THE WORLD WAR I CAMPAIGNS OF
PAUL VON LETTOW-VORBECK AND T. E. LAWRENCE:
A COMPARISON OF TWO TYPES OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mao Tse-tung, one of the most successful practitioners of guerrilla warfare alive today, distinguishes between two types of guerrilla warfare.

The first type

is based on the masses of the people. . . . [Examples of guerrilla warfare of this type] have been carried on in the interests of the whole people or the greater part of them; . . . [they] had a broad basis in the national manpower, and . . . [they] have been in accord with the laws of historical development. They have existed and will continue to exist, flourish, and develop as long as they are not contrary to national policy.

The second type of guerrilla warfare directly contradicts the law of historical development. . . . [Examples of this type of guerrilla warfare] have oppressed the masses and have been contrary to the true interests of the people . . . . They are easy to destroy because they lack a broad foundation in the people. ¹

Both types of guerrilla warfare occurred in World War I. The Arabs who fought with T.E. Lawrence in Arabia waged a guerrilla campaign of the first type, for they enjoyed the support of the Arab people within the Turkish empire. The Arab leader, Sherif Hussein, revolted against the Turks in June of 1916 and seized Mecca. After being repulsed from Medina, the Arab

forces began to disintegrate. To bolster the faltering Arab effort, the British sent financial and material aid; to organize the battered Arab forces they sent military advisors such as T. E. Lawrence. Rather than attempt to create regular forces from the Arab forces, Lawrence led Arab irregulars in a guerilla campaign aimed at harassment and exhaustion of Turkish resources. By employing these tactics the Arab forces helped General Edmund Allenby's Allied forces destroy the Turkish forces in Syria and Palestine by September, 1918.

The guerilla campaign waged by the German forces under the leadership of General Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck in the colony of German East Africa did not have the support of the masses of the people. After leading his army of Europeans and askari (native soldiers) to victory at Tanga and Jassin in 1914, Lettow-Vorbeck realized that his forces could not continue to wage regular warfare. He exploited the mobility of his troops to avoid major concentrations of enemy forces. He fought only when geography favored his forces. From 1915–1918 the German forces continually retreated before overwhelming British forces; stubbornly defended every favorable position; frequently raided British supply lines; and always escaped enemy traps to fight again the next day. Only after learning on November 13, 1918 about the earlier Armistice in Europe did the German forces, then in the process of invading Rhodesia, surrender. The lack of popular sympathy for the German forces distinguishes this campaign as the second type of guerilla war.
The existence of these two guerrilla campaigns in World War I, each representing a different type of guerrilla warfare, invites comparison. The study examines the two campaigns to determine whether they comply with Mao's precepts on guerrilla warfare; to discover what caused the two military leaders to wage the type of war they did; and to ascertain how the type of campaign waged influenced the conduct of war in each theater.
CHAPTER II

TWO TYPES OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

Mao Tse-tung has written:

Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, cooperation and assistance cannot be gained. . . . Because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathy and cooperation.¹

The World War I guerrilla experiences bear examination by the light of this dictum.

I

The first question which must be asked is: Were both campaigns examples of guerrilla warfare? Mao defines guerrilla warfare in Basic Tactics as a tactic employed when it is not advantageous to meet the enemy in large-scale engagements. Therefore, he says, "We [the Chinese] send out commando units, or guerrilla units, which employ the tactics of avoiding strength and striking at weakness, of flitting about and having no fixed position, and of subduing the enemy according to circumstances, and . . . we do not oppose the

¹Mao, On Guerrilla Warfare, p. 44.
enemy according to the ordinary rules of tactics. Instead of employing the ordinary rules of tactics, guerrillas, according to Mao,

select the tactic of seeming to come from the east and attacking from the west; avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightening blow; seek a lightening decision. When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws. In guerrilla strategy, the enemy's rear, flanks, and other vulnerable spots are his vital points and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated. 3

The Arab operations which Lawrence organized and led certainly fit this definition of guerrilla warfare. Lawrence developed his conceptions on guerrilla warfare only after the Arabs had proven their inability to fight a regular way by failing to take Medina in June of 1916. Thereafter, Lawrence, concluded, the Arabs should not attempt to destroy the Turkish armies by direct confrontation, but seek to wear down the Turks with "pin-pricks" against their weak points. Lawrence not only practiced the doctrine of "avoiding strength and striking at weakness," he gave it a "negative twist" and declared that the Arabs should

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be weaker than the enemy everywhere except in that one point or matter [in which the Arabs were stronger than the Turks]." Thus the Arabs always denied the Turks targets:

Our tactics were always tip and run, not pushes but strokes. We never tried to maintain or improve an advantage, but to move off again somewhere else. We used the smallest force, in the quickest time, at the farthest place. If the action had continued till the enemy had changed his dispositions to resist it, we would have been breaking the spirit of our fundamental rule of denying him targets.  

Like Mao, Lawrence emphasized the need for his forces to use deception. While Lawrence's tactics did not correspond to the letter of Mao's favorite doctrine of Sheng Tung, Chi Hsi (Uproar in the East: Strike in the West), they did correspond in spirit. For example, in June and July of 1917, after making an "uproar" in the north by spreading rumors of impending attacks upon Damascus and by raiding railroads near Deera, the Arabs struck in the south and seized a weakened Akaba.

Lawrence's Arab irregulars also followed the tactic of attacking the enemy's vulnerable spots. The most vulnerable spot of the Turkish forces was

\[\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{4}}\text{T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph (Garden City, New York, 1935), p. 194.}\]


\[\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{6}}\text{Mao, On Guerrilla Warfare, p. 26, and Basic Tactics, p. 60.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{7}}\text{Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 285-291.}\]
the Hejaz railroad which supplied the Turkish army with food and ammunition.\(^8\) Rather than attack the Turkish strong point at Medina, Lawrence led the Arabs to Wedj in 1918 so that they could threaten the vital railway and thus force the Turks to undertake a passive defense of their lines of communication. Lawrence and the Arab raiders continually cut the railway until starvation and lack of supplies rendered the Medina garrison harmless.\(^9\) This tactic of attacking the weaknesses of the enemy considered in conjunction with the tactics of avoiding the enemy's strength and of using surprise and deception clearly qualifies the Arab operations as guerrilla warfare.

These same criteria characterize the German campaign as guerrilla warfare. Like Mao and Lawrence, Lettow-Vorbeck employed guerrilla warfare only after he became convinced that regular means of war were disadvantageous. After Lettow-Vorbeck defeated the British forces at Tanga in November, 1914 and at Jassin in January, 1914, the loss of German officers and heavy expenditure of ammunition forced him to conclude: "the need to strike great blows only quite exceptionally, and restrict myself principally to guerrilla warfare, was evidently imperative."\(^{10}\) Thereafter, Lettow-Vorbeck retreated whenever the

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\(^8\)B.H. Liddell Hart describes the importance of the Hejaz railway in The Man Behind the Legend: Colonel Lawrence of Arabia (New York, 1934), pp. 31-41.

\(^9\)Lawrence personally accounts for the destruction of seventy-nine bridges in Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 608.

enemy seemed capable of forcing his forces into a decisive engagement. He fought only when his forces occupied strong, natural defensive positions and the enemy troops occupied correspondingly weak geographical positions. Whenever Lettow-Vorbeck felt that the enemy forces were too strong for him to win a quick victory, he would break off the fight and retreat.

The German forces in German East Africa did not immediately adopt a pure form of guerrilla warfare after abandoning regular warfare. They evolved a system of guerrilla tactics only after a transitional period from January, 1915 to November, 1917. During this transitional period Lettow-Vorbeck's forces depended on central supply dumps for ammunition and food. This dependence on fixed bases forced the Germans to retreat along their lines of communication rather than "flit about" as Mao believed guerrillas should. To protect their supplies the German forces often had to engage the British army in such regular battles as Mahiwa in October, 1917. With their entrance into Portuguese East Africa in November of 1917, the German forces ceased to depend on supply dumps and began to live off captured supplies. Lettow-Vorbeck said of his decision to give up supply bases,

the increased independence and mobility used with determination against the less mobile enemy would give us a local superiority in spite of the great numerical superiority of the enemy. In the unlimited territory at our disposal it would be possible to withdraw from unfavourable positions. The enemy would be compelled to keep
an enormous amount of men and material continually on the move, and to exhaust his strength to a greater extent proportionally than ourselves. 11

The sudden and constant change in directions which characterized the campaign from November, 1917 until November, 1918 is an excellent example of the freedom of movement which characterizes all guerrilla forces.

The German East African Protective Force was characterized by its utilization of deception and surprise in its operations. The most elaborate example of deception in the East African campaign was a double feint executed by the German forces in 1918 in Portuguese East Africa. Realizing that strong enemy patrols were following his forces by a parallel route and that strong, hostile forces occupied the port of Quelimane, Lettow-Vorbeck struck at a village suburb of Quelimane to deceive the enemy forces there into taking a defensive posture. Furthermore, he hoped that the pursuing enemy columns, anxious about the port of Quelimane, would bypass the German position on their parallel lines and leave his forces free to advance in any direction, except towards Quelimane. With the success of this maneuver, Lettow-Vorbeck decided that his troops should feint towards the valuable port of Mozambique. While the enemy exhausted themselves in marches to defend Mozambique, the German forces recuperated for the final move towards the west. The success with which the German forces executed this tactic of what one might

11bid., p. 272. For a full appreciation of the German force's ability to "flit about" see the map of German movements in Portuguese East Africa, p. 297.
call "Uproar in the south, Uproar in the north, strike in the west," revealed that they were proficient practitioners of the art of deception.  

Like Lawrence, Lettow-Vorbeck realized the importance of wearing down the enemy forces by attacks on their line of communications. Even during 1914 when Lettow-Vorbeck viewed the campaign as primarily regular warfare, he organized raiding parties to constantly harass the Uganda railroad on which the British position in Uganda depended. In one two-month period alone these raiding parties destroyed thirty trains and ten bridges thereby making travel along the vital railway very hazardous. After the British pushed the German forces away from the railway, German raiding parties continued to disrupt British supply lines. Raiding parties were not the only means by which Lettow-Vorbeck weakened his enemy's line of communications. Lettow-Vorbeck, in effect, attacked the British supply lines simply by withdrawing his troops into the African bush. The British supply lines were, perforce, extended over the difficult terrain and more exposed to rhinoceros charges, tropical diseases, and a host of other hazards typical of East Africa.

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14 Francis Brett Young gives a personal account of the difficulties which a British ambulance driver encountered in this campaign in Marching on Tanga: With General Smuts in East Africa (New York, 1917), pp. 95-164.
Whatever the means, Lettow-Vorbeck's harassment of the enemy line of communications conforms to Mao's conception of guerrilla warfare.

II

Thus, according to Mao's definition, both the Arab Revolution and the German East African campaign were examples of guerrilla warfare. But could the two campaigns depend on popular support?

