Globalization, Imperialism, and the Perspectives of Foreign Soldiers in the Middle East During the First World War

Leila Fawaz

Published online on: 10 Jun 2015

How to cite: Leila Fawaz. 10 Jun 2015, Globalization, Imperialism, and the Perspectives of Foreign Soldiers in the Middle East During the First World War from: The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates Routledge

Accessed on: 06 Dec 2018

https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315713120.ch1
GLOBALIZATION, IMPERIALISM, AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF FOREIGN SOLDIERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Leila Fawaz

The historiography of the First World War often portrays the war as an abrupt and brutal break from the age of globalization that preceded it. The world was headed toward greater commercial integration, the argument goes, until the First World War cut short this promising trajectory and triggered a dark spiral into deglobalization. Yet, such a narrative is only part of the story, because it assumes a ‘coherence and direction’ to globalization before the war and to deglobalization after it, while largely overlooking the fact that the war was itself a moment of growing global interconnectedness. While international trade and commerce came to a virtual halt during the First World War, other flows opened.

This chapter examines one such population flow – the massive influx of British soldiers and imperial subjects into and through the Middle East during the war. This brought various British imperial citizens and subjects – Englishmen, Welshmen, Scots, and Irish men, but also Australians, New Zealanders, Indians, and West Indians – into contact with the populations of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and, in making contacts, they developed perspectives and prejudices about one another.

The war unfolded in the Middle East and Africa, not only on the Western Front; it proved pivotal to incorporating these regions into global networks of imperialism. In doing so, the First World War did not just lay down new imperial structures, but also helped to crystallize existing prejudices, and to foster new stereotypes formed in the welter of conflict. On the one hand, soldiers drawn from different empires gained a first-hand knowledge that formed the basis of a mixture of condescension, disdain, and grudging respect towards the peoples of the region. On the other, local populations began to perceive imperial aims in a more negative light as they became caught in the territorial schemes of the colonial powers and as the horrors of war engulfed their homeland, tarnishing the lustre of Western modernity. Thus, the First World War was not just a moment of rupture, signaling a break from the globalized world of the years before 1914, but also a moment in which new networks of global integration were formed.

Did such contacts and encounters have lasting effects on the perspectives of outsiders to the Middle East and the local populations towards each other? In particular, did the relationships that
developed between military officers and soldiers – with each other and with the local populations during the war – affect the relationships that emerged in the subsequent transition period from war to the Mandate period and during the Mandate period itself? The answers to these questions can enrich our understanding of the ways relations between rulers and ruled evolved in the mandated territories, and of the legacy of suspicion these relationships have bequeathed to the Middle East. The argument here, however, is not one that depends on the framework of Orientalism, nor one that reduces all Western attitudes to racism. Rather, it stresses the dynamic, mixed, and bidirectional interactions of Western and non-Western, Arab and non-Arab, and other foreign and local populations.

This chapter focuses primarily on the experiences of British military personnel. The documents and memoirs of British soldiers and British officials dispatched to the Middle East during the First World War convey a range of attitudes from, at best, mixed opinions about the non-European soldiers and the local people they came in contact with, and, at worst, a profound disdain for them. It is all too human for people to transfer their feelings of prejudice from one outsider group to another. Moreover, these stances are remarkably similar to those British actors took towards other non-European groups such as Indian servicemen and Egyptian labor conscripts, which suggests the transfer and tailoring of common sets of colonial assumptions.

In some cases, these attitudes comprised a mix of respect for the martial skills of the non-European troops with ethnocentric assumptions about the soldiers' innate inferiority. Indian soldiers, together with other Commonwealth soldiers, were the backbone of the British war effort in the Middle East. By the time the armistice was signed in November 1918, India had provided over 1.27 million men for the war effort, and some 50 to 60 thousand Indian soldiers had died fighting for the British Empire in France and Mesopotamia. As the war progressed, it became clear to the commanding officers that the war sacrifice was too great to be paid by ‘white pepper’ (English) troops alone, so ever larger quantities of ‘black pepper’ (Indian troops) were rallied to meet British imperial needs. At times, it seems, the British commanders’ realization of how indispensable Indian soldiers were to the war effort exacerbated their feelings of ambivalence towards them. In addition, the commanders’ constant vigilance about the possibility of unrest, even revolt, among their troops underscored Britain’s awareness of its dependence on Indian manpower. In moments of crisis, such as during an attempted mutiny by Indian soldiers in Mesopotamia, “brutal suppression . . . was an indication of how seriously the British had always regarded this eventuality.”

