul: Kopernik Yayınları, 2020), 153

9 Lorenzo Kamel, *Imperial Perceptions of Palestine: British Influence and Power in Late Ottoman Times* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 2.

10 Kamel, *Imperial Perceptions of Palestine*, 17.

11 Gabriel Polley, *Palestine in the Victorian Age: Colonial Encounters in the Holy Land* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 2.

12 Polley, *Palestine in the Victorian Age*, 2.

13 Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 8.

prominent weekly periodical of the era, *the Penny Magazine* was the leading source of illustrations regarding Palestine between 1833 and 1845. Images of the Holy Land were compatible with the values and virtues of Victorian society. Gian Lorenzo Bernini designs a broad imitation of Fountain of the Palace of Palestine Prince and gives the impression of European architecture for Palestine.[14] As Bar-Yosef puts it, "the Penny Magazine's readers were encouraged to visualise the Holy Land in terms long obsolete, as one vernacular Orientalist vision was replaced by another."[15] Not only was this a visual conceptualisation of Victorians, but it also played a primary role in the imperialism process.

Figure 1: Fountain of the Palace of Palestine

Source*: The Penny Magazine*, 27 June 1835

This literal representation of British colonialism, in which the main strategy was settling the Jews in Palestine, was clearly expressed in the visions of Benjamin Disraeli, too. In the novel *Tancred* published in 1847, Disraeli's imperial imagination began to take shape with the romance between Christianity and Judaism, as well as "the steps of his Crusader ancestors to the Holy Land, hoping there to 'penetrate the great Asian mystery'."[16] Kamel also mentions Disraeli's idea of the New Crusade and admiration of Theodor Herzl "who tries to realise the Messianic ideal in and of Palestine."[17] Disraeli's Hebrew descent was not just an inspiration for the demands of the Jewish community. His awakening of the imperial spirit was another source of hope. Without much doubt, Disraeli played a central role in the imperial power and influence in the Middle East. His strategy to purchase shares in the Suez Canal Company in Egypt was often expressed in the form of a combination between deep-rooted philosemitism and moral aspects of imperialism. In a *Punch* cartoon of 1876, Disraeli was presented as the Modern Sphinx who had already began to implement schemes for its settler colonisation.[18] This sketch contains dimensions and features an exaggerated visual style of attitudes towards the sacred meanings of imperialism. These attitudes towards Zionism at the beginning of twentieth century started to settle at the

14 "Fountain of the Palace of Palestine," *The Penny Magazine*, 27 June 1835.
15 Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917*, 116.
16 Benjamin Disraeli, *Venetia; Tancred* (London: Frederick Warne, 1866), 118.
17 Kamel, *Imperial Perceptions of Palestine*, 76.
18 "The Sphinx is Silent," *the Punch*, 15 July 1876.

centre of British strategies. For instance, Edward Grey's diplomacy involved the aim "to weaken Turkish influence in the Eastern Mediterranean."[19]

Figure 2: The Sphinx is Silent

Source: *Punch*, 15 July 1876.

The British engagement in the Middle East, on the other hand, can be traced back to the French threat in Egypt in 1798. While the considerations of the British Empire in the Middle East were mainly based on economic interests, the aims of extending British hegemony in the Mediterranean and the protection of trade routes to India were also central to these strategies. In the first place, the British foreign policy in the Middle East was driven by the intimate relationship of Britain with the Ottoman Empire. Until the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, Britain was the main defender of Ottoman territorial integrity, and this alliance was a major component of the de facto British imperial presence in the Middle East. However, the occupation of Cyprus and Egypt, Gladstone's opposition to the Turkish government, and Germany's rapprochement with the Ottomans from 1883 onwards caused a rupture in this alliance. The developments in the Ottoman Empire, including parts of the Balkans and the Middle East within its borders, as well as the issues of the period concerning the Ottoman nations, had always been closely followed by the Victorian reader. The illustrations demonstrated the conservative views of the growing middle-classes on Turks and Islam. As Alkan argues, "a significant number of these caricatures were drawn with a typical orientalist bias, both in terms of composition and figures."[20] For instance, the "Alexandria's Bombardment and Burning" cartoon by Thomas Nest published in *Harper's Weekly* on 22 July 1882 was not only giving the news that the British Army occupied Cairo but also symbolising a defining moment in the Middle East for Anglo-British relations.[21] The tears shed by the Ottoman Sultan, drawn as a crocodile, while hugging her old friend the British lion, gave the impression that he was already an untrustworthy ally. The symbolism of the states by distinct animals were frequently used to show moral superiority between the British and Ottoman empires. Although cartoons are exaggerated and polemical, they were clear in reflecting some prejudices hidden in the subconscious of the respective society.

