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I. Introduction

History is composed of many events, and most of the time, human-beings are responsible for these events happening around the world; in other words, men have great influence on shaping the course of history, and conversely, history has much impact on an individual's life.

This paper will mainly focus on the influence both T.E. Lawrence had on history and history had on T.E. Lawrence by looking into his life in a chronological order, and summarize both impacts in the end.

II. Youth

Thomas Edward Lawrence, called Ned by his family, was born in Wales in 1888. He was the second of five illegitimate sons of Sir Thomas Chapman, an Anglo-Irish baronet, and Sarah Junner, who had served as a governess to Thomas's four legitimate kids. Ned's parents eloped together and adopted the name 'Lawrence'.

Lawrence did well at school and pursued a wide range of interests and enthusiasms. Since he had been especially fascinated by archaeology from childhood, after graduating the university, he worked at the British Museum excavation of the Hittite city of Carchemish, on the River Euphrates as an assistant. He was in charge of photography, pottery, and managing the locally recruited workforce; his success in the latter role was to prove valuable later. At Carchemish he learned how to motivate Arab villagers and, unlike Englishmen working in the British Empire, he did so with no help from military discipline or colonial authority. (1)

III. WW I (1914-1916) : History Shapes Men

After WWI broke out in 1914, Lawrence joined the Geographical Section of the General Staff in London for a brief period. He was then assigned to the Military Intelligence Department in Cairo where he became, above other things, an expert on Arab nationalist movements in the Turkish provinces that now comprise Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and the Hejaz region of what is today Saudi Arabia (2). Using his knowledge of Arabic he interviewed Turkish prisoners and soon became familiar with Turkish Army locations and strengths. (3)

The start of the Arab Revolt in June 1916 led Lawrence to undertake perilous missions behind enemy lines. He went to Arabia in October to participate in a fact-finding mission in the Hejaz where Sherif Hussein of Mecca had rebelled against Turkey, now fighting on Germany's side. His quality reports and his empathy with Arab leaders led him to be assigned to Emir Feisal, one of Hussein's four sons, as a British liaison officer and adviser in the Arab Revolt.

IV. WW I (1916-1917) : The Hejaz Campaigns : Men Shape History

In the early stages of the Revolt, both Lawrence and Feisal knew that the Revolt had to move north from the Hejaz if the Arabs were
to gain political advantage from siding with the Allies (4). Once they moved northwards up the Red Sea coast from Yenbo to Wejh, they posed a serious threat to Turkish lines of communication.

Soon, Allies learned that the Turks were intending to imminently withdraw from Medina, where the Turkish stronghold was located. While Hussein was delighted at the news, British headquarters in Cairo feared that Turkish forces' movement would be an additional hindrance to a British advance in the Palestine front. Cairo therefore urgently requested that the Arabs prevent the Turks leaving Medina. (5)

In response, Lawrence developed a new strategy. (6) He thought that frequent guerrilla raids would inflict unpredictable damage at remote points along the railway, halting traffic for a few days. As a result, withdrawal from Medina would be virtually impossible. This scheme was put into effect. Supplied by the British, he blasted the sections of the vital Hejaz Railway, endangering the Ottoman's supply line. Thanks to his strategy, the Turks' withdrawal from Medina became virtually impossible, and large number of Turkish soldiers and workers had to be deployed along the line in order to defend it and keep running it. From then on, the Turkish force became impotent.

V. WW I (1917-1918) : The Capture of Aqaba and the Syrian Campaigns : Men Shape History

By March 1917 although the blow at the Hejaz was successful, Lawrence and Feisal wished to proceed further northwards to Damascus and beyond. To do that, as Lawrence knew, there existed an obvious route if it could be secured – the track leading inland to Maan from Aqaba at the northern end of the Red Sea (7); for the Hejaz Arabs there may have been other, equally obvious routes. What was essential for them was to secure Aqaba, because they needed supplies from the British to become an effective force.

Using local knowledge from his earlier visit to Aqaba before the war and the information gained from his intelligence work in Cairo, Lawrence devised a scheme to make a wide circuit inland through the desert. Thanks to the experience at Carchemish, he could easily raise a small party of local force and capture the Turkish defenses by approaching them from the rear.