One British brigadier general betrayed his own bias when he argued that Indian troops “cannot fight without white officers whom they know.” General Charles Townsend, famously associated with the Mesopotamia campaign of 1915–1916 and the British defeat at Kut in the spring of 1916, showed a similar bias during the siege of Kut when he wrote that Indians were “utterly unfitted for modern conditions of war under periods of great stress” and that “Indian troops throughout the siege have been dejected, spiritless, and pessimistic, and there were considerable numbers of desertions to the enemy and many cases of self-mutilation and malingerer.” Revealingly, he reflects, “[h]ow easy would have been the defence of Kut had my division been an all British one instead of a composite one.” In fact, he hoped that the entire experience of working with Indian troops during the war would put an end to the “legends and fairy tales of the prowess of the Indian soldiers.”

British accounts of Ottoman troops show a more ambivalent attitude, hailing Turkish martial valour while also generalizing about the personal qualities of Ottoman soldiers. (These sources use the word ‘Turk’ to refer to Ottoman soldiers that included men from ethnic groups other than Turks.) However, they seem to have had particular respect for ethnic Turks – though this was qualified. A British soldier and writer who served in France and the Caucasus, and later
became liaison officer between the War Office and the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Palestine, damned the Ottoman Turkish soldiers with faint praise: “The true Anatolian Turk, in spite of short rations, poor equipment, and a complete ignorance of the causes and objects of the war, retained his morale, and fought well to the end.”13 Another British soldier specifically criticized the ‘Turkish soldiers’ lack of staying power, blaming it on a lack of education: “The exigencies of modern war demand also great technical skill to handle complex weapons and equipment, and the moral staying power that only a high level of education can give. Of these qualities the uneducated, illiterate Turkish peasant was entirely deficient.”14 Another British officer praised the ‘Turks’ as among the best fighters, but seemed to qualify that praise when he added that these Turks surrendered “when beaten, rather than being taken, if there’s any difference.”15

Religious differences came to the fore on the battlefield, underscoring cultural differences – and the British soldiers’ wariness – even more. British First World War memoirs yield many battle accounts of emboldened Ottomans charging across no-man’s-land to a zealous chorus of “Allahu Akbar.” One Australian soldier, in a letter to his parents, described the “courageous” Ottomans as “fanatics” creating a “shiver” among their British comrades with exhortations of “Allah! Allah! Allah!”16

On the other side of the war, German and Austrian soldiers praised their Ottoman comrades as exceptionally tough, but their observations were culturally bounded, as well. Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein,17 who was part of General Otto Liman von Sanders’s military mission to the Ottoman Empire shortly before the First World War18 and then served as chief of staff of the Eighth Turkish Army Corps, wrote that “the constant energetic supervision and guidance” by German officers of Ottoman soldiers was a prerequisite for effective defense.19 General Liman von Sanders, who trained Turkish troops and commanded the defense of Gallipoli during the war, also paid tribute to the “tenacious and steadfast prowess”20 of the Turkish troops, but argued:

It is a mistake to say that the training of the Anatolian soldier is impossible beyond a certain degree. The only trouble is that it takes a long time before he assimilates and comprehends the training for offensive purposes. Under good enterprising non-commissioned officers he will meet all requirements in the war of position, in short attacks and in scouting.21

Liman von Sanders shared with other European military leaders the belief that, whatever their shortcomings, the Anatolian Turks were better than those “of Arabian birth.”22

