Part III

FACTORS AFFECTING LABOUR PARTICIPATION
CHAPTER V

TRADE UNIONS
Strong trade union is the sin qua non of effective labour participation in management. Institutions of labour participation will function successfully only if there is, in each unit, a well organised trade union, truly representative of the workers. Unless the union can adequately and properly reflect the collective will and the aspirations of the workers, it will not get the required support from them. Only a self-reliant and strong trade union can deal with the management on the level of equality and make labour a true partner in the joint venture, which the industry is. As organisations of workers, trade unions participate in different organs of labour participation and serve as trustees and guardians of workers' interests therein. In this context, they play a positive and constructive role, aiming at expanding the area of participation, strengthening the organs of participation and cooperating with the processes of participation. An attempt has been made to examine the historical growth and the existing setup of trade unions in India in all its aspects so as to assess their role as tools of effective labour participation in management and to suggest measures to revitalise and strengthen the movement.

1. Under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, trade unions include both employer's and workers' organisations. This study is, however, confined to workers' organisations only.
Trade Union movement in India is of recent growth. As an organised movement Trade Union began to appear in this country immediately after the first world war. Economic distress caused by war, world wide awakening among workers as a result of Russian Revolution and the prevailing political turmoil contributed to the birth of this new organisation. The movement is thus only 45 years old but its history is full of adventure and revolutionary heroism. It was a new development in Indian society for which there was no parallel in ancient or medieval India. There is no evidence to support the theory that the genesis of the trade union movement may be traced back to caste Panchayat or guild type Mahajans or Shrenis as is sometimes claimed. These old institutions had ceased to exist long before the emergence of modern industry and did not influence the birth of Trade unions.

Before World War I.

Before the unions were actually formed some attempts - no doubt piece meal and uncoordinated - were made to organise the workers for specific purposes. But they were largely in the nature of welfare organisations and were initiated by philanthropists and social workers. The first trade union on record is Bombay Mill Hands Association, which was established in 1880, i.e. more than

1. Before World War I conditions were not favourable for the growth of workers' organisations; workers were weak and poor, employers strong, Government unsympathetic and public indifferent.
3. (a) In his presidential address to 7th session of A.I.T.U.C. (Delhi, 1927) Rai Sahib Chandrika Prasad observed: 'Trade unionists in India had been in vogue from ancient times'.
(b) V.V. Giri - Industrial Relations. P. 2
(c) K. T. Shah - Ancient Foundations of Economics in India. P. 49
30 years after the emergence of modern industry in India, the Association was, however, "a loose combination rather than a corporate body as it had neither a definite constitution nor a paying membership". It may at best be described as a precursor of modern trade unionism. A number of labour associations came up after 1890 but they were largely confined to better paid and educated employees and were sectarian in character. Buchanan described these unions as "a mill mob aroused over a particular temporary, purely local and often personal grievance than that of a business-like trade union." Other important features of this period were that leadership worked generally in cooperation and sympathy with Government efforts and nationalist discontent against British Rule had not yet entered the labour field.

**Inter War Period.**

The end of the war witnessed the emergence of modern trade unions in the country. Madras Labour union, formed in 1918 was the first trade union in the modern sense of the term and within a year the number of unions rose to 4 with a membership of 20000. Madras thus became the nucleus of organised labour activity. During the next three years, Trade Unions sprang up all over the country, particularly in coastal cities and industrial towns, covering mainly Cotton and Jute Textiles, and Iron and Steel industries and Railways and other transport workers.
By 1924, there were 167 Trade Unions with a total membership of 223,337. Among important unions formed during this period (1918-1924), Textile Labour Association (TLA) Ahmedabad deserves special mention. Based on Gandhian ideology of truth and non-violence, it turned out to be the best organised Trade Union and influenced in later years - particularly after independence - the course of the labour movement and Government's labour policy in the country.

**All India Trade Union Congress.**

A major event of this period was the birth of All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in 1920 with the object of "coordinating the activities of the labour organisations and generally further the interests of labour in matters -economic, social and political". From the very beginning, it had a political colour and all its prominent leaders belonged to Indian National Congress. Mr. Wadia, the founder of trade union movement in India described labour movement as an integral part of Indian National Movement and till today the movement is dominated by politicians and political parties. Creation of AITUC was 'hastened' in order to secure representation of Indian labour at the I.L.O. Even though...

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Reference from previous page:

6. "with the social mind surcharged with war spirits, political agitation and revolutionary ideal, the working classes could no longer remain patient and tolerant under the old social wrongs and new economic disabilities" - R.K. Das-op.cit.p.23.

Reference of this page:

1. Source: Directory of Trade Unions published by AITUC in 1925. Dr. Loknathan in his Labour Welfare in India had estimated the strength of trade unions to be 100 with 1,30,000 members.

the organisation was nothing more than a loosely coordinated body and some labour leaders even described it as premature, it served as a meeting place for those, actively engaged in trade unionism and a platform for the enunciation of labour policy. The unions were generally weak, ill organised and unstable and many of them were short-lived. It has been estimated that 75% of the unions formed during the period - 1918-22 - died during the subsequent period when Trade Union activity was at a low ebb. The movement as a whole was unstructured and the unions were nothing more than an inchoate manifestations of industrial unrest. The progress during the next few years was slow but the spirit of Trade Unionism had come to stay.

Indian Trade Union Act, 1926.

At this stage, some militant tendencies began to appear in the labour movement. Communist influence increased as it was reflected in increasing industrial unrest and they made determined efforts to capture the AITUC. This caused concern to the Government and the efforts to check this tendency led to the passing of Indian Trade Union Act, 1926. The Act was a landmark in the history of Indian Trade Unionism. The movement now entered a phase in which its progress could be gauged. The Act gave legal status to the trade unions and guaranteed civil and criminal immunity for bonafide trade union activities. The number of registered Trade Unions increased from 29 in 1927-28 to 104 in 1929-30.

1. For details, please see G.K. Sharma - Labour Movement in India p.102
3. Loganathan - Industrial Welfare in India.
4. Unstructured - State of Trade Unionism has been well, described in the Report of the Industrial Disputes Committee, Bombay 1921.
5. Charles Myers -op.cit p.106
These statistics are not the true indices of the actual growth of the trade union movement during the period. As registration did not confer any special rights on the union but only exposed the union members to victimisation and discrimination by employers, many unions did not take advantage of this provision in the beginning.

The period between 1930-35 was characterised by lull and inactivity on the trade union front. The economic and political climate in the country during this period was not conducive to the growth of the trade union movement. The communist influence was on the decline and the industry was passing through a depression. The trade union movement was divided and the Civil Disobedience Movement dominated the interest and attention of the people.

Interest in trade unionism revived after 1935 and the next few years - particularly 1937-39 witnessed a sudden growth of Trade Unions as is evident from the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Regd.Unions</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>2,61,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>3,90,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>3,99,159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Indian Labour Year Book 1950-51.

1. In the Annual Report for 1936-37, T.L.A. reported 'The most powerful factors discouraging the spread of labour organisation is the fear of victimisation. It is no idle or imaginary fear. Not a single step can be taken in the direction of extending union membership without provoking mass dismissals.'

* Including Employers' Associations.
The growth of the trade union movement may be attributed to economic and political climate of the country. Economy was recovering from depression and the conditions were favourable for pressing the claims of workers. The provision of special seats for labour in the legislation under the Government of India Act 1935 raised the status and prestige of the unions and provided initiative for their formation. Assumption of office by Congress ministries in 7 out of 11 provinces in 1937 inspired confidence among workers and enthused them to organise themselves with freedom. The general attitude of employers towards unions also underwent some change. Besides the quantitative increase in the number of unions, the movement spread far and wide in the country and touched many sections of workers who had not so far even heard of trade unions.

Splits And Reunions.

The history of Trade Union movement from 1928 to 1938 is the story of splits and persistent endeavours for re-union. The first split took place at the 10th session of the A.I.T.U.C in 1929 when the 'moderate' section of A.I.T.U.C. led by the veteran Trade Unionists like V.V.Giri and B. Shiva Rao and comprising of 30 unions with a membership of 9,56,39 seceded as a protest against the extremist policies forced upon the organisation.

1. This session of A.I.T.U.C. was presided over by Shri Jawaher Lal Nehru and in his autobiography he has given a graphic description of the part played by him at the session.
2. The specific issues on which differences arose were - affiliation of A.I.T.U.C. with Pan-Pacific Secretariat, boycott of Royal Commission on Labour and participation in I.L.O. Conferences.
by the communists and formed Indian Trade Union Federation. Communists were only trying to carry out the directives of the sixth congress of Communists International that the "communist parties should demarcate themselves in the most clear cut fashion, both politically and organisationally, from all the petty bourgeois groups ....... severe connections with Indian National Congress, which had betrayed the masses etc." The mission could not be completed because the communists were not powerful enough to suppress the nationalist elements in the organisation. The climax was reached at the next session held in 1931 and the extreme communist group, led by B.T. Randive and S.V. Deshpande, left the A.I.T.U.C. and formed the All India Red Trade Union Congress. The trade union movement was in the "throes of sharp growing pains". The R.T.U.C. could not command any influence and worked ineffectively till 1935 when it rejoined A.I.T.U.C.

The split was most ill-timed. The country was passing through a severe economic crisis and unity in labour ranks was essential to safeguard the interests of labour with the exit of the communists, M.N. Roy group took control of A.I.T.U.C. and took the initiative for resolving the differences and uniting the Trade Union movement. It was emphasized that political issues, which were mainly responsible for the split, should be isolated and differences over them should not come in the way of joint work by

1. For details please see Overstreet and Windmiller - Communism in India.
2. Michael Brecher - Nehru, a political Biography (1959) p.141
3. Its only significance in history is as a signpost to warn Trade Unions against the splitting tendencies of communists Karnik-op.cit. p.53.
Trade Unions - an objective which has not been achieved till to-day.
Efforts were made to bring the dissidents back to A.I.T.U.C. on the basis of 'Platform of Unity'. Success came a few years later, but the immediate result of unity efforts was that Railway Union and other unaffiliated unions and Indian Trade Union Federation came together and formed a new organisation called National Trade Union Federation in April, 1933, which soon became the largest Central Organisation with 47 unions and 135000 members. The desire for unity was growing, strong and a joint committee was formed to work out a detailed programme of action acceptable to both A.I.T.U.C. and N.T.U.F. Though the two sections of labour movement came together in April, 1938, but the unity was finally achieved in 1940 when N.T.U.F. dissolved itself. A.I.T.U.C. emerged again as the sole representative organisation of labour in India.

