THE GALICIAN CAMPAIGN OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER OF 1914 AND THE RESULTS UPON AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

A Thesis

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The European War of 1914-1918 occupies a unique niche in the record of world history. It was a conflagration that destroyed four empires and resulted in execution or exile for their respective rulers. After the war ended, the nations of Europe found, moreover, that an entire generation was gone. The furious artillery barrages, the insidious use of gas, the machine gun, and other technological inventions of mass death combined to rid European nations of their youth.

It was the largest conflict the world had ever witnessed, yet it was the last of the small wars. Even though it consumed more men and equipment and encompassed more area than any other war previous to it, the Great War was the last war that was fought with the rules and laws of chivalrous conduct. It was the last war where men on horseback were expected to charge barbed wire and machine gun emplacements. It was a war in which men awaited an enemy's attack in trenches, enduring artillery barrages of twenty
four hours duration. It was a war where men lived in the trenches dug in the earth and fought over the same churned up patch of ground for months at a time. It was a war fought with old tactics. Men endlessly attacked impregnable positions with bayonets and their bare hands. In the case of the French Army, men were shot as mutineers when they were unable to take their objectives.

Into this war of poison gas and flame throwers, the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary propelled itself. In August of 1914, it was fully prepared to fight an orderly nineteenth century war. Cavalry sabres and bayonets were sharpened religiously. Yet the war that began over the rights of Serbia was not a simple nineteenth century adventure. It was the first conflict that required the total effort of the entire populations of the belligerent nations.

In every country men went cheerfully to the battlefields. Each man knew he was fighting for the honor and glory of his king, ruler, and nation. In some of the country districts of Russia, men were mobilized for the war, and were not even informed who the enemy was. For them it was sufficient that their Emperor had bid them to arms.¹

Everywhere men believed that the war would cease in two to three months at the latest, and that they could return to their own lives soon. But even this expectation, that life could be resumed and lived as it had been before August of 1914, was impossible to fulfill. The war effectively made the old way of life obsolete.

The war was so huge that it was conducted on three major fronts on the continent of Europe. It was fought in the jungles and deserts of Africa and the Middle East, the high seas of the Pacific and the Atlantic, and the far away fortresses in Asia. Of these areas none could compare to the size and magnitude of the struggle on the eastern front in Europe. It was by far one of the most poignant military efforts which men have participated in. Over 12,000,000 men fought and died on this front alone.

It is my purpose to describe and explain the events which occurred during the late summer and early fall of 1914 on this eastern European front. The two months of August and September proved to have the most profound impact on the future conduct of the war. Because of the events of these two months, Austria-Hungary lost the fighting abilities of her armies. They were destroyed in the furious encounters in the hills and fields of Galicia.
As a result, Germany was forced to send reinforcements to bolster the sagging spirit of her allies. German lost the decisive battle of the Marne due to this aid which had been sent to the East.
CHAPTER I

"The cornfields swayed in golden color, the summer sun burned hot on the land below, as the farmer his farm, the worker his machine, the tradesman, the shopkeeper, the teacher, the civil servant, all left their workdays behind as they hurried to the colors to the demand of their Emperor."

In such glowing prose as this the official Austro-Hungarian War History describes the first day of mobilization for the Army of the Dual Monarchy. The war became a fact for the millions of people of Europe. Before the shells rent the sod and the beautiful cornfields were drenched in blood, the men left for their units in a festive spirit.

Looking at a map of Europe, one of the most obvious battlegrounds lay between France and Germany. According to the German tacticians, the decisive battle of the war was to be fought here within the first six weeks of the war. On the western front the combatants were soon to find themselves part of a mass of humanity that stretched in an

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unending line from Switzerland to the sea. The line itself was packed with troops, for it was a tactical rule at that time that every yard of frontage would be occupied by one rifleman.

In Eastern Europe however, the size and scope of the battlefield precluded establishing any similar ratio of men to frontage. The armies fighting in France found themselves packed together, yet on the eastern front they never could seem to concentrate enough men. The multitudes, who struggled here were constantly dwarfed by their surroundings. No matter how many troops were massed at a strong point, there was always the danger of an enemy attack at one of the weaker positions on the line. There always existed the danger of a flank or even a rear attack. Reconnaissance in such territory was unusually difficult, for cavalry could only effectively cover so much territory, and the few aircraft that each foe had available were not fully utilized.

At the beginning of the war, armies as huge as a

2The Russian cavalry was theoretically the most mobile having a twelve day supply of food. Much depended upon the mount and type of saddle used. Times History of the World War, Vol. 2, (London: The Times, 1914), p. 513.
modern city wandered around looking for the enemy. These armies consumed tremendous amounts of food, equipment, and ammunition. Neither side could survive without a complex system of supply stretching to their home base. These systems all depended upon the railroads to a great extent, however, the railroads in this area of the world were few and far between. As a result of this deficiency an entire Russian Army covered over one hundred miles on the apples which they had picked from the orchards in their path.

Unlike the Western front there were no intricate systems of trenches and dug in emplacements. It was a war of attack, consolidation and counterattack. On the battlefields of the east the capture of a railhead or supply depot could serve as the focal point for the destruction of a huge army which had used it as a base of supply or communication. There was a sustained anxiety about the unknown on this front, which the western front could never duplicate.

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3 One division contained 16,000 men. Auffenberg's army contained nine Infantry and two Cavalry Divisions. Not counting technical troops, medical etc. his force numbered 176,000 men.


5 The loss of such a center, such as Lemberg or Warsaw, would render impotent any force dependent upon them.
Modern science was partially responsible for this for railroads and automobiles could produce thousands of troops at unexpected locations and times.6

The Eastern Front, from the very outset of hostilities produced consternation and confusion among the three warring powers. Boundaries were difficult to defend. East Prussia projected toward Russian territory almost 240 miles. South of it lay the Polish Salient, a tongue of land 250 miles long which extended directly into the heartland of Germany. South of the 220 mile wide strip lay Austrian Glaicia. It nestled along the southern border of the Salient and protruded into Russia for almost one hundred miles. This common border was over one thousand miles long. An attack initiated by either side could come at any location. Awareness of these geographic factors had caused each of the powers involved to develop intricate plans for offense and defense. The Polish Salient, as is mentioned above, juts into the very heart of the territory of the Central Powers. It comes within one hundred and seventy

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The Germans had built an intricate system of railroads in E. Prussia and Silesia for the tactical defense of their border. It enabled them to transport their troops rapidly up and down their border to repel enemy attacks and to launch lighting offensives at weakened areas.
miles of the German capital. Across this Salient flows the sluggish Vistula River. Exactly in the center of this area lies the city of Warsaw. Throughout the nineteenth century the Russians controlled it and by 1914 had transformed it into the largest fortification and military depot in the region. It was the key to the entire front. The reason for this was the numerous railroad lines which converged on the city. It was second only to Moscow in the number of railroad lines passing through it.

To the East of the Salient lay the flat expanses of the Polish Plain. The Pript Marshes are located in its exact center. They are a 300 mile expanse of swamps, crisscrossed with few roads. The roads that did exist were inadequate and not suited for military use. Further east lay the massive realms of Russia, from which the fabled "Russian Steamroller" would soon issue forth.

The geography of East Prussia was studded with small lakes, rivers, and rolling hills. The Germans had fortified the border extensively and had wisely provided the area with an abundance of standard gauge railway lines. These lines proved their worth any number of times when swift movement of troops was required.
East Prussia was well fortified by the Germans. Along its eastern border lay the Angerrap Line, a series of lakes and interconnected forts. This system of fortifications would drive the invader either to the north or south. In the north the fortress of Konigsberg awaited them, while in the south, stationed just inside the border, numerous entrenchments guarded all approaches from the Polish Salient.

In Galicia the Carpathian mountains formed a natural barrier to restrict entry to the rich plains of Hungary. The three major Galician cities were, going from west to east, Cracow, Przemysl and Lemberg. Each was strongly fortified, especially toward the north to guard against invasion from the Polish Salient.

Before the war began, the three nations who were to fight on this eastern front, had devised a series of plans which each hoped would cover every facet of attack and counterattack. The nature of the terrain discussed above guided the military planners in their labors.

When the war began, Austria had two different plans

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7 Lemberg was also known by the name of Lviv, and Leopolis. All place names will, for continuity, follow the German spellings and pronunciations.
to choose from. Plan "B" or Balkan, was the less elaborate and in the opinion of General Conrad, the Austro-Hungarian Supreme Commander, the one he most probably would be required to pursue. Plan "B" would go into effect in the event of a war with Serbia. According to this plan, three of the six Austro-Hungarian Armies would invade Serbia; the Fifth and Sixth Armies would invade from the direction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the Second would cross the Sava and the Danube. The remaining three armies would station themselves in Galicia to protect the northern flank from possible Russian intervention. The other plan, known as plan "R" or Russia, actually assumed that war would come with Russia and Serbia simultaneously. In this eventuality, the Fifth and Sixth Armies would still invade Serbia as before, but the Second Army would be transferred to the northern or Galician Front.

The Russian arrangements for war were also quite specific. The activity of the German Army would determine which plan of attack the Russians would follow. The Chiefs

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8 Conrad had never expected a war of such gigantic proportions. In view of his limited goals and objectives, it is understandable that he should consider that a Balkan War would be the most probable. Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, *The Unknown War, The Eastern Front* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932) p. 118.
of the General Staff had concluded, and correctly so, that Germany would be their most dangerous opponent. Therefore they decided that together with their ally France, they would conduct a two front war simultaneously upon Germany.\(^9\) If Germany was to attack France first, Russia would move with Plan "A" or Austria. If Germany attacked Russia first, then Russia would be forced to use Variant "G" or Germania.\(^10\) According to an agreement with France, Russia was bound to produce 700,000 to 800,000 troops for the initial invasion; the French pledged themselves to contribute 1,200,000 to 1,300,000 troops, because France expected to bear the entire brunt of the massive German invasion.\(^11\)

The German plan was the most daring of them all. The events in the east would be determined by the German strategy in the Western theater.\(^12\) Germany initially also had two


\(^11\)Danilov, Russland Im Weltkrieg, p. 110.

\(^12\)Churchill, Unknown War, p. 82.
alternatives. She could invade Russia with her ally Austria-Hungary and maintain the defensive against France until Russia was destroyed, but the German Staff cast aside this plan as being too slow for their interests. In the 1890's General Schlieffen, the Chief of the General Staff discarded the previous plan, which was that of the elder Moltke. The German Staff adopted what became known as the Schlieffen Plan. This plan committed Germany to the path of total war to the death once it was initiated. Schlieffen's plan proposed to concentrate such strength against France that she would be crushed within thirty days. This would be accomplished with a flanking movement through neutral Belgium, through the flat fields in France, to the west of Paris and back towards the east to Verdun. They would repeat the victory of Sedan at Verdun. The common German-French border would be defended with light forces, and the Eastern Front with the barest minimum of force. All of the power of Germany was to go into the flanking northern or right wing of the German attack.

There was an immense risk involved in this plan, for if the right wing was too weak it would fail, and if the defending forces on the border would fail, the way to
Berlin would be left entirely free. The German Supreme Commander, von Moltke (the younger), had modified this plan through the years until by August 1914, it was no longer the plan of Schlieffen. He had weakened the right flank by shifting some of its forces to the defending left flank on the common border. Hermann von Kuhl, quoted in William Machester's book, *The Arms of Krupp*, stated: "In no case must the enemy be allowed to get to the Rhine; for then our...industrial region would be extremely endangered." Von Moltke had committed a grave error, one that Schlieffen would have never forgiven him. Schlieffen's last words on his deathbed were "Macht mir den rechten Flugel stark, "or "Make the right flank strong."  

