Chapter 4
1915: The War Continues

Had this been a 'limited war' in the style of the eighteenth century, governments might at this point have declared a truce and patched up a compromise peace. Left to themselves, the original protagonists, Russia and Austria-Hungary, would almost certainly have done so. But the original causes of the war were now almost forgotten, and what those powers felt hardly mattered. Their allies were now in the driving seat, and had no intention of calling a halt. The German armies after a succession of brilliant successes were deep inside the territory of their adversaries, and were confident that they could complete their victory during the coming year. Their government had already drafted, in the so-called September Programme, the peace terms they intended to impose on their defeated enemies. In the west, Belgium would become a German protectorate. France would be made to yield yet more land on her eastern borders and demilitarize her northern territories as far south as the mouth of the Somme. In the east, German frontiers would be pushed deep into Poland and extended north along the Baltic littoral. Heavy indemnities would be demanded from the defeated Allies, commensurate with Germany's own losses of 'blood and treasure'. For France, naturally enough, there could be no peace so long as the German army occupied a fifth of her most productive territory. As for opinion in Britain, peace was unthinkable so long as Germany continued to occupy and behave so outrageously in

3. Germany's self-image during the war

Belgium, and the million or so men who had voluntarily enlisted on the outbreak of the war had barely begun to fight.

In any case for both sides, especially for Britain and Germany, the war was no longer just a traditional struggle for power, but increasingly a conflict of ideologies. If conservatives in Britain saw it as a defence of the British Empire against the challenge of a rival Great Power, liberals saw it as a struggle for democracy and the rule of law against the jackboot of Prussian militarism, whose treatment of Belgium gave a foretaste of what Europe had to expect at the hands of a victorious Germany. The demonization of Germany was,

4. The image of Germany in Allied propaganda

of course, to be intensified by official propaganda, but that did no more than play on emotions already being ventilated and intensified by the press. The degree of popular hysteria was such that even the most distinguished families with German names found it convenient to relabel themselves: the Battenbergs as Mountbatten, the Royal family itself (generally known as the House of Hanover but more accurately Saxe-Coburg-Gotha) as the House of Windsor. At the lower end of the animal scale, the popular breed of German sheepdogs was rebranded as 'Alsatians', and dachshunds disappeared from the streets. Wagner's music was effectively banned. In Germany reactions were no less intense. The antagonism found expression in Ernst Lissauer's popular *Hassgesang*, a Hymn of Hate, which indicted England as Germany's most dangerous and treacherous foe. German academics and

intellectuals joined forces to depict Germany as fighting for a unique *Kultur* against Slavic barbarism on the one hand, and, on the other, the frivolity and decadence of French *civilisation* and the brutish shopkeepers' materialism of the Anglo-Saxons – a *Kultur* that embodied and was defended by the warrior virtues that the West condemned as militaristic. Such 'popular passions' were at least as important as political or military calculations in the determination of the belligerents to press on with the war.

War at Sea

The British government had initially shared the continental illusion that the war would be ended in a matter of months; not through a military decision but from a collapse of the financial system that enabled the economy of the belligerent powers to function at all. There was general surprise when the incoming Secretary of State for War, Britain's most distinguished living soldier Lord Kitchener, warned his civilian colleagues to plan for a war lasting for at least three years, but historical precedent gave no reason to suppose that it would be over any more quickly. Even if Germany were as successful by land as had been Napoleon, the war was likely to go on as it had in the days of Napoleon; and, like Napoleon, Germany would ultimately be defeated by British 'command of the sea'. The main concern of the Royal Navy was to ensure that this would be the case.

About the importance of that 'command' no one was in any doubt. Orthodox naval opinion, in Germany as well as in Britain, believed that wars were won or lost by a clash of great battle fleets, as they had been in the age of Nelson. The victor would then be able to starve his opponent into surrender, or at least so disrupt his trade that his economy would collapse and he would no longer be able to continue the war. In spite of Tirpitz's building programme, the German High Seas Fleet was still in no position to challenge the British Grand Fleet; but the British were too wary of the lethal power of mines and torpedoes to seek out the German fleet in its

North Sea bases or impose a close blockade on the German coast. Their caution appeared justified when on 22 September 1914 a German submarine sank three British cruisers in the English Channel, with a loss of 1,500 lives. The Grand Fleet therefore remained in harbour at Scapa Flow, in the extreme north of Scotland, watching in case the German fleet attempted a sortie. Its opponents in the German High Seas Fleet did the same, while the Royal Navy swept German shipping from the seas. The few German commerce-raiders at sea when war broke out were quickly hunted down, though not before a squadron under Admiral Graf von Spee destroyed a British detachment at Coronel off the coast of Chile on 1 November 1914 – to be destroyed in its turn in the Battle of the Falkland Islands a month later.

