

Grand Duke Was Brilliant Officer

Romanoff Chief in World War
Handicapped by Divided
Authority and a Short-
age of Supplies

BETRAYED BY CZAR

By William L. McPherson
(In New York Herald-Tribune)

The Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia is the third of the former Allied commanders in chief to pass from the scene within the last twelve months—Field Marshal Haig died on January 23, 1923; Field Marshal Cadorna on December 22, 1923, and the Grand Duke on January 6, 1923.

Like Cadorna, and unlike Haig, he failed to retain his high command until the end of the war. But he assumed it earlier than they did, being named commander-in-chief on August 2, 1914, while Cadorna's service in a similar post did not begin until Italy entered the war on May 23, 1915, and Haig's nomination as head of the British armies in France dated from December 15, 1915.

Cadorna was retired in November, 1917, following the tremendous Caporetto disaster, for which he was held directly responsible. The Grand Duke Nicholas suffered the crushing defeat of Tannenberg in September, 1914. But it was not held up against him personally, because it happened through blunders on the part of subordinates and because its effects were quickly neutralized by the series of brilliant Russian victories in southern Poland and eastern Galicia.

The Grand Duke conducted the Russian retreat out of the Polish salient in the summer of 1915, but his military reputation was not materially affected thereby. He was displaced on September 6, 1915, through parliamentary interference in St. Petersburg.

Haig also would have been displaced in 1917 by Premier Lloyd George, if the latter had dared to take such a step in defiance of army and civilian opinion.

It is a curious anomaly that a feeble and short-lived parliamentary body, with an uncertain status in an autocracy like Russia's, could intervene more effectively in military operations than could its powerful and self-willed chief of the British parliamentary coalition.

Popular As Soldier

The Grand Duke was Russia's most conspicuous and popular soldier. He was by his force of personality, high professional capacity and prestige as a member of the imperial family, the most available man to direct Russia's military effort. Kuropatkin, competent, but not brilliant, commander, had failed in the Japanese war and had ceased to be available. The fighting on the eastern European front had developed no leader fitted to take Nicholas's place.

And the czar, though yielding to the Liberal politicians in the Duma, who could not hope to influence the Grand Duke, and to the personal hostility of the Rasputin group, of which the czar was the all-powerful patroness, admitted the facts of the situation when he named himself as actual commander-in-chief.

He had no military competency and merely covered up a political maneuver of undertaking a responsibility, in the midst of the great war, which he had refused to assume under far less arduous and dangerous conditions toward the end of the Japanese war, although strongly urged to do so by his friend and crony of that period, Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Son of Army Commander

Nicholas was born and bred a soldier. He had pronounced military tastes and inclinations, and the spirit, manners and character of a military chieftain. His father, also a Grand Duke Nicholas, had been commander in chief of the Russian armies in the Balkans during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. The son had won distinction at the crossing of the Danube in 1873 and in the capture of Shipka Pass. He had reorganized the Russian cavalry, while acting as inspector general of cavalry from 1895 to 1905. He was made president in 1905 of the Council of National Defense, created to strengthen and modernize the Russian military establishment.

In 1903, however, this body was dissolved, for political reasons, and his work was confided to the War Ministry, which, with Kuropatkin's assist-

ance, did much to improve conditions, yet fell far short of bringing the army up to the condition of equipment, training or munitions, reserves and facilities for manufacturing them required for conduct of a war against a highly militarized nation like Germany.

Handicap Recalled

Nicholas also assumed leadership in 1914 under the additional handicap of no intimate knowledge of the arrangements made for co-operation with the French General Staff. He was called upon to execute plans which were not his own.

At the beginning of the war Russia stood on a very unequal footing with Germany—so unequal that the German General Staff left East Prussia inadequately defended, while hurrying the invasion of Belgium and France. But German superiority in tactics, morale, and especially in artillery and all the mechanical appliances of war, was quickly demonstrated, even in East Prussia, where Hindenburg and Ludendorff so easily enveloped and crushed a Russian army marching incautiously into the trap of Tannenberg.

