

# **RUSSIA'S PART IN THE WORLD WAR**

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Russia's part in the World War by C. M. Shumsky-Solomonov

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*By*

COLONEL C. M. SHUMSKY-SOLOMONOV

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## Introduction

The author of this pamphlet, Colonel C. M. Shumsky-Solomonov, is an officer of the Russian Army, a distinguished soldier and an authority on military problems. Col. Shumsky-Solomonov was one of the defenders of Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War, and as a military expert of the Petrograd daily, "Birjeviya Viedomosti", he was well known not only in Russia but also throughout Europe.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to present Russia's part in the recent War. Russia at present lies in seas of blood and tears because of her enormous sacrifices in the struggle against Prussian militarism. The nightmare of Bolshevism was able to overtake Russia because she was exhausted by three years of active participation in the War, during which her casualties reached 12,000,000, and her economic life became overstrained and partially destroyed. Russia's present pitiful condition is the result of her self-sacrificing services to humanity.

According to the data quoted by Col. Shumsky-Solomonov, of the 12,000,000 Russian casualties in the recent War, not less than 3,000,000 were in dead. "Russia's losses," says Col. Shumsky-Solomonov, "are more than twice those of France, four-five times those of England, and more than thirty-five times those of America. Russia's losses are more than twice the total strength of the British Army, and three-four times all the forces mustered by the United States. The number of Russia's casualties is larger than the total population of any of the following European countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Belgium, Holland or the Balkan States."

If Russia had not sacrificed 3,000,000 of her best youth, now sleeping on the battle-fields of Europe, a Prussian bayonet would now be ruling the world. As Col. Shumsky-Solomonov points out, the great role played by Russia in the recent struggle "became apparent at the very beginning of the War, in the important aid she rendered in frustrating the initial and most dangerous

plan of the Germans, by her early offensive in aid of the Allies. Russia, having diverted against herself the entire Austrian army and part of the German, at the time of the battle on the Marne, through her offensive in East Prussia and Galicia, deprived the enemy of the opportunity to realize the fundamental idea of Moltke's plan to fling 'all forces into France.' "

"At the following attempt of the enemy to find a decision in France, to break through to Calais, at Ypres," says Col. Shumsky-Solomonov, "Russia, by the blows she delivered in Galicia, at Warsaw and in East Prussia, contributed to the early termination of this second offensive in France, so dangerous to England, and compelled the Germans for more than a year to abstain from their main operations on the main decisive front of the War—in France.

"In 1915 Russia, having shouldered alone the whole burden of the struggle against Germany, Austria and Turkey, although forced to abandon Poland, still gave the Allies the opportunity to prepare throughout a whole year for the coming German offensive at Verdun. In 1916 Russia, thanks to the Brusilov offensive, saved Italy at that critical moment when the Austrians, through their successful offensive from Tyrol, in the rear of the Italians, threatened to cut off a considerable portion of the Italian Army, at the same time menacing Venice. Together with this, Russia by this offensive greatly facilitated the operations of the Allies on the Somme, and was instrumental in the final clearing of the Verdun forts.

"In the same year Russia took upon herself the blows of Mackensen's and Falkenhayn's armies, which had invaded Roumania, stopped the further advance of the Germans, and undertook the defense of a considerable stretch of the Roumanian front."

In the beginning of the War, in August, 1914, there were, in addition to the Austrian Army, only 14 German divisions engaged on the Russian front. During the first Russian advance into Eastern Prussia, the German General Staff was obliged, on the eve of the battle of the Marne, to transfer 6 additional divisions to the Eastern front. The number of German divisions engaged on the Russian front grew continuously, and in October, 1914, there were 25 divisions, in November—33 divisions, in December—43 divisions, and in January, 1915,—53 German divisions on

the Russian front. The role played by Russia and the services the Russian Armies rendered in the struggle against Prussian Imperialism can be seen further from the fact that during the spring of 1917 there were 162 German and Austrian divisions engaged on the Russian front alone, while on all the other Allied fronts together there were 205 German and Austrian divisions.\*

