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EDITORIAL

THE REFERENDUM IN TURKEY.

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WITH us here in America, when the party dominant in Congress has adopted a decision, a “knot is tied,” in order to prevent slippings, by a motion to reconsider, followed immediately by a motion to lay the motion to reconsider on the table. The motion to lay on the table being carried with the promptness usual with such motions, the episode is closed. In modern Turkey the parliamentary practice to accomplish the same end, in cases of deposing the monarch, seems to be for the Sheik-ul-Islam to issue a decree to that effect, which, being ratified by motion in parliament, the knot is likewise tied, the episode is closed. The practice was put into effective operation upon the Sultan.

Abdul Hamid being now done for and the Constitution emphatically reasserted, a bird’s eye view of the stirring events that occurred since the palace mutiny of April 13 brings into relief just one significant fact and lesson, a fact and lesson that all the dust of the turmoil should not suffice to becloud—**THE REFERENDUM NEEDS NO LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENT: IT IS A THING DE FACTO: ANY COUNTRY CAN HAVE IT FOR THE WILLING.** Turkey has willed, and applied the referendum with swiftness and precision.

When, incited with money and prelatism, some 7,000 Moslem soldiers in Constantinople broke loose from their officers, and, led by sergeants, surrounded the parliament, demanded the deposition of the Young Turks ministry, slaughtered those they could lay hands on, and virtually restored the loathsome regime which the Constitution had replaced—when these events occurred the language, inspired from the Yildiz Kiosk, no doubt, was that the parliament consisted only of puppets, that the real ruler was the Committee of Union and Progress, and that this organization had only upturned one autocracy to substitute a worse. The Editors of the two Turkish papers in New York had themselves interviewed and expressed

these views, and their views were echoed and re-echoed in the columns of the capitalist press. Exactly two weeks after the “puppets” had been told what was what, a salute of 101 guns, ordered by that very parliament of “puppets,” announced the end of Abdul Hamid and the beginning of a new reign, with Constantinople, and virtually all Turkey well in hand.

What was it that had happened? A miracle? The age of miracles is gone by. What happened was that the referendum—an automatically working thing, if at all in working order,—was heard from.

Members of a delegated body are not Topsies that “grow” but are not “born.” They are born of the will of constituents who are clear on what they want, and, therefore, are organized to get it. If the delegates are legitimate children of their parentage their action can not choose but reflect the will of those not seated in the parliament, and these are ever ready organized for the referendum. To monkey with such a delegation, backed by such an organization, is to monkey with a buzz saw—as Abdul Hamid in Turkey did, and our own Abdul Hamids will eventually find out.

“All About the Referendum” should be the collective title of the last two weeks’ happenings in Turkey.

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

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