

IS "DOING NOTHING" A SOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN PROBLEM?

L'HUMANITÉ and *L'Action Française* are rejoicing over the announcement that the Allies will not intervene in Russia. Never has the Government had a larger majority behind a decision. But is crying out 'No' in chorus sufficient to close the Russian question. Is merely doing nothing to be considered a solution?

The partisans of this negative policy present the Russian question in their own fashion. They pretend to believe that we are demanding an immense military expedition destined to take Moscow at a leap and cross Russia from side to side. They declare that such an expedition will hinder our demobilization. They show forth that any such project is unrealizable. Therefore nothing remains to be done. The public, in a word, is invited to choose between the impossible and the absolute nothing.

This argument may make its impression at public reunions but it makes no change in the realities. In the political as well as the material world, Nature abhors a vacuum. If the Allies have no Russian programme, then someone else will have one. If the Allies do not concern themselves with the reorganization of Russia, one of two things will probably happen, either Russia will be reorganized by the Germans, or Russia itself will disorganize Europe. In either case, French blood is liable to flow. It is on these premises that one must build if we wish the public to have an opinion of the Russian matter which shall be both exact and suited to our national interest.

But how shall Russia be reorganized?

Here, again, we shall have to 'follow Nature,' as the sages of other days were wont to say. It is not a matter of planning Gargantuan combats and of hurling columns of French troops across frozen steppes while Bolsheviki and ravens wheel about them. Those who are writing solemnly against such a nightmare could find a better use for their minds. They might be calculating, for instance, how large an army France would have to retain if Germany and Russia should meet in sweet communion in the bosom of Bolshevism or if the Germans, having established order in Russia, beneath the plaudits of a world weary of war, should make themselves the instructors of these immense masses of human beings whom they have saved from famine and anarchy. When we say that the Allies should reorganize Russia, it is simply to avoid these dangers; it is to preserve the lifeblood of France, not to bid it flow. The end is the economizing of the forces of France. The task of the Allies does not consist in creating an artificial order in Russia out of whole cloth — an order imagined by some of the *émigrés* of the Russian régime and imposed upon the people by the machine guns of the Entente. No the task requires less bullets and more patience; it lies in the gradual development of all the national energies which are opposed to Bolshevism, and, therefore, our natural Allies.

Bolshevism is not like other enemies. It fights a new war, or since nothing is new under the sun, a war such as the world has not seen since the wars of religion. It does not set country against

country; its triumph would not mean the replacing of the prosperity of one nation by the prosperity of another. Bolshevism is the negation of nationalism and prosperity; these are the reasons why it is equally absurd to believe that it can be conquered by purely material arms, or that we can get round it by encircling it with an intellectual 'sanitary barrier.' Will you have it that Lenine and his men will stop before a line of policemen or customs house guards. Where it makes its nest, Bolshevism ruins all. It lives on the condition that it be always on the go. It is necessary that its chiefs shall always be able to say to the mob, 'You suffer because our régime is encircled by capitalist States which hate and persecute you, but when we have conquered the wide earth, an equilibrium will be regained and you shall have Paradise.' The masses to whom this sort of propaganda is delivered believe themselves suffering for the redemption of mankind. A sort of fanaticism adds itself to their emotions, and exalts them. We shall have to meet this fanaticism with something beside barbed wire. We must oppose an ideal to it, the national ideal. Bolshevism wishes to destroy the homelands. Let us call our patriots to the defense.

The Russian patriots, of course, and also the patriots of all the nations which encircle Russia; above all others the patriots of Poland. The peril is greatest in Poland; it is there that the Allies can produce the maximum result with the minimum effort.

The peril is a pressing one. One of the first messages signed by Brockdorff-Rantzau* was sent to Warsaw. The secretary explains that the Ukrain-

ians are interfering with the retreat of the German troops and that these troops are no longer under the control of their officers. Then, these pretexts enumerated, he goes to the kernel of the matter. 'The German Government,' he writes to the Polish authorities, 'begs you to consent immediately to the crossing of Polish territory by German troops, and to aid their journey in every possible manner. Should the contrary come to pass, this Government cannot prevent hundreds of thousands of German soldiers opening for themselves a way home into Germany through Poland.' While this threat appeared in the southeast of Poland, the Bolsheviki have announced that a Soviet has been formed at Vilna and that 'the assembly decided to address a greeting to the central executive committee of the Soviets of Russia, to the Red army, to the commissioners' council and to the Congress of German Soviets. But this even is not the whole story, German troops which have not been demobilized are concentrating (according to von Hindenburg's directions) round Posen.

The armistice was signed on the eleventh of November. What of the status of Dantzig? Polish troops are a military instrument ready for the hands of the Allies; Poland is a base for the political policy of the Allies . . . why are we waiting?

The more the Allies delay in occupying eastern Europe, the costlier will be the solution of eastern problems. There was a time when the Russian question could have been solved with 40,000 men. If we allow all our various units of force in the East to perish, what will be the cost of reorganizing Russia? And if Russia is not reorganized what will peace be worth?

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Le Temps

FRANCE'S CLAIM TO THE SARRE REGION

BY F. ENGERAND

THE restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, that is to say, of the territory taken from us in 1871, does not bring France to its old frontiers or restore to her the province of Lorraine in its integrity. To limit our claim to the present area of Alsace-Lorraine would be to imply our recognition of the frontier of 1815; it would mean that France for a second time signed the fatal treaty of that year.

The 1815 frontier was the frontier of a defeated nation; strategically it was very bad, for it aimed to give Prussia access to the principal routes by which France might be invaded; to that end, the treaty detached an important part of Lorraine, the region of the Sarre.

This region of the Sarre had been united to France in 1648, and shared the destinies of the duchy of Lorraine of which it was an integral part and one of the great defenses. For us, Sarrelouis constituted a lock on one of the gates of invasion; the town had been powerfully fortified by Louis XIV, whose name it keeps. Ney was born there.

In 1814, the Allies, among whom was to be found the King of Prussia, had allowed France to retain not only Sarrelouis and the right bank of the Sarre, but also Sarrebrück and the left bank. Why? Because they had recognized our historic right to the territory on the one hand, and the proprietary right of the French government to the coal mines of the region on the other.

The Sarre is, in fact, the centre of an important coal basin which was opened to use through the agency and the funds of the French government. Be-

tween 1808 and 1811 Napoleon had caused the engineers of the mining bureau to survey the three hundred and sixty-seven square kilometres of the basin of the Sarre; the results of this work were registered in an atlas, a veritable register of discovered mines, and the whole business was officially recognized as the most considerable operation of its kind ever executed in France, perhaps in Europe even.

In 1814 Prussian troops occupied the region of Sarrebrück, and in 1815 the Prussian Government, to whose attention the importance of the coal beds had been brought, demanded a rectification of the frontier of the previous year. The intention of that Government to have the mines is revealed by the second frontier which follows the very edge of the coal veins which were then known.

But this was not all. The Government of Prussia had the effrontery to demand the results of the work of French engineers; it asked for the atlas in which they had registered the results of their deliberations. This requisition was entirely contrary to the stipulations of the treaty of Paris of 1814, nevertheless, the Government of Louis XVIII had the weakness to yield, and on the 30th of July, 1817, ceded to Prussia the precious documents she claimed.

There you have your irrefutable proof that the Prussian administration turned the work of French engineers to its own use, and that for one more time the French State had worked for the *Roi de Prusse*.