Chapter 4
ATTITUDES AND IDENTIFICATION

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SUMMING UP
IDENTIFICATION AND MILITANCY

The previous chapter contained an analysis of the factors which were relevant in the recruitment of union leaders as well as a discussion on the nature and extent of their participation in trade union and political activities. In this section, we deal with the issue of subjective class identification and its correlation with attitudes, militant or otherwise; militancy in the functioning of trade unions; and matters relating to the organisation of new unions.

The remaining sections of this chapter present some data on the reaction of the respondents to some specific issues associated with job satisfaction; on their perception of the strength of the movement; and on the reported reaction of their close relatives to union activities. The difficulties which the respondents encountered in trade union work are also analysed. Some special features which engaged the attention of the leadership during 1975 to 1977, the period of restricted freedoms (when a State of Emergency had been declared by the Central Government), are taken note of. The last section of this chapter includes analyses of the attitudes of the respondents towards certain other problems: various methods of settling industrial disputes; considerations which precipitate a strike action; intra-union factional disputes; views relating to the relative merits of craft unions and industry-wise unions; workers' participation in management; and alleged illegitimate sources of income of some trade union leaders.
Most sociologists recognise class position as an objective fact. Class as a concept endows the individuals in the system with a common location in the social process and recognises their limitation to a specific range of potential experience. It is postulated that in every location there inheres a tendency pointing towards certain modes of behaviour and thought.

It is not possible here to survey adequately the voluminous literature which has grown around this highly controversial subject. It is necessary, however, to refer briefly to one particular aspect which bears on the present topic.

The basic stress in the Marxist school has been on class stratification and polarisation. To a Marxist, class is always the category for purposes of the analysis of the dynamics of social conflict and its structural roots. As such it has to be distinguished strictly from 'stratum' which is a category employed for describing hierarchical systems at a given point of time.

In contrast, Weber has defined stratification in terms of class, status and power. According to him, a class is a group of people who have the same typical chance for the supply of goods, external living conditions and personal life experiences, insofar as this chance is determined by the power to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income. Status

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is a quality of social honour and is in the main conditioned as well as expressed through a specific style of life. Even if social status is determined by class situation, this does not make the two dimensions identical. Weber points out that both the propertied and the propertyless people can and do belong to the same status groups.

It has been suggested that Weber ignores the fact of the class status and power not being mutually exclusive categories. Anderson has criticised Weber on this score and has contended that occupational prestige as well as style of life or education depends on material resources. Occupational prestige and claims to aristocratic or hereditary status cannot, by themselves, support status group membership.

Weber's definition appears to eliminate class conflict as an essential element of class. Beteille has redefined class by taking some elements from Marx but divesting it of the concept of struggle as an important aspect. By class, says Beteille, "we mean a category of persons occupying a specific position in the system of production."

If one accepts this or the Marxist position, one must assign most union leaders to the 'working class' at the risk of ignoring the fact that their attitudes must have been conditioned by their own subjective identification with one class or another.

Thus it becomes necessary to ascertain the subjective pattern of their self-identification. Moreover, there are always some serious practical difficulties in the task of assigning certain sections of individuals in the society to specific classes under objective class criteria. Sociologists usually measure class in terms of income, occupation, education, class-consciousness, style of living, prestige, and a number of similar variables. A valid analysis is possible only by using a composite index embracing numerous parameters, each being evaluated separately, given proper weightage and then combined to provide an index of overall class position. Because of the limitation of time and resources, the present study did not assign quantitative values to such an index.

It has been argued with some justification by Roberts et al.⁴ and Anderson⁵ that, even if a majority of individuals view themselves as vaguely middle class or middle of the working class, it should not be interpreted as signifying a failure on their part to recognise objective social classes (*"Quite to the contrary, this middling, working identity is objectively rather accurate," to quote Anderson⁶*). Roberts et al. argue that various members of a society have ideas about the system of inequality of income, wealth, educational opportunities, etc., and generally regard themselves as working class or middle class, or as underprivileged or fairly-privileged, on the basis of such perceptions. In the same

⁵, 6. op. cit., p. 137.
strain, Westergaard and Bealer, while recognising that popular perceptions of class and class structure are difficult to track down, refer to firm signs that, among manual workers, the majority who accept the self-appellation 'working class' are inclined to underline the size of income, or ownership of property in contrast to non-ownership, or the capacity to exercise power or pull strings as essential criteria of class division; non-manual workers are likely to give equal weight to distinctions of prestige and its stigmata and to personal qualities alleged to characterise the members of different classes.

During the present Survey, the respondents were asked to indicate their class identification from among some stated alternatives, i.e., upper middle, middle, lower middle, or working class. As Table 4.1 shows, 62 per cent local-level respondents and 48 per cent State-level respondents identified themselves with the working class. Except 8 (5 per cent) local-level respondents who gave vague replies, the rest assigned themselves to the three strata of the middle class. The subjective identification process appeared to have been greatly influenced by the level of education and type of job. At the local level, only 1 (5 per cent) out of 19 illiterate respondents, 27 (24 per cent) out of 111 respondents who had not educated beyond high school, and as many as 26 (79 per cent) out of 33 respondents who had gone to a college, assigned themselves to the middle class. Only 6 (18 per cent) out of

7. *op. cit.* (n.23, chap. 2, *supra*).
Table 4.1

Subjective Identification With Different Classes: Distribution of Local and State-level Respondents by Central Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indefinite response</th>
<th>Upper-middle class</th>
<th>Lower-middle class</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>2 + 6</td>
<td>25 + 1</td>
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<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Others'</td>
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<td>21 + 0</td>
<td>3 + 0</td>
<td>6 + 0</td>
<td>34 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(62)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(25)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(62)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents. Percentages indicated within brackets do not include State-level respondents. Only one respondent (in 'Others') identified himself as belonging to the upper middle class.

34 respondents in the 'Others' category (which had 68 per cent white collar workers among its respondents) were in the self-identified working class, whereas 95 (74 per cent) out of 129 among the rest said that they belonged to this class.

Our contention is that such subjective identification, in the Indian context, does not convey the same meaning as would be understood in, say, Britain where the conscious or subconscious determinants in subjective assignment generally constitute a complex of the level of earnings, level of education, type of job, ownership or absence of ownership of immovable property, durable
consumption goods and expensive gadgets, style of living, and a particular type of system of social values. In the popular parlance of our country, any person who is well educated or has a white collar job (bhadrak in Bengal, babu in most parts of India) is dubbed as a middle class individual, irrespective of any other consideration. We are unable to presume that most respondents in our sample reacted to the question on subjective identification in any sense other than that conveyed by this widely understood informal definition. (It is not practicable for an interviewer to ask the respondent as to how he would assign himself under such or such definition: the whole point about subjective identification is that the answer must be spontaneous and untutored. If objective criteria are thus specified, the question is no longer relevant in its original sense.) Only in a few cases, in which respondents were well versed in the current sociological jargon, it can be assumed that the answer was possibly given in terms of another meaning: 7 out of 9 State-level AITUC respondents described themselves as belonging to the working class (undoubtedly in the Marxist sense), while only 1 out of 9 BMS respondents at the same level so described himself.

It follows that a correlation of subjective identification with attitudes, particularly militant attitudes, is in effect merely a dual correlation of the level of education and type of job with attitudes at least in our context, if not in the Indian context as a whole. That other factors are largely irrelevant was exemplified by a seemingly curious result. At
the local level, 39 (80 per cent) of those who owned landed property stated that they belonged to the working class, as against only 62 (58 per cent) of those who owned no landed property. The difference was statistically significant ($X^2=6.57$, df=1, $p < .05$). Again, 67 (74 per cent) among those who owned houses, but only 34 (53 per cent) among the rest, identified themselves with the working class ($X^2=6.96$, df=1, $p < .01$). The obvious explanation is that the ownership of these types of property did not form a significant part of the complex of factors which led to the subjective class assignment: it is known that small land-owners from the rural areas of Punjab who migrate to the cities in search of employment are usually less educated and work in non-white collar jobs; and, at least till recently, most educated white collared employees spent most of their income on current consumption and acquired little land or housing property.

As an inevitable corollary, 75 (71 per cent) local-level respondents with a rural background, and only 24 (50 per cent) with an urban background, identified themselves with the working class ($X^2=6.62$, df=1, $p < .05$).

A combination of these reasons, plus different interpretations of the term 'working class', resulted in inter-organisational differences in the responses to the question on subjective identification. Taking the local and State levels together, the number of individuals who identified themselves with the working class was: 43 (80 per cent) from AITUC, 39 (67 per cent) from INTUC, 26 (59 per cent) from BMS,
and 6 (18 per cent) from 'Others'.

As a confirmation of our above contention, the ensuing analysis of respondents' attitudes will show that their militancy was not significantly correlated with subjective class identification, rural/urban background, or ownership of land or houses, though it was influenced by the level of education in a zigzag manner.

4.12 Militancy

Militancy has been traditionally regarded as an essential ingredient of the culturally normative definition of the role of a trade union leader. This is understandable in the context of a situation in which a leader confronts an essentially hostile management which is unreconciled to the idea of a workers' union presuming to negotiate on terms of equality. Notions derived from the history of the Western trade union movement appear to suggest that manual workers (e.g., mine-workers) are more apt to act collectively than middle class employees (e.g., shop assistants). However, as pointed out by Blain, Roberts et al. and Bain, there has been a recent perceptible shift in the attitudes of the white collar organisations which have increasingly tended to cast aside old fears of militancy leading to loss of status and invalidating claims to professional recognition. Ostensibly, middle class militancy is not convertible into radicalism: the pragmatic

approach of the middle class, divorced from an ideological commitment to the political overtones of the trade union movement, merely accepts militancy as an expedient if, for instance, career prospects are blocked or automation threatens jobs. In Roberts's study, technicians acting militantly emphatically denied that they were a part of the working class. In Blain's study, airline pilots took to militancy only because of a perceived decline in their status in relation to the hierarchy of the organisation.

