

# SPECIAL NEWS FROM FRANCE

## DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE C. G. T. IN FRANCE—CAP- ITALIST LAW AND LOW METHODS EMPLOYED.

The French government, inspired by the fright it received during the recent railroad strike, has launched a most vigorous campaign of repression against the militants of the C. G. T. These "dangerous leaders" are being jailed by the score all over France on the slightest pretext. Some idea of the extent of this persecution may be gleaned from the following incidents and figures:

There are at present over 100 men still in jail as a result of the railroad strike. Many of these have not yet received trials and don't know under what charge they are being held. Two of these untried prisoners are the editors of "La Guerre Sociale" (Gustave Herve's paper), and this morning they went on a hunger strike in order to force the authorities to give them a trial.

The Federation of Building Trades has plastered Paris with posters containing a list of 134 names of their members who have been arrested within the last four months in Paris on various pretexts. This is only a partial list.

At Lousanne a syndicalist editor of "La Voix du Peuple" was sentenced to a year in prison for writing an article against the President of France. Another syndicalist was sentenced to one year in prison for making a speech just before the railroad strike, in which he declared himself as UNOPPOSED to SABOTAGE.

This campaign of repression has simply gone beyond all bounds. At Havre 10 days ago, during the coal heavers' strike, a bunch of strikers got mixed up in a brawl with a scab and before they had finished with him he had gone to Glory. Six of his assailants were arrested, and also Secretary Durand of the Syndicat of Coal Heavers, who was not even present when the murder was committed.

The trial took place at Rouen a few days ago and was of the usual type of "Capital against Labor" legal affair. A bunch of scabs, detectives and company officials, all paid by the French Transatlantic Steamship Co., testified that the death of Donge (the scab) had been determined upon in a previous business meeting of the Syndicate, and that Durand, the secretary, had insisted that Donge had to be done away with. Although dozens of witnesses refuted these rank lying statements, the jury, composed of business men and farmers, brought in a verdict of GUILTY for Durand, Mathier, Conillandre and Lefrancois. The three others accused were acquitted. Mathier, Conillandre and Lefrancois were given the "benefit" of extenuating circumstance and sentenced to twenty-three years' imprisonment. DURAND WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH, though he took no part in the actual killing of Donge. Durand is a militant syndicalist and that is a sufficient crime in France to justify one's being railroaded to the guillotine.

The jurors claimed, after the sentencing to death of Durand, that they didn't know that their verdict of GUILTY carried with it a death penalty. They have all signed an application for a new trial for Durand.

When the news of this infamous verdict became known in Havre, the workers immediately held great meetings and threaten that if Durand is not released within a week that a GENERAL STRIKE will be declared in Havre.

The C. G. T. has also taken action on the matter and a great series of protest meetings are to be held all over France in a few days. The GENERAL STRIKE will be the order of the day in the discussions of tactics to be pursued to secure Durand's release.

From present indications it looks as though the government will have to BACK DOWN, as the French labor movement is showing its teeth as it never did, even in the midst of the late railroad strike. It is safe to say that if the innocent Durand is executed that France will have some serious trouble to contend with, as the C. G. T. will be fighting for its very life.

### The Railroad Situation.

The railroad companies in the last week have had accounts published in all the daily papers that they are going to grant a general raise in wages to all their employes and that they are also going to better the general working conditions on the roads. This of

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course they are going to do out of the **PURE GENEROSITY** of their hearts. The rail-roaders don't see it in this light, however. They can only see it as the somewhat belated harvest of their great victory (the seeming defeat) in the recent strike. This is a very rational view, because for 10 years they had ineffectually tried to secure recognition in the shape of better wages and working conditions by political delegations, committee conferences with company and governmental officials, and now a few weeks after their strike, when they showed that they had a little power behind their demands, the railroad companies and government are only too willing to seize this favorable opportunity to throw them a sop.

As a result of the unfortunate end of the strike 3300 militants lost their jobs on the roads. To lose one's position is a very serious calamity in France, when usually a rail-roader calculates to work all his life on the railroad, and there is a great agitation going on to force the railroads to reinstate all these discharged men. This agitation takes two forms, one the usual hopeless political gab-fests of socialists deputies with Briand, and the other is a systematic sabotaging of labor and material on the railroads. This sabotage is being accomplished in usual finished French manner, and owing to its wide prevalency, railroading has practically come to a standstill, on the West Railroad (state lines). Wires are cut, signals destroyed, trains run late, cars and individual pieces of merchandise sent to wrong addresses, etc., etc. There will doubtless soon be another **GENERAL CONCESSION** of the railroads and the discharged men taken back. Of course the fear of the **DREADED SABOTAGE** will have nothing to do with this expected generosity of the companies.

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