

## Introduction

After losing 500,000 soldiers in Russia between June and December 1812, Napoleon started rebuilding his army in early 1813 to stop the Russians in Germany. At the end of 1812, Tsar Alexander I of Russia made the momentous decision to continue his war with Napoleon and drive the French from Central Europe. The destruction of the Grande Armée of 1812 provided Alexander with an opportunity to build a Russian-dominated coalition to liberate Europe. Russian pressure forced the French to fall back from the Vistula (Wisła) River and then across the Oder (Odra) River to Berlin by mid February 1813. Hoping to stop the pursuing Russians before they could step foot onto German soil, Napoleon looked to his ally, King Frederick William III of Prussia, for assistance. As Eugène de Beauharnais, the viceroy of Italy and commander of imperial forces on the eastern front, surrendered land for time, direct negotiations between the Russians and Prussians commenced.

With two-thirds of Prussia occupied by Napoleon's forces, Frederick William made the bold decision to break the French alliance and join the Russians to form the Sixth Coalition. Negotiations culminated on 28 February 1813 with the signing of the Treaty of Kalisch: the much-anticipated Russo-Prussian military alliance. The Prussians agreed to field an army of 80,000 men to assist a Russian contingent of 150,000; both states pledged not to make a separate peace with Napoleon. The British did their part to bolster the new coalition by promptly dispatching arms and ammunition to the Baltic for use by the Russians and Prussians. Alexander also hoped for an Austrian alliance in early 1813 but Austria's foreign minister, the adroit Klemens von Metternich, feared Russian success would be accompanied by Russian territorial expansion. With Alexander's armies approaching Central Europe, the Austrians declared neutrality.

For Napoleon, 1813 brought a fresh series of challenges. As French forces in the east steadily retreated, his political-military situation likewise

2 *Napoleon and the Struggle for Germany, vol. II*

deteriorated. Failure in Russia not only resulted in the loss of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, but also threatened French control of Germany, which Napoleon had organized into the Confederation of the Rhine in 1806. As Napoleon's prestige plummeted, German nationalists called for a *Befreiungskrieg*, a war of liberation, against French hegemony. Prussia's declaration of war only added to the complex set of problems that confronted Napoleon. Austria stood as an armed neutral, endeavoring to mediate between Napoleon and his enemies. Despite the dynastic ties between France and Austria due to the marriage between Napoleon and Marie Louise, the daughter of Kaiser Francis I, the Austrians could not be trusted.

The burden of waging war in Central Europe fell on Tsar Alexander in the early stage of the contest. Russia's frontline army, likewise devastated by the winter campaign in 1812, consisted of 51,745 tired soldiers, 12,283 Cossacks, and 439 guns when it crossed the Prussian frontier. Reinforcements, not expected to reach the front until the beginning of April, amounted to 12,674 men, 2,307 Cossacks, and 48 guns. Russian second-line troops – 56,776 men, 9,989 Cossacks, and 319 guns – besieged French-controlled fortresses on the Oder and the Vistula Rivers. A reserve of 48,100 men had yet to depart from Russia. As for the Russian High Command, it had been divided for some time. While Tsar Alexander fashioned himself as the liberator of Germany, Russian commander in chief General Mikhail Kutuzov opposed carrying the war into Central Europe to emancipate the same countries that had supported Napoleon's bid to conquer Russia. Other Russian commanders expressed concerns over their tenuous lines of communication. This boded well for the French, for crushing the Russian army in battle amid so much disagreement would certainly put the Russians to flight, similar to the 1805 campaign.

Of the 600,000 men and 1,300 guns of the Grande Armée of 1812, only 93,000 men and 250 pieces returned. Of the 93,000, more than half were Austrians and Prussians. Undaunted by such catastrophic and unprecedented losses, Napoleon planned to have 656,000 men mobilized by June of 1813. For leadership, the emperor transferred experienced noncommissioned officers from his armies in Spain to the new units. In a little more than four months, Napoleon's unrivaled organizational skills produced the 140,000-strong Army of the Main. Together with Eugene's Army of the Elbe, imperial forces amounted to almost 200,000 men by the end of April. With the French having lost 180,000 horses in Russia, critical deficiencies remained in the cavalry; this robbed the army not only of its shock tactics, but also of its eyes and ears. Napoleon adequately replaced the losses sustained in Russia, but draft horses remained in short supply. Reflective of the army itself, the French officer corps in 1813 contained strengths and weaknesses. In the senior ranks, the Russian campaign had taken its toll on the aging marshalate. However, one asset remained: the army's field-grade

*Introduction*

3

officers, most of whom were battle-hardened veterans. Nevertheless, the Grande Armée of 1813 lacked many of the tactical attributes of previous French armies, which in turn placed strategic and operational limitations on Napoleon.