Nevertheless, it is possible to visualise a situation in which working class militancy and middle class militancy can interact and reinforce each other. Westergaard and Resler have suggested, in the British context, a mechanism which may operate to produce militancy with a more radical twist. Occupational solidarity for defending and extending privileges is initially more likely among more prosperous professionals (e.g., doctors), but in their case any radicalism is unlikely to emerge except in the special circumstances of a preceding concomitant militancy. (Such special circumstances are necessarily exceptional, and hence do not lend themselves to much generalisation.) In comparison, the lower paid middle class employees (e.g., nurses, school teachers) have more limited privileges. These privileges might well decline further if pressures to maintain business profitability, or to keep public spending in check, intensify, and also if expansion in higher education brings forth a growing supply of

11. op. cit. (n.23, chap. 2, supra).
formally qualified labour in the context of an inadequate countervailing demand. This would effectively reduce pay differentials between such employees and routine-wage workers. The first level of response could then be in terms of apolitical militancy; if it failed, militancy could take a more radical turn.

Available evidence indicates that trade union militancy in the post-1947 India has exhibited at least a partial conformity to this model. Many middle class trade unions have by now developed links with political parties and their sponsored central trade union organisations, though usually short of a formal affiliation. A study by Pandey\(^\text{12}\) shows that continuing inflation has robbed the white collar workers of their illusory respectability, and the widening gap between income and expenditure has led them to adopt new and militant strategies to protect their interests. Adoption of the so-called working class norms in pursuit of middle class objectives has been fairly widespread, particularly in view of the successes of banking and insurance employees and airline pilots by militant bargaining. This, in turn, has provided additional legitimacy to the use of militant tactics by the working class in its own struggles. The attitudes of our mixed bag of trade union leaders have thus to be viewed in the context of this climate which is not specific to Punjab but extends all over India.

In the present work, a rough quantitative score

('militancy index') was devised to measure relative participation in militant action. The latter term was operationally defined to include imprisonment in post-1947 period (4 points), participation in one or more hunger strikes (4 points), strikes (3 points), dharnas, i.e., sit-down demonstrations (2 points), and protest demonstrations (1 point). Thus a maximum arbitrary score of 14 was assigned to any leader who had suffered imprisonment as well as participated in hunger strikes, strikes, dharnas and protest demonstrations. The data collected during the Survey produced the following information:

1. At the local level, 48 (29 per cent) respondents received points for imprisonment, 86 (53 per cent) for hunger strikes, 118 (72 per cent) for strikes, 75 (46 per cent) for dharnas, and 125 (77 per cent) for protest demonstrations. The average score was 7. The corresponding score at the State level was 11.

2. The organisation-wise score averaged at about 9 for AITUC, 8 for INTUC, 6 for BMS, and 4.5 for 'Others'. These scores appeared to be in accord with the image of AITUC as more struggle-minded, and of INTUC as having more staying power because of its links with the ruling party. The average scores at the State level were 13.5 each for AITUC and BMS and about 6 for INTUC. It was apparent that the INTUC leadership at this level confined itself more to organisational and deliberative tasks or to negotiations than to any active participation in the agitations launched by its local-level supporters. The highly committed BMS leadership at the State level took to more extensive hunger strikes to boost up the morale of the members at the local level. The lower index for 'Others' at the local level was due to the presence of some illiterate respondents as well as a larger white collar element (see serial number 7 below).

3. Respondents from smaller unions had a lower average score of 5.6 in contrast to the average score of 7.7 for the medium and large unions. The latter have obviously a greater staying power and willingness to engage in struggles.
4. Presidents and secretaries had a more militant record with an average score of 10 in contrast with other office-bearers whose average score was 6. An examination of time sequence showed that the relationship between militancy and election to a key office was of antecedent-consequent nature, thus indicating that union memberships in general had a more marked preference for militant leaderships.

5. A near maximum average score of 12 for the local-level whole-time professional leaders emphasised their leading role in protest actions. At the State level, all 14 whole-time leaders scored exactly 13 each, but the average score of the remaining 13 part-time leaders was 9. It appeared that the whole-time leadership at this level had emerged out of those who had a higher overall record of militancy.

6. Local-level respondents whose age was 35 years or more had an average score of 6 as against 6 for the younger leaders. This was attributed to their longer span of trade union activity, though the possibility of younger elements having a greater regard for their career prospects could not be totally ruled out.

7. In terms of level of education, the maximum militancy was exhibited by those who were neither illiterate nor very highly educated. These 111 respondents (at the local level) had an average score of 8, as against an average score of 4 for 19 illiterate respondents and an average score of 6 for 33 respondents who had studied in colleges and universities. In a cross classification of respondents with a medium degree of education, the average score of those with non-white collar occupations was a little above 8, whereas those with white collar occupations had one point less. These scores thus exhibited the following zigzag characteristics:
   a. Educated non-white collar workers had a quite high score, but illiterate workers in these types of occupations had a very poor score.
   b. White collar workers with a medium degree of education had a fairly high score, but those with a higher degree of education had a middling score.

8. Since there was a high degree of correlation between good education and the white collar nature of job on the one hand, and subjective identification with the middle class on the other hand, the above zigzag pattern resulted in the following situation: Respondents who identified themselves with the working class had an average score slightly higher than 7,
whereas those who identified themselves with the middle class had an average score slightly less than 7. The difference was statistically insignificant.

9. The following pairs of classification also showed no significant differences in militancy. (The component in each pair with a marginally higher score is placed first.)

a. No housing property Ownership of housing property
b. No property in land Ownership of property in land
c. Urban background Rural background
d. Indigenous origin Inmigrant

The only point which requires elucidation here relates to the observed pattern of correlation of militancy with the level of education. The pattern of education in the higher institutions of learning in India is heavily oriented towards career advancement, the basic stress being on obtaining a degree to get a better job. Such preoccupation with career prospects motivates individuals to strive more for co-option within the system by adjustment rather than to endanger one's 'respectability' by militant actions. At the other end of the spectrum, illiterate individuals are very poorly paid. A loss of job because of excessive militancy in their case is a major calamity because of the danger of being blacklisted by other employers.

It is not possible to make a direct comparison of the above data and conclusions with non-quantitative information from other sources. Fifty years ago, it was estimated that only 6.6 per cent of labour leaders in the USA, and 7.5 per cent of the labour leaders in other countries, had ever participated in strikes. Among the US national labour leaders, the
percentage was as low as 3.2 per cent. These figures have no relevance in the present context of India, but it may be pertinent to cite Roberts et al. to the effect that (upto the period analysed by them) 60 per cent of manual workers in Britain had never gone on strike even once. This, of course, refers to both the organised and the unorganised sections below as well as at leadership level, whereas the present sample was confined to leaders of organised workers who are inclined to act collectively in a militant fashion. Probably a more meaningful comparison may be obtained in terms of the number of strikes, the number of workers involved and the number of mandays lost in industrial disputes in various States of India. However, even though abundant data are available on this subject, a detailed comparison of this sort is not strictly within the scope of the present dissertation.

13 Organising New Unions

Summing up the role of the labour leader, Mills had this to say: "He organises discontent and then he sits on it, exploiting it in order to maintain a continuous organisation; the labor leader is a manager of discontent." No labour leader, of course, can be expected to sympathise with this point of view, nor be convinced that he should not help in the formation of new unions.

14. op. cit. (n.4, chap.4, supra).
In our sample, 25 (93 per cent) of the State-level respondents and 41 (25 per cent) of their counterparts at the local level reported that they had pioneered new unions. There was a fairly even division of these respondents in AITUC, INTUC, BMS and 'Others'. The whole-time professional leaders were very active in the process; at the local, 15 (88 per cent) of them had organised new unions as compared to only 26 (18 per cent) of part-time leaders. The difference was extremely significant ($X^2=40.1$, $df=1$, $p<.001$). Since unions in the textile industry accounted for as many as 12 whole-time leaders, as against only 5 in all other unions, the data also reflected the predominance of the leaders of the textile unions in the process. Presidents and secretaries were also more involved: 20 (43 per cent) of them had organised new unions as contrasted with 21 (18 per cent) among the rest. This difference, too, was significant ($X^2=10.6$, $df=1$, $p<.01$).

According to the respondents who had organised new unions, the task required a high degree of sensitivity to workers' grievances and courage to meet the employers' counter-offensive against new unions, except when the new unions were 'company sponsored'. It required also a careful probe into unrest and dissatisfaction among workers against existing leaderships, if any, and ability of the new leadership to demonstrate the possibility of winning concessions from recalcitrant managements through unionisation. The respondents confirmed the hypothesis (cf. Seidman16) of a degree of

overlap in workers' loyalty to the employer and to the union, and stressed the role of a union organiser in polarising this loyalty by inducing an in-group feeling that embraced all union members, both inside the plant and elsewhere, but excluded the employer and the supervisors.

The usual modus operandi in organising new trade unions was said to revolve around the pivotal role of the central organisations. The latter made selective studies of promising unorganised sectors generally, though not always, through whole-time organisers. In already unionised establishments, the scope of organising a new, rival union was reported as considerably enhanced after some major agitation launched by the existing union had fizzled out.