19 Kamel, *Imperial Perceptions of Palestine*, 105.

20 Necmettin Alkan, *Karikatürlerle Oryantalizm Avrupa'nın Türk ve Türkiye Algısı* (Cağaloğlu: Selis Kitap, 2016), 20.

21 "Alexandria's Bombardment and Burning" Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, 22 July 1882.

Figure 3: Alexandria's Bombardment and Burning

Source: *Punch*, 22 July 1882

This trend of perceptions in political cartoons continued to demonstrate this effect in different dimensions and by metaphors which addressed various themes about issues in the Middle East until World War I. The prevailing emotions in Edwardian cartoons were usually anger, negative impressions of the old Turks of the East, and the consideration of the Young Turks amongst the Balkan nations rather than an authority. In 1914, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Britain had already shifted dramatically with the German alliance established by the former which was ratified during World War I.

In the early days of the war, Britain allocated immense resources to building strategies in the Middle East. The British abandoned the policy of protecting the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, wanted to ensure the security of Egypt and India by dominating Arab countries, and strived to control the petroleum resources of Iraq. The secret agreements established the legitimate ground of the post-war division of the Ottoman Empire. Amongst these, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was the most prominent strategy between Great Britain and France, which aimed to share the Middle East. The articles of the agreement, which were kept secret for political reasons, were disclosed and announced to the people around the world by the Bolsheviks who seized power in Russia in 1917. Therefore, the agreement was not implemented. However, it created turmoil regarding the issue of Palestine, along with other Arab nationalist issues.[22] While the British were making plans for an agreement with the French, they were also promising an independent Arab state spanning a region from Cairo to Mersin by meeting with the Arabs and the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein. While they never quit contacting their principal ally, the Zionists, the Balfour Declaration was published in 1917, where Britain declared that it recognised and supported the right of the Jews to establish a homeland in Palestine. It is also clear that there was no consensus among Muslim Arabs during this period when Jewish immigration to Palestine accelerated with British support, and the number of Jewish settlers increased.[23] Following British army's success on the Palestine front during World War I, General

[22] Bige Sükan, "I.Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemde Sykes-Picot Anlaşması kaynaklı sorunlar," *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi/Journal of Atatürk Yolu*, no. 74 (2024): 200.

[23] Halil İbrahim Çelik, "İngiltere Mandası Yönetiminde Kudüs ve Türkiye'nin Kudüs Politikası (1917-1948)," *Medeniyet ve Toplum Dergisi*, no. 8 (2024): 255.

Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate on 11 November 1917. This not only was the beginning of the British military rule in Palestine but also paved the way for the plan of Jews to intensively settle in these lands. During this period, the military administration had found the Jews increasingly preoccupied with Arab nationalist movements, and the British Colonial Office took control over the region in 1921 until the formal approval of the Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations in 1922. Subsequent to the Balfour Declaration until the withdrawal of British forces from Palestine in 1947, Britain demanded to secure its position by supporting the creation of a Zionist Jewish State. During the mandate period, the British maintained a diminishing degree of sovereignty over Palestine, and at times, intervened with violence.[24] When the British government gave up its mandate, it was notably the beginning of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 but also a decision of the British Cabinet not to oppose a resolution for an independent Jewish state.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyse the main themes and cartoons as a genre of political discourse in British politics until the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. No study has been found in the field examining the use of cartoons for the purpose of conveying political facts. Moreover, this article is divided into two main sections. The first part analyses the cartoons of the British mandate period in Palestine starting from the Balfour Declaration. In doing so, attempts are made to find potential answers as to how the well-used rhetoric of the British role emerged in popular literature and what the nature of the British administrative structure was in Palestine. The second part of the study aims to convey how visual metaphors and cartoons were addressed until the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and the Israeli declaration of independence, which put the British government in a very complicated position.

