



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[World War I] Unsere Front im Osten un Westen

Stock#: 68032
Map Maker: Anstalt von Pasche & Luz
Date: 1915 (May 18)
Place: Stuttgart
Color: Color
Condition: Good
Size: 22.5 x 17 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Schlieffen Plan Nine Months into the War

This work centers on two maps showing the Western and Eastern Fronts as they stood in May of 1915. To the east, Germany has pushed into Russian Poland and has recently made large advances through Lithuania, nearly reaching Riga. In the west, Belgium has fallen, though the offensive line has changed little since the first month of the war. Rare historical insights into the German popular sentiment during the war can be found throughout the work.

The maps on the front are very detailed, showing the many towns, cities, borders, and roads of the region. Overlain in red are developments of the war. Conquered cities are underlined in red, occasionally with their dates of conquest included. Broken lines on the Western Front show the extent of fighting at the end of August and the middle of September, we see an initial rapid expansion followed by a slight contraction, and then stasis. On the Eastern Front the fronts from August, November, and December are marked. Here the war is much more dynamic, and recent gains as of May 15 delve deep into Russian territory. A point of particular interest are the seven red lines going from Germany to the heart of France, these show the Schlieffen Plan (the planned German invasion of France), which had been abandoned several months prior.

Many additional points of interest can be found on the map. An inset shows the heavily contested regions between the Meuse and Moselle Rivers. Verdun is encircled by German gains, setting the scene for the battle which would commence in February. Along the top of the map are the fourteen German heads of armies with their commands detailed. The portraits center on a decoration showing the flags of the central



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powers. Detailed German text details the war up to May 18th.

The verso includes seven maps detailing the belligerents in the war and showing areas of particularly intense fighting. Maps show Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire alongside any gains and losses. Other maps show the front in the Dardanelles, northern Egypt, Alsace, Belgium, and the Carpathians. Text describes action on both the Western and Eastern Fronts with an account for nearly every day of the war between the 15th of March and the 15th of May.

This map was sold separately and was likely originally designed to be included in a newspaper article.

The First Year of the War: Patriotism and Disillusionment

Of course, one of the major causes of World War I was the rise of nationalism throughout Europe. For the vast majority of Europeans involved, they saw the beginning of the conflict as a heroic attempt to defend the homeland. This was as true in Germany as it was in the Allied Powers. Sentiment remained high through the first several months of the war, even though Germany had already suffered its first major defeat at the Marne in September of 1914.

Tracing public sentiment after the first months of the war is difficult. Censorship and propaganda led to publications that differed from privately held views. The map obviously has a very patriotic outlook on the war, notable with the large German symbolism and portraits of generals. What is contained in the map paints a bleaker outlook. Despite movements on the Eastern Front, both positive and negative, the western front was stationary, as it would stay for nearly three more years.

The Schlieffen Plan

The map shows seven lines wrapping into France through Belgium, each representing a different Germany army division. This is very reminiscent of the original Schlieffen Plan, first designed in 1905 and 1906 by Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen. The plan consisted of a very offensive tactic that would be deployed in the event of war in France. The German army hoped to recreate the conditions of the Franco-Prussian War, in which very rapid movements allowed for a decisive victory. In the Schlieffen Plan, Germany expected French forces to try to push through Alsace and into Germany, and planned to respond by trying to hold France at bay while invading Belgium and outflanking the French army in the north, taking Paris.

Herman Moltke the Younger took control of the unified German forces after Schlieffen, and some historians suggest that he drastically reduced the scope of the plan. Belgium was still invaded, but German forces were halted at the First Battle of the Marne, and Molke was removed from command. This battle is sometimes taken to represent the failure of the Schlieffen Plan, and the army was restructured, with the



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seven armies given new orders.

The strengths and weaknesses of the Schlieffen Plan have been debated since the war. Some point to it (perhaps in a revisionist manner) as a defensive strategy in order to exculpate Germany from being aggressors in the war. Others make a hero out of Schlieffen and place blame for losing the war on Moltke. More recent scholarship suggests that the Schlieffen Plan was unable to ever work due to the size of the French army and the slowness of the German army, even without Belgian resistance and sabotage.

Detailed Condition:

Newspaper folding map. Damage along tears. Minor loss and repaired paper at intersecting folds.