420 SATISFACTION

This section describes the responses to questions relating to job satisfaction, the barriers to promotion as visualised by the respondents, their own perception of their families' attitudes to trade union work, their desire to see their sons following in their footsteps, their assessment of the strength of the trade union movement in Punjab, and the difficulties, particularly in the context of the period of 'Emergency', that faced them in trade union work.

421.1 Job Satisfaction

Exponents of 'neo-human relations' affirm that man seeks to satisfy in his work not only economic needs but also needs of a social character such as acceptance, approval, recognition and status. In our backward but developing economy,
the issue of job satisfaction additionally needs to be viewed in the context of widespread unemployment and limited job opportunities. These latter considerations tend to make acceptance, approval, recognition and status as less meaningful concepts, and the major factor in job satisfaction—fulfilment of economic needs—assumes more weight.

The respondents in the sample mostly understood the question in this context; indeed, many of them affirmed that they were satisfied with their jobs, frequently adding that they were reconciled to their present situation. Only a few respondents gave an unqualified positive response. All in all, affirmative replies, unqualified or thus qualified, were given by a total of 118 (72 per cent) local-level and 21 (77 per cent) State-level respondents. The majority of those who gave negative replies did so on the ground that their jobs were not commensurate with their qualifications. (Some even talked of migrating to the Gulf countries in search of more highly paid jobs.) The greater job security in the public sector jobs was reflected in 87 per cent of the respondents working in this sector professing themselves as satisfied, as against 62 per cent in the private sector. The greater economic security which goes with white collar jobs and higher educational qualifications produced a positive correlation between the level of education and job satisfaction: 29 (88 per cent) respondents who had been to a college or university, 80 (72 per cent) respondents who had less education, and 9 (47 per cent) illiterate respondents said that they were satisfied ($X^2=9.91$, df=2, $P<.01$). Most well educated
respondents had jobs with banks or local bodies, that is, jobs with some degree of security and adequate avenues of promotion.

All local-level and State-level full-time professional leaders expressed satisfaction with their jobs, presumably due to their higher ideological commitment.

421.2 Promotion Prospects

Respondents, who were not full-time professional leaders, were asked if there were any barriers in the way of their promotions. Out of 146 such local-level respondents, 10 stated that they did not have the requisite qualifications for promotion, 50 were confident that they would be promoted in due course, while 86 alleged that their promotion was being withheld due to various reasons. The two most cited reasons were bias on the part of the managements, and the respondents' participation in union activities.

421.3 Desire to See One's Son Following One's Footsteps in Union Work

In trying to assess the general outlook of the trade union leaders towards the movement, we assumed that, if they had found satisfaction in their union work, or if they regarded it as a crusade, they might want their sons to follow in their footsteps.

Table 4.2 summarises the responses. At the local level, 123 (75 per cent) respondents wanted their sons to do so, 19 (12 per cent) did not, and 21 (13 per cent) were either non-committal or dismissed the question as hypothetical. Those who did not want their sons to follow them mentioned the
travails of the life of a union leader: job insecurity, perpetual confrontation with the employer, lack of appreciation by members of the union, no pecuniary gain, little leisure, little peace. The percentage of affirmative answers at the State level was the same; however, at this level all answers were either for or against. Organisation-wise, taking the two levels jointly, the distribution of affirmative answers was: AITUC 87 per cent, INTUC 72 per cent, BMS 68 per cent, 'Others' 71 per cent. The difference between the AITUC respondents and the rest was statistically significant. These findings were in general accord with those by Jaspal Singh17 and by Punekar and Madhuri18 who reported 72 per cent and 68 per cent.

Table 4.2

Responses to the Question: "Would you like your son to be a trade union leader?": Distribution by Central Organisations

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<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
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<td>(13)</td>
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</table>

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents. The percentages indicated within brackets do not include State-level respondents.

17. op. cit. (n.14, chap.1, supra).
18. op. cit. (n.42, chap.1, supra).
respondents, respectively, as wishing their progeny to take up active union work. A British study reported a figure of 55 per cent in 1961.19

There was a negative correlation between higher castes and the desire to see one's son taking up union work: 86 (72 per cent) respondents from higher castes and 34 (89 per cent) respondents from lower castes returned affirmative replies ($X^2 = 4.73$, df = 1, $P < .05$). Though politics in India have been traditionally dominated by higher castes, there has been a recent tendency among those who belong to the lower castes and join the movement in an active way to deplore the general apathy in their own castes and to wish that others amongst them would also be more active.

421.4 **Respondents' Perception of the Reaction of Their Families to Their Trade Union Work**

Since an average trade union leader has a low level of earnings and has little time to devote to his family and social obligations, existence of a congenial atmosphere at home (which, in turn, might be expected to increase, or at least not dampen, his enthusiasm for union work) depends upon the reaction of his family to his participation in union activities. During the Survey, it was not considered feasible to ascertain such reaction directly from the members of the respondents' families, and the respondents themselves were asked to state their own perception of such reactions.

At the local level, as indicated in Table 4.3, 74 (45 per cent) respondents reported a favourable reaction, 29 (18 per cent) an unfavourable reaction, and 60 (37 per cent) said that the reaction was neither favourable nor unfavourable or was both favourable and unfavourable. More favourable reaction was reported by the respondents from 'Others' and AITUC, and the maximum degree of indifferent reaction was reported by the EMS respondents. Unfavourable reaction was maximum (24 per cent) in the case of AITUC respondents. At the State level, 6 out of 9 AITUC respondents reported favourable reaction, 2 reported an unfavourable reaction, and 1 reported indifference. The state-level INTUC and BMS respondents were evenly divided, in each case, in their reportage of the three types of reaction. The larger favourable reaction in the case of the families of the AITUC leaders could be attributed to the greater political and union consciousness among their relatives (see sec.313). The more favourable reaction in the case of the 'Others' category was presumably due to the large gains which had accrued to the households of the white collar employees through the relatively restricted militancy of their unions without much danger to job security. The larger indifference reported by the EMS respondents was at least partly due to a substantial element of immigrants whose families, residing far away, could not be expected to exhibit much reaction (see Table 4.3 for the difference between indigenous and migrant respondents in this regard).

The maximum unfavourable reaction was reported by presidents and secretaries of local unions, due undoubtedly
### Table 4.3

Respondents' Perception of the Reaction of Their Families to Union Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favourable</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Unfavourable</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>23 + 6</td>
<td>13 + 1</td>
<td>9 + 2</td>
<td>45 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTUC</td>
<td>20 + 3</td>
<td>17 + 3</td>
<td>12 + 3</td>
<td>49 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>(35)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>11 + 3</td>
<td>21 + 3</td>
<td>3 + 3</td>
<td>35 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Others'</td>
<td>20 + 0</td>
<td>9 + 0</td>
<td>5 + 0</td>
<td>34 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(59)</td>
<td>(26)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  |            |             |              |       |
| Indigenous       | 62         | 36          | 21           | 119   |
| respondents (52) |            | (30)        | (18)         | (100) |
| Inmigrants       | 12         | 24          | 8            | 44    |
| (27)             |            | (55)        | (18)         | (100) |

|                  |            |             |              |       |
| Presidents/      | 21         | 11          | 15           | 47    |
| Secretaries (45) |            | (23)        | (32)         | (100) |
| Other Office     | 49         | 14          |              | 116   |
| bearers (46)     |            | (42)        | (12)         | (100) |

|                  | 74 +12     | 60 + 7      | 29 + 8       | 163 + 27|
| (45)             | (37)       | (18)        |              | (100)   |

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents. Percentages indicated within brackets do not include State-level respondents.

to their much more busy work schedule in unions.
Respondents’ Perception of the Strength of the Trade Union Movement in Punjab

Among the local-level respondents, 56 per cent believed that the movement in Punjab was strong, 40 per cent considered it to be weak and the remaining 4 per cent gave vague replies. The state-level respondents had an almost similar perception (see Table 4.4). The maximum amount of dissatisfaction with the strength of the movement was exhibited by the BMS respondents at both levels (66 per cent); many of them accused other organisations of exploiting the workers.

Table 4.4

Local and State-level Respondents’ Perception of the State of the Trade Union Movement in Punjab: Distribution by Central Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No definite response</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>1+0</td>
<td>29+7</td>
<td>15+2</td>
<td>45+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(64)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDUC</td>
<td>3+0</td>
<td>28+7</td>
<td>18+2</td>
<td>49+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>2+0</td>
<td>12+1</td>
<td>21+8</td>
<td>35+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Others’</td>
<td>1+0</td>
<td>22+0</td>
<td>11+0</td>
<td>34+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(65)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7+0</td>
<td>91+15</td>
<td>65+12</td>
<td>163+27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures preceded by plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents. Percentages indicated within brackets do not include State-level respondents.

The Most Difficult Problem Faced by the Respondents in Union Work

Every respondent was asked to spell out the most difficult problem faced by him in his work for the union. The
responses were subsequently classified in the following nine groups:

1. Problems arising out of victimisation, punishment or retrenchment of workers, failure to get demands conceded, delays or failures in settlement of disputes or their implementation.

2. Weak organisational strength of the union, problem of cadres (quantitative as well as qualitative), factionalism.

3. Pressures from below for launching struggles to press reasonable or unreasonable demands.

4. Shortage of time.

5. Problem of inadequate union finances.

6. Lack of trade union consciousness in rank and file, lack of adequate co-operation from members.

7. Problems relating to the choice of forms of struggle, conduct of agitations, their success or failure.

8. Governmental or police interference, repression, unhelpful attitude of government officials, non-cooperative attitude of the labour department of the Punjab Government.