The unity, however, did not last long. Differences arose again on the question of attitude to World War II. A.I.T.U.C. had adopted a neutral policy, but a section of trade union leaders, led by M.N. Roy vigorously defended India's participation in war and pleaded for committing Indian labour to war efforts. Unable to persuade A.I.T.U.C. to accept their line of action, this group left A.I.T.U.C. in 1940 and formed Indian Federation of labour in 1941. 182 unions with a total membership of 2,88,676 immediately joined the Federation. The growth of the federation was rapid and by the end of 1944, it claimed 222 unions and 4,07,773 membership.

The Federation's policy admirably suited the Government, which soon recognised it as a representative organisation of labour. The Government also gave a grant of Rs 13000 per month to the Federation for propaganda and publicity to boost up workers' morale.

Communists' attitude to war changed after Germany attacked Russia.
and Russia joined the 'Allied' camp, which according to them converted the complex of imperialist war into a peoples war. The Nationalist element in A.I.T.U.C. was still opposed to any cooperation with the British Government but after the arrest of congress leaders in 'Quit India' movement, communists were in full control of the organisation and consolidated their position. During 1944-45, an increase of 44% took place in the membership of A.I.T.U.C. with that of A.F.L. fell by 44%. In 1946, on a representation made by A.I.T.U.C. and after proper verification by the Chief Labour Commissioner, the Government of India again recognised A.I.T.U.C. as the most representative (central) national federation of Indian labour.

World War II.

The war gave impetus to the trade union movement. The steady growth of employment and the increasing disparity in the cost of living and earnings of workers provided ample scope for the growth and development of unions, resulting in sufficient increase both in number and membership of registered unions.

Table XI

Registered Trade Unions and Memberships.

(1939-45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of registered unions</th>
<th>membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>5,11,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>5,13,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>5,73,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-43</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>5,85,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-44</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>7,80,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-45</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>8,89,388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Indian Labour Year Book 1950-51

The Trade Union actively, which was very brisk during the war, continued with increasing vigour in the post-war period and the
number and membership of Unions increased to 1833 and 13,31,962 respectively by 1946-47. The post war period was a very critical one in India's history. Major political and constitutional changes were in the offing. Communalism of the worst kind was rampant and there were serious riots in various parts of the country. Economic situation was highly explosive. Demobilisation and retrenchment of a large number of persons from the army and other defence industry had made the employment situation very serious. Production was declining. The upward trend of prices continued with unabated vigour. The deteriorating economic condition coupled with political and communal tension, caused violent industrial unrest. Political developments dominated the scene and the prospect of freedom occupied the attention of Indian people. Viewed in context of the political situation, this was hardly the time for the growth of unionism, but to combat economic distress a large number of trade unions came up. The Trade Union movement however, did not exercise any decisive influence on the course of events, whatever part was played by workers in the political developments during 1945 to 1947, it was as followers of the nationalist movement and not as trade unionists.

Post-Independence Period.

It is in this setting that India attained freedom. The post independence period witnessed most rapid strides in the trade Union movement. The number of registered unions increased to 2766 in 1947-48 and by the end of 1959-60 there were 10658 registered unions in the country.

1. The number of industrial disputes increased from 820 in 1945 to 1181 in 1947 and the number of mandays lost from 3958685 to 15844512 during the same period.
2. Karnik - op.cit. p.117
## Table III.

REGISTERED TRADE UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP  
(1947 - 61) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of Regd. Unions</th>
<th>No. of Unions submitting Returns</th>
<th>% of 3 to 2.</th>
<th>Union membership</th>
<th>Average membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>2594</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1651807</td>
<td>1045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>2585</td>
<td>1813</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1951836</td>
<td>1076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>3483</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1816255</td>
<td>982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>3714</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1751933</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>4505</td>
<td>2509</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>1988120</td>
<td>792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>4380</td>
<td>2690</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>2094035</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>5909</td>
<td>3285</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>2106042</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>6557</td>
<td>3517</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>2166855</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>8016</td>
<td>3968</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>2269679</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>8477</td>
<td>4370</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2373000</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>9868</td>
<td>5460</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>3006000</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>10071</td>
<td>5952</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3635000</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>10656</td>
<td>6485</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3910000</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The phenomenal progress of the trade union movement in the post-independence period may be attributed to the favourable attitude of the Government, favourable politico-economic climate, progressive labour legislation, politicialisation of unions and competitive multi-unionism, industrial relations policy of the State, privileges and prestige granted to the registered unions, increased industrialisation and

1. For example, only a registered Union can invoke the conciliation and arbitration machinery provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

* Later figures not available.
gradual emergence of a 'committed industrial labour force', spread of education with increased union-consciousness, curbs on the arbitrary powers of the management, protection of worker against victimisation and recognition of the role of unions as 'tools of industrial democracy'.

Table III, given above, reveals that during the period from 1947-48 to 1959-60, (i) the number of trade unions increased by about four times, (ii) that the membership increased only by 2½ times with the result that average membership per union declined from 1045 to 603. This shows that the increase in membership has not kept pace with increase in the number of unions, resulting in the preponderance of smaller and weaker unions. The frequency distribution of trade unions according to membership during 1958-59 shows that 41.9% unions had a membership below 100 and only 0.9% unions had more than 10,000 members each, and (iii) a large number of unions do not submit returns. During 1959-60 only 61% unions had submitted returns.

1. Frequency distribution of Trade Unions submitting Returns according to membership during 1958-59:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership of Union</th>
<th>Absolute Number</th>
<th>Percentage to the Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 50</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>1,192</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-299</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-499</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000-1,999</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000-4,999</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-19,999</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 and above</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total. 6,040 100.0

In the trade union field, the most significant event in the post-independence period has been a clear cut division of the movement on political and ideological basis. The formation of the Indian National Trade Union Congress in May, 1947, started the process of this concrete 'polarisation' of the labour movement. It has been observed that during and after the World War II, A.I.T.U.C. was in the firm grip of the communists. The communist complexion of the organisation became more pronounced in 1946 after the foundation of popular ministries in the Provinces. The agitational role of the communists dominated the A.I.T.U.C. The nationalist element was all along feeling unhappy about their increasing infiltration among the working class, their anti-national role in the freedom struggle and extra-territorial loyalty, their violent methods, their attitude towards national leadership and their non-cooperative and non-constructive approach towards current labour problems. In a final and determined bid to capture the organisation and rescue it from the influence of communists, the Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh (H.M.S.S.) directed all its members to affiliate their unions with A.I.T.U.C. The Congress Working Committee on its part directed all congressmen to work with H.M.S.S.

1. On the recommendation of the Labour Sub-Committee set up by the Gandhi Sewa Sangh, the Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh was established in 1938 with the object of training labour workers on building up with their help trade unions on constructive and peaceful basis.
and accept its guidance in labour matters. The H.M.S.S. failed to infiltrate the A.I.T.U.C. and very soon it became clear that it was not possible to persuade A.I.T.U.C. to change its policies. The H.M.S.S. frankly confessed that 'in the existing set up of A.I.T.U.C. it was vain to expect fair play ....... since it was not possible to join the race for multiplying bogus unions and bloated returns of membership'.

The Sangh, therefore, came to the conclusion that the parting of ways had become inevitable and a new Central Organisation -- "an indigenous movement having its roots in the soil" -- was the most urgent need of the movement. The decision to form I.N.T.U.C. was taken at a high-level conference, held in Delhi on May 3, 1947 presided over by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel - the iron man of the Congress and attended by prominent leaders of the Congress and members of the Government, including the Prime Minister Jawaher Lal Nehru. Representatives of about 200 unions claiming a membership of more than 5,750,000 drawn from many trades, occupations and services from all parts of the country attended the Conference. I.N.T.U.C. had the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi and from the very beginning enjoyed the confidence and support of the Congress party and the Government.

It was not only the 'ideological incompatibility' with the Communists that forced a new organisation of labour on the congress party. There was also the realisation that a Central Trade Union Organisation controlled and dominated by the party in power would be a valuable asset to the

Government in implementing its economic and labour policies and that it would also be more tolerant to prevailing economic conditions and hardships. The following observations of the Secretary, Indian Federation of Labour is not far from the truth.

"....... Nationalism is now installed in power. An independent Trade Union Movement will be too much of a nuisance and danger to it. It is, therefore, attempting to secure a servile and dependent movement. That is the only meaning of the curious spectacle of ministers of State going about to organise a Central Trade Union Organisation."

To some, a new organisation was also needed to run the trade unions on Gandhian lines. On June 1, 1948, the Government of India declared that the I.N.T.U.C. and INTUC was the most representative organisation of labour. This raised the prestige and status of I.N.T.U.C. and enabled it to consolidate its position.

In March, 1948, Socialist group in the Congress - known as Congress Socialist Party (CSP) - left the Congress.

1. Prof. Omati writes "In 1920, the executive body of the party (Congress) had moved towards the labour movement to get its assistance to obtain power. In 1946, with power and Governmental responsibility around the corner, the party moved towards labour movement to forestall possible difficulties that might arise from labour movement antagonistic to the new Government" - Jobs and Workmen in India, p.118
3. Commenting on the Government's recognition of INTUC as the representative organisation of labour in India, Ashok Mehta President, H.M.S. observed "To the working class and the Indian people, who have looked askance at the INTUC, this decision does not come as a surprise. They have accepted it as the culmination of the process of collaboration in a joint venture between the Government and the INTUC" (Ashok Mehta - Labour on March (1948) p.37).
4. The Socialist had to leave the Congress because a resolution passed by AICC the same year prohibited political groupings with the congress.
and set up a separate Socialist party. In December of the same year Socialists gave birth to a new Labour Federation - Hind Mazdoor Sabha. It was first known as Hind Mazdoor Panchayat but after the I.F.L. merged with it, it was re-named as H.M.S. which began its career in 1949 with 419 unions and 679287 members (claimed, not verified).

Meanwhile, another non-communist group in the A.I.T.U.C led by Mr. M.K. Bose had left the organisation. The group did not find itself in agreement with the philosophy and policies of another communist-dominated A.I.T.U.C. or Congress-sponsored I.N.T.U.C. They tried to align themselves with the Socialists, but their efforts to reach a compromise with H.M.S. did not succeed. The group had no alternative but to form another All India Federation and in April, 1949 U.T.U.C. was born with Prof. K.T. Shah as Chairman and M.K. Bose as General Secretary.

In 1949, U.T.U.C. had a claimed membership of 331991 and 254 affiliated unions. Thus by 1949, there were four Central federations of labour, each affiliated to and owing allegiance to one or the other political party.

1. After partition of the country, Indian Federation of Labour was practically a defunct body - both morally and organisationally - because its strongholds were West Punjab, Sind, and East Bengal, which went over to Pakistan.

