

EDITORIAL

THE A.F. OF L. A TURKEY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE purpose of this article is not to make the A.F. of L. out a fowl—foul though the thing be.

The purpose of this article is to draw a parallel between the A.F. of L. and the recent country called Turkey, in answer to a correspondent who asks whether or not the A.F. of L. “may not yet head a Labor uprising in the United States.”

Wherein has the power consisted that for fully a century kept Turkey from collapsing? Was the tenacity of Turkish existence due to internal vitality? Was it due to structural perfection, or fitness? Was it due to the genius of her people, or of her rulers? More than a century ago Turkey would have collapsed like a punctured toy-balloon, and that condition continued until the present Balkan war broke out, and the collapse occurred.

What kept up Turkey?

Turkey—institutionally repellent to European civilization; moreover, by race and religion a potential menace to European races and religions;—was kept up by “The Powers”; it was kept up by those very European nations who justly pronounced Turkish institutions “unspeakable,” and who profess a religion so at variance with that of Turkey that the devout of both sides called each other “dogs.” When, in the course of time, “The Powers” partly lost their cunning, and partly lost their interest in the preservation of Turkey, the collapse occurred. Montenegro, Servia, Bulgaria, to the North, Greece, to the South, raised their heads; spread their wings; and swooped down upon the Lie that as a European nation, Turkey had long been. Whereupon the Lie went the way of all lies.

It is and will be similarly with the A.F. of L.

Like Turkey, the A.F. of L., being mainly made up of working people, is repel-

lent to the Capitalist Class; like Turkey, the A.F. of L., by reason of its proletarian composition and inevitable instincts, is a potential menace to capitalist interests; how much alike the mutual sentiments at bottom are between the A.F. of L. and the Capitalists may be judged from the readiness of the former to dynamite the latter, and from the readiness of the latter to bayonet and hang the former: they may not call each other “dogs,” but they mean as much; finally, like Turkey, the A.F. of L. is propped up and preserved by the very foes of its people: what “The Powers” were to Turkey, the Civic Federation Capitalists are to the A.F. of L.

When in the fullness of Time “The Powers” that now are the props of the A.F. of L., will, in their turn, have either lost their cunning, or will find further efforts to preserve their A.F. of L. protégé bootless, then will the economic Montenegros, the economic Servias, the economic Bulgarias, the economic Greeces, of America, all of whom are now kept out of their economic Balkans, spontaneously raise their heads; spread their wings; swoop down upon the economic Lie of the A.F. of L;—and send that Lie whither the political Lie of Turkey was sent in our own days.

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