9. Miscellaneous problems not otherwise classified: personal indigence or job security problems; difficulties in holding meetings; pull of sectional interests; interference by political interests or parties; consequences of party-union relations; problems arising out of multiplicity of unions.

As many as 33 local-level and 3 State-level respondents gave answers which could not be categorised at all ("Every problem has its difficulties", "I do not have many difficulties", "Nothing is difficult as long as one has the will to work" and so on).

Table 4.5 summarises the responses according to these groups organisation-wise. The group serial numbers given above indicate the descending order of the number of respondents who furnished replies for these particular groups, except for the miscellaneous group 9 which was third in order of importance.
Table 4.5

The Most Difficult Problem Faced by Local and State-level Respondents in Union Work: Classification of Responses by Central Organisations and Type of Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of problems*</th>
<th>Number of respondents belonging to:</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>INTUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 + 1</td>
<td>15 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 + 3</td>
<td>5 + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 + 2</td>
<td>3 + 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 + 0</td>
<td>4 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 + 0</td>
<td>4 + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 + 0</td>
<td>2 + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>2 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 + 0</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5 + 3</td>
<td>4 + 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-total 32 + 9 40 + 8 32 + 7 26 + 0 130 + 24
Non-specific responses 13 + 0 9 + 1 3 + 2 8 + 0 33 + 3
Total 45 + 9 49 + 9 35 + 9 34 + 0 163 + 27

*For a description of problems in each group, see section 423.1.

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents.
Respondents from AITUC, BMS and 'Others' were somewhat more concerned with organisational problems (group 2) than those from INTUC who appeared to have more management-related problems (group 1). This, of course, does not imply that the non-INTUC respondents had less group 1 type problems, or their INTUC counterparts had less problems of the group 2 type. The question related to the most difficult problem faced by the respondent: for INTUC as the strongest organisation, the organisational problems were more or less already solved and were now overshadowed; for the remaining respondents, the main task was to build up their own organisations on a more sound footing and, consequently, group 2 problems took precedence.

Among specific problems cited in group 1, besides those mentioned above, were those relating to the role of managements in strike-breaking, discriminatory promotion policies which favoured 'informers', selective retrenchment, etc. That these problems are not specific to Punjab is shown by some of the workers' complaints before the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee: these included victimisation on a large scale, initiation of rival unions by employers in connivance with 'stooges', bribery of union officials, systematic espionage into union affairs, hiring toughs to beat up and intimidate union leaders, fomenting strife between Hindu and Muslim workers, etc. Our respondents also referred to violation of labour laws and mutually agreed settlements on bonus, gratuity, dearness allowances and other issues.

20. op. cit. (n.24, chap. 3, supra).
One of the main complaints in group 2 was shortage of cadre strength. Also, factionalism and groupism were cited as major problems: it was alleged that managements exploited these to divide workers and thus blunt the workers' main weapon, the union.

Group 3 problems included, among others, pressures by members who often wanted realistic as well as unrealistic demands to be always backed by militant actions. There were also pressures for launching full-scale agitations on relatively unimportant issues, mostly without adequate preparation. Wild-cat strikes triggered off by some sudden provocation taxed the negotiating skill of leaders to the breaking point. Once in a while, the unwilling leaders were accused of a 'sell-out'. An AITUC leader observed rather ruefully: "The dilemma of a union leader is this: either wage a struggle on a non-issue, or alienate the rank and file." Comments by some respondents paralleled those by Allen21 about the strain imposed on the union leaders by the rejection of carefully negotiated agreements by ordinary members who had little idea of the art of the possible.

Shortage of time, particularly because of refusal of leave, even when due, comprises group 4. Inadequate financial resources of unions (group 5) were cited as the reason for low-key working of some local unions. Small unions were unable to send delegates to central conferences or to engage even

part-time secretarial or legal help. Other consequences reported were curtailment of welfare activities, less staying power during agitations because no help could be given to the starving families of workers on strike, and less publicity material.

In group 6 complaints, some respondents deplored the inadequate trade-union consciousness or apathy in their rank and file, particularly its illiterate section which wanted its demands accepted but was not willing to participate in struggles, even when launched for fulfilment of these very demands.

Another dilemma faced by union leaders has been posed by Eby22: "How to sensitize their members to action, but not to such a degree that the members focus their drives on the leaders?" A few respondents, in group 7 type of problems, viewed the choice of the forms of struggle, matters relating to the conduct of agitations, and the determination of tactics, as posing, in every case, a challenge to the maturity of leadership. Whether to go for a negotiated settlement, threaten an agitation, or call for a strike, involved consideration of many complex issues such as the strength of the union, staying power, likelihood of support from other unions, and the attitudes of political parties, press and the general public. The same was true regarding calling off a strike if the chances for success were slim. One respondent referred to the inevitable awkward situation which arose when workers had to be prepared for a retreat, particularly when a small minority amongst them wanted a fight to the finish while the majority of workers had

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already trickled back to work.

In group 8 there were complaints regarding the unhelpful, and sometimes repressive, attitude of the organs of state power. Most bureaucrats were alleged to be pro-employer; whereas appeals by dismissed employees were given short shrift or unduly delayed in hearings by tribunals, action against recalcitrant employers was either not forthcoming or lenient and was frequently kept in abeyance on flimsy technical grounds. Many respondents also referred to unfair arrests by the police of activists whenever an agitation was contemplated.

Group 9 problems cited by the respondents have already been mentioned in the listing above. There was a great deal of stress on problems caused by the existence of more than one union, each owing allegiance to a different political party; many respondents accused rival unions of deliberately sabotaging agitations in order to gain temporary advantages.

423.2 Special Problems During the Period of 'Emergency'

In June 1975, the Government of India promulgated a State of Emergency which remained in force till early 1977. During this period, there was a drop in the number of strikes and agitations and, in the opinion of many trade union leaders, the 'normal' working of trade unions was affected.

The attitudes of different nation-wide political parties towards the Emergency form a suitable backdrop for assessing the varied reactions of the respondents. The ruling Indian National Congress supported the Government measure. The CPI initially viewed it as one designed against 'communalism' and
'reactionary forces' but later became critical since it felt that it had led to curbs on legitimate political and trade union activities. The CPI (Marxist) viewed it as "an authoritarian and undemocratic measure by the bourgeoisie which has failed to contain the crisis of capitalism". The Jana Sangh saw it as a measure directed primarily against itself, since many of its activists were arrested and detained without trial.

In responses to the present Survey (which was conducted in the latter part of the Emergency period), leaders belonging to AITUC followed the CPI line, justified the steps against 'communal and anti-national reactionary elements', and felt that the measure had succeeded in arresting the rise in price level, but were critical of the new labour policy which had resulted in 'imposing' restrictions on trade union activities. They were also critical of the enactments about bonus to workers\(^\text{23}\) and the Compulsory Deposit Scheme\(^\text{24}\) (CDS).

The INTUC line was to hold rallies and meetings to support the promulgation of the State of Emergency, but in the words of one of its State-level leaders, "Our leadership is embarrassed by the new restrictions on trade union activity. We tell the workers not to go on strike or to demand higher wages. The government reciprocates by giving more concessions.

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23. The Bonus Ordinance (1975) reduced the statutory minimum bonus from 8.33 per cent to 4 per cent.

24. Under the Scheme, 50 per cent of the new dearness allowance was not paid to the employees in cash. It was deposited with the Regional Provident Fund Commissioners, to be returned later to the employees in five annual instalments.
to capitalists and employers. "We have lost credibility with the ordinary worker," was the comment by a local-level INTUC leader. None of the INTUC respondents undertook an unqualified defence of the government policy, but a few supported the declaration of Emergency as a necessary measure for national welfare.

Among the BMS leaders interviewed, there were nearly a dozen who, after having been detained under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) because of alleged connections with the RSS, had just been released. They were bitter and vehemently condemned "the repressive policies of the Congress government towards its political opponents" and against the trade union leaders of BMS in particular.

Among 'Others', the leaders of the three banking unions appeared to be somewhat circumspect in the expression of their views. Two respondents initially refused to answer any question relating to the 'Emergency', but opened up when they were convinced that the present interviewer was not connected with any government agency. The reaction of the two non-banking unions in this category reflected the AITUC or the INTUC line according to their connections with the CPI or the Congress Party, respectively.

As Table 4.6 shows, AITUC and INTUC leaders were fairly vocal on the issue of the 'Emergency', but a majority of the respondents from BMS and 'Others' were reticent and offered no views, especially at the local level. The specific problems
mentioned by the respondents have been grouped in three sets: (1) problems related to managements and employers, (2) problems related to the police and bureaucracy, and (3) problems related to denial of freedoms of thought, speech and action, viz., bans on meetings, processions and strikes.

### Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of problems</th>
<th>Number of respondents belonging to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AITUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to managements and employers</td>
<td>19 + 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to police and bureaucracy</td>
<td>15 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to freedoms of speech, thought, action</td>
<td>15 + 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents.

As many respondents mentioned more than one type of difficulty, the total number of responses in Table 4.6 is not equivalent to the number of respondents.

