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EDITORIAL

A Hint From Turkey.

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Our Western civilization capitalists have long abandoned their pristine respect for democratic institutions, and for the inevitable outcome of these—parliamentary or representative government. They have wheeled about, and now, as far as their secret sentiments are concerned, they stand in mute admiration before the despotic system of government, which to overthrow was a condition precedent for their own access to power. To-day, our Western civilization capitalists find that their quondam phrases of liberalism are a hindrance to them; they are taken up by the proletariat and are used in ways and manners that bode nothing good to our capitalists. In view of all this, our Western civilization capitalists would fain find some pretext to abolish representative government and all the political liberties that lead to or flow from it.

But they dare not. Much as they seek for pretexts to circumvent the suffrage, to put stumbling blocks in its way, even to hamstring it, they have not yet boldly dared to declare it bad, less yet have they dared to take a stand against representative government. But now comes a voice from the far and uncivilized East. The Sultan of Turkey drops a hint.

The Austrian parliament has, during the last few months, been presenting a shocking spectacle of disorder, and even riot. The lie direct has been passed; inkstands have flown across the room from the desk of one delegate upon the nose of another; benches have been raised and dropped on heads; blood has flown; in short the public has been treated to the spectacle of a beer garden upon an extensive and from a conspicuous theater. Western civilization capitalists looked on, and drew a variety of more or less flat conclusions; the Sultan of Turkey, however, steps up and pointing his finger at the Austrian riotous assembly, says: "Lo, parliamentary government!" By this one, short sentence the Unspeakable Turk becomes the exponent of the Western civilization capitalism; he leaps to the very front as the genuine representative of the aspirations of Western civilization capitalism, as the only one who fathoms its sentiments and expresses its wishes.

We may expect at any moment to see the Turkish hint taken by our Western capitalist class. Political freedom has become an unmitigated nuisance to it; it keeps that class in constant fear, jumping up and down the anxious seat at every election; every year almost holding its breath during campaigns, and with palpitating heart, asking itself the question, What is going to rip now?

Can such a nuisance be much longer tolerated by our Western civilization rulers, whose affinity with Eastern barbarism, the Sultan's hint now makes clear?

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