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Gaza under British rule (1917-1948): Contradictory Promises and the Colonial Legacy in Palestine

Bachelor finalist, Mariana RODRIGUES*

Lt.Col. Cav Pedro FERREIRA, PhD**

*University of Lisbon

e-mail: mrodrigues21@edu.ulisboa.pt

**Portuguese Military Academy Research Centre

e-mail: ferreira.pna@exercito.pt

Abstract

This paper analyses the impact of British rule in Gaza between 1917 and 1948, highlighting the way in which the commitments made by Britain during the First World War influenced the political configuration of Palestine, specifically the territory of Gaza. The importance of this topic lies in the need to understand the historical origins of geopolitical tensions in the region, and is justified by the significant role of the British administration in articulating contradictory commitments to the Arabs and Jews, which triggered long-lasting conflicts. The main objective is to evaluate the effects of these promises on Gaza and its population, particularly in the context of the British administration. The methodology adopted is historical-analytical, based on bibliographical research and the analysis of books and scientific articles. It concludes that British action has profoundly molded the socio-political reality of Gaza, contributing to territorial fragmentation, the political exclusion of Palestinian Arabs, and the aggravation of identity tensions. This analysis contributes to a critical understanding of the British legacy in Palestine.

Keywords:

Gaza; British Mandate; Palestine; Balfour Declaration;
Arab nationalism; Zionism; self-determination.

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This article analyses the impact of British rule over the territory of Gaza between 1917 and 1948, in the light of the diplomatic promises made during the First World War. The relevance of this topic is justified by the centrality of Palestine - and Gaza in particular - in the dynamics of conflict and instability that persist to this day. Understanding the historic roots of British involvement sheds light on the genesis of the territorial identity and the political disputes that shaped the 20th century in the Middle East.

The problem we intend to address lies in the contradictions of the promises made by Britain to different actors - Arab leaders and the Zionist movement - and the way how these promises influenced British imperial policy in the region. Specifically, this study asks how these decisions affected the territory of Gaza, both at the level of its political and social structures and in the context of the emergence of local resistance. The importance of this question lies in its direct impact on the development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the construction of clashing national identities. In recent decades, research into the British Mandate and Palestine has deepened, highlighting themes such as British imperial management, the effects of the Balfour Declaration, Arab resistance, Jewish immigration, and the formation of Zionist institutions.

This article adopts a historical-analytical approach aimed at understanding British actions in Gaza, based on the articulation between primary documentary sources and specialized literature. This approach is appropriate because it allows political decisions to be contextualized in the light of broader historical processes and their consequences to be critically examined.

One of the key concepts in this study is Zionism, understood as the political and ideological movement that was established in the late nineteenth century, advocating for the establishment of a sovereign Jewish homeland, with Palestine regarded as the most suitable location due to its historical and religious significance to the Jewish people. Zionism, as a mobilizing force, gained strength with the support of the Balfour Declaration and was a determining element in the demographic and political transformation of the Palestinian territory.

This article is organized into four main parts. The first presents the historical background to the British promises during the First World War. The second analyses the direct impact of the British Mandate on Gaza. The third examines the Arab-Palestinian reaction, with an emphasis on the Revolt of 1936-1939. Finally, the fourth part deals with the end of the Mandate period with the 1948 war, the creation of the State of Israel, and the massive displacement of Palestinians, many of whom took refuge in Gaza.

The aim of this article is therefore to understand how British rule and its political decisions have shaped the historical trajectory of Gaza and contributed to the

worsening of tensions between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The central question guiding the study is: how did the promises made by Britain during the First World War and the subsequent administration of the British Mandate affect the territory and population of Gaza? Through this analysis, we aim to contribute to the critical understanding of British colonialism and its legacy in the Middle East.

British Promises and the Reorganization of the Middle East (1915-1917)

The drawing of a new geopolitical map of Europe and the Middle East marked the end of the First World War. Even before the First World War was due to end, it was already known that Great Britain wanted to keep the Palestinian territory to which Gaza belonged. The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence of 1915 included a series of communications in which the British government pledged to recognize Arab independence, contingent upon Husayn ibn Ali, the Sharif of Mecca and King of Hejaz, initiating a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. The proposed Arab territory was to include regions such as Syria, Mesopotamia, and potentially Palestine (Haidar, et al. 2024).

