

TEACHERS & SCHOOL STAFF FOR PALESTINE VICTORIA

# TEACHING FOR CHALLENGING ANZAC DAY PALESTINE



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# INTRODUCTION

Teachers and School Staff for Palestine Victoria produced this resource as a contribution to the global movement to end the genocide in Gaza. History is powerful, and our students deserve a better understanding of Australia's historical and ongoing role in the oppression of the Palestinian people, not the uncritical reverence that the Anzac mythology permits and perpetuates. We hope you can use this resource to enable rigorous, critical and empowering education.

We are very grateful to Micaela Sahara and Sary Zananiri for their support in creating this resource. Teachers and School Staff for Palestine Victoria take responsibility for all errors.

*Teachers and School Staff for Palestine Victoria, 2024.*

You can find our other material here:

Teaching for Palestine Guide: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/10gDkpm\\_-EYb3Gd817Xo2suL\\_5OInbZ1O/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10gDkpm_-EYb3Gd817Xo2suL_5OInbZ1O/view)

Weapons Out of Classrooms Campaign  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/13kmFUIk-mcJb6KV1w66BJmidf8\\_HZ0Is/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13kmFUIk-mcJb6KV1w66BJmidf8_HZ0Is/view)

Teachers and School Staff for Palestine Victoria Website  
<https://sites.google.com/view/tss4p/home>

# **SARAFAND AL-'AMAR: ANZAC DAY AND THE HALF-REMEMBERED HISTORY OF THE ANZACS IN PALESTINE**



Schools in Australia are deliberate targets for government funded mystification about the country's role in wars. Victorian Year 9 and 10 students can enter three different government sponsored prizes about Anzac day, including the Victorian Premier's "Spirit of Anzac Prize". Primary school children have been recruited in the production of war memorial soundscapes and writing messages of thanks on dead soldiers' graveside crosses.

Such instances of official remembrance obscure the realities of war, and the consequences of Australia's role in imperialism and militarisation. As teachers, we should strive to resist this, and we should introduce our students to the real history of the ANZACs - in Palestine and elsewhere.

# WHAT DOES PALESTINE HAVE TO DO WITH ANZAC DAY?

Few students and teachers sitting through the annual Anzac ceremony would associate Anzac day with Palestine, but the first ANZACs invaded Ottoman Palestine in World War I, and they took control of the land and the people for the British Empire.

After the armistice in 1918, ANZAC soldiers of the Light Horse remained in Palestine waiting to be demobilised and sent home to Australia. During this time, some of these soldiers returned to the Gallipoli Peninsula, where they engaged in what was described as the 'holy task of locating the graves of Anzacs, and in collecting trophies for the Australian national memorial collection', solidifying the nationalist myth of the Gallipoli Landings, the anniversary of which was already being observed as ANZAC day from 1915 onwards.[1]

Such acts of quasi-religious myth-making about the ANZACs have continued to this day. In 2017, to mark the centenary of the ANZACs' capture of Palestinian territory, then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, and opposition leader Bill Shorten attended a commemoration service at Beersheba with Benjamin Netanyahu.

In his official address, PM Malcolm Turnbull stated that the ANZACs 'like the State of Israel has done ever since ... defied history and with their courage fulfilled history. Lest we forget'.[2] Turnbull's words are striking, not only because of the monumental historical narrative that they invoke (the ANZACs 'defied' and 'fulfilled' history), but because of the way in which they situate the ANZACs as 'courageous' heroes who birthed two nations.

# WHAT DOES PALESTINE HAVE TO DO WITH ANZAC DAY?

Turnbull was right to connect the ANZACs' military successes with the creation of Israel. The Australian victories set in motion a series of devastating events, enabling the fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration, where Britain agreed, despite separate and contradictory promises, to recognize 'a National Home of the Jewish people' to be located in Palestine, and the establishment of a 'Jewish National Colonising Corporation for the resettlement and economic development of the country [Palestine]'.<sup>[3]</sup> In short, the British mandate was secured in part by the ANZACs, and this laid the ground for the creation of the state of Israel, while preventing the creation of a Palestinian State.

There are some other parallels with Israel that Turnbull did not draw. If both countries form their identities through stories of noble military successes, they both also hide a history of horrific, racially motivated violence against Palestinians. More than this, the brutal massacre committed by the ANZACs at Sarafand al-'Amar chillingly portended the Nakba, the catastrophic displacement of Palestinians in 1947-1949.

Turnbull did not share this more sinister parallel because it did not suit the heroic myth-making project of the Australian and Israeli governments to do so. As teachers, however, it is our obligation to bring this history to light.

