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The World War

1914 to 1918

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The Military Operations on Land

Volume Six

Published by E. S. Mittler & Son

Berlin in the Year 1929

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The Autumn Campaign 19

The Conclusion of Operations

in the West and East

With twenty-one maps

and sketches

Published by E. S. Mittler & Son

Berlin in the year 1929

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Introduction to the Fifth and Sixth Volume.

The present two volumes — Volume V and VI — present the depiction of the autumn campaigns of 1914 on both theaters of war. After the simultaneous setbacks at the Marne and in Galicia around the middle of September, the close interactions between West and East become so pronounced that the previous method of depicting the events on both theaters of war for specific periods in separate volumes had to be abandoned in order to clearly reveal the major connections of the multi-front war, especially the crisis-induced tensions of the overall situation. In the future, therefore, each volume will depict the events of an operational period on all theaters of war simultaneously and coherently. In this process, the activities of the supreme army command, insofar as they concern the overall war leadership, will be presented separately from their leadership on the individual theaters of war, so that the diversity and versatility of the tasks assigned to them become clearly apparent.

To avoid making the entire work too extensive, the depiction of events on the battlefronts is significantly shorter than before. While a more detailed depiction of the battles on the entire front seemed necessary due to the great significance of the war of movement in the West up to the Battle of the Marne and in the East up to the liberation of East Prussia, these are now only described in more detail in the parts of the battlefront where their outcome was significant and influenced the operational decisions of the supreme command. The fundamental change that took place in the West through the transition from a war of movement to a war of position generally required here a

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Introduction to the Fifth and Sixth Volume.

a somewhat more detailed appreciation of the battles at the front than in the East, where only the significant battles around Lodz and in East Prussia are presented in more detail.

The description of the events with the opponents provides merely an operational overview without details of the battles.

The Historical Commission has entrusted General of the Infantry a. D. Dr. phil. v. Kuhl in Berlin-Steglitz and the Secret Councillor Dr. phil. Brandenburg, regular Professor of History at the University of Leipzig, with the review of the fifth and sixth volumes. The Reich Archive extends its special thanks to both reporters.

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1. The terrain is only depicted in more detail where it seemed significant for understanding the tactical events.

2. The following applies to troop designations: Corps numbers are given in Roman numerals, army, division, and brigade numbers in Arabic numerals; armies, divisions, and brigades are distinguished only by the size of the numbers.

3. List of abbreviations used:

Abt. = Department,

b. = Bavarian,

Ers. = Replacement,

G. = Guard,

GrzSch. = Border Protection,

H. K. K. = Higher Cavalry Commander,

J. Br. = Infantry Brigade,

Kav. = Cavalry,

K. K. = Cavalry Corps,

K. D. = Cavalry Division,

L. = Landwehr,

Ldst. = Landsturm,

M. D. = Marine Division,

M. d. L. = Supreme Army Command,

O. B. d. Ost. = Commander-in-Chief East,

R. = Reserve,

Rgt. = Regiment,

zsfsl. = assembled.

Ws. = Army Woyrsch,

Inf. = Group Linsingen,

Sch. = Group Scholz,

Be. = Corps Below,

Br. = Corps Breslau,

Fa. = Corps Fabek,

Ga. = Corps Gallwitz,

Ge. = Corps Gerok,

Gr. = Corps Graudenz,

Mo. = Corps Morgen,

Pa. = Corps Pannwitz,

Pl. = Corps Plüskow,

Po. = Corps Posen,

Th. = Corps Thorn.

Fr. = Cavalry Corps Frommel,

Go. = Cavalry Corps Göllen,

Ri. = Cavalry Corps Richthofen,

Br. = Division Bredow,

Ja. = Division Jacobi,

Rgsbg. = Landwehr Division Königsberg,

Wr. = Division Wernitz,

Gre. = 99th Reserve Infantry Brigade Gregory,

Ldst. We. or We. = Landsturm Brigade Westernhagen,

Neug. = assembled Brig. Neugebauer.

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Sch. = Section Schmid,

L. H. = Leibhusaren Brigade.

ö. od. ö. u. = Austrian-Hungarian,

Psf. = Army Group Pflanzer,

Kr. = Group Krautwald,

Lju. = Group Ljutičić,

Te. = Group Tersztyánszky,

Tsch. = Group Tschurtschenthaler,

Sz. = Group Szurmay,

ha. = Cavalry Corps Hauer.

Poln. Leg. = Polish Legion,

T. = Territorial,

Gr. R. On. = Group of Reserve Divisions,

Sect. de R. = Sector de Reims,

Kol. = Colonial,

Brit., Br. = British,

Ind. = Indian,

Belag. A. = Siege Army,

Dnjest-Gr. = Dniester Group,

Kos. = Cossacks,

D. Kos. = Don Cossacks,

f. oder kaut. = Caucasian,

f. = Siberian,

f. oder turk. = Turkestan,

Trsbait. = Transbaikal,

Ur. = Ural,

Sch. Br. = Rifle Brigade,

Gr. = Grenadier Corps,

Cha. = Cavalry Corps Charpentier,

Wo. = Cavalry Corps Nowotny,

Tu. = Cavalry Corps Tumanow,

Mr. = Section Marimowitsch

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I. New Plans for the Conduct of the Two-Front War.

Maps and Sketches: No. 1, 2, and 6.

On November 4, the Supreme Army Command in Mézières received the report from Generaloberst v. Hindenburg about the planned new offensive with three corps of the 9th and parts of the 8th Army from the Posen—Thorn line; the timing for the start of the attack had not yet been reported. On the same day, Generalleutnant v. Falkenhayn made the grave decision to continue the attack in Flanders despite the extremely tense situation in the East, in order to achieve a visible military success in the West by capturing the hotly contested Ypres. The East had to help itself with its own strength — as best as it could. General v. Falkenhayn no longer expected a campaign decision in Flanders at this time.

A day later, on November 5, a telegram from the representative of the Supreme Army Command at the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command, Generalleutnant Freiherr v. Freytag-Loringhoven, about the diminished offensive power of the allied army in the East, repeated similar reports from the Commander-in-Chief East and already raised doubts as to whether the Eastern Army could withstand the great Russian superiority much longer without help from the West. How seriously the overall situation was viewed at the Great Headquarters in those days is also shown by the diary entry of Generaloberst v. Plessen from November 9 about the report of General v. Falkenhayn to the Supreme War Lord: "... No progress in the report (at Ypres). It is leading to a regular siege war, which will still take a long time, and we have no time. The East calls."

In General v. Falkenhayn's wishes for the further conduct of the two-front war, a significant change was emerging in those days: he came to the realization of the necessity to immediately:

1) Volume V, p. 562. — 2) Volume V, p. 564. — 3) The Austro-Hungarian Army Command was called "Army High Command," which is avoided in this presentation, as the German term "Armee-Oberkommando" has a different meaning.

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New Plans for Conducting the Two-Front War.

After concluding the ongoing battles around Ypres in the second half of November, the intention was to cease further operations in the West and shift the focus of warfare to the East, seeking a decisive campaign against Russia. To this end, six army corps were to be transferred from the West to the East as simultaneously as possible.

On the morning of November 8, General von Falkenhayn had a briefing from the head of the military railway system, then Colonel Groener, on the question of transporting stronger forces to the East: "I have promised him (General von Falkenhayn)," it says in a diary entry by Colonel Groener from November 8, "to transport four army corps with 40 trains each daily, two from the right wing, one from the center, one from the left wing. In an emergency, a fifth could be transported simultaneously; however, it is very questionable whether so many troops can be withdrawn from the front at once."

Before such a regrouping, General von Falkenhayn still considered achieving a visible military success in Flanders urgently desirable. Only after taking the Ypres salient did he believe it possible, without damaging the fighting spirit of the Western army, to free up large sections of the front in the West, thereby simultaneously making the necessary forces available for the East and providing the West front with the required fortification. If success at Ypres failed, such a measure was, in his opinion, not without concern, as it could easily appear as an admission of defeat, which would revive the enemy's offensive spirit. Therefore, he pursued with increased vigor the prompt execution of the attack ordered on November 4 to capture the Ypres salient; he did not doubt the rapid achievement of this limited combat objective, given the deployment of fresh forces and strong combat resources as well as the great exhaustion of the enemy. Then it was possible, without endangering the Western front, to save stronger forces for the East not only at Ypres but also from other parts of the Western front. However, this required time — at least two weeks.

For the major offensive in the East, he considered, in the sense of an idea apparently pursued by him for some time and in accordance with the known operational intentions of the local leaders, the equally bold

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The New Plan and the Dispatch of Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch to Teschen.

such a generous plan, with five to six corps from the west, as well as the forces anticipated by the Commander-in-Chief East and new ones to be drawn from the 8th Army from East Prussia, a total of about twelve German army corps, to break through unexpectedly from the area of Thorn against the right flank of the main Russian forces advancing towards Silesia and Posen, in order to render the Russians "inoperative" by exerting pressure from the north against their connections and to bring about the "decision" in the east. To enhance the effect of this operation, he was even determined to temporarily relinquish the entire province of East Prussia and part of West Prussia, Posen, and Silesia to the Russians. He was willing to make great sacrifices to achieve greater things!

Initially, however, only the Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff was to be taken into confidence. The further development of the plan, which was still in a state of disillusionment, was to depend on his approval; only when it had taken firm shape were the German leaders in the east to be informed.

On the evening of November 8, however, Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch was dispatched from Mežières to Teschen, where the Austro-Hungarian military leadership intended to move its headquarters from Neu-Sandez on November 9, with written instructions: You are to proceed to the Austro-Hungarian headquarters at the earliest opportunity and report the following orally to the Chief of General Staff, General Conrad v. Hötzendorf: I deeply regret that the sluggish progress of our offensive in the west has so far only allowed the dispatch of three cavalry divisions and 40,000 reinforcements to the east. Any further weakening would, as I have already informed His Excellency v. Conrad, have unfavorably affected our situation in the west, without being able to bring about a decision in the east. I now hope to have five to six army corps available for the east in about fourteen days. Their deployment would naturally have to be in an effective direction, not against the front of the Russian forces, but in conjunction with the strongest possible parts of the German 8th and 9th Armies along the Vistula.

1) It is striking that neither General v. Falkenhayn in his book "The German Supreme Army Command 1914—1916", nor Colonel Tappen in his diary entries mentions the plan of the great eastern offensive with a word. The current Lieutenant General Tappen has so far shared in a letter dated December 14, 1921, about the plan that he did not particularly mention the plan in his diary entries because it was initially still in development.  
2) Volume V, p. 489. — 3) Volume V, p. 559.

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New Plans for Conducting the Two-Front War.

The prerequisite for the success of this operation is that the allied Austro-Hungarian army, in conjunction with the German forces fighting alongside it, holds the Russian armies on the left bank of the Vistula as long as possible and draws as many forces as possible. Both will only be achieved if the Dankl army) is significantly reinforced by parts of the Austro-Hungarian armies located to the right of the Vistula. Their deployment can be carried out by rail through Bohemia and Silesia. Certainly, from the Austro-Hungarian standpoint, there are two objections to this plan:

1. It makes the protection of Hungary and Transylvania against the advancing Russians difficult, and

2. It appears as if Austro-Hungarian forces are being used to protect German soil. —

In reality, however, both objections are untenable. In our situation, it is not about protecting one area or another, but about securing the existence of the allied empires. This can only happen if we unite to defeat the Russian army or at least bring it to a complete halt. I know no other way than the one I hereby propose to Archduke v. Conrad. If it succeeds in this way for the operationally mobile German army wing to seize the right flank of the Russians and push them just a few days' marches south, they will lose their connections to inner Russia and must become inoperative in a short time. The lack of ammunition, which already exists with them, as well as supplies, will then immediately become acutely noticeable. I am well aware that my proposal demands a great effort from the Austro-Hungarian military leadership. Germany will also suffer greatly from its consequences, as it entails the complete abandonment of East Prussia and probably a large part of West Prussia, Posen, perhaps even Silesia. But such concerns, as I said before, should not play a role in our current situation. It is simply a matter of whether we win or surrender to Moscow's mercy or lack thereof. The answer to this, in my opinion, cannot be doubtful."

Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch arrived at the Austro-Hungarian headquarters in Teschen on the afternoon of November 10; he explained his written instructions to General v. Conrad through oral presentations. According to stenographic records, which the general's wing adjutant

1) 1. Austro-Hungarian Army.

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Discussion in Teschen.

v. Conrad, Lieutenant Colonel Kundmann, during the lecture of Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch, stated the following¹):

"General v. Falkenhayn is aware of how important it is to achieve a decision in Russia, but the entire German army is positioned from the Vosges to the coast 100 to 200 meters from the enemy. The Germans need Ostend to have a naval base for submarines there. The German Supreme Army Command is keen to push the allies back to Dunkirk. The Belgians have caused the inundation, as a result of which the III Reserve Corps had to retreat. We want to take operations. If we succeed, the English and French must retreat. If the attack does not achieve the desired success, General v. Falkenhayn intends to relieve forces and shift them to the east. Germany would then have to give France free rein, so the German forces would take another position, holding back corps behind the armies to prevent a breakthrough. The assumption of this position takes time. Excellency Falkenhayn hopes to be able to send five to six corps in at most thirteen days. General v. Falkenhayn thinks of withdrawing more forces from the 8th Army, from which two corps have already been drawn, possibly freeing East Prussia. He believes that the operation, proceeding from the direction of Thorn with twelve Prussian army corps, could bring about the decision."

In response to General v. Conrad's question about when the German corps could intervene in the east, Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch is said to have replied according to the transcript of Lieutenant Colonel Kundmann: "That would be on November 22²). We can unload four corps simultaneously." General v. Conrad pointed out that the date for the advance of the German 9th Army was already November 11. It was questioned whether this order should be carried out or whether one should wait until the German reinforcements were in place. Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch replied that General v. Falkenhayn had not been informed of the intention of the Eastern Command; still unaware of the plan of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief.

¹) Cited according to Conrad V, G. 453 ff.  
²) There is a misunderstanding here; how it arose could not be determined. That Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch, who never received a written instruction (page 3), was not in agreement with November 22 as the day of intervention in the east is excluded. That General v. Conrad proceeded in this way is undoubtedly evident from the later telegram exchange with General v. Falkenhayn (page 246).

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New Plans for Conducting the Two-Front War.

Advance²¹), he had thought of deploying the five to six corps in the area of Thorn to push the Russians back by exerting pressure from the north towards the southeast. This was essentially the same operation that the 9th Army now wanted to carry out alone, with 13 to 14 divisions. Under these circumstances, he could do nothing but report to General Ludendorff that reinforcements for five to six corps would be available in 14 days, and leave it entirely up to him whether to wait or not.

The Falkenhayn plan, particularly the idea that Austro-Hungarian forces should also participate in the operation from Silesia, found even more approval from General v. Conrad, as this seemed to ensure direct cooperation between the Austro-Hungarian and German armies. Since the decision now lay in Russian Poland, he had already moved the four divisions of the 2nd Army there — even at the risk that the Russians might temporarily reach Hungary. With this communication, General v. Conrad concluded the discussion.

Meanwhile, on November 9, a day after Lieutenant Hentsch's departure, a telegram from Posen had arrived at General v. Falkenhayn's, in which General Ludendorff asked Generaloberst v. Hindenburg for reinforcements from the west for the offensive they planned. In this telegram, too, the resilience of the allies, whose gaze was "alarmingly directed backward," was unfavorably assessed. "German Eastern Army," it continued, "in its current strength too weak to bring about a decision alone. It can only count on partial successes. I cannot overlook the situation in the west. If a decision is not made there soon, please consider seeking a decision here and freeing up three to four active corps for the east. More will be needed later. . . ."²²)

The timing of the start of the operation intended by Generaloberst v. Hindenburg was also not specified in this telegram; from the fact that reinforcements from the west were still being requested, General v. Falkenhayn may have concluded that the start of the operation was not imminent. To learn more and reliable information about this and the operation intended by the leaders in the east, he decided to commission Lieutenant Hentsch to

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Discussion in Posen.

after completing his mission in Teschen, to proceed immediately to Posen, the new seat of the Eastern Headquarters. On the evening of November 9, the following message was sent to General v. Freytag for transmission to Lieutenant Hentsch, who was still on his way to Teschen: "Return of Lieutenant Hentsch via Posen. Orient there about the situation and intentions. Then immediate return here." The wording of the message to General v. Freytag left it undecided whether Lieutenant Hentsch was to inform himself about the intentions of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief or to enlighten him about the plans of General v. Falkenhayn. When he arrived in Posen on the evening of November 11, the new offensive of the German Eastern Army had just begun. As a result, the agreement made with General v. Conrad, to leave it to the Eastern Commander-in-Chief whether he wanted to wait for the promised reinforcements before starting the offensive, had become irrelevant. In the discussion with the leaders in the East, Lieutenant Hentsch neither addressed this question nor, notably, mentioned the large Falkenhayn attack plan with a word. Instead, he thoroughly discussed the situation in the West. From these explanations, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg gained clarity for the first time that the Flanders offensive was to be considered failed. This offered, in his view, the possibility of ending operations in Flanders and seeking the great decision in the East. This seemed all the more urgent as the strength of the Austro-Hungarian army was no longer highly estimated. Lieutenant Hentsch also shared this view. On the evening of November 12, he returned via Berlin to the Great Headquarters, where he gave General v. Falkenhayn a detailed report on his mission. Nothing about the content of his lecture is contained in the files, and nothing reliable could be established otherwise. Even before his return to Mézières, Lieutenant Hentsch had reported by telephone that, due to the increasingly difficult situation with the Austro-Hungarian army, it would be urgently desirable if "two army corps were sent soon, preferably immediately."

1) It almost seems as if General v. Falkenhayn did not wish to communicate the plan to the leaders in the East as long as it was still in the state of basic outlines, as it otherwise remains incomprehensible that Lieutenant Hentsch was not instructed to inform himself about the situation in Posen and then only proceed to Teschen, in order to conduct discussions that appeared necessary with these intentions very similar to the basic ideas of the offensive prepared by the Eastern Commander-in-Chief.

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New Plans for Conducting the Two-Front War.

Meanwhile, the telegraphic exchange of ideas between General v. Falkenhayn and the leaders in the East had continued. In response to the telegram from General Ludendorff on November 9, the Chief of the General Staff had replied the same evening that, according to his information, the Austro-Hungarian military leadership had no further intentions of retreat. "I hope to have four more active corps available for the East in fourteen days. Any partial successes achieved in the meantime will always be of great value."

General v. Falkenhayn believed he could make the four army corps requested by Generaloberst v. Hindenburg available only in 14 days; their intervention in the East was then expected at the earliest by the end of November or the beginning of December. Here, there was a contrast between the views of General v. Falkenhayn and the leaders in the East. General Ludendorff had only promised a decision in the East in his telegram if four army corps were promptly transported from the West and explicitly emphasized that more would be needed later. This difference of opinion could not be clarified by the exchange of ideas between the leaders in the East and the Supreme Army Command in the following days; rather, the differences became more apparent, especially since Hentsch's visit to the Oberost headquarters.

While Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff, who had previously supported General v. Falkenhayn in his efforts to bring about a decision in the West with all their might, after the failure in Flanders at the beginning of November, finally joined the view of General v. Conrad regarding the focus of the war effort and urgently requested the dispatch of significant reinforcements from the West, General v. Falkenhayn still insisted on carrying out the already ordered attack at Ypres before sending reinforcements to the East.

The telegram from General v. Falkenhayn to the Commander-in-Chief East on the evening of November 9 was answered by a message received in Mézières early on November 10, stating that the "offensive of the 9th Army from the direction of Thorn, left wing along the Vistula" was to begin that day, on November 10.

On the same day, November 10, the new attack in the West at Ypres was also to be initiated, as General v. Falkenhayn, like

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Start of the Offensive in the West and East on November 18.

mentioned that in a few days he hoped for a successful conclusion of the heavy fighting in the West; then the regrouping of forces towards the East could soon begin. At the early point of the start of the offensive in the East, General v. Falkenhayn initially saw no threat to his own plan, as the offensive of the Commander-in-Chief East, given the weakness of the forces to be deployed, could at most achieve "partial successes"; such he also believed should be welcomed as an introduction to the major operation. What General v. Falkenhayn understood by "partial successes" can no longer be determined with certainty. Presumably, he thought less of the possibility of a deep thrust into the right flank of the main Russian forces, and more of their frontal binding and halting of their advance. Then his major offensive along the Vistula was to make the already heavily engaged Russians "operationally incapable" in a short time by striking deep into their flank and rear. He had already initiated the preparatory measures for this. In a telephone conversation with the Chief of Staff of the 1st Army, Major General v. Kuhl, he had ordered on the morning of November 9 to consider the establishment of rear positions and the withdrawal of reserves. It might become necessary that "we would have to switch to the defensive in the West in order to transport to the East." Then the positions in the West would have to be shortened to be able to withdraw army corps. However, the new positions should not be too far back, as otherwise a major retreat would result, which would be tantamount to a defeat. Everything depended on how the situation developed on the extreme right wing. Only then could the defense line be determined.

This instruction shows that General v. Falkenhayn at that time considered withdrawing parts of the front in the West to spare forces for the East, although he still rejected a generous straightening of entire army parts as long as no visible military success was achieved with sacrifices. However, this thought did not go beyond the stage of considerations. Soon events would occur on both the western and eastern theaters of war that would throw previous calculations and preparations for the major Eastern offensive in the form envisaged by General v. Falkenhayn overboard.

1) According to diary records of General v. Kuhl.

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III. The War in the East up to the Victory at Kutno.

A. The "Commander-in-Chief East" and His First Decisions.

I. The Overall Situation on the Eastern Front at the End of October.

Maps and Sketches: No. 6.

With the retreat of the German front from Poland, the overall situation in the East had become extremely serious by the end of October 1914.

The Russian pressure continued to increase in strength, with one Asian corps after another appearing at the front. There were also reports of the arrival of Japanese officers and artillery, which could not be dismissed as false1). Confidence in the combat effectiveness of the Austro-Hungarian army was deeply shaken, and still, significant parts of it were stationed at the Serbian border, where Field Marshal Potiorek was preparing for a new attack. Added to this was the concern about the stance of Italy and Romania, while the alliance with Turkey could not initially significantly ease the situation on the German Eastern Front. Although it was expected that some of the previously held-back Asian troop contingents of Russia would now remain permanently tied to the Caucasus front, the Russians now had such numerical superiority against Germany and Austria-Hungary that they dared to push through between the Galician and East Prussian fronts of the Central Powers, driving the thrust deep into Germany through Poland. This created a situation similar to what had been considered possible at the start of the war2). However, it was now much more serious, as the hope that soon after a decisive victory in the West, the bulk of the German army would come to the aid of the East was quite low.

The current Russian attack primarily threatened the parts of the German border areas that lay outside the framework of permanent fortifications and the defensive positions prepared according to the mobilization plan. The fortified line of the lower Vistula had been bypassed; the enemy advance was directed towards Silesia.

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Defense Preparations between Oder and Vistula.

Here was only Breslau, and even this was protected only by makeshift expansion against the attack of Russian field troops. Based on considerations made in peacetime, a defense front was prepared, behind which, in the event of a Russian incursion, the army units that could be spared in the west were to be made ready for attack. However, this defense front left Silesia unprotected; the small outdated fortress of Glogau formed its right wing, the strong military base of Posen the main support. Starting at the Oder near Züllchow, the line of the Obra-Bruch was set up for defense with the front facing south to the advanced positions of the fortress Posen. North of Posen, the area interspersed with lakes was free up to the Netze. Then followed a position protected by the Netze, which again had the front facing south and connected east of Bromberg to the fortified Vistula line. As this ran north out of the Danziger Bay, the strong Vistula fortress Thorn remained in front of the front, further north, but still very close, further advanced and therefore entirely reliant on its own strength, Lötzen and Königsberg. For the northern wing of the Vistula front, and even more so for Königsberg, it was of decisive importance that the Russian fleet dominated the Baltic Sea. The connection to Königsberg was thus secured, and herein lay the strongest protection of this large military base. One could hope to eventually bring the Russian masses to a halt at Posen and the lower Vistula. But even that would have meant renouncing extensive territories indispensable for longer warfare. Therefore, everything should be attempted to halt the enemy's advance as soon as possible.

Colonel General v. Hindenburg and his Chief of General Staff had already dealt with the question in Radom, even before October 20, of how operations against the Russian superiority could be continued if it came to a retreat. The best solution seemed to be a regrouping of forces using the railways on German territory, to regain the flank from the enemy, because only in this way could one hope to stop the advance movement of his masses. The expansion of a position in the line Noworadomsk—Wielun ordered at the beginning of the retreat took such plans into account. Subsequently, the Austro-Hungarian front was directed northwards, running approximately to the mouth of the San. If the Russians advanced against this front, which covered Galicia and Upper Silesia, a blow in the west could hit the flank and rear. If reinforcements from the western theater of war were already involved, then all the better; probably

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The War in the East.

one would have to accomplish the task solely with one's own strength. Then a

complete shift of focus to the north was necessary. Whether this would be

possible in view of the nearby and overwhelming enemy was initially

completely uncertain. Nevertheless, since October 28, everything had been

prepared to be able to immediately transport two corps by rail if necessary.

During a meeting held that day in Petrikau with General v. Mackensen,

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg "briefly shared his thoughts on the situation and

the possibility of resuming the offensive. He saw such a possibility in the

shift of the mass of the 9th Army to the north (Gnesen—Thorn) and a

subsequent surprise attack on the right flank of the Russian main force

advancing in the western Bormarsch"1). When General Ludendorff was in

Berlin on October 30 for a meeting with General v. Falkenhayn,

everything was still in limbo.

In Berlin, General Ludendorff learned how the overall situation

in the east was now viewed by the Austro-Hungarian military command.

As General v. Conrad had written down, he calculated that to the right of

the upper Vistula, 26 1/2 Russian divisions (= 424 battalions) were facing

28 Austro-Hungarian divisions (= 364 battalions), and trusted that these

would hold despite their lower overall strength; however, they could not

attack or send forces to other fronts. To the left of the Vistula, there were

40 to 42 Russian divisions (640 to 672 battalions) advancing against

24 1/2 allied divisions (= 300 battalions). "The enemy is pressing here with

more than double superiority, which he will probably eventually bring to

bear." As soon as the allied forces could no longer hold at and west of the

San estuary, the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian army would also have

to be withdrawn, and the recently liberated fortress of Przemysl would have

to be left to itself again. In doing so, the 2nd Army would then retreat into

the Carpathians, the 3rd and 4th between these and the upper Vistula to the

west, up to the Dunajec, later up to the height of Krakow, while the 1st

Army would remain in contact with the German 9th Army on the left.

"Under these circumstances, an early intervention of significant forces to the

left of the German 9th Army seems to me of decisive importance, aimed at

striking the Russian Bormarsch in its right flank, possibly from the line

Kreuzburg—Kalisch—Komin. Which forces of the 8th Army could also be

brought in for cooperation slightly above Thorn,

1) Communication from Field Marshal v. Mackensen to the Reichsarchiv on   
January 8, 1929. — 2) Volume V, p. 555 ff.

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Appointment of a "Commander-in-Chief East".

is beyond evaluation here, but the decision now undoubtedly lies in Poland west of the Vistula." General v. Conrad therefore advocated seeking the decision against Russia first, and continued: "But if the decision in the East is to be of decisive importance, it must be made immediately and with strong forces; therefore, at least 30 German divisions must be deployed to the left of the 9th Army. If this does not happen, then the Imperial and Royal Armies must try to halt the Russian advance as much as possible, but if forced to retreat, they must carry it out to the Danube line Budapest—Vienna."

Conrad's proposal was entirely in line with the views of the Hindenburg High Command, which General Ludendorff represented from Berlin. However, since General v. Falkenhayn described the situation in the West as "very promising" and foresaw a decision in Flanders as "near," General Ludendorff felt compelled to comply with the decision demanded in the name of the Supreme War Lord. It was intended that the East should help itself for the time being, as well as it could; how long this would last could not yet be foreseen, perhaps six weeks). However, General Ludendorff requested and achieved greater freedom of movement for the 9th Army. As long as the army was tied to the left wing of the allied army, only an attack from the line Noworadomsk—Wjelun with the right wing along the Pilica to the north was possible, which at best could hit a weak spot in the gap in the Russian overall front. However, for the far more promising attack against the Russian right wing, complete freedom of movement and unrestricted authority over the troops of the German 8th Army was a prerequisite for Generaloberst v. Hindenburg. This had been clearly demonstrated in the last days of October. The situation that the commander of the 9th Army was simultaneously in charge of the 8th Army proved to be impossible in the long run. This need was met by the Supreme War Lord appointing Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, with Major General Ludendorff as Chief of Staff, on November 1 as "Commander-in-Chief of all forces in the East of the Reich" (Commander-in-Chief East), while the 9th Army received a new commander in General of Cavalry v. Mackensen. The command over the Deputy General Commands of the VI., V., II., XVII. Army Corps and the fortresses

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Generaloberst v. Hindenburg reserved for himself the command of his area, with the deputy general commands of the I and XX Army Corps and their fortresses remaining under the 8th Army. The Eastern Headquarters was to be relocated on November 4th behind the center of the future front into the large fortress of Posen.

Simultaneously with this reorganization of command relations for the German part of the front against Russia, an attempt was made in early November to achieve greater unity in cooperation with the Austro-Hungarian army.

In the German Emperor's response to a telegram from Emperor Franz Josef, which went to Vienna on November 1st, it was stated: Preconditions to continue holding the war in the East are "joint actions of your 1st and my 9th Army, which to my delight has already been achieved by your influence, but could be significantly improved if you would decide to place all Austrian-Hungarian forces gathered on the left bank of the Vistula and still to be added under the command of General v. Hindenburg in operational matters. — I believe the present times are too serious not to let purely military questions come to the forefront."

Emperor Franz Josef rejected this suggestion, stating that "from my army command's side, in full agreement with Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, everything is being done that is within our power. A formal subordination of my 1st Army under Generaloberst v. Hindenburg is not considered essential by the army command. . ."

Additionally, the question of joint command over all forces deployed against Russia by the Central Powers had been raised from the German diplomatic side, but without the knowledge of the supreme army command. On his own initiative, Undersecretary Zimmermann had expressed the idea in a conversation with the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to establish this command under Archduke Friedrich with Major General Auffenberg as chief of staff, while General v. Conrad could become the commander-in-chief of the Austro-Hungarian army. When the Archduke and General v. Conrad were asked from Vienna to express their opinion on this proposal, General v. Conrad responded — and similarly the Archduke —

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The Question of Joint Command in the East.

... I consider the insertion of a high command between the army commanders and the supreme commander to be impractical; the latter must directly manage the armies. The proposal places operational leadership entirely in the hands of General Ludendorff; it is merely a clear indication of lost trust; under these circumstances, I must emphasize that I foresee my complete resignation in the most loyal manner and without any offense ...” The General later justified his stance in his work as follows: “Despite all high regard for General Ludendorff, it was not appropriate to agree to a command arrangement that would place the Imperial and Royal Armed Forces and thus the fate of the monarchy in the hands of a young general of a foreign, albeit allied, power.” The idea of joint command in the East, which increasingly imposed itself, was thus temporarily buried.

2. The Events up to November 3.

Maps and Sketches: No. 6.

The Austro-Hungarian 1st and the German 9th Army had continued the retreat begun on October 27, the Austrians attacking the line San-Münchung—Kielzy, the German 9th Army with the Guard Reserve Corps, XX Army Corps, as well as the newly formed cavalry corps from three Austro-Hungarian cavalry divisions (2nd, 3rd, 9th) inserted into the front of the German army, under Field Marshal Lieutenant Baron v. Hauer, against the area between Kielzy and Noworadomsk, with the Landwehr Corps and the Madesen Group — XVII Army Corps, Frommel Corps (36th Reserve Division and Bredow Division) and XI Army Corps — in the position under construction Noworadomsk—Wjelun. On the extreme left flank, the Korda Cavalry Corps (8th and Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division) had taken the direction against the Warthe up to Kalisz, the Poznań border guard was to be moved there, and the 5th Cavalry Division rolling westward was assigned to this flank. Initially, only limited reliance could be placed on the troops drawn from the fortresses after the abandonment of the original main reserves; they needed rest so much after the exertions of the last weeks that they were sent back by rail as far as possible, the Landsturm Brigade Hoffmann to Poznań, the Landsturm Brigades Westenrangen

1) Conrad V, G. 392 ff. — 2) Volume V, G. 489 f.

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The War in the East.

and Rinteln to Thorn. In this now particularly important fortress, the 21st Landwehr Brigade (original main reserve from Breslau) was stationed as the core of the garrison. At the same time, the first of the 14 Landsturm battalions, which had been envisaged to reinforce the fortress garrisons, rolled in from the interior of the Reich.

The headquarters of the German 9th Army had been in Tschentschau since October 28.

The Austro-Hungarian High Command was still in Neu-Sandez. Its 1st Army was to hold the line San-Mündung—Kielzy for some time, considering the overall situation of the army. It was necessary to ensure that the left flank of this army remained secured against Russian encirclement. Therefore, on October 30, General v. Conrad requested from the 9th Army Command the provision of the right wing of the 9th Army (Guard Reserve Corps, XX Army Corps, Landwehr Corps) for a counterattack from the area Kielzy—Noworadomsk. Apparently still hoping for the arrival of the requested large German reinforcements from the west, he considered it, as reported by Colonel v. Sauzernweig, who was sent to the headquarters, "necessary that the 9th and Austrian 1st Army only turn against a part of the Russians, that is the southern front (4th and 9th Army)." In the absence of General Ludendorff, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann respond to Neu-Sandez: "Since the enemy is also following the 9th Army, and indeed with a wing over Lodz, acceptance of the local proposal would lead to the destruction of the 9th Army." Therefore, the Guard Reserve Corps, as promised, would be left to cover the flank and fight in conjunction with the allied 1st Army, but the German 9th Army would otherwise be united in the direction of Tschentschau—Wislum. On the other hand, the cavalry corps Hauer, now standing to the left of the Guard Reserve Corps, whose 3rd Cavalry Division had covered the retreat of columns of the Guard Reserve Corps in a costly battle that day, was again made available to the Austro-Hungarian High Command.

On October 31, General v. Conrad reiterated his request from the previous day, although Colonel v. Sauzernweig had also tried to convince him that the overall situation of the German 9th Army made his demand impracticable. If the German 9th Army did not comply with his proposal, it was now said, "an overwhelming, comprehensive pressure against the flank of the 1st Army at Kielzy would not 1) G. 227 ff. — 2) G. 36 f.

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Austro-Hungarian Wishes.

only the retreat of all other Austro-Hungarian armies would result, but it would also sever the connection to the German 9th Army, making further joint fighting impossible. This, however, must "inevitably have serious consequences for the overall situation of Austria-Hungary and no less for Germany, considering the political constellation and the stance of previously neutral states." Colonel v. Sauerzweig advocated, under these circumstances, leaving parts of the German XX Army Corps as protection on the left flank of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, to prevent premature withdrawal of this army. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg decided to initially leave the XX Army Corps between Kielzy and Noworadomsk. However, he reported the "threatening" telegram from General v. Conrad to the Supreme Army Command.

On the evening of October 31, General Ludendorff returned from Berlin. Regarding the prevailing view at the 9th Army's headquarters at that time, it is stated in its war diary: "The Chief of the General Staff is fully aware that, given the numerically superior enemy, one cannot be content with a defensive (Noworadomsk—Wielun) alone. A possibility must be created to become offensive at some point. In all considerations, the needy Austrian army is inhibiting."

Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian army intercepted a radio message from the Russian 4th Army and communicated it to the German 9th Army, which gave hope for a favorable turn: On October 30, this Russian army reported to the Southwest Front Army Group that it intended to join its four corps by November 2 in the Radomsk^2) — Kielzy line. Then it was stated in the wording of the translation at that time: "Having reached this line, the army is on average 120 versts^3) away from the Vistula, which is why I consider it essential to then halt further advance, to

1) The unfavorable judgments about the Austro-Hungarian army reproduced here and elsewhere merely represent the views held at the time by the relevant German authorities. The Vienna war diary was concerned that the particularly unfavorable judgments of the German high command at the time were largely based on reports from the local Austro-Hungarian liaison officer, Captain F. Fleischmann. The army command, possibly based on a report available to him, underestimated its credibility, as was indeed the case. The current Dr. F. Fleischmann has disputed the accuracy of this view.  
2) 15 kilometers southeast of Konst. — 3) 1 verst = about 1 kilometer.

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The War in the East.

to establish the rear¹) of the army. The further pursuit of the army would then be limited to the army cavalry. The most pressing question of the rear establishment is the restoration of the railways. Only after their completion will a further advance of the army be possible. It had to be determined in the very next few days whether the Russian armies would actually halt and then give the German 9th Army the opportunity to shift its forces. The idea of concentrating the combat-ready units of the German Eastern armies, at least with the complete release of the Silesian borders, for an attack in the area of Posen and Thorn took on a firmer shape. On October 31, the 8th Army, which had just reported that it could not continue its offensive due to a lack of ammunition²), received the order to prepare the evacuation of three divisions, whose transfer to the Thorn area had been planned for some time and had become increasingly urgent due to the advance of the Russian northern flank and the appearance of enemy forces between Nowogeorgiewsk and Thorn.

In the 9th Army, the expansion of the Noworadomsk—Wjelun position was initially continued. Since the enemy was not pressing, the rearguards of the left army flank were to halt at the Widawka and near Sieradz on the upper Warthe. Landsturm from the Deputy General Command of the V Army Corps and the 5th Cavalry Division expected northwest of Kalisch were to cover the left flank of these rearguard positions, behind which the expansion of the main position continued with the greatest emphasis. Previously hardly used combat means of fortress warfare on the Eastern Front: mortars and searchlights, sandbags and barbed wire were requested, and a rear position was explored behind the Noworadomsk—Wjelun line at Tschentschtochau. The idea of a tenacious, sectional fight for terrain possession began here, as it was necessary to protect German land, especially the important Upper Silesian industrial area, and to play a role in the East as well.

On November 2, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, now as Commander-in-Chief East, gave the following order to General v. Mackensen, who, with Major General Grünert as Chief of Staff³), took command of the 9th Army: "The 9th Army is to cover the left flank of the Austrians and otherwise delay and prevent the further advance of the Russian armies moving westward. Whether

¹) Correctly translated: "the rear connections". — ²) Volume V, p. 540.  
³) Previously in the same position with the 8th Army.

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An Important Russian Radio Message.

that in the prepared position Noworadomsk—Wiezlna or through an

offensive west of the Pilitza can be better achieved, depends on the

measures of the opponent. Should the opponent — as it almost seems —

pause his forward movement for a while, then the transport of parts of the

army for an operation against the Russian northern flank must be expected."

Since preparations for such transport were already in full swing1), it could

begin immediately once the decision was made.

Meanwhile, it became apparent that the Russians indeed halted their

advance. Apart from aircraft and troop reports, this was evident mainly

from further radio messages from the Russian 4th Army2). One of them

had revealed on November 1st that this army also intended to push forward

only indecisively until November 3rd. On the night of November 2nd, a

detailed encrypted order from the same army was intercepted by radio

stations in Breslau and Königsberg and also by the Austro-Hungarian army;

by noon it had been partially transcribed into plaintext and translated,

reaching the command of the German Eastern Army. The order was sent to

the commanding generals of the Russian Grenadier Corps, the XVI.,

XVII., and the III. Caucasian Corps, to the commander of the Kral

Cossack Division and the Transbaikal Cossack Brigade, and as a

communication also to the commanders of the neighboring 5th and 9th

Armies as well as the Southwestern Front. It read in the deciphering:

"The armies operating on the left bank of the Vistula have been tasked by

the supreme command with reaching the line Kutno—Konsf—Opatow—

Sandomir. The 2nd and 5th Armies have maintained their positions since

October 31st along the line Lentschytza—Lodz—Wolborzh—Sendow3),

continuing the pursuit by the vanguard and cavalry. The army entrusted

to me is tasked with occupying and firmly holding the line Konsf—

Radochyzce—Schenjaw—Morawicza4), deploying the corps in folded

formation and holding strong reserves behind the left flank. The 9th Army

is to align itself with the movements of the left flank of the 4th Army and

establish itself in the Sandomir region. Today, the 9th Army reaches the

line Gorno5)—Lagow—Borja—Klimontow6). In execution of this order,

the corps are assigned the following sections in the position...7). After

execution

1) G. 36. — 2) G. 41. — 3) 6 kilometers north of Konsf. — 4) 13 kilometers south of  
Relszy; the two aforementioned places are about 12 kilometers west of the line  
Konsf—Relszy. — 5) 13 kilometers east of Kielzy; the next two places between  
Gorno and Klimontow. — 6) 16 kilometers south of Opatow. — 7) Details follow here.

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According to the directives given for November 2, the (?) Corps were to lead their troops into the specified sections on November 3 and proceed to fortify the position under the protection of the vanguards ... 1)." This Russian order provided full clarity; it was almost certain that the enemy had halted and was about to dig in.

On the evening of the same November 2, however, the news came that the A u s t r o - H u n g a r i a n 1 s t A r m y had abandoned its position at San-Mündung—Kielzy due to a Russian attack on its right flank; it was retreating to the line Dunajec-Mündung—area north of Miechów, and the other Austro-Hungarian armies would now also continue to retreat. This seemed to fully confirm the previous assessment of the German Commander-in-Chief East, who had already reported to the Supreme Army Command the evening before that "the Austrians are making a very shaken impression." In his war diary, it was noted on this day 2): If not before, it was now clear that the resistance of the Austrians was completely broken, that the higher-ups in the political interest of the 9th Army demanded unanimous cooperation (shoulder to shoulder) with the Austrians on their own operations, which must increasingly paralyze them, and that without separation from the Austrians, a final German victory could not be expected. Nevertheless, the Guard Reserve Corps is instructed to continue covering the flank of the Austrian army for the time being. In doing so, it will have to retreat in connection with the Austrians, approximately to Naglowitze 3). The idea of an advance by the 9th Army on the west bank of the Pilitza to the north, whose prospects had already become very slim due to the Russians' standstill, was now finally ruled out of consideration.

In the evening, Captain v. Fleischmann, the Austro-Hungarian liaison officer with the Commander-in-Chief East, reported to General v. Conrad 4): "Today's events with the 1st Army, in the course of which the resistance of the eastern flank was broken after a relatively short fight, have again created the impression at the headquarters East that the army will not be able to sustain a lasting resistance at the chosen position on the Nida. According to the headquarters East, the position on the Nida is too close to the former position of the 1st Army to allow for a reestablishment of this army.

1) Here followed details about security and reconnaissance. — 2) P. 41, Note 1. — 3) 14 kilometers west of Hendshöfen. — 4) Records of the War Archives Vienna.

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The Attack Decision of Generaloberst v. Hindenburg.

and the arrangement to enable a sustainable resistance. Moreover, the duration of resistance in this position is very limited due to the danger that the position, and subsequently also a close connection to this enemy position of the German army, is exposed to an encirclement in the very near future. In a retreat of the Austrian army with the left wing up to the height of Krakow, the Eastern Headquarters would see the possibility of freeing the forces of the German army and launching a new offensive operation in Poland. To reach the next decisions for the 9th Army, the Eastern Headquarters received the requested prospects regarding the duration of resistance at the Nida from the Imperial and Royal Army High Command² and for the announcement of the decisive decisions that would soon be in question, considering a hardly expected longer duration of resistance at the Nida. Initially, the Eastern Headquarters proposes to withdraw the reinforced 1st Army in line approximately at the lower course of the Nida—heights Maly and Bjelky Kiza—Ramonka³) and south of Pilitza (place), whereby for the 9th Army as a line of resistance, approximately that of Mschyglod³)—Tschensochau—Wielun and further north would be considered."

Before the answer to this question arrived, the events had already progressed.

3. The first measures for the attack on the Russian northern wing. Differences of opinion with General v. Conrad.

Maps and sketches: No. 6.

November 3 brought the decision. Although on this day advance troops of the Landwehr Corps were driven out of Pscheborz³) by the Russians, the results of the systematically arranged reconnaissance and the reports of the troops nevertheless showed consistently that the enemy had halted the advance on a large scale. On the left wing, which had moved little from the position it had already occupied in mid-October, there seemed to be a slow forward movement. Over the right wing, an intercepted radio message from the Russian 2nd Army at 3:15 a.m. clarified: "The High Command has ordered that the 2nd and 5th Armies remain on November 3 in the occupied

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The War in the East.

Positions. The corps of the 2nd Army entrenched themselves strongly in the occupied front and maintained contact with the enemy . . .1). Parts of General Rennenkampf's army on the left bank of the Vistula remain in the area of Plosz-Gostimin, the 5th Army in the front Msurti-Ropitscha2) - Pschedborsch. — Scheidemann. 2nd Army.“

Rarely has a commander in a mobile war had such reliable information for his decisions as the commander-in-chief of the German Eastern Army on November 3, 1914. The strength, organization, and current deployment of the enemy were known; only when the Russians would attack again was uncertain, but it could be assumed with some certainty that at least a few days would pass.

And yet the whole situation was not as simple as it might seem today, because it was feared that the enemy would immediately attack again despite everything if he allowed the intended transport away. The German troops, however, were exhausted by the retreats on the bottomless roads and in the worst autumn weather, at the end of their strength. It seemed questionable, very questionable indeed, whether the resistance of those left behind was strong enough to cover the departure of the others3).

The contemporary view of the situation is characterized in the war diary of the commander-in-chief East under November 3 with the following words: “Since remaining in the position Tschentschachau—Bielum would undoubtedly have led to a full encirclement by the enemy and there was no longer any guarantee that the Austrian army would hold, the decision was made, which had been considered for some time, to lead the three active corps to an offensive, left wing on the Vistula, by rail.” Immediate action was necessary if the situation was to be exploited for such a far-reaching redeployment of forces as the commander-in-chief East envisioned as the best solution. He now wanted to strike the Russian northern wing, and if possible — decisively. “On November 3, at 10 a.m., it was clear to me that new action was required”4), wrote General Ludendorff in his decisive operations4). “I agreed with Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, to the previously discussed idea of a march at Hohensalza. The orders were given immediately . . .” The main thing was the fastest assembly of a powerful army between Posen and Thorn and the concealment of this assembly, because the less

1) Details followed here. — 2) Twelve kilometers south of Petritau. — 3) Record of the General Staff. — 4) Sauberzweig, then Chief Quartermaster of the 9th Army, from the post-war period. — 4) Ludendorff, Memories p. 74.

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The Order for the Formation of the Attack Army.

the greater the number, the more important it was to secure the advantage of surprise. Extensive measures for the secrecy of movements were taken based on experiences made both in the West and the East. Parts of the army initially had to remain stationary in connection with the Austrians and Hungarians to cover the loadings; later, however, the borders of Silesia were to be released if necessary.

If the northernmost, the XI Army Corps, was referred to on foot march, a corps could be transported directly along the border via Ostrowo to Gnesen, another simultaneously via Breslau—Posen on a double-track route. Since the railway authorities were prepared, the relocation could be initiated immediately after the order was issued. Further forces could also be brought from East Prussia on double-track railways via Königsberg—Marienburg—Bromberg and via Allenstein to Thorn. Preparations had already been made for this as well, so that the detachment of troops from the front was already underway. If no disturbances occurred, five corps could be ready to advance on the border between Pleschen and Thorn by November 10, even if initially without the last parts of their columns and trains. Further forces could follow them, provided they were available by then. Local border protection and three cavalry divisions, to which more from the west were to be added soon, had to undertake the task of remaining, which was not an easy task, as it was known that at least four enemy cavalry divisions with infantry were stationed west and north of Lodz. On the other hand, it was hoped that the undoubtedly existing backwardness of the Russians in aerial reconnaissance, as well as the shortness and darkness of the November days, would aid in concealing the German movements.

On November 3(2), Generaloberst v. Hindenburg issued the following order for the newly to be formed attack army (future 9th Army): "It is intended to unite XI, XVII, XX Army Corps and parts of the 8th Army under Army Command 9 for an offensive in the Thorn area, while the Guard Reserve Corps and Landwehr Corps in the area of Tschenstochau and southwards cover the left flank of the Austrians and Upper Silesia, and Division Bredow and 35th Reserve Division provide protection in the Pitschen—Kempen area.

1) The German Field Railway System, Vol. I, p. 165 ff. — 2) The time of day is not known. The High Command 9 was able to issue the army order amended on the basis of the army command at 10 p.m.

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The War in the East.

Take over the border. — XI Army Corps, by pushing back enemy forces that crossed near Sieradz, aims to reach the area of Ostrowo, XVII Army Corps is to be redirected towards Rosenberg—Kreuzburg, XX Army Corps towards Tarnowitz to be loaded there. The troops designated for the protection of Silesia, including Division Bredow and the 35th Reserve Division, are to cover the transport; they will later come under the command of General v. Woyrsch. The Cavalry Corps, under Army Command 9, remains temporarily at the border north of Kalisch and prevents Russian cavalry from entering German territory. The army initiates the movement on November 4."

On the night of November 4, the headquarters of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief was moved behind the middle of the Eastern Front to Posen, where it was housed in the Royal Castle. From there, it was reported to the Supreme Army Command: "It is intended to unite three army corps of the 9th Army in the area of Posen—Thorn to launch an offensive from there with forces of the 8th Army."

On November 4, movements began with the 9th Army, and on the 6th, the transport of the XX and XVII Army Corps by rail. From East Prussia, the XXV Reserve Corps and the 36th Reserve Division of the I Reserve Corps wanted to move to the area of Thorn, the other division and the general command of this corps were later followed. However, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief was not satisfied with the selection of troops released by the 8th Army; they seemed insufficiently suited to the decisive task intended for the future 9th Army. Instead of the newly formed and unfavorably composed XXV Reserve Corps1), Generaloberst v. Hindenburg expected the release of the best troops for the upcoming offensive operation, on which the fate of the German East depended, especially the particularly strong active I Army Corps in artillery. A Russian radio message intercepted on November 5 also contained an extremely unfavorable assessment of the combat value of the German XXV Reserve Corps. It stated about the "frank 50th Division": "... The units count 60—70 men. Many units2) have no kitchens, many sick soldiers and officers. The mood is very depressed. The units are led by sergeants. The non-commissioned officers report that 90 percent are volunteers. XXV Reserve Corps poor soldiers. 232nd Regiment

1) Vol. V, C. 272 ff. and 531 ff.  
2) Unclear translation; apparently meant companies.

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Friction and Differences of Opinion.

together three machine guns<sup>1)</sup>. It was the first time that one heard a derogatory judgment about German troops from a Russian mouth.

The units arriving from the 8th Army<sup>2)</sup> came, although in their wartime organizational composition, largely with empty ammunition vehicles or without the heavy artillery specially assigned to them during the previous operations; the Commander-in-Chief East had particularly counted on the latter. Thus, confusions arose, which, in connection with differences of opinion about the previous conduct of the battle in East Prussia and about destruction measures during the retreat there on November 7, led to the removal of General v. Francois from the command of the 8th Army<sup>3)</sup>. General of Infantry Otto v. Below became his successor.

In these days, however, differences of opinion also emerged between the Commander-in-Chief East and the Austro-Hungarian Army Command<sup>4)</sup>, which temporarily took on a certain sharpness. Oral discussions among the leading personalities might have clarified some questions more quickly. Most recently, General Ludendorff had recovered in Neu-Sandez on September 18, since then they had seen each other orally, and on October 30, General v. Conrad had been represented at the meeting in Berlin due to unavailability. Communication through liaison officers could not completely replace personal contact, even though Captain v. Fleischmann at the Commander-in-Chief East, as well as Lieutenant General Freiherr v. Freytag-Loringhoven and the other German officers at the Austro-Hungarian Army Command, were constantly in close contact with the personalities leading the operations. Despite daily exchanges of ideas via telegraph between Posen and Neu-Sandez, misunderstandings did not fail to occur. The mistrust that had arisen with the Commander-in-Chief East since the alleged abandonment of the Guard Reserve Corps<sup>5)</sup> by the German command also had an effect. Added to this was the increasingly strengthened conviction that the allied army no longer possessed any significant combat power for a secure victory (no noteworthy offensive power<sup>6)</sup>). This view, which found multiple expressions in communications to the Supreme Army Command, was also shared by General v. Freytag, who at the end of November 5

<sup>1)</sup> This generalized Russian judgment is certainly not fair to the troops of the XXV Reserve Corps; however, it could not be omitted in the context given here. — <sup>2)</sup> G. 324 ff. — <sup>3)</sup> G. 330. — <sup>4)</sup> G. 227 ff.  
— <sup>5)</sup> Volume V, p. 115. — <sup>6)</sup> p. 41, note 1.

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The War in the East.

gave a report to the Supreme Army Command with the judgment: "No longer to count on offensive power in the large. In defense, a narrow front is necessary due to weak artillery."

At the German Eastern Command, the task of the Austro-Hungarian army was viewed quite differently than in Neu-Sandez. While General v. Conrad had always seen a serious danger in the separation of the two allied armies, it was seen—as already mentioned—in Posen that such a separation was precisely the best solution. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg placed no value on "shoulder-to-shoulder" fighting, as it was a matter of the completely independent forces of two sovereign states, whose concerns were by no means always the same. Under these circumstances, frictions, as the October campaign had already shown, were inevitable. Meanwhile, it had to be considered that the Austro-Hungarian left wing still held, to prevent premature Russian advances into the withdrawal of the 9th Army, but then the allied army—according to the opinion of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief, which Captain v. Fleischmann had already reported to General v. Conrad—should gradually retreat southward, left wing on the fortress of Krakow, to draw Russian forces there. That then a large gap arose between the two allied armies, that the Upper Silesian industrial area remained largely uncovered, had to be accepted. The Russians might not even dare to push into the opened pincer. If they did, the German attack from the north would be all the more effective. The allied army, however, it was believed, would, if anywhere, then first in the strong defensive position of the Carpathians with the large fortress of Przemysl in the foreground and the fortress of Krakow as the left wing support point, find the opportunity to draw forces for a new thrust at a decisive point.

General v. Conrad had been prepared by Captain v. Fleischmann for the possibility of shifting parts of the German 9th Army to the area of Lhyn since October 29. When he learned on November 3 that this plan was now to be implemented and that the bulk of the 9th Army was to be moved north to attack the Russian flank, he agreed, but not with the retreat of the Austro-Hungarian army southward and the complete separation from the German Eastern Army. General v. Conrad wanted, if he had to retreat further, not over the Carpathians to

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Differences of Opinion with General v. Conrad.

Hungary to be pushed back, but to cover the way to Vienna west of the mountains.

The news of the now firm German decision to shift north and launch a new attack gave the Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff reason to consider further strengthening and extending his left wing; but it also prompted him to make a new attack decision of his own. General v. Conrad wanted to attack north over the upper Vistula as soon as the situation allowed, so that the Russians would be caught in a pincer movement. However, the 1st Army was to take the direction of Krakow with its right wing if it had to retreat far, in order to hold a position that ran northwards from there to the town of Pilitza, with a connection to German troops south of Sarki (as assumed from the report of Captain v. Fleischmann on November 2). Initially, however, General v. Conrad wanted the 1st Army to hold further east and remain there as long as possible, so that the armies adjoining to the east could prepare in peace for the retreat to the west. He wished, as Captain v. Fleischmann reported to the German High Command on the evening of November 4, that the German Guard Reserve Corps would remain immediately to the left of the 1st Army and protect its flank. The Commander-in-Chief East agreed to this protection, but considered "extensive rearward staging" of the Guard Reserve Corps necessary and recommended, in line with his differing view from the Austro-Hungarian perspective, to also bend back the left wing of the Dankl Army further.

When Captain v. Fleischmann reported these intentions to Neu-Sandez on the morning of November 5, the German Guard Reserve Corps was already marching further west. However, at the Austro-Hungarian headquarters, there was now such concern about the flank of the 1st Army that it was decided to withdraw this army immediately as well.

Once again, Colonel General v. Hindenburg had his view communicated to General v. Conrad. On the morning of November 6, Captain v. Fleischmann urged: Headquarters East sees in the decision to withdraw the 1st Army without resistance to the line Stala—Kromolown the danger that the enemy would follow into Silesia. On the other hand, the effort to closely align with the 9th Army

1) G. 44. — 2) Stala 20 kilometers north of Krakow, Kromolown 11 kilometers west of the town of Pilitza.

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The War in the East.

a significant gap between the 1st Army and the other Austrian

armies. As a result of the enemy's pursuit by the 1st Army towards

Silesia, the success of the evacuation of the 9th Army and the

further success of the same is questioned. — Headquarters East recommends

again leaving the right wing and the center of the 1st Army at the

Nida or Nidsa and bending back the left wing into the area of

Pilitza (place). "In the event of a failure of the 1st Army, its retreat

to Galicia must be possible." General Ludendorff had informed him, as

Captain v. Fleischmann further reported, that if the decision remained

to withdraw the 1st Army to Stala—Kromolow, the

German Guard Reserve Corps would be withdrawn from the area assigned to it;

it would therefore be moved to another use in such a case.

General v. Conrad replied: Holding the

Nida or Nidsa line with the left wing at Pilitza would give the

enemy the opportunity to "push the 1st Army to the Vistula,

completely separate it from the German forces and make any further

retreat in a westerly direction impossible, moreover a retreat

of the other Imperial and Royal armies over the Carpathians

to Hungary inevitably follows ... If the German

headquarters pursues the tendency to divert a possible Russian advance

to southern Silesia without regard to the Imperial and Royal

armies to the south against the 1st Army and to force the army command¹)

by opening, to withdraw the Guard Reserve Corps for other

use, to accept the local proposal,

it must be noted that the 1st Army nevertheless

will initially retreat to the mentioned position Stala—Kromolow

and also cover southern Silesia with its best forces."

In response to this communication, Captain v. Fleischmann

received the order on November 7th to "report the following verbatim: The

commander-in-chief objects to his measure adversely affecting the operations

of the Austro-Hungarian army. The evacuation of the 9th Army has been decided

after there was no longer any prospect that the Austrian 1st Army with its right wing

would hold; the Austrian army command¹) was immediately informed of the decision.

It has raised no objections. Energetic action was now in the mutual interest. The proposal

of the commander-in-chief regarding the use of the 1st Army was based solely on

strategic moments. The commander-in-chief had believed that

¹) = Austro-Hungarian Army Command.

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Sharp Dispute with General v. Conrad.

The Austro-Hungarian army at Krakow with the left wing in the

position proposed by him would engage in the decisive battle. In this view,

commitments were also made for the use of German troops. Due to the

measures taken for the 1st Army, which deviated from their own proposals

and were not considered favorable, the commander-in-chief has again found

himself in a predicament, where he is obliged to make new decisions. They

will be chosen in the spirit of common interest."

The views of the two allied commanders

in the East were completely divergent. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had to

come to terms with the decision of the Austro-Hungarian military command

willingly or unwillingly. He no longer attempted to bring them to another

decision. The disputes had already taken on a sharpness that could not be

beneficial to the matter. Frictions between the German commander-in-chief

East and the Austro-Hungarian military command and derogatory remarks

about the performance of allied troops had already been reported earlier by

Lieutenant General v. Freytag to the Supreme Army Command. To prevent

further unnecessary discord, General v. Falkenhayn urged the commander-in-chief

East on November 7: "Your Excellency, I ask you to ensure that in the

area, even among individual lower officers with members of the Austro-Hungarian

armed forces, every possible camaraderie is exercised." Moreover, on the

Austro-Hungarian side, mistrust had been further heightened by the already

mentioned suggestion, occurring at the same time, to establish a joint command

in the East with General Ludendorff as chief of staff. That the German Supreme

Army Command and the headquarters East were completely uninvolved in this

proposal'), could not be known to the Austro-Hungarian military command.

The concern for the left wing of his 1st Army and the possibility that

the German Guard Reserve Corps could also be completely withdrawn from

there had meanwhile prompted General v. Conrad to continuously withdraw

more forces from the front to extend his left wing. On November 5, he

requested the use of the German railway line Oderberg—Ratibor—Oppeln

and the lines from there to the east for four infantry divisions, which were

to be moved from the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army to the left wing of the

1st. This gave the situation a completely new aspect. The

1) G. 38.

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The allies no longer demanded that German troops maintain contact on their flank, but sought instead to establish an immediate connection to the German front. Since they were not available for the grand plan of the Commander-in-Chief East, the intended shift was welcome; it benefited the protection of German territory. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg now wished that the allied 1st Army hold its ground until reinforcements arrived; he also did not want to weaken the "Army Detachment Woyrsch" leaving the 9th Army on that day. Then it might still be possible to keep the enemy away from the borders of Silesia and to protect the coal and industrial area, which was so important given the economic situation.

Meanwhile, the assembly of the new 9th Army had progressed to the point where the offensive could begin. The Commander-in-Chief East rightly considered it a particular success that the deployment had succeeded without interference from the enemy; he had apparently not anticipated it so far. Immediate action was now necessary to ensure that the surprise and thus the essential prospect of success were not lost. To be able to supply new strength to the attack in its course, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg planned, as soon as the railways could manage it and the allied divisions had arrived at the Upper Silesian border, to draw additional forces from the Army Detachment Woyrsch, from the Guard Reserve Corps, and also from the 8th Army from East Prussia. For the same purpose, he also requested reinforcements from the Supreme Army Command. Generalmajor Ludendorff wired there, as already mentioned, on November 9: "Impression of Austrians increasingly unfavorable. Their gaze is worryingly directed strongly backward. Resistance north of Krakow by Austrian 1st Army calculated for one day. German Eastern Army in its current strength too weak to bring about a decision alone. It can only count on partial successes. I cannot overlook the situation in the West. If a decision does not fall soon, I ask to consider seeking a decision here and freeing the active corps for the East. More will be required later. Commander-in-Chief agrees with the dispatch of this telegram."

1) p. 240. — 2) See military organization Appendix 1. — 3) See troop movements Appendix 2. — 4) p. 7. Due to the significance of the wording in the following telegrams for the dispositions, their repetition could not be avoided. — 5) p. 41, note 1. — 6) p. 231.

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The Desire for Reinforcements.

The immediate response from General v. Falkenhayn was: "I have urgently requested General Conrad to extend the resistance of the 1st Army in conjunction with that of the Guard Reserve and Landwehr Corps north of Krakow as long as possible. The Austrian military command intends to transport the XII and IV Army Corps from the southern flank in Galicia over Upper Silesia to the left flank of the 1st Army. From this, it is not to be concluded that there is any further rapid retreat intention by the Austrian military command. I hope to have four more active corps available for the East in fourteen days. Any partial successes achieved in the meantime will always have high value." The Commander-in-Chief East replied on November 9 at 11:30 p.m.: "Offensive of the 9th Army from the direction of Thorn, left flank along the Vistula, begins tomorrow, November 10."

On the evening of November 11, Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch (as a representative of the Supreme Army Command) arrived in Posen to inform himself about the situation and intentions. He came from the Austro-Hungarian headquarters, where he had communicated General v. Falkenhayn's plan for a future large eastern offensive and requested Austro-Hungarian troops to leave Silesia; the dispatch of allied troops to Silesia was already underway. Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch reported nothing about Falkenhayn's operational plan in Posen.

What the representative of the Supreme Army Command reported about the battles in Flanders showed Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and his Chief of Staff for the first time that it had only been about local successes there since the beginning of the month. This gave a completely new picture of the overall situation. Previously, they had seen their task as keeping the back of the army struggling for decision in the West free, but now they felt justified in demanding sufficient forces for the East to seek the decision here, and they expressed this view with excited words.

Following the discussion, Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch apparently reported himself on the morning of November 12 by telephone to Mézières: The view at the Commander-in-Chief East was that it "would be of great value if we could get two army corps soon, preferably immediately, then we could make a very nice thing." General

1) C. 7 and S. 231 f. — 2) The message went from Posen to the Deputy Chief of Staff in Berlin and was relayed from there. The written record of the message in the files does not indicate a sender; however, based on the time and form of the message, only Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch is in question.

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The War in the East.

Ludendorff further reported: "Just now, the Austrian officer assigned to the Eastern High Command was with me and described the situation with the Austrian army and in Vienna as very desperate. The Emperor seems to have been informed of nothing so far. The Austrian officer fears hasty decisions. There is talk of ceding Galicia to make peace. General v. Conrad is being intriguingly opposed in the sharpest manner, but there is no other suitable person available." General Ludendorff added: "We consider it urgent that the most decisive steps be taken in Vienna to counter such pessimistic views." On the other hand, he "emphasized so sharply that something must happen with us soon." The response from the German General Staff Chief was: "Unfortunately, two army corps cannot be made available at the moment. However, the 4th and 2nd Cavalry Divisions will be dispatched to the Eastern High Command from November 13th towards Posen." The pessimistic views of the Austro-Hungarian intelligence officer are in no way confirmed by the information available to the Supreme Army Command.

To leave nothing untried, the Eastern High Command again approached Archduke Friedrich on November 12th and reiterated the necessity of now winning Romania as an ally.

Meanwhile, General v. Conrad had already communicated on November 9th that three divisions were already assembling on the northern flank of the 1st Army, and the four divisions still arriving would therefore be "deployed externally, i.e., north of the Landwehr Corps of the Woyrich Group, whereby the latter would reach the area of the 2nd Army and integrate into the framework of this army." General v. Conrad also wished for the deployment of this army with its left wing in Kreuzburg, with the Hauer Cavalry Corps to be deployed further to the left.

At the Eastern High Command, there was no clear understanding of what the deployment of such strong Austro-Hungarian forces right in front of the middle of the Russian front and so far north was intended to achieve. Perhaps behind this lay the desire to strengthen and extend the front of the Austro-Hungarian army by incorporating imperial German forces and thereby, after the arrival of German reinforcements from the west, secure greater influence on the overall conduct of the war in the east. The Danube Monarchy had to — as things appeared in Posen — also

1) p. 41, note 1. — 2) Records of the War Archives Vienna. — Conrad IV, C. 445.

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The Deployment of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army.

Value was placed on being represented in a manner corresponding to their interests during the final advance into Poland¹).

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg was only willing to agree to the deployment of the allied 2nd Army at the desired point of the front if it were subordinated to him; however, this was not to be hoped for. He therefore proposed to continue adhering to the proven clear separation of command areas and wanted to move the Woyrsch Army Detachment northwards to make room for the Austro-Hungarian Army. On this basis, an agreement was initially reached; the northern wing of the 2nd Army was to be unloaded at Lublinitz.

¹) According to the communication from the Vienna War Archives, the local files contain nothing that could support this view. General v. Conrad decided to move the 2nd Army northwards uninfluenced by Vienna. In fact, he later advocated decisively that the situation created by the deployment of the 2nd Army be exploited and the occupied Polish territory be accordingly delineated. (Conrad V, p. 811, 822 f., 856 f. and 891.)

keyno: 044

B. The Battles at Wlozlawek and Kutno.

1. The Deployment of the German 9th Army.

Maps and Sketches: No. 6.

On November 4, the movements for the assembly of the new 9th Army between the Warthe and Vistula began. They were to essentially complete their deployment for the fighting troops by November 10. From daily intercepted radio messages and incoming reports from the front, it became clear that the Russians were completely holding back their main forces against the Silesian and Poznan borders and were also not pressing further in East Prussia and on the Austro-Hungarian front for the time being. Nevertheless, there was constant great tension regarding the success of the transport movement. General v. Mackensen remained in Tschensitschau until the end of the transport. The Russian was, although behaving calmly, only three days' marches away. "From hour to hour, the High Command expected their advance to attack. An army corps had already requested to move back the rail points; it was refused. We were very lucky; the evacuation of the 9th Army succeeded."

To conceal their own movements from the enemy as long as possible, the forces prepared for the new offensive were initially held back on the orders of Generaloberst v. Hindenburg on this side of the Reich border; even raiding parties were to cross the border only after the completion of the march. The concealment beyond the border was entrusted to the German cavalry, which was numerically inferior to the Russians; behind them stood Landsturm troops as "border guards." The main task of the cavalry lay before the future southern flank of the army. Here, in open terrain, the strongest Russian pressure was expected, while from Konin northwards, the long-stretched lakes of the border area and then the fortress Thorn offered resistance to enemy advances. However, the task of the cavalry was not easy given the size of the area still to be covered, after the enemy had already crossed the river section of the Warthe above Konin at several points.

1) Record of Lieutenant General v. Sauberzweig from the post-war period.

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The Concealment of the March of the 9th Army.

On November 3rd and 4th, the Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant v. Korda, with the German 8th and the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division, supported by the Landsturm Brigade Doussin (seven battalions, one squadron, twelve guns) from the Deputy General Command of the V Army Corps, pushed back the southern flank of the Russian Cavalry Corps Nowikow (5th, 8th, and 14th Cavalry Division with a Siberian Rifle Regiment with a battery) at Warta over the Warthe. General Nowikow reported this to his army in a radio message, which was intercepted by the Germans: "The losses in yesterday's battles have weakened and exhausted the unit to such an extent that I was forced against my will to give the men and horses rest"; he would therefore only be able to cross the Warthe on November 6th in the area of Uniejow, 30 kilometers below Warta. Until then, the Caucasian Cavalry Division was already known to be on the western riverbank.

On the northern flank of the German Cavalry Corps, the 5th Cavalry Division, called in from the west, had meanwhile arrived. On November 5th, the Higher Cavalry Commander 3, General of Cavalry v. Frommel, took command and received, in addition to the previous order from the Commander-in-Chief East, the instruction to first destroy the enemy Cavalry Corps Nowikow. For this, the German cavalry leader was to attack the enemy comprehensively from the north. However, this did not succeed, as General Nowikow evaded, while further north the Caucasian Cavalry Division, reinforced by infantry, occupied Konin. This division was, as known from a Russian radio message, set against the Krotoschin—Wreschen railway. Indeed, on November 7th, a Cossack detachment also advanced across the border to Pleschen, where they captured mail and money at the post office.

On November 9th, General v. Frommel succeeded, with the 5th and 8th Cavalry Division, in driving the Caucasian Cavalry out of Konin again, dispersing an infantry battalion and capturing more than 500 prisoners. Meanwhile, on his right flank, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division, the Landsturm Brigade Doussin, had withdrawn as ordered by General Nowikow overnight over Kalisch. The attempt to capture this enemy on November 10th by uniting all three divisions did not succeed. When the two German divisions were about to launch the intended attack, they had to stop, as they were mistaken for the enemy by the Austro-Hungarian division. General Nowikow was able to evade southeastwards again, and the German Cavalry Corps remained between Kalisch and Warta.

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The War in the East.

Carrying out the concealment completely became increasingly difficult as their own combat strength simultaneously decreased. By order of the Commander-in-Chief East, the 44th Infantry Brigade from the XI Army Corps was provided as a reserve for the cavalry at the border south of Pleschen; it was to be used only in the most extreme emergency. However, the cavalry was ultimately able to fulfill the task assigned to it alone; the assembly of the new 9th Army remained hidden from the enemy, as his reconnaissance also failed; his cavalry was prevented from breaking into German territory. When the offensive was to begin, the Frommel Cavalry Corps was barely capable of great equestrian achievements after the preceding exhausting days. The leader had to report that he intended to let them rest generally on the 11th; the 8th Cavalry Division, which had pursued after the battle at the Masurian Lakes and then the entire Polish campaign behind it, was "only slowly mobile, of low combat strength."

The deployment of the 9th Army had proceeded behind the veil of the Frommel Cavalry Corps and the border guard systematically and without disturbance by the enemy, and had reached:

the XI Army Corps, this by foot march, while all other units arrived by rail, up to November 9th the area of Jarotschin and north to the Warthe, the 44th Infantry Brigade in front of the right flank the area south of Pleschen;

the XVII Army Corps north of the Warthe also already by November 9th the area of Wreschen and southeast of it;

the XX Army Corps by November 10th the area south of Hohensalza;

the 6th and 9th Cavalry Divisions, coming from the western front, by November 9th the area of Hohensalza; the higher cavalry commander designated to take command of these two divisions had not yet arrived;

the I Reserve Corps from East Prussia with the 36th Reserve Division already on November 8th the area southwest of Thorn, while the 1st Reserve Division could only complete its unloading by the 11th;

9) Without the 1st Battalion of the Field Artillery Regiment 82 of the 37th Infantry Division, which had been transferred to the 21st Landwehr Brigade (p. 62).

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The Deployment of the 9th Army.

The XXV Reserve Corps from East Prussia with the 49th Reserve

Division until November 9 in the area of Thorn and northeast,

while the 50th Reserve Division had been unloaded further back.

The shift of the Austro-Hungarian left wing to the

north had enabled Generaloberst v. Hindenburg to also

assign the 3rd Guard Infantry Division from the Army

Detachment Woyrsch for the new offensive; however, it was only expected

by November 12, and even then initially only with one brigade, near

Thorn. The request of General v. Gallwitz to bring the entire Guard

Corps into the offensive could not be met — as was communicated to him on

November 9 — "for political reasons," meaning:

with regard to Austria-Hungary, it could not yet be complied with.

The units of the 9th Army were, apart from the corps from

East Prussia and the cavalry, somewhat replenished by the recruitment of

reinforcement troops. In all corps, the heavy

artillery had been increased by contributions from the fortresses to two battalions,

almost every corps had an aviation unit and a

"radio station." The XXV Reserve Corps caused concern. An attempt was made

to compensate for its unfavorable personnel composition immediately before

the start of the advance by assigning it war-

experienced officers and non-commissioned officers from other units and

reinforcing its machine gun troops from the fortress of Posen. After

the losses suffered in East Prussia, the battalions of the corps

only reached an average supply strength of 500 men, with the

49th Reserve Division being stronger after the recruitment of 1400 men replacements

than the 50th. The following 3rd Guard Infantry Division

was therefore considered as a "reserve" for the XXV Reserve Corps.

In terms of numbers, most of the army's units had somewhat regained their former

combat strength. In no way, however, could what the previous campaigns had taken from the troops in terms of proven

officers, non-commissioned officers, and men be replaced, and even in

the remaining old stock, the efforts and impressions of months of battles, marches, and deprivations had not passed without a trace.

Exhaustion was often evident, occasionally even

leading to a decline in willpower. The Army High Command had

1) p. 54. — 2) p. 241. — 3) The I Reserve Corps was without a radio station; the  
XXV Reserve Corps was without aviation. — 4) p. 48.

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The War in the East.

had already felt compelled on November 2 to state in the daily order: "The indiscriminate evacuation of even lightly wounded of all kinds to hospitals, railway trains, and collection points for the sick has reached a scale that deserves serious disapproval." Such irresistible striking power of the troops, as had led to the rapid and decisive victories in East Prussia in August and September, could no longer be expected. The importance of strong artillery equipped with ample ammunition was all the greater. However, it began to lack more and more in ammunition. In a directive from the Supreme Army Command, it was explicitly pointed out to economize with it. Thus, they faced a new difficult task with limited means. Nevertheless, the leadership was convinced that it would succeed in solving it, for it was, like the troops themselves, imbued with the consciousness of inner superiority over an opponent who had already been severely defeated several times. This consciousness outweighed all doubts and appeared as a reliable guarantee of victory.

Initially, there was still hope for a rapid reinforcement of the attacking army by corps from the west at the Commander-in-Chief East; however, there was no great confidence in supporting the impending operation by attacking the Austro-Hungarian army from Galicia. An advance from Silesia and the southern part of the Province of Posen was only considered if the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was ready there. However, about a week had to pass, during which the Army Detachment Woyrsch remained dependent on defense. From the fortress of Posen, initially only the already mentioned Landsturm Brigade Dousin was usable, while the Landsturm Brigade Hoffmann, after participating in the October campaign against Warsaw, first needed rest and reorganization. Perhaps even more important than the advance from Silesia and South Posen was the simultaneous advance of German forces over the Prussian border east of the Vistula for the 9th Army, to bind the Russian forces standing to the right of the river there and prevent them from intervening on the left bank. For this purpose, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg subordinated the combat resources of the fortress Thorn to General v. Mackensen on November 10, which had meanwhile been reinforced by the 21st Landwehr Brigade (6 battalions, 18 guns). However, this brigade was also the only troop unit of the fortress that could initially be counted on, as the Landsturm troops of Lieutenant General v. Westernhagen were, as the governor reported on November 7

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News from the Enemy.

had been put into a state by the preceding retreat battles "very close to dissolution," and therefore could only be used temporarily in railway and border protection. Furthermore, a border protection unit of the Graudenz fortress (twelve battalions, some squadrons, and batteries) was stationed at Strasburg, but it also had only limited combat strength. Thus, the commander-in-chief East decided to leave a brigade of the XXV Reserve Corps to advance on the right bank of the Vistula. For the battle on the left bank of the river, these forces were initially out of action.

The situation with the enemy was well known through intercepted radio messages. The Russians had not yet made any attempts to resume the advance. If they resumed early in the previous direction, the battle on the Silesian border would likely also spill over into German territory, which was not at all disadvantageous for the prospects of the intended flank attack by the 9th Army. The greatest danger always remained that the enemy would anticipate the German intention prematurely and adjust their measures accordingly. Therefore, haste was still required; as soon as the deployment of the enemy troops was essentially completed, action should be taken without delay.

By November 10, it was known that in the Vistula bend from the Vistula estuary to Uniejow on the Warthe, on a front of about 270 kilometers, four Russian armies (9th, 4th, 5th, and 2nd) with a total of at least 32 infantry divisions were positioned. The northern wing of this deployment was formed west of Lodz by the 2nd Army under General Scheidemann, with the I, IV, III Siberian, and XXIII Corps. Another corps of this army, the II, was positioned—one day's march behind the northern wing of the overall deployment—at Lenitschyz on the Bzura and up to 20 kilometers north of it. In front of this Russian army's front was the already mentioned cavalry corps Nowikow and the 9th Siberian Cavalry Division, both reinforced by infantry, about 20 kilometers north of the II Corps of the 2nd Army stood at Wloclawek, where a bridge over the left Vistula-Ilser was completely isolated, the V Siberian Corps of the Russian 1st Army; their remaining parts were still on the right bank of the river. There was the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps at Plock, where a bridge was also suspected; the bridgeheads on Grodno were calculated with the advance troops of this corps. Further north of it at Sierpez was the VI Corps, west of it the 6th Cavalry Division was advanced against Thorn, the I Turkestan Corps stood at Mawa.

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Rail lines behind the Russian front seemed not yet restored, so that larger troop movements or the introduction of reinforcements would require considerable time.

The goal of the German attack was a deep strike into the flank and rear of the Russian attacking armies. First, the 2nd Army had to be overrun, in order to — if all went well — subsequently bring down further parts of the Russian army front.

The attack of the 9th Army again led into the Vistula foreland, poor in transport facilities and deliberately neglected by the Russians in this regard for operational reasons. Only along the outer borders of the advance area was there a railway line, on the right wing from Kalisch via Sieradz—Lodz to Lowitsch in Russian, on the left wing from Thorn via Wlozlawek to Lowitsch in German gauge. Both routes, however, required extensive repairs after the numerous and thorough destructions carried out during the retreat. Telegraph and telephone facilities were almost entirely lacking. The existing roads were swollen by autumn rains with few exceptions. What accommodations were in prospect were of the most meager kind; this weighed more heavily in view of the approaching winter than before. In addition, the long nights made the execution of the upcoming attack tasks more difficult.

A special order for the attack of the 9th Army was no longer given by the Commander-in-Chief East. In discussions with General v. Mackensen, the task of the army was already so far determined on November 2 and 3 in Tschentschachau that there was full agreement and clarity about it. The army was to advance from its ordered assembly area against the Lodz—Lowitsch line, while against the Russian front south of Lodz, as far as possible, Landwehr and Landsturm were to be deployed. On November 10, General v. Mackensen gave the attack order for his army. The Commander-in-Chief East had absolute confidence in him and his Chief of Staff. He avoided interfering in their measures.

1) See "The German Field Railway System", Volume I, p. 170 ff.  
2) Communication from Field Marshal v. Mackensen dated November 15, 1928.

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The Beginning of the Advance.

2. The Battle of Włocławek.

Maps and Sketches: No. 6, 7, and 8.

The first target of attack for the German 9th Army could only be the isolated V Siberian Corps stationed at Włocławek. General v. Mackensen hoped to intercept this corps with a surprise attack. At the same time, it seemed possible to insert into the gap between the Russian 2nd and 1st Armies.

The German 9th Army was still closing in on November 10th, and could only advance on the 11th. To keep the secret of the large regrouping as long as possible and to ensure surprise, reconnaissance units of the infantry and reserve divisions were not to cross the line of the previous border protection before November 11th; only the cavalry was to advance. The commander of the 6th Cavalry Division, Lieutenant General Count v. Schmettow (Egon), who also commanded the 9th Cavalry Division until the arrival of the Higher Cavalry Commander, had on November 10th with both divisions "using the gap still existing at the time" between the Russian II Corps and the V Siberian Corps to advance in the general direction of Kutno against the flank and rear of the Russian 2nd Army... The 9th Army," the order continued, "will advance on November 11th initially to the line Kolo—Włocławek. Concealing this advance is the task of the Cavalry Corps... The Army High Command expects a bold and ruthless offensive from all quarters..."

Based on this order, the Schmettow Cavalry Corps rode into Russia on November 10th and reached, without encountering the enemy, the area of Lubraniez, 30 kilometers beyond the border, on the left flank of the V Siberian Corps. That the presence of the German cavalry here was soon noticed by the enemy could not be avoided.

Meanwhile, at the Army High Command in Hohensalza, the chiefs of staff of the corps had gathered at noon on November 10th for a meeting and briefing on the upcoming tasks. "The mood at the High Command was the best," it says in the war diary of the XI Army Corps; they expected great success from the upcoming offensive, as the enemy had noticed nothing so far. The Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Grünert, reportedly said something like: "It depends on a quick and vigorous offensive in the upcoming operation, while being considerate-

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The War in the East.

march off, set out early to reach the marching goals during the day.

Everywhere, where the enemy is encountered, attack without delay.

At nightfall, do not shy away from the final push, but continue the attack.

Do not deploy stronger forces in fortifications than absolutely necessary,

encircle with strong forces."

The following order was issued: "1. The Russian 2nd Army is positioned

in the line Uniejow—Lask—Petrikau, with strong vanguards on the Warthe.

Behind its right flank, the II Corps is staggered in the line

Krosniewice—Lentschiza. In the area Wloslawek—Bschech—Kruschyn

stands the V Siberian Corps, on the right bank of the Vistula near Plock the

VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps. Some Russian cavalry divisions

with infantry are advancing on Kalisch; in the area

Konin the Caucasian Cavalry Division. — 2. The 9th Army begins

on November 11 the advance to attack the right flank

of the Russian 2nd Army." The orders for the individual

corps followed.

The XI Army Corps (without the 44th Infantry Brigade, which had to

advance eastwards alone from Pleschen) and the XVII Army Corps

were to march eastwards, reaching Golina—Kletschew by the beginning of November 11.

The XX Army Corps, which had a longer march ahead north

around the elongated Goplo Lake, had decided, upon a request from the high command,

to carry out this march in one go; however, on November 11,

it had to advance more than 40 kilometers east to Lubraniec, which was to be reached "with

strong forces". The I Reserve Corps (initially

without the 1st Reserve Division, which was still on the railway) and to the left

the XXV Reserve Corps (initially without the 50th Reserve Division,

with one brigade not yet arrived, the other deployed to the right of the Vistula)

were assigned the section Bschech—Wloslawek as their target. For

the I and XXV Reserve Corps it was then: "It is the task of both

corps to pin down the enemy opposite them on November 11

and to connect the march east over the upper Vistula. Decisive

encompassing attack in conjunction with the XX Army Corps on

November 12."

A Russian radio message received on the evening of November 10

stated, General Charpentier, the leader of the Caucasian Cavalry

Division, "in the possibility of an attack with large German forces

on Kolo". The Russian seemed to have become alert; it was

high time for the advance to begin.

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The Battle of Włocławek.

On November 11, the movements of the German right wing proceeded according to plan; initially, it was still far from the enemy. However, against the deployment of the V Siberian Corps, the Russians seemed to have taken countermeasures; infantry and artillery were reportedly advanced from Bschechti against Lubraniez. The 6th Cavalry Division encountered these forces. It was unable to break the Russian resistance alone. Only late in the day did advancing infantry of the 41st Infantry Division clear the way. Since Russian detachments were also encountered further south up to and including Sjbiza, the Schmettow Cavalry Corps barely advanced beyond the main road Sjbiza—Lubraniez to the east that day. The XX Army Corps under General v. Scholtz remained in the evening with the 41st Infantry Division deployed for attack at Lubraniez, the 37th about twelve kilometers further back on the march road. The I Reserve Corps under Lieutenant General v. Morgen¹ and the XXV Reserve Corps under General of Infantry Baron v. Scheffer-Boyadel had fought with one division each against Russian advance troops in the afternoon and repelled them. In doing so, the 36th Reserve Division of the I Reserve Corps had already advanced several kilometers further against Bschechti than the adjacent 49th Reserve Division on the left against Włocławek.

For November 12, General v. Mackensen ordered the continued march of the XI and XVII Army Corps eastward to Paprotnia, 15 kilometers west of Kolo, and Sompolno. On the rest of the army front, the operation against the V Siberian Corps continued. General v. Mackensen now expected that this Russian corps would still try to escape the encirclement threatening it. He therefore instructed the Schmettow Cavalry Corps: on November 12, "break through the enemy front with the XX Army Corps, block enemy retreat routes at Kowal and Chodecz, and push from Lubien south to the east." The XX Army Corps was to advance with the rear, the 37th Infantry Division, on Sjbiza, and turn with the other division "to encircle the enemy early" on Kruschyn, thus getting behind the V Siberian Corps. The I and XXV Reserve Corps were to continue the attack against the front of this corps.

Even on November 12, only the parts of the 9th Army deployed against the V Siberian Corps engaged in combat, while the other units reached their assigned objectives.

¹ One of the youngest division commanders of the officer, as a successor for General Otto v. Below, who had received the 8th Army.

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From the cavalry corps, the 9th Cavalry Division, assigned to Lubien under Major General Count v. Schmettow (Eberhard), after a brief firefight, only reached as far as Chodecz, where it was halted by new enemy resistance; it had not advanced more than 20 kilometers in total. The 6th Cavalry Division of Lieutenant General Count v. Schmettow (Egon) managed to approach the enemy retreat routes south of Chozem by noon; however, its strength was insufficient to hold back the retreating Russian troops. In an attack by the 33rd Cavalry Brigade against Russian infantry at Borzymie that day, the Schleswig-Holstein Dragoon Regiment No. 13 lost 50 percent of its strength.

From the XX Army Corps, the 37th Infantry Division reached the area west of Chodecz after a march of about 35 kilometers, where it — now level with the cavalry — rested. The 41st Infantry Division had already deployed at Lubraniez the previous evening. According to the corps order, Major General Reiser, who had only taken command of the division that morning, ordered at 10:45 PM: "The division attacks at dawn over Lubraniez in the general direction of Kruschyn." However, the execution of this order was delayed on November 12 for reasons that could no longer be determined. At 8:00 AM, an hour after sunrise, the division commander ordered reconnaissance to determine "if and where the enemy still stands." It turned out that the enemy indeed still held and had anchored its southern flank to the swamp and lake terrain west of Chozem. The encirclement planned there thus stalled; the division only managed to push the enemy back a few kilometers throughout the day.

Simultaneously, the Russians also resisted the frontal attack of the I and XXV Reserve Corps. The 36th Reserve Division under Major General Krug managed to advance about three kilometers south of Bischofshut by evening in continuous combat. To the left, General v. Scheffer had newly inserted half of the 50th Reserve Division, which had meanwhile arrived. His 49th Reserve Division under General of Infantry v. Briesen, against which Russian artillery fire from the right bank of the Vistula was also directed, took Wlozlawek in the evening; its leader fell heroically.

The army high command in Hohensalza had ordered the army units assigned for a joint attack against the V Siberian Corps

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The Battle of Wlozlawek.

already at 12:30 p.m. instructions were given to prevent a concentration of troops on Wlozlawek. Otherwise, the task for November 13 remained the same: "All parts deployed against the V Siberian Corps to end," as stated in the war diary of the High Command from November 12, "tomorrow initially in a comprehensive attack to destroy it." At the same time, General v. Mackensen prepared for the continuation of the major attack against the northern flank of the Russian 2nd Army. He intended to push as strong own forces as possible between them and the Vistula. Since no immediate reinforcement could be expected, the XXV Reserve Corps was initially to be taken as a reserve behind the front, the powerful I Reserve Corps on the outer flank of the army.

For November 13, the corps were given the following marching objectives and tasks: The Cavalry Corps Trommel was to secure the right flank of the army at Turek. The XI Army Corps was to reach Kolo, to advance southwards from there the following day to Dombje or further north to Kladawa, the XVII Army Corps with the vanguard Pschechitsch, eight kilometers north of Kladawa. The Cavalry Corps Schmettow was to inflict as much damage as possible on the V Siberian Corps and gain ground forward; its objectives were Stschelze, ten kilometers north of Kutno, and Gostynin. The XX Army Corps was to turn further on Lubien and north, the I Reserve Corps, whose 1st Reserve Division was gradually arriving, on Kowal. Behind these two corps, the XXV Reserve Corps (without half of the 50th Reserve Division) and the 3rd Guard Infantry Division arriving by train at Argenau were to form the army reserve in the future.

The XI and XVII Army Corps also reached the ordered objectives on November 13 without a fight. The two divisions of the Cavalry Corps Schmettow recognized the enemy at noon, who was withdrawing southeast on the Kowal—Gostynin road. Each division developed artillery and riflemen on its own, also capturing prisoners; however, they did not succeed in hindering the enemy's advance. In the evening, both cavalry divisions were about six kilometers east of the Lubien—Kowal road. The XX Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps had only enemy rearguards in front of them in the morning and continued the advance without further contact with the enemy to the assigned marching objectives Lubien and Kowal.

The V Siberian Corps had escaped. The army order of November 13 stated that the success of the attack against the V Siberian Corps "did not fully meet expectations."

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Entries in the war diary blamed the fact that "the center — 36th Reserve Division — advanced faster than the wings designated for encirclement." Today, as we see the overall situation, this view no longer seems tenable.

The V (Siberian Corps) under General Sidorin had been prepared for defense in the extended line Chozew—Bschechti—Gombinze. The corps was composed of the active 50th Infantry Division from Petersburg, a particularly good division, and the 79th Reserve Division. Of the latter, 6½ battalions had been left in Nowogeorgiewsk and on the rear connections, so General Sidorin had a total of only 25½ battalions, which had not yet fought seriously and were therefore fresh and unused. Strong cavalry joined the southern flank of the corps, extending to Iłbiza. General Sidorin expected the German attack mainly from Thorn, where German forces had already been identified on the left of the Vistula on November 9, and counted on the timely advance of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps via Płock. As this support failed to materialize, the General wanted to withdraw his front slightly towards Włocławek under the pressure of the German attack on November 12. However, when he then also felt the intervention of the German XX Army Corps in the early afternoon hours, he recognized the encirclement threatening him and gave the order to retreat, which now could only be carried out in disorder and with heavy losses.

Despite great numerical superiority, about 45 battalions, 61 squadrons, and 260 guns on the German side against 25½ battalions, 30 squadrons, and 102 guns on the Russian side, only an ordinary victory was achieved; it was not possible to intercept and destroy the enemy. The speed and striking power of the German cavalry corps were not sufficient to prevent the enemy's march, and the attack and movements of the XX Army Corps had not advanced with the speed required by the situation. The early onset of darkness benefited the enemy. He suffered heavy losses but left only a few thousand prisoners in German hands overall.

1) According to Korolkow, Lods p. 13 and 16 ff.  
2) The Siberian divisions originally intended for the corps had not yet arrived.  
3) German losses: 49th Reserve Division: 900 men, more than half missing; otherwise not ascertainable.

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The Battle of Włocławek.

While fighting against the V Siberian Corps was taking place on the left bank of the Vistula at Włocławek, the German advance had also begun on the right bank of the Vistula. It was intended to distract the enemy's attention, bind them, and, as the governor of Thorn explained, according to the attack order, not to go far beyond Lipno—Rypin. According to intercepted radio messages, it was known that from the Russian VI Corps, an infantry regiment with two batteries had been advanced to Lipno and Rypin; at Lipno, the 6th Cavalry Division was also assumed. Against this place, on November 12, Lieutenant General v. Bronsart advanced with his 21st Landwehr Brigade and the 99th Reserve Infantry Brigade from the XXV Reserve Corps (a total of twelve battalions, one squadron, seven batteries) from Thorn and Gollub. On the 13th, Lipno was reached after a battle. At the same time, Lieutenant General v. Wernitz, with eleven Landsturm battalions, some squadrons, and batteries from the Graudenz fortress, had been deployed in two columns from Strasburg against Rypin to eliminate the Russian forces there. However, without having achieved success, he was withdrawn by the governor of the fortress back to the border position on November 13, as the Russians were meanwhile advancing sharply against Soldau and Neidenburg on his eastern flank¹).

3. The Battle of Runo.

Maps and sketches: Nos. 6 and 9.

On the afternoon of November 13, a radio message from the Russian General Tschagin, Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army, was received at the headquarters of the German 9th Army, at 2 p.m., which gave a clear picture of how the situation was viewed on the enemy side and what was intended. The radio message read in the translation available at the time: Approximately two army corps of the Germans were moving in the direction of Wislun. East of Wislun, enemy fortifications have been identified. In the Kalisch area, approximately one army corps and two to three cavalry divisions. From the direction of Thorn, approximately three divisions are advancing on the left bank of the Vistula and pushing back the V Siberian Corps, which withdrew into the Domb-Wislun—Stannow front. To assist the V Siberian Corps, our II Corps is advancing today at dawn into the Lanjenta—Pierowandola—Bisonki front—

¹) p. 340 f.

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Kossorz. At Plozk, the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps crosses the Vistula to cooperate with the V Siberian Corps. To connect with the II Corps, the 1st Rifle Brigade from the XXIII Corps is advanced to Ostrowo and a regiment to - Dombje. - The Commander-in-Chief has ordered that on November 14, the armies of the Northwestern Front are to go on the offensive, aiming to make a deep incursion into Germany, break the enemy's resistance (if they attempt such during our attack), and seize the line Jarotschin-Ostrowo-Sempter-Kreuzburg-Lublinitz-Kattowitz vigorously. For the border line between the 2nd and 5th Army, the following direction is determined: Belchatow-Schtscherzow-Wielun-Pitschen, with these points assigned to the 5th Army. The immediate security of the right flank of the 2nd Army is assigned to the II Corps, which is to attack further north in the direction of Lentschitza-Unjejon-Kalisch-Ostrowo in cooperation with the other corps of the 2nd Army and in connection with the left flank corps of the 1st Army, which has received special orders. The general purpose of the 1st Army is to secure the flank and rear of the armies of the Northwestern Front, which operate on the left bank of the Vistula. The directive for the attack will be sent as a supplement."

The enemy had not yet recognized the German attack preparations and the advance of the 9th Army by noon on November 13; they suspected only one corps near Kalisch and two divisions near Wlozlawek in the area of this army. The prospects for a great success grew if the enemy carried out the intended advance on November 14 - with the northern wing in an almost southwestern direction close past the German 9th Army. Initially, on the 80-kilometer stretch from the previous northern wing of the enemy XXIII Corps at Dombje to the Vistula at Plozk, at most 3 1/2 Russian corps were expected, including 1 1/2 (II and XXIII), which had already been heavily defeated in East Prussia in August and September, and the V Siberian, which had lost all connection at Wlozlawek. General v. Mackensen decided to now deliver the decisive blow with the assembled strength of his third army corps from the line Kolo-Lubien in the general direction of Lentschitza, to finally strike the flank and rear of the Russian 2nd Army; the eastern wing of the German XX Army Corps was thereby directed against the center of the previous deployment of the Russian II Corps. The army order given by telephone from the army headquarters Hohensalza to the individual corps between 7:30 and 9 in the evening

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The Battle of Kutno.

for November 14, said, following the information about the enemy: "3.) The 9th Army will attack along the entire line tomorrow. A vigorous offensive is necessary, as success can be of decisive importance for the operations as a whole. — 4.) Higher Cavalry Command 2 continues its previous task in the Turek area. Any advance of the enemy to the west or north must be stopped. — 5.) XI Army Corps keeps Kolo occupied with infantry and artillery and turns with the main forces against the line Dombje—Dischenze, to attack the enemy standing here and throw them south. — 6.) XVII Army Corps turns over Klodawa along the road to Kronjensitze, with main forces north of the road, for a comprehensive attack against the left wing of the Russian II Corps. — 7.) XX Army Corps attacks the position of the Russian II Corps over Dombrowize, with the left wing on the road Lubien—Krojensitze, deploying to the left. — 8.) I Reserve Corps marches, setting out early, on Gostynin and prevents the advance of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps to the flank of the II Corps. For the same purpose, the Cavalry Corps of the Higher Cavalry Commander 1 is to cooperate. — 9.) XXV Reserve Corps lets a mixed detachment advance east of Wlozlawek on Domb-Wieslki and reaches Kowal by 2 p.m. — 10.) 3rd Guard Infantry Division comes under the direct command of the Army High Command and moves as an army reserve to Piotrkow tomorrow ..."

