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EDITORIAL

GERMANY'S SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AT WORK.

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ABOUT fourteen years ago, addressing a meeting in Berlin against the moves then on foot to inject reform issues into the Social Democracy, Bebel asked: "What, for instance, has the issue of vaccination to do with Socialism?" The question was a clincher. So, likewise, may to-day—in sight of the prominent rôle played by the Social Democracy in the Reichstag debates, just started, to secure ministerial responsibility—the question be asked: "What has the issue of ministerial responsibility to do with Socialism?"

"Ministerial responsibility" implies a "Political State"; Socialism implies the "Industrial State"—two mutually repelling systems. The issue of "ministerial responsibility," accordingly, affects only the class system of rule. Can it be any concern of Socialism to tinker upon and perfect and beautify a system that its aim is to overthrow?

The answer is "Yes" and "No"—according to the country affected.

"Yes"—in Germany.

No more than in Nature, does evolution make leaps in Society. Feudal Society cannot leap into Socialism. The chasm between the two has to be bridged by Capitalism. The bridge over the chasm is the socio-political work of engineering that history demands from the bourgeois. That engineer's work is in an unfinished state in Germany. Its unfinished state has blocked Socialist progress in the Empire. The German Socialists, on the march to their goal, are halted by the abruptly breaking off arch the of the bridge they needs must cross. A special problem arises under such circumstances. For these many years the German Social Democracy has been laboring thereat—the finishing of the work left unfinished by the German bourgeois revolution. The task is impossible. No more than the bourgeois could have perfected the feudal, can the proletariat perfect the capitalist system. A moment has,

however, arrived when the bourgeois of Germany, driven by their class interests, have themselves buckled down to the work they left unfinished. The move of the Radical Liberals to secure "ministerial responsibility" means just that; and, acting like enlightened men the German Social Democracy gives a helping, a strong helping hand.

The enlightened conduct of the German Social Democracy will be misunderstood only by the pure and simple Socialist politician of America. For the identical reason that the German Social Democracy deserves applause for temporarily suspending its Socialist work and assisting the bourgeois Radicals, such a policy in America deserves condemnation only. Here, in America, the bourgeois has completed his revolution as he has done nowhere else. Here the bourgeois bridge spans broad and strong the chasm that separates Old Feudalism from coming Socialism. Here, in America, to suspend Socialist work one instant and assist the Radical bourgeois is not to assist in a necessary work, it is to waste time in filigreeing the bourgeois bridge.

As an applauder of the German Social Democracy, the S.L.P. of America rejects, for America, the tactics that German conditions demand.

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

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