2. U.T.U.C - United Trade Union Committee, Why?
Extent.

It has been observed that trade union movement has made rapid strides during 1950's and the membership has increased from 17.5 lakhs in 1950-51 to 39 lakhs in 1959-60. Inspite of this growth, the movement covers only a fraction of total working population. It is difficult to give any precise idea of the extent of trade unionism in the country - in various industries and states - because the available information relates only to registered unions, which have submitted returns. A large number of unions do not submit returns. Moreover trade unions are under no obligation to get themselves registered and it is possible that there may be some unregistered unions functioning.

In 1961, total employed population amounted to 1580 lakhs - 1133 lakhs, agricultural and 447 lakhs, non-agricultural. This represents the total number of persons who could be organised into trade unions, out of which approximately 39 lakhs have been so organised giving the extent of trade unionism as low as 2.5%. Considering that the trade union movement is largely confined to non-agricultural population, the percentage comes to about 9. This compares very unfavourably with the extent of unionisation...

1. In 1959-60 only 6% registered unions had submitted returns.
3. According to Dr. Punekar's estimate, only 0.9% of total working population was unionised in 1931. Punekar, S.D.-Trade Unionism in India (1948) pp. 118-119.
4. Dr. Shiva Rao, delivering his lectures in 1939 estimated the extent of trade unionism of workers in organised industries, transport and plantations, who could be immediately organised, at 4%. State in Relation to Labour. p. 93.
in advanced countries, such as U.K., U.S.A., and others.

The non-agricultural force, however, is not exclusively or even primarily industrial in the modern industry sense.

Charles Myers had estimated that in 1951, the industrial labour force of India was around 70 lakhs. On a similar basis we may place the industrial labour force at approximately 115 lakhs in 1961, out of which 35 lakhs were organised. From this we may conclude that about 33% of industrial workers are unionised. This is the most liberal estimate of the extent of unionisation in Indian Industry. Compared to 1951 estimates, position has improved somewhat as is shown in the following table:—

Table IV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unionisation in relation to</th>
<th>Percentage of unionisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Total working population.</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Non-agricultural work-force.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Industrial Labour.</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. (i) In the U.K. the total trade union membership in 1959 represented about 40% of the employed population - I.L.O., Trade Union situation in the United Kingdom, 1961, p.19.
   (ii) In U.S.A., approximately 17.1 million union members in 1960 represented a little more than 33% of the total number of employees in non-agricultural establishments, the source of union membership. - American Labour Review, September, 63, p.12.
   (iii) In Federal Republic of Germany, in 1958 40% population employed in non-agricultural occupations were organised in trade unions - Facts about Germany, printed at the instance of the Federal Government of Germany in 1959, p.157.
   (iv) In Sweden, in industry manual workers organised to the extent of more than 90%. Even in agriculture trade union members—represented about 70% of the total employment— I.L.O. Trade Union situation in Sweden, 1961, p.38.


3. This figure has been arrived at as follows:—
   Total factory employment (in lakhs). 35
   Plantation. 12.7
   Mining. 6.7
   Construction & Public utilities. 30.0
   Transport. 30.0
   Total.... 114.4


4. Remaining 4.1 lakhs union members belonged to non-industrial occupations.
The extent of unionism varies from industry to industry. The industry-wise classification is given in Table V, which reveals that out of a total union membership of 39.1 lakhs in 1959-60, 29.3 lakhs or 75% were concentrated in three industry-groups: Manufacturing Group leading with 43.5% followed by Transport, Storage and Communication (18.1%) and Agriculture and Allied activities (13.7%). Construction accounted for only 2% of total membership. Whereas over all average membership per union was 603, it was highest in Agriculture and Allied group (2086) followed by Mining and Quarrying (1704). Manufacturing Group had an average membership of 568 per union. The lowest average was of Commerce group (232).

**TABLE V.**

**NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF TRADE UNIONS SUBMITTING RETURNS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO INDUSTRIES -1959-60.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industries</th>
<th>No. of unions submitting Returns</th>
<th>Membership in (000's)</th>
<th>Percentage of total membership</th>
<th>Average membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Agriculture and Allied Activities</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>2086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mining and Quarrying</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manufacturing</td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>1701</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Construction</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Electricity, Gas, Water and Sanitary Services</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Commerce</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Transport, Storage and Communication</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>1153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Services</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6485</strong></td>
<td><strong>3910</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>603</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The membership figures have been rounded up in thousands, so the total does not tally.

The percentage of Trade Union membership on the basis of average daily employment in selected industries is given in Table VI, which indicates their relative strength in different spheres. It will be seen that Trade Unionism is weak in Railways and Post and Telegraphs (both public sector undertakings). It is strong in Textiles - Cotton and Jute - and Coal and moderate in Paper and Paper Products and Printing and Publishing.

### TABLE VI.

**TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP AND AVERAGE DAILY EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES - 1969-60.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Group</th>
<th>Estimated daily employment (1960)</th>
<th>Trade Union membership (1960) in (000's)</th>
<th>Percentage of membership to employment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Textiles.</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coal.</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Printing, Publishing and Allied Industries.</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Paper and Paper Products.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Food, Beverages and Tobacco</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chemicals and Chemical Products.</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Plantations.</td>
<td>1287 *</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Non-Metallic Products including Products of Petroleum and Coal.</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rubber and Rubber Products.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Railways.</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Post and Telegraphs.</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures relate to 1950.

The movement has not uniformly spread to all the states of India. Only four states account for 58.4% of total membership - West Bengal (23.4%), Maharashtra (15.7%), Madras (9.6%) and Bihar (9.6%). Since unionisation is dependent on the extent of industrialisation, a better estimate of the strength of Trade Unions can be made by comparing union membership with average daily employment in respective states. Applying this test, it will be observed that in quantitative terms, the trade unions movement is strongest in Delhi which employs only 1.8% of total factory workers and has 5.7% of union members followed by Assam with 2% of total factory employment and 5.3% of the total union membership. Maharashtra accounts for 20.8% of factory employment but only 15.7% of union membership. It is weakest in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra which with 3.4%, 4.2% and 5.7% of factory employment respectively have only 1.1%, 1.4% and 1.9% of trade union members.

From the foregoing account of the strength of trade unionism, it will be seen that the growth of the movement has not been balanced. It is largely concentrated in major organised industries in urban areas. It is almost non-existent in agriculture. Besides, inherent difficulties in organising agricultural workers, National Federations of Labour are also indifferent towards this problem. For example, in 1960, H.M.S. had only one union of agricultural workers. Out of 1589 unions claimed by I.N.T.U.C. on April 30, 1963 only 20 unions were in the agricultural sector, covering 10880 members i.e., 0.6% or total membership claimed.

1. See Table VII.
2. According to Shri V.V. Giri, the primary reason for this one-sided development of trade unionism is that it has not grown from within but has largely been built by outsiders. -Broadcast talk by Shri V.V. Giri - Trade Union in India since independence I. Labour Gazette, September 1959 pp. 259-261.
Table VII.

EXTENT OF TRADE UNIONISM - STATE WISE.
(1959-60).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>No. of Regd. Unions</th>
<th>Total No. of Unions Submits Returns</th>
<th>Membership of Average Daily Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1342</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1134</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andaman and Nicobar Island</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total               | 3910,000            | 99.1                                | 37,65                                 | 99.95 (000) |

Trade Unions have developed in India on the pattern of industrial unions. Craft unions did not find favour with outside leadership, nor with the national federation, which preferred industrial unions. The working committee of I.N.T.U.C. even adopted a resolution and reiterated that it was not in the interest of the working class to have unions on any basis other than the industrial. The explanation for the predominance of industrial unions, according to Strutméral, is the historical fact that India by passed the merchant-Craftsman stage of capitalism and went straight from agriculture to factory stage of production. Lack of skilled workers also stood in the way of craft unions. The only exception is T.L.A., Ahemdabad which was formed in 1920 on the craft principle; but now that has also been transformed into an industrial union and the former craft unions have become separate departments. But the pattern of industrial unions has not been carried to its logical conclusion of one industry-one union and so the picture presented is somewhat confusing. Most of the unions are of 'one shop' variety covering workers, irrespective of occupations, employed in a particular plant or firm but not embracing the entire industry. The result is narrow jurisdiction, small size, weak finances and consequently little power and influence.

Craft Unionism is, however, found among the non-manual

2. Source: S. Ghosh - Trade Unionism in underdeveloped countries (1960), p.76
employees and professional workers, that is, in single occupation industries. Thus we have the unions of taxi drivers, Rickshaw pullers, Railway coolies, Domestic servants, journalists, Teachers etc. Trade unions of the employees of commercial and banking industry and Government establishments also belong to this category. This is somewhat similar to Italian Category unions.

**Industrial Federations.**

The Indian Labour movement has sought to meet the problem posed by the presence of a large number of autonomous unions of 'one shop' variety in two ways - both of which are comparatively recent developments. Firstly in major cities, city-wide unions, covering workers in a particular industry are emerging e.g., R.M.M.S., Bombay, Suti Mill Mazdoor Sabha, Kanpur, Textile Labour Association, Indore etc. Secondly, unions in particular industries have formed industrial federations. These federations cover a number of major industries and also include unions of white-collar workers e.g. bank employees and Government servants. It may, however, be noted that a particular industrial federation has as its members, unions belonging to one of the national federations only or the industrial federations are associations of unaffiliated unions, functioning independently of the national federation. The effect of the first character of industrial federations is that Trade union rivalry existing at the local level has been extended to the industry level also. Thus in practically each industry there are at least two federations - one

1. Joseph Lapalombara - The Italian Labour Movement (1957)Ch.III.
of which belongs to I.N.T.U.C and the other to A.I.T.U.C. or H.M.S. U.T.U.C has not sponsored any industrial federation. On April 30, 1963, fourteen such industrial federations were affiliated to I.N.T.U.C. and another five, though not formally affiliated, were working in close collaboration with it.

National Federations - Affiliations.

Four National Federations are at the apex of trade union structure in India. They have a tremendous influence on the labour movement in the country and play an important part in shaping the Government’s labour policy. Table VIII given below gives the number of Unions affiliated to the national federation and their membership (both verified) for the years 1952-53 to 1959-60.

Table VIII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of unions</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>% of 2 to total number of unions submitting returns</th>
<th>% of 3 to total union membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952 - 53</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>1632873</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954 - 55</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>1644488</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 - 56</td>
<td>1531</td>
<td>1757498</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957 - 58</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1722737</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958 - 59</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1863290</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959 - 60</td>
<td>2166</td>
<td>2058584</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Years 1953-54 and 1956-57 have been omitted as complete information was not available.

