

and war, “with the same detachment, rationality, and scientific curiosity, and emotional control” (233). In these essays Bell sought to push Bloomsbury’s values beyond Bloomsbury.

Bell’s ambivalence about Bloomsbury’s values arose out of every young man’s question: what was he to do with his life? He was his mother’s son, but he was also his father’s son, with a love for the outdoor life, hunting, and fishing—the *vita activa* not the *vita contempliva*. His parents’ pacifism would not do. Bell needed action, as he had pointed out in his fellowship dissertation. Teaching in China led him to think that “softness,” that is, romantic, sentimental thinking, and vagueness, was the chief Chinese intellectual vice. And this led him to feel (and fear) that there might be a strain of softness in Bloomsbury, perhaps even in himself. His was more than a generational revolt; it was an effort to come to grips not only with his own life’s purpose but also with the meaning of the culture in which he had been raised. He came to feel that pacifism was a failure to resist fascism. On returning from China, Bell went to Cambridge and read a paper to the Apostles on the military virtues. His parents and their friends recognized a change in him. Stansky notes, “[h]e wore his Chinese robe like an armor, protecting himself against their love and solicitude” (255). In a view he shared with Gilbert Murray’s daughter, Bell regarded liberalism as “political romanticism: it has no innate sense of human baseness, and can only move between illusion and disillusion” (248). Rosalind Murray rejected her father and turned to Rome; Julian Bell rejected his mother and turned to Spain.

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CHARLES TOWNSHEND. *When God Made Hell: The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq, 1914–1921*. London: Faber and Faber, 2010. Pp. 624. £10.99 (paper). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2013.49

“I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.” These words were spoken not in 2003 as British forces swept into Basra as part of George W. Bush’s invasion of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Instead, they were uttered in Baghdad on 19 March 1917 by the commander of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Maude. Written by arch-imperialist Sir Mark Sykes, the *Proclamation of Baghdad* eerily foreshadowed the sort of sentiments that nine decades later could have come directly from the mouths of George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, or Tony Blair.

The military campaign in Mesopotamia lasted from November 1914 to November 1918. In addition to providing an example of Western intervention that was to be emulated three times (in 1941, 1991, and 2003), it framed the way for the creation of the modern state of Iraq in 1921. It thus represented the formative politico-historical development in modern Iraqi history. Yet that outcome was not the result of a coherent or consistent policy but rather stemmed from “a sequence of unintended consequences,” as Charles Townshend notes in his introduction to the most recent English-language history of the campaign. *When God Made Hell: The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq, 1914–1921* provides a searing account of military and political history and demonstrates how the decisions made during and immediately after the war continue to reverberate today.

Inexplicably, the Mesopotamia campaign remains comparatively neglected in First World War literature. Ghassan Atiyyah’s magisterial *Iraq: 1908–1921—A Socio-Political Study* was published by the Arab Institute for Research and Publishing in Beirut in 1973. It contains an extensive account of the war compiled from Ottoman and Iraqi historical archives, the latter since destroyed. More recently, Mohammad Gholi Majd’s *Iraq in World War I: from Ottoman Rule to British Conquest* (University Press of America, 2006) painstakingly synthesizes Iraqi and Western sources to reconstruct the impact of conflict on local political,

economic, and social patterns. However, no single-volume campaign history had appeared since A. J. Barker's pioneering (and aptly titled) *The Neglected War*, published (also by Faber) in 1967.

Townshend does an admirable job of weaving together an immensely readable narrative from the mass of declassified archival material unavailable to Barker. He describes how the initially limited strategic aims of the small Indian army force that captured Basra in November 1914 eventually gave way to British "imperial expansion on a dizzying scale" (xxiii) after the seizure of Baghdad in March 1917. Along the way, the British and Indian armies suffered one of their most humiliating defeats at Kut in April 1916. Curiously, the commander of the 6th Indian Division, which surrendered following a four-month Ottoman siege, was also named Charles Townshend, no relation to the eponymous author, a professor of international history at Keele University.

*When God Made Hell* is organized into four sections, each named after a defining geographical phase of the campaign: "Basra," "Kut," "Baghdad," and "Mosul." This structure neatly encapsulates the steady expansion of Britain's objectives. Initially, the forward momentum was provided by a succession of "cheap military successes" that opened up "enticing possibilities" of taking Baghdad to offset the setback at the Dardanelles in 1915 (133). A lack of strategic direction and operational oversight in London meant that responsibility devolved onto the commanders on the ground. This ad hoc arrangement failed to identify the alarming gaps in intelligence on enemy intentions or the crippling logistical breakdown that culminated in defeat at the battle of Ctesiphon in November 1915 and the subsequent retreat to Kut. Thereafter, British policy focused on reorganizing and redoubling its military effort. This was deemed necessary by imperial officials concerned that "so heavy a blow to British prestige would trigger a wider catastrophe in the East" (259). Notably, this did not happen, in part because Baghdad was finally occupied on 11 March 1917. This opened up "heady possibilities" among imperial dreamers both in London and in Delhi keen to develop grandiose agricultural and settlement projects in the region (369). Although its significance to the wider war effort against Constantinople now ceased, military operations in Mesopotamia continued until the very end; Mosul was occupied eleven days after the Armistice of Mudros ended the Ottoman war on 30 October 1918.

British attention then shifted to finding the political justification for retaining control of the three provinces of Mesopotamia at the postwar peace conferences. The final part of Townshend's book assesses the legacy of political decisions made immediately after the war ended. These were instrumental in shaping the nature of the Iraqi polity that emerged from the al-Thawra al-Iraqiya al-Kubra (the Great Iraqi Revolution) that erupted in backlash in 1920. Their enduring relevance was demonstrated in 2003 as one of the largest insurgency groups named itself the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade in an attempt to appropriate the record of resistance to foreign occupation across the ages. *When God Made Hell* would have been required reading for policymakers had it been available in 2003; instead, it fills a vital gap in contemporary military and political history and the turbulent intersection of war and state creation in the modern Middle East.

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JUDITH R. WALKOWITZ, *Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012. Pp. 432. \$40.00 (cloth).  
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2013.50

Over the course of her distinguished career, Judith Walkowitz has earned a well-deserved reputation as a preeminently innovative historian of the modern urban experience. The publication