1. An Overview of the Cartoons of the British Mandate in Palestine

During World War I, propaganda and media flourished around the world and served multiple purposes. The states involved in the war had not only tried to protect their interests through systematic propaganda activities but also boosted morale at the home front and tried to demoralise their enemies. Cartoons were used extensively as a propaganda tool in books, newspapers, magazines, posters, and postcards by both the Allied and Central Powers.[25] At the same time, cartoons also encouraged the reader to think and enable political and social issues to be summarised in a drawing. The cartoons of the period continued to have this effect in different dimensions, and the metaphors in these cartoons addressed various themes.

Since its heydays in the nineteenth century, the *Punch* magazine continued to be a prominent satirical eye of Britain, and the illustrations in the magazine reflected conservative views on the growing middle-class's thoughts, interests, and concerns within a political discourse. Cross defines *Punch* as 'the biggest cannon' amongst other cartoon

[24] Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 77-79.

[25] Caner Çakı, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndaki Alman Propaganda Kartpostallarında Kullanılan Karikatürlerde Türklerin Sunumunun Göstergebilimsel Açıdan İncelenmesi," *Akdeniz Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*, (AKİL), no. 29 (Haziran 2018): 80.

periodicals.[26] *The Passing Show* was another British weekly humour magazine published from 1915 to 1939 in London. The drawings provided a reliable account of the British values and beliefs until World War II.[27] *The Evening Standard*, *the Daily Mail*, *the British Sentinel*, and *the Bystander* were significant British periodicals that provided perspectives on events. The Victorian periodical *the Evening Standard* focused on foreign relations and cartoons, particularly those in other publications which gained eminence.

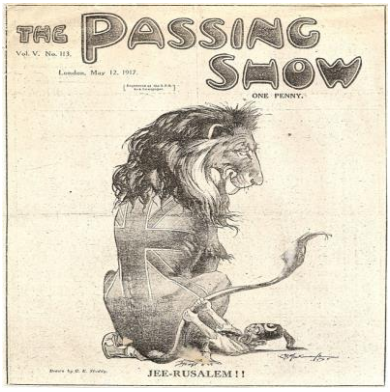
Britain's Middle East policies during World War I were founded on its promises to other parties. With the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the British Government offered Syria to France and, Eastern Anatolia to Russia. These promises were also an attempt to secure its dominance over Palestine and Iraq. Another strategy was to convince the Arabs led by Sharif Hussein, whose support was targeted by promising to allow him to establish a 'Greater Arab Kingdom'. However, this promise conflicted with a 1917 letter sent by Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild, which was also the main evidence of British government's support for an independent sovereign Israel in Palestinian lands. Although the Balfour Declaration was published in the press on 9 November 1917, Britain had already begun to radically consider the future of Palestine with the government of Lloyd George, who was in favour of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, by his assignment to office in January 1917. The Sinai and Palestine campaign of 1915-1918 was a defining period for the future of the Middle East. Symbolising Britain's strength, the lion figure representing the British Empire often showed up in cartoons during wartimes. *The Passing Show*'s illustration on 12 May 1917 had specific significance since it showed the power of the British against the Turk who is in fear through an image of a haughty lion.[28] The Union Jack on the back of the lion also gave the impression that the colonies contributed to the war front in the Middle East. An image of a weak Turkish man screaming "Jee-rusalem!!" not only represented Ottoman defeat but also portrayed British orientalist Turcophobic attitudes. The lion was a symbol of British power, which forced the Turks to abandon Jerusalem. It is worth noting that although the cartoons were normally humorous, the gravity of the subjects were reinforced by more intense stylistic symbols and values during this period.