In 1917, Dr Harry Stürmer, a former German correspondent in Constantinople for the German Kölnische Zeitung, expressed his decidedly negative views on the Triple Alliance. Even then, however, he conceded Turkish bravery on the battlefield. He admired “the Turkish soldier with his stoical heroism in defence, and the brilliant attacking power and courage of the Anatolians,” and admitted that he had “gained a high opinion of Turkish valour and powers of resistance.”23 He adds, “In mess-tents and at various observation-posts I made the personal acquaintance of crowds of thoroughly sympathetic and likeable Turkish officers.”24 However, these congenial Turkish officers did not manage to spare their countrymen from Stürmer’s juxtaposition of the “brave but stupid Anatolians, accustomed to dirt and misery . . . [versus] . . . cultured and highly civilized men, sportsmen from the colonies who had hurried from the farthest corners of the earth to fight not only for the British cause, but for the cause of civilization.”25

In other instances of generalizations, opinions about the local population were even more negative. The British, who had declared a protectorate over Egypt at the start of the war, reassured Egyptians that they would not be deployed on the war fronts.26 Nevertheless, more than a million
and a half Egyptians served as unpaid labourers in the Egyptian Labour Corps and Camel Transport Corps and were also forced to work on various infrastructure projects. So apparent was the antipathy of British officers towards these Egyptian workers, and so visible was the officers’ abuse of the workers, that contemporary observers protested about it. British officers’ mistreatment of Egyptians extended even towards those seeking paid work.

With regard to Arab troops elsewhere, British and Ottoman Turkish officers occasionally ascribed dubious qualities to Arab soldiers and civilians alike. One British lieutenant colonel, describing his postwar interviews with Ottoman Ministry of War officers, observed that “[w]henever a ‘Turkish’ officer spoke . . . about the ‘Irak divisions’ . . . he always seemed to do so with an air of contempt which in reality they did not deserve.” An honorary American captain in the British army disapproved of Arab tribal opportunism and described “the desert Arabs” as hovering “like vultures in the distance waiting for nightfall to cover their looting.”

He repeatedly recounted how Arabs regularly crept into camps to pilfer ammunition stocks and rifles, which they promptly sold to the enemy.

Depictions of Arabs as dishonest and shamelessly mercenary are a frequent motif in British wartime accounts. For example, one account notes that the number of Arab fighters per unit was apparently inflated by local leaders, since “it was to the advantage of the sheikhs to exaggerate the strength of their following because they were being paid so much per man.” Arabs were widely perceived as “not only dirty and smelly,” but also “crooked and untrustworthy.”

When John Harding, British commander of the 162nd Brigade Machine Gun Company, 54th Division, was asked in a postwar interview for his opinion of Palestinians, he replied: “Not much. We hated the Palestinian Arab, he’s a terrible chap.” When asked why, Harding replied, “[w]ell they rob the dead, they mutilated the wounded and they made themselves thoroughly objectionable.” Harding then quoted from a blatantly vulgar Australian soldiers’ farewell ditty to Egypt:

\[
\text{Land of sand and stinking socks,} \\
\text{Syphilis and dripping cocks,} \\
\text{Arabs’ heaven and soldiers’ hell,} \\
\text{Land of bastards, fare thee well.}\]

The antipathy towards Arabs was so deep among some foreign officers that they described them as, essentially, less than human. A Venezuelan officer, who served in the Ottoman regular army under special arrangement during the First World War, claimed that he encountered an Arab scout who had preserved a colorful tattoo by amputating a British soldier’s arm. The officer concluded:

When I remember that this human hyena and his comrades, our Arab volunteers, one year later formed the picked corps dubbed the ‘liberating army’ of Emir Feizal, I am frankly unable to comprehend how civilized England and the humanitarian North American public could bring themselves to accept Feisal’s father, the Sheriff Hussein of Mecca, as co-signer of the Peace Treaty and member of the League of Nations!

To this officer, the “low-caste Arab recruit” was a “traitor, liar, and deserter by nature. The only way to subjugate and rule him is to pump him full of lead or lay on the lash.” He also believed that “Arab irregulars, in spite of their reputation for valour, are as a rule collectively rather timorous, and only attack in front when they have to do with recruits or with an adversary markedly inferior in number.”