What instructions were given by the 9th Army for the units deployed on the right bank of the Vistula for the fortress Thorn could not be determined.

The Commander-in-Chief East agreed with the intentions of the 9th Army for November 14. However, he placed particular emphasis on the fact that above all the XI Army Corps should advance sharply to stop the expected advance of the Russians over the Warthe. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg considered it necessary to explicitly point out "ruthless offensive" to the commanding general of this corps in a personal letter and to emphasize the necessity of reaching the Ner crossings in the enemy's flank.

The Battles on November 14.

November 14 was a beautiful late autumn day. The Frommel Cavalry Corps was able to fulfill its covering task west of the Warthe near Turek without being attacked. The XI Army Corps had been positioned around Kolo, the reinforced 44th Infantry Brigade to the south near Brudzew. General of Infantry

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v. Plüskow deployed the 38th Infantry Division with the left wing over Chelmno to attack Dombje, the 22nd to the left on Oschweze and Glembohje; two battalions, three batteries of the 44th Infantry Brigade were to remain on the west bank of the Warthe at Brudsen to repel any enemy attacks.

The advance of the corps encountered resistance east of the Warthe already northwest of Chelmno and Umjen, which could only be overcome in the course of the day, partly under heavy fighting. The attack of the 38th Infantry Division under Major General v. der Esch on Chelmno proved particularly difficult; it was directed against parts of the Russian 3rd Guards Infantry Division, which were supported by flanking from the left bank of the Ner. On the German side, the 83rd Infantry Brigade bore the brunt of the fighting. The attempt by the parts left at Brudsen to catch the enemy in the rear failed because a Warthe ford marked on the map proved unusable. Thus, the 83rd Brigade under Major General Freiherr v. Hanstein succeeded only at 4:30 p.m., shortly after sunset, in taking the burning Chelmno from the northeast. Around the same time, the right wing of the 22nd Infantry Division reached Oschweze. This place had already been evacuated without a fight by the enemy, the Russian 1st Rifle Brigade, under the pressure of the advancing German 43rd Infantry Brigade on Glembohje. Following this, Major General v. Hülsen led the 43rd Brigade, according to his orders, in connection with the right wing of the XVII Army Corps further south against the Ner; he reached its northern bank without encountering the enemy, by 8 p.m. southwest of Grabown in a six-kilometer-wide front. The Russian Rifle Brigade had moved eastward.

Meanwhile, at 5:30 p.m., the army command had received the order to take Dombje "still during the night, otherwise to hold the northern Ner bank." The 38th Infantry Division then resumed its forward movement in the darkness; its troops reached Dombje at midnight but only after heavy night fighting, taking it at 5:30 a.m. on November 15. Thus, the XI Army Corps was in possession of the northern Ner bank from Dombje to south of Grabown. It had faced 2½ Russian infantry brigades and pushed them back in a frontal attack over the Ner; nothing is known about enemy losses, no booty was taken, own losses amounted to about 1000 men, including 38 officers.

In addition to the XI, the XVII Army Corps had attacked, which on the night of November 14 began with the start of the 35th Infantry Divi-

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sion at Pschedeitsch, with the 36th located about ten kilometers further back and south.

According to the army order, it had advanced against the left

flank of the Russian II Corps. The commanding general,

Lieutenant General v. Pannewitz, had deployed the 35th Infantry Division at

Klodawa on both sides of the road leading east to Krosniewice

for the attack. The 36th Infantry Division was to follow behind the right

flank and with a brigade comprehensively attack the assumed southern

end of the Russian formation at Rdutow. Due to frictions in

the transmission of orders and delays during the approach on unknown

paths, in the darkness and with inaccurate maps, the

preparation of the troops for the attack was delayed by both divisions by an hour and a half

and more. On a short November day, only very rapid

advancement, especially of the right flank intended for encirclement,

could bring the success intended by the leadership.

The 36th Infantry Division, however, instructed the 69th Infantry Brigade assigned to this flank

at 10:30 a.m. to "arrange their further advance

after the attack of the 35th Infantry Division." Thus, six hours passed until the brigade,

before which Russian cavalry — without offering resistance — moved eastward,

had covered the twelve-kilometer stretch from

the area of Gorki to the area south of Rdutow;

it began to get dark. Airmen had clearly identified the extreme enemy southern flank

at this location; the 69th Infantry Brigade, however,

still found no resistance and, after some delay

crossing the Rgilowka stream, finally deployed south of Rdutow at night.

Meanwhile, the 35th Infantry Division had already penetrated the enemy position

on both sides of the Klodawa—Krosniewice road in a frontal attack

and reported that it had deployed small detachments for pursuit in the direction of Krosniewice

into the darkness. From this, General v. Pannewitz concluded that the

enemy was broken and instructed the 36th Infantry Division

to have the 69th Infantry Brigade "definitely reach Milonize and

the crossroads, south" today, thus striking deep into the enemy's flank.

He reported the situation around 6 p.m. by telephone to the

army command: "The XVII Army Corps has taken the enemy position

at Chodow. Several hundred prisoners from Regiment 1021)

and a number of machine guns. The divisions are pursuing: 36th Infantry

Division with 69th Infantry Brigade on Milonize, 35th Infantry-

1) The regiment belonged, as was known, to the 26th Infantry Division of the  
Russian II Corps.

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Division on Krosniewicze, 71st Brigade remains at Sobowtka. In the storm, the troops became very confused, so further exploitation of the success is not possible. "It is very questionable whether the goals set for the pursuit can be approximately achieved."

Immediately afterwards, at 6:30 in the evening, the army order for November 15th arrived at the general command, which was still intended for the 14th: "XVII Army Corps is still pushing as strong forces as possible towards Lentschitza today to cut off the enemy." General v. Pannwitz then gave the 71st Infantry Brigade, which formed the right wing as corps reserve, the instruction to occupy Lentschitza and keep the local transition open for the advance south. It was further stated: "In this situation, which demands the utmost from leaders and troops, no consideration can be given to the fatigue of the troops." The order reached the brigade, which had already covered 41 kilometers on partly very bad roads that day, only at 10:30 in the evening. An hour later, it continued the march from Sobowtka to Lentschitza into the night.

The XX Army Corps had fought on November 13th at Lubien and northwards with the front facing east. General v. Scholtz had to sharply turn his divisions south for the attack on the 14th and had accordingly directed the 37th Infantry Division over Bromborwicz, with the 41st Infantry Division's 72nd Infantry Brigade to the left along the main road to Krosniewicze; the 74th Infantry Brigade was to follow echeloned behind the left wing. Immediately after leaving the quarters, they encountered probing Russian reconnaissance units, which were pushed back. The corps worked its way on a front about twelve kilometers wide during the day slowly up to storm distance to the enemy's main position, which had already been confirmed by aircraft in the line known from the Russian radio message¹). The attempt to penetrate the enemy position at dusk succeeded only on the main road to Krosniewicze, where the infantry regiment of Grolman (1st Posen) captured 18 prisoners before 12. The storm was otherwise postponed to the next morning.

The Schmettow Cavalry Corps had advanced from the area east of Lubien early in the morning and west of the main road Kowal—Gostynin to prevent the expected intervention of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps from Plosz in the battle. The left located

¹) p. 71 f.

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The 6th Cavalry Division had already encountered Russians ten kilometers west of Gostynin. The execution of the attack at this point was left to the I Reserve Corps following on the same road. At noon, the higher cavalry commander 1, Lieutenant General Freiherr v. Richthofen, took command. He ordered a westward maneuver to reach the enemy's flank and rear. However, it turned out that there was already a continuous enemy front extending to the Russian II Corps. Thus, the Cavalry Corps was positioned in the evening in the approximately six-kilometer-wide gap between the German XX Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps opposite the Russian position.

At the I Reserve Corps, Lieutenant General v. Morgen had set the 36th Reserve Division in motion from Kowal to Gostynin, with the 1st Reserve Division following at a greater distance. At 11:30 a.m., the General reported to the Army High Command that the vanguard of the 36th Reserve Division had developed an attack against an enemy blocking the Bornmarch road about ten kilometers before Gostynin at Patrowo; "it apparently concerns only rearguards; the division will proceed vigorously." The attack, ruthlessly carried out under Major General Krug, captured about 1000 prisoners from the Russian II Corps and from the 79th Reserve Division of the V Siberian Corps, but remained in the evening before the main enemy position, which lay about eight kilometers west of Gostynin. The 1st Reserve Division had meanwhile been moved to the right but did not engage that day; it bivouacked northeast of Lubien behind the center of the Cavalry Corps Richthofen.

On the left flank of the I Reserve Corps, there remained a 15-kilometer-wide space up to the Vistula. Here, the division's cavalry, consolidated into a brigade, and further left, a unit of the XXV Reserve Corps (2 battalions, 1/4 squadron, 1 battery) under Major Schmid, advancing closely along the river, reached Domb-Wielki behind the retreating enemy that day.

Behind the front of the I Reserve Corps, the XXV Reserve Corps had meanwhile been moved to the right and reached the tightly closed area around Lubien in the evening, with the 3rd Guard Infantry Division two full days' marches further back towards Piotrkow.

To the right of the Vistula, General v. Brochem from the Thorn government had received the message that Wloclawek had been taken, but that an enemy — probably a division — was standing west of Sierpez. The General was to hold Lipno on November 14, achieving successes against weaker

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To exploit the enemy, but "evade superior attack." General v. Brochem therefore remained at Lipno, where there was minor skirmishing against the enemy advancing from the east.

The Army High Command in Hohensalza had maintained communication with the General Commands throughout November 14 via telephone and radio messages, thus staying largely informed about developments. From the Russian 2nd Army, it was perceived that they had not yet commenced their originally intended advance westward. Reports from aviators and the Frommel Cavalry Corps confirmed that their northern wing (Russian XXIII Corps) was still east of the Warthe section from Uniejow; the bridge at this location was reported destroyed by aviators in the afternoon. The enemy cavalry further south on the Warthe had also held back. General v. Mackensen assumed that the Russians had meanwhile recognized the strength of the German attack and would now divert further forces of their 2nd Army, perhaps even the entire army, northward. This view was confirmed by further reports and led to the already mentioned directive1) to the XI Army Corps for uninterrupted advance against the Ner lowlands. In this strong section, the corps was then to remain in defense until the center and left wing, turning south, had reached the same level.

On the Russian right wing, aviators identified the ship bridge at Plozk as not yet restored; only active barge traffic was observed there. The intervention of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps on the left Vistula bank was thus expected to suffer significant delays due to crossing; the V Siberian Corps, however, was no longer seriously considered since its defeat at Wloclawek. Thus, it was concluded that the Russian II Corps would likely not wait for the further attack of the German XVII and XX Army Corps on November 15, but would withdraw south during the night. That in reality the V Siberian Corps had extended the position of the II Corps westward and both corps now occupied a continuous front of about 40 kilometers in width was not yet known to the Army High Command in Hohensalza.

Thus, the army order given to the General Commands by telephone in the sixth and seventh evening hours was for

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on November 15, a pure pursuit order, which no longer expected serious

Russian resistance. While the right wing of the army,

cavalry corps Frommel and XI Army Corps, remained west of the Warthe

and on the Ner in defense, the left wing was to continue the attack:

"Enemy on the northern Ner and Bzura banks is to be attacked everywhere

without consideration. The operational situation demands the utmost from

leaders and troops." The XVII Army Corps received the already mentioned

order to reach Lentschyzha "today" with strong forces and at 10:30 p.m.

again the instruction: "The outcome of the day depends on the half of the

36th and 35th Infantry Division reaching the line Lentschyzha—

Krosniewicze today." The XX Army Corps, which had previously attacked

west of the road Lubien—Krosniewicze—Lentschyzha, was now to proceed

deliberately along this road against the Bzura section. Then the order

continued: "XXV Reserve Corps reaches, departing from Lubien at 6 a.m.,

via Stchelze Kutno . . . — Higher Cavalry Commander

Richthofen reaches 15 with both divisions Piontek. From here act against

rear connections of the 2nd Army." It was also added here:

"The operational situation demands the utmost from leaders and troops."

The I Reserve Corps was to take over the protection of the left flank of the

army against Plosz, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division to follow as army

reserve to Brdow.

Only at 2:30 in the night of November 15 did a radio message,

already sent at 4:20 p.m. but only now arriving with great delay,

from the cavalry corps Richthofen for the high command provide the clear

picture that new enemy forces, advancing from Gostynin, had closed the gap

between the Russian II and the V Siberian Corps. No new instructions

were given thereafter.

The Battles on November 15²).

In the night of November 15, a light rain began, which continued

with interruptions throughout the day. Corresponding to the need for rest

of the completely exhausted troops, the pursuit only gradually got underway.

At the general command of the XVII Army Corps, they had been

under the impression deep into the night that their own pursuit towards

Milonzitz and Krosniewicze had remained in flow and had already advanced

far to the east, indicating that the enemy was thus in full retreat.

¹) p. 76. — ²) The events at the XI Army Corps are already described on p. 74.

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The corps order issued on November 14, at 10:15 p.m., stated: "... XVII Army Corps is marching over Posthofstom to Lentschyzza," and then gave specific instructions for this march. It was only later revealed that both the height south of Rudnow and the town of Chodnow had still not been taken, and that the XX Army Corps was still stuck in front of the previous Russian position. The enemy was still standing! "Late in the evening and at night nothing but bad news" — wrote the First General Staff Officer, Major Count v. Schwerin, in his notebook.

On November 15 at 2:30 a.m., new orders were issued. However, the 71st Infantry Brigade, which had already marched to Lentschyzza, could not be counted on for the upcoming battle. The 69th Infantry Brigade, assumed to be at Milonize, had to go alone into the rear of the still-holding enemy, while the 35th Infantry Division continued the attack against its front.

In uninterrupted pursuit, the 71st Infantry Brigade advancing on Lentschyzza, under Colonel v. Dewitz, surprised parts of the Russian 1st Rifle Brigade at 5:30 a.m., six kilometers northwest of the city, which had fought against the XI Army Corps the day before. Following this enemy, the brigade crossed the Biura lowlands at Lentschyzza at 1:30 p.m. without a fight and took up a bridgehead-like position on the heights south of the city.

Meanwhile, the 69th Infantry Brigade, which had remained close south of Milonize overnight, with its six fully combat-ready battalions and six batteries (33 guns), struck the most sensitive point of the enemy. A rare great success awaited them if they attacked ruthlessly. At dawn, the enemy was spotted at the wooded areas southeast of Milonize lining the road from Krosnjeniewice to the south. At the same time, Russian columns were seen streaming towards Milonize from the west and northwest, and even in close assembly, they were caught by enemy artillery fire from the east and north; they felt threatened themselves. General v. Engelbrechten decided to wait for the arrival of the 35th Infantry Division. The day passed. Only at dusk, at 5:30 p.m., did the enemy retreat eastwards from the wooded areas southeast of Milonize. The 69th Infantry Brigade continued its march south to Lentschyzza; it had suffered a total loss of 225 men that day.

The attack by the 35th Infantry Division also only gained momentum when it was realized that the enemy was initiating a retreat; this was shortly after dawn, around 8:00 a.m. Following the enemy,

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reached the division at 2 in the afternoon at Krosniewice, but was then halted by the general command, as the XX Army Corps, which was advancing east of the main road leading south, had meanwhile reached the same level. 2000 to 3000 prisoners were the spoils of the XVII Army Corps.

At the XX Army Corps, it was learned before the advance that a brigade of the XVII Corps was "in the enemy's rear" at Milowice. General v. Scholz wanted to exploit this situation to cut off the entire Russian flank, which was holding west of Krosniewice. With ruthless determination, the 37th Infantry Division and the western flank of the 41st Infantry Division stormed over partially exposed terrain against the Russian positions and broke into them at several points despite fierce resistance. Numerous defectors reported. At a decisive point, the Infantry Regiment Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen (4th Posen) No. 59 drove a deep wedge into the Russian front just west of the road to Krosniewice. When this breach was then expanded eastward soon after 9 a.m., the enemy front east of the Ochnia course began to waver.

By 12 noon, the enemy was in retreat throughout the entire section of the XX Army Corps. The German divisions reached up to twelve kilometers south and southeast of Krosniewice in pursuit in the afternoon. However, the city of Kutno could not be reached due to the resistance of enemy rearguards in the darkness. The number of prisoners had risen to about 5000 men.

The XXV Reserve Corps, weakened by detachments, had bivouacked around Lubien, only a good hour's march away from the Russian positions. Since resistance from the enemy was hardly expected according to the army order, General v. Scheffer had his two divisions march side by side over Lamenta and eastward to advance on Stichelsze. However, when it turned out that the 6th Cavalry Division still had the enemy in its previous position in front of it, they deployed. Thus, the attack only got underway at noon when the Russians were already in full retreat. In pursuit, the left parts of the 98th Reserve Brigade of the 49th Reserve Infantry Division advanced swiftly southward but were unable to act decisively alone, as the pursuit drive among the mass of the corps was hampered by fatigue and

1) Without the 99th Reserve Brigade (pp. 65 and 71), Schmid's detachment (p. 77), and a battalion left behind in Wolczanie, thus totaling 17 battalions, 4 squadrons, 24 batteries (= 126 guns). The supply strength of the battalions averaged only 450 men.

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suffered internal friction; a regiment made — as it is called in the war diary

of the division — "for the purpose of searching the houses" for Russian

soldiers already in Lanjenta for an hour. Thus, they followed the

disordered retreating enemy until evening over the area of

Słcheleje and did not advance further west. Only a single detachment of two

battalions pursued up to Glogowiez, five kilometers northwest

of Kutno, but marched back seven kilometers when they encountered Russians there,

misjudging the situation, to regroup.

At the Richthofen Cavalry Corps, the divisions

had received orders to begin the advance on Piontek from dawn on November 15.

Since the enemy still held their previous

positions, this was initially unsuccessful. Only in the evening, when the attack

of the XXV and further east of the I Reserve Corps, with the cooperation of

parts of the Cavalry Corps, had cleared the way, could they begin the

advance on Piontek. Continuing the advance into the night

promised no success. Lieutenant General v. Richthofen

ordered his divisions to rest at Sticheleje and northwards.

At the I Reserve Corps, Lieutenant General v. Morgen had

continued the attack since early in the day. The advance of the

1st Reserve Division, which had suffered little in East Prussia and now

for the first time in a long time re-engaged in combat, was

decisively supported by the cooperation of parts of the 14th Cavalry Brigade of the

9th Cavalry Division and thus led to full success around noon

on the right wing of the corps, east of Działdowo; the 2nd Westphalian Hussar Regiment No. 11 alone captured about

1000 prisoners. Meanwhile, the left wing of the corps had to bend back slightly due to the threat of

Russian encirclement. The intention of

Lieutenant General v. Förster, now to swing left with his 1st Reserve Division,

was not approved by Lieutenant General v. Morgen, as he saw the enemy's retreat across the entire front

as genuine; he ordered the division to "continue the attack with a slight

left swing." Fighting until evening, the corps advanced only about one kilometer towards Słcheleje.

It had captured around 5000 prisoners, seized guns, and identified as a new

enemy the 14th Siberian Reserve Division of the VI Siberian (Reserve)

Corps. Preventing the intervention of this corps was not successful; it had already been closer than assumed.

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To the right of the Vistula, the troops of General v. Brochem had also remained on November 15. They repelled weak Russian forces probing towards Lipno.

The Army High Command had been well and timely informed about the situation throughout November 15. Its hope to quickly break the enemy resistance on this day and destroy strong parts of the Russian II Corps by the attack directed at its rear had not been fulfilled. By evening, including those brought in on November 14, about 15,000 men had been reported captured, but nothing was yet known about captured guns. "How firmly the enemy artillery was brought to safety," it says in the army order from the evening of the day.

While fighting was taking place at Kutno, the rest of the Russian XXIII Corps and the II Siberian Corps seemed to have turned north from their positions behind the Warta as early as the morning of November 15. When the cavalry corps Frommel reported that the enemy was moving north from Warta, it was immediately instructed to advance over the Warta, to strike the enemy's movement in flank and rear. But already in the afternoon, Russian radio messages indicated that the enemy was following up with more corps from the south behind the withdrawing forces; the cavalry corps was too weak to attack them. General v. Frommel therefore had to be restricted again to his covering task on the western Warta bank and to feint operations to tie down the enemy.

In the evening, the Army High Command expected that the Russians would soon have the entire XXIII, the II Siberian, the IV, and I Corps at the Ner and Bzura sections. In addition, an intercepted radio message indicated that behind the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps at Plozk, the VI Corps was also to be moved to the left Vistula bank. Thus, the German 9th Army, with its 5½ corps, had to face the entire Russian force of 8 corps (besides those mentioned here, also the II Corps and the V Siberian). All the more, General v. Mackensen held firmly to his intention to separate the enemy 2nd Army from its II Corps and from the parts of the 1st Army appearing at the Vistula by a quick and forceful attack. He had repeatedly influenced and ordered this throughout November 15, that the cavalry corps Richthofen should advance sharply to the south and Piontek "at least with one division" today; on the 16th, it was to launch an attack on Lodz, where according to radio messages...

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claims assumed by the high command of the Russian 2nd Army. But the advance of the cavalry had failed against the closed Russian front.

The army order issued by telephone at 7 p.m. for November 16 began: "9th Army will cross the Bzura section tomorrow with as strong forces as possible." The XI Army Corps was to remain at Ner and only provide strong artillery at Blonje to support the battle of the XVII Army Corps; this corps was to cross the Bzura at Lentschiza. The XX Army Corps was to go between Lentschiza and Piontek, the XXV Reserve Corps at Piontek over the section, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division to follow up to Krosnjenitze. The I Reserve Corps received the order to continue covering the left flank and rear of the army. The radio message to the Richthofen Cavalry Corps was: "Task for Higher Cavalry Commander 1 towards Lodz and against rear connections for the next few days without change." Reports from Lieutenant General v. Richthofen about the spoils of his corps in the battles of November 15 then gave cause to supplement the order at 11 p.m. with the following radio message: "Army High Command points out that the Richthofen Cavalry Corps must not be distracted from its main operational task by small partial successes. It is absolutely necessary that a stronger detachment with artillery reaches Lodz on the 16th to eliminate the local headquarters. The dispatch of a similarly composed detachment via Lowitsch to Skierniewitze is also urgently recommended. The Russian generalissimo is said to be there. The Army High Command confidently trusts that there will be enough enterprising leaders and capable horses in the cavalry corps to carry out these truly cavalry tasks. The bulk of the corps must definitely get beyond Piontek tomorrow."

Finally, the news of the impending Vistula crossing also gave the Russian VI Corps cause for the commander-in-chief Dst, who was constantly informed by the high command of all news and decisions by telephone, "in agreement with Army High Command 9" to order the governor of Thorn, "to march all available and ready-to-march troops in the fortress to Lieutenant General v. Brochem." Direct order to Lieutenant General v. Brochem extended to prevent the enemy VI Corps from crossing the river."

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Long after the army order was issued, it became known during the night from Russian radio messages that the enemy intended to attack the line Dombje—Lentschyzza on November 16, and that his V and VI Siberian Corps had orders to begin the attack at dawn. That these two corps of the Russian 1st Army would actually attack again seemed highly unlikely given their previous failures. However, the German 9th Army now expected serious battles over the Bzura crossings and the Ner. To preempt the Russians at the Bzura, the XVII and XX Army Corps were instructed to cross the section as early as possible; to relieve the Ner front, the Frommel Cavalry Corps was to engage in the expected battle at Dombje from the area north of Uniejow.

The battles on November 16.

The Frommel Cavalry Corps remained on the western Warthe bank opposite Uniejow and south. There was no fighting here, as the Russian Cavalry Corps Nowikow, which according to an intercepted radio message had the task of "covering the retreat of the army, especially of the XXIII Corps, preferably staying on the left bank," evacuated this Warthe bank completely and burned the bridges.

The large Russian attack expected against the XI Army Corps did not materialize. The enemy only probed with some battalions after heavy artillery fire at Dombje and was easily repelled.

The XVII Army Corps aimed for the hilly terrain south of Lentschyzza and had to cross the swampy Bzura lowlands, over which only a single road led. The 71st Infantry Brigade, which had been alone south of the lowlands in Lentschyzza since the afternoon of November 15 and kept the crossing open, could find itself in a rather difficult situation due to the expected Russian attack if help did not arrive in time. The remaining parts of the corps therefore set out early. When the enemy was reported advancing from the southwest at dawn near Lentschyzza, Colonel v. Dewitz immediately led the 71st Infantry Brigade into attack. Soon after, the other half of the 36th Infantry Division arrived on his left. The enemy, who had suffered heavily from flanking fire from the northern Bzura bank, retreated at 10 a.m., leaving 700 prisoners from the 5th Siberian Rifle Division of the II Siberian Corps and nine

1) Possibly an error in deciphering or translating.

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Guns in the hands of the 71st Brigade. The 35th Infantry Division, following the 36th, which had already encountered heavy Russian artillery fire during the march through Lentschyzka, deployed immediately against a strong new enemy advancing from Chorlow, as directed by Lieutenant General v. Pannewitz. Two kilometers south of Lentschyzka, a clash occurred. In the encounter, Lieutenant General Henning gradually pushed the enemy several kilometers southward. Finally, in the afternoon, the Russians were also forced to retreat quickly here due to the appearance of the German XX Army Corps on their eastern flank.

In front of the XX Army Corps and the XXV Reserve Corps, a nocturnal battle had taken place even before the movements ordered for November 16 began. The commander of the 6th Cavalry Division, Lieutenant General Count v. Schmettow (Egon), had found the quarters assigned to him around Stcheglez already occupied by troops of the XXV Reserve Corps on the evening of November 15 and decided, in accordance with the army's pursuit order, to continue riding towards Kutno; if successful in taking the city, much seemed to be gained. The march continued through the pitch-black night despite ice and cold. The vanguard of the division, the 45th Cavalry Brigade (Hussar Regiment 13 and Mounted Rifles 13) under Colonel Hugo, managed to overpower the Russian stragglers, who were far superior in number in the nocturnal street and house fighting but completely surprised, spending the night here without security. The total capture of the division in this daring cavalry action amounted to 1434 prisoners. Only at daybreak did horse and rider, exhausted, find rest in the city.

The XX Army Corps had begun the advance in two columns. North of the Bzura lowlands, 500 scattered Russians fell into German hands after a brief fight. The wide meadow and swamp section itself was not defended by the enemy, and the bridges were not destroyed. On two embankment roads, each more than two kilometers long, which had to be repaired by pioneers, the divisions crossed the Bzura lowlands from 1 p.m. between Lentschyzka and Piometz. General v. Scholtz turned the 37th Infantry Division southwest against the enemy's flank in front of the XVII Army Corps, which then, as already described, evaded. The 41st Infantry-

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The division received Oserkow as its target; furthermore, it was to advance as far south as possible, according to an order given by the army command at noon, to block the enemy's path to the east. However, the division found Oserkow occupied and postponed the attack on the city due to the fatigue of the troops and the approaching darkness to the next day.

At the XXV Reserve Corps, Lieutenant General Freiherr v. der Goltz (Hans) had already set out with half of the 50th Reserve Division at 5 a.m. upon receiving news of the cavalry's night battle in Kutno. Since the battle there had meanwhile ended, he moved north of the city to then follow the corps order corresponding to the 49th Reserve Division. However, this division made a rest stop after just seven kilometers of marching to cook and took another rest south of Kutno. It was not until the afternoon that the Bzura bridge north of Piątek, which had just been set on fire by the Russians but was not defended, was reached. As a result of the new stay, the corps only reached Piątek for rest after midnight. There was no sign of the enemy far and wide.

The Richthofen Cavalry Corps had, as instructed, deployed mixed detachments against Lodz and Skierniewice to scout out the high Russian staffs suspected there, each of the two dispatched detachments in regimental strength with a battery. That was little, but more could not be deployed given the other tasks. At 3:15 a.m., the army command had again pointed out that the cavalry corps should "not be held up" but must "advance south." Since the XXV Reserve Corps was set on Piątek, General v. Richthofen wanted to keep more to the east. The 6th Cavalry Division was to ride over Orlow to Oporow to Bielawy. The 6th Division (19 squadrons, 2 batteries) set out at 9 a.m. after their night battle in Kutno and only a short rest. The civil governor of Warsaw fell into their hands as he wanted to drive to Kutno in a motor vehicle. However, the division encountered resistance at Tarnow, which it could not break after the previous battles and unrest. After the enemy finally withdrew, the division only reached the area of Orlow at 8:40 p.m., where they crossed the northern Bzura bank. The 9th Cavalry Division under Major General Count v. Schmettow (Eberhard) (1 battalion, 20 squadrons, 2 batteries) encountered the enemy at about the same height as this at Oporow and Schylin, which they attacked. So far, they had not succeeded in the previous days in firing

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To supplement ammunition, the battle could not be conducted with the desired emphasis. Thus, the division finally only reached possession of Goshlin in the evening, where it remained. Again, prisoners were taken in larger numbers. From Piontek, over which the cavalry corps was supposed to advance with the main force according to the high command's instructions on this day, the foremost parts were still almost ten kilometers away.

The enemy had withdrawn in the night before the I Reserve Corps. In an intercepted radio message from the commanding general of the V Siberian Corps from the early morning of November 16, it said: "After the battle at Goshlin, the 50th Division has been completely scattered, as have many parts of the 14th Siberian. The corps is retreating to the line Poplazän—Lonz—Schtschawin-Roszielny." The brigade of the 13th Siberian Reserve Division had arrived too late. "It is impossible to carry out the order to attack; fear being forced to continue the retreat immediately." According to another radio message, the bridge at Plozk should now be completed. Following the Russians, the troops of the German I Reserve Corps encountered new resistance about six kilometers east of Goshlin, which had not yet been broken by nightfall. On the left flank, the Schmid detachment had to repel the enemy advancing from Plozk.

On the right bank of the Vistula, the Brochem Division advanced fighting over Lipno twelve kilometers southwards to Karolewo.

Movements of the Russians. — Assessment of the Battle of Kutno.

By November 16, the three-day battle of Kutno had reached its conclusion.

When the battle began, the weakened V Siberian Corps on the Russian side had already reestablished itself at Wlozlavei. The expected reinforcement by the VI Siberian Corps, consisting of reserve troops, only arrived gradually, as the construction of the bridge at Plozk was delayed and they had to rely on crossing. Initially, only half of the 14th Siberian Reserve Division was available to extend the front to the left; together with the composite Garbe-Cossack Division, they filled the gap that had previously existed between the 1st Army and the II Corps of the 2nd Army. This allowed the Russians to build a nearly 50-kilometer-long, continuous, albeit thin, enemy front from the Vistula to near Lowitsch; the division widths were, however, more than ten kilometers.

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The Russians at Kutno.

The Caucasian Cavalry Division was to cover the western flank of the II Corps. From the XXIII Corps, the 1st Rifle Brigade stood as the right wing at Dschenzwe, further west at Domitze and Chelmno the 3rd Guards Infantry Division (without a regiment), the rest of the corps at Uniejow. As the Caucasian Cavalry Division and the 1st Rifle Brigade withdrew before the advancing German troops, the 43rd Infantry Brigade of the XI and the 36th Infantry Division of the XVII Army Corps, already at noon on November 14 without any resistance, it was possible here to penetrate deeply into the Russian overall formation on the first attempt and to get into the rear of the II Corps. However, the front of this corps and the adjoining formations still held. On the evening of November 14, the II Corps under General Tschurin with its 23 battalions and barely 100 guns was still in a 20-kilometer-wide front; it faced almost 60 German battalions and about 400 guns, of which 6 battalions and 33 guns were in its rear. Nevertheless, it was not possible to destroy the Russian corps, as the long November night allowed timely countermeasures. The Russian left wing was bent back, and everything that was available there turned against the German 69th Infantry Brigade standing in the rear. General Tschurin himself had wanted to attack with his right wing. But when the German XX Army Corps advanced with emphasis here, the overall situation prompted him to retreat, which he continued in a southeasterly direction into the night. The German troops had inflicted heavy losses on his corps, but the number of prisoners was about 10,000. However, neither a closed troop unit nor a single gun could be reported as booty. Despite flawless measures by the German high command, the promising situation did not lead to the desired result.

Further east, the V Siberian Corps had meanwhile been reinforced by the second half of the 14th Siberian Reserve Division, which had come from Plozk, into three infantry divisions. General Sidorin wanted to advance again. However, this only happened on his right wing and even then only temporarily. The attack by 21 newly arrived German divisions, XXV Reserve Corps and 1st Reserve Division, hit the weakest point of the Russian overall front. The combined Guard Cossack Division, inserted here between the Russian II and the V Siberian Corps, retreated, as it is said in Russian accounts, "very quickly" and very far. Thus, the attacker came upon the Siberians

1) Korolkow, Lodz p. 39.

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The War in the East.

unexpectedly into the flank. Nevertheless, the overwhelming German thrust did not penetrate so early into the depth of the Russian formation here that it would have gone beyond a rather nice local success and frontal pushing back of the enemy.

In total, on November 14 and 15, north of Ner and Bzura, 9 1/2 divisions of German infantry and 2 cavalry divisions fought against about 6 Russian infantry and 2 cavalry divisions. The extent of the German losses in this combat section could not be determined. The total booty1) amounted to 20,000 prisoners, but only 70 machine guns and 11 guns; of these, the I Reserve Corps alone captured 6,000 prisoners, 20 machine guns, and all the guns. The bloody losses of the Russians are estimated at at least another 20,000 men, so that one arrives at a total loss of about 40,000 men2).

For November 16, the Russians had planned a general counterattack between the Vistula and the Warthe3). That it fizzled out was not surprising after the preceding events. The Russians did not even manage to block the Bzura crossings in time, where they could have easily held up the German advance in a strong position for a day or longer. But neither the 1st Rifle Brigade nor the Caucasian Cavalry Division, both of which had not fought before, offered any resistance at the important crossings of Lentschitza and Piontek, over which they passed unhindered. Such behavior can only be explained by complete panic. The German victory, especially the rapid advance of the 71st Infantry Brigade, had thrown both leadership and troops on the Russian side into confusion, as the thrust hit the border area of two armies. By the time reinforcements arrived, it was already too late. The Germans followed so quickly that the Russian troops, brought forward to attack Lentschitza on November 16, one after the other and without connection with each other, were repelled with partly heavy losses, totaling two divisions of infantry4).

Meanwhile, the severely shaken Russian II Corps had since the

1) The battle of the German XVII Army Corps south of Lentschitza is not considered, as it already represents the initiation of a new operational section and was conducted against other Russian troops than the battles north of the Bzura. — 2) The loss figures cited at Kowlow, Lodz, at various locations resulted in the same (overall picture). — 3) 85. — 4) 3/4 2nd Infantry Division (including 1st Rifle Brigade) from XXIII Corps, 1/4 and 3/5 1st Siberian Rifle Division from II Siberian Corps.

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The Battle of Kutno.

Retreats from Krosniewice were twice unsuccessfully attempted to be reestablished. On the left, there was no support, on the right it remained unreliable, as the V Siberian Corps, according to its commanding general, was no longer combat-capable, and the previously deployed parts of the VI (14th Siberian Reserve Division) had also suffered very heavily. Finally, the 13th Siberian Reserve Division also advanced from Plozk. However, it could not prevent the II Corps from being encircled on both flanks by the Cavalry Corps Richthofen on the evening of November 16 and forced to retreat from Schylin to the east.

The German 9th Army had three partially heavy days of fighting behind it. A complete victory was achieved. Once again, three Russian corps were defeated, a fourth was swept along in the defeat. And so the battle, despite brilliant individual achievements demanded by the German army leadership, brought only partial successes. The Russian II Corps had escaped, the German left wing only crossed the Bzura late. In view of the confusion prevailing among the enemy, a quick intervention by the XXV Reserve Corps, especially the Cavalry Corps Richthofen, might have given the Bzura crossings of Piontek and Bielawa intact into German hands, but certainly enabled an earlier breakthrough to the south than was actually achieved. Since both cavalry divisions were stuck in combat against the Russian II Corps, they were not, as required, with the main force south of Piontek in the evening, but with all parts north of the Bzura and thus behind the left army wing. Whether the Russian II Corps would have remained at Schylin if German troops had reached Piontek and Bielawa early is very questionable; if it did, then there was a task here for parts of the XXV Reserve Corps.

For the overall situation, great things were achieved. A gap was torn in the flank of the Russian attack front directed against Germany, in which now, ready for further tasks, three German army corps and a cavalry corps stood.

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The Change in the Decisions of General v. Falkenhayn

When General v. Falkenhayn drafted the plan for the great Eastern Offensive on November 8, which he intended to lead personally, he had anticipated a swift, complete success at Ypres, which would enable the freeing up of stronger forces for the East. He adhered to this plan even after receiving reports from the leaders in the East about the start of their offensive, from which he only expected partial successes, as his behavior in the following days clearly showed. "During the briefing, Falkenhayn revealed," it is stated in a diary entry of the acting General Adjutant, Generaloberst v. Plessen, about the briefing of the Chief of the General Staff with the Kaiser on November 10, "that after the fall of Ypres and the position there, four army corps would have to move to the East. He supplemented this certainly very important idea by stating that no major success could be expected in the West anymore..." A day later, on November 11, Colonel Groener noted in his diary: "Tomorrow the chiefs of the general staffs of the armies are to be heard, whether the four corps could not be withdrawn simultaneously, i.e., immediately"²). During the already mentioned³) meeting with the chiefs of the general staffs of the armies of the Western Front on November 12, General v. Falkenhayn again emphasized his intention to transfer reinforcements to the East; he wanted "to send initially four army corps to the East in about ten days, later more"⁴). With these reinforcements, "a decision should be brought about in the East," or at least "achieved that the enemy does not take possession of larger parts of our country." The entire Western army was then to be put on the defensive, as it was foreseeable that Ypres would not be concluded. On this occasion, he openly stated that he no longer believed in quick, decisive successes in the West and had therefore decided to initially refrain from a decision here.

¹) Connection to p. 9. — ²) In fact, General v. Falkenhayn did not make such an inquiry to the chiefs at the meeting in Mézières the following day. — ³) p. 19. — ⁴) According to stenographic records of Generals Krafft v. Dellmensingen and v. Kuhl.

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Gen. v. Falkenhayn maintains his plan despite the start of the Eastern Offensive on Nov. 10.

The diary entries of the Chief of the Field Railway Service, Colonel Groener, indicate that General v. Falkenhayn still adhered to his original intention. "The consideration from the 11th has," it says here under November 14, "changed again somewhat, although the intention has remained the same. Simultaneous shifting to the east and behind the front is now emphasized. 2½ corps to the east and two corps along the front — first act, followed by the second with 1½ corps to the east. Third act, another corps from the right to the left wing."

The intentions of General v. Falkenhayn were to undergo a fundamental change around the middle of the month. The events at the battlefronts had developed completely differently than expected. In the west, the hoped-for early military success had not materialized — a result that, in its effects, at least morally, was almost equivalent to a defeat —, in the east, a great victory had been achieved at Kutno beyond all expectations, whose effects could perhaps gain decisive importance for the campaign. What crisis-like tensions the events at Ypres had triggered in those days even in the Great Headquarters can be seen from the diary entries of Generaloberst v. Plessen about the daily reports of General v. Falkenhayn to the Supreme War Lord: "His Majesty," reads the entry from November 14, "in a very depressed mood, is of the opinion that the attack at Ypres has failed and is unsuccessful, and thus the campaign. However, the report from General v. Falkenhayn, that there is only enough ammunition for six more days, that is, today only for four days, is devastating. If we continue here without a decision in our favor, this is a moral defeat of the first class. A very bad situation, which is further aggravated by the recent heavy losses." On November 16, it says: "The Chancellor has summoned me. He is concerned about the enormous losses at Ypres. Wishes my influence to give up trying to break through the position there by force. I am of exactly the same opinion. Falkenhayn would rather refrain from the massive attack on Ypres than until the last, again undertaken with new troops, attack is undertaken, the last heavy shell is fired. And then it should go with four to five army corps to the east."

The suggestion made by Generaloberst v. Plessen together with the Chief of the Military Cabinet, General of Infantry Baron v. Lyncker, was immediately followed by the Kaiser, as can be seen from a note by Colonel Tappen from the same day,

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The Change in the Decisions of General v. Falkenhayn.

November 16, it emerges: "Travel to a meeting about deploying the newly available forces to Thielt and Lille ... Return to Mézières at 11:30 p.m. ... Upon return from Erzellen v. Plessen here, to deliver His Majesty's proposal to immediately free forces for the East."

General v. Falkenhayn only complied with this Imperial suggestion when the last attempt to force the eagerly sought success was considered failed in the early morning of November 18<sup>1</sup>).

With the failure at Ypres and the surprising victory at Kutno, which far exceeded the expected partial success<sup>2</sup>), the foundations on which General v. Falkenhayn's plans of November 8 were built had shifted. While the failure at Ypres greatly complicated, if not questioned, the simultaneous provision of strong forces for the East according to General v. Falkenhayn's view, the victory in the East had somewhat taken the execution of his own large offensive plan out of his hands. The Eastern army had — there could no longer be any doubt about it — mastered all the difficulties of the situation against expectations on its own. Any danger here initially no longer threatened. On the other hand, the development of the situation between November 10 and 18 clearly showed General v. Falkenhayn the consequences of his decision of November 4 for the further conduct of the two-front war. The cessation of all attacks in the West and the shift of the focus of warfare to the eastern theater of war as early as the beginning of November could have spared the Western army from new heavy bloodshed as well as new failures and could have given the operations in the East an effect that would not have remained without decisive influence on the overall situation, also on the Balkans. Now the fighting strength of the Western army was weakened in vain, and the result of the promisingly begun Eastern offensive was still uncertain.

This situation required new decisions for the conduct of the two-front war. The large offensive previously planned by the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army and to be led by him personally was now no longer in question. Even with the immediate transfer of stronger forces from the West to the East, they were unable to influence the immediately impending

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Consequences of the Resolution of November 4 for the Conduct of the Two-Front War.

Decisions in Poland no longer exert influence. General v. Falkenhayn was not unclear about this, as was evident from his telegram of November 18 to General v. Conrad, who had repeatedly and urgently requested information on November 16 and 17 about the strength and arrival time of the forces expected from the West. "That German reinforcements," it said here, "can still be brought in time to participate in the decisions underway in West Poland is, of course, excluded." The Commander-in-Chief East had also called for the reinforcements promised on the 9th on November 15.1) and 18.2) and in the last telegram specifically requested information on "when the promised army corps could be expected." These inquiries forced General v. Falkenhayn to finally make a clear decision on the question of shifting the focus of warfare to the East. Indeed, the leaders in the East now had to have certainty about the extent of the reinforcements and the timing of their arrival to continue their operations. In response to these pressing questions, General v. Falkenhayn sent a letter to Generaloberst v. Hindenburg on November 18, the content of which sharply illuminated the significant change in his view of the conduct of the two-front war due to the events of the last ten days. After initially pointing out the reinforcements that had already been sent to the Eastern Front — namely five3) cavalry divisions from the West, 36 Landsturm battalions, as well as two Landwehr replacement regiments, a Landwehr infantry regiment, and about 44,000 replacement troops from the homeland — he emphasized that the decision to shift forces from the West to the East would be "facilitated" for him "if there were a justified hope that the arrival of new forces within the limits of what is possible would bring about a final decision in the East. The hope here is obviously not present. At best, we will succeed in pushing the enemy back behind the Warthe and Vistula lines and forcing him to evacuate Galicia. This in itself does not constitute a war decision, although I cannot deny that such a success could be of far-reaching political significance. It will obviously be so in view of our ally, who the task-

1) p. 102. — 2) p. 189. — 3) The 5th Cavalry Division was loaded on October 30 and 31, the 6th, 9th-4th, and 2nd Cavalry Division were transferred to the East between November 3 and 17.

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The Change in the Decisions of General v. Falkenhayn.

encouragement is needed. For this reason, it is to be pursued. Of course, it would be worthless if the Western opponent were to succeed in the meantime in entangling our Western forces or even just forcing the abandonment of the North Sea coast. For our most dangerous enemy is not the one in the East, but England, with whom the conspiracy against Germany lives and falls. We can only hurt them if we maintain the connection with the sea. Likewise, we can only keep France in check if we fully maintain our current position in the West. The harmful influence of any, even the slightest, revival of French hopes is best shown by the French procedure after the German retreat in September, which must mainly be attributed to the weakening of the Western army in favor of the Eastern army. Such a strengthening of French aspirations would undoubtedly occur if we were to voluntarily give up even a foot of gained ground. In addition, the Western army must face a furious attack from the enemy after learning of the transport of significant forces. Concealment is, however, excluded in the long run given the circumstances." General v. Falkenhayn concluded with the assurance that the Supreme Army Command, despite existing difficulties, was determined to release forces from the West; "the extent to which assistance can be provided in the East depends firstly on the situation on the Western front, but also on the successes of the brilliantly initiated operations with the 9th Army and the armies in Southwest Poland." The "gradual withdrawal of the troops initially intended for deployment there" has already been ordered, they would "arrive over there not simultaneously, but one after the other — — —".

What a sharp change in mood and perception this letter to the Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Army revealed compared to the written and oral instructions that General v. Falkenhayn had given Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch on November 8 for General v. Conrad! Ten days ago, despite all seriousness in assessing the difficulties of the two-front war, confidence in victory and a strong

1) In contrast to these statements, General v. Falkenhayn had answered General v. Conrad two days earlier on his question about the arrival time of reinforcements that their transport could not begin before November 22. He had already intended to send the necessary cavalry divisions, "about five to six corps." Generaloberst v. Hindenburg was not informed of this. (See p. 103.)

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Gen. v. Falkenhayn Doubts Possibility of Offensive Execution of the Two-Front War.

Decision to shift the focus of warfare to the East to resolve the crisis of the two-front war, accordingly a generous, bold plan to bring about a campaign decision in the East — now abandonment of this plan, indeed somewhat of the will for initiative and doubt about the possibility of a campaign decision in the West and East — ten days ago the promise to transfer strong forces — five to six army corps — from the West to the East within two weeks at the latest — now uncertainty as to when, to what extent, and for how long forces can be transferred to the East — then unified deployment of reinforcements for the East — now their arrival one after the other!

The thoughts laid down in the letter of November 18 by General v. Falkenhayn mean nothing more and nothing less than a conscious renunciation by the responsible leader of German warfare of the successful, offensive execution of the two-front war. Not only on the western front, but now also on the eastern front, he doubted the possibility of bringing about a campaign decision, although not even an attempt had been made here with strong forces and the situation in the East at this time was particularly promising; in addition, previous operations had shown how superior German leadership and troops were to the Russians. How the highly tense situation in the East would develop with such a view was uncertain. The commander-in-chief of the Eastern Army was left completely unclear about the most urgent question for him of the strength and timing of the arrival of forces to be brought in from the West. Initially, he had to try to master the situation in the East with his own resources.

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V. The War in the East until the End of the Year.

A. The Battle of Lodz.

I. The Measures of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief¹).

Maps and Sketches: No. 10.

As long as no new strong forces arrived from the West, the fate of the entire Eastern front of the Central Powers depended on the success of the German 9th Army. Nevertheless, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg avoided intervening in the operations of this army. True to the peace principles of the German army, he wanted to leave the "how" of execution to the army commander-in-chief and his chief of staff, in whom he had great confidence. He had allocated all available troops to the army. Daily telephone conversations, especially between the two long-time close friends, the first general staff officers, Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann with the Eastern Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant Colonel Kundt with the Army Command 9, ensured the alignment of views and intentions of the two high command authorities.

On November 11, at the beginning of the operation, the prospects for a quick success of the 9th Army seemed favorable²). However, the attack did not gain ground as quickly as initially expected by the Eastern Command, and as would have been necessary for a decisive success. The 9th Army soon had to deploy all its corps to the front line and had no reserves left since then, while the strength of the enemy was and remained growing. Since November 12, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg³) knew that initially only the 2nd and 4th Cavalry Divisions from the West were to be expected; they were designated for the 9th Army to Thorn. However, when the requested active army corps would arrive was initially quite uncertain. General v. Conrad assembled his 4th Army at Krakow to lead the planned thrust northward from there; his 2nd Army was advancing towards Silesia, where it was to extend the left flank of the allied army. In East-

¹) Connection to p. 57; see also pp. 62, 64, 73, and 84. — ²) Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann wrote to his wife during these days that he "hoped to be able to report a great success in a few days" (Hoffmann, I, p. 60). — ³) p. 56. — ⁴) p. 233 ff.

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The Battle of Lodz; The Supreme Commander East.

Prussia¹) the situation at Soldau was serious; east of the Angerapp, General Otto v. Below attempted to tie down Russian forces with the remaining weak German troops through repeated new offensives.

On November 13, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had to report that the attack of the 9th Army was not advancing quickly. On the same day, he learned from intercepted radio messages that the Russian main army, after almost a fourteen-day standstill, intended to resume the interrupted advance with the goal: "deep into Germany"²). The thrust was planned with about eleven corps over more than 200 kilometers in width, with the northern wing just south of the Warthe over Jarotschin, and the southern wing over Kattowitz, aimed at the borders of Silesia and Posen. Thus, the time approached when the German 9th Army also had to come to battle, and General v. Conrad had anticipated the attack from Krakow. He wanted to execute it as soon as the enemy developed against this fortress and the Austrian-Hungarian 1st Army on the left and had been "heavily worn out"³). This also corresponded to the view of the Supreme Commander East.

On the other hand, there was no more time to reposition the German Army Detachment Woyrsch, which had meanwhile moved more sharply to the right⁴), so that the Austrian-Hungarian 2nd Army (IV and XII Corps) could stand to the right of it⁵); parts of this had initially been unloaded in the total strength of a mixed brigade. Under such circumstances, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg decided to comply with the previously rejected request of General v. Conrad and to deploy the 2nd Army north of the Woyrsch Detachment. He proposed to regulate the command relationships so that the Austrian-Hungarian 2nd Army would be subordinated to General v. Woyrsch, who in turn would be subordinated to Archduke Friedrich. The northern wing of the allied army thus came into the area east of Kreuzburg. General v. Conrad wanted to immediately send two cavalry divisions there to cover the deployment area to the north; they were to arrive on November 19. For Germany, rapid assistance for the protection of Silesia was thus in prospect; the front of the allied army command was strengthened by the inclusion of imperial German units; in the event of an invasion of Poland, the area of Tschenstochau still fell into their territory. However, in the event of a retreat, General v. Conrad had requested and received assurance from the Supreme Commander East that the 2nd Army, as soon as it was behind the

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Or it was said to proceed again to where the Austro-Hungarian military command wished. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had largely accommodated the ally; full agreement was reached.

The gap that still remained between the now "Army Woyrsch"¹) and the German 9th Army could only be inadequately filled by Landsturm and fortress troops of the Deputy General Commands of the German VI and V Army Corps. Primarily to deceive the enemy, these troops were grouped under the names "Corps Breslau" and "Corps Posen," although their strength and combat power did not correspond to such a designation. Each of the two "Corps" counted three Landsturm brigades, some squadrons, and batteries²). The Corps Posen was subordinated to the 9th Army on November 14, while the Corps Breslau was to receive its orders directly from the Commander-in-Chief East.

Thus, everything was done for the immediate protection of the province of Silesia and the southern part of Posen that was within the power of the Commander-in-Chief East. Whether it would be sufficient to hold off the Russian onslaught was by no means certain. Extensive evacuation preparations had been underway since early November. Justified concern and great excitement had gripped the population. Obra and Neße were dammed and flooded the wide lowlands through which they flow. Everything necessary for one's own warfare was to be brought back, everything that could not be brought back but could be of use to the enemy was to be made unusable. The untrained conscripts, almost 60,000 men from Silesia, were deported to the interior of the Reich, and all usable horses were requisitioned in the partially threatened areas. The railways were prepared for sustainable destruction, initially in the area east of Oppeln—Breslau—Posen. A difficult question was what should happen to the coal mines of Upper Silesia. The Russians had a great shortage of coal; their nearest mines were at the Donets in Ukraine, 2000 kilometers from the front! The removal of the stored coal supplies of Upper Silesia was begun. However, a real destruction of the mines would have had serious and long-lasting effects on economic life. After hearing the responsible

¹) Since a German "Army Detachment" was subordinated to an Austro-Hungarian "Army," the Austro-Hungarian "Army Woyrsch" has been retained here to avoid confusion.  
²) See War Organization Appendix 1.

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The Battle of Lodz; The Commander-in-Chief East.

The mining authorities decided that the Commander-in-Chief East should only prepare for the suspension of production for two to three months by destroying production facilities and mine railways. In the mines on Russian territory, these destructions were also carried out, but on German territory, the preparations were halted on November 15 by order of the Supreme Army Command, after the overall situation in the East was stabilized by the successes of the 9th Army and sufficient defense was ensured by the arrival of the allied 2nd Army.

A stubborn, step-by-step defense of the threatened provinces was intended. In any case, if the 9th Army did not have to, they wanted to at least keep the area on the northern flank of the Russian advance securely in hand and ordered the expansion of a defensive position that should extend from the Barthe bend south of Posen, utilizing the river and border lakes, to the Vistula near Neischawa above Thorn. Thus, while the attack of the 9th Army continued, every possible preparation was made to repel the expected large Russian attack at the front. Initially, it was expected that it would become noticeable in front of the positions of the Woyrsch Army on November 15 or 16; but soon it became apparent that the Russian army was not moving as quickly as expected.

When General v. Conrad announced on November 15 that the Austro-Hungarian armies designated for the attack would advance on the 16th from the right flank, starting with the 4th Army at Krakow, the Commander-in-Chief East suggested waiting until the attack of the German 9th Army, which seemed to promise great success at Kutno, had an effect; the Russians should only be attacked, as General v. Conrad had originally planned, when they had entrenched themselves against Krakow and the positions of the 1st Army. But the enemy held back completely here. General v. Conrad considered it necessary under these circumstances to adhere to the attack of his 4th and subsequently also the 1st Army, already ordered for the following morning, November 16.

On November 15, however, the response from Archduke Friedrich to the letter from Colonel General v. Hindenburg dated November 12 also arrived. It stated that in the East, everything — including the stance of Bulgaria and Romania — still depended on Germany directing so many forces to the East that it would enable the united allied armies to

1) Further details G. 237 f. — 2) p. 56.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

strike". Generaloberst v. Hindenburg forwarded this letter to the Supreme Army Command and added: "I must describe the view held by Archduke Friedrich as correct and consider an early support of the Eastern Army as urgently necessary. The attack planned from the Posen—Thorn line can only progress slowly against the Russians thrown into defense there due to their tenacious nature. The support must be stronger the later it arrives here in the East." The evening report of this day also pointed to the slow progress of the operations of the 9th Army: "Fights are difficult, progress is slow."

By the evening of November 16, a complete victory had been achieved at Kutno, but at the same time, it became clear that its immediate results did not fully meet expectations. The Russians had evaded without it being possible to destroy parts of them; in total, about 20,000 prisoners had been made since the beginning of the operations, 70 machine guns captured, but almost nothing was known about booty in artillery. According to intercepted radio messages, not only the entire Russian 2nd but apparently also the 5th Army was retreating; at least it was a sharp bending back of the northern wing of this army. The enemy had approached the Bohemian Army closely but did not seem to want to attack seriously; perhaps he was moving forces from here northwards to reinforce against the German 9th Army. The rest of the Austro-Hungarian front had not yet been attacked, the advance of the 4th Army from Krakow northwards had, as was learned, encountered hardly any resistance so far.

In East Prussia, the 8th Army was retreating behind the Angerapp. The Graudenz fortress troops under Lieutenant General v. Zastrow, the "Corps Graudenz", could hardly defend themselves against the now more than a week-long ongoing Russian attacks at the East Prussian southern border near Soldau and Neidenburg; just on the morning of November 15, the enemy took the town of Soldau. To help, the governor of Thorn was initially tasked with reinforcing the Broesig Division with Rypno; on November 16, another weak division was sent from the fortress. The "Corps Thorn", now united under the governor, Lieutenant General v. Dickhuth-Harrach, thus counted 20 battalions, 7 squadrons, and 12 batteries. Furthermore, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief had the Higher Cavalry Commander 4 from the west complete with the 2nd and 4th Cavalry-

1) See C. 239. — 2) E. 334. — 3) G. 341f.

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The Battle of Lodz; The Commander-in-Chief East.

Division now, instead of to the 9th Army, designated for immediate reinforcement to Soldau—Neidenburg. That should suffice for the defense there, perhaps even already providing the strength to transition to an attack from this particularly effective direction.

Colonel General v. Hindenburg was clear on the evening of November 16 that the fruits of the victory at Kutno could only be harvested through an immediate general offensive; it had to extend across the entire front from Krakow to Neidenburg. He asked the Austro-Hungarian military leadership to now attack immediately with their 4th and 1st Armies as well as the Bohemian Army. The Breslau and Posen Corps were also to advance, although their deployment was by no means complete, least of all that of the Breslau Corps. However, from the Bohemian Army, the Commander-in-Chief East thought, if the front closed tightly in the advance from the south and west, to withdraw the half Guard Reserve Corps (1st Guard Reserve Division) still deployed there, to use it together with the requested reserve corps east of the lower Vistula for an attack to the south.

When General v. Conrad became aware of these wishes and intentions of the Commander-in-Chief East, he opposed the idea that the German 1st Guard Reserve Division should soon be withdrawn from the front of the Bohemian Army and thus from the Austro-Hungarian command area. The counterattack had not yet been struck; the situation of their own right wing in the Carpathians was difficult and could, after the success now being sought north of Krakow, soon necessitate a shift of the 4th Army to the right over the upper Vistula into Galicia.

On November 17, the 9th Army wanted to continue the attack southward in the general direction of Lodz. On its right wing, the Posen Corps had meanwhile become operational near Kalisch. Southward, the Breslau Corps was assembling in three groups of brigade strength, the right wing just north of Kreuzburg; from there it was to advance one to two days' marches into Poland.

1) p. 241. — 2) Cf. p. 237. From the exchange of telegrams that took place during these days between Generals v. Conrad and v. Falkenhayn (pp. 95 and 246), the Commander-in-Chief East learned nothing.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

2. The Attack of the 9th Army from November 17 to 22¹).

a) The Attempt at Overarching Pursuit on November 17 and 18.

Maps and Sketches: No. 10 and 11.

The Russian radio interceptions received on November 16 brought the following to the attention of the German 9th Army: The cavalry corps Nowikow was initially to cover the retreat of the Russian XXIII Corps from Dombie to the south, but then fill the gap between the 1st and 2nd Army at Piontek. The Russian IV Corps, previously in the area north of Warta, was to march east via Aleksandrow; its marching goal lay between Sgierß and the northern edge of the large industrial city of Lodz. The I Corps, previously south of the IV Corps, was to retreat to the line Srumfa-Wola—Schabet. The Russian 2nd Army thus began the retreat eastward to escape the impending German encirclement. Perhaps the Russian army leader intended to establish a new defensive front directed northwest, with the I, XXIII, and II Siberian Corps approximately in the line Srumfa-Wola—Ostrow, with the IV Corps behind the eastern flank and with the cavalry corps Nowikow at Piontek to connect with the 1st Army. If the Russians managed to restore the connection between their 2nd and 1st Army in this way, the German 9th Army faced a task that was hardly solvable. Only if the Russian 2nd Army was kept separate from the 1st Army and remained on its flank was there a prospect of further success.

What conclusion the own movements and battles had reached on November 16 was not yet known to the army command in Hohensalza due to the great distances and the consequently always inadequate connections when the order for the next day had to be given. However, it was believed that the set goals would essentially be achieved. In detail, it might be as it would; in any case, the greatest haste and sharpest tension of all forces were necessary, which is why Mackensen decided to advance his corps sharply southeast through a night march into the still existing gap between the Russian 2nd and 1st Army.

The army order for November 17 began: "Enemy seeks to escape our encirclement, marches east. He is to be stopped everywhere, attacked, and destroyed." The newly formed Corps Posen²) was to advance from Kalisch to Warta; the

¹) Connection to p. 88. — ²) p. 100 and 103.

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The cavalry corps Frommel received Pabianize, southwest of Lodz, as its target. Under General v. Plüskow, the commanding general of the XI Army Corps, the 38th and 36th Infantry Divisions (the latter from the XVII Army Corps) were to continue attacking in a southern and southeastern direction. The corresponding movements, however, were to be carried out by the left wing of the army as before. By daybreak, they were to reach: under Lieutenant General v. Pannewitz, the commanding general of the XVII Army Corps, the 35th and behind it the 22nd Infantry Division (the latter from the XI Army Corps) Sgjerzh, the XX Army Corps the important road junction Bshesiny east of Lodz, the cavalry corps Richthofen another 15 kilometers southwards beyond Laskmofka-Wola; behind them, as a second line, the XXV Reserve Corps was to come to Strykow and the 3rd Guard Infantry Division was to reach Warschyze, ten kilometers north of Sgjerzh, by 10 a.m. The I Reserve Corps was tasked with covering the left flank as before, while on the right of the Vistula, the Horn Corps was to advance against Plosz under the direct orders of the Commander-in-Chief East.

The order for the night march reached the general commands late at night. At the XI and XVII Army Corps, it was difficult to communicate with the newly subordinated divisions and provide them with instructions; at the XXV Reserve Corps, the army order did not arrive until November 17, at 2:30 a.m. All troops and staffs were exhausted from the previous strenuous combat and marching days and had only come to rest very late that night. Despite recognizing the great goal, everyone was still striving to do their utmost. Persistent frost weather had hardened the previously groundless roads and paths; this meant a relief for the march of the foot troops but made the movements of the cavalry, which was partly still without winter shoes, more difficult.

On November 17, the Posen Corps reached Warta as ordered; the cavalry corps Frommel encountered resistance and made its way to the area of Schadeh and Woynikol. The Plüskow Corps, before which the enemy retreated only at night, followed with the 38th Infantry Division to Poddembize southwards, the 36th Infantry Division encountered resistance in the afternoon in the area northwest of Alexandrow, which it could not overcome that day.

The Pannewitz Corps set out with the 35th Infantry Division at 5 a.m. This division reached Sgjerzh during continuous pursuit battles throughout the day; the 22nd Infantry Division

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was followed. The XX Army Corps began the advance at 4:30 in the morning

in two columns. Its 37th Infantry Division was temporarily halted at Biala,

but managed to capture about 1000 prisoners from scattered parts of the Russian

3rd Guards Infantry Division. The 41st Infantry Division pushed the weak enemy

along the main road back to Strykow, where it encountered stronger resistance.

The plan was to wait for the XXV Reserve Corps to engage east of Strykow

to encircle the enemy. At 4:30 in the afternoon, General v. Scholtz gave the

41st Infantry Division the order to take the place. Initially, this did not succeed,

although west of Strykow the 37th Infantry Division and east parts of the XXV

Reserve Corps had already advanced south beyond the place. From the assigned

march target Blizneyn, which should have been reached by dawn, the XX Army

Corps was still ten kilometers away in the evening. The XXV Reserve Corps<sup>1)</sup>

had reached east of Strykow with the foremost division, the 49th Reserve Division.

The 3rd Guards Infantry Division, which had only received the advance order

at 1:30 in the afternoon, had already set off at 3:30 in the morning. It had already

covered 40 kilometers each on the three previous days and reached the ordered

target behind the left army wing after another march of 45 kilometers on the 17th.

The Richthofen Cavalry Corps had received the army order at 12:30 at night;

since radio communication was disrupted, its instructions reached the divisions

much later. The vanguard of the 6th Cavalry Division was in Orlow; on the

morning of November 17, it was found that the Bzura crossing was destroyed.

They wanted to turn west over Lenki, but found that the crossing there, consisting

of several bridges, was also made unusable. After it was restored through lengthy

work, Piotrek was reached at 2:30 in the afternoon. Then the division advanced

west of Glowno to the XXV Reserve Corps; 400 Russian stragglers fell into their

hands. Meanwhile, the 9th Cavalry Division had restored the crossing at Orlow,

but could only cross at dusk and then halted east of Piotrek behind the 6th

Cavalry Division; overall, the division had only gained 15 kilometers forward

on this day. The cavalry had not succeeded in advancing beyond the infantry again.

<sup>1)</sup> The corps had to leave parts behind at Piontek and at the Bzura bridge  
to secure the rear connections. Therefore, it was now missing a total of 9<sup>1/4</sup>  
battalions, 3 squadrons, 4 batteries (see p. 81, note 1).

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The Army High Command was in Hohensalza almost 150 kilometers behind the front. As rapid further progress of the operations was now expected, the headquarters was to be moved forward to Lentschytza, and preparations for this began. Meanwhile, the great distance hindered communication with the subordinate troop units, the briefing on the situation at the front, and the transmission of orders. The construction of telephone lines could only slowly follow in the country, which was extremely poor in wire lines, and — as far as following was possible — the great distances further complicated communication. The same applied to radio communication, which, at that time, still worked with great difficulties and was limited to short messages, and was often seriously disturbed by the nearby large stations of the Russian fortresses.

By the evening of November 17, the Army High Command had the following picture. As far as the marching objectives given for this day had been achieved at all, this had only happened at sunset instead of at dawn. The XX Army Corps was not, as intended, ahead of the XXV Reserve Corps and deep in the enemy's flank at Błesin, but next to the XXV Reserve Corps at Strzybow. The radio messages from the Richthofen Cavalry Corps arrived with delays of 15 hours or more and partially mutilated, so that by the evening it was still not known that the corps was ahead of the left army wing, but was even behind its infantry. However, it was clear: The great goal, to penetrate deep between the Russian 2nd and 1st Armies, had not yet been achieved.

From an intercepted radio message, it was learned about the enemy that the command of the Russian 2nd Army, which had been assumed to be in Lodz, was to be moved to Skierniewize on November 17. This indicated a further retreat of this army to the east. From the Russian 1st Army, to which the II Corps, previously belonging to the 2nd Army, had now transferred, it was learned that they intended to defend at Gombin. There, the newly formed I Reserve Corps had not managed to break the enemy resistance by evening.

The intention of the Army High Command for November 18 remained to prevent the enemy from retreating eastward and to destroy them at Lodz in a double envelopment. Since all reserves were deployed and the cavalry divisions initially designated for Thorn were 2

1) The battles of the I Reserve Corps and the Thorn Corps on November 17 and 18 will be dealt with later in context (p. 112f.).

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and 4 had been forwarded to East Prussia, the Commander-in-Chief East still deemed it necessary to now detach a division of the Cavalry Corps Richthofen to cover the encirclement movement. At midnight from the 17th to the 18th of November, the 9th Army sent the radio message to the Cavalry Corps Richthofen: "Commander-in-Chief East expects a report tomorrow that the headquarters of the Russian 2nd Army in Siernewize has been abandoned. The railway Lowitsch—Warsaw and Siernewize—Warsaw is to be interrupted. Lowitsch is occupied by some enemy battalions. A cavalry division is to be left for security against the line Lowitsch—Schyrkow in the north, the other must definitely reach the ordered march target for today. Tomorrow the decision will fall on this battlefield. 9th Army attacks tomorrow from the line Błesin—Strykow—Sierjew towards Lodz."

For this attack, the XXV Reserve Corps had already been ordered at 11<sup>10</sup> in the evening: "since the XX Army Corps has not reached its march target today" to immediately set out together with the 3rd Guard Infantry Division and reach Błesin. From here, the attack must proceed depending on the situation to the west or southwest... Prevent the enemy's march to the east by all means." Further orders determined that following the XXV Reserve Corps, the XX Army Corps should attack, the left wing from Strykow straight south. The Pannewitz Corps was to continue the attack, "set out backwards, continue the advance to the east, with a division south of the Ner on Pabianize; the enemy is to be attacked ruthlessly... Army command definitely expects that the right wing will at least reach Pabianize." This meant a march performance of 36 kilometers. On Pabianize, the Posen Corps was also deployed from Warta, and further, beyond that, in the area east and southeast of Pabianize, the Cavalry Corps Frommel.

In mild frost weather, the movements continued on November 18.

At the XXV Reserve Corps, General v. Scheffer received the army order by radio with some delay. He alerted his divisions and began the advance on Błesin at 5<sup>00</sup> in the morning. Since the XX Army Corps had occupied the road over Strykow,

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one had to move east over Glowno—Wola-Zyrusnowa; the 3rd Guard Infantry Division followed over Njesulkow. Here and at Wola-Zyrusnowa, the 49th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General v. Thiesenhausen repelled weak enemy forces in the morning. Parts of the 3rd Guard Division, which had hurried forward in forced marches, also engaged. At noon, the 49th Reserve Division took Błesinny, capturing columns of the II Siberian Corps and making about 1000 prisoners.

Meanwhile, the following radio message from the Army High Command had arrived at the General Command: "The situation suggests favorable progress of the XX Army Corps southward. Therefore, further movement of the XXV Reserve Corps is required, fully utilizing marching capability towards Bendbow. 6th Cavalry Division will be subordinated. Do not turn too early to maintain flanking." This directive prompted General v. Scheffer to demand the utmost from his troops. After the 3rd Guard Division and the 50th Reserve Division arrived, they continued marching south on frozen paths in the pitch-dark night. The 49th Reserve Division advanced ten kilometers beyond Błesinny to the northern end of Borowo, while the 3rd Guard Division and the 50th Reserve Division rested behind on both sides of Błesinny. "From the quarters, as was usually the case in this campaign, the Russians, who had already moved in, had to be expelled first. Mostly, however, friend and foe lay peacefully together in the same village overnight," it says in the war diary of the 49th Reserve Division. It was different southwest of Błesinny in Malschem! There, the 5th Guard Regiment on foot from the 3rd Guard Division had to withstand a heavy night battle against parts of the Russian I Corps, which was simultaneously pressing in from the south; 800 dead and 250 captured Russians were the result.

The 6th Cavalry Division under Lieutenant General Count v. Schmettow (Egon) overtook the infantry again that day by riding past them to the east, but only reached Lasnowka-Wola at nightfall, after having already captured scattered Russian troops and column stragglers south of Błesinny. At the important railway junction Koluszki, which was to be destroyed, the Russians were on their guard.

The troops of General v. Scheffer had penetrated into the rear parts of the Russian 2nd Army; there still seemed to be an opportunity to separate this army from the 1st Army. In the west as well as in the east, one had to reckon with the enemy in the future.

Those from General v. Richthofen for securing the flank and rear

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of the encircling wing<sup>1)</sup> designated 9th Cavalry Division remained on this day at Glowno.

Before the XX Army Corps, the enemy vacated Strykow only at midnight from November 17 to 18. At dawn, both divisions of the corps began moving south. At 9:40 a.m., General v. Scholz received the following telegram from the Army High Command, prompted by a Russian radio message: "Russian I Corps has reached Andrespol and Blistin with its vanguard, coming from the southwest. XX Army Corps with left wing division sharply south on heights of Nowosolna." It had to come to battle over these heights if the new enemy continued his march. They are formed by a ridge extending from the northwest of the city of Lodz to the east. Over it, the road from Nowosolna leads to Bzestiny. This elevation, which slopes quite steeply to the north, has its highest point about three kilometers northwest of Nowosolna (283 meters) and thus towers over the varied and hilly terrain in the north by 50 to 70 meters. The 37th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General v. Staabs reached the height of 283 by noon, fighting. However, the 41st Infantry Division was so delayed by the enemy that it only reached the ridge northeast of Nowosolna by evening. Overall, the corps had gained about eight kilometers forward; they stood deployed against the enemy. At least 1000 prisoners were captured, about 150 men were lost by the corps, almost exclusively from the 41st Infantry Division; the decisive battle against the new enemy was yet to come.

At the General Command of Corps Pannevitz, which, filled with the pursuit idea, had stationed its foremost troops in Sgierjsch, it was no longer expected on the morning of November 18 to face stronger Russian resistance. The Army High Command was informed at 7:45 a.m.: "According to the General Command, there is no enemy position between Sgierjsch and Lodz. If conditions at the neighboring corps do not require changes, the 35th Infantry Division will advance over Lodz to Richgown, the 22nd east alongside." At Sgierjsch, there seemed to be a gap in the enemy's deployment. The High Command ordered, "to push through energetically, to turn with parts against the right wing of the II Siberian Corps at Aleksandrow. Today decisive battle." However, at Corps Pannevitz, the perception changed very quickly; the 35th Infantry Division encountered strong enemy

<sup>1)</sup> p. 107 f.; see also p. 113, I Reserve Corps on November 17.

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immediately in front of their line. At dawn, the enemy attacked on a

broad front; intense artillery fire forced the general command

and the division staff to leave Sgierzh quickly and relocate the

office to the heights north of the place. The

35th Infantry Division was ordered to defend until the 22nd Infantry

Division was to the east and the 36th of the Plüskow Corps was to the west

at the same level.

On a front about eight kilometers wide, the 35th Infantry Division

was pushed hard south and west of Sgierzh into defense. In the

extremely confusing hilly terrain, covered with woods and numerous

farms and gardens and crisscrossed by streams, extending from the

city of Lodz far to the north and northwest, the conduct of battle

was not easy. The western wing of the division at Jedlische was

withdrawn from impending encirclement. Lieutenant General Hennig sought

to help himself with a thrust from Sgierzh to the south; he captured

prisoners from the II Siberian Corps and gained some relief. The

situation only finally improved when the 22nd Infantry Division

under Major General Diessenbach arrived. Lieutenant General v. Panne-

witz had given them the attack direction over Lagiewniki-Stare against the north-

east exit of Lodz. The division found no significant

resistance here and reached the connection to the left wing of the 35th Infantry Division

already in the early afternoon hours. Its own

left wing came through extensive forest to Rogi; an advance of the

32nd Infantry Regiment beyond this village to the south, however, led

to a local setback in the evening.

Meanwhile, the Russian pressure against the western wing of the 35th Infantry

Division at Jedlische continued unabated. All reserves

had been deployed in the thin defensive line, and the eagerly hoped-for

impact of the 36th Infantry Division of the Plüskow Corps had

failed to materialize.

General v. Plüskow had assigned the 36th Infantry Division for

November 18 north of the Ner section over the line Kasimjerzich—

Aleksandrow against the west side of the city of Lodz, while the

35th Infantry Division was to march south of the Ner.

Lieutenant General v. Heineccius led the 36th Infantry Division on a

front almost ten kilometers wide. At Aleksandrow, fighting began

as early as 9:00 a.m.; by 3:00 p.m., the extensive place

had been taken by the 69th Infantry Brigade. But until Major General

v. Engelbrecht could turn north here against the rear of the Russians at

Jedlische, it was evening; the darkness of the night be-

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...warned the enemy of the encirclement intended for him here. The 71st Infantry Brigade had only advanced about three kilometers beyond Kasimjerisch to the east.

The 38th Infantry Division under Major General v. der Esch had positioned itself on the main road Schadel—Pabianize, where it encountered the 8th Cavalry Division of the Cavalry Corps Frommel at the Julianow crossroads at noon; the intervention of the infantry broke the enemy resistance here. The march to the east continued past the cavalry, already in darkness; they wanted to reach Pabianize that day. However, when the cavalry division began to march back on the same road to reposition, severe marching blockages occurred. Simultaneously, the security detachments of the infantry division encountered enemy positions on the right flank as well as in the front; the skirmishes lasted until after midnight. The division eventually bivouacked along the marching road, starting seven kilometers west of Pabianize; a left detachment had reached a bit further, to Porszewice.

The advance of the Cavalry Corps Frommel had not only encountered enemies at the 8th Cavalry Division on the road to Pabianize but also southeast of Schadel. It seemed to involve stronger Russian infantry advancing from the south. Their resistance could not be broken anywhere. In the evening, the cavalry corps, with no enemy in front, was positioned immediately west of the 38th Infantry Division with the 8th Cavalry Division to the north, the 5th to the south of the Schadel—Julianow road, with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division south of Schadel. Behind them, the foremost of the three brigades of the Corps Posen had reached Schadel, while the other two were still behind due to lesser marching capability.

The I Reserve Corps was to cover the rear of the 9th Army fighting at Lodz. North of Lowitsch, the enemy was known to be the already twice-defeated V Siberian Corps, as well as parts of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps, which had also been defeated on November 16; likely, parts of the Russian II Corps were also retreating towards Lowitsch. Altogether, it was an enemy that neither the Army High Command nor the I Reserve Corps itself considered to have significant resistance strength anymore; captured Russian deserters confirmed this view. To prevent this group of the enemy from gaining new strength over the Plotzer Bridge, the Corps Thorn was also positioned on the right bank of the Vistula against Plotz.

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Battles of the I Reserve Corps.

Lieutenant General v. Morgen intended, with his I Reserve Corps, on November 17 to swing from the area east of Gostynin to the northwest against the Vistula section Dobshybor—Plozk, to drive the Russians into the river. However, resistance was encountered soon after the advance, which was not broken throughout the day, although the corps' cavalry in the south, with a battery, reached deep into the enemy's flank and captured 1500 prisoners during a breakthrough in the middle of the enemy front. In the evening, the I Reserve Corps was about ten kilometers east of Gostynin, facing the enemy directly to the east.

On November 18, the attack was continued. The goal was, as before, to encircle the enemy from the south and drive them towards the Vistula. However, this did not succeed, as the Russians continuously extended their left flank. On the other hand, the frontal breakthrough of the previous day turned into a success, the German left corps wing, the 36th Reserve Division, encountered only slight resistance. Lieutenant General v. Morgen had them swing south over Gombin to encircle the enemy, who was still holding in front of the 1st Reserve Division. There was no danger on the left flank; the "Schmidt" detachment had secured the bridge from Plozk and had advanced beyond Dobshybor. How Lieutenant General v. Morgen saw the situation in the evening is shown by the following report to the Army High Command: "By maneuvering the 36th Reserve Division into the enemy's rear," the ring is closed. Darkness prevents the encircled forces, of which 2000 men with 17 machine guns have already surrendered today, from being removed today. It will happen tomorrow. The encircled enemy is estimated at about one division; tomorrow the I Reserve Corps will first secure the loot and then march on Dismolin."

The Thorn Corps had already reached the Strwna section on the evening of November 17, advancing with the right wing on the Vistula, but had been held up here for a full day by the enemy and destroyed bridges. After restoring the crossings, Lieutenant General v. Dichhuth-Harrach intended to cross the river course on the 19th and attack the enemy reported to be in position eight kilometers northwest of Plozk.

1) From the XXV Reserve Corps, see p. 77.

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h) The Comprehensive Attack against the Russians at Lodz from November 19 to 22.

The Perspective of the High Command.

Maps and Sketches: No. 11.

A situation map of the Army High Command 2 (from November 18 showed the picture) that was made of the enemy on this day: North of Lodz, the IV and II Siberian Corps are marked with the front facing north, to the right of them the I Corps is in the process of extending the front to the east. Against these three Russian corps, of which the II Siberian had already suffered at Lentschiza on November 16, the German Corps Pannwitz and the XX Army Corps attack from the north, while the Scheffer Group (2½ Infantry-1 Cavalry Division), outflanking the enemy far to the east, marches south into its flank. There is currently no rear threat to these encircling troops. Perpendicular to the Russian front directed north, the map shows west of Lodz the heavily battered Russian XXIII Corps from the Battle of Kutno with the front facing west; opposite it, the German 36th Infantry Division of the Plüskow Corps. Further west, the enemy is still opposite the right flank of their own army; from the area north of Pabianize to south of Schavel. It is known that the Nowikow Cavalry Corps is still there, whose march to close the gap between the Russian 2nd and 1st Army²) has therefore not yet begun. According to a Russian radio message, an infantry regiment of the XIX Corps of the Russian 5th Army has also arrived north of Lask, and it is suspected (marked with a question mark on the map) — also according to radio messages — that the I Siberian Corps of the same army is at Pabianize. Opposing these Russian forces are the 38th Infantry Division, the Frommel Cavalry Corps, and finally the Pösen Corps, whose combat value, however, cannot be highly estimated.

Regarding the course of the battles on November 18, only sparse reports were available at the Army Headquarters by evening. As progress was made both west and east of Lodz, the holding of the enemy in front of the Pannwitz Corps was not considered unfavorable. The longer he remained here, the more likely it was to intercept him. The Plüskow Corps, which had a radio connection, was of the opinion in the afternoon that "apparently rear guards were present" in front of its right flank; it wanted "today still

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with the 38th Infantry Division taking Pabianice, 36th advancing on Lods and

southward." The perception of the Army High Command was — as must be concluded from the

issued orders — that the enemy was still only fighting for retreat. They wanted to encircle him;

there was no apparent danger to the execution of this intention. As Lieutenant General v. Richthofen reported, the

Russians were supposed to have withdrawn in disorder through Lowitsch to

Skierniewice on November 16 and 17 and cleared Lowitsch except for weak detachments.

According to a report from the 6th Cavalry Division, the

enemy had moved south from Glowno.

At 6 p.m., the following army order was issued, which was sent to the corps by

radio; only the XX Army Corps could receive it

by telegraph: "Army situation favorable. Tomorrow the encirclement will continue. — XXV Reserve Corps with 3rd Guard Division advances to the front

Butwoniez-Bendow, heavily echeloned behind the left wing, XX Army

Corps in front Bukowniez-Widzen. At height 283, a strong mixed detachment remains to control Lods. After reaching

the mentioned front, advance while pushing back the enemy to the

road Lods-Tuschyn-Montkotschyn. Boundary between the corps

Bukowniez-Kalino. — Corps Pannwitz swings, strongly supporting the right wing, in line Andilow-Rettkima. — Corps Plüskow engages the enemy on

front Janowitze-Kasimierzch-Aleksandrow and prevents his

departure. — Corps Posen closes in line Stumfka-Wola-Schadel. —

Higher Cavalry Commander 3 early over Lask to Wadlew; reconnaissance southward. Higher Cavalry Commander 1 over Bendkow to

Petrikau. Entire cavalry blocks roads leading from Lods to the south and

southeast." This order, which hardly expected serious resistance from the Russians

at Lods, aimed at the tight encirclement of the city from

east and west, as well as a wide-ranging movement of the cavalry

against the traffic junctions in its rear, especially

against Petrikau, where all rear connections converged.

The order received an addition for the XX Army Corps at 8 p.m.:

"If the Army Corps passes Lods tomorrow, pay close attention and guard the exits (escaping cars and the

like)"; the corps was also to deliver the army order to the XXV Reserve

Corps and agree on joint action with it.

After issuing the order, the already mentioned report from

Lieutenant General v. Morgen\*) arrived, suggesting a decisive victory for the

I Reserve Corps. This report strengthened the confidence in the

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The Army High Command dispelled any concerns about the rear of the wide-ranging flanking movement of the XXV Reserve Corps and the XX Army Corps. The 9th Cavalry Division, previously held back as a rear guard, received orders in accordance with the army command to leave only one regiment at Glowno, but otherwise to follow the 6th Cavalry Division south.

On the evening of November 18, Russian radio messages also revealed that the command of the Russian 2nd Army was still in Lodz and apparently initially had no intention of leaving the city, and that stronger enemy forces from the I Siberian and XIX Corps with "heavy and mortar artillery" were still in front of the German right wing and in the southern flank of the Plüskow Corps (38th Infantry Division). This was consistent with the evening report of the Frommel Cavalry Corps, which stated: "Divisions pushed the line Winzentowo-Wishechschtschewize-Janowize against enemy infantry and artillery; fighting until darkness." The Army High Command did not consider the threat from the south to be very serious. For the success of the encirclement initiated east of Lodz, it seemed advantageous if the enemy still held out in the west. The attack of the Plüskow Corps, from which decisive effects south of Lodz were expected the next day, should not be weakened by considerations for the withdrawing enemy; the corps was to attack its flank to the east with full force and undeterred. Therefore, no information about the enemy in the south was given to it, but the Posen Corps received the order to appear on November 19 "at Stunfka-Wola and Schade with its beginnings in two columns and to close in on these two places, which are not to be crossed initially"; connection with the Plüskow General Command should be established soon. This was considered sufficient to protect the right flank of this corps.

1) According to Hoffmann, Volume II, p. 81, it says: In these days, the Commander-in-Chief East "urgently pointed out the danger from Warsaw to the 9th Army and repeatedly recommended leaving the Guard Division Litzmann at Skierniewize" (see also p. 107 f.). Lieutenant General Grünert reported on October 28, 1928, in response to an inquiry, that Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann had made such a suggestion to him by telephone on one day (probably primarily November 18). The response was reportedly, "that we could not believe in the success of the weak XXV Reserve Corps with the two cavalry divisions without the 3rd Guard Division, but that we valued the victory at Lodz higher than the defense against the possible threat from Warsaw, which could also be dealt with later." This view of the 9th High Command was confirmed by Field Marshal v. Mackensen (communication from January 8, 1929).

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The Battles on November 19.

Map and Sketches: No. 11.

November 19 began with light frost and a gloomy morning. Soon followed snowstorms, which at times prevented any visibility; only in the afternoon did the weather clear up.

At the Cavalry Corps Frommel, it was believed that it was still necessary to hold an enemy in retreat through overtaking pursuit and attack. General v. Frommel had set his three divisions side by side to advance on Wabden. General v. Plüschow, who himself was six kilometers east of Schadel directly at the front, was of the opinion, according to the army order, that it was important to hold the enemy at Lodz with the left corps wing, but to advance ruthlessly over Pabianice with the right to complete the encirclement; he therefore wanted to attack on the entire front of his corps, more than 15 kilometers wide. The 38th Infantry Division was to reach at least Pabianice, if possible even beyond. Separated by a gap, the 36th Infantry Division was initially to take possession of the line Konstantynow—road junction seven kilometers north of it. The Posen Corps wanted to close up at Schadel, where for the time being only the Landsturm Brigade Doussin was stationed.

At the 38th Infantry Division, Major General v. der Esch had arranged the further march in three columns side by side to attack the enemy at Pabianice; he still expected only enemy rearguards and cavalry. That the troops of the division on the right flank had already encountered strong resistance at numerous points on the previous evening and night was not known to him due to an unexplained failure of the reporting service. Before the advance could begin, fierce battles developed — in some places even before dawn — at the front and soon also in the entire more than twelve kilometers deep southern flank of the division. The division was soon pushed into defense in the gently rolling terrain along the Schadel—Pabianice road. Its left wing, the 83rd Infantry Brigade under Major General Freiherr v. Hanstein, was positioned between Porszewice and Konstantynow leaning on the Ner section; the 76th Infantry Brigade under Major General v. Besser had to retreat southwest of the road junction of Janowice soon after 8 a.m. under the pressure of strong Russian encirclement and overwhelming artillery impact after significant losses.

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v. Berg, the commander of the tenaciously fighting 6th Thuringian

Infantry Regiment No. 95, fell.

To the right of the Plüskow Corps, the Cavalry Corps

Frommel had intended to begin its advance at 8 in the morning, but the

8th Cavalry Division under Major General Freiherr v. Kap-herr and

to its right the 5th under Major General v. Unger had already been

attacked by the enemy, who had been positioned directly opposite them

throughout the night. Here the battle took place. Further to the right,

the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division under Field

Marshal Lieutenant v. Korda initially found the way clear when advancing

west of the Schädel-Lask road, until they too encountered the enemy at

Borschewize, who pushed them back again.

Supported by the Landsturm Brigade Doussin of the Posen Corps,

whose leader, Lieutenant General v. Koch, had inserted between the

Austro-Hungarian 7th and the German 5th Cavalry Division on both sides

of the Schädel-Lask road, the Cavalry Corps was able to repel all Russian

attacks throughout the day. On the right flank, the Landsturm Brigade

Hoffmann extended the right flank of the cavalry at Wolawize; later, the

Landsturm Brigade Reiswitz arrived, so that the Posen Corps was united

south of Schädel by evening. There was no longer any danger of being

encircled here.

General v. Plüskow, through coordination with General

v. Frommel and Lieutenant General v. Koch, had endeavored to direct the

battle of the three corps into unified paths; from Tscharnez, he had ordered

at 12:15 p.m.: "The 38th Infantry Division must absolutely, in

conjunction with the Cavalry Corps, which is engaged south of the Bilamow-

Schädel line and with Brigade Doussin, which is currently advancing from

the Sounitsa-Wolawize line in an easterly direction, push back the opposing

enemy over the Lask-Pabianize road." Meanwhile, the situation of the

38th Infantry Division had become increasingly difficult.

In almost all parts, the ammunition was running low;

the four heavy field howitzer batteries had only 70 rounds left for their 16

guns by noon, the Infantry Regiment Brigade reported it had completely

run out; fresh ammunition, which had to be transported along a ten-kilometer

stretch immediately east of Schädel behind the front line, did not arrive

in time. The losses increased. The extended position showed

numerous gaps that could no longer be closed. Thus, the enemy had the

opportunity to successively attack individual parts of the front.

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to seize in the flank. The left wing of the 83rd Infantry Brigade was soon in the air at the Ner south of Konstantynow, as the 36th Infantry Division, expected north of the river course, had not advanced. Encompassed on both flanks, Colonel v. Randau, who commanded here, withdrew his troops, reduced by losses, to the same level as the left neighboring division. This affected the rest of the front of the 83rd Infantry Brigade further. The division commander ordered a retreat to the heights northeast of Janowitze. By evening, the 38th Infantry Division stood with a quarter of its forces north of the road junction of Janowitze in a four-kilometer-wide front, folded far back to the left on the heights southwest of Automiersk, the Ranzau detachment. To the west, there was no direct connection to the 8th Cavalry Division. But the enemy also seemed exhausted from the battle; he did not press forward. At 7 p.m., Major General v. der Esch reported to the commanding general in Automiersk that he intended to hold the current position the next day.

November 19 was an especially difficult day of battle for the German troops of the western army wing. The 38th Infantry Division had intercepted the main thrust of the Russians, which had been unexpectedly conducted against them with more than double the strength. Troops from the Russian XIX and I Siberian Corps had attacked. In heroic defense, the brave Thuringians had barely suffered losses, several heavy field howitzers had fallen into enemy hands. Also, the 36th Infantry Division of the Plüskow Corps, the Pannwitz Corps, and the XX Army Corps encountered unexpectedly fierce resistance to the movements ordered by the army command for November 19. The 36th Infantry Division, fighting under Lieutenant General v. Heineccius in two separate groups east of Kasimjersk and near Alexandrow, barely advanced, at times even fearing being broken through by the enemy's fierce counterattacks. Only the right wing of the Pannwitz Corps gained ground, as the Russians entrenched north of Alexandrow had vacated the field at night. The left wing of the 22nd Infantry Division, however, which was to swing far to the south, did not advance at all and faced repeated counterattacks, which the enemy also undertook here, with a difficult stand. The XX Army Corps had set its goals, according to the army order, far, but in stubborn fighting during the day, it did not advance more than 1½ kilometers even at the most favorable point. From the main road Lodz-Nowod-

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Isolna was still two to three kilometers away; troops from the Russian I Corps and Siberians were now also clearly identified by prisoners in this part of the front. To encircle the enemy, the 72nd Infantry Brigade under Major General Schäfer was sent to the south side of the Biondchyn forest. They had crossed the eastern part of this forest without a fight, but the enemy still held the western part. The brigade was since separated from the other troops of the corps.

At the XXV Reserve Corps, General v. Scheffer initially made his decision based on the radio message he received on the afternoon of November 18 from the army command; he was ordered to continue marching "making full use of marching capability" southwards, with the addition, "do not turn too early, to continuously flank." In the corps order for November 19, it was stated: "The enemy has been caught from three sides, completely defeated, retreated south, and left many prisoners and booty in our hands." The target was given to the 3rd Guards Infantry Division Bendkow, the 49th Reserve Division was to follow; the 50th Reserve Division was set on Lahrars (seven kilometers southeast of Bendkow), the 6th Cavalry Division was to ride further ten kilometers beyond Bendkow towards Petrikau after the 3rd Guards Division arrived. From the radio message received later (army order?) without further explanation demanding earlier turning, the 3rd Guards Infantry Division was turned west, towards Karpin, the 50th Reserve Division was to turn over Bendkow towards Krushbow, thus marching west south of Wolborta.

Without rest, the troops set out again, driven forward by the thought of pursuit and emboldened by the relatively easily achieved successes on November 18. In the same spirit, General v. Scheffer rode south from Bleschin with his close staff on the morning of November 19. However, the dangers inherent in the corps' task were also seen: "If our encirclement does not decide the battle today, then we will be encircled," said Major v. Massow, the chief of staff of the corps.

As the 3rd Guards Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Rittmann had already begun the ordered advance south towards Karpin, their forward, 6th Guards Infantry Brigade was hindered by snowstorms and fog by the report of the enemy's approach.

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against the right flank to turn westward. There, the Miazga flows south from Nowosolna via Bedon, Karpin, and Bendow. This inconspicuous watercourse, with its marshy, now frozen meadow area, formed a broad shallow depression. Already east of this section, the 6th Guard Brigade encountered the enemy, whom they defeated. Lieutenant General Litzmann ordered them to proceed to Bedon to cross the Miazga there; he himself continued with the 5th Guard Brigade marching towards the road bridge of Karpin. However, at Bedon, the 6th Brigade encountered stronger Russian resistance. Major General v. Friedeburg, who had only a field artillery detachment with him, decided to wait for heavy artillery, as there seemed to be no particular urgency at this location. In the evening, the brigade was positioned east of Bedon; on the right, it was connected to the 72nd Infantry Brigade of the XX Army Corps, which was also stuck before the Miazga section. With the 5th Guard Brigade, Lieutenant General Litzmann took control of the crossing from Karpin without serious combat and reached Wola-Ratkowa in pursuit of a weak opponent. Eight kilometers further south, the 49th Reserve Division crossed the Miazga at Bendow, also without encountering resistance. They reached the area between this place and the town of Tuschyn, with half of the 50th Reserve Division behind them up to Bendow.

From the Richthofen Cavalry Corps, the 6th Cavalry Division reached the ordered march target Moschtscheniza on the Miazga. South of the section, the enemy was reported; Russian troop concentrations were discovered ten kilometers further south, near Petrikau. The 9th Cavalry Division, according to the last command order, had left only the 19th Dragoon Regiment against Lowitsch-Schyln and had otherwise followed the 6th Cavalry Division south. But already at Byszewin, Lieutenant General v. Richthofen halted the division, as the order given directly by the army command was not known to him. He considered the complete exposure of the flank to be risky and wanted to clarify the intentions of the high command once more. As the division reported, a Russian company had advanced westward from Lowitsch and had entrenched itself halfway at the road junction towards Lowitsch-Glowno; otherwise, only Cossack patrol detachments had been seen in the area west of Lowitsch. The announced railway destructions had so far been west of Sierne-

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wize and Lowitsch succeeded; there was no news about the outcome of the operation against the Russian high command suspected in Skierniewize.

At the I. Reserve Corps, the enemy had timely evaded the encirclement planned for November 19. The 36th Reserve Division reached Kiernoßia and Sanniki in pursuit over Osmolin with the foremost parts, behind which General v. Morgen had halted the 1st Reserve Division at Gombin and southward, to at least give part of his excessively strained troops the urgently needed rest.

East of the Vistula, the Thorn Corps reached the area of Plozk and northward without a fight.

The Army High Command on November 19.

Map and sketches: No. 11.

The Army High Command in Hohensalza only gradually became aware of the events that took place on the front on November 19. In the morning, they were particularly influenced by enemy radio messages intercepted at night: "The Germans are strongly pressing the left flank of the Garbe3) at Konstantynowek4). The immediate energetic attack of the I. Siberian Corps is extremely necessary. The situation of the army is serious." This was communicated by the commander-in-chief of the 2nd Army, General Scheidemann, to the I. Siberian Corps of the 5th Army. He had urgently radioed the commander of the Nowogeorgiewsk fortress: "Briefly inform me about the 1st Army. Are they attacking or not? Does the 1st Army have success? We are ready at Lodz. The 5th Army is not yet here. The enemy is bypassing the Garbe on our left flank. The situation is serious." Further radio messages from the 2nd Army stated: "Very stubborn fighting on the front Lipiny—Dombrowa—Piatkowize—Mikolajew—Konstantynow5). The Germans broke through to Błesinyn, have fortified it. The fifth6) is coming, Automjew with the right flank." — Furthermore: "At Konstantynow, the enemy is pressing hard. Your immediate cooperation is necessary. Where are you? Why are you not attacking? We risk the collapse of an excellently planned operation." From other-

1) See p. 113. — 2) Reports of the corps on the situation see p. 125 f. — 3) As was known, it could only be the 3rd Guard Infantry Division of the Russian XXIII Corps. — 4) Road indication! west of Konstantynow. — 5) The places correspond to the line assumed by the Germans for the night of November 18 to 19 from east of Nowosolna to south-southwest of Konstantynow. — 6) = 5th Army.

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From radio messages, it was learned that the situation of the Russian 1st Army was considered favorable; the VI Corps was to prepare "to jointly fall on the enemy's flank with the II Corps, which is attacking Lowitsch." All this clearly showed that the Russian 2nd Army was no longer considering a retreat, but, trusting in the successes of the 1st Army and the approach of the 5th Army, intended to fight the battle at Lodz; at the time, its western flank seemed to be in severe distress. General v. Mackensen intended to exploit this situation before the Russian 5th Army intervened.

