CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

A trade union is an association of workers meant to maintain and improve upon the living conditions of the working class in a peaceful and democratic way rather than by strikes and violent means. It is a platform on which the workers can stand and voice their opinions and grievances to the employers. Similarly, the employers too can explain their situation to the employees and a healthy give and take of ideas and thoughts can take place leading to mutual benefit and ultimately to the profits of the concern.

The distinction of being the first real labour leader in India goes to Narain Meghjee Lokhande who began life as a worker. It was largely on his initiative that a conference of the workers in Bombay was held on 23 - 26 September 1884. This conference drew up a Memorandum signed by 5,500 workers to be presented to the Factory Commission. The Memorandum demanded (a) one complete day of rest every Sunday, (b) half an hour recess at noon (c) limitation of hours of work and (d) compensation for injuries, etc.

In 1890, Lokhande formed an association of the Bombay mill workers called the Bombay Millhands' Association. Lokhande became its President and D.C.Athaide became
its secretary. It is considered the first organisation for labour in India. However, the Bombay Millhands' Association was not a labour organisation with the structure and aims of a trade union. Lokhande was primarily a philanthropic promoter of labour legislation and of workers' welfare. The grievances of the working men were presented not as a matter of right, but in the manner of an appeal to reason, and human feeling. The verdict of the report on the working of the Factory Act in Bombay (1892) is significant. It said, "The Bombay millhands have no organised trade union. It should be explained that although Mr. Lokhande, who served on the last Factory Commission, describes himself as President of the Bombay Millhands' Association, that Association has no existence as an organised body, having no roll of membership, no funds, no rules ... Mr. Lokhande simply acts as a voluntary adviser to any millhand who may come to him."¹

The passing of the Factory Act of 1891, brought an end to this phase of the Indian Labour movement. Now came another phase which was to last till 1917 and which has been called the Abolition Period. This was characterised by two features: agitation for the abolition of the indentured system of labour and attempts at organising the workers into quasi-trade unions. Quite a few organisations thus came into existence that were like trade unions, but not really trade unions.
Gujarat was not left unaffected by the events in the rest of the country. Anasuyabehn Sarabhai, the life-long President of the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad, was fully aware of the various events taking place in the country and elsewhere. Even as she was working for the amelioration of the working class within the limited sphere of Ahmedabad, she was conscious of trends in labour organisation. But in this matter, her guide and source of inspiration was Mahatma Gandhi and it was to him that she turned in the next major phase of working class agitation in her native city. Mahatma Gandhi was a leader of national standing even in the early phases of the labour movement and his impact on the trade union movement of Gujarat was tremendous. The Gandhian ideology in fact formed the base of the movement.

Ahmedabad played the key role in the trade union movement of Gujarat. The labour strike at Ahmedabad in 1918 formed the most important chapter in the labour movement of Gujarat. Mahadev Desai in his book, "A Righteous Struggle" or "Ek Dharmayudh" has in detail mentioned all the aspects of this strike. The leaflets issued have also been discussed in length.

The leftist ideology also played an important role in the labour movement of Gujarat. The 5th Congress of the Communist International—held in 1924 gave the Indian Communists the following direction:

"The Indian communists must bring the trade union movement under their influence. They must
The first World Congress of the Communists International held in Moscow in April 1919 had strong words to say about Mahatma Gandhi whose philosophy of action by then had become known world-wide. In a statement, it said:

"Tendencies like Gandhism in India thoroughly imbued with religious concepts, idealise the most backward and economically most reactionary forms of social life. They see the solution of the social problems not in proletarian socialism but in a reversion to these backward forms. They preach a passivity and repudiate class struggle. In the process of the development of the revolution, they become transformed into an openly reactionary force. Gandhism is becoming more and more an ideology directed against mass revolution. It must be strongly combated by communism."

Several important leaders were involved in the trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947. Anasuya-behn Sarabhai, Shankarlal Banker, Khandubhai Desai, Gulzarilal Nanda, S.R. Vasavda, Somnath Dave, Keshavji Vasavda and Noor Mohammad Sheikh were among the important leaders. The influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel was also tremendous on the course of the movement. It was due to the sincere efforts, leadership qualities and genuine sympathy to the workers' cause of these leaders that the
amelioration of the working class could take place. These were individuals without any selfish purpose. They wanted the workers to be able to lead a respectable life. They wanted to protect the workers from exploitation at the hands of their employers.

Two important bodies were formed in Ahmedabad in 1924, namely, Matadar Mandal (Voter's Council) and Latta Mahajan (branch of Mahajan in workers' own locality). The first Latta Mahajan was established in Saraspur area and the second in Gomtipur. Their task was to collect union subscriptions without having to face needless harassment from mill officials.

As the time passed by and the minds of the workers came to be gradually moulded by Mahajan activities, there was talk especially in the Throstle, Weaving, Frame, Card, Blow and Engineering departments for demanding restoration of the wage cut. In May, 1926, representatives passed a resolution to that effect.