During the First World War, a confidential exchange of letters took place between Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein of Mecca, laying the groundwork for British-Arab relations during the conflict. The British desired Sharif Hussein's support in their campaign against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. As the custodian of the Muslim Holy Places, Hussein was regarded by Britain as a potential unifying figure for the Arab world, especially given his claim to represent the entire "Arab Nation". In return for his commitment to lead an uprising against the Ottomans, Britain offered financial assistance and military guidance, notably through British officers such as T. E. Lawrence, later popularized in the film *Lawrence of Arabia*, and assurances of support for Arab independence. The correspondence between McMahon and Hussein unfolded over several months, with McMahon's letter dated 24 October 1915 generally recognized as the most pivotal document in the exchange. By this time, British ambitions regarding Palestine were already understood (Sabel 2022, 15).

This correspondence gave rise to the Sykes-Picot agreements of 1916, which had a major impact on the region where Gaza was located. But the promise to give the Arabs independence was not fulfilled (Salihu 2024). France and Great Britain, with the consent of Russia, reached a secret agreement during the First World War to divide the territories of the Middle East into respective zones of influence and control following the anticipated defeat of the Ottoman Empire. The French zone would correspond to the current northern Syria and Lebanon, and the British zone would cover southern Iraq and the port of Haifa (Palestine). The agreement also foresaw that Jerusalem, along with certain parts of Palestine, including Gaza, would be placed

under a vaguely defined international administration. The specific nature of this administration was to be determined through consultations with Russia and other allied powers, rather than being directly assigned to British or French control under the initial terms of the agreement. Due to discontent with this decision, Arab nationalist movements emerged (Salihi 2024).

Although this agreement did not assign Gaza or Palestine directly to British control, Britain attacked Gaza in what became known as the First, Second, and Third Battles of Gaza. The British attacks on Gaza were part of the British offensive on the Sinai and Palestine fronts during the First World War, following the Ottoman attempts to seize the Suez Canal. In the first two battles, even with the British superiority in numbers of soldiers, vehicles, weapons, and food, as well as in naval bombardment, the Ottoman forces managed to resist and repel the British attacks (Ağaoğlu 2017). However, in November 1917, in the Third Battle of Gaza, the British managed to conquer Gaza. In these three battles, Gaza suffered intense bombardments that had a significant impact on its population, destroying the city and causing high casualties (Halevy 2015).

Also, in November 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, motivated by the desire to gain support from influential Jewish communities around the world during the First World War, particularly in the United States and Russia, as well as strategic and imperial interests in the region. Palestine was seen as extremely important for the future security and prosperity of the British Empire (Haidar, et al. 2024).

According to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, His Majesty's Government expressed its support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, if this would not prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities or Jews elsewhere (Sabel 2022, 47)¹. This declaration signaled a significant change in British policy towards the future of Palestine, moving away from the idea of an international administration outlined in Sykes-Picot and paving the way for British control to implement the Balfour Declaration (Haidar, et al. 2024).

The Imposition of the British Mandate and the Gaza Affair (1917-1936)

The question of whether the Balfour Declaration contradicted the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence remains a subject of ongoing debate. The official British stance has consistently maintained that the Balfour Declaration did not pertain to Palestine as covered by the McMahon-Hussein agreement. Some authors claim that the Declaration did not contradict the Sykes-Picot Agreement, since the Declaration was subsequently accepted by France (Sabel 2022, 50). Other scholars contend that the Balfour Declaration

¹ "Balfour Declaration, statement of British support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." It was made in a letter dated November 2, 1917, from Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, to Lionel Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild (of Tring), a leader of the Anglo-Jewish community" (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2025). The original text can be consult in https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp

conflicted with earlier British promises to the Arabs, particularly those found in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence of 1915, wherein Britain appeared to support Arab independence in regions including Syria, Mesopotamia, and potentially Palestine (e.g. (Haidar, et al. 2024)).