The Plüskow Corps had reported by radio after midnight that the 38th Infantry Division would take Pabianice at dawn on November 19, and the Frommel Cavalry Corps had opponents on its southern flank. The report contained nothing about other enemies. The High Command had remained of the opinion that nothing serious was to be expected from the south initially. However, at 8:15 a.m., the Plüskow Corps had sent another radio message: "Advance of the 5th Army from the south over Lask not unlikely. 38th Infantry Division immediately turn north towards Retkinia—Konstantynow to attack against XXIII Corps. 38th Infantry Division must close southern exits with strong detachments." That the 38th Infantry Division was already engaged in heavy fighting against parts of the Russian 5th Army at the time of the order's departure was initially unknown to the Army High Command.

At 9 a.m., the I Reserve Corps was informed of what was known from intercepted radio messages about the attack intentions of the Russian 1st Army. Under the impression of the victory reports of the corps, it was added regarding these Russian intentions: "Exploitation seems questionable; if it happens, possibility to also deal with this enemy, exploit."

At 11 a.m., the following report from General v. Frommel was received: "Cavalry Corps with Doussin in combat south of Dolny and at Wiskitno against advancing infantry and artillery." A radio message from the Popiel Corps reported similar things. However, there were no reports from the Plüskow Corps; it was assumed that its advance was proceeding as planned. At noon, the Army High Command regulated the encirclement of the city of Lodz by new instructions to the Plüskow Corps advancing from Panna and the XX Army Corps. The divisions of the XVII Army Corps were to hold the city with the front facing south against the Russian 5th Army in the morning and west; the order concluded: first, however, "Exploitation of the

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follows“. In the same assessment of the situation, the army order for November 20 was drafted at 5 p.m., beginning with the sentence: “Dissolution of Russian 2nd Army begins.” However, this order was not issued because the evening reports from the corps had arrived, finally providing a somewhat accurate picture of the actual conditions at the front.

It became particularly noticeable on this day that the construction of telephone lines for the troops could not keep up quickly enough. For messages and order transmission, reliance on radio communication was too frequent¹). That Captain Count Schlieffen from the High Command was present as a communications officer at the front, specifically with the Pannewitz Corps in Ostrow, from where he also reported on the situation of neighboring corps, could only alleviate part of the difficulties. That the XX Army Corps reported on this day: “Communication to the Army High Command and to neighboring army corps only feasible with the greatest time loss and difficulties. To expedite wire traffic and review messages, it is proposed to promptly send a general staff officer to Lentschitza,” General v. Mackensen intended to add to his staff anyway, as soon as the necessary wire connections were completed. However, these seemed more favorable to the distant wings of the army from Hohensalza than they could be in Lentschitza.

Which messages specifically arrived at the High Command on the afternoon of November 19 can no longer be determined with certainty. Whether a radio message from the Plüskow Corps at 1 p.m., stating the 38th Infantry Division was attacked in the line Julianow—Janowice “by apparently superior enemy,” reached the Army High Command at all is questionable. Presumably, the following radio message first brought news of the Plüskow Corps' battle: “From 5° — Division (Esje) retreats in line Julianow—Florentinow²); right wing is threatened. Division Heinricus in line Ignacewo—Rombjen—Lomni³); right brigade attack without decision; enemy position Konstantynow—Niesjenzin⁴); left brigade retreats attack from line Antonjewo—Marianow⁵). Corps headquarters Kasimjerch. Questionable whether division

¹) See p. 107.  
²) Two kilometers northwest of Porschewize.  
³) In the line four kilometers west of Konstantynow—two kilometers east of Alexandrow.  
⁴) Two kilometers north of Konstantynow.  
⁵) Places two kilometers south and north of the road Alexandrow—Lodz.

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withstand renewed attack.” That was a disappointment; but

that was not enough: according to the reports available by 6 p.m.,

neither the Pannewitz Corps nor the XX Army Corps had made significant

progress. These reports were supplemented by a Russian radio message

already communicated at 5:30 from the radio station in Thorn, which

contained a report from General Scheidemann to his superior office from

3:30 p.m. The commander-in-chief of the Russian 2nd Army

had been aware of the advance of a German corps on the eastern flank

of his army, from Błoniey to the south. With his own western flank, he

had “made a little progress; on the rest

of the front, the army holds its position. From Petrikau, a brigade of the

10th Infantry Division is being transported, it will go to Tuszyn. The

army staff is moving to Pabianize today.”

General v. Mackensen faced a completely changed

situation. Crushing the enemy at Lodz in a tight encirclement had

not succeeded; but on his own western flank, the overwhelming Russian

attack weighed heavily. Besides the Nowikow Cavalry Corps, apparently

two corps of the Russian 5th Army, the XIX and the

I Siberian, were already engaged in battle. The bulk of the V Corps seemed

to follow behind. A serious situation could arise for the German western

flank. The high command was still trying to make the best of it:

the Plüskow Corps was to retreat with its right flank behind

the Ner for defense, the Frommel Cavalry Corps, the Posen Corps, and

the Breslau Corps were to push the enemy from the west in flank and rear.

Whether this would result in an encirclement success given the

weakness of the fortress corps was questionable,

but a standstill on the western flank was expected as a minimum

result. Thus, the hope for victory turned almost exclusively to the deep

encirclement in the east of Lodz, which General

v. Scheffer had begun promisingly.

For the further prospects of the Scheffer Group, the situation in

their rear, near Lowitsch, was of decisive importance. It still seemed

hopeful. The I Reserve Corps had reported at 11 a.m.: “The enemy encircled yesterday”) is completely scattered in forests and woods.

Individual troops must be extracted from the houses and woods. The troops belong to the VI, the V Siberian

and the VI Siberian Corps. It seems complete dissolution is

1) p. 113.

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prevail. The guns are partially buried and hidden. ... The parts that crossed from Plozk are said to have passed through in complete dissolution ...” The reserve corps wanted to reach Kiernojsa, 20 kilometers northwest of Lowitsch, by noon. This report was supplemented by a simultaneous personal report that Lieutenant General v. Morgen had addressed directly to Colonel General v. Hindenburg. It read: “I have decisively defeated the V and VI Siberian and yesterday still the VI Corps at Gombin.” The enemy in complete dissolution is fleeing back to Nowogeorgiewsk. Thousands of prisoners. The number of captured guns and machine guns has not yet been determined. I am pursuing today to the line Glodow-Koszelny—Kiernojsa—Samitki. Our losses are about 2000.” Here at least a decisive success seemed to have been achieved!

General v. Mackensen was determined to continue the encirclement operation. At 6 p.m., the following army order was issued for November 20: “XVII, XX, and XXV Corps must continue the attack in the ordered directions with all energy tomorrow to relieve the XI Army Corps attacked today and ensure the execution of the decisive operation for the outcome of the campaign. XI Army Corps is to dig in with the 38th Infantry Division at Kasimierz north of the Ner section in connection with the 36th Infantry Division and hold it at all costs. The 36th Infantry Division is holding its current position. — Corps Posen advances from Schadel south of the Ner against the left flank of the enemy, which is facing the 38th Infantry Division. — Higher Cavalry Commander 3 covers the right flank of Corps Posen and participates in its attack. — XI Army Corps bombing over Pabianize, where the Russian army headquarters is located. — Higher Cavalry Commander 1 continues the previous task.”

However, this order has not yet been issued, as further reports were awaited. At 8:30 p.m., a recorded Russian report came from the Breslau radio station, which General Scheidemann had reported to his superior at 5:30 p.m.: “To General Danowitsch, copy to the staffs of the 1st and 2nd Army. — On the front of the II Siberian and IV Corps, the battle is to be held at 1 p.m. According to reports from the Kimonhyers, the Germans are to retreat hastily to Lentschiza. A most energetic advance of the 1st Army is necessary. Tomorrow

1) These corps were, as far as was known, opposite the German Corps Pannewitz.

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I intended to proceed with the attack, if¹) only the 5th Army aligns itself."

Soon after, the government of Posen reported: "Today at 6:00 a.m., an intercepted

radio message reads: To General in Lodz. I have ordered to inform you that it is

absolutely necessary to do everything for success at Bzura. You must hold out here

to the utmost, unless by gradual weakening of your left wing. On November 21,

reinforcements will advance from Siernewize to cooperate on your right wing. Müller."

General Müller was known to be the chief of staff of the Russian 5th Army. To these

reports came the already mentioned knowledge that a brigade of the Russian 10th

Infantry Division of the V Corps would advance from Petrikau to Tuszyn. Furthermore,

the 9th Cavalry Division reported that a Russian company had advanced from Lowitsch

to halfway to Glowno and entrenched there; no reports were available from the area

of Schylin, nor about the outcome of the operation set against Siernewize; the division

was held by General v. Richthofen at Bzura²), who asked for a decision whether to

secure against Lowitsch—Schylin or to advance further south; a regiment of the division

was stationed at Glowno.

General v. Mackensen faced serious decisions. The intercepted radio messages provided

a clear picture of Russian intentions: Holding or even attacking the 5th and 2nd Army

at Lodz, attack of the 1st Army from the Vistula; common goal: success at Bzura. But

from the intention of the enemy to execution seemed far, and there was absolute trust

in the superiority of the German troops. According to the latest reports from General

v. Morgen, one could hope that he would at least keep the Russians in check at Lowitsch

and Siernewize. General v. Mackensen wanted to dictate the law of action to the enemy,

as before, in self-confident, defiant confidence: it must succeed, for our troops are better,

and we will finish faster than the Russians. If the commander-in-chief gave up this

confidence, then he also gave up the prospect of achieving a campaign-decisive victory

at Lodz; he faced the overwhelming enemy superiority again. Now or never something

had to be dared. Thus, General v. Mackensen, in clear recognition of the impending

dangers, but also in purposeful consistency and unarmed audacity, held firmly to the

decision to continue the initiated operation east of Lodz with full force.

¹) The word "if" is supplemented in the sense; it is missing in the transcript  
in the files. — ²) See p. 121.

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The army order already mentioned above was sent partly as a telegram, partly as a radio message first to the corps of the western wing, and at 10:45 and 11:00 in the evening also to those of the eastern wing. The XX Army Corps received a telegram to "advance over Chojny-Richgyn; close off Lodz to the east. Ruthless offensive. The decision of the campaign lies with the XX Army Corps and XXV Reserve Corps. Hold out!" The Scheffer group was ordered by radio to advance against the line Richgyn-Tuschyn, folded to the left, to "march in the rear of the enemy position at Lodz. Cavalry divisions assist corps on the left wing in the attack. Ruthless offensive. Tomorrow decisive effect of the corps." In Tuschyn, an enemy infantry brigade, nothing more. Headquarters of the Russian 2nd Army Pabianice is to be evacuated early; high reward..." This also answered the inquiry of General v. Richthofen; but the 9th Cavalry Division also received the special instruction: "As ordered, march south." The I Reserve Corps was informed, "Lodwitz weakly occupied by the enemy. Russian unloadings are to take place in Skierniewize from November 21. At Glowno, a cavalry regiment of our 9th Cavalry Division is stationed. The I Reserve Corps must reach Groß Lodwitz on the 20th and prevent the enemy from advancing west and southwest from here. Railway Skierniewize-Warsaw immediately sustainably destroy. Prevent unloadings Skierniewize."

Shortly before the departure of the orders to the XX Army Corps, the I and XXV Reserve Corps, however, a new report from Lieutenant General v. Morgen had arrived at the army headquarters at 10:30 in the evening, which had to raise considerable doubts about the significance of the victory he had achieved the day before. Nothing more was said about the great booty expected according to previous reports; the I Reserve Corps had rather been attacked itself on November 19 at nightfall near Kiernozia, "apparently by strong forces, namely parts of the II Corps, V Siberian Corps and probably VI Corps." The enemy therefore still had more strength than had been previously attributed to him! But Lieutenant General v. Morgen wanted to attack him again on November 20 at dawn, comprehensively on the right.

Whether the report of the I Reserve Corps reached the hands of the key personalities of the high command before the dispatch of the orders to the corps of the eastern wing remains uncertain.

1) p. 126. — 2) According to the communication of Field Marshal v. Mackensen from January 1929, this was not the case.

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Orders were certainly no longer exercised. The coming day had to

bring the decision on whether it would still be possible to prepare the Russians

for downfall at Lodz before the threat from Lowitsch

and Skierniewice deprived the German encirclement of forces.

The Battles on November 20.

Maps and Sketches: No. 12.

In the instructions for the right wing of the army,

changes had occurred during the night of November 20.

While the 38th Infantry Division was supposed to defend north

of the Ner section according to the army order, its command, with the consent

of General v. Plüskow, decided on the evening of November 19 to

set up on the flat heights south of this section. When the army high command

learned of this, it changed its order. However, the change did not reach

the 38th Division in time. Therefore, based on the first army

order, without being pressured by the enemy in any way, it moved back to the

southern bank of the Ner at night. At the Posen Corps, Lieutenant General

v. Roch, when he received the army order to attack late on November 19,

reported: "Ordered attack not feasible before the opposing

enemy, against whom the exhausted corps barely held today,

is repelled. Additionally, enemy 7th Infantry Division expected."

This division of the Russian V Corps was advancing from the south according to intercepted

radio messages. General v. Mackensen therefore had to

give his consent, whether he liked it or not, for the Posen Corps to remain in

a "flanking position." Thus, the entire right wing of the army

had switched to defense.

On the left wing of the Frommel Cavalry Corps,

it was only noticed on the morning of November 20, after daylight, that the

38th Infantry Division was no longer south of the Ner. This unexpected

realization raised concerns about the now unprotected own left

flank and therefore led to hasty backward movements of this wing

of the cavalry. Since the enemy did not pursue, the new

front soon stabilized. Together with the Posen Corps, the

cavalry set up in a new, but still cohesive line of defense,

extending from the Pichna section five kilometers northwest of

Sgunka-Wola, then south and east past Schadeb, up to ten kilometers

northeast of this place. The farthest right wing was formed by

the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division, the left by the 5th and

8th Cavalry Division. Since the enemy held back, there was only

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to artillery battles. After nightfall, cavalry and militia sought shelter in the villages behind the front, while the enemy kept their abandoned daytime positions under fire.

Even with the Pilsudski Corps, there were no serious battles. The 38th Infantry Division was able to organize its units undisturbed, the 83rd Infantry Brigade could only form six companies at Infantry Regiment 96 and not much more at Infantry Regiment 94. At the front of the 36th Infantry Division, combat activity flared up only before dawn and then again more intensely in the evening, without changing the situation.

The Pannwitz Corps tried to resume the attack after a restless night, but the 35th Infantry Division could no longer advance on its own; the 22nd Infantry Division, fighting over a wide area, reported that the success of their attack would depend on the comprehensive advance of the XX Army Corps. Meanwhile, the enemy attacked this division in the afternoon and penetrated a gap on the Lodz—Lagewniki-Stare road and west of it, from which they were thrown back by a counterattack by Infantry Regiment 32 under Lieutenant Colonel Baron von Wangenheim.

The attack of the XX Army Corps also did not progress on November 20th. In particular, despite repeated attempts on this day, it was not possible to capture the important forest of Bionstühn south of the forest, the 72nd Infantry Brigade, assigned for encirclement, expected that the enemy would retreat under the pressure of the encirclement by the Scheffer Corps. He therefore did not seek his attack target in connection with his own division in a northwestern, but in a southwestern direction in conjunction with the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade, but also made little progress there. Under the influence of the events at the 22nd Division of the Pannwitz Corps

1) Generalmajor Kunhardt v. Schmidt, the then First General Staff Officer of the Corps, writes on January 10, 1929: "The forest was weakly occupied! Some companies of Siberian sharpshooters had entrenched themselves in it. It was a tall forest with dense undergrowth. The enemy withdrew so far from the edge that it was difficult to observe and hardly to be targeted by artillery fire. Without sufficient artillery preparation, however, the exhausted infantry of the 41st Infantry Division could not attack. The artillery was not able to move the front further. There was a lack of sufficient ammunition supply, difficult observation, fog until about 10 a.m. In the meantime, the importance of the forest area was well understood. The attack order was renewed daily. The division

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and due to events behind their own army corps, General v. Scholz had to decide to make the continuation of the attack to the south dependent on the effectiveness of the encirclement by the XXV Reserve Corps. As a result, the forest of Biontschin remained in enemy hands, interrupting the front of the XX Army Corps.

The corps' attention was heavily occupied that day by reports of Russian detachments appearing in its rear. Already before 8 a.m., there were civilian reports of Russian troop concentrations in Siernievice. When this news was passed on to the Army High Command, the reassuring response came: "I Reserve Corps covers the army's rear in the Lowitsch area against Siernievice. The reported enemy is nothing more than stragglers from the corps defeated by General v. Morgen." Soon, reports followed about the advance of Russian forces from the east and north towards Glowno, where the 19th Dragoon Regiment was stationed. Even if, like the Army High Command, the new opponent was considered insignificant, it seriously threatened the supply line crucial for the corps and indispensable for General v. Scheffer's troops, the road junction of Strykow. At 11 a.m., the Army High Command ordered infantry and some artillery to be sent as reinforcements to Glowno. But soon more serious reports came: a 3 1/2-hour-long column was reported, which should have reached Bratoschewice, halfway between Glowno and Strykow, by 12:30 p.m. Consequently, the Army High Command prepared the dispatch of a mixed brigade from parts of the 22nd Infantry Division of the Pannewitz Corps and both divisions of the XX Army Corps, which was canceled under the impression of later favorable news. By the evening of November 20, only 1 3/4 battalions and some artillery of the XX Army Corps had been set in motion towards Strykow. The supply, as well as the exchange of wounded and prisoners of the corps, were adapted to the dwindling situation, the essentials in columns and trains

Instructions to concentrate their entire artillery effect against the forest. Finally, the Schaar Brigade also received the order to take the forest from the rear; but it did not succeed, it was too dense.

In this way, small progress was reported daily, but nothing decisive happened! When the threat at Strykow then occurred, it was too late. — Despite all difficulties, the forest should have been taken at all costs. The attack power of the 41st Infantry Division was particularly weakened by the costly combat activities of the 72nd Infantry Brigade at Krosniew (B. V. G. 449 ff.) and thus again held in check at Kutno (S. 81).

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closely drawn to the fighting troops, everything else was pushed northwestward. At the Army High Command as well as at the General Command of the XX Army Corps, it was hoped that the situation at Stryków would soon ease due to the impact of the Scheffer Group against the enemy's rear at Lodz and especially due to the advance of the I Reserve Corps against Lowitsch.

At the Scheffer Group, a report from the 6th Cavalry Division on the evening of November 19th had supplemented the news about the enemy in the south: a "column with artillery" had advanced on the Petrikau-Lodz road in the afternoon towards Renkorzi. General v. Scheffer therefore wanted to lead his 2½ divisions of infantry against Tuszyn-Goszinowice, using the 6th Cavalry Division to protect the left flank; however, he reserved the final decision until the morning of November 20th. From the army order, only a part arrived by radio message during the night, the rest not until 5 a.m.; this rest contained the note that no more than one Russian brigade was at Tuszyn. In its entirety, the army order instructed the Scheffer Group — as already mentioned — to proceed left against the line Rzgow-Tuszyn, "to march into the rear of the enemy position at Lodz". The cavalry divisions were to "accompany the left wing to assist in the attack. Ruthless offensive. Tomorrow) decisive effect of the corps". The Russian high command in Pabianice was to be lifted early.

General v. Scheffer assumed, as before, that the Plüskow Corps and the Frommel Cavalry Corps would meet him from the west, as he had not heard of the mishap of the right wing of the army on November 19th, nor of the stalling of the attack at the Pannewitz Corps and the XX Army Corps. On the morning of November 20th, he set the 3rd Guard Infantry Division from Wolakowa on Rzgow; "49th Reserve Division will", as stated in the order to the Guard Division, "if the situation permits, follow over Tuszyn, connecting with the XX Army Corps and Frommel Cavalry Corps (should have been at Pabianice yesterday)". For half of the 50th Reserve Division, the plan remained against the enemy expected from the south, on Goszinowice; the 6th Cavalry Division was to cover the left flank, the 9th was not yet in place.

1) p. 128. — 2) Cf. p. 107. For transmission by radio, the order had to be encrypted and, due to its length, divided into several parts, which were then transmitted in chronological order. Deciphering required additional time. — 3) That meant: on November 20th.

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At the headquarters of the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, it was only shortly before the scheduled departure at 7:30 a.m. that it was learned that the 6th Guard Brigade had not been able to take the section from Bedon the previous evening, as a strong enemy with heavy artillery was positioned opposite. The report further stated that the brigade commander, Major General v. Friedeburg, intended, given the situation at the XX Army Corps, which had not yet advanced south of Nowosilona, not to attack initially, but rather "to engage the enemy, as the probably strong position will become untenable by itself through the encirclement by the 5th Brigade and the XXV Reserve Corps." To accelerate the attack of the 6th Brigade, Lieutenant General Litzmann attempted to have parts of his artillery act from the south against the enemy's flank at Bedon. He himself, in accordance with the army order, turned with the 5th Guard Brigade westward towards Richgow, where the enemy was identified; the gap between the two brigades of the division widened. Welcome help was approaching.

The 9th Cavalry Division had received immediate orders from the Army High Command, in response to their inquiry, to seek connection in the Bendkow area to the left wing of the XXV Reserve Corps and to accompany it during the attack. After a 13-kilometer march, Major General Count v. Schmettow (Eberhard) reached the area of Raptin with his division (1 battalion, 14 squadrons, and 2 batteries<sup>1</sup>) at 11:00 a.m. He had established early contact with the 3rd Guard Division. Lieutenant General Litzmann expected decisive success from the cavalry's intervention against the enemy's rear, which was still holding at Andrespol with the front against the Friedeburg Brigade; the intervention of the cavalry division in the battle west of the Miasga would enable his troops to carry out the attack against Richgow. Major General Count Schmettow decided not to advance south but to initially support the Guard's attack with his entire division. His intervention contributed to the southern flank of the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade being able to cross the Miasga on a bridge built by pioneers south of Bedon in the evening; 1000 Russian prisoners were captured as booty. However, at Bedon itself, the brigade had not succeeded in forcing the crossing in a costly frontal attack. Into the pitch-dark night, Major General v. Friedeburg now set his battalions marching southward to

<sup>1</sup> Ten squadrons and one battery secured at Glowno and Bhesfino or had not yet returned from the operation against Sfernewize.

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along the enemy front to regain connection with his division.

In the afternoon hours at Rischgow, the impact of the 49th Reserve Division advancing from the southeast via Tuschyn became noticeable. According to various reports, it had only seven battalions with combat strengths of about 400 men, but twelve batteries (48 guns). Already during the assembly for the advance on Tuschyn, the enemy had pushed in from the south into the barely vacated quarters of the division; the division commander, Lieutenant General v. Thiesenhausen, was not deterred from continuing the march westward; he hoped to soon join hands with the cavalry corps Frommel. He left the fight against the enemy advancing from the south to half of the 50th Reserve Division. Advancing from Bendkow, General v. Scheffer himself arrived at the 49th Division, which reached Tuschyn without a fight. He wanted to continue the march westward to Pabianice, as he suspected the 3rd Guard Infantry Division already in Rischgow. However, when it turned out that this division was still east of the place in attack, the commanding general turned the 49th Reserve Division northward. The enemy, who had previously fought against the Guard, now retreated northward. The 49th Reserve Division remained in the evening at Rischgow and west, the half of the 3rd Guard Infantry Division east of the place.

Half of the 50th Reserve Division, seven battalions and nine batteries (36 guns), had set off early from Bendkow to the south to prepare for the expected enemy at Gozimowicze, but already encountered the enemy on the way in the front and on the right flank. Lieutenant General Freiherr v. der Goltz (Hans) immediately turned his troops westward and attacked, covered on the left flank by the 6th Cavalry Division remaining at Moschtscheniza. 400 prisoners were made by evening; however, it was not possible to completely defeat the enemy. Meanwhile, the 6th Cavalry Division had initially stood at Moschtscheniza with the front facing south, but had to move a few kilometers northward, as new enemy forces advancing from Tomaschow to Wolborz threatened their division. In the evening, the foremost troops of the 50th Reserve Division and the 6th Cavalry Division were about six kilometers west and south of Bendkow, facing the enemy in indecisive combat.

General v. Scheffer from Lieutenant General v. Richthofen was with the 49th Reserve Division in Rischgow. They had no connection to the army command since the morning; the construction of the Dacht

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The command had not kept pace with the forward movement, communication by signal failed. About the overall situation of their own army, they only knew what had been transmitted from the army command at night, and that was little. However, it was noticeable that there was still no sign of the cavalry corps Frommel and the corps Plüskow, although they were only about ten kilometers away from Pabianice. Also, from the XX Army Corps, which was believed to be attacking from the north, there was no noticeable effect for the time being. On the other hand, there was almost complete clarity about the enemy, who was directly in front of them, due to a special stroke of luck.

When the general command had been held in Tuschnyn at noon, a Russian pilot accidentally landed with them, carrying the following order from the Russian army leader, General Scheidemann, personally signed, from the Russian 2nd Army dated November 19, 8 p.m.: “To the commander of the brigade of the V Corps. The enemy is attempting to deeply envelop the right army wing. The division of our outermost right wing (22.) is supported with its right wing on Andrespol. Their staff is located at the Andrespol station. The Germans, who are enveloping from the north over Błeszinyn, are advancing over the area from Borowo to the west. Today, their marching columns, advancing from Borowo over the Majsa, were halted by the fire of General Krause's heavy artillery, which was stationed at Kurowize. Now the Krause detachment has retreated to the area of Rżichow; this detachment (remnants of the 13th and 14th Siberian Rifle Regiments), parts of the 1st Rifle Brigade with two heavy and some light batteries) will move to the village of Janow (on the Lodz factory railway, east of Lodz) at the disposal of the I Corps. – The brigade under your command is to move to Błeszinyn and come under the command of the I Corps. – On November 20, General Nowikow's cavalry corps (8th and 14th Cavalry Division) will move over Pabianice into the area of Chrystin-Stare–Rokizyn. Immediately establish contact with the commanding general of the corps, who is informed about your advance and subordination. Scheidemann. – Addendum: According to received reports, enemy outposts – possibly cavalry – were identified in the area of Gluchow–Grabina-Wola. Fight your way through at any cost. Scheidemann.” This order was then noted on November 20: “In view of your delay: Parts of the Krause detachment were

4th Siberian Division from the II Siberian Corps. – 2) Places east of Błeszinyn.

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On November 20th, early in the morning, sent forward from Rischgow to Wola-Ratowa, where

enemy patrols appeared. Today, a movement of the enemy from Sushinow) to the southwest was observed. — If you

are already engaged in combat, to hold off the enemy encircling columns,

continue fulfilling your task and bear in mind that

your rear connection — right wing of the army standing at Lodz

2nd Army (Wischtnow) — is Rischgow. — General Scheidemann."

This order provided surprising clarity about the situation on November 20th at noon.

The Russian 2nd Army was still at Lodz, where it

apparently intended to hold its position with the front facing east and north.

However, the Scheffer Corps was deep in their rear. In

the south, an infantry brigade of the V Corps faced it, in the north the

Krause detachment — also about a brigade — opposite, then the

right wing of the 22nd Infantry Division fighting with the front facing east and north at Andrespol. From the west, however, over Pabianice,

instead of the German cavalry corps Frommel, the Russian cavalry corps Nowikow initially appeared.

This was a completely unexpected situation.

How the battle at Bedvon had turned out, General

v. Scheffer did not know in the afternoon, but like Lieutenant General

Litzmann, he assumed that the Russian resistance there had meanwhile been broken.

The commanding general also had no conclusive news from the 50th Reserve Division;

he had immediately sent them the instruction, after deciphering

the captured Russian order, to advance to Tuschyn and occupy Olutow, the road junction ten kilometers south

of Pabianice, with a detachment of all arms. How General

v. Scheffer viewed the situation is shown by the corps order issued at 4:30 p.m. in Tuschyn.

It began: "1.) The enemy is forced in the direction of

Lodz. Weak enemy from Petrikau and in the area of Groß^2)

was driven off. Stronger enemy cavalry is reportedly planning, according to intercepted

air reports, to break through the area of the XXV Reserve Corps from

the west. — 2.) The Reserve Corps goes to rest.

The corps is also to prevent the encircled enemy from breaking through to the south during the night by all means." — The

3rd Guard Infantry Division and the 49th Reserve Division — it continued —

should remain in the reached areas, the half 50th Reserve

Division to occupy Tuschyn and the area south of it; a mixed

detachment of this division has been sent to Olutow. The division has

1) Not east of Bedon on the railway. — 2) Nine kilometers southwest of Bendvon.

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Connection "with Cavalry Corps Frommel (in the area west of Dutow)" to be established. As before, the commanding general was filled with the firm confidence that General v. Frommel would still come; in this confidence, he was determined to continue fighting behind enemy lines until victory.

General v. Scheffer had intended to stay in Tuschyn for the night, but then moved to Rzchow after dark when the arrival of the 50th Reserve Division was delayed. Further news arrived here. From Bzhesiny, the business echelon of the ammunition columns and trains reported that they had moved there, "as Strykow was threatened by the enemy (weak infantry) from the northeast and the XX Army Corps had its columns march off from Strykow to Sgierz." Then it was learned from the 6th Cavalry Division about the advance of the Russians from Tomaschow to Wolborz. The 50th Reserve Division was therefore tasked with protecting the reserve corps against the enemy reported from Wolborz, and at the same time, the order was repeated to move to Tuschyn and "block" Dutow, namely "by a detachment (weak infantry with machine guns, for the enemy, who wants to retreat from Pabianze in a southerly direction)." However, it then turned out that the 50th Reserve Division could not initially be counted on at Tuschyn; a battalion of the 3rd Guard Division was sent there from the north. In the evening, the enemy was detected at several points in the forest west of the Tuschyn—Rzchow road; he was also not close to the west of Rzchow. How the situation had developed on the rest of the army front and on the rear connections of the corps leading over Bzhesiny—Piontek was unknown.

They stood in the midst of the enemy. In the proud awareness of being superior to him even in the minority, leaders and troops did not heed the dangers of this situation but saw only the one great goal: the destruction and capture of the encircled Russian forces.

At the I Reserve Corps, the night's rest of the 36th Reserve Division had been severely disturbed by unexpected attacks from the east); at Samiki, the Schmid detachment of the XXV Reserve Corps had been scattered, Kiernowia and Dimolin had to be evacuated. General v. Morgen had to abandon his intention to continue attacking "comprehensively on the right" on November 20.

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Instead, at dawn, he launched his left wing in a surprise attack against the Russian northern flank. At noon, he reported to the High Command that he was "in combat in the line Sladow-Borowy—Bzymysl" against the V Siberian, VI Siberian, II Corps, and apparently parts of the VI Corps," and that the now initiated left envelopment was advancing. The general was unable to comply with the High Command's wish to withdraw some forces and move on Lowitsch due to the strength of the enemy directly in front of him. When the Russian advance from Lowitsch via Strzykow to the west became known, the High Command urged again at 1 p.m. that the I Reserve Corps should reach Lowitsch as soon as possible and hold the enemy there. General v. Morgen hoped for imminent full success at this time and replied: "The I Reserve Corps will advance to the area north of Lowitsch despite great exertion of the troops." By evening, the 1st Reserve Division on the left wing of the corps, under Lieutenant General v. Förster, had achieved a victory through their unexpected counterattack, capturing twelve guns and numerous prisoners; the enemy was pushed back here to the line Osmolin—Slubice. However, in front of Kiernoßa, the 36th Reserve Division was still in defense against strong superiority. All in all, the corps had gained hardly any ground that day. General v. Morgen reported to the Army High Command in the evening as his intention: "I Reserve Corps is striving to reach Lowitsch at all costs, even at the risk of being flanked."

To the right of the Vistula, the enemy had weakened more and more in front of the Thorn Corps, and further east he was retreating. Thus, General v. Dichtluth received the order from the Eastern High Command at noon on November 20, via an aviator, to immediately transfer the brigade of the XXV Reserve Corps previously assigned to him to the left bank of the Vistula; further troops were to follow. The bridge, whose construction had previously been intended at Wloclawek, was now to be built at Plock.

The Army High Command on November 20.  
Maps and sketches: No. 12.  
At the Army High Command in Hohensalza, on November 20, they were informed about the advances west and north of Lodz  
1) Seven kilometers east of Gombin.

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as well as being informed in a timely and accurate manner at Lowitsch, little was known

about the situation south of Lodz. Radio communication was frequently disrupted,

and aerial reconnaissance was severely hindered by the weather.

In the west and north of the city of Lodz, the battle was ongoing, and also

in the east, half of the 3rd Guard Division, as learned from a radio message

from the 9th Cavalry Division at 8:00 p.m., was still stuck at Bedon. With

about two divisions of infantry from the 6th Cavalry Division, General v. Scheffer

was deep in the enemy's rear, parts of his troops, according to an intercepted Russian radio message, already west of Andrespol; this

was bound to lead to the collapse of enemy resistance! At the same time,

however, the situation in the rear of the encirclement wing could also

raise serious concerns.

The High Command saw from various radio messages quite clearly

about the enemy and his intentions against the German eastern wing: From

the west and south, against the Scheffer group, the cavalry corps

Nowitlow, a brigade of the 10th Infantry Division, and recently from

Tomaschow, also the 5th Cavalry Division were deployed. In the east,

at Siernewize, the expected troop deployments had already

begun, from Lowitsch, the 43rd Infantry and the 13th Siberian

Reserve Division were marching on Strzybow. Although both divisions,

belonging to the Russian II and VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps, had already

suffered heavily in recent battles, their artillery had hardly been taken from them.

At Glowno, only five Russian battalions had been reported so far, but no artillery.

Nevertheless, the advance of perhaps three enemy divisions from the direction

Siernewize—Lowitsch against the rear of the XX Army Corps had to be expected.

To these Russian forces, the Army High Command could only

oppose what it withdrew from the attack front of the Pamenwitz Corps and the

XX Army Corps, along with the Dragoon Regiment 19 and perhaps

some units left behind on the rear connections of the reserve corps. Otherwise, everything depended on

rapid and decisive successes of the I Reserve Corps against the rear of the new Russian

attack, thus in the direction of Lowitsch. That General v. Morgen

would reach this place by November 21 was quite

unlikely, as he had to cover 24 kilometers of march to Lowitsch alone,

but the resistance of the enemy and the decreasing

strength of his own troops after nine days of almost uninterrupted fighting

had to be taken into account.

Despite the dangers threatening in the rear of the encirclement attack,

General v. Mackensen and his Chief of Staff were firmly determined to

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Encirclement operation against the enemy now tightly surrounded at Lodz to be carried through to a victorious end¹). What was learned about the enemy from Russian radio messages on November 20 could only reinforce this intention.

At 12 noon, the commander-in-chief of the Russian 2nd Army reported by radio to his supreme command that the enemy was continuing his deep encirclement of the right flank at Andrespol, his infantry had not significantly already occupied Feliksin and was also advancing on Wola-Ratkowa. It continued: "All reserves are deployed, little artillery ammunition, the troops' stance is heroic..." A similar call for help was directed to General Ruszki in Warsaw with the concluding sentence: "An energetic, rapid action by the 1st Army is necessary." A message was sent to an unknown recipient: "The situation is very serious... To save it, the army is going on the offensive, the XXIII Corps²) with the left wing first, while the 1st Siberian³) positions itself in its rear. To save the situation, at least one division must be sent to the Kalinow-Witkowo⁴) front, the brigade of the 10th Division has not yet arrived." At 4 p.m., General Scheidemann radioed the 43rd Infantry Division that he had gone on the counterattack with his left wing, and further: "The right wing is pinned down. The attack is progressing successfully, the rear is extremely endangered. The situation is critical, every minute is precious; help us out." The Russian radio traffic was unusually lively that day, and everything learned were important messages and orders, some of which were made particularly urgent. Thus, General Scheidemann alone had radioed the cavalry corps Nowikow between 2 and 4 p.m. three times "urgently" and "out of turn" to immediately move to Rotizyn, just south of the railway junction of Koluski⁵). It was also learned that General Ruszki in Warsaw on that day, "due to the isolation of the 2nd and 5th Army," had subordinated these two armies to the commander-in-chief of the 5th Army, General Plehwe.

The situation was evidently also extremely tense among the Russians. The decision hung by a thread; now it was a matter of holding out. The Russian attacks mentioned in the radio messages had not been much noticed on the German side so far. From the commander-in-chief

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Often, who had reserved command over the Breslau Corps, had its foremost brigade set on Sunisfa-Wola. This could give the cavalry corps Frommel the impetus for new action. General v. Mackensen therefore also ordered the Plüskow Corps to prepare for action again on November 21. Otherwise, no new instructions were given; it remained as previously ordered.

The Battles on November 21.

Maps and Sketches: No. 12.

November 21 was the first day in a long time with good flying weather; it was utilized to the fullest. On the far right wing of the army, the only brigade of the Breslau Corps ready for use, under Major General Schmiedefeld, supported by the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division, took the factory town of Sunisfa-Wola by noon. Parts of the 7th Infantry Division of the Russian V Corps were identified as opponents.

The Posen Corps found itself attacked during the morning and lost some ground. The order received around 11 a.m. to attack Lask together with the cavalry corps Frommel was therefore not executed. At 3:30 p.m., Lieutenant General v. Koch reported: "Situation of Posen Corps unfavorable, hope to hold next front to the east, left wing Schabet...". The northern adjoining parts of the cavalry corps were not attacked themselves, but also did not decide to flank the opponent of the Posen Corps; as the 38th Infantry Division remained far behind them on the left, the 5th and 8th Cavalry Divisions even moved several kilometers northwest.

At the Plüskow Corps, which had already received the order at 1 a.m. to be ready for attack, the order came at 9 a.m. that the 38th Infantry Division should attack Pabianice. However, it was 3:30 p.m. before the western wing of the division began to cross the Ner at two crossings; the attempt to also cross at Automstief was abandoned, as there were enemy forces on the southern bank. Meanwhile, General v. Plüskow had received aerial photographs showing the enemy in front of his front still appeared quite strong. Behind the front line of the Russians, from Sullano to Pabianice, three infantry brigades alone were reported as reserves, and additionally a five-kilometer-long column marching from Lask to the north. A Russian attack seemed imminent. As also the

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The left wing of the corps, the 36th Infantry Division, did not advance, so finally only the 76th Infantry Brigade of the 38th Division, which formed the extreme right wing, crossed the Ner. The opposing enemy forces seemed significantly smaller according to the night march observations than reported in the morning; however, the overall situation was still so unclear that the commander of the 38th Infantry Division — as stated in the war diary of the general command — "considered the situation on the south bank of the Ner too precarious for the brigade and feared a night advance over the Ner between his 76th Infantry Brigade and the 83rd." Meanwhile, General v. Plüskow reported that in the evening all troops were withdrawn to the north bank of the Ner. The division commander even ordered: "The constructed crossings are to be destroyed again today." Thus, the attack on this section of the front was abandoned for the time being; any impact on the enemy had ceased.

At the Pannewitz Corps, November 21st passed with fruitless attack attempts from both sides. Vigorous advances against the 22nd Infantry Division gave the local command posts the impression around noon that the enemy wanted to break through.

The XX Army Corps had been informed by the high command on November 21st at 6 a.m.: "Today, 1½ divisions from Rishgow are advancing north before Bormarsch into the enemy's rear. So hold and do not let through. From Lowitsch, only parts of the defeated 14th Siberian Division are coming." To protect the rear, only seven companies and three batteries of the corps under Colonel Küster at Strzyhow were stationed, as on the evening of November 20th. At 9 a.m., an air report came in, stating that numerous Russian bivouacs were identified in the area of Glowno—Bielawy—Lowitsch; a twelve-kilometer-long marching column, at least one division, was marching through Lowitsch to the southwest; two trains were under steam there. When this report was passed on to the high command, it had already ordered the 9th Cavalry Division to cover the army's rear at Zischeny. It responded reassuringly: The I Reserve Corps occupies Lowitsch today. This also seemed sufficient to the general command of the XX Army Corps.

At 11 a.m., Colonel Küster reported that the enemy was advancing from Glowno to the west and south. The Dragoon Regiment 19, previously stationed at Glowno, had moved westward. Almost simultaneously, an airman reported that south of Lodz, a Russian column about eight kilometers long, infantry and artillery, was marching towards Pabian-

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nize to the south. This could be interpreted by the XX Army Corps as a Russian retreat or as an attack against the Scheffer Group. General v. Scholtz reported this to the High Command and added: "Since we cannot count on pressure from the XXV Reserve Corps against the enemy, the XX Army Corps will continue the attack with full force." The High Command was very much in agreement with this decision, but assessed the prospects of the Scheffer Group differently. It reported that General v. Scheffer had reached the line Wandalin—Forest of Rud at 9:30 a.m. with 1½ divisions, and the left wing of the 3rd Guard Division had reached Olechow at 11 a.m. The High Command assumed that "the 3rd Guard Infantry Division must be so ready that the enemy will capitulate," and asked whether the impact of this action was already being felt at the XX Army Corps. "Attacks have not occurred anymore," was the response, "but the enemy is tenacious in defense."

Meanwhile, the XX Army Corps received a new aerial report about the enemy in the east: A three-kilometer-long infantry column had reached Jeszow from Sieremietze at 11 a.m.! The enemy was thus advancing in a total width of about 30 kilometers. The situation had become so acute that General v. Scholtz had to demand the utmost from his troops. From Olechow, southeast of Lodz, where the 3rd Guard Division was assumed to be, to the front of the XX Army Corps, the distance was only seven kilometers; from the south and north, German artillery fire now had to converge on the Russians. General v. Scholtz urged his two divisions to proceed ruthlessly to bring the battle at Lodz to a conclusion before the enemy advanced further in their own rear. However, the attack did not go beyond insignificant initial successes; nothing was noticed from the Scheffer Corps. Meanwhile, the situation in their own rear had become increasingly threatening.

At 1 p.m., artillery fire was heard east of Strykow; at 3:30 p.m., there was news that Russian riflemen were advancing in a five-kilometer width against Strykow and also against the Moschczenica section six kilometers south of this place; a German company in Bziesin was supposed to evade artillery before a Russian cavalry regiment. Thus, the enemy had approached the own front line only about five kilometers backward. The High Command could not provide any information about the success of the expected German 9th Cavalry Division at Bziesin according to the last report. Measures against the enemy in the east were not

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to postpone. The 37th Infantry Division received orders to withdraw a battalion, the 41st, "all dispensable" and send it to the Moschtscheniza section; however, the attack against the south was to continue. Hours of justified serious concern followed. Nothing was known about the status of the battle with the Scheffer group or the I Reserve Corps. General v. Scholz finally decided to withdraw the 74th Infantry Brigade fighting north of the Nowopolna forest from the front to deploy it at Strykow and south; the attack against the south had to be halted. However, when the enemy did not advance beyond the Moschtscheniza section by nightfall despite the weak German defenses, the situation was viewed more optimistically. The chief of staff of the corps, Colonel Hell, reported by telephone to Hohensalza around 8 p.m.: "The enemy advancing against Strykow and south is not considered dangerous, as he apparently lacks any energetic leadership. Only an infantry regiment with artillery is kept ready against him." The enemy at Błonień was driven back by a detachment of the 9th Cavalry Division; if this division fully arrives there tomorrow, the situation will "no longer be considered dangerous."

Meanwhile, Major General Reiser, as leader of the 41st Infantry Division, had already withdrawn his 74th Infantry Brigade from the previous front by 4 p.m. in view of the threat from Błonień and Strykow, to prepare it for defense against the east. Thus, only the 72nd Infantry Brigade, fighting in conjunction with the 3rd Guard Division, remained from this division in the attack, with which there was hardly any connection. In addition to the right wing of the 41st Infantry Division, Lieutenant General v. Staabs also had to withdraw the front of his 37th Infantry Division, which had already been severely reduced by detachments. Thus, on the evening of November 21, only the extreme right wing of the XX Army Corps, adjoining the corps at Pannewitz, remained in place with the front facing south; the entire remaining front of the corps had been moved three kilometers north from the Nowopolna—Błonień road, the left wing, the 74th Infantry Brigade, stood at a right angle to it with the front facing east. The connection to the 72nd Infantry Brigade fighting south of the Nowopolna forest was thus completely severed; in the more than five-kilometer-wide gap stood the enemy.

General v. Scheffer, with whom the Higher Cavalry Commander, Lieutenant General v. Richthofen, was also present, had ...

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Morning of November 20<sup>1)</sup>, unable to establish any connection with the army high command, as a wire line was missing, radio communication was repeatedly disrupted by nearby Russian stations, and his reserve corps did not have a single aircraft available. When the general could no longer postpone issuing new orders early on the morning of November 21, he had not been informed about the overall situation of the army for about 48 hours. He anticipated that the pressure from the Frommel cavalry corps from the west would soon become noticeable. He considered whether to continue the attack westward or northward, towards the XX Army Corps. At the same time, he felt how the Russian encirclement from the south and east was becoming increasingly threatening. Ammunition and supplies were already scarce, as the supply routes were long; since the enemy was close to Strykow<sup>2)</sup>, further supplies were initially questionable. Nevertheless, General v. Scheffer steadfastly adhered to fulfilling his mission; he was in full agreement with Major v. Massow, his chief of staff. Attack and victory remained the motto.

Given the unclear situation in the west, General v. Scheffer decided to attack northward with full force; the 6th Cavalry Division was to take sole responsibility for protection against the south and east. The first attack target was the Chojny section, running hard south of the city of Lodz from east to the Ner. The right wing, Guard Brigade Friedeburg, was to attack from Bevon to Olechow, the left wing of the 49th Reserve Division from Rzischow northward, with half of the 50th Reserve Division following. In this attack, the entire front of the corps had to be shortened to about seven kilometers, with the freed 9th Cavalry Division then reaching the area south of Pabianice to cover the left flank and block the enemy's routes to the southeast.

Shortly after issuing the orders, a radio message from the high command finally arrived at 7:30 a.m., which had been given at 4:20 a.m., stating: “(Urgent) To 9th Cavalry Division. Immediately notify XXV Reserve Corps that it must immediately attack the enemy's rear east and west of Lodz, without regard to takeover.” The message carried the note: “Delay due to foreign interference.” and General v. Scheffer had written below: “This is the first army order that clarified where the enemy's flank and rear are to be found

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are!" He needed to change nothing in the given orders. This view was further confirmed when at 9° the second half of the army order was also transmitted, which stated: "Deploy forces at Rzchow accordingly, let Kruschow follow, the outcome of the battle depends on it." As a response, the already mentioned report) was given: "Front line now Wandalin—Wald Ruda, now engaged at Nordpolna—Lodz. 50th Reserve Division set over Kruschow, but still temporarily bound."

General v. Scheffer was with the 49th Reserve Division, which marched from Rzchow in a column northward to Chojny. Near the forest of Ruda, it encountered resistance and was almost simultaneously heavily attacked from the left flank; the commanding general assumed that the Russians intended to cover their retreat over Pabianice to the south with this attack. Since the 9th Cavalry Division was still deployed with the 3rd Guard Division at this time, the 6th Cavalry Division was now ordered to advance at Dutowo; thus, the last was also deployed against the enemy at Lodz. Meanwhile, a very heavy battle developed at the 49th Reserve Division, which continued into the darkness.

As the outermost left wing of the 3rd Guard Division, the 5th Guard Regiment on foot advanced alone around 11° in a rapid thrust over the Chojny section to Dombrowa; the attached artillery had set the southern edge of the city of Lodz on fire from a distance of two kilometers, from which Russian infantry developed. In this situation, General v. Scheffer reported to the high command that Olechow was reached). The neighbors of the 5th Guard Regiment were still two to three kilometers back on the left and right, and so this regiment also had to soon retreat under all-round pressure. In the evening, the left half of the Guard Division, the Below Brigade, faced the enemy south of the Chojny section in a broad front; decisive progress was not achieved.

The 9th Cavalry Division had not come out by November 20th. When the high command ordered its departure to Błesin), it was not possible to withdraw the shooters engaged in combat in the open terrain. Only what was not set for deployment, in total a unit of about regiment strength), could-

1) p. 143. — 2) Gbenda. — 3) Cf. p. 142. — 4) Colonel Count v. der Goltz with six squadrons, two machine guns, and a battery. The largest part had just returned from support against Sierenzweize (p. 87), where only a partial success could be achieved due to the small strength (p. 207).

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was created. The Guard Brigade Friedeburg also had to halt its next night march to its division in view of the enemy in the Vistula lowlands. It remained stationary during the day in connection with the 9th Cavalry Division. In the evening, General v. Friedeburg wanted to maintain his position, which now extended south and west of Bedont on the right Vistula bank. To the north, the 72nd Infantry Brigade of the XX Army Corps joined on the left bank; then came the big gap.

As November 21 drew to a close, no decisive attack success had been achieved by the Scheffer group, and it had also not been possible to shake off the enemy in the rear.

The half 50th Reserve Division, setting off in the dark, was to march north around the enemy standing west of it. By noon it had reached Tuschyn, where in the afternoon hours it had to fend off an advancing enemy from the southeast. General v. Scheffer, who did not attach much importance to this enemy, wanted to have the half-division ready for the battle at Rzhowo and moved it in the evening over the Wolborka section to the area north of Tuschyn; there its previous enemy could also be repelled with small forces.

When the 50th Reserve Division marched north in the morning, the 6th Cavalry Division had to retreat from its far advanced position to escape the encirclement threatening from Goszimowicze and Bendkow. It positioned itself in the angle between Wolborka and Małga and stayed there; for both the order of the General Command to ride over Tuschyn to Dutowo and a radio message from the Army High Command to block the Russian ammunition supply from Petrikau to Lodz soon proved impractical in view of the actual situation.

General v. Scheffer, together with Lieutenant General v. Richthofen, had taken his command post in Rzhowo. He received at 3 p.m., presumably in response to an inquiry, from the Cavalry Corps Frommel the radio message: "Corps Posen and Higher Cavalry Command in ongoing battle at Schadel. Offensive on Lask currently not possible." — "That clarifies the situation on the right army wing," wrote a General Staff officer of the corps under this message. No help was to be expected from the west for the time being. How things stood at Błesin and Stryków was unknown. The general perception of the situation was reflected in the following reports from the XXV Reserve Corps to the Army High Command: Radio message from 11 p.m.: "49th Reserve Division marches west of Rzhowo against strong attack from Pabianice. 3rd Guard-

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Division Augustow¹) Battle against entrenched enemy ... 6th Cavalry Division advances on Dlutow." — Further radio message at 4:40 p.m.: "Enemy pushes with strong forces over the line Pabianize—Choiny in a southeasterly direction. Enemy from Petrikau with beginning Baby²). General impression: Attempt of a breakthrough to the south."

At the I Reserve Corps, General v. Morgen had looked forward to November 21 with great confidence. He had set the advance of the 36th Reserve Division in two columns over Kiernoßa and west of it on Lontisch; the 1st Reserve Division was to follow. At 8:30 a.m. he reported to the Army High Command: "Today again eight guns, three machine guns taken, thus in previous battles around 15,000 prisoners, 31 guns, 40 machine guns. Resistance against us probably caused by the intervention of the Russian II Corps. 36th Reserve Division still in good advancing combat. Enemy on the right wing retreats to the west. Reserve Corps will reach Lowitsch today." But it soon became clear that the enemy at Kiernoßa and south still held his position from the previous day. At 5:15 p.m. it was reported to the Army High Command: the 36th Reserve Division had "encountered strong resistance; is now in the process of breaking this resistance. It will happen today." Also from the east, the enemy had attacked, he would "be eliminated and we will reach Lowitsch today." Another 3,000 prisoners were made and three machine guns captured. The booty will be even greater this evening." Then followed an addition, from which it emerged that the enemy, who had been observed the day before marching from Lowitsch to the west, had turned north over Bielawy—Sobota and was now entrenched in the angle between Bzura and Sludwia. Lowitsch was strongly occupied by the enemy. The entire report concluded: "Tomorrow Lowitsch will be attacked."

However, with this confident view of the General Command, the successes at the front did not keep pace. By the evening of November 21, it had not been possible to defeat the enemy. He held the edge of the shallow stream bed, which runs east past Kiernoßa to the south to Sludwia, and thus blocked, in conjunction with the parts standing west of Sludwia, the roads to Lowitsch in a broad front as before.

¹) Two kilometers north of Dombrowa, a point that the division actually reached. — ²) Hard east of Gozimowicze.

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General v. Morgen had already anticipated during the day that combat-ready parts of the K o r p s T h o r n would engage on the right bank of the Vistula over Slubice. The first to be transferred, the 99th Reserve Brigade of the 50th Reserve Division, had been assigned to him. Lieutenant General v. Ditfurth had reported to the High Command 9 that the entire brigade would be "transferred by this afternoon" and was to march on Ilow; "two battalions Brochem") and two batteries will follow immediately...". However, the crossing was so slow due to high water levels and strong currents that by the evening of November 21, only a single battalion was on the march to Slubice, and further forces could only follow significantly later. That was a disappointment.

The Army High Command on November 21.

Maps and Sketches: No. 12.

The Army High Command in Hohensalza had confidently expected that November 21 would bring the decision of the battle and thus of the current campaign through the destruction or capture of the Russians at Lodz. The morning report, which on this day at 9:30 a.m., as far as can be determined for the first time, went directly to the Supreme Army Command"), concluded: "Mood good, things are moving forward." When favorable news from the Scheffer group about their progress in the south of the city arrived in the morning hours, it was believed that the Russian surrender was imminent. This view was supported by the intercepted calls for help from the Russian 2nd Army on the same day: During the night, General Scheidemann had sent a message to the Russian forces stationed at Glowno, which concluded with the sentence: "There is great danger in the rear; the situation is critical; every minute is precious. Help!" A radio message at 6 a.m. began: "The army has deployed all reserves. The 10th Division Brigade cannot be found." A report from General Scheidemann indicated that the Russian I Corps, which had been fighting against the German XX Army Corps for the third day, had turned back to face the attack of General z. Scheffer. This report concluded: "The supply of ammunition is hindered by the appearance of enemy

1) 21st Landwehr Brigade. — 2) The 8th Army and the Woyrsch Army had already reported directly several days earlier. An order directing these reports could not be determined. The Supreme Commander East seems to have initially learned nothing of them; nothing certain could be determined. — 3) p. 143.

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Cavalry on the Pabianize—Petrikau road was extremely hindered.” The commander of the 5th Army, General Plehwe, to whom the 2nd was now subordinate, reported to the superior command about the seriousness of the situation: “As a last resort to counter the encirclement, the weak Nowikow Corps appeared until now.”

The already mentioned aviation report of the march of an eight-kilometer-long Russian column, infantry and artillery, from Pabianize to the south¹) prompted the order to General v. Frommel: “Enemy departing to Petrikau. Begin relentless pursuit there today.” Then came aviation reports from the Pannwitz Corps: “... Our troops have already crossed Lask ...”; “a three-kilometer-long Russian column is marching from Lask to Pabianize. Besides the already mentioned eight-kilometer-long column, marching from Pabianize to the south, another was reported at noon, marching in the opposite direction, from the south to Pabianize; “at least one army corps in Pabianize,” it was further reported. Almost simultaneously, a report came from General v. Frommel, he was fighting at Schawel, “Offensive on Lask currently not possible.” A clear picture could not be gained from this radio message and the apparently contradictory reports of the aviators²), the high command in Hohensalza remained of the opinion that the enemy was departing from the area of Pabianize to the southeast.

From the east, against the rear of the German encirclement, one had to reckon, according to Russian radio messages, with 2½ divisions of infantry (43rd, half of the 55th, and 13th (Siberian) under General Slußarjenko and two cavalry divisions (Guard Cossacks and 5th), further from the south as before on the half 10th Infantry Division and about three cavalry divisions of the Nowikow Corps. This was such a dangerous threat in terms of numbers that one might have doubted whether the initiated encirclement operation could still be brought to a good end. Such doubts did not arise for the Mackensen high command. The enemy in the rear was not highly regarded, and there was rock-solid confidence in the German troops that they would quickly deal with the enemy at Lodz, now that he was so closely encircled, through a relentless attack from the south; then the ghosts in the rear would also vanish. Thus, it was held

¹) p. 143. — ²) From the very detailed Russian accounts, it appears that on November 21, no movements of larger troop bodies took place in the Lask—Pabianize area; nor were there any large troop concentrations in and around Pabianize. It therefore seems that what the aviators reported as troops were movements of vehicle columns and withdrawals of wounded and similar.

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steadfastly determined: to continue with full force against Lodz, only the absolutely necessary for defense in the rear! At 3:30 in the afternoon, the Supreme Army Command was informed upon their immediate inquiry: "Battle at Lodz is approaching a favorable decision. Corps Morgen is approaching Lowitsch, had a favorable day yesterday with great war booty."

By evening, there were still no reports of any decisive successes. However, in the army leader's decision, there was no wavering, although flyers at 4:00 in the afternoon again claimed to have identified a 17-kilometer-long column of all arms marching from the southeast on Lask. At 6:00 in the evening, it was radioed to General Scheffer: "Avoid house-to-house fighting in Lodz. Only use artillery, conclude with infantry." Between 9:00 in the evening and midnight, orders for November 22 were sent in individual instructions to the corps. They clearly show the understanding and intentions of the High Command.

The cavalry corps Frommel received the order: "In conjunction with Corps Posen and the 38th Infantry Division, on the 22nd, launch a vigorous offensive towards Lask, which will be reached the same day by Corps Breslau. Rearward movements of the enemy have been identified. Break the last resistance! Early advance of the army cavalry towards Wadlew—Petrikan is urgently desired."

The XVII Army Corps was to hold back its 36th Infantry Division from Corps Plüskow. The order began: "Enemy seems to be standing in front of our position only with rearguards." Both divisions of the corps "will maintain the closest contact with the enemy today and during the night, staying close to him during rearward movements." They were to attack west of Lodz towards the southeast on November 22, with the 22nd Infantry Division closing off the city itself in the west and north.

The XX Army Corps and the 3rd Guard Division were instructed to also proceed "to destroy the enemy east of Lodz." The XX Army Corps was again to ensure security at Strykow; the impact of the I Reserve Corps on Glowno is expected tomorrow in the course of the afternoon."

The XXV Reserve Corps was initially ordered: "The 3rd Guard Division must destroy the enemy east of Lodz early tomorrow with the XX Army Corps in a ruthless attack, preferably pushing them away from the city, deep infantry in... XXV Reserve Corps prevents enemy at Richgow-

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... breakthrough to the southeast, digging in and echeloning to the left. 6th Cavalry Division blocks at Dlutow, remains unengaged." However, this order was changed at 11 p.m. due to a new Russian radio message, in which General Scheidemann again described his situation as "extremely serious," as follows: "According to reliable reports, only one cavalry division opposite the 49th Reserve Division this evening. (Only three battalions this evening) sent against the 49th Reserve Division. Breakthrough therefore unlikely. Corps must attack more vigorously west of Lodz tomorrow morning, 3rd Guard Infantry Division east of Lodz."

Finally, the 9th Cavalry Division received the order not to move to Piotrkau — a brigade was sufficient there — but to Petrikau, to block the supply to Lodz.

New instructions have not been sent to the I Reserve Corps; its target remained Lowitsch, its task the protection of the army's rear.

All these orders were based on the assumption that the enemy would try to escape from Lodz — perhaps already during the night. Disregarding the danger threatening from the east and south, every last man was to be set in motion to settle accounts with the enemy at Lodz. Here, the capture of perhaps an entire Russian army as booty was beckoning?).<header>November 22. The End of the Encirclement Operation.</header><footer>Maps and sketches: Nos. 13 and 14.</footer>On the morning of November 22, there was thick fog, followed by snow flurries.

On the right wing of the army, the joint attack of the Breslau and Posen corps, the Frommel cavalry corps, and the 38th Infantry Division on Lask did not take place; the attacking power of the involved units was too weak. Whether more could have been achieved with unified command on this wing, for which the command of the XI Army Corps was available, remains uncertain. Major General Schmiedecke advanced with his Breslau Landwehr Replacement Brigade from Stunfka-Wola in the morning and pushed Russian advance troops back to the east. It was the first day of combat for the bri-

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gave; but it only reached Gajeznowit, eight kilometers west of Lask, supported by the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division. The Posen Corps wanted to advance "as soon as the situation allowed." It did not come to that; Russian artillery fire and probing by weak enemy detachments made the own front appear threatened in places. In the evening, the Posen Landsturm was back in its old position after weak own attack attempts. The cavalry corps prepared for pursuit and waited for the 38th Infantry Division, which was to cross the Ner with the right wing at 6:00 a.m. However, since the bridges had been broken again the evening before1), the advance was delayed. During the day, the 76th Infantry Brigade, as the right wing of the division, pushed Russian advance troops south of the Ner back a few kilometers, but then remained in front of stronger resistance. The other brigade remained opposite Lutomiersk north of the Ner.

At the XVII Army Corps, Lieutenant General v. Pannwitz had ordered a unified attack for his two divisions after strong artillery preparation. However, he reported to the High Command early in the morning that he did not have the impression that the enemy was withdrawing or suffering from a lack of ammunition; rather, the opposite was the case. On the other hand, the own artillery complained about poor ammunition; the artillery preparation for the attack had begun. Soon the report followed that the attack would "not be easy and would only advance slowly, as the Russians have several positions one behind the other." In fact, it was only possible to gain some ground in a few places during the day. "It turns out that the attack strength of the troops has significantly decreased," reads the record of this day in the war diary of the General Command. Just as little as the divisions of the XVII Army Corps, the subordinate 22nd Infantry Division advanced.

Meanwhile, partly at the request of the XX Army Corps, countermeasures had to be taken against the enemy in the rear, who had temporarily advanced between Westküla and the road from Piontek to Biala and thus to only eight kilometers from Ssjersh. In total, however, three companies of newly introduced replacements, some squadrons, and 1½ batteries were sufficient to push the enemy back behind the Moschtscheniza section.

For the XX Army Corps, General v. Scholtz had again ordered the attack with full force to the south; south of the forest of

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Biontischyn was to involve the 72nd Infantry Brigade from the east. For the defense in the rear, only half of the 74th Infantry Brigade was designated; it was assumed, however, that a brigade of the 9th Cavalry Division was stationed at Bzhsesin. Only upon issuing the orders did the General Command learn that its two divisions had withdrawn from the enemy in the evening and taken up new positions further north. Although it was possible to lead the troops back to the old line without a fight before dawn, an attack could no longer be carried out. General v. Scholtz had his position in Dobra, only four kilometers southwest of Strykow. At 11 a.m., he informed the High Command via telephone: "Yesterday, the enemy reported from Jesow is advancing against the flank and rear of the army corps. This threatens the left flank to such an extent that further attack is excluded and will be prevented. Breakthrough between the 37th Infantry Division and Strykow to be prevented. Large baggage of the XXV Reserve Corps taken yesterday. Ammunition replenishment for XXV Reserve Corps and 72nd Infantry Brigade now excluded." The enemy in front of the front is exactly as yesterday; "strong resistance everywhere."

As the view of the Army High Command, Lieutenant Colonel Kundt reported to the supreme army leadership at 9 a.m. via telephone: "Decision expected east of Lodz today, where the I Russian Army Corps is encircled by our XX Army Corps and 3rd Guard Division from the north, east, and south. — The enemy defends itself along the entire line with extraordinary tenacity; continuous counterattacks by day and night. The danger of a breakthrough by the Russian 2nd and 5th Army is not considered high by Army High Command 9. Enemy troops reported advancing from the east and southeast. These belong mostly to the repeatedly defeated Russian corps. — XXV Reserve Corps is today southeast of Lodz. The attacks of the Russian reserves are directed against this corps. It is hoped that XXV Reserve Corps can hold out. On our right flank, the combined Corps Breslau Lask reaches today. 9th Cavalry Division is marching on Petrikau to block the Russian supply route. Corps Morgen is north of Lowitsch, supposed to take Lowitsch today. According to a recently received radio message, the Russians have suffered very heavy losses and have no more reserves. The situation is considered quite favorable by the Army High Command, even if the decision takes longer than expected."

Significantly more serious than expressed in this report, saw

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the situation was reported at the same time to the Commander-in-Chief East.

For the High Command 9, the growing danger became apparent hour by hour,

threatening especially the Scheffer Group, and then also the XX Army Corps.

The reports received in Hohensalza showed no success anywhere that could

offset the immediate threat to the rear. Little was expected from the right

flank of the army anyway. The reports from the front of the XVII Army

Corps and the 22nd Infantry Division emphasized the stubborn resistance

of the enemy. The XXV Reserve Corps, whose shortening could primarily

bring about a turnaround, had already reported during the night: "Corps

will not be able to continue the offensive in the chosen direction if further

threatened from the rear and flank." The High Command had replied:

"Against XXV Reserve Corps, the repeatedly defeated Cavalry Corps

Nowikow, reinforced by six to seven battalions, has been deployed. If

advance is not possible, holding the position is essential." Then the 9th

Cavalry Division reported that, according to prisoner statements, four

regiments of the 6th Siberian Division were advancing from the east on

Bzheziny; according to a new Russian radio message, other Siberian

battalions now seemed to have blocked the way to Pabianitze for the

XXV Reserve Corps. The prospects for a decisive and rapid success of

the Scheffer Group were dwindling. The situation was no better for the

I Reserve Corps, which was still fighting northwest of Lowitsch; the

enemy had also reinforced here. General v. Morgen reported no longer

as confidently as in the previous days. To the question posed in the

morning: "Can the Army High Command expect that the I Reserve

Corps will reach Lowitsch today?" the answer was: "I Reserve Corps

is engaged in combat, which is difficult due to great fatigue (tenth day

of combat) and losses. Lowitsch is still being pursued; absolute certainty

of achieving this goal cannot be given." So here too, a standstill, at

least only slow progress! But the situation was pressing. Even the

capture of Lowitsch was now hardly sufficient to help the XX Army

Corps and save the initiated encirclement operation. Rapid advance

to Glowno should have been anticipated; but that was out of the question.

The Russian radio messages made it clear that the enemy no longer

thought of giving up Lodz. General Scheidemann reported that the

"fierce attacks" of the Germans northwest of the city by the

1) p. 192.

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The united efforts of the Guard — meant was the Guard Division of the XXIII Corps — and Siberians were repelled. Against the German encirclement movement, countermeasures were underway, aiming to cut off the German forces deployed there. General Scheidemann had indeed described the situation on November 21 at 8:30 PM as "extremely serious"; however, his evening report to the army command concluded with the sentence: "The mood of the troops is elevated in anticipation of the intervention of the 1st Army in the rear of the Germans. The morning report of November 22, which arrived at 9:15 AM, sounded more serious again. It stated: "... The losses reach 70%. The reserves are almost completely exhausted. There is no news of the approach of General Slussarenko¹). His attack is not noticeable and has so far had no influence on the army ..."

At the German High Command 9, there was reluctance to accept the law from the enemy, wanting at least to hold the gained position. The main goal was to re-establish the connection to Group Scheffer and to regain control of Bischofshayn, which seemed lost. The 6th Siberian Division was now assumed there. At noon, the XX Army Corps received the order to retake the place, while simultaneously the 9th Cavalry Division²) was to advance from the south. When General v. Scholtz reported that executing the order was "impossible today" for his corps, as he still had two companies and four batteries available and could not withdraw anything from the front due to Russian artillery fire before dark, the High Command replied that even this small troop strength must suffice to carry out the thrust.

Meanwhile, the Russian pressure on both sides of Strylow became increasingly stronger. As opponents in the east, besides the Russian 43rd, as well as half of the 55th and 13th Siberian Reserve Divisions, a Turkestan rifle brigade was now also identified. On the German side, only about five battalions and some squadrons had been deployed against them so far; this was not sufficient for the duration. General v. Scholtz had requested support from the XVII Army Corps. But almost everything in this corps was also committed to the front; the 22nd Infantry Division believed itself threatened by an imminent Russian attack.

At noon, a flyer from the XX Army Corps reported, due to

¹) Leader of the forces expected from Lownitsch.  
²) See p. 152 and 154.

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was forced by the fog to descend at the I. Reserve Corps: This corps was fighting, "heavily pressured by Russians," northwest of Lomitsch. "Advancing ... today very unlikely. Intervention in battle at Strykow excluded." Thus, the last hope faded. The enemy pressed more and more heavily both south and north of this place. From the church tower in Dobra, long Russian columns were observed advancing from the north on Biala, into the rear of the corps. Further holding seemed impossible. General v. Scholz decided to bend his left wing northward to throw the enemy at Strykow. At 2:30 in the afternoon, he reported this intention to the high command.

In Hohensalza, one could no longer escape the compulsion of the situation. Nowhere on the front was success in sight, but the conditions in the rear became more unbearable by the hour. The movement intended by the XX. Army Corps meant abandoning the promisingly begun encirclement operation and had to bring the three German infantry and two cavalry divisions fighting in the enemy's rear into an extremely difficult situation. It was not easy for General v. Mackensen and his chief of staff to agree to General v. Scholz's decision. "You are thereby taking responsibility for a serious decision," was the response to the high command on the telephone, and they were asked again whether the Russian attack was really so threatening, whether other countermeasures were not possible. General v. Scholz replied that the 41st Infantry Division was still holding, but it was doubtful for how long, as the enemy was continually extending his right wing; their own infantry was fully engaged; the divisional commanders had reported in response to an inquiry that holding at Nowosolna and Strykow was impossible.

General v. Mackensen now gave his consent for the XX. Army Corps to withdraw the front to Nowosolna. However, he rejected the corps' further proposal to also bend back the 22nd Infantry Division on the right, so that they could then attack more strongly at Strykow. The decision received at 3:30 in the afternoon at the XX. Army Corps in Dobra shows the overall view of the high command at that time. It stated: "The army high command agrees that the line Mosfelur^1)–Strykow should be held. The high command should use Nowosolna for deceiving the enemy.

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leave behind those who can bind the weakened enemy in the front. The Army High Command will attempt to make forces available for the offensive against the enemy's flank. It is expected to be possible to withdraw forces from the XVII Army Corps against Stryków and in the direction of Bzúrahin other forces. The backward movements should only be carried out as far as the tactical situation requires."

With this decision, the encirclement attack against Lodz was abandoned. That the decision was not made too early was shown when, as early as 3:35 p.m., the report came in that the enemy was marching westward from Bzúrahin in two columns. The Scheffer group also had to be recalled. At 4:34 p.m., the order for retreat was issued to them.

3. The Restoration of the Front from November 22 to 25.

a) The Danger in the Rear of the XX Army Corps until noon on November 24.

Maps and sketches: Nos. 13, 14, and 16.

On the afternoon of November 22, General v. Mackensen considered the encirclement east of Lodz to have failed. His deep-rooted conviction of the unconditional superiority of the German troops left no concern about the fate of the Scheffer group. He also remained unwavering in his intention to penetrate the gap in the Russian overall front south of Lodz, to separate the enemy's 5th and 2nd Armies from the other armies. If the Russian cavalry corps Nowikow bit against the German XXV Reserve Corps, perhaps the field was free for a major operation of the German Northern Army between Bzúra and from the north on Petrikau, against the point where all rear connections of the Russian forces standing at Lodz could be paralyzed with one blow. Thus, it seemed, one also helped the German troops most effectively in the south as well as in the north of Lodz.

The order, which was issued to the Scheffer group on November 22 at 4:34 p.m., read: "Enemy attacks XX Army Corps over Bzúrahin and Stryków. XXV Reserve Corps disengages from the enemy at Dunelbew behind the Miasga section. Tomorrow attack Bzúrahin to relieve XX Army Corps and regain own rear connections. 3rd Guard Infantry Division with parts of 41st Infan-

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and blocks tomorrow the Miasga section to the west in line Bedon–karpin inclusive. Higher Cavalry Commander 1 with 6th and 9th Cavalry Division is to be freed and moves to the Bendkow area to completely interrupt Russian supplies via Petritau and Wolborz. Destroy the bridge in Wolborz. Confirm receipt and report intended execution.” Damaging the enemy was never the goal; worries and faint-heartedness were unknown to the German 9th Army's high command. In such a view, General v. Mackensen always found unwavering support from his advisors, Major General Grünert and Lieutenant Colonel.

At 6 p.m., Lieutenant Colonel Kundt gave the following message by telephone to Mézières: “Before enemy forces advancing from Tomaschow–Siernewize (apparently the second intended for Kaufaus), the XX Army Corps had to be withdrawn from east of Lodz to Strykow. XXV Reserve Corps with half of the Guard Reserve Corps will be moved today from south of Lodz to Bendkow and will attack northeast tomorrow. This movement is also necessary to be able to supply the XXV Reserve Corps. Our right wing and XVII Army Corps have advanced today. Main reserve Breslau today Lask. Tomorrow stands before Lowitsch, front to the south and southeast. Dichtby is to be overlooked at Plotz. 6th and 9th Cavalry Division will move to Petritau tomorrow to further cut off supplies. Frommel with the 7th Austrian Cavalry Division will advance south of Lask to the southeast tomorrow to close off the enemy at Lodz from the south. — Russian army leader radioed, he had 70 percent losses. The Russians are still tough. — After completing the temporary task of the XX and XXV Corps, the old idea will be resumed. But it will take a few days until the final decision.”

Then came the evening reports from the front. They showed again that no significant successes were achieved or in sight anywhere; the enemy was entrenched almost everywhere opposite and kept probing with parts. In the process, numerous prisoners were brought in at various sections — the XVII Army Corps and I Reserve Corps each reported 1000 — and that also seemed to show how brittle the enemy was¹). On the other hand, the I Reserve Corps held its position, whose further advance for the situation at Strykow was-

¹) In fact, the prisoners in these days mostly came from the bayonet attacks of the Russians, which were repeatedly undertaken with great dash, during which parts were then intercepted.

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was decisive in the assessment of the prospects of his attack, now much more reserved than before. He had faced heavy fighting on November 22 and wanted to continue attacking Lowitsch on the 23rd; but then it was said: "All enemy troops marching from Lowitsch to the west and southwest have returned to Lowitsch). The enemy there is much stronger than assumed; he has heavy artillery and many batteries..." "In the rear of the XX Army Corps, the enemy had not advanced further by evening at Strykow. For the parts of the 41st Infantry Division standing south of the Brionskhin forest, the order was given to regain connection with the corps. However, whether this order could be carried out was doubtful.

The full seriousness of the situation south of Lodz was shown by a radio message from General v. Scheffer at 7:15 in the evening from 3:45 in the afternoon²). After that, the enemy was already close in the rear of the XXV Reserve Corps at the Miazga crossings, but a successful attack by the Guard was doubtful. General v. Scheffer asked for new instructions. He must have already received the order from 4:34 in the afternoon. To supplement this, Lieutenant Colonel Kundt sent the following radio message at 9:30 in the evening: "Commander-in-Chief trusts that the breakthrough to the east will succeed for the XXV Reserve Corps and the parts with it, if it is initiated with foresight and carried out with ruthless bravery. Direction for cavalry divisions Benfow, all other Bzheim." This order, however, which adhered to the use of cavalry against the south, has not been changed.

Through an attack by the German right wing and the center, the Scheffer group could have been effectively helped, but the last few days had clearly shown that the troops of the right wing were no longer able to attack; the striking power of the center, however, was paralyzed by the enemy's attacks in their rear; one had to be satisfied if they held their ground. Thus, General v. Plüskow, to whom the Corps Posen was subordinated alongside his 38th Infantry Division, could still receive the order in the evening to hold their position for the XVII Army Corps, which retained the 22nd Infantry Division. The cavalry corps Frommel alone retained an attack task; it was to push over Lask to Petrikau into the large gap in the Russian front standing here, while at the same time further south the brigades of the "Breslau" corps ordered by the Commander-in-Chief East were to advance.

¹) Note from the High Command: "Na na!" — ²) p. 173. — ³) Cf.

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On November 23, the two southern Landsturm brigades of the Breslau Corps suffered setbacks; they were pushed back to Schtscherzow and from Widawa against the Warthe; only at Stumfka-Wola did the Landwehr Brigade Schmiedecke manage to advance slightly. In the evening report of the corps to Breslau, it was stated about the Landsturm: "... We lack officers and non-commissioned officers. The troops are fighting well. Companies are led by non-commissioned officers, one to two officers per battalion." The cavalry corps Frommel, without the 8th Division, which remained inserted between the Posen Corps and the 38th Infantry Division, moved after a late start to flank the brigade attacked at Stumfka-Wola, but did not advance further than this.

In the section of General v. Plüskow at the Posen Corps, which was still standing at Schadef, in the evening "the general impression prevailed that the enemy no longer stood in its previous strength, mainly artillery"; it seemed that one only had to reckon with weak forces of the enemy. Whether this view was reported further up is not known. The Posen Corps itself was not able to exploit the apparently favorable situation. The Landsturm is "unreliable," was the judgment about one of the brigades on this day; an order pointed out "that from one battalion 200 men, who had reported sick, had marched from the front line to a rearward location for examination." The leadership found itself in the extremely difficult situation of having to reckon with a troop that, despite good will, was in no way up to the high demands placed on field troops in terms of composition, training level, and equipment. They were not in a position to replace the Landsturm with combat-ready units. — At the active 38th Infantry Division, the 76th Infantry Brigade, standing in great breadth south of the Ner section, repelled a Russian attack in the evening, but then felt broken through by a new Russian thrust in the darkness and retreated again to the northern Ner bank. The 8th Cavalry Division, which filled the gap to the Posen Corps, found itself compelled to follow this movement by moving northwards on the left Ner bank.

At the XVII and XX Army Corps, there was calm on the front directed towards the south. All attention was focused on the enemy in the rear. General v. Scholtz had moved his staff to Sgierzh on the evening of November 22 to ensure the urgently needed contact with General v. Pammentz for the next tasks.

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to position. Under the cover of rear guards left behind to the south, the front change of the XX Army Corps to the east and north was carried out without disturbance during the darkness. Of the 21 battalions and about 20 batteries that the corps had available north of the Białystok forest, only three-quarters were positioned against the enemy at Strykow, who was increasingly extending his front to the north and west. Without help from the XVII Army Corps, it seemed no longer possible to master this opponent. At 8 a.m., the high command was informed: "If nothing is done against the enemy, who apparently undertakes something with stronger forces against our rear connections, the situation of the XX Army Corps will not be considered safe." At the XVII Army Corps, too, the threat to the rear had to be addressed by sending troops. At 9:15 a.m., General v. Pannwitz informed the high command: "The situation at Biala has developed unfortunately." The weak detachment deployed there had to retreat and was now only four kilometers from Sgierzh. The XVII Army Corps was now also forced to deploy stronger forces to the north.

At 11:30 a.m., a radio message from the Scheffer group was received at the army high command: "Majsa section crossed at 9 a.m. with main forces. Enemy advancing from direction. XXV Reserve Corps attacking ..."; the corps was taking 10,000 prisoners with it. When this message was immediately forwarded to the supreme army command, Lieutenant Colonel Kundt added reassuringly on the telephone: "There is not the slightest cause for concern, the operation has so far proceeded smoothly. On the rest of the front, attack alternates with counterattack; the army high command has the impression that the Russians are partly crumbling strongly. — The army high command has the urgent desire to hold out and is quite confident." Shortly after General v. Scheffer's report, a radio message also came from the Richthofen cavalry corps; it covered the rear of the reserve corps, so it had not advanced on Bendkow. His report concluded: "Horses no longer suitable for larger operations due to constant lack of fodder."

These reports prompted the order to the XX Army Corps at noon that it should now "also engage in the direction of Błesin to intervene in the battle as much as possible. It is to be assumed that the lower section at the supreme army command; the words reproduced here in bold are underlined there.

1) According to the transcript at the supreme army command; the words reproduced here in bold are underlined there.

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strive for the corps to gradually regain its old position at Nowosolna.

Around the same time, pilots reported that due to unfavorable weather,

they had only just been able to begin their activities, and that all roads

behind the Russian front at Strykow-Biala were clear. The enemy there

did not seem too strong, but his pressure was such that an attack by the

XX Army Corps in the direction of Bzura was not to be considered for

the time being. At 3:30 in the afternoon, General v. Scholtz reported:

"The XX Army Corps has been attacked along the entire line but can

hold its ground." The First General Staff Officer wrote to the High

Command: "Again an unnecessarily alarming message."

By evening, about fifteen battalions of the XX and five of the XVII

Army Corps, along with corresponding artillery units and three cavalry

regiments, were deployed with the front facing northeast and north against

the enemy, who had advanced as far as west of Strykow and south of Biala.

A single German battalion with a battery was also advancing from Piontel

against the rear of this enemy. The battle seemed to have come to a halt.

The situation was more favorable for the I Reserve Corps. Contrary

to expectations, the Russians had begun their retreat to Lowitsch on the

night of November 23; Lieutenant General v. Morgen followed them.

He had already withdrawn a brigade and the cavalry of the corps to the

west and was set to capture the southern Bzura bank at Sobotka. His

corps had also received a welcome reinforcement from the arrival of the

99th Reserve Brigade of the XXV Reserve Corps from Plosz. However,

due to the strong ice drift that had since occurred, no further units from

the right bank of the Vistula could be expected; the 99th Reserve Brigade

had only a single battery, and its train was still on the right bank of the

Vistula. Thus, General v. Mackensen had to agree to the proposal of

Lieutenant General v. Ditfurth, who wanted to march back to the fortress

of Thorn with the Thorn Corps without the 21st Landwehr Brigade,

which was to remain at Plozk, to cross the river there. Since almost 100

kilometers had to be covered on the right bank of the Vistula alone,

the involvement of these forces in Lodz could not be counted on for the

time being.

The Scheffer Group was informed of the situation by radio at noon

with the concluding sentence: "In principle, the XXV Reserve Corps and

the units with it still intend today

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reach, otherwise tomorrow." By evening, only a report from the cavalry corps came in from these troops, which covered the rear of the reserve corps at Karpin and eastward; this itself was assumed to be south of Błesin.

November 23 had brought such an escalation of the situation that even the army high command of Mackensen, so confident of victory, had to take serious concern. The renewed advance of strong Russian forces from Lowitsch to the west had completely disrupted the cohesion of the army: South of Lodz, three infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions of General v. Scheffer were surrounded by the enemy, north of Lowitsch 2½ reserve divisions of Lieutenant General v. Morgen were separated from the rest of the army by a wide gap where the enemy stood. Their main forces were close to the enemy north and west of Lodz after days of unsuccessful fighting and partly heavy own losses. About seven infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions had a total extension of about 60 kilometers from the area south of Stumska-Wola over Autowjerst to Sgierz. These divisions had severely dwindled after eleven days of continuous marches and battles with inadequate accommodation in the Polish early winter.

In the hope of still crushing the enemy at Lodz before help arrived, the forces had been strained to the limit of possibility; now exhaustion had set in without achieving the goal. Reserves were no longer available, but the enemy was numerically far superior and partly with completely fresh troops. As far as was known, he had at least 23 infantry and 5 cavalry divisions in the area between Włocławek on the Vistula and Sieradz on the Warthe; in contrast, the own army, including the Scheffer group, counted only about twelve infantry divisions and five cavalry divisions in total. Above all, the German 9th Army was now pushed into defense; thus it was questionable whether the troops of General v. Scheffer could still be saved. To help them, the enemy at Strykow had to be defeated first; here only the I. Reserve Corps could bring help.

Already at 5° in the afternoon, the order was given to General v. Morgen

1) 5th Army = 6 Divisions (V., XIX., I. Siberian Corps). — 2nd Army = 8 Divisions (IV., I., XXIII., II. Siberian Corps). — 1st Army = 9 Divisions (II., VI., V. Siberian VI. Siberian Corps, 2 Turkish Brigades, 55th Division). — 3rd Army = 3 Cavalry Divisions (5th, 8th, 14th). — Charpentier = 2 Cavalry Divisions (3rd Kos., Rauf.).

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proceeded, on November 24, with two brigades to strike the enemy at Strykow from the rear; otherwise, the corps was to hold at Lowitsch and send cavalry with guns to Stjerniewice against the Warsaw railway to prevent the transport of further Russian reinforcements. No new orders were issued otherwise. Preparations were made to resume the attack anew after clarifying the situation at Błesinyn and Strykow with reinforcements, which had meanwhile been promised by the Commander-in-Chief East and were expected in a few days¹). In the written directive issued for this in the evening, it was stated: "In this battle, it is crucial that the army maintains its currently favorable position, keeps close contact with the enemy, avoids unnecessary losses, and prepares for the new decision. Upon recognizing any backward movements of the enemy, relentless pursuit and seizing... On our part, everything must be done to strengthen the activity of the troops so that we are prepared for the new battles. The tough and brave enemy must not be underestimated. However, it is also imperative to warn against overestimating the enemy and his measures."

In this situation, the Commander-in-Chief East inquired whether the army could hold the current front. He suggested, if necessary, to retreat behind the section of Lentschitza²). General v. Mackensen saw no reason for this for the time being, especially not as long as the troops of General v. Scheffer had not regained the connection. However, on the initiative of the Commander-in-Chief East, the commanding generals were consulted on how long they could hold the current line. Meanwhile, General v. Mackensen, in line with his view, reported to the Supreme Army Command at 8:45 in the evening: "From XXV. Reserve Corps, with the 3rd Guard Division and part of the 41st Infantry Division, no final news yet. Situation there probably good. Army High Command is certain that it must break through northwards towards Błesinyn with Strykow. The left wing of XX. Army Corps, which was withdrawn yesterday, is attacked today in front from the rear (from Lowitsch). Frontal attack³) has completely failed. Against rear attack, all reserves of XVII. Army Corps and two brigades of the I. Reserve Corps have been set in motion. The enemy there will be cleared tomorrow; so far, the attack is against

¹) p. 250. — ²) General Ludendorff notes in a letter to the Reichsarchiv dated December 22, 1928, that he can only believe that Hoffmann was bluffing with the exchange of views. See p. 186 and 193, note 1. — ³) Meant was Russian frontal attack.

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advanced very well. A division of the I Reserve Corps will remain at Lowitsch tomorrow; the day after tomorrow the division will probably be moved slightly westward to connect. — The High Command is still quite hopeful and would be grateful if its view, based on impressions on the ground, were considered by the Supreme Army Command. The Army High Command is fully aware of its responsibility. It would be deeply regrettable if, based on the current situation, decisions were forced upon the Army High Command that would ruin the successes achieved through the troops' superhuman efforts. As soon as reinforcements arrive, we will attack again. In the meantime, we maintain the situation here."

Late in the evening of November 23, a pleasing report from the I Reserve Corps was received. The corps had reached the heights immediately north of Lowitsch. General v. Morgen wanted to occupy the city itself the next day "to avoid a costly house-to-house fight." He also believed "that the enemy would abandon the city at night, as holding it is impossible as long as the I Reserve Corps holds the heights north of Lowitsch." Of the two brigades, it was further reported, that were to go behind the enemy at Strykow, one would set out from Bielawy at 6:30 a.m., the other would probably not be free at Lowitsch until 7:00 or 8:00 to advance via Glowno.

Regarding the Scheffer group, General v. Mackensen reported to the Supreme Army Command around midnight: "Higher Cavalry Commander 1 is today in line Butowinze—Lasnowska-Wola—Rokitn. The second part of the report could not be deciphered due to engine defects. The Army High Command assumes that the XXV Reserve Corps is intact in the area of Błesin."

On the morning of November 24, the situation of the cut-off army units appeared extremely serious. An intercepted radio message from the Russian Army Command stated that 60 empty trains were prepared on the Warsaw—Siernewize line to transport the captured German army, consisting of three corps and two cavalry divisions. On the other hand, there was a radio message from General v. Scheffer,

The radio message could not be found in the records, but it is cited or mentioned by Ludendorff (Memoirs, p. 83), Hoffmann (II, p. 82), Wulffen (p. 94), and Clissmann (p. 199). Major General v. Bockelberg, then Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief East, informed the Reichsarchiv in January 1929 that the radio message was present in Opien on the morning of November 24.

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who wanted to continue the attack on Bzhesiny. Further, the radio message stated: "Ammunition urgently needed, as artillery supplies were also exhausted for foreign troops. In the battle in Borowo, Lieutenant General v. Waenker fell. . . ." That sounded serious. Help with ammunition could only be provided once the enemy encirclement was broken; however, it seemed to be tightening more and more. An intercepted radio message from the Russian cavalry corps Nowikow at 11 p.m. reported: "Trains of the enemy with significant cavalry and infantry cover attempted to break through to the south, east, and southeast, but were stopped by us and spent the night in the Rokitzy area." The Russian 5th Cavalry Division at Koljuscht was to attack from the north on November 24 at 7 a.m. The message concluded: "Tomorrow I will complete the encirclement of the enemy." The commander-in-chief of the Russian 2nd Army had responded that the enemy had "excellently" retreated from the area south of Lodz and was now fighting against Russian troops advancing from the west and northeast. "I ordered your cavalry corps to immediately develop a decisive and energetic activity from the south in the enemy's rear and to pursue him day and night with the intention of encircling and destroying him. . ."

These reports available by 7 a.m. were followed by calls for help from General v. Scheffer1), which arrived at 7:30 and 8 a.m., stating: "No reserves available. Situation serious." — "Severe shortage of ammunition and supplies. Urgent help requested towards Bzhesiny."

During these difficult hours, the army high command was in constant exchange of thoughts with the XVII., but especially with the XX. Army Corps. As much as General v. Scholz wished to support the XXV. Reserve Corps by attacking in the direction of Bzhesiny, he had to dutifully report that this was unfeasible in the current situation and, if attempted, would also jeopardize the fate of the XXV. and XVII. Army Corps. For the time being, only the brigade of the I. Reserve Corps designated for Slomno could assist the XXV. Reserve Corps, but even their help would not be effective on this day.

Generals v. Scholz and v. Pannwitz, however, had meanwhile set the left wing of their front directed northwards for an attack, and at least here a glimmer of hope appeared. At 8 a.m., the high command received

1) C. 183.

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command from the XVII Army Corps reported that the enemy had evaded at Biala. However, the immense tension persisted and prompted General v. Mackensen to order the XX Army Corps to attack Błeszyn despite all the compelling counterarguments he had presented. It was 9 a.m. when it was communicated via telephone: "Situation serious, great urgency required. The enemy at Biala no longer plays any role; the forces assigned there must immediately advance over Stochod towards Błeszyn ... Unstoppable advance urgent." The I Reserve Corps was also to be ordered anew, but the direct connection there was interrupted. Therefore, the XX Army Corps had to transmit the order to the I Reserve Corps or its brigade waiting at Glowno: "Everything depends on withdrawing the brigade, which is to march on Glowno, to Błeszyn to prevent a catastrophe for the XXV Reserve Corps and Guard Division."

In response to these instructions, General v. Scholz reported at 9:15 a.m.: "The XX Army Corps stands with the forces of a weak division in an extension of over ten kilometers facing the enemy. The forces of the XVII and XX Army Corps assigned against Biala are not advancing in the attack. An attack by the Army Corps towards Błeszyn is utterly unfeasible. It would lead to a certain failure ..." Then at 10 a.m. came news from the I Reserve Corps; a telegraphist of the corps reported Tschenstochau, 15 kilometers north of Lowitsch, the corps had been "flanked" from the east and was still fighting north of Lowitsch; it had sent its motor vehicles back to Tschenstochau.

The hope of being able to help General v. Scheffer's troops dwindled more and more; they had to break through as best they could. The necessity, if that did not succeed, to retreat with the entire army behind Narew and Bzura, came closer. At 10:30 a.m., the High Command handed over the order to Lieutenant General v. Morgen through a flyer: "The task of the I Reserve Corps for the next few days is to cover the left flank of the army north of the Bzura bank to the east, a change of the army to the north was considered from further instruction: if the brigade assigned to Glowno, as assumed, was already on the way, it should go to Błeszyn to help the XXV Reserve Corps. There, flyers had reported more that fighting was still taking place on the railway west of Koluschki." General v. Scheffer was thus still eight kilometers from Błeszyn and a full day's march from the nearest German troops.

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The Events with the Scheffer Group.

h) The Events with the Scheffer Group1).

November 22.

Maps and Sketches: No. 12, 13, and 14.

Already the evening of November 22 clearly showed the danger in which the troops of General v. Scheffer found themselves. The battle for the heights west and northwest of Richnow had not come to rest even with the onset of darkness. The general command was located east of the city only five kilometers behind the front. It was under the fresh impression of the heavy, so far unsuccessful battles in the immediate vicinity and the increasingly threatening reports from the south, east, and northeast about new Russian forces advancing against the rear of the German troops. Added to this were increasing ammunition and supply concerns. The chief of staff, Major v. Massow, suggested to his commanding general to break off the attack to move southward over the Maissa to reconnect with the other parts of the army. General v. Scheffer rejected this idea, as he still believed in victory.

The fundamental order of the army high command for November 22, which ordered the ruthless and early attack of the 3rd Guard Division and defense of the XXV Reserve Corps2), was received at the general command's radio station at 10° in the evening. It reinforced the commanding general in his confident view. In the corps order, the attack order emphasized by the army leadership for the Guard Division was only expressed through a reference to the previous attack order, which had set Chojny and Olechow as targets. Now it said: "3rd Guard Infantry Division continues its task, but secures strongly to the left." The 49th Reserve Division was to connect with the Guard on the heights south of Chojny and defend positions that curved somewhat

1) Connection to p. 147 f. — 2) C. 151 f. The order is filed in the corps records at the correct place, but — as indeed many other orders — bears no receipt mark of the general command, which in those days, occupied only with patrols, was without registry and staff. When the content of the order was later mentioned in a combat report of the Guard Division, which had received it through the XX Army Corps, General v. Scheffer wrote in the margin: "Not known at the General Command XXV Reserve Corps."

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moved two kilometers west around Rischgow. Southwest of this town, half of the 50th Reserve Division was to connect with the front facing southwest; it was also assigned the task of securing the Wolborta section against the south. The 6th Cavalry Division, currently located west of the Miasga near Wiatles, received orders to keep the crossings over the watercourse open at Karpin, three kilometers further south, at Kotilnik. Nothing was ordered for the 9th Cavalry Division, as it was believed to be already on its way to Błesinyn.

The intention underlying this corps order to defend on the left flank was not shaken by the instructions from the high command¹) received later in the night, which emphasized the idea of attack less sharply.

As the winter morning of November 22, Totensonntag, dawned over the frozen fields southeast of Lodz, the 3rd Guard Division and, despite differing army orders, by arrangement of local leaders still inserted into the front of the Guard, the 9th Cavalry Division lay west of the Miasga from Bedon to height 222 south of Choiny. Lieutenant General Litzmann had ordered this position to be reinforced. Early in the morning, he received a message from the XX Army Corps containing the army order from the previous evening. According to this, the 3rd Guard Division was to attack together with the XX Army Corps, "early and ruthlessly"; it was added that the 72nd Infantry Brigade, which formed the left flank of the corps, was to join the Guard's attack; the artillery fire was to begin jointly at 7 a.m. Lieutenant General Litzmann immediately made the necessary arrangements and urgently called on the 72nd Brigade to participate in the attack. Its commander, Major General Schær, had already felt compelled to engage the enemy advancing from Błesinyn and the forest of Winotschyn, so that his brigade could attack westward. In contrast, the Guard Brigade Friedeburg had learned of the high command's attack order earlier than the division commander himself and had therefore begun the attack at Bedon as early as 8 a.m.; the deployed parts of the 9th Cavalry Division had joined. The first assaults encountered about 2000 Russians with some machine guns, but then the attack stalled. Meanwhile, the Guard Brigade Below had to be pulled together to the right from its wide deployment and could therefore only launch the attack at noon. Its left flank took

¹) p. 152.

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the western half of Olechow, but this brigade was unable to advance further by nightfall.

Behind the Guard, the Goltz detachment of the 9th Cavalry Division, reinforced by infantry, temporarily held off a far superior enemy, but then retreated to the western Miasga bank near Janowka. Major General Count Schmettow (Eberhard) therefore found it necessary to recall the already weak forces embedded in the infantry of his division at noon to take over the cover in the rear.

In the evening, the 3rd Guard Division was positioned in a roughly seven-kilometer-wide front from Andrespol to Olechow on hard-frozen ground, facing entrenched enemies in indecisive battles. The 72nd Infantry Brigade, with only three battalions and six batteries, however, was pressed by overwhelming opponents on the flank and rear, broke off the unequal battle south of the Winitschn forest by nightfall, and was retreating to Wola-Rakowa behind the front of the Guard Division. On the eastern Miasga bank, the enemy now had completely free rein.

At the 49th Reserve Division, the enemy succeeded on the evening of November 21 in advancing in the darkness to the German artillery positions just in front of Rzhow. During the night, Lieutenant General Waenker v. Dankenschweil, who had just arrived as the successor to the division commander who had fallen at Wloszlawek, ordered the counterattack. The operation, already prepared by Lieutenant General v. Thiesenhausen and carried out at dawn, was fully successful but also brought new heavy losses: both participating regimental commanders and all battalion leaders were wounded or fell. After this fierce battle, complete exhaustion set in among friends and foes, allowing hours of rest during the morning. To close the gap on the left flank of the Guard Division, reserves were lacking, and it repositioned itself when the Guard had to concentrate its forces to the right and advance northward in the attack against Olechow. Through the gap, the enemy advanced in the afternoon against the already severely depleted 49th Reserve Division, while simultaneously attacking it with great force from the west and southwest. Under overwhelming, encircling pressure, the weak northern flank of the division retreated in the evening to near Rzhow, and the left flank of the Guard was also threatened.