In 1926, a Majoor Samaj Sudhar Sangh was formed with the object of encouraging self-improvement among workers. Any person over the age of 12 could become a member by paying an annual subscription of four annas. Non-mill workers too could become members of this Sudhar Sangh (Reform Association) but had to give up drinking for six months prior to applying for membership. Large number of people did enroll themselves as members.

On Sunday, 18 October, 1926, the annual meeting of the Joint Board of Representatives met at Satyagraha Ashram. Mahatma Gandhi had pledged that for one year he...
would stay at Sabarmati and would be available for consultations. He told the representatives that every department should work in concert with others and share expenditure and the strong should help the weak. He told the representatives: "Mahajan is your Swaraj. There is no such Mahajan anywhere else in India. But there is no reason to be conceited about it. In a desert place even an eranda plant is considered a prime tree. Our tree has not grown to be as large as a banyan tree. But we should bend our efforts to make it so." This was the time when even children below the age of 12 went to work. This added to the family income but at the same time it deprived children of education. Even though both the Government and the Mahajan laboured hard to put an end to child labour, the efforts were largely unsuccessful. Anasuyabehn thought of forming a Mandal for these child workers and a meeting was called in January 1927. The result was the establishment of Majoor Kumar Mandal.

Social activism was now coming increasingly to the front. In September 1928, the Mahajan's Board of Representatives passed a resolution to set up a Volunteer Corps to render social service to the community. The Volunteer Corps was divided into three Sections. Each section was charged with a particular duty. Section one was entrusted with the task of imparting physical education to the young. Section Two was put in charge of looking after the growth of the Mahajan. It fell to Section Three to undertake work of social reform. The Second and the Third Sections were to be given primary training and
were summoned once a month for a discussion pertaining to their work. The minimum age of admission was pegged at sixteen. Corps members were given specific uniforms.

It stood to the credit of the Mahajan that the Volunteer Corps started with an enrollment of two hundred. Nandshankar Bhatt had joined the Mahajan as a teacher in 1924, but he was then moved to the Volunteer Corps, where he was to put in service for many years.

It stood to the credit of the activists that they were trying to strengthen the Mahajan. Towards the end of 1925, a Bal Mandir was opened and children between the age of 3 and 7 were admitted to it and instruction given on Montessori lines. Bal Mandir was intended for children who could move about freely but had not yet reached the age of admission to primary school. The idea in setting up the Bal Mandir was to take the children away from the dirt in the slums and bring them up in clean surroundings. By 1923 the strength of Bal Mandir had grown to 68.

Jobbers in various mills began to realise that they too were employees even if they formed the link between employees and employers. They were persuaded to form a Jobber Mukadam Mahajan which was to help in the primary Mahajan itself. The membership of the Majoor Mahajan, in the circumstances started to grow from 6,220 in January 1924 to 12,030 towards the end of the year, to 17,075 by the end of 1928.

In 1929, Shri Kachchi and Shri S.R. Vasavada joined.
the Majoor Mahajan and they provided very useful services. Some mills were putting obstacles in the way of their workers joining the Mahajan. When the matter was referred to the Mill Owners' Association, the latter argued that individual mills had the freedom to decide whether or not to deduct union subscription from wages. The matter was referred to the arbitrators who were Seth Mangaldas and Mahatma Gandhi. The arbitrators held that no mill should place any impediment on the recruitment of union members. They further agreed that union subscriptions according to the rates fixed by the Majoor Mahajan should be deducted from the wages and receipts issued by the Mahajan be given to the workers.

Thus, the Textile Labour Association represented how a trade union of Mahatma Gandhi's conception could function in an unassuming manner in order to help the workers to grow to their full height. It tried to give to the workers a steady job and a habitable house. It concentrated its energies on creating physical conditions where the workers would live a happy and healthy life and also enlighten themselves on the various phases of life which would make their life more useful. They would negotiate with their employers in time of crisis in a peaceful manner and if negotiations failed and arbitration was not accepted by the other side, they would then resort to strike in a peaceful way. It can thus be said that a trade union based on such democratic ideals alone was eminently fitted to evolve peaceful industrial relations.
The present leading personalities of the Textile Labour Organisation are marching on, with the same spirit of solidarity and integrity, equipped with the same means and objects as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi so that peace, productivity and prosperity in the industry could be achieved, coupled with all-round development, both socially and economically, of those engaged in the industry. It will thus serve as a faithful record of reference and guidance even for the future generation.