Lawrence and the Arab forces definitely enjoyed the "sympathy, cooperation, and assistance" of the people. Hussein's rebellion against the Turks in the name of Arab independence appealed to an Arab people who already experienced a smoldering nationalism. Before the outbreak of war, the Arabs chafed under the Turkish yoke and organized as vehicles of their nationalism the Fethah, Ahad and other secret societies working for the national liberation of Arabia. ¹⁵ The execution of Arab nationalists by the Turks in 1916 further aroused Arab feelings against the Turks. Indeed, the martyrdom of Arab nationalists made Arab independence a popular cause. ¹⁶

When Lawrence arrived in Arabia, he became convinced of the need to have popular support for the revolution. He concluded, "It [the rebel movement] must have a friendly population, not actively friendly but sympathetic to the point

¹⁵ Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 46–48.

¹⁶ Lawrence describes the fervid nationalism of the Arabs in Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 100–106.
of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2 per cent active in a striking force, and 98 per cent passively sympathetic.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, he viewed the primary goal of the Arab forces as the conversion of the Arab people to the Arab cause, not the destruction of the Turkish army. He conceived of his forces becoming "an influence, . . . , an idea, a thing invulnerable, intangible, blowing where we listed. Our kingdoms lay in each man's mind."\textsuperscript{18} Following Lawrence's advice, the Arab forces spread the infection of Arab nationalism until Lawrence could report "the civil population of the enemy area was wholly ours without pay or persuasion."\textsuperscript{19}

The Arab forces which gathered to fight for Arab independence constituted a people's army; an army which, in Mao's words, represents "military strength organized by the active people and inseparable from them."\textsuperscript{20} Those Arabs who actively opposed the Turks were not professional soldiers and they were not members of an institution which had interests separate from those of the masses of the people. The rebels were members of Arab society; they were tailors from the cities, tribesmen from the desert and shepards from the hills; their interests were the interests of Arab society. Thus, when Feisal's army

\textsuperscript{17}Lawrence, \textit{The Essential T.E. Lawrence}, p. 214.

\textsuperscript{18}Lawrence, \textit{Seven Pillars of Wisdom}, p. 192.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 385.

\textsuperscript{20}Mao, \textit{On Guerrilla Warfare}, p. 50.
descended on Wedj in 1917, the old Arab with Lawrence was correct in exclaiming: "it is not an army, it is a world which is moving on Wedj."\textsuperscript{21}

While the Arab rebels had won the sympathy of the Arab people, the German forces in East Africa lacked popular support. Only the minuscule European population had an interest in the outcome of the war and only the European population gave its wholehearted support to the German forces. The native population, which composed the overwhelming majority of the colony, had no stake in this war among Europeans. A Masai tribesmen stated the native position clearly: "It makes no difference to us whether the English or the Germans are our masters."\textsuperscript{22} Generally the natives assumed a neutral attitude towards the war. Yet Lettow-Vorbeck found it necessary to station troops in the interior of the colony to insure against native insurrection.\textsuperscript{23} Despite this action the native uprisings in the colony revealed that the German East African Protective Force lacked the support of large segments of the native population.\textsuperscript{24}

The German East African Protective Force was not a people's army but a professional force maintained for the protection of the European community.

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\textsuperscript{21}Lawrence, \textit{Seven Pillars of Wisdom}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{22}Lettow-Vorbeck, \textit{Reminiscences}, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., pp. 87, 159, 196.
\end{flushright}
in the colony. Its interests were separate from those of the majority of the people in German East Africa. Those natives who became askari ceased to be members of native society. German officers trained the askari until the black soldiers lost their old tribal loyalties and began to identify their interests with those of the army rather than those of the native community. This training proved very effective for the askari who, upon retiring from the forces, formed their own communities rather than returning to their old tribal homes.\textsuperscript{25} Even more symptomatic of the German success in training the askari to think of themselves as something apart from native society was the use of the askari to suppress native uprisings.\textsuperscript{26} The East African Protective Force was not an instrument of the people.

III

Were the campaigns successful? Mao wrote:

The principal function of an army's weapons is simply to kill the enemy, and an army's final aim is simply to reduce or destroy the enemy's fighting strength.\textsuperscript{27}

Mao suggested several ways in which guerrilla forces could fulfill these functions. They could kill the enemy outright, destroy the enemy's material, or

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 10.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{27}Mao, Basic Tactics, p. 51.
distract the enemy from strategic points at decisive moments. Both the Arabs and the German forces in East Africa succeeded in using these means to accomplish the "final aim" of an army.

Lawrence and an Arab contingent of less than 3,000 men captured or destroyed the Turkish Fourth army of approximately 20,000 men, the 1,200 Turkish soldiers at Akaba and an indeterminable number of Turkish troops in numerous raids and battles throughout Arabia.\textsuperscript{28} Lettow-Vorbeck's forces were nearly as successful in destroying the strength of the enemy. Lettow-Vorbeck calculated that the British lost 20,000 in European and Indian troops in the conflict as well as 40,000 black askari in fighting his 13,000 men.\textsuperscript{29} In addition the Portuguese and Belgians lost large numbers of European and black troops in the conflict.

Both guerrilla forces proved efficient in destroying the material of their enemies. Liddell Hart concluded that the Arab's "strategy of material attrition . . . came far nearer to using up the enemy's reserves that the strategy of physical attrition had done in other theaters."\textsuperscript{30} Indeed, the frequent demolition operations along the Hejaz railroad had exhausted the Turkish supply of rails.


\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Colonel Lawrence}, p. 302.
by the end of the war so that the Turkish garrison's connection with the main Turkish forces was cut. Although the German forces proved adept at destruction of enemy railways, they proved even more capable of destroying the horses and oxen teams on which British transportation depended.\textsuperscript{31} The tse-tse fly proved a valuable ally to the Germans in the destruction of British transportation animals: together they killed 140,000 horses and mules making the maintenance of the British supply line extremely difficult.\textsuperscript{32}

Both campaigns proved to be classic examples of the ability of guerrilla forces to distract men and material from decisive theaters. During June and July of 1918, nearly half of the Turkish forces south of Damascus were distracted by the Arab forces and pinned down east of the Jordan where they could play no part in the decisive Palestine campaign. While Allenby concentrated his 69,000 troops against approximately 16,000 Turkish troops, Arab guerrilla activity occupied the 2nd and 8th Army Corps of the Turkish army as well as garrisons of Turkish troops along the Hejaz railway.\textsuperscript{33} In addition, the Turkish troops in Medina and Southern Arabia were rendered impotent by the Arab destruction of the Hejaz railway. Liddell Hart concluded that "it would be difficult to find in the

\textsuperscript{31}Angus Buchanan describes how lack of supplies constantly plagues the Royal Fusiliers in \textit{Three Years of War in East Africa} (New York, 1919), pp. 183-188.

\textsuperscript{32}Lettow-Vorbeck, \textit{Reminiscences}, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{33}Liddell Hart, \textit{Colonel Lawrence}, p. 302.
whole history of war as extraordinary a case of economy of force in distraction. Yet Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign was an even more extraordinary case of economy of force in distraction. Lettow-Vorbeck calculated that his 13,000 troops diverted 300,000 British troops and 130 generals from the all-important European theater. Furthermore, the campaign cost the British 600 million pounds. These two guerrilla campaigns proved as successful in reducing the enemy's strength by diverting it from decisive theaters as they did in reducing the enemy's strength by destroying its men and material.

Both the operations of the Arabs with Lawrence and those of the German East African Protective Force of Lettow-Vorbeck qualify as examples of guerrilla warfare. And both forces succeeded in accomplishing the military tasks which Mao has prescribed for guerrilla forces. Yet Lawrence actively sought popular support for the Arab forces while Lettow-Vorbeck did not. To discover the cause for the difference in their approaches to local populations, one must examine the attitudes of the two men.

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34Ibid., p. 303.

35Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 20, and Mein Leben (Munich, 1957), p. 123. Arning estimated the number of Allied forces diverted to East Africa as 250,000. He also reckons (Vier Jahre Weltkrieg, p. 323) that the 2,000 Schutztruppe in Portuguese East Africa opposed 120,000 Allied troops.

36Lettow-Vorbeck, Mein Leben, p. 123.
CHAPTER III

ATTITUDES AND AIMS

Lawrence and Lettow-Vorbeck represented two opposing schools of thought. Lettow-Vorbeck, whose society, profession and personal experience favored the development of colonial ideas, accepted an imperialistic weltanschauung. Lawrence, whose society was in the process of questioning the value of empire and whose personal experience contradicted colonial conceptions, developed an anti-imperialist viewpoint. Each man's attitude affected his conception of the war aims for their respective theaters. In turn, the war aims determined whether or not the two forces sought popular support.

I

The times and society in which Lettow-Vorbeck grew up naturally pre-disposed him toward imperialistic ideas. He was born in 1870: the year after energies formerly absorbed in German unification were freed to be diverted outward.¹ During the years he attended school at Frankfurt and Berlin, German missionaries, businessmen, and explorers slowly persuaded the German

¹Mary Townsend, European Colonial Expansion since 1871 (Chicago, 1941), p. 71.
people that it was necessary for the new nation to obtain colonies in Africa and Asia. ² Soon after Lettow-Vorbeck enrolled in the Kadettenanstalt in Berlin, Bismarck, for a variety of political and diplomatic reasons, modified his traditional policy of refusing to involve Germany in the quest for colonies. By 1885 Germany had acquired German East Africa, Southwest Africa, Togoland, Cameroon, and German New Guinea. ³ By the time Lettow-Vorbeck was twenty-one, the debate which had accompanied the German venture of imperialism was resolved. With the exception of a faction of the Social Democrats, colonialism had been accepted by most of German society as a policy of unquestionable value. ⁴ From 1892-1914, when Lettow-Vorbeck served in the army, the German people responded enthusiastically to Kaiser William's vision of gaining for Germany "a place in the sun" while continuing to support Germany's colonial policy. ⁵

Whatever imperialist ideas German society instilled in Lettow-Vorbeck, they were reinforced by his connection with the military. The Lettow-Vorbeck


³Townsend, Colonial Expansion, pp. 156-168.


⁵German enthusiasm for colonial expansion continued during the war. See Emil Zimmerman, The German Empire of Central Africa, with an introduction by Edwyn Devan (New York, 1918), pp. 5-22.
family was traditionally a military family and Lettow-Vorbeck's father had been a Prussian general. Lettow-Vorbeck followed the family tradition and became a professional soldier. This connection with the military made Lettow-Vorbeck susceptible to imperialist ideas and attitudes for, as J.A. Hobson was to point out, "the services are, of course, imperialist by conviction and professional interest." As in Britain and France, the military took an early interest in Germany's colonial effort. Captaia Hermann von Wissmann, later Major, had been the first white man to cross central Africa from east to west. Often colonial administrators were military officers such as Major Wissmann and Major Liebert, governors of German East Africa, and Major Theodor Leutwein, governor of the Cameroons. The military continued to favor colonialism until the war.

