

EDITORIAL

THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**P**OWER comes from below.”

This is a slogan common on the lips of reformers. On the lips of these the slogan is meant to have a particularly strong revolutionary ring. Fact is that, with the reformer, the slogan implies an error of the first water. The slogan being usually hurled at and against some existing power, it is meant for an enunciation of a new principle: it is not even a principle: it is truism.

There never was, and there is not to-day, any “power” that did, or does not come from below. However despotic or “intolerable” any past or existing power; it is only from below that it came, and it is only with the consent of “below” that it continues. The instinct of the race recognizes the necessity of “power”—government—central directing authority. According to the will of “below,” that “power” has ever taken shape and ever will. The “power” that rules a people ever was, and ever will be the kind of “power” that particular people deserve. A people’s degree of civilization is gauged by the nature of the “power” which it raises, or permits. Consequently, the slogan, “Power comes from below” is a slogan hurled by a nation at itself, and by which it demands of itself that the clothes it dons—the “power” it submits to—shall fit its expanding limbs.

The Turkish parliament, just inaugurated amid the heartfelt rejoicings of the one time despotically ruled Turkish Empire, illustrates. these principles.

Thirty-two years ago a parliament was established in Turkey. That “power” did not come from “below.” It was a sort of Christmas present, made by the existing and legitimate “power,” to a people who had not willed and enforced it. As a consequence the clothes did not fit. The incident is told of lots having been cast in the parliament of 1876 for a minority and a majority contingent, or an “administration” and an “opposition” wing—in imitation of other parliaments. The process was ridiculous;

the parliament was short-lived. “Below” had not yet reflected the “power” that consists of a parliamentary government. It is now otherwise. True to the fact that “power” comes from “below,” and the Turkish people having advanced beyond the swaddling clothes of Yildiz Palace personal power, they themselves cast off the old wrappage, and themselves donned the knee-breeches of parliamentary political rule. No wonder they rejoice—what boy does not at his first knee-pants!

Power comes from below. In the measure that the Turkish people, and the rest of all of us—now at the boy’s knee-pants stage of parliamentary or political power—shall come to man’s estate, the political rule that now sways us, and for which alone we are fit, seeing we consent to it, will be cast off in short order, for the “toga virilis” of Industrial or Socialist Administration.

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

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