Despite intrinsic merits of Gandhian concept of militant but non-violent trade unionism as typified by Majoor Mahajan Ahmedabad, its acceptance elsewhere in Gujarat and beyond was not instant. Majoor Mahajan came into being in 1920 in Ahmedabad. It was only 12 years later viz., in 1932 that workers of New Shorrock Mills, Nadiad agitated for adopting this model in their mill too and struck work. Despite the failure of strike, the millowners later gave way and allowed the formation of a trade union on the lines of the Majoor Mahajan. The movement thereafter caught on and the Mahajan's objective of industrial harmony was recognised even by the millowners in several regions of Gujarat. Consequently, Mahajans were formed at Nadiad, Petlad, Baroda, Bhavnagar, Kadi, Kalol, Siddhpur, Navsari, Khambat and Viramgam.
April 17, 1917 was the beginning of the Satyagraha in India and simultaneously, the beginning of the non-violent revolution. November 7, 1917 was the beginning of the violent revolution in Russia. The year 1917 thus saw two different kinds of revolutions inaugurated in the world, one violent, the other non-violent. Both were to leave their mark on the history of our times. The violent revolution was led by the communists and the non-violent revolution was led by Mahatma Gandhi. These two concepts were to clash in India, more so in Ahmedabad, where the Gandhian experiment was being carried out. The communist revolution aimed at the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Gandhian revolution aimed at the symbiotic relationship between capital and labour. Mahatma Gandhi said that truth was the best path for this purpose.

For the Communists, a strike was a legitimate political weapon. Mahatma Gandhi's conscience rebelled against making workers strike for political purposes. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest political contribution that labourers could make was to improve their own condition, to become better informed and to insist on their rights.

It was inevitable, therefore, that there should have been a clash between the Ahmedabad Textile Association - the Majoor Mahajan and the communist unions. That in Ahmedabad, despite all that communist leaders did to do down the Mahajan, the latter went from strength to strength only showed the essential vitality of the Gandhian approach. It was built on the Indian ethos as exemplified
by satyagraha.

Elsewhere in India, a great strike movement had overtaken the country. Beginning in 1918 and continuing throughout 1919 and 1920, the strike movement paralysed the entire industrial organisation. Those strikes were not inspired by any ideology. They were merely the consequence of the rapidly deteriorating economic situation.

Those who laboured in the vineyard of industrial relations to some extent may be said to have been influenced by the British labour movement. Among them were intellectual like Lala Lajpat Rai, N.M. Joshi and R.R. Bakhle. The British Labour Party wanted Indian labour to organise on the same principles as had been adopted in Britain and in 1920, even sent two of its stalwarts, Col. Wedgewood and Ben Spoor to the first Congress of the newly formed All India Trade Union Congress. The Textile Labour Association remained outside the All India Trade Union Congress from the very beginning. This was never liked by the communists.

Thus, with the help of the above discussion, we can make certain observations. Trade unions are vehicles of social change along with economic changes. They should work to take concrete, collective and curative steps to bring about a change in the outlook on population. They have to try to reduce the size of the families of the workers. Trade unions constitute a very important part of our socio-economic framework. The trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 created an impact on the rest of the country also. It set a shining example before the rest of the country that the determination of the working
class backed by an effective leadership can, not only help the workers to raise their standard of living but also fight the exploitation at the hands of their employers. Mahatma Gandhi, Anasuyabehn, Shankarlal Banker and other such leaders made the foundation of the movement strong leading eventually to its success. Although it was influenced by the leftist ideas, it did not divert from its basic ideology.

According to an interview with some of the trade union leaders of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 like Shri Dhanwant Ojha, Shri Navin Chandra Barot, Shri Manaharlalbhai T. Shukla and Shri Arvindbhai Buch, several important facts came into light. Firstly, prior to 1917, the working class was in a very bad condition. There were social reformist organisations and liberal ideology was prevalent. The labour class of Gujarat was not influenced by the trade unions outside.

Secondly, the ideology at that time was not leftist and neither was it Gandhian. The Gandhian influence came in only after 1917. In 1917, the Russian revolution had a wide impact on India and consequently on Gujarat. People began to study Marxism. The Communists individually came to Gujarat. In 1921, there was a Communist Party of India (CPI) Session in Gujarat. The first manifesto of the Communist Party of India was passed. It was from now onwards that the Communist ideology began influencing the trade union movement in Gujarat. Thus, from 1917 to 1947, there were both Gandhian and Communist influences.

Thirdly, till 1930, the Gandhian ideology was clear-cut. According to it, the owners and the working class were complimentary and thus, there should be a good relation between the two. Firstly, there must be negotiations, otherwise arbitration must follow. If all these failed, then strikes could be
Thus, there were strikes in 1918 and 1923-24. The Textile Labour Association, however, did not hold a general strike at any time. It became a reformist organisation. The Communists called it the 'Company Union.'

Fourthly, after 1930, the main people involved in the activities of the Textile Labour Association were Shankarlal Banker, Gulzarilal Nanda and Khandubhai Desai. Keshavji Vaghela became the first secretary of the Textile Labour Association.

Fifthly, in this movement, the Gandhian ideology was more effective than the Marxist ideology. The trade union movement in Gujarat can be said to have been started in 1918.

