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# Russia

by Eugene V. Debs

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The autocrat of Russia [Alexander III] rules over half of Europe and fully one-third of Asia. His power is absolute. Russia is a semi-barbarous country, sadly benighted and greatly in need of royal funerals. The emperor believes he has a divine right to rule Russians, and a great many of his subjects believe they have a divine right to kill him.

Russia has an established church called the "Greek church,"<sup>1</sup> and the emperor is at the head of the establishment. The church is a splendid burlesque, carrying about as much religious pressure to the square inch of boiler surface as falls to the lot of a man-eating tiger, a cobra, or a crocodile of the Nile. It is the kind of religion that glories in darkness, ignorance, superstition, and degradation. The priesthood of the Russian church is chiefly engaged in keeping Russians in ignorance. This done, they can be ruled and enslaved.

A great many Russians, seeing the people of other nations having the right to stand up and talk, and vote, and have parliaments, congresses, etc., have concluded that such things would be good for them, but the emperor will have none of it, hence Russians want to kill the emperor, and they are going to do it.<sup>2</sup> But it would do no good to kill the present emperor, since the woods are full of heirs to the throne, and just as soon as the present ruler went under another one would pop up of the same character, and the business would all have to be done all over again. Still, if two or three grand dukes were to hand in their checks suddenly the probability is that the next occupant would give up some of his divine prerogatives and permit the people to have a say through some representative body.

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, the Russian Orthodox church.

<sup>2</sup> While his father Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 and his son Nikolai II deposed in the spring of 1917 and executed the next year, Alexander III died without the assistance of the Russian revolutionary movement, succumbing to kidney disease on November 1, 1894, at the age of 49.

The hue and cry about emancipation of the serfs is known to be a miserable sham, the serfs being in *statu quo*, and worse off, if possible, than ever. It is not the policy of an autocrat to tolerate independence, and it is because the Russian despot will not permit liberty, because he will perpetuate the bondage of Russians, that thousands of them want to blow him up.

The latest accounts from the wretched land is that a brother of the emperor had been caught in a conspiracy having for its object the removal of the reigning despot. But should Grand Duke Sergei mount the throne only a change of rulers would result, and it is more than probable the miscreant who plotted against his brother would be the more heartless villain of the two.

It is eminently Christian for the people of the United States to send food to the famine cursed districts of Russia, but unless it is followed until delivered to those dying of hunger the probabilities are that the nobility will steal it.

It is not easy to tell the future of Russia. A far more easy task is to predict the reigning family of the wretched land unless some one of them levels down the throne. The edict has gone forth. A century may be required to execute the decree, but the present form of despotism is doomed. There will be a revolution, a general slaughter of grand dukes and heirs to the throne. This will come and Russia, like France and the Israelites, will owe its delivery to a *Red Sea*.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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