The Balfour Declaration also raises the question of the principle of self-determination, given that most of Palestine's population in 1917 was Arab. The Palestinians felt betrayed by the Balfour Declaration, as it ignored their aspirations for self-determination (Sabel 2022, 43). The declaration exacerbated tensions between Jewish immigrants and the Arab population, leading to violent clashes over land and resources. Britain was aware that consulting the population could result in an "anti-Jewish verdict but justified its policy with the importance of the Jewish question outside Palestine and the belief in a historical Jewish claim to the region (Sabel 2022, 48). It is also important to note that, in 1917, Britain did not hold sovereign rights over Palestine to cede territory to the Jewish people. The Balfour Declaration constituted a conditional commitment, stipulating that if Britain were to gain rights over Palestine, it would act following the terms outlined in the Declaration. Although the Balfour Declaration affirmed protections for the civil and religious rights of Palestine's non-Jewish inhabitants, it notably omitted any recognition of their collective national identity or political rights (Sabel 2022, 50).

The Balfour Declaration is also considered a fundamental antecedent to the Nakba² of 1948 and the creation of the State of Israel. The declaration gave impetus to the Zionist project of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine (Inci n.d.).

This declaration was a turning point for the Zionist movement and contributed to an increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine, which included the Gaza region, and was supported internationally by powers such as France, the United States, Italy, and Japan, which was a gain for the Zionist movement. This declaration is still seen by many Palestinians as the root of their difficulties and as a historical injustice (Inci n.d.).

After the end of the First World War in 1918, the map of the Middle East was significantly altered with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which affected Gaza. The Allied powers, Great Britain and France, began to plan the future of the region, which included the division of the Middle East. The League of Nations, established following the conclusion of the war, played an important role in formalizing the status of Palestine (Martinelli 2022, 89).

In 1919, the United States appointed the King-Crane Commission, or 1919 Intercollegiate Commission on Turkish Mandates, an American

² The Nakba "means "catastrophe" in Arabic, refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war" (United Nations n.d.).

commission of enquiry into the disposition of areas within the former Ottoman Empire, sent to the Middle East by President Woodrow Wilson. The Commission aimed to consult the populations of the Ottoman Empire on their post-imperial territorial and political objectives, compiling their responses in the King-Crane Report, which was only published in 1922 ([Cooper and Omicron 2021](#)).

The Commission concluded and recommended that the mandate for Palestine should be given to the United States, noting the strong and unanimous opposition of the Muslim and Christian populations to the Zionist project in Palestine, which was intrinsically linked to the question of Syrian unity. The Commission also proposed the appointment of Emir Feisal as the head of a newly unified Syrian state, asserting that the governance and administration of such a state should be derived from the will and free choice of its native populations. According to the Commission, the concept of a national home did not equate to the establishment of a Jewish state. The Commission warned that such a development could gravely infringe upon the civil and religious rights of Palestine's non-Jewish communities and therefore recommended that Jewish immigration be curtailed and the pursuit of a separate Jewish state be reconsidered. The King-Crane report was not implemented by the US government and had a limited impact on the political decisions of the time ([Sabel 2022, 62](#)).

Still in the context of the end of the First World War, the Paris Peace Conference took place between 1919 and 1920, where the victorious Allied powers met to define the terms of peace with the defeated countries and to decide the fate of the territories of the dismembered Ottoman Empire. One of the crucial decisions taken at the Paris Peace Conference was the establishment of the League of Nations Mandate system to supervise the Ottoman territories in the region. Palestine, which included Gaza, was placed under British Mandate following the decisions of this conference, later formalized at the San Remo Conference, chaired by the Supreme Council of the Allies in April 1920, where Türkiye formally ceded Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. The former Ottoman provinces of Syria and Lebanon were mandated to France, Palestine, and Iraq (Mesopotamia) were mandated to Great Britain ([Inci n.d.](#)). The authority to determine the status of Palestine rested with the Allied Powers rather than the League of Nations. The Allied Powers were the ones who decided that Great Britain, as the Mandate Power, would govern Palestine following the terms of the agreement between them and the League. As early as August 1920, Türkiye signed the Sèvres Peace Treaty, by which it renounced all its rights over the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East in favor of the Allies. British rule of Gaza and Palestine officially began in 1922 with the British Mandate for Palestine, which was established by the decisions of the Paris and San Remo Peace Conferences and incorporated the Balfour Declaration of 1917 ([Sabel 2022, 44](#)).

The League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, which ran from 1922 to 1947, was a crucial period in the history of Palestine, framed by the mandate system established

after the First World War. The League of Nations designed this system to manage the former territories of the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Although intended to bring these territories to independence, in practice, the mandate system represented a distinct form of colonialism ([Feldman 2008](#), 6).

