

# The People.

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EDITORIAL

## Why War?

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**T**he war wave, which a fortnight ago was beating high, and then went somewhat down, has again risen almost to its former high water mark. Its persistence shows the strength of the interests back of it. What these interests are we have partly indicated in previous issues. There remains another "interest," at times a controlling one.

A foreign war ever has been the refuge of tyrants from the danger of turbulent elements at home. To simply massacre these, and thus get rid of them, is one easy task, however absolute the power of the tyrant. Local and isolated massacres may be indulged in and may not shock the public conscience; but they are inadequate. A foreign war meets all the requirements of the case. By means of a generous beating of the drum patriotic the very domestic element considered dangerous at home is lured into the army; war, once engaged in, the carnage among these is looked upon as an incident of war; and, whatever the issue of the war the tyrant that brought it on wins his real point; the turbulent elements that alarmed him are decimated; the more submissive ones, being less heated, did not go to the front, and remain an easier mass to get along with. Just such motives as these are back of the war wave we are now experiencing, and they it is that give it the persistence it has.

Our capitalist class looks with an alarm that it seeks to conceal, but does not succeed in, at the masses of the poor that its system breeds. These poor masses have been kept in such dense ignorance that they have no understanding of their actual condition. They feel pinched, hounded and oppressed. Why and how is a secret to them. They even believe that their hardships are natural, and that the social system that grinds them down is "eternal." And yet for all this they are restless. Their very ignorance renders them violent, when they do not think; and flighty, rushing after political chimeras, when they do think to the extent that it is given to them to think. In either case they are a source of danger. War is an outlet. The capitalist class of America to-day, as a whole, favors the opportunity that will afford a wholesale blood-

letting without their bearing the charge of inhumanity, on the contrary, giving them a chance to affect patriotic devotion.

Carnage is a spectre that dogs the heels of capitalism—that “best of all possible social systems.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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