German cruisers bombarded English coastal towns during the winter of 1914–15, and there was a clash on the Dogger Bank in January, but otherwise both fleets remained inactive. After two years a new German commander, Admiral Scheer, lost patience. On 31 May 1916 he led the High Seas Fleet out into the North Sea to challenge the Grand Fleet to battle. The British took up the challenge, and the two fleets clashed off the Danish coast in what for the British became known as the Battle of Jutland, for the Germans as that of the Skaggerak. The unprecedented nature of the encounter and the failure of signal communications made the battle itself inconclusive. The Germans sank fourteen British ships totalling 110,000 tons as against their own loss of eleven ships totalling 62,000 tons, and so were able plausibly to claim a tactical victory. But the strategic situation remained unchanged. British ships continued to dominate the world's oceans, and the German High Seas Fleet to rot in harbour until the end of the war.

Colonial Warfare

'Command of the sea' also meant that Germany was cut off from her colonies, but these were too few to matter. Unlike the French in the eighteenth century, whose colonies had been a major source of

wealth that could be transferred to their conqueror, the Germans had acquired overseas colonies mainly for reasons of prestige, to bolster their claim to the status of *Weltmacht*; but they were if anything a drain on their economy. Their islands in the Central Pacific – the Marshalls, the Marianas, the Carolines – were quickly seized by Britain's allies the Japanese, as was their base Tsingtao on the Chinese mainland. Those in the South Pacific – Samoa, Papua, the Solomons, the Bismarcks – were taken by the Australians and New Zealanders. Ironically, although all were to be the scenes of desperate fighting in the Second World War, in the First they hardly rated as sideshows. In West Africa, French and British colonial troops cooperated in clearing Togoland and the German Cameroons. South African forces, largely Boers who had been fighting the British fifteen years earlier, captured German South-West Africa, later Namibia, but German East Africa, later Tanzania, proved a very much harder nut to crack. The commander of the garrison, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, first repulsed a landing by Anglo-Indian troops at Tanga, and then evaded and harassed an expedition sent to destroy him under one of the stars of the Boer War, Jan Christian Smuts, in a guerrilla campaign that was still being successfully waged when the war ended in Europe in 1918.

Lettow-Vorbeck brilliantly upheld the honour of German arms, but the effect of his campaign on the outcome of the war was negligible. It was clear from the outset that the war would be decided on European battlefields. Although the British had been laying plans for 'Imperial Defence' for the previous thirty years, these had been concerned not so much with the defence of imperial territory overseas as with contributions from the Empire to the Royal Navy, and with the homogenization of Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand forces with those of the United Kingdom. British command of the seas enabled those forces to be brought to Europe, some of them escorted by Japanese warships. All were volunteers. Many were first-generation immigrants or their children for whom Britain was still 'home', and membership of the British Empire a cause for pride. In addition, détente with Russia had freed the

Indian army for service overseas, although the miserable winter of 1914 that many of them spent in the waterlogged trenches of the Western Front made it clear that this was not the best way to use their services. Fortunately a more convenient theatre of war opened up for them when, at the end of October, the Ottoman Empire entered the war at the side of Germany.

The Dardanelles and Salonica Campaigns

The Ottoman Empire ('Turkey' for short) was a major actor on the European scene whose role we have not yet considered. After a century of degeneracy, defeat, and humiliation, when she survived mainly because the European powers saw her existence as necessary to preserve the balance in Eastern Europe, power had been seized in 1908 by a group of young officers (the original 'Young Turks') set on modernizing the archaic political and economic system and restoring national prestige. They turned their backs on the Islamic traditions of the Ottoman Empire with its vast sprawling frontiers in Africa and Arabia in favour of a compact ethnically homogeneous Turkey that would eliminate alien elements – Greek, Armenian – within her own territory and sponsor a Pan-Turanian movement that would liberate and unite the thirty million ethnic Turks of the Caucasus, southern Russia, and Central Asia under a single rule. The Russians viewed the advent of this new regime with understandable alarm, the more so since in Germany it found enthusiastic support. German investment poured into the country, especially for the development of its railways. German diplomats exercised the commanding influence in Constantinople that had been a British prerogative in the previous century, while German officers assisted in the training and re-equipment of the Turkish army – though not in time to save it from humiliating defeat in the First Balkan War of 1912. There is still a special shrine in honour of its German mentors in the Turkish Army Museum in Istanbul.