Palestine was classified as a Class A Mandate, which, according to Article 22.4 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, meant that its existence as an independent nation could be recognized provisionally, on condition that the advice and help of a mandatory (Great Britain) guided its administration until it was able to conduct itself. However, effective power resided with Great Britain. The Mandate policy, designed to support the establishment of a Jewish national home, had a direct and increasingly significant impact on Gaza, as well as the broader Palestinian territory. It promoted Jewish immigration to Palestine, which in turn intensified tensions and conflicts with the existing Palestinian Arab population in Gaza and other regions ([Martinelli 2022](#), 88).

The British administration, mandated by the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference, had the dual obligation of promoting the Jewish national home and preserving the civil and religious rights of the Arab population, a contradiction that became a source of instability in Gaza and throughout Palestine ([Feldman 2008](#), 240). The governance policies implemented by the British in Gaza, under the Mandate system defined at the Paris Peace Conference, shaped daily life and administration in the region for decades.

The Mandate explicitly referenced Jews, the Jewish population in Palestine, and the broader Jewish community in the region, yet it failed to acknowledge Palestinians or Palestinian Arabs, who comprised approximately 92 percent of the population. Instead, Palestinians were referred to in vague and generic terms such as “non-Jews,” “natives,” or “peoples and communities,” without formal recognition by either the British authorities or the League of Nations ([Martinelli 2022](#), 87).

The Mandate period saw the simultaneous growth of Palestinian nationalism and Zionism, with both claiming the same territory ([Martinelli 2022](#), 13). British policies in the Mandate faced increasing difficulty in reconciling their obligations towards the Zionist movement and the Arab population. The Palestinian political elite sought to maintain their traditional role as interlocutors with the British authorities and the League of Nations, demanding the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and an end to Jewish immigration ([Rigby 2015](#)).

The Arab Resistance and the rise of the conflict (1936-1939)

The 1930s saw the rise of Palestinian resistance to Zionist colonization, culminating in the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. The Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 in Palestine was a

period of intense unrest and violence by the Palestinian Arab population against British rule and the growing foundation of a Jewish national home (Martinelli 2022, 98). This uprising represented a significant milestone in the Palestinian nationalist struggle and had profound impacts on British policy towards the region.

This uprising took place because of growing Arab opposition to the Zionist project and Jewish immigration to Palestine (Sabel 2022, 47). The Palestinian Arabs saw Zionism as a threat to their demographic majority and their national aspirations. The increase in Jewish immigration in the 1930s intensified tensions, leading to a growing sense that the future of Palestine was being decided against the will of the Arab population. Of course, the Arab rejection of the British Mandate from its inception, seen as a betrayal of the promises of independence made during the First World War, also contributed to the atmosphere of conflict. The general strike of 1936, one of the main strategies of the uprising, affected Gaza's local economy, which depended on trade and agriculture (Feldman 2008, 21).

The revolt led to a reassessment of British policy towards Palestine. In 1937, the Peel Commission was established and proposed the partition of Palestine into two sovereign states, one Arab and one Jewish. However, the proposal was denied by the Pan-Arab Congress and the British government, which feared alienating Arab allies (Sabel 2022, 83).

In 1939, the British government published the White Paper, which outlined a proposal for the creation of an independent Palestinian state within ten years, while simultaneously imposing limitations on Jewish immigration and land purchases. This policy change was seen by the Jews as a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration, while the Arabs, although initially supportive, realized its limited implementation, leading Zionist leaders to seek support from the United States (Martinelli 2022, 99).

The Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 represented a turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict, revealing the extent of Arab resistance to Zionist aspirations and prompting shifts in British policy in the region. However, British repression left the Palestinian population exhausted and disarmed, resulting in a weakened leadership. In contrast, the Zionists, more organized, strengthened their military and political institutions (Martinelli 2022, 99). The 1936–1939 Uprising also influenced the anti-colonial struggle in Palestine, including Gaza, serving as a precursor to the later intifadas (Martinelli 2022, 99). The kufiyah³ became one of the main symbols of Palestinian resistance, and the uprising remains a central element of Palestinian collective memory, something that would continue to be relevant in Gaza in subsequent conflicts (Alghezi 2023).

³ "Keffiyeh, headdress typically made of cotton and traditionally worn by men in parts of the Middle East. The black-and-white checkered keffiyeh, which represents the Palestinian liberation movement, is also worn to convey political sentiments." (McDonald 2025).

