

THE AGITATOR

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THE AGITATOR does not bear the union stamp because it is not printed for profit. But it is union, every letter of it. It is printed and published by unionists and their friends for the economic and political education of themselves and their fellow toilers. Much of the labor is given free. On the whole it is a work of love—the love of the idea, of a world fit for the free.

Di-plumacy has become a philanthropic pursuit like shopkeepin', but politics, me lords, is still th' same ol' spoort iv highway robb'ry Mr. Dooley

SYNDICALISM IN FRANCE

(This is the first and only complete history of the great French labor organization, and we are glad to present it to our readers, especially at this time, when so much is being said and so little is known about syndicalism. The reader will observe the dissimilarity between the C. G. T. and any organization in this country. This history was accepted for publication as a pamphlet in Chicago eighteen months ago and has been pigeon-holed ever since. Syndicalism wont stay "put" any longer. —Editor.)

Structure of the Confederation Generale du Travail

In the following grouping the beautiful symmetry of the C. G. T. can readily be seen. The famed "two sections," one organized according to locality, and the other according to industry, are made clear.

A frequent reference to this "group," while reading the article, will help the mind to grasp the details more fully.

354,000 members organized locally, thruout France, according to crafts and industries, into 3012 syndicates (local unions)

3012 syndicates organized nationally according to craft; industry or "department" into 57 National federations, or unions; one for each craft or industry organized.

3012 syndicates organized locally regardless of craft or industrial lines into 154 "Bourses du travail," (local councils,) one for each city or district organized.

Federal Committee, consisting of one delegate from each national federation.

Bourse Committee, consisting of one delegate from each "Bourse du travail."

Confederal Committee, consisting of the combined Federal and Bourse Committees.

The official figures of 354,000, are taken from the reports of the C. G. T. (1910) upon which per capita tax is based; and is, therefore, a conservative estimate of the organization's strength. For instance, The Nat. Fed. of Transport Workers pays assessments on 5,000 members, yet in Paris alone there is known to be 7,000 in good standing in this union. An estimate of 500,000 would probably be nearer the exact numerical strength of the C. G. T. than the official figures.

The Syndicates

The fundamental form of organization in the C. G. T. is the syndicat, or local union. The 3012 of these syndicates are in all the industries and localities of France. They, in regard to scope of organization, do not conform to "iron clad" classification. They have not been created according to some utopia or "cut and dried" plan, but are the result of long evolutionary processes. They are in many stages of development, and are constantly and rapidly changing and improving their forms by fusing with each other, or widening their scope and including broader categories of workers. They may be loosely grouped under three general heads, viz. (1) craft, (2) modified craft and (3) industrial syndicates.

(1) The craft syndicates usually consist of skilled workers whose professions are clearly marked, or who dont

require assistants, such as locksmiths, proof readers, composers, typewriters, engineers, etc.

(2) modified syndicates usually consist of mechanics and helpers or of workers in trades closely allied. The Syndicat of Masons of Paris, for instance, includes bricklayers, stone masons, hod carriers, etc. Syndicates of workers in two or more closely related trades are common: such are, in various places Roofers-Tinners Tinners-Plumbers, Plumbers-Roofers, Plasters-Painters, Bartenders-Waiters, etc.

(3) The miners and railroaders local unions are types of industrial syndicates. The miner's syndicates include all mine workers, the railroaders syndicates all railroaders except engineers and firemen, who have separate organization of their own. In big railroad centres there are syndicates for each railroad system. In Paris there are 11 of these system industrial syndicates.

The French idea is to group a great number of workers in the syndicates as is practical. In Paris, where building trades workers are very numerous, they are organized into 34 syndicates of trade or modified trade type; but in the smaller cities where building trades workers are fewer they are all grouped together in industrial syndicates.

Administration of Syndicates

While following no hard and fast rule, as each syndicate chooses its own methods, the syndicates are usually administered by an executive committee of about a dozen members including a secretary and treasurer. Except in the cases of the large syndicates whose secretaries are paid, the services of these committeemen are gratuitous. Their functions are purely executive matters requiring legislation being settled at the business meetings of the syndicates, which usually take place four times a year. At these business meetings, as in those of syndicalist organizations of all degrees, the principle of quorum is ignored, any number of members regularly assembled being competent to transact the syndicates business. Officers of the syndicates must, according to the national law of 1884, be French born, 21 years of age and in enjoyment of civil rights.

The National Federations

The national federation is a national alliance of all the syndicates organized in a given craft, industry or department. Like the syndicates the federations have not been created according to any prearranged plan but are the products of an evolutionary process. They are of many types, but may be loosely classified under four heads (1) craft, (2) semi-industrial, (3) industrial, and (4) "departmental."

(1) The clear cut craft type of federation is comparatively rare. It is represented by the barbers, school teachers, drug clerks and a few others.

(2) The bulk of the federations are of the semi-industrial type most of them being directly engaged in the production of one article or set of articles. Workers engaged in producing the raw materials used are not generally in these unions. The employees of the state match works, for instance, are all organized into the Federation of Match Workers, all textile worker into the "Federation of Textile Workers," all leather workers into the "Federation of Leather Workers," all Glass Workers into the "Federation of Glass Workers," etc.