The theme of Arab cowardliness emerges in these accounts again and again. British officers almost universally describe Arabs as poor fighters. In a confidential report sent by a British general in Baghdad to London, the general wrote:

From my knowledge of both classes, Arabs in MESOPOTAMIA and in SUDAN have not the same fighting value, latter being immensely superior. My experience here is that Arabs promise much and do little whilst they usually exaggerate their achievements. The case of our communications by river when before KUT is an instance of their inactivity and inability to do substantial harm.37

It was common for British officers to note that Arab troops were “not at present of great fighting value,”38 that they deserted easily, and that the “Bedouin, even under direct orders of Sherif Faisal, will not remain anywhere within fighting distance of the enemy, and are useless for night operations.”39 (That the Bedouin may have been deliberately practicing self-preservation apparently did not occur to the officers.) Even when the Arab soldiers showed spirit, it was – from the foreign officers’ perspective – for the wrong reason: “The Arab in fact does not wish to own allegiance to anyone, and he reserves to himself the exclusive right to fire on whom he pleases.”40

The landscape of the Middle East and the depths of history it represented awed foreign soldiers. As historian Priya Satia puts it, British personnel were intensely aware that the arid tracts between Indian Expeditionary Force D and Allenby’s troops further west “spanned the whole land of Holy Writ, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and from Babylon to Shush.” In private letters and published memoirs, they wrote of being “immensely moved by the close contact” with the Garden of Eden, Ezra’s tomb, the Tower of Babel, Ur of the Chaldees and other Old Testament sites.41

For many British soldiers, this proximity to biblical sites inspired courage on the battlefield, and some went so far as to entertain thoughts of reclaiming the holy sites for European Christians – a modern Crusade, as it were. In this way, the very countryside that caused such hardship inspired resilience and courage. However, as David Woodward notes, appreciation of the countryside did not translate into appreciation of its peoples:

Many members of the EEF [Egyptian Expeditionary Force] also developed an appreciation for Palestine – its rugged peaks and gorgeous ravines, wildflowers, blue skies, and magnificent sunsets. But many were as contemptuous of the Arab inhabitants as they had been earlier of the impoverished Egyptians. Ignoring the scarcity of water which made cleanliness difficult, they found both the local Arabs and their homes dirty and unkempt.42

Given such accounts by many of the Westerners and others in the Middle East during the First World War, it is not far-fetched to imagine that these deeply prejudiced attitudes inevitably tainted relations between Europeans and local populations after the war. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the foreigners who appreciated and cared for the peoples they came to know during the war and after. We know of the respect, even admiration that some officers felt for Arabs, Turks, or other indigenous groups, including that of the famed T. E. Lawrence. We also know that the much-maligned foreign missionaries cared about education, even if their missions left the inevitable mark of cultural imposition, and that some missionaries went beyond their
official duties in helping the local people – for example, aiding the starving populations during
the famine. The use of what we call soft power today meant that all sorts of seasoned, foreign
personnel dealt with local populations in constructive or amiable ways, whether for business or
to develop more long-lasting social relations with them.

Let us look at the region from the locals’ perspective now. While outsiders viewed local sol-
diers in the ways described above, the local conscripts and people had their own concerns. Their
views are so different from the foreign officers’ and soldiers’ perspectives that this great disparity
arguably foreshadows the future challenges in European–Arab relations.

Salim Tamari’s work on the First World War brings Arab perspectives to a whole range of
topics including how outsiders were perceived. He tells us about local observers who noted the
spread of sexually transmitted diseases among the townspeople and foreigners. They also noted
that these diseases were more widespread among the foreigners than among the local population,
and they referred to this behavior as “moral corruption.” Nonetheless, it is striking that they
were objective enough not to level all the blame on the foreigners, but rather on the condition
of war – a level of reasonableness rare in even the least biased foreign observers:

[when the German and Austrian soldiers arrived we found that they were worse [than
us]. We attributed their behaviour to their contact with the Turks. And when the Brit-
ish army arrived, we found that they were even more degenerate, for there is no vice
and immodesty that is beyond them. We concluded that war is the source of this moral
corruption, especially since the city population, and especially those who live in the
vicinity of army camps were much more degenerate than those who lived in villages
and towns away from military centres.]