Although the uprising was suppressed, it had lasting consequences on the development of Palestinian nationalism and the redefinition of British policy towards the region, preparing the ground for the events that would culminate in the end of the British Mandate and the 1948 war ([Martinelli 2022](#), 19-20).

The end of the British Mandate and the consequences for Gaza (1947-1948)

With the end of the Second World War, Britain faced growing international pressure over the question of Palestine. Following this pressure and with the creation of the United Nations (UN) on 29 November 1947, the UN passed Resolution 181, which recommended the partition of Palestine into two separate independent states, but linked by an economic union, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem being an international zone (*the corpus seperatum*) ([Sabel 2022](#), 93). This resolution was accepted by the Zionists but rejected by the Palestinians ([Haidar, et al. 2024](#)).

The resolution proposed ending the British Mandate in Palestine, involving the gradual withdrawal of British forces, and the establishment of borders between the proposed Arab and Jewish states, with Jerusalem receiving special status. The creation of both states was set for completion by October 1, 1948. The plan called for dividing Palestine into eight areas: three for the Arab state, three for the Jewish state, with Jaffa designated as an Arab enclave within Jewish territory, and Jerusalem placed under international oversight by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. The Gaza Strip was also designated as part of the Arab state ([Inci n.d.](#)).

The plan allocated roughly 55 percent of Palestine's territory to the proposed Jewish state, even though Jews made up about one-third of the population at the time. The remaining 45 percent was set aside for the Arab state, which included areas with predominantly Arab populations ([Salihu 2024](#)). The Jewish Agency in Palestine accepted the Partition Plan, while the Palestinians rejected it, viewing it as unjust and a significant loss of land. They perceived the resolution as taking away most of their territory. The Arab response to UN Resolution 181 was one of outright rejection and opposition ([Haidar, et al. 2024](#)).

The rejection of the Partition Plan by the Arab and Palestinian leadership led to an increase in violence and subsequently to the 1948 war. This war, known to Palestinians as Al-Nakba, had a significant impact on Gaza. As a result of the 1948 war, thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their homes, and many of them took refuge in the Gaza Strip. The problem of Palestinian refugees, including those in Gaza, has become a central and enduring issue ([Alghezi 2023](#)).

It is important to note that the Partition Plan was never fully implemented due to the 1948 war. The Mandate period ended with the 1948 war and the creation of

the State of Israel in most of the Mandate territory. The failure to create an Arab-Palestinian state, the displacement of a large part of the Palestinian population, and the division of Jerusalem marked the end of this era. Instead of the two states envisaged in Resolution 181, the result of the war was the expansion of Israel beyond the proposed borders, the failure to create an independent Arab state in most of the allocated territory and the division of Palestine between Israel, Jordan (which annexed the West Bank) and Egypt (which administered Gaza) ([Alghezi 2023](#)).

Although Resolution 181 did not result in the immediate creation of a Palestinian state in Gaza, it is seen as an initial international recognition of the legitimacy of a Jewish state in Palestine. For Palestinians, the resolution and the subsequent war and displacement, including to Gaza, are foundational events in their history and their struggle for self-determination. This period was marked by growing tensions between Palestinian and Zionist national aspirations, the policy of British support for the creation of a Jewish national home, and culminated in the partition of the territory and the 1948 conflict ([Martinelli 2022](#), 84).

It is also important to highlight in this context Israel's Declaration of Independence, which occurred on 14 May 1948, representing the culmination of decades of Zionist aspirations for a Jewish homeland, and was made by David Ben-Gurion, on the day the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end ([Salihu 2024](#)).

Following the British withdrawal, Israel's Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948 prompted the invasion of regular armies from neighboring Arab states ([Inci n.d.](#)). This conflict, known as the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 or the War of Independence, was crucial in ensuring the survival and sovereignty of the State of Israel. The Zionists' aim with the war was to conduct an ethnic cleansing of the territory allocated to them by the UN ([Rigby 2015](#)).

The fighting lasted until April 1949, when the Armistice Agreements were formalized between Israel and the Arab countries ([Sabel 2022](#), 26). During the conflict, Israeli forces managed not only to resist but also to expand the territory they controlled beyond the borders proposed in the UN Partition Plan ([Sabel 2022](#), 38).