1) p. 146 f.

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The left wing of the 49th Reserve Division had meanwhile been extended by half of the 50th Reserve Division; at Modliza, an assigned single Guard Battalion secured the rear of the German front against the south and also against the east, as the bridge southwest of Dallowo had fallen into enemy hands by noon. Two Russian cavalry divisions were reported to be advancing here.

The 6th Cavalry Division had stood in the angle between Wolborta and Maissa in the morning, as on the previous day. According to the corps order to keep the crossing from Karpin open, it should have crossed to the eastern Maissa bank; but this was prohibited by the overall situation. Lieutenant General Count Schmettow (Egon) found himself threatened by the enemy in the south and east throughout the day and therefore only deployed weak local security over the Maissa bridges. This remained the case when the 9th Cavalry Division arrived in the evening to the north next to the 6th.

General v. Scheffer was fully aware of the seriousness of the situation. No help could be expected from the west. If it was not possible to reach out to the XX Army Corps in an attack to the north, then the German troops south of Los faced encirclement by superior enemy forces. In the west, there were at least nine Siberian battalions, in the southwest and south the cavalry corps Nowikow and at least one brigade of the Russian 10th Infantry Division, thus again eight battalions, in the southeast and east further Russian forces of unknown strength against them, and in Bieshtiny a Siberian division had moved in from the east. General v. Scheffer knew all this; the retreat was blocked, the connection to their own army cut off. Then he also learned from the 9th Cavalry Division that parts of the eastern XX Army Corps were fighting at Strykow with the front to the east and this corps could therefore no longer deploy its full strength against the south! Thus, more than ever, everything depended on the success of the attack by the 3rd Guard Division.

At 11 a.m., General v. Scheffer had reported to the high command that he intended to hold with his corps and the 6th Cavalry Division initially, while the Guard Division attacked; "then everything offensive northwest, 9th Cavalry Division rear cover infantry strength at most: 49th Reserve Division 3500 men, 50th Reserve Division 1200 men ..." But the Guard's attack made no significant progress. There was still no sign of any impact from the XX Army Corps to the north. The situation became increasingly precarious. The following report, given to the general command at 3:45 p.m., showed

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The Events with the Scheffer Group.

the view of General v. Scheffer at this time: "... Enemy

cavalry division at Ruta-Mühle¹) broken through, pushed 6th Cavalry

Division back to Kurowize ... Crossing Bedon left to the enemy by 72nd Infantry

Brigade, crossing Karpin occupied by enemy

infantry columns with artillery from Bendhof²) ... Fortification

continues against stronger forces coming from the east ... Attack by 3rd Guard

Division advancing, whether a favorable decision will succeed is questionable, as

Friedburg still fortified Feliksin. Lodz in enemy hands. Request

instructions."

And General v. Scheffer now reckoned with the necessity of having to seek

connection to his own army via Karpin—Bisztyn, if

even through combat. Before he made a final decision, he went

to Lieutenant General Litzmann to personally learn

how the prospects were with the Guard Division. Meanwhile, his

Chief of Staff, Major v. Massow, had to prepare the night march to the east.

Above all, the Karpin Bridge had to be regained. For this, Lieutenant General v. Richthofen, who

kept in close contact with the General Command, sent his

9th Cavalry Division the order to gain the eastern Miazga bank at Butowjez

and open the crossing of Karpin for the XXV Reserve Corps.

The order concluded: "50th Reserve Division will today make a

morning move against the Russian cavalry corps towards Wardzyn and

gain the crossing at Karpin."

When General v. Scheffer arrived at the command post

of the 3rd Guard Division at 4 p.m., their attack was essentially fixed.

Lieutenant General Litzmann held the view that liberation from encirclement

must still be sought by continuing this attack northward,

with the use of reinforcements. Already considering

the mood of the troops, one should not march over Karpin; the

march east would always be a retreat, the breakthrough north

a continuation of the previous attack. When General v. Scheffer

turned to leave, Lieutenant General Litzmann believed he had won him over for the attack

northward³).

¹) Southwest of Dalfow.  
²) This view was incorrect. The crossing of Karpin has actually   
remained uninterrupted in German hands.  
³) Lieutenant General Litzmann gave the order at 5:25 p.m. to continue   
the attack at Olechow and anticipated the arrival of the   
50th Reserve Division of the 5th Guard Brigade for the evening, thus counting on the   
attack northward as somewhat secure. General v. Scheffer reckoned — as

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

At the General Command, there was now news that the enemy had been repelled at the Karpin Bridge and that it was still occupied by German troops. This spoke for the march eastward. There was hope of initially reaching the eastern bank of the Mjasja without a fight, then further decisions could be made. In any case, distance was gained from the previous enemy, who had been closely flanked and backed during the breakthrough to the north without the protection of a natural obstacle. After renewed, longer discussions with his Chief of Staff, General v. Scheffer finally abandoned the idea of such a breakthrough; the prospect that the attack against entrenched enemies at a location where attempts had been made for two days without significant results would bring quick success the next day seemed, when all circumstances were considered, too slim, and the situation at the XX Corps after the retreat of the 72nd Infantry Brigade was quite unclear. The commanding general saw this view confirmed when at 7 p.m. the already mentioned1) order from the Army High Command arrived, stating that the XX Army Corps would attack via Błeszyn and Strykow. The XXV Reserve Corps was to move behind the Mjasja section to "relieve the XX Army Corps and regain its own rear connections" by attacking from Błeszyn on November 23. The 3rd Guard Division, with parts of the 41st Infantry Division, was to cover the withdrawal and then block westward at the Mjasja, while the Cavalry Corps was to clear the way for an advance on Wolborz and Petrikau.

The Mjasja flows as a stream about ten meters wide through flat, often marshy meadowland, but can be waded through by infantry at most points. On November 22, the banks were frozen. For the retreat, as far as was known, four crossing points were considered: the crossings at Kotlinki, three kilometers south of Karpin, whose usability was questionable; the road bridge and another light bridge at Karpin; a column bridge built by pioneers, passable for all arms, two kilometers northwest of Karpin, and finally a crossing east of Autolyze.

At 8 p.m., General v. Scheffer issued the corps order to the troops. It read: "1.) Enemy is thrown back or repelled

The then Major v. Massow reports — "changed" into the corps headquarters. The General himself firmly denied having been bound in any way during the discussion. Since this took place in private, further clarification is not to be expected.

1) p. 158.

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The March of the Scheffer Group over the Miasga.

has been and has lost 6000 prisoners. A new enemy has appeared from the south

in front of the 6th Cavalry Division and from the north behind the

XX Army Corps. — 2.) XXV Reserve Corps resumes its old marching routes

and attacks the enemy from behind the XX Army Corps. 3.) Divisions discreetly disengage from the enemy

and begin the march. Cut off the rear guards. 50th Reserve

Division: 9 in the evening via Kalino—Warsaw—Kurowize—Karpin—

Lajownitza-Wola; it secures the crossing of the remaining corps in positions

on both sides of the Miasga section. If the enemy cavalry

is still at Daltow, it is to be attacked, if possible, to cross at

Kostlinti. Then promptly report the reconnaissance

results to the 49th Reserve Division. 49th Reserve Division: 10

in the evening on the road Rzhow—Wola-Ratkowa—Karpin—Borowo—

Pichanowize—Bzhesiny. At the road junction Kurowize, hold until

the 50th Reserve Division has passed with Borhut. Infantry and field

artillery advance, if the bridge two kilometers northwest of Karpin is usable,

over it. Continuous reconnaissance and connection with

3rd Guard Infantry Division. Guard Infantry Division with

parts of the 41st Infantry Division: Not before midnight. A

flank security is to be immediately placed south of Bedon. Division marches

via Butowize to the eastern Miasga bank and blocks the section

Bedon—Karpin. It follows the Reserve Corps as soon as all parts, including

cavalry divisions, have crossed." The next figures of the

corps order referred the heavy artillery of the Guard, the train of the

Reserve Division as well as the advanced parts of the columns and

trains to the marching road of the 49th Reserve Division. Between all batteries

individual companies were to be inserted. Bridge trains and

communication means were to be drawn far forward in the marching order.

The order concluded: "Any resistance is to be broken without consideration. Deployment

alongside the marching road. All carbine shooters are ready to fire.

I ride behind Borhut of the 49th Reserve Division. (signed) v. Scheffer."

At the same time, the cavalry was ordered: "Higher Cavalry

Commander 1 covers with the 6th Cavalry Division the crossing of the

49th and 50th Reserve Division to the south and west and clears with the

9th Cavalry Division beyond the Miasga to the east and north."

This was followed by the explicit instruction to all divisions to take the Berndunten;

their number was estimated at at least 2000.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

November 23rd.

Maps and Sketches: No. 13 and 14.

The orders of the General Command seemed to clearly regulate the night march and its security in all directions. It was also possible everywhere to disengage unnoticed by the enemy, as he was as exhausted by the previous battles as the German troops. The wounded and prisoners could be taken along. However, during the execution of the march, frictions arose that were not foreseeable.

The 3rd Guard Division not only received the marching order from General v. Scheffer but also had knowledge of the army's order, which included the task for the division to cover the withdrawal. Thus, Lieutenant General Litzmann, who did not feel explicitly subordinate to General v. Scheffer, believed he also had to take over the security west of the Małaja against the south. In total, five battalions and three batteries were finally deployed, mostly crossing the march of the 49th Reserve Division southwards. Moreover, the Guard Division (without Brigade Friedeburg), avoiding the night path through the unknown forest west of Butowjez, turned south and positioned itself northwest of Wola-Ratkowa with most of its artillery and vehicles on the road of the 49th Reserve Division.

Disruptions also resulted from the movements of half of the 50th Reserve Division. Their vanguard, which was supposed to be the foremost part over the bridge of Karpin, was not yet in place when the beginning of the 49th Reserve Division arrived there on November 23rd at 4:30 in the morning. Thus, this division was the first to begin the crossing. From Butowjez over the column bridge northwest of Karpin, the foremost brigade of the 9th Cavalry Division soon arrived on the right Małaja bank and took over the first protection against the east. At the road crossing in Karpin, General v. Scheffer personally regulated the further march of the crossing troops. The 49th Reserve Division was turned north through the elongated village of Borow. With half of the 50th Reserve Division

1) That the 3rd Guard Division was "subordinate" to the XXV Reserve Corps was never clearly stated on any day (see p. 108, note 2). Lieutenant General Litzmann therefore considered himself independent, openly appointed to the task by General of Infantry v. Scheffer. These differences in interpretation were never properly addressed to the higher-ranking General v. Scheffer, who did not feel explicitly subordinate to General v. Scheffer, believed he also had to take over the security west of the Małaja against the south. In total, five battalions and three batteries were finally deployed, mostly crossing the march of the 49th Reserve Division southwards. Moreover, the Guard Division (without Brigade Friedeburg), avoiding the night path through the unknown forest west of Butowjez, turned south and positioned itself northwest of Wola-Ratkowa with most of its artillery and vehicles on the road of the 49th Reserve Division.  
2) = German settlement "Wilhelmsdorf".

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The Departure of the Scheffer Group over the Miazga.

the night reconnaissance had revealed that the crossing point at

Kotlinik was indeed in German hands but unusable. From about 8 a.m.

onwards, the half-division, exploiting gaps in the marching column of the

49th Reserve Division, crossed the bridge at Karpin and turned eastwards

towards Lajnowka Forest to take over the cover against the east.

With the same mission, the entire 9th Cavalry Division was also assembling there,

having previously participated with parts in an engagement of the Guard Brigade

Friedeburg. This brigade had found only an icy ford at the crossing point east of

Bukowiez, which had to be overcome by the numerous vehicles with the greatest

difficulty. At the edge of the forest immediately east of the ford, the enemy had to be

driven off at Gora-Sjelonaj), whose fire had temporarily caused confusion in the convoy.

Here, by the early afternoon, most of the remaining parts of the 3rd Guard

Division arrived, having crossed the Miazga partly on the column bridge, partly on the

road bridge. The troops of the 72nd Infantry Brigade previously assigned to the Guard Division

had been directed by the General Command of the 50th Reserve Division.

The enemy, however, pressed sharply; only from a great distance

did he fire south, especially also from the west, with artillery against

the march road at Wola-Ratowa and the Karpin Bridge. But already

this caused losses and considerable congestion among the vehicle columns,

which were already jammed; at times they stood three and four abreast.

Finally, the last part, the 6th Cavalry Division entrusted with the cover

against the west, reached the east bank. In the evening

and at night, the Miazga bridges were blown up.

While troops, vehicles, wounded, and prisoners in almost

twelve-hour, albeit frequently interrupted, lines crossed the Karpin

Bridge, a fierce battle had erupted halfway between Karpin and Biskupin since early

morning. The rear guard of the 49th Reserve Division had not long left Richgow

when the vanguard of the division, more than 20 kilometers away, encountered

already developed enemy forces at the railway south of Biskupin, advancing from the north;

itself was only one and a half battalions and three batteries strong.

Already on the first reports of the approach of the new enemy,

the commanding general of the vanguard had issued the warning not

to advance too far alone. Then at 6:30 a.m. he had on the road-

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

cross in Karpin gave the assembled division commanders of the reserve

corps and the cavalry corps the order to attack northward.

The order began: "Enemy advancing from Błeszin in a south-

westerly direction through the woods." The following were to attack: the

50th Reserve Division with the right wing along the railway towards

Koljuschić, the 49th to the left with the left wing on the road Gor-

sielona—Gallon, the 3rd Guard Division via Butowjez to Galowek.

The 6th Cavalry Division was tasked with covering the south, the 9th with

covering the east.

However, the ordered attack did not initially occur, as the troops

were mostly still far behind due to the previously described frictions.

Within the marching column of the 49th Reserve Division, there were

so many foreign parts and vehicles that it was not possible to support

Borkut, which had already crossed the railway north of Borowo, in time.

Later, however, the approaching units were withdrawn by the enemy,

who had occupied the forest edge west of the elongated village of Borowo

on the left flank of the advance route; two battalions had also been retained

to reinforce the 6th Cavalry Division at Karpin. There was no sign of the

expected impact of the Guard Division on the left flank until dusk,

nor on the right flank from the attack of the 50th Reserve Division.

The Borkut of the 49th Reserve Division bled out in an unequal fight,

and with it, the division lost its new commander, Lieutenant General v. Baenker,

the second to die a hero's death in just twelve days at its head. The vanguard

leader, Major General v. Gauten, and the division's general staff officer

were wounded. In the evening, the division lay, exhausted from battles and marches

and severely weakened by losses, on both sides of the northern part of

Borowo.

The commanding general only gradually became aware of the full seriousness

of the situation with the 49th Reserve Division. On his order,

half of the 50th Reserve Division had initially halted in Lajnowitza-Wola

to rest. Here, the division commander, Lieutenant General Freiherr v. der Goltz (Hans),

learned of the battle of the sister division and immediately resumed the march;

it was around 12 noon. Just southwest of Koljuschić, Russians were repelled

in bloody close combat at dusk, attempting to envelop the division's eastern flank;

thus, the night also brought an end to the fighting here. The 72nd Infantry Brigade,

as it now turned out, had only two battalions left (one had followed the

Guard), but six batteries (though almost without ammunition, as

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The Attack of the Scheffer Group on Bzheziny.

under Lieutenant Colonel v. Kunowski, had not yet been able to intervene.

Lieutenant General Litzmann had received the attack order from General v. Scheffer at 9:30 in the morning. When he arrived at Gora-Sjelona around 12:00 noon, he found only half of his division there; heavy fighting had already taken place at the nearby forest edge against advancing Siberians. The division commander set the infantry to attack through the forest to the north. The artillery was to take cover in the rear; only when the railway embankment cutting through the forest from east to west was taken, should it be moved up with the baggage train. Parts sent to secure the south were still missing. General Litzmann became increasingly aware of the desperate situation in which the entire Scheffer group now found itself. He made the decision, regardless of the troops fighting east of him, to push through with the infantry as far as possible to Bzheziny itself, using the forest and the soon-to-be-expected darkness, to at least save the bulk of the guard infantry. It was clear that if successful, this would also open the way north for the rest of his division and the XXV Reserve Corps. However, General v. Scheffer was not informed of the decision<sup>1</sup>.

The guard infantry fought its way through the more than two-kilometer-wide and almost four-kilometer-deep, often impassable forest to the railway, where orderly combat leadership was almost impossible. The 5th Guard Regiment under Major Reinhard, which had arrived last at Gora-Sjelona, finally reached the railway embankment first, crossing it without a fight. Other parts encountered resistance here again, which was quickly overcome. The commanding division commander himself had advanced in the skirmish line. It may have been around 7:00 in the evening when the railway embankment was taken everywhere. What had been in front of the enemy had disappeared northward in the darkness, with the guard infantry partially already following. General Litzmann was about to issue orders to continue the attack. He did not know what had become of the divisions of the XXV Reserve Corps; the battle noise on the right flank had fallen silent. Then an order from the general command arrived.

General v. Scheffer had received the radio message from the high command on the morning of November 23: "Desired that XXV Reserve-

<sup>1</sup> General Litzmann reported this to the Reichsarchiv, stating that he had sent a message; it did not arrive. The files provide no clarification.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

corps and parts located with it still reach Bzhesiny today. Left

flank XX. Army Corps bent back in line Moslule—Dobra—

Svendow. XX. Army Corps will also attack Bzhesiny today.

I. Reserve Corps before Lowitsch.” This directive revealed the full seriousness

of the situation and initially at 12° noon prompted a preliminary order

to the Guard Division, stating: Attack 49. Reserve

Division is at the railway east of Galfow. 50. Reserve Division has been

reinforced so that an advance of the attack from there is to be expected.

The attack on Bzhesiny must be continued with all force today...”). Then

news had come about the difficult situation of the 49. Reserve Division,

about the heroic death of its commander and the unfortunate fate of its

vanguard. But the enemy had also made itself felt in the rear, not only

west of the Miasza, but also on its eastern flank from the south. Only an

attack on the entire front could help in such a situation; today one had to

gain space to the north as far as possible. At 4° in the afternoon

General v. Scheffer in Borowo ordered: “It is to be strived for with all means

to reach Bzhesiny today with the foremost infantry,

in any case, the Mroga section is to be crossed.” Then followed

the accommodation lines for the divisions and for the Guard Division an

additional order for securing against the west, while the cavalry

corps continued to be entrusted with covering against the south and southeast.

At 8° in the evening, order recipients of the divisions were to report to the

corps headquarters Chrusty-Stare. The order contained the glaringly

illuminating note: “15 cm - ammunition and light field

howitzer ammunition is no longer available, only some cannon ammunition

and 10 cm ammunition. Infantry ammunition is still available. Within

the troop units, a balance is to be made.”

This order could only strengthen the commander of the 3rd Guard Division

in the intention to continue the movement during the night;

he wanted not only to reach Bzhesiny with the foremost infantry but with

the entire division, whose localities were known to the division staff from

marching through and accommodation. Lieutenant General Litzmann ordered

at 7²⁵ in the evening: “The division takes Bzhesiny.”

For this, it was to reach the path leading silently from the southwest to

Bzhesiny in marching column with vanguard over Galfowel—Malschew,

1) According to General Litzmann's report, this order was received so late by the 3rd Guard  
Division that it had no influence on the decisions (p. 179).

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The Attack of Group Scheffer on Bfhesiny.

to develop one kilometer before the town and enter it unexpectedly.

The order concluded: "After the storming of Bfhesiny, the baggage will

be brought up. Order recipient at the market in the old

division staff quarters." At the same time, an order went to Major General Count Schweinitz,

who was still with artillery, baggage, and train at Ora-Gielona, to

follow the infantry to Galfowo. Then everything that was available

continued the march through the starry winter night,

Lieutenant General Litzmann himself on foot with the 5th Guard Regiment, which

was at the forefront.

This second night march was an unspeakable effort for the troops

exhausted to death, it was willingly accomplished, as everyone knew

it was about honor and freedom. In Galfowo, sleeping Russians

were taken from the houses. At 3 a.m. on November 24, they were

between Mallschew and the southwestern wall of Bfhesiny. In skirmish

line, the vanguard continued with unloaded rifles. A Russian

outpost was overpowered, then the Prussian Guard entered the

sleeping town. Before the enemy could effectively defend themselves,

the main part of the town was taken. Just in time, the

commanding general of the VI Siberian Corps¹) escaped, parts

of his staff were captured. At 5 a.m., Lieutenant General

Litzmann sent the first report of his success to the general command²).

Exhausted, the German troops in Bfhesiny sank into rest; only

about half of the division's infantry was there to sleep, but

not a single gun; the leader of the 5th Guard Regiment was

next to the division commander the senior officer in the place.

Russian relief attempts startled the sleepers again, but were

repelled. In a counterattack, they reached the heights just south of

the place, which proved to be a commanding line with wide visibility

at dawn. Still missing was the 6th Guard Brigade; only through provisioning

did Major General v. Friedeburg learn of the division's continued march.

Thus he, initially mistaken for an enemy, finally arrived at 9 a.m. from

the northwest at Bfhesiny, later his four guns and

finally also the staff of the 5th Guard Brigade with some additional parts.

In total, however, there were at most 3000 rifles, plus two

machine gun companies and four guns, with which Lieutenant General

Litzmann now stood in the middle of the enemy. His eyes were directed south,

for there the artillery was to follow; there the XXV Reserve Corps

had to be engaged in battle.

¹) He commanded the Russian troops  
Corps fought at Lowitsch. — ²) See wording on p. 184.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

At the General Command in Chrusty-Stare, they had waited in vain on the evening of November 23 for orders or reports from the Guard Division. The connection seemed to be cut off by the enemy in the forest; since the division had marched north from Gora-Sielona, there was no news; General v. Scheffer was not without concern for the fate of the Guard. An encirclement of the enemy at the forest edge west of Borowo was not noticeable, as before the 49th Reserve Division faced the enemy there. Otherwise, their attack, like that of the 50th Reserve Division, was stalled at the railway embankment. In the south, the cavalry still held off the enemy for the time being. — How much longer? If it did not succeed on November 24 to break through to the north, then there was hardly any hope of rescue. At 10 p.m., a message was sent to the High Command: "Attack on Bisheiny to be continued early tomorrow. Due to the great shortage of supplies and ammunition, support from the XX Army Corps is desired ..." Then General v. Scheffer ordered at 10° p.m. for November 24: "Attack will continue. Railway is to be crossed at 6° a.m. — Attacking: 50th Reserve Division sharply encircling Bisheiny on the right, 49th Reserve Division on Bisheiny, 3rd Guard Infantry Division towards west of Bisheiny ..." It was verbally added that "everything must be done tomorrow to force the breakthrough to Bisheiny, even if it costs the last bullet of the infantry and the last shot of the artillery. If the breakthrough does not succeed, then the XXV Reserve Corps will have ceased to exist by the next evening").

November 24.

Maps and sketches: Nos. 15 and 16.

Exhausted from marches and battles, mostly with empty stomachs, the troops had found rest on the evening of November 23 on hard-frozen ground or in cramped peasant huts, but the seriousness of the situation did not allow the leader to sleep; General v. Scheffer bore the responsibility for the fate of all. After a worry-filled sleepless night, finally at 5¹⁵ a.m. on November 24, a sign of life came from the Guard: Their artillery command, General Count Schweinitz, reported: "By order of the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, all artillery, baggage, ammunition columns, and trains of the division are to be brought to Galfow this afternoon. On the

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The Attack of the Scheffer Group on Bzura.

It was recognized that "Galkow(1) was occupied by the enemy. The further march of the long column(2) had to be stopped." Now the General wanted to position his batteries to support the attack of the 49th Reserve Division with them. What could have happened that the Guard Division was so shattered? Where was their infantry, and what was to become of it if it was almost without artillery? Where was the divisional staff? The full seriousness of the overall assessment of the General Command is shown by two radio messages that were sent before dawn by the Army High Command. At 6:30 in the morning, it was radioed: "According to prisoners' statements, two Siberian divisions of the XXV Reserve Corps. Enemy pushing forward; enemy cavalry corps on flank, rear. Wypalenisko(3) station overcrowded with transports. No reserves available. Situation serious. Request urgent assistance also regarding ammunition situation." Only 20 minutes later, a second, even more urgent call for help was sent: "Great shortage of ammunition and supplies. Urgent help requested towards Bzura. Situation serious!".

November 24 had to decide the fate of the encircled German troops. If there was no more rescue, General v. Scheffer wanted to go down fighting. So the morning broke. A short field service introduced it and gave strength to new hope.

Near the front line of the 49th Reserve Division, General v. Scheffer had been waiting for the development of the attack at his command post in Chrusty-Stare since 6 a.m., with him the Higher Cavalry Commander, Lieutenant General v. Richthofen. Even before their own artillery had opened fire to the north, gunfire was heard in the south; the enemy was pushing against the two cavalry divisions, which were covering the rear at Laskowka-Wola and east. The commanding general saw how the danger grew from hour to hour and yet could not help. He would have liked to rush to the firing line himself, but he was bound to his command post. In the front, the attack did not get underway, and there was concern about the fate of the Guard Division. It had meanwhile been learned that they had crossed the railway in the forest in the evening, but the forest was now occupied by the enemy again! To the right, the 50th Reserve Division was beyond the railway, but what would happen there was unknown; only heavy gunfire was heard from the northeast.

(1) Located just south of Galkow. — 2) 1 battalion, 2 machine gun companies, 10 batteries, plus baggage, columns, about 1000 seriously wounded and 6000 captured Russians. — 3) = Koluszki. — 4) p. 167.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

echo. Will the breakthrough still succeed? Not far behind the

location of the general command, the large number of vehicles was parked;

always new batteries, which had fired their last ammunition, were added.

In between, however, stood, guarded by only a few German soldiers, more

than 10,000 Russian prisoners! General v. Scheffer was determined to fight

to the last bullet, but he also considered sending his two cavalry divisions

alone if they could no longer hold in the south; perhaps they would at least

find a way to break through to the northeast. Preparations for this were

made; only the final order was missing.

Then at 10:30 in the morning, two cyclists finally brought a message

from Lieutenant General Litzmann: "Bzhezin, November 24, 5:00 a.m.:

Railway embankment in the assigned area taken by storm at 6:45 p.m.

Gallow cleared of the enemy. In Gallow, 80 Russians captured. The division

reached and took Bzhezin with main forces at 4:00 a.m. very exhausted...

Please urgently spare the division any marching performance today." —

"This is the turning point of fate, and all doubts have now vanished,"

exclaimed Colonel v. Posek, the chief of staff of the cavalry corps, expressing

what everyone felt. Immediately, the joyful message went to the troops with

the renewed order to attack, which had meanwhile already been set in motion

by a full success of the 50th Reserve Division.

The Russians, who had crossed the railway early in the attack,

found no echo among the dead-tired troops. As it became light around

7:00 a.m., the battle gradually resumed. At the 49th Reserve Division,

Lieutenant General v. Thiesenhausen could only order the attack to begin

at 9:00 a.m. Breaking the Russian resistance initially did not succeed.

Particularly, the enemy repeatedly made itself felt on the left flank,

which was mainly kept in check by the cooperation of the guard artillery.

Things went better with the 50th Reserve Division.

It was felt that the Russians had exhausted their costly counterattacks

here by the evening. At 7:00 a.m., Lieutenant General v. der Goltz had

his infantry attack on both sides of the railway leading from the south

to Solyschki, on the left the 100th Reserve Infantry Brigade under

Lieutenant General Riedel v. Kunsheim, on the right the remnants of the

72nd Infantry Brigade under Lieutenant Colonel v. Kunowski. They

encountered only slight resistance, which was overcome. Then the left

flank turned against the enemy, who still held in front of the 49th Division.

The fire of German heavy

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The Attack of Group Scheffer on Błeszyn.

and light artillery unexpectedly hit his flank and his artillery. The 49th Reserve Division also advanced now. The Russian resistance quickly succumbed, the retreat turned into a flight.

When General v. Scheffer arrived at noon at the 50th Reserve Division with the joyful news that Błeszyn had been taken, the German lines were already advancing across the entire front. The booty of prisoners and guns fell mainly to the 49th Reserve Division; other parts were brought in at Błeszyn by the Guard Infantry; the rest escaped northwest in the Mroga Valley or west through the forest. In the early afternoon hours, the foremost troops of the XXV Reserve Corps, some also frostbitten, starved, and exhausted to death, arrived at Błeszyn; baggage and trains, prisoners and booty followed in an endless procession, while the Richthofen Cavalry Corps continued to keep the enemy in check in the south.

The corps order issued at 3:30 in the afternoon on the battlefield began with the words: "The enemy south of Błeszyn is scattered." General v. Scheffer expressed his thanks to all subordinate troops, especially the brave commander of the 3rd Guard Division, for their achievements.

As November 24 drew to a close, all parts of Group Scheffer had reached the area of Błeszyn, all in all only about 6000 infantrymen, but more than 10,000 captured Russians. The hardest part seemed to be overcome. After the brilliant victory of November 24, the next day was awaited with full confidence, although the connection to the army had by no means been reestablished. The enemy still stood between Błeszyn and the XX Army Corps, so this fought — as the Army High Command reported through flyers and radio messages — at Stryków, almost a day's march northwest of Błeszyn.

c) The End of the Crisis<sup>1)</sup>.

Maps and Sketches: No. 16.

At General v. Mackensen in Hohensalza, the following radio message from General v. Scheffer arrived on November 24 at 11:15 a.m.: "3rd Guard Division, advancing on the left flank, took Błeszyn this morning. XXV Reserve Corps and Higher Cavalry Commander 1 are still fighting in advance south of the Mroga section in the area of Pichanowicze<sup>2)</sup> and Koliszuki." That was a glimmer of hope; it went

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still advancing at Błaszyn. Full confidence returned to the Army High Command. It grew when an hour later the XVII Army Corps also reported a victory: "Enemy at Biała retreated in panic. Pursuit initiated. Volunteer units are marching on Stryków." By 3:30 in the afternoon, it was reported to the Supreme Army Command that the retreat of the XXV Reserve Corps was "no longer endangered." The severe threat looming east of Lodz seemed averted. In contrast, it was of little consequence that General v. Plüskow from the right wing of the army reported that the right wing of the 38th Infantry Division, standing north of the Ner section, was attacked by an apparently superior enemy; "Outcome is uncertain."

By evening, the situation further cleared in a favorable sense: West of Lodz, all positions were held, and even small advances were made; the enemy had not crossed the Ner, as it turned out. The commanding generals in the west and north of Lodz had reported in response to inquiries that they could hold out for several more days with sufficient ammunition and supply. This aligned with General v. Mackensen's view, who wanted to wait for the announced reinforcements to intervene in the current positions. This conversation was recorded in the war diary of the High Command under November 24: "The Eastern High Command repeatedly suggested in telephone conversations to the Army High Command to withdraw the army from Lodz, perhaps behind the Bzura section from Lentschitza. The commander-in-chief did not follow this advice but adhered to the motto 'Hold out.' Although today a consideration was made on how a regrouping should be carried out if the emergency should arise. However, it was clear that the army, withdrawn behind a wide river section, could gain time but would have given up the offensive, in which German strength lies, and thus the will to victory. Therefore, the Army High Command is determined to hold out to the utmost. This perseverance paid off in the successes that began to withdraw east of Lodz by evening:

The enemy in the rear of the XVII and XX Army Corps was, as

1) G. 165. — 2) The war diary was only later compiled under the direction of Lieutenant Kundt. Since he was not reachable while abroad, and the author himself had fallen, some things could not be fully clarified (p. 165, note 2).

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also confirmed by multiple pilots, in full retreat. The advance

of a small detachment from Piontek and the 70th Reserve Infantry

Brigade of the I Reserve Corps from Bielawy against its rear had

prompted it to a rapid withdrawal in conjunction with the attack on its front.

In the evening, Strykow was also back in German hands.

A pilot from the XXV Reserve Corps returned with the news

that the enemy south of Bzura was completely dispersed.

The simultaneous victories at Strykow and

Bzura had restored the situation. The fact that the

I Reserve Corps was still fighting north of Lowitsch with its front facing east

lost significance under these circumstances.

On the morning of November 25, General v. Mackensen reported to the

Supreme Army Command: "The counterattack directed against our eastern flank

has failed. The attacking parts of the Russian

1st Army are dispersed ... There is no longer a threat to our eastern flank ...”

It was now only necessary to complete the junction of the German

front between Lodz and Lowitsch. The XX Army Corps

was to "regain its old position at Nowosolna by swinging south as much as possible"

and bring ammunition and supplies to General v. Scheffer via Strykow.

The 3rd Guard Division was given Niesulow, and the XXV Reserve Corps Glowno as targets.

The Richthofen Cavalry Corps was to remain in front of Bzura.

The execution of these orders led to further fighting against the enemy

by the troops of General v. Scheffer on November 25,

who made himself felt especially from the west against Bzura; he was

repelled by the 3rd Guard Division tasked with covering the march.

In the north, the left wing of the XX Army Corps and

the 70th Reserve Brigade moved towards the XXV Reserve Corps at Glowno.

However, the XX Army Corps did not regain its old position,

as this would only have been possible through costly attacks against the now

entrenched enemy on the heights near Nowosolna. In the evening,

the front moved from the previous left wing of the XVII Army Corps

northwest of Nowosolna over Niesulow towards Glowno.

Finally, the 3rd Guard Division and the Richthofen Cavalry Corps

disengaged from the enemy.

The troops of General v. Scheffer, exhausted from battles and marches,

were safe, they could be supplied and provided with ammunition

as far as what was brought up was not already from the almost

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...the needy XX Army Corps was claimed. The six-day battles behind enemy lines had cost General v. Scheffer's heroic band about 4500 men in losses, more than half of which were from the 3rd Guard Division. More than 2000 wounded returned with the troops, almost all others had already been evacuated earlier; over 1000 dead now rest in the Heroes' Cemetery north of Rzgow, where the fallen of the vast battlefield are buried. Three German infantry and two cavalry divisions, including about 200 guns, were preserved for the fatherland, 16,000 captured Russians and 64 guns were brought back as booty from the encirclement.

The front of the army was closed again except for a gap to the I Reserve Corps. But this no longer posed a serious threat, even though the enemy had further reinforced at Lodzisch, and Lieutenant General v. Morgen was forced by the enemy's superiority to withdraw his troops at night to defend the heights between Sobotka and Skiernofia. Here he now covered the left flank of the army.

With the movements of November 25, the campaign of Lodz had temporarily reached its conclusion; the situation was brought into balance. The army command moved its headquarters from Hohensalza to Lentschyzä.

4. The Commander-in-Chief East and the Battle of Lodz¹).

Maps and sketches: No. 10 to 16.

On the evening of the victory at Kutno, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had anticipated the general retreat of the Russians from West Poland and had also requested attack and pursuit from the Austro-Hungarian army. However, November 17 already clearly showed that the enemy was not yet thinking of a final retreat; he also withdrew the last parts of his 5th Army from in front of the Woyrsch army, namely northward in the direction of Lodz²). The Commander-in-Chief East reported to the Supreme Army Command on the evening of this day: "Battle at 9th Army progressing. Decision has not yet³) been finally made." At the same time, Captain v. Fleischmann reported on the perception of the Eastern Command

¹) Connection to p. 103. — ²) p. 204 and 242. — ³) Underlined in the transcript at the Supreme Army Command.

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The Commander-in-Chief East.

to Teschen'): "Here impression that on November 16 a general retreat from Poland on the Russian side was initially already decided, until subsequent intervention of Grand Duke Nicholas holding or attack of the Russian forces operating in Poland caused otherwise."

On November 18, it is stated in the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East: "The continuous shifting of strong forces from south to north (the pushing out of the 5th Army) increasingly revealed the correctness of the view that had been represented to the Supreme Army Command, that only with reinforcement by at least two army corps a decisive success would be possible." Therefore, General Ludendorff wired to Mézières: "For the report to the Commander-in-Chief, I request information on when the promised army corps can be expected."

During the day, it became apparent that the attack of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army north of Krakow was stuck in front of enemy positions, but strong Russian forces threatened from the east through Galicia on the right flank of this army. The possibility already threatened by General v. Conrad, that significant parts of his 4th Army would have to be turned back there, thus moved closer, their impact on the enemy in Poland was questioned. The German 9th Army, however, had encountered new resistance. On the other hand, it was now unexpectedly advancing on the right of the lower Vistula at Soldau—Neidenburg4); the enemy was apparently about to withdraw forces from here as well, to use them against the German 9th Army. The decision of the campaign also continued to lie with this army. The evening report of the Commander-in-Chief East stated: "In the battle at Lodz, no decision has yet been made, it is also not yet foreseeable."

The report that arrived on the morning of November 19 from the 8th Army5) gave cause for concern for East Prussia. The Russians now seemed to be attacking Lötzen with emphasis and had, as stated in the report, "as a result of incitement" by Landsturm achieved successes. It was reported to the Supreme Army Command: "At Tischenhochau and Lodz stubborn fighting, in which a decision has not yet been made. At Lötzen, the right wing of the 8th Army was pressed into the line Eckersberg—Gehöhe"), as there in the foremost line fighting Land-

1) Records of the War Archives Vienna. — 2) G. 55 and 95. — 3) G. 103. — 4) G. 342. — 5) G. 337. — 6) This initial view could not be maintained as more detailed reports were available. — 7) Places southeast of Lötzen.

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storm can no longer be withstood. Ten old-style guns lost. General Ludendorff asks for an answer as to when reinforcements can be expected to arrive.” Then, although a victory report came from the left wing of the 9th Army by General v. Morgen, there was concern about the western wing of this army, as a superior enemy stood opposite. The Russians, according to the Austro-Hungarian army command, were now withdrawing forces from the front of their 4th Army, presumably to close the gap between this and the 5th Army. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg tried to ensure that the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, which formed the left wing of the Woyrsch Army and had not yet fully assembled its forces, would still advance sharply, so that the Russians could not shift more forces northward. General v. Conrad, who had already given the order for a general attack for November 19, agreed with this view, but the attacks on the Austro-Hungarian front made little progress even on this day2).

That the last available man of the German 9th Army was deployed for the decision against Lodz, leaving the flank and rear temporarily uncovered against Warsaw, was something the Commander-in-Chief East could ultimately only approve3); everything depended on securing the final victory there, which still seemed close4).

On the night of November 20, a written response from the Supreme Army Command arrived regarding the reinforcements intended for the east5). For the imminent battle decision at Lodz, it was no longer relevant; however, the setback on the right army wing, at the 38th Infantry Division, brought a severe disappointment. At 9:10 a.m., it was reported to the Supreme Army Command: “At Lodz and south to Krakow, very heavy fighting, with no decision yet made. At Lowitsch and presumably a new enemy, against whom the Plozk group must turn.” At noon, the Supreme Army Command reported that the first parts of the reinforcements from the west began to roll today. It was too late.

1) p. 126. — 2) pp. 239 and 243. — 3) See p. 116, note 1. — 4) The First General Staff Officer of the Eastern Command, Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, wrote to his wife on November 19 (Hoffmann, I, p. 60): “The greatest battle we have fought is underway — hopefully, it will be a great success. According to human calculation, we must win, but the waiting is exhausting.” — 5) p. 95 f.; this referred to the Ibrum Corps, which received orders that day to cross to the left bank of the Vistula at Plozk (see p. 138).

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The western wing of the 9th Army was already pushed into defense, and only a single Landwehr Brigade of the Breslau Corps approached the battlefield here; hope had to rely on the northern wing of the Woyrsch Army advancing on Nordowadnoßt, which was not highly trusted. The prospect of a decisive change in the situation southwest of Lodz was very low.

Regarding the situation at the eastern wing of the German 9th Army, it was recorded for November 20 in the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East1): “At the 9th Army, reports are consolidating that the enemy is bringing forces from the south, southeast, and Warsaw to fall on the rear of the encirclement movement. The Commander-in-Chief was of the opinion that the tactical2) encirclement of the Russian right wing was ordered at the 9th Army. However, it turned out that a surrounding without serious combat was carried out. The XXV Reserve Corps was suspected in the Tuschyn area. When the situation became known, the Commander-in-Chief intervened, but the raids had already thwarted the possibility of execution.” The Commander-in-Chief East now insisted that the Army High Command 9 move its headquarters closer to the battlefront3).

In the evening, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg reported to the Supreme Army Command: “No decision has been made anywhere; very heavy fighting, especially with Group Plozk4). Frommel is at Stunska-Wola. Richtshofen has broken through towards Tuschyn to the south to cut off ammunition; it has succeeded5).”

On November 21, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg stated in the morning report to the Supreme Army Command: “The fight stands before Austrians and Woyrsch; no setbacks anywhere, but also no great successes, purely frontal grappling.” To promote the decisive battle at Lodz, this was not enough. Even the rapid advance at Mlawa in these days could not yet influence the fight on the left of the Vistula. Nevertheless, General v. Zastrow received the order to “vigorously advance towards Warsaw and deploy the cavalry for the destruction of

1) The war diary available to the Reichsarchiv was written retrospectively, but based on daily records made in consultation with the First General Staff Officer. — 2) Underlined in the war diary. — 3) See p. 123 and 124. Whether this urging first took place on this day or earlier could not be determined. — 4) As noted in the transcript at the Supreme Army Command; it is evidently the I Reserve Corps meant here. — 5) The failure in the encirclement is presumably due to a Russian radio message.

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Railways northwest of Warsaw to be seen“). However, the Vistula crossing of the Thorn Corps proceeded more slowly than expected.

The Commander-in-Chief East had no means left to help the 9th Army, which was struggling heavily at Lodz; he was condemned to play the spectator in the drama that seemed to be unfolding there. Contrary to the orally and also externally transmitted report, which the High Command of the 9th Army submitted to Mezières on the morning of November 22²), his brief morning report began with the statement: "Situation unchanged, very serious." At 6:30 p.m., the end of the encirclement attack was reported by encrypted telegram. It was verbally added by telephone from the First General Staff Officer: "Situation very serious³)." An attempt was made to advance the Breslau Corps.

November 23 brought the certainty that the XXV Reserve Corps was able to disengage from the enemy and reach the eastern bank of the Miasga. However, since the XX Army Corps had meanwhile had to bend its left wing far back, not much was gained. The hope for a favorable solution was low. Additional concerns arose: Southeast of Krakow, parts of the Austro-Hungarian army were retreating westward; north of the Vistula, the enemy seemed to be strengthening in front of the allied front and did not want to engage here either. Serious doubts arose again as to whether the resistance strength of the allies was still sufficient. The southern wing of the Breslau Corps had been pushed back, and on the left wing of the 9th Army, the Thorn Corps was held back by ice on the right bank of the Vistula.

On the liberation of the cut-off troops of General v. Scheffer

¹) p. 342 f. — ²) p. 154. — ³) Underlined in the transcript at the Supreme Army Command. Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann wrote home on this day (Hoffmann, I, p. 60): Our left wing is defeated. How we can straighten and save the situation, I do not know yet — but it may still occur to me. It was on a knife's edge. We could have had a great victory, but the troops failed, the men could no longer; the officers are dead, and the enemies are too many. We have completely defeated three to four corps in the last eight days — we are bringing about 50,000 prisoners home. Slowly the strength is coming to an end; there is no reason for concern, the German border is well secured. There is no need to fear an eastern blockade. The Russians are close to Warsaw from three sides, but nothing is felt. My nerves were at the end, for five nights I heard continuous gunfire. Now I am calm as steel again, I can face misfortune

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The Commander-in-Chief East.

One could hardly hope anymore. In the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief

East, the situation at that time was characterized by the words: "At the

9th Army, fighting continued with undiminished intensity along the entire line.

The incoming radio messages indicated that only a special

coincidence could save the left, encircled wing from destruction or

capture. Nevertheless, the position was to be held."

When on the morning of November 24th the Russian radio message was received

about the preparation of trains for the transport of the expected German

prisoners"), the tension reached its peak. The enemy now stood about ten kilometers

deep between the cut-off troops of

General v. Scheffer and the other parts of the 9th Army; in addition, the large

gap between the XX Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps, still fighting hard at Lowitsch.

"The situation has not improved, it is still unchanged," was reported at 9 a.m. from Posen to the Supreme Army Command,

and in the war diary it says about the morning: "The intercepted radio messages indicate that the situation of the XXV Reserve

Corps and the 3rd Guard Division became increasingly desperate. The 9th Army

was ordered, if the army could hold its current position,

then it should be held. If retreat is necessary, then in the direction

Thorn into the line Sompolno—Wlozlawek."

Then came the news of the victory of the group v. Scheffer at

Bielymin, later of the improvement of the situation at Strzybow. In the evening

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg reported from Mezieres, however, only:

"Battle at 9th Army cannot yet be assessed. The situation is

not as desperate as it seemed yesterday and this morning. We hope,

the main thing will prevail."

Only on the morning of November 25th did the message read: "Breakthrough

will likely succeed"). Even less could the question of

booty numbers, which was asked based on a previous report from the 9th Army directly

to the Supreme Army Command, be conclusively answered.

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg said:

"Number of prisoners and... to be specified only in a few days. Army Corps

send them back. We will learn more about this only at invitation stations."

1) See p. 165 and 186. — 2) p. 166. "What I felt," wrote after  
the war General Ludendorff (Memories, p. 84), "I cannot describe. It was  
at stake! Not only the capture of so many brave men,  
but a triumph of the enemy, but a lost campaign! The 9th  
Army would have had to be withdrawn after this defeat." — 3) Morning  
report of the High Command 9 f. p. 187.  
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The evening report of November 25 stated: "Yesterday's skirmishes over," but concluded: "Russians are everywhere opposite and apparently preparing a new attack. Situation continuously serious." The question of the Supreme Army Command could also be answered later in the evening to the extent that 40,000 prisoners, 70 guns (in addition to 30 rendered unusable, which could not be recovered), 160 ammunition wagons, and 165 machine guns were reported as spoils of the battles around Lodz. However, it was also stated: "The Supreme Commander East explicitly reports that there can be no talk of a decision."

In the operations, a standstill had occurred. For more than a quarter of a year, it had been possible, with limited forces, not only to cover the back of the Western Army but also to keep the Russian masses largely away from the homeland borders. To continue the operations, reliance was placed on the reinforcements expected from the West, but for the time being, nothing certain was known about their total strength or their arrival times. Thus, the prospects of the further campaign were not yet foreseeable.

5. The Operations of the Russians.

a) The Russian Operations from Early to Mid-November.

Maps and sketches: No. 6 to 10.

At the beginning of November, a certain standstill had occurred in the forward movement of the Russian armies.

From the army group of the Northwest Front under General Ruzki (headquarters Siedlce), the 10th Army attacked with 20 infantry divisions and 6 cavalry divisions at the eastern border of East Prussia1), the 1st Army stood with 8 infantry divisions and 3½ cavalry divisions against Soldau and on both sides of the Vistula against Thorn, the 2nd and 5th Armies, with a total of 16 infantry divisions and 5½ cavalry divisions, advanced through East Poland to the area west and south of Lodz; decisive action was not possible for the time being due to the thorough German retreat movements.

From the army group of the Southwest Front under General Ivanov (headquarters Cholm), to the left of the Vistula were the 4th and

1) Signed in the transcript at the Supreme Army Command.   
2) G. 249 ff., see appendix to Volume V, G. 497. — The account is largely based on Korolkow, Overview G. 108 ff., 130 ff., 140 ff. and Lodz G. 3 ff.   
3) G. 347 ff.

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The Operations of the Russians.

The 9th Army, with a total of 23 infantry divisions and 4 cavalry divisions, reached the line Konsk—Sandomir. To the right of the Vistula stood the 3rd, 11th, and 8th Armies and the newly formed "Dnieper Group" with a total of 26 infantry divisions and 12 cavalry divisions still east of the San, in front of the Austrian fortress Przemysl and on the Dniester.

Since Turkey entered the war, 6 infantry divisions and 3 cavalry divisions (1st Caucasian and 2nd Turkestan Corps) were permanently bound to the Caucasus Front. The High Command had only about 9 infantry divisions available in total, of which 1½ were just arriving from Siberia, while the others were distributed to Petersburg, some places in the interior of the Reich, and the Black Sea coast. Therefore, the numerous mixed Landwehr brigades that had been set up in the meantime could now also be used. In the field troops, efforts were underway to replace the heavy losses suffered so far. However, less well-trained replacements had to be used, and the large loss of active officers was particularly noticeable. In addition, there was an increasing shortage of weapons and equipment; the enormous losses, especially in East Prussia, could not be replaced. Thus, reinforcements often arrived at the front without weapons. The field batteries, which initially had strong artillery, had to be reduced to a standard strength of six guns during the autumn, so many divisions now had only 36 light guns instead of 48, as few as the German reserve divisions, but only about half as many as most German active infantry divisions and also fewer than the Austro-Hungarian divisions. This shortage of equipment was accompanied, as in all armies, by serious ammunition shortages.

The Russian Supreme Command, still in Baranowitschi, had since the end of October seen the hasty retreat of the German 9th Army from the middle Vistula as proof of their defeat. When the pursuit by the German destruction operations

1) The battles on the Caucasus Front will be dealt with in a later volume in context. — 2) Called "Dpolfscheje" by the Russians and previously mostly translated as "Reichsdeutsche." These troops corresponded at least to the German Landwehr. These troops corresponded at least to the German Landwehr, and they also did not have the older replacement troops with less artillery than these. Dpolfscheje is therefore translated as "Landwehr" to avoid misunderstandings.

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When the situation arose, the Supreme Commander, Grand Duke Nicholas, issued instructions on November 2 for the preparation of further attacks, stating: "No significant forces detected at Thorn; to the left of the Vistula, the Germans are retreating to Kalisz, with the main forces retreating over Noworadomsk and Włoszczowa; the Austrians are retreating south of Kielce, still maintaining a rearguard; serious resistance is to be expected at Sandomir." The objective of future operations was described as a "deep incursion into Germany between the Vistula and the Sudetes." For this, an attack group of four armies was to be prepared along the line Kolo—Czestochowa—Auschwitz; their advance could only begin from this line once the destroyed railways and roads were restored. Meanwhile, the army flanks were to be secured by "decisive successes in East Prussia and on the San." Accordingly, the 10th Army of the Northwest Front was tasked with breaking the enemy's resistance in East Prussia and then joining the 1st Army to establish themselves on the lower Vistula. The main attack was assigned to the 2nd, 5th, 4th, and 9th Armies. The 2nd was to be echeloned behind the right wing to maintain the connection with the 1st Army, while the 4th and 9th were to push back the enemy still standing in front of their front and initially advance to the Nida. The remaining armies of the Southwest Front were to continue the attack in Galicia, occupying the Carpathian passes to protect the left army flank and sending cavalry into Hungary.

The "necessity of the fastest execution of tasks in East Prussia and Galicia, to not delay the start of the attack," was particularly emphasized during discussions with the staffs of the army groups by the Supreme Army Command. Since the Commander of the Northwest Front did not believe in a quick success in East Prussia, he suggested not waiting for it but attacking with the army center as soon as it was ready. On the other hand, the Commander of the Southwest Front considered it more appropriate to first turn with full force against the Austro-Hungarian army and remain purely defensive in the north until then. He reiterated the view he had always held, that the decisive attack against Germany should only be launched after the southern flank was secured by defeating the Austro-Hungarian army.

This precondition seemed fulfilled when the Austro-Hungarian army began its retreat from the San on November 3. On

1) This referred to the Vistula course Warsaw—Thorn.

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On November 4, the movement of the Russians was recognized, and on the 5th, the Grand Duke wired General Hoffner1): “Our armies have just achieved a complete victory, which represents the impact of our success on the Vistula. The Austrians are retreating on the entire front in Galicia. The campaign plan, which I shared with you at the very beginning of its development, has thus been successfully carried out, and it has now been unequivocally crowned by the greatest success we have achieved since the beginning of the war. I hope for a quick and complete resolution of our joint task and am convinced that the final victory will belong to the banners of the Allies.” On the occasion of this wire, the representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was informed at the Supreme Army Command that with the capture of Sandomir and the crossing of the Russian 3rd Army over the San, the pressure of the Austro-Hungarian army had been definitively broken, and similarly, the pressure of the Germans in East Prussia and to the left of the Vistula. Thus, they had gained free rein to act on the entire front. The Grand Duke decided on the attack according to the proposals of the Northwest Front.

By November 10, the restoration work on railways and roads had progressed to the point that the armies of the Northwest Front in Poland were ready to attack; their troops had been replenished to full strength, but there was a lack of rifles for the replacement troops. The right wing of the Southwest Front had advanced to about the same level but still suffered from supply difficulties, while the left wing, the 3rd and 8th Armies, was still 40 to 45 percent below the required strength. The enemy was perceived as follows: No enemy on the lower Vistula, cavalry and infantry at Kalisch, one to two corps at Wislun, three to four corps at Tschenstochau; overall, in the Vistula bend between Thorn and the Galician border, at most five German corps and three cavalry divisions. There was concern, however, that the Germans might shift their forces by rail and reinforce from the western theater of war. Therefore, the Russian Supreme Army Command deemed it necessary to begin their own attack but decided — presumably due to the supply situation of the 4th Army — to wait another two to three days. The first target was to be the line Jarotschin—Kattowitz—Auschwitz as a “starting position for the thrust deep into Germany.” The

1) Letter from Prince Kudachev, representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Supreme Army Command, to Minister Sasonov on November 6, 1914, reprinted in Krasny Archive XXVI, p. 20.

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The 2nd Army was deployed against Kalisch–Wjelun, the 5th and 4th against Tschenstochau, and the 9th against Krakau. General Rußki was to lead the main attack.

On November 11, reports came in about the reinforcement of German forces at Thorn and Kalisch; agents had reported that troops were being transported from East Prussia to Thorn. The Germans seemed to have begun regrouping their forces; whether a strong German group still stood at Tschenstochau was questionable.

On November 12, Grand Duke Nicholas set the start of the general attack for the morning of November 14 and now specified the next goal, to prevent the regrouping of the enemy. General Rußki, to whom the 4th Army of the Southwestern Front was now also subordinated, was to make proposals for the execution of the attack by the 2nd, 5th, and 4th Armies, "under the obligatory observation of all measures that ensure the security of the right flank"). The 9th Army remaining at the Southwestern Front was to participate in the attack.

Meanwhile, the advance of the German 9th Army against the right flank of the Russian attack army had been in full swing since November 11 and had led to combat at Wlozlawek in the afternoon of that day).

At this time, the Russian army was positioned as follows\*):

From the army group of the Northwestern Front, the 10th Army was still fighting at the eastern border of East Prussia²).

From the 1st Army under General v. Rennenkampf, with a total of 8 infantry divisions and 3½ cavalry divisions, the I. Turkestan Corps along with the 4th Don Cossack Division was positioned in front of Neidenburg and Soldau in the attack against the East Prussian southern border³). Additionally, to the right of the Vistula, the VI Corps along with the 6th Cavalry Division was at Sierpez and Lipno, behind them at Plock the V Siberian (Reserve) Corps as army reserve; to the left of the river, the V Siberian Corps was at Wlozlawek, southwest of it at Isbiza the depleted Guard Cossack Division. Since October 26, General v. Rennenkampf had requested the construction of a Vistula bridge at Plock to be able to lead his forces across the river by the shortest route, while the army group had ordered the bridge construction 40 kilometers further back at Wyszogrod. So

¹) Danilow, p. 332. — ²) p. 67 ff. — ³) See military organization, Appendix 1. — ⁴) p. 347 ff. — ⁵) p. 352 f.

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The shifting of additional forces to the left bank of the Vistula took a lot of time. — Since November 9, the army had received reports of significant German forces assembling at Thorn1); however, the German security troops retreating from Wlozlawek had destroyed the railway, making it difficult to conclude on attack routes. General v. Rennenkampf ordered the V Siberian Corps to establish a sustainable defense at Wlozlawek and intended to bring the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps over Plock to the left bank of the Vistula for the upcoming offensive. On November 11, he recognized the German advance over the border; he went to Plock and initiated the crossing of the corps to the left bank of the Vistula. However, due to a lack of equipment, the corps could only begin crossing on November 13 and could bring no more than about one infantry brigade plus artillery to the left riverbank daily; parts used the bridge at Wyschogrod.

The 2nd Army under General Scheidemann, with a total of 10 infantry divisions and 4 cavalry divisions, had positioned the II Corps to protect its right flank against Thorn in a front about 20 kilometers wide northwest of Lentschitza; to the right, there was a gap of about 50 kilometers wide up to the V Siberian Corps at Wlozlawek, and to the left, up to the XXIII Corps south of Dombje, an almost equally large gap. The XXIII Corps was followed to the south behind the Warthe by the II Siberian Corps, then the IV and I Corps. The left wing of this 80-kilometer-wide, west-facing deployment stood west of Petrikau. In front of the front, the Caucasian Cavalry Division from Romin had retreated against German cavalry towards the Warthe; the three-division-strong cavalry corps Nowikow stood at Sieradz. Reconnaissance had detected the advance of German infantry from Jarotschin and strong cavalry at Kalisch.

The 5th Army under General Plebjew stood with 6 infantry divisions and 1 1/2 cavalry divisions with a width of 50 kilometers south of the 2nd Army, left wing at Pjotrkow, order from the right wing: I Siberian, XIX, V Corps. In front of the front, the enemy seemed to have weakened at Wjelun, but at Tschenstochau, he was still in considerable strength.

The 4th Army under General Ewcrt concluded with 10 divisions

1) How the Supreme Army Command came to the differing view mentioned above (p. 197 f.) is not known. Perhaps there are errors in the Russian representations.

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Infantry and 1<sup>1/2</sup> cavalry divisions moved southwards. With more than 70 kilometers of front width, their southern flank was at Mjechow. The supply difficulties had not yet been overcome by this army, as the railway was only operational up to Piń for the time being.

The Southwest Front Army Group had reached the Nida with 9 infantry divisions and 2<sup>1/2</sup> cavalry divisions of the 9th Army in Russian Poland. Their remaining parts, including the left wing of the 9th Army, a total of 30 infantry divisions and 12 cavalry divisions, had advanced past Przemyśl to the Dunajec and the Carpathian passes.

At the Northwest Front Army Group, on the afternoon of November 13, the V Siberian Corps retreated southwards along the Vistula from Włocławek in the face of German superiority to Gostynin, to await the crossing of the VI Siberian Corps here. The commanders of the 1st and 2nd Armies recognized the seriousness of the situation; at the army group's intelligence office, the advance of detachments from four German corps: XXV Reserve Corps, XX, XVII, and XI Army Corps, as well as strong cavalry between the Vistula and Warthe, was considered proven. General Ruzki himself, however, held firmly to his previously formed opinion that the Germans had essentially maintained their previous distribution of forces. He attached little importance to the events at Włocławek and attributed the blame for the failure there solely to the V Siberian Corps.

With such an understanding, General Ruzki made no proposals for changes to the Supreme Army Command for the major offensive. In the army group order of November 13, he said about the enemy: "From the direction of Thorn, at most two divisions advance, opposed by the V and VI Siberian Corps; near Kalisch, about one corps and three cavalry divisions, opposed by the 2nd Army; near Mjechow, about two corps opposed to the Nida of the 2nd and 5th Armies; near Tschenstochau, about one corps, opposed by parts of the 5th and 4th Armies." Accordingly, he ordered the advance of the 2nd, 5th, and 4th Armies westwards for November 14, against the Tarnów-Kattowitz line. The II Corps of the 2nd Army was to secure the right flank and therefore follow in echelon to the right. The 1st Army was tasked with covering the entire offensive movement against the lower Vistula and using its two Siberian Corps to the left of the river.

\*) See p. 69 ff. — Thus, only the 1st Reserve Corps had not been included until then.

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These orders raised serious concerns for the commander of the 2nd Army. To assist the V Siberian Corps, General Scheidemann obtained permission to attack northwards with his II Corps from the Lamjenta line—area west of Krosniewice; the XXIII Corps was to cover the army's flank at Dombje and Uniejow, and the II Siberian Corps was to move north behind the Warthe for support. Only two of the army's five corps remained free for the advance westward without additional tasks, and these two were to extend their front to the right. The request to also shift the boundary northward to the 5th Army was rejected by General Rußki.

On November 14, the German attack brought full clarity; north of Kutno, a battle flared up, extending from the Vistula west of Plock to the Warthe west of Dombje. Initially, only about 2½ Russian corps faced 5 German ones. General Rußki subordinated the II Corps to General v. Rennenkampf and still, in complete misjudgment of the actual situation, considered the three corps, which the 1st Army had along the left of the Vistula, to be "completely sufficient to scatter the entire terrain known as the XXV Reserve Corps." The army received orders to attack on the entire front left of the Vistula on November 15. Following the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps, the VI Corps, which had only minor enemy forces in front of it on the right of the Vistula, was also to be moved to the left bank, with half of the 63rd Reserve Division from Warsaw taking its place. Otherwise, the previous orders remained. On the night of November 15, the headquarters was moved from Siedlce to Warsaw.

The three corps of the 1st Army designated for the attack on the left of the Vistula were pushed into defense by the German superiority. The 2nd Army had to decide to also turn a brigade of the II Siberian Corps northward to support its XXIII Corps in its unequal fight. The rest of this army, still 2¾ corps, had already begun the advance westward and crossed the Warthe at Warta, Sieradz, and Widawa. Similarly, the 5th, 4th, and 9th Armies had begun their advance; the latter two approached the positions of the Woyrsch Army Detachment and the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army.

When General v. Rennenkampf received the order on November 15

1) p. 73 ff. — 2) The Russians apparently had a particularly poor opinion of this corps. How it came about could not be determined. See also p. 49, note 1.

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to attack, "to defeat the enemy and then follow the 2nd Army in echelon," he was clear about the impracticability of this order. The combat strength of the V Siberian Corps was only slight, the VI Siberian Corps had only half reached the left bank of the Vistula, and the II Corps had already suffered heavily. He limited himself to passing on the army group's attack order to the corps; these remained on the defensive.

In the 2nd Army, General Scheidemann decided on the night of November 15, in view of the difficult situation of his XXIII Corps at the Ner, to divert the entire rest of the II Siberian Corps there and again request the army group to move the border against the 5th Army to the north.

When General Ruszki arrived in Warsaw early on November 15¹), serious reports from the combat area between the Vistula and the Warthe indicated that he made the decisive decision to first settle accounts with the enemy in the north and then continue the advance to the west; in the same sense, the Supreme Army Command had instructed him and arranged for the supply of reserves²). The army group order issued at noon again specified for November 16 that the 1st Army should attack with three corps. The entire 2nd Army was to swing to the right to gain the Klodawa—Kalisch line and also attack, the 5th Army to follow north; the 4th Army was to remain standing for the time being. A similar order could have saved the situation two days earlier, but now the battle at Kutno was already lost, all forces previously deployed with the front to the north were defeated and retreating south.

On November 15, however, the Supreme Army Command also intervened. Reports that the Germans intended to evacuate Tschenstochau and move the troops from there to Thorn³), to deploy them to the right of the Vistula, had raised new concerns. General Ruszki was to be prepared to possibly move the 5th, perhaps also the 4th Army by rail to the right bank of the Vistula⁴). The 10th Army, which was only approaching the German Litzken—Angerapp position, was to be urged to advance more quickly, and reserves were to be drawn from the interior of the country. The next task of the Northwest Front, however, was to clear the enemy between the Vistula and the Warthe.

¹) G. 79 ff. — ²) Danilow, G. 336, where no time is specified. — ³) Presumably, the transport of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division gave rise to these reports. — ⁴) Danilow, G. 336/337.

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In the evening, General Ruski realized the full extent of the danger resulting from the new defeat of his army units deployed to the north: the enemy had pushed between the 1st and 2nd Armies; the path through Piontek was open to them to flank one or the other. Reserves to close the gap were lacking. The proposal of the Supreme Army Command to send a corps by rail to Kutno promised no success anymore; it would have arrived too late. The 2nd and 5th Armies therefore had to be withdrawn eastwards, had to evade to the line Sgierzh—Pabianize—Petrikau. To enable this, General Ruski ordered the 1st Army and the two right-wing corps of the 2nd Army to attack again despite everything, to draw the enemy's attention. What was available in terms of individual regiments in Warsaw and Nowogeorgiewsk, in total only six battalions¹), was to be transported by rail to Lowitsch to cover the left flank of the 1st Army, which otherwise could be encircled and thrown into the Vistula. Also, the 6th Siberian Division, which had arrived from Asia at the beginning of November at the 10th Army in East Prussia, was to be brought in. Thus, General Ruski hoped to restore the connection between his 1st and 2nd Armies. However, a new gap was to be expected between the 5th and 4th Armies moving north, which then had to be closed by the 4th Army.

To comply with the attack orders of the army group, the strength of the four corps standing against the north was no longer sufficient after the previous defeats; they could not even hold the Bzura-Ner section on November 16²). General Ruski, however, stuck to his attack decision and sent the 5th Cavalry Division of the Nowikow Cavalry Corps towards Sgierzh. He intended to strike the four to five German corps, which he now quite correctly assumed to be in the gap between his own 1st and 2nd Armies, with eleven Russian corps. The advancing reinforcements were required to make the greatest marches to have the armies deployed and ready by the evening of November 17. However, this sudden front shift of two previously adjacent armies to the right flank involved movements of such large formations that were extremely difficult to execute and at least had to result in significant friction in the supply chain. The 2nd Army was to march to the right flank, with three corps along the line Strykow—Sgierzh—Konstantinow, with one corps

¹) Two regiments of the 3rd Turkestan Rifle Brigade and the Officer Shooting School Regiment. — ²) See p. 85 ff.

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behind Bhfsejnu to reach, the 5th Army with two corps to the left next to the 2nd Army to move to Pabianice—Lask, with one corps to Petrikau; this corps was then further designated as an army group reserve for rail transport to Skierniewice. On November 18, the attack was to begin and be directed by the 2nd Army against Piontel—Lentschyz, by the 5th against Lentschyz—Dombje, while the 11th Army was to draw forces to itself again at Zgierz through attack. Since the Vistula front at Plock had become firm, this army expected the imminent cooperation of the VI Corps on the right wing, while the left was to be strengthened by the troops arriving by rail at Lowitsch. On the other hand, it became clear on the evening of November 16 that the corps of the 2nd and 5th Armies advancing from the south would not reach their marching goals in time, as this would have required a march of 60 to 100 kilometers from the morning of the 16th to the evening of the 17th. It became clear that the attack could not even begin on November 18; General Ruzki had to be prepared for the fact that the shifting of the front to the north would no longer succeed in time. If this case occurred, he wanted to retreat further east; for this, he now already gave the 2nd Army the direction towards Lowitsch—Skierniewice—Rawa "in case of failure."

On the morning of November 17, the V and VI Siberian Corps of the 1st Army stood with the right wing west of Plock leaning against the Vistula, with the left northeast of Schilin behind the Pischjowa section, behind the left wing the Guard Cossack Division. Two brigades of the VI Corps were to reach the left Vistula bank at Plock during the morning. To the south, the Siberian Corps behind the Pischjowa west of Kiernojia was joined by the II Corps, completely shattered by the defeat at Kutno; the Caucasian Cavalry Division had retreated south of Lowitsch. Against the German I Reserve Corps, which attacked here alone with about 25 battalions and 100 guns, there were thus a total of 100 Russian battalions with 250 guns2) available. But the resistance of the V Siberian Corps, which formed the right wing, already severely beaten twice and initially attacked alone, quickly collapsed under the fire of the German artillery; the foremost brigade of the VI Corps, just arriving, was swept along by the retreating; the bridge at Plock had to be abandoned again. Threatened on the right flank, the VI Siberian also began

1) See p. 104 ff. — 2) Nominal strength: 108 battalions, 276 guns (only field guns, but no light and heavy howitzers counted).

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(Reserve) Corps to retreat. In the evening, the Siberians were positioned in the line Doblyshkow—Pischjowa section northeast of Sychlin. Only the II Corps was still in its old position; it had not been attacked so far. Since the crossing of the VI Corps at Plocz could not be continued (instead, half of the 63rd Reserve Division was supposed to cross at Wyschogrod, but the bridge there was also unusable). Thus, initially, only the individual regiments rolling towards Lowitsch, summarized as "Marijowitsch Detachment," were to be expected, all in all a weak brigade. From the reserve of the Supreme Army Command, the 55th and 67th Reserve Divisions from Petersburg were to follow; Soldau, which had been finally taken by the I Turkestan Corps after seven days of efforts on November 16, was to be vacated again to free forces for Lowitsch.

In the 2nd Army, General Scheidemann had temporarily intended to move his headquarters from Lodz back to Skierniewize, but then decided to stay in Lodz with his troops. From them, the II Siberian Corps, which had already been jumbled by the piecemeal deployment of its forces at Lentschytza and mixed with parts of the XXIII Corps, was to move east from Sgierjsch to make room for the IV Corps. The attack of the German XX Corps intervened in this flanking movement; Strykow was lost, they retreated south, with the 5th Cavalry Division, entrusted with the protection of the right flank, moving eastwards to Jeszow. The IV Corps, coming from the southwest, only reached the area just south of Sgierjsch in the evening, the XXIII, mixed with detached parts of the II Siberian Corps, Alexandrow and Kasimjerisch. Behind these corps, the I Corps was still marching towards the right flank, on Andrespol east of Lodz.

In the 5th Army, the I Siberian and to its left the XIX Corps had only been set in motion northwards against the line Pabianize—Lask in the afternoon, the V had begun transporting a division to Skierniewize at Petrikau.

The 4th Army, corresponding to the completely changed situation, was now reassigned by the Supreme Army Command to the southwest front, to attack here together with the enemy at Tschenstochau and southwards, thereby making further shifts of forces by the enemy impossible. The unified Russian attack front against Silesia and Posen was torn apart.

1) The reason is not known. — 2) G. 341 f. — 3) A radio message with this information was intercepted by the Germans (G. 107). — 4) Danilow, G. 341 and 346.

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On November 18<sup>1)</sup>, of the fresh forces that General Rußki had wanted to deploy for a general attack, only the IV Corps was present, all others still held back. Thus, there were only uncoordinated skirmishes against the advancing Germans.

The 1st Army, citing the condition of its troops, had obtained permission to withdraw the front to Nowo-Lowitschi, so that its right wing approached the bridge site of Wyschgorod. However, the retreat order only reached the troops at 7<sup>o</sup> in the morning and later, so that only the V Siberian Corps could withdraw under the cover of rearguards in the early dawn; the commanding general of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps decided to remain in position until the evening. Thus, the German 36th Reserve Division penetrated deep into its rear; the corps held out in the encirclement until the evening and managed to escape without serious losses in the early darkness, as the striking power of the German I Reserve Corps had also diminished.

In the 2nd Army, General Scheidemann had ordered that the "Kraus Detachment<sup>2)</sup>" (about a division, mixed from parts of the XXIII and II Siberian Corps) was to hold Błeszin until the I Corps arrived. This corps had covered more than 80 kilometers on November 16 and 17 and therefore reached Andrespol with about 50% marching losses only at 9<sup>o</sup> in the morning on the 18th, where it remained exhausted. Meanwhile, the Kraus Detachment was completely shattered by the attack of the German XXV Reserve Corps and the 3rd Guard Division. Parts reached Rawa, others as far as Radom, where they spread panic a few days later; barely half regrouped at Karpin. The II Siberian Corps, now reduced to about one division, was pushed back by the attack of the German XX Corps from the heights north of Nowo-Polna towards the Błeszin—Lodz road. The IV Corps, which had not been combat-ready since the battle at the Masurian Lakes<sup>3)</sup>, attacked towards Sjerish and temporarily caused the German Pannwitz Corps severe difficulties, but ultimately did not advance. West of Lodz, the XXIII Corps, which had only 1 1/4 divisions available here, was pushed back a few kilometers by the German 35th Infantry Division.

The I Siberian and XIX Corps of the 5th Army reached the Pabianize—Lask line only at noon and probed against the flank of the German 38th Infantry Division and against the Cavalry Corps Trommel from the left next to the XIX Corps, which now only had two divi-

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The strong cavalry corps Nowikow, which was soon to follow its 5th Division, was to move eastward into the gap between the 2nd and 1st Army. A regiment from the V Corps had reached Sjerniewicze by rail, then the route from the detachment of the German 9th Cavalry Division sent there had been interrupted; the rest of the corps was at Petrikau.

h) The Defense Against the German Encirclement at Lodz.

Maps and Sketches: No. 10 to 15.

On the evening of November 18, due to the German advance over Brzeziny to the south, General Ruzski's connection to the 2nd Army was severed. This army and the 5th were engaged along the entire front, into which three fresh corps, the I, I Siberian, and XIX, could enter on the 19th. Thus, success seemed assured. The 1st Army, as General Ruzski reported to the Supreme Army Command, now had the "responsible task of attacking the flank of the Germans, not with any limited goal, but with the aim of immediately regaining direct contact with the troops of the 2nd Army." General Ruzski was fully aware of the condition of the 1st Army, also knowing that the reinforcement intended for it by the V Corps had become impossible due to the railway interruption. Nevertheless, the situation required the attack of the 1st Army. General Ruzski further reported to the Supreme Army Command: "... Thus, all forces available to me are assembled for operations against the enemy. Their strategic position is apparently favorable, but I do not conceal that success depends on the offensive spirit and even the steadfastness of the troops, in which, according to the reports of the commanders of the 1st and 2nd Army and after exchanging views with them, I cannot firmly believe. I also add that, according to the reports of these commanders, the mood of their subordinates does not show the necessary fighting spirit. Nevertheless, I have again demanded that my instructions be carried out exactly under all circumstances..." In a letter that the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army subsequently wrote to the Minister of War, he stated that the already difficult situation was further complicated by the fact that "suddenly there was a lack of confidence in the troops among Ruzski and his closest associates." It was also stated: "With the raising of the fighting spirit, the

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strategic position a decisive victory, for the enemy is in a pincer.“

On the morning of November 19¹), the German 6th Cavalry Division also interrupted the wire connection of the army group to the 5th Army at Petrikau. General Ruszki, however, had been able to coordinate with General Plehwe about the continuation of the attack and informed him to relay to the 2nd Army that the 1st Army would attack.

General v. Rennenkampf was determined to initiate the ordered attack of his 1st Army despite everything; he wanted to use the two Siberian corps, half of the II and half of the VI, north of the Bzura, and set everything else — especially the incoming reinforcements — Lodzisch and Skernewize for an attack in the direction of Lodz. Thus, the reinforced V Siberian Corps advanced westward from Slon on November 19, initially encountering no resistance and in the evening overran the German detachment Schmid in Samitri, capturing 200 prisoners²). The VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps with 1½ divisions and, to the left, the entire II Corps, remained at Skernowia and northwest of Lowitsch, as the reinforcements expected for the attack westward arrived only gradually.

On the right wing of the 2nd Army, the 5th Cavalry Division retreated southward without a fight before the German advance to Tomaschow. The newly arrived I Corps, which was to attack Nowosolna via Hellerweden over Bedon, encountered parts of the German 3rd Guard Division and the XX Army Corps, stalled, and lost 2000 men alone as prisoners in fierce fighting that day. Even with the Russian IV and XXIII Corps, there was hard but inconclusive fighting. The bulk of the I Siberian and XIX Corps, however, encountered the front and flank of the German 38th Infantry Division positioned at Pabianice, pushed them into defense, and captured 400 prisoners and three heavy guns. Despite their significant superiority, these fresh Russian troops were unable to break the German resistance in the Automysl—Schadel line definitively. General Plehwe sent them the ¾ 7th Division of the V Corps from Petrikau in the afternoon for assistance, keeping a division of this corps³) there as the last reserve.

In the evening, the army group had General Plehwe tell the commander of the 2nd Army: “The entire success of the operation

¹) p. 177 ff. — ²) p. 137. — ³) ¼ 7th and ¾ 10th Division.

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depends on the holding of the 2nd Army, and mainly on its right wing, which is in the greatest danger. You must make every effort not only to stop the advance of the Germans against your right wing but even to push them back to the north... I have no doubt that tomorrow, through the combined efforts of the three armies, the enemy's resistance will be broken."

On November 20th¹, the Russian leadership was disturbed by the advance of the German Breslau Corps against Sieradz and to the south. In connection with the advance of the Scheffer group far to the east, it became apparent that the Germans wanted to close the ring around the 2nd and 5th Armies, after failing at Pabianice, now further south. General Rußki proposed support through the 4th Army, but the Supreme Army Command replied: "this army, itself threatened on its northern flank², cannot help at Lodz. The two Guard Cavalry Divisions, resting behind the 10th Army, were to be transported by rail to Iwangorod and inserted into the threatened line. General Rußki entrusted General Plehwe with the supreme command over the isolated 2nd and 5th Armies at Lodz. He now made a serious attempt to urge the 1st Army, to which there was still a wire connection, to proceed more rapidly. The 1st Army was given the line Plosz—Kutno—Piontek—Strzyfow as the target for November 20th. General v. Rennenkampf wanted to continue the attack against the German I Reserve Corps with the right wing. However, when the 50th Infantry Division of the V Siberian Corps came under heavy German artillery fire west of Samtfi, it retreated again, leaving its guns and dragging the rest of the corps with it. The advance of the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps soon stalled. In the evening, the Russian front stood north of the Bzura section as before the start of the attack on November 19th, in the line Slow—south of Rierniza—northwest of Lowitsch. South of the Bzura, the "Lowitsch Detachment," intended for the advance, had meanwhile been diverted about 30 kilometers (43rd and 63rd Divisions, Marjmontwitsch Detachment, and 6th Siberian Division), but these units had not yet fully taken their positions and therefore halted on November 20th in the Mroga section at the line Zielawy—Glowno. On the left flank of the 2nd Army, the Charpentier Cavalry Group (Caucasian Cavalry and Guard Cossack Division) remained southwest of Skernewize, where a regiment of the

¹) C. 129 ff. — ²) S. 243 f.  
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V Corps. From the right bank of the Vistula, where the Germans did not press,

General v. Rennenkampf sent another brigade of the VI Corps (1/2 4th Division)

to Wyschogrod; the 2nd Turkestan Rifle Brigade, dispatched from the I Turkestan

Corps, had arrived by train in Sochaczew, the 55th Reserve Division destined for

Skierniewice reached Warsaw, and in Grodno, half of the 76th Reserve Division

was to be loaded. Hour by hour, the parts of the 1st Army positioned for attack

on the left of the Vistula had to be maneuvered. From the 2nd Army, an officer

in a motor vehicle had reached the Lowitsch detachment; otherwise, information

was obtained mostly through mutilated radio messages1) about the plight of this army.

The 2nd and 5th Armies acted independently on November 20 in mutual agreement.

Against the German encirclement south of Lodz, General Plehwe had already

during the night set the half 10th Division of the V Corps from Petrikau to Tuschyn

and the 1st Division2) of the I Siberian Corps from Lutomiersk to Rzgow in motion,

while the rest of the V Corps3) along with the advancing 5th Cavalry Division from

Tomaschow halted the advance of the German 6th Cavalry Division north of Petrikau.

In the evening, 3/4 of the 10th Infantry Division stood after a decisive battle with

the German half 50th Reserve Division at Gosinowice and Kruschow; the remnants

of the Raus detachment, known at the front, only 300 rifles and 20 guns4) left, had

retreated northward from the superior German attack from Rzgow. Between this

place and Pabianice, the 1st Siberian Division had made contact with the German

49th Reserve Division by evening.

The Russian I Corps was at Bedon, which it lost in the evening, and at Nowosolna

was pushed into defense and forced by the German encirclement to also take a front

to the south. Everything that was still available in reserves from this and the

adjacent corps on the left was deployed there, but it was far from sufficient to

establish a continuous defensive front from Bedon to north of Rzgow.

North and west of Lodz, the battle continued without significant results. After

the advance of the 1st Siberian Division to the south, the own strength was no

longer sufficient to expand the success achieved the day before against the

38th Infantry Division. The XIX Corps took the front against Schadet and was

five kilometers south in the evening.

1) See the radio messages intercepted by the Germans on p. 140. — 2) Exactly:   
3/4 1st and 1/2 2nd Siberian Division. — 3) One regiment each of the 7th and 10th Division.   
4) p. 135.

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of this place; on its left flank, 1½ Cossack divisions (Turkestan Brigade and 5th Don Division) secured against the advancing Breslau Corps, behind which ¾ of the 7th Infantry Division had arrived at Lask. The Nowikow Cavalry Corps had begun the march eastward and reached the area south of Pabianice in the evening alongside the 1st Siberian Division.

The reports that General Scheidemann sent to General Plehwe and General Russki on the evening of November 20 showed the full seriousness of the situation of the 2nd Army. He longed for the forces promised from Petrikau and especially for the 1st Army to act against the rear of the German encirclement.

For November 21, the 1st Army had left only the two Siberian and ¼ VI Corps north of the Bzura, which, however, withdrew before the German I Reserve Corps during the day to just in front of Lodwitsch and had to be reinforced there by parts of the arriving reinforcements. South of the Bzura were the II Corps and the "composite corps" from the arriving reinforcements, a total of about 4½ divisions, advancing against Strykow—Błeszyn, with the Charpentier Cavalry Group on their left. By evening, these forces had advanced almost without a fight with the right wing to halfway between Piontek—Strykow, otherwise to just east of Strykow and Błeszyn, thus having advanced only about ten kilometers in total.

At Lods, General Plehwe had taken command of the 2nd and 5th Armies and moved his headquarters to Pabianice. He wanted to continue the attack; the situation was particularly difficult because the 2nd Army had lost most of its columns and trains due to the German encirclement movement. Ammunition and supplies were running low, the troops were severely depleted, and their striking power was exhausted even in the newly arrived corps of the 5th Army. Only the 1st Siberian Rifle Division, deployed from the west on Rzgow, still attacked with force and had temporary success until it unexpectedly encountered the German 49th Reserve Division marching north into the Siberian left flank. Nothing was achieved on the extreme right wing, although the active XIX Corps, along with 1½ Cossack divisions, was now also reinforced by ¾ of the 7th Division and faced only cavalry and militia as opponents.

1) p. 141 ff. — 2) "Garrison Lodwitsch" = ¼ 10th Division from Stjerniewize, ¼ 4th Siberian, ¼ 13th Siberian Division, ¼ 2nd Turkestan Brigade. — 3) p. 209.

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During the day, a flyer was sent to the 1st Army to report on the expansion of the German encirclement movement south of Lodz and to urgently demand the attack of the 1st Army, which had not yet been felt. In the evening, General Plehwe learned that the attack from Lontisch was indeed underway, and therefore assumed that the enemy south of Lodz must now begin the retreat. The Nowikow Cavalry Corps was to block the enemy's last escape route between the 5th Cavalry Division at Bendkow and the cavalry of the 1st Army, which was suspected to be advancing from the east on Koluschki. To complete its fate, further attacks were to be made in the south, east, and northeast of Lodz; the attack west of the city was halted.

On November 22(1), the Nowikow Cavalry Corps, the 3/4 10th Infantry Division, and the 1st Siberian Division attacked the German 6th Cavalry Division and the 1 1/2 divisions of the XXV Reserve Corps from the south and west in vain. In front of the German 3rd Guard Division, some weak and mixed units stood with the front facing south, as well as the left wing (22nd Division) of the I Corps. This corps had requested reinforcements, fearing it could no longer withstand a second attack like on November 21. Nevertheless, it was also possible here to hold the positions essentially. However, the attack ordered for the east and northeast front of Lodz did not get underway; they did not even push forward when the German XX Army Corps withdrew its front here, and the sound of the artillery of the retreating 1st Army from Lontisch must have been clearly audible behind the enemy.

The 1st Army had learned of the plight of the 2nd Army not only through the flyer but also through one of the already mentioned radio messages from General Scheidemann. General Rußki had repeatedly and increasingly urged, and finally, the attack at Strykow and Błeszin also got underway, although the leadership of the attack group, composed of parts of various units, had to overcome great friction. Meanwhile, north of the Bzura, the Siberian corps began to retreat again, the city of Lontisch was under fire, and preparations were made to evacuate the station. Together with the news of the appearance of German forces at Piontek and reinforcements coming from Sgierß, this new setback also paralyzed the attack in the direction of Lodz. Against German forces with a strength of only about one division, 4 1/2 Russian divisions came, of which

1) p. 152 ff. and 169 ff. — 2) p. 149 f. and 156.

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1½, who had not fired at all, barely beyond Strykow and Bzhezinj. General v. Rennenkampf himself had arrived at the attack group and ordered the continuation of their attack at night; he set the line Gjerisch—Widsen (eastern suburb of Lodz) as the target, while the 6th Siberian Division was to advance separately on Wola-Ratkowa into the rear of the German encirclement group.

Overall, the Russians stood with great superiority in the rear of the German XVII and XX Corps on the evening of November 22; they had pushed themselves between these two corps and the Scheffer group over a wide kilometer and surrounded the latter from all sides. The outcome seemed more doubtful; empty trains were prepared to transport the prisoners1).

General Ruzki was particularly impressed on November 22 by the threatening advance of the Germans up to close to Lowitsch; he ordered, presumably fearing a threat from the right Vistula bank, the immediate demolition of the bridge at Wyszogrod, and took measures to support the troops at Lowitsch. On the other hand, during the day, it was possible to restore the telephone connection to General Plehwe. According to the reports available by 2 p.m., General Ruzki considered the overall situation to be extremely serious. "The heavy losses and the general exhaustion of the troops, the absence of large parts of the trains at the 2nd Army, which had broken out at Opotschno, Kozenice, and Rawa, the appearance of new enemy forces in the area between the 5th and 4th Army2), the yielding of the right wing of the 1st Army — all this affected the commander-in-chief of the army group3)." General Ruzki concluded that further attack was out of the question. If fresh enemy forces intervened, the armies would have to undertake a forced and therefore disordered retreat. Therefore, it was better to voluntarily retreat to a narrower front and wait there for replacements and reinforcements. He ordered the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Army to retreat to the line Slow—Lowitsch—Sternenwize—Tomashow. To enable this movement, however, the right wing of the 2nd and 5th Army, which were the troops south and east of Lodz, should attack decisively again on November 23; at the latest in the night of the 24th, the general retreat should begin.

This decision by General Ruzki came as a complete surprise to the Supreme Army Command. "At the very last moment" — wrote General Danilow,

1) G. 166. — 2) Corps Breslau, cf. G. 160. — 3) Korolow, Lodz, p. 114.

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...at that time Quartermaster General and Chief of the Operations Department, after the war1) — "we could expect a successful resolution of the 'Bzura Knot' that caused us so much concern. The difficult situation of the Germans surrounded on all sides had to worsen soon due to the continuously increasing frost and the eager storm offering no prospect of snowfall and warmth... We at headquarters were full of confident trust in a successful conclusion of the operation begun." In this situation, the general was called to the telegraph, which transmitted the words of General Rußki: "Failed attempts of the VI Siberian Corps to advance...; the Siberian Corps unable to proceed with the advance...; massive losses in the 2nd and 5th Armies, where some units have lost up to 70 percent of their strength... Advance of fresh enemy forces on the left flank and into the rear of Plehwe's army... Advance of the Germans from Piontek to Lowitsch... Possibility of reviving the situation as it existed at Lask—Lodz, but on a larger scale..." All this, reported General Rußki, prompted him to order the retreat. At the Supreme Army Command, they were deeply affected and asked questions, but believed they could not overlook the situation in detail to the extent that they dared to intervene. Therefore, the order was given to the Southwest Front to now also prepare the retreat of the 4th and 9th Armies. General Iwanow and the 4th Army raised objections; they would handle the situation. However, since General Rußki persisted in his plan, he also involved the Supreme Army Command in the order for the 4th and 9th Armies2).

Meanwhile, Generals v. Rennenkampf and Plehwe had also raised objections to the retreat decision with General Rußki. General Rußki, for whom the retreat seemed necessary mainly due to the enemy pressure against Lowitsch and the gap between the 5th and 1st Armies, then postponed the final decision to the next evening and made it dependent on whether the situation changed "decisively to our advantage" during the course of November 23.

On November 23,3) the troops of the Russian 1st Army advanced their positions north of the Bzura with reinforcements, as the Germans had not followed far. The

1) Danilow, p. 351. — 2) As in Korolkov, Overview, pp. 143/144 and Bobb, p. 115 based on Russian war records. General p. 353) writes in contrast that General Iwanow wanted to retreat, but the Supreme Army Command prevented it. — 3) pp. 161 ff. and 176 ff.

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The assault group south of the Bzura, however, did not continue the attack despite the instructions of General v. Rennenkampf during the night. Only during the course of the day did their right wing gain some ground, but the center did not advance further at Strykow in the face of German resistance. On the left wing, the 43rd and half of the 63rd Division marched undeterred, but also unhindered by the fierce fighting on their right and left, further west to join the 2nd Army. The 6th Siberian Division¹) (14 battalions and 5 batteries with 40 guns) assigned to Bola-Radkow encountered the advancing vanguard of the German 49th Reserve Division with its eastern column south of the railway at Błesin, which it attacked together with the Caucasian Cavalry Division, while its western column attempted to encircle through the forest west of Borowo. The right wing of this column met six battalions, but without artillery, at Gora Zielona, with the German 3rd Guard Division, was repelled and lost itself in the forest. Meanwhile, to break the German resistance at the railway, two battalions and a battery were deployed to encircle the German eastern flank over Koluschki; they encountered, already in darkness, the German half of the 50th Reserve Division, were defeated, and retreated northwards to Rogow under "heavy losses." The cavalry group Charpentier, initially involved in the battle, had the 3rd Guard Cavalry Division recalled from Koluschki to Glowno to cover against Bzelnay, the Caucasian Division moved northeast to Jeszow for the night.

The cavalry corps Nowitnow mistook the long columns of captured Russians, whom the Germans were leading, for German troops and contented itself with blocking the roads to the east and southeast. Only the artillery of the 5th Cavalry Division took the German retreat route at Karpin under fire in the morning.

The 10th Division and the 1st Siberian Division had only detected the night march of the Germans on the morning of November 23rd. They followed, but were kept at a respectful distance by artillery fire and rearguards; only in the evening did they reach Kurowitze and Bola-Radkowa. The I Corps found the English Captain Neilson²) on this day in a most unsatisfactory situation, in a semicircle, staff, reserves, artillery, train, all huddled together, heavy and light guns mixed and directed in all directions"; the corps had shrunk to the strength of about one brigade, exhausted and suffering.

¹) Main source: Nowitnow: "The 6th Siberian Rifle Division in the Battle of Lodz." — ²) Assistant to the Military Attaché; see Knor, p. 209.

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under ammunition shortage. Therefore, at Bedon, it also remained already west of the Miassja under German artillery fire and did not advance north beyond Nowosolna.

The entire remaining front of the 2nd and 5th Army was engaged in battle. When General Ruski received the report of the Germans retreating from Righow, he abandoned his own retreat plans and ordered that the 2nd Army as well as the 10th Division, the 1st Siberian Division, and the I Corps of the Army Group Plehwe should continue the attack on the night of the 24th. However, this order was not carried out by the 1st Army because the troops could no longer perform, and by the other units because General Plehwe considered the situation of the encircled German troops so hopeless that the night attack seemed unnecessary to him.

On the evening of November 23, the 43rd and half of the 63rd Division had reached the I Corps south of Nowosolna. From the commanding general of the VI Siberian Corps, General Wassiljew, who had taken command on the southern flank of the 1st Army, came the order from Błesinyn to immediately assist the 6th Siberian Division to the east, but both divisions postponed the march due to exhaustion and lack of supplies until the morning of November 24.

Through the gap between them and the 6th Siberian Division, the German Guard Infantry broke through to the north in the evening and night and took Błesinyn. General Wassiljew narrowly escaped to Koluschtski. Two battalions and a battery he sent for relief were unable to retake Błesinyn. The perhaps six battalions remaining, completely isolated remnants of the 6th Siberian Division, succumbed on the morning of November 24 to the attack of the German XXV Reserve Corps and were, since Błesinyn was already in German hands behind them, partly captured, partly scattered to the east and west.

During this battle at Błesinyn, there was no sign of an attack by the Russian I Corps. Only one regiment of the 63rd (Reserve) Division arrived in time to engage in the battle at Salkowek; however, this did not change anything in the outcome. Otherwise, the repeated, even urgent attack and pursuit orders of Generals Plehwe and Scheidemann

1) pp. 166 ff., 181 ff. and 186 f. — 2) According to Korollkow, Lodz, p. 128; these must have been the reserves that escaped there the day before and were won by the German 50th Division. These are said to have otherwise retreated to Rogowo in the darkness from Koluschtski to the northeast and "no longer took part in the battle."

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ineffective. The 1st Siberian and the 10th Division followed the Germans only slowly and at a distance, as did the cavalry corps Nowikow and the Caucasian Cavalry Division, which remained completely inactive after their involvement in the battle of November 23.

Similarly, the attack of the 1st Army at Strykow on November 24 made no further progress. From the northern wing, some advance was made in the morning hours, but soon it was pushed back by parts of the German I Reserve Corps, which advanced over Bielawy, threatened from the rear, and was taken.

General Russki had not yet given up hope on the evening of November 24, despite the occupation of Bzhesiny by the Germans. He wanted to complete the destruction of the encircled enemy by a general attack on the morning of November 25 and ordered Generals v. Rennenkampf and Plehwe: "Now, as not only the partial battle at Lodz-Bzhesiny but the fate of an operation is being decided, which has an enormous influence on the outcome of the entire campaign, the troops must act with all energy day and night... It is absolutely necessary, in these decisive days, to demand the exertion of the last strength, without regard for rest." — It was too late, for in the meantime, the commanding General of the II Corps at Strykow, General Tschurin, had received the unverifiable news that Bzhesiny and also Lowitsch had been taken by the Germans and decided to retreat with everything behind the Mroga section from Glowno. Only then was the way finally cleared for the German group Scheffer.

At the Supreme Army Command, General Januschkewitsch, in a letter to the Minister of War, presumably on November 24, described how, after the news of General Russki's decision to retreat, the "completely improbable delightful" news of the retreat of the German encirclement troops had suddenly come. Since then, there was a firm hope for a great success at Bzhesiny. When this was delayed, the Supreme Army Command expressed its astonishment to General Russki that nine to ten Russian corps with five to six Germans could not manage, which brought our front into such confusion.

1) According to Russian sources, this decision was only made at 9 in the evening; it is reported that the Russians were still observed by German aircraft in retreat during daylight, and that Strykow was again in German hands by the evening. — Krahm-Archiv, II, p. 133; the letter is undated.

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brought have." General Rustki blamed Generals v. Rennenkampf and Scheidemann. But when it became known on November 25 that the Germans had escaped, the disappointment was very great. In Petersburg, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General Bjelajew, told the French ambassador on November 26: "We have won the victory, a great victory. At Brzeziny and Strykow, the battles are not yet over, but the losses of the Germans are extraordinarily large; three of their corps are almost completely encircled. I have worked all night to prepare the transport of 150,000 prisoners." At the General Staff of the Field Army, however, they did not seem to have had such great hopes. When it was clear that the great blow had failed, General Januschkewitsch wrote to the Minister of War: "The operation from Lodz, I hope, will be completed. It is regrettable that this happens without the destruction of the enemy, but the Grand Duke and I said, after everything hung by a thread, one must also thank God."

6. Reflections.

The thorough destructions during the retreat from the middle Vistula had already brought the overwhelming Russian offensive movement to a halt on Russian soil. The surprising maneuvering of the German main forces from the center of the Russian attack front to their right flank and the immediately following thrust of the 9th Army then shattered the Russian attack plan aimed "deep into Germany." As November drew to a close, the enemy's attack mass was fixed in the north at Lodz, in the south at Czestochowa and Krakow. It was split into two parts, between which a wide gap yawned south of Lodz. Without significant reinforcement from the west, the German main army struggling in Flanders had its back covered for another month. Thus, the initial goal of the Lodz campaign was fully achieved.

During the course of the operation, however, this goal gradually grew: "The more I thought about the new task ahead of us," wrote General Ludendorff after the war4), "the sharper the situation and enormous danger became apparent, the clearer my resolve became to turn the operation decided in Czestochowa, if possible, into a great

1) Paléologue, I, p. 208. — 2) Krasny-Archiv, II, C. 134. — 3) p. 235 ff. — 4) Ludendorff, Memories, p. 77 f.

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To shape the annihilation strike; that alone could ultimately save us. It was not enough to just stop the enemy. This idea did not arise suddenly; it gradually formed. The expanded goal was not achieved; the reinforcements requested from the West were missing. With tied blades, they faced each other towards the end of November; the balance of power — not in pure numbers, but measured by the combat value of the troops — was close to equilibrium. Even in this, there was already a gain for the German side. — Could more have been achieved?

