SYNDICALISM IN FRANCE

Group Individualism

The C. G. T. is a highly decentralized organization, the federations composing it having almost complete autonomy in the matter of their own internal regulations. The individual syndicates in their by-laws or federations reserve to themselves the full right of deciding whether or not they shall carry on their fight against their employers. Besides making their own constitutions, charging what dues they wish, etc., etc., they can raise strikes, hold meetings, etc., just as they choose, even tho the majority of their fellow syndicates in their federation or federation may decide on the contrary. In short, the federation is in all respects, as well as by majorities of syndicates as by central committees, in these important matters. Their matchless solidarity results not from a consciousness of their class interests, not from empty constitutional provisions or coercive central committees. They are the majority of syndicates only insofar as their less important co-operative undertakings, such as "tou du indoul," vatsiem, payment of per capita tax, etc., are concerned. This principle of autonomy of the syndicates is so firmly established, that, except in cases of actual scandal, it is almost impossible to expel a syndicate for the exercise of its autonomy. These statements are true only of the syndicates in the federations controlled by the direct actionists. Those controlled by the political parties are controlled and the syndicate, consequently, possessed of much less autonomy.

To become part of either bureau or federation a syndicate of the central federation must first apply in writing and comply with the rules of that bureau or federation. In case of refusal to comply, the bureau or federation has the right to expel the syndicate. In general, the federations in France are composed of separate syndicates, each one of which is independent of the others.

The system of autonomous organization, which deprives central committees of legislative power and places the executive power in the hands of the delegates is being strongly encouraged by the direct actionists, who have long since learned the folly of power in the hands of central bodies.

Equity of Organizations

Another manifestation of the group individualism prevalent in the C. G. T. is the equalization of contributions. In the formation of committees, conventions, etc., all organizations in the same category, regardless of their number, are equal and represented equally. For instance, in the formation of the general committees of the individual bureau each syndicat big and little, alike, is represented equally. This rule also holds true in regard to the federations, all the syndicates in a given federation furnishing one delegate each to its national committee. This does not apply to the centralized federations, which still exist in the system of proportional representation. In the formation of the Bureau committee the same system is used: the smallest bureau in the country is entitled to the same representation as that of Paris, viz., one delegate. On the Federal Committee the National Federation of Laundry Workers with 30 members, like the National Federation of Building Workers with 85 members, has one delegate. Finally, the two sections of the C. G. T. are equal to each other, each furnishing a representative to the three sub-committees. The form of this "practical anarchism" of the C. G. T. is very displacing to the politicians, who for years have fast for the adoption of the system of proportional representation. Only in the payment of dues are the organization numerically considered, each paying according to its membership.

Dues

The C. G. T. (Confederaire Committee) for its running expenses taxes each member one cent a year per member and the federations 1-2 cents per year. These dues and federations in turn tax their syndicates which usually collect 1 cent. The taxes of the federations and federations on their syndicates verify according to the number of their benefit schemes. They usually amount to but a few cents per month. Dues in the syndicates vary on the same principle from 10c. per month up. The C. G. T. has a universal dues card, issued yearly. The dues stamp is in two sections, one section being bought by the syndicate from its bureau and the other from its federation to whom they are sold by the C. G. T. A free form is lost if the union is almost universal. Initiation fees, except in syndicates for centralized federations, are negligible.

Contracts

The contract system is not very well developed in France. The syndicate usually makes its own contracts, the federations rarely doing so. Contracts are usually concluded with employers on a year to year basis. The breaking of contract often, the members resign and strike as individuals. After the end of the strike they rejoin it.

C. G. T. Conventions

The C. G. T. conventions are held every two years. Syndicates, bureau and federation meet, and one delegate.

The syndicate alone is entitled to vote, they being considered the superior organizations of the C. G. T. They are the ultimate power of the committee.

The question of the organization of business is determined by referendum of the syndicates, three months prior to opening of the Convention Delegates usually arrive in Paris one month in advance. The convention is final, there being no general referendum.

Purpose of C. G. C. T.

According to the preamble the C. G. T. has for objects, "1st., The organization of the workers for the defense of their interests, moral and material, economic and professional.