Yet, this was a more generous view than that of other Arab observers, who were shocked by
what they saw as the moral decadence of groups of foreign soldiers in the Arab lands. Turkish and
Arab journalists and commentators noted the upsurge of prostitution in their cities and associated
it with the influx of foreigners. In Egypt, in particular, there was evidence that the presence of
foreign troops led to the spread of prostitution. No group had a more rowdy reputation than
the Australians and New Zealanders. They were regulars in the red-light districts of Alexandria
and Cairo, and their unruly carousing was mentioned in official reports. More generally, for
Australians and other troops, “outlets for stress included alcohol, malingering, grousing, absence
without leave and, at the extreme, self inflicted wounds (SIW).” While foreign soldiers harped
upon the immorality, thievery, and cowardliness of local soldiers, the latter and their families in
turn came to decry the loud, uncouth, and depraved manners of many of the Commonwealth
soldiers and others.

The foreign commanders’ accusations of lack of bravery on the part of the Arabs, in particular,
are also questionable. First, the urge to turn tail and run is a common phenomenon on the battle-
field, by no means limited to particular cultures or societies. Second, what is called ‘cowardliness’
may well be a sensible strategy of survival among conscripted and volunteer soldiers facing ter-
rible odds. We should not forget that the human losses amongst Ottomans during the war were
staggering. The Ottoman Empire might have mobilized three to four million people; estimates
of its losses vary. To the numbers of those who died or were wounded in combat should be
added those who succumbed to disease or malnutrition as a consequence of the famine that swept
through the Syrian provinces in 1915–1917, or those deportees who fell by the wayside during
long forced marches through grueling terrain.

That Arab soldiers showed courage and commitment to the cause of war is noted by a variety
of sources. Salim Tamari tells us about one decorated soldier who fought at Gallipoli, Gaza, and
Perspectives of foreign soldiers

Beersheba and had “little hesitation to sacrificing his life for the sultan and his Ottoman homeland.”48 Indeed, various British officers did remark on the bravery of Arab soldiers, providing a counterpoint to their compatriots’ more derogatory stances. Referring to the Arab Revolt, one source reported that “the Sherifian infantry, numbering about 300 advanced with great dash to within 300 yards of the enemy’s position, where they came under the concentrated fire of 4 machine guns,” which drove them to a halt: “There were no supports or reserves to throw into the line at the critical moment, and nothing but their individual bravery and tenacity enabled them to retain their position as they did for 6 hours, keeping up a hot fire on the enemy trenches.”49 The same source mentions another battle where, thanks to “the energetic efforts” of one Arab and one British commander, a strong Ottoman attack supported by artillery and machine guns, “with a view to completely defeating the Arabs in this area . . . opened fire on sleeping Arabs but owing to the latter’s mobility and the magnificent handling of two small guns by a handful of Regular Army troops, no great harm was done.”50

Conscripts on all sides also showed courage simply in dealing with the miseries of war. As the military historian Hew Strachan has noted, “disease was still a principal cause of death” in the First World War, as it had been in many previous wars.51 The heat of several of the war fronts “brought flies and then disease, particularly dysentery; water supplies were a headache.”52 One New Zealander made a comment, which, presumably, many other soldiers might have echoed: “What with fleas and crawlers my skin at present is nearly raw, but we all scratch – scratch.”53 The evidence is that the discomforts of war were overwhelming and yet, soldier after soldier endured them. This required courage and resilience from every survivor. This was all the more so for Arab soldiers and civilians, who endured such suffering while facing an enemy – or fighting for an ally – who had so little respect for them, in some cases dismissing them outright as practically subhuman. One might wonder whether these experiences could have set the stage for the deep-seated cultural dislikes and misunderstandings during the post–First World War period and the establishment of mandatory rule.

