

EDITORIAL

## ABDUL HAMID, ONCE MORE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**T will pay to put Abdul Hamid once more on the witness-stand, so to speak, and once more, so to speak, make the conspicuous gentleman give State's testimony for the benefit of the Socialist or Labor Movement.

Abdul Hamid wielded a power that was peculiar. There seemed to be magic in the man's thrusts and parries. European coalitions against him were miraculously shattered by counter-coalitions he conjured up. The wrath of the populace, kindled by his capriciously cold-blooded assassinations, was extinguished by a breath from his throat at his appearance in public. Conspirators against his life dropped their weapon-laden arms, palsied at a look from his eyes. Even the Young Turks, organized, powerful and enlightened, and well aware that Abdul's rule meant slavery and debasement and should be ended, and who aimed at nothing short of that, approached and handled him much as one approaches and handles a porcupine.



ABDUL HAMID II (1842-1918)

What was the secret of Abdul's power? It was MYSTIFICATION. On this he traded; on this he traveled. As reputed Caliph; as Khan, a mysteriously vague, and as Khakan a still more mysteriously vague appellation, Abdul Hamid hypnotized the minds of the public and stalked along, feared, awe-inspiring, triumphantly and triumphant. This lasted fully thirty-three successive years. Then all came suddenly to an end. The same Abdul is now fallen so low as none so poor to do him reverence. He is bundled off from his once sacrosanct Kiosk, and, with only a miserly harem of barely twenty women and a hardly sufficient complement of eunuchs, he is

unceremoniously shipped to Salonica, there to await trial.

What is it broke the mysterious spell so mysteriously? Another MYSTIFICATION—the Sheik-ul-Islam, “Head of the Church,” whose oracular dictum, pronounced, one may imagine, in the hollowest of voices: “He must abdicate or be deposed” caused the swollen Khakan to collapse like a pricked balloon. Abdul may, perhaps he did try his mystic passes on Cheftek Pasha and his Macedonian veterans. But when he was Sheik-ul-Islammed—then the power oozed clean out of him. The jig was up.

While Abdul Hamid, in the solitude of imprisonment facing death and with his future behind him, ponders, though now too late to avail him, upon the “Law of Mystification,” the Socialist or Labor Movement, free and with its future before it, may profitably contemplate that Law.

Mystification—the common vernacular calls the thing “Flim-flam”—is a powerful weapon. But it is a treacherous weapon—treacherous to its own wielder. It is a weapon of the nature of the compacts that mediaeval stories, heavy-weighted with meaning, tell that men made with the Devil. The compact assured immediate glory, but only at the price of assured downfall. He who plays the Khakan dodge upon others will have the Sheik-ul-Islam dodge played upon him—sooner or later. The Khakan game requires the Khakan checkerboard to be played: on that same board moves the Sheik-ul-Islam game. What is true of individuals in this respect is true of Movements also.

Flim-flam may now and then seem to fill the sails of the Socialist or Labor Movement. But where Flim-flam fills them some other Flim-flam will as surely empty them again. Not the wind of bombast, not the hullabaloo of futility, not the Mystifications of the Lie, not the Flim-flam of Falsehood—none of these but even-paced Facts and Reason are the ground on which the Socialist or Labor Movement must seek its field, the weapon with which it must hew its onward path, the atmosphere it must create around it, and fill its arteries with.

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