The British took a relaxed view of all this. Once they had established themselves in Egypt in the 1880s, they had abandoned the

thankless task of propping up the Turks as a barrier to Russian expansion. Indeed, they initially saw in the German presence there a useful counterweight against Russia. When Russia became an ally, the Straits linking the Mediterranean with the Black Sea, through which passed a third of all Russian exports, acquired a new strategic importance, but it was assumed that Anglo-French command of the Mediterranean would be enough to ensure safe passage. Further, if the Germans controlled the Turkish army, the British were equally influential in the Turkish navy. Two state-of-the-art battleships had been built for it in British yards, and in August 1914 they were ready for delivery. But when war broke out the British government stepped in and purchased the ships for themselves, thus alienating their chief supporters in Constantinople. Admittedly the Turks had just concluded a treaty with Germany directed against the Russians, so there could be no guarantee that the vessels would not fall under German control; and the incident might have been forgotten if two German warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, had not successfully evaded British pursuit in the Mediterranean on the outbreak of war and cast anchor off Constantinople on 12 August. Their brooding presence, combined with the stunning successes of the German armies on all fronts, helped persuade the Turkish government to declare war on Russia, and on 29 October the German ships, now flying the Turkish flag, bombarded the Black Sea port of Odessa. At the same time the Turks took the offensive against the Russians by attacking in that historic arena of Russo-Turkish conflict, the Caucasus – an unwise thing to do at the onset of winter, as the 80,000 Turkish losses during the next three months were to testify.

The British did not lament this diplomatic defeat, and may indeed have deliberately courted it. The decrepit Ottoman Empire was more useful to them as a victim than as a dependent ally. The Colonial Office and the India Office had long seen Turkey's Asian possessions as a legitimate prey for the British Empire. The Royal Navy, having recently begun to convert from coal to oil-burning ships, had its eyes on the oil refineries at Basra at the head of the Persian Gulf. With Turkey as an enemy, Britain could now convert

her anomalous occupation of Egypt into a full protectorate. London even felt self-confident enough to promise Constantinople, seen for 100 years past as a bastion of British security, to their new allies the Russians. It was still assumed that Turkey, with her political life concentrated in Constantinople, would be easily vulnerable to the pressure of British sea power. All that was needed was to force a passage through the Dardanelles, which nobody thought would be very difficult; and early in 1915 preparations were made to do just that.

The Dardanelles campaign was triggered in January 1915 by a request from the hard-pressed Russians for a 'demonstration' against Constantinople to relieve Turkish pressure in the Caucasus. There were influential forces in Whitehall that had always questioned the wisdom of committing the British army to a land campaign in Western Europe instead of using Britain's maritime power to blockade the enemy and her financial strength to support continental allies – the strategy that had served them so well in the Napoleonic Wars. Now they had their chance – especially since the army had failed to secure the decision on the Western Front that had been so confidently expected. The young First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, urged on the Dardanelles expedition with his incomparable eloquence. His colleague at the War Office, Lord Kitchener, an imperial soldier who had spent most of his life in the Middle East, favoured it as well. For one thing it would reopen communications with Russia, freeing her to export the grain that played so vital a part in her economy. For another, a 'back door' could be opened through the Balkans to help the Serbs, who were still successfully resisting Austrian attack; and Serbia's former allies of the Balkan Wars, Bulgaria and Greece, might be persuaded to come to her help as well. Bulgaria, admittedly, was a very long shot. Traditionally hostile to Serbia anyway, she had lost to her in the Second Balkan War the lands in Macedonia that she saw as her rightful reward for her efforts in the First, and was longing to get them back. The Allies hoped to compensate her at the expense of Austria-Hungary, but the Central Powers were in a far stronger

position to woo her, both diplomatically and militarily. No one was very surprised when Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers in October 1915.