# WHAT WAS THE SARAFAND AL-'AMAR MASSACRE?

Still waiting for demobilisation, the three brigades of the ANZAC Mounted Division remained camped in Palestine, close to the Mediterranean, when on the 10th of December 1918, after a bungled robbery, a New Zealand soldier was shot and subsequently died. Convinced that Palestinian people from the nearby town of Sarafand al-'Amar (which they knew as Surafend) were responsible for the murder, a group of vigilante ANZACs surrounded the town and demanded that those responsible be brought to them. When town leaders denied any knowledge of the events the ANZACs cordoned the town refusing to let anyone leave.[4]

Unsatisfied with how the matter was handled by army staff the next day, ANZAC soldiers took their revenge. As noted in official accounts, 'that which followed cannot be justified'.[5]

Early in the evening around 200 soldiers entered Sarafand al-'Amar, initially expelling some of the town's women and children. Armed with heavy clubs and bayonets so as not to accidentally shoot one another in the dark, the soldiers attacked the remaining townspeople. According to some accounts as many as 137 people were bludgeoned and stabbed to death.[6] One eyewitness recalled 'it was a most gruesome sight the manner in which their heads were bashed and battered'.[7]

ANZAC soldiers then proceeded to raze Sarafand al-'Amar to the ground; the flames from the burning town 'lit up the countryside' and those nearby could 'hear the shouts of the troops and the cries of their victims'.[8] The soldiers then proceeded to destroy an outlying camp and murder its inhabitants.

Although a number of injured and maimed survivors of the massacre were treated in allied field hospitals and both the Australian and New Zealand governments paid recompense for the destruction of property at Sarafand al-'Amar, no one has ever been held responsible.[9] The exact details of the massacre were deliberately obscured and ignored.[10]

Sarafand al-'Amar, however, 'should not be forgotten'.[11]

# THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL AND AL NAKBA

According to Palestinian scholar Walid Khalidi, the period of the British Mandate following World War I “as a whole, was seen by the Palestinians as an Anglo-Zionist condominium and its terms as instruments for the implementation of the Zionist programme; it had been imposed on them by force, and they considered it to be both morally and legally invalid.”[12]

In February 1947, Britain relinquished what it called the “problem of Palestine” to the United Nations (UN). Australia was pivotal in the UN investigation and partition of Palestine that created Israel.[13]

Following the end of the British Mandate and the establishment of the State of Israel, Zionist military forces enacted ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. This persecution is known as Al Nakba (the catastrophe). Al Nakba included the violent dispossession and displacement of at least 750 000 Palestinians and the expropriation of land amounting to 78 percent of historic Palestine. During Al Nakba, Israelis destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages, and killed 15 000 Palestinians in over 70 massacres.[14] The remaining 22 percent of Palestine, the former British mandated territories, were administered by Jordan in the West Bank and Egypt in the Gaza Strip.

Although UN Resolution 194 was the instrument through which Israel was granted recognition as a state, this was conditional. Palestinian refugees “wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date,” and compensation should be paid to Palestinians for the loss or damage of property.[15] This did not occur, and the status quo remained until 1967, when during the Six Day War, Israel expelled the Jordanian and Egyptian authorities and took control of the entirety of historic Palestine. From the stones of the destroyed Palestinian towns and villages Israelis built new settlements.

Today, as Israeli Human Rights organisation, B’Tselem, has recently affirmed, Palestinians living in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory live under an apartheid system which allows only Israelis the right to self-determination. In 2011 Israel passed the Nakba law under which indigenous Arabic is not recognized as an official language and the discussion of the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians in schools and other state institutions is forbidden.[16]

# AUSTRALIA - AL NAKBA

Recently, Israel has attempted to further legitimise its occupation through usurping and promoting the history of the World War I ANZACs in Palestine, focused primarily on the commemoration of the battle of Beersheba.

When the ANZACs captured Beersheba from the Ottoman Empire in 1917, Beersheba had a largely Palestinian Arab population, as it did throughout the British Mandate. Beersheba was never intended to become part of Israel under the 1947 UN partition Plan. Beersheba again became a battle ground in 1948 when the city was captured by Zionist terror groups and its Palestinian inhabitants were terrorised into fleeing.[16]

In 2007, the Pratt Foundation in Australia commissioned a statue for a theme park in Beersheba, set up in memory of Australian soldiers.[17] Australia's involvement in Palestine is etched in that statue, in the stone war memorials that are distributed across the Australian continent and in the ANZAC soldiers who lie in Gazan graves. But the real legacy of Australia's involvement in Palestine is in Gaza, only 43 kilometres from Beersheba, where Israel daily rains terror on 2 million Palestinian refugees, with Australian and Victorian government support. This support is not only moral, it is also material: between 2018 and 2023, \$13 million worth of Australian manufactured arms and ammunition have been exported to Israel. Despite Foreign Minister Penny Wong's overdue calls for 'an immediate humanitarian ceasefire', Australia's role as an arms dealer has contributed greatly and devastatingly to Israel's latest genocide in Gaza.[18]

In order to understand how such a complicity is possible, we must consider the way in which we are manipulated by the commemorations and the competitions which are trotted out each year on ANZAC day.