Several factors hampered Prussian mobilization in January and February 1813. French troops still occupied half of the country and held all of Prussia's significant fortresses. Tedious negotiations with the Russians also slowed the process. Concentration of the field army, scheduled to begin on 12 February, had to be postponed until the formation of the Coalition. After creating the alliance at Kalisch, the mobilization continued at an accelerated pace and culminated with the 17 March 1813 decrees creating a national Landwehr (militia). Aside from a few battalions, the militia would not be ready for field service until August. At the beginning of the war, the Prussian regular army consisted of 127,394 men and 269 guns. Of this figure, only 65,675 men had received sufficient training to be utilized in the field; only half of Prussia's armed forces were trained regulars or reservists.

During initial operations, the Allies liberated Berlin with their northern army of 30,000 Prussians and 18,000 Russians commanded by Russian general Ludwig Adolph zu Wittgenstein, while Prussian general Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher's 26,000 Prussians and 10,500 Russians took the Saxon capital of Dresden with the Coalition's smaller southern army. Behind these two armies followed the Allied commander in chief, Kutuzov, with the Russian main army and reserve. After clearing Berlin, Wittgenstein drove southwest through a detachment of the French Army of the Elbe at Möckern near Magdeburg on 5 April, allowing for his union with Blücher east of the Saale River in the vicinity of Leipzig. Following Kutuzov's death on 28 April 1813, Tsar Alexander named Wittgenstein Allied commander in chief.

The appearance of Allied forces in Saxony in late March prompted Napoleon to concentrate his forces on the left bank of the Saale River throughout April. The emperor began his counteroffensive on 30 April by leading 120,000 men across the Saale to confront the Allied army near Leipzig. Reports of French movements indicated that the emperor would converge on Leipzig in two columns: Eugene's Army of the Elbe marching southeast from Magdeburg and Napoleon's Army of the Main due east from Weißenfels. The Allies resolved to attack.

Approximately 88,000 Russians and Prussians with 552 guns prepared to engage Napoleon's army of 145,000 men and 372 guns. Although Napoleon possessed fewer total guns, he had more heavy batteries than the Allies, which granted the French artillery an advantage in range and effectiveness. Early on 2 May 1813, the Allied army advanced southeast to northwest in the hope of smashing through the imperial armies as they moved east. Wittgenstein opened the battle of Lützen by having the Prussian II Corps

4 *Napoleon and the Struggle for Germany, vol. II*

attack a supposed French rearguard holding the quadrilateral of villages immediately north of the Allied army: Großgörschen, Kleingörschen, Rahna, and Kaja. This French force turned out to be Napoleon's massive III Corps. Although surprised by the Allies, Napoleon quickly recovered and ordered a double-envelopment. After eight hours of brutal fighting, his enveloping forces reached their positions. With both flanks threatened, Wittgenstein ordered a retreat.

The 2 May 1813 battle of Lützen proved extremely bloody. Prussia's new army shouldered the weight of the engagement and paid dearly in its debut, losing 8,400 men. In addition, Gerhard von Scharnhorst received the wound that took his life on 28 June. Russian losses are not known, but can be estimated at 3,000 casualties. Imperial forces lost some 22,000 combatants and 5 guns. Operationally, the battle of Lützen again demonstrated Napoleon's supremacy. His ability to move units to the battlefield where and when they were needed to deliver maximum combat power remained unrivaled. Indeed, on 2 May, the Sixth Coalition came within hours of being destroyed by a double-envelopment that would have been so crushing it would have ended the war.

Following Lützen, the shortage of cavalry prevented Napoleon from unleashing a deadly pursuit to annihilate the Allies and make his victory decisive. Therefore, he hoped an operation in North Germany would create strategic opportunities that had thus far eluded him in Saxony. On 4 May, Napoleon directed Marshal Michel Ney to the Elbe fortress of Torgau, which, along with Wittenberg, provided the gateway to Berlin and North Germany. Ney's army eventually numbered 84,300 men, while Napoleon commanded 119,000. Napoleon knew that Ney's march to Torgau would signal to the Allies the start of a French offensive against Berlin. He hoped this would prompt the Prussians to separate from the Russians and march north to save their capital. Similar to his First Italian Campaign, he would then execute a *manoeuvre sur position centrale* to destroy the Prussians and Russians in succession.

