

This is, as I say, all mere guess-work ; but it is not to be supposed that the Germans, who move through historical time with the map of the immediate future (a map 'made in Germany') in the hands of their staff-officers, have *no* plan for the solution of the problem. And if you ask me to hazard a guess concerning the way in which they hope to solve it, I will only put two such guesses before you : (1) they probably expect, in some way or other, to reassert their old ascendancy over the Tsar himself, when they have beaten him ; they will 'make him make peace', and will promise him German support to secure his throne against the very certain anger of his people. Or else ; (2) they suppose that a Russia, cut off from the Baltic and the Black Sea, and thereby from all European trade and all incentive to self-development, will lazily relapse into its mediaeval condition of half-barbarous isolation. Well, I don't know which is the more absurd or the more childish expectation ; and, if either of these guesses is anywhere near the truth, as representing the German forecast, it only shows that the German leaders are as blind and stupid as they are wicked.

No, the real loss to Russia of a wholesale defeat of the three great allies in this present war would be that, for some time to come, she would lose her recently acquired proud position of champion of the Slav races ; and these (large populations but little 'powers') would be left sticking between the Devil of Germany, the deep sea of Austria, and the half-stranded shark of Turkey. I cannot see what the most victorious Germany you can imagine would do with all these peoples—I even forget half their names—for they are an ugly lot to tackle. To remove them wholesale, to drive out Serbs, Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, Wallachians,