As soon as the decision for the new operation was finalized on November 3, the assembly of the 9th Army was carried out faster than the enemy thought possible, thanks to the efficiency of the German railways and their smooth cooperation with the troops, and also faster than the own Supreme Army Command had expected, which had thought of a similar operation with much stronger forces, but at a later time. Should they have therefore halted the attack at the last moment, given up the surprise ensured by the rapid advance into the enemy's flank, and allowed the enemy, as would have been unavoidable, to penetrate deep into German territory? The success could have been even more complete if the major strike succeeded later. However, the Supreme Army Command refrained from such intervention, and General Ludendorff also judged after the war: "We could not wait in the East with the start of the operation, even if we had clearly seen the reinforcement on November 10." It is more than questionable whether exhausted reinforcements arriving from the Western Front could have compensated for the disadvantages of longer waiting later.

The surprising deployment of the German 9th Army in the Russian flank was a performance recognized even by the enemy, which justified far-reaching hopes. A timely Russian attack in the direction of Czestochowa, according to General Danilow, then head of the operations department, "could have thwarted the plan of the German counterattack. Accordingly, we had to attribute the loss of our freedom of action with all its associated adverse consequences only to our own indecision and inability to remove all obstacles opposing the execution of our original attack plan... Our slowness and inability to gather intelligence on all developments with the enemy had the Germans

1) G. 9 and 55. — 2) Ludendorff, Memories, p. 80. — 3) Danilow, p. 333 f.

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The speed of action and the art of carrying out all measures in complete secrecy

were opposed, which led to the blow they had prepared against us hitting us completely unexpectedly."

The conditions for decisive initial successes of the German 9th Army were given. The hope that the V Siberian Corps standing alone at Wlozlawek and a few days later the Russian II Corps at Kutno could be finally dealt with was justified. The Mackensen High Command did everything to turn this hope into action; the enemy did not evade prematurely but positioned itself for battle. However, the conditions under which this was conducted had changed since the beginning of the war. The enemy's weapon effectiveness had not become stronger than before; the enemy suffered more from a lack of weapons and ammunition, but the German troops were no longer quite the same as at the beginning of the war. They had bled successively at Tannenberg, at the Masurian Lakes, and then partly in Poland, partly at the borders of East Prussia. It was always the same units that struggled in uninterrupted marches and battles against an overwhelming enemy, to whom new, including active troops, still flowed, which had not yet fought at all. Purely numerically, the German losses were constant; however, they did not pass unnoticed by the troop units. They attacked more cautiously and therefore more slowly. This benefited the enemy, who, favored by the long November nights, was still able to save themselves from seemingly hopeless situations. General v. Mackensen was not fully satisfied with the results of the victories at Wlozlawek and Kutno. Although many thousands of prisoners were made, as long as a large capture of artillery was missing, the enemy's backbone was not broken.

The result of the initial battles was a deep incursion into the enemy's army front, which increasingly grew into a breakthrough between the Russian 2nd and 1st Armies. However, the attacker's forces were only sufficient to swing in one direction, against the Russian 2nd Army. On the other side, one had to search at every turn and could only detach individual reserve troops for this. If in such a situation the decision against the Russian 2nd Army did not fall soon, all difficulties and disadvantages of a breakthrough would have to be felt to an increased extent, because the German 9th Army lacked any reserve that could be thrown against the advancing enemy. "It is clear," wrote Field Marshal v. Hindenburg after the war, "that this army, if it

1) v. Hindenburg, p. 114 f.

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The attack does not penetrate quickly, the enemy masses will be drawn from all sides. This danger is all the greater, as we have neither numerically sufficient nor adequately effective troops to both bind the Russian army masses from the great Vistula bend and the enemy corps north of the middle Vistula through strong, sustained frontal attacks or even deceive them for a longer period. We will certainly let our troops advance everywhere despite everything, but it would be a dangerous mistake to expect too much from this... What is lacking on our side in forces must be compensated for by speed and tactical skill. I am sure that in this respect everything humanly possible will be done by the army leadership and troops." — It was all about the German 9th Army succeeding in quickly and decisively dealing with the Russian 2nd Army at Lodz.

The first battles before Lodz once again showed the entire difficulty of frontal attacks even against numerically and artillery-wise inferior enemies; the German troops, with the sole exception of the 3rd Guard Division, had already endured almost a week of heavy fighting. However, the enemy was able to deploy an entire army of three corps at Lodz and was immediately determined to do so. The change in front of his 2nd Army and the advance of the 5th to the right flank were carried out with skill and speed and, as far as we know, without too much friction in supply. The rather difficult movement within the army group showed a decisiveness of the Russian leadership and an agility of the troop bodies that perhaps had not been fully expected.

The German leadership has been confirmed in these days by intercepted Russian radio messages in underestimating the enemy's will to resist at Lodz. A "Tannenberg" was envisioned. They were almost certain of a rapid retreat of the Russian 2nd Army and wanted to prevent it in order to drive the army into isolation. This led to a setback on the western flank on November 19 with the German 38th Infantry Division, and on the eastern flank to a wide-ranging encircling movement instead of encirclement, as the enemy did not withdraw but remained. Had not only the 3rd Guard Division but the entire Scheffer group swung sharply westward on that day, a full encirclement could not have been achieved, but a decisive blow against the Russian 2nd Army at Lodz would likely have been achieved. However, the forest of Brwinchyn remained in Russian hands, the widely extended

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The German front broke off. In fact, on November 19, General v. Scheffer marched south of the Miasga, while at the same time, to the west of the section, the Russian I Corps moved past him to the north. This corps was only able to hold on with great difficulty in the following days; one or two more combat-ready German divisions, attacking from a decisive direction, would have sufficed to achieve a complete victory here.

When the German group Scheffer finally turned westward, threatening clouds were already gathering on its southern flank and in its rear, so that only a quick and decisive blow could help. To achieve this, the XVII and XX Army Corps would have had to advance against the XXV Reserve Corps from the north; attempts to do this failed; but whether more could have been achieved through a sharper concentration of forces, especially the numerous artillery, remains uncertain. The lack of success north of Lodz increased the dangers associated with the breakthrough. The I Reserve Corps alone was unable to keep the Russian 1st Army, which had grown to four times its size despite all its defeats, in check at Lowitsch for ten days of uninterrupted fighting; two German divisions faced eight Russian ones here. New enemy forces came from Petrikau. However, north and west of Lodz, hardly any progress had been made since November 17. Could the encirclement south of the city still be continued? If the order was given on November 20, the Scheffer group could still be recalled and turned against the Russian 1st Army; on the 21st, it might have been too late. Should the safe route be taken to save one's own troops, or should the risk be taken despite everything? Such doubts did not occur to the German 9th Army's high command at that time. An unshakable sense of superiority, which dominated leadership and troops, allowed them to shrink from no task and no enemy superiority.

Since the evening of November 20, a whole Siberian division stood just west of Rzghow, the Nowikow cavalry corps to the south, and another 3/4 division of the Russian V Corps along with the 5th Cavalry Division north of Petrikau. By now, the task of the Scheffer group was no longer solvable. Unyielding will to win and the Russian five-pronged attack led to the German leadership not being embarrassed by this situation. They maintained the all-encompassing attack against Lodz until they were confronted by 4 1/2 divisions of infantry and 2 cavalry divisions of the Russian 1st Army hard on the rear of the XX Army Corps...

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The corps was forced to desist. General v. Mackensen resisted this concession to the utmost, but then, when the XX Corps had to change the front, and the Scheffer group had to be recalled, he, together with the Commander-in-Chief East, immediately pursued the new idea of now pushing into the wide-open gap between the Russian 4th Army and Lodz to bring the enemy to a standstill at this city.

According to human judgment, the fate of the Scheffer group was sealed; it cannot be called cautious when the Russians prepared empty trains to transport the prisoners. At Tannenberg, the situation of the encircled Russians, measured by all external circumstances, was less hopeless; they had a far more favorable numerical ratio, had fought less, and were not burdened by baggage and accompanying prisoners. When General v. Scheffer gave the retreat order on the evening of November 22, his three weak infantry and two cavalry divisions were already surrounded by Russians in the strength of almost six infantry and five cavalry divisions, which — no longer tied up in the rear — could direct their full force against the encircled German group.

Whether in this situation the continuation of the attack in the area of the 3rd Guard Division to the north, for which Lieutenant General Litzmann had advocated, offered better prospects on November 23, or the withdrawal behind the covering Miazga, then turning north, is a question that will never be decided with certainty. General Litzmann himself said about his commitment to the attack to the north in a letter to General v. Scheffer on December 9, 1914: "It was and is more a matter of feeling for me." However, the course of all the battles described in this section of the war clearly shows that such an attack — quite apart from the immediate threat from the enemy on the flank and rear — would have required ammunition and, until it broke through to the XX Army Corps, also time, both of which were scarce. The success proved General v. Scheffer right; but it was only made possible for him by the behavior of the opponent. Only because the Russian half 63rd Reserve and the 43rd Infantry Division moved so far west on November 23 that a large gap remained in the forest west of Borowo, was the night march of Lieutenant General Litzmann to Błaszyn possible. Only because, likewise, on the evening of the same day, General Charpentier's cavalry moved far to the east from Koluszki and finally the strong enemy in the rear held back anxiously.

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Instead of attacking sharply, on November 24, the attack of the Goltz Division and the defense in the rear by the Richthofen Cavalry Corps succeeded.

However, the occupation of Bzhesiny alone did not yet decide the breakthrough; the troops that arrived there were too weak. The dissolution of the Russian general command may have disrupted the enemy's command, and troops from Rojstshü also seem to have been withdrawn backward. Whether the attack of the 50th Reserve Division would have made such rapid, ultimately decisive progress for the success of the breakthrough on November 24 without these circumstances is questionable.

The rescue of General v. Scheffer's heroic band is not owed to a single leader or a single troop unit, but to the overall performance of all the troops who, under his purposeful leadership, gave their all to break the encircling ring. Since they attacked not only at one point but systematically across the entire width of their front, they managed to find and exploit the gaps present in the enemy. The will and spirit of German generals and soldiers, who, united in mutual trust in their common distress, preferred to die rather than surrender, brought liberation from a seemingly hopeless situation. The enemy was deprived of the success he already believed he had completely secured at the last moment. "One of the finest feats of arms of the campaign" was accomplished, a deed that, as a major Russian newspaper expressed at the time, "had won the respectful admiration of all Russian military" for the German Bzhesiny fighters.

Through the deed of the Scheffer group, the victory of the XX Army Corps over the Russian 1st Army was overshadowed, and yet here, mixed-up parts of various German corps divisions, with a total strength of at most 1½ divisions, forced four enemy divisions to retreat. In the official Russian account, it is said to explain this otherwise hardly understandable event: "Most of the troops of the 1st Army were already exhausted in battles and marches, the supply was irregular, the logistics were not up to par. Among the troops, fatigue, indifference, and a tendency towards demoralization and panic were evident. These deficiencies

1) Army report of December 1, 1914. — 2) Birkenhügel Wibedmowski, cited after Wulffen, p. 95. — 3) Korolów, Lodz, p. 101. — 4) It should be noted that all German units involved in Lodz actually fought and marched far more than the Russian troops appearing here.

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diminished the significance of numerical superiority. A numerically

weaker opponent, who felt like a victor and knew how to act quickly,

took on a daring task and was successful, though not completely."

"Thus, our advance operation," General Danilow judges

its conclusion, "from a tactical standpoint so far ended with

a failure. Their main goal, to liquidate the breakthrough of the Germans

between the 1st and 2nd Army and to thwart their attempt to encircle our

troops at Lodz, has been achieved." This can be agreed upon.

Like the Russian, the German success so far was only a

half one. More could have been achieved if there had been more forces; only one

more combat-ready German corps would have sealed the fate of the Russian 2nd Army.

The fact that it did not arrive in time was not the fault of the

leadership in the East.

Whether one should have limited the goals under such circumstances

cannot be decided here. There were compelling reasons that led the

Mackensen command to refrain from doing so and to dare much

to gain much. The Commander-in-Chief East did not

advise against it, did not always have the situation in detail so

clear that he could take responsibility for immediate intervention.

He then recognized the full seriousness of the situation, which had

arisen from the failed attempt at deep encirclement of the Russians,

and probably felt it more acutely than the directly

involved army leadership. From about the afternoon of November 23,

he saw the situation of the encircled Scheffer group as so desperate

that he hardly expected their rescue. In such a case,

it seemed necessary to withdraw the entire front of the army. But

General v. Mackensen did not want to do that at all, because he still had hope

for the return of General v. Scheffer and his soldiers. The inadequacy

of the Russians on one side, the skill of German leaders and

troops on the other, worked together to justify this confidence.

Leadership and troops have achieved the highest in the battles at Lodz

that could be achieved. General v. Mackensen "felt satisfaction,

having held out, taken General v. Morgen on the left wing of the army

and attached the 3rd Guard Division to the XXV Reserve Corps"2). Whether the army command

could have had a greater influence on the entirety of the battles closer to the front, whether it

1) Danilow, p. 356. — 2) Communication from November 15, 1928.  
\* World War. Volume VI.

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The War in the East until the End of the Year.

whether different decisions would have been made is not to be determined. However, it must not be overlooked that the closer proximity would have at least enabled him to have lively contact with some of the subordinate leaders and troops.

Driven by the will to win and confidence, General v. Mackensen consistently and persistently sought the destruction of the enemy. That the full final success was nevertheless denied to him was due to the overwhelming superiority of the enemy. With eleven infantry divisions and five cavalry divisions, he began the advance on November 11 against initially four Russian infantry and five cavalry divisions. As the operation came to a standstill on November 25, the number of both sides' formations was only slightly reinforced by weak Landsturm brigades, hardly usable in open field, but the enemy infantry had grown to 26 1/2 divisions. In total, at Lodz, 123 German battalions with around 800 guns fought against 204 Russian battalions with 750 guns, but at Lowitsch only about 34 German battalions with 100 guns fought against 160 Russian battalions with 384 guns.

1) For information on losses and booty, see p. 360, note 1.

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B. The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22. — The Role of the Subordinate German Units.

1. The Retreat from the San.

Maps and Sketches: No. 6 and 10.

Austria-Hungary was more severely and directly affected by the consequences of the October retreat from the middle Vistula than the German Empire. The enemy had already been deep in its territory for six weeks at that time. After the heavy losses and setbacks at the beginning of the campaign, a significant part of the army had suffered severely again; in addition, cholera had claimed its victims and dampened the mood until vaccinations brought improvement. The replacement of personnel, equipment, and ammunition caused serious concerns, more serious than for the German ally, as they were even less prepared for the consumption demanded by the war and had fewer resources and means to help themselves in need. The structure of state and army was less solid than in Germany. The initial German victories in the West and in East Prussia were greeted with genuine joy, and the immediate assistance by the German 9th Army in early October was welcomed with enthusiasm. The setback in morale was all the deeper when it became apparent that they too could not stop the Russian onslaught. The hope of driving the enemy out of the country without further strong German assistance was gone, and at the same time, confidence in their own strength had suffered a new severe blow. There was no outstanding own victory to counter all the depressing factors, to which hope could cling. Additionally, the uncertain neighbors Romania and Italy, as well as Bulgaria's hesitation! In Vienna, there was hope that a success in Serbia, where Field Marshal Potiorek had just launched a new offensive, could influence the mood of the Balkan states in favor of the monarchy. However, decisive for the stance of the wavering ones remained the victory against Russia, on which everything depended for the Danube Monarchy.

It is therefore understandable that the Austro-Hungarian military command increasingly demanded that Germany now seek the decision against Russia, after having fought against France for three months

1) Connection to Vol. V, p. 491.

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

was still not reached. 30 divisions from the west had been demanded by the Chief of General Staff, General v. Conrad, at the end of October1), but almost nothing was granted. The east remained dependent on defense.

All in all2), the Commander-in-Chief, Archduke Friedrich, had at his disposal against Russia, including the garrisons of Przemyśl and Krakow, 52 infantry divisions (including 11 Landsturm divisions) and 11 cavalry divisions with a total of 632 battalions, 329 squadrons, and 382 batteries, while troops amounting to about 22 infantry divisions with a total of 311 battalions, 40½ squadrons, and 163¾ batteries stood as the 5th and 6th armies against Serbia3). Given the importance that a victory over this country was politically attributed in Vienna, no contributions from there for the front in Galicia were to be expected for the time being.

The Austro-Hungarian front against Russia leaned its right wing at the beginning of November at Chernivtsi on the northwest side of Romania. This clearly showed the importance that the continued stance of this country had not only for the situation in the Balkans but even more for the immediate fight against Russia. In widely extended positions, the army group Pflanzer, consisting of second-order troops, held the northern slopes of the Carpathians up to the area south of Stryj and thus blocked the roads to Hungary. Then followed, turning north, at Przemyśl and behind the San up to the Vistula, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th armies. To the left of the Vistula, the 1st army formed the left wing; it had just suffered heavily before Ivangorod and during the retreat, losing about 50,000 men4), with Russian reports alone claiming 15,000 prisoners. Thus, the left wing of the army, which had to threaten the path into the heart of Austria, had become the weakest part of the front, and it was now most directly threatened by the Russian advance against Germany.

For a possible retreat of the Austro-Hungarian army from the San, General v. Conrad had always envisaged the direction north of the Carpathians to Austrian Silesia, approximately in the line Vistula-Jägerndorf, that is, in a deployment that would cover the southern part of the Prussian

1) G. 37 and 3D. V, G. 555 ff. — 2) Since significant shifts within the army occurred in the next two weeks, more detailed information was provided for November 15 (G. 235 with military organization). Independent brigades are counted as half divisions. — 3) 3D. V, G. 550, where according to the number of the 22 volumes only 16 divisions are accounted for, while according to the number of units (battalions, etc.) there are about 22. — 4) Conrad V, G. 420.

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The Situation of the Austro-Hungarian Army.

in the province of Silesia in front of the front. "From there," he wrote after the war¹), "the Imperial and Royal Armies were still able to cooperate with the German forces and counter a thrust of the enemy against Vienna by a thrust from west to east, this fundamental idea of my views." A retreat to the south to the Carpathians, on the other hand, could lead to the army being pushed into Hungary. For securing the direct route from Poland to Vienna, which led west of the Tatra through Silesia, Moravia, and Bohemia, through an area whose predominantly Czech population "already caused them concern"²), one was then entirely dependent on German help. However, the Austro-Hungarian commander did not want to let it come to that. He rejected the idea of the German Commander-in-Chief East, who, with regard to the overall operation against the Russian army, recommended retreating to the Carpathians, with all decisiveness³), as well as any proposal for joint command, which would have given a German general decisive influence on the use of the Austro-Hungarian army⁴).

The fundamental idea for further operations was to strengthen the own left wing so that it could attack again, or at least prevent the enemy from marching into Moravia and Bohemia; an encirclement of this wing should be prevented by all means. From this arose the demand that it remain continuously secured by immediately adjacent German forces, that the armies of the two allied powers fight "shoulder to shoulder." In addition, the Austro-Hungarian military leadership had to ensure that the territory of its own country was secured as widely as possible. The current conditions of the fortress Przemyśl also played a role, as its stocks had been extensively used for the last battles of the field army. Now the fortress could not simply be left to itself; the operations had to adapt to this; the San line had to be held at least until Przemyśl was sufficiently supplied with ammunition and provisions again, and this

¹) Conrad V, p. 425. — ²) General v. Conrad reported on this on November 12, 1914 (Conrad V, G. 474/75): "Returning from Vienna, the heir to the throne Archduke Karl told me that conditions in Bohemia are said to be almost revolutionary; the prisoner of war camp Benatek was a hotbed of Russophile movement. It was the rebellious seed of decades of Czech subversive work." See also p. 304. — ³) p. 149 ff. — ⁴) p. 53.

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

again conditional on leaving the front standing also on the left bank of the Vistula. General v. Conrad had therefore already halted his 1st Army with the left wing at Kielcsy and was quite in agreement that the German 9th Army should continue its retreat further southwest faster than his own left wing. He rather wished that the German 9th Army would flank the Russians from the west if they attacked the 1st Army. Since this operation was rejected as impracticable by the Commander-in-Chief East, General v. Conrad insisted that at least strong German forces should remain as flank protection immediately next to the left wing of the 1st Army.

The situation with the 1st Army was serious. General Danl, the commander-in-chief, had already expressed doubts on October 28 as to whether he could hold the 90-kilometer line San-Mündung—Kielcsy, as he only had 11½ divisions at his disposal, which — as the report further stated — "could at best be valued at a strength of 7000 to 8000 men per division. The supply of the 1st Army with ammunition had also become so precarious that longer battles seemed out of the question." General Danl had therefore been concerned "that the thin, long-stretched line between the San-Mündung and Kielcsy would be shattered by the Russians in at most two to three days" and requested that his army be allowed to retreat westward in connection with the German 9th Army. General v. Conrad had replied to him on the same day: "Given the great superiority of the enemy, the fight for time is now indispensable. Abandoning the San line and withdrawing the 4th and 3rd Army to the Dunajec or up to the height of Krakow is, at least for now, out of the question; above all, the supply of Przemysl, which will take several more days, must be completed. An immediate retreat of the 1st Army to Krakow would certainly result in a far superior enemy following the 1st and the German 9th Army and — at the same time — advancing over the Vistula into the flank and rear of our other armies; this would then force a retreat over the Carpathians, which is completely inadmissible for many reasons. It must rather be ensured that the 4th and 3rd Army, as soon as the retreat of the 1st Army makes this necessary, can return in constant connection with the latter between the Vistula and the Carpathians in a westerly direction." Therefore, the 1st Army had to prepare for stubborn resistance in the San-Mündung—Kielcsy line. Reinforcements were to be brought to the army there.

1) G. 40 f. — 2) Study by Lieutenant Colonel v. Toly from the War Archives Vienna. — 3) Ibid.

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The Retreat from the San.

On November 2, the fate of the 1st Army was decided, not by the feared encirclement of its left wing, but by a defeat of its right wing in the area of Opatow. General v. Conrad ordered the retreat from the San that afternoon; the equipment of Przemysl had meanwhile been essentially replenished. The previous garrison, increased by one brigade, remained in the fortress, totaling troops of 3 1/2 divisions.

According to the operational basic idea of General v. Conrad, the 1st Army was now to retreat with the right wing to the fortress of Krakow, not with the left as Generaloberst v. Hindenburg wished; it was to keep the front to the northeast. As soon as General v. Conrad learned that the shift of the mass of the German 9th Army to the north was finally decided, he was intent on compensating for this setback at the decisive point for his intentions by strengthening and extending his left army wing with Austro-Hungarian forces. At the same time, this energetic leader also took from the German attack intention the impetus for a new own attack decision; if the German army advanced again, Austria-Hungary's troops should also be involved. General v. Conrad planned, if the situation allowed, to advance with the 4th, perhaps also with parts of the 3rd Army over the upper Vistula to the north, so that the Russians would be caught in a pincer movement.

In the effort to extend the left army wing, a proposal from General v. Böhm-Ermolli, the commander-in-chief of the 2nd Army, was very welcome to the army command, who suggested on November 5 to withdraw strong forces from his front section south of Przemysl, as no more attacks were expected there. On November 6, the shift of the army command with two corps of the army to the left army wing was ordered, the rest was to join the 3rd Army.

On November 7, General v. Conrad set out his view in an army order, stating: "The overall situation requires the retreat and strengthening of the left wing of our army to repel the Russian advance in the area north of the Carpathians." On this day, however, General Dankl also personally came to Neu-Sandez and reported that the 1st Army was "very exhausted and apathy was noticeable even among the officers." Generaliss Dantl inquired whether the army had to remain or could retreat: "it urgently needed at least 48 hours of rest." General v. Conrad insisted on this.

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

that the army, considering the overall situation, should initially hold northwest of Krakow; only on November 10 could it move from there, "if it could not hold or was pushed by the Russians, to retreat to Pschemko," which meant up to the German border near Katowice. The Russians did not push further, but the situation of the 1st Army remained difficult, as the reinforcements rolling in from the 4th Army suffered significant delays due to railway congestion. Consequently, as General Dankl reported on November 10, they arrived "in completely torn, combat-ineffective formations."

Meanwhile, the command of the 2nd Army had been advanced to Oderberg, and on November 8, the German Supreme Commander East requested the necessary use of the Upper Silesian railways for the deployment to the left of the 1st Army.

On November 9, the Austro-Hungarian military command was relocated to Teschen in Austrian Silesia, where on the afternoon of the 10th, the German Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch arrived with the already mentioned letter from General v. Falkenhayn, who promised reinforcements from the Western Front for a major German offensive from the area of Thorn and also requested troops to cover Silesia. The reinforcement and extension of the Austro-Hungarian left wing, which the German Supreme Army Command had thus gained, and which General v. Falkenhayn had hardly hoped for and therefore only requested with special justification, as well as the establishment of a joint German-Austro-Hungarian front directed south or at least northeast, was precisely what General v. Conrad sought. Moreover, the information that five to six German corps were coming from the west and, together with parts of the 9th and 8th Army from Thorn, were to attack, finally gave hope for a decisive turn in the east. Since General v. Conrad mistakenly understood Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch to mean that the intervention of the new corps in the east was already expected for November 22, he also wanted to prepare the attack of his 4th, 1st, and 2nd Army for the same date. Thus, the meeting concluded in full agreement.

The situation of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army northwest of Krakow had meanwhile stabilized. Its left wing had been reinforced and extended so far that the connection to the German army detachment Woyrsch remaining at Tschentschau was secured. General v. Conrad therefore hoped that a further retreat of the 1st Army could now be completely avoided.

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The Shift of the 2nd Army.

Then, however, there was no more room for the advancing divisions of the 2nd Army between the 1st Army and the Army Detachment Woyrich. General v. Conrad therefore wished to now deploy the 2nd Army to the left of this Army Detachment and to integrate it into the framework of the Austro-Hungarian army; the Austro-Hungarian left wing was to come into the area of Wislnu. However, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg could not agree, as he considered a clear separation of command areas to be better; General v. Woyrich was to make room for the allied 2nd Army by shifting to the left as soon as it arrived.

Meanwhile, the attack of the German 9th Army began from Thorn and achieved the first success at Wlozlawek. On November 13, an already mentioned important Russian radio message declared the situation: the enemy intended to resume the offensive on November 14 and to proceed in a closed front to a deep incursion into Germany. The imminent Russian attack led to an agreement between Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and General v. Conrad. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army now had to be deployed north of the German Army Detachment Woyrich. It was agreed that it should be subordinated to the German General v. Woyrich as the senior general, but the then mixed "Army Woyrich" from German and Austro-Hungarian units would be under Archduke Friedrich. This ensured that the influence of the Austro-Hungarian army command extended as far north as was in the interests of the Danube Monarchy; the bulk of its army stood in a broad front five days' march from the line Weiskirchen—Jägerndorf, envisaged for any further retreat. The own ranks were strengthened and stretched by the inclusion of imperial German forces, ensuring close leadership with the ally. What General v. Conrad considered important and sought, he had achieved and at the same time secured the assurance that his 2nd Army, should it come to further retreat, would be transported back across the Oder on the German side to where the Austro-Hungarian army command wished.

2. The Battle North of Krakow.

Maps and Sketches: No. 10.

The impending Russian attack necessitated a decision on what should happen next. The original idea of General v. Con-

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

rad, to counter the Russian advance north of the Carpathians shoulder to shoulder with the German officer by attacking from the west, had to be postponed when the German 9th Army moved north. Instead, the plan came to the forefront to attack the upper Vistula to the north; this was a weakened form of a similar idea previously proposed by Generaloberst v. Hindenburg when he recommended retreating to the Carpathians. The deployment of the 2nd Army to the left of the German Army Detachment Woyrsch was already based on the idea of later launching this army from the west or northwest. The Russians could then be crushed between Czestochowa and Krakow in a double envelopment. Here, in cooperation with the impending German attack from the north, a major, perhaps even independent Austro-Hungarian victory seemed achievable. Meanwhile, weaker parts of the 4th Army were to hold back the enemy's advance from the east south of the Vistula, while the 3rd Army and the Pflanzer Army Group defended the routes over the Carpathians. However, some time had to pass before the attack plans could be implemented.

The temporary halt of the Russian advance allowed for the undisturbed execution of the initiated movements, giving a large part of the troops the much-needed rest and preparing the defense through position building. During the initially expected defensive battle, the attack was to begin from the right flank. The 4th Army was to advance from the south over the Vistula, with the large fortress of Krakow securing the river crossing and enabling a surprising breakthrough. The 1st Army was to join this army's attack, starting from the right flank. The behavior of the Woyrsch Army depended on the successes of the adjoining armies; depending on whether the attack of their own 1st or the German 1st Army first appeared on their front, they were to join the actions of one or the other. In the army order of November 13, it was stated: "The 1st Army maintains its position and is ready to transition to the attack, starting from the southern flank, as soon as the advance of the 4th Army from the south becomes noticeable. — The 4th Army will have to attack with its main forces on the northern Vistula bank to engage in the battle as surprisingly and comprehensively as possible by exploiting the fortress..." The timing for the deployment of the 4th Army will only come when the enemy concentrates its forces in the attack against the front of the 1st Army and the

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The Intentions for the Battle North of Krakow.

The fortress has been fully developed and heavily used. Calm waiting with full preservation of the troops is necessary to then intervene unexpectedly and with full force."

The next day, Archduke Friedrich, as the supreme commander, once again announced the basic ideas of the upcoming operations: "For more than three months we have been fighting against almost double Russian superiority. A situation can only be created for a short period that gives us superiority at one point, while in other areas a minority must always repel the enemy's advance with all tenacity. Where we are equal to the enemy in numbers, we must strive with all means to achieve a rapid, decisive success, so that he does not find an opportunity to assert his superiority elsewhere to such an extent that it becomes impossible for us to exploit laboriously achieved successes. Only the stronger can afford to take time, the weaker must save it. The battles taken today in the area north of Krakow are intended to give the 1st and 4th Armies the opportunity to deliver a powerful blow under favorable conditions, while the army group reinforced by our 2nd Army, under my command, General of Infantry v. Boehm in the north and the 3rd Army in West Galicia, have the difficult task of fighting stubbornly against a superior enemy. In the north, the German 9th Army successfully began the offensive between Wloclawek — Kolo on November 12. The advantages of the fortress of Krakow located in the combat area, the preceding time of gathering, but above all the proven spirit of the brave armies and their leaders make me confidently expect that the success will be a decisive one and that the direction and strength of the attack will not give the enemy the opportunity to revert to the protracted struggle for fortified positions characteristic of the current warfare and to gain the time that we must exploit with all available means for victory. In the spirit of this order, all leaders and troops of the command area are to be instructed."

By November 15, the situation of the Austro-Hungarian army had developed as follows:

The army group of General of Cavalry Baron v. Pflanzer-Baltin, composed exclusively of second and third order troops, covered in extensive deployment with a total

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six Landsturm divisions, from the Romanian border to the Ojtoz Pass, the roads to Hungary; their left wing was withdrawn to the ridge of the Carpathians.

Also withdrawn to the mountains and essentially with the same task as the Pflanzer army group stood the 3rd Army under General of Infantry Boroević v. Bojna, 13 infantry divisions and four cavalry divisions strong, from the Lubloter Pass to Neu-Sandez. The fortress of Przemysl, already encircled by the Russians since November 9, was 70 kilometers in front of the front.

The 4th Army under General of Infantry Archduke Josef Ferdinand had, including a division strong fortress garrison of Krakow, twelve infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions. While weak parts secured the southern Vistula bank against the east, the bulk of the army had been gathered in the protection of the fortress in a confined space, but had suffered unusually large marching losses. General v. Conrad had felt compelled to "encourage": "Reported by the army command, the lagging behind of troops and the decline of the combat strength of the divisions, which have just received 3000 to 4000 men in reinforcements, to 5000 rifles suggests a worrying loosening of discipline and demands the application of the sharpest means all the more, as those left behind fall into enemy hands." – The condition may have improved in the five days that have since passed; however, hardly all units of the 4th Army could be described as fully capable attack troops. The army had the order to "prepare itself in the fortress area of Krakow in such a way that it could intervene in the expected battle with small marches in a northerly and northeasterly direction, from which intervention the battle decision would be expected."

Northwest of Krakow stood the 1st Army under General of Cavalry Dankl, which — reinforced to 13½ infantry divisions and 2 cavalry divisions — had held a 60-kilometer-wide position facing east-northeast for five days now, with the left wing south of Sarki. In this army, confidence and morale had risen again since November 7.

The 1st Army joined with its right wing at Sarki with the Boroević army, of which, however, only the southern wing was combat-ready with five German reserve and Landwehr divisions.

1) p. 227, note 1. — 2) Conrad V, G. 450. — 3) Army order of November 14, Conrad V, G. 494. — 4) p. 231. — 5) For more details see p. 240.

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Changed Intentions for the Battle North of Krakow.

The Austrian-Hungarian 2nd Army, meanwhile subordinated to General v. Woyrsch, under General of Cavalry v. Böhm-Ermolli, a total of four infantry and two cavalry divisions, was mostly still on the march or on the railway. Their foremost parts had extended the left wing of the previous Army Division Woyrsch to the area south of Wislun by November 15.

To the left rear of the Woyrsch Army, the predominantly landwehr troops with very little artillery, and therefore very little combat-capable German "Corps Breslau" (1), which was directly subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief East and was intended to advance on Wislun, were stationed at Kempen—Schildberg.

Information about the enemy was mainly obtained through intercepted radio messages. As far as was known, the Russian Dniester Group stood in front of the Pflanzer Army Group — like this one, consisting of second and third order troops — in front of the 3rd Army, the Russian 8th and 3rd Armies. Behind these two, the 11th Army had enclosed Przemysl. Opposite the own 4th Army, with weak parts still south of the Vistula, followed the Russian 9th Army, in front of the 1st Army and the Army Division the Russian 4th and the extreme southern wing of the 5th Army. All in all, on the defensive front south of the Vistula, not counting the garrison of the fortress Przemysl and the enclosing Russian army, about 20 Austrian-Hungarian divisions (2) faced 25 to 27 Russian ones; however, for the future attack north of the Vistula, it was possible, through the targeted measures of General v. Conrad, to assemble about 32 allied divisions, including the garrison of Krakow, five of them German, which at the time seemed to face only 23 1/2 Russian ones.

On the night of November 15, General v. Conrad learned from Captain v. Fleischmann (3) that the attack of the German 9th Army was "progressing rapidly"; the preliminary further intention was to continue this attack over Nida and Bzura in a southeasterly direction. The Russians apparently had not yet fully recognized the German offensive between Nida and Vistula, the bulk of their 2nd and 5th Armies seemed to have continued the march westward.

The Austrian-Hungarian military leadership shared the same view. They knew from Russian radio messages that the enemy 4th Army was set against the line Czestochowa—Sarki, the 9th had moved south.

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to attack and cover the flank of the 4th Army against Krakow. In total, four to five divisions of the 9th Army were advancing on the southern Vistula bank and, according to intercepted radio messages, had already crossed the lower Dunajec with their beginnings. The opportunity for the thrust of the own 4th Army to the north seemed particularly favorable now, as the enemy 9th Army was divided by the Vistula into two parts and spread out over a wide area. On the other hand, the Russians proceeded very cautiously; that they would soon attack the fortress of Krakow was no longer considered likely according to the reports now available. If they entrenched themselves in a siege position and continued to increase their pressure south of the Vistula, the own task became increasingly difficult. The moment could come when one was forced to give up the attack on Krakow again in order to gain space in Galicia. One had to take the situation as it was. General v. Conrad abandoned the previous plan. He no longer wanted to wait until the enemy had entrenched and weakened himself in the attack1). On November 15, in the afternoon, the army order for the attack was issued2). It expressed the expectation that the advance of the Russian 2nd, 5th, and 4th Armies at the Böbrigh Army from the northern flank of the 1st Army would lead to battle on that day. The decisive sentences were: "4th Army begins the attack as unexpectedly as possible on November 16 early. ... It is important to penetrate by November 16 to Bzhesko-Nowe—Proschowize—heights east of Slomnitza3) to secure the comprehensive attack of the 1st Army, to give it space and to be able to intervene in a decisive direction on November 17." The 1st Army was also to be ready for attack on November 16 and join the advance of the 4th Army. When Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, who was completely surprised by the changed intentions of General v. Conrad, urgently asked through Captain v. Fleischmann4) at midnight to hold back the attack of the 4th Army, to let the Russians — as planned — start first and to wait until the German success from Kutno also made itself felt on the rest of the enemy's front, General v. Conrad no longer responded to this, could hardly do so considering the advanced time. He doubted the impact of the success of the German 9th Army on the behavior of the Russians at Krakow; "the decision from the

1) Army order from November 13 (cf. p. 99 and 234). — 2) Conrad V., p. 498. — 3) This line was on average 18 kilometers northeast of the main belt of Krakow. — 4) Records of the War Archives Vienna. Report of Captain v. Fleischmann from November 15, 11½ in the evening.) Cf. also p. 101.

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The Battle North of Kratau.

Expecting the 9th Army to advance alone seemed inadvisable to me," he wrote additionally after the war1).

For the attack on November 16, the 4th Army had 9½ infantry divisions, which, as far as was known, initially faced only three, later six Russian divisions. The mobile artillery of the Kratau fortress made available to the 4th Army for the attack, a total of about 30 heavy batteries with 114 guns, including 30.5 and 24 cm mortars, was to provide a further decisive advantage over the Russians. The southern wing of the 1st Army was also in a favorable position with nine divisions against four to five Russian ones; only with the Bojrich Army did the balance of power begin to equalize2).

On the morning of the attack day, the advance of the 4th Army suffered significant delays due to friction when passing through Kratau and the bridgehead east of Rybnik3). After a midday break, the infantry only reached the foremost Russian positions about twelve kilometers forward of the fort belt by dusk and postponed the attack to the next day. The 1st Army also did not achieve its objectives; the advance of the right wing of this army faced several terrain difficulties, so that, although a serious clash did not occur, little ground was gained4). Against the left wing of the 1st Army and against the Bojrich Army, the enemy had not yet attacked seriously anywhere; rather, the withdrawal of the previously established southern wing of the Russian 5th Army (V Corps) in a northeasterly direction was noted in front of General v. Bojrich's left wing.

With the result of November 16, the intended surprise success was called into question. However, the prospects for the attack still seemed good in view of their own numerical superiority. Accordingly, the order of General Dankl at the 1st Army on the evening of November 16 concluded with the words: "With twelve divisions, the army will now attack 7½ Russian ones — victory must be ours!"

In the daily report on November 17, General v. Conrad reported: "In Russian Poland, the battle against Russian main forces developed under favorable conditions." However, the attack still gained

1) Conrad V, p. 499. — 2) Conrad V, p. 505, text excerpt "Assumed balance of power north of the Vistula on November 16 and 17, 1914." — 3) Conrad V, p. 511. — 4) The bridgehead was within the fortress area. — 4) Conrad V, p. 510.

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

only slowly gained ground1). The following day, intercepted radio messages revealed

that the Russian 4th and 9th Armies had orders to resume their attack on

November 19. Since the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army had almost completely

arrived on the northern flank of the Borojevic Army, the prospects for success

also increased in this area. General v. Conrad ordered a "general attack" for

November 19 by the 4th and 1st Armies and the Borojevic Army; the order

concluded: "Break enemy resistance definitively, then pursue"2). However, the

result was only that local advances were made here and there, and prisoners

were taken; the hoped-for major success did not materialize despite numerical

superiority.

Once again, General v. Conrad sought to advance the armies on November 20:

"The continuation of the attack on November 21 must bring decisive success.

The enemy is at the end of his resistance in many parts of his front. Ruthless

penetration on both flanks is essential." Regarding the outcome of this day of

attack, Field Marshal Count Conrad wrote after the war: "A major success

seemed to be emerging with the German 9th Army; the hopes I had attached

to the order of November 20 were only partially fulfilled. Both the German and

Austro-Hungarian troops of the Borojevic Army) did not advance, and even

some parts had to be withdrawn; the hard-fighting 1st Army gained some

ground, but only the 4th Army was able to show greater successes . . . . Under

the onset of winter weather, both friend and foe suffered." The army order

issued on November 21, however, bore the confident headline: "Pursuit" and

stated: "The center and right wing of the 4th Army advance victoriously

against Glomnitza and Proszkowicze). A full success is expected today on the

northern flank of the Borojevic Army. As the Russian 2nd and 5th Armies are

heavily pressed by comprehensive attacks from the beleaguered 9th Army, the

enemy is likely to retreat everywhere on November 21 or during the night to

November 22. Sharp observation and aerial reconnaissance will determine the

retreat routes.

1) In the official Russian account (Korollow, Overview, p. 170 f.), there is talk of  
a Russian attack only until November 17, only on November 18 it says: "The 9th  
Army was attacked by the enemy along its entire front." 2) Conrad V, C. 529.  
3) Conrad V, C. 502. 4) In Conrad, "Krakow" is mistakenly given as "Baranow."  
5) C. 244. — 6) The daily targets set in the first attack order on November 15 were  
for November 16, 18 kilometers forward of the fort belt of Krakow.

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The Battles of the Woyrsch Army

positions have, and ruthless pursuit must yield a rich harvest . . 1).”

But even the hopes expressed in this order by General

v. Conrad were not to be fulfilled.

3. The Battles of the Woyrsch Army 2).

Maps and Sketches: No. 6 and 10.

The German part of the Woyrsch Army, the "Army Detach-

ment W o y r s c h", was left on November 6, after the transport of the Ger-

man 9th Army, under the previous General Command of the Landwehr Corps

with the task of covering the left flank of the Austro-Hungarian army and

Upper Silesia. Lieutenant Colonel Heye was at the side of General of Infantry

v. Woyrsch as Chief of Staff. The only active division assigned, the 3rd Guard

Infantry Division, soon followed the 9th Army to Thorn, and the inclusion of

further units was omitted in consideration of the wishes of the Austro-Hungarian

army command). In total, General v. Woyrsch had five divisions, which at that

time stood on more than 100 kilometers of front length from Sarti to Bjelun.

Due to the approach of the Russians against the southern flank of the army

detachment and the urging of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, which had only

promised further holding with stronger defense of the area from Sarti, General

v. Woyrsch was prompted to concentrate his forces more sharply to the right

from November 10 and thereby shorten the front to 63 kilometers. The positions,

which had been worked on for two weeks, partly longer, had already reached a

certain resistance capability in some places; wire obstacles were being created,

position combat equipment was allocated. On November 13, the decision that

the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army should be deployed to the left of the army

detachment and subordinated to General v. Woyrsch alleviated the concern

about the northern flank, which had previously been secured only by Landsturm

troops of the later "Corps Breslau".

On November 14, General v. Woyrsch, who had chosen his

headquarters in Koschentin, 12 kilometers east of Lublinitz, took command

of the army composed of German and Austro-Hungarian

units and thus simultaneously came under the supreme command

of Archduke Friedrich. With the special-

1) The pursuit directions for the individual armies followed. — 2) p. 100.

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The conditions of the allied army were well known to General v. Woyrsch, as the former leader of the Landwehr Corps, and his chief of staff more than other German officers, as they had already experienced the early weeks of the war in the ranks of this army. Their current position was particularly difficult, as General v. Woyrsch, although the senior general, was tainted as the leader of a German army detachment, while at the same time remaining the commanding general of the Landwehr Corps, to avoid holding a higher rank than General v. Böhm, who had been the commander of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army since the beginning of the war. Various considerations had to be taken into account.

On November 15, on the eve of the attack by the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 1st Armies north of Krakow, the Woyrsch Army was positioned as follows: Under a corps led by General of Artillery v. Gallwitz, the commanding general of the Guard Reserve Corps, the 1st Guard Reserve Division and the Landwehr Division Bredow were grouped together, reinforced by a brigade of the 4th Landwehr Division, from Sarki to northwest east of Lischenfochau. Here, the German Landwehr Corps, without 1/2 of the 4th Landwehr Division, but reinforced by the 35th Reserve Division, joined with the front to the northeast and much further deployment. 27 kilometers northwest of Lischenfochau, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army under General of Cavalry v. Böhm-Ermolli with Colonel Dr. Bardolff as chief of staff was just beginning its deployment. So far, only half of the XII Corps and to the left of it up to the Warthe bend south of Wislun, half of the IV Corps had arrived. Further parts were moving up from the unloading points now established at Rosenberg and Kreuzburg; the IV Corps consisted of Hungarian, the XII mainly of Transylvanian replacements. The two-division strong Cavalry Corps Hauer was advancing from the southwest to behind the right flank of the 2nd Army. Among the German formations of the army, the 1st Guard Reserve Division was the only effective force. It was also artillery-wise twice as strong with 96 guns as all other divisions, including the Austro-Hungarian ones, each of which had only about 40 to 50 guns. On the other hand, the infantry strength and the number of machine guns, with an average of 9000 rifles and 24 machine guns, were relatively large and approximately equal in all divisions of the army.

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The Battles of the Woyrsch Army.

On November 16, the news that the enemy was moving his 5th Army northward was a pleasant surprise. This eliminated the danger posed by the German 9th Army's victories that the Woyrsch Army would be encircled from the north. Instead, there was the unexpected prospect of now attacking the northern flank of the Russian 4th Army comprehensively, as it was now positioned east of Częstochowa in front of the center of the Woyrsch Army.

General v. Woyrsch immediately decided to take advantage of this opportunity. On the night of November 17, he ordered the deployment of the northern flank of his army, namely the left flank of the 35th Reserve Division and the Austrian-Hungarian troops that had arrived by then, to attack from a line about 20 kilometers forward of the previous positions. Long distances and destroyed bridges on the left flank delayed the advance to this starting position, so the further advance on this day, without significant delay by the enemy, already came to a halt after a strong day's march east of the old positions with the left flank at the Warta. North of Jaloslchom, the Hauer Cavalry Corps had arrived. On the left flank, the southern flank of the Breslau Corps had reached Bielum.

On November 18, the attack of the 35th Reserve Division remained, with partially significant losses, in front of the now eastward-bent northern flank of the Russians. The encirclement planned there by the Austrian-Hungarian 16th Infantry Division of the XII Corps did not come into effect despite a march of only about ten kilometers until nightfall1). Further to the left, the 31st Infantry Division of the IV Corps reached the march target ordered for the morning in the direction of Novoradomsk only in the evening. Overall, this division, like the Hauer Cavalry Corps, advanced only a small day's march further without combat. Attacks by parts of the Gallwitz Corps, which were ordered in connection with the intended advance at the Austrian-Hungarian 1st Army, brought prisoners, as did this army, but otherwise no significant results. Nevertheless, they seem to have made a lasting impression on the enemy2).

1) The reasons for the delay could not be determined. — 2) According to Korolow (Überbild, p. 170), the XVII Corps northeast of Warta was "almost broken through" by the German attack on November 17. It could not be determined which German attack was involved. On November 18, the southern adjoining III Caucasian Corps lost 4500 prisoners, 2 guns, and 8 machine guns to the Austrian-Hungarian II Corps, which formed the left flank of the 1st Army. (Glenda p. 171.)

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

For November 19, General v. Conrad had already given the mentioned order for a "general attack"; the Russian resistance was to be finally broken, and the enemy then pursued. The Russian attack ordered for the same day was hardly noticeable in front of the Bödrich army's front. But even this army itself, apart from the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, hardly advanced. This wing reached, partly fighting, by evening the area eight kilometers west of Noworadomsk, where the enemy meanwhile seemed to unite a grenadier division and strong cavalry as flank protection. A day's march further north, the Breslau Corps had remained in the advance on Schtscherzow and Widzab.

On November 20, the attack was to be continued. As far as was known, only the two divisions of the Russian Grenadier Corps stood in extended deployment north of Tschenstochau to west of Noworadomsk, further on their northern flank 1 1/2 Cossack divisions. For the attack, General v. Bödrich had at his disposal: just north of Tschenstochau, half of the 4th Landwehr Division, to the left adjoining and under the unified command of General v. Böhm the German 35th Reserve Division, the Austro-Hungarian XII and half of the IV Corps as well as the Hauer Cavalry Corps, all in all 4 1/2 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry divisions. A Russian radio message intercepted during the night revealed that the enemy not only intended to hold but to repel the threatening encirclement, even to "destroy" the enemy north of the Warthe from Noworadomsk; he had also withdrawn a division as a reserve from the front. To prevent further shifting of forces, General v. Bödrich ordered an attack on the entire front. The result was disappointing: North of Tschenstochau, German and Austro-Hungarian troops managed to take the front Russian line, but then faced new positions held by the Russians, although the Austro-Hungarian 35th Infantry Division of the XII Corps came deep into its flank in tough forest fighting. North of the Warthe, east of Dzialoszyn, however, the left wing of the 31st Infantry Division of the IV Corps and the Hauer Cavalry Corps lost ground due to local leadership after initial successes against Russian counterattacks, even slightly withdrawing in the evening. Since only a weak brigade of the 32nd Infantry Division of the IV Corps was on the march as reserves — the rest of the division was still on the railway — a decisive turnaround in the situation was hardly to be expected for the time being.

1) See p. 239.

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The Battles of the Woyrsch Army.

The continuation of the attack on November 21 brought no more results except for 700 prisoners taken by the Austro-Hungarian 35th Infantry Division. However, this division found itself compelled to also take a front to the north, as north of the Warthe, the left flank of the army had once again bent westward in the face of new Russian attacks, this time a full ten kilometers.

On November 22, the enemy also forced the Austro-Hungarian 35th Infantry Division back into the general front; it lost a good quarter of its strength in the process. North of the Warthe, an attempt was made to advance again towards Nowo-Radomsk using parts of the Austro-Hungarian 32nd Infantry Division that had since arrived; however, the result was only that the previous line was extended somewhat further north.

The Woyrsch Army now stood in an almost straight front, which ran from east of Sarki east past Tschenstochau and then in the direction of Schtscherzow to about 15 kilometers south of this place. The Austro-Hungarian troops reported about 2000 prisoners, but they themselves probably suffered more, as the Russians claim to have captured 4500 men and 21 machine guns from them. Fresh forces included half of the 32nd Infantry Division on the march. General v. Böhm requested reinforcements from his army command as well as relief through attacks by German troops at Tschenstochau and south, both in vain. General v. Conrad could no longer provide anything, as his extended front was in need everywhere at this time; attacks by German troops at Tschenstochau seemed temporarily impossible given the strength of the enemy in front of their line with their own limited offensive power. The attack had also stalled with the neighboring allied 1st Army on the right and was not expected to revive. Therefore, General v. Woyrsch decided to replace the Guard Reserve Infantry Brigade of the 1st Guard Reserve Division, which formed the right wing of his army at Sarki, with Landwehr and to use it to support the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. The Woyrsch Army temporarily switched to defense; it was at the same time that the German attack at Lodz and the Austro-Hungarian attack north of Krakow were also abandoned.

The Woyrsch Army had been in battle for about a week. The expected major Russian attack was primarily thanks to the successes of the

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

The German 9th Army did not develop. The particularly promising opportunity for an attack against the enemy flank, which seemed to present itself when the Russian 5th Army moved north, while the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army began to deploy to the left of the German army division, could only have been fully exploited if there had already been attack-ready troops in sufficient numbers at that time. The initially available parts of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and the German 35th Reserve Division, consisting of militia, were not sufficient to deliver a quick and strong blow. Thus, the battle soon turned into a purely frontal engagement due to the deployment of reinforcements arriving successively on both sides.

4. Hopes and Disappointments in the Austro-Hungarian Army Command.

When on November 16, the 4th Army and the right wing of the 1st north of Krakow launched an attack, General v. Conrad was full of hope, considering how to proceed after achieving victory. At that time, he still expected the arrival of the German Beskiden Corps, intended for the East, by November 22. However, the conditions for their deployment had changed since the visit of Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch1). Therefore, General v. Conrad urged General v. Falkenhayn: "For our further decisions, it is urgently necessary to know how strong German forces have been moved here from the West, and when and where they will be ready to deploy. Rapid response requested by General of Infantry Conrad."

The response from General v. Falkenhayn, received on the same day, began: "Transport of forces from the West to the East cannot begin before November 22, as reported by Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch2). Deployment in the East is possible at the earliest from November 28." This was a severe disappointment and caused discontent. This effect was further intensified by the additional information that the exact arrival time and strength of the units depended on the situation in the West, as well as by the concluding sentence: "Here not understandable, why further decisions are necessary at this time after the brilliant success of the German 9th Army and the behavior of the Russians. Clarification on this is requested."

1) G. 4 ff. and 231 ff. — 2) G. 5, Note 1.

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Telegram Exchange with General v. Falkenhayn.

In a long response telegram, General v. Conrad presented his overall view on November 17. He pointed out what Austria-Hungary had already accomplished and endured for the common cause. He himself had long emphasized that, given the stationary war situation in France, the decision must be sought against Russia. The time was approaching when the Austro-Hungarian main forces would have to turn again against the Russians in Eastern Galicia, who now seriously threatened Hungary. For this, he needed to know when and where the German Western Corps would be deployed to accordingly free up his own forces in Poland.

Following these explanations, the response from General v. Falkenhayn, received on the morning of November 19, was another severe disappointment, as it calculated what had already been given by Germany to the East in terms of forces, and then simply stated: "That German reinforcements could still be brought in time to participate in the decisions now underway in Western Poland is indeed excluded."

General v. Conrad was of the opinion that the German Supreme Army Command had a "great debt" to pay to Austria-Hungary, as it had neglected the East even after the Battle of the Marne. Dismissive judgments about the performance of Austro-Hungarian troops and comparisons with those of their German comrades, which were heard from their own country as well as from the German side, increased the discontent. Added to this was growing concern about the attack of their own 4th and 1st Armies, which were not advancing, as well as the increasing Russian pressure in Galicia. However, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg advanced from Łódź and Field Marshal Potiorek in Serbia from victory to victory. General v. Conrad expressed his displeasure in a letter addressed to General v. Bolfras, the head of the military chancellery of Emperor Franz Josef. He still hoped for a complete victory in Poland in cooperation with the German 9th Army.

1) G. 95. — 2) Conrad V, C. 542 f. — In the letter, it was stated after describing the measures taken for the attack north of Krakow: "From this action west of the Vistula, we hope for a great decision, but we also count on the fact that by November 22, ten to twelve German divisions from the West would attack here in the East, as had already been promised, but is now not being adhered to. — The Supreme Army Command in Germany is obliged not to overlook that the great decision must now be sought here, as they are working ruthlessly at our expense everywhere, after we have kept their back free for more than three months, even though not without error.

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The Austro-Hungarian Front until November 22.

In the following days, General v. Conrad saw his attack in southern Poland increasingly falter. For this attack, he had systematically consolidated the forces of the Austro-Hungarian army, excluding the Balkan armies over which he no longer had influence, into a powerful numerical superiority. He had left only very weak forces against the Russian superiority in Galicia and the protection of Hungary, but had united 31½ divisions (including five German ones), which were given special strength by the numerous heavy artillery of the Krakow fortress, against only about 20 Russian divisions. But even this power was not enough to achieve a tangible success. The fact that the armies had reported 28,000 prisoners, 48 machine guns, and 2 cannons as booty in six days of fighting did not mean much compared to their own losses, which had risen to 70,000 to 80,000 men; the combat strength of the infantry had melted down to half. Everything now depended on the success of the German 9th Army, on which General v. Conrad was certainly counting. In this view, he issued the "Pursuit" order on November 21.

Then, on the night of November 23, came the news that the German attack at Lodz had been abandoned. The hope that the Austro-Hungarian offensive in southern Poland could be revived by a German victory at Lodz was gone. Against the flank and rear of the main force deployed north of Krakow, the Russians advanced south of the Vistula over the Dunajec and increasingly threatened to break into Hungary. Decisive measures had to be taken soon against the Russians south of Krakow.

Now, however, one must swallow all this and display to the world the pose of the deepest agreement and alliance loyalty — but I am fed up with the company. — One should not deliver one's troop strength to such selfish allies, and therefore I separate the moment when we have our four divisions of the 2nd Army directly under us again."

1) p. 227. 2) The figures are calculated based on the information from Conrad V, pp. 590 and 599. 3) p. 240.

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C. The Deployment of Reinforcements from the West and the Progress of the Battles in Poland and Galicia.

I. How should the operations be continued?

Maps and Sketches: No. 15.

On November 15, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, in a letter to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, as already mentioned, pointed out that the support for the East, the later it arrives, must be measured more strongly. On the night of November 20, a General Staff officer delivered the response, in which General v. Falkenhayn explained that since the end of October, five cavalry divisions had already been allocated to the East — furthermore, 47 Landwehr and Landsturm battalions, which "could be considered combat-capable against the inferior enemy there," thus the infantry of two corps —, then 44,000 men as replacements, thus the infantry of two more corps, and finally very ample ammunition. The further explanations revealed that the German Chief of General Staff did not hope for the "final decision" in the East sooner; for that, what the West could give would not suffice. "In the best case," it would be possible to push the enemy back behind the Vistula and Narew and liberate Galicia. That was also to be aimed for, and the army command was therefore determined to send reinforcements. How many there would be depended on the further development of the situation in the West and the East. In conclusion, it was pointed out that these reinforcements could not arrive simultaneously, but only one after the other in the East.

When this letter arrived from Mézières, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg was still counting on a full victory at Lodz, even though the news of the setback at the 38th Infantry Division was already available and the morning report to the Supreme Army Command therefore seriously stated: "At Lodz and south to Krakow, very heavy fighting, in which no decision has yet been made." Then, at noon, the long-awaited message from General v. Falkenhayn arrived, stating that the transport of the promised reinforcements in the direction of Thorn had now begun. It was added: Due to the difficulty of relieving from the previous combat front, it is

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Arrival of the available units only one after the other, not simultaneously possible. — If another target point is desired, immediate notification is required to ensure the arrival of replacements and maps.” After that, it was not expected to rely on rested, combat-ready units, but probably only on exhausted troops that might have just suffered heavily. Since the units were not supposed to arrive simultaneously, their use for large, unified decisive strikes was only possible if one could wait until the last ones had reached behind the front. When that would be was quite uncertain. Waiting for the deployment of the first arriving units seemed out of the question given the serious combat situation at Lodz. Initially, only three divisions from the west were registered. It was therefore very welcome that the commander of the 8th Army, General of Infantry Otto v. Below, despite the enemy pressure against Lötzen, simultaneously offered the 1st Infantry Division to reinforce the 9th Army1).

The transport of these four divisions to the 9th Army had begun by November 22. Given the further increased tension of the situation in front of Lodz, the reinforcements had to be deployed where they were most urgently needed and could have the quickest effect. It had to be considered that the single-track railway Thorn—Kutno—Lowitsch was temporarily usable only up to Nieszawa2), while double-track railways led close to the front behind the right army wing. The decision was made that the bulk of the arriving reinforcements should be deployed next to the right wing of the German 9th Army, where previously only weak Landsturm forces stood on an extended front, and the attack had been stalled since November 19. If the new divisions attacked at this front section, where the enemy had been relatively weak so far, they could counterbalance the noticeable strong Russian pressure at Strykow and Lowitsch. But even then, the left wing still needed immediate reinforcement against Lowitsch. Thus, unloading points for the advancing II Army Corps and half of the XXIV Reserve Corps were set in the line Kreuzburg—Ostrowo, while the 1st Infantry Division coming from East Prussia was to be unloaded on the Thorn—Nieszawa route. When on the afternoon of November 22, just one day before the first rolling transport trains reached their destination, the Scheffer group had to be recalled from the encircling attack, it was

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How Should the Operations Be Continued?

Overall situation in the East completely changed. The decisive success hoped for at Lodz against the Russians slipped from the hands of the German 9th Army; they had to be content if they could hold the previous line. The Austro-Hungarian attack in southern Poland had also stalled; neither against Noworadomsk nor north of Krakow was there any progress. Southeast of Krakow, however, the right flank seemed seriously threatened. Units that were supposed to cover there were retreating before superior forces. The Russians reported larger numbers of prisoners from the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army.

There seemed to be no longer any reliance on the allied army holding out for long. In East Prussia, the lake and Angerapp positions were now defended only by a single active and a reserve division, otherwise by Landwehr and Landsturm. On their right flank, however, only very weak forces were still available at the extended East Prussian southern border, whose advance at Prasnysz had just come to a halt.

The enemy was still far superior in total numbers, and their offensive power seemed by no means exhausted. Even if the main front of the Russians south of Lodz showed a gap, they still pressed sharply against the allied armies in Galicia and against the left wing of the German 9th Army.

In such a situation, the Commander-in-Chief East also had to decide on the deployment of further reinforcements expected from the west and, in connection with this, on the continuation of operations as a whole. He regarded the situation at Lodz as extremely serious, but even before that, the situation at the front of the allies presented itself to him. Against the German 9th Army at Lodz, particularly strong Russian forces were already united, and more seemed to be marching or being transported to this focal point of the battle from everywhere. Even after the arrival of the now completed German reinforcements, there was little hope of a quick victory here. The newly arriving forces had to leave the railway far from the front and could only engage in battle after several days of marching. The continuation of the attack at Lodz, for which the enemy was prepared, had to lead to long and heavy fighting. When a decision could be reached in this regard was uncertain. Would the allies hold out that long?

In view of this situation, the Austro-Hungarian liaison officer, Captain v. Fleischmann, suggested on the morning of the 23rd No-

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November the thought of sending the reinforcements still in prospect to Krakow, where unloading is possible right behind the front and with the deployment of some German corps a decisive victory over the Russian southern flank is to be expected. General Ludendorff immediately turned to Colonel Tappen. What he told him is evident from a query by the Supreme Army Command, which referred to the conversation, otherwise influenced by the extremely sobering assessment of the situation at Lodz, which was shown in the reports of the Commander-in-Chief East, and the far more optimistic view of the 9th Army Command). The conditions on the Austro-Hungarian front, according to the latest reports from General v. Freytag, were not nearly as serious as the Commander-in-Chief East seemed to assess them. The query to this was: "General Ludendorff has informed me through Colonel Tappen that six divisions are needed to support allied forces at Krakow; otherwise the situation there cannot be maintained. This is incomprehensible to me. Even if six divisions could still be made available here, they would undoubtedly have to be deployed to force a decision at Lodz. Such a move would bring the fastest, safest, and simplest complete relief for allies in Krakow. A statement on this is requested." — Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had a response sent at 6^65 in the evening: "To bring about a decision here, in our opinion, a further six divisions are necessary. Their deployment must occur promptly, as according to all indications here, Austria could not hold out much longer. With the arrival of reinforcements at Lodz, it could only be expected in about 14 days, even if the transport is initiated soon, while unloading could occur directly behind the Austrian front in the Krakow area to strike the Russian left flank there. — If Austrians could guarantee to hold out, the deployment of new forces in the Lodz area would be more effective and better for the protection of German territory."

On November 24, as the situation with the 9th Army began to improve, the Commander-in-Chief East learned that now the other half of the XXIV Reserve Corps, the 47th Reserve Division, and the next day half of the XIII Army Corps would move east. Indecisively, Captain v. Fleischmann communicated a telegram from Teschen on the morning of November 25. It referred to a recently received communication from General v. Falkenhayn, outlining what he intended to send in further reinforcements. Then it said: "Since there is agreement on the deployment location of these reinforcements

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between Imperial and Royal Army Command¹) and Headquarters East requested²), the Army Command announces its view as follows: A decisive success can only be expected if the 2nd and 5th Russian Armies are finally dealt with and then — immediately — the offensive is continued with full force — in a southeasterly direction. It is therefore beyond question that the main forces of the German reinforcements in transit must be deployed with the German 9th Army to enable them for the intended offensive. In favor of the decision previously sought at Lodz, the Austro-Hungarian forces south of the Vistula are so weakened that the situation there and at Krakow can only be sustained if a German division is sent there as reinforcement. General v. Conrad therefore ordered on November 25th to unload the fifth German division for the Austro-Hungarian army command south of the Vistula at Krakow. On the other hand, the corps following this division would be used again with the German 9th Army; the unloading of the last, not yet securely promised army corps would only be agreed upon based on the situation then existing.

Thus, the idea suggested by Captain v. Fleischmann to seek the decision by deploying strong German forces at Krakow was also abandoned by his own army command. However, it seemed necessary to comply with General v. Conrad's request for support by a German division. It was decided with a heavy heart; as things stood, however, a compelling necessity seemed to be present. Since the Supreme Army Command had expressly left the decision on deployment to the agreement with General v. Conrad, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg now assigned the 47th Reserve Division of the XXIV Reserve Corps to Krakow. The II Army Corps took over for the 9th Army; he reserved the disposition over the other half of the Reserve Corps and the half XIII Corps initially designated for Wreschen.

Meanwhile, the Wisłoka crisis was overcome. The Commander-in-Chief East still considered the situation of the 9th Army to be serious; above all, its left wing under General v. Morgen seemed to be superior

¹) = Army Command. — ²) In the draft of General v. Falkenhayn it was stated: "Regarding the deployment location, I ask you to coordinate with the Commander-in-Chief East ... but since the allied army only holds its position on both sides of the Vistula at an improper height from Krakow, there is no doubt that success will ultimately be on our side."

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threatened by Russian attack. Further unfavorable news was added: the Landsturm Corps Breslau, whose right wing had retreated slightly in recent days, reported, "that the troops are only half capable of marching. No officers." From the southern border of East Prussia, General v. Hollen reported that the Graudenz Corps had been withdrawn from superior enemies from Jiechawo and Przasnysz. At the 8th Army, the enemy seemed to be attempting to bypass the encirclement to the south. At the 9th Army, the evening report of the Commander-in-Chief East concluded with the statement that the situation remained "very serious." A heavy comprehensive attack threatens the left wing of the Morgen Corps. In East Prussia, the Russians were preparing to bypass Lake Spirding from the south. We urgently need support."

In response to this report, the following reply from General v. Falkenhayn to the Commander-in-Chief East arrived on the night of November 26: "Your Excellency must have gathered from the measures of the Army Command and my communications that everything is being done here to reinforce the Eastern Army as far as is compatible with the security of our position in the West. The Army Command is unable to do more; nor will reinforcements, which can only now be made available, be able to change anything about the encirclement threatening the Morgen Corps, according to the report of the Commander-in-Chief East, or the expected march of the Russians around Lake Spirding. — Five divisions are on transport to the Eastern Army, two more will follow shortly, and beyond that, an attempt will be made to make two more divisions available as soon as the Western Corps, impaired by the transfer of the Western replacement to the Eastern Army, are replenished. Further reinforcements there are not to be expected, according to His Majesty's decision, because all victories in the East, which could be achieved at the expense of our position in the West, are worthless."

These statements finally destroyed any hope of the early arrival of forces strong enough to make a decisive turn in the East seem likely. It was necessary to see how to proceed. A new attack with a large objective, which the Commander-in-Chief East desired as urgently as the Commander-in-Chief of the 9th Army, was not to be considered for the time being; for the time being, only defense was in question. In the morning report of November 26, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg reported that the crisis had been overcome. The Morgen Corps "has been slightly withdrawn before the expected strong enemy attack, against which the 1st Division from Thorn is expected to be deployed tomorrow afternoon. Whether the attack can be parried with this is still not foreseeable." A little later

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Contrasts between Supreme Army Command and Eastern Commander-in-Chief.

followed the report that the 47th Reserve Division wanted to go to Krakow to support the Austro-Hungarian front there. However, the 4th Cavalry Division, previously used on the East Prussian southern border, received orders to be transported to Thorn despite the difficult situation there.

In the afternoon, General Ludendorff had a telephone conversation with General v. Falkenhayn, in which he expressed his displeasure about the delayed arrival of reinforcements and pointed out that as a result, defense was still possible on the entire eastern theater of war. General v. Falkenhayn had a different opinion; he issued the following message, which was sent in the evening by the Eastern Commander-in-Chief: "Regarding conversation with General Ludendorff. The success of the war now depends on the offensive in Northern Poland not being dispatched and it not becoming a positional war here in the West. To renew the offensive, seven divisions (including Dickhuth²) and 1st Division would have been available by the end of the month without the transfer of the 47th Division to Krakow. Even now, six fresh divisions (II Corps, 48th, 1st, 26th Division Dickhuth) can be used for this purpose, perhaps with the behavior of the Russians also another part of the 8th Army. From here, as reinforcements, two more divisions will follow soon, that is, departure in early December. — The Army Command is therefore confident that the Eastern Commander-in-Chief will continue the offensive at all costs before the enemy can bring strong forces from the south. A success in Northern Poland would decide not only the Galician question but, as mentioned, probably the war."

In this message, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg saw a reproach against his decisions and measures. He wrote next to the last sentence: "I think there is no hope for that anymore" — and further: "I have always said that in vain, and now the tables are turned." The attitude

1) The following day, General v. Falkenhayn reported to the Kaiser that General Ludendorff had informed him: "that given the general situation on the eastern theater of war, the offensive must now be abandoned." What was actually said can no longer be determined. The content of the conversation mentioned above is derived from the telegram sent immediately after the conversation on November 26 by General v. Falkenhayn to Posen (mentioned above in excerpt) and is supported by the following statement by General Ludendorff on December 20, 1928, to the Reichsarchiv: "I probably said what we had achieved with the uncertainty of the army leadership — what we do not know, like strangers, properly led by the target. I had to vent once. In fact, in Posen, they did not think of abandoning the attack, but only of interrupting it until the expected reinforcements arrived." — ²) = Corps Thorn.

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The account of General v. Falkenhayn appeared contradictory: on November 18, when the situation before Lodz still justified great hopes and the Austro-Hungarian army had just launched an attack, he doubted the possibility of bringing about a decisive decision in the East with the forces that the West could provide, and now, after the heavy days of Bzura had barely been overcome and the attack before Lodz had stalled like at Krakow, was a success in Northern Poland supposed to decide the war? — The reinforcements from the West came "too late"; nothing could be withdrawn from East Prussia, as only weak German forces stood there against probably twice the Russian superiority. However, what the enemy could bring from the south to Lodz was already in place.

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg urged the Supreme War Lord on November 27: "From the telegram of the Supreme Army Command on the evening of the 26th, I must see dissatisfaction with my measures and my views. I humbly request Your Majesty's decision. — That the decision falls in Northern Poland, I had already expressed to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army on November 9 and urgently asked him for reinforcements, which are now arriving gradually and belatedly. On the other hand, one must constantly reckon with the wavering decisions of the Austrian army command and the inferiority of the Austrian army. I have also left no doubt about this to the Chief of the General Staff."

The sharp contrast between the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army and the Commander-in-Chief East, which was expressed in this telegram, was outwardly settled on November 29, when the Kaiser, accompanied by General v. Falkenhayn, arrived for a visit in Posen, which he had announced several days earlier. However, the internal contrast between the Supreme Army Command and the Commander-in-Chief East continued to exist.

Quite independently of the resolution of the dispute of opinion, meanwhile — coincidentally on the same November 27, when the Commander-in-Chief East had called for the Emperor's decision — Generaloberst v. Hindenburg was promoted to General Field Marshal, Generalmajor Ludendorff to Lieutenant General, while General v. Mackensen received the Pour le mérite order. This clearly showed how the Supreme War Lord valued what had been achieved in the East so far, and that the leaders there continued to enjoy his full confidence.

1) G. 95. — 2) S. 41, Note 1. — 3) S. 414.

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Contrasts between the Supreme Army Command and the Commander-in-Chief East.

2. The Capture of Lodz.

a) The Defense of the 9th Army until November 29¹).

Maps and Sketches: No. 15 to 17.

In a general directive²) from November 23, General von Mackensen emphasized that the decision must be "postponed until the arrival of reinforcements, of which the II Army Corps and a reserve division will arrive on our right wing, the 1st Infantry Division on our left wing in the next few days." When on November 25 the troops of General von Scheffer returned to the line of the other corps, the immediate threatening danger was overcome, but it was also clear that the army's offensive power had seriously suffered from the preceding 14 days of almost uninterrupted combat activity and heavy losses. In addition, there was an increasing shortage of ammunition and supply difficulties, which also impaired the general supply of the troops, especially the supply of oats for the horses, and finally the extremely poor accommodations in wintry Poland.

On a widely extended front measuring more than 60 kilometers, the right wing and center of the army faced an approximately equally strong enemy from east of Stryków to northeast of Lodz, starting from the right with a brigade of the Breslau Corps (which was directly subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief East), the Frommel Cavalry Corps, the Posen Corps, the XI, XVII, and XX Army Corps, whose units were partially intermingled and mixed due to the preceding battles. In this part of the front, positions were being established or had already been established, which gave the defense more stability day by day; the construction of obstacles had begun. The combat activity was limited to mutual rifle and artillery fire or rested entirely. Where they were close to each other, the fight began with mortars, rifles, and hand grenades.

Different on the left army wing: here, in the area northeast of Lodz to the Vistula, everything was in flux over a width of more than 70 kilometers, positions were missing. The front, which curved northward southwest of Stryków, joined the left wing of the XX Army Corps, showed a large gap between the XXV and the I Reserve Corps; the left wing

¹) Connection to p. 188. — The battles of the I Reserve Corps are described up to November 30 inclusive. — ²) p. 165.

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was about 15 kilometers from the Vistula. In total, the German command had only five infantry divisions available on this part of the front for the time being: the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, the XXV and the I Reserve Corps, along with the Cavalry Corps Richthofen with two divisions. Behind the left flank, the 1st Infantry Division had already advanced two days' marches; the bulk of the Thorn Corps was retreating on the right bank of the Vistula to the fortress and was to be brought forward again on the left bank. The enemy had so far been numerically superior on this army flank; troops of the Russian II and VI Corps, V Siberian, VI Siberian (Reserve), and the I Turkestan Corps, as well as several independent reserves and five cavalry divisions, were identified. General v. Mackensen expected that the enemy would try to draw even more forces to this flank to continue the attack. For this purpose, he had at his disposal a double-track railway from Petrikau and Warsaw to Siermiewize and a single-track from Warsaw to Lowitsch, and finally a Vistula bridge at Wischogrod.

For November 26, General v. Mackensen had ordered that the XXV Reserve Corps, whose 99th Reserve Infantry Brigade was still with the I Reserve Corps, with the attached 3rd Guard Division, should "prepare positions" for the almost 25-kilometer-wide section from the left flank of the XX Army Corps to the Bzura at Bielany, then "Provision of strong forces for the offensive, XX Army Corps at Strykow, XXV Reserve Corps at Bratoschewize and Glowno." North of the Bzura, the I Reserve Corps was to cover the left army flank as before; the advancing 1st Infantry Division was subordinated to it. The Cavalry Corps Richthofen was to remain in front of the XXV Reserve Corps with the offensive task: "Continuous harassment of enemy rear connections, daily interruption of the Siermiewize—Petrikau railway."

On the morning of November 26, the army command arrived at the new headquarters in Lentschitza, which was only about 30 kilometers behind the battlefront of the left army flank; however, the connection to the right army flank had now become all the more difficult. The XXV Reserve Corps had reported that the assigned defensive section was too extensive for the low combat strength of its troops just returned from Bzura, the two reserve divisions counted at most 3000 infantrymen together1), rest and refreshment were urgently needed, ammunition and supplies not yet replenished; on

1) The full strength, excluding the 99th Brigade, was about 20,000 men.

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Deploying forces for an offensive was out of the question. General v. Scheffer could only extend his left wing to the Mroga crossing west of Glowno; there remained a gap of more than 15 kilometers to the right wing of the I Reserve Corps north of the Bzura. The Richthofen Cavalry Corps also felt overwhelmed by the task; its troops were severely depleted. A report from the 6th Cavalry Division stated that even the best patrol horses were no longer capable of greater performance, and iron rations were also missing; the troops were starving and so exhausted that they could only be kept alert in the firing line and on posts by officers. The horseshoes were partly worn out, partly lost. There were no studs, so that in icy conditions the division's mobility was immediately in question. Only about a third of the ammunition stock was available. This division had to be withdrawn behind the front of the XXV Reserve Corps in the face of the advancing enemy; the 9th Cavalry Division was already placed by General v. Richthofen on the left wing of this corps, where it was to protect the flank behind the Mroga. Further north, the I Reserve Corps had left a small mixed detachment at Bielawy, so that the large gap was at least not completely without troops.

In the angle between Bzura and Sludwia stood the I Reserve Corps along with the 99th Reserve Brigade, its right wing northeast of Sobota behind the broad lowland of the Bzura with the front facing south; at Summy, where the corps' front sharply turned northwest, the almost 20-kilometer-long left wing joined behind the Sludwia. Behind it, the beginning of the 1st Infantry Division reached Gostynin during the day. There was no connection to the 21st Landwehr Brigade still standing on the right bank of the Vistula near Plozk, as there was no crossing at the rivers.

During the course of November 27, Russian radio messages and reports from the front increased the high command's concern about the large gap at Bielawy. The Russian VI Corps, reinforced by a reserve division, and General Nordilow's cavalry seemed to be advancing against it. A Russian breakthrough at Piontek or Komte could have serious consequences for the center of the army. The situation was further complicated by the enemy simultaneously launching a fierce attack on the I Reserve Corps from the east. To defend the gap at Bielawy, quickly assembled parts of the XX Army Corps were brought in.

North of the Bzura, General v. Morgen had deployed the advancing 1st Infantry Division against the Russian northern flank for encirclement; he

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hoped to master the situation. However, this division encountered resistance in the height of Zmoyel

in the dense fog, which it could not immediately break,

while the southern half of the corps front was sharply pressed by the enemy.

Towards evening and at night, the situation became extremely serious. The

enemy brought new forces from Lonitschi to Bielany (where the

weak German detachment was), before help was available.

At the same time, other parts of the enemy crossed the Bzur in the fog.

The Russians were deep in the rear of the main front of the I Reserve Corps;

General v. Morgen considered withdrawing his southern flank to the west,

but then decided to "hold out." He ordered Sobota to be retaken in the

darkness, and added, trusting in a successful attack by the 1st Infantry Division:

"By rolling out the forces facing the I Reserve Corps frontally,

tomorrow will make an impact on the enemy standing at Bielany and to the east."

This confidence was justified. Following the right wing

of the 1st Infantry Division, the 1st Reserve Infantry Brigade under

Major General Barre had already advanced from its position behind the Sludwia

on the evening of November 27, as ordered, continued the attack in the

darkness to the road Stryków—Kiernozia and took from the enemy

300 prisoners and eleven guns in fierce close combat around midnight.

Further east, Lieutenant General v. Conta

with the 1st Infantry Division had reached Lwowek and Samulki by evening.

The situation at Bielawy and Sobota remained serious, however. As

forces were lacking to wrest Sobota from the Russians again,

General v. Morgen saw himself forced to withdraw the sharply advancing

part of his front at Summy further during the night.

At the high command of the 9th Army, the Russian breakthrough at Bielawy—Sobota,

which became known only at night, was not considered too significant,

as the intervention of the II Army Corps and the further reinforcements

announced in the meantime, half XXIV Reserve Corps on the right, half XIII Army

Corps on the left wing, would have to make themselves felt in the coming days.

By the morning of November 28, intercepted radio messages indicated that

the enemy had deployed at least 1½ infantry divisions (67th and ½ 4th) as well as

Cavalry Corps Nowikow to strike at Piontek in the rear of the

German forces standing at Stryków. He had also, in the course of

1) The Russians claimed to have captured 100 prisoners and two machine guns in this action.

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attempted during the night to advance against the positions of the XX Army Corps and the

XXV Reserve Corps, but was repelled, except for an insignificant

incursion at the border of both corps. The command over the troops deployed between the left wing of the XXV Reserve Corps and

the Bzura had meanwhile been transferred to Lieutenant General Baron v. Richthofen, who eventually had forces

equivalent to about one infantry division, but from four different

corps, and two cavalry divisions. These troops and

the right wing of the I Reserve Corps were to push the enemy back at Bielawy—

Sobota over Mroga and Bzura.

In a radio message from the Russians, it was stated that they wanted to continue the attack "extremely

decisively." At the German High Command in

Lentschitza, preparations were made around noon to, if necessary, withdraw the entire

army front advancing eastward between Lodz and the Bzura against the road Lodz—Piontek. In

the early afternoon, very disturbing reports

from the I Reserve Corps increased the tension. The right wing of the corps

was supposed to have retreated, and the enemy had already advanced along the Bzura to Orlow to the

west. Then at 4 p.m. came the turning point; the

bad news turned out to be incorrect or outdated. At the

battlefront at Bielawy and Sobota, the Russians began to retreat,

but the left wing of the I Reserve Corps was, although fighting hard,

in continuous victorious progress. By evening, the 1st Infantry

Division had captured another 2500 prisoners and four guns. The

danger was eliminated.

In a Russian radio message intercepted that day, it was

stated: "... On the left bank of the Vistula, the enemy holds and

even tries to deliver short blows, but does so only with the intention of

securing the retreat he has planned to the northwest." On the night

of November 29, the German High Command learned in the same

way of new Russian attack intentions south of the Bzura: General

Orlowido was accused of not having advanced beyond Sobota; he received the order to

forcefully break through south of the Bzura to Lentschitza early in the morning. South of him, the

Russian II Corps wanted to attack "in dense, seamless infantry battle lines"¹)

between Bielawy and Glowno. Considering the continuously strong

pressure of the enemy against the German positions immediately north of Lodz,

it seemed that they still intended to, from Lodz to

¹) Wording of the translation at that time. The Russian wording is not known.

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to crush the part of the army front reaching the Bzura in a two-sided attack.

In contrast, General v. Mackensen was determined to attack with the right

flank of the army as soon as the II Army Corps, which had meanwhile been

assigned to him, was in place, presumably on November 30. In the meantime,

given the Russian superiority, the plan was to hold the position and await

the arrival of further reinforcements behind the left flank, the first of which,

half of the XIII Army Corps, began arriving at the Thorn-Nieszawa line.

The commander-in-chief agreed that General v. Morgen could meanwhile

exploit the currently promising situation in front of his front for further

attacks while securing against the east.

General v. Morgen wanted to intercept the Russian forces still standing

northwest of Lowitsch north of the Bzura. To this end, he had ordered his

left flank to continue the attack southward on Lowitsch. As the enemy

remained largely calm in discipline after the heavy setbacks just suffered,

this attack reached the heights north of Lowitsch and on both sides of

Sludwia by the evening of November 29, where it continued deep into the

darkness, reaching the northern edge of the Bzura lowlands. The 1st

Infantry Division under Lieutenant General v. Contandt captured another

1000 prisoners and 16 guns, albeit with "not insignificant" own losses.

However, the Russian VI Corps still held the northern bank of the Bzura

from west of the Sludwia mouth to Sobota inclusive; the town of Bielawy

was also still in enemy hands. On the other hand, the expected Russian

attack, apart from weak attempts at the Mroga section, had not developed

anywhere.

On November 30, General v. Morgen knew that not only the two

Siberian corps, which had been defeated so often, were deep in his almost

unprotected left flank, but also presumably the 1st Rifle Brigade and the

freshly arrived 3rd Siberian Division from Asia. Morgen now wanted to

first conclude the battle against the part of the enemy that was still holding

the northern bank of the Bzura at Sobota and southward. This decision

led to full success during the course of November 30: in a comprehensive

advance on both sides, the 36th and 1st Reserve Divisions reached the Bzura

between Sobota and the Sludwia mouth, capturing another 8900 prisoners,

7 guns, and 18 machine guns as booty, supported by the impact of the

German troops at the lower Mroga. However, the attack on Lowitsch

east of the Sludwia could not be carried out; instead, the 1st Infantry

Division moved eastward during the day.

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The Successes of the 1st Reserve Corps.

The front had to be bent back and here, together with a weak flank guard left behind at Kiernozia, repelled the Russians advancing from the east. There was no longer any danger from this direction.

What the troops of General v. Morgen achieved in the days since November 11 in continuous combat against a far superior enemy deserves the highest admiration. However, their leader had provided them with ample personnel and ammunition replacements at the expense of other corps. Against their own loss of 8,000 men, they also captured around 30,000 men and more than 60 guns.

b) The attack of the 9th Army and the battles on the northern flank of the Woyrsch Army from November 30 to December 6.

Maps and sketches: No. 18.

On the right flank of the 9th Army, there had been essentially calm since the setback of November 19; relatively weak German forces faced relatively weak enemies. Behind them, on November 23, the beginning of the eighth II Army Corps had arrived by rail at Kalisch and Schildberg, three days later to the right, half of the XXIV Reserve Corps at Kreuzburg.

On November 29, the day before the attack on this army wing was to begin, the situation was as follows:

South of the 9th Army stood the Woyrsch Army. As stated in the Austro-Hungarian army order of November 26, it was to "maneuver sparingly against the German 9th Army" and, slowly, encompassing from the northern flank, join the attack of the latter. This flank was formed by the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, which, with the XII Corps, stood 18 kilometers west of Noworadomsk on both sides of the Warthe, with the IV Corps to the north. The German Guard Reserve Infantry Brigade had taken Schichzerow on November 28, capturing 220 prisoners, but had to evacuate the next day before a superior enemy. It now consisted together with the Cavalry Corps Sauer five kilometers southwest of the place; both units were subordinated to the commanding general of the IV Corps, General of Cavalry v. Tersztyánszky.

1) Connection to G. 188 and 245. — 2) p. 177 ff. — 3) p. 262.

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From the XXIV Reserve Corps, which was directly subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief East, the 48th Reserve Division had reached the Warthe southwest of Widawa. The nearly 100-kilometer march had been particularly strenuous for the last parts. The division, belonging to one of the newly formed reserve corps, had been able to get used to the demands of the war on a relatively quiet front in the west, but was then used on the main battle front of the 9th Army. Its march had been concealed by the southern wing of the previous Breslau Corps, which was subordinated as "Division Menge" to the commanding general of the reserve corps, General of Infantry v. Gerok. In the diary of this corps it says: "The business value of the Breslau Corps, which is composed exclusively of Landsturm replacement troops, was extremely low. These troops were not considered for offensive purposes"; they were also without any appropriate armament and equipment.

The right wing of the 9th Army was formed by the three-division strong Cavalry Corps Frommel. It had been able to at least provisionally complete the winter shoeing of the horses in the last quiet week. The Landwehr Brigade Schmiedecke of the previous Breslau Corps was inserted into its front.

Behind the veil of the Cavalry Corps, the II Army Corps, after a similar march as the 48th Reserve Division, reached the area of Stumfa-Wola and Schadeck in a broad front according to the orders of the army. It was one of those western corps that had bled the most heavily so far and now came directly from the battles in Flanders. The business strength of its divisions was indeed about 7200 men, but 2000 men of newly recruited replacements were included.

North of Schadeck, the Plüskow Corps joined. Its right wing formed in a widely curved formation the mostly Landsturm-based Posen Corps, whose front sharply bent east at the Ner. As the left wing of the corps, the 38th Infantry Division had been concentrated eastward in accordance with the army command and now stood northwest of Lutomiersk on the northern bank of the Ner. This division had not yet recovered from the heavy losses of November 19; its business strength was indicated in its own war diary as "50 percent."

This was followed by the XVII Army Corps, as previously reinforced by the 22nd Infantry Division of the XI Army Corps, in its already on November 18-

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vember reached positions northwest and north of Lodz. The corps had been in constant expectation of strong Russian attacks in recent days, which had not yet developed; it suffered significantly under heavy enemy artillery fire, which could not be adequately returned due to a lack of ammunition. General v. Pannwitz had felt compelled to report on November 28: "Ammunition and fodder urgently needed. Horses are dying of exhaustion." The situation was even less favorable for the parts on the left, with the XX Army Corps, whose battalions had only operational strengths of at most 300 to 400 men, as well as the XXV Reserve Corps with the Cavalry Corps Richthofen, which had endured the hard days from Bzura to Bielawy. To support weak points in the 60-kilometer-long army center from Rawa on the Ner to the Bzura near Bielawy if necessary, the high command had only a few battalions with artillery at its disposal, whose composition had to be changed repeatedly depending on the situation.

North of the Bzura, the cowardly attacking I Reserve Corps with the assigned 1st Infantry Division formed the left army wing. Behind it, the half XIII (Royal Württemberg) Army Corps had reached Kowal with the foremost parts of the 26th Infantry Division, but the bulk had not even been unloaded. From two divisions, the 25th Reserve Division had been assigned to the corps, which was only now being loaded in the west. From November 30, the 4th Cavalry Division arriving by train from East Prussia was expected in Thorn.

From the previous Corps Thorn, which had been advancing from the right bank of the Vistula to the 9th Army, the Landwehr Brigade Westenhagen had reached Kowal in forced marches. With another part of the troops, the governor had to remain in the fortress, as the situation on the right bank of the river had worsened due to the retreat of the Corps Graudenz from Prasnysch to Mlawa and the withdrawal of the 4th Cavalry Division. The 21st Landwehr Brigade approached the fortress on the right bank of the Vistula in the retreat from Plozk. The ice-covered river appeared as an insurmountable obstacle; on the southern bank, the foremost German security troops stood at Dobrzyn and Lipno.

1) p. 262 f. — 2) p. 255 and 344. The division now consisted, deviating from its original structure, of the 17th, 18th, and 39th Cavalry Brigade.

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A complication for the upcoming offensive lay in the supply conditions, which were particularly unfavorable for the center of the army. Railways were temporarily operational only up to Sieradz behind the right and just before Włocławek behind the left flank; the construction of a field railway from the border near Höhensalza towards Lentschitza did not fulfill the hopes of the commander-in-chief. Apart from that, the general shortage of artillery ammunition became increasingly noticeable; it went so far that reinforcements coming from the west arrived with empty columns.

In view of the weeks-long ongoing battles and the adverse weather conditions in wintry Poland, the will to fulfill duties and exert effort to the utmost began to wane here and there. The tension between the strength of provisions and the number of actual fighters had grown. The war diary of an infantry division deployed northeast of Lodz even contains the entry on November 29: "Many troops are wandering behind the front, allegedly looking for their unit." All in all, the combat value of the troops was diminished in every respect compared to previous months. It is summarized in the war diary of the 9th Army's high command on December 2: "Operation has been hampered for a long time by: 1. the shortness of the days. 2. Decrease in combat strength due to officer casualties and reduction of combat strengths (reinforcement of the troops through replacements occurs gradually, but the new personnel is naturally only inadequately trained and insufficiently integrated). 3. Insufficient supply of provisions, fodder, ammunition; the latter caused by increasing impassability of roads, too slow continuation of railways, insufficient allocation of artillery ammunition (according to the calculation of Department I c²) only 58 rounds per battery per day are available, which is too little given the heavy enemy fire), which faced an extraordinary demand during the uninterrupted battles. Today, higher cavalry command I reported: "The ammunition shortage is such that further execution of the attack is in question; the light ammunition columns are empty, the batteries only have their iron stock left, XXV. Reserve Corps is unable to assist." The cavalry not only lost a large number of horses during the current operation but also already in southern Poland.

1) See "The German Field Railway System", Volume I, p. 171 ff.  
2) Department I c handled the supply.

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due to a lack of oats. The regiments often threshed themselves; but now there is hardly any fodder to be had in the country."

The Russians were quite well informed, as they had been facing the same enemy in the same area for more than ten days. Intercepted radio messages continued to complete the picture, although the Russians — as was known — had long realized that their radio messages were being deciphered by the Germans). In addition, there were prisoner statements, while aerial reconnaissance at that time during the short and foggy winter days could only bring limited results. "The airmen are doing an excellent job," it says in the war diary of the High Command; "the evaluation of their reports is, however, very difficult because the whole country, as far as it has been traversed by the Russian army in recent months, is filled with trenches and field fortifications. The trenches reported by the airmen therefore provide no content for the enemy's intentions, especially as they tend to run in every direction."

According to the view of Army High Command 9, the enemy was positioned as follows: West of Noworadomsk, the Grenadier Corps was identified as the northern wing of the Russian 4th Army, with the XVI Corps advancing from the south; these forces seemed to be tied down by the Borysch Army. In the nearly 50-kilometer-wide gap to the 5th Army, only the 7th Infantry Division of the V Corps and about 3½ divisions of cavalry and Cossacks stood from Schtscherzon to the Gumska-Wola-Lask road; the bulk of these forces were supposed to have just been moved from Lask southward into the Schtscherzon area. North of the gap, the XIX and half of the I Siberian Corps followed in still quite broad formation, then turning east, south of Kasimirshje the XXIII, north of Lodz the IV, and in somewhat denser formation up to the Bzura the II Siberian, the I, the other half of the I Siberian, half of the V, the II Corps as well as the cavalry corps Nowikow and Charpentier, together about five divisions strong. Where the boundaries between the 5th, 2nd, and 1st Armies lay along the long front was not clear. North of the Bzura, the VI Corps still held west of Lowitsch, then followed north to the Vistula the VI Siberian (Reserve) and the V Siberian Corps, including at least one division of the apparently freshly arrived IV Siberian Corps from Asia, as well as some rifle brigades and reserve divisions.

\*) p. 280, note 1.

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The enemy was then far superior in the number of units, having against 30 divisions of infantry and about 8 cavalry divisions against 17 1/2 divisions of infantry and 5 cavalry divisions of the German 9th Army. He too had suffered heavily. The attack power of the Russian infantry had greatly diminished; the guns captured north of Lowitsch in recent days were without shields, often of older type.

As before, the overall front of the enemy showed a large gap between the 5th Army, where only relatively weak forces stood. Taking advantage of this situation, the surprise thrust of three German West Divisions was now to be directed against the left wing and the flank of the Russian 5th Army; in doing so, General v. Mackensen wanted to roll up the enemy front to some extent. The army center was initially to remain in defense and gradually join the advancing attack of the right wing. Only on the left army wing, where General v. Morgen also wanted to continue the attack on November 30, the already described battles were allowed to continue, to tie down the reinforcements of the Russians advancing from Warsaw and to complicate their overall situation at Lodz. The reinforcements still expected for this wing were then to bring the final great victory at Lodz, together with the attack of the right wing. But one had to start from scratch now to restore the situation that had already brought such success within reach before November 22. The basic condition for success was that the right army wing advanced rapidly in the attack.

A unified order for the attack beginning on November 30 was not given. The participating corps of the 9th Army received individual instructions, and these were also given orally to a large extent by telephone or at the army headquarters to general staff officers ordered there; for the II Army Corps, there was only radio communication. This corps had the decisive thrust to

1) Including the parts under the command of the Supreme Commander East on the right wing of the 9th Army, but on both sides without the units still on the railway.  
2) See p. 262.  
3) The intentions underlying the attack can only be discerned from the orders given and individual records that happen to be available. Occasionally, reasons for the chosen procedure can be recognized more with ruthless admission to the situation at the time and the measures taken. See also the communications of Field Marshal v. Mackensen reproduced on p. 284.

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lead; it received the attack direction from Stumska-Wola to Lask, "in such a way that it does not strike against the enemy's flank, but proceeds concentrically in conjunction with Corps Posen." To the right of the II Army Corps, the Cavalry Corps Frommel was to close in south of Stumska-Wola on the morning of November 30 and cover the army flank; its next target was the area south of Lask. Further south, Corps Gerok was positioned by the Commander-in-Chief East over Widawa; it was to follow the II Army Corps on the right and act jointly with it. General v. Woyrsch had also ordered the attack for the northern wing of the army. Thus, on the German side, a total of four infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions were designated for the attack against an area where the enemy presumably had significantly weaker forces. The idea that he might try to escape the impact of this attack by early withdrawal was therefore constantly alive.

In front of the II Army Corps, the Russian advance troops were entrenched a kilometer or more from the previous foremost German line; behind them, further enemy positions were built. General of Infantry v. Linsingen had ordered his corps, reinforced by the Landwehr Brigade Schmiedede and two mortar batteries (21 cm), to attack in a nine-kilometer-wide strip running on both sides of the railway from Stumska-Wola to the east, with the main focus on the right wing. In fact, both divisions of the corps soon expanded considerably further, the northern one to maintain connection with the right wing of the Corps Plüskow (Corps Posen). After artillery preparation, the infantry attack began at 9 a.m. It encountered a defensive enemy along the entire attack front, which eventually extended more than 15 kilometers. "Russian resistance not too strong," it was said in the war building, and by evening, little progress had been made overall, still a full eight kilometers from Lask. Prisoners from the Russian V., XIX., I.¹) and XXIII. Corps were reported.

To the right of the II Army Corps, the deployment of the Cavalry Corps Frommel was delayed so that it only reached the foremost Russian positions at noon and was still three kilometers away from the Grabia section, behind which the main Russian position was assumed, by evening. From Corps Gerok, only the 48th Reserve Division was designated for the attack, the Menges Division

¹) Presumably confusion with the I Siberian Corps.

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to cover the flank. After a march of 12 to 20 kilometers,

the reserve division completed its deployment only at 10 a.m.

and therefore crossed the Widawka only at nightfall; it drove the enemy

from the right bank and captured 400 prisoners.

In the Woyrsch army, the ordered attack of the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army on

Szczercow did not take place, as General v. Böhm was concerned about an impending enemy

attack from the southeast, where he assumed the Russian XIX Corps1).

To the left of the German II Army Corps, the Pütz Corps

joined the attack with its right wing. Around 4 p.m., the army command pointed out that the

corps had to align completely with the II Army Corps. Due to the slow

progress of this corps, "excessively rapid advance of the

38th Infantry Division would not correspond to the intentions of the army command."

This division, however, remained on November 30, except for small

parts of its right wing, in its position northwest of Lutowiersk.

In the middle of the army front, there was calm. Russian attack attempts were repelled at the Mroga section.

