PREFACE.

The Industrial Revolution which started in Europe in the early Eighteenth Century brought in its wake problems which were of tremendous magnitude and could not be solved by the isolated efforts of private individuals or un-official agencies. In the beginning some efforts were made by such philanthropists as Robert Owen in England to improve the miserable living conditions of factory workers, but labour legislation started in a concerted way towards the close of the Nineteenth Century. Political and social reforms were introduced side by side with labour reforms and the emergence of socialist ideologies accelerated the progress of labour legislation. It did a lot of good to the condition of labourers in India and created class consciousness among labourers which was essential for trade-unionism.

The object of my thesis is to identify the problems which became more and more serious and urgent with the growing urbanisation which was the natural and direct outcome of the establishment of big industries in metropolitan cities and which resulted into a growing demand for urgent many-sided reform. The impact of other industriised countries on developing countries like India was of immense significance and has been studied in depth.

The factory workers suffered from a number of hardships, faced risks and experienced difficulties, which
could be solved only by the vast resources and comprehensive efforts of the State. The idea of social welfare state increased the tempo and further helped in the progress of labour legislation.

Industrialisation in India came much later and hence the process and speed of legislation was also much halting, delayed and slow. We find the inter-war period very important and fruitful in this regard. The establishment of international agencies like I.L.O. (International Labour Organisation) made the labourers more conscious of their rights and privileges. Political ideologies and economic stresses and strains made the Indian government realise the urgency of the issue and they initiated a series of reforms by legislating against exploitation of woman and child labour, guarantee security of life and provide safe-guards against accidents and unhygienic condition and other hazards.

I have dealt with important and selective enactments and have made an attempt to deal with labour legislation in India with particular emphasis on legislation in U.P. I have tried to show as to how the condition of labour was improved, and to what extent the general reform movements and political-economic ideologies helped in bringing about better conditions for factory labourers, which constituted the bulk of Indian population, and very important segments of it i.e. the middle classes, capitalists,
the elite and the vocal labour organisations.

In the first instance I am deeply indebted to my revered teacher late lamented Prof. Mohn Habib who suggested the idea of working on this subject. I never forget his affection for me. His saintly approach towards the welfare of his students is proverbial and will serve as a beacon light for generations of students to come.

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I have borrowed information from a number of sources indicated in the bibliography, but the views expressed and conclusions drawn are entirely my own.

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