The ordeal of war also included interminable periods of waiting, which required stamina and resilience. In the words of one Ottoman captain who was wounded in Gallipoli, fought in Palestine, and then joined the Arab Revolt,

for weeks we waited, prepared, eternally watchful, tense, expectant: and each morning we arose to the endless patrol of British torpedo boats, far at sea; and each day’s end, before twilight crept upon the world and enshrouded it, in moving silhouette against the sky, we would see those British torpedo boats still in restless prowl. Three weeks without incident.54

Conversely, war also involved sudden and vicious combat, often accompanied by overwhelming fear.

A sensible British major who served in the Mesopotamia campaign wrote in his journal that

the wounded were straggling . . . plastered in mud, frozen with cold & starving; yet they were cheerful. This was probably due to the relief from the strain of this sort of fighting, but all the same, this war has shown that courage is as widely distributed a virtue among human beings, as it is among animals; in fact, it is more so.55

He understood that, for everyone involved, “war is war and pretty beastly at that.”56

The enlightened reflections of this British observer highlight the difference that nuanced perceptions and relationships in the war can make. One might wish that there had been more
European soldiers with the outlook of this even-keeled major, with his subtle observations. He ended a year of his journal noting that his observations were reflections of his personal viewpoint, but that he was aware that there might be other interpretations as well. This is refreshing: he understood that his individual perspective might not be definitive. More of this open attitude among his fellow foreign soldiers during the war could well have helped the transition to the colonial era that followed.

However, as we have seen, many of the European servicemen and officers who served in the Middle East looked upon local inhabitants and combatants alike with jaundiced eyes, their attitudes ranging from outright disdain to grudging respect for the martial qualities of Arab or Turkish fighters. The First World War, far from putting an abrupt end to the first age of globalization, signaled the elaboration of new networks of movement, bringing unprecedented numbers of military and technical personnel to the Middle East. But in doing so, it served to entrap the region in new global structures of imperial governance, and to lay down the foundations for enduring mutual suspicion.

Notes


3 Ibid., 210–213.


6 David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers’ Letters, 1914–1918* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 4; Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 122–123. Omissi puts the number of Indians who died serving in the First World War at 49,000. Bose estimates it was 60,000; see also, Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 185–86: “A million Indians served Britain in First World War; around the same number came from the white dominions. Two million Africans served, mostly with little choice and mostly as carriers and laborers, around a fifth of whom died of disease.”

7 Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, 125, 122. To avoid censors, Indians occasionally attempted codes, like ‘black pepper’ and ‘white pepper’ to distinguish between Indian/British troops: ‘Red pepper’ was also used to refer to British (white) soldiers in a letter written by an Indian soldier in code to avoid the censors. I thank Sugata Bose for information on this subject; see also Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.


10 Arthur James Barker, *Townshend of Kut, a Biography of Major-General Sir Charles Townshend* (London: Cassell, 1967), 193, 196–197. In these passages, Townshend’s view of Indian soldiers is qualified to some extent, as he believed the Indian Army would be more effective if it had “fewer regiments more highly paid and much more highly trained.” (emphasis in original)
Perspectives of foreign soldiers