**In order to cease and prevent such a complicity in the future, we must show our students the past as it is, and not as our myth makers wish it to be; we must refuse militarism and turn towards the half-remembered graves of Sarafand al-'Amar.**



Bedouin children at the village of Sarafand al-'Amar, Palestine. Photo: Wynton Herbert, Wairarapa Archive.



New Zealand and Allied troopers at the village of Sarafand al-'Amar



BA photo of the village of Sarafand al-'Amar, Palestine, circa 1918-1919, taken by Wynton Herbert French. Wairarapa Archives,



Australian PM Malcolm Turnbull and Benjamin Netanyahu commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the 'Battle of Bersheba' with descendants of ANZAC troops in Palestine.

- [1] Karkar, Sonja. "The Anzac-Palestine Connection." Palestine Chronicle, October 31, 2017. Available at: <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/the-anzac-palestine-connection>
- [2] 16 Turnbull, Malcolm. "Speech at the Centenary of the Battle of Beersheba Commemorations – Israel." Tuesday, 31 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.malcolmtturnbull.com.au/media/speech-at-the-centenary-of-the-battle-of-beersheba-commemorations-israel>.
- [3] "The Balfour Declaration." Times (London), 9 November 1917, p. 1.
- [4] Gullet, Henry. "The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918." Volume VII of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918. 'There are a range of transliterations of Sarafand al-'Amar, including the shortened Sarafand and the imperial British name Surafend which was used by the ANZACS. For consistency, we have used Sarafand al-'Amar, unless citing the work of others'
- [5] Gullet, Henry. "The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918." Volume VII of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918. pp 786 – 787
- [6] Mulhal, A.S. In: Daley, P. Beersheba: Travels through a Forgotten Australian Victory. Centenary ed. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017
- [7] Daley, P. Beersheba: Travels through a Forgotten Australian Victory. Centenary ed. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017
- [8] Gullet, Henry. "The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918." Volume VII of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918
- [9] Daley, P. Beersheba: Travels through a Forgotten Australian Victory. Centenary ed. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017
- [10] Daley, P. Beersheba: Travels through a Forgotten Australian Victory. Centenary ed. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017
- [11] Gullet, Henry. "The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918." Volume VII of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918
- [12] Ramzy Baroud, "How Britain Destroyed the Palestinian Homeland", Al Jazeera, 10 April, 2018, Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/4/10/how-britain-destroyed-the-palestinian-homeland>
- [13] "Palestine Plan of Partition with Economic Union – General Assembly Resolution 181." UNRWA. Available at: [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org).
- [14] Remembered. Available at: [www.palestineremembered.com](http://www.palestineremembered.com).
- [15] United Nations General Assembly. "Resolution 194 (II)." UNRWA. Available at: [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org).
- [16] Bazelon, Emily (moderator). "The Road to 1948: How the decisions that led to the founding of Israel left the region in a state of eternal conflict." Panel discussion, 1st of February 2024.
- [17] Karkar, Sonja. "The Anzac-Palestine Connection." Palestine Chronicle, October 31, 2017. Available at: <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/the-anzac-palestine-connection>
- [18] "The Guardian, Australian arms and ammunition exports to Israel totalled \$1 over past five years, data reveals' (accessed 11/4/2024), [theguardian.com/Australia-news/2023/nov/australian-arms-exports-Israel](https://www.theguardian.com/Australia-news/2023/nov/australian-arms-exports-Israel)

# HISTORY SOURCE BOOK: ANZACS AND SARAFAND AL-'AMAR صرفند العمار



# SOURCE 1: CONFESSIONAL INTERVIEW WITH AN ANZAC, 1988

*Interview with Harold 'Ted' O'Brien, aged 89. Interview conducted by Major Doug Wyatt in 1988. Ted did not know he was being tape-recorded.*

T: That was where that big stink happened over there where a New Zealand sergeant was killed, [by] a Bedouin[1], pinching. And he chokes this fella and apparently there was some other people and they turned on him and they killed him ... So they got their heads together and ... the New Zealanders and the Australians, they went out to this village and they went through it with a bayonet.

DW: Did they?

T: Yeah. Broke the village up and everything. Oh, men and that, they'd string them up. That was that. When Allenby[2], he came to see it ... For days after you could hear these people, women and kids, trekking over the horizon. But, oh dear, it was awful. For a sergeant to be killed like that. And everyone was a bit het up with that sort of thing.'

Pause

T: You know, you do things you wouldn't normally do in this [sic]. But they did, they went in there ... Yes, a lot of dirty work... War, it's, you know, there's no beg your pardons about that. If you can get a fella dirtier, you get him ... war is a shocking thing, Doug, no doubt about that. No doubt. I never want to talk about it. I've had some dirty scrapes with that. It's shocking just what men'll do. Crikey.