Source: Ministry of Labour.
According to official figures for 1959-60, as given above, 2165 unions with a total membership of 2058584 were affiliated to these national federations, out of a total of 6485 unions, submitting returns with 39.10 lakhs membership. The federations thus represent between them about 33% of unions and 53% membership, which shows that the unions not affiliated to the national federation are largely small. It also shows that a large number of unions are affiliated and continue to be independent. The percentage of unions affiliated to national federations has declined from 48% in 1952-53 to 33% in 1959-60 and the membership has declined from about 78% to 53% during the same period. Membership is also not in proportion to unions affiliated to a particular organisation. For example, I.N.T.U.C. with 860 unions had a membership of 1853386, while A.I.T.U.C. with 886 unions had only 508962 members, H.M.S. with 190 unions had more members than U.T.U.C. with 229 unions. Verified average membership of unions affiliated to national federations is given below in column 4.

### Table IX.

**RELATIVE POSITION OF NATIONAL FEDERATIONS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federation</th>
<th>No. of Member-unions</th>
<th>Verified Membership</th>
<th>Average Verified Membership per Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.N.T.U.C.</td>
<td>1249</td>
<td>1503388</td>
<td>1225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.I.T.U.C.</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1047815</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.M.S.</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>519262</td>
<td>2033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.T.U.C.</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>210109</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Ministry of Labour.

1. Latest figures available are for 1959-60. No verification was done during 1960-61 due to general elections and in 1961-62 due to National Emergency. Verification for 1962-63 was in progress at the end of October, 1963.
It will also be observed that verified figures are different from those claimed by various federations. The most exaggerated claims have been made by the A.I.T.U.C. Similar trend is discernible in the claims made for 1962-63.

I.N.T.U.C. is strong in West Bengal (326465), Maharashtra (300405), Assam (215665) and Bihar (149976) and has a large following in Textile and Hosiery (396733), Plantation (331914) and Transport (247483) industries. A.I.T.U.C. is strong in West Bengal, Tamilnad and Kerala and its main centres of actively are Engineering, Petroleum and Construction industries. H.M.S. is strong in Bombay and Bihar - the industries controlled are - Railways, Cotton Textiles and Coal Mining. U.T.U.C.'s strong holds are West Bengal, Bihar and Madras States and Plantation, Port and Dock and Shipping industries.

We have observed earlier that a large number of unions and industrial federations are not affiliated to any national federation. Unions of Government employees are not allowed, exceptions being made only in the case of employees(civilian) of defence establishments and Railways. There are some other unions.

1. According to A.I.T.U.C. the difference is largely the result of discrimination against A.I.T.U.C. and a deliberate policy followed by the Government to favour I.N.T.U.C.

2. | Unions claimed | Membership claimed |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.N.T.U.C.</td>
<td>1601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.I.T.U.C.</td>
<td>1671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.M.S.</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.T.U.C.</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. For details see I.N.T.U.C. - 14th Annual Report.

4. Non-affiliated unions give rise to a new problem. They are under no obligation to accept or implement any agreement concluded by central national federations at tripartite conferences or otherwise. They have to be tackled separately.
also which have of their own accord not thought it proper to formally affiliate themselves with any national federation, important among these are unions of white-collar workers, such as, bank or insurance employees. All India Bank employees federation and All India Cantonement Board employees federation, though working in collaboration with I.N.T.U.C., have not been formally affiliated to it.

The unions of Govt. employees inspite of better organisation have not been able to pull much weight in the general trade union movement of the country, because of the policy of isolation imposed on them or willingly followed by them. It has been suggested that the ban should be lifted. It is doubtful if it will be advisable to do so under the present ideological rift in the trade union movement. It is better that the Government servants keep aloof, they should not be too actively involved in party politics.

National vis-a-vis Industrial Federations.

Ideology of four national federations percolates down to the state and local levels. Every federation has state branches and the organisation works down to the local level through them. This pattern of organisation is unsound. There is no organic relationship between different parts of the structure. In the whole set up, state organisation holds a key position as a crucial

link between the national and local. But due to inadequacy of finances and lack of experienced leadership, state committees do not command much influence and act as co-ordinating bodies of independent unions without any direction and control. This weakness of State organisation is visible in all the federations. Factionalism at state level further reduces their effectiveness. The best solution is to discard local plant pattern and encourage industrial unions. This will strengthen trade union structure and improve organisational efficiency. But under the prevailing conditions, such a development is unlikely. Besides initial organisational difficulties, vested interests have developed at local levels and they may sabotage any such move. The present tendency is to form industrial federations and not industrial unions.

Finances.

Trade union Finance and Organisation are inter-related and inter-dependent phenomena, which may be regarded as cause and effect of each other. Most of the unions in India are financially feeble because they are organisationally weak and vice-versa. The vicious circle of weak finance — less activity — low membership — weak finance percolates throughout the movement and must be broken, if the unions have to become strong, self-reliant and

1. Trade Union Record — November 20, 1962 — Article by Satish Loomba, "State Committees, some problems of Trade Union functioning" p.5
capable to meet the challenge of modern age. Adequate finances are necessary for expanding and strengthening the unions, for rendering effective services to union members and for bargaining collectively with employers. Enthusiasm of members, their faith in trade unionism and their loyalty to the organisation are necessary for growth and development of Trade Unions but they alone are not enough. The unions must have resources to discharge their responsibility to the members and to the society. Adequate finances are the best guarantee to union independence; they are also the best guarantee that leadership in all circumstances remains responsible to membership. Trade Unions should make sincere efforts to augment their resources and strengthen their funds.

The following table gives the general financial position of Trade Unions for the year 1953-59:

Table X.

GENERAL FUNDS OF UNIONS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of</th>
<th>No. of unions submitting returns</th>
<th>Opening balance</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Closing balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central State</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>823664</td>
<td>1043544</td>
<td>883135</td>
<td>984073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>5786</td>
<td>8581413</td>
<td>11448256</td>
<td>10772050</td>
<td>9257619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5942</td>
<td>9405077</td>
<td>12491800</td>
<td>11555185</td>
<td>10241592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 'Trade Unions' - 1953-59.*
Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour & Employment Government of India.

* Till October 1963, Report for 1959-60 was not brought out by the Labour Bureau.
Though average income and expenditure have been fluctuating from year to year, yet no substantial improvement has taken place during the last decade, as is reflected in the Table given below. Both the average income and expenditure continue to be fairly low and for 1956-60, were ₹ 2172.00 nP and ₹ 1833.00 nP respectively.

Table XI.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF UNIONS (1951 - 59).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of unions submitting Returns</th>
<th>Income (Lakhs)</th>
<th>Expenditure (Lakhs)</th>
<th>Average Income</th>
<th>Average Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951-52.</td>
<td>2509</td>
<td>50.84</td>
<td>45.32</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>1806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53.</td>
<td>2690</td>
<td>52.05</td>
<td>46.43</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54.</td>
<td>3235</td>
<td>59.76</td>
<td>52.17</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>1605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55.</td>
<td>3535</td>
<td>66.31</td>
<td>57.19</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>1618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56.</td>
<td>3970</td>
<td>82.94</td>
<td>65.06</td>
<td>2089</td>
<td>1640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57.</td>
<td>4390</td>
<td>80.17</td>
<td>71.81</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>1635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58.</td>
<td>5470</td>
<td>102.88</td>
<td>92.62</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60.</td>
<td>6494</td>
<td>154.09</td>
<td>134.65</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>2073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This income is obviously too meagre to build up unions on sound lines. This is hardly sufficient to maintain one full time officer or even to cover essential office expenses. The income of majority of unions is even less than this, because a few big unions such as Tata Workers' Union, Textile Labour Association, Ahemdabad, Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh, Bombay etc. account for the total bulk of the income of the unions. For example, during 1962-63, Tata Workers Union had income of ₹ 79705.00 nP.
The position of industrial and national federations is equally vulnerable. For example, the income and expenditure of National Federation of India Railwaymen for 1954-55 were only Rs 6617 and Rs 5079 respectively. Obviously this is an insufficient financial basis for an organisation representing 900000 workers. Similarly, the total income and expenditure of All India Defence Employees Federation for the period May, 1953 to October, 1954 was Rs 6715.88 nP. All India Trade Union Congress showed an income of Rs 9000 and H.M.S. had an income of about Rs 6000 in 1953. I.N.T U.C. is comparatively in a stronger position. In 1962-63 it had an income of Rs 145000 with the result that I.N.T.U.C. has a well-established and well-staffed central office at Delhi, has its own full-time research staff and publishes a number of periodicals from its central and regional offices.

Expenditure.

Besides the meagre income of the unions, their expenditure pattern is unbalanced, defective and lacks welfare orientation. The major part of expenditure of the unions is devoted to salaries and allowances and establishment charges. In 1958-59 these items accounted for 42% of the total expenditure. As against this, expenditure on educational, social and other benefits amounted to 1.7% of the total. During 1958-59, T.L.A. alone accounted for 58% of total expenditure under this head, which shows that a large number of unions are doing practically nothing in this sphere.

Table XII further reveals that 10.3% of the total expenditure was incurred on trade disputes and other legal matters. It is a matter of concern that unions whose resources are already very meagre should have to spend such a disproportionately large sum on litigation. To take one example, Bhupendra Cement Workers Union, Surajpur (Punjab) with an average annual income of about Rs 6000.00 nP spent more than Rs 80,000 over a period of ten years on fighting a case, involving the dismissal of five workmen. This expenditure becomes unavoidable, when the union gets involved in cases of charge sheets, victimisation and rentrenchment.

Table XII.

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (1958-59).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contribution from members.</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>1. Salaries, Allowances etc, of officials</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Donations.</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>2. Establishment charges</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sale of Periodicals</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3. Expenses in conducting Trade Disputes</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interest on Investments.</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4. Compensation to members for loss arising out of trade disputes</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Miscellaneous.</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>5. Legal Expenses.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Funeral, Oldage, sickness and unemployment benefits.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Educational, social and other benefits.</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Publications.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Auditors fees.</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Miscellaneous.</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sources</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>All items.</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1. The emergence of a class of labour practitioners who enter the trade union field for livelihood and not from the spirit of service is an indicator to this malady.
2. Resources had to be augmented by special donations to meet
Subscription Rate.

Besides small membership, financial weakness of unions may be attributed to low rates of subscription and the failure to realise even them. In their keenness to attract more members, unions fix their membership fees at extremely low rates and fail to collect even these. Since 70% of unions' income is derived from subscriptions, the financial position of the unions can be improved by fixing up minimum rates and ensuring that these are regularly collected. Indian Trade Union Amendment Act 1960 has provided for a minimum subscription of twenty five naya Paise per member per month. This seems to be too low but the scope for raising the subscription rate with a view to increase income appears to be limited in view of the past experience when even lower subscriptions were not being regularly realised. Admission fee will also be a deterrent to new enrolment. There is, however, a case \( \frac{2}{3} \) fixing up subscription rates at a sliding scale varying with income. Progression may by itself not make any substantial addition to trade union finances because only a small membership belongs to higher income group but it will have a good psychological effect on low-paid workers and act as an incentive to regular payment of subscription.