The extension of the revolt was accomplished by Lawrence’s remarkable exploit, and the Arabs held both Aqaba and the route up to the Maan plateau (8). Hurrying to Cairo with the news, Lawrence requested urgent supplies from General Allenby, the new Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

From that point on, Lawrence, trusted by both Arab and Britain, became the key link between General Allenby and Feisal's army. As the revolt extended, there were further raids and hard fighting especially when Allenby launched his final thrust northward through Palestine. In the course of the fighting, Lawrence promised that the Arab army would cut the line at the critical moment and his role was very decisive in the advancement of Allies. He was again promoted and received more military honors.

VI. Diplomacy (1919-1922) : Men Shape History & History Shapes Men

After capturing Damascus, Lawrence immediately went back to London in 1918 to promote the case of Arab independence, in which he had come to believe passionately. Working closely with Emir Feisal, Lawrence served in the British Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

Even though both men made strong impressions and received a sympathetic hearing from the Conference, it was clear that his proposals would be rejected by Britain and her wartime ally, France; before the conference had even begun, the British and French leaders had agreed secretly on the future of Turkey's Arab territories. Thanks to the effort of Lawrence and Feisal, it was nevertheless accepted that Hejaz should be represented at the forthcoming peace conference in Paris, with the Emir Feisal as an official delegate and Lawrence as his adviser. (9)

Bitterly disappointed and exhausted, Lawrence returned to Britain. Reminiscing about the days of the war, he wrote a romantic account of the Bible-land victories, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, which was a huge success in a country numbed by the horrors of European trench warfare. Lawrence soon became a popular hero and his fame gave added weight to his political campaign.

By the end of 1920, subsequent attempts to impose British colonial rule in Iraq had provoked an open rebellion. As a result, Winston Churchill was appointed Colonial Secretary, and he persuaded Lawrence, who had been campaigning against Government policy (10), to join him as an adviser. Following a conference in Cairo, Feisal became King of Iraq and his brother Abdullah was made ruler of Transjordan, the region that would eventually become the Kingdom of Jordan (11). In achieving this accession of the Emir Feisal, Lawrence was instrumental. Although the settlement left Syria under French rule, and both Iraq and Transjordan ? renamed Jordan in 1946 ? were still under British tutelage, they thereafter enjoyed an appreciable degree of self-government, and this achievement relieved Lawrence of much of the guilt he had felt at Britain's treatment of her Arab allies.

VII. Service in the Ranks (1922-1935) : Men Shape History & History Shapes Men

By then, however, the cumulative exertions and horrors of the wartime campaign and the writing of a thousand-page Seven Pillars of Wisdom had drifted Lawrence into a perilous state of mind. Having completed his job with Churchill, Lawrence resigned from the Colonial Office and joined the Royal Air Force as an ordinary aircraftman under the name 'John Hume Ross.' He said to his friends that he sought a 'brain sleep' at RAF but four months later, the press discovered his whereabouts. Then, he was discharged and with the help of his friends, he moved to the Tank Corps as T.E. Shaw. He, however, hated the Army so much that he went through periods of deep depression.

At the end of 1925 he was eventually allowed to the RAF but four months later, he was put into effect. Supplied by the British, he blasted the sections of the vital Hejaz Railway, endangering the Ottoman's supply line. Thanks to his strategy, the Turks' withdrawal from Medina became virtually impossible, and large number of Turkish soldiers and workers had to be deployed along the line in order to defend it and keep running it. From then on, the Turkish force became impotent.

This time, he was posted to a flying-boat unit at Plymouth, where, although dismayed by the experience in India, he was to become passionately committed to a new cause. At the beginning of 1931 he witnessed a flying-boat crash, quite close to the shore. The old-fashioned rescue launch was so slow to reach the scene that lives were needlessly lost. (12) From then on Lawrence became deeply involved in the development of these planning-hull design craft, spending his last Air Force years working in boatyards. As a direct
VIII. Men Shape History

Although he was just an individual like others, throughout his life, Lawrence had much influence over the course of history. In the Hejaz Campaigns, he came up with a new strategy against the withdrawing Turks; he prevented Turks withdrawal from Medina by inflicting frequent guerilla raids upon the railway, which eventually halted traffic for a few days.