Do you know, I could tell you something that I've never told anybody. When we got ambushed and there was ... before that, we went down in the north, a few of us and had a scrap and everything. There was one bloke standing up, dying on his feet, and we used to go through them—you know. We used dead coins and ... we was going to rob the dead sort of business. And I pulled my jackknife and ... I would pull his belt off like that and I let his guts come out, you know. He was gone as far as I was concerned ... Those sorts of things, you'd do them and you wouldn't think anything. In your own private life you never want to speak of it again.

[1] Palestinian people living in the Negev region, stretching from Gaza to the Dead Sea.

[2] Senior British Army Officer

*cont.*

...They [the dead bodies of Turkish soldiers] were in the barbed wire, you know, and everything. And then, afterwards, in the daylight, bodies lying everywhere like that. We used to pot-shot them and you would see them up like that and they'd bounce. Oh, dear, it was a bit of sport—but the wind changed. Crikey, the stink! I'll never forget it. Oh, it was a horrible stink that, no doubt about it.

...

Oh yes. And some New Zealanders. Well, I think perhaps the New Zealanders were the main ones [involved in the Sarafand al-'Amar massacre], because a New Zealand sergeant it was. And these Bedouins. They were wicked. The Bedouins, you see, you didn't know whether they were for you or not ... and they had to be treated as enemies, to finish up, you know ... You'd shoot them on sight.

DW: Were there any Tasmanians involved in that little incident?

T: Oh yes. Our squadron was there. I was down there. I don't know what I did with it, I was cranky and that. But they had a good issue of rum and they did their blocks. But I don't know.

DW: Was the entire squadron involved?

T: Oh no. I think it would be only the sergeants, from the sergeants down. I can't think how it was organised or anything like that, it just happened. And everyone did their block. This sergeant was a very popular man, you know. It was really these New Zealanders came round our lines and tell them about it—they decided they'd go in and clean it up. And they did, I think.

DW: And you went yourself?

T: Yeah, I was there, but I don't know if I did anything like that.

DW: [ Lists a number of names of other men from C Squadron, and asks O'Brien whether they were involved.]

*cont.*

T: We were all pretty well ... because it was our crowd that did it.

DW: [Asks if there were any repercussions apart from Allenby's telling-off]

T: No. Not from our personal crowd. They sort of wiped it off. It was one of those things. I think it got back to Australia and then I think Allenby sort of part apologised or something like that. But it was a wrong thing—it was bad, that's all. But there were these things that went on all the time.

DW: What did you actually do? Did you go in and wreck the village?

T: Oh, absolutely. Yes. It didn't matter. There was cows and ducks and geese. There were kids. But men. They all went for the men with the bayonet and they got it.

DW: The women then moved out, I suppose?

T: There were some left. And they trekked out. They left their village and they went away. It was a bad thing. It was a real bad thing.

DW: [Suggests to O'Brien that he should go and see Ian Jones' movie, *The Light Horsemen*, which had been recently released.]

T: I don't know, I was there long enough to get disgusted with the whole bloody thing. And I thought to myself when I come back I don't want to see anything like that again. It was ungodly.

*This interview was taped by Doug Wyatt, and Wyatt passed his tape-recording of O'Brien to the Australian War Memorial in 1990. The extract here is reformatted for accessibility, based on its transcription in: Daley, P. (2017). Beersheba centenary edition : Travels through a forgotten Australian victory. Melbourne University Publishing. The full recording and transcript are available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C88026>*

## SOURCE 2: EXCERPT FROM “HAPPY DISPATCHES: JOURNALISTIC PIECES FROM BANJO PATERSON'S DAYS AS A WAR CORRESPONDENT”, 1934

*“A New Zealand trooper was fatally knifed by an Arab thief who was robbing his tent; and the New Zealanders and their blood brothers, the Highlanders, organized a revenge party. They were sick and tired of being robbed and murdered by an allegedly friendly population, and they knew that nothing would be done unless they did it themselves.*

*A few Australians went along with them—there couldn't be any trouble on any front without an Australian being in it—and the revenge party followed the thief to his village, recovered the stolen goods, and killed every able-bodied man in the village. Then they threw the bodies down a well; filled the well up; burnt the village, and retired in good order to their camp which was within half a mile of Allenby's headquarters.*

*Paterson, AB. (1934) Happy Dispatches: Journalistic Pieces from Banjo Paterson's Days as a War Correspondent, Chapter 17 Lord Allenby (Continued), The Great Clean-Up*