Realisation Of Dues.

'More important than prescribing a minimum rate is the problem of collecting the dues and ensuring that no member is enrolled or continues on rolls without paying the required subscription. Regular payment of subscription is necessary not only for financial stability of the unions, but also
because it serves a moral purpose. It is the symbol of a member's active interest in his union, it is the expression of his confidence in its effectiveness and it donates his readiness to make the necessary material sacrifices in solidarity with his workers. Since many unions do not have a regular office nor paid office staff, they find it difficult to realise the dues. Since the temptation to raise membership is irresistible - emphasis so far has been more on membership, less on subscription - members continue as such without paying union dues. One of the suggestions is the introduction of "check off" system. In view of the multi-unions and employers' present attitude, such a measure will not be advisable as it will give the employers an opportunity to influence the workers in union matters and undermine the independence of the unions. The impracticability of the check-off system is evident from the fact that even the simple practice of collecting dues on the premises sometimes leads to complications, e.g., on November 10, 1962, 1423 workers of Western India Mills Ltd., Bombay went on strike demanding discontinuation of the system of collecting subscription in mill premises by the representative of the recognised union. Trade Unions themselves will have to take more active interest in realising dues. A systematic procedure and concerted efforts are required to achieve this purpose. Every member of the union must know the time and the place for the payment of dues. The appointment of departmental representatives to realise dues would be helpful. It is sometimes suggested that 'union

collectors' be paid some commission for collections made by them. This will act as an incentive but there is also the fear that this may lead to objectionable practices. Once it becomes directly remunerative, all sorts of unscrupulous methods may be adopted to raise subscription. Code of conduct would be endangered since 'collectors' may try to win membership by coercion and all sorts of temptations. Automatic withdrawal of membership for non-payment of dues for a prescribed period may be a check on members' lethargy and indifference, provided it is strictly enforced by all unions. To prevent unions from enrolling bogus members, penalty may be imposed on a defaulting union.

Multiplicity.

The presence of four national federations has resulted in multiplicity of unions both at plant and industry levels. The differences among them are quite sharp and each federation endeavours to have its own union in each plant and industry. A field investigation in twelve industrial establishments of Madras made in 1959 by South India Textile Industry's Research Association revealed that politics and fight for leadership and power were the chief causes of multi-unions. Some trade union leaders set up separate unions because it pays them to do so. The result is the existence of many unions catering for the same group of workers. Multiplicity is more

2. Industrial Disputes Act 1947 gives the union President and/or the Secretary the right to appear on behalf of the union in conciliation and arbitration proceedings. Unions usually pay for this work. Leaders who cannot occupy these offices in existing unions have a temptation to set up new unions.
evident at industry level. For each major industry there are at least two federations. Precise information regarding multiplicity of unions at plant level or industry level in a local area is not available but in most of the important plants there are at least two unions. This is confirmed by a survey of Trade Unions in Punjab. For example, there are six unions in Silk Industry at Amritsar, three unions in Hosiery Industry, Ludhiana, and two unions in Sports industry at Jullundur. Among major industrial units, Nangal Fertilizers, all the four Sugar mills in Punjab, both the starch mills, both woollen mills, four out of six cotton mills etc. have two unions each. There are three unions in Atlas Cycle Works, two unions in Shri Gopal Paper Mills - the only paper mill in Punjab, and two unions for the famous Bhakhra Dam workers. It may be noted that multiplicity is comparatively less in Punjab, because only two Central federations - I.N.T.U.C and A.I.T.U.C - are active here. Out of 443 unions which submitted returns during 1962-63, 177 were affiliated to I.N.T.U.C., 49 to A.I.T.U.C., 8 to H.M.S. and none to U.T.U.C.

Effects.

Low extent of trade unionism in the country and the plant pattern have already reduced the size of unions in India.

1. For example, Railways - National Federation of Indian Railwaymen's federation. All India Railwaymen's federation.
   Cement - Indian National Cement Workers' federation. All India Cement workers' federation.
   Defence - Indian National Defence Workers' federation. All India Defence Employees' federation.
   Banks - All India Bank Employees' Association. All India Bank Employees' federation.

Multiplicity has further aggravated this situation. The presence of multiple unions in a unit undermines considerably the bargaining strength of the unions, adversely affects their finances and consequently reduced their utility to the members, thus making them less attractive. It complicates the problem of trade union recognition and obstructs the smooth function of joint consultative bodies. For example, in case of Jute or Engineering Tribunal in West Bengal, there could not be found a single union which could represent the whole industry. A number of unions had to be cited in each case and each put forward separate demands.

The Way Out.

The problem of multiplicity can be solved either by legal enactment prohibiting more than one union in a unit or by a gentleman's agreement among national federations that none of them will try to set up a union in a unit where one already exists. Under the present circumstances neither of the two appears to be feasible, as discussed later. The minimum that needs to be done is strict enforcement of Indian Trade Unions Act 1926. A large number of unions which do not observe the provisions of the Act should be automatically deregistered. Unions which can not even submit returns regularly have no claim to continuation of registration; there is a presumption that they do not maintain satisfactory records. Between 1927-28 to 1944-45, the percentage of unions submitting returns was rather high, ranging between 66% to 90.5%. After 1944-45 it began to decline and was so low as 49.5% in 1955-56 but is now coming up and was 61% in 1959-60 (refer to Table III). Percentage also varies from state to state. During 1959-60
it was as high as 85.7% in Delhi and 80% in U.P. and Madras and so low as 29% in Madhya Pradesh (refer to Table VII).

In the same state also it varies widely from year to year; for example, in Punjab it was only 32.5% in 1959-60 but in 1961-62 and 1962-63 it went up to 62% and 71% respectively.

There is also a case of imposing restrictions on the registration of Unions so that only genuine unions secure registration. A minimum membership in terms of percentage of total number of workers employed in the unit concerned, as a qualifying condition for registration deserves careful consideration. Under the present Act, any seven members can get a union registered. This is too liberal a provision. Giving every small group of workers a right to form a union encourages individualisation and fissiparous tendencies, which is against the spirit of trade unionism, which is essentially an institution of collective bargaining.

The privileges granted to the registered unions have also been responsible for the mushroom growth of unions. Some of these privileges rightly belong to a recognised union and the question of rights and privileges of registered vis-a-vis recognised unions needs reconsideration.

Inter-Union Rivalry.

Since the national federations are attached to political parties, there is intense inter-union rivalry which is correctly described as the 'bane' of trade union movement in India'. It is both the cause and effect of multiplicity of unions and a major factor in the disturbed conditions of industrial relations in many places. For example, the strike
at Tata Iron and Steel Co. in 1958 was largely the result of inter-union rivalry. Persistent labour trouble at Heavy Electricals Bhopal may also be attributed to rivalry between the two unions, affiliated to I.N.T.U.C. and A.I.T.U.C. respectively. Trade union conflicts have been undermining the strength and solidarity of working classes. Energies of union are dissipated in mutual fights instead of fighting the employers for better terms and conditions of employment. Employers naturally exploit such a situation. There is a lot of mud-throwing and washing of dirty linen in public. Finding faults with the rival leadership and personal jealousies are other consequences. Attitude of unions against one another is usually 'opposition for opposition sake'. As a result of this rivalry it is very difficult to determine the 'workers' point of view. The Esso, Bombay entered into a collective agreement with Petroleum workers union (A.I.T.U.C.) but Petroleum employees Union (I.N.T.U.C.) opposed the agreement and challenged the legality, propriety and validity of these settlements and invoked the machinery of Industrial Disputes, Act 1947. Conciliation having failed, the union asked for adjudication. The agreement thus became not an instrument of industrial peace but of warfare. Associated Cement Company entered into an agreement with All India Cement Workers' Federation on bonus but the Indian National Cement Workers' Federation has challenged it and the matter is lying before the Industrial Tribunal.

1. Indian Worker, June 24, 1962.
Multiplicity and rivalry can be completely eliminated only by unifying and integrating the trade union movement. Its natural corollary is that there should be only one industrial federation of trade unions and all unions should be affiliated to it irrespective of their ideology or political affiliation. There are two ways of achieving it, either by legislative enactment as has been done in Ghana or by voluntary agreement among existing federations. Ghana has solved the problem of union rivalry by legislation. Under the Industrial Relations Act, 1959, a single federal trade union structure has been achieved. The Government has approved Trades Union Congress as a federation of 24 scheduled unions and every union must be affiliated to one of the scheduled unions. There is no scope for the growth of new unions. Such a measure is contrary to the prevailing ideas of industrial democracy in India and also runs counter to the conventions on Free Trade unionism drawn up by the I.L.O. Besides being politically unacceptable, it is not likely to serve much useful purpose in the present circumstances. The differences among existing federations are very deep and if they are forced into one union, instead of inter-union rivalry we shall have group rivalries within the unions which are not uncommon even now though all members

of a particular union have a common ideology, political affiliation and the same programme of action. It is also highly doubtful that under the present circumstances the national federations can be persuaded to wind up their affairs and merge themselves into a single federation. This poses a large problem of Trade Union Unity which has been discussed later.

Code Of Conduct.

1. In the meanwhile a Code of Conduct has been evolved to persuade the Trade Unions to conduct their affairs in a more disciplined and orderly manner and for maintaining harmonious inter-union relations. The Code, which was agreed to, by the four national federations of labour in May, 1958, contains the following provisions:

1. Every employee in an industry or unit shall have the freedom and right to join a union of his choice. No coercion shall be exercised in this matter.

2. There shall be no dual membership of unions.

3. There shall be unreserved acceptance of, and respect for, democratic functioning of Trade Unions.

4. There shall be regular and democratic elections of executive bodies and office bearers of trade unions.

5. Ignorance and/or backwardness of workers shall not be exploited by any organisation. No organisation shall make excessive or extravagant demands.

6. Casteism, communalism and provincialism shall be eschewed by all unions.

7. There shall be no violence, coercion, intimidation or vilification in inter-union dealings.

8. All Central Labour Organisations shall combat formation or continuance of Company Unions.

The Code has, however, failed to secure the desired results partly due to its basic deficiencies but largely due to apathy of labour organisations and their leaders. The Code has been ratified by the leaders of the national federations but most of the unions at the unit level are indifferent to it, some of them even ignorant. The problem becomes particularly difficult because the national federations have ineffective control over their affiliated unions. Further, no sanctions have been provided for the violation of the Code. Since it is difficult to verify the observance of the principles enunciated in the code, the fear of 'being caught', which could be expected to act as a deterrent is also gone. Trade unions are still exploited by their leaders for personal and political ends. Vested interests have stood in the way of faithful observance of the code. The net result is that the provisions of the code have been frequently flouted and inter-union rivalries and conflicts arising therefrom have shown no sign of abatement.