In the first set of responses, it was alleged that managements and employers were now more 'emboldened' and
resorted to harassment and victimisation with impunity; they violated all legal provisions relating to closures and lockouts even more blantly than in the earlier times, and, in case of protest, threatened to use their influence to get the union activists arrested under MISA. A clandestine BMS publication alleged that "... five lakh workers have been retrenched. The mouths of workers are shut and they are not permitted to protest against the outrage by the extraordinary power possessed by the Government." 25 Some respondents alleged that some private as well as public sector enterprises had unilaterally withdrawn concessions and customary facilities previously available to workers and trade unions, such as advances from future pay, loans, festival gifts, free half time for key office-bearers, etc. Some managements were said to have set up new tame unions to divide the workers.

The second set of complaints accused the police and bureaucracy of connivance with managements and employers. It was alleged that frequent use was being made of MISA and the Defence of India Rules (DIR) to arrest activists. Examples were cited of the detention without trial of 11 leaders of the All India Bank Employees' Association, and comparisons were made with the situation in Nazi Germany. The government was criticised for having issued the Bonus Ordinance and for the reintroduction of CDS, both of which had led to the trade union leaders being castigated by the rank and file for their

ineffectiveness'. The state officialdom was additionally criticised for not heeding complaints about non-implementation of statutory minimum wages in many industries.

The third set of responses centred around the specific problems created by the censorship on the press and other news media and restrictions placed on freedom of speech. Due to bans on meetings and processions, communication with workers was said to have been considerably curtailed. Freedom of action had been violated by banning strikes, and collective bargaining had become impossible without using the threat of a strike as a weapon.

30 ATTITUDES TOWARDS CERTAIN SPECIAL PROBLEMS

In this section, the attitudes of the respondents are assessed in relation to certain specific problems: settlement of industrial disputes, considerations pertinent in strike decisions and in the actual conduct of strikes, factions in trade unions, craft unions versus industry-wise unions, the Government scheme for workers' participation in management, and the problem of corrupt union leaders.

31 Settlement of Industrial Disputes

The settlement of industrial disputes in India is partly governed by the Industrial Disputes Act (1947) which specifies the following mechanisms for conflict resolution:

1. Works committees of representatives of employers and workers to resolve conflicts at the level of the establishment.

2. Government-appointed conciliation officers to mediate in and promote settlements.
3. Government-appointed boards of conciliation having the same functions as those of a conciliation officer, but with wider powers.


5. Labour courts, industrial tribunals and national tribunals constituted for the adjudication of industrial disputes.

At the discretion of the Government, any existing or potential dispute can be referred to any of these bodies; the mechanism also operates if one or both of the parties ask for such a reference, provided the persons applying represent, in the opinion of the Government, a majority of the respective party to the dispute. The law does not make it obligatory for the Government to ascertain the particulars of the dispute from both parties before referring it to a tribunal, and prior conciliation proceedings are not a pre-requisite except when a public utility service is involved. Arbitration is another device which is sometimes made use of for conflict resolution in industry.

The philosophy underlying the settlement of industrial disputes in India has been viewed differently by students of the trade union movement and by the trade unionists themselves. Ornati summarizes three strands of thought. The first, advocated by the West-oriented intellectuals, favours free collective bargaining and pure and simple trade unionism, and is essentially

British in origin. The second strand favours collective bargaining without necessarily rejecting conciliatory and persuasive government intervention. The third strand of thought, which accepts a planned mixed economy, asserts that the objective complexity of the issues renders it necessary that market forces should not operate without restrictions.

Giri\(^2\), a former trade union leader and later President of India, was one of the major exponents of collective bargaining and total exclusion of compulsory adjudication from the law of the land; the latter, he maintained, cut at the very roots of the movement. It was only in a system of straightforward collective bargaining that unity was maintained among workers as a direct outcome of necessity. Ornati\(^2\) himself views collective bargaining as a desirable future goal rather than a presently applicable policy because of the relative weakness of the movement, limitations on the union bargaining power caused by massive unemployment, dismal poverty and opposition by employers. Myers\(^2\) concurs on the ground that, at the present stage of economic development, India cannot afford the period of labour strife which is the usual prelude to more mature collective bargaining.

At the national level, the INTUC leadership subscribes to the third strand of thought. It holds that, in an economy which aims at planned production and distribution in the interests of social justice, strikes and lock-outs are out of

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27. op. cit. (n.12, chap.1, supra).
28. op. cit.
place. It supports negotiations, collective bargaining and voluntary arbitration but takes the stand that the government is entitled, in the common interest, to make arbitration and adjudication compulsory in certain cases. This point of view is essentially the same as that of the Government of India. The INTUC national stand is not actively repudiated at the regional and local levels, but the approach there is more pragmatic in practice - as exemplified by the higher than average militancy index in the case of our local-level INTUC respondents (see sec. 412).

The AITUC leadership holds that, in the absence of working class control on the means of production and on the distribution apparatus, or over the state which is the main agency of development in our semi-planned economy, collective bargaining with the right to strike and some measure of state intervention, but no compulsory arbitration, is the right policy. It asks for legislation for compulsory recognition of unions. "In the even of the failure of negotiations and collective bargaining," AITUC says, "the workers should be free either to exercise their right to strike or to refer the dispute to arbitration, for which a machinery should be at their disposal for use at their will." It is thus assumed by AITUC that, given popular pressure, the state machinery can reorient its policies in favour of the working class.

The BMS leadership regards collective bargaining as

superior to any arrangement involving third party intervention. Genuine collective bargaining, in its opinion, implies the ability to apply sanctions including strikes, at least in the last resort. Government intervention is considered acceptable only under exceptional circumstances (threat to the security of state or public health and safety; or on request), and an independent agency is suggested as a device to help in solution of disputes.

During the present Survey, the respondents were asked, firstly, to specify the best method in their opinion for settling industrial disputes and, secondly, to name the method by which disputes had been actually settled during the tenure of their leadership. The responses are summarised in Tables 4.7 and 4.8. As far as the first question is concerned, the responses were near-unanimous: 159 out of 171 local-level and State-level respondents who gave analysable responses specified negotiations. There were some differences in shade of opinion, some favouring direct and bilateral negotiations, some favouring trilateral negotiations with the government as a participant, while most were undecided on this point. Strikes, struggles and coercive methods as the best methods of conflict resolution were favoured by only 9 respondents, only one respondent felt that straight government intervention was best, while two respondents flatly stated that disputes could not be resolved till socialism was achieved. Vague answers (17 respondents) were mainly on the line that the best method was

31. Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, "Vote on Industrial Relations Bill", Canara Bank Workers' Union, Bangalore, (circa 1978.)
Table 4.7

Best Method of Settling Industrial Disputes: Distribution of Local and State-level Respondents by Central Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AITUC</th>
<th>INTUC</th>
<th>BMS</th>
<th>'Others'</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiations</td>
<td>34 + 6</td>
<td>40 + 8</td>
<td>35 + 5</td>
<td>31 + 0</td>
<td>140 + 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikes, struggles,</td>
<td>2 + 1</td>
<td>3 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 3</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>5 + 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coercive methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government intervention</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No solution without</td>
<td>2 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>2 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socialism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague answers</td>
<td>7 + 1</td>
<td>4 + 1</td>
<td>0 + 1</td>
<td>3 + 0</td>
<td>14 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0 + 1</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>1 + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 + 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>49 + 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>35 + 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>34 + 0</strong></td>
<td><strong>163 + 27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents.

governed by the attitude of the employer and the strength of the union.

Another point of unanimity was the near-universal criticism of the existing conciliation and adjudication machinery. It was stated that, in general, conciliation had become a handy device to delay settlements and did not serve any useful purpose, particularly when compulsory adjudication was bound to follow. Adjudication procedures were described as cumbersome, dilatory and unfair because the employers could afford to hire the best legal talent and engage in protracted legal battles. Some respondents cited cases to show that many legal battles had been going on for five to ten years or even longer. "The remedy
is too expensive. Often the expense involved is more than what the workers would have got even if their demands had been conceded in full in the first instance. This results in demoralisation, for the patience of the worker is exhausted and he quits the battle in desperation. The union loses support." This quote from one of the responses sums up the general attitude of our respondents.

Table 4.8

Multiple Response Table:

Disputes Settled by Various Methods During the Tenure of Local and State-level Respondents:
Distribution by Central Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of responses indicating settlement by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITUC(45+9)</td>
<td>40 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(89)</td>
<td>(51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTUC(49+9)</td>
<td>43 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(88)</td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS(35+9)</td>
<td>33 + 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(94)</td>
<td>(37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Others'(34+0)</td>
<td>29 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(85)</td>
<td>(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(163+27)</td>
<td>145 +25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(89)</td>
<td>(55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents. Percentages indicated within brackets do not include State-level respondents.