## SOURCE 3: EXCERPT FROM OFFICIAL HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA IN THE WAR, 1923

*“To [The three brigades of Anzac Mounted Division] the loss of a veteran comrade by foul murder, at the hands of a race they despised, was a crime which called for instant justice. They were in no mood for delay. In their movement against Sarafand al-'Amar, therefore, they felt that, while wreaking vengeance on the Arabs, they would at the same time work off their old feeling against the bias of the disciplinary branch of General Headquarters, and its studied omission to punish Arabs for crime. They were angry and bitter beyond sound reasoning. All day the New Zealanders quietly organised for their work in Sarafand al-'Amar, and early in the night marched out many hundreds strong and surrounded the village. In close support and full sympathy were large bodies of Australians. Good or bad, the cause of the New Zealanders was theirs. Entering the village, the New Zealanders grimly passed out all the women and children and then, armed chiefly with heavy sticks, fell upon the men and at the same time fired the houses. Many Arabs were killed, few escaped without injury; the village was demolished. The flames from the wretched houses lit up the countryside, and Allenby and his staff could not fail to see the conflagration and hear the shouts of the troops and the cries of their victims. The Anzacs, having finished with Sarafand al-'Amar, raided and burned the neighbouring nomad camp, and then went quietly back to their lines.”*

*Gullett, H. (1923) Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Volume VII*

# SOURCE 4: IMAGE FROM TABLOID NEWSPAPER 'THE UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE AIF', 1933



"Sacker", Unofficial History of the A.I.F, Smith's Weekly p 16, 24th of June 1933

## SOURCE 5: PHOTOGRAPH OF SARAFAND AL-'AMAR, PALESTINE CIRCA 1918.



Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2018/dec/10/the-moment-that-forever-changed-my-perspective-on-anzac-mythology>.

# SOURCE 6: AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSEMEN IN GAZA, PALESTINE, JANUARY 1918



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P03631.008

Source: Palestine Remembered  
[https://www.palstineremembered.com/GeoPoints/Gaza\\_526/Picture\\_111021.html](https://www.palstineremembered.com/GeoPoints/Gaza_526/Picture_111021.html)

# SOURCE 7: PALESTINIAN SCHOLAR WALID KHALIDI'S DESCRIPTION OF SARAFAND AL-'AMAR صرفند العمار IN THE DECADES FOLLOWING THE MASSACRE, 1992.

*[During the British Mandate] The British established their largest military base in the Middle East in the area near Sarafand al-Kubra, thus "building it up" significantly. The British also built a prison for Palestinian activists next to it. At about the same time, in the late 1920s, the British burned Sarafand al-Sughra [smaller sister village 5km away], temporarily reducing it to a ruined state once again...*

*The population was composed of 1,910 Muslims and 40 Christians. The village had two elementary schools, one for boys and one for girls...*

*Adjacent to it were the al-Raja' ("Hope") Orphanage (for the children of Palestinians killed in the 1936–39 rebellion against the British), a public hospital, and an agricultural station. Agriculture was the main economic activity, with citrus being the main crop... Archaeological evidence in Sarafand al-'Amar suggests that the village existed in the Roman and Byzantine periods.*

## *Occupation and Depopulation*

*...A party of Haganah sappers carried out a raid on Sarafand al-'Amar on 15 April 1948. The attackers penetrated "deep in Arab territory," according to a New York Times report, and demolished a three-storey building. The British authorities stated that 16 people were killed and 12 wounded in the ruins of the building... Sarafand al-'Amar was probably occupied during the night of 19–20 May 1948 by the Second Battalion of the Israeli army's Giv'ati Brigade... The residents of the village probably fled or were evicted at the same time.*

## *The Village Today[3]*

*The site, which contains what may be the largest Israeli army camp as well as an air base, has been designated a military area. No more than six houses remain; most of them are deserted, but one or two are occupied by Israelis. The school is also deserted, its front yard overgrown with cactuses. The surrounding land is cultivated by Israelis.*

*Khalidi, Walid. (1992) All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948 (p. 457). Institute for Palestine Studies*

*[3] This source was published in 1992*

# SOURCE 8: THE BALFOUR DECLARATION, A PUBLIC STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN 1917.

Foreign Office,

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in  
Arthur Balfour

## SOURCE 9: LETTER FROM SIR HENRY MCMAHON, BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, TO HUSSEIN BIN ALI, SHARIF OF MECCA, OCTOBER 24, 1915.

*...As for those regions lying within those frontiers wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interest of her ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following assurances and make the following reply to your letter:-*

- 1. Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca.*
- 2. Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognise their inviolability.*
- 3. When the situation admits, Great Britain will give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government in those various territories.*
- 4. On the other hand, it is understood that the Arabs have decided to seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as may be required for the formation of a sound form of administration will be British.*
- 5. With regard to the vilayets of Bagdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special administrative arrangements in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests.*

*I am convinced that this declaration will assure you beyond all possible doubt of the sympathy of Great Britain towards the aspirations of her friends the Arabs and will result in a firm and lasting alliance, the immediate results of which will be the expulsion of the Turks from the Arab countries and the freeing of the Arab peoples from the Turkish yoke, which for so many years has pressed heavily upon them.*

*I have confined myself in this letter to the more vital and important questions, and if there are any other matters dealt with in your letter which I have omitted to mention, we*

*(Compliments)*

*(Signed) A. H. McMAHON*

# SOURCE 10: NEWSPAPER REPORT OF A SPEECH GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER JOSEPH COOK AT HORSHAM ON 1 AUGUST 1914

*MELBOURNE, Friday. In the course of a speech at Horsham tonight the Prime Minister (Mr. Cook) referred to the European crisis. He said, "I hope that reason will get the better of these passionate feelings that have been aroused, and that there may be peace ...*

*whatever happens Australia is a part of the Empire right to the full. Remember that when the Empire is at war so is Australia at war. That being so, you will see how grave is the situation. I want to make it quite clear that all our resources in Australia are in the Empire, and for the Empire, and for the preservation and the security of the Empire."* (Loud cheers.)