In Austria-Hungary the Supreme Commander was Freiherr Conrad von Hoetzendorff, who was extremely dedicated to his career. He took his job so seriously that he even signed his love letters with the title, "von Conrad, General der Infantry." The German General Erich Ludendorff mentions

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14Hereafter he is to be referred to as General Conrad.

Conrad in his memoirs and speaks very highly of him.

"...the brain of the operations of the Austro-Hungarian Army was General Conrad,...a clever and distinguished General of great mental adaptability. He was a strategist with an unusually fertile mind and always instilled fresh vitality into the Imperial and Royal Army." 16

Franz Joseph, Conrad's Emperor, felt just the opposite of him. Indeed he was so distrustful of Conrad's military ability that from the first he said that he would have preferred to place the army under German control. 17

There is no doubt that Conrad was a good strategist. Time and time again, according to his military associates, he devised brilliant plans to forestall the Russians. Both Churchill and Ludendorff felt that he had made the correct strategical moves at the correct times. Unfortunately, Conrad's glaring fault lay in his inability to evaluate the competence and abilities of his troops correctly. Hoffman, the able assistant to Ludendorff and Hindenburg, writes of Conrad,

"...The ideas of the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff were good they were all good. ...the misfortune of


that man of genius was that he had not the proper instrument by which he could transform his ideas into facts. The troops failed him."\(^{18}\)

The Army of Austria-Hungary was in many ways different than most of the armies in Europe at the time. In the years before the war Germany had given one-half of its budget to the military, but Austria-Hungary gave only one-fifth of its appropriation, for this purpose. The Hungarians had put a stop to increased military appropriations for they refused to support an army that might someday be used against them.\(^{19}\) The Austrian bureaucracy also refused to support the rival institution of the military. Therefore because the Austrians lacked money for military expenditure they had to phase out a trained reserve army. All expenditures went to the first line troops, and when the war began Conrad at least had at his disposal a highly trained loyal body of troops.\(^{20}\)

This lack of a reserve power figured in Conrad's


\(^{19}\)Conrad 481; History Today, They had not forgotten the bitter less of 1848.

strategy. He would have no one to replace the losses in his first line armies. Therefore he was determined to fight a long war. He had to effect a decisive victory before his supply of troops ran out. He calculated that he would have two to three months before he would face serious manpower shortages. He unfortunately estimated his casualties too lightly.\textsuperscript{21}

Prior to the war Conrad planned, in the event of Russian intervention, to send three quarters of his army against Russia and the other fourth would go on the defensive against Serbia. However, he was throughly misinformed as to the time it would take Russia to mobilize.\textsuperscript{22} General Conrad believed he would have five weeks to attack and control the Polish Salient, while being relatively unopposed. On the morning of July 25, when Austria-Hungary mobilized, it declared war upon Serbia and the armies against Russia were not required according to pre-war planning. Hence Plan "B" for Balkan went into effect. But Conrad had been misled by

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22}Russia would have difficulty in mobilization because her railroad system was not as big or developed as the western European nations. The nation was much bigger and naturally had to allow more time for the concentration of troops.
the machinations of politicians and diplomacy.

From Conrad's own memoirs his anger at being misled was apparent:

"The diplomats took only Serbia as their enemy, therefore mobilization for this action had to follow. To alter this on the possibility that Russia might intervene was not possible. Maybe the action towards Serbia would be finished without interruption by other powers. This would happen if a rapid success against Serbia stopped the intervention of other powers. Consequently strong forces were required against Serbia from the beginning, ...This necessity was imposed on us by diplomatic action."\(^{23}\)

He goes on to say that to take the Russian intervention seriously and mobilize for Russia would be foolish, for using only limited forces against Serbia would not achieve success quickly enough. Slow victory would merely increase the chances of outside intervention. This was Conrad's dilemma and it was a most unfavorable position to be in from the point of view of operations.\(^{24}\)

Conrad chose to stay with Plan B, and simply assumed Russia would not interfere. He seemed to ignore the possible consequences of a Russian intervention and was caught


\(^{24}\)Ibid, p. 111.
completely unprepared by Russia's forthcoming actions. The situation itself should have given Conrad ample cause for alarm. Russia was indignant, France was watching events icily, and even Britain was on guard. Yet Conrad assumed that an invasion of Serbia would go unopposed. Conrad blamed the Austrian and German diplomats for his predicament, but no one can alter the fact that he rushed headlong into a de-
cision without weighing all of the facts carefully. He would have had to wait one or two more days and he would have been able to make the correct decision. He unwittingly sent the Austrian Armies in the wrong direction on the 25th of July.25

Kaiser William telegraphed the Emperor on July 31 in-
dicating that,

"...in this momentous struggle, it is of the greatest importance that Austria should direct her main forces against Russia and should not divide her forces by an offensive against Serbia. This is the more important (course) as the large part of my army will be in France."26

It must be understood that once a mobilization order was issued it was possible, but not practical, to alter or stop it. This affected Austria inasmuch as any change in the

schedule would disrupt the railroad timetables and men would find themselves scattered all over the realm. Even though Plan "R" was in effect on paper, Plan "B" was being dutifully carried out by the railroad personnel. Conrad tried to minimize his error by stating:

"The First, Third, and Fourth Armies were on the way...towards Galicia, while the Second Army was arriving on the Sava and Danube and would not follow the above armies until after the approaches to Galicia had become free.

These orders had the effect, it was hoped of tying down a number of enemy troops who had to observe the actions of this army while it stood on their border." 27

Conrad also felt that he should explain to his allies the direction in which he had sent one half of his armies. In a letter to Moltke, dated August 2nd he explained:

"...We were obliged to declare openly that our hostile intentions were directed towards Serbia only and that further mobilization was merely a measure of protection against the threat from Russia.

It was hoped these measures...would restrain Russia from hostilities, while giving to the monarchy the possibility of carrying through the offensive against Serbia.

...we must hold to the idea of an offensive against Serbia, since Russia might have only been threatening us, to restrain action against Serbia." 28

27 Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, p. 113.

28 Ibid, 164-165.
Conrad asked Moltke to be patient, that despite certain complications, that transport of troops to Galicia would be completed.

The Russians had not been idle all of this time. In order to aid France, Russia's only hope was to keep as many German Divisions tied down on the Eastern Front as possible. Since the main German attack fell on France, Variant "A" was the plan put into use by the Russians. To concentrate Russian troops on the west bank of the Vistula was wisely rejected by the Russian Stavka as imprudent. There was too great a time difference between full mobilization by Russian troops and that of the Central Powers. It would have been possible, had the Russians massed in the Polish Salient, west of the Vistula, for the Austrians and the Germans to launch joint offensives from the flanks and sever the Russian advance Army. The Russians wisely assembled behind the Vistula just to the east of the Polish Salient.


30 The name Stavka is merely the Russian equivalent for General Headquarters.

31 Golovine, Russian Campaign of 1914, p. 46.
Russia's offensive followed this basic outline. A large body of troops gathered in the southwestern front under General Ivanov. The Fourth and Fifth Armies, consisting of seven corps advanced towards the border from the general area of Brest-Litovsk. In the southern area the Third and Eighth Armies containing nine corps advanced from the Kievan military district. The goal of the armies of the southwest front was to destroy the Austro-Hungarian forces in Galicia and to force the enemy in the south to retreat across the Dniester. The immediate goal after the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Army was to be the occupation of the Galician Plain and the capture of footholds in the mountain passes in the Carpathians. The main offensive force constituted the Third and Eighth Armies advancing from the Kievan area. The concentration of this force was to be accomplished with all speed. The Fifth Army had the task of holding the area of Brest-Corbin at all cost.

Surprisingly enough, the Austrian Army felt especially prepared. According to the memoirs of Conrad and of General Auffenberg, the Army had high morale. The nationality differences were even submerged before the danger from a common

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32Danilov, Russland Im Weltkrieg, p. 134. 33Ibid.
foe. The supply of good officers in the Austro-Hungarian Army was numerous. Conrad stated that it was the best army the monarchy had ever put into the field. 34

The personnel of the army were made up of many nationalities. The army was composed of 25% Germans, 23% Magyars, 17% Czechoslovaks, 11% Serbs, Croats & Slovenes, 8% Poles, 8% Ukrainians, 7% Roumanians and 1% Italians. To keep dissension at a minimum, members of these groups were sprinkled over every unit. The cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers was close to 75% German. 35 The total number of words of command were eighty in number and German in language. If the officer was not of German background he usually did not even know those commands. This German cadre was one of the primary forces which held the army together. They maintained a fierce loyalty to the Emperor. 36 These officers were brave and dedicated soldiers, but as such, they often times showed a complete disregard for cover and concealment from the enemy's fire. As a result, officer's losses were extremely high and orders had to be issued to

34 Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, pp. 222-223.

35 Edmund Glaise-Horstenau, Österreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg, p. 44.

36 Churchill, Unknown War, p. 230.
restrain them from foolhardy acts of bravery. Austrian officers were less dependent upon the rule book than their German counterparts. As a result the Austrian officers were said to have led their troops, while the "German officers drove their troops with fear."  

The infantry was considered the least glamorous branch to be in. Their basic weapon was a .315 cal. Mannlincher, bolt action rifle. This weapon was said to be on the verge of obsolescence by General Auffenberg. Money was scarce and the newer weapons were considered too expensive. The rifle of Austria compared unfavorably to the weapons of other countries. The bullets were extremely heavy, and a normal complement of ammunition weighted the infantryman down and tired him out quickly. The rifle was proven dependable however and was used in spite of its inferiority.