To make the code more effective, its provisions may be enlarged and the deficiencies referred to above may be removed.
The use of the trade unions for personal and political ends may be prohibited and some penalty may be laid down for those union leaders who are found guilty of the violation of the code provisions, for example, they may be debarred from holding any office in trade unions for a prescribed period. Sanctions may also be provided to deal with defaulting unions, as has been done in case of Code of Discipline. A committee representing all the national federations of labour may be appointed to review periodically the functioning of the code. It was agreed at the time of adoption of the code to constitute such a machinery with an independent chairman to implement the code but according to available information it was not done till June, 1963.

'Outside'Leadership.

An important feature of Indian Trade Union movement is the dominance of 'outside leadership'. In practically all the countries, 'outside' leaders have guided the labour movement in initial stages, but the leadership gradually passed on to the working classes. In India, however, 'outsiders' still continue to dominate and direct the movement.

An analysis of trade union leadership of I.N.T.U.C.

1. By 'outsider' is meant a person who was never connected with the industry or the establishment in which the union functions.
In Assam for the year 1955-56 shows that 72% of the members of the Working Committee were 'outsiders'. Out of 25 members, 18 had no connection with the industry, whatever; 4 were former employees and only 3 were workers employed in industry. Similarly during 1963, out of 18 office-bearers of Punjab branch of I.N.T.U.C., only 7 were employees. Details of the position held by them are given below:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Outsider/employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Vice Presi-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-president</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Secretaries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Secretaries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising Secretaries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Secretaries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Employee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More important than the number of outsiders, is their hold on the labour movement. They occupy all the key positions and exercise influence far beyond their number. For example, none of the important office bearers of even such well-established and well-organised trade unions as Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, Rashtrya Mill Mazdoor Sangh, Bombay, National Federation of Indian Railwaymen etc. is drawn from the class of industrial workers. Similarly, it will be seen from the classification of office bearers given above, that the President, Senior Vice President, Treasurer and both the General Secretaries of Punjab I.N.T.U.C.

1. I.N.T.U.C. being the largest and the most representative labour organisation, analysis of its leadership may be considered to be fairly representative.
were outsiders. The same is the position at the national level. All the four national federations are led by outsiders, and persons with actual experience of working in factories rarely find a place in their leadership.

The 'outside' leaders have played an important part in the growth of Trade Unions in India. They did the pioneering work and came to the rescue of the Trade Unions at a time when due to lack of education and fear of employers, it was almost impossible to find leaders from the rank of working classes. It would be no exaggeration to say that but for their selfless service and devotion to work, the movement may not have attained its present position.

The 'outside' leadership has, however, not proved to be an unmixed blessing. Outside leadership is largely political in character and most of the union leaders occupy important positions in the political parties. For example, the President of the Punjab I.N.T.U.C. during 1963 was also the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. The result is that the political considerations dominate the functioning of the Trade Unions and the real purposes of the unions are undermined. The presence of outsiders in influential positions often leads to personal rivalries and thereby weakens the unions. Trade unions are not infrequently exploited for political and personal ends. 'Outside' leadership is also partly responsible for the slow growth of inside leadership. Vested interests develop and they prevent genuine 'inside' leadership from emerging. Whatever 'inside' leadership has come up in recent years is largely drawn from supervisory personnel or white collar

1. For Example, During 1962-63, the President, four out of five Vice-President, the General Secretary, the Treasurer and both the organising secretaries of INTUC were 'outsiders.' Similarly the Presidents and General Secretaries of other national federations were outsiders.
workers and operates only at the local or 'uncritical'
level of union activity. In the significant or strategic
areas of union activity, the outsider has not been dispensed
with. Some monopoly trends are also visible in the trade union
leadership. Like multiple-directorships in Joint Stock Companies
where the power is concentrated in a few hands, only a few
top leaders direct and control most of the unions affiliated
to a particular industrial or national federation. Obviously
they cannot have the time and energy to attend to the affairs
of all the unions under their control.

Due to lack of industrial background and first hand
knowledge and experience of the work environment, 'outsiders'
cannot represent labour point of view effectively. Being non
workers, they also cannot correctly gauge workers' feelings
and emotions on a particular issue.

Explaining the importance of 'inside' leadership
and dangers of 'outside' leadership, Prof. H.S. Kirkaldy observed:

"It is rare to find a stable and established
Trade union movement until it becomes a movement
not only for but of the workers. Participation
by those not belonging to the working class opens
the door not only for the genuine sympathiser and
for the political organiser but also for the
exploiter who has no purpose to serve but their
own advantage." 2

The movement still has in its fold some loyal and
devoted workers, who in choosing a trade union career, have
shown preference for an unstable and uneasy life full of
financial difficulties and physical hardships. Their number is,

3. S.D. Punekar - 'Outside leadership of Trade unions.' -
   Economic weekly, special number- July, 1958.
however, not large. Most of the union leaders may be said to be 'careerists' who have no hesitation in using the unions for personal prestige and power at the cost of the working class. The strike at the Premier Automobiles, Bombay in 1958 exposed the festering sore that eats into the vitals of the trade union movement in the country. The extent to which personal issues and prestige considerations enter into important policy decisions of the union is illustrated by this strike.

Commenting on the present trade union leadership Justice Shah of the Bombay High Court observed:

"At present it seems that Trade Union business is any body's business and any one who has no honest occupation in life can dabble in it and make some money out of it at the workers' cost. If this is the kind of leadership of workers unions, the sooner it is put on end or eradicated the better for all concerned." 2

Judging the calibre and character of present trade union leadership it can be safely stated that if the movement has to grow on sound lines and become self reliant and truly democratic, it must provide from within adequate number of persons fully equipped to organise and manage the affairs of the unions. The development of inside leadership will largely depend on the facilities provided for education and training for union leadership, which is bound to be a slow process. Until that is done, it would be neither possible nor advisable to dispense with the outsider, but his gradual elimination is necessary for the health and vitality of the labour movement. The proportion of outsiders among union office bearers may be progressively reduced and some restrictions imposed on their

activities. Some penalty may also be laid down for those union leaders, who are guilty of professional misconduct and misuse their positions, and exploit the unions for personal gains.

**Trade Union Unity.**

**Link between Labour Federations and Political Parties.**

It has been observed earlier that all the four national labour federations are attached and owe allegiance to one or the other political party. It is evident from the manner in which new labour federations came into existence in the immediate post-independence period. For example, unable to wrest the A.I.T.U.C. from the clutches of the Communist party of India, Indian National Congress took the initiative to set up I.N.T.U.C. and similarly the Socialists after seceding from the Congress formed H.M.S. Link between the political parties has become closer during these years and the hold of the parties on their 'labour wings' has been on the increase. Every federation denies this position but accuses the other of being subservient to a political party.

A.I.T.U.C. described I.N.T.U.C. as 'no more than an appendage of the state, a labour front in the service of the bourgeoisie.

In his Report to the 7th Annual session, the General Secretary of I.N.T.U.C. stated that "the other national centres of Trade Unions in India, being tied to political parties, continued to be utilised for political ends. Hence they could not function effectively either in shaping the policies of the nation or in advancing the demands of workers. As against this I.N.T.U.C.

continued to be free from the strings of any political party". Similarly, Bagaram Tulpule, General Secretary, H.M.S. denied any direct relationship between H.M.S. and any political party. According to him, "H.M.S. is broadly of Socialist orientation but not oriented towards any political Socialist party". These denials are not borne out by the attitude of the federations on political issues and towards political parties. I.N.T.U.C. has always supported Governments' national and international policies, often to the point of embarrassment and unpopularity, and other federations have followed the lead given by their political associates. All Labour Federations have openly supported the political parties allied to them in the general elections and their top leaders occupy important positions in the political parties concerned. Link between political parties and labour federations becomes more apparent when members belonging to a political party are not allowed to join or work with a trade union organisation, different from the one sponsored by the party concerned, e.g. In 1955-56, A.I.C.C. issued the directive that "no congressman will be permitted to associate himself with any rival organisation opposed to I.N.T.U.C." Similarly after the formation of Communist Ministry in Kerala, Labour Minister while greeting

1. Quoted in , G.K. Sharma, Labour Movement in India1953.p.196
2. I.N.T.U.C. strongly supported Government's Compulsory Deposit Scheme (1963) and Gold Control Policy (1963) and severely condemned other labour federations for opposing the Government on these issues. But only after a few months Govt. made substantial modification in these policies, partly at the instance of other political parties and labour federations. This placed INTUC in an awkward position. If it was convinced of the merits of these policies it should have criticised the Government for revising them but it kept quiet.
the 25th session of A.I.T.U.C. clearly stated "I would like to take a solemn pledge before the august gathering to implement the policies and resolutions adopted by A.I.T.U.C.

There is, however, no fixed pattern of relationship between the labour federations and the political parties, towards which they are oriented. The circumstantial evidence however, does reveal a fairly close link between them. Indian Trade Unions are alleged to practice political unionism.

To quote Ralph James, an American Professor, Labour Federations in India are "largely the instrument of political parties with which they are identified."

A stage has now been reached when the political parties are in no mood to relax their hold on their 'labour wings' and do not encourage them to become independent of party control. Party discipline is fairly rigid in case of A.I.T.U.C. Even I.N.T.U.C. which proclaims to be a democratic institution does not encourage its members to express and advocate views contrary to the declared policies of the Congress party. In 1950, when a group of I.N.T.U.C. leaders broke off from the Congress, the latter demanded their expulsion from I.N.T.U.C.

In June, 1958 Mrs. Maitreyi Bose, President, West Bengal branch I.N.T.U.C. resigned all her positions in the organisation as a protest against dictatorial interference in I.N.T.U.C. by Pradesh Congress President. Her complaint was that constant

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3. Footnote on the next page.
interference by Congress officials had made healthy trade union activity almost impossible in the state.

**Ideological Differences.**

Indian Labour movement is divided not only on political but also ideological lines. On such major issues as right to private property, class conflict, means vs. ends the labour federations differ widely. I.N.T.U.C.'s economic philosophy may be summed up in one word 'Sarvodaya' while A.I.T.U.C. is wedded to 'Marxism'. A.I.T.U.C. firmly believes in the doctrine of class conflict. I.N.T.U.C. on the other hand does not subscribe to this theory and holds that the "difference between employers and labour is only superfluous".

In the early stages of its growth, H.M.S. also emphasized 'class conflict' but in later years the talk of class war was officially discounted. H.M.S.'s attitude is still lukewarm. U.T.U.C. believes in class struggle but does not regard it as incompatible with collective bargaining. A.I.T.U.C. is more concerned with ends but I.N.T.U.C. and H.M.S. are not prepared to sacrifice means. The different federations also hold varying views on important aspects of labour policy, for example,

(Footnote from the previous page)

3. The office bearers of AITUC are appointed, controlled and dismissed by the Polit. Bureau of the Communist Party of India. Their fortunes in the AITUC are linked with their position in the party. The dismissal of a number of so-called 'left wingers' in U.P. and West Bengal from the AITUC after Chinese aggression in October, 1962 is a point to this.