[26] Anthony Cross, "The Crimean War and the Caricature War," *The Slavonic and East European Review 84*, no. 3 (July 2006): 462.

[27] "The Passing Show" entry updated 9 April 2015, https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/passing_show_the

[28] "Jee-rusalem," *The Passing Show*, 12 May 1917.

Figure 4: Jee-rusalem



Source: *The Passing Show*, 12 May 1917

The Battle for Jerusalem was not only a war for economic considerations in the Middle East but also literal evidence of the British Empire's struggle for prestige. The entrance of the British General Edmund Allenby to Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate on foot on 11 December 1917 was a defining moment. While Prime Minister David Lloyd George implied a sacred meaning by defining the military success as a 'Christmas gift' for the British nation, it was also a manifestation of political victory.[29] In a *Punch* cartoon, General Allenby was sketched standing, armed with a sword, helmet, and shield on a hill of Jerusalem, which gave the same impression of holiness, honour, and strength.[30] In this regard, *the British Sentinel* portrayed David Lloyd George as the chosen leader to restore Israel, and "the war was 'a door of hope' to the Wandering Jew."[31]

Figure 5: The Last Crusade

Source: *Punch*, 19 December 1917.

29 https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/timeline/worldwars_timeline_noflash.shtml
30 "The Last Crusade," *Punch*, 19 December 1917.
31 "Jerulsalem's Joyous Welcome to Britain," *the British Sentinel*, December 1917.

Figure 6: Jerusalem's Joyous Welcome to Britain

Source: *The British Sentinel*, December 1917.

The British press was deeply interested in General Allenby and the fact that the British ended the Ottoman rule in Palestine. However, there was a growing discomfort with the use of terms and imagery reminiscent of the Crusades. Despite addressing Ottoman's jihad, General Allenby "tried to discourage the use of the Crusades as a symbol and convince the British society that he had no religious motives, and he was fighting the Ottoman Empire, not Islam."[32] It is seen here that Allenby's statements would be the key for the British rule in Palestine until 1948. While appearing tolerant towards other religions, he continued to support the establishment of a Jewish state. Furthermore, the defeats of the British army at Gallipoli and Kut Al Amara had already increased their concerns about the Middle East and caused them to lose their prestige. It was considered that these military defeats should be compensated through diplomatic strategies. It is nevertheless true that "political Zionism and non-Jewish Zionism began to develop as a tool to serve British interests among British politicians."[33]

Before the British mandate was established in Palestine in July 1922, there was a strong dilemma in the British Parliament as to the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. It is, nevertheless, true that there was "a clear distinction between the motives for the 1917 Declaration itself and the factors affecting the decisions between 1918 and 1923 to persist with its undertakings."[34] The components of the British Empire aiming to shape the Palestine policy were influenced by imperialist intentions and Zionism. However, Lloyd George's "personal judgement of foreign policy was the authority for the decision-making mechanism, and "the Foreign Office was unable to keep in its hands the reins of eastern affairs on account of the subordination of the British Middle East policy."[35] The cartoon titled "Lloyd George, King of the World!" published on 17 September 1921 by *the Passing Show* was not only illustrated in light of these thoughts, but it also drew attention to the

[32] Mark Urban, *Generals: Ten British Commanders Who Shaped The Modern World* (London: Faber and Faber,2005), 233.

[33] Çelik, "İngiltere Mandası Yönetiminde Kudüs," 252.

[34] William H. Mathew, "The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, 1917—1923: British Imperialist Imperatives," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (July 2013): 232.

[35] Mathew, "The Balfour Declaration," 242.

domestic and foreign challenges of George's cabinet on the chessboard and the Prime Minister as the pogo-jumper.[36]

Figure 7: Lloyd George, King Of The World!