Sixthly, the political situation prevailing at that time was very hot. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre had taken place in 1919. The Civil Disobedience movement took place in 1930. Gujarat was at the forefront during all these significant happenings. Several pamphlets, leaflets and books were published during the course of the movement. In his book, 'Ek Dharmayudh' or 'The Righteous Struggle', Mahadev Desai has discussed these leaflets.

Seventhly, there were certain leaders from outside Gujarat also who influenced the course of the labour movement in Gujarat. They were S.A. Dange, R.S. Nimbkar and R.D. Bharadvaj.

Eighthly, in 1859, the first textile mill had opened in Gujarat. The emergence of the working class in Gujarat
was a significant development. The work of social reformers was also great. The great strike of 1918 took place and the formation of the first working class organisation in Gujarat took place. The important dividing lines in the course of the trade union movement in Gujarat were from 1923 to 1926, from 1926 to 1930, from 1930 to 1937, from 1937 to 1945 and from 1945 to 1947. In 1937, the first Congress ministry came into being. The working class movement played a very important role in the independence movement.

However, the trade union leaders of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 remain dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. They are not satisfied with the post-independence happenings in the trade union movement of Gujarat till the present time. According to them, political consciousness must be developed in the working class as happened in England. They notice a trend of economism in India where the people are fighting for the economic gains. For example, the All India Trade Union Congress is economically motivated. They are also not satisfied with the way these various organisations are functioning. According to them, they should perform educative work also. However, the attention of these organisations is not towards these duties.

However, in one's own opinion, the trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 was a success in spite of all its problems. There was a combination of the Gandhian ideology and the leftist ideology. The workers learnt to fight in a non-violent manner and they could now make their demands to the employers without fear and they could get their
grievances settled. Though after the independence of our country, there has been a tendency for economic gains, but, the Gandhian ideals remain present even now. The basic ideals of truth, non-violence, sarvodaya or the good of all and mutual harmony between the employers and the employees instead of the class war, for mutual benefit of both the parties as taught by Mahatma Gandhi are still relevant.

Further, one can say that the trade unionism in one country is not comparable to that in another country because of varying approaches, roles and functions assumed by it from time to time. It is observed that in a desperate desire for greater profits, the employers neglect the wants and needs of the workers. This makes the workers feel cheated and exploited leading ultimately to their uniting into a trade union. The urge for higher wages is always prevalent among the workers. When the workers feel that in spite of the organisation making considerable profits, no substantial increase in their wages has taken place, it is then that they resort to trade unions.

Broadly speaking, the origin and growth of trade unionism is the result of increased complexities of the economic structure of man's life. Trade unions are thus the result of industrialization. With a change from closed to mercantile economy, vast changes are brought about. When the economic circuit gradually opens up, when people produce goods for sale, when they have to sell in order to buy and often have to buy before they have sold, then merchant and usurper step in between the producer and the market. Little by little, the
the producer is separated from his working equipment, 
the product of his labour and outlets for that product. 
When the process is complete, when another person, a chain 
or eventually a group of people stand between him and the 
markets, the modern class problem comes into being. The 
persons who command means of production and the routes 
of access to the market occupy a very strategic position 
at which tolls can be levied on all that passes. It is round 
this strategic position, this toll gate, this potential 
position of social domination and economic exploitation 
that class conflict is waged.

Since the organised labour of a large employer, 
who is the owner entrepreneur, have little bargaining power 
arising due to various factors such as their defence, lack 
of reserve funds and the perishability of their labour. 
But when they unite, their bargaining power is strengthened 
and these handicaps are reduced. The trade unions are an 
important indication of social unrest and social progress 
which is the result of large-scale industrialisation.

Some non-economic factors too have influenced 
the growth of trade unionism in any country. The conditions 
necessary for the growth of organised action among the 
working classes are the differentiation of separate wage-
earning class, some stability of status within that class 
and some power of intercommunication among the members. 
Common nationality and language, uniformity in the work 
performed by considerable members, improvement of education 
and political activities also influence the growth of trade 
unions.

Nevertheless, it may also be contended that trade
unions, perhaps, would not have emerged but for the attitude of the state which exhibited, in the early periods of modern industrialization, a callous disregard to the sufferings and needs of the toiling masses. In India, as late as 1921, in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills' case, the Madras Labour Union led by B.P. Wadia was indicated as a criminal conspiracy and damages were awarded against the union.

Thus, we observe that the trade unions were born of the necessity of workers to protect and defend themselves from encroachment, injustice and wrong done to them by the employers and to protect the workers in their inalienable right to a higher and better life. Any human action, whether individual or collective, is directly or indirectly connected to practice. Practice is not only the changing of nature but of social relations too. In the history of the labour movement, the years from 1922 to 1927 are marked at first sight by a definite decline. In Ahmedabad, 56 out of 64 textile mills were closed down by a massive strike in April 1923 against a 20% wage-cut at a time when, Mahatma Gandhi was in jail.

