SYNDICALISM IN FRANCE

(This is the first and only complete history of the great French labor organization, and we are grateful to present it to our readers, especially at this time, when 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 is dedicated for publication as a pamphlet in Chicago eight-to-teen months ago and has been pigeon-holed ever since. Syndicalism won "pay" just any longer. — Editor.)

Structure of the Confédération Générale du Travail

In the following groupings 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 to gain the details more fully.

354,000 members organized local federations of the C. G. T., according to crafts and industries, in 3021 syndicates (local unions)

302 syndicates organized nationally according to industry

5 National federations, or unions, one for each craft or industry organized.

Bourse, consisting of one delegate from each national federation.

Confédération Générale, 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. A reasonable estimate of the total number 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 syndicate or local union. The 1021 of these syndicates are in all the industries and localities of France. They, in regard to scope of organization, do not conform to the term "district." They have not been created according to some utopia or "cut and dry" plan, but are the result of long evolutionary processes. They have grown in stages of development, and are ready, rapidly and changing improving their forms by fusing with each other, widening their scope and including broader demands. They may be loosely grouped under three general heads, viz. (1) craft, (2) modified craft and (3) industrial syndicate.

(1) The craft syndicates usually consist of skilled workers whose professions are clearly marked, or who do not require assistants, such as locksmiths, proofreaders, composers, typewriters, engineers, etc. (2) modified craft consist of mechanics and helpers or of workers in trades closely allied. The Syndicate of Masons of Paris, for instance, includes brick-layers, stone cutters, etc. Same for tailors, etc. Syndicates in which workers in two or more closely related trades are common: such are in, various places Roofers-Tinners-Tinters-Fishermen-Boilermakers-Engineers, etc. Syndicates in which workers in trades or in more closely related trades are: such as for railroad, etc. In all of these systems industrial syndicates. The French law requires a number of workers in the syndicates as is practical. In Paris, where building trades workers are very numerous, they are organized into 21 syndicates of trade or modified trade types; 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 syndical choice is made, the French are usual-ly administered by an executive committee of about a dozen members including a secretary and treasurer. Except in the case of the largest Syndicate whose secretaries are paid, the services of these committees are gratuitous. Their functions are purely executive matters requiring legislation, but not the meetings of the syndicats, which usually take place four times a year. At these business meetings, as in those of syndicalist organizations of all degrees, the membership is gathered, and their officers are elected, and a financial report of the activities of the previous year is given. In these meetings, however, if present, any number of members regularly assembled being competent to transact the syndicate business. Officers of the syndicate must, according to the national law of 1884, be French born or at least 16 years of age.

The National Federation

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 machinery plan but are 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 closed cut craft type of federation is comparatively rare. It is represented by the hatters, 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 federations of industry federations, for instance, are all organized into the Federation of Match Workers, all textile workers into the "Federación de Textiles," all textile workers into the "Federation of Leather Workers," all Glass Workers into the "Federation of Glass Workers," etc.

"The Federation of Fishermen's Organizes, in addition to lithographs, newspapers, reporter artists, engravers, gravers etc. The "Gen. Federation of Theatre Workers" includes actors, "sups," actors, 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. The "National Federation of Food Stuff Workers," the most similar, is a .national syndicate of the industrial union type, composed of food stuff workers of all categories except agricultural workers who have their federation. It includes hotel employees, bakers, confectioners, brewery workers, milk men, grocery clerks, etc.

(4) The "National Federation of Metal Workers" is the type of federation nearest approached in this country. It consists of metal workers of almost every category, from metal miners, boilermakers and "demolishers of ovens" to makers of "jewelry and optical" goods. This federation is somewhat top heavy, and with an increase in membership will in all likelihood be subdivided.

With the exception of a few organizations such as the miner's and railroad worker's, which preserve the same scope of organization, the federations of these unions meet all these federations follow the custom of dividing themself for convenience sake into numerous loose craft syndicates in the localities whose membership is large.

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

The federation's numerically strongest (1910) are "Building Workers" 85,000, "R. R. Workers" 46,000, "Miners" 30,000, etc.

Federalist and Centralized Federals

In regard to their organization forms the French federations are of two pronounced types, viz. federalist and centralized federals. The federals are without doubt the one in which the syndicats enjoy the complete possible autonomy. It is administered by a national committee composed of one delegate from each affiliated syndicate. These delegates are always subject to recall, so consequently keep in touch with their respective syndicates, and represent their interests at the meetings of the confedera-tions such as "Building Trades Workers," "Leather Workers," Metal Workers," are of this federalist type. The centralized federals have some form of 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 they are gradually being displaced 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 classed organized in such a way as to include all workers of all kinds in given localities. They are of two types, those organized on governmental territorial lines, such as the 302 syndicates (local unions) organized in 50 natural industrial lines, such as mining, textile districts, etc. Both types are numerous. The "Bourse du Travail de Paris et environs" is a characteristic type of Bourse organization. It consists of all the C. G. T. syndicates in its territory—about 350, organized in 302 syndicates, and is administered by a general committee of one member from each syndicate. An executive committee of 30 members, including the Secretary and Treasurer, are paid $200. Duties of committees are of an administrative and propagandizing nature. The syndicates decide all legislative matters.

The great value of the Bourses lies 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 enrolling 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.

(To be continued.)

TRIAL OF THE MEXICAN JUNTA

The Parce is over. The trial of the Junta began June 21st. It took the first two days to select a jury. Then a week and a half spent listening to State witnesses. They were nicely trained to lie against the Mexican Liberal Junta. Any one with a clear conscience can see that the jury were prejudiced against the defendants. 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 riff raff gleaned from the slums. The Mexican Liberal Junta had about 12 witnesses. All stated they went to Mexico to fight in the Revolution of 1910 for their country. There is no proof for the Mexican liberals, in spite of the promise made to him by assistant prosecutor Robinson that he bo the witness box that the Junta had been democratically elected by the people. He stated this to the Jury, but Robinson denied it.

Gen. Jack Moisy is a serving six years sentence in the Parce. He is a2 man with a big appetite and makes his fortune out of revolution. J. B. Laflin, stated that he read "Barbary Mexicans," by John K. Turner, and was thereby inspired to go to Mexico and fight the czar system, a injustice which rests on blood and iron. The brothers Magnon and Los Lobos who are Los Angeles and as there is little to report the Battle of Paris. The 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 cooped up to serve imperialism. I was