The Austrian Cavalry was the most respected and honored


38 *Times History of the War*, p. 222.

branch of the Armed Forces. It still clung affectionately to old methods and tactics, such as thundering charges with drawn sabres. This of course just would not do against the amassed firepower of just one machine gun. As a result, early losses were quite heavy. They were forced to adopt new methods of attack during the conduct of the war. The Cavalry began the war with obsolete uniforms consisting of a bright blue tunic and red trousers. The caliber of both men and animals was excellent. 40

The Austro-Hungarian Artillery had a very good reputation before the war began. Unfortunately, during the course of the war it was discovered that its artillery pieces were inferior to those of the enemy. Austria-Hungary had the lowest ratio of cannon per division of all combatants. The number of cannon per division in Austria-Hungary was six to one, in Great Britain it was twelve to one. Almost all of the combatants had recoil mechanisms on the cannons to absorb the shock of firing, but Austria only had this device on the heavy field artillery. 41

The Austro-Hungarian Army was divided into three parts, the General Army, the Landwehr of Austria, and the Landwehr

40 Ibid, 40. 41 Ibid, 42.
(or Honved, as it was called) of Hungary. As was noted earlier there was no well trained reserve force to assume the second line positions, or to serve as replacements.42 The tour of duty was of two years duration. It imposed hardships upon not only the officer cadre, but also created shortages of valuable and experienced non-commissioned officers who were in charge of training. When a modern army lacks a large training cadre, short term service is a useless device. Moreover, the Austrian Army could not induce enough non-commissioned officers to remain in the army as a profession. What was even worse, the unity brought about by the German language was seriously disputed in Hungary. Germanization was strongly resisted in Hungary and as a result the German language of command was sharply criticized.43

42 Ibid, 33.
43 Times History of the War, Vol. 2, 236.
CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY: GALICIA

In the East, the three giant empires threw their machinery into gear and the war exploded into being. The Germans had hoped to crush the French first and left a weak force on the eastern periphery of Eastern Prussia. They had counted heavily on both the extreme tardiness of the Russian mobilization and the advance which Austria had planned, to occupy their eastern foe, Russia. This was to give them time to finish with the French, unmolested. 44

As was noted in the previous chapter, the geography of the Eastern Front was unique. Another factor which was vital to this front was its topography. The topographical view of this eastern area of Europe shows four main topographic sections. The first is the belt of the Carpathian mountains to the south, the second a broad plateau north of the mountains which terminates on a prominent northward

44 General Basil Gourko, Memories and Impressions of War and Revolution in Russia 1914-1917 (London: John Murray, 1918), p. 15.
facing escarpment. The third section is a vast area of level plains extending from Germany through Poland to central Russia. Finally, the fourth topographical area consists of the hill and lake country of East Prussia.\footnote{Douglas Wilson Johnson, Topography and Strategy in the World War (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1917), p. 50. In the southern area, the topography was beneficial to Russia for no natural boundary existed to block their advance.}

An important feature of the area of the Polish plain is that the rocks are unconsolidated. This furnishes no material by which even rudimentary roads might be constructed. It is a region of flat terrain where drainage is always a problem. Hence, the area is marshy and the soil is of an extremely clayey nature. The inhabitants of this area, who are few, rely on river transportation in the warm months and sleds on the river ice in the winter. It is no wonder that Napoleon said, "In Poland I have learned of a new element, mud."\footnote{Ibid, p. 57.} The combined armies would learn, just as Napoleon had, that the Polish plain was no area in which to wage a modern war.

The battle of Lemberg in the first two months of the war was a titanic struggle of previously undreamed of
dimension. Altogether 648 Austrian battalions engaged 744 Russian battalions in a month long series of bloody engagements.\textsuperscript{47} The front extended for 200 miles between the Dniestter and Vistula Rivers. Each battle reacted upon, and set the stage for, the next. The Russians through numerical superiority, turned the Austrian right flank early in September. This began a general Austrian retreat which lasted for 150 miles. This first great offensive also cost both combating nations approximately 600,000 men.\textsuperscript{48}

As soon as the Russian General Staff had ascertained that the German thrust was to go against France, they put their Plan "A", or Austria, into operation on August 2, 1914. The French, Russia's ally, demanded an immediate offensive to relieve the pressure on their armies. Pre-war strategy of both powers had assumed that a rapid Russian offensive would be the only way to relieve pressure on France.\textsuperscript{49} Therefore two Russian armies were sent into Prussia, where they were subsequently destroyed in September. The southwestern group of the Russian armies, the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 8th Armies,

\textsuperscript{47}Danilov, \textit{Russland Im Weltkrieg}, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{48}Manchester Guardian, September 17, 1914, p.5.

\textsuperscript{49}Percy, "Russia's Role in a European War", p. 885.
were given the task of crushing the Austro-Hungarians and opening the gateway to Berlin.

Along the borders of Galicia the Russian armies were distributed in a crescent shape. The General Officer commanding this front was General Ivanov. His chief of Staff was General Alexeyev.⁵⁰ The composition of their armies was as follows: The 4th Army under Baron Salza (afterwards replaced by General Ewarth) was composed of the XIV, XVI Corps., and one Grenadiers Corps. or 6 division of infantry and 3½ division of cavalry.⁵¹ It was concentrated in the area near Lublin, between the Weiprz and Vistula. The 5th Army, under General Plehve, contained the V, XVII, XIX, XXV Corps, or ten infantry, divisions and five Cavalry Divisions. It was concentrated in the Cholm-Grubiezov area. The third Army, under General Russky contained the IX, X, XI, XXI Corps or twelve infantry divisions and four cavalry divisions. It was situated in the Luck-Dubno area of Poland. The Eighth

⁵⁰Both Generals had served in the Russo-Japanese War and had experience with modern methods of warfare. Both were selected for their ability to lead.

⁵¹One Battalion contained 1,064 men; one regiment contained four battalions; one brigade contained two regiments; two brigades made up one division of 16,000 men; two divisions made up one corps, and two to three corps made an army.
Army under General Brussilov, contained the VII, VIII, XII, XXIV Corps or ten infantry divisions and five cavalry divisions. These troops concentrated on the extreme left of the Russian flank fifty miles east of the Austrian town of Tarnopol.52

In his memoirs, General Brussilov, commanding officer of the Eighth Army, discussed the merits of this force and its leaders. He personally felt that General Ivanov was devoted to his work but lacking in decision, narrow-minded and, in general, deficient in intelligence.53 On the other hand he felt his fellow general on the right flank, General Russky was a capable, accomplished, strong minded and skillful commander.54 He also described his troops and the preparation of his army. Of his troops he had only praise: "They were well trained and disciplined and went obediently to battle although they had no enthusiasm or understanding of the war itself."55 His army was unprepared for the trench


type warfare which had been ridiculed in the Russo-Japanese War. It had no trench mortars, mine throwers or hand grenades. His troops had few machine guns, only eight per regiment of 4,000 men and his artillery was not well suited for offensive operations. 56

The decisive factor in the Russian decision to attack in the southern area was that the political structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was much more unstable than that of Germany. It was believed that the lower morale of the Austrians would make them a more vulnerable enemy than the Germans. A victory on this front could theoretically place Austria out of the war entirely. To forestall this, Germany would have to pour more and more of her troops into Galicia if she wanted to retain her ally. This would, in turn, effect the activity on the western front.

Another reason the Russians chose to attack in Galicia, was that by doing so they could utilize a larger number of troops due to the immensity of the region under contention. There were few geographic or topographic barriers to hinder an advance. 57

The Russian plan demanded an immediate attack by all


57 Golovine, Russian Campaign of 1914, p. 64-65.
units. Moreover this was characteristic about the thinking of the military training of the era; the offensive and the attack were the only methods of warfare. This was a grand idea, but to accomplish the goal of surrounding and destroying the entire Austro-Hungarian force, the Russians would either have to have a better trained army or a numerically superior one. As to the first, the Russian armies were in no way superior.\textsuperscript{58} As to the second aspect, adequate superiority is judged as at least 1\frac{1}{2} to 2 times the size of the opposing force. The rapid mobilization and offensive would discount the added superiority of numbers because of units arriving behind schedule from deep inside Russia.\textsuperscript{59}

The Offensive planned by The Russian Grand Duke was extensive. He had planned for his main attack to come from the east. Led by the Third and Eighth armies of Generals Russky and Brussilov, the main attack would advance westward with the right flank on the city of Lemberg and the left flank on the Dniester River. The Fifth Army was to move south westward from Cholm and envelop the Austrian left

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Ibid}, p. 31.

flank at Lemberg. The fourth was to move south across the rear of the Austrian Armies and cut off their line of retreat. The Austrians were to be crushed in a gigantic pincers movement. The cavalry army was not to be used as reconnaissance units, but to fill in the open areas between the various Russian Armies. 60

The Austrian military, under General Conrad had already ordered mobilization to begin, but as noted earlier he had ordered the wrong plan into motion. His armies were sent into Galicia in the following manner. General Kunmer was to lead a group of one cavalry division and three Landsturm Brigades from Cracow, up the left bank of the Vistula in touch with the left flank of the First Army on the right bank. The First Army, led by General Dankl, was to contain the I, V, X Corps or ninth infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions and was to assemble on the San River above Sienawa. The Fourth Army, under command of General Auffenberg, contained the II, V, XVII Corps or nine infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions. They were to assemble on Jaroslaw-Przemyśl. The Third Army was to advance from the Sambor-Lemberg area. It was led by General Bruderman and its force also contained a cavalry group

60 "The Lemberg Campaign, August-September 1914", Army Quarterly, April-June, 1931, p. 27.
south of the Dniester led by General Kovess. This composite army contained the III, XI, XII and XIV Corps, altogether eighteen infantry divisions and four cavalry divisions.61

Conrad's intention to attack as soon as he had enough troops was detailed in a letter to General Moltke, dated on August 2nd. Conrad wrote at that time:

"...we must hold fast to the idea of the offensive... (The declaration of war of Russia) has produced a new situation...we must (now) put preponderance of troops in the north despite complications caused by the transport of troops to the south.62

Conrad went on to say that if the Russians would attack as suspected, from the north between the Vistula and the Bug, he would advance against them with his First and Fourth Armies. If these armies were successful in defeating the Russians, they were to wheel eastward, join flanks with the southern two armies, the third and second advance eastward into the heart of Russia.

Unfortunately, however, Conrad had counted heavily on

61Conrad, *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, p. 281. This force had a roster strength of 352,000 men.

a concurrent German advance from the north. He was convinced that Austria-Hungary was not strong enough to face the Russians and Serbs unaided. Moltke's promise of needed reinforcements from the western front after six weeks and his pledge that the German Eighth Army would simultaneously attack against the Narew River towards Siedlce, was taken literally by Conrad. Whether the battle on the western front was won or not, Conrad expected the German reinforcements to arrive at the prescribed time. Conrad seems to have had no knowledge of the workings of a united command. Moltke's promise came in a letter in 1909, and neither Siedlce nor the Narew was mentioned. It is astounding that Conrad could have based an entire offensive plan of attack on a five year old letter.

The German G.H.Q. clearly never intended to carry out its part of the 1909 agreement. Moltke's instructions to General Prittwitz, when he assumed command on the 8th August and stated that an advance into Russia was to be made only if Russia remained on the defensive. Moltke also stated that the army in the east would have to destroy Rennenkampf's army

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63 Walther Hubatsch, Germany and the Central Powers (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Publications, 1963), P. 37.

64 "Lemberg Campaign", Army Quarterly, p. 29.

65 Ludendorff, Ludendorff's Own Story, p. 72.
before any move at all could occur. On the 9th of September, Moltke told Conrad that no help could be spared. He wrote,

"...we ourselves are in so difficult a situation with four enemies against us that we can spare no one, we have gone to our limit. We must have a decision in the west. I would help but it cannot be done."

On the 14th of August Conrad sent a telegram to General Prittwitz, the German General in East Prussia. In it, he stated that the General offensive would start towards Lublin and Cholm on the 22nd August. He wrote:

"...the situation indicates that a German thrust towards Siedlce is important and it is urgent that Siedlce be occupied."

On the 15th of August, the Austrian liason in Prittwitz's headquarters wired back to Conrad. His message stated:

"...A Blow (by the enemy) is about to be struck from Kovno-Olita by the enemy soon. Only after that (is opposed) can operations begin towards Siedlce. The German army here feels that it is drawing forces upon it, freeing the Austrians."

Conrad wired back again on the 15th of August asking for aid:

"...Only by cooperation can success be achieved. I gather from the previous telegram that the German Army is advancing and will not begin operations towards Siedlce."

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66 Österreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg, p. 273.