Source: *The Passing Show*, 17 September 1921

After the establishment of the British mandate in Palestine, there was period of calm between 1923 and 1929 and a significant decrease in Jewish immigration due to the strict quota imposed by Britain.[37] However, the growing anti-Semitism in Poland and a long-standing conflict about accession to the Western Wall in Jerusalem from late August 1929 onwards escalated into violence. These riots did not only create trouble for British authorities but also raised questions about what kind of policy would be implemented. In a Commons meeting on 9 December 1929, James de Rotschild asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs "whether His Majesty's Government have made any promises or pledges to the Arab-speaking populations of Palestine or neighbouring countries which invalidate in any way the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917."[38] This was a crucial moment, questioning confidence in collaboration with Zionists. *The Evening Standard* published on 27 August 1927 sketched a British policeman's in-between situation which implied a strong metaphor not only addressing the ambiguity of policies during riots but also showing the element of satire in British humour aimed at the absurdity of the conflict between Arabs and Jews. For instance, according to the British policeman, "wails and warwhoops" from both sides could turn into community singing.

[36] "Lloyd George, King of the World!," *the Passing Show*, 17 September 1921.

[37] Kadir Kasalak, "İngilizlerin Filistin Politikası ve Filistin Mandası," *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 3*, no. 25 (2016): 72.

[38] "Palestine (Mandate and Balfour Declaration)," HC Deb 09 December 1929 vol 233 cc23-4.

Figure 8: Wails or warwhoops?

Source: *The Evening Standard*, 27 August 1929.

Jewish immigration to Palestine substantially increased until 1936, and the British Mandate's biased attitude towards the Jews raised reactions against Britain among Arabs. The Palestinians launched a series of Arab uprisings called the intifada which began on 19 April 1936 and lasted 3 years.[39] During this period, attempts were made to reconcile both parties through commissions and various conferences organised by Britain. William Ormsby-Gore, as British Secretary of State for the Colonies, was appointed to deal with the Palestine Problem. However, his report on dividing Palestine led him to resign eight days after he entered the House of Lords."[40] According to his statement of policy:

> If, as a result of the investigations of the technical Commission, which will undoubtedly occupy many months, a scheme of partition is regarded as equitable and practicable by His Majesty's Government, it will be referred to the Council of the League for consideration…It may also be necessary, in the light of the Commission's report, for His Majesty's Government to give further consideration to the suggestion of the Permanent Mandates Commission that the Arab and Jewish areas should be administered temporarily under a system of "cantonisation" or under separate mandates.[41]

The Mandates Commission proposition was not welcomed in the parliament or the public sphere. The British government, however, continued to reconsider their governing policies to maintain a peaceful solution between Jews and Arabs. The White Paper of 1939 was a declaration of official British policy as a result of the final parts of the Arab-Zionist London Conference. This was not only a statement of strategy for ten years in the context of British policies for Palestine but also aimed to have Arabs and Jews contribute to the Palestinian administration. Nonetheless, the 1939 White Paper was only strong evidence that the British mandate regime in Palestine was nearing its end. It is therefore clear that the cartoon titled "the March of Time" in *Punch* dated 19 October 1939 referred to Richard I as a central

[39] Ali Ata Yiğit, "Filistin Meselesinin Kronikleşmesi (1918-1948)," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları 243*, no. 123 (2009): 404.

[40] Oren Kessler, *Palestine 1936: The Great Revolt and the Roots of the Middle East Conflict* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023), 125.

[41] "Policy in Palestine, despatch dated 23rd December, 1937, from the state of Secreatry for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for Palestine" by William Ormsby-Gore, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-207196/

Christian commander during the Third Crusade, who was sketched appearing anxious about troubles in Palestine.[42]

Figure 9: The March Of Time?

Source: *Punch*, 19 September 1939.