Lettow-Vorbeck's immersion in the German colonial effort during his military career increased his vulnerability to colonial ideas. After graduating from the Kadettenanstalt in 1888 and serving in an infantry regiment for 11 years, Lettow-Vorbeck was assigned the task of studying the colonies for the General Staff from 1899-1900. He received first hand experience in colonial affairs while serving as an adjutant with the German forces in Tientsin during the Boxer

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6 Lettow-Vorbeck proudly describes the military feats of his distinguished ancestors in Mein Leben, pp. 9-19.


8 Townsend, Colonial Expansion, p. 277.
Rebellion (1900–1901). When the Hottentot and Herero rebelled in Southwest Africa (1904–1906), Lettow-Vorbeck served as adjutant to General von Trotha until wounded in 1906. After serving in an infantry regiment at Kassel from 1906–1909, he became commander of the Marine Battalion at Wilhelmshaven; a position which he described as "closely connected with German work overseas." Thereafter he commanded the German East African Protective Force until 1919. Even after this professional connection with the German colonies ended Lettow-Vorbeck remained active in colonial affairs and was a leader in the German post-war colonial movement.

Lettow-Vorbeck accepted the imperialist ideas and attitudes which were so much a part of his environment. He adopted the economic arguments for colonialism expressed by most nineteenth century imperialists. His view that "Germany must have colonies on economic grounds" would have been perfectly reasonable to British and French imperialists such as Joseph Chamberlain and Jules Ferry. And most German imperialists accepted the economic arguments for acquiring colonies since Ferdinand List had popularized that view in his *National System of Political Economy*. Like these nineteenth century

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imperialists Lettow-Vorbeck felt that colonies were of value for their production of agricultural products. He enthusiastically described the banana, coffee and cattle production of German East Africa. Although Lettow-Vorbeck did not seem to value the colonies as a source of raw materials for German industry or as a market for surplus production, he did value colonies as fields of investment. He noted that the Germans "were beginning to understand the national value of our colonial possessions; settlers and capital were venturing in; industries and factories were beginning to flourish."  

Not only did Lettow-Vorbeck's economic arguments reflect the opinion of nineteenth century imperialists, but his contention that Germany must have colonies "on account of her over-populousness" was equally common among supporters of imperialism. Heinrich Treitschke had made this point clear: "For a nation that suffers from continual overproduction and sends yearly 200,000 of her children abroad, the question of colonization is vital."  

It is clear in his description of German East Africa that Germany's colonies appeared to Lettow-Vorbeck as a solution to the problem of over-population:

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14 Ibid., p. xvi.

15 Ibid., pp. 324-325.

16 Adolf Hausrath, Treitschke: His Doctrine of German Destiny and of International Relations (New York, 1914), pp. 205-216.
No traveller who visits these countries of East Africa can fail to observe that in the fertile, elevated interior there is room for the settlement of hundreds of thousands of Europeans. . . . At times we passed through fertile districts which were completely forsaken by the inhabitants, but which were known not to have been occupied even in the previous year. They had simply moved away, had settled somewhere else in the abundantly available empty and fertile country, and there had begun to cultivate fresh fields. If the country capable of cultivation were fully utilized it would probably be possible to support in German East Africa, which has hitherto been inhabited by about eight millions only, a population barely less than that of Germany. 17

While sharing with the imperialists of his day the belief that colonies must be secured for practical reasons of economics and population, Lettow-Vorbeck did not accept the more abstract arguments favoring imperialism. Nowhere does he make a claim as did Prince Hohenlohe, German chancellor 1894-1900: "the support of our colonial possessions is a command of national honor and a manifestation of our national prestige." 18 Nowhere does he espouse Social Darwinism and suggest, as did Treitschke, that Germany should have colonies because "every virile nation has established colonial power." 19 Indeed, he even deemed it proper to make light of the Kaiser's promise of giving Germans "a place in the sun" by relating the fact that his soldiers, sweltering in tropical heat of East Africa, felt that the Kaiser had fulfilled his promise to the hilt. 20

17 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 11.
18 Townsend, Rise and Fall, p. 180.
19 Hausrath, Treitschke, p. 215.
20 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 119.
While the jingoistic beliefs of many imperialists did not find favor with Lettow-Vorbeck, the idea of a White Man's Burden may have influenced him. Although he did not express a desire to civilize the natives, he did comment favorably on those institutions which attempted to improve the lot of the native. He noted that the church missions did "exercise a remarkable influence on the education of the natives... the missions have deserved extremely well by introducing European handicrafts..." 21 He also felt that large numbers of natives had been "educated up to agriculture by the Missions and by the German Administration." 22 Apparently Lettow-Vorbeck believed that Europeans did have an obligation to better the living conditions of the native Africans.

Lettow-Vorbeck shared with most imperialists, indeed, most Europeans of his day, a paternalistic attitude toward non-European peoples. The more fanatical Social Darwinists who favored exploitation or extermination of "inferior" races represented a minority of European opinion. 23 In general Europeans did, however, accept the Social Darwinist premise that civilization was a process of unilateral evolution which had as its endpoint European society. All other cultures, according to this conception of civilization, had not evolved or matured. Therefore, the Europeans felt that they should treat the natives of Africa and

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21 Ibid., p. 11.


Asia as a parent would treat a child. Even the anti-imperialist Hobson adopted
this view when he argued that the "lower races" must be protected and guided
by more mature powers. 24 In the German colonies this paternalism became the
official policy. Heinrich Schnee, governor of German East Africa from 1907-
1919, described the German method of government as "paternal," 25 and
Wilhelm Solf, colonial secretary in 1912, declared: "the natives are our wards." 26
Dr. Solf declared that Germany must take part in a "great task which cultured
humanity is obliged to fulfill towards the tribes of these territories -- the task
of training them morally and intellectually, and of creating, the conditions for
their economic development as well as being helpful to them in obtaining a higher
degree of human development." 27 Thus Heinrich Schnee justified the practice
of flogging of recalcitrant natives because "the native in many respects
resembles a child." 28

Lettow-Vorbeck's relations with the askari reveal this same paternalistic
attitude. His views corresponded with John Buchan's assessment of the native
troops of the British forces in the Cameroon campaign during World War I:

24 *Imperialism*, pp. 100-153, passim.

25 Heinrich Schnee, *German Colonization, Past and Future: The Truth
about the German Colonies* (London, 1926), p. 123.


27 Schnee, *German Colonization*, p. 92.

28 *ibid.*, p. 119.
In the case of such troops everything depended upon the leading. They were like great schoolboys, and, if properly handled, would go anywhere and do anything. The campaign proved that France and Britain had not lost the art of providing the type of regimental officer who by his tact and courage can win and retain the affection of savage tribesmen. 29

Lettow-Vorbeck's belief that the natives needed white leadership to fight effectively is evident in his description of Lieutenant-Colonel Freiherr von Bock: "His true chivalry and fatherly care soon won him the hearts of his black comrades, to such a degree that he was in their eyes the bravest of all Germans, and they clung to him with touching loyalty." 30 Later, during the war, the behavior of Lettow-Vorbeck and his European associates gave substance to their ideas that the natives were like children who needed white examples and leadership to act in the proper manner. At the battle at Tanga in 1914, Lettow-Vorbeck described the action when the askari began to retreat:

The European members of Headquarters at once ran there and stopped them. To this day I can see the fiery and determined Captain von Hammerstein, full of fury, throwing an empty bottle at the head of a retreating Askari. . . . When we Europeans got in front of them and laughed at them they quickly recovered themselves and saw that every bullet did not hit. 31

Such foolhardy action resulted from the conviction that white man must show the black man how to act.

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31 Ibid., p. 42.
II

Like Lettow-Vorbeck, T.E. Lawrence grew up in a society experiencing an imperialistic fervor. For some fifteen years before Lawrence's birth in 1888, Britain had been increasingly active in the field of colonization. Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain* and James Froude's *Oceana* had demanded an expansive colonial policy for reasons of economy and prestige similar to those of Trietschke, List and the German imperialists.\(^{32}\) In the years immediately following Lawrence's birth Britain expanded into North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland. And while Lawrence attended the City of Oxford school from 1896-1907, the British empire continued to expand: in Nigeria where the emirates of Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and Zuria were overthrown and replaced by the protectorate of northern Nigeria in 1903; in the Sudan where Kitchener in 1898 reestablished British control after defeating the forces of Khalifa Abdulla at Omdurman; and in south Africa where the Boer states of Transvaal and Orange Free State were brought into the empire after the war of 1899-1902. From 1907-1910 when Lawrence attended Oxford, Malaysia and Tibet became targets of British imperialism.

Although Britain experienced the same imperialistic impulses which affected Germany, there was more opposition to imperialism in Britain than in Germany. There was an anti-colonial tradition in Britain. Gladestonian Liberals continued to favor a "Little England" policy and continued to oppose

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the expansion of the empire. 33 When the Boer war turned into a long, grueling and expensive affair, Liberal and Labour presses found popular support for their anti-imperialist policy. In 1902, Hobson’s classic criticism of imperialism, was published while other literature questioned the economic validity of imperialism. Thus, while in Germany the people and government overwhelmingly supported a policy of imperialism, English society was having serious doubts as to the desirability of colonialism.

However it does seem to be this anti-imperialist literature that persuaded Lawrence that British rule over Arab lands would be undesirable. Nowhere did he espouse the arguments of the anti-imperialists damning imperialism because of economic reasons. Economics played no role in Lawrence’s opposition to British rule over Arabian lands. His opposition stemmed from his ideological and somewhat romantic belief that the Arabs should be free simply for freedom’s sake.

Although Lawrence had in his childhood expressed the desire to liberate the Arabs from bondage, it was his contact with the Arabs at Carchemish in 1911 which convinced him that the Arabs should rule themselves. 34 He discovered that the Arabs were not savages who needed European guidance and protection so that they might become civilized. On the contrary he found the

33Ibid., pp. 1 - 53.

34Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 5.
Arabs to possess a culture which, although different, was as legitimate as the civilization of Europe and he was immediately "drawn to their way of life."\(^{35}\)

In a letter to V. W. Richards in 1924 he said:

> You guessed rightly that the Arab appealed to my imagination. It is the old, old civilisation which has refined itself clear of household gods, and half the trappings which ours hastens to assume. The gospel of bareness in materials is a good one, and it involves apparently a sort of moral bareness too. They think for the moment and endeavor to slip through life without turning corners or climbing hills. In part it is a mental and moral fatigue, a race trained out; and to avoid difficulties they have to jettison so much that we think honourable and grave; and yet without in any way sharing their point of view, I think I understand it enough to look at myself and other foreigners from their direction, and without condemning it. I know I'm a stranger to them, and always will be: But I cannot believe them worse, any more than I could change their ways.\(^{36}\)

This willingness to grant a "brown" culture equal status with European civilization contrasted strongly with the prevailing Social Darwinistic Weltanschauung of most nineteenth century Europeans. For instead of judging Arab culture by the European standard and finding it lacking, he was willing to admit that it was different and not on the same evolutionary track as Europe. Only a very few Europeans believed civilization could be a range of mountains and other people's should be encouraged to climb their own peaks rather than be dragged up that of the Europeans.\(^{37}\) And even Mary Kingsley, a proponent of this view,

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\(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 24.