Never after, except in rare instances (and then on the defensive), were the Russian armies able to meet the Germans on nearly equal terms. As Hindenburg once explained it, it was the case of the morale and equipment of a more advanced military people triumphing over the morale and equipment of a less advanced one.

Checked Austrian Drive

With Austria-Hungary the case was different. The Dual Monarchy had to depend on armies of uneven quality. Many racial groups were disaffected and fought half-heartedly. To the great astonishment of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff the Russian forces easily stopped its offensive movement in August, 1915, into southern Poland and then swept from the east and southeast over Eastern Galicia and the Bukovina.

Except in East Prussia, the Grand Duke Nicholas had things pretty much his own way for the first nine months of the war. He had frustrated two German drives from the west toward Warsaw, overran Middle Galicia and pushed to within eight miles of Cracow and forced the bulk of the Austro-Hungarian forces beyond the Carpathian ranges. He successfully occupied and defended the Polish salient. Russia had done much better than the Western Allies. She had seized a large area of enemy territory, while Germany had overrun Belgium and entrenched on the soil of France.

Supplies Ran Low

But Russian supplies were running low. General Gourko wrote in his "War and Revolution in Russia" that "for months in 1915 batteries in action daily did not receive more than four shells per day." An army corps would receive 1,000 shells at one delivery and not know when the next installment would arrive.

In the spring of 1915 Falkenhayn decided to carry the war into Poland and to liberate the occupied Austrian territory. He was at the time engaged in a bitter quarrel with Hindenburg and Ludendorff and would not listen to Ludendorff's suggestion of an envelopment operation out of East Prussia.

That was a piece of luck for Nicholas. With overwhelming superiority in artillery and machine guns, Falkenhayn elected to make a frontal attack, irresistible under the circumstances and sure to clear Poland and the Galicia, but also allowing as competent a tactician as the Grand Duke to withdraw the masses of his armies

some distance behind the Brest-Litovsk line, on which they had originally mobilized.

Heavy Losses in Campaign

Russia lost 350,000 killed and 1,250,000 prisoners in this campaign. The man-power losses could be made up. Munitions were coming in from western Europe and the Russian armies were to show themselves capable of another powerful offensive in 1916.

Nicholas was not responsible for the tragic military breakdown of 1915, whose consequences were not as serious as they might have been. But the czar displaced him on September 6, partly because of the activities of the Duma politicians and partly, no doubt, because of the Grand Duke's feud with Rasputin. The sinister adventurer who won the czar's confidence had asked permission to go to the front and "bless the armies." Nicholas had sent him the contemptuous answer: "Come and I will hang you." Rasputin's power at court was far-reaching. He used it skillfully to accelerate the Grand Duke's downfall.

Organized 1916 Offensive

Transferred to the Caucasus, Nicholas put fresh life into the Asiatic campaign. He organized and directed the dashing winter and spring offensive of 1916, which captured Erzerum on February 16, Trebizond on April 13 and cleared Armenia of the Turks from the Black Sea south to Lake Van. In July the Russian front was pushed west from Erzerum 100 miles farther to Erzincan. From that time on there was little activity in either Armenia or Kurdistan, all Russian efforts being centered in the Russian efforts being centered in the Brusiloff drives in the Carpathian sector.

The Grand Duke was ordered home from the Caucasus in March, 1917. The czar, then about to be deposed, wanted to rename his commander-in-chief. Such an order was issued, but the Duma, seizing the control of the government, rescinded it. No revolutionary faction wanted to have a member of the imperial family at the head of the armies. Nicholas returned to

the army. Nicholas returned to

Flirting With Jungle King



TOGARE, THE LION TAMER, WEARING LIVING FUR

Wonderful power over the king of beasts is possessed by Togare, who is paying his first visit to England, thrilling all beholders at the Olympic circus in London.

Wonderful power over the king of beasts is possessed by Togare, who is

paying his first visit to England, thrilling all beholders at the Olympic circus

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in London.

in