Conrad could have altered his own plans to attack, given the German responses to his pleas for aid, but he eventually went along with his original plans, hoping that the Germans might tag along. Even as late as the 4th of September Conrad would continue to hope for a German advance towards Siedlce. 71

It would take approximately three weeks before the entire force of the Second Army could be assembled in force in Galicia. This was due to the poor nature of the Railroad lines between Lemberg and the Serbian border. Unlike Germany Austria had not built an extensive number of strategic railroads that would criss-cross the nation. Conrad had previously estimated that the Russian forces would reach their maximum mobilization strength thirty days after mobilization his strategy was to attack the Russians before they would reach full strength and disrupt their mobilization timetable. Since this return journey could not begin effectively until August 18th, Conrad was to find himself extremely short of both men and time. 72

On the 15th of August, the day before General Conrad

71 *Osterreich Ungarns Letzter Krieg*, p. 312.

Pages 36-38 are missing
THE
BATTLE OF KRASNIK
Aug. 23-25, 1914

Map 2
Krasnik

On August 22, General Auffenberg received the following order from Conrad:

"The common offensive of the First, Fourth, Third, and part of the Second Army is ordered on 23 August to the narrow heights north of the Tanew forest region, possess it with full strength and set right so that the enemy attack shall be repulsed." 78

On the morning of 23 August in compliance with orders, the advance guard of the Austrian troops encountered the advance guard of the Russian troops on the high ground above the Tanew. This was the opening of the battle known as Krasnik.

The Russian Fourth Army was not supposed to leave its concentration area in Lublin until its preparations were completed. However under pressure to aid the French, and because of his belief that this western army would meet weak opposition, Grand Duke Nicholas ordered it to advance. It moved from Lublin before any of its reserve divisions had arrived and before its transport was complete. 79 On the 23 of August, it found itself in pitched battle with a strong

78 Auffenberg, Teilnahme Am Weltkrieg, p. 135.
79 Winston Churchill, Unknown War, p. 147.
Austrian force.  

The battle continued with both sides losing heavily. By nightfall, the Russians, greatly outnumbered, retreated towards Krasnik. The following day General Dankl's troops stopped an offensive toward his center and right flanks, and on the 25 of August, his troops succeeded in out-flanking the Russian troops from the east. The Russians were forced to retreat to a new position, and they had left behind 6,000 prisoners. At least 40,000 troops from both sides had been killed or wounded in the three day battle. These losses become extremely critical to both sides as the campaign progresses.

This success on the side of the Austrian forces disconcerted the Russian Stavka (or General Headquarters). They were completely misled as to where the Austrians were. This opposition put up by the Austrians was believed to be merely a covering force for the main Austrian attack. The Russians assumed all of Austria's force was in the east, protecting Lemberg, and that no help could be spared to aid this Austrian force at Krasnik. The Grand Duke and General Ivanov decided to envelop the Austrians at Krasnik.

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The Russian Fifth Army, General Plehve's, on the left flank of the Russian Fourth, wheeled against the rear and right flank of the Austrian line. The Third and Eighth Russian armies were to advance, in echelon, covering the left flank of Plehve's Fifth. 81

Krasnik was a victory of sorts for the Austrians. They had stopped a Russian advance and had succeeded in pushing it back. They had at the same time incurred irreplaceable losses. 82

Komarov

This victory at Krasnik seemed to enkindle the hopes of Conrad. He stated:

"This was a joyful beginning, but I know that it was only a beginning and that momentous decisions were yet to be taken. 83"

The Austrians were ordered to advance. The Austrian

81 Ibid, p. 31.

82 The two armies, each 200,000 strong fought for seven days, resulting in 40,000 killed or wounded. The Russians lost 6,000 as prisoners. Winston Churchill, Unknown War, p. 150.

Map 3

THE BATTLE OF KONAROV
THE EVOLUTION
Aug. 29-30, 1914

Russian
Austrian

AUFFENBERG
Fourth Army, under Auffenberg, reached a point directly to the right of the Austrian First Army but still had not sighted the Russians as of the evening of the 25th of August. On the 26th, Auffenberg advanced unknowingly into the left flank guard of the right wheeling Fifth Russian Army. Auffenberg's troops successfully stopped the Russian advance.

Meanwhile, Conrad was still unconcerned about the vast sea of Russian uniforms converging on his right flank. He was so unconcerned (not to mention misinformed) that he further depleted the defending Third Army, by transferring three divisions under Archduke Joseph to guard the right flank of Auffenberg. Auffenberg ordered his numerically superior force to encircle his enemies force, by a simultaneous flanking movement by the two Archdukes on his right and left wings. Plehve, lacking good intelligence information still attempted to turn, thinking the Austrian troops in front of him were only weak flanking guards. The 27th was spent mainly in maneuvering for position, hence little actual fighting took place.

The 28th proved to be a black day for Conrad. The 15th Division was ambushed, losing about 4,000 men as prisoners. The survivors fled, spreading panic and fear among
the troops on their left flank. The Archduke Joseph, meanwhile, pushed his right flanking movement with moderate success. He had surprised one Russian division, and on the 28th was stopped momentarily to allow his artillery to catch up to him.

The Austrian offensive in the north was mildly successful. Unfortunately time was running out on Conrad's plans, for, eight of the ten days which Conrad had allowed for final victory were gone. Worse than that, the Russian Armies were growing stronger daily, outnumbering his eastern troops by three to one. At the same time he was losing irreplaceable men in battle. Conrad realized that the depleted Third Army and the Kovess group of troops to the east of Lemberg served as his only remaining link to victory. Into their reduced numbers the full crashing force of the Russian invasion would be hurled.

**The Battles for Lemberg**

On the 26th of August, at the same time Dankl and Auffenberger were struggling with the Russian forces in the north, three corps of the Third Austrian Army advanced eastwards towards the Zlota Lipa River. There they expected to meet
a thin defensive screen of Russian troops. The Russians were advancing, on the few roads in Galicia, in long columns. To the front of each column was a numerically strong advance guard. These advance guards would give the twenty-five mile long columns the time that was necessary to form into battle position. These advance guards met the three Austrian corps along the banks of the Zlota Lipa River.84

The Austrians, under the impression that attack was the law of warfare, rushed the Russian line whenever contact was established. This resulted in extremely heavy casualties for the Austrian troops, who were without suitable artillery support. The Austrian Third Army reeled back stunned. These Russian forces were clearly beyond the magnitude of anything they had been led to expect.

Early on the 27th of August, General Conrad allowed the Third Army to retreat to a line closer to the city of Lemberg. He also sent word to Auffenberg to return the three divisions which had been taken from the Third Army to reinforce his right flank. Their purpose was to aid in the encirclement of Plehve. The Third Army withdrew approximately twenty miles to the Gnila Lipa River. It was a stronger position,

for the river contained many swamps and marshes and few bridges or roads. Archduke Joseph and his three divisions were ordered to return to the Third Army, but Auffenberg managed to persuade Conrad to allow them to continue their attack upon Plehve's flank.

The Russians at this time outnumbered the forces of the Third Army and the Kovess Group by three to one. The Third Army was by now fighting with its back to the walls of Lemberg. The city being only one day's march behind them. There was nothing behind the Austrian forces to stop the Russian troops from driving all the way to Vienna. If the Russians would penetrate the lines of the Third, they would cut off the Austrian First and Fourth Armies advancing to the north. As these two armies were battling and moving northward, each step took them further and further away from their bases of supply. On the 28th, Conrad again ordered the Archduke Joseph to aid the Third Army and again Auffenberg managed to talk him out of it. The battle for Galicia depended upon the fate of the Third Army. Even Conrad seemed to realize the gravity of the situation, when on the 27th he wrote in a letter to

85Brussilov, A Soldier's Notebook, p. 48.
86"Lemberg Campaign", Army Quarterly, p. 38.
the General Adjutant of the Kaiser that: "I write these lines in the most difficult moments of my life."87

On the 28th August, misinformation to General Russky gave the Austrians a needed respite. He had assumed that in confronting the Third Army, he was facing the strong point of the Austrian lines, due to the fierce attack of the three Austrian corps at the first Lipa. He stopped his forward motion for two days and proceeded to deploy his units into battle formation. The Grand Duke had ordered Russky to advance and in doing so directed his forces to aid the stricken Plehve. Russky, however, delayed his Third Army until the 30th of August, and then advanced, inclining only slightly to the north of Lemberg. This prepared the way for the second battle for Lemberg or sometimes referred to as the battle of the Gnila Lipa. Russky's individual disregard for orders from above saved the Austrians from almost total annihilation.88 If the Russians had advanced immediately, they would have in a very short time crushed the insignificant Austrian forces in position before them. Even so, when the Russian attack started, it moved like a wall of water against a sand dike.

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The Austrian XII corps was broken and its retreat became a rout, with the common goal being the city of Lemberg.

Conrad was by this time a raw bundle of nerves. His armies in the north were on the verge of victory, yet his troops to the east appeared to have been crushed. The Second Army at long last began arriving from Serbia. On the 27th of August, Conrad wrote to his friend:

"...The German victories (in the north; Tannenberg, etc.) have been gained at our expense. (He was still bitter about the lack of German aid in the direction of Siedlce). I was advised a course of action in 1909 and again in 1912... our troops are everywhere fighting as gallantly as the Germans, who are not engaged against the Russians but against Frenchmen. ...It is time for us to take to the offensive. (His eastern flank was all but destroyed and he wanted to take to the offensive.) ...our troops are suffering heavy losses, especially from the Russian artillery."\(^{89}\)

This is where the genius of Conrad emerged. The dilemma which faced him was this: should he allow the Third Army to repossess the three divisions of the Archduke Joseph, or should he let Auffenberg utilize them. He decided, due to Auffenberg exhortations, to allow them to remain in the north. Conrad was proved basically correct in this assumption. The Third Army did hold their position long enough for Auffenberg to strike. Unfortunately, due to an incorrect

Map 5
intelligence report, Auffenberg's armies allowed Plehve to escape. Conrad had lost his great prize on which he had staked so much. The Russians, however, surprised at the tenacity of the Third Army, had wasted two days in deploying their forces. Auffenberg used these two days, but still could not achieve a victory. Conrad had lost his biggest gamble.

After August 30th, the Russian forces were reinforced with ten divisions of infantry and three more divisions of cavalry. These troops all went to the northern armies of Plehve and Ewarth, who were still heavily engaged by Komarov. The Austrian northern flank was soon to oppose enemies of equal numerical strength.⁹⁰

On August 31st, Auffenberg gained his greatest success. His flanking attacks had been under way for four days and he had enclosed Plehve's Army on three sides. Plehve was late to realize what was occurring. Thereupon, he immediately commanded a retreat on the night of the 30th of August. Plehve maneuvered vigorously to avoid the pincers movement of the two Archdukes on his flanks. Indeed, in one move it would be possible to gather the entire army of Plehve.⁹¹

⁹⁰On the 30th of August, the Grand Duke Nicholas revised the Russian war plan. Priority was given to the ultimate defeat of Austria-Hungary.

Austria was never to rejoice over the news of the destruction of Plehve. An Austrian pilot, flying a reconnaissance patrol, reported that, what looked like a full Russian Division, was marching to the rear of Archduke Joseph's position. Cavalry patrols on the opposite flank reported to the Archduke Peter that a Russian battalion was moving to his rear.\textsuperscript{92} Almost at the same moment, both Archdukes gave the order to retreat and cover their rear areas. Actually however, but reports of enemy activity turned out to be false. Meanwhile the army of Plehve had managed to escape the deadly Austrian net.

Nevertheless the Austrians felt that Plehve's army was still too battered to be of any future offensive threat to the Austrian positions. They were soon to find out just how "battered" Plehve's forces were.\textsuperscript{93} On the next morning Auffenberg heard the news of the retreat of the two Archdukes. Immediately he ordered his entire army to pursue the escaped Plehve. After seven days of fighting the Austrians were in control of the field of battle, but the enemy had escaped. Nonetheless the men of the Fourth Army received the following

\textsuperscript{92}Auffenberg, \textit{Teilnahme Am Weltkrieg}, 172.