\(^{37}\)Porter, Critics of Empire, p. 153.
was not willing, as was Lawrence, to believe that the cultures of non-Europeans could be as high as that of the Europeans. 38

Lawrence's belief in the equality of the Arab allowed him to establish deep friendships with Arabs. As early as his trip to Carchemish Lawrence reported:

I travelled always with someone from our Carchemish digging gang, and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, taking a few camels on hire-carrying, sailing down the Syrian coast, bathing, harvesting and sight-seeing in the towns. 39

Where Lettow-Vorbeck was always careful to separate the Europeans from the askari in his writings of the German East African campaign, Lawrence's use of the words "we" and "ourselves" reveals that he had become, at least for the moment, one with his Arab friends. Later he was to develop friendships based on mutual respect with such Arab leaders as Faisal, Abdulla, and Auda. The poem beginning the Seven Pillars of Wisdom which was probably dedicated to Dahoum, expresses a profound relationship which the usual paternalistic attitude denied to most Europeans. 40

Lawrence's discovery that the Arabs were not savages who needed European tutelage and protection, but a people equal to the Europeans, convinced him that they should govern themselves. While excavating the Hittite ruins at

38 Ibid., p. 153.


Carchemish before the war, he had already made contact with Armenian revolutionaries and sections of the Arab revolutionary societies favoring national liberation. 41 During the First Balkan War in April of 1913, he was to write, "As for Turkey, down with the Turks! . . . Their disappearance would mean a chance for the Arabs." 42 His enthusiasm for Arab independence continued during the war when he helped lead the rebellion against the Turks while at the same time protecting their freedom against French and British imperial interests. 43 As one of his biographies has commented:

Lawrence's problem, whether his loyalty lay towards the Arabs or towards England when England the Arabs were in conflict was the most difficult problem of his life . . . his natural instinct to side with the weaker inclined him to press the Arab claim even against the interests of British Imperial expansion. 44

Even after the war Lawrence continued to press for Arab self-government -- often at the expense of the British. This propensity caused an opponent of his policy to declare, "It is clear that Lawrence with his mad self-seeking pan-Arab policy pays no account to what the policy is costing the country." 45 He pleaded the Arab

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41 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 20.

42 Lawrence, Letters, p. 152.

43 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 143.


case for Feisal during the Versailles Peace Conference and when the British refused to honor their promises to the Arabs, he attacked British policy in the press. A After a six month period of depression and withdrawal brought on by the failure of the Arabs to achieve independence, Lawrence once again became politically active in supporting Arab independence against imperial interests. In articles to the Sunday Times and the Observer Lawrence criticized British policy in Mesopotamia and demanded that Arabian self-government be implemented. Early in 1921, Lawrence accepted an offer from Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, to become advisor on Arab affairs to the new Middle East Department. From this position he was able to persuade Churchill and the Colonial office to allow Feisal to become king of an autonomous Mesopotamia in 1921, Abdulla to become king of the semi-independent state of Trans-Jordon and Huessein to rule over a Hejaz Arab state. Huessein refused the British offer, but the other steps were implemented and Lawrence concluded that "England is out of the Arab affair with clean hands." He had succeeded in giving the Arabs Arab governments in spite of British imperialism.

It is interesting to observe that both Lawrence and Lettow-Vorbeck had visions of empire. But the differences in their visions reveal the German to be an imperialist while the Englishman was not. Lettow-Vorbeck adopted the

46 Lawrence, Letters, p. 281.
47 Ibid., pp. 311-317.
48 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 322.
49 Lawrence, Letters, p. 346.
old mercantile conception of empire. He measured the value of colonies not by their ability to flourish independently but on their ability to contribute to the prosperity of the Fatherland. Thus when he described the vast economic potential of German East Africa, he concluded that "it would be possible to make East Africa into a second India." In opposition to Lettow-Vorbeck's traditional concept of a colonial empire maintained for the profit of the homeland, we see Lawrence's concept of a "commonwealth of free peoples." His description is clear:

You know how Lionel Curtis has made his conception of the Empire -- a commonwealth of free peoples -- generally accepted. I wanted to widen the idea beyond the Anglo-Saxon shape, and form a new nation of thinking people, all acclaiming our freedom, and demanding admittance into our Empire. There is, to my eyes, no other road for Egypt and India in the end, and I would have made their path easier, by creating an Arab Dominion in the Empire.

These dominions which were to form the "New Nation" were to be self-governing states which governed their own resources and affairs in their own best interests rather than for the interest of Great Britain. The empire then was to be an association of equal states joined together by self-interest.

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50 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 11.
52 Ibid.
53 Lawrence, Letters, p. 308.
54 Ibid., p. 578.
These two military figures represented two opposing schools of thought. Lettow-Vorbeck with his paternalistic attitude toward the askari and his hopes of making the colonies of "national value" to Germany clearly represented the "new imperialism." On the other hand, Lawrence's belief in the equality of the "brown" races and his efforts to secure for them self-government, revealed him to be an anti-imperialist. During World War I when both men commanded non-Europeans in battle, this difference in attitude resulted in their respective war aims to differ fundamentally. Lettow-Vorbeck subjugated the interest of the colony to the interest of Germany while Lawrence often placed the interest of the Arabs above that of British imperial interests.

III

Upon assuming command in German East Africa in January, 1914, Lettow-Vorbeck began making his decisions from a European perspective:

During the past ten years the universal war had more than once seemed so imminent that I was obliged seriously to consider whether the force under my command would be called upon to take any part in that conflict, and, if so what its task might be. Owing to the position of the Colony and the weakness of the existing forces -- the peace establishment was but little more than two thousand -- we could only play a subsidiary part. I knew that the fate of the colonies, as of all other German possessions would only be decided on the battlefields of Europe. To this decision every German, regardless of where he might be at the moment, must contribute his share. In the Colony also it
was our duty in case of universal war, to do all in our power for our country. The question was whether it was possible for us in our subsidiary theatre of war to exercise any influence on the great decision at home.\textsuperscript{55}

Because of this "Eurocentric" viewpoint -- this subjugation of local interests to those of Europe -- Lettow-Vorbeck began to prepare his forces which had previously been organized only for combat against rebellious native warriors, for battle against European trained forces.\textsuperscript{56} After a journey of reconnaissance and inspection on which he formulated the strategy which he was to employ during the first stage of the campaign, Lettow-Vorbeck began rearming and retraining his forces. He started the process of rearming the askari with the then modern smokeless rifles instead of the 1871 pattern Mauser favored for native wars despite its smokey discharge. The askari were trained in the use of the machine-gun and also trained in previously much neglected marksmanhip.\textsuperscript{57} Lettow-Vorbeck expected that his forces were to contribute their share in the event of a European war.

While many Germans in the colony hoped to keep German East Africa neutral after the outbreak of war in Europe,\textsuperscript{58} Lettow-Vorbeck wanted German East Africa involved in the war for he believed that his colonial forces could

\textsuperscript{55}Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., pp. 8-9.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58}Schnee, German Colonization, p. 81.
prove influential in the all-important European theater:

The question which immediately forced itself upon us was whether, in the now obviously imminent universal war in which England would almost certainly join, the Colony would remain neutral or not.... I considered it to be our military object to detain the enemy, that is English forces if it could by any means be accomplished. This, however, was impossible if we remained neutral. In that case the situation would be that we who did not command the sea, would have to remain inactive, with a force which, though small at the moment, had behind it a loyal very efficient population of eight millions suitable for military service. England, on the other hand, would have no need to employ a single man in East Africa on our account.... It would, therefore obviously have been an advantage for England if any agreement had existed which condemned us to neutrality.... From a military point of view it was a disadvantage not for us, but for England, if war occurred in East Africa.... We should have been compelled, if a cruiser had sought shelter in our harbours, to refuse to admit her, by reason of our neutrality, whereas the favourable position and coastal development of East Africa made it the natural hiding-place in cruiser; warfare in the Indian Ocean.59

Once again, Lettow-Vorbeck illustrated his tendency to view the situation from the European viewpoint. While it was doubtlessly to the advantage of Germany to have East Africa act as a diversion to Allied men and material, it was not to the advantage of German East Africa. For cut off by the British fleet from assistance from Germany, with her long coast all but defenseless, and surrounded as she was by enemy possessions, East Africa's only prospects in war were invasion and occupation.

59Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 31.
After the outbreak of war, Lettow-Vorbeck continued to view the aims of his army from a European viewpoint. During 1914 and the early part of 1915, when many military thinkers still thought the war would be a short affair, Lettow-Vorbeck did use his forces to protect the colony so that in case of a compromise peace, Germany's claim to German East Africa would be secure. Thus at Jassin and Tanga he attacked British troops while risking his troops to protect the colony. Yet even at these early battles, he viewed as his main objective the diversion of Allied resources from more important theaters. He asked himself, "Could we, with our small forces, prevent considerable numbers of the enemy from intervening in Europe, or in other more important theatres, or inflict on our enemies any loss of personnel or war material worth mentioning? At that time I answered this question in the affirmative."60 In order to hold the enemy troops in East Africa and to protect the colony in the most effective way, Lettow-Vorbeck deployed his troops at Tavaeta so that they might "grip the enemy by the throat and force him to employ his forces for self-defense."61

After 1915, however, the political aim of defending the colony ceased to influence Lettow-Vorbeck's decisions. The war in Europe required that the German forces in East Africa take whatever measures were necessary to accomplish the purely military aim of diversion and destruction of hostile men and material.

60 Ibid., p. 3.
61 Ibid., p. 4.
Therefore, in 1915, Lettow-Vorbeck stepped up operations against the Uganda railway because "it was important to encourage the enemy in this intention [that is, the intervention of South Africans in East Africa] in order that the South Africans should really come, and that in the greatest strength possible, and thus be diverted from more important theatres of war." 62 Although attracting 15,000 South African troops to East Africa clearly made the defensive position of the colony hopeless, Lettow-Vorbeck felt that the military objective required such action.

After the battle of Latema Reata in March, 1916, Lettow-Vorbeck's forces retreated rapidly deeming it improper to risk the army in defending even the most valuable areas of German East Africa. The most blatant proof that the military objectives had come to completely dominate the German East African Protective forces occurred in 1916 when Lettow-Vorbeck led his troops out of German East Africa leaving the colony completely in British and Belgian control. The abandonment of the colony enabled his forces to continue to distract troops, finances and material from other theaters. Although the force returned to German East Africa in 1918, it made no attempts to reestablish itself in the colony but only rushed through on its way to invade Northern Rhodesia where it could continue to attract attention away from Europe. 63

62 Ibid., p. 75.

IV

Lawrence and the Arab forces' aims were never Eurocentric or purely military. The decision of the Arabs to go to war stemmed from their desire for independence rather than for any concern for the war in Europe. Lawrence, too, showed more concern for events in the Middle East than he did for those in Europe. During the time he worked in Cairo as a member of the Arab Bureau, he concentrated solely on the military problem of defeating Turkey without relating the problem to the European theater. For this reason, David Garnett and Phillip Knightly both pointed out, that Lawrence seemed to consider the French, whose interests conflicted with Lawrence's ambitions for the Middle East, more of a threat than the Germans.⁶⁴ Judging from his emphasis on Middle Eastern affairs, Lawrence felt that the defeat of Turkey was of equal importance to the events of the European continent.