2d., To organize, independent of all political schools, all workers combining for the purpose of the abolition of the wage system." This second clause was confirmed by the C. G. T. convention at Avignon, (1906) in a resolution. In the following passage the convention considers this declaration to be a recognition of the class struggle which, on the economic field, brings the working class into conflict to all forms of exploitation and oppression, both moral and material, instigated by the capitalist class against the working class.

"In its daily work of conquest, syndicalism seeks through the co-ordination of the workers efforts, the betterment of their conditions by the realization of immediate benefits, such as the shortening of the workday, increase of wages, etc. But this work is only one phase of the task of syndicalism, which is complete only with the complete suppression of the worker, which can only be realized by the expropriation of the capitalists. It endorses the general strike by which the best and the end of struggle as a means to achieve this end and end all accord to all forms of exploitation and oppression, both moral and material, instigated by the capitalist class against the working class."

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MISSION OF THE AGITATOR

Misery and poverty are so absolutely degrading, and exercising a paralyzing effect over the nature of men, that no class can be said to possess its own sufficiency. They have to be told of by other people, and they often entirely despise them. What is said by great em- ployers and the leaders of unemployers of the working class is not true. Agitators are a set of interfering, meddling people who come down to some perfectly contented class of the community, and see the seed of discontent among them. That is the reason we agitators are so often believ- ly necessary. Without them in our incomplete state, there would be no advance towards civilization.

Slavery was put down in America, not in consequence of the reasons on which the C. G. T. does not express desire on that they should be free. It was put down entirely thru the gross illegal conduct of the employers and the leaders of the working class. They not slaves themselves, nor owners of slaves, nor had anything to do with the question really. It was, undoubtedly, the power of the black man which put slavery down. We are not the leaders of the white man. The C. G. T. does not express desire on the close of the war the slaves found themselves free, found themselves indeed so absolutely free that they went back to the old plantations, many of them bitterly regretted the new state of things.

To the thinker, the most tragic fact in the whole of the Russian Revolution is not that Nicholas II. was killed for being a queen, but that the starved peasant of the Vendee voluntarily went out to die for the Picardie cause of feudalism.

OSCAR WILDE.

WOMAN'S REAL POWER ECONOMIC

The most significant sign of the real awakening of woman is the attempt on her part to be honest with her- self, and to confess that man has not enslaved her, but that she has enslaved herself.

She has closed the path of least resistance, and the question is no longer a political question.

She has made her sex the sole excuse for her being.

She has relied upon her sex attraction as the means whereby she may escape from productive work and the economic struggle.

She does her sex functions passively; while initiative is positive.

The process of gestation is involuntary; while the birth process is voluntary.

Finding she had no economic power she had sought to remedy the discrepancy by invoking the power of the child.

The demands of the church being payable in the next world, and not in this man has been willing to grant her this satisfaction; so the church has come to her aid and declared women orgasms of gestation to be sacred and divine, and to furnish a sufficient excuse for her being.

The Law she has not been able to win. It being man made and its demands being payable in this world, and representing real, instead of assumed power, man has shown his valuation of her by making laws ignoring her, or openly discriminating against her.

As, for instance, in the state of Tennessee a man may away his wife's unmarriage child, and may also collect his wife's earnings.

For the most part men have taken women on their own terms.

There have been certain compensations.

She has not yet risen above prattle in chivalry and debauchery.

She as an object of conspicuous waste, serves as the most convincing evidence of his prowess as a "nurse" over his sex.

If woman really wants to know man's true valuation of her she must look in books. Here she will find the undeniable valuation of woman is all, for the reason that her economic and industrial power is all.

After trying for two thousand years to gain equality with men on the grounds of her sex value, and the as- sumed divinity of her organs of reproduction, she finds herself several hundred years in arrears, and in propor- tion the more honest she is ceasing to re- present sex with less inferior status, and is seeking to enter an as an individual and an economic factor, and not alone as a sex creature in the sphere of evolution. In proportion as woman develops economic power she will cease using her sex as a commodity.

There are no men prostitutes because men have never sold their sex-power; they sell their economic power and not the property of, and in the female market the commodity has a high price in proportion as it is scarce.

The woman, on the other hand, sells the inseparable laws of life.

Without first having demonstrated their economic power to demand, they have besought men to give them the

Now the power to give includes the power to take away.

They have consistently petitioned against the employment of child labor.