

# STRIKING EVENTS IN FRANCE

Paris, Dec. 3, 1910.

The French labor movement at present is fairly surging over the condemnation to death of Secretary Durand of the "Coal Heavers" of Havre for alleged moral complicity in the killing of the scab Donge by several strikers recently. It will be remembered that this is the case where bought witnesses testified that at Durand's instigation Donge was tried and condemned to death in a union meeting, and that the latter's death was only the execution of the sentence.

This story is simply absurd. The condemnation is only a part of the ages old tactics of trying to kill a dangerous movement by persecuting its militant spirits. The C. G. T. is well aware of the real import of the death sentence for Durand and is preparing to put up a vicious fight. Protest meetings are being held in all the large cities of France. The keynotes of these meetings are demands to the government for Durand's release on pain of a general strike, and warnings to all militants to hold themselves ready for a mass movement on short notice.

The agitation has already produced an echo in the Chamber of Deputies, where one excited politician demanded of Briand if he knew that the C. G. T. was openly preparing to revolt against law and order. This gentleman promised to institute an inquiry as to the legal standing of the C. G. T., with the object in view of suppressing it if possible.

Saturday night I attended a great protest meeting at a riding school close to the Place de la Bastille. There were fully 10,000 indignant syndicalists present. Yvetot, Bouderson and other militants were the speakers. These speakers urged the syndicalists to resist the execution of Durand by every means in their power. The crowd was worked up to an intense degree and the speakers were continually interrupted by howlings of the forbidden word, "Sabotage!" The French slaves well know what tactics hurt their masters, and they also know that the word "Sabotage" stands for the most revolutionary sentiments the working class can have, i. e., utter contempt for capitalist life and property. It is coming to mean for them a general panacea for all their social ills.

A Socialist created a division in the meeting by advocating the election of more Socialist deputies, sending committees to Briand in order to stay the hand of the murderous government. When the drift of his talk became clear to the audience, he was greeted with a wild roar of disgust and disapproval. It was only on the appeal of a militant direct actionist that this speaker was allowed to finish his talk. I was pleased beyond measure at the incident, as it showed clearer than anything I have yet seen since coming to France that the French working class is getting "clear" on the question of "the ballot."

At the exit of the building, a couple of thousand gendarmes and soldiers (infantry and cavalry) were stationed, and when the meeting was finished the large crowd singing the "Internationale" and hooting the police were forced to pass through a small door two at a time. They were then sent in different directions and kept moving for several blocks from the meeting place by the innumerable police, who were stationed in hundreds at all the strategic points in the neighborhood. It required more than an hour for the crowd to filter through this small door. The idea was to prevent these feared even though unarmed syndicalists from "bunching up." I was flattered and pleased at sharing in this general attention from the police, and I was filled with disgust when I thought of the tame and unfeared American labor movement that I was doomed to return to in all likelihood. If it were possible for me to learn French in a couple of years, good enough to speak it fluently, I would surely stay here and cast my lot in with these red blooded syndicalists.

On my way home I went down into the subway station at the Place de la Bastille and was fairly startled at meeting some of the foundations of the Bastille which were uncovered and left exposed for exhibition purposes by the Metropolitan Subway Co. The steel of this history conducted violently with the frame of mind I was in after attending this revolutionary meeting, and fairly jerked me back to the times when labor hadn't the slightest idea of its interests.

I thought if revolutionary sentiment grows amongst the Parisian building trades workers as much in the next 20 years, as it has in the past twenty years, prison walls such as that I was looking at

will be impossible, the workers will simply refuse to build them. The building of churches in France has ceased, due to lack of demand created by a growing intelligence amongst the workers. The next phenomena in order will be to stop building prisons to stuff with militant workers. This also will emanate from a rapidly learning working class.

The Socialist Prime Minister Briand has got something new up his sleeve now. He has laid out to be voted on, a legal scheme of compulsory arbitration for the railroaders, which will deprive the latter of not only the right to strike, but even to organize. Severe penalties are attached to infraction of the law. Some people call Briand a traitor in taking such measures as he has in suppressing the railroaders in the recent strikes and in advocating these laws, but this, however, is a little harsh on the gentleman, if he did once profess to believe in the efficiency of the general strike and urge the use of direct action tactics in conjunction with political action, it was only due to a slight incoherence of ideas on his part, or possibly a desire to secure a few votes. He is now "coming to" and takes a sincere and true Socialist attitude, i. e., that the only proper tactics for the working class to pursue is to vote, vote and to vote again. He is simply doing openly what every Socialist is doing all over the world—discrediting direct action tactics and suppressing them as much as possible.

The "Employers' Association" has issued a long fake protest against the compulsory arbitration laws. This is, of course, only to make the workers believe that the law will have some elements of justice in it. It will soon be time for the C. G. T. to take a hand in this merry little farce and straighten affairs out a little.

Almereyda and Merle, the two editors of "La Guerre Sociale," arrested as political prisoners during the railroad strike and held as common prisoners, went on a hunger strike a week ago to secure rights accorded political prisoners, but after a few hours of it the Governor weakened and sent them to the special quarters reserved for political prisoners.

Yours for double-jointed fish-balls,  
W. Z. FOSTER.

## BARBAROUS FRESNO

Inside History Leading Up to the Disgraceful Fight Against Free Speech.

By E. Flawith, in People's Paper.

Early in the summer of this year a mere handful of men, members of the I. W. W. local in Fresno, got busy amongst the poor Mexicans, Russians and others who were working for the Santa Fe, Electric Power and other companies.

They showed the men that they were being bled of all they earned at the companies' stores; that they were not under compulsion to accept their enslaved conditions as they imagined they were, by virtue of a so-called contract.

The result of this agitation was effective. The Santa Fe authorities complained to the police that they had lost \$10,000 by the unsettled condition of the men. The police, like all other dogs, knew their master's voice.

The Mexicans did not want to leave town at the behest of their master and work on a dam.

Silvern, a contractor, complained of this to Chief of Police Shaw. This hawkshaw is said to have then told Silvern to give him the name of every man who refused the job out of town, no matter what the wages or conditions happened to be, and he would have every one arrested as vagrants.

Now the fight was on. Mexicans and Russians left town to avoid arrest and trouble. Labor was getting scarce. Dividends of stockholders were being lessened.

The police, not being able to get any real charges against the I. W. W.'s, awaited their opportunities when no private individual was looking on. They affronted and insulted a few leaders of the agitation, trying hard to provoke them to personal encounters. Failing in this, they prosecuted the men for disturbing the peace. Perjury was like a blue smoke. It was so thick and nauseating that even Judge Briggs is said to have privately admitted that what the police said was perjury.

But the men had to go to jail "because they were impudent in court." Impudent because they said the police were telling lies.

No I. W. W. was to be tolerated after this. Permits to speak on the streets were revoked, although there are no ordinances in Fresno abridging or regulating free speech. The result was the arrest, from