The "Federation of Lithographers" organizes, in addition to lithographs, newspaper reporters, artists, engravers etc. The "Gen. Federation of Theatrical Workers" includes actors, "supes," ushers, musicians, stagehands, electricians, etc.

(3) The higher type of industrial federation is best exemplified by the "National Federation of Building Trades Workers," which is at once the largest, best formed and perhaps most revolutionary federation in France. It includes in its ranks building trades workers of all categories, from brick-makers, quarry men and "chimney doctors" to sculptors, draftsmen, wood carvers, etc. The "National Federation of Food Stuff Workers," tho much smaller, is another fine type of industrial union. It is composed of food stuff workers of all categories except agricultural workers who have their federation. It includes hotel employees, butchers, bakers, candymakers, brewery workers, milk men, grocery clerks, etc.

(4) The "National Federation of Metal Workers" is the nearest approach to the "department" type of union. It consists of metal workers of almost every category, from metal miners, boilermakers and "demolishers of ships" to makers of scientific instruments and opticians. This federation is somewhat top heavy, and with an increase in membership will in all likelihood be sub-divided.

With the exception of a few organizations such as the miner's and railroader's, which preserve the same scope of organization in the syndicates as in the federations, all these federations follow the custom of dividing themselves for convenience sake into numerous loose craft syndicates in the localities where their membership is large.

In the localities where the membership is small, the the syndicates retain the industrial form of the federation.

The federation's numerically strongest (1910) are "Building Workers" 85,000, "R. R. Workers" 48,000, "Miners" 30,000, "Metal Workers" 30,000.

Federalist and Centralized Federations

In regard to their organization forms the French federations are of two pronounced types, viz. federalist and centralist. A federalist, or decentralized, federation is one in which the syndicates enjoy the completest possible autonomy. It is administered by a national committee composed of one delegate from each affiliated syndicat.

These delegates are always subject to recall, so consequently keep in touch with their respective syndicates, and represent their interests. All the revolutionary federations such as "Building Trades Workers," "Leather Workers," "Metal Workers," are of this federalist type.

In the centralized federations the syndicates have very limited autonomy. The federations are usually administered by a small powerful committee, elected for a term of years, at the conventions, which usually take place every two years. Such committees are, ordinarily, dictators. The conservative socialist politicians are interested in them, but are gradually being dislodged by the famous "militant minorities" of direct actionists, who favor the adoption of the better federal form.

Bourses du Travail

A Bourse is a local alliance of all the syndicates of all the organized industries in a given locality. The Bourses are true class organization, organizing in one union, workers of all kinds in given localities. They are of two types, those organized on governmental territorial lines, such as ward, city and county; and those organized on natural industrial lines, such as mining districts, textile districts, etc. Both types are numerous.

The "Union of Syndicates of the Seine" (Paris and environs) is a characteristic type of Bourse organization. It consists of all the C. G. T. syndicates in its territory—230 syndicates of 52 national federations. It is administered by a general committee of one member from each syndicat. An executive committee of 30 members, including Sec., Treas., etc., is elected from its ranks. The Secretary and Treasurer are paid \$2.00 for eight hours. Duties of committees are of administrative and propaganda nature. The syndicates decide all legislative matters.

The great value of the Bourses lie in their class nature. They do not limit themselves to the organization of any one category of workers, but to the whole working class in their localities. They have done much to break down in France the narrow spirit of trade unionism and to teach the workers they are primarily members of the working class and not of any particular craft, by enabling workers of all kinds to undertake making important cooperative projects in common. The following are a few of their many undertakings. All are optional to each Bourse.

Wm. Z. FOSTER.

(To be continued.)

TRIAL OF THE MEXICAN JUNTA

The farce is over. The trial of the Junta began June the 21st. It took the first two days to select a jury. Then a week and a half was spent listening to the lies of the state witnesses. They were nicely trained to lie against the Mexican Liberal Junta. Any one with a clear conscience could see that these men on trial were innocent.

Most of the State witnesses went to Mexico as fortune hunters to get rich quick; and as they could not succeed they turned traitors against the Mexican Liberal Party. Martin, the first State witness, stated that he was a spy for the Mexican Government. There were at least 25 state witnesses, mostly rif raf gleaned from the slums. The Mexican Liberal Junta had about 12 witnesses. All stated they went to Mexico to fight in the Revolution of their own free will. Jack Mosby was also a witness for the Mexican Liberal Junta, in spite of the promise made to him by assistant prosecutor Robinson that if he became a witness for the State he would soon be set at liberty. He stated this to the Jury, but Robinson denied it. Gen. Jack Mosby is serving a six years sentence in a Military Prison for deserting the U. S. Army.

J. B. Laflin, stated that he read "Barbarous Mexico," by John K. Turner, and was thusly inspired to go to Mexico and fight the cruel system of injustice which rests on blood and iron. The brothers Magon as well as Liberado Rivera and Enseimo Figueroa, are found guilty in spite of their innocence and sentenced to 23 months in jail. They were taken at once to the County Prison of Los Angeles, which truly represent the Bastille of Paris. Hundreds of people were present, but also plenty of police and spies.

Now it is for us to do our best for these four men who are innocently compeld to serve imprisonment. I was