The replies to the second question on the method by which disputes had been actually settled during the tenure of a respondent's leadership (whether the settlement had been preceded by a strike or not) were somewhat more varied.
A summary of these appears in the multiple-response Table 5.8. As many respondents mentioned more than one method of settlement, the total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents. The Table shows that the most common method was negotiation, followed by conciliation and adjudication in equal measure. The method of arbitration was used less sparingly. There was no significant difference among the respondents belonging to various organisations regarding the use of negotiation as a method for conflict resolution, but there was much variation regarding the use of other methods. At the local level, the respondents from INTUC appeared to have made maximum use of adjudication (80 per cent), conciliation (76 per cent) and arbitration (49 per cent). The corresponding percentages for the respondents from AITUC were 51, 60 and 47, for the respondents from BMS these were 37, 37 and 9, and for the respondents from 'Others' these were 44, 38, 15. One probable reason for the lower percentages in the case of the BMS leaders was the shorter period for which they had been in the movement. As far as the three banking unions included in 'Others' were concerned, the settlement of many disputes was arrived at directly at the level of their nationwide federations; as a consequence, the local leadership was not in the picture, except for comparatively minor disputes which were settled by negotiation. As for the AITUC respondents it is worth noting that many of them alleged that some employers refused to negotiate settlements with their unions and the government frequently refused to refer the disputes raised by them to boards of conciliations and tribunals.
Considerations Pertinent in Taking Strike Decisions and Conducting Strikes

As Dayal et al. observe, any major event in an organisation is better understood in the context of the constellation of the total activities of the system, rather than by the immediate cause and effect relationship. Except in the case of a lightning strike, when workers react to some sudden provocation, a strike is such a major event. Taking a strike decision involves a tremendous responsibility because a strike, successful or otherwise, has far-reaching repercussions on the strength of the union itself and its future prospects. Seidman et al. point out that a responsible union does not go on a strike haphazardly any more than a country goes to war haphazardly. The leadership always needs to pay due regard to two types of considerations: strategic (that is, those pertaining to timeliness and the nature of purpose), and tactical (day to day improvisations).

Table 4.9 shows what factors were considered relevant by the respondents in the present sample. The total number of responses in the Table exceeds the number of respondents since many leaders had more than one consideration in mind. The responses were classified after the data had been collected into the following nine groups which were then allotted serial numbers 1, 2, 3, .... in the decreasing order of the number of respondents who mentioned a consideration in the group concerned.

---

Table 4.9

Multiple Response Table:

Considerations Pertinent in a Strike Decision and in Conduct of Strikes: Distribution of Responses of Local and State-level Leaders by Central Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of responses*</th>
<th>AITUC</th>
<th>INTUC</th>
<th>BMS</th>
<th>'Others'</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13 + 7</td>
<td>24 + 5</td>
<td>15 + 6</td>
<td>15 + 0</td>
<td>67 + 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30 + 6</td>
<td>19 + 3</td>
<td>11 + 2</td>
<td>10 + 0</td>
<td>70 + 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 + 3</td>
<td>14 + 3</td>
<td>7 + 1</td>
<td>15 + 0</td>
<td>48 + 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 + 0</td>
<td>6 + 0</td>
<td>2 + 2</td>
<td>6 + 0</td>
<td>24 + 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 + 5</td>
<td>5 + 0</td>
<td>2 + 1</td>
<td>4 + 0</td>
<td>20 + 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 + 3</td>
<td>5 + 1</td>
<td>3 + 0</td>
<td>6 + 0</td>
<td>19 + 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 + 1</td>
<td>5 + 2</td>
<td>1 + 1</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>9 + 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7 + 5</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 1</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>7 + 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>0 + 1</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>2 + 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For a description of responses in each group, see sec. 432.

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents.

1. If all other methods fail (67 local-level, 18 State-level).
2. Strength, finances, workers' capacity to withstand likely repression by police and management (70 local-level, 11 State-level).
3. No division within the organisation on this issue; decision by a large consensus or by majority of workers (48 local-level, 7 State-level).
4. Miscellaneous, not otherwise classified: Consideration of the national interest; consultations with leaders of State organisations (24 local-level, 2 State-level).
5. Importance attached to the issue (20 local-level, 6 State-level).
6. Political and environmental considerations, public opinion, government attitude, likely reaction of press and other news media (19 local-level, 4 State-level).

7. Repercussions on other industries, attitude of other unions and other similar external factors (9 local-level, 4 State-level).

8. Factors relating to the timing of the strike, e.g., strike during the peak season or when time-bound orders are pending, or when the employer is particularly hard-pressed (7 local-level, 6 State-level).

9. The extent of the trade union interest: whether the issue affects some or all employees or is relevant in one or more establishments (2 local level, 1 State-level).

Rather understandably, the most frequent consideration (group 1) appears to have been that the strike weapon should be the last one in the armoury after representations, demonstrations, slowdowns, dharnas, hunger-strikes, gheraoas and other methods have failed and the intervention of the State labour department has proved equally ineffective. Many respondents, in fact, stated that more often than not the threat of a strike was meant to 'coerce' the management into a compromise and most strike threats were seldom implemented.

An almost equally frequent consideration (described as far more important by the respondents from AITUC) was that of union strength and the anticipated staying power of the workers under financial hardship and repression which would follow inevitably once the strike was launched (group 2). The question of financial hardship under such circumstances has always been particularly important: a study by Dayal et al.35 showed that the indebtedness of workers during a strike increased from

35. op. cit.
26 per cent to 58 per cent. The respondents also stressed the prior availability of adequate funds to conduct poster campaigns, publicity drives, meetings, demonstrations, etc., and to help workers' families worst hit by the lack of household finances and by police repression. Many AITUC respondents revealed that all these factors were considered in depth in a calm, calculating manner before taking a strike decision at the level of executive committees of the unions and sometimes also at a higher level.

The third group of responses focussed attention on the need for a strike decision to be freely acceptable to the workers who were affected by the decision. It was emphasised that strikes which were launched without approval at general meetings or through ballot had comparatively less chances of success.

Miscellaneous considerations (group 4) included the need for consultation with the affiliating organisations (and, as suggested by a few respondents, with political parties) to obtain 'mature' advice. This consideration was more emphasised by the AITUC leaders at the local level, but none of the State-level AITUC respondents mentioned it as one of the relevant factors. Respondents from INTUC and 'Others' emphasised the importance of upholding the national interest: some relevant considerations cited were that there should be no damage to public or private property, including that of the employer; acts of violence should be publicly denounced even when committed in the name of the union by 'misguided' activists; essential services such as water supply and fire-fighting units should be allowed to function. A few INTUC respondents included the stipulation that the national economy should not suffer due to loss of production,
though they did not specify how this desideratum was achieved in practical hard-bargaining contexts.

The importance attached to the issue under dispute forms group 5 of our list, but no special significance need be attached to its being lower down in the frequency table. Most respondents obviously assumed that this factor was implicit in the complete discussion which they had with the present interviewer, and had been in any case covered when they had stated that a strike should be used as the last weapon or that negotiations were the best method.

The need to consider the political situation and similar environmental factors before taking a strike decision constituted the theme of group 6 of 23 responses. Many of these attached a good deal of weight to public opinion as well as the likely reaction of the government. Particular mention was made of the strikes which had been willingly withdrawn when the Indo-Pakistan conflict came to the boiling point a few years earlier, and the unwilling deferment of strike decisions when the State of Emergency was promulgated. The role of public opinion as a consideration was also emphasised in the case of strikes which were likely to affect the public utility services.

The seventh group of responses stressed that, in formulating its charter of demands and issuing a strike call, a union invariably took into account the conditions of service in similar establishments in the neighbourhood elsewhere and the likely attitude of the unions in such establishments. It was stated that the resistance by the managements to changes
which, for instance, increased wage levels above those in similar establishments was more marked for two types of reasons; those relating to the particular establishment's future profitability, and those relating to the likely united stand of the managements of different establishments.

Another consideration (group 8) mentioned by 13 respondents (of whom 12 were from AITUC) related to the timing of the strike - as in the example mentioned by Barabash36 about the strike threat in a Pittsburg departmental store immediately before the annual Christmas rush. These respondents emphasised that a strike caused immense hardship to the participating workers, and there was no reason why an employer should not, in turn, be pressurised when time-bound large orders were to be executed or production had to be geared for the peak season. Another suitable occasion mentioned was in relation to any establishment having a large inventory of raw materials, especially that of a perishable variety. Unions usually did not call for strikes when the management had excess stocks of finished goods, or when it was practically bankrupt and wished to wind up its business; in fact, in such cases, managements were said to adopt deliberately rigid postures in order to provoke the unions into going on strikes.

The last set of a few responses (group 9) centred around the consideration of the number of workers involved, particularly when a strike covering many establishments was a likely result of the decision. Reference was also made to the question of

36. op. cit.
calling a strike when the likely beneficiary was only a section of the membership; strike decisions in such cases depended on the degree of cohesiveness in the organisation.

433 Factionalism Within Trade Unions

Factionalism is a phenomenon prevalent in most organisations. In order to understand at least partially the nature of the intra-factional disputes in the trade union movement in Punjab, the respondents were asked about the factions in their own unions and the impact of these, if any, on the working of their respective organisations. As many as 139 and 23 (85 per cent in both cases) leaders at the local and State-levels, respectively, stated that there were no factions within their unions. At the local level, 8 AITUC respondents, 5 INTUC respondents, 3 BMS respondents and 8 respondents from 'Others' reported that factionalism existed within their unions. At the State level, there were 2 such respondents from INTUC and one each from AITUC and BMS. The analysis of responses from these 28 leaders produced the following picture:

21 responses: Factionalism centred around personalities. New factions arose or old ones were revived whenever a union election was in the offing.

4 responses: Factions were created by the management which wanted to infiltrate into the union to secure a say in union affairs.

2 responses: Factions had an ideological basis: an INTUC leader mentioned a Jana Sangh faction within his union, and an AITUC respondent spoke of a Jana Sangh-Akali Party faction which did not have adequate strength on its own to form a separate union.

1 response: An INTUC respondent attributed the factionalism within his local-level union to the rivalries in the State-level organisation.
It appeared that factionalism, though not entirely absent, was probably not serious enough to warrant disquiet. It was reported that factions, even when they existed, were generally able to evolve agreed formulas on specific issues and were usually active participants in common struggles.