Meanwhile, Wittgenstein retreated to the Spree River, where he placed the Allied army in a commanding position just east of the river and the town of Bautzen. The imperials followed slowly and cautiously, engaging in almost daily combat with Wittgenstein's rearguard. Instead of effecting a split among the Allies, Napoleon found his adversaries in a fortified position around Bautzen and along the Spree River. Although the emperor intended to engage the Allies at Bautzen and still move against Berlin with a portion of Ney's army, the marshal mistakenly brought his entire army south to join the battle.

Napoleon issued orders to attack the Allied left wing and center at Bautzen on 20 May. While his Guard, IV, VI, XI, and XII Corps fixed the Allies, Ney's III, V, VII, and II Corps would swing southeast to envelop the

*Introduction*

5

Allied right. By nightfall on the 21st, he planned to have 144,000 combatants on the battlefield facing 96,000 Coalition soldiers. To facilitate Ney's operation against the Allied right flank, Napoleon sought to deceive the Allies into thinking he intended to turn their left. Napoleon spent the morning of 20 May 1813 moving his pieces around the board to increase Allied concern over the left wing. Although Wittgenstein did not fall for the ruse, Alexander did. Ignoring Wittgenstein's objections, Alexander transferred his few reserves to the left wing. Having had enough of being ignored, Wittgenstein napped under a tree. Around noon, French artillery blasted the Allied positions while IV, VI, XI, and XII Corps advanced east across the Spree. Combat lasted until 8:30 that night. Altogether the Allies lost some 1,400 Russians and 500 Prussians; French losses are not known. The engagement on the 20th won Napoleon the keys to Wittgenstein's forward position: the city of Bautzen and the crossings over the Spree north and south of the town. By pinning the Allies and deceiving them over the point of his attack, the emperor attained basic objectives through the simplest of means.

Napoleon resumed the offensive by attacking the Allied left at dawn on 21 May. Around 11:00 A.M., he directed his VI Corps to move against the Allied center. Around 2:00 P.M., two divisions of IV Corps crossed the river and prepared to assault the Allied right on the Kreckwitz heights from the west. One hour later, Ney mistakenly turned southwest to storm the Kreckwitz heights from the east instead of proceeding southeast to sever Wittgenstein's only line of retreat. As imperial forces closed on the right of the Allied position from the west, north, and east, Tsar Alexander reluctantly agreed to break off the battle.

Allied losses on the second day of Bautzen are estimated to be 10,850 men. By comparison, French losses reached 22,500 men including 3,700 missing. Napoleon could not interpret the battle of Bautzen as anything but a disappointment. Fortunately for the Allies, the compulsive Ney could not turn away from the Kreckwitz heights. Had Ney followed orders, the war quite conceivably could have ended with both Alexander and Frederick William being taken prisoner. Ney's blunder could not have been more fortuitous for the Allies and therefore disappointing for Napoleon.

Retreating to Silesia in the aftermath of Bautzen, the Coalition experienced a crisis just when it appeared that Austria would join the alliance against Napoleon. Prior to Bautzen, an Austrian envoy, the anti-French former foreign minister Johann Philipp von Stadion, met with Prussian chancellor Karl von Hardenberg and the de facto Russian foreign minister, Karl Robert Nesselrode, to discuss the Coalition's peace terms. More importantly for the Allies, he announced that Kaiser Francis would decide for either war or neutrality by 1 June. Consequently, Stadion came prepared to engage the Allies in serious military planning in the event his master chose war against Napoleon. He shared a memo drafted in Vienna on 10 May by

6 *Napoleon and the Struggle for Germany, vol. II*

General Jan Josef Václav Radetzky von Radetz, the chief of staff of the Austrian army assembling in Bohemia. The memo presupposed that Austria would join the Sixth Coalition and wage war against the French Empire. Regardless of the whereabouts of the main Allied army, Radetzky declared that Napoleon would fall on the Austrian army with his main force as soon as Francis declared war on him.<sup>1</sup>