The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 August 1914.

# SOURCE 11: THE SARAFAND MASSACRE: NOT AN ABERRATION, BY VACY VLAZNA

*The Sarafand [al-'Amar] Massacre wasn't a one-off. The Anzacs were notorious for inflicting harassment and collective punishment[4] on Egyptian and Palestinian civilians.[5]*

*In Australians and Egypt, 1914-1919, Dr Suzanne Brugger records 4 incidents at Azizia, Bedrashein, Abu Akdar and Saft El-Malouk in which the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) in 1919 were involved in destroying Egyptian villages by fire, killing people by using excessive force.*

*A letter in the Egyptian Gazette in 1918 complained 'Insobriety'[6] and misconduct by the troops threatened to undermine the prestige of the white races and of the Allied forces [7] and dominant British regime in particular.' (Brugger p61)*

*Misconduct included brutal violence: "Men of the Eight Brigade on a route march near Tel el Kebir sniped at passing "gypos' until their targets fled over the skyline, Egyptian conductors were thrown from moving trains, and Egyptian stationmasters and minor officials were assaulted. The British soldiers are a sedate[8] lot in comparison with ours, boasted a Victorian private, "they don't knock the baskets of oranges off the heads of the natives, or pull boys off donkeys." (Bill Gammage The Broken Years, p138).*

*Other misconduct included- leaving without paying at brothels, not paying fares on trams, looting and burning trading booths, 'drunkedness, riotous behaviour and brothel-trawling', foul language, cruel and crude jokes, 'crumbling discipline'.*

[4] Punishing a whole group of people for the crimes of an individual

[5] People who are not soldiers or in the military

[6] Drunkenness

[7] Britain, Russia and USA in WWI

[8] Calm

# SOURCE 11: THE SARAFAND MASSACRE: NOT AN ABERRATION, BY VACY VLAZNA

*The accumulative offences were so grave that Brugger declares, 'the actions of the Australian troops in the past 5 years [1914-19] had contributed in part to this raising of the temper of the populace' for emerging Egyptian nationalism and the 1919 rebellion.[9]*

*Sometimes, a cover-up creates more violence than the original crime. The glorification and sanitisation[10] of war is a form of cover-up that leads to further wars.*

Vlazna, Vacy. The Sarafand Massacre and Anzac Cover-up, Part 2 Pearls and Irritations, May 2, 2019 <https://johnmenadue.com/vacy-vlazna-the-sarafand-massacre-and-anzac-cover-up-part-2/> [modified for accessible language]

[9] In 1919, the Egyptian people rose up against the British Occupation of their lands. ANZAC soldiers used violence to stop the revolution, but the strength of the revolution meant that Egyptian Independence prevailed

[10] Changing something to make it less intense or less offensive

## SOURCE 12: YOUSEF ALREEMAWI, THE DIRECTOR OF AVERROES CENTRE OF ARAB CULTURE, 2018

*"History is written by the victors. We were the ones defeated and no one cared about our narrative."*

Retrieved from: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/Surafend-massacre-100-years-on-a-dark-and-bloody-chapter-in-anzac-history/8ebsrv5hq>

# **RESOURCES FOR CHALLENGING ANZAC DAY**



# RESOURCES FOR CHALLENGING ANZAC DAY

## Videos

*Lest We Forget Beersheba/ Bi'ir as-Sab / Be'er Sheva*, Sary Zananiri and Australian Jewish Democrat  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=gSpwRAy6A7g>

*The Australian Wars*, Rachel Perkins  
<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/the-australian-wars>

*Alfred's War* (Children's book read aloud) written by Rachel Bin Salleh and illustrated by Samantha Fry, video by Wooyal Dreaming  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5u-ZpwrkJw>

## Images

*Lest We For/Get Over It*, Sam Wallman  
<https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/unsettled/fighting-wars/lest-we-forget-over-it/>

*The WWI Anti-conscription votes*  
<https://library.unimelb.edu.au/asc/collections/archives/resources/research-guides/world-war-one-collections/the-wwi-anti-conscription-votes>



