



Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East (Ala Notable Books for Adults)

By Scott Anderson

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A thrilling and revelatory narrative of one of the most epic and consequential periods in 20th century history – the Arab Revolt and the secret “great game” to control the Middle East

The Arab Revolt against the Turks in World War One was, in the words of T.E. Lawrence, “a sideshow of a sideshow.” Amidst the slaughter in European trenches, the Western combatants paid scant attention to the Middle Eastern theater. As a result, the conflict was shaped to a remarkable degree by a small handful of adventurers and low-level officers far removed from the corridors of power.

Curt Prüfer was an effete academic attached to the German embassy in Cairo, whose clandestine role was to foment Islamic jihad against British rule. Aaron Aaronsohn was a renowned agronomist and committed Zionist who gained the trust of the Ottoman governor of Syria. William Yale was the fallen scion of the American aristocracy, who traveled the Ottoman Empire on behalf of Standard Oil, dissembling to the Turks in order gain valuable oil concessions. At the center of it all was Lawrence. In early 1914 he was an archaeologist excavating ruins in the sands of Syria; by 1917 he was the most romantic figure of World War One, battling both the enemy and his own government to bring about the vision he had for the Arab people.

The intertwined paths of these four men – the schemes they put in place, the battles they fought, the betrayals they endured and committed – mirror the

grandeur, intrigue and tragedy of the war in the desert. Prüfer became Germany's grand spymaster in the Middle East. Aaronsohn constructed an elaborate Jewish spy-ring in Palestine, only to have the anti-Semitic and bureaucratically-inept British first ignore and then misuse his organization, at tragic personal cost. Yale would become the only American intelligence agent in the entire Middle East – while still secretly on the payroll of Standard Oil. And the enigmatic Lawrence rode into legend at the head of an Arab army, even as he waged secret war against his own nation's imperial ambitions.

Based on years of intensive primary document research, *LAWRENCE IN ARABIA* definitively overturns received wisdom on how the modern Middle East was formed. Sweeping in its action, keen in its portraiture, acid in its condemnation of the destruction wrought by European colonial plots, this is a book that brilliantly captures the way in which the folly of the past creates the anguish of the present.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, August 2013: Scott Anderson's *Lawrence in Arabia* is a marvel of a history book. The research is impeccable. The story is fascinating and unforgettable. And the characters are so compelling that they seem to have been plucked from a novel. During World War I, the course of the modern day Middle East was set by a handful of young, low-ranking actors who exerted oversized influence on the region. Anderson focuses our attention on four men: a minor German diplomat and spy, an American oilman descended from the Yale family, a Romanian-born agronomist, and T.E. Lawrence himself. As we witness the western nations attempting to carve up a region that they were never able to master, these adventurous and often duplicitous men come to full life--none more so than Lawrence. The amount of research it must have taken to write this book is astounding. But there is no filler here: this is the kind of detail that causes the narrative to pop, that makes it live and breathe, and it will keep you reading long into the night. --Chris Schluep

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review To historians, the real T. E. Lawrence is as fascinating as the cinematic version in *Lawrence of Arabia* is to movie fans. The many reasons interlock and tighten author Anderson's narrative, yielding a work that can absorb scholarly and popular interest like. Start with Lawrence's WWI memoir, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922). A rare-book collectible, it inspired many of the scenes in David Lean's film and is also subject to cross-referencing interpretations of Lawrence's veracity. For lyrical though Lawrence could be about Arab leaders and desert landscapes, he could also be enigmatically opaque about the truth of his role in events. Accordingly, Anderson embeds Lawrence and *Seven Pillars* in the wider context of the Arab revolt against Turkey, and that context is the British, French, German, and American diplomacy and espionage intended to influence the postwar disposition of the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Lawrence was Britain's agent in this game, and the other powers' agents, although none enjoy his historical celebrity, assume prominence in Anderson's presentation. Its thorough research clothed in smoothly written prose, Anderson's history strikes a perfect balance between scope and detail about a remarkable and mysterious character. --Gilbert Taylor

From Bookforum

We all know that the Western powers made (and continue to make) the same mistakes over and over in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but a skilled and perceptive writer like Anderson can provoke a kind of intellectual astonishment, a feeling of revelation. Anderson is first and foremost a storyteller, and his more analytic and sweeping passages often surpass the book's intricate rehashings of battles and field strategy. —Suzy Hansen

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ryan Daggett:

As people who live in typically the modest era should be up-date about what going on or details even knowledge to make them keep up with the era which is always change and advance. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice for yourself but the problems coming to

a person is you don't know what type you should start with. This Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East (Ala Notable Books for Adults) is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Judith Roemer:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? May be reading a book could be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the e-book untitled Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East (Ala Notable Books for Adults) can be fine book to read. May be it may be best activity to you.

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