But Greece was a different matter. She had been Serbia's ally in both Balkan Wars. Her business and trading classes were strongly anglophile. The army and court were equally strongly pro-German – not surprisingly, given that the King was the Kaiser's brother-in-law (most of the new Balkan states had gone shopping for their royal families in Germany). The Prime Minister, Eleutherios Venizelos, a Cretan, was himself a strong supporter of the Allies, but demanded a high price for Greek support – Constantinople, which had unfortunately already been promised to the Russians. Nevertheless the Serb victories over the Austrians in the winter of 1914 and the Allied landings at the Dardanelles the following March strengthened his hand sufficiently for him to accept an Allied request (largely inspired by the French) that they should land a small army at Salonica to bring direct help to the Serbs. This force landed in October 1915.

By then a great deal had happened. The Dardanelles expedition had failed. Its military objectives had from the beginning been confused. The Royal Navy had been ordered simply 'to bombard and take the Gallipoli peninsula, with Constantinople as its objective'. But when they attacked in March 1915, Allied (Anglo-French) naval forces had been turned back by enemy minefields, and had called in land forces to help. Troops were then committed piecemeal to the Gallipoli peninsula, had suffered heavy losses in landing, and could then only cling on to narrow beachheads overlooked by strong Turkish defences. A major British attack in August at Suvla Bay failed owing to the incompetence of its commanders. By October it was clear that the operation had been a total failure, redeemed only by the courage and endurance of the troops, especially those from Australia and New Zealand, who had carried it out, and by the successful evacuation of the peninsula at the end of the year. The Allies had thus lost all credit in the eastern Mediterranean. In

Greece, Venizelos was disgraced; and, when the Allied expedition eventually landed at Salonica, the new Greek government complained bitterly of the infringement of its neutrality – which was especially embarrassing for the British liberals who claimed to be fighting for the rights of small nations.

To make matters worse, the Central Powers had taken the military initiative in the Balkans with far greater success. In November 1915 Austrian and German forces under German command, joined by Bulgarians, invaded Serbia from three sides, pre-empting the Allied advance from Salonica to help her. Serbia was crushed and occupied, the remnants of her defeated army straggling over the Montenegrin mountains in mid-winter to escape through the Adriatic ports. Those who survived joined the Allied force at Salonica, which was left in a state of almost comic impotence, while the Austrians were now able to concentrate their strength on their preferred adversaries; the Italians.

Italy Enters the War

Italy, as we have seen, had declared her neutrality when war broke out. There was no great enthusiasm for joining in the war: the Treasury had been drained by the war against the Turks, and industry was paralysed by strikes. The Church and much of the aristocracy favoured the cause of the Catholic Austrians against the liberal West. But the traditions of the *Risorgimento*, the prospect of the final unification of the Italian nation, gave the Allied cause a great popular advantage, which the Central Powers could match only by ceding the Italian-speaking territories still in Austrian possession. The Germans brought heavy pressure to bear on their Austrian allies to do this, but Vienna was understandably reluctant. After all, the war was being fought to preserve the Monarchy, not to dismantle it. The Italians were universally unpopular, besides being the only adversaries the Austrians were confident of being able to defeat. Nevertheless, in May 1915 Vienna reluctantly yielded to German pressure. It was too late: the Italians had signed the secret

Treaty of London with the Allies on 26 April. By this they were promised all the Italian-speaking regions south of the Alps, together with the German-speaking South Tyrol and wide areas of Slovenia and Dalmatia where the Italians were in a definite minority – to say nothing of a substantial share in Turkish Anatolia where there were no Italians at all.

Italy declared war on 23 May 1915, and her commander-in-chief General Luigi Cadorna spent the next two years launching suicidal attacks in the mountains beyond the Isonzo, losing almost a million men in the process. The Austrian army fought them with an enthusiasm that it had shown on no other front. Arguably, the Italian entry into the war did more for the morale of the Austrian army than the victories it had won, very much as a junior partner to the Germans, over the Serbs and Russians in the course of 1915. Certainly it did little to compensate the Allies for the loss of the Balkans and their defeat at the hands of the Turks.