Whereas Lettow-Vorbeck came to conceive of his army's function as a strictly military matter, Lawrence, lacking Lettow-Vorbeck's Eurocentrism, considered events in the Middle East too important to let his forces aim at only military objectives. It is true, however, that his forces did have a military objective. Lawrence sought to use the Arabs to help the British forces destroy the enemy of England. In a list of his motives for getting involved with the

Arabs, Lawrence listed second this motive: "Patriotic, I wanted to help win the war, and Arab help reduced Allenby's losses by thousands." Lawrence used the Arabs to help Allenby smash the Turkish forces. They protected the right flank of the British armies during the Palestinian campaign; they diverted half of the Turkish forces opposing the British at decisive times; and they cut the Turkish lines of communication to enable the British to trap the Turkish forces.

However, the military objective of the Arab forces was overshadowed by their political aim: the establishment of Arabian independence. The relationship between these two aims was expressed by Lawrence when he said:

Then I thought of the Arab aim, and saw that it was geographical, to occupy all Arabic-speaking lands in Asia . . . . In the doing of it we might kill Turks: we disliked them very much. Yet 'killing Turks' would never be an excuse or aim. If they would go quietly, our war would end.  

Thus the military objective of destruction of enemy forces was not a prerequisite for the attainment of this aim. Indeed, Lawrence concluded that although the Arabs had not accomplished the textbook aim of war, "the destruction of the organized forces of the enemy, by the one process, battle," they had won the Hejaz war for ninety-nine per cent of the land was occupied by Arab forces. As for the Turkish army, "they were welcome to the other fraction of the Hejaz till peace

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66 Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 191.
or doomsday showed them the futility of clinging to our windowpane." 67 The destruction of enemy troops was of secondary importance to Lawrence.

Lawrence and Lettow-Vorbeck's aims determined the type of wars they would wage. Lettow-Vorbeck's purely military objectives did not require that the masses of people become involved in the campaign. But for Lawrence's aim of creating an independent nation he first of all had to convince the people that they wanted freedom. Thus he said, "We had won a province when we had taught the civilians in it to die for our ideal of freedom: the presence or absence of the enemy was a secondary matter." 68

67 Ibid., p. 189.
68 Ibid., p. 198.
CHAPTER IV

EFFECTS ON WAR AND ARMY

The type of guerrilla warfare waged by each commander effected their prosecution of the war. Both the popular campaign of Lawrence and the purely military campaign of Lettow-Vorbeck proved to have inherent advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore the characteristics of the Arab and East African armies reflected the nature of the wars in which they fought.

I

Lawrence's prosecution of the Arab revolt as a people's war gave the Arab forces several advantages which the forces of Lettow-Vorbeck were denied. The most important advantage which the popular character of the Arab revolution conferred upon the Arab forces was it allowed them to mobilize the full resources of the Arab peoples whose loyalty they had won. The Arab people actively supported Lawrence's Arab forces by supplying them with information, men and material. Due to the support which Lawrence received from the masses, he was able to have the "perfect intelligence" which he believed necessary for his campaign against the Turks.¹ For example, when

¹Ibid., p. 194.
Lawrence prepared the attack on Akaba, Nuri Shallan, the Arab leader nominally under Turkish suzerainty, informed Lawrence of the movement of Turkish cavalry searching for the Arab forces.\(^2\) When Lawrence felt that it was necessary to have personal reconnaissance of Turkish positions, the Arab population protected and cared for him.\(^3\) Furthermore, the Arab people gave the Turkish forces information planned to aid the Arab forces. Nuri Shallan told the Turkish authorities of an Arab concentration which threatened Damascus while the Arabs actually prepared to attack Akaba. Because of this support given to the Arab forces by the people, Lawrence was able to know the exact dispositions of the Turkish troops while the Turkish forces continually operated on false and misleading information in seeking the Arab forces.

Lawrence was also able to draw on the Arab population for fighting men. He did not have to support an army at all times but only enough men, usually around sixty, around which the local people could coalesce. His forces represented the spark that ignited the fuel, the people, into the conflagration of rebellion. The capture of Akaba in July, 1917 best illustrates Lawrence's dependence on local population for soldiers. Akaba and the surrounding area was held by 1200 Turks. Lawrence left Wedj with fifty men from the Arab army. After

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 285.

\(^3\)Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 152-153.
he reached the Akaba area he was able to enlist the support of the Howietat of Auda and other local tribes so that the Turkish forces' numerical superiority was neutralized.⁴ Again at Tafila and Deraa, the local population supplied Lawrence with the bulk of his fighting men.⁵

The popular character of the Arab revolt not only strengthened the Arab forces, it weakened the Turkish forces. Manpower drained away from the multi-national Turkish forces; Turkish operations were sabotaged; and Turkish minds rendered insecure. With the outbreak of the Arab revolt, large groups of Turkish soldiers of Arab origin deserted to the Arab forces. The Turkish armies which opposed the British in Palestine "suffered a continual drain from Arab desertions."⁶ The 1200 man cavalry unit which had originally been raised by the Sheikh of Russ from peasants of the Central Arabian oasis for service in the Turkish army, deserted in mass and became Feisal's Ageyl bodyguard.⁷ Furthermore, Arab officers trained in the Turkish army succumbed to the Arab revolution's appeal to nationalism and provided the leadership for the Arab Regular Army. Maulaud, the first regular officer of the Arabs, had been a Turkish officer in Mesopotamia during the first years of the war, but he joined

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⁴Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 228-312.
⁵See, for example, ibid., pp. 469-478, 581-630.
⁶Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 121.
⁷Ibid., p. 100.
the Arab revolt as soon as he learned of Huessein's rising. Ja'Far Pasha, who had organized and led the Sensui against the British in Egypt before the Arab rebellion, joined the Arab revolution and provided it with his valuable military experience. 8

Turkish operations against the Arab rebels were constantly sabotaged by Arabs remaining nominally loyal to the Turks. For example, Ali Riza Pasha who was the Turkish Base Commandant at Damascus was also head of the Arab revolutionary underground. He had met with Lawrence in 1917 and exchanged information concerning the Arab assault on Akaba. When Ali Riza Pasha was appointed by the Turkish authorities to take charge of the Turkish line of defense in 1918, he selected heavy artillery positions that could not be occupied for lack of water and then deserted to the British side, leaving the Turkish troops in the lurch. 9

Perhaps the most important disadvantage which the nationalist character of the Arab revolt had on the Turkish forces was its psychological effect. After the revolt was launched the Turks began to view all Arabs with suspicion. During the Gaza offensive by Allenby in October, 1918, the Turks diverted men and material away from the main front because of the fear that the Arabs of the Judean hills were preparing to rise in rebellion. 10 In 1918 the Turks at Deraa

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8 Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 166-167.
9 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 295.
10 Ibid., p. 196.
believed the fantastic reports of the magnitude of the uprising in the Hauran, evacuate the city and burnt the six airplanes which were stationed there to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. 11

Because Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign was not fought primarily in the interests of the inhabitants of German East Africa, he was unable to draw fully on their resources as was Lawrence in Arabia. He was able to draw fully on the resources of the European community however. Out of a white male population of 3,266, Lettow-Vorbeck reported that 3,000 served with the Protective Force. 12 The medical missions which had been studying sleeping-sickness before the war were transformed into medical auxiliaries for the army. 13 The rifle clubs which had been active in sporting before the war were organized into companies, and the women of the colony contributed to the war effort by spinning and weaving uniforms for the army. The cotton fields of the colony provided cloth for uniforms, rubber gathered by the planters was vulcanized and shaped into bicycle tires and coconuts were treated so that they yielded a liquid which could substitute for motor-fuel. 14 Lettow-Vorbeck was

11Ibid., p. 285.


13Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 25.

14Ibid., pp. 69-70. For a woman's viewpoint of the mobilization of the colonial resources see Joseph Abs, Der Kampf um Unsere Schutzgebiete: Unsere Kolonien Einst und Jetzt (Dusseldorf, 1928), pp. 93-104, quoting Ada Schnee, Meine Erlebnisse während der Kriegzeit in Deutsch-Ostafrika.
to comment favorably on

how intimately all classes of the population of the northern
districts [where white settlement was concentrated] worked in
with the troops, and how they tried to anticipate our every
wish. This cooperation continued as long as the troops re-
mained in the North.\textsuperscript{15}

The natives were less willing to support the army which did not serve
their interests. Lettow-Vorbeck was unable to utilize all of his forces because
"it was essential to remain undisputed master of the natives, in order, if
necessary, to enforce the growing demands for carriers, agriculture, supplies
and all manner or work."\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore the number of troops which he could
mobilize was restricted because of the belief that the black troops needed white
leadership.\textsuperscript{17} The Germans restricted themselves to recruiting ten askari
per European. Although the natives did supply the Germans with foods and
acted as carriers for the German forces, they did the same for the British
forces. Since the German forces fought for no racial, tribal or national inter-
est of the natives, Lettow-Vorbeck could not attract the askari fighting with
the British to the German forces.

Furthermore, Lettow-Vorbeck's imperialism apparently prevented him
from using all the opportunities open to him. There were native revolts against
all his surrounding enemies but he failed to support or encourage these uprisings.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 71.
The Giriama tribe, north of Mombosa, rose against the British in 1914, seriously compromising the British position at Mombosa which, as the terminus of the Uganda railway, was a valuable military objective for the Germans. The British feared that German support of the uprising would result in the loss of the port, but Lettow-Vorbeck took no steps to abet the natives. Perhaps the idea of stirring up blacks against their white masters was repugnant to the racist in him or the fear that such rebellions would eventually turn against his forces, prevented him from inciting native uprisings against his foes. At any rate Lettow-Vorbeck's forces made no appeal of native peoples or the native troops serving with the Allies.

However, Lettow-Vorbeck enjoyed certain advantages which resulted from the fact that his campaign was a duel of armies rather than a "people's war." Lettow-Vorbeck had a well-defined authority over his troops. With the exception of Heinrich Schnee, Lettow-Vorbeck was the sole commander of the Protective Force and the line of command under him was clear cut. He did not have to work through native chiefs or constantly play politics to keep

18 Honders, *East African Campaign*, p. 34.

19 The actions of the German Captain von Langenn-Steinkeller would suggest that the primary motivating factor for this phenomenon was the distaste with which white men viewed the idea of turning the blacks against their masters. He warned the British at Karanga to evacuate all Europeans, especially women and children to "avert a massacre" since they would have been attacked by Africans. See Honders, *East Africa*, p. 171.
his forces in line. Therefore, the resources of the colony were effectively mobilized to carry out the strategic plans of one man rather than dispersed in many ineffective actions. Secondly, Lettow-Vorbeck was not restricted from utilizing the European resources which were available for the prosecution of the war by considerations of national pride or rights. There were no national animosities aroused when Lettow-Vorbeck mixed European and native troops to improve the efficiency of the force.\(^\text{20}\) Not only was there a lack of friction between the Europeans and natives, but the natives displayed no divisiveness among themselves. Members of tribes which were traditionally hostile, such as the Masai and the Wassukuma served together, side by side as askari.\(^\text{21}\) A third advantage which the German forces gained because the purely military nature of the campaign was mobility. Lettow-Vorbeck realized that since the British knew that the natives were not pro-German, that they would not hold them responsible for the actions of the German forces. Therefore in 1917, Lettow-Vorbeck was free to leave the colony entirely in the hands of the British and Belgians for he felt no responsibility for utilizing his army to protect the natives.