\textsuperscript{93}Conrad, \textit{Aus Meiner Teilnahme}, p. 593.
communique, which stated:

"The Fourth Army through superior weaponry and courage has received the highest praise of the fatherland.

A second great deed remains... the campaign in East Galicia where the enemy penetrated, the Fourth Army should support the Third Army. The Fourth Army will do their work with the thought of helping its oppressed comrades and victory shall be on their flags." 94

In Vienna, on September 2nd, the people received the following official bulletin:

"The battle which lasted for one week near Komarov, lead yesterday to the complete victory of Auffenberg. Masses of prisoners 160 cannon were captured and the Russians (were) in retreat across the Bug. Lemberg is still held with very great difficulty against the Russians." 95

Conrad, knowing the truth, was paralyzed. He had gambled and had lost. Auffenberg had failed to grasp the prize. The Third Army, weakened and exhausted, broke before the end of the 1st of September and Conrad's worst fears were becoming a reality. Conrad knew the perils of the eastern advance of the Russian forces.

He coolly observed that the Russian Army was advancing with one flank to the north of the city of Lemberg. His

94 Auffenberg, Teilnahme Am Weltkrieg. p. 249.
95 Ibid, p. 248-249.
Second Army had just arrived from an exhausting train ride from Serbia. This Army was not only exhausted from the trip but was further weakened by the absence of one of its corps, which had been detached to aid in the struggle against the Serbs. Conrad ordered the Second Army to advance and turn the Southern or left flank of the Russian armies before Lemberg. They were to attack General Brussilov's Eighth Army. Concurrently he ordered Auffenberg to forget the pursuance of Plehve, and turn about and march due south, directly upon the theoretically exposed Russian right flank. He ordered the Third Army to maintain their position on the Wereszyca River at all cost.  

It was intended that the Russian forces would be crushed between the three Austrian Armies. It was Auffenberg's plan on a much grander scale. This plan was ingenious, however, Conrad overlooked one thing. The armies at Conrad's disposal were not the brave legions that had answered the call to mobilize. Auffenberg's army was ragged after eight days of furious battle before Komarov. The Second Army was understrength and utterly exhausted, and the Third Army was

96Conrad, _Aus Meiner Dienstzeit_, p. 586.
97Auffenberg, _Teilnahme Am Weltkrieg_, p. 272.
98Nicholas Golovine, "Battle of Galicia," _Slavonic Review_ p. 43.
still reeling from the fierce assaults made upon it at the Gnila Lips. The Second Army also had to step off of its trains into an atmosphere of defeat and discouragement, which were never intended to be good morale builders.

The Russian commander had also come to a few conclusions about the general situation. Nicholas had decided to deal the Austro-Hungarian forces the coup-de-grace. On the 30th of August, the Russians reinforced their Fourth Army and had by then diverted the Ninth Army from East Prussia to the right of Ewarth's troops. The Russian G.H.Q. had formulated a new plan, still dictated by the standard tactics. The left flank of the Russian Army before Lemberg was to remain stationary, tying down on its position as many Austrian forces as possible. The center of the Russian line (Plehve) was to keep on re-treating, drawing Auffenberg as far north as possible. The combined forces of the Fourth and Ninth Armies were to strike due south with all of the forces at their disposal. They were to attempt to cut off the Austrian troops in the Galician Province. By this method the Austrian Army would be conveniently destroyed and the path to Berlin would be left wide open.

Before this plan could be put into action however, the Russian Headquarters received news of the terrible disaster to the Russian armies at Tannenberg, at the hands of the Germans. The Grand Duke on August 31st sent out the following message:

"...In view of the great check to the Second Army press forward on the Austrians along the entire front. The forces of Generals Ewarth and Lechitsky (Fourth and Ninth Armies) should advance wherever possible...so as to crush the enemy. In sectors where advance is impossible, the troops must hold their position to the last man." 100

Russky's and Brussilov's forces were ordered to incline more to the north, once again to give Plehve more support on his left flank.

A curious situation developed at that time. Auffenberg was ordered to turn and attack due south in order to catch the Russians on their exposed right flank. 101 Russky was ordered north, in order to catch Auffenberg on his exposed right flank. Needless to say, a collision occurred, thoroughly surprising both leaders. At the same time the Austrian Second Army attempted a half hearted flanking movement and failed. They linked up with the other Austrian forces, in a


101 Knox, With the Russian Army 1914-1917, p. 96.
rather extended line formation, and by September 6th all three Austrian Armies were together on a common front along a line running through Rawa Russka to Grodek. 102

The Austrian northern flank meanwhile was being covered in part by the beleagured Dankl, who at this time was engaging both Russian armies. Dankl's forces however were over forty miles away from Auffenberg's northernmost outpost. This forty mile gap between the two Austrian forces proved to be the undoing of the Austrian Cause in Galicia. 103 Dankl had a particularly rough time of it. He had either to penetrate the Russian lines or retreat. On September 2nd, he reached a point within eleven miles of Lublin. This was more or less the "high-water mark" of the war effort of the Dual Monarchy. He was stopped there and beaten back with heavy losses. He lost over 5,000 men as prisoners. The tide of battle turned and from this moment on the Russians controlled the battlefront. 104

On September 9th, the Austrians found themselves, for once, in a position of numerical superiority over the Russian

103 *Osterreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg*, p. 269.
forces near Grodek. Conrad ordered the Second and Third Armies to advance, with the goal of once again trying to turn the enemy's flanks. September 9th became the most fiercely fought battle day since the war began. The attacks were a credit to the Austrian troops. Although they failed to accomplish their goal, Brussilov stopped and reported that the Austrian forces before him were much too strong to counter-attack. By inflicting frightful losses, the Austrians had won another strategical victory. 105

Thereafter, the Russians had the initiative, that is, they had just discovered the forty mile gap in the Austrian line. Plehve's army plus an additional cavalry corps surged into the gigantic opening. By the 11th of September this force could have gotten well beyond the rear of the Austrian line, 106 had it not been for the Austrians intercepting a Russian message. The Russians, not believing in codes, sent Plehve by wireless, a directive to march to a certain location some fifteen miles behind the Austrian lines. He was to wait there until the mass of Russian forces pushed the Austrians back upon him. However, Auffenberg had intercepted

105 Brussilov, A Soldier's Notebook, p. 60-62.
106 Churchill, Unknown War, p. 171-172.
the message, and like Plehve eight days before, effected an immediate retreat. The Austrians were saved from defeat temporarily.

Conrad, still somehow believing that he had fresh troops, had organized yet another plan. He used a similar plan for every situation; he ordered a counterattack. Auffenberg and Boehm-Ermolli, Generals of the Fourth and Second Armies respectively were luckily a little more in touch with reality. Auffenberg ordered and managed to carry out a very effective withdrawal. Conrad's orders to "attack without halting, with energy regardless of loss," were likewise passes over by Boehm-Ermolli.\footnote{Ibid, p. 172.} By September 11th, Conrad finally realized the sad state his army was in and called a general retreat of all armies.\footnote{Conrad, \textit{Aus Meiner Dienstzeit}, p. 689.} The entry in his memoirs stated:

"The risk of a breakthrough by two Russian corps behind the left wing of the Fourth Army threatened to place it in a catastrophic position. In this position there was only one thing left to be done, break off the struggle and retreat behind the San River."\footnote{Ibid, p. 701-702.}

In the west, the German "Blitzkrieg" had finally run out of energy along the banks of the Marne. Moltke ordered a
THE AUSTRIAN RETREAT
AFTER LEMBERG
September 1914.

Map 9)
retreat of his forces at almost the same time Conrad had recognized defeat. Both of the Central Powers saw their chances for a quick decisive victory dissolve in the smoke of two gigantic battlefields.

The Official Austrian History of the First World War describes this chaotic retreat of the Austrian troops in the following manner:

"Day and night, behind lines of transport wagons, the infantry staggered with bent shoulders... the artillery, sinking up to their axles in the swamp of the road. The cavalry regiments, in confusion, leading their galled and sore horses."\(^{110}\)

General Conrad, however describes the same event quite differently in his memoirs:

"The Imperial and Royal Armies were not beaten, they were only being led back (130 miles), the object was to avoid a situation which would lead to defeat if the battle was continued. To remain still was to be avoided. The first engagement (Krasnik) and the second (Komarow) were successful, and the third one (near Lemberg) and the fourth one near Rawa russka were not. The sixth and later strokes would be successful and bring the decision. For that I wanted to conserve freedom of action and re-establish the forces soon. Without a doubt the enemy had suffered heavily in the battles...it was obvious that this was... the reason which did not permit him to take advantage of conditions which made him unable to disrupt the withdrawal of the Imperial and Royal Armies."\(^{111}\)

\(^{110}\)Osterreich-Ungarns Letzter Kreig, p. 344-345.

\(^{111}\)Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, p. 710.
It appears that General Conrad was either totally blind to reality or that he was trying to paint a more respectable picture of his actions as commander and chief. It is beyond a doubt that the Austrian forces were beaten. They were not withdrawing in the normal sense of the word, they were routed, panic stricken.

The Russians, of course, did not allow the Austrians to retreat in good order. The Russians pursued the Austrians closely, shelling the retreating troops and swooping down on the defenseless columns with cavalry formations. 112 In addition, Lemberg had fallen into Russian hands on the 1st of September, giving much needed supplies and rolling stock to the invading armies.

When the Austrians reached the San River on the 16th of September, they attempted to turn and delay the pursuing Russians by demolishing the bridges. The Russians were too close and managed to capture one bridge intact. They poured across the river in an exultant pursuit. 113 The Austrians stationed approximately 150,000 men in the fortress at Przemysl and left them to their fate. They finally ended their rout when they arrived at the banks of the Wisloka River. It was

112 Brussilov, A Soldier's Notebook, p. 70.
113 Knox, With the Russian Army, p. 98.
there that Conrad was able to gather into some semblance of
order and stage a weak defense.  

All during the retreat it had rained. Both pursued
and pursuers alike were exhausted. At the Wisloka both sides
gathered their breaths, warily watching their opponents.
Brussilov records his impressions of the event in his memoirs:

"Leaving a large force inside the fortress of
Przemsl, the enemy fell back to the west bank of the
San. It seemed to me that we ought not allow them
to pull themselves together, but should follow
close on their heels and complete their overthrow.
However our line of communication was too long and
not in good order and the railheads at Lemberg were
greatly congested and supplies were greatly delayed."  

Moreover, Brussilov indicated that the Russians also rested
because they needed reinforcements. He would have pursued
the Austrians farther, but the level of training of the re-
inforcements was extremely low. At no time in the war did
Brussilov feel that the training of the reinforcements was
adequate, and it decreased as the war progressed; militarily,
morally and politically, the situation of the Russian troops
deteriorated as the war progressed.  

\[114\] Frank H. Simonds, The Great War; the First Phase

\[115\] Brussilov, A Soldier's Notebook, p. 75.

\[116\] Ibid, p. 77.
As for the Austrian troops, it was difficult for them to understand their Commander in Chief. His official communique regarding their 130 mile race with the Russians went: "For tactical reasons the breaking off of battle was not necessary, the situation was not bad, the operative conditions were merely untenable."  