# RESOURCES FOR CHALLENGING ANZAC DAY

## Articles

*The Anzac legend has blinded Australia to its war atrocities. It's time for a reckoning, Martin Crotty, Carolyn Holbrook* <https://theconversation.com/the-anzac-legend-has-blinded-australia-to-its-war-atrocities-its-time-for-a-reckoning-151022>

*Alan Tudge is dead wrong. Anzac should be contested – as it always has been* Paul Daley, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2021/oct/26/alan-tudge-is-dead-wrong-anzac-should-be-contested-as-it-always-has-been>

*Anzac Day: We've Already Said Thanks, It's Time To Move On, Chris Graham* <https://newmatilda.com/2016/04/24/anzac-day-weve-said-thanks-enough-its-time-to-move-on/>

*Perhaps this will be the time to do away with Anzac Day, Geoffrey Havers* *"Perhaps this will be the time to do away with Anzac Day", Geoffrey Havers, Honi Soit Thursday, April 24, 1958 (University of Sydney student newspaper)*

*The Anzac Day Lie , Belinda Lowe* <https://ethics.org.au/the-anzac-lie/>

*Anti-war debate muted as Australia marks ANZAC Day Ali MC* <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/25/anti-war-movement-sidelined-as-australia-marks-anzac-day>

*Lest We Forget Over It, Luke Pearson* <https://indigenoux.com.au/luke-pearson-lest-we-forget-over-it/>

# RESOURCES FOR CHALLENGING ANZAC DAY

## Articles (cont.)

*Lest We Forget*, Yassmin Abdel Magied

<https://independentaustralia.net/australia/australia-display/lest-we-forget-yassmin-abdel-magied,12615>

*What will you remember? Armistice, Anzac Day and the plight of the people of Gaza?* Amanda Wise

<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/remembrance-day-anzac-and-the-plight-of-people-of-gaza/103093026>

*Calls grow for Australia's Frontier Wars to be remembered on ANZAC Day*, Aaron Smith

<https://amp.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/24/calls-grow-for-australias-frontier-wars-to-be-remembered-on-anzac-day>

*Lest we forget the Frontier Wars*, Federica Caso

<https://independentaustralia.net/australia/australia-display/lest-we-forget-the-frontier-wars,13840>

## Play

*The One Day Of The Year*, Alan Seymour

<https://readingaustralia.com.au/essays/the-one-day-of-the-year/>

## Books

A list of general anti-war children and young adult books

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/war/>

Palestine Picturebook Collection

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/18Ohr43CoVeCh2-mHAjsnki87SJlkoY55GT\\_48HErtLo/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18Ohr43CoVeCh2-mHAjsnki87SJlkoY55GT_48HErtLo/edit)

# **PALESTINIAN ACTIVISTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT REGARDING ANZAC DAY**



*“As a refugee to this continent I can’t seem to wrap my head around ANZAC Day. While I absolutely respect the lives that were lost, I struggle to understand why Australia would be sending troops to fight in overseas wars that have nothing to do with Australia in the first place. I have seen war first hand and I have experienced the horrors of it and I know for a fact that Australia is complicit in these wars.*”

*It seems to me that Australia’s alliance with the US imperialist state will continue to drag us into wars that don’t concern our communities. It also seems that lately, our so-called governments are pushing for Australia to become one of the top ten weapons manufacturers and exporters. It is time that Australian communities come together to demand better of our governments. We must learn from past mistakes and stop wasting human life, whether it’s Australian, Palestinian or anywhere else in the world.”*

*“As a Palestinian–Australian, I had family on both sides of the First World War who fought unwillingly in both the Australian and Ottoman army, many never returning to either Jerusalem or Australia. 56,000 Australian troops died on the shores of Gallipoli. **The 1,000 First Nations soldiers who fought and returned from the war wouldn’t even become citizens of the Australia state until the referendum of 1967.***

*The impact of the war was the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of new modern nation states, like Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. In the last century, each of these has been embroiled in various conflicts since the creation of these colonial borders by the British and the French.*

*While ‘lest we forget’ remains the motto of ANZAC Day. **Today it seems to me that the ways in which we remember these traumatic events is a form of collective amnesia.***”