**Principle of Organisation : Craft Unions Versus Industrial Unions**

In their modern sense, craft unions derive their ancestry from guilds which originated in Europe when the initial stages of industrial development were dependent, to a considerable extent, on skilled craftsmanship. In England, the trade union movement was earlier characterised by craft-exclusiveness, and the efforts to create a single nation-wide organisation did not succeed until the late 19th Century. Much later still, the cleavage between AFL and CIO, industrial unionism versus craft unionism, in the USA was symbolic of the sharp division on the principles of union organisation. Even after their merger, AFL-CIO still maintains two separate wings for craft and industrial unions.

In India, most of the unions have belonged to the category of industrial unions. Sturmthal argues that India has bypassed the merchant-craftsman stage of capitalism; technological development has already advanced for enough to lessen the importance of individual craftsman’s skill, and the comparatively tiny number of such craftsmen naturally makes industrial unionism, rather than craft unionism, more relevant.

The most notable example of the latter in India is the

Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, which is a federation of several craft unions. Some other examples of craft unions are teachers' unions in universities, journalists' unions in newspaper establishments, etc., but the general tendency has been towards industrial unionism. The main pattern is that of a plant-based organisational structure of small unions federated at graded geographical levels. The question of welding together into industry-wise unions or area-wise unions has also some prominence in relation to their potential for more effective collective bargaining. Textile workers in the Bombay-Ahmedabad region, plantation labour in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and jute mill workers in West Bengal are organised on industry-cum-centre basis. In Punjab, workers in hosiery, motor body building, steel and transport industries are mostly organised on the same basis.

Table 4.10 indicates the choice of the respondents in the present sample for one type of union or the other. An overwhelming majority (86 per cent) at the State and Local levels preferred industrial unions; 53 out of 54 AITUC leaders, 48 out of 58 INTUC leaders, 34 out of 44 BMS leaders, and 28 out of 34 leaders from 'Others' made this choice. Only 1 AITUC leader, 7 INTUC leaders, 9 BMS leaders and 6 leaders from 'Others' had a preference for craft unions. The comparatively higher preference for craft unions among BMS and 'Others' categories was due to inclusion in these of four unions of banking employees and lower paid university employees;

38. Myers, op. cit.
Local and State-level Respondents' Preferences Between Industrial Unions and Craft Unions: Distribution by Central Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NO preference</th>
<th>Industrial unions</th>
<th>Craft unions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>44 + 9</td>
<td>1 + 0</td>
<td>45 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(98)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTUC</td>
<td>2 + 1</td>
<td>43 + 5</td>
<td>4 + 3</td>
<td>49 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(88)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>0 + 1</td>
<td>27 + 7</td>
<td>8 + 1</td>
<td>35 + 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Others'</td>
<td>0 + 0</td>
<td>28 + 0</td>
<td>6 + 0</td>
<td>34 + 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(82)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2 + 2</td>
<td>142 + 21</td>
<td>19 + 4</td>
<td>163 + 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(87)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures preceded by a plus (+) sign indicate the number of State-level respondents. Percentages indicated within brackets do not include State-level respondents.

Local-level responses from these unions for this type of organisation were 10 (37 per cent) out of a possible 27, as against 9 (7 per cent) out of a possible 136 among the rest. The difference was statistically highly significant ($X^2=20.2$, df=1, P<.001).

Respondents were also asked about the reasons for their preferences. Many of them stated more than one reason, and a few respondents whose preference was for industrial unions also mentioned some plus points for craft unions. There were no major inter-organisational differences in answers to this question.
A total of 101 local-level and 17 State-level respondents, who had earlier expressed their preference for industrial unions, stated that this system of organisation resulted in united struggles as also a better bargaining power for common demands such as job security, better wages and increased bonus. Some of them suggested that, with this type of organisation, it was possible to paralyse all work in an industry in the event of a strike. On the other hand, craft unions generally resulted only in partial closures; moreover, every industry remained in a state of perpetual conflict, with one union or other always on strike. The craft union system was thus viewed in a dual manner; as inhibiting total closure when required in the interest of trade union agitations, and as inhibiting total industrial peace even when a majority of workers was opposed to an agitational approach. Reference was also made to the possibility of the management using one union to sabotage the interests of another; in particular, unions of skilled workers could be used effectively against unions of casual and marginal workers. (Bogaert also takes note of this phenomenon.)

In a set of 31 responses (4 of them at the State level), political and ideological reasons were advanced in favour of industrial unions. Craft unions were seen as a handy tool in the hands of the capitalist class to weaken the trade union movement. Industrial unionism was viewed as strengthening the workers in the class struggle because of its tendency to weld them into single unions. The increased solidarity was seen by

39. op. cit. (n.5, Chap.1, supra).
a few respondents to be to the advantage of general political movements.

The theme of 16 responses was that industrial unionism promoted better organisation of unions and resulted in better co-ordination. Any other principle of organisation made the unions work at cross purposes and created divisions even in single craft unions because of overlapping interests of some of their members with those of sections of members of other unions. The remaining members who had no such interests tended to pull in other directions, thus further fragmenting unions.

The proponents of craft unions generally argued that the problems of workers pursuing different trades were different and could not be harmonised through the patchwork of a single union. Different interests of permanent or casual workers, and of skilled or unskilled workers, were best served through separate unions; this did not, however, bar common struggles based on a combined consensus. The observation by Bell that white collar employees in the USA shrink from identifying themselves with the dirty-handed blue collar workers was unconsciously echoed by some respondents. They maintained that the problems and aspirations, including those connected with the conditions of service and living, were vastly different in the two categories. The existing distrust between the two was also mentioned, and it was suggested that a common union was an ineffective means of papering over the cracks. Two respondents from a banking union also argued that craft unions had a better chance of growing strong as skilled employees could

Workers' Participation in Management

In 1975, the Government of India introduced a voluntary scheme for the participation of workers in the management of manufacturing and mining units employing more than 500 persons. In 1977, the scheme was extended to public sector organisations employing 100 or more workers. Out of about 1400 units which introduced the scheme, there were 523 units in the public sector at the Central level, 70 such units at the level of different States, 62 units in the co-operative sector, and 688 units in the private sector; 52 units in the co-operative sector had alternative parallel arrangements. Under the scheme, a joint management council consisting of an equal number of the representatives of employers and employees is set up in each unit; its functions include creation of conditions for higher productivity, elimination of all forms of corruption and better consumer service. However, the operation of the scheme has not had an unqualified success. Many councils have not either functioned at all or have functioned only sporadically. The critics of the scheme have alleged that the workers' participation contemplated under the scheme is geared only towards avoiding strikes and has no other significance as far as the management of a unit is concerned.

Among the central trade union organisations, INTUC has given its full support to the introduction of the scheme.

The AITUC stand is somewhat circumspect, regards the measure as inadequate, and includes the formulation: "If compulsory recognition of trade unions by the employer and negotiations with them are made statutory then no such (bipartite) machinery is necessary." The BMS leadership has its own scheme for 'labourisation' which would provide job satisfaction, reduce grievances and promote industrial peace; in 1978, the national President of BMS termed workers' participation as the first step towards 'labourisation'. An earlier BMS publication described the scheme "as a slogan coined to dupe the poor workers, extract work from them like donkeys and deprive them of the right to share the fruits of increased production.... This is a pure and simple trap or fraud perpetrated by the ruling party."

In the present sample, the majority of the INTUC and BMS respondents followed their respective national lines. Most AITUC respondents seemed to feel that the line taken by their national leadership was one of unequivocal support, and they adhered to this line. At the local level on an overall basis, 34 (21 per cent) respondents stated that they had never heard of the scheme, 121 (74 per cent) welcomed it, and only 8 (5 per cent) did not want it. At the State level, the scheme was welcomed by all respondents except 6 out of 9 BMS respondents. At the local level, the percentage of INTUC and AITUC

43. Naresh Chandra Ganguly, "Workers Participation in Management to Ownership", in Shram Shakti Smarika (in Hindi), 5th All India Conference, Jaipur, 21 to 23 April,1978, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, New Delhi, 1978.
44. Anonymous, op. cit.
leaders welcoming the scheme was 87 per cent as against 57 per cent of the rest.

The supporters of the scheme viewed it as one for promotion of a sense of involvement among workers, increased efficiency and expanded production, and as an instrument of self-discipline as well as an agent inhibiting unrest - and also as a legitimate reason for demanding more wages because of the ensuing or contemplated increase in productivity per capita. They had, nevertheless, many reservations about the modalities of its implementation. "Only the employer's stooges are appointed as workers 'representatives'," remarked one respondent. An AITUC respondent narrated his experience as one of the three workers' representatives in a factory at Jullundur. Two of them had exposed a corruption scandal involving some members of the management. After a few days, both were arrested under the Defence of India Rules. Many respondents were sceptical of the possibility of any management accepting the basic philosophy underlying the scheme.

The critics maintained that, in actual practice, the scheme amounted to involving the workers in decisions regarding laying down targets of increased production, while denying them any say in other vital matters. One respondent suggested that meaningful participation implied control over all decisions, right from the purchase of raw material to the pricing and sale of the finished product, with a claim to scrutinise production records and balance sheets as well as to ensure the veracity of profit and loss statements.
That some union leaders are corrupt is beyond dispute. Ball has seen this phenomenon as indicative of a sickness which is symptomatic of the decline of unionism as a moral vocation. However, as Eby has pointed out, the topic cannot be studied in isolation in a society in which the chief criteria of success are income and conspicuous consumption. "There is no absolute reason," Roberts argues, "why American unions should be faced with a problem of corruption other than the fact that corruption is a problem of the American society."