117 _Osterreich Ungarns Letzter Krieg_, p. 314.
CHAPTER III

"Lemberg and After"

General Conrad had given his utmost to win this battle for the Galician capital of Lemberg. As Winston Churchill described it:

"General Conrad had fought the battle of Lemberg to the last ounce, last inch and last minute which his armies could still sustain." 118

It was literally true. When Conrad ordered the Austrian retreat on September 11, 1914, there was little if any, effective resistance remaining in his depleted Legions. The retreat itself was a chaos of panic and terror.

News of the Austrian setback reached the capitals of Europe. And it became more and more obvious to those in positions of authority that the fate of the Austrian Empire had depended upon this battle. 119 On the extreme right flank the Austrian forces had received a tremendous mauling from the forces of General Brussilov. The Russians buried

119 Frank Simonds, Great War, p. 149.
over 5,000 Austrian casualties on this flank alone.\textsuperscript{120} Moreover at Rawa Russka the Russians had captured thirty guns and 8,000 prisoners.\textsuperscript{121}

The topography of these two areas of Lemberg and Rawa Russka gives some indication of the reasons for high casualties. These two areas lie along the edge of the Podolian Plateau. The edge of this plateau falls off in a steep escarpment of 500 to 600 feet. It alternates in terrain features with forest areas and steep, eroded cliffs. No matter what condition the slope is in, the advancing enemy must first cross an open plain under full observation by the defenders. Then he must climb the steep embankment itself, always under withering fire. The two battles at Lemberg and Rawa Russka were fought to determine possession of two strategic entrances to the plateau.\textsuperscript{122}

The initial battles for Lemberg were fought well south of the city. The attacking Russian Eighth Army had to negotiate passage of several steep gorges of the numerous streams flowing in a northern direction down off of the


\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Times History of the World War}, Vol. 3, p. 265.

\textsuperscript{122}Douglas Wilson Johnson, \textit{Topography and Strategy in the World War}, p. 70.
plateau. Austria could not hold these natural obstacles effectively for several reasons. The first would be directly related to absence of the Second Army, and the second would be of a more psychological nature. It seems that the Austrians could not hold their positions due to their earlier defeats. 123

When the Austrian Army had decided to evacuate Lemberg it was done so only under great pressure. They felt it was an unpardonable sin to give the enemy free access to such a large city filled with supplies and rolling stock, but the situation demanded such a move. It would have been sheer folly on the part of the Austrians to have attempted a stand in front of such a city. If defeat had been even remotely possible, (and with the Austrians it was more or less probable), the natural line of retreat for the troops would be into the city. Masses of supplies and men would have to funnel through the narrow streets of the city, running a very great risk of the Russians surrounding Lemberg and capturing the entire lot. 124

The official Russian announcement which announced the successes at Lemberg was issued soon after the Russian

123_Ibid_, p. 71. Johnson stressed this psychological factor.

defeat at Tannenberg. It stated:

"Seven days of the most stubborn fighting in East Galicia has... given victory for us [the Russians]. Five Austrian corps have been routed and are retreating in disorder westward abandoning their arms and baggage.

Besides an enormous number of killed and wounded, the Austrians lost not less than 40,000 prisoners. The roads of retreat of the Austrians are so encumbered by carts and implements that the pursuing troops are unable to use the roads.

Panic is spreading among the Austrian troops. During the last seven days we [the Russians] have taken over 200 guns and 70,000 prisoners, Lemberg is ours!"125

The Russian victories in Galicia from August 25th to September 7th balanced the serious Russian defeats in East Prussia during the first days of September. Following the Austrians as they retreated from their positions about Lemberg was the famous light cavalry of Russia, the Cossacks. From time to time they swooped down on the long columns of retreating troops and sparked terror throughout the Austrian forces. Merely the mention of the words "the Cossacks are coming," would be enough to spark a panic stricken flight.126

By the end of September 7th, roughly one third of the forces in the Austrian Army had fallen prisoner to the enemy. This total was in addition to the numbers who were killed

and drowned. This terrible destruction within the short space of a little less than two months stunned the survivors. The army became a skeleton of its former self.  

After losing heavily in all aspects of the battles for Lemberg, the Austrians were not only concerned with retreating but also with consolidation of their forces. The Russians were so close upon their heels that the Austrians had to retreat almost seventy miles before they could find a suitable place to turn and even try to consolidate.  

For the Russians, the capture of Lemberg turned out to be a bountiful harvest. Not only did it bolster their national prestige, but it proved to be a valuable gift to their own invading troops. The Russians supply system was extremely extended and was of necessity based upon the poor roads of Polish Russia. The capture of Lemberg eased the Russian difficulties considerably. It was the most important railway center in Galicia, containing railheads for seven different lines. The Russians had invaded Galicia so swiftly and had captured Lemberg so rapidly that the Austrians had not had time to employ demolition teams to destroy important

127 Ibid, p. 344.

128 Frank H. Simonds, Great War, p. 213.
points within the city. The capture of thirty locomotives and a considerable amount of rolling stock of the standard Austrian guage lessened their difficulties.¹²⁹ Vast stores of supplies had also been carelessly been left behind, and these fell as booty to the invaders.¹³⁰

The Russians pursued the Austrians relentlessly, never letting them have the opportunity to halt, rest or regroup. To the west of the city of Lemberg lay the fortified town of Grodek. Situated on the bank of a north to south running river, the position was one of strong defensive value. Here the beleagured Austrian forces established a strong rearguard. It managed to hold off the pursuers for only a short period of time however.¹³¹

The next easily defensible position to the west, beyond Grodek, was the marshy flatlands of the upper Dniester and San Rivers. Both rivers, at this point, meander aimlessly

¹²⁹ Each nation had built their railroad lines at a slightly different guage than their neighboring countries. This was done for military security to keep the enemy from invading your nation on their trains. The Russians found, to their chagrin, that this changing of guage effectively slowed their supply system. The capture of a large amount of Austrian rolling stock enabled them to supply their troops faster and more efficiently.

¹³⁰ Frank H. Simonds, Great War, p. 149.

through broad flood plains. The San itself has an enormous region filled with these former river channels and swampy areas. It was to this area that General Conrad directed his troops. He and his men had but to cross this area and the Russians could be held back by a small number of forces. But General Conrad had forgotten or had perhaps never known just how desperately disorganized his great army was. So it was the Austrians who experienced the difficulties in crossing the swamps. It would have been no small feat for an army retiring in good order, but it was almost impossible for the confused, chaotic mass that Conrad led. The Austrian Army crowded itself onto the few roads cutting through the swamps. This merely heightened the disorganization and the confusion. The Russians had followed so closely that they almost succeeded in driving a part of the Austrian Army into the swamps. This Russian single-minded pursuit made it virtually impossible for the Austrians to reorganize and decreased their fighting spirit even more.

Still retreating, the Austrians made for the Wisloka River. Conrad tried to cross the river and regroup. Przemysl, on the river San, was surrounded on September 16. Jaroslau,

\[^{132}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 72.}^ \quad ^{133}\text{Ibid.}\]
further north on the San, was attacked and surrounded at about the same time. It fell to the Russian attacks on the 23rd of September. This defeat showed that the Austrians had still not recovered, after almost one month of constant fighting and retreating. The Austrian Army was in such difficulty that it was not able to hold successfully a position at Jaroslau, that was considered ten times stronger than the one which their German allies were forced to hold after the defeat on the Marne.\textsuperscript{134}

By September 26th, Russian pursuit of the Austrian Army tapered off due to preparations to forestall a German attack somewhere in the northern reaches of the Polish Salient. Conrad, given this brief interval, was able to face his defeated troops about and after doing so he rapidly attempted to organize some sort of workable defense. It was immediately apparent that the Austrians would not be able to put up much resistance if left unaided.\textsuperscript{135} What had begun at Lemberg and continued at Jaroslau might also be encountered on the banks of the Wisloka. The Austrian Army was in desperate need of aid.

The estimate of the Austrian losses was tremendous. In less than six weeks, out of an army of more than 900,000 men, less than 600,000 recrossed the San during the mass retreat. The terrible disaster, was not the fault of the weary Austrian troops. The General assumption was that the Austrian troops were ill trained, cowardly and defeatist. Austria's allies, the Germans, shared this opinion. They were beginning to regard the Austrians as a "millstone around their necks." However, no matter how inferior the strategy or organization of the Austrian Army, the individual soldier proved himself courageous on numerous fields of battle.

The Austrians fought with great courage during the opening month of the war. Viewing the aftermath on many battlefields, showed the mark of a fierce Austrian struggle. The Austrians did not dig their trenches as deeply as the Russians, and as a result their ranks were thinned incredibly by the massive bombardments of high explosive shells even before the Russian troops advanced. The Austrians as


137Times History of the War, p. 264.

well as the Russians had expressed a disdain for cover during the first weeks of the war. The positions of the Austrians were always found destroyed by shell fire and almost every square foot of earth contained a shard of metal, piece of shattered equipment, or shreds of tattered blue uniforms.

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The important factor to keep in mind at this time is the casualties and the military rank of the majority of these casualties. Once the Austrian line was penetrated by the Russian attacks the Austrians usually gave us resistance and either retreated or surrendered as prisoners. The Times History of the World War offered the following explanation:

"...In the great retreat the Austrians just gave out." 140

Considerable numbers of troops surrendered willingly. Conrad himself stated in his memoirs that: "Many battles became the enemies because we had given the battle away." 141

In truth however, both the tactics used and the casualties incurred combined in a deadly duo of disadvantages which the Austrian Army was powerless to arrest or reverse. It

139 *Times History of the World War*, p. 251.


must be remembered that the best movement an army could undertake as far as Conrad was concerned, was the attack. This tactic gave to the cavalryman the pre-war prestige of a knightly warrior, mounted on his charger, racing towards the enemy with outstretched sword. Once again it was demonstrated that such actions resulted only in tremendous losses, especially when attempted before a machine gun. The Austria military budget, moreover had been too penurious to allow a large force of trained reservists to exist within the Monarchy. The huge losses together with a lack of trained replacements left Austria-Hungary in serious difficulties. The tactics were responsible for the needless loss of thousands of brave Austrian troops. The unflinching, sabre-in-hand attacks, were everywhere attempted as a gallant gesture. The Austrian officers experienced rapid losses from tactics such as this. Without their trained leaders the enlisted men in the ranks were confused and often broke from the lines under the slightest pretense. 142

As a direct result, the bravest, most loyal troops were efficiently cut down, within six weeks of the outset of the war. The officers were primarily of German descent.

142 Winston Churchill, Unknown War, p. 230., Danilov, Russland Im Weltkrieg, p. 252.
Their loyalty to the Emperor had held the divers nationalities of the army together. More than half of their total number were eliminated. These officers and non-commissioned officers were irreplaceable. To fill the gaps left by their deaths the army began to commission experienced survivors from the non-commissioned officers to the commissioned officerial ranks. This need to fill the gaps resulted in two major developments. First, the loss of the Germanic cadre allowed Croats, Czechs, and Roumanians to become members of the officers corps. These individuals had little or no loyalty to the House of Habsburg. These individuals from other nationalities had often resented the pre-war Germanization attempts and as a result despised any type of Germanic rule. Needless to say they did not feel as strictly bound by honor and loyalty to defend the realm of the House of Habsburg. Officers of the active army had been drawn from service schools and military academies prior to the war. Such a rapid destruction of Germanic officers left a void that could not be rapidly filled.