The Eastern Front in 1915

Nor had the Allies done any better on their major fronts. The strategic initiative still lay with Berlin – in particular with Erich von Falkenhayn, the highly competent new Chief of the General Staff. Falkenhayn had a clear order of priorities. He realized that Germany's most dangerous enemies lay in the west. Unless France and, even more important, Britain, were defeated, the Allies could prolong the war indefinitely – not so much through their own military strength as through the maritime superiority that enabled them to draw on the economic resources of the New World and deny them to Germany. Russia no longer presented any immediate threat, and the sheer size of the eastern theatre made it difficult to obtain a decisive victory on that front. Left to himself, Falkenhayn would have returned to the Schlieffen strategy of allocating minimal forces to hold the Russians while concentrating everything on securing a decisive victory in the west. But he was not left to himself. For the German public the great heroes of the war were

now the victors of Tannenberg: Hindenburg and Ludendorff. This formidable couple had no intention of allowing their theatre to dwindle into a backwater, and they now commanded enough political influence to ensure that it did not. Moreover, the Austrians at the end of their disastrous winter campaign were on the verge of collapse. Already by the end of 1914 they had lost a million and a quarter men. By March they had lost a further 800,000. Those losses included most of the professional cadres that had held the multinational army together, and Slav units – Czech, Romanian, and Ruthene – were beginning to desert *en masse*. Conrad himself began to consider a separate peace with Russia, if only to deal with the Italians more effectively.

Reluctantly, therefore, Falkenhayn accepted that for the time being he would have to stand on the defensive in the west and attack strongly enough in the east to rescue his Austrian ally and inflict enough losses on the Russians to strengthen the hand of the influential circles in St Petersburg who were already calling for peace. To this end he created a new Austro-German army group under the command of General August von Mackensen, with Colonel Hans von Seeckt as his Chief of Staff, to attack the Russian positions in Galicia in the region of Gorlice-Tarnow. This offensive saw the first use of the methods that were to characterize the middle years of the war: carefully planned infantry attacks behind a curtain of prolonged and concentrated artillery fire. It was a total success: 100,000 prisoners were taken and the Russian lines penetrated to a depth of eighty miles. It was not in itself 'decisive', but for Falkenhayn that was not the point. He was beginning to understand the nature of this new kind of warfare. In this, the object was not victory in the field so much as 'attrition'. Germany's strategy should now be to compel her adversaries to exhaust their resources while committing as few as possible of her own.

Hindenburg and Ludendorff disagreed. They still visualized a far-reaching strategy of encirclement that would trap the entire Russian army, as Schlieffen had hoped to encircle the French, in 'a

5. German troops burning a village on the Eastern Front

battle without a tomorrow'. Falkenhayn would have none of this. In August he authorized an offensive in the northern sector of the front, but with the limited objective of driving the Russians out of Poland and establishing a defensive line running north–south through Brest-Litovsk. This operation was so successful that he then allowed Ludendorff to carry out a further sweeping advance in the north to take Vilna; but, once again, the German army secured a spectacular operational victory that had no strategic consequence.

By the end of 1915 the German record on the Eastern Front had been one of unbroken success, for which Hindenburg and Ludendorff reaped the credit. But these brilliant victories over greatly superior forces owed little to skilful generalship. They were due rather to good organization, superior logistics, better training, and better intelligence, much of it gained electronically through listening to Russian messages transmitted *en clair*; qualities possessed in abundance by a highly educated and industrious people whose development was still far ahead of the Russian Empire.

Also significant, however, was the brutality with which this campaign was conducted on both sides, of which civilians were the chief victims. Russian troops devastated the countryside as they withdrew, having no fellow feeling for its Polish and Lithuanian inhabitants. The number of refugees was estimated at between three million and ten million. The Germans were even less concerned with civilian welfare. They advanced not only as conquerors but as colonizers: this was territory that Ludendorff planned to annex as part of a greater Reich, settled and dominated by Germans. The region became known simply as OberOst, after the military organization that ruled it. German officials treated the inhabitants as barbarians, without rights or identity of their own. In this, as in so many other respects, German actions in the First World War grimly foreshadowed their behaviour in the Second.

The Western Front in 1915

On the Western Front the Germans stood on the defensive throughout 1915, and were equally successful. They attacked only once, at Ypres in April, with little serious strategic purpose other than to try out a new weapon, chlorine poison gas. Initially this was highly effective: the Allied troops against whom it was deployed, taken completely by surprise, temporarily abandoned an 8,000-yard stretch of the front line. But the Allies rapidly improvised antidotes and embodied the weapon in their own arsenals, making the conduct of the war yet more complex and inhumane. Since this new 'frightfulness' was added to the German record of barbarism and was to be one of the most valuable items of Allied propaganda both during and after the war, more was probably lost than gained by this innovation. For the rest, the German armies perfected their defensive positions, usually on ground of their own choosing – digging systems of trenches with deep and often comfortable dug-outs, protected by barbed-wire entanglements and defended not only by pre-registered artillery but by machine guns, which now came into their own in the kind of defensive warfare that no European army had expected to have to fight.