The case of James R. Hoffa, who secured unanimous election to the US Teamsters Union after his expulsion from the AFL-CIO, attests to the fact that, in the more developed capitalist world, union corruption is judged more by business standards than by moral ones.

Roberts categorises union corruption into unethical practices which, strictly speaking, are not criminal (e.g., drawing excessive salaries for services of comparatively little value to members); activities in which the borderline between morally dubious practices and unlawful behaviour is clearly crossed (e.g., diversion of union funds to build private fortunes); and racketeering which involves the employer or an outside agency (e.g., receiving payments for collusive contracts

45. op. cit.
46. op. cit.
disadvantageous to union members). Schneider\(^48\) correctly characterises racketeering as a deviation from normal unionism, involving bribes for signing unfavourable settlements, calling off strikes, starting strikes to ease the employer's inventory problems, driving the employer's competitors out of business by strike action in their establishments, threatening militant members in a closed-shop factory with expulsion from the union and consequent loss of employment, and sundry similar practices. Mills\(^49\) observes that racketeering occurs at three levels: the leader, the employer, and the colluding public officials.

Union corruption is not a phenomenon confined to the West. Lynd\(^50\) has shown how some corrupt union leaders, particularly in Africa, have become alienated from their rank and file through their conspicuous arrogance and extravagance. These tendencies have been reinforced by opportunities for training abroad provided through the agency of some world-wide confederations as well as by international financial subsidies to favoured individuals. These have often produced a more ease-loving, personalised and centralised leadership, have resulted in the neglect of union reliance on unpaid branch officials, and have stimulated the diversion of union funds into purchase of expensive transportation equipment to maintain even minimal contact with local branches. By a multiplier effect, unionism as a career, rather than as a vocation, has percolated

\(^{49}\) op. cit. (n.15, chap. 4, supra).
as a normal standard to other unions which have not been directly involved in the process.

No precise study of the nature and the extent of corruption in the Indian trade union movement is available. It is unlikely that all these 'developed' forms of corruption have yet been adopted by the highly motivated unpaid leadership, though some instances of union corruption are known. For example, Vaid has reported an allegation by the proprietor of a firm to the effect that some trade union leaders were receiving Rs. 51 to Rs.200 per year from him. In the study by Jaspal Singh, 85.7 per cent of his respondents believed that some union leaders had illegitimate sources of income. In a study from Tamil Nadu, a worker was quoted as having disclosed that it was customary to deduct Rs.10, rarely with the victim's consent, as a gift to the union president from every worker's pay packet whenever a new wage or bonus agreement was arrived at. It is possible that the relatively weak economic position of most unions in India keeps corruption at a petty level, but a consequent alienation of the leaders from the led does constitute a dimension of union dynamics which cannot be ignored.

During the present Survey, 78 (48 per cent) of local-level respondents and 20 (74 per cent) of State-level respondents were found to believe that the wealth, property and life

51. op. cit. (n.39, chap. 1, supra).
52. op. cit. (n.14, chap. 1, supra).
style of at least some trade union leaders was disproportionate to their known sources of income. This belief was shared by 58 per cent of the respondents from AITUC, INTUC and BMS, as against only 24 per cent from 'Others'. The reasons for this large variation were not very clear except under the arguable hypothesis that the middle class and working class standards are clearly different on the question of the precise definition of what constitutes a corrupt act. Other significant differences detected during the statistical analysis were as below:

1. Among whole-time officials, 76 per cent believed that some leaders were corrupt. The corresponding figure for part-time leaders among the respondents was 45 per cent.

2. All the State-level AITUC respondents, but only 61 per cent of their counterparts in INTUC and BMS, made such allegations.

3. That some leaders were paid by managements was alleged by 47 per cent of all presidents and secretaries, but only 26 per cent of other office-bearers substantiated this allegation. On the other hand, the allegation that some leaders extorted payments from the rank and file members was made by 26 per cent of presidents and secretaries, but by as many as 61 per cent of other office-bearers.

The specific nature of allegations (which were not verified by the present researcher) varied, but their inter-organisational distribution revealed no particular pattern. These allegations can be broadly divided into four groups.

Misappropriation of union funds and donations: It was alleged that some trade union leaders misappropriated union funds by obtaining subscriptions, donations and ad hoc collections (for instance, for organising conferences, for
presenting 'purses' to prominent political or trade union personalities, etc., and, in one case, for construction of a co-operative workers' housing colony), all without issuing proper receipts or maintaining verifiable accounts of income and expenditure. In case of any substantial pressure from fellow leaders or members to render account, such leaders sometimes defected and organised rival unions.

Payments by managements in return for favours and blackmailing of managements: Some leaders were said to have received recompense in clandestine deals with employers and managements involving cash payments, gifts in kind (e.g., scooters) or other favours (e.g., award of proxy contracts to near or distant relations to run canteens, bicycle parking lots, etc.). The usual return considerations were said to have been (i) sabotage of an agitation by its premature termination, frequently announced without consultation with fellow leaders; (ii) abdication of leadership at crucial moments by feigning illness; (iii) engineering a strike when the employer had surplus stocks; (iv) mishandling workers' cases in labour courts; (v) making settlements which were less disadvantageous to the employers; and (vi) withdrawing threats of strike which were meant only to extort money from the employer for enriching oneself.

Payments exacted from workers: These related to unauthorised or illegal payments by (i) promising to obtain jobs, transfers, promotions, etc., through intercession with managements; (ii) acting, or pretending to act, as a channel for conveying bribes to managing supervisors for specific
favours such as condonation of lapses or losses caused by neglect or larceny; (iii) overcharging members for expenses on postage, court fees, lawyers' fees; (iv) obtaining multiple travelling expense payments from several workers for a single journey to the district or State headquarters to act on their behalf at labour court hearings; (v) making private deals with workers to obtain for them ration cards, employment exchange registrations or passports for emigration to Europe or West Asia; and (vi) misappropriating, in whole or part, back wages or compensation awarded by the labour tribunals and collected on behalf of a worker on the basis of a power of attorney.

Payments from other sources: These allegations related to alleged receipt of money from political parties and foreign governments or their intelligence agencies.

SUMMING UP

The overall picture of an average trade union leader in Punjab, which emerges out of this discussion of attitudes and views, is that of a politically linked, consciously or subconsciously ideologically motivated, fairly militant individual with a family background of political or union activism. There are variations from individual to individual, between leaders belonging to one organisation and leaders belonging to another, between full-time paid officials and part-time leaders, between key office-bearers and other office-bearers, among leaders from different backgrounds, and so on, but the chief features are more or less clearly delineated.

We have shown that the factors which lead an individual
to identify himself subjectively with the middle class or the working class are not identical in our case with those that govern such identification in the more developed industrialised countries. The two relevant considerations in the Indian context are the level to which an individual has been educated and the type of job (manual or white collar) on which he is engaged. Others factors are almost irrelevant except in the case of ideologically educated individuals who tend to identify themselves in the Western categories. Even the extent of militancy is not significantly correlated with subjective class identification: middle class employees are only marginally less militant than working class employees.

Organisation-wise, AITUC leaders are the most militant, followed by INTUC, BMS and 'Others' in this order. Leaders at the State level are generally more militant, and so are full-time officials at both the local and State levels, presidents and secretaries at the local level as compared to other office-bearers, and individuals who have received education only up to the high school level or below as compared to those who are illiterate or those who are highly educated. Manual workers are, in general, more militant.

We have also analysed the considerations which govern the trade union leaders of Punjab in setting up new unions. The basic problem is that of polarising the workers' loyalty, and the pivotal role is that of the central organisations.

The job-satisfaction concept in the present context is more explicable in terms of limited job opportunities, and we
find that an individual is satisfied, or at least professes himself to be satisfied, if he succeeds in getting a job which is somewhat commensurate with his qualifications. The concepts of acceptance, approval, recognition and status appear to be only indirectly relevant. There is some heart-burning on the score of promotions which, in the case of trade union activists, are sometimes withheld due to their participation in the union work. However, a vast majority of trade union leaders are motivated enough to want their progeny to follow their footsteps in becoming union activists. Only in a small minority of cases, their families look upon their work in the union with disfavour.

A little more than half of the trade union leaders believe that the trade union movement in Punjab is strong. They do face many problems, the chief ones being those which arise out of the unwillingness or inability of the employers to concede the workers' demands or to afford them 'fair' opportunities for agitation; those relating to the weakness of some trade union organisations; and the problem of inadequate cadres. During the period of 'Emergency', there were also some special problems due to increased intransigence of managements, the hardened attitude of the Government and the suppression of the freedoms of speech and thought.

On the question of the settlement of industrial disputes, a vast majority prefers negotiations and uses strike only in the last resort for issues of a major importance. Most industrial disputes are actually settled through negotiation, though adjudication and conciliation are also important in this context.
Arbitration is comparatively less important.

An important section of this chapter has dealt with the considerations which move trade union leaders to take strike decisions and help them in conducting strikes.

Other matters dealt with here relate to factionalism within unions, preference for industrial unions or craft unions (most trade union leaders prefer the former principle of union organisation), the reactions to the government's scheme for workers' participation in management (except for the BMS, the scheme is generally welcomed, but with many reservations about the modalities of its implementation), and the problem of union corruption. In regard to the last, many union leaders are convinced that corruption exists in the form of misappropriation of union funds, payments received from employers for unethical considerations, exactions from ordinary workers, and receipts from political parties and foreign agencies. However, there was no occasion in the present study to verify the correctness of such allegations.