143 Winston Churchill, Unknown War, p. 230.
144 Ludendorff, Ludendorff's Own Story, p. 89.
The need to replace the fallen officers resulted in the promotion of a number of non-commissioned officers, who had the necessary experience. In this case, the very training of the Austro-Hungarian army became a serious drawback. The Austrian officer was much less bound to the "rules in the book," than was the German. As was noted earlier, they led their men and their men followed willingly. The well-trained pre-war officers in the Austrian Army were educated to take the initiative when confronted with problems. However, the Austrian non-commissioned officer was trained to wait obediently until such an order, requiring use of initiative, was given to him. This ability of the non-commissioned officer to await the word of his commanding officer was praised in the pre-war army, yet when these non-commissioned officers filled a leadership position they could not rid themselves of their subservient tendencies. As a result, they had little ability to use personal initiative to its fullest degree. They could not change. Hence, while the leaders might have been very good, if they in turn were well supervised, alone they tended to react too slowly in critical situations.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{146}Times History of the World War, Vol. 2, p. 222.
In an earlier chapter, the lack of professional non-commissioned officers was discussed. This was explained in terms of the result of a short term of service and its resulting hardships upon the small training cadre. The army experienced increasing difficulty in its lack of success in finding a suitable source of competent non-commissioned officers. The educational standards in Austria-Hungary were lower than in Germany and the problem of multiple languages increased the difficulties. Simply not enough men, who were competent, were either available, or, if competent, were interested in a service career. Numerous steps were taken to correct this situation, but the outbreak of the war interrupted them before they were of any success.\footnote{George H. Allen (et.al.), \textit{Great War}, Vol. 2, \textit{Mobilization of the Moral and Physical Forces} (Philadelphia: George Barries and Sons, 1916), p. 235.}

This great loss of officers of whom 75\% were Germanic, left the great masses of enlisted men without figures of authority.\footnote{Bertram D. Wolf, "Titans Locked in Combat," \textit{The Russian Review}, Vol. 24 (Jan. 1965, p. 17-18.)} The heterogeneous quality of the Austro-Hungarian Army was a serious drawback. The elimination of the German authority figures gave free reign to the Slavic
sympathies of an important segment of the army. This sympathy with and distaste for killing brother Slavs led to numerous desertions and large numbers of troops defecting to the Russian lines in order to be interned for the duration of the war. In the short period between September 11-14, 1914, the Russian communiques' reported the capture of 83,530 Austro-Hungarian prisoners.\footnote{149} A great victory might have tended to unify this diverse collection of nationalities but the series of defeats disillusioned many and broke the bonds between nationalities, and severed their tie to the Empire.\footnote{150}

In spite of this factor of diverse nationalities, the Austrians had actually expected to carry on a victorious campaign in Galicia. By their series of disastrous defeats, the Austro-Hungarian Army prophesized the ultimate dissolution of their own state. By the end of September, the loss of effective leadership, the intensification of inter-racial strife, and the organization of the army itself cooperated to give the army of Austro-Hungary the defeatist tendency which it maintained until the end of the war.\footnote{151}

\begin{itemize}
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That the organization of the army itself aided in the disintegration is an ironic manifestation of the lack of cooperation between Austrian and Hungarian parts of the Empire. The annual contingent of recruits prior to the war was 103,000 for the regular army, 20,000 for the Austrian Landwehr, and 12,000 for the Hungarian Landwehr (or Honved). This number of recruits stayed the same for twenty years while the population increased by approximately 10,000,000. The army remained the same size throughout this entire twenty year period. The additional male population, due to the general increase in the population was poorly trained if at all. The army at this time was being modernized and expanded within its own framework. The size of the field artillery was increased, numerous machine gun units were created and technical units such as engineers, communications, and transport were increased. Since the draft was not increased accordingly, the units were formed from the troops already present in the ranks. As a result, this left many units under strength. This situation was not remedied in time for the commencement of hostilities.  

All of the factors mentioned above, which prevented

the Austrian Army from withstanding the Russian onslaught, were closely related to the capabilities of General Conrad. In view of his ability to plan and plan well, he should not be criticized for his mistakes in the opening battle for Galicia. General Conrad's major problem lay in his lack of perception with regard to the structure of his army and what heavy losses would do to this structure. Conrad never learned to use time as an ally. The Austrian Armies attacked in the opening days of the war unprepared and without proper coordination of artillery. Of all the armies involved in the war, the Austrian was probably the most unique. Conrad's army needed careful supervision and control. Unfortunately, Conrad did not realize this and he sacrificed his entire army in the first three weeks of the war.*

From the beginning, Conrad had had difficulty in pursuing the correct course of action because he was essentially inflexible. He had always advocated a war with Serbia, but when it came he was unprepared for the consequences of his actions. Unfortunately for Austria-Hungary, Conrad did not foresee the probable international implications of his actions. His plans of action were rigid and unadaptable. In Plan "B,"

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he assumed that the war would be directed at Serbia only. It did not occur to him that even a war with a small nation like Serbia, might cause a more powerful nation to intervene.

On July 25th, 1914, Conrad ordered Plan "B" into action. By sending three armies to Serbia and three to Galicia he had assumed that the war was to be of local size and magnitude. If Russia would not have acted as she did, Conrad might have been viewed in a different light.

After sending three armies to the Balkans, Conrad found to his chagrin that Russia had declared war upon the Central powers. He was totally committed to the entirely incorrect course of action. He should have at least allowed the Second Army to fight when it arrived in Serbia. His lack of decisiveness was a fatal one for Austria. By recalling it to Galicia, he effectively removed it from both fronts for three weeks and lost the decision in both areas.

Of all Conrad's mistakes this is perhaps the most damning. He had committed one of the most basic mistakes in the conduct of war. He had divided his forces, much as Moltke had in the west, so that when the crucial encounters occurred both in Serbia and in Galicia he found himself at a numerical disadvantage. Conrad's main fault, perhaps lay in his stubborn attempts to pursue one single line of action,
even when it became obvious that this particular tactic would no longer suit the conditions at hand.

Another mistake on the part of General Conrad was to have ordered the majority of the Austro-Hungarian cavalry to undertake a reconnaissance of immense proportions in an insufficient amount of time. He had only limited numbers of aircraft at his disposal, but he nevertheless should have coordinated the two branches of his forces so that the cavalry would not have had to cover the entire area, resulting in exhaustion for both men and horses. Moreover, it was at this point that Conrad began to expect too much of his troops.

A third error was Conrad's constant reference to a combined German and Austrian attack towards the town of Siedlce. This was a mistake of grave importance. If the Germans would have been able to invade the Polish Salient from the north at the same time that the Austrians had moved from the south, the results at the end of September might have been much different. As it was, the German troops were hard pressed in East Prussia. They were inferior in number to the invading Russian armies, and they were not about to take a smaller force 200 miles into enemy territory without protected routes of supply, reinforcement, or knowledge of enemy forces in the area. Yet Conrad expected his allies to engage in this
foolhardy expedition. When they did not, Conrad went ahead with his half of the planned invasion anyhow. This weakened Conrad's already weak right flank, and allowed his left to become dangerously extended.

Again when the Russians were forcing the Third Army back after the disastrous encounters at the Gnila Lipa and Zlota Lipa Rivers, he was unable to make a firm decision concerning the strategic position of the three divisions of the Archduke Joseph. Conrad had sent them to assist General Auffenberg with his encirclement of the Russians under Plehve, and had repeatedly tried to recall them to return to their original station with the Thire Army. Even though the Third Army needed them desperately, Conrad let himself be persuaded to let Auffenberg use them. Thus his right flank was forced to collapse just as his western flank was on the verge of victory.

A fifth error which Conrad committed occurred immediately after the fall of Lemberg itself. He had ordered a very original and complex counterattack to take place against the Russian forces which were attacking from the south. His right flank, consisting of the Second Army, was to turn the Russian left flank and cut across its rear. General Auffenberg was to cease his pursuit of the escaping Plehve and turn about.
His force was then to march due south and catch the advancing Russian force on the end of its right flank. Both flanks of the Russian line were to be turned and the entire southern invasion force could be surrounded and destroyed. It was a brilliant plan, but General Conrad had not allowed for the condition of his troops. Auffenberg's Army had been advancing, fighting and maneuvering for seven days, and as a consequence it was exhausted. The Third Army which was charged with holding the center against the Russian "steamroller" was discouraged and had been defeated many times in the past seven days. The Second Army had spent the first three to four weeks of the war riding around in Austrian boxcars. It was exhausted from travel and its morale was at a low point due to its arrival in the midst of defeat. Its attack in the south was a feeble half-hearted attempt.

Conrad should have immediately signaled a retreat, while his army was still operational. This would have not only allowed his army to fight again, once it had recuperated and reorganized, but it would have spared him the agony of a 150 mile retreat with the subsequent loss of one-third of his army and tremendous amounts of supplies. Conrad felt that retreat was out of the question until it was absolutely necessary. He never realized just how urgent the situation
really was until he had destroyed one-third of his army and had reduced the rest of it to a confused mass of humanity.

Conrad tenaciously clung to the doctrine of constant and unhesitating attack. Had he been in command of the German Armies, using the Schlieffen Plan, it is conceivable that the history of the First World War would be altered today. His tenacity, iron strength, and stubborn persistence would have been excellent qualities for a strong German Army, but these qualities were fatal for the Austrian war effort. General Conrad had succeeded in driving his armies to the point of exhaustion. They had given him their finest effort but that was not enough. The primary result of the Austro-Hungarian loss was the destruction of the staunch old line army. Without this army the Dual Monarchy was in grave difficulty. It was surrounded by enemies and its army became but a ghost of its former self. Conrad felt that the war was best carried out by means of the offensive. He felt that this multiplied the small advantages and would give the initiative to the Austrian forces.

General Erich von Ludendorff admitted in his memoirs that:

"...The Austrian Army was exhausted. Those who

remained, left much to be desired in many cases and failed to cement the fabric of the army. The old valiant soldier stock had fallen in battle."155

Because the Austro-Hungarian army fought itself to death, the shell that remained was of very poor quality. Bernard Pares stated in his war diary that:

"The numbers of the Austrian units are so reduced that they are only shadows of what they were and some seemed to have disappeared altogether. The ordinary drafts came in long ago and are now exhausted."156

This depletion of the Austrian forces led to the most important and far-reaching result of this early campaign. Because of Austria-Hungary's serious defeat in Galicia, Germany was forced to bear more and more of the burden on the eastern front. More and more troops had to be sent to the eastern front until Germany too was faced with collapse. The initial plan had been to reduce France quickly, and turn all of the available forces upon Russia. The entire reason for the existence of the Schlieffen Plan itself was to avoid a two front war of any duration. Many German Generals correctly felt that Germany could not win in such an

155 General Erich Ludendorff and Feldmarschall Paul Hindenburg were the replacements of General Prittwitz, The German Commander of the Eastern Front. Ludendorff eventually became commander of the entire German Armed Forces in the West. Ludendorff, _Ludendorff's Own Story_, pp. 90-91.

156 Pares, _Day By Day With The Russian Army_, p. 87.
instance. Austria's defeat left Germany with no other alternative but to send more and more valuable reinforcements to the east.

At the opening of hostilities the Germans had but fourteen divisions stationed on the eastern front. They were entrusted with the protection of the northern section of the eastern front.