To this it must be added that Russia entered the War unprepared for a modern struggle. As Col. Shumsky-Solomonov points out, "The Russian Army consisted of millions, but bayonets and guns it had only for one-tenth of its number." General Brusilov once said: "Our soldiers had no shells with which to blast their way across barbed-wire entanglements before an attack; so it was necessary for them to break down the wires with their own bodies and thus to form a bridge for the next attacking column." In the fall of 1917 the Russian Armies collapsed after months of intensive German and Bolshevist propaganda, but this cannot minimize the great heroism of the Russian soldiers during the first three years of the War, heroism without which the alliance of the democratic nations would never have been able to defeat the Prussian militarism.

A. J. SACK

*Director of the Russian Information  
Bureau in the U. S.*

May 25, 1920.

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\*See diagrams on pp. 15 and 18





## Russia's Part in the World War

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### Was it Possible for Germany to Win the War?

In discussing Russia's role in the past World War, it is customary to cite the losses sustained by the Russian Army, losses numbering many millions. There is no doubt that Russia's sacrifices were great, and it is just as true that her losses were greater than those sustained by any of the other Allies. Nevertheless, these sacrifices are by far not the only standard of measurement of Russia's participation in this gigantic struggle. Russia's role must be gauged, first of all, by the efforts made by the Russian Army to blast the German war plans during the first years of the War, when neither America, nor Italy, nor Roumania were among the belligerents, and the British Army was still in the process of formation.

Russia's role must in addition be gauged by the efforts put forth by the Russian Army to save the situation at other critical moments of the War. And of such, we know, there were not a few until the Allies succeeded in gaining their victory over the stubborn and powerful enemy.

Lastly, and this is the main thing, the role played by the Russian Army must be considered also in this respect that the strenuous campaign waged by Russia, with her 180 millions of inhabitants, for three years against Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey, sapped the resources of the enemy and thereby made possible the delivery of the final blow. This weakening of the powers of the enemy by Russia was already bound at various stages of the War to facilitate correspondingly the various operations of the Allies. Therefore at the end of the War three years of effort on the part of Russia, which had devoured the enemy's forces, were destined to enable the Allies finally to crush the enemy. The final

catastrophe of the Central Powers was the direct consequence of the offensive of the Allies in 1918, but Russia made possible this collapse to a considerable degree, having effected, in common with the others, the weakening of Germany, and having consumed during the three years of strenuous fighting countless reserves, forces and resources of the Central Powers.

Could Germany have won the war? A careful analysis of this question brings home the conviction that Germany was very close to victory, and that it required unusual straining of efforts on the part of France and Russia to prevent Germany from "winning out."

The plan of the old Field Marshal, Moltke, was far from worthless. It is a fact that it took from six weeks to two months to mobilize the armed forces of Russia, during which period Russia was unprepared for action. The population of Germany was 70 million and that of Austria-Hungary 52 million, a total of 122 million persons. During these two months of forced inaction those 122 millions of Teutons were faced only by 40 million Frenchmen, for Russia was not yet ready. A threefold superiority in numbers, in addition to an equal degree of military skill, technical equipment and culture, was bound to crush lone France.

It is true that for the complete realization of this scheme it was necessary that the Austrian Army, as well, involve France. This should have been anticipated, as military science does not admit of the division of forces. Just to the contrary, it demands "the concentration of all forces in the decisive hour and at the deciding point,"—in France, upon this particular occasion.

It may be said that Russia could have occupied Galicia and East Prussia had the Austrian Army left for France. Well, the fact is that both these provinces were occupied by Russia anyhow. But if in the first battle of the Marne, when the Germans felt the shortage of the two or three corps dispatched back into Prussia, they would have had these troops at their disposal in addition to half a million Austrians, Joffre's condition would have been rendered critical. The loss of the Marne would have