Lawrence’s decision to wage a people’s war denied to him the advantages which Lettow-Vorbeck gained in fighting a purely military conflict. His only authority was derived from Feisal. As a European he was suspect and so he

\(^{20}\)Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 19.

\(^{21}\)Ibid., p. 10.
had to play politics to implement his ideas. In "Seventeen Articles," which he prepared for British advisors to the Arabs, Lawrence advised:

Win and keep the confidence of your leader. Strengthen his prestige at your expense before others if you can. Never refuse or quash schemes he may put forward but ensure that they are put forward in the first instance privately to you. Always approve them, and after praise modify them insensibly, causing the suggestions to come to him until they are in accord with your own opinion. When you attain this point, hold him to it, keep a tight grip of his ideas, and push him forward as firmly as possible, but secretly, so that no one but himself (and he not too clearly) is aware of your pressure.²²

Furthermore, Lawrence advised that Europeans should not give direct orders to the Arabs.

In matters of business deal only with the commander of the army, column, or party in which you serve. Never give orders to anyone at all, and reserve your directions and advice for the C.C., however great the temptation (for efficiency's sake) of dealing direct with his underlings.²³

This lack of definite authority was to prove "embarrassing" several times to Lawrence during the campaign. For example, in 1917 Lawrence and his Arab raiders attacked a Turkish train near Mudaauwara on the Hejaz railway. The Arabs dispersed with loot despite Lawrence's protestations. Lawrence and his two fellow Englishmen were left alone with Stokes mortars and machine-guns and no way to transport them. Two Arabs did return and together these five rescued the guns but the ammunition had to be destroyed.²⁴ Often times when Arabs

²²Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 109.
²³Ibid.
²⁴Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 371, 374.
demanded attacks against the Turks which Lawrence opposed, the Arabs' view prevailed. In 1918, for instance, the officers of the Arab Regular army asked Feisal to authorize an attack on Ma'an. The British officers opposed the attack but Feisal agreed to allow 'the sons of Arabs to hurl themselves against the Turkish trenches.' So contrary to the strategy suggested by Lawrence, the attack was launched and, as Lawrence predicted, it did fail.

The fighting of the war for independence exacerbated the natural Arab xenophobia so that Lawrence was unable to fully utilize the European resources available. At Ragbegeh and at Akaba, Lawrence advised against the landing of European troops for, he felt, 'the appearance of British troops so near to the Holy Cities might antagonize the Moslem world and even the Arabs it was intended to succor.' Nasir explained the Arab's quickness to suspect interference from infidels: 'Don't forget that until a month ago we never had a European in this country: if we had, we should have shot him. You must give us time to get used to it.' And Feisal pointed out to Lawrence that the British reputation for swallowing the territories which she protected, aroused the suspicion of the Arabs. Lawrence was aware of this bias and he advised those who dealt with the Arabs:

25 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 232.
26 Ibid., p. 78
27 Ibid., p. 108.
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When stranger sheiks come in for the first time to swear allegiance and offer service, clear out of the tent. If their first impression is of foreigners in the confidence of the Sheriff, it will do the Arab cause much harm.\textsuperscript{28}

To keep Arab suspicion of European designs at a minimum, Lawrence continually advised that British forces with the Arab contingent be kept at a minimum. Hence in 1918, only one hundred British subjects served east of the Jorden.

The Arab revolt against the Turks failed to end the divisiveness of the Arab tribes. In the "Seventeen Articles" Lawrence advised:

\begin{quote}
Do not mix Bedu and Syrians, or trained men and tribesmen. . . Arab townspeople and Arab tribesmen regard each other mutually as poor relations, and poor relations are much more objectionable than poor strangers.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Not only were townspeople and the tribesmen divided against one another, but tribes were divided against tribes. Lawrence reported that "it is impossible to mix or combine tribes, since they disliked or distrusted one another. Likewise, we would not use the men of one tribe in the territory of another."\textsuperscript{30}

Therefore it was necessary to raise a new army with every transfer of operations.\textsuperscript{31} Only Lawrence's tact and British gold kept the constant bickering among the Arab tribes from totally disrupting the Arab forces. As it was Lawrence appeared to have spent more time and energy struggling to keep the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., p. 110.
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 113.
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 173.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 64.
\end{flushright}
Arab force unified than he did fighting the Turks.

By making the rebellion a people's war, the army assumed a responsibility for the people. As an instrument of the people, the army had to act to serve the interests of the people even if such action contravened military considerations. Therefore after the Arab forces took Tafliel with the help of the townspeople, they became tied to the town. If the Turks returned, the townspeople would have been slaughtered. So despite their strategy of fleeing before an attacking enemy, the Arab forces were forced to defend the village against the Turkish counter-attack. Though they did so successfully, Lawrence bewailed the necessity of action contrary to his strategy.\(^2\) Again at Tafas, in 1918, the fear for the inhabitants of the Arab village, caused Lawrence to order the Arab forces to move to meet the Turkish column rather than attempt to pick it slowly to pieces. After reviewing the massacre of the inhabitants of Tafas, the desire for vengeance by the Arabs caused the forces to attack the Turks rather than take the militarily sound measure of slowing down the Turks by maneuver and waiting for the arrival of Pisani's artillery.\(^3\) Military consideration could not stand in the way of the Arab people's desire for revenge.

One might assume that the Arabs, fighting for Arabs, would have had higher morale than did the askari who fought for a European cause. This does

\(^{32}\) Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 482.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., pp. 630-638.
not seem to be the case. To keep the Arabs in the field, Lawrence dispensed large amounts of gold. Even Auda, Lawrence’s friend, was on the verge of switching to the Turkish side when Lawrence succeeded in bribing him to remain with Feisal.34 Furthermore, the Arabs were unwilling to take casualties.35 On the other hand, Lettow-Vorbeck said of the askari: "almost without any external means of coercion, even without immediate payment, this force, with its numerous native followers, faithfully followed its German leaders throughout the whole of the prolonged war against a more than hundredfold superiority. When the armistice came it was still fit to fight, and imbued with the best soldierly spirit."36 Askari deserted during the course of the war and some fought on the side of the British.37 But considering the facts that approximately half of the askari had been raised only with the declaration of war and that some of the German askari had originally served with the British in British East Africa, these desertions do not detract from usual high morale of the force.38 Even at the end of the long grueling campaign, Lettow-Vorbeck reported that an askari said, "I will always stick by you and fight on till I fall." Many others

34 Ibid., pp. 226-227.
35 Meinertzhagen, Middle East Diary, p. 28.
37 Ibid., p. 305.
38 Ibid., pp. 287, 152, 305.
spoke to the same effect, and I am convinced that it was not merely a case of empty words. 39 The British who had expected the askari to turn against the Germans, were unpleasantly surprised by the loyalty of the askari. 40 Not only were the askari loyal to the Germans, they were also willing to risk their lives in battle. Meinertzhagen reported that the askari "can stand a great deal of punishment and will stand up to gun and machine-gun fire." 41 All the British forces brought into the field in East Africa admired the German askari's fighting ability. Apparently the Germans succeeded in instilling among the askari a loyalty to the army stronger than that Lawrence was able to instill among the Arabs for their prospective nation!

II

Like all institutions armies reflect the ideas of those who create and preserve them. 42 Thus the Arab forces which were struggling for independence, did not adopt the European ways of war but forced the Europeans in Arabia to accommodate themselves to Arab ways. On the other hand, the askari, fighting

39 Ibid., p. 318.

40 Schnee, German Colonization, pp. 167-169.

41 Army Diary, p. 178. Meinertzhagen notes "His South African supreme contempt for the German native soldier, formerly dubbed 'kaffir,' has given place to a feeling of supreme respect." p. 193. For other European evaluations of the askari, see Buchanan, Three Years of War, pp. 137, 183; W.D. Downes, With the Nigerians in German East Africa (London, 1919), p. 117; and Horden, East Africa, p. 218.

for European aims, accommodated themselves to the European ways. The appearance, organization, tactics, and attitude towards war of the two forces reflected this difference.

The dress of the two forces clearly illustrates this point. Lettow-Vorbeck, believing in the superiority of European methods, supplied the askari with European style uniforms rather than allow them to wear the usual native cloth wrappings.\(^{43}\) From the neck down the askari wore the European uniform which the Germans imposed upon them. The khaki shirt with buttons, long sleeves, shoulder straps, and European decorations; the long trousers, and the army boots of the askari were similar to the German colonial uniforms. Although the askari uniform was indistinguishable from the European, their headgear differed. The fez-like cap and sun cloth of the askari was not native to the black inhabitants of German East Africa who normally wore no headgear. Neither was it a European style. Apparently it served to separate the askari from the native population while keeping a gap between the askari and the Europeans.\(^{44}\) As for the Europeans they wore either bushhats or pithhelmets.

In 1945 George Orwell was to write:

> Until recently it was believed that the white was much more liable to sunstroke that the coloured, that a white man could not safely work about in tropical sunshine without

\(^{43}\) Arning, *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg*, p. 1.

\(^{44}\) The fez was supposed to have a German eagle decoration on it. See the cover to Arning, *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg* and Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika*, p. 48.
a pithelmet. There was no evidence whatever for this theory, but it served the purpose of accentuating the difference between 'natives' and Europeans. 45

Even after the German troops were forced to secure uniforms from the captured supplies of the British and Portuguese, the Europeans and askari continued to wear separate headgear.

In the Arabian campaign, the Arabians, fighting for independence, continued to wear the traditional Arab cloak and headcloth. The Arabs not only wore their traditional dress but they imposed their dress upon their European advisors. When Lawrence first arrived in the Hejaz, his Arab guide made him change from his uniform into Arab garb to hide the fact that an infidel was going into the holy province. 46 Later Feisal asked Lawrence to wear Arab clothing because khaki uniforms were associated by the Arabs with Turkish officers and Arab dress would help his acceptance by the tribesmen. Lawrence agreed and Feisal fitted him out in "splendid white silk and gold embroidered wedding garments." 47 In the "Twenty-seven Articles" Lawrence was to suggest that British advisors to the Arabs accommodate themselves to Arab ways by wearing Arab clothing:

17. Wear an Arab headcloth when with a tribe. Bedu have a malignant prejudice against the hat, and believe that our persistence in wearing it... is founded on some immoral or irreligious principal...

46 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 82.
47 Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 126.
18. If you can wear Arab kit when with the tribes you will acquire their trust and intimacy to a degree impossible in uniform. . . . Complete success is when the Arabs forget your strangeness and speak naturally before you, counting you as one of themselves . . . .