Workers have been granted freedom of association and every democratic country is zealously guarding this freedom that has been secured after great struggle and sacrifice in each country. At Ahmedabad, under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi, occupational unions like spinners' unions and weavers' unions were established which federated in the industrial unit known as the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad.
In several important industrial units, unions whether affiliated to central organizations or not, operate independently, each claiming to speak on behalf of all workers. Instances are in evidence when attempts are made by each of the many or more than one union in the same industry or unit to undermine the influence of the others and questioning the bonafides of rival leaders is also not unknown. In this situation, one could visualise some employers taking advantage of these inter-union rivalries and playing one union against the other. Basically, inter-union conflict feeds itself on differences in the concept of what one group or the other considers to be the workers' interests as also about the means to be adopted for advancing them.

The various factors which have hampered the growth of genuine trade unionism in our country can broadly be placed under two important heads, viz., internal and external. Some of the internal factors include the lack of an enlightened labour force capable of manning and conducting the movement efficiently, purposefully and effectively, a general lack of education, the division of the workers by race, religion, language and caste, the migratory nature and presently the lack of proper commitment of the industrial workers, the general poverty and low level of wages, the dependence of the trade unions for their leaders mainly on social or political workers, lawyers and other professional and public men, the lack of united front of trade unions in
our country and the movement being dominated by various political parties, the political division of trade unionism, the trade unions in our country failing to realize the importance of mutual help and welfare activities, inadequacy of funds and the low standards of life and fatigue of the work. Some of the external factors include the attitude of employers in India as a whole which has generally been hostile to the trade unions. As noted by the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad and various Labour Enquiry Committees, etc., from time to time, the fear of victimisation in some form or the other has been a powerful factor and a real obstacle to the growth of strong trade unions at various industrial centres in the country for a long time and still may exert a considerable influence on their stability and disrupt the loyalties of their members so necessary for the solidarity of the working class. The jobbers and other intermediaries have also been deeply hostile to trade unionism in our country because they have been afraid that it would gradually destroy their power over the workers. Certain deficiencies in the legal provisions in regard to unions and industrial relations have also been an obstruction to the proper strength of the unions.
The early efforts to grapple with the problems of the industrial units involved attempts to reduce wages. Ahmedabad mills went through a general strike in 1923 but obtained a 15.5 per cent reduction in wages.

The significant role of the communists in the trade union movement of Gujarat has been discussed earlier. The theory of the Communists may be summed up as the abolition of private property. In April 1921, S. A. Dange published his work 'Gandhi vs. Lenin' and later he went on to publish an English Weekly called the Socialist from August 1922. During the course of the movement, the contradiction between the slogan of non-violence with which Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leadership sought to restrict the movement and the objective response of the masses to the other militant slogans of the non-cooperation movement came to the fore. This contradiction led to a criticism of Gandhian ideology, method of struggle and political programme by young leftwing revolutionaries who were more and more drawn to the Russian revolution and the ideology and practice of its leader Lenin. The most advanced of such criticism is to be found in S.A. Dange's 'Gandhi Vs Lenin', which gave a new orientation to the critique of Gandhism and despite its inevitable shortcomings contained an alternative path and programme for India's independence.
The fruitful idea is advanced of the need to combine the non-cooperation movement with the organisation of workers' general strike and peasants' uprising in order to overthrow imperialist rule.

The work of social reformers led to the formation of various organizations. The reform movement that took shape through the new associations, though restricted to the urban Gujarat, had an overall impact on the society. The Gujarati literature with new social themes encouraged new social outlook. New dimension was added to the reform movement with the emergence of new caste associations. These caste associations, without allowing themselves to appear radical, served the purpose of the reformers, so far as the process of the cultural modernization was concerned.

The general unrest in the country gave impetus to the labour movement. The Indian leaders desired to safeguard the interests of the Indian capitalists and also to ameliorate the conditions of the Indian workers, especially employed under European capitalists. The main object of the leaders was to give a popular and mass character to the movement. Although their success was modest they laid the foundation on which Mahatma Gandhi built his mass activity.

Thus, we see that there was a general dis-
satisfaction among the factory workers. Their wages were low and hours of work long. Discontent amongst them was perennial. Mahatma Gandhi had to intervene in the strike of the mill-hands of Ahmedabad quite early after his return from South Africa.

Political motivations and ideologies influenced the trade union movement in Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 and were in turn influenced by its increased strength. The twin aspects of the labour movement in Gujarat, labour organisation for industrial bargaining and its ideological orientation, should be viewed in the larger background of the nationalist struggle against imperialism and the emergency of politically inspired opposing International Labour Organisations. The opening decade of the 20th century also gave the first ever demonstration of the emerging political consciousness among the Indian working class. The workers of Bombay went on a political six-day strike over the conviction and imprisonment of the great leader, Lokamanya Tilak in 1908. This development elicited the comments of Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924), the founder of the Russian Communist party, that the Indian proletariat has already matured sufficiently to wage a class-conscious and political mass struggle.

