

might alienate its voters, that the failure of such revolutionary demonstrations might shake the confidence of the masses in the party and strengthen the power of the capitalist class. Years of success had bred in the bureaucrats of the party a holy horror of failure. They were desperately opposed to any action that did not, at the outset, bear assurance of a successful outcome.

The radical minority waged constant war upon this deadening conservatism. In Prussia it demanded the adoption of a policy of active opposition to the three-class election system, against which the party had used its political weapons in vain. In 1904, at Bremen, Karl Liebknecht moved that the question of the general political strike against the unequal suffrage laws of Prussia be discussed. At the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart, in 1907, Rosa Luxemburg called out to the delegates who had adopted a resolution celebrating the martyrs of the Russian counter-revolution: "If they could speak they would cry out to you, 'We do not need your praises. Learn, rather, from our example.'" In 1913, at the celebrated Party Convention of Jena, the unceasing agitation of this small group of revolutionists had so far borne fruit that they succeeded in securing the adoption of the following resolution, against the vehement opposition of David, Bernstein, Scheidemann, and others:

"The Party Congress of Jena, 1913, sees in the general application of mass cessation of labor, under certain circumstances, one of the most effective methods, not only against proposed attacks upon existing political rights, but also for the conquest of new political reforms and rights.

"The achievement of general, equal, direct and secret suffrage for all public offices is a necessary condition for the liberation of the proletariat. The existing three-class suffrage system not only deprives the propertyless class of its political liberties, but hampers them in every movement for the improvement of their standard of life; it makes the worst enemies of labor-union activity and social progress, the Junker caste, the controllers of all legislation.

"The Party Congress, therefore, calls upon the politically enslaved masses to use all their powers in the fight against the three-class election system, realizing that this struggle cannot be carried out without great sacrifices to a victorious conclusion.

"While the Party Congress opposes the use of the general strike as an unfailing weapon that may be used at all times for

the abolition of social wrongs in the anarchistic sense, it is of the conviction that the proletariat must be prepared to use its whole power for the achievement of political equality. The political mass strike can be successful only with the united effort of all organs of the labor movement, by class-conscious masses, inspired by the ultimate aims of Socialism, prepared for all sacrifices. The Congress pledges every comrade, therefore, to work tirelessly for the political and labor union organizations of the working class."

On this occasion Rosa Luxemburg delivered a half hour speech that has become famous in the annals of the Socialist movement of Germany:

..... "We declare that in Germany, as in all other countries, it is not necessary to wait with the eventual application of the general-strike weapon until the last man and the last woman have paid their dues as organized members of a Socialist local, when we call attention to the fact that where a revolutionary situation has arisen, when we face great historical tasks, the organization of the party will exert a moral and spiritual influence that will sweep the unorganized masses into our movement, when we declare that the policies and tactics of the party must be such that will awaken enthusiasm and the self-sacrificing spirit outside of the organization, for only in this way can we carry the masses with us,—then the Executive Committee protests, and says that we are preparing to disrupt the organization. That means lack of discipline, that is sowing suspicion against the party functionaries! They have spoken of our lack of responsibility, of our unscrupulousness. I will not use such expressions, but allow me to say that such methods in the discussion of party questions border on demagoguery..... We have been accused of being direct actionists, and conspirators. We here declare that they are the conspirators who would apply the typical tactics of the conspirators to the strike because they believe that the outbreak of a mass strike must be a surprise, that it must be worked out and prepared secretly, behind closed doors, by a handful of officials..... Can you not understand that the masses themselves must become familiar with this new weapon? After all, we here are not speaking to the masses, we are merely formulating propositions that must be thought out, digested and accepted by the comrades outside..... The mass strike in Germany, as in all countries, to be sure, must come from the masses, and that is the reason why we say in our resolution that the mass strike cannot be ordered, from one day to another, by party and union leaders, as our party authorities seem to assume. Nor can it be stopped once it has reached the historic stage of ripeness. But this does not, by any means take from us the responsibility for the conduct of the mass strike if it is to be successful, if it is to bring us the maximum of positive results and advantages, in the political and socialist awakening of the masses. The party must stand at the head of the movement, but in order to be at its head when it comes, it must not wait patiently until the revolutionary situation has become a fact, to be dragged along by the masses, no, it must prepare the masses, by a complete re-orientation of its tactics and methods toward a revolutionary tendency,