North of the Bzura, fighting was fierce but successful2).

At the army command, more was expected from the attack of the

II Army Corps; for December 1, General

v. Mackensen ordered: "Continue the attack on Lask vigorously." The corps Gerok, meanwhile transferred by

the commander-in-chief East to the 9th Army, was

assigned to General v. Linsingen, who ordered the 48th Reserve Division to advance

north on the eastern Widawka bank. To protect the

southern flank, the commander-in-chief East pointed out to the Woyrsch army that renewed action by the Guard Reserve Brigade and the Cavalry

Corps Saur was "very appropriate." The same request was urgently repeated in the evening, but could not be ordered, as the Woyrsch army

was subordinate to the Austro-Hungarian army command.

General v. Woyrsch had so far exercised a certain restraint towards the army command Böhm,

to not disturb the relationship built on fraternal cooperation. The difficulties

arising from this are recorded in the war diary of the command3

1) On the German side, there was already no doubt that this assumption was incorrect,   
as the Russian XIX had been fighting near Pabianice for ten days.   
2) G. 262 f.

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Borysch occasionally indicated<sup>1)</sup>. However, as it was now crucial to participate decisively in the battle of the German 9th Army at a decisive point, General v. Borysch stepped out of his restraint on November 30 and ordered: "The Austrian 2nd Army is to join the offensive tomorrow according to the actions of the XXIV Reserve Corps, which is intended for Sobki, from the left wing and take the general direction towards Petrikau with its northern wing." Through the wing direction, from which a deviation to the south was still possible, General v. Borysch hoped to dispel fears about the allegedly detected Russian XIX Corps there. A renewed<sup>2)</sup> request by General v. Böhm for reinforcement by a few divisions was forwarded to General v. Conrad.

Based on the order of General v. Borysch and a similarly immediate directive from Teschen, General v. Böhm ordered the attack of his left wing for December 1. The commanding officer here, Field Marshal Lieutenant Baron v. Lütgendorf, advanced with the Guard Reserve Brigade and a brigade of his division only at 11<sup>o</sup> in the morning. After light fighting, the German brigade reached Schtscherzow in the evening, the cavalry corps to the north reached the east bank of the Bidawka; overall, they had gained only about five kilometers of space forward.

In the Linsingen group, the 48th Reserve Division had no enemy in front of it on December 1, but was unable to carry out the ordered advance northward, as it was exhausted by the previous marches and the night battle for the Bidawka crossing, which had cost it about 300 men and thrown its units into disarray. Thus, this division ordered a halt to the advance as early as 11<sup>15</sup> in the morning.

The cavalry corps Tr and the II Army Corps also found little resistance. The enemy retreated eastward. The cavalry corps advanced ten kilometers beyond the left-behind 48th Reserve Division to near the road Schtscherzow—Lask, the II Army Corps to about halfway Lask—Pabianize. Prisoners from the Russian XIX Corps stated that their corps had orders to retreat to Petrikau.

At the Plüskow Corps, the 38th Infantry Division reported at 10<sup>o</sup> in the morning that the enemy had evacuated Automysl, and indeed — as soon became apparent from residents' statements — with the main

<sup>1)</sup> See also C. 241. — <sup>2)</sup> C. 245.

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already 2° at night, with the rear guard at 4° in the morning. The heights west of the place were

still occupied. In view of this situation, the High Command

pointed out that the corps should not be drawn south,

a shortening of the front was desired; it would therefore do no harm

for its right wing to march folded to the left of the II Army Corps.

At 1° in the afternoon, General v. Plüskow ordered the advance. Without

combat, the corps swung in the afternoon hours into a front directed to the southeast;

its right wing was about six kilometers behind the II Army Corps,

the left remained north of the Ner at this Army Corps.

The XVII and XX Army Corps reported the positions in

their front still occupied; the enemy artillery fired vigorously. Russian

retreat movements at the lower Mroga prompted the

XXV Reserve Corps to push forward over this section, but

the advance soon came to a halt before new enemy positions.

The I Reserve Corps also fought without any particular result.

Meanwhile, aerial reconnaissance reported a longer column of all arms

marching from Lask, from Pabianice, and from Bfesziny to the east.

Adding the already mentioned troop reports and

intercepted radio messages, according to which the High Command of the Russian

2nd Army had been moved from Lodz to Koluschki, it seemed as if the

enemy was about to withdraw his entire front. That he still held and fired heavily between

Lodz and Mroga did not contradict this. General

v. Mackensen therefore decided to now also take up the attack with the left

wing of the army, without waiting for the reinforcements expected there.

Only the center should still hold back.

The orders for December 2nd gave the II Army Corps the

direction over Pabianice to the east. How the Army High Command

envisioned the continuation of the battle is shown by an instruction given to the Plüskow Corps,

which stated: "Having reached Lodz, the Corps

closes Lodz from the south and then, with a continuing attack to the north,

also from the west, while the 38th Infantry Division directly to the north

should give the enemy in front of the 36th and 35th Infantry Divisions in the rear."

On the left wing of the army, the sharply retreating part of the German front at Bzelnay

should be advanced. Above all, however, the

enemy in the left flank of the I Reserve Corps had to be pushed back so far

that this corps could attack Lowitsch the following day.

The foremost parts of the XIII Corps (26th Infantry Division) were

initially directed to the orders of General v. Morgen.

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Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief East had urged General v. Booyrich in the afternoon to "relieve the heavily fighting 48th Reserve Division," and he had then ordered the Böhm Army: "The right wing of the 9th Army in victorious advances on Pabianice has reached Dobron today. To ensure success and thus cover the 9th Army, a vigorous offensive by the Austrian 2nd Army and the Hauer Cavalry Corps is absolutely necessary." General v. Conrad gave instructions of the same content.

On December 2, the left wing of the Booyrich Army and the right of the Linsingen Group encountered little resistance and advanced up to 20 kilometers, the left wing of the Booyrich Army halfway to Schtscherzow—Belchatow, the 48th Reserve Division of the Gerok Corps ten kilometers west of Wadlew. However, the Frommel Cavalry Corps, which had been reached by the II Army Corps the evening before, instead of reaching Rischgow on December 2, came to a halt at the foremost Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division at the Grabia section south of Lask before enemy occupation; the two German divisions did not advance. The II Army Corps also encountered resistance on both sides of the road to Pabianice at Dobron; it attacked, as the radio report stated, "with impetuosity," capturing about 1000 prisoners, but ultimately did not break through. The Plüskow Corps also remained in attack, left wing at the Ner east of Lutomerjest.

Left army wings made only insignificant progress at Bielawy, and not much greater progress was made by the I Reserve Corps east of the Sludwia. The 52nd Infantry Brigade of the 26th Infantry Division, deployed extensively from Gombin against the Russian northern flank, also did not advance beyond Wshleiny in a varied attack battle continued into the moonlit night and still had enemies on its left flank. The rest of the division reached Gombin only on that day.

The previous attack result was that the enemy was pushed back into an almost straight line front, now facing frontally. The left wing of the Booyrich Army, the Guard Reserve Brigade, and the Hauer Cavalry Corps, and the Gerok Corps had advanced somewhat further against the gap in the Russian front. However, whether their strength would be sufficient to deliver a decisive blow was quite questionable. The lack of reserves was also noticeable here. Behind the left wing, apart from half of the 26th Infantry Division, only in days

1) How this perception came about could not be clarified.  
\* World War, Volume VI.

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new reinforcements to be expected. The 4th Cavalry Division had to

prepare for winter and feed the horses with oats

before they could be used again; they were left at Thorn. The 21st Landwehr

Brigade had reached a day's march south of the fortress, the

25th Reserve Division still on the railway.

From the reports received by the Army High Command by the evening of December 2,

there was no indication of a retreat by the enemy; the opponent apparently wanted to hold Lodz.

Behind his right flank, a vehicle column about 15 kilometers long was observed

approaching Schafschützen, which, according to the aviators, possibly brought fortress guns from Nowogeorgiewsk.

Concerns about the security of their own flank on the Vistula

persisted. The ice drift had subsided due to warmer weather;

the Russians were reported to have crossed the Vistula and

were tampering with the bridge pontoons still lying there; to the right

of the river, the weak German garrison at Doblzyn had been evacuated by them.

General v. Mackensen entrusted half of the XIII Army Corps with

protecting the left flank of the army west of the Bzura, the 21st Landwehr Brigade retreating from Thorn

with the immediate security of the Vistula route Plock—Wlozlawek. The attack was to be continued in the previous

directions: from the I Reserve Corps on Lowitsch, with

the Cavalry Corps Richthofen now assigned the Landwehr Brigade

Westernhagen and a composite infantry brigade under Major General Neugebauer

to assist by pressure from the west, — from

the right wing of the army in the general direction over Pabianice to the east.

In the Woyrsch Army, the front of the northern wing had

bent more and more with the advance of the attack. From intercepted

radio messages, it was clear that a Russian counterattack was imminent;

enemy cavalry was reported advancing from Petrikau. Above all, the III Caucasian Corps, which had previously

stood at Sarki in front of the southern wing of the army, moved behind the Russian

front to the north. For December 3, General v. Böhm had

reported the intention: "Continuation of the offensive over Belchatow to Petrikau."

General v. Woyrsch was very agreeable. General v. Conrad was eager.

The time had to be used as long as the advance between the Russian 4th and

5th Army still offered prospects; if the III Caucasian Corps arrived,

it might be too late.

On the night of December 3, the enemy sought to make room for attacks west of

Pabianice as in the Bielany corner and

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at the latter point against Landwehr troops also successes. On the day itself

the right wing of the 9th Army and the left of the Woyrsch Army

again achieved pleasing progress.

General of Cavalry v. Terstyánszky, now in command of the 32nd Infantry

Division, the Lütgendorf Division, and the Hauer Cavalry Corps,

had left only the extreme southern wing as a pivot point

and attacked along the entire remaining front. As the left

wing, the German Guard Reserve Brigade under Colonel v. Nostitz

advanced on the 5th over the Petrikauer road ten kilometers beyond Belchatow

to just west of Mszty, thus advancing the furthest east

part of the entire Austro-Hungarian-German army front. The Cavalry

Corps Hauer, however, moved into the large gap that had arisen south of the Lütgendorf Division

between this and the 32nd Infantry Division.

Thus, the Terstyánszky Corps stood from Mszty to the left wing

of the XII Corps on a 40-kilometer wide, almost straight front. The

commanding general had halted the movement at 5 p.m.

to prepare for the next day's battle against the now close

approaching III Caucasian Corps.

As the right wing of the 9th Army, the Cavalry Corps

Frommel came immediately north of the Petrikauer road to the same level

as the Guard Reserve Brigade. In the Liningen group,

the Gerok Corps had full success northwest of Wadlew; its 48th Reserve

Division under Lieutenant General v. Hahn captured 2200 prisoners and 6 guns from the Russian 7th Division.

From the II Army Corps, the right

wing advanced about eight kilometers and stood in the evening on the flank of the

enemy still holding at Dobron. Here and further north, however,

no progress was made. The Plüskow Corps felt too weak to attack

on its own strength and waited, as instructed,

for the advance of the II Army Corps. At the

XXV Reserve Corps, the Richthofen Cavalry Corps, and the 1st Infantry

Division, there was a great shortage of artillery ammunition, and the

heavy field howitzer batteries were plagued by ineffective shells. On the

left flank, the 26th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General

Wilhelm Duke of Urach had to fight both in the front and against a new enemy

attacking from Slow against the flank.

The 3rd of December also did not bring the hoped-for result. In the

9th Army, the attack was to continue the next day, especially at the

II Army Corps, with the Frommel Cavalry Corps "reaching

the Lodz—Petrikau road with strong elements" early.

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The Woyrsch Army, based on the results of aerial reconnaissance

and intercepted radio messages, had no doubt that its northern flank would face

strong Russian attacks from the south, perhaps also from the east, the next day.

Generaloberst v. Woyrsch, with whom the German Kaiser and the Chief of the

General Staff of the Field Army were present that day, viewed the situation quite

seriously. Since it had not been possible to free up reinforcements for the threatened

flank, General v. Falkenhayn successfully arranged for the remainder of the 1st

Guard Reserve Division at Sarti to be relieved by troops of the Austro-Hungarian

1st Army and thus made available for reinforcement to the north. Meanwhile, it

became apparent that the Russian attack at Belchatow was affecting the seemingly

decisive battle of the 9th Army at Pabianice. This task could only be solved by

attack; based on previous experiences, however, Generaloberst v. Woyrsch doubted

whether the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army would muster the necessary momentum.

He dutifully brought this view up during his presentation to his supreme warlord.

The Kaiser had a discussion with General v. Böhm, and visibly under the impression

of this conversation, the General decided to attack southeast against the III Caucasian

Corps and gave the Terstjanzky Corps far-reaching attack objectives. He estimated

about three Russian divisions as opponents at this location. The securing of the left

flank and subsequently the rear of the future southeast and south-directed front of

the Terstjanzky Corps was all the more urgent. General v. Böhm therefore demanded

simultaneous action by the Frommer Cavalry Corps of the German 9th Army on

Petrikau. However, this corps could not advance on Petrikau due to the situation

on the left of the Bohemian right flank. All the difficulties that a breakthrough

without strong reserves against even a weak front entails became apparent. They

emerged more strongly, as it was a matter of the enveloping wings diverging

southeast and northeast on the border of two army fronts.

The advance of the Terstjanzky Corps on December 4th did not

extend far beyond an initial deployment ordered for 7 a.m. close to the previous

line. They soon encountered the enemy, who attacked. The left wing of the 32nd

Infantry Division was able to make a forward

1) Promoted to Generaloberst on this day.   
2) Information from General Heye to the Reichsarchiv on March 10, 1925.

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made 400 prisoners, in the center the cavalry held, on the left the Austro-Hungarian brigade of the Lütgendorf division fought into the night on both sides of the Borowa Mountain (height 278), which as a bare cone towers over the slightly undulating area lying on average 60 meters lower. On the extreme left flank, the German Guard Reserve Brigade, after initially defensive action, only late turned against the enemy's flank to the south and finally only after dark intervened over the moonlit snowfield. Thanks to the support of a battalion assigned from Hungary, they made 600 prisoners by 2 a.m., but also suffered heavy losses. The brigade finally lay with its advanced left wing ten kilometers south of the Belchatow—Petrikau road with the front facing south. Since the Frommel cavalry corps had meanwhile turned to the northeast and only its right wing remained west of Mzurki at the Grabowka section, the flank and rear of the Lütgendorf division were as good as unprotected.

Meanwhile, the enemy in front of the Linsingen group of the 9th Army had already withdrawn the part of its front threatened by encirclement during the night of December 4; the Plüskow corps also believed it had detected retrograde movements. However, the pursuit set here soon came to a halt again. Similarly, the enemy had settled again in front of the Gerok corps; it was the same as before, reinforced in the center by the guard cavalry corps transported from Lithuania. The German left wing also had no success to show, apart from 700 prisoners, although General v. Morgen had done everything to reach Lowitsch, "at any cost." In his rear, the 26th Infantry Division struggled heavily into the night, but without decision.

General v. Linsingen reported that he did not expect any success from further frontal attacks. He wanted to use December 5 to gather strong forces on the southern flank for a new encirclement and requested the relief of the troops on his northern flank. In contrast, General v. Mackensen was of the opinion that the rear and flank of the Linsingen group were too insecure for such an encirclement given the uncertain situation at Belchatow. On the other hand, the situation did not allow for a postponement of the attack, but required its continuation the following day. The idea that the enemy might still withdraw its entire front was taking shape. For flyers wanted to on the clear weather of December 4

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The infantry regiment from Pabianice to the east and eight battalions from Petrikau via Wolborsk to the northeast were recognized as marching, but also a longer column advancing from Schafschow in the west; here the Russian forces behind the front were estimated at at least one corps. Even if they were mostly already defeated troops, the enemy seemed determined to hold on to his advance.

There was no clear understanding of the situation at the Terisztvánszky Corps until the evening. Generaloberst v. Woyrsch was well aware of the situation there, especially when it became known that two to three more Russian divisions were being moved north behind the front. Whatever reserves could be freed up, he set in motion in the same direction; but it was not there. Meanwhile, General v. Conrad (in a meeting with General v. Falkenhayn in Breslau) had anticipated the arrival of the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian 27th Infantry Division at Sieradz for December 5th. Requests for further reinforcements went to Lentsch and Posen, but initially, the Terisztvánszky Corps had to help itself. At 6 p.m., Army Command Böhm reported that it intended to continue the attack on December 5th, but then expressed concerns again. At 10 p.m., Oberstleutnant Heye felt compelled to tell his liaison officer on the phone, "just don't lose courage." In a similar vein, General v. Conrad soon had the view of the German Supreme Commander East communicated to General v. Böhm: "Based on previous, repeatedly confirmed reports about the miserable condition and minimal combat strength of the III. k.u.k. Corps, Headquarters East promises itself a temporary holding off of Russian corps from the decisive battles at Lodz even without the current reinforcement of the Imperial and Royal IV. Corps."

On December 5th, the Terisztvánszky Corps was unable to continue the attack; however, it was able to maintain its position essentially, only the left wing of the German Guard Reserve Brigade, which had advanced too far south, had to be withdrawn during the day due to enemy encirclement. As the Frommel Cavalry Corps also remained bound to the northeast on this day, Field Marshal Lieutenant v. Lütgendorf ultimately felt the threat in the rear

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but so serious that he had his entire division swing back to a front facing east after nightfall.

In the 9th Army, General v. Linsingen reported on the night of

December 5th that the Russian left wing extended to Jutroschin, southernmost Luschin; he now intended to advance from the middle

of his front towards Pabianice after thorough artillery preparation.

However, the regrouping of forces ordered that night could not be fully completed by morning. The attack

was nevertheless scheduled for 2:30 in the afternoon. But when aircraft reported the

arrival of strong Russian reserves at Pabianice and unfavorable news came from the

northern wing of the Woyrsch army, the attack, which was not yet sufficiently prepared artillery-wise, was canceled at the last

moment.

On the evening of December 5th, the German 9th Army was still in the

same line as the previous evening; the II Army Corps, which was supposed to form the

tip of the attack, lagged behind; furthest ahead was

the cavalry corps Frommel in an extended formation, but it had too

little combat power to deliver a deep thrust. Against

the middle of the front, the enemy had shown more activity than usual. Elsewhere, reinforcements were still

flowing to his right wing on the Vistula. However, the German leadership hoped that

the arriving and further advancing German western

divisions would eventually force a turn there. The

II Army Corps was instructed to organize and reconnoiter the units on the following day, December 6th,

and to attack again only on the 7th. At the same time, the high command warned again against

swinging too far south in the attack.

The situation also looked bleak for the Woyrsch army. Despite

the reinforcements rushing in by foot and rail, a breakthrough of the Böhm army's attack was hardly

to be expected. The displeasure over their delayed

arrival was clearly expressed in telephone conversations with the Eastern commander-in-chief.

In this situation, at the high command of the 9th Army in Lentschytza

on December 6th at 5:30 in the morning, a radio message from Russian General

Nowikow from 2:30 in the morning was presented, stating: "At 11:00 in the evening, my right will receive

the order to cover the withdrawal of the XIX Corps." From

another radio message, it was learned almost at the same time that the

general command of the Russian XXIII Corps from the southwestern exit of the

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City of Lodz to be moved back to the east. That was a completely unexpected turn!). The Linsingen group was the first to be informed; they immediately reported that backward movements of the enemy had been detected in front of the left wing of the II Army Corps, General v. Linsingen had ordered the attack to be resumed across the entire front. Soon reports followed that the enemy was also retreating in front of the Plüskow Corps and the right wing of the XVII Army Corps, but the situation with the XX Army Corps remained unclear at first. The pursuit, which was immediately initiated, could be continued to the line Sutschyn—Tuschyn—Wola-Nakowa—Nowosolna without encountering the enemy. The extensive factory city of Lodz was occupied without significant loss. By evening, it was clear that the enemy had systematically evacuated the westward bulge of their front, while in the south in front of the Cavalry Corps Frommel and the Woyrsch Army, in the north in front of the XXV Reserve Corps and the front of the 9th Army extending to the left to the Vistula, the previous line was still held.

The Russians had succeeded in carrying out the retreat, apparently prepared for days, taking all weapons and equipment with them. They were not yet defeated; new battles were imminent. Nevertheless, the retreat of the enemy, the capture of a large, long hotly contested city was seen as a German success, which was rightly celebrated as a great victory.

c) The Operations of the Russians¹) and Considerations.

Maps and Sketches: No. 15 to 18.

When the Germans had broken through at Bzura, the Russians initially continued their attack with the aim of establishing the most direct, closed front possible between the Vistula and Lodz.

¹) Lieutenant Colonel v. Waldow, then General Staff Officer at the Commander-in-Chief East, informed the Reichsarchiv on February 17, 1929, from the letter of December 6, 1914: "At 11 p.m. (on December 5) Russian radio messages arrived, which we could not explain. A series of radio sentences were received by us, I conclude after long speculations from us on a radio message that explained that the Russian line was retreating. We didn't want to believe it and thought of drops and deliberately false radio messages, but it was true that the Russians were retreating, which we could already deduce from their steps. (See Appendix to p. 218; also p. 317 ff. The published Russian accounts in Novorossiysk and Lodz) conclude at the end of November. For the subsequent period, only a much more general account from Njesnamow is available.

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positions. The 1st Army, which could now again concentrate all forces in a northwestern direction, assumed only weak enemy forces there and set the line Gombin—Sychlin as the attack target for November 27. The 2nd and 5th Armies were also to continue the attack, with the Nowikow Cavalry Corps breaking through Bielawy to Piontek. General Ruzki hoped to still tear the German front between the Vistula and Lodz. This led in the last days of November to the battles at Bielawy north of Lowitsch, where the German attack on Lowitsch was finally halted by the divisions that arrived on November 27 (½ 76th Reserve Division to 1½) against the flank of the German 1st Infantry Division.

Meanwhile, news of the arrival of three German corps from the west on November 27 had already caused a complete shift in the further intentions of the commander of the Northwest Front. General Ruzki reported to the Supreme Army Command on this day that he saw the retreat "as inevitable, as the enemy was receiving reinforcements, and his armies would not withstand the attack of fresh forces"¹). Until the Supreme Army Command decided on this issue, they switched to defense. Since then, the German 9th Army and the adjoining northern wing of the Woyrsch Army were constantly the attackers. The Russians were only concerned with holding their ground, especially worried about the gap west of Petrikau between the wings of their two army groups. To close it, the cavalry at this point was gradually reinforced to five divisions (Guard Cavalry Corps with 1½ and Tumanow Cavalry Corps with 3½ divisions), but above all, the 4th Army weakened its southern wing at Tschenstochau and Satt with three divisions (½ XVI and III Caucasian Corps), which it opposed to the Austro-Hungarian troops of the Woyrsch Army.

The forces of the Woyrsch Army were not sufficient to exploit the weakening of the enemy in front of their southern wing for an attack, as the Russians were entrenched here and had partially already equipped their positions with wire obstacles. Overall, since the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the army had approximately equally strong forces in front of it; nine divisions of the allies faced eight Russian ones. "November 1914," as the then Chief of Staff of the Woyrsch Army later explained after the war²), "was for the army-

¹) Korolkow, Overview, p. 181.  
²) Communication from General Heye to the Reich Archive on March 10, 1925.

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High Command Woyrsch faced the hardest time of the entire war, not due to the severity of the situation, but because the solution to the tasks set could only be inadequately achieved despite all efforts, due to the increasingly apparent inadequacy of the available forces, which in number could be considered sufficient... The Woyrsch Army Detachment was formed in November 1914 to assist the 9th Army, which was tasked with bringing about the main decision, by facilitating the concentration against the enemy's flank as much as possible. The Army Detachment saw its task in this regard as being entirely in the service of the 9th Army, aiming to draw as many Russian forces as possible onto itself, at least to bind those set against its own front. This could be achieved through attack as soon as the operation of the 9th Army from the area around Thorn was recognized by the Russians. The intention to attack was and remained the guiding motive of all actions of the Woyrsch High Command since mid-November 1914. — It was examined daily how an effective basis could be created for this intention to attack, mainly by strengthening the left wing adjacent to the 9th Army.

Despite individual frictions, cooperation with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army brought troops and leaders of the allies closer together. General v. Böhm, his chief of staff, and his troops were seriously striving to meet the often unusually high demands placed on them. They prevented any direct influence of the Russian 4th Army on the course of the battles at Pabianice.

By the end of November, the German 9th Army had about 15 divisions available against about 27 Russian ones, including the northern sector. No significant new forces had flowed to the enemy during the described battle phase. Given the often deeply reduced strengths of the units in men and guns due to combat losses and other departures, as well as the ammunition shortage on both sides, it is hardly possible to form an approximately accurate picture of the actual ratio of mutual strength. It is also not clearly known what forces the enemy initially had ready against the German Linsingen group and how he gradually reinforced these forces. Under the impact of the German attack, the Russians gradually withdrew their front southwest of Lodz. Due to the simultaneous strong pressure against Pabianice and Lowitsch, the commander of the Northwest Front was finally forced on December 5 to move the entire left wing behind the naturally strong Milag the following night.

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to withdraw the section in order to free up forces for the defense at Lowitsch.

In assessing the attack of the 9th Army, the question arises whether more could have been achieved. Anyone examining the question must not overlook that the German 9th Army was still under the fresh impression of the severe crisis just experienced at Bzura and, with the sole exception of its right wing, was kept on alert in the following days by continuous attacks to which the enemy constantly brought new forces. Added to this was the weakened state of the troops and a shocking lack of ammunition, which was always just enough to adequately support the battle at a spatially limited location, but not for conducting simultaneous attacks at multiple locations. It might have been possible to supplement the thrust from the west with an attack from the north, perhaps from the area east of Lowitscz on Pabianice, and thus initially cut off the Russian wing standing southwest of Lodz; four active divisions of the XI and XVII Army Corps with about 300 guns would have been available for this. However, the described circumstances had worked together in such a way that the attack was limited to the right wing and the new forces arriving there from the west, while a simultaneous attack from the army center or its weakening in favor of the attack wing was refrained from.

The manner in which the attack was then carried out showed a striking departure from the procedure used before the days of Bzura. They did not want to strike deep into the enemy flank with a wide encirclement, but to roll up the Russian line with a sharply held attack wing. The rest of the army's front waited until it was their turn when swinging in. But even then, the encircling arm was not to be further executed, but — as repeatedly expressly ordered — the own front was to be shortened. Thus, a deliberate decision was made to refrain from intervening in the depth of the enemy formation, obviously because they did not want to repeat the procedure that had led to the crisis at Bzura, given the low strength of their own forces.

Regarding the entirety of these questions, Field Marshal v. Mackensen himself wrote1), he had then given up the corps in the middle of his army, "not to let go of the enemy standing before them, but to attack him vigorously as soon as the effect of the attack from the

1) Response to the Reichsarchiv from January 10, 1929.

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Line Stumska-Wola—Schadet against Lodz comprehensively advancing right wing of the army or generally retrograde movements or weaknesses at the enemy in front of their front would become noticeable. This restriction was intended to protect the relevant troops from costly frontal attacks. The decision of the battle for Lodz would, I reckon, be brought about by the attack from the west. I feel that the advance of the army units positioned west of Lodz proceeded more slowly than I expected. The troops deployed there by the Russians proved to be particularly strong in combat. The combat strength of the II Army Corps has, as I know from the heavy fighting on the German Western Front, suffered somewhat, although outstanding individual achievements revealed the highest military performances. I considered the striking power of the 38th Infantry Division to be diminished by the previous battles in the Ner area. I was perhaps too focused on their momentum."

The Field Marshal further wrote about the continuation of the attacks of the left wing of the army, they were prompted "on the one hand by the continued renewed attacks of the Russians, on the other hand by the endeavor to bind the Russians east of Lodwitzig and to prevent their further advance from Warsaw and below with incoming reinforcements. In addition, the possession of Lodwitzig, which I sought, could also strengthen the Russians in the retreat dangers from Lodz, which were repeatedly voiced. Also, the strong-willed personality of General v. Morgen, his tactical insight proven in East Prussia, and the confidence of his daily reports influenced my considerations so much that I, fighting with myself, refrained from temporarily halting his eagerness to attack. — As I survey the conditions on both wings of the 9th Army at the end of November and the beginning of December 1914 today, I have the feeling that my leadership should have demanded more restraint on the left and increased the cooperation of the forces available against Lodz on the right for the attack."

It remains to be seen whether significantly more could have been achieved with the now limited means in such a way than with the procedure actually adopted. Considering the outcome of the battles in their entirety, one must acknowledge that extraordinary achievements have been made. The Russian offensive, which began with overwhelming superiority and boldest expectations "deep into Germany," which had taken new hope from the German retreats so far, has been significantly weakened. The greater endurance and the harder will of the weak German detachments and the reinforcements arriving too late with exhausted strength had once again checked the Russian force.

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shown. Three weeks after the day when the "steamroller" was supposed to move against the German border, it was not the Russians in Silesia and Posen, but the numerically inferior German Eastern Army that had gained a firm foothold deep in western Poland with the capture of Lodz.

3. The Attack of the 9th Army against the Lower Bzura.

Maps and Sketches: No. 19 and 20.

On December 2, Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff were seen in Breslau to attend a meeting of General v. Falkenhayn with General v. Conrad, which took place there in the presence of the German Emperor and Archduke Friedrich. During this, General v. Falkenhayn said about the situation in the East: "The operation that is underway with the 9th Army can only succeed if federal assistance continues to be granted, if the Austro-Hungarian army does everything to bind its enemy. The enemy is constantly trying to push forces northward. The greatest importance must be placed on ensuring that the pressure being exerted does not cease under any circumstances. Under this condition, one can hope that success will be achieved with the 9th Army. What then? I can take the position that there is no reason for us to chase into Russia; we can be content to bring the Russians back over the Vistula and the San, and then let them do what they want. Such a retreat will wear down the Russian army but would also be a political success... As a general point of view for the continuation of operations, it must be considered that our superiority lies in the closest connection of the two allies." In contrast, General v. Conrad again, but without success, advocated for the transfer of significant German forces from the west to the east to achieve a decision against Russia. Moreover, he also said: "As for the next major task, its first goal is to bring the Russians behind the Vistula. For this, the pressure of the Austrian forces must continue in a southeasterly direction. This pressure is extremely fatal for the Russians; it must not be relaxed. If this success is achieved, the Russians are behind the Vistula, then it would also be possible for us to achieve a decisive

1) Text according to the records of Lieutenant Kundmann, then aide-de-camp of General v. Conrad; reproduced here according to Conrad V, p. 650ff.

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To inflict defeat and push them behind the San. — These would be the next goals.“

This Breslau meeting did not yield any significant new perspectives for the continuation of the operations of the 9th Army. When on December 4th the attack of its southern wing at Pabianice had stalled and the subsequent northern wing of the Woyrsch Army had turned against the III Caucasian Corps to the southeast, the question arose of how to deploy the last expected reinforcement from the west, the III Reserve Corps. The Commander-in-Chief East intended to move the corps to the right wing of the 9th Army, as a gap had appeared between the inner wings of the two allied armies, against which the enemy seemed to be bringing more and more forces towards Petrikau. Since the railway had meanwhile been restored to Sieradz, the corps could be brought to effect here most quickly to push forward the stalled attack of the Linsingen group. In contrast, the Mackensen High Command was of the opinion that less decisive action could be achieved against the middle of the Russian front than on the left army wing by attacking along the Vistula. There, in addition to the forces already deployed, three reserve and one cavalry division (25th Reserve Division, III Reserve Corps, 4th Cavalry Division) would be available. Furthermore, since the Austro-Hungarian military leadership had already sent its 27th Infantry Division to reinforce the northern wing of the Woyrsch Army towards Sieradz, Field Marshal v. Hindenburg decided in favor of the proposal of the Mackensen High Command; the III Reserve Corps was to be moved to the left wing of the 9th Army. At the same time, General v. Conrad was requested to bind the Russians by attacking along the entire front of Woyrsch and the 1st Army or, if that was not possible, to at least consider the transport of further forces to Sieradz.“

On the left wing of the 9th Army, the attack had become increasingly difficult since early December; the I Reserve Corps had become bogged down against Lowitsch. General v. Mackensen had therefore already given the commanding general of the XIII Army Corps, General of Infantry v. Fabeck, the order on December 4th, “not to linger too long with the enemy on the Vistula, but to come as quickly as possible with the strongest possible forces to support the I Reserve Corps.”

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in front of the corps were only troops that had already been defeated several times.

In the same sense, General v. Fabek was also informed by the I Reserve Corps

about the enemy. He temporarily had only the 26th Infantry Division of his corps,

which had been engaged in heavy fighting against Wiszhelyin since December 2,

but made no significant progress. On December 5, General v. Fabek continued

the attack of the 26th Infantry Division. The Morgen Corps reported heavy

fighting and heavy losses; they have amounted to more than 8000 men since early

November. His report further stated: "Further occurrence excluded. Ammunition

shortage. Situation not simple. Corps must have ammunition urgently. Could not

the new Württemberg 2) Division advance faster? We will be forced 3) to hold

the position. We believe we can hold out if we receive ammunition, especially

shrapnel. If a new division from Samitki were directed to Byki 4), it would be

effective 5)."

On the night of December 6, General v. Conrad, considering the development of

the battle south of Krakow, rejected further reinforcement of the Woyrsch Army;

he threw the next division, already planned for Sierads, into the battle south of

the Vistula 6). Since then, success in Poland depended solely on the outcome of

the attack by the German 9th Army at Lowitsch—Ilow. This fundamental view

was not changed by the unexpected evacuation of Lodz on December 6, which was

nothing more than a shortening of the front by abandoning the salient far to the

west and thus threatened by encirclement on both sides of the Russian position.

However, as the German line also shortened, General v. Mackensen saw the

possibility of truly reinforcing the future attack target further along the Bzura.

During the course of the day, he moved the XVII Army Corps to the front and

positioned it north of Lodz. Since immediate pursuit south of the Bzura promised

no success given the completely orderly retreat and the great lead of the Russians,

he set December 7,

1) According to the record at the I Reserve Corps. — 2) Meant was the Prussian   
25th Reserve Division subordinated to the Württemberg General Command.   
3) This meant: We will have to limit ourselves to that. — 4) Three kilometers   
southwest of Wiszhelyin, in the gap between the 1st Infantry Division of the   
Morgen Corps and the 26th Infantry Division. — 5) This was supported by Chief   
of General Staff v. Mackensen on February 19, 1929, to the Reichsarchiv: "The   
word 'we' written by General v. Morgen showed the full seriousness of the   
situation, also that the letters afterward were not simple." — 6) C. 300.

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to grant the southern wing of his army the absolutely necessary rest and to reorganize the units along the entire front, which had become heavily mixed after the preceding uninterrupted battles.

On the far left wing of the army, the 26th Infantry Division had fought near Ilow and southward for four days without decisive results but with a loss of already 1100 men. General v. Fabeck had paused the battle on December 6 to await the arrival of the 25th Reserve Division, and the attack was to continue on December 7. An encirclement from the north through the enemy Russian lowlands seemed to offer no prospects due to the prevailing weather conditions and the influence from the right bank of the river. Therefore, General v. Fabeck moved the 25th Reserve Division south of Wisheliny into the front, where conditions for the attack seemed more favorable and General v. Morgen had also requested the deployment. However, the attack did not advance on December 7. The divisions of the Fabeck Corps were similarly exhausted from the battles in France and Belgium, as had occurred a week earlier with the II Army Corps on the right wing; they had together only about 10,000 men in the front, of which probably half were newly integrated. The situation was further complicated by Russian detachments, especially cavalry, repeatedly making their presence felt deep in the left flank and rear of the corps from Wisheliny, some of which seemed to have at least crossed the river. On that day, the 21st Landwehr Brigade took over the protection, but their forces were insufficient to extend the right wing upstream beyond Plozk.

In the center and on the southern wing of the 9th Army, despite foggy weather, aircraft were able to identify a continuous enemy position during the day, which, starting at Wolborzh, ran north behind Wolborzh and Mialga to Nowosolna. In this line, the enemy seemed to intend sustained resistance, further back, behind the Rawka, no installations were detected. Behind the Russian northern wing, lively rail traffic was observed; Skierniewice, Schafschew, Ghirardow, Blonie, and Grodzisk were reportedly occupied by troops. Intercepted radio messages and prisoner reports also indicated that the enemy had particularly strengthened and continued to reinforce his northern wing. It seemed that the Russians were taking measures against the impending German attack. This could not change the decision once made. However, one drew from a

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captured radio messages directly raised the suspicion that the Russians had also deciphered German radio messages or overheard telephone conversations). Extreme caution and restraint were made mandatory for the use of these communication means.

On the evening of December 7, the Army High Command reported to the Commander-in-Chief East about the situation on the left wing of the army: "I. Reserve Corps and 1st Infantry Division are holding on only with difficulty." The attack of the XIII. Army Corps has also not advanced. The III. Reserve Corps reached Borcht on December 8, Gombin, but not spread out, so that the breakthrough towards Wilhelmg can only be attempted on December 9. The mortar battalions are being deployed for this." It was noted in the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East: "Due to the delayed arrival of reinforcements, despite constant requests, and long marching distances from the railway endpoints, a decisive unified deployment of the reinforcements had become impossible. The heavily struggling left wing needed immediate relief, as the pressure from the Russian 1st Army was increasing."

On December 8, General v. Fabeck wanted to continue the attack at Włocławek and Now with a sharp concentration of artillery effects. General v. Mackensen agreed, although the XVII. Army Corps and the III. Reserve Corps were still far from being ready; the 1st Infantry Division deployed on the left wing of the I. Reserve Corps was to join the attack of the Fabeck Corps. Why they did not wait longer could no longer be clearly determined. Calls for help from the I. Reserve Corps, perhaps those that had been delayed for days, seem to have played a role. On the other hand, at the Army High Command as well as at

1) See p. 280, note 1. — 2) This information did not correspond to the facts, as no battles had taken place at the I. Reserve Corps and the 1st Infantry Division on December 6 and 7. How the report came about could not be determined; presumably, it was made orally over the telephone. The report is found in the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East; it was written by then-Captain in the General Staff v. Waldow based on information he obtained during the war journey from Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, but especially immediately from his telephone conversations with Lieutenant Colonel Runst from High Command 9. A transcript made by Captain v. Waldow on December 8, 1914, contains the sentence: "Army High Command 9 is not very reliable" (communication from today's Lieutenant Colonel v. Waldow to the Reichsarchiv on February 26, 1929.) — 3) One battalion with eight mortars (21 cm) each at the Fabeck Corps and the III. Reserve Corps.  
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The Supreme Commander East was of the opinion that the Russians should not be given

more time to strengthen their positions and bring in reserves; there was also concern

that the Vistula might freeze, thereby jeopardizing the security of the left flank of the army.

Above all, after the victories that General v. Morgen had repeatedly reported over the enemy

at Lowitsch in the preceding days, the feeling of superiority over the Russians there was so

predominant that success was expected even without waiting for further reinforcements.

By the morning of December 8, the II Caucasian Corps was newly identified as the enemy

at Ilow, which had previously been stationed at the East Prussian eastern border\*). According

to radio messages, the 7th Siberian Division was also supposed to have arrived there with the

Russian 1st Army; it was assumed that the 8th would soon follow. This army had been ordered

to advance to the line Gombin—Bielawy. If they carried out this order, German and Russian

attacks would have to clash in the area of Lowitsch—Ilow. The idea of allowing the enemy

to settle under such circumstances and postponing the own attack until all forces were gathered

was not considered by the Army High Command even now. The Fabeck Corps continued the

attack it had begun\*). Despite strong artillery preparation, it did not achieve any significant

progress that day, but cost parts of the corps new significant losses. Meanwhile, the expected

enemy attack, as learned from another radio message during the day, had been abandoned;

the Russians now wanted to stubbornly defend themselves at Lowitsch—Ilow. On the rest of

the 9th Army's front, attempts were made that day to withdraw reserves despite low troop

strengths and wide sections, to provide the troops with the opportunity for rest and relief.

The XI Army Corps had already been behind the front with most of its forces since the capture

of Lodz.

1) The opinion laid down here is based on communications made by officers of the   
involved command authorities to the Reichsarchiv in January 1929. The files provide no   
clarification. — 2) G. 349. — 3) General v. Loßberg, as Chief of Staff of the XIII Army Corps,   
wrote to the Reichsarchiv on February 14, 1929, that the Fabeck Corps had indeed considered   
that plan but had postponed it because the Army High Command had "constantly demanded   
quick assistance" for the I Reserve Corps (see p. 287, note 6).

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The chiefs of staff of the corps engaged in battle so far were gathered on the morning of December 8 for a discussion about the tasks of the coming days at the army headquarters in Lentschytza. The goal of the upcoming attack was to be: "To strike the enemy on the left bank of the Bzura and then, under strong security, to continue the offensive on the right bank of the Bzura southwards towards Warsaw." This was the continuation of the operational idea that had been guiding General v. Mackensen since November 10; at that time, the Russian front had been temporarily flanked and retreated to the Vistula, their southward movement intercepted by the Austro-Hungarian army. Until now, the German front at Bendow turned sharply northward a kilometer north of Lontischy. From here to the Vistula bend west of Wyschogrod, over a total width of 25 kilometers, the XVII Army Corps, the Fabeck Corps, and the III Reserve Corps were to attack eastwards against the lower Bzura, replacing parts of the 1st Infantry Division. To the right of the XVII Army Corps, the I Reserve Corps along with the 1st Infantry Division was to join the advance of the attack with a strong left wing south of Blendow. The 4th Cavalry Division was to be ready behind the front, while the 2nd Landwehr Brigade continued to secure along the Vistula. The start of the attack was set for December 10, as the III Reserve Corps could not be deployed before that day. However, since the Fabeck Corps had already "approached the enemy to the closest distances" according to the reports, the High Command ordered that this attack should also continue on December 9. The corps south of the Bzura, including the XI Army Corps, which was now re-entering the front between the II and XX Army Corps, were to coordinate troop movements with the enemy and were to drive out the Russian advance troops still standing west of the Maja on December 9.

However, these intentions changed during the course of December 8; reports of shifts in Russian troops from south to north contributed to this. The war diary of the High Command noted: "Decision of the Army High Command, after rear troops have moved forward and conditions have been further clarified, to proceed with the attack along the entire line on December 10 ... Army High Command

1) There are no records of the meeting itself. Only scattered information and the instructions given by the corps provide an indication of the course and outcome of the meeting.

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will in the general attack deliver the main thrust on the flanks, especially with the significantly reinforced left flank, which is to push into the enemy's rear connections."

From the outset, the attack of the southern flank suffered because the army adjoining on the right, Woyrsch, did not have the strength to participate in the attack. When General v. Böhm there on December 7, after the arrival of the already considerably weakened Austro-Hungarian 27th Infantry Division, had succeeded in resuming the attack, Generaloberst v. Woyrsch pointed out to him that, given the overall situation, it was initially only a matter of holding the position. The following day, the German 15th Reserve Infantry Brigade of the 1st Guard Reserve Division¹), which had meanwhile also arrived at the northern flank of the army, was able to capture 1000 prisoners in a counterattack. Otherwise, the days had passed without battles of greater significance. Already the lack of ammunition dictated restraint.

In view of these conditions on the southern flank of the 9th Army, the border guard Linsingen had to hold back parts of the Gerok Corps as flank protection. The II Army Corps and the XI Army Corps advanced on December 9 over the section the weak enemy security forces still standing west of the Miazg, but then faced strongly fortified positions, some of which might still be old German installations from the days at Bzura. On the left army wing, the attack of the Fabek Corps again brought only insignificant and relatively costly local successes at Wlshleiny; they also encountered wire obstacles. The III Reserve Corps under General of Infantry v. Beseler, which had to cover 30 to 40 kilometers to the designated marching targets, Slubitze for the 5th and Gombin for the 6th Reserve Division, reached these places — as stated in the war diary — "after very strenuous marches with great marching losses with most of the troop units only late at night." The heavy field howitzer battalion of the corps could only reach the front on December 11, the assigned mortar battalion not until December 12.

Meanwhile, flyers had observed a column about 17 kilometers long in front of the southern flank of the army around noon, approaching Petrikau from the southeast; according to radio messages, the Russian XIV Corps was expected there. Since west of Petrikau the III Caucasian had already been...

¹) p. 276.

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The corps south of the road from Mszurki, the Guard Cavalry Corps

Gülenschmidt along with the 7th Infantry Division and the Cavalry Corps Novi-

kov north of this road, raised the question of whether the northern wing of the

Bvonrich Army and north of the Mszurki—Petrikau road, the Cavalry

Corps Frommel and the Landsturm Division Menges of the Gerok Corps

would be sufficient to keep the enemy, soon to be reinforced by an entire corps, in check.

General v. Linsingen considered the frontal attack over the Miasza

and wanted to be in a position where his flank was no longer appropriate,

to march the enemy south at night on December 10,

but replied that "it must remain with the attack to the east over the Miasza,"

under strong positioning behind the right wing.

Consequently, General v. Linsingen reinforced the forces securing against Petrikau,

Cavalry Corps Frommel and Landsturm Division Menges, with

the 48th Reserve Division, so that this too was available for the attack to the east.

An army order was not issued for the attack on December 10.

The corps were to act according to the instructions given orally on the morning of

December 8 and later supplemented in telephone conversations.

The attack was to be carried out everywhere against an enemy

who had been preparing for defense for days and had built strong positions.

For an attack against a "fortified field position," as was now imminent,

the peace regulations for the first day only provided for the infantry's approach

and the artillery's opening fire, to achieve a decisive breakthrough the following morning.

Experiences, especially in the West, had also taught

that the battle often dragged on much longer; this was also to be expected here,

as the enemy had built several lines one behind the other almost everywhere.

The High Command had fundamentally ordered the corps

"not to wait for the neighbor during the general attack,

but to advance independently." Moreover,

the II Army Corps, the Fabek Corps, and the III Reserve Corps,

which were positioned at decisive points on the flanks,

knew the course of such battles from fresh personal experience in the West.

Particularly on the northern flank near Lowitsch—Ilow, where the main decision lay,

it was expected that they would be lengthy and difficult, as the

enemy seemed to have very strong reserves behind this flank;

pilots now report at least one division at Sieremiewice, at Schatschew

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have captured an entire corps; six bridges over the Bzura were reported

below this place. A main requirement for solving the difficult task —

unrestricted ammunition — was missing. On the evening before the attack

at 10³, the High Command of the 9th Army reported to the Commander-in-Chief

East that all corps were stuck in front of the enemy position. The

Fabeck Corps had "not advanced a single step. III. Reserve Corps" had

strong marching air. Success is still hoped for at Lowitsch."

On the night of December 10th, a Russian radio message was intercepted,

according to which the enemy intended to "strike" the German forces

at Petrikau. This did not change the decision.

December 10th was a sunny and warm winter day. The II Army Corps

prepared its advance against the positions east of the Miasga with artillery

fire. In the evening, General v. Linsingen reported to the High Command

that an attack seemed "in any case not feasible in a short time" due to

the strength of the enemy position. The XI Army Corps wanted to cross

the Miasga if the opportunity arose. The XXV Reserve Corps, which was

the last to receive the order to advance on the evening of this day, pointed

out the excessive front width of its section; the High Command decided

it should attack "as far as the conditions in front of its front allow."

On the northern wing of the army, the XVII Army Corps had been

inserted into the area of the 1st Infantry Division between the I Reserve

Corps and the Fabeck Corps. The III Reserve Corps, designated for the

extreme left wing, received the order at 8¹ in the morning: "The situation

urgently requires that the forward division enters the position of the XIII

Army Corps and that the attack of this corps is carried out." General v.

Bejeler, who had fresh memories of the experiences gained in the West

and had been pointed out by the Commander-in-Chief East by General v.

Fabeck to the tenacity of the Russians, trusted the view that the attack

was not possible on this day given the situation and the condition of the

5th Reserve Division and otherwise only after systematic initiation and

strong artillery preparation. He had the division extend the front on the

left wing of the Fabeck Corps on the night of December 11th. Since also

1) Wording according to the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East. — To this  
General Field Marshal v. Mackensen wrote on February 15, 1929, to the Reichsarchiv:  
"I did n o t sign this report." 2) Communication from General Kaimb  
from February 23, 1929; see G. 322, note 1.

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The Attack on the Lower Bzura.

Since the heavy artillery of the reserve corps, which was very weak in field guns (only 72 guns against 144 of the active corps), was still behind, the Commander-in-Chief East had the Army High Command particularly emphasize that the army should not "run its head against the wall," but should wait for the heavy artillery; against Lowitsch, where a sugar factory seemed to be the main stronghold of the Russians, Austro-Hungarian 30.5 cm mortars were to be made available.

On December 11, fog impaired artillery activity. With rain and mild weather, the southern part of the Miasga ground gradually became so swampy that the corps attacking there temporarily refrained from carrying out the attack. General v. Linsingen suggested withdrawing his corps for other use; then very weak forces would suffice for defense in this sector. On the northern wing of the 9th Army south of Wyschliny, some progress was made by the XVII Army Corps and the adjoining troops, with the 1st Infantry Division on the right and the 25th Reserve Division on the left, under heavy fighting, and a total of 2800 prisoners were brought in. The III Reserve Corps, however, did not begin the attack on this day either. General v. Beseler wanted to have his heavy guns ready for fire first and reported that he intended to carry out the attack together with the Fabek Corps only on December 14. He planned to break through along the Vistula lowlands after strong but short artillery preparation, and then, if possible, to push through in one move straight over the Bzura Bridge south of Wyszogrod — that was about 15 kilometers. Parts transferred to the northern bank were to cover this attack on the left flank. General v. Beseler, who was senior to the Commander-in-Chief himself and had a name in the army, believed that such a systematic and thoroughly prepared attack would save heavy losses in this area. The knowledge and experience of General v. Beseler, the conqueror of Antwerp, should also be duly instilled at the High Command, so December 14 seemed too late for the attack. The commanding general was pointed out that everything facing the enemy had already been severely beaten several times and was weak in artillery; with longer waiting, the Russian positions would become stronger every day.

December 12 brought progress to the left wing of the army south of Wyschliny. The fruits of the previous days of fighting were ripening. The enemy seemed particularly affected by the fire from

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around 300 guns¹) of the XVII Army Corps and the Fabek Corps, although their effect was not fully realized due to the completely inadequate supply of ammunition. On both sides of the Kiernośia—Rybno road, the XVII Army Corps and Fabek Corps gained up to three kilometers of terrain, capturing almost 9000 prisoners and more than 40 machine guns. However, their own losses were significant; the brave 36th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General v. Heineccius alone lost 1100 dead and wounded. The 5th Reserve Division of the III Reserve Corps had advanced in connection with the Fabek Corps. General v. Beseler, however, continued to insist on carrying out the actual attack only on the day after next, December 14.

In the views and procedures of the corps of the left wing of the 9th Army, contradictions seemed to emerge that could not be beneficial to the matter. In the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East, it says on December 12: "A division of the extraordinarily cumbersome, large army was considered. The connection with all parts of the front and the army command took too long. The influence of the Commander-in-Chief is too low. The formation of a new army is not considered expedient due to the ongoing operation. Instead, individual command groups should be formed. It seems expedient to place the attack north of the Bzura uniformly under the command of General v. Beseler. Corresponding regulation is recommended to Army Command 9." The Commander-in-Chief East kept himself informed about the events on the northern Bzura bank through a general staff officer sent there. On the afternoon of December 12, General Ludendorff also inquired directly with the III Reserve Corps about the situation. The Chief of Staff, Colonel Karbich, explained: "6th Reserve Division will move into Binat tomorrow afternoon behind the left wing of the 5th Reserve Division. Corps hopes to make a big strike on the 14th and only needs ammunition for its artillery." To the further question of whether the Fabek Corps was subordinate to General v. Beseler, the answer was: "No, corps have agreed" — and to the question of whether General v. Beseler had any other wishes, it was said: "Ammunition, and not to be forced to attack,

¹) They had: Fabek Corps 108 light guns, 8 10 cm cannons, 16 heavy field howitzers, 8 mortars; XVII Army Corps 144 light guns, 16 heavy field howitzers.

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before ammunition is there“). General Ludendorff concluded: “If Excellency v. Beseler has any wishes, he should contact Posen directly.”

On the night of December 13, the enemy evacuated their positions in front of the front of the XVII Army Corps, the Fabek Corps, and the III Reserve Corps. Partially disbanding, the German troops advanced almost without a fight up to nine kilometers and stopped just before Rybno. From there, the line ran southwards to Glowno, where it joined the old position of the I Reserve Corps, but northwards eight kilometers west of Wychogrod, where the III Reserve Corps was still somewhat behind. After this success, the Army High Command, as Major General Grünert reported to Posen, “did not have the impression that the enemy will hold on the left bank of the Bzura.” Since the morning, the 4th Cavalry Division had been ready in the area south of Kiernozia, so that they could pursue as soon as the opportunity arose, and gave the corps pursuit targets up to the Bzura, without a sharp turn south: I Reserve Corps on Lowitsch, to the left on a narrow front combined XVII Army Corps and Fabek Corps, III Reserve Corps on Sochaczew. The two middle corps were to break through the Bzura in the further course and thereby open the presumably stubbornly defended crossing of Sochaczew for the III Reserve Corps. This corps itself, which was later intended for the protection of the left army flank, was instructed by the Army High Command and also directly by the Commander-in-Chief East to advance more quickly. The war diary of the latter contains the note: “According to the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief East, a vigorous attack by the III Reserve Corps on December 13 would have spared some losses of the 9th Army, and the overall situation would have moved forward. Due to the hesitant, methodical behavior in the leadership of the III Reserve Corps, the enemy will come to a halt behind the Bzura in a new position.” It remains to be seen whether this judgment fully does justice to the difficulties the III Reserve Corps had to reckon with as long as its heavy batteries were still behind.

On the morning of December 14, General v. Mackensen summarized the

1) This view was also represented by General v. Fabek, who had a meeting with General v. Beseler on that day (Communication from General v. Lobberg to the Reichsarchiv on February 19, 1929).

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next attack objectives of the left wing in an army order once again, in which it further stated: "The corps are to decisively advance against the ordered sections today, repelling the opposing enemy. Achieving and crossing the Bzura today is to be aimed for and will decisively promote the army's operations." However, the hoped-for progress did not materialize. The three corps of the left wing reported new enemy positions against the line reached the previous evening; they were still at least ten kilometers away from the Bzura.

Meanwhile, the attack at the I. Reserve Corps and the three corps of the army center, XXV. Reserve Corps, XX., XI. Army Corps, had been attempted with more or less emphasis since December 11, but with low artillery strength in purely frontal engagements, it had not brought any noteworthy results; in the reentrant angle of the army front at Bielawy, the enemy had even attempted to attack the Landwehr Brigade Westermann on the afternoon of December 14, but was repelled with heavy losses. The II. Army Corps had been withdrawn behind the front, following the suggestion of General v. Linsingen; a temporarily considered idea to let the corps attack Petrikau had to be abandoned, as the Woyrsch army did not feel strong enough for decisive cooperation in such an attack. Meanwhile, a brigade of the corps had been requested by the Commander-in-Chief East for East Prussia¹), another and the Landwehr Brigade Schmiedecke were assigned to the Gerok Corps; General v. Linsingen had to practice advancing with the remaining 4th Infantry Division as a reserve behind the northern wing of the army, where his corps was then to be supplemented by the allocation of the 1st Infantry Division.

Given the slowness with which the 9th Army's attack progressed, it was questionable whether a decisive victory was still possible. The battle degenerated into purely frontal attrition. However, with the increasing successes of the left wing, it was increasingly expected that the enemy would eventually give in and retreat across the entire front. In the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East, it says on December 14: "According to radio messages, further retreat of the Russians is expected; backward movements have also been detected."

¹) See p. 346.

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Austro-Hungarian Army Command and Commander-in-Chief East.

4. The Battle South of Krakow¹).

The Deployment of the German 47th Reserve Division.

Maps and Sketches: No. 15 and 19.

In the flank and rear of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the situation had become so serious that General v. Conrad decided on November 26 to first repel the enemy south of Krakow with a surprise attack. To do this, he wanted to use significant parts from the front of the 4th Army north of the upper Vistula and also the German 47th Reserve Division advancing towards Krakow.

These intentions led to disagreements with the Commander-in-Chief East, who at that time was preparing the new attack over Sieradz to the east and was concerned that with the weakening of the Austro-Hungarian front north of Krakow, the pressure on the enemy in southern Poland would decrease; Russian forces could become free there and complicate the German attack. The exchange of ideas mediated by Captain v. Fleischmann with General v. Conrad temporarily intensified. To accommodate the German view, the Austro-Hungarian army command on November 26 gave the army Bövrych the already mentioned²) order to "connect the enemy's troop movements northwards against the German 9th Army" and then join their attack, comprehensively from the northern flank; the 1st and 4th Army were to hold. However, the eastern flank of the 4th Army had to be gradually withdrawn to free up the forces necessary for the thrust south of the Vistula. As already in the battle north of Krakow, the large camp fortress was to cover the troop movements and the river crossing.

The meeting in Breslau³) on December 2 brought the allied leaders in the east personally closer. Since General Ludendorff had been in Neu-Sandez on September 17, no direct exchange of views had taken place. "The three of us⁴) had the same interests and therefore understood each other very soon," wrote Count Conrad after the war⁵). However, he returned "displeased" to Teschen, as his demand for the deployment of additional German forces

¹) Connection to p. 240, 248 and 253 f. — ²) C. 263. — ³) p. 285. — ⁴) Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, General v. Conrad and Lieutenant General Ludendorff. — ⁵) Conrad V, C. 650.

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from the West had been rejected. "I felt how bitter it is not to have the means of power at my disposal, whose use I was convinced could lead to a decisive success"1).

South of Krakow, Field Marshal Ljubičić with the Austro-Hungarian XI Corps had retreated from superior Russian pressure from the Dunajec to the west in the last week of November and had taken a position that extended about 30 kilometers south from the fortress, into the foothills of the Western Beskids. The Russians seemed to follow the southern flank of their 3rd Army, while their northern flank was stuck north of the Vistula and the western flank of the Russian 8th Army was fighting at Bartfeld in the Carpathians with the front facing south. Thus, in the enemy front between the 3rd and 8th Armies, there was a gap about 60 kilometers wide, apparently occupied only by cavalry. General v. Conrad wanted to exploit this situation to decisively strike the two corps of the Russian 3rd Army south of the Vistula by a surprise attack from the south in flank and rear. The XIV Corps, which was to be provided by the 4th Army and had been fighting north of Krakow, under Field Marshal Lieutenant Roth with its three divisions consisting of German-speaking, Alpine core troops, was rightly considered a particularly good troop body, which was also particularly suitable for the upcoming battles in the snowy mountainous terrain. The German 47th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General v. Besser, which had been unloaded in Krakow since November 28, belonged to the formations newly established in October and suffered from the same deficiencies as these. The division, which had previously stood on a relatively quiet front in the west, counted 12,000 rifles, but only 36 field guns, while the three divisions of the XIV Corps, after the immediately preceding costly battles, probably had only 13,500 rifles, but 138 guns (including 38 mountain guns).

Field Marshal Lieutenant Roth was to attack from the Tymbark valley to the north, with his back against the Western Beskids rising to 1300 meters, and place the main focus on the right wing; here, the decisive blow was intended for the German 47th Reserve Division in the general direction of Bochnia. To prepare, all divisions had to advance one after the other on a single road leading from the west to Tymbark, as the mountains prohibited any deviation to the south. In changing winter weather, the mountainous terrain was frozen, snowy, or muddy. From the Tymbark road they were to

1) Conrad V, p. 660. — 2) See Vol. V, p. 272 ff.

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The Battle South of Krakow (47th Reserve Division).

the divisions, as they arrived one after the other, swung north to attack, with the 47th Reserve Division as the last.

On December 3, the two foremost divisions of the XIV Corps turned off the road west of Tymbart; thus began the attack on the left flank. The next, Austro-Hungarian 8th Infantry Division drove Russian cavalry out of Tymbart; behind it, the 47th Reserve Division followed west of the place.

On December 4, the entire XIV Corps swung north to attack. Only then was the way cleared for the German 47th Reserve Division. Since it had initially been designated for Krakow due to the unclear situation, it had to cover nearly 100 kilometers, except for a few parts that had been transported by rail, marching along behind the position of the Lübiczki Corps, overcoming all the frictions associated with such cross-marches near a front. A mountain battery with four guns and "Panje" vehicles for supply had been allocated by the allied army in a cooperative manner. However, the absence of any mountain artillery was felt as a serious deficiency. The division reached its position on the right flank at Widoma on the road leading north to Bochnia on the evening of December 4, where the Austro-Hungarian 6th Cavalry Division was already engaged in combat facing north.

Field Marshal Lieutenant Roth initially believed he had only two enemy cavalry divisions with a few infantry battalions directly in front of him; on the right flank, some Russian battalions were identified near Neu-Sandez. The surprise seemed successful. Lieutenant General v. Besser was aware that the success of the entire operation depended on his advance; he wanted to exploit the situation with a swift attack northward. For December 5, the 47th Reserve Division was assigned the heights west and southwest of Bochnia as its target; by then, it was about 25 kilometers in total. The division's attack gained only about six kilometers of space against a barely visible enemy in the rugged mountain and forest terrain on that day; it captured 4,000 prisoners.

On December 6, Russian resistance in front of the 47th Reserve Division intensified; to its right, the Austro-Hungarian cavalry even retreated southward in the face of a Russian counterattack; reserves were lacking behind the assault wing. In the west, however, the attack of the Austro-Hungarian troops gained ground more quickly, as the enemy...

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having recognized the impending danger and begun to withdraw his troops, threatened by encirclement south of Krakow, to the east; he simultaneously brought new forces from the east against the decisive wing of the allies.

Thus, the planned encirclement attack gradually turned into a frontal battle, which came to a halt along the general line Limanowa—Raba-Knie, west of Bochnia. Reinforcements were brought up from both sides. On December 10, the Russians began their own attacks. The 47th Reserve Division had to hold the most advanced part of the front at Rzchosezyn, west of Rajbrot, between the Austrian-Hungarian VI and XIV Corps, until the decisive turn on December 11, when the sharply eastward-concentrated left wing of the Austrian-Hungarian 3rd Army brought the decisive turn. Threatened from the south over Jaslo, Gorlice, and Neu-Sandez in the rear and flank, the Russians withdrew their southern wing and since then held a continuous front directed southwest. In the line Neu-Sandez—Limanowa—Lapanow—west of Bochnia, the allied troops began to expand their positions.

The German 47th Reserve Division had suffered heavily in the continuous battles since December 5 in difficult terrain. The units had become disorganized, and the losses among officers were great. In addition, despite willing assistance from the Austrian-Hungarian side, the supply situation was still very inadequate due to difficult transport conditions, and the condition of the troops in some units, according to reports from regimental commanders, was "very sad and depressed," with rifle strengths reduced to two-thirds or half. Nevertheless, as success became apparent, there was pride in having participated in this operation of the allied army at a decisive point. The enemy was thrown into defense; a total of about 30,000 prisoners and 50 machine guns were reported as booty. However, whether the overall success could have been greater with a different setup of the battle remains uncertain.

The undertaking, originally intended only as a local defensive measure and born out of necessity, was begun with correspondingly weak forces; reserves behind the assault wing were therefore lacking. When on December 4, the 4th Army proposed to send another division by rail to Tymbart, General v. Conrad saw, as it was simultaneously determined by Hilsersufe in favor of the Woyrsch army,

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Reflections on the Battle South of Krakow.

and also had to give there<sup>1)</sup>, the situation north of the Vistula was not yet considered stable. Only after repeated urging and reports of the Russians advancing from Neu-Sandez against the flank of the encircling wing did he release additional forces of the northern Vistula army for the attack of the Roth group on the afternoon and evening of December 5, and only then did he decide to let the 3rd Army "engage in the battle. Initially, to ease the situation of the 4th Army, but above all to secure the battle success, which was considered possible<sup>2)</sup>. It was clear that the attack south of Krakow was the last chance to achieve any success at all. If this attack is not carried out quickly and ruthlessly due to ice and other circumstances, it is not foreseeable where another success might beckon," Captain v. Fleischmann was informed in Posen that evening<sup>3)</sup>. The measures of the 3rd Army and the speed of their intervention did not meet the expectations held by General v. Conrad. In the snowy Carpathian terrain, they struggled forward only step by step. The nerves of the army command were put to a severe test.

All in all, the victory south of Krakow was nevertheless to be booked as a complete success. The fact that it was achieved almost entirely by one's own strength was doubly valuable for the morale and attitude of the Austro-Hungarian army at a time when the overall situation of the Danube Monarchy looked quite serious.

As late as December 3, the successes in Serbia had shown the view: "Since things were also progressing in Galicia and Poland, the overall situation could be described as favorable and it was hoped that this would not remain without repercussions on Bulgaria, Romania, and Italy<sup>4)</sup>." Immediately thereafter, however, the reversal came in Serbia: The Austro-Hungarian offensive ended there in complete collapse; Field Marshal Potiorek had to withdraw his armies back across the border after heavy losses. The Serbs were victors across the board; if they had the strength, especially the ammunition, to continue the attack into Hungary, a serious situation could arise. In a very serious memorandum, General v. Conrad presented his view on December 14. The fortification of the Danube line Vienna—Budapest was to be completed and for its occupation

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provisions were made to prepare a fortified line Budapest–

Lake Balaton extending eastward.

Meanwhile, the weak troops of General v. Pflanzer, despite brave resistance,

could not prevent the Russians from penetrating deep into Bukovina and

occupying Chernivtsi. Thus, the northernmost tip of Romania was surrounded

by enemy troops; how much longer would this country maintain its neutrality?

— Up to the Dukla Pass, the enemy stood on the height of the Carpathian ridge,

and in many places had already crossed and threatened to break through to I. A.

When the Hungarian Prime Minister Count Tisza on December 3rd — before

the decision was made to deploy stronger forces south of Krakow — demanded

from General v. Conrad that the situation be improved, the latter emphasized:

"No one wished this more fervently than I, but it was a matter of holding

together the already limited forces where a decisive blow was to be struck;

such a blow also secured Hungary most effectively against an invasion."

He replied to the Count that everything possible was being done, but that

"the decision about the fate of both states of the monarchy now lay in Poland,

where it must therefore be pursued with the strongest possible forces.

A further weakening of these forces would be a grave mistake."

In addition, things did not look good within their own ranks. The internal

conditions in Bohemia as well as in Croatia were causing concern. General

v. Conrad did not have confidence that the political leadership there would

act with the necessary determination and requested that generals be appointed

as governors in these areas.

The army itself was exhausted, the stocks were dwindling at an ever

faster pace. The ranks of the imperial and state-loyal peace officer corps

were severely thinned, the replacement of reserve officers was, depending

on their national origin, partly not impeccable and lax. Furthermore,

there was a lack of equipment, weapons, and — everywhere — ammunition.

(Cholera and typhus had afflicted many parts of the army); as of December 1st,

6500 men were still down with it. But the worst were the constantly increasing

losses of the troops who surrendered to the enemy without serious combat

or even defected. The Austro-Hungarian army report of November 27th

recorded 5500 men lost from the Bohemian IX Corps, "but only to the

smallest extent due to combat."

1) Conrad V, p. 660. — 2) Request from December 4th, Conrad V, p. 675 f. —   
3) p. 226.

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Overall Situation on the Austro-Hungarian Front.

mostly by defectors of Czech nationality”); the Russians

reported even 7000 prisoners on this occasion. On December 6,

the army command had “multiple reports that the

legitimacy of the Sokol associations”) ensured good treatment for prisoners in Russia,

and that for the same purpose agitators among the Slavic

troops distributed Russian newspapers. All Armenians and the Planzer group

were ordered to counter these dangerous activities,

and the Imperial and Royal War Ministry was also informed

to take action in the hinterland”\*). On December 10, the

commander of the 2nd Division reported that his men were very exhausted, and that

some of them, mainly Poles, left the guard duty,

got lost in the villages, and obtained civilian clothes

to permanently evade service. — “These regrettable incidents,”

later remarked Field Marshal Count Conrad, “and not only

the combat losses were not a small part of the rapid

decline of the ranks. Strict enforcement of discipline was thus

demanded”\*).

Thus, the overall situation until December 14 for the Austro-

Hungarian army command, despite the victory at Limanowa-Lapanow”), was not

too favorable. When on that day Captain v. Fleischmann unexpectedly

entered Teschen and reported on alleged German peace intentions”),

there was no leverage for any negotiations;

the enemy, however, was deep in Galicia and Bukovina.

It became all the more important to further develop the success south of Krakow,

and there was still hope here. Above all, it was expected

that the strong German pressure against the lower Bzura would

force the enemy to retreat from western Poland. Then

progress would also be faster in Galicia.

5. The Retreat of the Russians and the Pursuit.

Maps and sketches: Nos. 19 and 20.

At the headquarters of the German 9th Army”), it was learned on the night

of December 15 that the Russian XIV Corps was marching east from Petrikau.

To gain clarity, a joint forceful reconnaissance was conducted with the Wobrich army against Petrikau and

1) Conrad V, G. 618. — 2) Czech Gymnastic Associations. — 3) Conrad V, G. 690 f.  
— 4) Conrad V, G. 715. — 5) This is how the victory south of Krakow was referred to by the Austro-  
Hungarian side. — 6) G. 416. — 7) Connection to G. 298.

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Wolborz agreed. With growing tension, further news was awaited.

On the morning of December 15, the deciphering of the Russian radio messages intercepted during the night was delayed because the enemy had used a new code. Then, during the course of the morning, the allied army command reported that the Russians were retreating on both sides of the upper Vistula in front of the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 1st Armies; this was the front almost east and north of Krakow, where there had been calm for about three weeks. The Austro-Hungarian attack south of the Vistula seemed to be having its effect, aiming directly at the rear of the Russian main front, whose reserves were tied down by the German attack against the lower Bzura. The interaction of the offensives of both allies was effective; the Russian northern wing also seemed to be fighting only to gain time.

In the German 9th Army, north of the Bzura, the 35th Infantry Division of the XVII Army Corps made progress. Above all, on this day, the III Reserve Corps, after its artillery had fully arrived, also attacked with emphasis on the extreme left wing of the army. The 6th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General von Schütz and Neudorff was able to drive the enemy out of the forest northwest of the Kornata Mountain after thorough artillery preparation, without encountering significant resistance, and with minimal own losses, reaching the same level as the neighboring Corps Fabek. The 115 m high mountain, which dominated the low terrain far and wide, still lay before the inner wings of the two corps.

In various places on the front north and south of the Bzura, the enemy also attacked on this day, partly with ruthless use of his infantry; he was repelled everywhere with heavy losses. Among the over 2000 prisoners brought in north of Lodz were those from the 59th and 68th Reserve Divisions, which had previously been stationed in East Prussia. But in the south, the Russians also seemed to be bringing in forces; the command of the V Corps had been moved from Petrikau northwards to Iisjad early in the morning. Everything the enemy had available in terms of forces seemed to want to resist the persistent, albeit slowly acting pressure of Mackensen's army.

For the Commander-in-Chief East, the idea was close to trying the attack elsewhere under these circumstances; it has also been considered. On the right bank of the Vistula north of Warsaw

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The Retreat of the Russians and the Pursuit.

The enemy was obviously very weak. However, a shift of forces there

cost time, and both men and horses were no longer capable of large operations

on the winter battlefield. It was necessary to be content with further

expanding the successes achieved so far on the spot. The attack against the lower Bzura

was to be continued with all emphasis.

To relieve the 9th Army and at least to encircle the enemy in front of their

front, if possible, Generaloberst v. Böhm was prompted by the Supreme Army Command

to instruct the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army to turn parts of its left wing

northward as soon as possible. The "Corps Gallwitz" was considered for this,

which in recent days had been formed from the German 1st Guard Reserve

Division and the Austro-Hungarian 27th Infantry Division and advanced over Petrikau and southward.

On the night of December 16, news came from Teschen that

the enemy was now in retreat in front of the entire front of the 4th and 1st Army and the Army

v. Böhm; everywhere the pursuit was underway. But also

from the northern wing of the German 9th Army, a complete turnaround occurred by the morning of

December 16: the stubbornness of the

German attacks had worn down the enemy. The XVII Army

Corps and the Fabek Corps had been pursuing the retreating enemy since dawn, and a few hours later, its withdrawal

was also reported by the III Reserve Corps. The corps turned sharply southward,

according to the instructions given by the High Command two days earlier, to

gain the right bank of the Bzura south of Schafschhew. If at the same time the Gallwitz Corps advanced northward from the northern wing of the

Böhm Army, a major success against the Russians west of

Rawa — this was altogether about nine corps — seemed possible.

In the afternoon, the following message from the

Austro-Hungarian Army Command was received by the Commander-in-Chief East: "The retreat

of the Russians on both sides of the Vistula took place, according to the Army Command's view, under the pressure of the threatening double encirclement, which

in the north by the German 9th Army's advance to the

Bzura, in the south by the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 3rd Army's comprehensive advance against the Krakow—Tarnow—Rzeszów road

was initiated. It is to be assumed that the enemy will do everything possible.

1) See the operations of the Russians (p. 320 ff.). — 2) G. 297. — 3) — Army   
Command.

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the two encompassing wings of the Allies as long as possible to

hold back, to secure the return of his front to the Vistula—San line.

The army command believed that a decisive success west of these escape lines could only be expected if a breakthrough on the German northern flank to the railway line Warsaw—Sierne-

wize—Kolositzky could be reliably expected in the very near future.

"If this does not happen, the Russian army could retreat behind the Vistula—San line without significant

losses and during their retreat pull strong forces from the front to bring them to the

railway on both flanks and secure the attack that failed frontally.

The army command already believed to see signs of this in the reinforcement of the Russian forces advancing against Mlava."

If a decisive success west of the Vistula—San line was not in sight, the army command considered it worth considering that the Allies should preempt the Russians by merely

following the Russian forces retreating in Poland in a loose front and letting the main forces encircle the Russian

Vistula—San front on both sides." They were thinking of shifting strong Austro-Hungarian forces to the area south of

Pischemyl and German forces to the East Prussian southern border, in order to attack in the general direction of Siedlce from the south and north in accordance with the original war plan. Then it continued: "Finally

it was emphasized again that, according to the local view, a rapid and decisive

success west of the San—Vistula line is still considered desirable

under the condition that a breakthrough of the western

9th Army to and over the line Warsaw—Sierne wize will soon be noticeable.

An immediate communication of the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief

East was requested.

When this inquiry was to be answered, the following report from Posen was received from the intelligence officer sent to the left wing of the 9th Army:

"The enemy has crossed the Bzura in a hasty retreat. End of the

columns 10° in the morning in Topolowna—Kromnow (on the Vistula)."

The three northernmost army corps turned off into the line designated by order of the army command (security against Bzura)."

1) The German Corps Graudenz had retreated there; that the enemy had  
reinforced was not proven (see p. 346). — 2) Both places are located nine  
kilometers east of the Bzura, Topolowna on the road Sochaczew—Lowicz. —   
3) The information contained in this report about the enemy was false; they  
originated, as could not be determined. The then Captain in the General  
Staff Dürck, who made the report, informed the Reichsarchiv on March 6, 1929,  
that he always received his information from the General Staff of the XIII Army Corps.

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The Retreat of the Russians and the Pursuit.

As the Commander-in-Chief East planned the further operations, the following report was given, which Captain v. Fleischmann delivered at 8 in the evening as a response to the inquiry from the afternoon to his army command1): "According to the latest combat results from today — own forces already at the lower Bzura, enemy in retreat before this — the headquarters intends to strike as soon as possible, at the latest with strong forces on the Warsaw—Skierniewice railway. Hence the hope and will, by advancing the German northern wing in an easterly direction, to achieve success with the decisive blows of the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 3rd Armies northwest of Poland west of the Vistula. The transport of parts of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army for economic encirclement from the northeastern Carpathians is fully agreed, but here — in any case — leaving sufficient strong forces for the pursuit through Poland to the Vistula. Only after the aforementioned operation is it intended to bypass the Vistula line from the north, whereby — for effective encirclement — a thrust in a broad front against the Zielostwo—Warsaw railway is considered." General v. Conrad immediately communicated in response to this that initially only one corps of the 1st Army should be moved to the right wing of the 3rd; sufficient forces would be left in Poland for pursuit. He also had the impression that the Russian retreat was proceeding in full order.

On the morning of December 17, the 9th Army reported that the enemy was retreating along their entire front; the pursuit had begun. In agreement with the Commander-in-Chief East, targets were given, located between the Piliza in the south and the Utrata in the north, to divert from the large fortresses of Nowogeorgiewsk and Warsaw. In this approximately 70-kilometer-wide area, Colonel General2) v. Mackensen wanted to follow the enemy eastward with the four corps of the right wing, while four corps3) of the left wing, set for overtaking pursuit over the Bzura, were to receive the line Bolimow—Großißt as their target and behind them the III Reserve Corps, staggered to the left for protection against Nowogeorgiewsk and Warsaw, was to follow. Also for the cavalry, the moment had now come to engage in one of their characteristic actions or had received from the III Reserve Corps. They apparently refer to reports that the flyers of the III Reserve Corps actually made that morning.

1) Records of the War Archives Vienna.  
2) Promoted these days.  
3) Here, the "Liningen Corps" (General Command of the II Army Corps with 1st and 4th Infantry Division; see p. 298) is already counted as a corps, although it was only assembled as such on December 19.

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On the southern flank, General v. Frommel, with his three cavalry divisions, had already the evening before, when the enemy was still standing, received the direction over Wolborz to the northeast against the rear of the Russian Miasfa front with the instruction: "The situation requires decisive, swift, and ruthless action by the cavalry corps"... Consideration for rear connections cannot be considered). Cavalry corps of the infantry." General v. Frommel was to advance further into the depth of the Russian retreat area and also received the direction along the Pilitza to the east towards Nowe-Miasto—Grojec, the cavalry corps Richtfonne to ride on Lonitsch, to — where opportunity arises — advance in the general direction of Mischchonow, "highest performances from man and horse are to be demanded," was added. The 4th Cavalry Division received Taritschyn, still 20 kilometers east of Mischchonow, as its target.

In the further course of December 17, however, it turned out that the enemy had once again managed to disengage everywhere, unnoticed and without significant loss of prisoners and equipment, by exploiting the long winter night; in rainy weather, which made any aerial reconnaissance impossible, contact with him was lost, a few hundred stragglers were the only booty. The roads and paths, already excessively used by the movements of the Russians, were in such a state due to rain that rapid pursuit was excluded. Therefore, the cavalry corps Trommel did not go beyond the neighboring infantry divisions.

The enemy still opposed resistance to the advance against the Bzura below Lowitsch, as here he covered the northern flank of his retreat. He could be hit particularly sensitively below the Rawka estuary, where one then simultaneously came into the rear of the Rawka line. Here, General v. Fabeck pushed sharply forward; in a rapid follow-up, his 26th Infantry Division succeeded in gaining a foothold with parts on the right bank of the Bzura.

For the continuation of operations, it was determined on this day at a meeting between the Chancellor and General v. Falkenhayn, with the involvement of Lieutenant General Ludendorff, that the attack of the 9th Army must be continued with all emphasis). The middle Vistula was the next target.

1) The corps had expressed concerns shortly before in this regard, as "without ammunition, iron, and fodder it would not work."  
2) For more details on the discussion, see p. 419.

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The Pursuit.

On December 18, the Russians released the Bzura at Lowitsch and downstream to the Rawka estuary; further downstream, however, at the section decisive for the success of the operation, they resisted with all their might. It was only late in the evening that the left wing of the 35th Infantry Division of the XVII Army Corps managed to reach the confluence of both waterways as an officer from Rawka and Bzura; separated from this group by the enemy, larger parts of the 26th Infantry Division of the Fabel Corps held their ground east of the Sucha estuary on the right Bzura bank; further downstream, the 25th Reserve Division only brought a single battalion across the river. In wide stretches of the army, it was once again necessary to reach the west bank of Bzura and Rawka. The strong accumulation of Russian general commands behind the section of Schafschin, which was revealed by intercepted radio messages, increasingly suggested that the enemy was determined to continue resisting at this section of their front.

Late in the evening of December 18, the 9th Army reported that the Rawka had generally been reached. Field Marshal v. Hindenburg had ensured that the 1st Guard Reserve Division of the Borowitsch Army was temporarily placed under the orders of Generaloberst v. Mackensen. The division had then advanced 20 kilometers north of Piliza via Tomaschow to the east. Thus, the 9th Army stood in a line running almost straight north from Piliza south of Rawa to the Vistula north of Schafschin, measuring almost 90 kilometers. The hope of decisively striking the enemy through encirclement or overtaking pursuit was gone; nor had the cavalry succeeded anywhere in advancing beyond the infantry and disrupting the retreating enemy. However, intercepted Russian radio messages) made it almost certain that the enemy would continue their retreat, presumably to retreat behind the middle Vistula and the northern wing into a bridgehead-like position, which was reported by aircraft south of Warsaw—Nowogeorgiewsk. In the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief) it is stated on this day about the situation: "It is assumed that the enemy wants to continue to retreat. The strong resistance at the Bzura will thus be-

1) The radio messages that prompted this view could not be found in the records; however, that such radio messages existed is evident from various records in the files and is also confirmed by a report that Captain G. Fleischmann made to General v. Conrad (Conrad V, p. 785), as well as by a communication from Lieutenant Colonel v. Waldow to the Reichsarchiv dated February 26, 1929.

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The Progress of the Battles in Poland and Galicia.

It was assumed that the enemy intended to cover the retreat to Warsaw in this way.

The question must be considered whether to follow up to the Vistula

or not. Is it possible to supply the army in this process? Already now

it poses extraordinary difficulties, with the railway points far behind.

The combat strengths are very low after the continuous heavy fighting.

The troops are at the end of their strength. Only the thought of ending

the war by capturing the Vistula and Warsaw spurs the men to give their

last strength. It seems more expedient to voluntarily halt in time than to

stand exhausted before a new enemy position without being able to continue

the attack. The question has not yet been decided. Army Command 9 hopes

that the enemy will not be able to stop. Accordingly, Generaloberst v.

Mackensen had also set wide pursuit objectives for the next day; they pointed

straight east.

However, further reports on the stubbornness of the Russian resistance

and the overall situation in front of the 9th Army's front raised doubts

whether the enemy would try to hold the current line — even if only for

a short time. Except in front of the extreme southern flank of the 9th Army,

he had a continuous water obstacle in front of him, which was only crossed

by German troops at the western protruding corner between Bolimow and

Sochaczew by the night of December 18 to 19.

In the Woyrsch Army, the situation was seen as less hopeful

than in the 9th Army. It was felt that the enemy had settled again, and

on December 18 it was written in the war diary: "In front of us and, as

the small number of prisoners shows, also in front of the Austrian 1st and

the German 9th Army, the enemy is retreating undefeated and in good

order. The strength for stubborn resistance where it suits him, he

undoubtedly still possesses. — We, for our part, do not quite understand

the jubilation with which the retreat of the Russians is celebrated as a

decisive victory throughout the country. The great Russian offensive into

Germany had already failed almost a month ago; the Russians' resistance

strength is by no means broken." This view was expressed in an order

given at noon, which instructed the southern flank of the army to prepare

for defense in front of the presumed Russian position. Only the northern

flank, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, continued to advance, as it was

still behind compared to the German 9th Army. The conditions on the

East Prussian front also spoke of the

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The End of the Pursuit.

the assessment of the situation). At the Lötzen and Angerapp positions, all Russian attacks had failed; the enemy had long since begun to withdraw troops to throw them into the decisive battles at Lodz and on the Bzura. At the East Prussian southern border, the retreat of the Graudenz Corps had given the enemy freedom of movement again; he had not followed it so far. The active 5th Infantry Brigade, sent there for reinforcement, was arriving; Major General Gurko, who now took command, was to "relieve the 9th Army through lively activity and threatening with attack."

December 19 justified the cautious assessment of the situation in front of the German 9th Army. During the night, a surprising Russian attack had brought the parts of the Fabek Corps standing alone on the eastern Bzura bank into a very serious situation; outflanked from the left, the 26th Infantry Division had lost more than 1100 men, about half of them prisoners, and six machine guns, but had finally been able to hold and also captured more than 600 prisoners themselves. By noon, it seemed, as stated in the war diary of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief, "after the received radio messages," there was no longer any doubt "that the Russians want to hold behind the Rawka—Bzura. The (intended?) retreat to the Vistula is abandoned. Presumably, the General Staff has driven the armies forward again through changing orders."

In almost all parts of the 9th Army, the attempt to advance further led to serious fighting during the day. In the evening, the Cavalry Corps Frommel and the Gerok Corps, along with the assigned 1st Guard Reserve Division, were south and south of Rawka, having advanced the furthest. On the right, the allied 2nd Army was still about 15 kilometers back, on the left, the XI and the right half of the XX Army Corps had been left west of Rawka after heavy fighting and were still a full six kilometers away from Rawka. East of Sieremiewiz, the XXV Reserve Corps, on a narrow front with weak parts of the 49th Reserve Division, had been able to gain the eastern bank of the river. Further north, the I Reserve Corps had only reached the Rawka-Niedering road in tough forest fighting. In hard battles, the I Infantry Division of the Linsingen Corps and the XVII Army Corps at Bolimow and north had gained the eastern bank, securing the right flank of the 26th Infantry Division of the Fabek Corps. Thus, from Bolimow to Schafschützen, a total of four German divisions had in 13 kilo-

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meter wide front on the east bank of Rawka and Bzura, and further downstream in a narrow river loop also parts of the III Reserve Corps. 10,000 to 12,000 prisoners, some machine guns, but not a single cannon, were reported as the total result of the pursuit so far.

December 20 brought several thousand more prisoners in pure frontal battles, but no significant progress. On the right wing of the army, the cavalry corps Frommel and Corps Gerok were unable to exploit their far-advanced position on the northern Piliza bank, as they themselves were threatened from the south; the cavalry corps had to take the front south for flank protection. Here, a gap had arisen on the border of the allied armies. The commander-in-chief East had held the right wing of the German 9th Army in pursuit north of the Piliza, General v. Conrad was assigned to the left wing of the Bojowitsch army on Opotschno; agreement had not been reached. Now the pursuit of the Bojowitsch army, weakened by the withdrawal of the 1st Guard Reserve Division, had come to a standstill at the Tschana and north. Generaloberst v. Bojowitsch expected Russian counterattacks from Opotschno against the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, which still formed his northern flank. To be able to continue attacking, he immediately and through the Austro-Hungarian military leadership requested the return of the 1st Guard Reserve Division, so that it could strike the Russians in the flank south over the Piliza. This division under Major General Albrecht was currently standing as a Jewish cornerstone of the 9th Army on the north bank of the river near Tomaschow, each time fighting with the front to the east and could not be removed from there in the current situation. To support the Bojowitsch army, therefore, only cavalry and not less combat-capable troops from Lasktrüm were available. The Menges Division and the Posen Corps, whose main forces were currently southwest of Rawa in the second line, were designated for the march south. The cavalry corps Frommel received orders to cross to the right Piliza bank at Tomaschow and below, the cavalry corps Richthofen, which had been without proper use behind the middle of the army front for eight days, was set in motion south, while the 4th Cavalry Division was now to move to the northern flank of the 9th Army.

At the front of the Austro-Hungarian army, the pursuit had meanwhile come to a complete standstill. The 47th Reserve Division had in the unrestrained pursuit against the Dumaj

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On the evening of December 17, they suffered a serious setback and lost around 600 men as prisoners. Not only were the Austrian-Hungarian troops exhausted, but also the Imperial German division. A report they submitted on December 18 to the superior command of the Austrian-Hungarian XIV Corps highlighted the difficulties of warfare in the Galician Carpathian foreland. In this report, it stated: "... The condition of the infantry is poor. The troops are very exhausted from the marches carried out in the last three days, mostly on pathless roads in very difficult terrain. Despite early departures, the troops, due to numerous march stoppages, often caused by other marching columns ahead of the columns, usually reach their march destination late in the darkness. — Supplying the troops was hardly possible in recent days, as most supply vehicles did not reach the troops. They are still stuck in the mountains in part. Added to this are the great efforts of the preceding days and battles, in which some of the men lost coats and equipment. Even in these days, the men mostly could not receive warm food, and the supply was otherwise inadequate due to combat and terrain conditions. All these conditions have caused, in addition to colds, dysentery and other intestinal diseases, which have significantly reduced the combat strength and value of the troops. — Some artillery pieces and ammunition columns are still stuck in the mountains. Likewise, company horses, ammunition wagons, and many supply vehicles. The severe shortage of bread is particularly noticeable ..."

On the night of December 21, General v. Conrad issued the following army order to the Commander-in-Chief East: "Guiding idea for the near future: encirclement on both sides of the Russian forces still located west of the Vistula-San line, from the north by the German 9th Army, from the south by the Austrian-Hungarian 3rd Army, which should be strengthened as much as possible, whose attack will subsequently also involve the 4th Army." Until then, the 4th and 1st Armies should tie down the enemy but otherwise remain on standby. "The Börrich Army had," if the ongoing attack on the Russian 4th Army behind Tichana should not penetrate, "also to bind the enemy, protect the southern flank of the German 9th Army, and attack immediately if the enemy withdraws forces, especially if they should shift north. Necessary to hold immediately ..."

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By the morning of December 21, the 9th Army could report that the enemy had cleared the west bank of the Rawka at Rawa, and that further north the 49th Reserve Division of the XXV Reserve Corps had made progress on the east bank of the river. During the day, the 22nd Infantry Division of the XI Army Corps was also able to gain a foothold on the right bank at Rawa, and the XVII Army Corps achieved local advantages on this bank. All in all, however, no decisive progress had been made anywhere, and the situation on the southern flank had meanwhile developed very favorably. The enemy had not reached south of the Pilitza and the Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Corps Hauer, already located on the right bank, as well as the left wing of the Gallwitz Corps, the Austro-Hungarian 27th Infantry Division, were pushed back to the west. As a result, the northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was so far behind that the German 9th Army had to secure an almost 30-kilometer deep flank on the Pilitza section from Domanjewice to Tomaschow.

December 22 brought local progress on the right Rawka bank at the Linsingen Corps and 1600 prisoners, while the III Reserve Corps failed in its attempt to gain a foothold at another point on the right Bzura bank. The following days brought no significant changes. For Christmas Eve, December 24, agents and prisoners had announced a general Russian attack, which did not occur. Snow, fog, and unproductive marshland with mild winter weather and short, dim days hampered all movements and any effective artillery activity. Local bombing raids, which led to small successes here and there, alternated with setbacks, and the III Reserve Corps had to abandon its position east of the Bzura again. Gradually, the fighting began to die down; only on the southern flank did it continue further along the Pilitza.

The pursuit result of the German 9th Army since December 17 was 27,000 prisoners, 62 machine guns, and 2 guns. A decisive success against the enemy, who was now entrenched everywhere and in some places already secured by wire obstacles, was not achieved; the own losses were heavy.

1) The Russian festival took place 13 days later.  
2) The Russians, on the other hand, attacked during the Christmas days in the Carpathians and at Dniester crossings (pp. 339 and 355).  
3) p. 355 ff.

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The Operations of the Russians.

6. The Operations of the Russians¹) and Considerations.

Maps and Sketches: No. 19 and 20.

By the end of November, the offensive power of the Russian Northwestern Front was completely exhausted despite all reinforcements that had gradually flowed in. The same was true for the parts of the Southwestern Front fighting in Poland. Only in Galicia was there an offensive. At this time, the Russian Supreme Command received news about the arrival of three German corps from the west, whose intervention they expected against their own Northwestern Front. The gap between this front and the Southwestern Front seemed to be a particularly vulnerable spot, but the route from Mlawa to Warsaw was also almost unprotected. The Northwestern Front had no more reserves for defense; the command had given out almost everything it still had available internally; only parts of the IV Siberian Corps were still moving by rail. The Southwestern Front could not help either. To regain reserves and thereby regain operational freedom, there was no choice but to initially shorten the front by evading.

On November 29, Grand Duke Nicholas had a meeting in Siedlce, the headquarters of the Northwestern Front, with the commanders of the two army groups, where all difficulties of the replacement and ammunition situation were thoroughly discussed²). These conditions were particularly oppressive for the Northwestern Front, where "unpleasant conditions³)" were reported. General Russki doubted that it would be possible to hold the current line long enough for his armies to regain full combat strength. The result of the meeting was an order from the Grand Duke. Accordingly, everything was to be prepared so that the armies of the Northwest and also the Southwestern Front could, if necessary, begin the retreat to the line Slow-Tomaschow-Nida-Iłża-San on the night of November 30 to December 1, to continue against the middle Vistula and the San. The Grand Duke intended to maintain a foothold on the left bank of the Vistula and the San to be able to attack again at any time. Strong reserves were to be concentrated near Warsaw to counter East Prussia, where the 10th Army failed at the Masurian Lakes⁴), again

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to be able to attack. The order to execute the retreat movement

was to remain dependent on the further development of the situation.

Already on the following day, November 30, the

commander-in-chief of the Southwest Front, General Ivanov, raised

objections to the execution of the retreat, which would shake the confidence

in his own army and people, but would restore the healthy morale of the

Austrians and Hungarians here. He requested to hold the current

line and supported this request with a series of reports

that were available at that time about the condition of the Austro-Hungarian

armies near Krakow. That thousands of soldiers had surrendered there in the last battles

was evidence of the deep moral decay of that army; the spirit of his own troops, however, was brilliant,

they were eager to continue attacking near Krakow. Finally, the

General, as before¹), pointed out that it was necessary to first completely defeat Austria-

Hungary; only then could one march on Berlin.

The order to execute the retreat was initially omitted,

and to what extent General Ivanov's objection contributed to this

remains unclear. However, the Grand Duke now determined: even if the

Northwest Front had to be withdrawn, the Southwest Front should

remain and continue attacking near Krakow. The connection between both

fronts was then planned to be around Petrikau, later at Tomaschow. It

also had to be prevented that the Germans brought more forces

from the west to the Russian front.

When German Western troops seriously threatened both flanks

of the Russian armies near Lodz in early December²),

they turned to France by all possible means. It was presented

as if their own attack in Poland was still ongoing. The

Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army reported on December 4 to

the military attaché at a meeting with General Höffre³): “The arrival

of German reinforcements must have an extremely unfavorable impact

on the development of our attack on the left bank of the Vistula

and can also make the war on the Eastern Front indecisive⁴).”

¹) B. V, G. 497. — ²) C. 273 ff. — ³) Valentimow, G. 29 f. — ⁴) The French   
general at the Russian Supreme Command could also point out in a telegram   
that “the Grand Duke wished to avoid trench warfare, he wanted to continue the offensive”   
(Valentimow, G. 30). — The French ambassador in Petersburg was informed by the Grand Duke,   
however, that despite the difficult situation near Lodz and Opochno in the area   
from Maltsch to Silesia, his Chief of Staff, General Janusch-   
kewitsch, pointed out the difficulties of supply and the dwindling of   
troop strengths” (Paléologue, I, G. 224).

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The Operations of the Russians.

Therefore, it is urgently desired that a further weakening of the Germans on their Western Front be prevented.

After the Russian Northwestern Front had shortened its lines by evacuating the Lodz salient on the night of December 6th1), the Russian armies were positioned in the following manner in the next few days2):

Northwestern Front under General Russki.

The 10th Army was positioned with 16½ infantry divisions and 4½ cavalry divisions in front of the German positions at the Masurian Lakes. From the 1st Army, 3 infantry divisions and about 2½ cavalry divisions fought north of Warsaw.

The bulk of the 1st Army, which had been continuously reinforced in recent weeks, with 15½ infantry divisions and 3 cavalry divisions, the 2nd Army with 9½ infantry divisions and 2 cavalry divisions, the 5th Army with 5 infantry divisions and 2½ cavalry divisions were positioned from the lower Vistula east of Plock to west of Tschow, with their right flank bearing the pressure of the new German attacks. The previous commanders-in-chief of the 1st and 2nd Armies, Generals v. Rennenkampf and Scheidemann, were relieved of their positions after the failure at Bzura3).

Behind the Northwestern Front, the "Fortified Area" of Warsaw-Nowogeorgiewsk had another infantry division and ½ cavalry division. To the left of the Vistula, a position was developed that ran from Nowogeorgiewsk, enclosing Warsaw in an arc, to Gorakalwaria. A similar, though smaller, bridgehead, which already belonged to the Southwestern Front, was established at Iwangorod.

Southwestern Front under General Iwanow.

The 4th Army with 8 infantry divisions and 2½ cavalry divisions and the 9th Army with 15 infantry divisions and 1½ cavalry divisions were positioned from Petrkau to Krakau. In western Galicia and in the Carpathians, the 3rd and 8th Armies fought with 18 infantry divisions and 8 cavalry divisions. For their reinforcement, the (including the Dniester Group)

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8 divisions of infantry and 4 cavalry divisions, the 11th Army, which had enclosed Przemysl, sent about half of its forces to the battlefront.