Acknowledging Radetzky's views, the Russians and Prussians drafted the Wurschen Plan for future combined operations. The blueprint strongly emphasized unprecedented communication, cooperation, and understanding between the Austrian and Russo-Prussian armies. Both would take a position facing one of Napoleon's flanks. Whichever Allied army he did not target would immediately take the offensive against him. When drafting his memo, Radetzky had envisioned the theater of war being somewhere between the Saale and the Elbe Rivers. However, by the time Stadion delivered the memo, the Allies had already abandoned the Elbe and had prepared to accept a second battle with Napoleon on the Spree. If the Russo-Prussian army were forced to retreat across the Oder, the Wurschen Plan called for it to remain close to the Austrians by hugging the Bohemian frontier and leaning on the Riesengebirge (Karkonosze), part of the Sudetes Mountain system. If pressed by Napoleon, the Allied army could maintain contact with Austria by moving into one of the entrenched positions in Silesia such as Schweidnitz (Świdnica). Thus, the Wurschen Plan signaled the Coalition's recognition that unreserved, close collaboration with Austria would be the primary objective of future operations.<sup>2</sup>

After being named Allied commander in chief on 26 May 1813, Russian general Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly rejected the Wurschen Plan out of concern over the condition of the Russian army. Instead of placing the Allied army in a position to immediately cooperate with the Austrians, Barclay advocated a retreat across the Oder and into Poland for a six-week hiatus for rest and reorganization. The Prussians could either follow or face Napoleon on their own. However, Tsar Alexander imposed his will on Barclay, ordering the retreat to turn southeast toward Schweidnitz in south-central Silesia. Not only did Alexander spare Frederick William from having to make a very difficult decision, but the Russian monarch also maintained the Wurschen Plan's implied commitment to cooperate with Austria. Thanks to Alexander, the signing of the armistice on 4 June found the Russo-Prussian army still west of the Oder, a crucial factor for a partnership with the Austrians. Alexander's devotion to the Wurschen Plan along with Napoleon's inability to drive the Allies across the Oder opened the door for unprecedented collaboration with the Austrians.

As for Napoleon, despite defeating the Allies at Lützen and Bautzen, decisive victory eluded him mainly because he lacked cavalry to exploit his success. After pursuing the Allied army into Silesia, Napoleon failed to

*Introduction*

7

maneuver it into a third battle. By late May 1813, marauding and straggling in the Grande Armée had increased to epic proportions. With 90,000 men on the sick list, the emperor realized he had pushed his army beyond exhaustion. Although not the ultimate factor in Napoleon's decision to accept an Austrian proposal for an armistice, these ugly indicators as well as the realization that he simply could not substitute infantry for cavalry and expect to win a decisive victory led him to open negotiations with the Prussians and Russians. An Austrian proposal to prolong a temporary armistice to 20 July was signed at Pläswitz in Silesia on 4 June and eventually extended to 17 August.

The Armistice of Pläswitz saw the failure of Austria's attempts to mediate a peace between Napoleon and the Allies. After Austria declared in favor of the Coalition, the Allies finalized their plans to field three multinational armies. The 42-year-old Austrian general Karl Philipp zu Schwarzenberg received command of all Allied forces, including the main army – the Army of Bohemia – which consisted of 220,000 Austrians, Prussians, and Russians. Blücher commanded the Army of Silesia – 105,000 Russians and Prussians – while the former French marshal, Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, took command of the Army of North Germany – 140,000 Prussians, Russians, Swedes, and North Germans. A fourth Allied army, General Levin August von Bennigsen's Army of Poland, was expected to reach Silesia in September. The Allies created these multinational armies both to prevent Napoleon from defeating them piecemeal, and to limit politically motivated acts of national self-interest.

For operations, the Russians and Prussians accepted the Austrian-authored Reichenbach Plan as the Coalition's operational doctrine. According to it, the three Allied armies would form a wide arc around French forces in Saxony and Silesia and engage only detached enemy corps: pitched battles with Napoleon would be avoided. Should the emperor concentrate against any one army, it would retreat, while the other two attacked his flanks and communications. As Napoleon could personally command only one army at a time and thus could directly challenge only one Allied army at a time, the other two Allied armies would attack his flanks and lines of communication, while the threatened army refused battle but induced the emperor to pursue, thus extending and exposing his line of operation. The plan aimed to split and exhaust French forces. Although Napoleon had the advantage of interior lines, he would be forced to fight against armies advancing simultaneously against his center, flanks, and communications.