These defences the Allied armies felt compelled to attack. For one thing, they lay deep inside French territory, and for the French at least it was unthinkable that they should remain there unchallenged. For another, the disasters on the Eastern Front made continuing pressure in the west appear essential if the Russians were to be kept in the war at all. Strategic direction was still largely in the hands of the French, with the British very much as junior partners. There was still heavy pressure within the British Cabinet in favour of limiting the British contribution on the Western Front and seeking a more traditional maritime strategy – a view to which Kitchener himself was strongly sympathetic. Even the most enthusiastic 'westerners', as they came to be called, would have preferred to delay any offensive until 1916, when they hoped that their new armies would be properly trained and equipped. But the

failure of the Dardanelles campaign, the pressure of their allies, and above all the weight of a public opinion anxious to come to grips with the Germans, meant that by the end of 1915 the British were irrevocably committed to a 'western' strategy, and looked forward to its consummation the following year.

So throughout 1915, in a succession of attacks of increasing intensity, the French and British armies learned the techniques of the new kind of war at very heavy cost. Their early attacks in March were easily repulsed. It became obvious that the key to a successful assault lay in sufficient artillery support, but the Allied armies did not as yet have either enough guns of the right calibre or the industry capable of manufacturing them, while the guns they did possess did not have the right kind of ammunition. Before 1914 artillery shells had consisted mainly of shrapnel, whose airbursts were effective in mobile warfare. But what was now needed was high explosive, heavy enough to flatten barbed-wire defences, pulverize enemy infantry in their trenches, catch enemy reserves as they moved up to support the defenders, and neutralize enemy artillery by counter-battery fire. Further, infantry attacks had to be carefully coordinated with artillery barrages, which demanded not only first-rate staff work but reliable communications; and the only communications available, in the absence of mobile radio-sets, were runners, carrier pigeons, and telephone lines that were usually the first casualties of an enemy counter-barrage. Finally, even if an attack was initially successful, it could seldom penetrate beyond the first line of the German trench system, where it remained vulnerable to bombardment and counter-attack from the flanks. Further advance was then delayed by the need for artillery to re-register its targets. At this stage of the war gunners had to fire 'sighting shots' to ensure accuracy before opening a bombardment. This took time and forfeited surprise. Later (as we shall see) they developed techniques of 'pre-registration' that made this unnecessary. Finally the difficulty of communication between the attacking forces and the reserves needed to complete the

breakthrough made command and control on the battlefield almost impossible.

For the British the problem was complicated by the fact that their forces consisted of almost untrained volunteers commanded by officers often promoted far beyond their level of competence; but it must be said that the French, trained as they were for a completely different kind of warfare, did little better. Nevertheless by September the desperate state of the Russians demanded a major effort in the West. The Allies therefore launched a major joint offensive that Joffre promised would 'compel the Germans to retire to the Meuse and probably end the war'. The British sector centred on the mining region of Loos. The attack was launched with

6. Marshal Joffre with his British junior partners, Field Marshal Sir John French and General Sir Douglas Haig

massive artillery support, which now included heavy as well as field guns, and gas was for the first time turned against its inventors. The British indeed actually breached the German front line to a width of five miles and a depth of two. But the Germans had also learned lessons, and constructed an entire second defensive position in rear of the first. On the British side faulty staff work, confusion of command, and the sheer friction of war meant that no reserves were on hand to exploit the breach. The operation dragged on for another month, by the end of which both sides had lost some 200,000 men.

None the less the Allies reckoned that they had now found the formula for victory: more guns, longer preliminary barrages, better communications, and better staff work. All this they hoped to put into effect in 1916 in a great joint offensive from east and west planned by the Allied High Command at the French Headquarters at Chantilly in November. Joffre remained securely in the saddle as commander-in-chief of the most powerful allied army in the west, but Britain was becoming an increasingly important partner, as the size of the British Expeditionary Force swelled from its original six to fifty-six divisions, in six armies. It was widely, and rightly, assumed that its commander, Sir John French, was no longer up to the job, and his performance at Loos had proved it. He was replaced by the dour, inarticulate, and iron-willed Sir Douglas Haig; and preparations began for the Battle of the Somme.