2. Political Cartoons until the Arab-Israeli War of 1948

The conflict between Arabs and Jewish immigrants, which had subsided during World War II substantially increased after 1946. The position and policies of the United States were also significant in determining the status of post-war Palestine. The Morrison-Grady Plan was therefore presented to end the differences of opinion between the United States and the United Kingdom with a joint report. The report's suggestion for the partition of Palestine into self-governed Arab and Jewish regions and a British central administration did not satisfy both sides. Jews considered the plan a continuation of the White Paper of 1939 which would not allow the establishment of a "Jewish State" and bind the migration of 100,000 Jews to Palestine into being subject to the approval of Arabs.[43] The plan was also pivotal to the British position in the Middle East to maintain supremacy in the post-war era.

In 1946, in the prominent cartoons of *the Evening Standard*, *the Daily Mail*, and *Punch*, the common impression was that permanent peace would not be achieved despite all efforts. For instance, a cartoon in *the Evening Standard* on 2 August 1946 satirised the insensitivity of the states to Jewish immigrants.[44] All the doors were closed, except for Palestine, which was full of fights that the British police were trying to suppress. Drawing attention to the invalidity of legal plans next to the realities of conflict, stated by the term "Calm Consideration Department", the general idea was "Neither Jews nor Arabs believe in the Morrison Plan for Palestine. It is time for the Government to consider calmly."[45]

42 "The March of Time?," *Punch*, 19 September 1939.
43 Fahir Armaoğlu, *Filistin Meselesi ve Arap-İsrail Savaşları:1948-1988* (Ankara: İş Bankası Yay., 1989), 79-80.
44 "Search for an Open Door," *the Evening Standard*, 2 August 1946.
45 "Calm Consideration Department," *the Evening Standard*, 12 December 1946.

Figure 10: Search For An Open Door

Source: *The Evening Standard*, 2 August 1946.

Figure 11: Calm Consideration Department

Source: *The Evening Standard*, 12 December 1946

Both sketches illustrated the irony of peace with issues discussed and decisions taken subsequent to the Morrison-Grady Plan with complex metaphorical and blending patterns. In the meantime, looking at the British Parliament debates after the decision to hand over the Palestinian problem to the United Nations on 2 April 1947, it becomes clear that the general idea was in parallel with the public opinion as the aforementioned cartoons illustrated. Although the British decision to not impose a solution by force of arms was welcomed, the resolution of the United Nations for partition created more stir. *The Daily Mail* furthermore showed how the British government's hands were tied with deadlocks in Palestine, not only with the conflict between Arab and Jewish forces but also with terrorism, refugees, kidnappings, and bombings.[46] This situation was portrayed as a state responsible for all these events, while also being in a difficult situation.

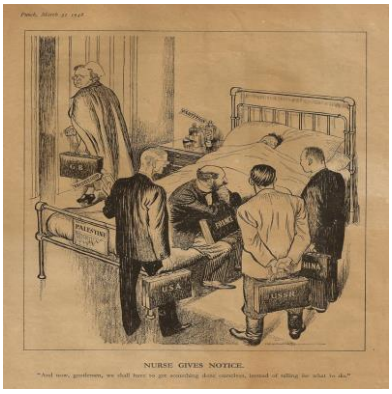
[46] "Palestine Mandate," *The Daily Mail*, 13 October 1947.

Figure 12: Palestine Mandate

Source: *The Daily Mail*, 13 October 1947

In the process leading to the establishment of Israel in 1948, it becomes clear that there were still references to "Sick Man of Europe" metaphors often used for the notion of the failing Ottoman Empire, orientalist perceptionsx, and distrustful images in British cartoons. While the reluctant acceptance of the partition in Palestine prevailed, placing figures as Great Britain as a nurse still aimed to give assurance to the British public and other states that the withdrawal was a necessity.[47] There was a strong tendency to conserve and protect the British image in Palestine in an exaggerated manner.