The First World War and its aftermath brought a period of soaring prices, unprecedented profiteering for the industrialists but low wages for the workers. The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene marked a determined bid to broad-base the nationalist movement and mobilisation of the workers and the peasants...
for the national cause. It was felt that the workers should be organised into a national trade union and drawn into the vortex of the struggle for independence. At almost the same time, the October Revolution in Russia and the formation of the Comintern was an open call to the workers of the world to combine to dispossess the capitalists and institute a Proletarian revolution. The setting up of the League of Nations' Agency I. L. O. (International Labour Organisation) gave an international complexion to the labour problem.

The Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, trusteeship and class-collaboration had a great influence on the movement and strike was a weapon rarely employed. The Trade Union Act of 1926, recognised trade unions as legal associations, laid down conditions for registration and regulation of trade union activities, secured their immunity, both civil and criminal, from prosecution for legitimate activities but put some restrictions on their political activities.

The rise of the Communist movement in India in the 1920s lent a militant and revolutionary content to the trade union movement. The 4th Congress of the Communist International sent a message to the All India Trade Union Congress not to be content with fair day's wages for a fair day's work but to fight for the ultimate goal of overthrow of capitalism and imperialism. Further, the Indian Communists were urged to organise the trade union movement on a class basis and purge it of all alien basis.
The Second World War created an emergency and the trade union leaders again split on the question of participating in the war. The Communists following the Russian Communist party wanted to help the British to fight out the Nazis, while nationalist leaders wanted to strengthen the national movement to overthrow British rule from India. This led to a sharp ideological rift and the trade union movement was split again. Industrial unrest increased during the war because of the mounting cost of living. Defence of India Rules had prohibited strikes and lockouts and referred industrial disputes to conciliation and adjudication. But the deteriorating economic conditions made the workers conscious of the need for making organised efforts for securing relief. This gave a fillip to the trade union movement and there was a marked increase both in the number of unions and of organised workers.

As V.V.Giri, the former President of India, stated, that if the trade union movement is not united and strong enough to achieve these objectives, the industrial structure to be built in India on the basis of a full-fledged socialist democracy would not have firm foundations and the state in spite of its best ideals and designs would find it difficult to assure fundamental rights to the working class. V.V.Giri rightly asserted that socialism required the establishment of an industrial democracy which called for discipline on the one side and sincere and efficient work on the other.

Mahatma Gandhi did not believe that the capitalists
and the labourers were always opposed to each other and as such they could not go hand in hand. He believed that for national development both should work in close co-operation and harmony with each other. If both the labourers as well as the capitalists tried to realise their duties, many disputes could be amicably solved.

Mahatma Gandhi was in favour of the trade union movement but held that the unions must be organised on the basis of non-violence. He laid down certain conditions by following which trade unions could become an effective power and dictate terms to the capitalists: (a) each worker would consider himself to be a trustee for the welfare of his fellow labourers and must not become self-seeking; (b) every worker must remain non-violent under all circumstances; (c) every worker must lead a life of self-restraint; (d) while demanding their rights and privileges workers must not forget their duties (e) a labour union must be guided in its policies by the sense of right and not by the desire of gaining cheap popularity.

Mahatma Gandhi opposed the idea of resorting to strikes as a method of solving our industrial problems, unless all other methods had failed. In his opinion, strike in the industry was not only injurious to the labourers but also to the country as a whole. Industrial strikes meant retardation in production which a poor nation like India could ill-afford.

Mahatma Gandhi firmly believed that the state should least interfere in industry which should be controlled by the private sector. At the same time, he realised that the
machinery, which was responsible for large-scale production, could not safely be kept in the hands of private persons or a few capitalists. In his opinion if this was left to the individuals there might be exploitation and the few might be in a position to amass wealth which was not healthy. He, therefore, came to the conclusion that large scale industries should be left to the care of the state, but others as far as possible to individuals.

The year from 1922 onwards saw the emergence of socialist and communist ideas. A left wing emerged within the All India Congress which had been leading the national movement. That wing was represented by leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. After 1927, a left wing leadership developed within the trade union movement also. The communists believed in class struggle. The socialists did not believe in class-struggle but were, definitely, conscious of organising workers and peasants parties with a view to serve their economic interests. They were certainly more interested in saving the workers and the peasants from economic exploitation as compared to liberal national leaders. The Socialist and Communist groups, therefore, organised several workers and peasants parties. Some parties among them organised the workers on the principle of class-struggle and thus, strengthened the workers' movement. The movement of these parties gradually increased their influence in A.I.T.U. Congress and finally captured its leadership. This left wing within the A.I.T.U. Congress gradually grew aggressive which resulted in its split in 1929. Mr. Joshi had to leave the Congress. He formed a
separate organisation of the workers called the Indian Trade Union Federation. A further split in the A.I.T.U. Congress took place in 1931 but the two factions joined hands with each other soon in 1935. In 1938, the Indian Trade Union Federation also decided to join hands with A.I.T.U. Congress which strengthened it further.