3. There is not much of a distinction between the union movement and the political parties in the case of U.T.U.C. as their only substantial activity lies in labour field. -Charles Myers - op.cit. p. 138.
the right to strike, compulsory adjudication, recognition procedure, labour participation in management etc.

Unity Efforts.

These political and ideological issues have always stood in the way of trade union unity. A few limited attempts in the past did not achieve much success. For example, an attempt had been made in 1950 to bring H.M.S. and I.N.T.U.C. together, the narrow down the points of difference and to secure collective action on specific issues. A code of conduct was evolved, but it was never implemented. H.M.S. felt unhappy about I.N.T.U.C.'s attempt to set up rival unions in the field covered by H.M.S. I.N.T.U.C. on the other hand was annoyed as H.M.S. was hobnobbing with A.I.T.U.C. also. A.I.T.U.C. also made several attempts to join hands with H.M.S. and U.T.U.C. but the efforts could not go very far because 'the experience of both H.M.S. and U.T.U.C. after each such joint action was that it was cleverly utilised by the A.I.T.U.C. to increase its influence and strengthen its organisation.' U.T.U.C. has been wavering in its loyalty between A.I.T.U.C. and H.M.S. During these years, with varying permutations and combination the labour federations have been collaborating with one another on specific issues. For example, in 1958 A.I.T.U.C., H.M.S., U.T.U.C., combined in observing Demands Day. They were also combined on the issue of Central Employees' strike of July, 1960, on the other hand I.N.T.U.C., H.M.S. and U.T.U.C. combined against A.I.T.U.C. to overthrow the communist regime in Kerala. I.N.T.U.C. and H.M.S. achieved some unity on the Railway and Defence industries. The picture
at the moment is a little confusing but some general conclusions re: the pattern of relationship among unions and labour federations may be drawn. On one extreme is I.N.T.U.C which is not inclined to work in unison with any other labour federation and on the other is A.I.T.U.C. which is ever-ready to work with any and every federations but it is not ordinarily trusted by other federations. U.T.U.C. is radical, non-communist and anti-I.N.T.U.C. Hence it is nearer to H.M.S. and the A.I.T.U.C. H.M.S. is nearer to I.N.T.U.C. but is jealous of Government patronage, which the latter enjoys. It is willing to come to terms with I.N.T.U.C. but does not want A.I.T.U.C. to be left out.

Efforts towards Trade Union unity were comparatively more successful in the field of industrial federations but ultimately they also ended in failure. The two industrial federations on Indian Railways - A.I.R.F. and Indian National Railway workmen Federation - were merged in April, 1953 and N.F.I.R. was formed but at the zonal level merger could not be effected. The tussle between I.N.T.U.C. and A.I.R.F. group continued. A.I.R.F. group made serious efforts to resolve the differences but I.N.T.U.C. group’s response was poor, since had I.N.T.U.C. by now acquired effective control of N.F.I.R.

1. In November, 1960 INTUC committee reiterated its stand that under no circumstances INTUC union should form joint or united front of any kind with any communist or non-democratic organisation with different political affiliation on different unions affiliated to the central federation trade unions organisation owing allegiance to the rival bodies." - Indian Worker, November 14, 1960.
Even the Union Minister for Railways intervened in March, 1956 and tried to bring the two groups together but the talks failed and AIFP again emerged as a rival federation.

Similarly, I.N.T.U.C. and H.M.S. - led unions of Civil defence employees merged in May, 1953 and formed an All India Defence employees Federation with Mrs. Maitreya Bose (I.N.T.U.C) as Chairman and S. M. Joshi (H.M.S.) as General Secretary. It worked satisfactorily for about five years, but the groups came to a clash in 1958. I.N.T.U.C. walked out and set up Indian National Defence Workers Federation. Both the federations are now functioning.

Indian Labour movement is divided not only at national level but also at international level, which has further complicated the issue. I.N.T.U.C. and H.M.S. are affiliated to I.C.F.T.U. while A.I.T.U.C. is affiliated to W.F.T.U. As long as these two international federations of labour continue pulling in opposite direction, it will be an uphill task to bring labour federations in India together.

In view of these developments, chances of unifying and integrating the labour movement are remote. A single country-wide apex organisation of trade unions is simply out of the question at the moment. Even the modest goal of 'one union for one industry' appears to be ambitious. We for the present, concentrate on 'one establishment, one union'. There is a valid reason to make sustained efforts to reduce the area of divergence. The strength of the movement will to a large extent depend on the capacity of different unions to discover common interests and objectives and evolve combined
methods of attaining them.

Role Of The Government.

The opposition parties often complain that the I.N.T.U.C. is not prepared to come to terms with other labour federations and that is primarily because it enjoys Government's patronage and support. In support of this contention it is pointed out that the Government has favoured I.N.T.U.C. unions in the reference efc adjudication and in the determination of the representative unions. The Government's reluctance to lay down definite and clear-cut policy for the determination of representative union is interpreted as a deliberate attempt to maintain the representative position of Indian National Trade Union Congress. To some extent the Government's inclination towards I.N.T.U.C. is understandable. There is a definite harmony of approach between the two. They both subscribe to similar political, economic and social philosophies and their programmes and policies are complementary to each other. I.N.T.U.C. has been collaborating with the Government in the formation and implementation of economic and

1. "I do not want to make any personal reference to ministers. If the INTUC has to get 10 ministers or 20 ministers, we do not mind. The question is what these ministers do. Why they become ministers, do they still remain INTUC gentlemen or whether they become really ministers of a State, which describes itself democratic. I say, Sir, that in the application of the industrial law, specially those ministers who had been appointed for the ranks of INTUC, have definitely applied law in a most partisan way and we are quite prepared to show how ministers have been misusing law in order to help a particular trade union organisation." S. A. Dange- Indian Labour Conference, 12th Session (1952) p. 38.
labour policies. But this will indeed be unfortunate if the Government gets involved in the deepening of this inter-union rivalry. If the Government is really keen to develop a strong independent union movement, it should keep the scales even between different parties. The Government, as the biggest employer in the country, should set an example for others. It should not only make no discrimination and treat all unions alike, but also actively encourage collective action on their part and discourage mutual bickerings and friction among them. Another step that the Government can take to promote trade union unity is to persuade its own party - the Congress - to allow the labour federations attached to it: I.N.T.U.C. - some freedom of functioning and avoid excessive political pressure. It should not be very difficult. Most of the Government leaders are also party leaders. Those in authority have a special responsibility. The Government can also exercise some moral pressure on the I.N.T.U.C. so that the latter may take the initiative in securing co-operation of other unions and even at the risk of a temporary set back to its prestige and position take steps to put the labour movement on sound lines. This of course does not mean that the other labour federations should be allowed to indulge in 'unfair practices' with impunity.

Trade Union Democracy.

Outside leadership and political domination have also adversely affected the democratic character of the unions. "Trade unions to be fully effective" observed the Royal Commission on Labour 'demand a democratic spirit'.
There is, therefore, the need among the trade unions to make democracy democratic. "The unity of the workers" wrote Prof. Laski "will be maintained only by making unions democratic and democracy is participation in which the rank and file are not only told they matter, but are really aware that they do matter to their leaders." A trade unions member who does not actively participate in its deliberations and leaves the policy making entirely to his leaders is defeating one of the primary purposes of trade unionism. Like any other institution, a trade union needs discipline but the last thing it needs is autocratic control from above.

**Recognition.**

We may now consider the problem of recognition of Trade Unions, which is a vexed and controversial problem in India. It is an extremely sensitive issue dealing with status and rights. Recognition of union is a first step to collective bargaining; it is an essential prerequisite for regulating labour management relations and maintaining harmonious relations. Recognition provides the channel of communication between the management and workers and is the basis on which workers lay their claim to negotiate with the employers the terms and conditions of employment. Non-recognition is a major hurdle in the matter of securing industrial peace and its satisfactory solution is an urgent necessity.

The problem of recognition is at the root of much bitterness that has spoiled industrial relations in this country. For example, the Textile Workers general strike in

I. Lask, H.J.-Trade Unions for the New Society p. 171
Bombay in 1960 was organised by H.M.S. with the object of securing recognition. The strike of 5000 workers of Premier Automobiles, Bombay, which lasted 101 days in 1958 was due to withdrawal of recognition of the union by the management.

The strike at Sindri Fertilizers, which caused a loss in production of about Rs 20 lakhs was engineered in order to force the Sindri Management to accord formal recognition to one of the two rival factions in the workers' union affiliated to I.N.T.U.C. Recognition of union is one of the issues involved in the persistent labour trouble both at Rourkela Steel Works and Heavy Electricals, Bhopal.

Causes Of Non-recognition.

There is no central labour legislation providing for recognition of unions. The Indian Trade Union Act, 1926 and Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 are silent over this question. Trade Union (Amendment) Act, 1947 provided for compulsory recognition of representative unions, under specified conditions but for some inexplicable reason, the Act was never enforced. The Industrial Relations Bill 1950 also made provision for compulsory recognition but it never became law. Only in some states, statutory provision for

1. The strike originated out of derecognition of H.M.S. union by management but other factors also complicated the issue. For details see, R.L. Mehta - A Study of Strikes in the Premier Automobiles from the point of view of the Code of Discipline, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India, New Delhi.
   Madhya Pradesh Industrial Relations Act, 1960.
   Industrial Disputes (Rajasthan Amendment) Act, 1958.
recognition exist, but these cover only a few industries in particular regions. Reliance has so far been placed on voluntary recognition of unions by employers. But employers have so far been generally reluctant to recognise unions. Employers even question the need for recognition stating that even an unrecognised union can avail of industrial relations machinery. Agreeing to recognition in principle, many employers advance multiplicity of unions as an excuse for escaping it, while there are others who make recognition a nullity by recognising all of them. The presence of multiple unions, it is argued, makes it impossible to bargain with one of them. Recognition of one union creates jealousies and heart burning, making the employers' position untenable. The Royal Commission was of the opinion that the existence of two or more rival unions is not in itself a sufficient ground to refuse to recognise. The practical difficulties however, can not be ignored. The problem has been accentuated because the employers have not always been impartial and favouritism shown to one union has occasionally infuriated others.