20. If you wear Arab things at all, go the whole way. Leave your English friends and customs on the coast and fall back on Arab habits entirely. 48

Thus, the Arab rebels and their European advisors who were fighting for the people, wore the clothing of the people.

The manner or organization of the two forces revealed that the one subjugated native to European methods while the other rejected the European model. The Germans, believing European ways superior to that of the natives of Africa, organized the German East African Protective Force so that it was a small replica of the domestic military organization. The askari were trained to act in companies of approximately two hundred men instead of in the tribal units favored by the natives. 49 These companies were coordinated by a General Headquarters which attempted to function like the General Staff in

48 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, pp. 111-112. Lawrence evidenced a personal prejudice against uniforms. He wore his uniform rather haphazardly when in Egypt and he commented later: "It came upon me freshly how the secret of uniform was to make a crowd solid, dignified, impersonal: to give it the singleness and tautness of an unstanding man. This death's livery which walled its bearers from ordinary life, was a sign that they had sold their wills and bodies to the State" (ibid., p. 290).

Germany. The composition of these companies revealed the belief in white superiority which dominated the force. All the officers were white and no blacks were in positions to command whites. Typically there would be one captain, two lieutenants, one doctor, one sanitation officer and two or three white sergeants per company. 50 Furthermore, at the beginning of the war, there were two field companies which were totally white. Both in the battles of Tanga and Jassin these companies were held in reserve where they were less likely to sustain casualties. Lettow-Vorbeck also preferred to have these units, which he believed to be of better quality, in reserve so that he could commit them at decisive points in the battles. 51 After 1915, the European companies were broken up to fill the vacancies caused by the casualties in Europeans in askari units and to provide white leadership to the new askari companies being raised. 52

The organization to the Arab forces revealed a lack of belief in the superiority of European methods or leadership. Although an Arab regular Army based on the European pattern was organized, it never did bear the brunt of the action of characterize the Arab revolt. 53 The major fighting during the Arab revolt was performed by Arab forces which were organized in the traditional Arab military unit of the tribe. Instead of officers who

50 Arning, *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg*, p. 32.
52 Ibid., p. 71.
53 Liddell Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, p. 95.
exercised authority over a prescribed number of men, the Arab forces depended for leadership on sheikhs who led as many men as would follow them. In general,

Organization did not come naturally to town Arabs or peasant Arabs, still less to the Bedouin. Nor did it fit their family basis. If they came together in forces that force became as shifting as the sands. It frequently happened that each member of a family would serve in turn for a few days, using the family rifle, and then be replaced by a brother. Those who were married were accustomed to divide their time between war and their wives. And the fluctuations of the family system prevailed on a stage higher in the tribal. An entire contingent of a clan would sometimes go home for a spell. 54

Europeans with the Arab force had no authority over the Arabs except that which, due to gold or respect, the individual Arabs were willing to accord to them. Officially the status of the Europeans was that of advisors who were forced to work through Arab commanders. Although a few Europeans such as Lawrence, Guy Dawnay and S. F. Newcombe did eventually command Arab raiding parties, they did so in spite of their European background rather than because of it. Lawrence defined the role of the Europeans in the "Twenty-seven Articles:"

15. Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are here to help them, not to win it for them. 55

54 Ibid., p. 63.

55 Ibid., p. 111.
Due to the similarity of the military situations of the two forces, the two armies used remarkably similar tactics. Both forces had to contend with the fact that they were greatly outnumbered. Both forces relied on mobility in the vast areas of their operations to compensate for their lack of strength. And both forces' surprise attacks, rapid movements and quick decisions contrasted sharply with the slow, grinding trench war on the Western Front.

Differences existed, however, and these differences were a result of the different aims of the two forces. Lawrence was willing to forego destruction of Turkish forces so that he could accomplish the political end of occupying all Arabic-speaking lands. He wanted the Turks to adopt a "passive defense" which would allow the Arabs to win, without interference, all lands except the fraction which the Turkish troops could "poke" their rifles at. For these reasons he was willing to allow the Turks to remain in Medina:

56 Lettow-Vorbeck listed his forces as 3,000 Europeans and 11,000 askari as opposed to his foes' 300,000 men -- see Reminiscences, pp. 19-20. Liddell Hart calculated that the 3,000 Arabs who actively served in the Arab forces opposed 100,000 Turks -- see his Colonel Lawrence, p. 302.

57 Speed apparently is relative. Lawrence reports that his Arab raiders averaged fifty miles a day -- Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 388. Lettow-Vorbeck's twenty miles per day appeared fast in the mud and jungles of Africa as he reports in Reminiscences, p. 137.

58 Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 192.
We wanted the enemy to stay in Medina and in every other harmless place, in the largest numbers. . . . Why bother about Medina. . . . The Turks sat in it on the defensive, immobile eating for food the transport animals which were to have moved them to Mecca, but for which there was no pasture in their now restricted lines. They were harmless sitting there; if we took them prisoners they would cost us food and guards in Egypt; if we drove them northward into Syria, they would join the main army blocking us in Sinai. On all accounts they were best where they were, and they valued Medina and wanted to keep it. Let them.59

Lettow-Vorbeck was not content to allow the British to adopt a passive defense. Although such a strategy by the British would have guaranteed German East Africa security from invasion, it would not have diverted troops from important theaters. Rather than allow the British to occupy the "harmless places," Lettow-Vorbeck provoked them into assuming an active offense so that their troops and material would be exhausted in the difficult terrain of East Africa. Some of the British officers realized that an offensive in German East Africa was risky and opposed such operations. In November, 1914 Colonel Meinertzhagen prophesized the course of the war with these words:

We [the British] must regard this colony as a detachment from the main theatre of war -- Europe -- and not ask for a man or a gun beyond what is vital for the defense of the colony. The prospect of offensive operations in bush country infested with tse-tse fly and malaria, rotten communications and no objective is courting disaster and failure. . . Von Lettow is not going to fight it out. He will flit from pillar to post and occupy as many as he can.60

59Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 131-132.

60Meinertzhagen, Army Diary, p. 107.
By October 1916 Meinertzhagen was to rue the success of Lettow-Vorbeck's strategy:

Men and money are going to win this war and here we are squandering four or five million pounds every week. Our battle field casualties have been negligible. What Smuts saves on the battlefield he loses in the hospital for it is Africa and its climate we are really fighting, not the Germans. 61

Because Lettow-Vorbeck sought to destroy the fighting capabilities of the opposing armies, he sought battles which promised a favorable outcome while Lawrence avoided all battles not absolutely necessary for his political ends. Lawrence said of the Arabian Revolt:

The context was not physical, but mineral and so battles were a mistake. . . . Our victory lay not in battles, but in occupying square miles of country. Napoleon had said it was rare to find generals willing to fight battles. The curse of this was that few could do anything else. . . . Battles are impositions on the side which believes itself weaker, made unavoidable either by lack of land-room or by the need to defend a material dearer than the lives of soldiers. 62

Therefore the tactics Lawrence developed emphasized that 'the Arabs should never try to maintain or improve an advantage. They ought to move off again somewhere else. . . . If the action had continued till the enemy had changed his dispositions to resist it, we would have been breaking the spirit of our fundamental rule of denying him targets.' 63

61 Ibid., p. 200.
62 Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 138.
63 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 57.
Lettow-Vorbeck's aim was the physical destruction of the military strength of the enemy. Therefore while avoiding battles which offered little chance of success, he sought battles which offered a chance of victory. The emphasis which Lettow-Vorbeck placed upon battles as means of destroying enemy resources is illustrated in the battle of Jassin. Rather than arrange his troops so that the British block-house at Jassin would be immediately overrun, Lettow-Vorbeck placed his troops so that they could attack the British forces which would attempt rescue operations.\(^{64}\) Although it is true that the German forces were forced to fight battles to protect supplies or to secure supplies from the enemy, Lettow-Vorbeck also fought battles merely to destroy his foe.\(^{65}\) He felt obligated to offer resistance to British attacks. He said:

> The retirement of our troops... who had not merely to escape, but also to inflict damage on the enemy, was a very difficult manoeuvre; the right moment to fall back, to halt again, to advance for a sudden counter-stroke, and then break off quickly, and in sufficient time, is difficult to gauge.\(^{66}\)

Instead of attempting to impose upon the Arab European methods of tactics, Lawrence adopted the tactics of the Arabs and adopted them to the general strategic situation. Liddell Hart argued that Lawrence's acceptance of Arab standards contributed to his theory of irregular warfare.\(^{67}\) His respect for Arabian style of war

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\(^{64}\) Lettow-Vorbeck, *Reminiscences*, p. 57.


\(^{67}\) Liddell Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, p. 123.
is evident in article twenty-two of the "Twenty-seven Articles:"

Do not try to trade on what you know of fighting. The Hejaz confounds ordinary tactics. Learn the Bedu principles of was as thoroughly and as as quickly as you can, for till you know them your advice will be no good to the Sherif. Unnumbered generations of tribal raids have taught them more about some parts of the business than we shall ever know. 68

Lettow-Vorbeck's askari used European tactics rather than rely on any traditional native means of fighting. The flank attack and the bayonet charge accompanied by bugle blasts which characterized the battles of the East African campaign were of European derivation.

The attitudes towards war differed between the Arabs and East Africans. In East Africa the war assumed the aspects of a sport. Meinertzhagen reported that the German officers at Tanga "treated this was as some new form of sport." 69 He in turn was informed by a German officer: "You English are really quite un-understandable and appear to regard war as a sport." 70 Even Lettow-Vorbeck in describing a British officer's exploits said that "the innate sporting instinct of his nation came out." 71

During the war all the amenities of battle were observed. Lettow-Vorbeck reported: "I should like to remark generally that during this first period of the

69 Meinertzhagen, *Army Diary*, p. 98.
war the conduct of the British regular officers was invariably chivalrous, and that the respect they paid was fully reciprocated. The adherence to the code of chivalry distinguished the war in East Africa from the other theaters of the Great War. At Jassin the surrendering British officers were allowed to keep their swords; in a similar manner the Europeans in the German forces, as a token of honor, were allowed to keep their arms after the Armistice.

Prisoners-of-war were carefully cared for, truces were called to clear the fields of the dead and exchange wounded, apologies for violations of the rules of war were exchanged as well as were complaints about breaches of chivalry.