For the Palestinians, the events of 1948 represented a national catastrophe. Around 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were forced to flee or were expelled from their homes. More than four hundred Arab-majority villages and towns were destroyed or repopulated by Jews ([Rigby 2015](#)). Responsibility for this exodus remains a controversial issue. The Israeli narrative argues that many Arabs fled voluntarily or at the request of their leaders, in a context of war. The Palestinian position claims that there were deliberate expulsions, massacres, and terror campaigns organized by Israeli forces to empty the region. The authors argue that both the traditional Israeli narrative of conspiracy and the contemporary Palestinian narrative of expulsion are flawed, emphasizing that the historical reality is far more complex ([Gelber 2009](#)).

The result was the collapse of Palestinian society and culture. Thousands of refugees settled in neighboring countries and territories such as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, multiplying the population of these regions (Haidar, et al. 2024). The population of the Gaza Strip increased during the war due to the arrival of refugees. With the end of the war, Israel came to control more than half of the territory of Mandate Palestine, including West Jerusalem. Jordan annexed the West Bank, while Egypt took over the administration of the Gaza Strip (Martinelli 2022, 109). The Arab state proposed by the UN was never created.

For Israelis, the 1948 war represents the realization of two thousand years of Jewish ambitions for a homeland in the Land of Israel (Weintraub and Gibson 2024). Victory in the war is seen as an existential struggle for survival, imposed by hostile Arab forces. For the Palestinians, the Nakba symbolizes the loss of their homeland, the beginning of a life in exile, the dismemberment of their society, and a collective trauma that continues to shape their identity and resistance to this day.

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration, which also became home to numerous Palestinian refugees who either fled or were expelled from their lands with the establishment of the State of Israel, drastically increasing the local population. Gaza has become one of the most densely populated places in the world, with serious humanitarian difficulties and dependence on international aid. Without Palestinian sovereignty and under Egyptian administration, the region has become a focus of frustration and resistance, developing a strong national identity and becoming central to the struggles of the Palestinian people (Martinelli 2022, 99).

Conclusion

Based on the guiding question - *how did the promises made by Britain during the First World War and the subsequent administration of the British Mandate affect the territory and population of Gaza?* - the article has analyzed the political, social, and territorial consequences of the British administration against the backdrop of the contradictory promises made during the First World War. Through a historical-analytical approach, it was possible to observe that British decisions, especially the Balfour Declaration and the implementation of the Mandate, generated a context of fragmentation and persistent tension.

The analysis showed that Gaza, although often treated as peripheral, was deeply affected by imperial dynamics. The city was the scene of decisive battles, the object of exclusionary administrative policies, and the target of a growing process of demographic pressure, especially after the 1948 war. The combination of British support for the Zionist project and the effective denial of Arab political rights created a structural imbalance, contributing to the emergence of Palestinian resistance and the consolidation of a conflict that lasted well beyond the Mandate period.

This entire process reveals the complexity of imperial decisions and promises made in wartime contexts, with repercussions that went beyond the short term. The case of Gaza shows that British colonialism, in trying to reconcile opposing interests without real mechanisms for mediation, not only failed in its declared objectives of stability but also fostered the foundations of a long-lasting conflict.

This study can have relevant applications in the field of Middle Eastern history, post-colonial studies, and international relations by offering a critical reading of the role of imperial power in the genesis of contemporary conflicts. It can also contribute to current debates on historical justice, self-determination, and the decolonization of memory.

The limitations of this work include the scarcity of specific primary sources relating to the direct administration of Gaza during the Mandate, which made it difficult to analyze local governance in greater detail. Furthermore, although it was possible to identify the main political and diplomatic milestones, a more in-depth approach to the daily life of the Gaza population would require other types of sources and methodology.

Several lines of research remain open, including: how did the experience of the Mandate shape Palestinian political culture in Gaza? What role did local leadership play in articulating resistance and negotiation? And how do colonial legacies continue to influence administration and political discourse in the Gaza Strip today?

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting this study are derived from publicly available sources and referenced within the article. No additional datasets were generated or analyzed specifically for this research.

DECLARATION on AI use

The author confirms that AI tools, including language models such as ChatGPT, NotebookLM and DeepL, were used solely to enhance the writing process, improve readability, and assist with grammar and formatting. All intellectual content, analysis, and critical arguments are the result of the author’s original work. The AI tools were not used to generate research findings or substitute independent scholarly work.