Some employers insist that they will recognise the union only if no outsider is associated with it. Ordinarily leadership is union's concern and no employer should bother about it, but there are many instances in which industrial relations in a unit were disturbed due to the presence of an

1. It can raise an industrial dispute, have conciliation proceedings and ask for adjudication.
Some employers also make it a condition precedent for recognition that the unions' constitution and office bearers must have the approval of the management. In Express Mills, Nagpur, recognition was given to the union on the condition that Dr. N.B. Khare would be its President. In Punjab Roadways Workshop, the union has been recognised with the condition that the management did not recognise the union's right to strike.

Compulsory Recognition.

Dissatisfied with the slow progress in the matter of recognition, the Indian Labour Conference discussed the question at its 16th Session held in 1958. The Conference noted with concern the prevailing confusion and controversy on this issue and adopted the criteria for recognition of unions. It was intended to provide required guidance and direction to employers and unions and to settle the controversy regarding 'which union should be recognised' at rest. The adoption of the criteria has not substantially improved the situation. Whole areas of industry recognise no union, and conflicts on this issue continue. The failure of the Code of Discipline, of which criterion forms a part, in this respect raises the question whether recognition should be on a compulsory basis. Royal Commission was deadly opposed to it. In their view no law

1. The President of the Union was an outsider and a prominent Communist leader.
2. Institute of Personnel Management - Personnel Management in India, 1961, p.95
could secure a genuine and full recognition, legal enactment would be a mere formality. At the 16th Labour Conference also, the trend of opinion was that compulsory recognition had no great merit as it would not create the atmosphere necessary for the success of mutual negotiations, though there were dissenting voices also. The Conference only agreed that certain conventions should be evolved for regulating the voluntary recognition of unions. Opinion in this country is largely influenced by the practice in U.K. but conditions here are different as the Trade Union movement lacks, maturity, unity and strength to secure recognition. The merits of voluntary recognition are not in question but voluntary efforts have been given a fairly long trial. Even the Code is on trial for the last five years but without much success. The Trade Unions have not so far acquired the required strength to compel employers to recognise them and the employers have not shed off their prejudices and their attitude continues to be unhelpful. Voluntariness to recognise also implicitly carried the right not to recognise unions. As it actually happened, Code provisions concerning recognition were observed more in breach than otherwise. An overwhelming majority of employers refuse to recognise unions and deal with them. The history of the world labour movement shows that in the early stages employers do not voluntarily accept unions. It is not reasonable to expect Indian employers to be different. The past experience makes the case for recognition on a compulsory basis stronger.

2. Shri S.A.Dange, General Secretary, A.I.T.U.C., was of the view that there should be legal compulsion for recognition of unions.
In the prevailing Indian conditions statutory provision for recognition will in course of time develop a tradition of recognition and stimulate the process of collective bargaining. This method has been adopted with advantage in many other countries like Canada and U.S.A. and has enabled the Trade Unions to evolve a more co-operative and constructive policy. It is true that legal compulsion alone will not create the required spirit but it is necessary that this first step to collective bargaining be taken firmly.

Recognised vis-a-vis Representative Union.

A major problem of recognition is the selection of the union which should be recognised as the 'bargaining agent'. Since the rights of a recognised union had not been clearly defined, much confusion prevailed regarding the implications of recognition. Much of the discussion on the subject gave the

1. A Trade Union Recognition Bill presented to the Bombay Assembly in 1937-38 aimed at the right to recognition of every union that had been registered. Mathur* saw no difficulty in recognising more than one union in one unit. Punekar** also recommended that recognition should be granted to every genuine trade union. At the 16th session of Indian Labour Conference, S.A.Dange, demanded that all trade unions be given recognition. The Royal Commission was also inclined to give recognition to more than one union in a unit.***

*** Report op.cit. p.324.
impression that a union could secure recognition without being recognised as a bargaining agent and by implication a distinction was sought to be made between a recognised union and a representative union. Once it is admitted that recognition gives the union a right to negotiate with the employers, it should not be difficult to appreciate that there can be only one recognised union in one bargaining unit and recognition can only mean recognition as a representative union. This view is confirmed by the rights given to the recognised union under the Code of Discipline.


At the 20th session of the Indian Labour Conference held in 1962, it was agreed that the recognised union should have the following rights:

(i) To raise issues and enter into collective agreements with employers on general questions concerning the terms of employment and conditions of service of workers in an establishment or in the case of a Representative Union, in an industry; in a local area;
(ii) to collect membership fees/subscriptions payable by members to the union within the premises of the undertaking;
(iii) to put up or cause to be put up a notice board on the premises of the undertaking in which its members are employed and affix or cause to be affixed thereon notices relating to meetings, statements of accounts of its income and expenditure and other announcements which are not abusive, indecent or inflammatory or subversive of discipline or otherwise contrary to the Code;
(iv) for the purposes of prevention or settlement of an industrial dispute:
(a) to hold discussions with employers who are members of the union at a suitable place or places within the premises of office/factory/establishment as mutually agreed upon;
(b) to meet and discuss with an employer or any person appointed by him for the purpose, the grievances of its members employed in the undertaking;
(c) to inspect, by prior arrangements, in an undertaking any place where any member of the union is employed;
(v) to nominate its representatives on the Grievance Committee constituted under the Grievance Procedure in an establishment;
(vi) to nominate its representatives on Joint Management councils; and
(vii) to nominate its representatives on non-statutory bipartite committees, e.g., production committees, welfare committees, canteen committees, house allotment committees, etc., set up by managements,
Criteria For Selection.

There is no uniform practice in matter of selection of the union for recognition purposes. Unions with widely varying memberships (as a percentage of total membership) have been recognised by the employers and occasionally unions with smaller memberships have been granted recognition, ignoring the claims of the union having a larger membership. Recognition has been considered as a favour or a gift to be conferred on the 'desirable' and well-behaved union, irrespective of their representative character. To remove this uncertainty and for the sake of uniformity the 16th Indian Labour Conference recommended the following criteria for recognition of unions.

1. Where there are more than one union, a union claiming recognition should have been functioning for at least one year after registration. Where there is only one union, this condition will not apply.

2. Its membership should cover at least 15% of the workers in the establishment concerned.

3. A union may claim to be recognised as a representative union for an industry in a local area, if it has a membership of at least 25% of the workers in that industry in that area.

4. When a Union has been recognised there should be no change in the position for two years.

5. Where there are several unions in an industry or establishment, the one with the largest membership should be recognised.

6. The representative union for an industry in an area should have the right to represent the workers in all the establishments in the industry but if a union of workers in a particular establishment has a membership of 50% or more of the workers, it should have the right to deal with matters of purely local interest. According to the above criteria, a union with 15% membership may be recognised as a bargaining agent in an undertaking and with 25% membership in an industry in a local area. Owing to small proportion of organised workers, minimum qualifying membership has been kept very low but this is basically incorrect to give 15% workers a right to take decisions which effect all workers. One H.M.S. leader stated that the so called 15% union forces its will on the remaining 85%. The ideal solution appears to be that the right of compulsory recognition and bargaining be given only to the union, having majority of workers as its members. The merits of this proposition are not in question, but it is stated as impracticable under the present circumstances. But to give 15% workmen the right to decide the fate of all the workers is also wrong in principle and undemocratic in spirit. It would be unworkable because any agreement arrived at by 15% workmen may not be acceptable to the remaining workers and there is no guarantee that they would abide by it - there is no moral force behind such an agreement. 15% or 25% are too

1. Quoted in Charles Myers op.cit. p. 287.
low percentages to give the rights of a representative union. Even the labour Panel of Planning Commission had recommended that the condition for representation should be at least one third of the total number of workers.

One H.M.S. leader had suggested that the representative union should have a 75% majority. There is no sanctity behind these percentages, but it seems reasonable and desirable that if recognition has to be meaningful, the recognised union should command the confidence of the workers. Qualifying memberships - 15% and 25% - as recommended by the code are too low and should be suitably raised. Special provision may be made to meet particular situation.

Verification Procedure.

The determination of the criteria for the selection of the union for recognition purposes does not by itself settle the problem. Disputes often arise regarding the membership claimed by various unions. The verification procedure recommended by the code and hitherto followed by the Government is found to be unsatisfactory.

Non-I.N.T.U.C. unions allege that verification is not impartial and the Government shows favouritism to I.N.T.U.C. union. It is difficult to verify the validity of these allegations but this view is widely prevalent and A.I.T.U.C.

2. Charles Myers op.cit. p. 287.
and other labour federations miss no opportunity of highlighting it and any number of examples are given to substantiate it. The non-I.N.T.U.C. unions are united in their demand that the representative character of the union should be determined by ballot. The leading trade union of the country - I.N.T.U.C. does not favour this procedure, stating that the election campaign will only spread hatred and discontentment, intensify inter-union rivalry and vitiate the entire atmosphere by demagogic appeals. Fear is also expressed that an open election, communists will win by exploiting ignorant rank and file of workers by extravagant promises and irresponsible attacks on rival unions.

These reasons do not appear to be convincing. Having accepted 'ballot' as a basis of political democracy its extension in industrial matters is only a natural corollary. It is no argument to suggest that communist unions will capture power. As long as communist unions act within the limits of Indian Constitution and remain a lawful body they have every right to be recognised as representative Union. In fact, such fears and I.N.T.U.C's persistent opposition to 'ballot' only aggravates the suspicion that

1. Kerala Hospital Workers' Union, which is the most representative union is not recognised by the Health Department though Evaluation and implementation committee recommended to the Government to accord recognition. (Trade Union Record 20.4.1962).

Shri Satish Loomba, Secretary, A.I.T.U.C. alleged that at Dharival Woollen Mills, Punjab the Evaluation and Implementation committee had verified that the A.I.T.U.C. union was the most representative but the Government did not press the employers to withdraw recognition from I.N.T.U.C. union and get it to A.I.T.U.C. unions. (Personal interview - December, 1962).
verification procedure favours particular union.

Many persons are puzzled by the Governments' reluctance to determine the representative union by ballot, and argue that in a democracy, which chooses its representatives to Parliament and legislation by secret ballot, it is only logical that industrial workers should choose their representative in a similar manner.

De-Recognition.

Along with the rules for recognition, it is also necessary to lay down the conditions under which recognition would be withdrawn. This question acquired particular importance after the withdrawal of recognition from a number of unions of Government employees for participation in the Central Employees Strike in 1960. Similarly, recognised and representative union of Bombay Municipal Employees and B.E.S.T. workers were recently "derecognised" for participating in 'Bombay Bundah' general strike in July, 1963. Such cases of withdrawal of recognition have created a widespread impression that recognition is a "kiss of death". It is confessed only to make workers docile and submit to management and Governmental coercion. To eliminate possibilities of political victimisation and to remove such misapprehension, rules and regulations for withdrawal of recognition should be clearly prescribed. The provision in the Code that recognition would be withdrawn if a union is found guilty of the code will no more be valid after statutory provision for compulsory recognition is made. It is, however, necessary to ensure that the recognised status of a union is not disturbed at short intervals.