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EDITORIAL

## A PEEP AT THE DOUMA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**L** *A Tribune Russe* for the month of May reports the interpellation made to the Ministry at the Douma by the Social Democratic deputy Sokebelef. It is this:

“Members of the Douma!

“We propose that you discuss immediately our urgent interpellation. We do so in view of the fact that all interpellations made by us Social Democrats are, according to the very language of our President, ‘systematically and automatically’ laid upon the table. [A voice from the Right: “What is your interpellation about?”] Our interpellation is upon the audacious decree of the Prefect of Bakou concerning the First of May. [Laughter from the Right.] The Douma must take a stand before May 1, seeing that the Prefects are stirring themselves. If all the Governors and Prefects start enacting laws, there will not be enough police agents to arrest all the delinquents, and there will not be enough District Attorneys to handle all the indictments. [Laughter.] I have another reason. On the 30th of March it was your friends who received upon their backs the knouts of the Cossack in the streets of St. Petersburg. That happened without previous circulars. What may not be expected to happen when regular circulars have been issued? If your protest of May 5 against the application of the knout indiscriminately, and not upon your own friends only, was made in good faith, you must certainly recognize the urgency of our present interpellation. All those who decline to be accomplices in the exploits of the Administration such as were perpetrated on May 1, new calendar, at Riga and Warsaw, all those who feel it incumbent upon themselves to disconnect themselves of responsibility for the excesses of the Police on the Russian First of May, will vote for the urgency of our interpellation.”

The interpellation, urgency and all, was put off.

The picture left upon the mind—Cossacks knouting a non-proletarian bourgeois demonstration; protests raised by the representatives of the knouted elements; the reminder of the event to the protestors; the circumstance recalled of that knouting

having taken place without warning; the former protestors appealed to not to justify the opinion that their protest was not in good faith when claimed to be, not in behalf of their own friends only, but in behalf of a general principle; finally, the convincing argument in behalf of the proletariat that the danger was greater than on the previous occasion, the laughter and disturbing noises that the plea was met with, and then the ignoring of the plea—that picture recommends, by revealing, the advantages, and it warns, by disclosing, the shortcomings of parliamentarism.

On the public platform the propaganda of Revolution addresses itself to “the jury,” so to speak. It is on the floor of parliaments that the propaganda assumes the aspect of {a} contest.

It matters not how discourteous the noises, how galling the laughter, how insulting the treatment bestowed upon the interpellation of the Social Democrat, neither noise, laughter, nor yet insult can dull the edge of the shots he fired with parliamentary decorum; they resound throughout the empire: they are a propaganda in themselves, a propaganda that makes its mark, and makes its mark just because conducted on the battlefield of parliament.

On the other hand, the discourteous noises, the galling laughter, the insulting treatment, each and all, culminating with the ignoring of the interpellation, uncover the limitations of the parliamentary field of battle, so far as Revolution is concerned. So far as Revolution is concerned, parliaments do not enact, they record accomplished revolutions.

Even in a country so backward still in parliamentary life as Russia, the Russian Douma points the revolutionist to the political field for propaganda, and illustrates the hopelessness of the political field for action.

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