The All India Trade Union Congress now came forward with an extensive and bold programme. Its declared objectives now included the establishment of a socialist state in India, socialisation and nationalisation of the means of production, securing of better economic and social conditions, protection of liberties like freedom of speech, association and even strike for the working classes, participation in the national struggle from the point of view of the workers and abolition of privileges based on caste, creed, race, community or religion. This party of workers succeeded in doing some useful work for them though its membership did not increase very much.

The success of the All India Congress in the elections of 1937 raised the hopes of the working class. They had been cooperating in the national movement with expectations of benefits to them. But the Congress ministries mostly belied their hopes. More than the workers, the Congress was under the grip of the capitalists which resulted in the Bombay Trade Union Dispute Act, police firing on the strikers in Bombay, banning of labour meetings and imprisoning of labour leaders, all against the interest of working class.
According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Labour in the real sense of the term is that which produces useful articles. Useful articles are those which support human life, such as food, clothes or houses and enable men to perfect the functions of their own lives to the utmost and also to exercise a helpful influence over the lives of others. The establishment of big factories with a view to getting rich may lead a person into sin. Many people amass riches but few make a good use of it. Accumulated wealth which leads to the destruction of a nation is of no earthly use. The capitalists of modern times are responsible for widespread and unjust wars which originated from the covetousness of mankind.\(^5\)

According to Mahatma Gandhi, the Ahmedabad labour union was a model for the entire country to follow. Its basis was non-violence. It had its hospital, its schools for the children of the mill-hands, its classes for adults, its own printing press and Khadi depot and its own residential quarters. The organization had never taken part in party politics of the Congress. It influenced the municipal policy of Ahmedabad. It had to its credit very successful strikes which were wholly non-violent. Mill-owners and labour had governed their relations largely through voluntary arbitration.

Mahatma Gandhi further said that if he had his way, he would regulate all the labour organizations of India after the Ahmedabad model. It had never sought to intrude itself upon the All India Trade Union Congress and had been uninfluenced by that congress. Mahatma Gandhi hoped that a time would come when it would be possible for the Trade Union Congress to accept the Ahmedabad method and have the Ahmedabad organiza-
tion as part of the All India Union. But Mahatma Gandhi said that he was in no hurry and it would come in its own time.

Mahatma Gandhi said that there was a worldwide conflict between capital and labour and the poor envied the rich. If all worked for their bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated. The rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property and would use it mainly in the public interest. If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no overpopulation and no disease. Such labour would be the highest form of sacrifice. Men would do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this would be labour of love, for the common good. There would then be no rich or poor, no high or low and no touchable or untouchable. If we did so, our wants would be minimised and our food would be simple. We would then eat to live and not live to eat. Thus, according to Mahatma Gandhi, let any one who doubted the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread and he would derive the greatest relish from the productions of his labour and improve his health.

Mahatma Gandhi while addressing the Ahmedabad Labour Union, said that his heart went out for the union and he prayed to God that the bond of affection between them may be stronger and that the union may realize that there was no difference of any kind between them. Mahatma Gandhi said that he went about with the mill-owners and he accepted their hospitality, but his heart was always with the union. He said that it was his fervent prayer to God that he would never be separated...
from the union and that he may lay down his life in the service of the poor.

Let us finally conclude our discussion on the trade union movement in Gujarat from 1917 to 1947. In one's own opinion, we can make certain observations. We must take into consideration the fact that the period from 1917 to 1947 was one of the most turbulent periods in Indian History. It was the time when the country was on the brink of freedom and there was severe enthusiasm in the minds of the people yearning for freedom. It was the time when the national leaders were going to jail and patriotic impulses were being stirred up in the minds of the people. This atmosphere thus inevitably made an impact on the trade union movement of the country and thus also of Gujarat. Mahatma Gandhi's inspiration came not only as a national leader but also as a leader of the working classes. Thus, the urge to get the country free from slavery went along with the urge to rid the working classes from their age-old exploitation at the hands of the capitalists. Thus, had the labour movement of Gujarat taken place a few centuries ago or even a few decades before 1917, then we can say that the results would have been different. Thus, the national movement during the period from 1917 to 1947 did have a very significant impact on the trade union movement of Gujarat during the same period.

Secondly, one can observe as to the extent to which the trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 was successful. There were definitely some shortcomings. At times, workers did not heed to the advice of their leaders and went about their own ways. Disunity became evident on several
occasions. However, it was due to the natural ability of the leaders like Shrimati Anasuyabehn and Mahatma Gandhi to lead the workers and pull them out during times of crisis that ultimately there was glory and success. They took the workers' interest as well as the interest of the mill-owners into consideration and this is where the secret of their success lay. There was thus a healthy collaboration between the two parties.