Figure 13: Palestine Mandate, Nurse gives notice



Source: *Punch*, 31 March 1948

On the other hand, on 14 May 1948, before the final hours of the British mandate and at midnight, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, and Transjordan, with a decision by the Arab League, declared war against Israel. It is nevertheless true that "the Zionist and the Palestinian versions of Britain's policy during the final phase of the mandate were already pulled apart."[48] The delayed British recognition of Israel was strong evidence that "in 1948, Britain did not pursue either an anti-Zionist policy or an anti-Arab policy but a pro-British one."[49] The sketch of a British soldier in May 1948, therefore, took the place of crusaders

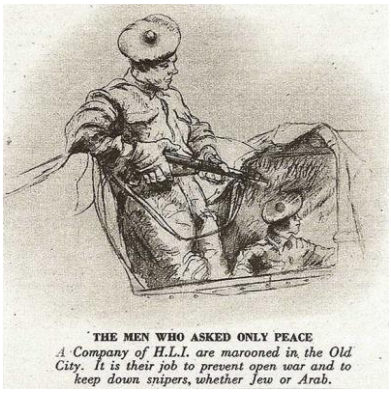
47 "Nurse gives notice," *Punch*, 31 March 1948.

48 Avi Shlaim, "Britain and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies 16*, no. 4 (Summer, 1987): 52.

49 Shlaim, "Britain and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948," 52.

which were frequently included at the beginning of the British mandate for Palestine.[50] This image gave the impression of disappointment and was far from being a British satirical cartoon.

Figure 14: The Men Who Asked Only for Peace



Source: *Picture Post*, May 1948

Conclusion

Since the growth of print culture in the mid-Victorian period, cartoons were presented as primary sources for readers since they conveyed critical messages from party politics or foreign policy with humorous illustrations in Britain. The cartoons reflected the attitudes of a wide range of British classes through the war, including regret, anger, prejudices, and hopes, with powerful images and metaphors. They were also a tool that strengthened social cohesion and promoted morale. In the twentieth century, cartoons were used extensively not only in propaganda activities during World War I but also for casting a satirical eye on life in Britain.

The story of the British engagement in Palestine was examined through presentation codes and metaphors. This study analysed cartoons published during the British Mandate period in Palestine and attempted to reveal how the British perception of the Middle East evolved over time. It is clear that British ideology and orientalist discourse were constructed to justify imperialism since Britain's first relations with the Ottoman Empire. The symbolism of portraying the states as distinct animals was frequently used to show moral superiority between the Western and Eastern empires. This style of cartoons was supported with British traditional values and belief figures by prominent publications such as *the Punch*, *the Passing Show*, *the Evening Standard*, *the Daily Mail*, *the British Sentinel,* and *the Bystander*. While a major common element was observed in these cartoons about Palestine, there were also several important myths that were constructed at the same time. The first of these was that "the British ended the Ottoman rule in Palestine with a holy power." This perception could compensate the defeats of the British army at Gallipoli and Kut Al Amara, which had already raised concerns about the British administration in the Middle East. The second myth in this period could be related to restoring confidence in the public regarding the leadership of the Lloyd George Government. After the establishment of the British mandate in Palestine during the period of calm between 1923 and 1929, another myth that

[50] "The men who asked only for peace," *Picture Post*, May 1948.

was attempted to be constructed in the cartoons was the fair administration of the British between the Arabs and Jews. The cartoons published until the end of the British rule in Palestine, however, illustrated the irony of peace with issues discussed and the invalidity of political and legal decisions taken. Although the use of exaggeration and humour in cartoons could increase the impact of literary activities on the masses, it is seen that the realities of the last years of the British mandate in Palestine eliminated this situation.

To conclude, it would be fair to argue that the majority of British cartoons perceived radical changes in the British government's policies in Palestine over time and often conveyed strong and disturbing messages by using humour to illustrate Arab-Jewish conflicts. However, the sole inclusion of British cartoons constituted an important limitation of this study. In this respect, shedding light on the British mandate in Palestine through different cartoons published in different geographies in the given period will contribute significantly to the field in future studies.

Declarations

1. **Ethics committee approval:** Not needed for this study.

2. Author contribution: The author declares that no one else has contributed to the article.

3. Competing interests: The author declares no competing interests.

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