To cover his base of operations at Dresden, maintain his mastery of the Elbe River, and capitalize on the enemy's mistakes, Napoleon assembled his forces in three groups. In the center, the Grande Armée (I, IV, and V Cavalry Corps, Guard, and I, II, VI, and XIV Corps) stood between Bautzen and

Görlitz. On his left in Silesia, he posted III, V, and XI Corps and II Cavalry Corps under Ney's command. After the expiration of the armistice, he wanted his center to march west to Silesia and unite with his left. This would enable him to concentrate his left and center – almost 270,000 infantry and 30,000 cavalry – to oppose what he believed to be the Coalition's main army of 200,000 Russians and Prussians in Silesia. Based on the actions of the Allies in May, Napoleon counted on them accepting battle in Silesia, where he planned to decisively defeat them before the Austrians could launch a serious operation against Dresden. Meanwhile, on his right wing, the IV, VII, and XII Corps and III Cavalry Corps of Marshal Nicolas Oudinot's Army of Berlin supported by Marshal Nicolas Davout's XIII Corps coming from Hamburg would conduct an offensive against the Prussian capital. After defeating the Coalition's Army of North Germany, Napoleon planned for the Army of Berlin to liberate the besieged imperial garrisons along the Oder River and advance to the Vistula, wheeling behind the Allied army in Silesia, which itself would be retreating eastward after being defeated by the emperor. Should Bernadotte somehow check the Army of Berlin, Napoleon could easily shift forces from the Silesian theater to Brandenburg to complete the work.

After learning that the Allies had actually assembled their main army in Bohemia, Napoleon still planned to destroy Blücher's Army of Silesia, thus removing its threat to the rear of both his Grande Armée in Saxony and Oudinot's Army of Berlin. Although he did not know where Schwarzenberg would lead the Army of Bohemia, Napoleon decided to march against Blücher, defeat him, and then rush back to Dresden. As for Blücher, from 15 to 20 August 1813 he chased Ney's forces westward from the banks of the Katzbach River to Bunzlau on the Bober River. Napoleon likewise reached the Bober on the 20th, attacking Blücher on the 21st. Complying with the Reichenbach Plan, Blücher retreated eastward for the next four days. Meanwhile, Schwarzenberg led the Bohemian Army across the Saxon frontier on 22 August en route to Dresden. With Blücher running, Napoleon's attention immediately switched to Saxony. On the night of 22/23 August, he issued orders for the Guard, VI Corps, and I Cavalry Corps to return to Dresden. With the forces that remained in Silesia (III, V, and XI Corps and II Cavalry Corps – 100,000 men, according to Napoleon's calculations), he formed the Army of the Bober commanded by Marshal Étienne Jacques Macdonald.

Always seeking a decisive victory, Napoleon welcomed Schwarzenberg's advance on Dresden as an opportunity rather than a setback. He planned to concentrate 200,000 men at Dresden to confront the Army of Bohemia. Little did Napoleon know that, as he made these plans, Bernadotte's Army of North Germany was holding its ground eleven miles south of Berlin at the battle of Großbeeren on 23 August 1813. Again shouldering the brunt of the combat, the Prussians suffered losses amounting to more than

*Introduction*

9

1,000 killed, wounded, and missing. Imperial casualties numbered more than 3,000 men and 14 guns. Despite the low body count, Oudinot ordered a headlong retreat that did not stop until his army reached the safety of Wittenberg on the Elbe. The Coalition's victory at Großbeeren saved Berlin and provided much-needed confidence for the Prussians.

Back in Silesia, Macdonald eagerly prepared to move against Blücher's suspected position east of the Katzbach River on 26 August. Meanwhile, Blücher, assuming Napoleon had departed for Dresden, likewise ordered his army to resume the offensive. On that day, the Army of the Bober collided with the Army of the Silesia along the banks of the Katzbach River. In a heavy downpour, the Allies repulsed the imperials, losing fewer than 1,000 men. Macdonald's losses on the 26th are not known, but his army suffered acute attrition during the ensuing retreat west to Saxony. By 1 September 1813, the Army of the Bober had lost 30,000 men and 103 guns.