The troop strengths had sunk deeply on both army fronts. According to a statement from December 4, already on this day, 2/3 of the full strength was missing. In the communication to the French ambassador, the Grand Duke stated at the same time that since the beginning of November, 530,000 men had been lost, 28,000 of them due to the Germans. The lack of artillery ammunition and rifles was greater than during the attack, as mentioned in German troop reports, only the foremost waves had rifles, the following were instructed to take weapons and ammunition from the fallen and wounded.

As the German pressure against the lower Bzura continued and the Austrians and Hungarians achieved successes south of Krakow, the Grand Duke called the commanders-in-chief of both army groups for another meeting in Brest-Litovsk on December 13. According to their proposals, he ordered: The northwest front should limit itself to maintaining a sufficient deployment area on the left bank of the Vistula north of the Pilitza and a similar one to the right of the river in the direction of Malwa. In East Prussia, an attempt should be made to advance further at the Masurian Lakes. Otherwise, it was to be awaited until the armies were replenished with men, ammunition, and equipment. The southwest front, however, should now withdraw from the enemy from its fortified positions to free up forces for a counterattack in the Carpathians.

In execution of these instructions, the Russians began the retreat on the evening of December 14 in front of the Austro-Hungarian army's front on both sides of the upper Vistula and retreated in Poland to about 15 kilometers behind the Pilitza.

At the northwest front, however, the 1st Army, under its new commander-in-chief, General Rittwinow, was set to attack on December 13 to "rescue" the II Caucasian Corps, which had been thrown by the German XVII Corps and the Fabeł Corps at Kiernoja on December 11 and had since been in severe distress; it was said to have been only 4000 men strong in total. Whatever forces seemed dispensable on the rest of the front were assigned to the 1st Army.

1) Njesnamow, G. 8. — 2) S. 318, Note 4.

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The attack, however, remained unsuccessful. On the other hand, "on December 14, the right wing of the 1st Army broke through the VI Siberian Corps and pushed it back behind the Bzura." On December 15, the 1st Army wanted to attack again. But then it is said in the Russian account: In view of the situation that had arisen, the commander-in-chief of the 1st Army was ordered on the night of December 16 to withdraw the V and VI Siberian and the II Caucasian Corps to the right bank of the Bzura." This was to be held as much as possible.

That the retreat of the 1st Army immediately endangered the still standing front of the 2nd and 5th Armies was not initially felt by the Russians. These two armies were instead ordered to facilitate the retreat of the 1st Army by a short attack; then they were to retreat behind the Rawka. Positions had already been prepared there as well as behind the Bzura. At Schachzew, the I Siberian Corps and 1 1/2 divisions of other troops were held in reserve behind the right wing of the new front.

In view of the strong German pressure, General Russki reported to the Supreme Command as early as December 17: He doubted whether the 1st Army would be able to establish itself behind the Bzura; if this did not succeed, the retreat of the 2nd and 5th Armies would also be endangered. The shortening of the front by the current retreat was only temporary and was not sufficient to raise reserves for the area north of Warsaw. In the Bzura–Rawka line, the troops could not recover and regain their combat strength. He therefore suggested withdrawing the armies to the positions in front of Warsaw, where both wings would have secure support. The commander-in-chief of the Southwest Front, however, spoke out very firmly against further retreat of the Northwest Front, for then he would also have to withdraw his front in Poland to the positions of Iwangorod, and this would entail further retreat in Galicia; but with that, the

1) Njesnamown, p. 9. — It is not possible, based on the available documents, to gain a clear picture of the interlocking of German and Russian combat operations during these days. As far as is known, starting from the Vistula, the V Siberian, VI Siberian (Reserve), II Caucasian Corps were positioned. It is not known from which divisions the VI Siberian (Reserve) Corps was composed at this time, so that it can be determined from the comparison with the captured prisoners whether the attack of the German XVII Army Corps on this Corps Fabel on the 14th or finally only the success of the III Reserve Corps on the afternoon of December 15 gave the final impetus to the retreat order to the Russian 1st Army.  
1) World War, Volume VI.

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Possibility of executing the intended strike against the Austrians and Hungarians.

The Grand Duke rejected the request of the Northwest Front under these

circumstances on December 18; the Bzura—Rawka line was to be held.

The Southwest Front, however, was to place the Guard Corps, previously

deployed in southern Poland, as an army reserve in Siedlce, after all

army reserves within the Reich had been exhausted and only one division

of the IV Siberian Corps was expected.

Since then, General R u s k i has been trying to hold the Bzura—Rawka line.

The prepared positions there were initially hardly usable; all trenches

had turned into mud due to water and snow, but the river course in front

of the line with its swampy edges formed a strong obstacle. Thus, it was

finally possible to hold the position, even though the units were completely

disorganized by the retreat and then by shifts necessitated by the repeated

German attacks.

The persistence of the attacks by the German 9th Army

had shattered three Russian armies so that they could only hold behind a

strong natural obstacle; however, the destruction of larger parts of these

armies was not achieved. This, however, had rightly been the goal of the

attack. The question arises whether this goal was achievable. It cannot be

answered with certainty today, but it leads to the following considerations:

The delayed offensive power of the deployed German units, both those

who had been struggling at Lodz for three weeks and those who came from

perhaps even heavier battles in the West, was a fact that required consideration.

The leadership in the East could not change the trickling arrival of reinforcements.

But was it necessary to throw them into battle without delay? Would it not

have been possible, at least after December 6, to wait for the arrival of the

last ones, to break through a few days later, but then with the strongest

artillery preparation and with rested strength, surprisingly against the lower

Bzura? Such a procedure, which might have brought more decisive successes

with fewer own losses, was then advocated with all determination by General

v. Beseler, but rejected by Army High Command 9 with the conscious intention

of not letting the enemy rest, but above all to wear down his northern flank

through continuous attack. The Commander-in-Chief East has probably con-

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Considerations on the German Attack against the Lower Bzura.

the situation in detail but not so overlooked that he decided to impose his tactical views on the army leadership1).

Another question is whether it was appropriate on the morning of December 16, when the enemy's retreat was recognized, to immediately turn the corps of the German left army wing sharply southward according to the plan already conceived. Here a similar line of thought seems recognizable, as was already the basis for the attack east of Lodz in the early days of December2); they wanted to keep the forces together and not spread them so widely, in order to break through at the point over the Bzura where it seemed easiest. However, the question arises whether the enemy could not have been more severely disrupted by initially pursuing them frontally to the river. There, the enemy masses had to be congested during the retreat. Given the confusion prevailing among the Russians, it might even have been possible to gain the other bank here in the immediate follow-up.

1) See p. 294 f. — When General v. Beseler reported before the deployment of his corps in Poland, the Field Marshal told him in the presence of General Ludendorff: "The Russian is very tough and skillful in defense. Frontal attacks on him usually lead to great losses without success unless they are carefully well-prepared. However, he is very sensitive to heavy artillery and flank threats." (Communication from General Kabiski to the Reichsarchiv dated February 23, 1929.)  
2) See p. 283 ff.

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D. The East Prussian Front in November and December.1)2)

1. The Battles of the 8th Army.

a) The Initiation of the Retreat into the Lötzen-Angerapp Position under General v. François.

Maps and Sketches: No. 21.

With the appointment of Generaloberst v. Hindenburg as Commander-in-Chief East3) on November 2, clear command relationships were also established for the 8th Army in East Prussia; direct communication with the Supreme Army Command ceased. The deputy command of the XVII Army Corps, with the Vistula fortresses from Thorn to Danzig under its control, was definitively removed from the army's command area, and the responsibility for protecting the East Prussian southern border west of Neidenburg, which was in the hands of the Graudenz fortress, was also taken from it. Since the previous Chief of Staff of the 8th Army, Major General Grünert, took on the same role for the 9th Army, the Quartermaster General Colonel Freiherr Schmidt v. Schmidtseck initially took over his duties.

Throughout October, the army had repelled nearly double Russian forces with 10½ infantry divisions and a cavalry division on the East Prussian eastern border. However, when General v. François was to give up three divisions to Thorn in the early days of November4), he saw no further possibility of holding the nearly 100-kilometer-long front at the border. There was no choice but to retreat to the prepared defensive position at Lötzen and behind the Angerapp. The decision was made on November 2. General v. François hoped, however, to demonstrate the superiority of German warfare in the open field to the enemy once more during the retreat. As prisoners testified, the Russians also rode

1) Since this chapter deals with the defense of the homeland by a small minority against overwhelming forces, the battles are described in more detail — similar to the breakthrough at Zluskyn — than they would otherwise be in the context of the great struggle on the Eastern Front. See Final Volume V, p. 548. — 3) p. 37. — 4) Vol. V, p. 540 f.

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Ammunition shortage; the aggressiveness of their infantry had significantly decreased after the experiences of the recent battles.

On the evening of November 2, the German 8th Army was positioned, starting from the right, as follows:

Landsturm of the Deputy General Command of the XX Army Corps, about nine battalions and one battery, from Willenberg to Bialla along the border; troops of the Lötzen fortress, eight battalions and six batteries, mostly Landsturm, south of Arys and, together with the 41st Cavalry Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, at Lyck;

XXV Reserve Corps in a front about 15 kilometers wide from Gr. Selment Lake to the northeast;

3rd Reserve Division with the assigned 33rd Landwehr Brigade in a width of 15 kilometers up to the Rospuda northwest of Ratschki;

I Army Corps, without its cavalry, but reinforced by 1/3 of the 36th Reserve Division from the I Reserve Corps, in a front almost 30 kilometers wide on Russian soil up to the southern tip of Lake Hanfscha, where the left wing turned and had the front north of the lake;

Group of General v. Jacobi (1/3 of the 36th Reserve Division from the I Reserve Corps, 6th, 70th, 34th Landwehr Brigade, cavalry of the I Army Corps), after they had repelled the Russian incursion south of Lake Wischtiter), north of Pieschorr with the front against the Rominten Heath;

1st Cavalry Division (without the 41st Brigade) at Mehlselmen, with weak security in the heath;

Corps of General Otto v. Below (I Reserve Corps without the 36th Reserve Division, 9th Landwehr Brigade and Landwehr Division Königsberg) in fortified position in a wide arc around Wirballen with security detachments on both flanks, the outermost left wing northwest of Schirwindt;

Tilsit Detachment (some Landwehr and Landsturm units from the Königsberg fortress) at Tilsit, where they were supported by a motorboat flotilla set up by the fortress.

The Army High Command was still in Goldap. General v. François had the XXV Reserve Corps and the prev...

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the entire line was distributed to the 36th Reserve Division of the I Reserve Corps for

assignment to the Commander-in-Chief East. The orders for the

retreat were made in such a way that these units would withdraw from the future front

to be loaded at Lößen (XXV Reserve Corps) and Gumbinnen

Insterburg (36th Reserve Division). The units

were by no means the most combat-ready parts of the army, but their assignment

corresponded most to the tactical situation of the moment. After the

movements were received, a telegram arrived early on November 3

from the Commander-in-Chief East, explicitly demanding "combat-ready,

offensive-capable troop units." General v. Francois

left it with the orders already made and replied that

the XXV Reserve Corps "according to the report of the commanding general is

capable of attack in every respect . . . . . Tactical situation does not allow

withdrawal of other troop units."

Meanwhile, the southern wing of the 8th Army had reached the line ordered for the retreat

without disturbance by the enemy on the night of November 3.

Bialla—Lyk—Marggrabowa—Piszchorl was reached. North of

Piszchorl, the Jacobi group initially remained standing.

On November 4, General v. Francois moved his headquarters

behind the northern wing of the army to Insterburg. Here, the position

of the Below Corps east of Wirballen advanced so far east that it

was somewhat in the air, since the Russians had advanced on both sides

of Lake Wischtyter by the end of October. 2½ German divisions stood

there, as was assumed at the time, against the Russian III Corps with the 25th,

27th, 53rd, and 56th Divisions and the 5th Rifle Brigade, thus facing almost double

the superiority. General v. Francois went to General v. Below

at Czysthünen and pointed out that it was probably time to give up the

advanced position; General v. Below wanted to do this only on

the order of the army commander. Since this order was not given,

but the enemy was withdrawing forces southward in front of the corps' front against its

flank, General v. Below set his

attack southward for the next morning. General v. Francois subordinated to him in the evening

the 1st Cavalry Division, against whose front the Russian attack was expected.

On November 5, the Russian 27th Infantry Division attacked

northeast of Pillupönen without success. But at 10 a.m., the German

1st Reserve Division of Lieutenant General v. Förster broke through after five hours

1) In fact, the 53rd (Reserve) Division and the 5th Rifle Brigade had already been withdrawn.

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Artillery preparation with about 50 light and 30 heavy guns, with 11½ battalions from the advancing southeastern corner of the Wirballen position, to catch the Russian attack in flank and rear. The intended surprise failed. The enemy had entrenched themselves in the high ground about 2000 meters in front of the German starting position; the German attack soon stalled over the wide, exposed lowland. Lieutenant General v. Förster wanted to work his way forward in the night for a morning assault. Meanwhile, the Army High Command received a message early on November 5 from the Supreme Commander East: "Since the Turfestanian Corps has already reached Mlava today, the dispatch of at least one more division will be necessary." General v. François then determined to release the rest of the I Reserve Corps; loading was to begin on November 8 at Gumbinnen. When General v. Below received this information, he decided to withdraw the troops under his command to Stallupönen on the night of November 6.

Still unaware of this decision, General v. François wished to complete the battle he had just begun before handing over the rest of the I Reserve Corps; parts of the I Army Corps were to participate. In an order given by telephone to the I Army Corps at 11 a.m., it was stated that the aim was to "defeat the enemy in open field battle. The most favorable opportunity for this will arise if the enemy, as it seems, continues his advance with the III Corps in a westerly direction north of the Rominten Heath." The I Army Corps was to withdraw a division from the front on November 5 and prepare it at Goldap, "to later open up over Tollmingkehmen." It turned out that the Jacobi group, behind whose front the division had to be moved northwards, could no longer hold their position; the southern adjoining position of the I Army Corps also became untenable. General v. François therefore gladly agreed to the proposal of Lieutenant General Koch, who now wanted to withdraw his entire I Army Corps, leaving rearguards behind, and lead it northwards over Tollmingkehmen to attack. This was "even more preferable" to the army leader. He ordered that the I Army Corps should reach the Goldap—Grabowen road in four columns this evening, to continue marching in one column to Tollmingkehmen tomorrow, to catch the Russian III Corps in the flank. The Jacobi group was to withdraw to the Czamer Lake and cover the flank march of the I Army Corps there. By withdrawing, a wide gap had to form in the middle of the army front; therefore, the 3rd Reserve Division

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from Marggrabowa to bind as strong enemy forces as possible. Further intentions were reported in the evening to the Commander-in-Chief East: "Army High Command intends, after a success against the Russian III Corps, which is aimed for tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, to withdraw the 1st Reserve Division, gradually withdraw the rest of the army to Lötzen-Angerapp, if the enemy presses."

This plan of General v. François was changed when the decision to retreat by General v. Below became known, who wanted to position himself at Stallupönen in a broad front so that he could still deliver a strong blow to the pursuing enemy. Thus, the continuation of the battle north of the heath was expected on November 7. If luck was on their side and the Russians lagged behind, then the I Army Corps from Tollmingkehmen and the Corps Below from Stallupönen could encompass them in the attack.

In the long, bitterly cold night of November 6, the troops of General v. Below managed to disengage from the enemy without difficulty; then they arranged themselves in the new formation. The movements of the I Army Corps also proceeded without disturbance from the enemy, but were associated with extraordinary efforts for the troops.

On November 7, the German northern wing was ready to attack. The I Army Corps stood after an average march performance of 50 kilometers with the 1st Infantry Division on the right, the 2nd Infantry Division on the left, on both sides of Tollmingkehmen, front facing east. Lieutenant General Kosch had a total of 17 battalions, 102 light and 20 heavy guns for the attack; 7 battalions and 7 batteries were initially still held back at Goldap. The 1st Cavalry Division, without the 41 Brigade, Lieutenant General Brecht was at Talkehmen. From the Corps Below, the 9th Landwehr Brigade, 9th Landwehr Brigade, 1st Reserve Division south and east of Stallupönen — all in all 23 battalions, 48 light and 32 heavy guns. The Königsberg Landwehr Division, also ready to attack, formed the outermost northern wing. It was known from an intercepted Russian radio message that the 29th Division of the XX Corps, which was assumed to be in the southern part of the Rominten Heath, was to advance on Goldap. In the heath, the 3rd Cavalry Division and parts of the 53rd Reserve Division were also present. North of that, the III Corps, which was assumed to have four divisions, was also suspected to have the 73rd Reserve Division, covering the area from Mehlkehmen to south of Stallupönen.

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reached and was to continue the advance over the line Tollmingkehmen—Stallupönen.

According to the order of General v. Francois, the German I Army Corps was to attack the "enemy in front of it" from the line Tollmingkehmen—Soginten (6 kilometers north of it) on November 7 at 8 a.m.; the 1st Cavalry Division was to support this attack, and the Below Corps was also to advance with "as strong forces as possible against the opposing enemy." The unexpectedly advancing enemy now continued the advance of the Russian III Corps, which was positioned with the left half of the 73rd Reserve Division north of the railway from Wirballen to Stallupönen, with the 27th and 25th Infantry Divisions between the railway and the heath, with the Gurko Cavalry Corps (1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions) approximately at Mehlkehmen. South of the railway and along the railway itself, the completely surprised enemy was encountered and quickly turned back, followed by the victorious attacker. The Königsberg Landwehr Division was also able to intervene here with parts, while simultaneously repelling Russian attacks north of the railway. By the evening of November 7, the German troops had gained about five kilometers of ground across the entire front; the left wing of the 1st Infantry Division had advanced up to three kilometers northwest of Mehlkehmen, and thus the furthest. Lieutenant General Koch wanted to continue the attack with his corps on November 8 up to the Pissa section. General v. Below, however, had to make the difficult decision to halt the pursuit in order to reassign the 1st Reserve Division, which remained at Stallupönen and north of replacement and Landwehr troops, the 9th Landwehr Brigade and Landwehr Division Königsberg. Nevertheless, the attack was to be continued here as well.

Without encountering significant resistance, the attack continued on November 8; however, the I Army Corps had to hold back its right wing strongly due to the enemy in the heath. It advanced up to Mehlkehmen and to the Pissa, the 9th Landwehr Division pushed south of Pillupönen, parts of the Königsberg Landwehr Division pushed south of Schloßfuhnen towards the border, while its northern wing defended itself and had to take parts of the front to the northeast against threatening encirclement. The division thus gained a width of 18 kilometers; the cavalry on its left flank moved towards Pillkallen. Thus ended the battles north of the Rominterheide. Despite the withdrawal of the 1st Reserve Division, a victory was achieved, the German leadership had understood how to deploy their weak forces in the most favorable

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To exploit the situation and strike where they wanted with superiority. The Russians were pushed back south of the railway over the border; they had no artillery, but on November 7 alone, they left 4000 prisoners and 10 machine guns in the hands of the victors. The German losses at the I Army Corps, which was most heavily engaged, were 900 dead and wounded.

Meanwhile, the German front in the south, after the withdrawal of the XXV Reserve Corps and the 36th Reserve Division, as well as the withdrawal of the I Army Corps, had to gradually retreat under the overwhelming pressure of the Russians. Step by step, the troops of the Lötzen fortress, the 41st Cavalry, and the 33rd Landwehr Brigade had retreated to positions about twelve kilometers east of Lötzen by the evening of November 8. To the north, the 3rd Reserve Division blocked the narrow pass of Kruglanken. Between it and the Jacobi group near Goldap, there was a wide gap.

The development of the situation led Lieutenant General v. Morgen to an equally unusual and serious decision. In the belief that local partial successes did not improve the army's prospects but would bring hardly replaceable losses, General v. François had twice proposed to withdraw the army behind the lakes, but then to concentrate their field troops for an attack against the far flank. When he learned on November 5 that the I Army Corps was being withdrawn northward while his division was supposed to bind the strongest possible enemy from Marggrabowa, his confidence in the army leadership was gone. He retreated faster than General v. François had expected to Kruglanken and immediately reported to the Commander-in-Chief East that the disorganization of François' command was incomprehensible and must lead to disaster; immediate remedy was urgently needed. He requested the transport of his division to participate in the offensive. Whether and to what extent this report influenced the decision of Generaloberst v. Hindenburg remains to be seen. Differences of various kinds almost excluded fruitful cooperation between General v. François and the now introduced office of the Commander-in-Chief East. After a telephone conversation personally conducted with General Ludendorff, General v. François was, at his own request, which coincided with the simultaneous request of the Commander-in-Chief East, on the evening of November 7

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relieved from the command of the army in East Prussia'); he therefore no longer participated in the conclusion of the combat operations on November 8.

For a full month, General v. Francois, under extreme tension of all forces of leadership and troops, kept the advancing Russian flood away from the cornerstone of the German front in the East. On the occasion of his activities, he reported directly to the Supreme War Lord on November 8: "One of three Russian divisions attempted an encirclement of Stallupönen, which was closed according to my orders, and a counterattack from the direction of Stallupönen and Tollmingkehmen was repelled. South of Stallupönen, the enemy was decisively defeated and in retreat. Attack east of Tollmingkehmen successfully advancing. So far, 4000 prisoners have been taken, nine machine guns captured, number of guns unknown. Just received a report that the enemy is in full flight on all parts of the battlefield. — On Your Majesty's orders, I have handed over army command to General v. Below today."

b) The execution of the retreat under General

Otto v. Below and the defense until the end of the year.

Maps and sketches: No. 21.

As the successor of General v. Francois, on November 7, the previous commanding general of the I Reserve Corps, General of Infantry Otto v. Below, one of the youngest commanding generals, who had still been a division commander at the outbreak of the war, was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the 8th Army. After the withdrawal of the I and XXV Reserve Corps, he had only 6½ infantry divisions, half of which were Landwehr, and 1 cavalry division, as well as some replacement and Landsturm units. As far as was known, 19 Russian infantry and reserve divisions as well as 4½ cavalry divisions') were opposed. Nevertheless, General v. Below wanted to continue to conduct the defense offensively. After the enemy had retreated north of the Rominten Heath on November 8, a continuation of the attack here was no longer in question.

1) For more details, see G. 48 f.  
2) I Army Corps, 3rd Reserve Division, Königsberg Landwehr Division, Jacobi Landwehr Division (6th and 34th Brigade), 9th, 33rd, 70th Landwehr Brigade, 1 Cavalry Division.  
3) III, XX, XXII, XXVI (Reserve), II Caucasian and III Siberian Corps; 5th and 1st Caucasian Rifle Brigade; 53rd, 56th, 59th, 68th, 73rd, and 84th Reserve Division — half 1st Guard, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Cavalry Division; 1st and 4th independent Cavalry Brigade.

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On the night of November 9th and on that day itself, the main forces involved in the attack were withdrawn to the line Tollmingkehmen—Stallupönen and northwards, while their security forces still held the lines reached in combat on November 10th, unchallenged by the enemy. Meanwhile, the weaker southern wing of the army retreated under Russian pressure to the prepared Lößen—Angerapp position. The 33rd Landwehr Brigade and Landsturm occupied the positions at Lößen, the 3rd Reserve Division and, to the north, the Jacobi Division along with assigned Landsturm occupied the Angerapp position up to and including Darkehmen.

By withdrawing the southern wing of the army, the far-advanced position in the north also became untenable in the long run. On November 11th, General v. Below began to withdraw the front here as well, to gain freedom of movement for a new strike. By the evening of November 12th, he had forces in the 40-kilometer-wide area Darkehmen—Stallupönen, consisting of three infantry divisions ready for an assault; the 3rd Reserve Division, which had taken over the section at the Angerapp from the Jacobi Division, was stationed at Darkehmen, with the 70th Landwehr Brigade advanced eastwards at Wilhelmberg, the I Army Corps at Walterkehmen, the 9th Landwehr Brigade and the 1st Cavalry Division at Trakehnen. The Königsberg Landwehr Division covered the left flank in its previous position at Stallupönen and northwards and captured 600 prisoners from the advancing enemy in a counterattack on that day.

While the enemy was still quite far from the deployment of the German southern wing at Goldap, he had already approached the advance troops of the 70th Landwehr Brigade and the I Army Corps north of Gawaiten and west of Tollmingkehmen to within a few kilometers; here the Russian XX Corps (28th and 29th Division) was located. General v. Below intended to surprise and repel this part of the enemy with a quick strike. On the night of November 13th, the I Army Corps and the 9th Landwehr Brigade were moved to the right to attack the enemy front; the 70th Landwehr Brigade was subordinated to the I Army Corps. The 3rd Reserve Division, which had only reached Darkehmen late at night after a strenuous march, was to advance as a reliable assault force on November 13th on the Goldap road towards the southeast. Overall, the commander of the 8th Army, who was joined by Major General v. Böckmann as Chief of the General Staff on November 13th, had at his disposal for the attack 49 battalions, 198 light and 44 heavy guns.

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On November 13, the Russians also continued their forward movement; it came to an encounter battle. The German I Army Corps under Lieutenant General Kosch and the 9th Landwehr Brigade under Lieutenant General Clausius repelled the Russian XX Corps, but in the early darkness, they did not advance beyond the line two kilometers northwest of Gawaiten—four kilometers west of Tollmingkehmen; 1000 prisoners and three machine guns were the spoils of the day (from the I Army Corps). Meanwhile, the 3rd Reserve Division under the new commander¹), Lieutenant General Kolve, had turned east from the Goldap road with the main force and captured Gawaiten by attacking the enemy's flank, which was also reached by the right wing of the I Army Corps. Southeast of Meiszeowen, the original vanguard of the 3rd Reserve Division and cavalry of the I Army Corps had taken over the protection of the right flank. The enemy, presumably the II Caucasian Corps, stood close by and also south of the Darkehmen—Goldap road.

During these successes west of the Rominten Heath, the German northern wing at Stallupönen, 1st Cavalry Division and Landwehr Division Königsberg, had to retreat in the course of November 13 to a line running from Rattenau to the southwest due to enemy superiority. Here, the Landwehr Division made another 500 prisoners in a successful counterattack. However, the extreme left wing remained threatened by Russian cavalry, which now appeared southwest of Pillkallen.

General v. Below was determined to continue the attack west of the Rominten Heath. In the army order for November 14, he set the goal: "Rolling up the enemy from west to east." For this, the cavalry of the I Army Corps and the 70th Landwehr Brigade were to take over the protection of the open southern flank, so that the 3rd Reserve Division could use its full strength for the attack against the east. The I Army Corps was also to continue the attack eastward, its left wing on Tollmingkehmen, the 9th Landwehr Brigade north of it. On the morning of November 14, however, it became clear that the opponent of the 3rd Reserve Division and the right wing of the I Army Corps was in a commanding position on the Traktischker Mountains and with strong artillery. Here, they had to be defeated before the Russian front could be flanked. By the evening of

¹) Lieutenant General v. Morgen had meanwhile become the commanding general of the I Reserve Corps in place of General v. Below (p. 67).

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On a short November day, the 3rd Reserve Division had barely advanced against this enemy, with the 1st Army Corps extending its right flank up to three kilometers south of Gawaiten, and the left beyond the Romint. In contrast, the 1st Cavalry Division, attacked by a superior enemy, had retreated several kilometers to the west. On the extreme northern flank, strong Russian cavalry pressed against the left flank of the Königsberg Landwehr Division and reached parts of the road leading north from Gumbinnen; the Landwehr Division was forced to take a position closer to Gumbinnen.

General v. Below wanted to continue the attack on November 15. If it succeeded in taking the dominant Russian position on the Tratischker Mountains, he hoped to be able to "roll out" the enemy front. On the threatened northern flank, the 1st Cavalry Division and the cavalry of the 1st Army Corps and the Königsberg Landwehr Division were to repel the enemy cavalry. But even on this day, the attack made only very slight progress. The 9th Landwehr Brigade, surrounded from the northeast after the withdrawal of the 1st Cavalry Division, was pushed into defense. General v. Below decided to halt the attack; a shortage of ammunition played a decisive role. They had to be content with having dealt the Russians a strong blow. The German troops, especially the 1st Army Corps, felt victorious; once again, they had captured 5000 prisoners and 17 machine guns from the enemy; he had shown white flags in many places and seemed shaken. So it was a disappointment that they had to retreat again.

On the morning of November 16, the German front was withdrawn to a position that, running from Darkehmen on the Angerapp in a northeasterly direction, still enclosed Gumbinnen. Reinforcements worsened the movement, but only the Königsberg Landwehr Division and the 1st Cavalry Division had to fight. The shortening of the front, which still measured 35 kilometers for only 3½ divisions, allowed the urgently needed reinforcement (70th Landwehr Brigade) to be sent to the fortress of Lötzen and the 1st Infantry Division to be withdrawn as a reserve at Gumbinnen. General v. Below was determined to continue to conduct the defense offensively.

The Masurian Lakes with the fortifications of Lötzen formed the cornerstone for the defense of East Prussia.  
1) Vol. II, p. 41.

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The defense found firm hold from the lakes to the Pregel along the course of the Angerapp; here, the construction of defensive positions had already begun before the Battle of Gumbinnen. West of the lakes, a blockhouse line built in peacetime against cavalry raids extended beyond Ortelsburg. From there to the Drewenz east of Thorn, there was no natural or artificial protection, except where border guard units had created fortifications at certain points since the beginning of the war. Regardless of the war situation and according to the available forces and materials, work had also been done on positions elsewhere, which by mid-October were still too far back. Successful defense against greater superiority was at this time still so little prepared that Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had agreed to the deployment of the XXV Reserve Corps in East Prussia despite urgent needs on the Polish theater of war¹). For a full month, work continued under the protection of the 8th Army on the lake and Angerapp positions, so that by mid-November their defense could be entrusted to the 8th Army, which had since been weakened by two corps.

The expansion of the small "Feste Boyen" into the large "Field Fortress Lötzen" weapons site had already been ordered by one of the first commands issued by General v. Hindenburg upon his arrival in the East²). In conjunction with the Spirding and Mauer lakes, these installations blocked a nearly 70-kilometer-wide front section. Since the victory at the Masurian Lakes, two pioneer companies and initially 6,000, eventually about 18,000 civilian workers, utilizing lakes and waterways over a 75-kilometer circumference, created a framework of support points with connecting defensive lines. By October 19, the infantry positions on the eastern front were defensively completed with obstacles, but approach roads, cover trenches, and concrete structures were still missing; on the western front of the field fortress, the installations were considerably further back.

The Angerapp position ran, beginning at the northeastern end of the lakes east of Angerburg, northward to the Goldap estuary and from there on the west bank of the Angerapp to the Insterburg—Gumbinnen road; the total front extension was 60 kilometers, with bridgeheads on the eastern riverbank near Darkehmen and Nemmersdorf. The work had been carried out since early October under the direction of General Kasten, General of the Pioneers of the 8th Army, by seven pioneer companies and

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Initially, 2000 civilian workers were emphatically promoted¹). Already on

October 17²), trenches with continuous barbed wire were present.

At the southern front of the province of East Prussia, the blockhouse

line, which connected to the lake position at Rudczanny and ran westwards

through the Johannisburg Forest with continuous barbed wire to west of

Ortelsburg, had been gradually reinforced by the deputy general command

of the XX Army Corps, but it had no great significance for the upcoming

tasks. Then followed a larger gap up to the defensive positions of Neidenburg,

which was only bridged by installations at Jedwabno³).

As the German troops gradually retreated to the prepared positions in

November, they found firm ground almost everywhere, even if the expansion

was hardly completed at any point. The further work in the front lines

now fell to the position garrisons, while civilian workers continued to be

used in the rear installations.

Since the XXV Reserve Corps had been transferred in the first week of

November, the defense of the field position Löwen was in the hands of the

33rd Landwehr Brigade under Lieutenant General v. Ginem. Reinforced

by Landsturm and artillery, it repelled a superior enemy several times

since mid-November in far advanced positions in the southeast, east, and

northeast of the fortress. South of the Löwentin Lake, the III Siberian

Corps stood opposite, whose advances against the important narrow pass

at Seeböhe were repeatedly repelled. Against the southeast front of the

main position, between Löwentin and Kruglinner Lakes, the Russian XXVI

(Reserve) Corps advanced; against its northern front, the XXII Corps

attacked west of Kruglanken in vain for the time being. North of the lakes

up to Darkehmen exclusively, the German Landwehr Division Jacobi with

the 34th and 6th Landwehr Brigades occupied the southern flank of the

Angerapp position; against them, the II Caucasian Corps cautiously advanced.

In total, four Russian corps, some reinforced by reserve divisions,

pressed against the lake position itself and immediately north of it, forcing

the German commander-in-chief to reinforce the three Landwehr divisions

that had previously stood alone against them.

¹) The number of civilian workers had risen to over 8000 by early December.  
²) Later information is missing.  
³) For the further course of the installations to the west, see p. 340.

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Brigades. The 41st Cavalry Brigade, which had meanwhile been marching from the southwest towards Angerburg, was no longer sufficient as a support for the southern flank of the entire front; General v. Below had to rely on troops from the northern flank, which thereby lost more and more striking power. As early as November 15, the 70th Landwehr Brigade had been withdrawn there to be loaded onto Lötzen; on the 16th and 17th, the 3rd Reserve Division had to extend southwards to relieve Division Jacobi and accordingly also the I Army Corps.

On November 18, the position at Seehöhe and with it 18 older guns of the III Siberian Corps were lost. General v. Below knew from a peace exercise the special significance that Seehöhe had for the defense of Lötzen: the enemy had opened the way for an attack on the more than 20-kilometer-wide, but so far only very weakly occupied southern front of the field position by taking it. On the same day, however, he also wrested Gr.-Stengelsen from the 34th Landwehr Brigade, which lay directly in front of the junction of the Angerapp position to the lakes. If General v. Below had still considered exploiting the gaps offered by the Russian northern flank with a new attack thrust, he now found himself prevented from falling back on such plans. The army's forces were sufficient for purely local operations in the face of the overwhelming enemy superiority and attrition. The fact that the enemy was driven out of Gr.-Stengelsen again on the same day and left 200 prisoners in German hands could change little in the overall situation. General v. Below intended to drive the Russians out again, especially at Seehöhe, where they had soon extended six kilometers to the west. For this, he wanted to deploy the 1st Infantry Division, which could be ready for a day's march west of Lötzen by November 21. But when he learned on November 20 how difficult the battles of the 9th Army at Lodz had become, while at the same time it seemed that the enemy was inclined to free up forces from his own army to offer them to the Commander-in-Chief East for the main decision and to forego the counterattack at Seehöhe. The 1st Infantry Division was immediately recalled; the 8th Army was once again poorer by a proven core troop and now even more forced to refrain from offensive operations. It was necessary to defend every foot of ground, sparing one's own forces and with scant ammunition. Even if in the next few days the signs increased that the enemy was indeed withdrawing forces, ...

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he remained strong enough to continue dictating the law, and for the time being there was no hope of wresting the initiative from him.

On November 21, the command over the Lötzen field position was transferred to Lieutenant General Koch and the garrison was reinforced by parts of the I Army Corps. With only one active, one reserve division, two Landwehr divisions, three individual Landwehr brigades, one cavalry division, and various smaller Landsturm and replacement units, the 8th Army had to hold its extended position, which now stretched from east of Neidenburg via Ortelsburg—Nikolaiiken—Lötzen—Darkehmen to north of Gumbinnen. Still, about five Russian active corps and strong cavalry stood opposite. However, the enemy did not make the expected use of his extraordinary superiority, attempted nothing against the southern flank of the army, but limited himself to a frontal attack from the east and even here only to smaller operations. From Seeböhe, he pushed his line on November 22 over the swamp depression to the foot of the Paprodtker hills and occupied on November 26 the narrow passage at the northwest tip of the Spirding Lake, a few kilometers east of Nikolaiiken. On the other hand, the German 3rd Reserve Division was able to capture 112 prisoners on November 25 near Darkehmen through a night raid.

On November 26, the sudden retreat of the German troops at Mlava highlighted the difficulty of the situation in eastern East Prussia in a bright light. To protect the threatened western flank, the 8th Army was assigned the 3rd Cavalry Brigade and deployed south of Ortelsburg. On the night of November 30, the Russians attacked at Ortelsburg and to the north; it was possible to repel them and take several hundred prisoners from them. On the same day, the Supreme War Lord visited the army. It was his first presence in East Prussia since the beginning of the war; it had a calming effect on the troops as well as on the severely tested and frightened population and, as General v. Below himself emphasizes, also provided the army leadership with invaluable support.

The Russians again made a futile advance on December 2 near Darkehmen; it seemed that the previously opposing II Caucasian Corps had been withdrawn. Then again, on December 4, they attacked the entire lake position southeast of Lötzen, but especially under

1) G. 344. — 2) From the 4th Cavalry Division, see p. 265 and 344.

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The deployment of siege guns targeted the eastern slopes of the Paprodtker Hills, where the East Prussian Fusilier Regiment No. 33 formed the backbone of the defense; they were repelled and lost 300 prisoners to a German counterattack on December 12. They then attempted to bypass through the extensive Nielitzker Marsh, in the early morning of the first Christmas Day, hoping that German vigilance would be less active on this day. This attempt cost them 3000 men, including 1100 prisoners. On December 27, they were granted a three-day truce to recover the bodies left behind in the wire entanglements. This occasion clearly showed how much the internal cohesion of the Russian troops was shaken; in masses, troops attempted to defect and had to be driven back into their trenches by the German leaders, as it would have contradicted the nature of the truce to take them prisoner.

Apart from these skirmishes, the main front of the 8th Army experienced the calm of winter positional warfare from mid-November until the end of the year, occasionally interrupted by intensified artillery activity and reconnaissance operations. Only on the extreme northern flank, where cavalry faced each other over wide areas, were the lines not yet frozen.

The 1st Cavalry Division covered the northern flank of the army from north of Gumbinnen to the Inster; the 41st Cavalry Brigade had been reassigned to it. Including the 43rd Cavalry Brigade, previously the divisional cavalry of the I Army Corps, and the cavalry of the Königsberg Landwehr Division, Lieutenant General Brecht commanded five brigades (and some infantry), facing the Russian cavalry corps Gurko (with 3 divisions) along with 1 independent cavalry brigade and attached infantry. It succeeded in gradually pushing back the enemy in continuous battles. The enemy had to, similar to before Lötsen, launch an advance on December 25; but here too, this attempt brought no success. Advancing German reinforcements, gradually growing to six infantry battalions and some batteries, supported the extensive front of the cavalry. As the year drew to a close, Lieutenant General Brecht stood in a 45-kilometer-wide extension from Mallwischken (15 kilometers north of Gumbinnen) to the Memel west of the Reich border; the Schoreller Forest in front of his front was cleared of the enemy.

1) Cf. G. 316. — The Russian festival fell 13 days later.  
2) Previously 1st and 2nd Division.

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The area north of the Memel was evacuated by the weak parts of the Königsberg fortress deployed there due to overwhelming Russian pressure since November 21. The "Troop Command Tilsit," since mid-December only three Landsturm battalions strong, protected the city of the same name.

Even though the enemy had gradually withdrawn forces, the task of the German 8th Army remained extremely difficult. In an extremely thin formation and almost without any relief, the troops, mostly consisting of older age groups, had to endure the East Prussian winter, while numerically far superior opponents stood threateningly close across the entire front.

2. The Battles on the East Prussian Southern Front.

Maps and Sketches: No. 21.

At the southern border of East Prussia, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had ordered the expansion of a position for an army corps at Soldau immediately after the victory at Tannenberg and tasked the government of the Thorn fortress with it. These installations continued westward, albeit with gaps, in former border protection positions and extended, also with gaps, eastward to Neidenburg. Further east, the next installations were found at Jedwabno.

The Thorn fortress was exclusively entrusted with border protection up to Strasburg, whose troops were subordinated to the 9th Army on November 10. From Strasburg to Neidenburg, the Graudenz fortress had to secure; further east, belonging to the 8th Army, the Deputy General Command of the XX Army Corps joined. Alongside some Landwehr and replacement troop units, mainly Landsturm was available. The situation was serious since the German 9th Army had been withdrawn from overwhelming pressure from Poland. By the end of October, the Russian VI Corps was established at Pultusk, the I Turkestan at Rosh an. Their advance was directed against the border protection section of the Graudenz fortress. The governor, Lieutenant General v. Zastrow, had at the beginning of November a total of 32½ battalions (about half of them Landsturm), 9 squadrons, and 16 batteries for defense at the border. Higher formations were missing; the

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Landwehr infantry regiments formed the backbone, to which the individual replacement, Landwehr, and Landsturm units were attached. With very few exceptions, all these troops were completely inadequately armed and equipped for the tasks of field warfare, some did not even have coats and adequate footwear. The right flank at Strasburg was fortified by Lieutenant General v. Bernis, the left at Soldau and Neidenburg by Lieutenant General Cliford Rocq v. Breugel. Advance troops, still on Russian territory, slowly retreated. The position at the border was to be held.

The Russians advanced from the Bzelsk—Ziechomow line, on the western flank, as far as was known, the 6th Cavalry Division, alongside the VI Corps, then the I Turkestan, on the eastern flank the 15th Cavalry and a Cossack Division, altogether more than double the strength, all active troops, of which the I Turkestan Corps had hardly suffered. On November 7, the Turkestan Corps began the artillery battle at Soldau and Neidenburg. Here, as "Division Breugel," a total of twelve German battalions with seven batteries stood. Despite multiple attempts, the enemy initially did not succeed in overcoming the Soldau—Neidenburg section; on the southern bank, the Soldau bridgehead could be held until November 10. Only on November 11¹) did the enemy begin to attack the northern Neidenburg bank between Soldau and Neidenburg, thus making a significant breach in the German formation and capturing six howitzers. But the fight had also become difficult for him. "The corps has already been fighting a stubborn battle for the capture of Soldau for the fourth day," it was said in an intercepted Russian radio message from November 13.

The seriousness of the situation was somewhat balanced by the simultaneous successes of the German 9th Army. The troops now advancing on the right Vistula bank from Thorn tied down the Russian VI Corps²). Corresponding to their progress, Lieutenant General v. Zastrow had also set his western flank in motion towards Rypin and westward; he gradually brought about seven battalions of reinforcements to the eastern flank, including the just-arrived Alsace-Lorraine Landwehr Infantry Regiment 99 from the west, and five batteries. On November 14 and 15, these troops halted the enemy advance east of Soldau with counterattacks, despite partially heavy own losses; they did not succeed in restoring the situation. On the night of November 16, the Russians also crossed southwest of Soldau despite

¹) According to Russian sources, not until November 12. — ²) p. 71.

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Winter cold the approximately one meter deep Soldau River and took the city; only further north was it possible to stop the attackers. The enemy had simultaneously launched a comprehensive attack at Neidenburg, with strong cavalry reported north of the city. Lieutenant General v. Zastrow, who had already exhausted his last reserves, faced new attacks with serious concern. On the early morning of November 17, the turn: the enemy was caught in full retreat to Mlawa; the victories of the German 9th Army had also saved the situation at Soldau-Neidenburg. Nevertheless, General v. Zastrow, with replacement, Landwehr, and Landsturm troops (which were completely inadequately equipped in every respect, superior in number to the best Russian troops) held off for six full days, a remarkable achievement. However, the German troops lacked the strength for immediate vigorous pursuit. As they arrived, they had to be thrown into battle one after the other. Now the units were organized; the "Corps Graudenz" was formed.

In mid-November, from the west, the Higher Cavalry Commander No. 4, Lieutenant General Freiherr v. Hollen, began to arrive with the 2nd and 4th Cavalry Divisions as reinforcements at the East Prussian southern border. He was to advance against the railways northeast of Warsaw, supported by the Corps Graudenz, and thereby cut off the lifeline of the Russian armies in West Poland. On November 19, the Corps Graudenz followed the Russians across the border; they retreated from Mlawa to Ziechanow on the 21st. On the same day, Lieutenant General v. Garnier with his 4th Cavalry Division north of this place pushed back enemy forces; he himself was severely wounded. Meanwhile, the western wing of the Corps Graudenz, a mixed brigade of six battalions and three batteries, had reached Sierpez in connection with the Corps Horn, the 4th Cavalry Division was stationed at Biezun, the bulk of the Corps Graudenz, excluding Landsturm 26 battalions, 6 squadrons, and 13 batteries, with the Breugel Division on the Mlawa-Ziechanow road, with the Wernitz Division, which had meanwhile been moved east, on the Mlawa-Prasznysz road. The Commander-in-Chief East drove sharply forward.

On November 22, the Russians evacuated Ziechanow. The I. Turkestan Corps was to be transported by rail according to prisoner reports

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were reported; on the heights south and southeast of Ziechanow, rearguards seemed to be entrenching; new enemy forces were reported advancing from the east.

On November 23, Lieutenant General v. Hollen, as the senior officer, took command of all troops on the East Prussian southern border. To clear the way for the cavalry, Lieutenant General v. Saltrov led the Graudenz Corps on November 24 to attack Ziechanow; the brigade previously stationed at Sierpez had to advance. On the right flank, the 2nd Cavalry Division reached Raziöns without encountering resistance. The Graudenz Corps itself drove back enemy advance troops; the Brenwitz Division reached the heights just south of Ziechanow, and the Wernitz Division extended in a broad front along the Ziechanow—Prasnynsch line, where the 4th Cavalry Division was already positioned. The main Russian position seemed to be on the heights south of Ziechanow near Pomorshe and Dipnogora; this was the target for the next day's attack.

On November 25, the left wing of the Breugel Division attacked with 7½ battalions from the west, and the Wernitz Division from the north, enveloping the Russian positions on the heights; the 4th Cavalry Division, whose 17th Brigade secured against Prasnynsch and occupied the town in the morning with a regiment, was to ride into the enemy's flank and rear. Despite this promising approach, they failed to rout the enemy; the strength of the mixed troops was insufficient for such a task. A Russian counterattack pushed the left wing of the Breugel Division back to Ziechanow, while its right wing felt tied down by enemy cavalry, which ultimately did not attack. The Wernitz Division did not advance at Dipnogora; the 4th Cavalry Division withdrew northward from the new enemy on its own flank, estimated at four battalions with artillery and numerous Cossack squadrons, thus exposing the distance of the Wernitz Division, with no reserves available behind this wing.

In this situation, Lieutenant General 3. Bästronow, as it was already getting dark, received at 4 p.m. through the designated command post of the higher cavalry commander 4, without any additional information, the report from the 17th Cavalry Brigade that its regiment stationed in Prasnynsch was "attacked by an enemy infantry division" and had to evacuate the place. The officer of the Graudenz Corps felt extremely threatened; for an enemy at least equally strong in number and superior in combat power was facing them. Although the right wing of the Breugel Division had not yet been fully engaged in combat, 7½ battalions

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were still in reserve there; the brigade advancing from Sierpez was still

to be expected, and finally parts of the 2nd Cavalry Division could still

be brought in. The situation was therefore by no means alarming in terms

of the number and deployment of the German forces. However, the picture

was different when considering the condition of one's own forces. The only

open troops, the two cavalry divisions, had just arrived from the west;

since they had not yet been able to carry out the winter shoeing of their

horses, their mobility was hindered. However, Graudenz's troops were

already so worn out by the ongoing battles at Soldau that they were no

longer up to serious tasks. Unaccustomed exertions in severe cold and

irregular supplies had loosened discipline. Only particularly experienced

and strong-willed officers and non-commissioned officers could have held

together the units, which were partly composed of older, partly of barely

trained younger men. But there was a lack of such officers and non-commissioned

officers; the troops were no longer securely in the hands of their leaders,

and it happened that they — as it is called in war diaries —, especially

in the dark, simply dispersed. Lieutenant General v. Zastrow did not want

to expose such troops to the danger of setbacks, which could have had

the worst consequences. He saw the advance to the south only as a

"sortie from the contact advanced to the border of Graudenz" to prevent

Russian transports. This task now seemed to be solved; he considered it

necessary to break off the fight and retreat northwards during the night.

Lieutenant General v. Hollen approved this measure by subsequent order.

Unhindered by the enemy, the German troops retreated on the night

of November 26th along the entire front. Lieutenant General

v. Zastrow expected the enemy attack in a position south of

Mlawa. However, the enemy did not follow; prisoners from the Turkestan

Corps stated that they had already been loaded for transport, but then

had been brought back. Moreover, it turned out that the report of an

attack by a Russian infantry division on Prasnitz, which had prompted

the German decision to retreat, had been false.

On the evening of November 26th, General v. Hollen and the

4th Cavalry Division were reassigned for other duties¹). General-

¹) The report had presumably been distorted during transmission by telephone.   
It was about an attack by "Cossacks (at least one division) with two guns   
and some infantry."   
²) See pp. 255, 265, and 338.

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Lieutenant v. Zastrow again took command at Mlawa. When he reported to the Eastern Commander-in-Chief on November 29 that he intended to further expand the position there under the protection of advanced units, he was told that his task remained to prevent the departure or evacuation of the 1st Turkestan Corps under all circumstances. For this, new action on Prasznysch was necessary. This time, General v. Zastrow wanted to firmly take Prasznysch in hand. After the troops had a week to consolidate their conditions, on December 3, the 2nd Cavalry Division, reinforced by two battalions and two batteries, but without the 8th Cavalry Brigade, which remained on the western flank, was sent for a forceful reconnaissance on Prasznysch, which they occupied under the leadership of Major General Freiherr Thumb v. Neuburg late in the evening; a weak enemy had retreated eastwards. On December 4, the Graudenz Corps advanced in a broad front on Ziechanow—Prasznysch. Russian advance troops were pushed back, but on the other hand, the 2nd Cavalry Division was again driven out of Prasznysch. In the evening, the German front from Ziechanow and Prasznysch was still about ten kilometers away. To retake Prasznysch, Lieutenant General v. Zastrow gathered his main forces against this place on December 5. On the 6th, the Wernitz Division advanced from the west against the city, while the 2nd Cavalry Division distracted in the north and east. However, the attack did not progress. Therefore, Lieutenant General v. Zastrow wanted to deploy the Brengel Division from the south against Prasznysch the next day. It turned out on the morning of December 7 that the enemy had evacuated the city unnoticed and had withdrawn southwards. Nevertheless, the German troops captured several hundred prisoners and some machine guns in these battles; however, their own losses amounted to 2000 men according to initial reports¹).

The condition of the troops prompted the leadership to declare a rest day. The equipment strengths had sunk deeply due to combat activity, marches, and inadequate accommodation in wet and cold weather, even without large bloody losses, for example, for the entire Wernitz Division to the strength of a war-strong infantry regiment. On an almost 90-kilometer wide, thinly occupied front from west of Ziechanow over Opinogora to Bogate, south of Prasznysch, the enemy stood close by. However, the German reconnaissance had not yet lifted the veil of its security.

¹) It was later found that they were much lower.

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was unable to break through. The attempt on December 9 to continue the

attack southwards with the entire corps was unsuccessful, whereas Russian

counterattacks on the 10th pushed the German front south of Prasnysz

even into defense. Besides the Turkestan corps, parts of several reserve

divisions were identified as enemy. When on December 11 a Landwehr

regiment, forming the right flank of the corps, hastily retreated northwards,

Lieutenant General v. Zastrow saw the retreat to Mlava endangered and

began the retreat for the second time on the night of December 12, which

he continued, followed by the enemy, the next night to the positions of

Mlava and on December 14 to the more naturally fortified border positions

of Soldau-Neidenburg.

Due to the hasty retreat with strong marches at night, the troops suffered

heavily again. Lieutenant General v. Zastrow reported to the Commander

in Chief East about their complete exhaustion and urgently requested

reinforcement of some divisions. The Field Marshal General could only

provide the 5th Infantry Brigade of the II Army Corps1) (six battalions

three batteries) and 4500 men as replacements. On December 16, the enemy

had approached the German positions so closely that parts of his artillery

opened fire. The first transports of the 5th Infantry Brigade arrived at

Soldau the next day.

For the already long-suffering Lieutenant General v. Zastrow, Major

General Surén took command on December 19, as the newly appointed

Governor of Graudenz. Meanwhile, reconnaissance had shown that the

enemy had followed only with weak forces to the border and otherwise

held back. However, the strength of the German troops seemed insufficient

for a new attack despite reinforcement. The Commander in Chief East

therefore only gave the Surén group the task of relieving the front of the

9th Army through "lively activity and threatening with attack."

On December 21, Major General Surén led the Graudenz corps and the

2nd Cavalry Division against the enemy again. Along the entire front from

Lautenburg to east of Neidenburg, weaker enemy forces were pushed back

southwards on this and the following days. Christmas was celebrated in

enemy territory. From December 26, however, the 5th Infantry Brigade

was reassigned to the 8th Army, so that the Surén group lost its best

strength again.

1) G. 298.

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By the end of the year, the Graudenz Corps, similar to the foremost German defenses, was positioned at the beginning of November in a widely extended front from Sjerpez south past Mlawa to east of this city, with the 2nd Cavalry Division with two brigades far ahead of the front in Racionz; their third (Leibhusaren) brigade formed the eastern wing of the entire formation at Janowo. With weak advance troops, the enemy was close by. South of Mlawa, parts of the 16th Infantry Division of the Russian VI Corps and the 6th Cavalry Division were identified, east of which was the 77th Reserve Division, on the road Mlawa—Przasnisch the 11th Siberian Rifle Division of the I Turkestan Corps and the 4th Independent Cavalry Brigade.

3. The Operations of the Russians1).

Maps and Sketches: No. 21.

Since the end of September, the Russians had been attacking the East Prussian eastern border with overwhelming force; only step by step had they gained ground. When the VI and the I Turkestan Corps had moved westward from the Grajewo area, the attack was only conducted frontally from the east. By early November, the Russian 10th Army deployed here had reached German territory at Lake Wischtyter and in the direction of Lyck. Separated by a gap of almost 100 kilometers, a right wing echelon of the 1st Army, in the strength of two corps, had marched against Mlawa and westward from the middle Narew. The gap between these two army parts had to widen with the advance of the 1st Army, unless the 10th Army also moved forward.

As part of the major offensive into Germany, the 10th Army under General Sievers had the task: "To break the enemy's resistance in East Prussia, push him back over the line of the Masurian Lakes, and then consolidate with the 1st Army at the lower Vistula"2). The army consisted of the III, XX, II Caucasian, XXII, XXVI (Reserve), and the III Siberian Corps, otherwise eight cavalry divisions3). To bring the army's attack into flow

1) Connection to Volume V, p. 547. — 2) Korolkov, Overview, pp. 108 and 112. — 3) Including the two Guard Cavalry Divisions resting behind the front; see also the military organization.

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General Rußki had also made available the garrisons of Kowno and Olita (73rd, 74th, and 84th Reserve Divisions) and the newly arriving, completely fresh 6th Siberian Division by rail in the last days of October. With these reinforcements, General Sievers had a total of over 23 infantry divisions at his disposal, which were deployed with slight deviations along the approximately 100-kilometer-wide front Wirballen—Lyck. However, the General did not expect much success from continuing the frontal attack. He had already raised the difficulties in the first decade of October for the second time, which would arise later against the Angerapp and lake positions if such an attack continued, and had again proposed to bypass the positions with a strong southern wing; however, this plan was again rejected by General Rußki. The reasons are unknown.

By November 3, the reinforcements had mostly arrived. The frontal attack continued, with the main force (XX, II Caucasian, XXII, XXVI Reserve Corps, and 3rd Cavalry Division) in the center, against the Rominten Heath and south to Marggrabowa. In the north, the Cavalry Corps Gurko (1st and 2nd Divisions) and the III Corps were to cover the flank, in the south the III Siberian Corps was to drive the enemy out at Lyck, while further west the half 59th Reserve Division, the 6th Siberian Division, and two Cavalry Divisions were deployed against Johannisburg—Rudczanny. As the Germans had withdrawn south of the Rominten Heath just on the night of November 3, the Russians gained ground here; they also advanced in the very weakly occupied heath itself. North of this, they only succeeded on November 6, when the German front was also withdrawn here. They were all the more surprised on November 7 by the German counterattack, which forced the Russian III Corps along with parts of the 73rd Reserve Division and the Cavalry Corps Gurko to retreat up to ten kilometers over the border with considerable losses the following day. Only when the Germans, forced by the overall situation, withdrew to the Angerapp, did they follow them again. Overall, progress was now being made everywhere, albeit slowly.

The German counterattack of November 13 and 14 temporarily disrupted the advance of the Russian 10th Army, but given the already great slowness of the enemy — as far as from Russi-

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According to Russian sources, it is not significantly delayed. By mid-November, the 10th Army approached the Angerapp and the field position of Bózen; on the southern flank, 1½ infantry divisions (half of the 59th and behind it the 6th (Siberian) as well as the 4th Cavalry Division) had reached the Johannisburg Heath, the 15th Cavalry Division was advancing from Stölzenka to Wyszlinjez. Thus, an encirclement of the lake position from the south was initiated, albeit not with particularly strong forces.

Since the reinforcement of the 10th Army at the end of October, half a month had passed without decisive progress being made. The transfer of troops to the heavily engaged main army in West Poland could no longer be postponed. Already on November 16, the 6th Siberian Division was recalled, and the 10th Army thus lost its best and only fresh troop, rendering its already too weak southern flank completely paralyzed. Then, the II Caucasian Corps and the 5th Rifle Brigade¹) were also to be withdrawn from the front for transport.

The Supreme Army Command urged a rapid attack by the 10th Army to relieve the main front. General Ruzki argued that in eastern East Prussia, a "very stubborn" enemy of at least two corps and five Landwehr brigades was opposing, with ample ammunition, so that he could maintain his fire day and night. The German positions were very well fortified and could not be attacked without strong artillery in the front; before heavy guns could be introduced, the roads and bridges destroyed by the enemy had to be repaired, which would take time²).

General Sievers, without the newspaper exaggerations, still had about 17 infantry divisions at his disposal for the continuation of the attack. An encirclement of the entire German front south around the Spirding Lake was no longer in question since the withdrawal of the 6th Siberian Division; the left flank had to make its way north of this lake against the southern front of Lötzen. The Russian army commander positioned the brigade of the 68th Reserve Division along with cavalry at Tilist; two reserve divisions (56th and 73rd) were to hold Stallupönen, seven divisions (III, XX, XXII Corps) were to take possession of the eastern bank of the Angerapp, five divisions (XXVI Reserve and III Siberian Corps) were to push the enemy away from the Spirding Lake and attack Lötzen after the arrival of heavy artillery; half a reserve division and two cavalry divi-

¹) However, this later remained in East Prussia. — ²) Korolíow, Overview, p. 154.

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Divisions had to cover the flank south of the lake. The main thrust aimed at the breach between Löwentin and Spirding Lake, where a continuous water front particularly favored the German defense. On November 18, the III Siberian Corps had an initial success at Seehöhe south of Lötzen, but suffered setbacks in other places. They sought to advance further from Seehöhe. In addition to the enemy's impact, winter was now making itself felt; the troops were still without warm clothing. Although General Sievers could still count on 16 own divisions on November 28 against about five to six German ones, his strength was lacking 70,000 men in all previous battles, which was the infantry strength of about 4½ Russian divisions. They were under the impression that the German artillery was superior in strength and had ample ammunition. The army leader considered it impossible to advance the attack quickly, as the troops were exhausted, the ammunition scarce, and the reserve divisions unusable for the attack. "There is nothing left but to proceed methodically and fortify every step of ground gained." A flanking movement that would have made the frontal attack unnecessary was allegedly still not allowed by the commander of the Northwest Front.

At the Russian Supreme Army Command, there was already dissatisfaction with the slow progress of the 10th Army; this increased as the situation at Lodz became more serious. But it was not until December 4 that the Russian siege artillery was to open fire against the fortified position of Lötzen; exploiting its effect, the assault against its eastern front was to be carried out. To facilitate this, they wanted to use extraordinary means not in accordance with the customs of war. On the early morning of the day of the attack, the Chief of Staff of the Russian Northwest Front, General Dranowski, had to convey the following order to General Sievers: "The commander-in-chief has ordered to strictly comply with the demand of the supreme commander."

1) The Russian army had different clothing for summer and winter.  
2) The accuracy of this view, regarding the number of guns, can hardly be determined, as on the German side numerous, albeit older, guns from fortresses were used; but there was the greatest shortage of ammunition on the German side at that time.  
3) Korolíow, Overview, p. 155.  
4) Cf. p. 338 f.

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sharpen, to drive all male inhabitants of working age from ten years upwards ahead of them during the attack\*). There is no known instance of this measure actually being carried out. The Russian attack only developed against the Paprodtker Mountains and was repelled there. Two days later, General Siewers requested new ammunition to "intensify artillery fire in view of the lack of officers in the troops and their poor quality due to training by inadequately trained and not duty-bound soldiers." He also reported that entire companies of the 84th Reserve Division had recently surrendered to the Germans without compelling reason. "General Siewers," it is stated in the war diary of the Northwest Front on December 6, "takes measures to mercilessly destroy the surrendering troops with their own fire; but this measure is only feasible during the day and not in every situation."

The Christmas attacks\*\*) also brought no success, but new serious losses. As the year drew to a close, General Siewers summarized his view: "The strength of the German positions, the excess of artificial obstacles, and the immense deployment of their artillery and machine-gun fire do not allow for quick success and an early breakthrough through the lake line"\*\*\*). The Russian army leader wanted to continue advancing from position to position. General Ruzski agreed with him and pointed out the necessity of building rear positions in view of the overall situation, so that any necessary retreat could be carried out slowly and the enemy could be kept off Russian soil as long as possible.

The official Russian war history judged the overall operations of the 10th Army after the war: "Trusting that we would only attack at the front, the enemy calmly withdrew his troops from there and tied down our superior forces with the remaining 1½ corps. Even on November 12, the Supreme Army-

\* It seems that the order of the supreme commander originally referred to driving the male population ahead of them during the general offensive to prevent them from being behind their own front. If the commander of the Northwest Front reiterated this interpretation at the moment of the attack on a fortification, it could only have been his intention to use the population as a shield in combat.  
\*\*) Cf. p. 339. — \*\*\*) Niesnamow, p. 28.

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The East Prussian Front in November and December.

command, to throw one or two corps of the 10th Army towards Warsaw, as

General Rußki considered this pointless; not much later he himself

was compelled to transfer the 6th Siberian Division and the II Caucasian Corps there1).

By the end of the year, the Russians had, opposite the East Prussian

border, including the seven Landwehr brigades that had meanwhile arrived2),

still about 17 infantry divisions and 4½ cavalry divisions, opposed by only about

6 divisions of German infantry in total, of which 3½ were Landwehr and Landsturm,

and cavalry in the strength of 2 divisions. That these weak forces

succeeded in preventing the enemy from advancing into the interior of East Prussia

will always be a special page of glory in the history of the troops deployed there and their leadership.

The Russian advance against the East Prussian southern border

had no discernible interaction with the described battles on the East Prussian border.

The Russian 1st Army, which was to cover the right flank of the main attack,

had at the same time the task of supporting the attack of the 10th Army in East Prussia

by pushing the enemy back to the border on the right of the Vistula.

For this, the commander-in-chief of the army, General v. Rennenkampf,

had the I Turkestan Corps with the 4th Don Cossack Division and the Usuri

Cavalry Brigade move from Zichanow to Mlawa at the end of October, the VI Corps

with the 6th Cavalry Division to the left from Plonsk to Sierpez;

behind it followed the VI Siberian Corps. While the VI Corps

initially halted at Sierpez, the Turkestan Corps attacked Soldau on November 13

after cautious advance and long preparations. After seven days of futile efforts, the city

was finally taken on November 16. Meanwhile, the VI and

the VI Siberian Corps had been withdrawn due to the battles against the German 9th Army in

the west; however, the Russian 10th Army was still fighting east of the Masurian Lakes.

The Turkestan Corps alone seemed so weak that it could not influence the course of the battles

at the 10th Army or west of the Vistula by continuing the attack towards East Prussia.

General v. Rennenkampf therefore decided to halt the attack

at Soldau and also to move parts of the Turkestan Corps to

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The Operations of the Russians.

to cross the left Vistula bank. Thus, this corps already began the retreat to Mlawa on November 17, the day after taking Soldau. The Germans followed.

On November 21, during a snowstorm, the Russian security forces near Mlawa were surprised by a German attack. The Turkestan Corps, from which only one brigade had been detached so far, quickly retreated further south and also left Jzichanow to the following Germans. Then it attempted to retake the city. As this did not succeed, they dug in. The German retreat on the night of November 26 was not caused by enemy actions.

When the great Russian offensive at Lodz finally failed and the withdrawal of the front in Poland was considered, the area around Mlawa gained increased importance; there was concern when the Germans launched a new attack here on December 4. The Turkestan Corps was reinforced by half of the 63rd and the 77th Reserve Division as well as the 4th Independent Cavalry Brigade, so that near Prasnysz and Jzichanow, about 3 divisions of Russian infantry and 2 cavalry divisions fought against much weaker German Landwehr and Landsturm troops, forcing them to retreat several times. The Russians retook Mlawa on December 16, but then withdrew their reinforcements, allowing new German advances in the last third of December.

What barely trained young German replacement troops, Landwehr, and Landsturm achieved and endured at East Prussia's southern border despite inadequate equipment and unfavorable weather since early November was not in vain. For almost two months, these mixed and in every respect unsuitable troops for open field warfare not only protected German land against Russian invasion but also tied down numerically equal, sometimes even superior Russian field troops, thus keeping the major decisive battle at bay.

1) G. 344.

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E. The Situation in the East at the End of the Year and Results of the Campaign in the East.

I. The Conclusion of the Battles in Poland and Galicia. — Views of the Leaders in the East.

Maps and Sketches: No. 19 and 20.

On December 16, when the Russian retreat had just been recognized, General v. Conrad had thoroughly explained to the Commander-in-Chief East how he intended to continue the operations. He wanted to strengthen his position in the Carpathians to attack the Russian southern flank from there. On December 19, two days after General v. Falkenhayn and General Ludendorff had been together in Berlin, General v. Conrad had his second meeting with General v. Falkenhayn, this time at the station in Oppeln. The German Chief of Staff was still full of confidence that it would be possible to push the Russians back behind the Vistula; he questioned how the war should proceed once this next goal was achieved. They negotiated about opening the Danube route and about the demarcation of the occupied territory in Poland. However, no result was achieved.

When the pursuit in Poland had already stalled on December 21, General v. Conrad communicated the following army order to the Commander-in-Chief East: "Guiding idea for the near future: encirclement on both sides of the Russian forces still located west of the Vistula-San line, namely from the north by the German 9th Army, from the south by the Imperial and Royal 3rd Army, which should be strengthened as much as possible, whose attack will subsequently also involve the 4th Army..." The Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff hoped through this maneuver of his right wing to regain the connection with the besieged fortress of Przemysl. But on the same day, he described the situation of this wing in a letter to the Foreign Minister, Count Berchtold, as quite unfavorable: "All belligerents are at a standstill against each other, so that the situation is stationary...

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The Battles in Galicia and Southern Poland.

näre is, which the daily local battles change little; only on the

eastern flank of our armies, between Gorlize and Lisko, are operations

currently still actively conducted. Our troops have been pushed back in this area

in recent days by a far superior enemy."

North of the Vistula, attempts by the 1st Army to force a crossing

over the Nida failed; the Russians claimed to have taken 10,000 prisoners

between December 22 and 24). South of the Vistula, however, the Russian

counterattack on both sides of the upper Nida led to a severe setback for

the Austro-Hungarian army. Here, the long-expected Russian Christmas

attack on the German front was fully carried out. The enemy had brought

up forces that he had freed during his retreat from the 1st Army and the

southern flank of the Bojrsch army. The result of his attacks was a further

retreat of the Austro-Hungarian Carpathian front. Here too, the Russians

claimed to have taken 25,000 prisoners between December 21 and 27).

Across the entire front from the Romanian border to south of Przemysl,

they reached the Carpathian ridge, having even crossed it in places.

Hungary seemed seriously threatened, the further stance of the neutrals

more questionable than ever.

Also on the northern flank of the Bojrsch army and on the southern

flank of the German 9th Army, the battles continued during the

Christmas days). The intention to let the two German cavalry corps

Frommel and Richthofen advance on the southern Pilitza bank, into the

flank of the enemy still holding there, did not come to fruition, as the

Landsturm of the Posen corps deployed here was unable to open the

passage for the cavalry. Meanwhile, south of Tomaschow, the Austro-Hungarian

troops of General v. Gallwitz had been led so far that they could

resume the attack on December 25. They succeeded in advancing southwest

of Tomaschow in several days of fighting. The Posen corps under

Lieutenant General v. Koch acted on the northern flank; the Reising

brigade, in cooperation with the infantry and artillery parts of the

Richthofen cavalry corps, successfully repelled attacks at Inowlodz on

December 24 and 27, capturing about 2,000 prisoners in total. Although

there was enough room for movement, the strength and number of the

deployed units were limited at C. 316.

1) Njesnamow, p. 34. — 2) p. 316. — 3) Njesnamow, p. 23. — 4) Connection   
to C. 316.

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The Situation in the East at Year-End.

were not sufficient to exploit the favorable situation. The demand repeatedly made by the Austro-Hungarian side that the Richthofen Cavalry Corps advance over the Piliza and attack the enemy on the southern bank in the right flank exceeded the cavalry's capabilities. Unified action was also hindered by frictions arising from the conditions at the border of two army fronts. In battles that continued until the end of the year, it was finally possible to somewhat equalize the indentation of the front line south of the Piliza. However, the German 1st Guard Reserve Division advanced to Domanevize before the protruding corner post at the border of the allied fronts, as no significant progress had been made further north.

For the German 9th Army, it had become increasingly questionable whether the goal of pushing the enemy back behind the Vistula could still be achieved. At the Army High Command, there was "the firm confidence of still achieving it"¹). In the army's war diary²) it is stated on December 22: "Prisoners say across the entire front and unanimously that morale among the Russians has been very depressed since the withdrawal from Lodz. — In contrast, the attitude and morale of the German troops are excellent, as not only reported by the corps officially, but also repeatedly emphasized by all officers arriving at the Army High Command, despite the exertions, deprivations, and dangers of the last six weeks." The Chief of Staff of the XVII Army Corps, present here today, who should be among the top with his achievements and successes, reports that the troops of the corps have not had a full night's rest since Lodz and the march from Sgierzh to Kiernozia; even the night was used for marching or fighting or preparing the attack. No wonder that the men are physically gradually "finished," that they can no longer perform physically despite all good will and good spirits. The Army High Command therefore approves that the corps arrange for all troops to gradually have a full night's rest to restore their old attack strength and, where possible without harming operational interests, also a day of rest. However, the order has been given: it must be held out until the enemy is thrown back from the Rawka. — The decrease of

¹) Record of then-Captain v. Waldow (General Staff of the Supreme Commander East) from December 21, 1914. — ²) See p. 186, note 2.

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The Battles of the 9th Army.

The performance capability of our brave troops, praised above all, provides an explanation for the fact that the enemy, contrary to expectations, has managed to mount new resistance despite his enormous losses, which since the beginning of operations in dead, wounded, and prisoners are estimated to be a quarter of a million. However, he has also, drawing from his inexhaustible human resources, rearmed extensively and brought in significant new forces, while the German army has not received any more replacement troops since the arrival of the III Reserve Corps. Finally, it must be said that the enemy has the advantage of the defensive, in which he has always shown his strength, with prepared field positions extending from the Pilitza to the Vistula."

On December 24, General v. Linsingen reported: "Combat strength of the army corps around 7000 rifles; the shortage of officers, especially professional officers, is extraordinarily large, some regiments have only eight officers left; the mixed replacement consists largely of very young and very old people. With the great exertions and poor roads, the horse material is beginning to fail; the breastwork prevails in several columns. Accommodation can only be granted sporadically at night to the fighting troops, as almost all forces are deployed in the front line and most villages are destroyed. — The 1st Infantry Division has been continuously in combat since November 27, the 4th Infantry Division entered the battle on November 30, which was only interrupted by strenuous marches from the southern wing of the army to the Bzura. — The commanding general no longer considers the army corps capable of offense and defense in the previous manner. The enemy holds his fortified positions with strong artillery, has received reinforcements, and has established new positions behind the front line, especially behind the Sucha."

The Commander-in-Chief East also followed the slow progress of the battles and the latest development of the situation with concern. From Tarnow in Galicia to Schaschcsew on the lower Bzura, a nearly 300-kilometer-long almost straight front had formed, where friend and foe stood close together with drawn swords; their forces seemed to have reached a balance when on December 24 at noon the following inquiry from General v. Falkenhayn arrived: "Is the implementation of the original operational idea: wearing down the Russians on the left Vistula bank by continuing the attack still considered possible given the current situation? If not, transition to the defensive at Bzura, Rawka, north bank of Pilitza under

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The Situation in the East at Year-End.

Deployment of strong forces on the right Vistula bank and offensive engagement there in question? ... Transfer of further forces from the western to the eastern theater of war impossible in the foreseeable future." Field Marshal v. Hindenburg immediately responded: "Commander-in-Chief temporarily maintains offensive intent. Whether the goal of throwing Russians over the Vistula can be achieved is not foreseeable. Otherwise, a defensive stance will be taken on the Piliza—Rawa—Bzura line. The weak front strengths of the corps do not permit a transfer of strong forces to the right Vistula bank. An offensive there could only be carried out with new forces. Perhaps the newly formed corps within the Reich could be made available for this."

"With the intention of not halting the offensive on the left Vistula bank to wear down the Russians," read the response received on December 26 from the Supreme Army Command, "all the more so as all reports from inside Russia indicate a progressive occupation of the army and growing war fatigue." It was emphasized again that the Commander-in-Chief East should not count on reinforcements; on the contrary, he must be mindful of freeing up forces for other purposes as soon as possible. Field Marshal v. Hindenburg replied: "There are no serious reports of Russian war fatigue. Request for information."

During the Christmas holidays, the attack of the 9th Army had largely come to a standstill. On December 26, the war diary of the High Command states: "The wish of individual corps to grant the troops more than one to two days of rest cannot be met by the Army High Command, as with any further delay the enemy could better group his troops as desired and strengthen his positions, making the attack even more difficult for our troops. The Army High Command fully acknowledges that extraordinary achievements have been demanded of the troops throughout the entire operation since November 12; it also knows that the army would not be at the Rawa if the Army High Command had not repeatedly urged the offensive and contradicted the wishes of the general commands and also the Eastern High Command for 'rest days.' Last night, the Eastern High Command demanded that the III Reserve Corps behave only defensively. The Army High Command replied that the offensive

1) See p. 427; see also p. 306 f. and the communication to General v. Conrad from December 16 (p. 309).

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The Battles of the 9th Army.

The idea should not be abandoned, especially not because the enemy, if not attacked, could move his troops." — An entry from December 27 read: "The Army High Command still has confidence that the tenaciously resisting enemy will eventually yield to the constant pressure. Even more desirable for the Army High Command would be a larger enemy attack, which, with a strong Russian assault, could open the way at one point just like the German offensive. However, a Russian attack is hardly to be expected, although the entire Russian infantry is said to be fully deployed. It also lacks training and trained personnel. However, poor shooting is compensated by advancing in dense masses... The Russian masses face very weak cadres on the German side. The current replenishment of about 12,000 men for all corps (on average about 10 men per company!) cannot remedy the problem."

To get the interrupted attack going again, Generaloberst von Mackensen had already ordered the formation of a special assault group under General von Linsingen from forces already stationed on the right bank of the Rawka and Bzura rivers on December 26; these were: 1st Reserve Division, Linsingen Corps, XVII and XIII Army Corps. But when all corps reported on inquiry that the Russian artillery was still firing with the same strength as before, the Commander-in-Chief East deemed it necessary to halt the offensive. In contrast, Generaloberst von Mackensen reported that he would have to withdraw the troops behind the Rawka and Bzura. He therefore considered it necessary to continue the attack with the aim of advancing the front about ten kilometers east of the river line; there the position for the winter should be established, but the main position should be on the west bank. He still had the firm confidence that this limited goal could be achieved. The Commander-in-Chief East put aside his concerns.

On December 28, a second assault group was to be formed at Rawa from the XI and XX Army Corps under General von Scholz, and the attack was to be resumed with full force by both assault groups. However, the hoped-for success did not materialize; a minor gain in territory by the 4th Infantry Division of the Linsingen Corps, which captured 1,200 prisoners, was lost again the following night; it was similar with a success of the 36th Infantry Division on December 29 at Borszymow. Winter weather hampered artillery effectiveness, the infantry's attack power was weakened; but the enemy also seemed exhausted. From the

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The Situation in the East at Year's End.

The Army High Command 9 still hoped, with the greater tenacity of the German troops, that it would succeed in pushing them back behind the Vistula — albeit slowly. The Supreme Commander East did not expect much from this; he believed that a decisive success was neither possible north nor south of the Pilica, and the goal could only be to establish a viable position for the winter. Thus the year ended.

The 9th Army had achieved great things, but it had also suffered heavily. Thanks to the precautions of German doctors, it was almost entirely spared from cholera and typhus, which had afflicted the allied army and the Russians. However, the combat losses of the seven-week struggle alone are estimated at well over 100,000 men; 36,000 German dead were laid to rest in the combat area. Perhaps just as many dead Russians are buried there, but in addition, 136,000 Russians, about two-fifths of them in the December battles, with more than 100 guns and 300 machine guns, were captured by German hands. This results in a Russian total loss for Northern Poland alone, estimated at no less than 300,000 men.

How the leaders in the East viewed the situation at the end of the year is revealed by communications sent by General v. Conrad, Lieutenant General v. Freytag, and Field Marshal v. Hindenburg to the Supreme Army Command in the last days of December. On December 27, General v. Conrad stated: From the Bzura estuary to the Pilica, the German 9th Army stands on a 90-kilometer-long front with about 18 divisions against about 32 Russian ones; subsequently, occupation troops and cavalry extend in a 30-kilometer width to Lomatschow. Then, in the northern part of the front width, about nine divisions of the Woyrsch Army follow — including the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army as the northern wing — facing about ten Russian divisions. At the Nida, our 1st Army stands on a 70-kilometer width with seven divisions against six Russian ones. South of the upper Vistula follows the 4th Army in an 80-kilometer width with 14 weak divisions against eleven Russian ones attacking. The 3rd Army has nine weak divisions in an 80-kilometer width against at least twelve Russian ones, which have been attacking since December 21. The right wing of the entire front is formed by the Pflanzer Army Group, which

1) According to the burial lists of the Central Records Office; these indicate only about 31,000 buried Russians elsewhere. How many Germans or Russians lie in another 74 mass graves (10 German, 18 mixed, 46 Russian) is unknown.

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View of General v. Conrad.

barely four Landsturm<sup>1</sup> divisions fend off seven to eight Russian divisions

of the second order.

Then it continued: "A decisive success against Russia

seems hardly achievable in this situation without the deployment of new forces. On

the northern flank, where success would be most effective, it is hindered by the undeniable

Russian superiority in numbers and strongly fortified fronts. Among

the armies between Piliza and Nida estuary, it is not achievable due to the large

expanse and divisions on the long front; with the

Austro-Hungarian 4th Army south of the Vistula, the offensive

strength is exhausted by the battles south of Krakow and at the Dunajec, the

army is decimated to a quarter; its southern flank is hard pressed.

In the 3rd Army, the reinforcements provided so far have not been sufficient

to achieve a decisive success; it was even pushed back

and will hardly be strong enough for a decisive offensive to the north

even with further reinforcements. A complete success on the Austrian

theater of war still seems to me: decisive for the overall situation and

of utmost urgency, especially with regard to the coming spring

and the impending shift in the balance of power due to the intervention

of neutrals, which only a success against Russia could surely prevent.

The consequences of such an intervention, however, are incalculable for the

military situation of the monarchy and thus also for that of Germany! . . .<sup>2</sup>"

In addition to this telegram, Lieutenant General v. Frey-

tag reported on December 28 to the German Chief of General Staff:

"The main evil in the Austro-Hungarian army at present

is its low business strength. Its initially low offensive

power has completely disappeared, even against equally strong Russian forces.

In addition, the Carpathian region makes such weak forces even more

ineffective. The main reason for this calamity, which is somewhat mitigated by

the now beginning renewed recruitment, but cannot be eliminated,

apparently lies in the fact that numerous

people of less reliable nationalities are leaving the troops.

The two-time retreat has not been without consequences, the confidence

in victory is impaired<sup>3</sup>. There is also no doubt regarding the

re-entry of convalescents, who are available in the hundreds of thousands

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The Situation in the East at Year-End.

must be, not the necessary emphasis. There is a lack of the required supervision in the hinterland. The shortage of rifles in the replacement formations would not be so noticeable if the necessary strictness had prevailed in the collection of rifles from the wounded. The factories are working at full capacity. Since some workers refused to work during the Christmas holidays, private enterprises have also been placed under military management since the 25th of the month.

The troops are no longer consistently such that they, as is the case with us everywhere, absolutely hold what they possess. However, among the Austrians, there is probably no danger in this regard for the time being. This impression was received the day before yesterday by Captain Häßler¹), whom I had sent to our 47th Reserve Division. He found them in good condition and in a corresponding mood despite the heavy losses suffered. They are well supplied in every respect by the Austrian side. Their commander, Lieutenant General v. Besser, has fully recognized the weaknesses of the Austro-Hungarian army but copes well with Austro-Hungarian leadership. His personality makes any concerns I previously expressed, that inserting this division into Austro-Hungarian troops might cause new frictions, irrelevant. Erzellen v. Besser even regrets that stronger forces from us could not be made available there, as a completely different result would have been achieved.

Despite all the locally prominent offensive drive in the Russian army, it hardly possesses offensive power on a large scale. Consequently, in the calculations made for the right wing of the army, it is hoped that the 3rd Army will succeed in holding the Carpathian ridge. Whether it will be able to liberate Western Galicia up to the San from the Russians and relieve Przemysl, although only three to four Russian reserve divisions stand before it, must be doubted."

General v. Conrad had also sent his telegram of December 27 to Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and asked him to support his position with the German supreme army command. He had added that the situation in Galicia might ultimately even force him to withdraw the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army from the joint front in Poland to use it again in the Carpathians.

Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, however, was of a significantly different opinion regarding the connections outlined by General v. Conrad.

¹) German General Staff officer.

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View of Field Marshal v. Hindenburg

View as this. His doubts about the resilience and will to resist of the Austro-Hungarian army grew when, on the morning of December 29, news came from the Bövich army that the allied army command had ordered the construction of a rear position, which was to run from Krakow to the town of Piliza and then behind the river of the same name to the north, "to be prepared for the case that the superior Russian attack south of the Vistula makes the holding of the Dunajec line impossible for the 4th Army, and in this case not to give up the advantages gained in Poland as incorrect." That Captain v. Fleischmann, after inquiry in Lemberg, said that for the time being it was "of course" out of the question to give up the Dunajec line, the construction of the position was only a precautionary measure for all cases, did not dispel the doubts of the Supreme Commander East. He had lost all confidence in the independent achievements of the allied army; the frequently changing plans and proposals of General v. Conrad appeared to him as uncertainty). So he wired to General v. Falkenhayn on the afternoon of December 30:

"The Austro-Hungarian army command is wavering in its decisions and shying away from the fight. In the decisive days in mid-December, four divisions were on the railway in Galicia to be deployed for a wide encirclement. They arrived too late for this and were missing in the decisive battle at the front. Even now, the front between the Nida estuary and Tomaschow is not being seriously attacked, only the left wing is pushing forward a little. Multiple requests to attack vigorously have so far had no decisive success. — The Austro-Hungarian troops, whose structure is loosened, have lost confidence in their own leadership. The troops seem to cling only slightly to German troops or under German leadership. — The Austro-Hungarian army command and the Austro-Hungarian troops are no longer factors with which a large-scale operation can be carried out. A further retreat of the armies in Galicia over the Carpathians and towards Krakow and

1) Originally, General v. Conrad wanted to carry out the attack from Krakow to the north only after the enemy had entrenched there; he then suddenly began it much earlier (on November 16) and broke it off again a week later to fight south of Krakow. — Captain v. Fleischmann suggested on November 23 the deployment of strong German forces at Krakow, as one must assume, on behalf of General v. Conrad; the German command rejected this deployment two days later. — On December 16 and 21, he proposed the encirclement of the Russian southern flank from the Carpathians as a guiding idea, but now he suggested a breakthrough from the west towards Radom instead. — For the rest, see p. 41, note 1.

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The Situation in the East at the End of the Year.

thus considering a withdrawal of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army from the Nida.

For the 9th Army, the question arises whether, after the circumstances with the allied army have developed in such a way, it should continue the attack under difficult conditions or switch to defense to free up forces for other uses. — Through the attack, the army has so far drawn significantly superior forces onto itself and achieved what needed to be achieved. However, it is advancing only slowly and probably cannot bind the Russian forces west of Warsaw for long. Russia can deploy additional forces and will use them against Austria, as success is possible here. A renewed offensive into Prussia is less likely, naturally possible. — The ongoing offensive weakens one's own troops without being able to achieve a decisive success unless the Russian army collapses internally. There are no signs of this. The resilience of the Russian army in defense is still very significant. Therefore, the 9th Army will have to be instructed in the coming days to prepare for defense . . . 1)."

2. Considerations.

After the rapid advance against the middle Vistula in October and the equally swift retreat from there, the maneuvering of the German 9th Army into the flank of the Russian attacking army was the decisive act; it brought the great Russian attack to a halt and ultimately defeated it.

The Austro-Hungarian military leadership at that time could not decide to comply with the wishes of the German Supreme Commander Hindenburg and withdraw their armies, setting aside the special interests of the Danube Monarchy, back to the Carpathians. Instead, they allowed the bulk of their army to move westward towards the Silesian border, as planned in peacetime. By doing so, they opposed the center of the Russian front instead of remaining on the flank, thus also aligning with the German supreme military leadership's wishes regarding the interpretation of Silesia.

Since early November, the fierce struggle of the German 9th Army at Lodz has been the focal point of events in the East. They

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Reflections.

The best parts of the German Eastern Army attacked ever-growing Russian masses; the magnitude of the German success at this point was decisive for the overall situation on the front against Russia. Only a very small amount of forces was ultimately missing to turn the battle into a heavy annihilation blow for the Russian army in Poland. Instead, when the German attack came to a standstill due to the severe crisis at Lodz, the warning prediction of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief was confirmed: "Later, more reinforcements will be necessary." When reinforcements from the West arrived at the end of November and beginning of December, the most favorable time had passed. Should they now be thrown into the raging battle at Lodz or used for a unified new operation? The latter was only possible if one was willing to possibly give up the ground won at Lodz in bloody battles. Since this decision could not be made, the operations soon took on a rigidity that had been foreign to them in the East until then. In deciding to continue the attack at Lodz, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief was in agreement with both his own and the Austro-Hungarian army leadership. Thus, the proposal to deploy reinforcements at Krakow did not go beyond initial considerations. Similarly, the idea of another redeployment of the main German forces for an attack from East Prussia to the south was rejected by the Eastern Commander-in-Chief; he also believed that such a redeployment would not lead to a new operation. The attack from Marwa on Warsaw had now become more difficult, as the enemy had had time to prepare for defense through fortification; he could also bring significant reinforcements into the "Fortified Area" in a very short time on five converging railways from the east, south, and west to Warsaw, perhaps more than the German railways could transport to the East Prussian southern border in the same time. If one wanted to attack from East Prussia, one probably had to reach further east. For such a large operation, however, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief no longer considered the strength of the troops sufficient after the previous battles, nor the season suitable. It was also difficult that neither the total number nor the arrival time of the reinforcements expected from the West was clear.

The decision was further sought at Lodz in December. That one could have proceeded differently tactically than what happened is

1) Communications from General Ludendorff to the Reich Archive from December 1928.

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The Situation in the East at Year-End.

already discussed1). The leadership was in the hands of the 9th Army. Without interfering in their command authority, the Commander-in-Chief East had the opportunity to exert decisive influence through the allocation of reinforcements; he thus assumed his part of the responsibility for the deployment through the manner of this allocation. Moreover, he refrained from any interference in the army's leadership after the days of Bzura. On the other hand, the 9th Command was eager to maintain its independence in full and therefore did not rely on Posen as a location and intentions more than absolutely necessary. Reporting the allocations to the Supreme Army Command only made the situation more confusing and thus more difficult. The Commander-in-Chief East did not always clearly see what was happening with the 9th Army, especially because the reports at that time were almost exclusively given by the 1st General Staff Officer of the army to the same place at the Commander-in-Chief East via telephone.

By dividing the ever-growing 9th Army, the Commander-in-Chief East could have secured decisive influence on the course of the operation. The direct subordination of the Breslau and Graudenz Corps and later the Gerok Corps under his command were steps in this direction. In the long run, however, the separation of such small parts could not usually be maintained in view of the development of the battles. The idea of dividing the 9th Army, which had become "extraordinarily unwieldy" due to its size, did not go beyond considerations2).

On the other hand, a point of view emerged in the conduct of operations in December that had rightly been kept away from the German army in peacetime, and also from the thoughts of the Commander-in-Chief East

1) P. 283 f. and 322 f. — 2) When General v. Beseler reported in early December upon his arrival in the East in Posen, General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg said to him in essence: "If we divide the 9th Army, we must direct the operation, and for that we are too far away in Posen. On the other hand, we cannot continue here because of the connection with Berlin and Teschern." (Communication from the Chief of the General Staff to the Reich Archive on February 23, 1929.) — In the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East, it says on December 12: "The formation of a new army is not considered expedient due to the ongoing operation. Instead, individual command groups should be formed." — General Ludendorff in the War (Memories, p. 84 f.): "Perhaps I should have communicated the concerns that prevented me from suggesting a new army division to the Commander-in-Chief East. We would have had a sharper influence on the operations."

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Considerations.

did not correspond. Since a war of annihilation no longer seemed achievable, the goal was set to "wear down" the enemy. However, this required the precondition that there was time and that during this time the enemy's strength was worn down more than one's own. Whether these conditions were sufficient for the situation of the Central Powers had to appear doubtful.

At the Austro-Hungarian front, operational mobility was maintained longer than at the German front. The 4th Army was thrown north in November and south again in December over the Vistula, exploiting the large fortress of Krakow, to attack, while both times they correspondingly evaded on the left bank. If the success in November did not meet expectations, and if during the December attack it was finally turned into a serious defeat by similar maneuvering of Russian army parts, this was mainly due to the failure of the troops, who, due to the unreliability of large parts of their replacements, were hardly a match for the Russians with equal numbers. The difference between the components in the army of the Habsburg multinational state, such as the German-speaking and Hungarian ones, who were wholeheartedly with the cause of the Central Powers, and those who were more or less indifferent, if not hostile, became increasingly apparent. These conditions were clearly expressed in the prisoner camps. By the end of October, there were reportedly 200,000 Austro-Hungarian, but only 15,000 Imperial German prisoners in Russia; in November and December, the Austro-Hungarian army, according to Russian reports, again lost about 60,000 prisoners to the Russians and more than 40,000 to the Serbs, while the total number of German prisoners was barely 2,000.

The fact that the major Russian attack in West Poland came to a halt was a defensive victory of outstanding importance. However, decisive offensive successes have not been achieved anymore. Also in the East, it became increasingly noticeable that attacks were only slowly advancing. This applies to the German troops hardly less than to the Austro-Hungarian and Russian ones. Even with Russian inferiority in

1) General Ludendorff wrote after the war (Memories, p. 85 f.): "In the Vistula bend, especially with the 9th Army, there were still a number of local skirmishes that had remained unresolved. In the trenches, there was little suffering. There was 'battling around' everywhere. I should have intervened more sharply right away, as I did later. The danger was close that the losses did not correspond with the gain." 2) Information according to Knor, p. 167.

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The Situation in the East at the End of the Year.

It has rarely been possible to advance the attack during a short winter day to such an extent that the encirclement led to the destruction of the enemy, and this naturally became more apparent the larger the overall extent of the battle became. Even in difficult situations, the enemy was able to hold out for a long time and eventually withdraw at night. It has never been possible to prevent such a withdrawal; there is not even a known case where such movements were temporarily captured and destroyed. The opponent, however, escaped almost without a decisive loss of combat power, losing booty in guns or combat elements. The battle now showed different forms in the East than at the beginning of the war. Although the Russians were weaker in terms of weapons and ammunition than before, the attacking infantry could only advance against them if the artillery had paved the way. Thus, the battles, hampered by exhaustion, lack of ammunition, and winter weather, dragged on more and more. Decisive successes were hardly achieved anymore. In the East, too, the war gradually degenerated into trench warfare.

As the year 1914 came to a close, an approximate balance of forces had been reached on the front against Russia. In a line measuring about 1200 kilometers, from the Romanian border south of Chernivtsi, following the snow-covered Carpathians, then through Western Galicia and the Polish lowlands to the lower Vistula below Nowogeorgiewsk, where the Prussian southern border and the Masurian Lakes faced each other. The fortress of Przemysl had been besieged for two months in front of the Austro-Hungarian front. In the south, own forces covered the rear of the Danube Monarchy against the now victorious Serbs. Against Russia, the forces of the Central Powers were densest at the focal points of the last battles, especially between Pilitza and the lower Vistula, but also similarly from Gorlice to Tarnow; between these two front sections and especially on the outer flanks, in the Carpathians in the south, in East Prussia in the north, the deployment was lighter and still offered room for surprising movements. Essentially, however, the front was frozen; the fact that bloody struggles for local terrain gains were still taking place here and there did not change anything.

Bukovina and Galicia were largely in enemy hands, with only a limited strip of East Prussia on the eastern border. However, the allied armies were deep in western Poland. What was

1) For comparison, it should be mentioned that the front in the west from the North Sea to the Swiss border measured about 500 kilometers.

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Reflections.

The terrain gained and lost was fairly balanced in extent. However, it was decisive that it was possible to repel the Russian mass assault without significantly weakening the German Western Front and to put such pressure on the enemy that he had to temporarily abandon any thoughts of an offensive.

The hopes with which Russia had entered the war were shattered, mainly by German victories. The major offensive aimed at Berlin, initiated in August and then pursued with full force in October, had failed; the Russians had not even managed to conquer East Prussia. Germany was not forced to significantly weaken its front in the West as long as it was attacked there, and thus the war plan agreed upon between Russia and France was completely thwarted. But

even against the Danube Monarchy, the Russians had achieved nothing decisive, although about a third of the Austro-Hungarian army was constantly fighting against Serbia. The Grand Duke, yielding to the wishes of France, had refrained from deploying all forces against his enemy from the Northern Army. Serious successes had also flared up on the Caucasus Front; although they did not directly affect the situation in Central Europe, they continuously tied down about five Russian divisions. The reserves from the vast interior of the empire had been deployed except for a single corps. The losses had been extraordinarily high. By the end of the year, there were 310,000 Russian prisoners in Germany, and about 210,000 in Austria-Hungary (including Serbs). The establishment of new units could not be considered; even the two corps destroyed at Tannenberg had not yet been reestablished. The replacements were just enough to cover the losses at the front. Although 800,000 recruits were in training, only about one in ten of them had a rifle.

The number of guns per battery had long been reduced from eight to six, without increasing the number of batteries. The shortage of ammunition was at least as great as with all other belligerents. The production of weapons and ammunition in the country was in a particularly glaring disproportion to the demand. The loss of the coal area on the Upper Silesian border played a decisive role for the war economy, as the coal supply via Silesia was cut off; everything needed by Northern and Western Russia had to be transported on a long journey on the already overloaded railways from the Donets region.

However, the army was exhausted by battles and defeats. It was

\* World War, Volume VI.

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urgently needed rest to regain strength. The opinions of those who still wanted to maintain an extended position in western Poland, and others who pushed for a withdrawal of the front into the protective area of the Vistula fortresses, were opposed. The supreme command decided, with fluctuations, for the former, where perhaps less purely military than political considerations may have been decisive. For all, however, the goal remained to resume the attack with full force after replenishing the troops with men, weapons, and ammunition. Despite certain peace movements, the war spirit of the Tsarist Empire had not been shaken in any way. German and Austro-Hungarian leaders and troops had cooperated in the joint struggle. Frictions could not be avoided; power issues were involved. "If the 2nd Army leaves" — General v. Conrad had expressed in a trusted circle when it was about troops for the Balkans after the setback in Serbia —, "we will be too weak here (that is in the north) against the Germans. Now we are the strong ones here (compared to the German Eastern Army) and have the leadership; they have turned away from what we want. At the moment we send the 2nd Army away, we no longer have the power to assert ourselves. Therefore, the Germans should, as unpleasant as it is, be allowed to come to the Balkans and send their divisions to Serbia." Despite all this, both allies had increasingly realized how much they depended on each other and how much they had each other. All in all, at the end of the year, there were 36½ German and 52 Austro-Hungarian infantry divisions (including the 3½ cut off in Pjetrnysl) against Russia; another 14 Austro-Hungarian divisions were against Serbia. On the front against Russia, the Piliza separated the command areas of both sides in such a way that the Austro-Hungarian army, with 57 divisions, including five inserted German ones, faced about 46 Russian divisions on 650 kilometers of front, while the German Eastern Army, with 31½ divisions on about 550 kilometers of front, faced about 54 Russian divisions. The best Polish territory was divided by a line that extended the German-Austrian border northwards to the Piliza and then followed this river.