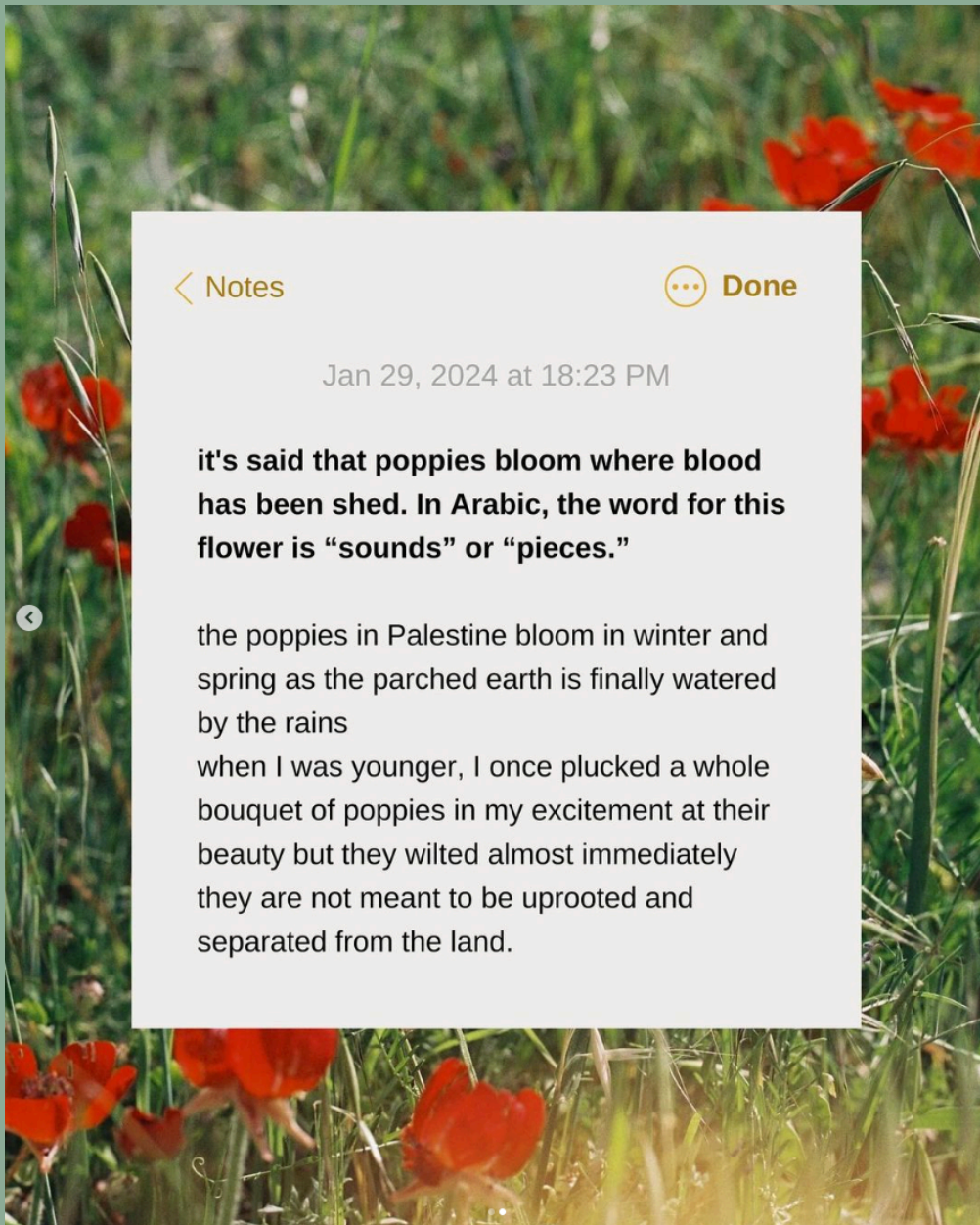
*“As a young man of Palestinian ancestry growing up in Australia I always had a very complicated relationship with ANZAC Day, Gallipoli and Remembrance Day. My father had actually seen war and he understood what it meant. My family came here because of what happened in World War One. **Whilst this country ‘lionises’ the Anzac sacrifice and what it meant to Australia, the reality of that sacrifice contributed to Palestinians’ loss of Palestine.**”*

*When the Palestinians rose up with the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire, against the Ottoman occupation of nearly 400 years, we did so because of a “promise”. We were promised independence. WWI was the end of the Ottoman Empire and the Palestinians were to get freedom and independence. What we didn’t know was that the British had colluded with the Zionists and signed the Balfour Declaration, and that Palestine had been promised to European Jewish colonisers, the Zionists.*

*My father, who was an anti-war advocate, taught us that **rich white people sent poor white and black and brown people to be slaughtered in Gallipoli** in the pursuit of empire. He taught us that those same ideologies are used when treasure and human sacrifice is expended to sustain empire. This can look like what’s happened in Iraq or in Afghanistan, and what might happen tomorrow in Taiwan, and what is certainly happening in the Middle East.*

***How could we celebrate or commemorate what was in effect the beginning of the end of the dream of Palestinian statehood?*** *The reason my father is buried in this strange land, and not next to his ancestors, in soil that his ancestors tended, was because of this concept of empire and imperialism and colonialism. It’s the reason that my father was ethnically cleansed from his home, while we grew up, disconnected from our culture and our lands and our ancestors, in a strange land.*

*There is a cognitive dissonance for a Nakba generation survivor in the fact that I have safety in the space of this colony. What my fellow Palestinians suffer because of colonialism is this genocide and the ongoing Nakba. So **there is a feeling of shame that we have safety, and a responsibility to exist as a part of our existence, and there is a struggle in reconciling these two positions.**”*





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