After the blow at Hejaz, Lawrence wanted to proceed further northwards, and again, with local knowledge and information gained from his intelligence work in Cairo, he devised a plan to hold Aqaba, an obvious route to the north. Lawrence not only cleverly devised the Aqaba scheme but also played an important role as a key link between Britain and Arab. Without him, there might have been several problems in communication between two countries. Furthermore, his capturing Aqaba was a pivotal point in the whole history of WWI because at that time, the U.S. was split between two decisions - either staying as a neutral country or joining the WWI as a member of Entente. However, the latter option, joining the Entente, was not fascinating to the U.S. since Russia was in chaos due to the Russian Revolution and France was close to throwing the towel. Thus, the British government definitely needed something that could convince the U.S. politicians and the public that the Entente was not losing the war but slowly dominating the war, and Lawrence provided that success story.

When the WWI was over, the world powers gathered in Paris. There, even though Lawrence tried his best, he could not achieve independence of a unified Arabia because powerful nations like Britain and France were closely involved in the Arab territory problems; however, Hejaz was able to represent itself at the peace conference thanks to Lawrence’s efforts. Also, by the end of 1920, an open rebellion was provoked in Iraq due to British attempt to rule over the territories. In settling down the situation and establishing Kingdom of Iraq and Kingdom of Jordan, Lawrence was an essential liaison.

Lawrence’s influence prolonged after his death throughout the WWII. He contributed to British efforts to save sailors of damaged or sunken ships in WW II by having focused on the development of planning-hull design craft which was faster than old-fashioned one so that swift rescue launch became possible.

IX. History Shapes Men

As an individual has an impact on history, the events in the course of history also have considerable influence in a person's life. The outbreak of WWI led Lawrence to join the Military Intelligence Department in Cairo where he became a specialist in Arab nationalist movement in the Turkish provinces. Following Arab Revolt in 1916 made him undertake dangerous missions behind enemy lines, and his knowledge and experience at the front were decisive factors of subsequent events in his life.

As the war went on, Lawrence kept succeeding in the advancement of Allies. As a result, he was constantly promoted, and received more military honors. However, he was bitterly disappointed by his failing to achieve the independence of Arab at the Paris conference. When he returned to Britain with disappointment, he wrote a romantic account of victories at Arab wars; it was a great success and Lawrence soon became a popular hero and a political figure of the days.

By 1922, Lawrence already had enough wars to fight and negotiations to deal with. He was very exhausted by the horrors of the war time so he decided to resign from the Colonial Office and take part in the RAF under the alias for the sake of the 'brain sleep.' Nevertheless, since he was a famous figure he was soon discovered and then he had to move to the Tank Corps under another name, T.E. Shaw. What was worse was that he didn't like the new army so he had to undergo the periods of deep depression.

Notes

(1) Biographical summary from T.E. Lawrence Studies
(2) ibid.
(3) Lawrence of Arabia from PBS
(4) Lawrence of Arabia from Imperial War Museum London, chapter The War: 1916-1917
(5) Biographical summary from T.E. Lawrence Studies
(6) ibid.
(7) ibid.
(8) ibid.
(9) Lawrence of Arabia from Imperial War Museum London, chapter Peace and Diplomacy
(10) Biographical summary from T.E. Lawrence Studies
(11) Lawrence of Arabia from Imperial War Museum London chapter Peace and Diplomacy
(12) Biographical summary from T.E. Lawrence Studies
(13) ibid.

Bibliography
When most people think of TE Lawrence they focus on filmmaker David Lean’s portrayal but a new play paints a different picture of the psychologically complex man. Image caption Lawrence’s interest in the Middle East grew out of his love of history and archaeology and in World War One he worked in intelligence as the British fought the Turks. The picture most people have of the writer TE Lawrence is the version of him in David Lean’s film Lawrence of Arabia. Lawrence was part artist, part man of action, hungry for public acclaim yet uneasy about his own inner self, he says. Brenton, who built his reputation as one of Britain’s most political playwrights, insists his new play at the Hampstead Theatre, Lawrence after Arabia, didn’t start out as a political statement.