

# The People.

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EDITORIAL

## Peace Universal.

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**T**he press has since last Monday been teeming with articles upon the Russian proposal for the universal disarmament that comes from the Tsar. Some of the articles express gladness, others suspicion; all, however, are tangled up in the meshes of the trained ignorance they have cultivated on the source of War and the root of Peace.

Taking up the Tsar's proposition by itself, it simply means that the close of the Nineteenth Century witnesses a spectacle akin to and essentially like that which astonished the middle of the Sixteenth Century, when Charles V. abdicated, and laying down the mightiest sceptre of that time, withdrew into the dark recesses of a Spanish cloister.

Autocracy, even when coincident with peace-breeding times, is insanity-breeding. It breeds a sort of mental paresis, that manifests itself in retiring moroseness. When, however, it coincides with turbulent days; when it falls in with critical periods in the history of the race, then it takes on the appearance of a religious spasm. That is what befell Charles V., and that is what has now befallen Nicholas II.

Charles V. ruled at a time when the chick of capitalism, particularly in Germany and France, was just breaking through the shell. The shell was the Roman Catholic creed, with its feudal beneficent scores of holidays. The oncoming capitalist system was hampered with by a creed observance that impeded it from extracting from the oncoming proletariat all the utility that in it lay: Holidays interrupted production; and the interruption had the force of religious sanction. The material requirements of the class that was fast coming to power shaped its religious views. Catholicism (due to its numerous holidays) was discovered to be "impure"; the Evangelical creed, which, though not directly, yet indirectly made havoc with the objectionable holidays, was discovered to be "pure Christianity." The "Reformation" broke out; the fatuous took it to be a religious, a spiritual uprising against the "Scarlet Harlot" of Rome; the knowing promoted the delusion and strove to free their class from the restrictions that

impeded its development: armed rebellion—the rebellion of Capitalism against Feudalism—broke out {on} all sides.

Charles V., the ruler of the day, understood as little as class rulers, crowned and uncrowned alike, understand such manifestations. He knew not the deep seat of physical resistance that rose up against him as the physical representative of the physical force of the social system that was about to succumb before a new social system. Autocrat, he interpreted rebellion to be against himself; clothed with might, he exercised his power, and smote right and left. But not all the physical power at the command of a mighty autocrat can resist the groundswell of Social Evolution. The arm of Charles V. grew tired with chastising; he felt that he had been lashing the sea; the spasm of religion seized him at last; and in 1555 he lay down his sword and scepter {sceptre?}, put on a monk's cowl, and sought quiet in the stagnant cell of a monastery.

Similarly now with Nicholas II. His autocratic rule falls in with a period in the human race that is the child of the period in which Charles V. battled and was tired out. As then the waves of the on-coming storm of Capitalism were beating against the shores of Feudalism, now the waves of the on-coming storm of Socialism are beating against the shores of Capitalism. Though not strictly within the whirlpool of Capitalist civilization, Russia feels, cannot choose but feel, the effects of the storm. It has long been feeling them. Like a Mrs. Malaprop it has misunderstood the physical signs of the times, and it has sought to mop the ocean dry. But the mop of the Dardanelles, of Herat, of Siberia proved ineffective. Nicholas too now feels tired out, recognizes the hopelessness of the struggle, and, similar causes producing similar results, he too now is seized with the religious spasm, and seeks quiet in peace.

The Russian peace proposal is ineffective. Peace can never be upon the conflict of human interests. But yet, the proposal may be hailed as an encouraging sign of the times. The exhaustion of the tyrant class is a barometer of the increasing vigor of the on-coming conquerors.

Our day, the day of Socialist victory, of Proletarian emancipation draws nigh.

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