Meanwhile, the Bohemian Army moved across the Saxon frontier on 22 August and stormed the imperial camp at Pirna on the 23rd. As the Silesian Army engaged the Army of the Bober on the 26th, Schwarzenberg assailed Dresden. In the midst of the engagement, Napoleon unexpectedly arrived with the Guard to repel Schwarzenberg's assault. During the night, II and VI Corps came up, increasing Napoleon's combatants to 135,000 men against 215,000 Allied soldiers. Continuing the battle on the 27th, Napoleon enveloped Schwarzenberg's left, crushing two Austrian corps. With the French also steadily working around his right, Schwarzenberg ordered a retreat. The Army of Bohemia withdrew after losing 38,000 killed, wounded, and captured along with 40 guns. Although the imperials sustained far fewer casualties (10,000), decisive victory again eluded Napoleon. Despite his having adequate cavalry, illness forced the emperor to leave the field rather than personally direct the pursuit.

In the aftermath of Dresden, General Dominique Vandamme's I Corps followed by XIV and VI Corps led the pursuit. On the 29th, Vandamme caught one of Schwarzenberg's Russian corps at Kulm, thirty-five miles south of Dresden and just inside the Bohemian frontier. Neither side gained an advantage despite savage fighting. With the battle continuing on the 30th, Schwarzenberg's Prussian II Corps attacked Vandamme's rear as the Russians pushed against his front and an Austrian corps enveloped his left. With XIV and VI Corps too distant to support, Vandamme attempted but failed to drive through the Prussians. Imperial losses on 29 and 30 August amounted to 25,000 killed, wounded, and captured along with 82 guns; Allied casualties numbered 11,000 men.

Following the defeats at Großbeeren, the Katzbach, and Kulm, Napoleon considered either an offensive against Prague or another march on Berlin for his next step. Both projects sacrificed the principle of annihilating the main enemy army, which would have provided the most direct

means of achieving total victory. Rather than a decisive battle with one of the three Allied armies, geographic objectives dominated the emperor's planning. Rejecting the Prague offensive, Napoleon returned to the capture of Berlin. A victory over the Army of North Germany and the timid Bernadotte appeared certain. Therefore, the emperor decided to allow the Army of Bohemia to recover after its drubbing at Dresden while he personally commanded the march on Berlin. He planned to lead 30,000 men from Dresden, unite with the Army of Berlin, and resume the operation against the Prussian capital.

Thanks to Blücher, Napoleon never executed the Berlin offensive as planned. Due to events in southeast Saxony, he neither marched north nor provided reinforcements for the Army of Berlin. Blücher's pressure on Macdonald's beleaguered Army of the Bober required Napoleon's personal intervention. Ney, who replaced Oudinot as commander of the Army of Berlin on 3 September, never received word of the emperor's change of plans. Therefore, when he began his operation on the 4th, he ordered the Army of Berlin to march eastward to unite with Napoleon, who, according to Ney's information, would reach Luckau on 6 September. Instead of his emperor, Ney found the Prussian III and IV Corps of the Army of North Germany at Dennewitz on the 6th. Ney's losses amounted to 21,500 dead, wounded, and captured along with 53 guns. Prussian casualties numbered 9,700 killed and wounded. After this victory, the Army of North Germany pursued the wreck of the Army of Berlin to Wittenberg and Torgau on the Elbe.

Unlike the victories he had enjoyed during the Spring Campaign, Napoleon's situation became critical after less than one month of campaigning. The success of the Reichenbach Plan depleted the ranks of the Grande Armée: since the expiration of the armistice, the imperials had lost 150,000 men and 300 guns – an additional 50,000 names filled the sick rolls. While French commanders suffered defeats at Großbeeren, the Katzbach, Kulm, and Dennewitz, the emperor raced back and forth between the Elbe and the Bober Rivers in futile attempts to achieve a decisive victory. Under normal conditions, the constant marches and countermarches would have exhausted his conscripts both mentally and physically. Yet the conditions remained far from normal. Heavy rains had washed out the roads and Cossacks menaced the lines of communication. Although the poor conditions forced Napoleon to grant his men plenty of rest, the slow starvation of the army could not be ignored. Supply shortages and the exhaustion of the Saxon countryside prompted Napoleon to write: “The army is no longer fed; to view it in any other way would be mere self-deception.”<sup>3</sup>

The battle of Dennewitz provided a crucial turning point in the Fall Campaign. In its aftermath, both sides changed strategy. Blücher led his Army of Silesia down the Elbe to Wartenburg, where it crossed the river on