During the Russian invasion of East Prussia, von Moltke, then the German Supreme commander in the west, yielded to the alarmist calls of General Prittwitz. These calls came concurrently with reports of a French and British retreat on August 25th towards the Somme. General Conrad was still asking hopefully for reinforcements to East Prussia, which would make possible his cherished dream of a two-pronged attack towards Siedlce. Moltke sent five corps to the eastern front; two corps and one cavalry division being sent on the 25th of August. This weakened the right wing of the Schlieffen Plan. Moltke also sent one of his reserve forces from the northern to the southern flank to help protect the industrial Ruhr. This division of force before the decisive battle was fatal for the German war effort in the west.157 Ludendorff himself

admitted in his memoirs that the transfer of the two corps from the west to the east had fatal results for Germany. 158

As the war progressed, more and more troops were being shipped to the east. In September, 1914, the Germans had increased their troops in the east to eighteen divisions of infantry and one division of cavalry. By October there were twenty-two divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry. In December there were thirty-six divisions of infantry and seven divisions of cavalry and by January of 1915, there were forty-six divisions of infantry and seven divisions of cavalry. 159

This increase placed on the Germans a larger and larger strain. Many German units were incorporated into the Austrian line to bolster the Austrian defensive capabilities. Still other Austrian units received German officers to command them. 160 If these steps would not have been taken, the Austrian line would have dissolved. In an Uncensored Diary From the Central Empires, Ernesta Drinker Bullitt, describes the conditions prevalent on the front lines in 1916. She


159Ibid, p. 17.

160Pares, Day By Day With The Russian Army, p. 50.
said, "the Austrian troops [had] the bad habit of picking
up in the middle of the night and walking silently to the
rear." 161 The Germans had to reinforce their allies constant-
ly, because Berlin was terrified that the Dual Monarchy was
going to be forced into a separate peace. 162 It became
common knowledge that the Russians would attack only if they
were positive they were opposed by Austro-Hungarian troops. 163

Bernard Pares wrote of the German support to the Aus-
trians with these words:

"The Austrians, encouraged by German allies were
making frantic efforts to pull themselves together.
The fragment of the army that had escaped was united
at Cracow. It was being stiffened and reorganized
for further operations." 164

The results of this campaign were felt years after its
outcome had been decided. Ludendorff and Hindenburg had
continually urged that an extended offensive be begun in the
east. In order to do this effectively troops would have to
be taken from the western front. Falkenhayn, the new Supreme

161 Ernesta Drinker Bullitt, Uncensored Diary from the
Central Empires (New York: Doubleday, Page and Comp., 1917),
p. 161.
162 Ludendorff, Ludendorff's Own Story, p. 93.
163 Ibid, 258.
164 Stanley Washburn, Field Notes From the Russian Front,
Commander opposed this line of thought bitterly. As early as December 30th, Hindenburg had written that:

"The grievous situation of Austria-Hungary is the salient point in the operations of the eastern army and becomes so more and more. It can only be remedied by Germany with considerable and high grade reinforcements under energetic German leaders, which must be supplied directly to the Austro-Hungarian Army whether to strengthen its own front or to operate on its extreme right wing."

Falkenhayn had refused to give his permission to allow forces to be taken to the east from the western front. He himself, however, saw nothing wrong in wasting them in fruitless assaults upon the British and French lines. The dispute between the importance of the two fronts was going to prove fatal to the German war effort.

After the months of October and November, the Austrians had been reinforced but their situation was still unstable. The Austrians were still unable to push the Russians back except with the aid of German troops or German leadership. The Austrian troops were still badly demoralized and their leaders had little prestige left. In spite of the German victories in the Polish Salient the Austro-Hungarian forces could barely hold their positions.

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165 The appointment of Falkenhayn marked the close of the first phase of the war, afterwards the initiative passed to the allies. Bennett, _Wooden Titan_, p. 36-37.

166 Margaret Goldsmith and Frederick Voigt, _Hindenburg_;
The Galician campaign in August and September 1914 had two basic results. The first was immediate. The Austrian Army, through oversight and error, was hopelessly beaten. Austria had to be sent valuable aid by her German ally. That itself led to the second result. The Austrian Army's destruction as a competent fighting force required increased German aid. This weakened the German forces in the west and at the same time precluded a decisive German victory on either front. Austria, by her series of defeats ultimately dragged Germany into the whirlpool of defeat. After four years of maintaining a fierce struggle, the Central Powers collapsed, drained of men, products and the means to continue the war.


CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

After the disastrous defeats of August and September, the Austrian Army was no longer considered a fighting force. What had begun as a war of revenge upon the small and helpless state of Serbia had developed into a struggle for survival against three and later four of the strongest powers in the world. Austrians in Vienna, as well as Hungarians in Budapest, had both greeted the arrival of the war with patriotic fervor. Indeed for a brief time all of the diverse nationalities of the Empire were unified in the presence of a common foe. All too soon however, the news from Galicia and even from the Serbian fronts diminished the feelings of unity. A victory might have sealed the solidarity of the Empire, but a series of losses, such as these, increased distrust and dissent among the many nationalities.

Conrad had committed numerous costly errors in his conduct of the war, and had been too stubborn or blind to rectify them. He became confused at the very outset of the war and had sent the Second Army in the wrong direction. He persisted in his previously planned Galician tactics even though he lacked one of his armies, and even though the Germans had refused to participate in the attack on
Siedlce. He wasted his men in fruitless attacks, going on with new offensives even though it was clear to many that he should have been retreating. He buried the cream of his professional army in the fields of Galicia; men of their worth would never be seen in the ranks of the Dual Monarchy's Army again. Yet for all his stubbornness and intractability, Conrad was a planner of unexcelled ability. His major fault, however, was that his grand plans never seemed to take into account the character of the troops that he had at his disposal.

After these terrible defeats in the first two months of the war in Galicia, General Erich Ludendorff, Conrad's German counterpart, already seemed to realize the greater implications of the Austrian alliance. For example, the organization of the Austrian Army itself was of an impossible nature after September of 1914. The Austrians had arranged their available reserves, so that every infantry battalion had its own "march battalion" of inadequately trained reservists. Many times, regiments which had not been subjected to serious battle casualties were ridiculously above strength, containing five or six battalions rather than the required three. Others, however, were so below strength that they had only one or two battalions. There ought to have been and equal distribution of men and officers. Yet the very nature of the multilingual army precluded this kind of distribution. Moreover, the "march battalions" were oftentimes poorly trained and led.
Therefore the German army released valuable men from important duties and sent them to Austria to undertake the training of the reserves. This further depleted the strength of the German army. 168

Ludendorff suggested numerous methods to remedy the problems of the crumbling Austrian Army, but his suggestions came too late to be of any use. He had known that Austria's army was not of first class quality and that the railroad lines were inadequate for the job of transporting and supplying the troops. He was further disturbed to learn that the alliance between the two major Central Powers, Austria and Germany was of a basically political nature. The alliance between the Russians and the French had been one solely devoted to the military aspects of the two nations. Hence when the war occurred the two allied countries of France and Russia were more prepared and more coordinated in their actions than the Central Powers were. He felt that the prewar arrangements between Germany and Austria had been totally inadequate. No plan of mutual operations existed on paper to be followed simultaneously by both parties. General Conrad would not submit to German control for he would be liable to lose his position and rank. Duplication, confusion and chaos were always major ingredients of any joint Austro-Germanic venture. 169

168 Ludendorff, Ludendorff's Own Story, p. 268.
169 Ibid, p. 70.
Ludendorff blamed Germany for not realizing the truth about Austria-Hungary. Not only had Austria-Hungary been extremely negligent concerning her pre-war preparations, but so had Germany in taking the strength of her ally at face value. Ludendorff felt that if the Austro-Hungarian Army had been able to do only one half of what had been expected of it, the German forces could have been able to maintain a preponderance in the west.\textsuperscript{170}

"Germany failed to infuse any new life into our perishing allies. We should have realized that the Dual Monarchy was the sick man of Europe and kept faith with her and led her instead of binding ourselves to her strong but one sided policy." \textsuperscript{171}

Both Hindenburg and Ludendorff realized that the attack in the west was ground to a halt. They saw that it would be almost impossible to rebuild the momentum of the advance in the west. They turned instead to the eastern front. They felt that they could eliminate the Russians first. Ludendorff and Hindenburg had repeatedly asked Falkenhayn for reinforcements, but he refused to send them. In the east there were no fortified lines of trenches, fewer numbers of crack troops and little artillery. Still, the Germans managed to achieve numerous victories over the Russians. They lacked the overpowering strength needed to subdue the Russian forces entirely. Hindenburg and Ludendorff argued that the forces in the west be put on the defensive.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Ibid}, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Ibid}. 

and the main emphasis be placed on the eastern front.172

The western front had degenerated into a defensive stalemate. Artillery was not exploited to its fullest extent on either front yet and there was not enough of it to launch an artillery attack in numerous sectors at once. The creeping barrage had not yet been devised. Maneuver was impossible due to the lines of trenches behind their walls of barbed wire. The tank was not invented yet, and gas warfare was still in its infancy. This combination of factors made the positions in the trenches impregnable to ordinary land assault. The machine gun made short work of the many waves of brave men that attempted to force a breakthrough.

On the basis of this knowledge the Kaiser was repeatedly urged to force Falkenhayn to turn the main thrust to the east. Conrad wired Falkenhayn on December 27, 1914 and said:

"Complete success in the eastern theatre is still ...decisive for the general situation and extremely urgent. A rapid decision and rapid execution are absolutely necessary if the intervention of the neutrals, which is certainly expected at ... the beginning of march is to be forestalled." 173

Falkenhayn refused.

At last in January, 1915, the Kaiser gave the go ahead to Ludendorff and Hindenburg to attack in the east. This marked the beginning of the eastern phase of the war.

173 Bennett, Wooden Titan, p. 48.
for the Germans. After great losses, the Russians showed remarkable ability to recuperate and reinforce their front line troops. Time after time, the German forces, along with their Austrian allies would defeat the Russian troops in tremendous engagements, only to have the Russian forces return in strength within a month. Russia was seemingly inexhaustible.

The Austrians showed almost no recuperative ability whatsoever. They were beaten and they knew it. The Slavic elements of the Austro-Hungarian army were beginning to desert, and Conrad was reduced to begging for more and more German reinforcements. Austria had failed to live up to its part of the alliance.174 Ludendorff had nothing but praise for his own troops and scorn for the Austrians.

"In defense, the German troops proved their worth. The Austrian troops succumbed to the Russians ... The German troops carried their allies with them and had beaten a strong enemy." 175

Conrad in his memoirs recorded his casualty figures for the first two months of the war. At the beginning of the war the strength of Austria's Army was as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Horses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Army</td>
<td>340,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Army</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Army</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Army</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,125,000</td>
<td>385,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

175 Ludendorff, *Ludendorff's Own Story*, p. 359.
By the end of September, 1914, statistics clearly show that the losses were great.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Horses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>207,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>136,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>803,000</td>
<td>275,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Losses were computed to be as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Horses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>109,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Austrian armies had lost one fourth of their strength in two short months of fighting and retreating. These men were the cream of the army and could never be replaced. Hence, the campaign in Galicia in August and September of 1914 resulted in the destruction of the Austrian army as a fighting force. This put added pressure on her German ally and may possibly have decisively jeopardized the Central Power war effort. Moreover, the Galician campaign put a serious strain on the nationalities within the monarchy and this led eventually to the collapse and dissolution of the Dual Monarchy.

177
Ibid.
CHAPTER V

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