11 Ibid., 197.
12 Ibid., 197; Bose, A Hundred Horizons, 62.
14 Wavell, The Palestine Campaign, 19.
15 David R. Woodward, Hell in the Holy Land: First World War in the Middle East (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 4, citing Diary entry of 18 October 1918 (‘With the Forces in Gallipoli and Palestine: A Diary’ by Signaler W. Marchant, Imperial War Museum, Marchant MSS Box No. 102.)
17 Mustafa Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 144.
18 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War in 1914, 80–83.
20 Liman von Sanders, Five Years in Turkey (Annapolis: United States Naval Academy, 1927), 104.
21 Ibid., 95.
22 Ibid.; Wavell writes of “the instability of the Arabs” and of “their inaptitude for regular warfare and prolonged operations,” but he does not directly compare them to the Turks. Wavell, The Palestine Campaign, 184.
23 Harry Stürmer, Two War Years in Constantinople: Sketches of German and Young Turkish Ethics and Politics (New York: George H. Doran, 1917), 38.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 39.
26 FO. 371/2672. No signature (possibly the ‘Financial Adviser’ mentioned in Antony McMahon [for A. Henry McMahon] to Right Hon Sir E Grey Bart, No. 113, stationery The Residency, Cairo, 25 May 1916), from FO. 21 March 1916, copy W. 51083/16, No signature, to “Sir” (no name), at the bottom of the page: (The Secretary of the Army): “I am to observe, in reply, that the status of Egypt is by no means on a par with that of His Majesty’s Dominions, and I am at the same time to call your attention to the proclamation of the General Officer Commanding the British Army of Occupation in Egypt, dated Nov. 6, 1914, in which it was expressly stated that ‘Great Britain takes upon herself the whole burden of the present war, without asking for assistance of the Egyptian people.’”
27 Charles Cecil Rowe Murphy, Soldiers of the Prophet (London: John Hogg, 1921), 85.
28 Kermit Roosevelt, War in the Garden of Eden (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1919), 112.
29 Ibid, 47.
30 Murphy, Soldiers of the Prophet, 103.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 187–188.
34 Rafael de Nogales Méndez, Four Years Beneath the Crescent (Reading: Taderon Press, 2003), 285.
35 Ibid., 247.
36 Ibid., 261.
37 For example WO 158/634, Secret, from General, Baghdad, to: London, repeated Egyptian Force, Cairo, x. 3061 3d, 4 August 1917.
39 WO 158/634, Unreadable signature, for Lt-Col, General Staff, Hejaz Operations, Stationery Hejaz Operations, Savoy Hotel, Cairo, 25 August 1918, to Gen Staff Operations, General Headquarters, enclosing report from O.C. Troops, Nn Hejaz, covering period 13 July–31 July; Enc. signed Joyce, Lieut-Col, O.C. Nn Hejaz Troops, Abu tisal, 13 August 1918 to Gen Staff, Hejaz Operations.
40 Murphy, Soldiers of the Prophet, 71.
43 For example, Mary Dale Dorman, personal journals, 1915 and 1916; Mary Bliss Dale, personal journals, 1916.


45 Beth Baron, Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 52.


47 James L. Gelvin, The Modern Middle East: A History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 180, notes that while Germany and France lost, respectively, about 9 and 11 per cent of their populations as a result of the war, estimates for Ottoman losses run as high as almost 25 per cent – approximately five million out of a population of 21 million; Edward J. Erickson, Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood, 2001), 210–211, notes that almost 26.8 percent of men mobilized were lost. In the case of Greater Syria, perhaps half a million people died: Linda Schatkowsk-Schilcher, “The Famine of 1915–1918 in Greater Syria,” in Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honor of Albert Hourani, ed. John P. Spagnolo (Reading: Published for The Middle East Centre, St Antony’s College, Oxford by Ithaca Press, 1992), 231, citing George Antonius, The Arab Awakening (London, 1946), 241; In Beirut, during the famine, the population plummeted from 180,000 to 75,000 from 1915 to 1916. See Elizabeth F. Thompson, Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon (New York, Columbia University Press, 2000), 20–21.

48 Tamari, Year of the Locust, 14–17; the quote is on 14.


51 Strachan, The First World War, 159.

52 Ibid., 119–120.

53 Ibid., 120.

54 Sarkis Torossian, From Dardanelles to Palestine: A True Story of Five Battle Fronts of Turkey and Her Allies and a Harem Romance (Boston: Meador, 1947), 37.

55 Major J. D. Crowdy Collection: United Kingdom, St Antony’s College, Middle East Center, Camp Wadi, 29 January 1916.

56 Major J. D. Crowdy Collection: United Kingdom, St Antony’s College, Middle East Center, Sannaiyat Trenches, 11 September 1916.