Thirdly, let us see whether the movement would be successful to-day. We must acknowledge that there are no leaders of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi and Shrimati Anasuyabehn. It has been unfortunate that after our country's independence in 1947 our politicians have been more interested in retaining their seats of power and our capitalists have been more interested in profit making, thereby ignoring the interests of the working classes. There is widespread corruption and violence and thus had the trade union movement taken place today in Gujarat, it is difficult to say that it would show the same success as it did from 1917 to 1947.

Fourthly, the trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 did make a strong impact on the present day labour movement. Its roots go back to the times of 1917 to 1947. Several important acts the Trade Unions Act of 1926 and the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, were passed during these times. Workers to-day, despite all the problems have succeeded in attaining a certain standard of living whereby they and their families can lead a respectable life. Houses, schools, hospitals, etc. are now visible in almost every workers' locality. The efforts of the leaders of these times of 1917 to 1947 were largely responsible in what is being seen...
today and today's worker owes a lot to these pioneering figures.

Thus, the overall view is that the trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 set a shining example to the rest of the country as well as the world that hard work and fierce determination on the part of the workers supplemented with an outstanding leadership can lead ultimately to the amelioration of the working classes and both the employers as well as the employees can mutually benefit.

From 1933, there was a conflict between the Gandhian and the leftist leaders. This continued for about four years. Due to this, even the labourers came under the propagandist influence of the leftists. Many leftist workers from all over India visited Ahmedabad. They gave strike calls in order to undermine the activities of the Majoor Mahajan but they could not succeed. They started their own union and Yusuf, the leader of the union was finally fed up and he left Ahmedabad and went away to Kanpur.

Gandhiji believed that if the Satyagraha had to be wound up due to the upsurge of violence, it was not its failure. It only implied that Satyagrahis had not properly understood its spirit and were not yet trained up. In this respect Gandhiji points out that Satyagrahis must have "the faith that it is all for the best. My own experience hitherto has been that each suspension has found the people better equipped for the fight and control over forces of violence. I dismiss from my mind the fear that it may lead to desertion and disbelief."6

Gandhiji wanted that the Satyagraha must be carried out in all openness without any secrecy and must be launched
after satisfying oneself that the satyagrahis are prepared to suffer to the maximum extent and identify themselves with their cause like sugar in milk. That is why Gandhiji's dictum that he only who has mastered the art of obedience to law should launch the movement of disobedience.

Gandhiji had said, "I think the initial mistake was made when all Kathiawaries were permitted to join Rajkot satyagraha. Thereby we put our reliance on members, whereas a satyagrahi relies solely upon God who is the help of the helpless.

Gandhiji believed that a satyagrahi must fight for a clean cause with clean hands and there can be no satyagraha for an unjust cause or in defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

After the trade union movement spread in Nadiad, it became more active. Unions were formed in various places. Till 1947 the trade union movement in Gujarat was depending on Ahmedabad. The native states prevented the leaders from coming to their states, because they were also involved in the national movement.

Thus, finally we can say that in the native states, the labour movement was taken as the nationalist movement. Rulers would not like Congressmen.

Thus, it was mainly because of the tremendous impact of Mahatma Gandhi that the trade union movement in Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 differed from the other parts of the country. There was a definite ideological link between the various industrial centres of Gujarat which were concerned with the trade union movement. It was thus the Gandhian ideology...
which pervaded the atmosphere affecting the course of the trade union movement.

Thus, the value-oriented approach of Mahatma Gandhi had a definite impact on the trade union movement in the various regions of Gujarat inspiring them towards a common goal of harmonious industrial relations.

Despite the fact that Gandhiji appreciated the sacrifices of innumerable men and women who had laid down their lives for the sake of Bolshevik Revolution; during Stalin's time, Gandhiji was known as a Charlatan and Mountebank.\(^\text{11}\) It seems that Gandhiji did not fit in the role that the Soviet leaders had designed for him. No wonder that he was seen as, according to the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, "A reactionary who hails from the Bania caste,---- betrayed the people and helped the imperialists against them,.... aped the ascetics,.... pretended in a demagogic way, to be a supporter of Indian independence and an enemy of the British,... and widely exploited religious prejudices".\(^\text{12}\) So when Gandhiji died on January 30, 1948, "One country and one only, passed over his death in silence. No message or condolence came from Russia not a word of comment appeared in Soviet newspaper".\(^\text{13}\) It was only after the death of Stalin, that Gandhiji was acknowledged as a great national leader by the new leadership of Soviet Russia.

Thus, in short, the trade union movement of Gujarat from 1917 to 1947 was a successful one leading to amelioration of the lot of the working class. The
Gandhian ideology gave it a distinct flavour and it battled its way to success despite several hindrances in its path. The present generation of workers of not only India but the entire world has a lot to learn from the movement which not only involved hard work but also selfless sacrifices by several leaders whose names have become immortal in the annals of history.