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EDITORIAL

## THAT REICHSTAG STRIKE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE Maximilian Harden trial was taken up by the press as the “knell of German militarism.” Even more significant, as a sign of the times, is the hardly commented upon “Reichstag strike.”

The facts in the case are these:

About a week ago, in the course of a debate on the colonies, a Reichstag deputy remarked incidentally: “Negroes also have immortal souls.” This sentiment was jeered by the press representatives in the reporters’ gallery. Herr Groeber, a Reichstag member of the Centrist, or Clerical party, justly resented the jeers, and called the jeering journalists “swine.” The journalists took offence and “struck.” The strike consisted in refusing to publish the speeches made in the Reichstag, unless Herr Groeber apologized. The strike lasted five days. All papers ceased to contain any mention of the Reichstag transactions—and the Reichstag surrendered. Herr Groeber read his apology, the journalists returned to the gallery, and the speeches were resumed.

Whether the term “swine” was too severe or not, one thing is certain, the conduct of the reporters in jeering, and thereby participating in the debate, was utterly reprehensible, all the more seeing their jeers were on the side of inhumanity. This notwithstanding, the “offending” Reichstag member was compelled to apologize. The pressure brought upon him must have been severe. The speech-makers forced him to apologize for the simple reason that if he did not they would “cease to be heard.”

The wronger the reporters were all the more glaring does the fact project itself upon the canvas of modern society that, what is broadly called “parliamentarism,” consists of other things besides enacting laws, a thing attended to by the majority; and that a leading thing in “parliamentarism” is the speeches, a thing in which the

minority plays an important part. The “Reichstag Strike” brings out forcibly the fact that the work of agitation and education—the leading feature of political action during campaigns—preserves much of its force and acquires some new force when done under the resounding board and upon the national stage of a parliament. How powerful this feature is is brought out by the “strike”: even the ruling majority feels the necessity of being heard.

It is for this reason that the capitalist press made light of the “strike.” For that very reason the well poised revolutionist of to-day takes the lesson to heart.

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

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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)