Preparations were made for winter and for stubborn defense. Given the perception that the German supreme command had about the needs of the Western Front, it was completely uncertain whether and where the offensive in the East could be resumed in the foreseeable future.

1) Conrad V, C. 811.  
2) Landwehr and Landsturm units are included here, not with the Russians.

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VIII. Retrospect.

With great vigor, General v. Falkenhayn pursued the goal of achieving a decisive campaign in the West. As long as there was a justified prospect of achieving it, his tenacious will to win, which had not shied away from great sacrifices, even the use of the last army reserve in Flanders, deserves approval, although there were serious errors in the execution of the operations.

A new situation arose when, at the beginning of November, General v. Falkenhayn realized that the desired campaign decision in the West had not been successful and that the war plan pursued so far had failed.

In the West, the Allied forces were indeed severely weakened, but their defeat had failed; both armies faced each other in long lines spanning the entire operational area and almost everywhere in immediate artillery contact; in the East, the numerically superior enemy was about to launch an offensive that was to lead deep into the heart of Germany. Given the weakness of the German forces available in the East, the thrust planned by the Commander-in-Chief East against the northern flank of the Russian main army was not sufficient to banish the danger in the long term. This situation presented the German Supreme Army Command with decisions of great importance. Where was the decision now to be sought, where to place the focus of warfare?

In the West, an encirclement of the enemy was no longer possible. Only an operational breakthrough on a broad front could force a decision here. It meant, especially in trench warfare, a risk for which there had been no previous experience. Whether the available forces in troops and war material would still be sufficient for such an undertaking had to be seriously doubted. Bringing in German forces from the East was out of the question, especially in view of the weakened resistance of the allies and the danger to the economically significant Upper Silesia. A campaign decision in the West was thus temporarily no longer within the realm of possibility.

The stagnation of the front in the West and the great tension in the East, especially the new plan of Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, ...

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urged a shift of focus to the East to give its offensive the most lasting effect possible. Here, the vastness of the theater of war also offered the possibility of maneuver warfare. At this time, in early November, the German high command no longer had any immediately deployable, significant army reserves; the forces for the East had to be taken from the Western Front. But was this still possible now, after repeated failed attempts to achieve a campaign decision? Wouldn't a further weakening of the Western army provoke the enemy, once he had recovered from his current exhaustion, to new, enormous efforts and conjure up the danger of an enemy breakthrough? It was difficult to assess in early November to what extent the West could give up forces without endangering itself. No reliable experiences were yet available, although the superiority of operations over the attack due to the increased effect of modern weapons was clearly recognized. The question of how strong forces were needed to force a decision in the East was also unresolved. Opinions on this were divided; while General v. Conrad had recently demanded 30 divisions, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg considered only a fraction of this necessary to decisively shape the offensive he planned. It was also difficult to foresee how long the East would require these forces. Closely related to this was the question of how long it would take for the currently undoubtedly exhausted enemy in the West to recover to the point where a serious threat to the German front arose. Since Turkey's entry into the war, a new concern had arisen. To establish secure connections with the new ally, who was dependent on support through ample war material, it was necessary to defeat Serbia as soon as possible, a task whose solution again required stronger forces.

Given the multitude of conflicting demands and the intense tension of the situation on all theaters of war, especially in the East, it was indeed not easy for the leadership of the two-front war to make a clear decision. In this situation, it seemed most logical to once again, as at the beginning of the war, place the focus of operations where it offered the most favorable medium-term prospects; at this point, that was again the East! Initially, only as many troops from the West needed to be transferred to this theater of war as were necessary to achieve

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The set goal, to break the strength of the great Russian offensive, seemed

necessary. According to Generaloberst v. Hindenburg, this required four active army corps. Such a limited weakening of the Western army was, in the view of General v. Faltenhayn, possible without endangering the Western front due to the great exhaustion of the enemy and the superior defensive power of modern weapons. The decision to reinforce the Eastern army, however, required the immediate cessation of all attacks in the West and the prompt implementation of all measures necessary to strengthen the Western front and to gain forces for the East. Only after eliminating the immediate threat in the East did the German military leadership regain the freedom of its decisions, and the longer the enemy in the East was defeated, the more time was gained. This period had to be used to calmly make all preparations for the final campaign decision on the Eastern theater of war; this included building a strong and well-secured defensive front in the West and increasing the offensive power to the maximum in the East by bringing in new army reserves and ample war material, especially ammunition.

General v. Faltenhayn, however, felt compelled to reject such far-reaching conclusions from the current situation in the first days of November. He estimated that the immediate cessation of the offensive in the West without visible success of the German arms, combined with the necessary realignment of extended front sections for the deployment of forces, would have a moral impact equivalent to a defeat, which would invigorate the enemy and have a highly unfavorable effect on the still neutral states at the time. That this disadvantage could soon be turned into its opposite by a victory in the East does not seem to have been considered by General v. Faltenhayn as a full compensation. The overly pessimistic assessment of the impact of halting attacks in the West without visible military success was probably the main reason for the decision on November 4 to keep the focus of military operations temporarily in the West and to demand a new effort to achieve such military success by capturing the Ypres salient from the already heavily exhausted Western troops.

However, the seriousness of the situation in the East forced new significant decisions just a few days later, on November 8. The focus of military operations was now to be shifted to the East, and there, under the unified leadership of the German Chief of General Staff and with the deployment of strong forces also from the Western theater of war, far beyond the scope

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beyond the plans of the Commander-in-Chief East, a major offensive operation along the Vistula against the northern flank of the Russian main forces advancing towards Silesia and Posen was to be conducted. The bold and grand idea corresponded to the seriousness of the overall operational situation and was well suited, with consistent, determined execution and unified use of the Central Powers' forces, to resolve the existing crisis. However, the success of the plan was contingent upon fulfilling two demands; firstly, the costly battles in Flanders had to be halted to intervene in the East in time and to use the fresh troops and ammunition stocks prepared for the attack at Ypres for the Eastern offensive. General v. Falkenhayn, however, could not bring himself to abandon the continuation of the attack at Ypres. Furthermore, close contact and continuous cooperation with the leaders in the East were necessary to achieve coordinated action, especially regarding the start of the planned offensive there, as the operational plans of both command posts, both the leaders in the East and the German General Staff Chief, as was known to him, were based on the same fundamental idea of an offensive against the northern flank of the Russian main forces. This contact also failed to materialize. The consequences became ominously apparent when the battles beginning almost simultaneously on November 10 and 11 in the West and East took a completely different course than the head of German operations had expected. In the West, the new attack at Ypres failed completely despite the deployment of strong fresh forces and the last ammunition reserve, which was so urgently needed for the major Eastern offensive; in the East, where only a limited "partial success" barely affecting the overall situation was expected, a victory was achieved at Kutno, which, with timely, i.e., already beginning in early November, transfer of forces from the West, could have exerted a far-reaching operational effect, at least forcing the Russians to evacuate the Vistula bend.

The disastrous consequences of the decision of November 4 for the conduct of the two-front war thus became clear. A great opportunity to resolve the crisis of the two-front war was missed at the beginning of the month. The conclusions drawn by the head of operations from the unforeseen development of the overall situation were surprising; he lost faith in the possibility of a victorious offensive execution that

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front war. In his letter of November 18 to the Commander-in-Chief in the East, it was stated¹) that the hope that "the arrival of new forces within the limits of what is possible could bring about a final decision in the East" apparently did not exist. The innermost reasons for the change in his views between November 8 and 18 perhaps lay less in operational than in psychological areas.

It was a difficult path full of bitter disappointments and setbacks that led General v. Falkenhayn from Noyon via Arras to Flanders. Nevertheless, his belief in victory and his will to bring about the great decision in the West — at any cost — had remained unbroken until then. Only when the offensive of the Fabeck group ended without result at the beginning of November, despite the use of new battle-tested units and strong combat resources, did he begin to doubt, first in himself, his abilities, and his luck as a commander, and finally in the possibility of successfully carrying out decisive operations in the West. It was during those gloomy November days that he, for the first time, expressed doubts to his trusted circle about tactical intentions and, as an "autodidact"²), repeatedly questioned his suitability for his position³). Nevertheless, he did not yet lose the will to attack. Even if a campaign decision in the West was no longer achievable, at least a visible success of the German arms should be achieved by capturing Opern, a goal had to be reached. Under the use of many forces and new strong combat resources, his will to attack was consumed by a goal whose achievement had no significant influence on the overall situation and whose importance hardly justified the expenditure of effort.

It was only natural that the setback, which followed such constant tensions of will and recurring painful disappointments, was strong and lasting. Through the last failure at Opern, the doubter became a disbeliever, who, under the continued failures that shook his self-confidence, lost faith in the final victory with military means. What was worse, he also lost trust in the sword he was to wield

¹) C. 95 and 96. — ²) Volume V, p. 9.  
³) Communication from the then head of the central department in the General Staff of the Field Army, Lieutenant Colonel v. Fabeck, to the Reichsarchiv dated March 26, 1927.

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was called. The word from the army, "as a shattered tool," with which decisive operations could no longer be conducted, cast a glaring spotlight on the perception of the German Chief of Staff.

In those most fateful days, a fundamental change took place in General v. Falkenhayn's perception of the nature of this war, and thus also in his stance on its most important operational problem, the conduct of the two-front war. In light of modern weapon effects, he henceforth considered annihilation strikes from campaigns of decisive impact to be excluded; and not only on the western theater of war, but now also on the eastern, although the situation here seemed to offer great prospects just around the middle of the month.

Only from this internal transformation can the further operational thinking and actions of the German Chief of Staff be understood. He no longer pursued wide and ambitious goals in his operational plans, but only goals of limited scope, which appeared safely achievable without great risks; in the West, the conquered territory was merely to be held, no "foot of ground taken was to be voluntarily given up." In the East, he hoped at best to "push the enemy back behind the Narew and Vistula line and force the evacuation of Galicia." "A decision of the war could not," as he himself wrote, "lie herein." Accordingly, the forces were distributed according to this limited objective. The West remained his main theater of war. According to General v. Falkenhayn's view, it was to be weakened as little as possible to maintain the current position of the Western army "under all circumstances." Such a view might have seemed understandable as long as the Western front had not yet proven its resilience; after the last defensive success in the second half of December, however, there could hardly be any doubt that the Western front stood extraordinarily firm despite some weaknesses, indeed, that it could definitely withstand further weakening. General v. Falkenhayn wanted to allocate only as much strength to the East as was absolutely necessary to achieve the limited goal he had set.

According to his view, the task of the leadership of the Central Powers was primarily to "wear down" the enemies in strategic defense and finally make them inclined towards peace. The rest was the task of diplomacy. That the war for this purpose in

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General v. Falkenhayn was not unclear about the fact that it had to drag on for a long time. Therefore, he believed he had to insist on the economical use of all forces, both personnel and material. According to the German General Staff's view, holding out and maintaining position did not require decisive offensive strikes, in which he had already lost faith.

Certainly, the operations of the German troops in the East, due to their ongoing strong inferiority, had brought setbacks, disappointments, and seemingly insurmountable obstacles and frictions. Despite all difficulties, it was the indomitable will to victory and destruction of the German leaders in the East that gave rise to operational plans of unheard-of audacity and — most importantly — also provided the strength to carry them out. It was he alone who, after the retreat from Poland, transformed a seemingly hopeless situation into one promising success and returned the initiative to the German leadership. In stark contrast to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, the leaders in the East saw salvation only in a warfare whose goal was to dictate the law of action to the enemy. With a clear sense of what was possible, they pursued their goals. For them, the demand of this war was the development of all energies and their increase to a maximum. The more powerfully it was conducted, the more the initiative of the warfare had an effect, the longer, according to their view, the duration of this war would be. This had to be the primary focus of the German army leadership. In a long war duration, they saw the most serious danger to Germany's victory.

Until the Berlin meeting at the end of October, they had not contradicted General v. Falkenhayn's view that nothing should be left untried to bring about the full campaign decision in the West. For this, the East had been ready to make any sacrifice. When, finally, after the failure of the Fabeck group and after the onset of floods in Flanders, it became evident that the set goal in the West was not achieved, it was General Ludendorff who, in agreement with his commander-in-chief, suggested to the German General Staff Chief the cessation of further attacks in the West and the shifting of the focus of warfare to the East. According to the leaders in the East, the two-front war could now only be won if it was possible to first completely defeat the Russians and provide the German Western Army with the difficult task of overcoming

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To ensure the enemy in the West had continuous freedom of movement. The earlier the decision was made in the East, the greater the prospects of reappearing in the West with strong superiority and forcing the decision there as well. Only through devastating blows of campaign-deciding impact, according to the German leaders' view in the East, which aligned with the views long held by General v. Conrad, could the Central Powers win the two-front war. Contrary to General v. Falkenhayn, they believed the German army, if granted only a short time of rest and provided with fresh replacements and sufficient ammunition, was still capable of delivering such blows. They were also aware that the sharpness of this instrument began to suffer under the unprecedented demands continuously placed on the troops in the fight against the overwhelming enemy. Therefore, they insisted all the more urgently that everything possible be done to restore the former combat strength. Their trust in the spirit of their troops was unlimited, as they had proven their military prowess many times during the entire offensive operation.

It was clear that from this fundamental difference in attitude towards the most important basic questions of warfare, strong contrasts between the two command posts had to develop in the further conduct of operations. Tension followed tension, crisis followed crisis. Since the meeting in Posen at the end of November had not addressed or only briefly touched upon the core issues of warfare, it was unable to reconcile or mitigate the existing differences in any way.

The intention of the responsible statesman, Chancellor v. Bethmann Hollweg, to remedy this untenable situation in the long run by changing the person of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, did not go beyond the first attempt. Although I was convinced that General v. Falkenhayn was not the suitable leader for solving the enormous task facing the German Chief of General Staff in this fateful struggle for Germany, he refrained from drawing the necessary conclusions from this when the military entourage of the Kaiser advised against a new change in the person of the Chief of the General Staff. If Chancellor v. Bethmann Hollweg stated as the reason for his stance¹) that he, as a statesman, had to submit to the "military expert judgment" in this purely military question, such restraint appears in this context-

¹) v. Bethmann Hollweg, Memoirs II, p. 44.

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in which it was a matter of the existence or non-existence of the Reich, retrospective consideration is not justified. However, it must not be overlooked that, given how the power influences of the responsible advisors of the supreme warlord were actually distributed at the time, it was extremely difficult for the statesman to assert himself in a matter considered purely military at the time against the military advisors before the Kaiser. Nevertheless, it must be considered a principle that the statesman, who is responsible for the overall policy of the Reich and ultimately for the conduct of the war, has the duty to intervene independently as soon as the war itself appears endangered by the conduct of the war for achieving the political goal. To enable the necessary independent judgment, it is essential for the leading statesman to have clear ideas about the nature of war in general and, in this case, about the forms of conducting a multi-front war in particular, just as the military leader must have an understanding of the necessities and possibilities of political leadership. The thoughts and intentions of statesman and military leader must mutually penetrate each other.

When the German Chief of General Staff approached the Chancellor based on the situation at the time, which was only expected to improve by displacing the Russians from Galicia and the Vistula bend, with the demand for a separate peace with Russia, hoping to achieve such a peace without significant sacrifices from Germany, especially without giving up the Balkans and the Orient and thus also Germany's allies, it proved that there was no accurate understanding of the conquest and annihilation mills of the opponents welded together by the London Agreement of September 4, 1914. Russia could be made inclined to peace through severe military defeats that deeply shook its state structure. In this, the responsible leaders of German politics, in contrast to General v. Falkenhayn, saw as clearly as the German leaders in the East. To achieve this goal of complete subjugation of Russia, according to the political leadership's view, the fulfillment of two preconditions was necessary: establishing secure connections with Turkey through the subjugation of Serbia and creating a joint supreme command in the East.

The Reich leadership believed it had to place even greater emphasis on fulfilling the first demand, as it had become questionable whether it would continue to succeed in blocking Russia's nearest and shortest connection with the Western powers through the closure of the Dardanelles. A

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The abandonment of the valuable Turkish ally could, according to the

political leadership's view, have unforeseeable consequences for the overall

situation of the Central Powers. The same view was held by the Field Marshal

von der Goltz, who was in Turkey and approached the Chief of the General

Staff of the Field Army in the same direction. The great importance of the

Serbian question for the overall conduct of the war did not escape General

von Falkenhayn either; however, he believed that the necessary forces could

not be made available for its resolution at first, so nothing decisive happened

initially.

The other prerequisite for the complete and rapid defeat of Russia was

also of fundamental importance; only a unified command in the East ensured

an appropriate distribution of forces and thus also the highest increase in

power deployment at decisive points. This fundamental question had not

been resolved in the military discussions of the allies during the pre-war

period, although in 1892, when the German deployment against Russia was

planned in close connection with that of the ally, the creation of a joint

command was suggested by the Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff.

According to the deployment plan for the East at that time1) and the force

ratios, only an Austro-Hungarian command could be considered — a solution

that was understandably rejected by the then Chief of the General Staff of

the Prussian Army. In the negotiations between Colonel General von Moltke

and General von Conrad in the pre-war period, this significant question was

not addressed at all, because as long as only relatively weak German forces

appeared in the East, it could only have been resolved by placing them under

Austro-Hungarian command; however, this was rightly avoided. At the

outbreak of war, the plan of Emperor Franz Josef to place the entire Austro-

Hungarian army under German command failed due to the determined

resistance of General von Conrad. During the war, when the joint operations

in Southern Poland, whose success was at times endangered by the lack of a

joint command, practically forced a solution to this problem, Emperor

Wilhelm personally endeavored to establish a unified command for the

German and Austro-Hungarian troops operating in Southern Poland with

Emperor Franz Josef — unfortunately, in vain. Another attempt to establish

a unified command in the East was made

1) Volume I, p. 8.

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In November, from a political side, through Undersecretary Zimmermann; however, this attempt failed due to the conflicting political and military interests of both states for perhaps understandable reasons. General v. Falkenhayn himself exercised complete restraint on this important issue. Thus, the leaders in the East had to try to reach an understanding on a case-by-case basis, although this could only be an emergency measure.

Even in the matter of close cooperation between the German army and the German navy, there had already been a lack of necessary collaboration before the war. At the outbreak of war, neither the army command knew the operational plan of the navy, nor vice versa, while their mutual coordination was an urgent operational necessity. It would have been of inestimable value in August 1914 for the German right wing if the German navy, tasked with reconnaissance in the Channel, had timely identified the disembarkation ports of the British expeditionary corps! Instead, in those days, the leadership of the British general staff and admiralty was limited to discussing whether the fleet should attempt to disrupt the English troop transports to the mainland. While General v. Moltke did not expect significant support from naval warfare for German operations on land, his successor, General v. Falkenhayn, later emphatically made this demand. For this, the secure possession of the ports of the northern French and Belgian coasts was of utmost importance to the navy. A suggestion for their acquisition, as long as the opportunity still existed, did not come from the general staff.

General v. Falkenhayn believed that in this war, Germany's most dangerous enemy was not in Russia or France, but in England. However, it seemed logical to also focus the conduct of the war entirely on isolating England. On land, this was most safely and quickly achieved through the overthrow of England's allies. Since General v. Falkenhayn no longer considered this goal achievable since mid-November, and the naval command did not yet dare to deploy the battle fleet, England could only be targeted through submarine warfare. If this decision was made, then it might seem justified to conduct the land war in stricter defense and seek the decision in the public conduct of the naval war, for which the immediate increase of submarines was necessarily required. The implementation of a large-scale, confusing submarine construction program then had to

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Retrospective.

demanded by the army command. However, a suggestion to this effect was never directed to the naval command by the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army during those weeks, although due to the English blockade measures from early November, the question of conducting submarine warfare was addressed for the first time by the Admiralty Staff. A comprehensive view of this would have necessitated close, inseparable cooperation between the army and navy, as land and sea warfare formed a whole and had to be conducted uniformly, complementing each other.

The great difficulties that increasingly opposed an offensive conduct of the multi-front war were compounded by the concern for restoring the weakened combat strength of the army. Closely related to this was the necessity not only to maintain domestic economic life but also to mobilize Germany's economic forces for the war effort to a much greater extent than was envisaged in peacetime. The unavoidable danger of a prolonged war made this issue appear in a particularly serious light. That it received special consideration in the deliberations of the head of overall operations was inevitable due to its close connection with all questions of conducting the multi-front war. To what extent General v. Falkenhayn took this into account is not yet to be discussed here.

How many significant tasks awaited fulfillment at the end of the year due to the failure of the first war plan! The situation was all the more difficult as both Germany's war preparations and the war plan itself had been based entirely on the hope of being able to bring about a decision even without exploiting the full national strength with limited means. Germany had neglected in the decades before the World War to stretch its military strength, like France, to the limits of the physical and material capabilities of its population. Beyond the total war strength of 3.8 million heads, more than 2 million trained conscripted men were mobilized into the war-

1) For more details, see "War Armament and War Economy" Volume II, which will appear later. — 2) For more details, see "War Armament and War Economy" Volume I, which will appear shortly.

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formations of the army found no use; another 3.5 million conscripts were available at the beginning of the war, who had received no military training, so that approximately 5.5 million conscripts were initially not used militarily at the outbreak of war. At the beginning of the World War, the numerical inferiority of the mobile field troops of the Central Powers compared to their enemies in the East and West was approximately 2 million men. With systematic utilization of Germany's immense national strength in the decades before the outbreak of war, the Reich would not have entered the World War with such a large inferiority. Numerical strength was the only external factor that could be included in the victory calculation. All others, such as superior leadership, better training, or other means of victory, were uncertain. If one of these factors failed, victory was in question; the slightest mistake could become fatal. Germany's inadequate war armament is therefore probably also one of the causes of the temporary failure of the plan to conduct the two-front war. Leading this with a numerical inferiority meant a gamble that left too much to chance or a brilliant leadership. Although the Minister of War, v. Falkenhayn, had been eager from the outbreak of war to make up for omissions and to strengthen the field army partly through mobilization and consolidation of occupation troops, partly through the formation of new formations, he naturally could not compensate for the great initial inferiority. The total armed forces of the Central Powers were approximately evenly distributed on both theaters of war by the end of 1914. In the West, 98 German infantry divisions faced 107 of the Allies, in the East about 50 Austro-Hungarian against about 120 Russian and Serbian divisions. On no theater of war was there a superiority of the Central Powers. On November 12, the day of the meeting of the army chiefs of the Western Front in Mézières, the Chief of Staff of the 1st Army, General v. Kuhl, noted in his diary: "Will the reinforcements by four army corps from the East be sufficient? We have no superiority anywhere. By holding out in the East and West, we cannot win the war."

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Retrospective.

All in all, the situation of the Central Powers at the turn of the year 1914/15 had taken on a serious appearance. In the West, the first campaign plan had definitively failed, and the war of movement had solidified into protracted trench warfare. In the East, it had so far been possible to secure the rear of the Western army and not only halt the onslaught of the superior Russian masses but even break their powerful offensive. However, the situation remained extremely tense due to the great exhaustion of the Austro-Hungarian army. The subjugation of little Serbia on the southeastern front had not been successful.

At sea, too, no decision had been reached by the end of the year. The fleet was still waiting in the home ports for orders for offensive use.

The initially favorable prospects of the Central Powers for establishing a Balkan bloc against Russia had deteriorated. In Romania, the inclination for an alliance with Russia was growing; Greece's stance was temporarily neutral. Bulgaria wavered and waited in vain for a decisive military success of the Central Powers against Russia. The situation of Turkey, which had joined the side of the Central Powers before this decision, had to be warned. The establishment of secure connections with the new ally had not succeeded, and the prospects for it were minimal. The difficult situation of Turkey had become a new cause for concern. Italy's stance became increasingly doubtful.

The outcome of the warfare of the allied Central Powers at the end of the war year 1914 had to be taken seriously; not without reason was Chancellor v. Bethmann Hollweg at the end of the year "very concerned about Germany's future"¹). Although the war plan of the allied opponents to crush the Central Powers had been thwarted and had suffered a similar fate in the great battle in Poland in the second half of November as the German war plan at the Marne two months earlier, although the force of the Slavic onslaught had shattered against the superior strength of German leadership and German troops, and the temporarily serious threat of a flooding of Central Europe by the Russian masses advancing from the East had been temporarily averted, nowhere had a war decision been reached. Despite all efforts and sacrifices, it had only come to a balance of forces. The hope of ending the war with a few swift blows had been definitively abandoned by the Supreme Army Command.

¹) p. 415.

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Review.

It was necessary to reckon with a long duration of the war. This posed an even greater danger for the Central Powers, as from the beginning the seriousness of the economic situation meant that time worked against them. The duration of the war could only be shortened by decisive offensive strikes.

Certainly, endurance and "holding one's ground" were synonymous with victory for the Central Powers. However, it seemed questionable whether this goal could be achieved through the extraordinarily protracted and unforeseeable time-consuming attrition of the opponents sought by General v. Falkenhayn.

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Appendix 1.  
War Organizations.  
Preliminary Note.

The composition of individual units is derived from the war organizations in Volumes I and II; therefore, only the composition of newly established German units or those whose organization has changed since the beginning of the war is included here.

In calculating the number of divisions, two independent brigades are counted as one division; German Landsturm units and equivalent units of other armies are included, while German Landsturm units and corresponding units of other armies are not.

The German Western Army

on December 10, 1914.

Directly subordinate to the Supreme Army Command:

Flying Corps of the Supreme Army Command (O.H.L.) (strength of 6 departments, assembled from aircraft contributions of all armies).

Right Army Group.

(39 Infantry Divisions, 1 Cavalry Division)

Commander (also Commander-in-Chief of the 6th Army): Colonel General Rupprecht Crown Prince of Bavaria.

Chief of General Staff: Major General Krafft v. Dellmensingen.

4th Army.

(15 Infantry Divisions, 1 Cavalry Division)

Commander-in-Chief: Colonel General Albrecht Duke of Württemberg.

Chief of General Staff: Major General Ilse.

Army Troops: III./Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 7 (13 cm cannons), 7./Foot Artillery Regiment 8 (15 cm cannons), 5th and 6th heavy coastal mortar batteries (30.5 cm mortars), 3rd short naval cannon battery (42 cm mortars), 2 Austrian motor mortar batteries (30.5 cm mortars), Field Flying Detachments 6 and 28.

XV Army Corps: General of Infantry v. Deimling; 30th, 39th Infantry Divisions (without Jäger Battalion 14, Jäger Regiment 1, 3rd Dragoon Regiment 14 and 3rd and 6th/Foot Artillery Regiment 84); attached: Reserve Infantry Regiment 8, 8th/Bavarian Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 3 (21 cm mortars), 4 15 cm cannons from German fortresses, 4th and 1st and 2nd Reserve/Pioneer 22, Pioneer Trial Company. Subordinated: Guard Division Münzel (Staff 2nd Guard Infantry Division, 4th Guard Infantry Brigade, 5th/2nd Guard Uhlan Regiment, Staff 1st Guard Foot Artillery Brigade, 2nd Guard Foot Artillery Regiment, 1st/1st Guard Foot Artillery Regiment (light field howitzers), 2nd and 3rd Guard Pioneers).

XIII Reserve Corps¹): General of Cavalry v. Fabkenhayn; 43rd, 44th Reserve Divisions (without Reserve Pioneer Companies 43 and 44 with Reserve Division Bridge Train 43 and 44).

VIII Reserve Corps²): General of Cavalry v. Kleist; 45th, 46th Reserve Divisions; attached: ³/₅ I./Bavarian Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 3 (light field howitzers), ¹/₂ Landwehr Foot Artillery Battalion 7 (light field howitzers), ¹/₂ I./Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 9 (2 batteries 21 cm mortars), ²/₃ I./Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 3 (10 cm cannons), 6 12cm and 6 15 cm cannons from German fortresses, 2nd Reserve/Machine Gun Regiment 24, 1st, 3rd and 1st Reserve/Machine Gun Regiment 25, Reserve Pioneer Company 43, Reserve Division Bridge Train 43, Field Flying Detachment 40.

¹) War organization see Vol. V, Appendix 1.  
²) War organization see Vol. V, Appendix 1; the Reserve Infantry Regiments 209, 211 and 212 consisted of only 2 battalions each.

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The German Western Army.

2nd Army.

(8½ Div. Inf.)

Commander-in-Chief: Colonel General v. Bülow.

Chief of General Staff: Lt. Gen. v. Lauenstein.

Army Troops: III./Foot Artillery R. 1 (21 cm mortars), ½ I./Res. Foot Artillery R. 18 (10 cm cannons), Bavarian Eng. R. 4, Field Flying Detachment 23.

XVII Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Schenck; 21st, 25th Inf. Div. (without 2 Sq. Ul. R. 4 and 2 Sq. Drag. R. 7); assigned: 29th c. M. Brig., 3 12 cm cannons from Wesel.

XI Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Below (Fritz); 31st, 42nd Inf. Div. (without 2 Sq. Ul. R. 4 and 2 Sq. Drag. R. 7).

I Bavarian Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. Ritter v. Xylander; 1st, 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div. (without 2 Sq. Chevau. R. 8); assigned: 3 12 cm cannons from Wesel.

XIV Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Hoiningen; 26th, 28th Res. Div.; assigned: Res. J. R. 99 (4 Batt.), Field Artillery Replacement Detachment 76 (3 Batteries), III./Res. Foot Artillery R. 10 (f. S.), Field Flying Detachment 32.

Middle Army Group.

(24½ Div. Inf.)

Leader (also Commander-in-Chief of the 7th Army): Colonel General v. Heeringen.

Chief of General Staff: Lt. Gen. v. Hänisch.

1st Army.

(9 Div. Inf.)

Commander-in-Chief: Colonel General v. Kluck.

Chief of General Staff: Maj. Gen. v. Kuhl.

Army Troops: II./Foot Artillery R. 4 (21 cm mortars), Eng. R. 18, Field Flying Detachment 12.

III Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Lochow; 5th, 6th Inf. Div. (without 1st, 2nd, and 4th J./Suf. R. 3); assigned: Jäger Battalion 3, 3rd Ldw. Inf. R. 12, 2 15 cm Ran. Batteries from Koblenz and Cologne.

IX Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Quast; 17th, 18th Inf. Div. (without 1st, 3rd, and 5th/Drag. R. 16); assigned: 11th Ldw. Inf. R. 52, 1st and II./Ldw. Inf. R. 53, II. and III./Sdw. Inf. R. 55, 2 15 cm Ran. Batteries from Cologne and Koblenz.

IV Reserve Corps: Gen. of Artillery v. Gronau; 7th, 22nd Res. Div.; assigned: 1 12 cm Ran. Battery from Wesel, 2 15 cm Ran. Batteries from Cologne and Koblenz, Field Flying Detachment 33.

IX Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Boehn; 17th, 18th Res. Div. (without Eng. R. 31); assigned: 10th mixed Ldw. Brig. (without Ldw. Inf. R. 12 and II./Ldw. Inf. R. 52).

27th mixed Ldw. Brig. (without I. and III./Ldw. Inf. R. 53 and II. and III./Ldw. Inf. R. 55).

7th Army.

(8½ Div. Inf.)

Commander-in-Chief: Colonel General v. Heeringen.

Chief of General Staff: Lt. Gen. v. Hänisch.

Army Troops: III./Foot Artillery R. 4 (21 cm mortars), ½ II./Res. Foot Artillery R. 9 (10 cm cannons), 2./Res. Foot Artillery R. 14 (10 cm cannons), 6 12 cm and 12 15 cm Ran. from German fortresses (distributed among the corps), Eng. R. 31, II./Eng. 21, Field Flying Detachment 26.

X Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Emmich; 19th, 20th Inf. Div. (without 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th/Suf. R. 17, with 5th/Suf. R. 17).

XII Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Elsä; 23rd, 32nd Inf. Div.; assigned: Jäger Battalion 14.

XIV Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Boehn; 13th, 14th Res. Div. (without Res. Juf. R. 9); assigned: 2./Res. Foot Artillery R. 9 (10 cm cannons), 2 15 cm Ran. from Cologne, Field Flying Detachment 33.

XV Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Heeringen; 17th, 18th Res. Div. (without Eng. R. 31); assigned: 1./21./Res. Foot Artillery R. 2 (f. S.), Field Flying Detachment 26a.

25th mixed Ldw. Brig.

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Military Formations.

3rd Army.

(7 Inf. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Cav. v. Einem gen. v. Rothmaler.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. v. Hoeppner.

Army Troops: III./Foot Art. R. 7 (21 cm-Mortar), Field Flying Detachment 22.

VI. Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Pritzelwitz; 12th Inf. Div.; assigned: reinforced 22nd Inf. Brig.

(without R. 11, Inf. R. 51, Field Art. R. 42), 1/2 Foot Art. R. 6 (for special purposes), 2 12 cm guns

from Cologne, 1./Pi. R. 23.

VIII. Army Corps: Genlt. Riemann; 15th Inf. Div. (without 29th Inf. Brig.), 16th Inf. Div.

(without 31st Inf. Brig.); assigned: Ldw. Inf. R. 106, 1 and 2 Ldw. Est. of XIX. A. R.,

2 12 cm guns from Cologne, 1/2 Foot Art. R. 6 (for special purposes), 6./Res. Foot Art. R. 9 (10 cm-San),

2 12 cm guns from Cologne, 3./Res. Pi. R. 19 (1 and 2 Ldw. Pi. R. 23 (without 1st and 2nd).

VIII. Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. Frhr. v. u. zu Egloffstein; 15th, 16th Res. Div.;

47th mixed Ldw. Brig. (without Ldw. Inf. R. 106, 1 and 2 Ldw. Est. of XIX. A. R.,

2 Ldw. Pi. R. 23, 1 Ldw. Pi. R. 23 (without 1st and 2nd).

XII. Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Einem; 12th Res. Div.; assigned: 6th Rifle R.

(without 31st Inf. Brig.); assigned: Ldw. Inf. R. 106, 1 and 2 Ldw. Est. of XIX. A. R.,

2 Ldw. Pi. R. 23, 1 Ldw. Pi. R. 23 (without 1st and 2nd).

Line Army Group.

(30 1/2 Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

Leader (also Commander-in-Chief of the 5th Army): Genlt. Wilhelm Crown Prince of the German

Empire and of Prussia.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genlt. Schmidt v. Knobelsdorf.

Army Group Reserves: Div. Fuchs (Staff 16th Inf. Div., 29th and 31st Inf. Brig.), 7th Cav.

Div. (assigned: 1./Pi. R. 23 (without 1st and 2nd).

5th Army.

(11 1/2 Inf. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Genlt. Wilhelm Crown Prince of the German Empire and of Prussia.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genlt. Schmidt v. Knobelsdorf.

Army Troops: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th (heavy Coastal Mortar Battery (30.5 cm-Mortar), 1st and 4th short

Marine Gun Battery (42 cm-Mortar), 1st self-propelled Motor Mortar Battery (30.5 cm-Mortar),

Field Flying Detachment 25.

XVI. Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Mudra; 27th Inf. Div. (without Field Art. R. 13, 33rd Inf.

Div. (without 1./Rifle R. 9; 12, 12th Field Art. R. 33, 34th Inf. Div. (without all and 1./

Field Art. R. 26 with 1./Rifle R. 9; 12; assigned: 1./Rifle R. 9, 12, 1./Ldw. Inf. R. 106,

1./Ldw. Inf. R. 106, 1 and 2 Ldw. Est. of XIX. A. R., 2 Ldw. Pi. R. 23, 1 Ldw. Pi. R. 23

(without 1st and 2nd).

V. Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Mudra; 13th Res. Div. (without 1./Rifle R. 9, 12, 1./Ldw.

Inf. R. 106, 1 and 2 Ldw. Est. of XIX. A. R., 2 Ldw. Pi. R. 23, 1 Ldw. Pi. R. 23

(without 1st and 2nd).

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VI Reserve Corps: General of Infantry v. Goßler; 11th, 12th Reserve Division (without II./Reserve Infantry Regiment 22 and I./Reserve Infantry Regiment 23), 2nd Landwehr Division (53rd combined Landwehr Brigade [without II., III./Landwehr Infantry Regiment 124, with 1st and 2nd Landwehr Battalion of XI Army Corps], 54th Bavarian combined Landwehr Brigade [with I. and 2nd Landwehr Battalion of IV Army Corps], 1st Landwehr Pioneer Company of VII Army Corps); attached: II./Field Artillery Regiment 53, II./Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 8 (field howitzer), I., 9/2 2., II./Foot Artillery Regiment 6 (21 cm mortar), 7./Bavarian Foot Artillery Regiment 2 (10 cm cannon), 3 Battalions 12 cm cannon from Germersheim, 9., 10., II./Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 7 (15 cm cannon), Field Flying Department 34.

XVIII Reserve Corps: General of Infantry v. Stauben; 11th Infantry Division (without 22nd Infantry Brigade and Field Artillery Regiment 42), attached: 43rd combined Landwehr Infantry Brigade (without 2nd Landwehr Infantry Regiment 116, 2nd Landwehr Squadron of XI Army Corps, 2nd Landwehr Battalion of XVIII Army Corps, with 1st, II./Landwehr Infantry Regiment 26, II./Landwehr Infantry Regiment 124), Field Artillery Regiment 70; 21st Reserve Division; attached: 7th, 8th/Foot Artillery Regiment 6 (field howitzer), I., 2./Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment 20 (field howitzer), 1 Battalion 10 cm cannon from Diedenhofen, 1 Battalion each 12 cm cannon from Germersheim and Ulm, 5./Foot Artillery Regiment 8 (15 cm cannon).

Army Detachment Strauß

(7 Infantry Divisions)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry v. Strauß

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant Colonel Fischer

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Military Formations.

Erf. Div. (without 17th mixed Erf. Brig., Bav. Erf. Detachment of the Guard Corps, Field Art. Erf. Detachment 53); assigned: Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3 (for F. S.), 5., 6. Erf. Foot Art. R. 8 (10 cm- Ran.), 4./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (15 cm-Ran.).

Erf. Div. (without Field Art. Erf. Detachment 25); assigned: 1./Ldw. Inf. R. 65, II./Ldw. Inf. R. 32, 55. Brig. Erf. Batl., Field Art. Erf. Detachment 15, 1., 2./Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 9 (for F. S.), 4./Ldw. Foot Art. R. 12 (10 cm-Ran.), 4./Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3 (12 cm-Mörf.), 2. Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the XV. A. K., 2. Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the II. Bav. A. K.

2. Bav. Ldw. Inf. Brig. (Res. Inf. R. 60, I., II./Ldw. Inf. R. 82); assigned: 4./Bav. Ldw. Inf. R. 7, Ran. Erf. Detachment of the XIV. A. K., Field Art. Erf. Detachment 25, 1., 3./Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 18 (for F. S.), 2./Ldw. Foot Art. R. 12 (21 cm-Mörf.), 1. Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3 (12 cm-Mörf.), 1 Btr. 15 cm-Ran. from Metz, 1. Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the XV. A. K., 1/3 Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the XIII. A. K.

Bav. Ldw. Div.3) (13. Bav. Ldw. Brig. [Bav. Ldw. Inf. R. 8 and 10], 14. Bav. Ldw. Brig. [Bav. Ldw. Inf. R. 121 and 111, III./Bav. Ldw. Inf. R. 151], Ldw. Est. of the II. Bav. A. K., 1. Ldst. Btl. of the II. Bav. A. K., 2. Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the II. Bav. A. K.); assigned: 1./Ldw. Inf. R. 71, Ran. Erf. Detachment of the Guard Corps, Field Art. Erf. Detachment 22 and 84, 2./Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 1 (for F. S.), 4./Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 18 (for F. S.), 1., 2., 4./Rek. Foot Art. R. 13 (for F. S.), 4./Bav. Foot Art. R. 2 (10 cm-Randonnen), 2./Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the XIII. A. K.

Erf. Div. (without 21st mixed Erf. Brig.); assigned: 5. Bav. Ldw. Brig. (without 1. Ldw. Est. of the II. Bav. A. K., 1. Ldst. Btl. of the II. Bav. A. K.), Ldw. Inf. R. 100, 1. Pi. Est. of the XIV. A. K., Ran. Erf. Detachment of the XXI. A. K., Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 16 (for F. S.), 4./Ldw. Foot Art. R. 12 (21 cm-Mörf.), 1/2, 2./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (13 cm-Ran.), 3. Erf. Komp. Pi. R. 14.

Reserve Corps4) Gen. b. Inf. v. Eberhardt; 30. Res. Div. (10. Bav. Res. Inf. Brig., 5. Bav. Erf. Brig. [2. Bav. Erf. R.5], 4. Bav. Erf. R.6], 1., 2./Res. Foot. R. 5, Field Art. Erf. Detachment 31, 51, 80, 4. Apl. Btl. 15); assigned: 2./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (15 cm-Ran.), 3./Rek. Foot Art. R. 13 (15 cm-Ran.), 5./Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3 (15 cm-Ran.), 39. Erf. Brig. [2. and 9. Bav. Brig. Erf.], Ldw. Inf. R. 81, 3./Res. Foot. R. 5, 1./Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3, 2./Bav. Field Art. Erf. Detachment, 4./Bav. Field Art. Erf. Detachment, 2./Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3, 2./Ldw. Pi. Romp. [Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 3]; assigned: 5./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (15 cm-Ran.), 1/2, 2./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (13 cm-Ran.), 1/2, 2./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (13 cm-Ran.), 2. Ldw. Pi. Romp. of the XIII. A. K.

Assigned: 52. Ldw. Brig.10) (Ldw. Inf. R. 80, Erf. Inf. R. 291), 1. Ldw. Est. of the XIV. A. K., Field Art. Erf. Detachment 13); assigned: 2./Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 1 (for F. S.), 4./Rek. Foot Art. R. 14 (10 cm-Ran.), 1/2, 2./Rek. Foot Art. R. 10 (13 cm-Ran.), 2./Rek. Pi. Btl. 15, Pi. Romp. 14; 84. Ldw. Brig.12) (I., II./Rek. Inf. R. 70, 70, 1./Rek. Foot Art. R. 9, 2./Field Art. Erf. Detachment 13); assigned: 1/3, 2./Bav. Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 1 (for F. S.), Ldst. Pi. Romp. of the XV. A. K.

1) 1., 2. and 6. G. Brig. Erf. Btl. are combined into the 1. G. Erf. R., 3., 4. and 5. G. Brig. Erf. Btl. into the 2. G. Erf. R.  
2) Previously Brig. Pfefferhofer.  
3) Previously reinforced Bav. Ldw. Div. (Fischer).  
4) Previously Corps Eberhardt.  
5) Composed of 1., 2., 3., 4. and 8. Bav. Brig. Erf. Btl.  
6) Composed of 5. and 6. Bav. Brig. Erf. Btl.  
7) Previously Division Rexroth.  
8) Composed of 10., 11. and 12. Bav. Brig. Erf. Btl.  
9) Previously Department Freiherr.  
10) Composed of 58., 82. and 84. Brig. Erf. Btl.  
11) Previously Dornn-Brigade (Neuber).

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The German Western Army.

Army Division Gaede.

(2 Div. Inf.)

Commander: Gen. of Inf. Gaede.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Lt. Col. v. Wolff.

Subgroups: IV./Ldw. Inf. R. 99, 2. Ldw. Est. of the XIV. A. K., Field Art. Replacement Detachment 14,

3./Ldw. Foot Art. R. 13 (in F. S.).

Bavarian joint Ldw. Brigade (without 2. Ldw. Est. of the I. Bavarian A. K.); assigned: 1., 2./Ldw.

Foot Art. Btl. 20 (in F. S.).

Bavarian joint Ldw. Brigade (Ldw. Inf. R. 121 [4 Btls.] and 123, Württemberg Ldw. Battery); assigned:

1./Ldw. Foot Art. Btl. 20 (in F. S.), 2. Ldw. Pi. Company.

Bavarian joint Ldw. Brigade (Ldw. Inf. R. 40 and 119 [4 Btls.], 1. Ldw. Est. of the XIII. A. K.,

5./Saxon Field Art. Battery 76 [XIV. A. K.]); assigned: 2., 4./Foot Art. R. 16 (in F. S.),

5./Saxon Btl. Foot Art. R. 20 (12 cm-Ran.), 1./Res. Pi. Btl. 14.

Bavarian joint Ldw. Brigade1) (Ldw. Inf. R. 109 and 110 [4 Btls.], 2. Ldw. Est. of the XIII. A. K.,

Field Art. Replacement Detachment 66 [XV. A. K.]); assigned: 2. Ldw. Est.

of the I. Bavarian A. K., 1./Foot Art. R. 16 (in F. S.), 2./Res. Pi. Btl. 14.

General Government of Belgium.

(11/2 Div. Inf., 2 Cav. Div.)

Governor General: Gen. of Cav. Baron v. Bissing.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Maj. Gen. v. Kraewel.

Higher Cavalry Commander 2: Gen. of Cav. v. der Marwitz; 3. Cav. Div. (without

1. Jäg. Btl. 6), Bavarian Cav. Div. (without Bavarian Jäg. Btl. 1 and 2, with ChevauL. R. 8).

Bavarian joint Ldw. Brigade (Ldw. G. R. 39 [4 Btls.], V./Ldw. G. R. 76, 1. and IV./Ldw. G. R. 87,

3. Ldw. Est. of the VII. A. K., 3. Ldw. Est. of the X. A. K., 1. and 2. Ldw. Est. of

VIII. A. K., 1. Ldw. Est. of the XXI. A. K., 1. Ldw. Est. of the I. Bavarian A. K., 1. Ldst.

Battery of the I. Bavarian A. K., 2. Ldst. Pi. Company of the X. A. K., 1. and 2. Ldst. Pi. Company

of the XIII. A. K., 1. and 2. Ldst. Pi. Company of the I. Bavarian A. K., 1. and 2. Ldst. Pi. Company of

II. Bavarian A. K., 1. and 2. Ldst. Pi. Company of III. Bavarian A. K.).

Bavarian joint Ldw. Brigade (without 1. Ldw. Est., 1. Ldst. Battery and 1. Ldst. Pi. Company of

I. Bavarian A. K.)2).

Joint Res./Ers. Brigade (Res./Ers. R. 1 and 2, 1. Ldst. Pi. Company of the IX. A. K.).

Heaviest Artillery3): 1. light Coastal Mortar Battery (30.5 cm Mortar), 2. short Marine-

Ran. Battery (42 cm Mortar).

1) Previously Division Bodungen.  
2) In transport to the 3rd Army.  
3) At the disposal of the Supreme Army Command at the General Government of Belgium.

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Military Organization.

The French Army<sup>1)</sup>

on December 10, 1914.

Supreme Command:

General Joffre (commandant en chef).

Chief of Gen. Staff: General Belin (major général).

Dept. Chiefs: General Pellé, General Auduant, Colonel Ragueneau (aides-majors généraux).

For special use: General Foch (adjoint au commandant en chef), tasked

with leading the Northern Army Group.

Army Detachment Vosges<sup>2)</sup>.

— subordinated to the 1st Army —

(4 Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

Commander: General Putz.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Colonel Challe.

41st Inf. Div., 66th, 71st Res. Div., 10th Cav. Div., Fortresses Belfort with 57th Res. Div. in

Epinal.

1st Army.

9<sup>1/2</sup> Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

Commander: General Dubail.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Colonel Debeney.

VIII Corps (15th, 16th Inf. Div., att. Brig. Belfort), XXXI Corps (64th, 76th Res. Div.,

1 Brig. 59th Res. Div.), 2nd Group Res. Div. (59th Res. Div. without 1 Brig., 68th, 74th Res.

Div.), 65th, 73rd Res. Div., 2nd Cav. Div., Fortress Toul.

3rd Army.

— subordinated to the 1st Army —

(10 Inf. Div.)

Commander: General Sarrail.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Colonel Lebduc.

V Corps (9th Inf. Div.3), 150th Res. Brig.4)), VI Corps (12th, 40th Inf. Div., 67th Res. Div.,

107th Res. Brig.5)), XV Corps (29th, 30th Inf. Div., 149th Res. Brig.4)), 72nd Res. Div.

with 108th Res. Brig.5)), Fortress Verdun with 1 March-Div. (Div. de Morlaincourt).

4th Army.

(12<sup>1/2</sup> Inf. Div.)

Commander: General de Langle de Cary.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Colonel Paquette.

II Corps (3rd, 4th Inf. Div., assigned 10th Inf. Div.6), 1 Col. Brig.), XII Corps (23rd, 24th Inf.

Div., 60th Res. Div., 91st, 96th Terr. Div.), XVII Corps (33rd, 34th Inf. Div.), Col. Corps

(2nd, 3rd Col. Div.).

Note: From 16.12. the I Corps joined, from 28.12. the IV joined.

1) Deployed at the battlefront.  
2) Also referred to as Army Detachment Putz. It existed since December 8.  
3) 10th Inf. Div. transferred to 4th Army.  
4) From the dissolved 75th Res. Div.  
5) From the dissolved 54th Res. Div.  
6) From 3rd Army.

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The French Army.

5th Army.

(11 Inf. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: General Franchet d’Esperey.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Lt. Col. de Lardemelle.

I Corps (1st Inf. Div.), III Corps (5th, 6th Inf. Div., Div. Passin?), XVIII Corps (35th, 36th Inf. Div., 69th Res. Div.), 2nd Sifr. Div., Sector de Reims (Div. de Maroc, 51st, 52nd Res. Div.).

6th Army.

(5½ Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: General Maunoury.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Col. Guillemín.

II Corps (14th Inf. Div., 63rd Res. Div.), 5th Reserve Group Div. (55th Res. Div., Brig. Klein), 6th Reserve Group Div. (37th Inf. Div., 61st Res. Div.), 6th Cav. Div.

Note: The 6th Reserve Group Div. became XXXV Corps on 15.12.

2nd Army.

(12½ Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: General de Curieres de Castelnau.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Col. Hellot.

IV Corps (7th, 8th Inf. Div.), XI Corps (21st, 22nd Inf. Div.), XIII Corps (25th Inf. Div., 1st Moroccan Brig.), XIV Corps (27th, 28th Inf. Div.), 26th Inf. Div.3), 53rd, 56th, 62nd Res. Div., 32nd Terr. Div., 8th Cav. Div.4).

Provisional Army Group North.

(Groupe provisoire du Nord.)

Commander-in-Chief: General Foch (see also Supreme Command).

Chief of Gen. Staff: Col. Weygand.

5th Army, 10th Army, Det. Furnes, Fortress Dunkirk.

10th Army.

(11 Inf. Div., 3 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: General de Maudhuy.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Col. de Vallieres.

X Corps (19th, 20th Inf. Div., 88th Terr. Div.), XXI Corps (13th Inf. Div., 58th Res. Div., 9th Terr. Div., 1 Brig. with 43rd Inf. Div.), XXXIII Corps (45th Inf. Div., 70th, 77th Res. Div., 84th Terr. Div.), 43rd Inf. Div. without 1 Brig., 1st Cav. Corps (1st, 3rd, 9th Cav. Div.).

8th Army5).

(12 Inf. Div., 3 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: General d’Urbal.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Lt. Col. Louis.

IX Corps (17th, 18th Inf. Div.), XVI Corps (31st, 32nd Inf. Div., 12th Jäg. Btle.), XX Corps (11th, 39th Inf. Div.), XXXII Corps (38th, 42nd Inf. Div., 2 Brig. with Foreign Legion), Group Hély d’Oissel6) (87th, 89th Terr. Div., Marine-Inf. Brig.), 2nd Cav. Corps (4th, 5th Cav. Div.), 7th Cav. Div.7).

1) The 2nd Inf. Div. was directly under the Army High Command.  
2) Formed on 9.12., composition unknown.  
3) The 26th Inf. Div. withdrew from the 8th to the 2nd Army and became Army Reserve.  
4) Temporarily under the 56th Res. Div.  
5) Since 16.11., previously "Army Detachment Belgium".  
6) Since 5.12.  
7) Assigned to Group Hély d’Oissel.

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Military Formations.

Department Furnes.

81st Territorial Division without 1 Brigade, some smaller active units.

Fortress Dunkirk.

1 Brigade of the 81st Territorial Division.

In the Fortress Paris: 3½ Territorial Division.

The British Expeditionary Corps

on December 10, 1914.

(12 Infantry Divisions, 5 Cavalry Divisions)

Commander-in-Chief: Field Marshal Sir John French.

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Murray.

1st General Staff Officer: Major General Wilson (Sub-Chief).

I Corps (1st, 2nd Infantry Divisions), II Corps (3rd, 5th Infantry Divisions), III Corps

(4th, 6th Infantry Divisions), IV Corps (7th, 8th Infantry Divisions), Indian Corps (Lahore, Meerut),

21 Territorial Battalions, Cavalry Corps (1st, 2nd, 3rd Cavalry Divisions), 2nd Cavalry

Regiments 3).

Note: On December 26, a reorganization took place. It

1st Army under General Sir Douglas Haig with I, IV, and Indian

under General Sir H. L. Smith-Dorrien with II, III Corps

The cavalry was directly under the command of the Commander-in-Chief.

The Belgian Army

on December 10, 1914.

(6 Infantry Divisions, 2 Cavalry Divisions)

Commander-in-Chief: King Albert of Belgium.

Chief of General Staff: General Wielemanns.

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th Infantry Divisions, 1st, 2nd Cavalry Divisions.

1) Assigned to III Corps.  
2) Arriving.  
3) Cavalry.  
4) Unloading in France completed on December 23.

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The German Eastern Army

The German Eastern Army

on November 11, 1914.

(Later reinforcements in Latin script.)

Commander-in-Chief East:

Colonel General v. Beneckendorff and v. Hindenburg.

Chief of the General Staff: Major General Ludendorff.

8th Army.

(6½ Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Inf. Otto v. Below.

Chief of the General Staff: Major General v. Bößmann.

I. Army Corps: Lt. Gen. Kosch; 1.), 2. Inf. Div.

I. Res. Div.

Div. Jacobi (6th and 34th Brig.).

Div. Königsberg.

35th and 70th Ldw. Brig.

1 Cav. Div.

Deputy Gen. Commands of the I. and XX. Army Corps with the fortresses: Königsberg, Pillau, and Lötzen.

Attached foot artillery, distributed as needed from the fortresses to the units: 5 battalions and some additional batteries.

1) On Nov. 21 to the 9th Army.

Reinforcements:

End of Nov.: 3rd Cav. Brig. of the 4th Cav. Div. } from the East Prussian southern front.

End of Dec.: 5th Inf. Brig. of the II. A. K.

9th Army.

(12 Inf. Div., 5 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Cav. v. Mackensen.

Chief of the General Staff: Major General Grünert.

XI. Army Corps: Gen. of Inf. v. Plüskow; 22.1), 38.2) Inf. Div.

XVII. Army Corps: Lt. Gen. v. Pannwitz; 35th, 36th Res. Div.

XX. Army Corps: Gen. of Artl. v. Scholtz; 37.3), 41.4) Inf. Div.

I. Reserve Corps: Lt. Gen. v. Morgen; 1st, 36.5) Res. Div.

XXV. Reserve Corps: Gen. of Inf. Baron v. Scheffer-Boyadel; 49th, 1/2 50.6) Res. Div. (1 Guard-Inf. Div.).

Corps Thorn: Lt. Gen. v. Ditfurth-Harrach; 99th Res. Inf. Brig. of the XXV. Res. K.

Landw. Brig. Westenhagen (Landwehr and Landsturm); a total of 20 battalions (7 Est., 12 Battn.).

Higher Cavalry Commander 1: Lt. Gen. Baron v. Richthofen; 6th, 9th Cav. Div.

Higher Cavalry Commander 3: Gen. of Cav. Ritter v. Frommel; 5th, 8th, 1/2 7th Cav. Div.

Attached foot artillery battalions distributed from the fortresses to the units.

2) Without I. Abt./F. R. 32 (with 5th Cav. Div.).  
3) Without 1/2 Field Art. R. 35 and 1/2 I. Btl. Foot Art. 18 (with Ldw. R.).  
4) Without I. Abt. Field Art. R. 82 (with 21st Ldw. Brig.).  
5) Without I. Abt. F. R. 148 (with 6th Cav. Div.).  
6) Without I. Abt. F. R. 56 (with 6th Cav. Div.).  
7) See Corps Thorn.  
8) Without 1/2 5th G. Field Art. R. (with Ldw. R.).

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Military Formations.

Reinforcements:

(10 Div. Inf., 1 Cav. Div.)

Arriving gradually from mid-November:

About 5 horse-drawn foot artillery battalions from the eastern fortresses and from the west,

including 10 mortar batteries (21 cm) and 1 Austro-Hungarian mortar battery (30.5 cm).

Mid-Nov.:

Corps Posen, Genlt. v. Koch; four weak brigades (total 23 battalions,

8 batteries Ldw., reserve and local troops).

End of Nov.:

II. Army Corps¹) from the west: Gen. of Inf. v. Linsingen; 3rd, 4th Inf. Div.

1st Inf. Div.²) of the I. A. K. from the 8th Army.

Corps Gerok (½ XXIV. Reserve Corps) from the west: Gen. of Inf. v. Gerok; 45th

Div.² ³).

Div. Menges, Brig. Schmiedecke from Corps Breslau³).

4th Cav. Div. from the East Prussian southern front.

Early Dec.:

Corps Fabeck from the west (½ XIII. Army Corps and 25th Res. Div.): Gen. of Inf.

v. Fabeck; 26th Inf. Div., 25th Res. Div.

III. Reserve Corps from the west: Gen. of Inf. v. Beseler; 5th, 6th Res. Div.

Mid-Dec.:

1st Guard Res. Div. from the Army Woyrsch.

1) The 3rd Inf. Div. was divided in mid-December (see Corps Gerok

8th Army). The 4th Inf. Div. was merged with the 1st Inf. Div. into Corps Linsingen

2) 47th Res. Div. see Austro-Hungarian Army (4th Army).

3) Later joined the Corps: ½ 3rd Inf. Div. of the II. A. K., Div. Menge

Brig. Schmiedecke of Corps Breslau.

Army Detachment Woyrsch:

(see "Army Woyrsch" of the Austro-Hungarian Army.)

East Prussian Southern Front:

Corps Graudenz: Genlt. v. Zastrow (from Dec. 19 Genmaj. Surén); Div. Wernitz,

Breugel (total 32½ battalions, 9 squadrons, 16 batteries Ldw., reserve and local troops).

Reinforcements:

Arriving gradually: about 20 battalions Ldw. and local troops.

Mid-Nov.: Higher Cavalry Commander 4: Genlt. Frhr. v. Hollen; 2nd, 4th Cav. Div.

(these into 4 brigades).

Temporarily in December 5th Inf. Brig. (from II. A. K.).

Also directly subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief East:

Deputy Gen. Commands of the V., VI., II., XVII. Army Corps with the fortresses Graudenz,

Posen, Thorn, Graudenz and some smaller places. From the groups of

Deputy General Commands and their fortresses were provided during

November:

Corps Breslau: three brigades (total 22 battalions, 5 squadrons, 6 batteries Ldw., reserve

local troops); the corps was established at the end of November, see Corps Gerok

8th Army.

Corps Posen see 9th Army, reinforcements.

Corps Thorn see 9th Army.

Corps Graudenz see East Prussian Southern Front.

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The Austro-Hungarian Army.

The Austro-Hungarian Army

on November 16, 1914.

Against Russia:

(57 Inf. Div., 10 Cav. Div.)

Supreme Commander:

Gen. of Inf. Archduke Friedrich of Austria.

Chief of the Gen. Staff: Gen. of Inf. Baron Conrad von Hötzendorf.

1st Army.

(13½ Inf. Div., 2 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Cav. Dankl.

II., V., X. Corps.

3rd, 44th Inf. Div.; three Lfst. Brig.

9th, 11th Cav. Div.

2nd Army.

(see Army Woyrsch).

3rd Army.

(13 Inf. Div., 4 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Inf. Boroević von Bojna.

III., VIII., IX., XI. Corps.

6th, 38th Inf. Div.; three Lfst. Brig.

1st, 4th, 5th, 8th Cav. Div.

4th Army.

(12 Inf. Div., 2 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Inf. Archduke Josef Ferdinand.

VII., XIV., XVII. Corps.

One Lfst. Div., four Lfst. Brig.

10th Rad. Div.

Assigned at the beginning of December and subordinated to the XIV. Corps under Field Marshal:

German 47th Res. Div. (from XXIV. R. K.): Genlt. von Besseler.

Army Woyrsch.

(9 Inf. Div., 2 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Inf. von Woyrsch.

Chief of the Gen. Staff: Lt. Col. Heyse.

\*) Austro-Hungarian Landsturm corresponds approximately to German

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Military Formations.

German Army Detachment Woyrsch.

1/2 Guard Reserve Corps1)2): Gen. of Artillery v. Gallwitz; 1st G. Res. Div. Landwehr Corps: Lt. Gen. Leader v. König; 3rd and 4th Ldw. Div. 35th Res. Div., Div. Bredow.

Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army.

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Cavalry v. Böhm-Ermolli. Chief of the Gen. Staff: Colonel Dr. Bardolff. IV Corps: Gen. of Cavalry Tersztyanszky v. Nadas (31st, 32nd Inf. Div.). XII Corps: Gen. of Infantry Kövess v. Kövesshaza (16th, 35th Inf. Div.). Cav. Corps: Field Marshal Leader v. Hauer (3rd, 9th Cav. Div.). Reinforcement early Dec.: ö. and 27th Inf. Div.2).

1) 3rd G. Inf. Div. to 9th Army. 2) The 1/2 Guard Reserve Corps gradually transferred to the ö. and 2nd Army in Dec. The 1st G. Res. Div. moved from there to the German 9th Army in mid-Dec. For this, the ö. and 2nd Army was temporarily formed into the "Corps Gallwitz," which otherwise consisted almost exclusively of German troops.

Army Group of Gen. of Cavalry Baron v. Pflanzer-Baltin. (About 5 Div. Inf.) Second-order troops and Polish Legion.

Fortress Garrisons.

(4 1/2 Div. Inf.) Przemysl: Field Marshal v. Kusmanek; 23rd Inf. Div., 85th Inf. Brig.; v. Kraßnik: about two Lstf. Brig.

Against Serbia1):

(About 16 Div. Inf.)

Commander-in-Chief: Field Marshal Potiorek. 5th Army: VIII Corps and Combined Corps. 6th Army: XIII, XV, XVI Corps.

1) By the end of December, the 6th Army was dissolved. All troops were consolidated into the 5th Army. The command was taken over by Gen. of Cavalry v. Frank, who was now subordinated to Archduke Friedrich.

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The Russian Army

The Russian Army

(113 Inf. Div.¹), 12 Ldw. Brig.²), 40³/₄ Cav. Div.)

on November 11, 1914 (Southwest Front on November 16).

(Later reinforcements in Latin script.)

Supreme Commander:

Gen. of Cav. Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich of Russia.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Gen. of Inf. Janushevich.

Gen. Quartermaster and Chief of Oper. Dept.: Gen. of Inf. Danilov.

Army Group of the Northwest Front:

(48 Inf. Div., 12 Ldw. Brig.²), 17 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Inf. Ruzki.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Gen. of Cav. Oranowski.

Reinforcements:

The battlefront of the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Army west of the Vistula was reinforced by

November 25 with 4 Inf. Div., by the end of December with an additional 6¹/₂ Inf. Div.

1 Cav. Div. (Details see with the armies); smaller shifts from one army to another within this battlefront have been disregarded.

1) Including 1¹/₂ divisions of Cossacks on foot. — Infantry divisions with numbers over 52, Siberian with numbers over 11 are reserve divisions. All divisions have the same structure.

2) "Opolchenie"; see p. 195 note 3.

1st Army.

(8 Inf. Div., 3¹/₂ Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Cav. v. Rennenkampf (from Dec. 2 Gen. of Cav. Litvinov).

a) Left of the Vistula:

(4 Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div.)

VI. Sib., VI. Sib. (Res.) Corps.

Sujef. Guard-Coss. Div.

Reinforcements:

By Nov. 25 (8 Inf. Div.): II. Corps from

A.4.; 1/₁₆ I.D. (VI.K.), 1/₄ I. Turk. Corps

from the right bank of the Vistula; 6 Sib. Sch. Div.

10. A., 1/₆ 3. Div. and Bgt. of Off.

Shooting School from the command area Warsaw;

2nd and 4th Sch. Brig., 55th and 67th R. Div. from

the army reserve.

By the end of Dec. (7 Inf. Div.): 1/₂ 76 R.D.,

1st and 2nd Lkau. Corps, 1st Cauc. Sch. Brig., 1/₂ 59.,

1/₆ 68., 1/₂ 76. R. Div. (the latter partly

from the temporary, see command area)

10. A., 1/₆ 3. Div. and Bgt. of Off. Shooting School

from the command area Warsaw;

2nd and 4th Sch. Brig., 55th and 67th R. Div. from

the army reserve.

1) Withdrawals: by Nov. 25 4 and 1/₂

16. I. Div. (VI.K.), 1/₄ I. Turk. R. to the

left bank of the Vistula.

By the end of Dec. 3/₄ I. Turk. R., 1/₆ 16. T.

Div. (VI. K.), 6. R. Div., 4. Don-Coss. Div.,

Ussuri Cav. Brig. to the command area Warsaw.

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Military Formations.

2nd Army¹).

(From Nov. 22, subordinated to the commander of the 5th Army.)

(10 Inf. Div., 4 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Cav. Scheidemann (from Dec. 1 Gen. of Art. Alliew, from Dec. 11 Gen. of Inf. Smirnow).

I., II., IV., XXIII.²), II. Siberian Corps.

Cav. Corps Nowitow (5th, 8th, 14th Cav. Div.), Caucasian Cav. Div.

Reinforcements in Dec.: 2nd Cav. Div. from 10th Army; 62nd Inf. Div. from the army reserve.

1) Transfers: by Nov. 25, II Corps to 1st Army; in Dec. XXIII Corps, Cav. Corps Nowitow to 5th Army.

2) The brigade of the corps routed at Tannenberg was a fortress garrison of Nowogeorgiewsk; for this, the 1st Rifle Brigade was with the corps.

4th Army.

(From Nov. 14 to 17 subordinated; for the southwestern front.)

5th Army¹).

(6 Inf. Div., 1½ Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Cav. Plehwe (from Nov. 22, also commanded the 2nd Army).

V., XIX., I. Siberian Corps.

5th Don Cossack Div.; Turkestan Cossack Brigade.

Reinforcements in Dec.: XXIII Corps, K. K. Nowikow from 2nd Army.

1) Transfers: in Dec. I. Siberian Corps to 1st Army.

10th Army¹).

(22 Inf. Div., 6 Landwehr Brig., 8 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Inf. Sievers.

III., XX, XXII, XXVI (Res.), II. Kaut, III. Siberian Corps.

6th Siberian Rifle Div.; 5th Rifle Brig., 1st Kaut Rifle Brig.

53rd, 56th, 59th, 68th, 73rd, 76th, 77th, 84th Inf. Div. (Res.) Div.

1st, 2nd, 14th, 15th Cav. Div., 1st and 2nd Landwehr Brig.

1st and 2nd Guard-1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 15th Cav. Div.; 1st and 4th independent Cav. Brig.

Reinforcements: Some Landwehr Brigades.

1) Transfers: by Nov. 25, 6th Siberian Rifle Div. to 1st Army, 1st and 2nd Guard Inf. Div. to the western front; by the end of Dec. II. Kaut Inf. Div., 1st Kaut Rifle Brig.; 1st/59th, 1st/68th, 1st/76th to 1st Army; 2nd Inf. Div. to 2nd Army; 25th Inf. Div. (III. Res.), 77th Inf. Div., 4th independent Inf. Brig. to the Warsaw area.

Fortified Area (Warsaw–Nowogeorgiewsk)¹).

(2 Inf. Div., 6 Landwehr Brig., 0 Cav. Div.)

Commander: Gen. of Inf. Bobyr, Commander of the Fortress Nowogeorgiewsk.

XXVII. (Res.) Corps (63rd Inf. Div. (Res) Div., four Landwehr Brig.), 1st/2nd Inf. Div. (XIII.), 1st independent Border Brig., two Landwehr Brig., Regt. of the Officer Shooting School.

Reinforcements from Nov. 26 to the end of Dec.: 3rd/4th I. Turk. Corps, 1st/2nd 16th (VI. Corps), 6th Cav. Div., 4th Don Cossack Div. and Ussuri Cavalry Brig. 1st/2nd 76th Inf. Div. from 25th Inf. Div. (III. Corps), 77th Inf. Div., 4th independent Cav. Brig. from 10th Army.

1) Transfers: by Nov. 25, 2nd/63rd Inf. Div. and Regt. of the Officer Shooting School to 1st Army.

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The Russian Army.

Army Group of the Southwestern Front

(49 Inf. Div., 16 Cav. Div.)

on November 16, 1914.

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Art. Ivanov.

Chief of Gen. Staff: Gen. of Inf. Alexeyev.

Reinforcements on Nov. 24; 1st and 2nd G. K. D. from 10th A. (Northwestern Front).

3rd Army.

(9 Inf. Div., 4 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Inf. Radko-Dmitriev.

IX., X., XI., XXI. Corps.

74th Inf. (Res.) Div.

7th, 16th Cav., 3rd Don and 3rd Cauc. Coss. Div.

Reinforcements on Dec. 18: 61st and 70th R. D. from 9th A.

1) Newly formed from two previously independent brigades.

4th Army1)2).

(8½ Inf. Div., 1½ Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Inf. Ewert.

Gren., XVI., XVII., III. Cauc. Corps.

Ural Coss. Div.; 1st Transbaikal Coss. Brig.

Reinforcements on Nov. 18: 13th K. D. from 9th A.

1) From Nov. 14 to 17, subordinated to the Army Group of the Northwestern Front.

2) Until Nov. 12, two more divisions, which were then transferred to 9th A.

8th Army.

(11 Inf. Div., 5 Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Cav. Brusilov.

VII., VIII., XII., XXIV. Corps.

3rd, 4th Rifle Brig.

65th Inf. (Res.) Div. and 12th Siberian Rifle (Res.) Div.

10th, 12th Cav., 1st and 2nd Kuban, 1st Terek Coss. Div.

9th Army1).

(15½ Inf. Div., 2½ Cav. Div.)

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Inf. Letschizki.

Guard, XIV., XVIII., XXV. Corps.

1) Transfers: Nov. 18: 13th K. D. to 4th A.; Dec. 28: Guard K. to Reserve.

2) Until Nov. 12, only 13 divisions (see 4th A., Note 2).

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Order of Battle.

Guard and 2nd Rifle Brigade.

61st, 70th, 75th, 80th, 81st, 83rd Infantry (Reserve) Division.

13th Cavalry, 1st Don Cossack Division; independent Guard Cavalry Brigade.

11th Army.

(4 Infantry Divisions, 2 Cavalry Divisions)

Commander: General of Infantry Seliwanow.

XXVIII and ½ XXIX (Reserve) Corps.

9th, 11th Cavalry Division.

Reinforcements in December; XXX Corps (newly formed, known

together), Caucasian Native Cavalry Division from the Army Reserve.

Injefstr. Group.

(Initially assigned to the 8th, later to the 11th Army.)

71st, 78th (from XXIX (Reserve) Corps) Infantry (Reserve) Division, Landwehr Units (Cau-

2nd additional Cossack Division.

Caucasian Army.

(6½ Infantry Divisions, 3 Cavalry Divisions)

Commander: General of Cavalry Count Woronzow-Daschkow.

1st Caucasian, II Turkestan Corps.

2nd Caucasian, 6th Turkestan Rifle Brigade; 1st Ruban-Plastun Brigade (Cossacks on foot).

66th Infantry (Reserve) Division; 2nd, 3rd Ruban-Plastun (Reserve) Brigade.

1st and 2nd Caucasian Cossack Division; Transcaspian and 1st Siberian Cossack Brigade.

Reinforcements in December: 3rd Caucasian (Reserve) Rifle Brigade, 3rd Kuban

from the Army Reserve.

Additionally available (Army Reserve¹):

(9½ Infantry Divisions, 4¾ Cavalry Divisions)

Remnants of the original 6th Army (Petersburg).

Commander: General of Artillery van der Vliet.

55th and 67th Infantry (Reserve) Division.

Landwehr Units (number unknown).

Orenburg Cossack Division.

¹) Transfers: by November 25 (2½ Infantry Divisions) 3rd Turkestan Rifle Brigade, 55th Infantry Division  
to the Northwestern Front; by the end of December (2½ Infantry Divisions, 1 Cavalry Division) 3rd Turkestan  
(IV Siberian Reserve), 62nd Reserve to the Northwestern Front, Caucasian Native Cavalry Division to the Southwestern Front.  
(Reserve) Rifle Brigade, 3rd Kuban Cossack Division to the Caucasian Army.

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The Russian Army.

Remnants of the original 7th Army (Odessa).

Commander-in-Chief: Gen. of Artillery Akitin.

2nd Inf. (Res.) Div.

Landwehr units (number unknown).

Don Cossack R.

Outside Army Group:

(Partially still being formed.)

(XIII.¹), XV.¹), IV. Siberian Corps (3rd, 9th Siberian Rifle Div.).

10th Siberian Rifle Div.

Caucasian (Res.), 3rd Turkestan Rifle Brig.

various brigades (number unknown).

2nd Turkestan and 3rd Kuban Cossack Div., Caucasian Native Cavalry Div.; 2nd and 3rd Transbaikal Cossack Brig.

Reinforcements end of Dec.: Guard Corps from the Southwestern Front.

¹) These two corps were destroyed at Tannenberg.

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Troop Movements on the German

Troops:

on the German Western Front and from there to the

Maps and Sketches No. 2, 3 and 6; furthermore, the German

Seq. No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Locations

1. | 5th R. D. | 3rd Army | 9th Army | Rail Transport | 30.–31.10. | in and near Arlon

2. | 6th R. D. | 6th Army | 9th Army | " | 3.–4.11. | in and near Courtrai

3. | 9th R. D. with H. K. R. 1 | 6th Army | 9th Army | " | 5.–6.11. | in and near Courtrai

4. | 4th I. D. with Gen. Kdo. II. A. K. | 1st Army | 6th Army | " | 4.–7.11. | Anizy, Laon

5. | 9th R. D. | 5th Army | 4th Army | " | 5.–7.11. | Dun, Stenay

6. | Ldw. I. R. 99 | Army Detachment Falkenhausen | East Prussian Southern Front | " | 7.11. | Dieuze

7. | 6th R. D. | 6th Army | 4th Army | Foot March | 9.11. | Area Courtrai

8. | Division Hofmann (Staff 19th I. D., Staff 40th I. Brig. with I. R. 77 and 78, Staff 26th X. R. Brig. with I. R. 15, III./R. R. 73, I./R. R. 74, III./R. R. 79) | 7th Army | 6th Army | Rail Transport | 12.–13.11. | Bazancourt, Guignicourt

9. | Division Fuchs (Staff 16th I. D., 29th and 31st I. Brig.) | 3rd Army | 4th Army | " | 13.–14.11. | Challerange

keyno: 393

Western Front and from there to the East.

Movements

East from November 3 to December 31, 19

Field Railway Service, Volume I, Maps 1, 4, 6 and Sketch 32.

Railway lines or marching routes | Unloading stations or marching destinations | Unloading time or end of the march

Luxembourg—Koblenz, further Frankfurt a. M.—Leipzig—Cottbus—Posen and Wreslar—Kassel—Güsten—Berlin—Frankfurt a. O.—Posen | Jarotschin, Pleschen, Miloslaw, Wreschen | 1.—3.11.

Brussels—Liège—Aachen—Cologne—Hanover—Berlin—Schneidemühl—Bromberg | Hohensalza, Pakschitz | 5.—7.11.

Brussels—Liège—Aachen—Cologne, further Hanover—Berlin—Schneidemühl—Bromberg and Magdeburg—Berlin—Posen—Elfenau | Hohensalza, Pakosch | 7.—8.11.

Lagnier—Cambrai—Valenciennes—Lille | Lille | 5.—8.11.

Sedan—Charleville—Liart—Hirson—Mons—Tournai | Courtrai, Ingelmünster | 7.—9.11.

Stargemünd—Frankfurt a. M.—Bebra—Cottbus—Posen—Thorn | Grallau | 13.11.

— | Area south of Bruges | 9.11.

Rethel—Liart—Hirson—Cambrai—Douai and Laon—Lagnier—St. Quentin—Douai | Lille, Tourcoing | 14.—15.11.

Vouziers—Liart—Avesnes—Tournai | Roulers, Iseghem | 14.—15.11.

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Troop Movements on the German Side

Dept. No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Points

10. | 66th R. T. Brigade | A. A. Strantz | 4th Army | Rail Transport | 13.—14.11. | Conflans, Mars la Tour

11. | 4th R. D. | 6th Army | East Prussian Southern Front | " | 13.—14.11. | in and near Audenarde

12. | 2nd R. D. with H. R. K. 4 | 6th Army | East Prussian Southern Front | " | 15.—17.11. | in and near Audenarde

13. | R. F. R. 109 | 2nd Army | 1st Army | " | 15.—16.11. | Nesle

| Bavarian F. R. 16 | 2nd Army | 1st Army | " | 15.—16.11. | Péronne

| 4./III. 6 | 2nd Army | 1st Army | " | 16.11. | Nesle

| 1./Chev. 4 | 2nd Army | 1st Army | " | 16.11. | Péronne

| return | R. F. R. 109 | 1st Army | 2nd Army | Motor Transport | 24.—25.11. | Area southwest of Folembray

| Bavarian F. R. 16 | 1st Army | 2nd Army | Marching | 25.11. | "

| 4./III. 6 | 1st Army | 2nd Army | " | 24.11. | "

| 1./Chev. 4 | 1st Army | 2nd Army | " | 24.11. | "

14. | 7th R. D. | 6th Army | Left Army Group | a) Marching | 22.11. | Area halfway Courtrai—Tournai

| | | | b) Rail Transport | 3.—4.12. | in and near Sedan

15. | II. A. K. | 6th Army | 9th Army | Rail Transport | 20.—25.11. | Area Lille

16. | 48th R. D. with Gen. Command XXIV. R. K. | 6th Army | O. B. East | " | 22.—24.11. | in and near Roubaix

keyno: 395

Western Front and from there to the East.

Railway lines or marching routes | Unloading stations or marching destinations | Unloading time or end of the march

Montmédy—Charleville—Avesnes—Tournai | Roulers, Iseghem | 14.—15.11.

Brussels—Liège—Cologne, further Hanover—Berlin—Schneidemühl—Bromberg—Graudenz and Magdeburg—Berlin—Posen—Thorn | Allenstein, Passenheim, Grallau | 16.—17.11.

Montmédy—Luxembourg—Koblenz, further Kassel—Gießen—Berlin—Schneidemühl—Bromberg—Graudenz and Frankfurt a. M.—Erfurt—Cottbus—Posen—Thorn. | Lautenburg, Strasburg, Grallau | 19.—21.11.

St. Quentin | Tergnier | 16.11.

St. Quentin | Chauny | 16.11.

St. Quentin | Tergnier | 16.11.

St. Quentin | Tergnier | 16.11.

Chauny—Péronne | Area southeast of Bapaume | 25.11.

Chauny | Area around Péronne | 26.11.

Chauny | Area around Nesle | 26.11.

Chauny | Area around Péronne | 26.11.

Orchies—Denain—Le Cateau—Guise—Marle—Montcornet—Liart—Mézières | Area around Sedan | 30.11.

Diedenhofen—Saargemünd | Saarburg, Lauterfingen | 3.—5.12.

Lille—St. Quentin—Laon—Sedan—Luxembourg—Koblenz, further Kassel—Gießen, Koblenz—Breslau—Oels and Frankfurt a. M.—Leipzig—Cottbus—Sagan—Oppeln | Ostrowo, Stalmierz, Kalisz, Kempen, Schildberg, Grabow | 23.—28.11.

Lournai—Liège—Aachen, further Cologne—Elberfeld—Magdeburg and Crefeld—Hanover, further Berlin—Frankfurt a. O.—Liegnitz—Breslau | Kreuzburg, Konstadt, Laskowitz, Rosenberg | 26.—27.11.

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Troop Movements on the German

Dept. No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Locations

17. | 47th R. D. | 5th Army and Army Detachment Strantz | Austro-Hungarian Army | Rail Transport | 24.—28.11. | in and near Spincourt Conflans

18. | 9th R. D. | 4th Army | 5th Army and Army Detachment Strantz | " | 25.—26.11. | Roulers, Lichtervelde, Tieghem

19. | 26th I. D. with Gen. Command XIII. A. K. | 6th Army | 9th Army | " | 25.—28.11. | Area Tournai

20. | 25th R. D. | 6th Army | 9th Army | " | 29.—30.11. | Area Roulers

21. | 66th R. J. Brigade | 4th Army | Army Detachment Strantz | " | 27.11. | Lichtervelde, Roulers, Tieghem

22. | Division Hofmann Heavy Artillery of the 4th and 5th Army | 6th Army | 7th Army | " | 27.—28.11. | Area Lille

23. | 4th and 5th Army | 9th Army | " | 28.11.—6.12. | Area Lille and Metz

24. | III. A. K. | 4th Army | 9th Army | " | 1.—4.12. | Area Lille

25. | H. R. R. 2 | 6th Army | Gen. Gov. in Belgium | Foot March | 6.12. | Froyennes northwest of Tournai

26. | 3rd R. D. | 6th Army | Gen. Gov. in Belgium | " | 6.12. | Area Courtrai—Audenarde

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Western Front and from there to the East.

Railway lines or Unloading stations Unloading time Remarks

March routes or March destinations or completion

of the march

Ingeln—Saarlouis—Saar- in and near Krakow 28.—30.11.

brücken—Kirn—Mainz—

Darmstadt—Bamberg—

Leipzig—Dresden and Saar-

gemünd—Germersheim—

Heilbronn—Nuremberg—Hof—

Dresden, further Hirschberg—

Reibze—Randzin

Valenciennes—Hirson—Sedan in and near Longu- 27.—29.11.

yon—Spincourt

and Stenay

Quittich—Aachen, further Cologne Thorn, Alexandrowo, 28.11.—1.12.

—Elberfeld—Magdeburg— Njeschawa

Frankfurt a. O.—Posen and

Krefeld—Hanover—Berlin

—Schneidemühl—Bromberg

Moulers—Liart—Sedan— Njeschawa, Wlozla- 3.—4.12.

Luxembourg—Koblenz, further wek

Rüdesheim—Frankfurt a. M.

—Halle—Berlin—Frank-

furt a. O.—Posen and Kattel

—Sütten—Berlin—Schneide-

mühl—Bromberg

Coutrai—Valenciennes— Region Conflans —29.11.

Hirson—Sedan

Cambrai—St. Quentin—Laon Region Guignicourt 28.—29.11.

—Liart—Sedan—Luxem- Thorn, Njeschawa, 1.—9.12.

burg—Koblenz—Frank- Wlozlawek, Kutno

furt a. M.—Bebra—Cottbus

—Lissa—Posen—Rogasen

—Bromberg—Thorn and Metz

—Kirn—Mainz—Würzburg Thorn, Alexandrowo, 5.—8.12.

—Bamberg—Leipzig—Cott- Njeschawa, Wloz-

bus—Posen—Thorn lawek

Quittich—Aachen, further Cologne Brussels 6.12.

—Magdeburg—Berlin—

Frankfurt a. O.—Posen and

Krefeld—Hanover—Berlin

—Schneidemühl—Bromberg

Area Hasselt—Bever- 11.12. Occupation troops

loo—Turnhout Belgium.

—Antwerp—

Mechelen

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Troop Movements on the German Side

Abt. No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Points

27. | Bavarian R. D. | 6th Army | Gen. Gov. in Belgium | Marching | 6.12. | Area Tournai

28. | Div. Fuchs | 4th Army | Left Army Group (Army Det. Strantz) | Rail Transport | 7.–9.12. | Roulers, Lichtervelde, Fiseghm

29. | 1st Bavarian Ldw. Brig. | Gen. Gov. in Belgium | 3rd Army | " | 8.12. | Antwerp

30. | 1st G. Inf. Brig., 1./2. G. U. L. R., 1st G. Field Art. R. (von Garbe- Div. Winkler) | 4th Army | 6th Army | Marching | 8.12. | Southeast of Gheulevelt

31. | Division Fuchs (reinforced by 3rd Battery of the Bavarian Replacement Division) | A. A. Strantz | A. A. Gaede | Rail Transport | 11.–12.12. | Area Conflans- Mars la Tour- Chambley

32. | 41st Ldw. Inf. Brig. (III. and III./Ldw. Inf. R. 87, IV./Ldw. Inf. R. 76) | 6th Army | 3rd Army | " | 12.12. | Area Lille

33. | Reserve of the III. Bavarian A. K. (6 Btl., 1 Est., 7 Battr.) | A. A. Strantz | A. A. Falkenhausen | Marching | 12.12. | Area Northeast of St. Mihiel

back | A. A. Falkenhausen | A. A. Strantz | " | 15.–16.12. | Area Southwest of Thiaucourt

34. | 1st Res. Replacement Brig. | 4th Army | 3rd Army | Rail Transport | 23.12. | Ghent

35. | 31st Inf. Brig. (of Division Fuchs) | A. A. Gaede | 3rd Army | " | 23.12. | Bollweiler

36. | Res. of the 5th Army (3 Btle., 1 F. J., 1 Mortar Battery) | 5th Army | 3rd Army | " | 23.–24.12. | Dun and South

back | 3rd Army | 5th Army | " | 27.12. | Area Somme Hy

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Western Front and from there to the East.

Railways or March Routes | Unloading Stations or March Destinations | Unloading Time or End of March | Remarks

---|---|---|---

Area Brussels—Tournai—Maubeuge—(Chimay)—Namur—Tirlemont—Brussels | 9. 12. | Occupation troops in Belgium.

Area Conflans—Mars la Tour—Chambley | 8.—10. 12. |

Somme Py | 12. 12. |

Area Douai | 10. 12. | The Winkler Division was moved to the right wing of the 6th Army at the beginning of November and transferred to the 4th Army on November 25 by shifting the army boundary.

Area Gebweiler—Mühlhausen | 12.—13. 12. |

Area northeast of Reims | 13. 12. |

Area southwest of Thiaucourt | 12. 12. |

Area northeast of St. Mihiel | 15.—16. 12. |

Somme Py | 24.—25. 12. |

Somme Py | 25. 12. |

Challerange, Somme Py | 24. 12. |

Area Dun | 29.—30. 12. |

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Troop Movements on

Serial No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Points

37. | Reserve at XII. A. K. (3 Btls.) | 7th Army | 3rd Army | Rail Transport | 23. 12. | Area northeast of Aubigny

back | 3rd Army | 7th Army | " | 28. 12. | Challerrange

38. | Remainder of the Guard Div. Winkler | 4th Army | 6th Army | Marching | — | Southeast of Gheulevelt

G. Gren. R. 2, 5./2. G. U. R., 2. G. Field Art. R., 2./S. Pi. Btl.

G. Gren. R. 4, 3./S. Pi. Btl.

1/2 I. L./1. G. Foot Art. R. | — | — | — | 23. 12. | —

— | — | — | — | 26. 12. | —

— | — | — | — | 28. 12. | —

39. | 42nd Cav. Brig. (of the 7th Cav. Div.) | A. A. Falkenhausen | A. A. Gaede | Rail Transport | 24. 12. | Saartburg, Rieding

40. | 7th Cav. Div. (without 30th and 42nd Cav. Brig. and Jäg. Btl. 9) | A. A. Falkenhausen | A. A. Gaede | " | 27. 12. | Saartburg, Rieding

Troops:

on the German Eastern Front from

Maps and Sketches No. 6 and 21; also The German

Serial No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Points

1. | XI. A. K. | within the 9th Army | — | Marching | 4. 11. | South of Sieradz

2. | XVII. A. K. | within the 9th Army | — | Rail Transport | 6.–10. 11. | Kreuzburg, Rosenberg, Laskowitz, Konstadt

keyno: 401

Railway lines or Unloading stations Unloading time Remarks

March routes or March destinations or Completion

of the march

Laon—Liart—Vouziers Somme Py 23. 12.

Vouziers—Charleville—Liart— Area northeast 28. 12.

Laon Aubigny

Tourcoing—Roubair—Lem- Area Douai —

pleuwe

— — 25. 12.

Strasbourg Wittelsheim, Dornach —

Strasbourg Wittelsheim, Dornach 25. 12.

27. 12.

Movements

3 November to 31 December 1914.

Field Railway Service, Vol. I, Map 1 and 6 and Sketch 32.

Railway lines or Unloading stations Unloading time Remarks

March routes or March destinations or Completion

of the march

Ottowo Jarotschin 9. 11.

Ottowo—Jarotschin Wreschen, Stralowo, 7.—10. 11.

Schwalibogowo,

Miloslaw

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Troop Movements on

Dept. No. | Unit | from | to | Type of Troop Movement | Loading Time or Start of March | Loading Stations or Departure Locations

3. | XX Army Corps | within the 9th Army | — | Rail Transport | 6.—10.11. | Cawjerzie, Lasy, Sombrowoje, Sosnowicze

4. | 3rd Guard Infantry Division | Army Detachment Woyrsch | 9th Army | " | 10.—12.11. | Beuthen, Tarnowitz, Bismarckhütte, Laurahütte

5. | I Reserve Corps | 8th Army | 9th Army | " | 5.—11.11. | Stallupönen, Gumbinnen, Juschken, Insterburg

6. | XXV Reserve Corps | 8th Army | 9th Army | " | 5.—8.11. | Widminnen, Lötzen, Stürlack, Angerburg

7. | 1st Jäger Division | 8th Army | 9th Army | " | 22.—25.11. | Stürlack, Rastenburg, Korschen

8. | 4th Reserve Division | 8th Army | 9th Army | " | 29.—30.11. | Goldap, Stallau

9. | 5th Field Brigade | 9th Army | East Prussian Southern Front | " | 16.—17.12. | Sjeradz

10. | 5th Field Brigade | East Prussian Southern Front | 8th Army | " | 26.—31.12. | Illowo

keyno: 403

Rail lines or marching routes

Unloading stations or marching destinations

Unloading time or end of the march

Oppeln—Breslau—Posen

Gnesen, Carlshof, Tremessen, Mogilno, Hohensalza, Jakscheiz

7.—10. 11.

Neurode—Ostrowo—Jarotschin

Hohensalza, Argenau, Bartschin, Pakosch

11.—13. 11.

Königsberg—Marienburg—Bromberg

Thorn, Ottlotschin, Alexandrowo

6.—12. 11.

Posen—Allenstein—Gütersloh

Thorn, Tauer, Schönsee

6.—9. 11.

Allenstein—Dt.-Gylau

Thorn, Alexandrowo, Nieszawa

23.—26. 11.

Neidenburg—Thorn

Thorn, Tauer

30. 11.—1. 12.

Insterburg—Grallau

Grallau

17.—19. 12.

Gumbinnen—Sziillen

Sziillen (south of Tilsit), Lötzen

28. 12. 14—1. 1. 15.

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General Remarks of the Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Field Army from 25. 11. 14.

Appendix 3.

Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.

Strictly confidential!

Written by officer.

G. H. Q. Mézières, 25. 11. 14.

General Remarks.¹)

1. In the near future, it is above all essential to hold the gained line unconditionally. However, the offensive spirit must not be lost; rather, every opportunity must be taken to occupy forward terrain. Even smaller operations of this kind maintain the offensive spirit in the troops, counteract fatigue, and do not lack impact on the enemy. The prerequisite for the success of all operations is their most thorough preparation; unsuccessful operations have a discouraging effect on the enemy to the same extent as they adversely affect our troops. The experience gained throughout the campaign, that the enemy strives to retake lost positions through particularly fierce counterattacks, must lead to the inevitable fortification of every gained position. What is gained must be held unconditionally.

2. In general, the position currently reached by our foremost line should be maintained. Since it has arisen merely from the tactical situation, the necessity for subsequent defense will exist in some places. At such points, an improvement forward should be sought. Only where this is completely unfeasible can the abandonment of small terrain sections be justified. However, it must be noted everywhere that our task will also be to ensure that even completely insignificant objects are regarded by the enemy as a great success and exploited accordingly.

3. To ensure the unconditional holding of our positions, the foremost lines must first be further fortified by all means. In addition to using the strongest obstacles of all kinds, a cover securing against the effect of the enemy's heavy artillery must be erected. Where not already present, strongly covered shelters, well-covered communication routes, and battery covers must be created. Special attention should be paid to the expansion of artillery observation posts; the provision of armor plates for the latter is to be initiated. Likewise, care will be taken for rifle shields and for machine gun positions that resist infantry fire even from the shortest distance. Efforts will be made to secure the guns we have installed with strong obstacles. The more securely each deeper line is secured, the more troops can be saved there and relocated further back, possibly freed for other uses. Therefore, efforts will be made to save on passive obstacles at the foremost line by strengthening them.

The fact that our troops generally perform fortification work reluctantly, and the importance of expanding our entire line, compel the higher commands to personally lead the expansion.

4. In addition to fortifying the foremost line, the expansion of rear positions must occur simultaneously. The experiences of the campaign show that it is necessary to create a unified line of positions, that rather a stepwise defense of numerous consecutive positions, each with strong obstacles and good flanking facilities, provides the most sustainable delay to any enemy breakthrough. This type of defense is

¹) Draft by Major General Wild v. Hohenborn.

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General Remarks of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army from 25. 11. 14.

new, and some voices fear that the presence of rear lines

might have an unfavorable influence on the steadfastness of the garrison of the front line.

The experiences we have had with our opponents, however, seem to suggest

that the advantages of closely spaced lines should not be underestimated. It is therefore recom-

mended to create one or two rear, as independent as possible, defensive positions and battery covers

right behind the front line. These positions mainly serve the secure accommodation of the supports

of the front line. The necessity of flanking all positions with well-secured shooting and machine

guns is particularly emphasized.

5. The above statement should not exclude the possibility that independently

of each other and of the association of related rear fortifications, the expansion of particularly larger

reception areas for the rear parts is prepared and possibly also carried out. However, the prerequisite

here is the consideration of the mood among friends and foes when retreating such measures.

6. Further emphasis is placed on the thorough expansion of a good telephone network

in all parts and especially between the different weapons. Where

it is connected, but significant cables allow, they should be laid in the ground at a depth

to avoid disturbances by enemy action. This is particularly true for the most important and often

very endangered cables of the front artillery observation posts.

7. When setting up rear accommodation locations, it is important, in addition to

the best possible preparation of defensive measures by installing obstacles, to protect the troops

against the fire of the sometimes very far-reaching artillery of the enemy, and thus not only to avoid

unnecessary losses but also to provide the troops with ample rest through a significant sense of security.

Even in the accommodations exposed to the fire of the enemy artillery,

it must be constantly strived to achieve protection by coloring the enemy-facing

fronts with earthworks and sandbags, further by possible earth layers

and appropriate filling of the ground floor with earth, by creating

secure rooms in the earth and by a certain trench-like

security — especially for the commanders, etc. — to achieve. Experience

shows that in some places, lack of air cover could have been achieved.

8. The inclination of all rear parts against aircraft and

observation of trees — not easy; it is, however, absolutely necessary to demand. The inventiveness

of the commanders is given a wide scope here. Likewise, the secure

accommodation of working horses will require thorough considerations.

9. It might be advisable for the entire service operation to establish a threefold

rhythm in the rotation of the troops: front line, readiness, complete

rest.

10. To keep the morale of the troops fresh, every effort must be made.

In addition to every supportive care, the activity of the troops standing in the

front line should be considered. Field service exercises of these troops

not only serve further training but also bring a lively element into the

service. That the strengthening of discipline must go hand in hand with occasional relaxation

is self-evident. — Special attention is required for the freshness

of the officers. Where the impressions of the daily battles lasting for months may begin to

weaken the strength, it is always very advantageous

to grant a short leave in the larger cities located in the rear area or

in the recovery homes set up by the A.O.K.'s or A.K.'s.

11. Our position for the foreseeable future has, in a certain sense, the character of

fixed winter quarters. Setting up closing stoves, issuing woolen

blankets, warm underwear, keeping excessive weight out of the

trenches, in short, protection against the effects of winter as necessary as

possible at suitable locations. It is also repeated here that in these

months the possibility of advancing under fine circumstances is

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General Remarks of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army from 25. 11.

must not sleep (see paragraph 1)! If he did so at any point, the loss of the campaign would be almost conjured up1).

12. Greatest importance is placed on the allocation of strong reserves. The corps reserves serve to ensure the unconditional holding of the corps' position, either by reinforcing the front line or by counterattack. Army and army group reserves are to thwart larger enemy breakthrough attempts or serve as a means for offensive operations ordered by the army commander. The army group reserves, as a mobile reserve of the Supreme Army Command, either take over the tasks of the army reserves or — and this is their main purpose — are available for larger operations. In the first case, the commanders of the army groups can dispose of them. The more forces the A. O. K.'s of the Supreme Army Command can provide with further expansion of the positions and after replenishing the army corps, the greater will be the benefit of the army reserves for the greater whole!

1) This last sentence was personally added by General v. Falkenhayn.

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Source Reference.

The presentation is based on the files located in the Reichsarchiv as well as on the information provided by the leading personalities involved and their staff. Below are the most important sources of the available literature. In the presentation, they are indicated by the keyword highlighted in bold in this directory.

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