Both sides complimented the good work of the other in the best knightly tradition. After capturing a British officer who had surprised a German supply column and destroyed it, Lettow-Vorbeck concluded that he and his fellow officers "could not help but admiring the excellent work of his patrol." The British responded in kind. When the British Commander-in-Chief, General Jan Smuts, received the news that Lettow-Vorbeck had received the Order Pour le Merite, he immediately relayed the news to his German opponent. Lettow-Vorbeck said:

72 Ibid., p. 106.
73 Buchan, Nelson's History, pp. 105-106.
74 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 317.
75 Ibid., p. 143.
He also expressed the hope that his cordial congratulations would not be unacceptable to me. I thanked him equally politely. ... I mention this letter from General Smuts as proof of the mutual personal esteem and chivalry which existed throughout in spite of the exhausting warfare carried on by both sides. On many occasions also the enemy intimated his great appreciation of the achievements of the German forces. 76

Often the troops in German East Africa went beyond prescribed code of conduct in extending courtesies to their foe after the battles had been fought. The most interesting example of this behavior was the propensity for offering food and drink to Europeans who happened to be in camp as victors or vanquished. After the British disaster at Tanga, Meinertzhagen went to the German camp so that terms for the exchange of the wounded could be agreed upon. He reported:

We [the German officers and himself] chattered away like old friends, talking about yesterday's fight. ... The Germans were meanwhile kindness itself and gave me a most excellent breakfast which I sorely needed. 77

Later he was "regaled" with old brandy and treated to a discussion of the war. 78

The allies treated the Germans in much the same way, whether they were Portuguese prisoners inviting their German captors to share brandy or Belgian officers treating their German captives to dinner and wine. 79

76 Ibid., p. 170.

77 Meinertzhagen, Army Diary, p. 97.

78 Ibid., pp. 100-101.

79 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 322.
Four points need to be made about the chivalry which characterized the conduct of the campaign in East Africa. First, it seemed to spring from a certain camaraderie among the European soldiers, which transcended national lines. Out in the bush of Africa the lines of distinction between Europeans became blurred and national divisions were largely forgotten. Surrounded by a totally alien culture and struggling against a hostile environment, the British, German and Belgian soldiers became more aware of their similarities as Europeans than their differences because of nationality. The best example of this feeling of "togetherness" by Europeans is the action of the German Lieutenant von Veltheim. On September, 1914, Veltheim was wounded and captured by the British at Koronga. While imprisoned at Malanje, the natives of the region rebelled and cut off the village of Malanje. There being no military personnel at the village, Veltheim placed his services at the disposal of the British magistrate there. He organized the defense and assumed military command of the station until the danger passed. 80 This camaraderie among Europeans was testified to be Lettow-Vorbeck who was to "thank the Belgian commandant for the camaraderie shown us, camaraderie which always exists among soldiers, even between enemies, when they have mutual respect for one another. 81

80 Honders, East Africa, pp. 179-180.
81 Lettow-Vorbeck, Reminiscences, p. 322.
Secondly, the strict adherence to chivalry may have been an attempt by Europeans to salvage some amount of prestige. In 1939, George Orwell described the look which a Moroccan Negro soldier gave him:

But the look he gave me was not in the least the kind of look you might expect. Not hostile, not contemptuous, not sullen, not even inquisitive. It was the shy, wide-eyed Negro look, which actually is a look of profound respect. I saw how it was. This wretched boy... actually has feelings of reverence before a white skin. He has been taught that the white race are his masters, and he still believes it.

But there is one thought which every white man... thinks when he sees a black army marching past. 'How much longer can we go on kidding these people? How long before they turn their guns in the other direction?'

It was curious, really. Every white man there had this thought stowed somewhere or other in his mind. I had it, so had the other onlookers, so had the officers on their sweating chargers and the white N.C.O.'s marching in the ranks. It was a kind of secret which we all knew and were too clever to tell: only the Negroes didn't know. 82

In 1914, many Europeans feared that by teaching black men to kill white men, the secret of white man's prestige would be destroyed. Schnee said that 'war in which black men under European leadership be forced to fight against white men, would deal a deadly blow to the prestige of the white race among the blacks.' 83 After the war he concluded that 'the prestige of the white race, upon which, for the greater part, the white man's rule in Africa depends, has been permanently

83 Schnee, German Colonies, p. 87.
undermined. The British also feared the consequences of training blacks to kill Europeans. They failed to organize their tribes to resist German incursions because "it was desired not to involve natives in a white man's war."85 The South Africans opposed plans to train Zulu and Swazi peoples for war in German East Africa for "such a step might afterwards lead to grave political, social and military problems which would fall entirely on the Union."86 Nevertheless, black men were used to kill white men. Yet they were not trained to disrespect them. Chivalry, which is, after all, based upon respect for one's opponent, was imposed on the natives.

Thirdly, chivalry which is a European institution was imposed upon the askari just as were European uniforms. Although there were lapses in following the chivalric code, in general the askari adopted the European standard as their own.87 The askari adherence to the chivalric code is evident in Lettow-Vorbeck's description concerning the English Lieutenant Barrett who "was severely wounded and fell into our hands; owing to false accounts he thought his last moment had come, and was surprised when our Askari, who had no European with them, tied

84 Ibid., p. 100.

85 Modern, East Africa, p. 25.

86 Ibid., p. 135.

him up and carried him to a doctor. In his astonishment he remarked: 'Why your Askari are gentlemen'.

Finally, the attitude of some European officers of regarding war as a form of sport was possible because the armies, fighting for a purely military objective, were not defending their homes and families or fighting for any political ideal. Therefore, the enemy was not conceived of as an evil menace which sought to destroy one's homeland or a devil fighting on the side of wrong. In the war in East Africa the enemy became something more human and not necessarily an embodiment of evil. The campaign which had no great ideological or national issue at stake took on a less serious aspect than the contemporary national struggles.

In Arabia where the Arab forces fought for the idea of national independence and for the preservation of their homes war was much too serious to be regarded as sport. Besides, chivalry, a Western concept, was rejected by the Arabs as surely as they rejected European uniforms. While generally obeying their own code of war, the Arabs and the Europeans with them were sometimes overwhelmed by national interests which caused them to act contrary to such restrictions. After viewing the massacre of Tafas in 1918, Lawrence ordered the Arabs to take no prisoners: "In a madness born of the horror of Tafas we killed, and killed, even blowing in the heads of the fallen and of the animals, as though

their death and running blood could slake our agony. "89 National passions were too violent to be checked by codes of war.

In summary, the decision whether or not to tap the military resources of the people had far-ranging effects on both the course of the wars and the characteristics of the armies in both campaigns. Lawrence's decision to use the people gained several advantages for the Arab rebels, but these advantages were balanced by certain inherent disadvantages. Lettow-Vorbeck gave up the advantages which accrued from fighting a people's war but reaped the benefits of waging a purely military struggle. The Arab army took on the aspects of the Arab people, while the appearance and actions of the German forces in East Africa were alien to the native peoples.

89 Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, p. 633.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that each of the two major First World War guerrilla campaigns represented one type of guerrilla warfare described by Mao: the Arab revolution was "based on the masses" while the German's struggle in East Africa "lacked a broad foundation in the people." Although the type of guerrilla warfare waged had a profound effect on both the conduct of war and the characteristics of the army in each campaign, both the Arab Revolution and the German operations in East Africa proved successful in a military sense. In conclusion, some explanation is offered about why both campaigns proved successful despite the difference in type of guerrilla warfare waged.

Since Mao's success in China, commentators on guerrilla warfare have tended to accept him as the perfector of guerrilla warfare. Consequently his principles on guerrilla warfare have taken on the aspects of holy writ to many of those who hope to find techniques for combating guerrilla tactics and those who plan to employ guerrilla principles. And among the most unquestionable commandments in Mao's scripture of guerrilla warfare is his dictum that successful guerrilla forces must associate themselves with the masses of the people.
Yet the World War I guerrilla experience suggests a different conclusion. Although the dependence of the Arab guerrillas on popular support might be considered an affirmation of the need for guerrilla forces to have popular assistance, the East African German force's ability to function without the sympathy of the native population directly contradicts such a conclusion. One must conclude then that popular support is not of equal importance in all guerrilla campaigns. These two World War I guerrilla experiences demonstrate that time and circumstance determine whether or not popular support is necessary.

In Arabia the situation favored the fighting of a guerrilla war with a popular base. The people in the area of operations, although deeply divided by tribal differences, did share a common language, a common religion, and a common tradition. They recognized themselves as belonging to one Arab nationality. Before the war a smoldering nationalism existed among the Arab people and they were ripe for revolution. Any guerrilla forces which appealed to Arab nationalism would have received the support of this large, important people.

The military situation in Arabia demanded a popular base. The Arab rebels had no army which could hope to resist the Turks. Lawrence concluded that the regular elements in Arabia were so weak that the rebels could not let any resource go unused. The only source of military strength which the Arab rebels could tap was that of the people.

Not only did the people have a monopoly on military power in Arabia, they also had a monopoly of food and water necessary for the support of guerrilla
forces. The resources of Arabia were so scarce that they were all utilized by the people. While guerrilla troops could have obtained food from British ships, water could only be obtained from the people. In addition, a force drawing supplies from the people would have gained mobility due to its independence from lines of communication and its lack of baggage.

The geography of Arabia also required guerrilla forces to have popular support to keep their movements hidden from the Turks. In the wastelands of Arabia, guerrilla forces could not move without the knowledge of the people. Guerrilla forces could not get water and food without going to the wells and oasises where the Arab population was concentrated. Often times these people could easily predict the destination of such troops because the necessity of securing food and water in the barren wastes of Arabia prescribed certain routes. The impossibility of keeping the guerrilla's movements from the people, required that the people have sympathy with the guerrillas to keep the secret from the Turks.

The situation in German East Africa tended to reduce the importance of the people in a guerrilla campaign. No common bonds existed between the various native tribes of East Africa so no common appeal existed to which the peoples of East Africa would have responded. They spoke different languages, worshipped different gods, and shared no common history. Although the natives all belonged to the same race, this common trait created no feelings of unity among the natives.
The German East African Protective Force was an efficient army which in some respects at least equalled the Allied forces opposing it. The existence of this strong army represented a source of military strength which the Germans could utilize in war; there was no need to tap the military strength of the masses. Although the German forces were heavily outnumbered, the victories at Tanga and Jassin at the beginning of the conflict convinced the German colonists that the German army's superiority in morale and mobility would allow them to carry out their war aims.

The German forces in East Africa were not dependent on the people for sustenance. The fertility of the East African territory allowed the German troops to obtain what food they could not capture from the enemy by hunting, foraging or, in many cases, by farming the land. Water, too, was abundant in most parts of East Africa. This natural abundance of the necessities of life in East Africa enabled the German guerrilla forces to survive without the assistance of the people.

The sparseness of the East African population also made it possible for the German forces to maneuver without the knowledge of the people. Often both the German and British armies would travel for days in the vast spaces of East Africa without meeting natives. Since it was possible to keep the movements of the military forces from the natives, the German forces did not need to fear that the people would betray their movements to hostile forces. And when the natives did attempt to relay information to the Europeans, the problem of
communication proved so difficult as to make such information unreliable or meaningless.

The World War I guerrilla experience demonstrates that the value of the support of the people varies with the circumstances. Mao's principle that successful guerrilla warfare must have the support of the people is not universally true and should not be considered valid regardless of the circumstances. In Mao's own words

In studying the guiding laws of war of different historical stages, of different characters, of different places, and of different nations, we must keep our eyes on their respective characteristics and their development, and oppose a mechanical approach to the problem of war.1

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MAP 2
THE HEJAZ RAILWAY

Source: Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, p. 34.
Includes my additions.