

LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS

IN

SHOLAPUR CITY.

By

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PREFACE

This thesis embodies the results of independent research commenced by me in 1953 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics of the University of Poona. The study was almost complete in 1958 itself, but due to certain unavoidable circumstances it could not be submitted to the University earlier.

The paucity of systematic studies of labour organizations in specific industrial localities in India has been felt by a number of students. Herein, I have made a modest attempt to fill in this gap by presenting a picture of the rise and growth of labour organisations in Sholapur, together with their present-day functioning and problems against the background of the trade union movement in the country as a whole. This study could not be as exhaustive as I would have liked it to be, due to severe limitations in time and other resources at my disposal.

I owe more to Prof. D. R. Gadgil than I can express in words. He has encouraged me and guided me at every stage of the work and given many hours of his valuable time to discussing it with me. However, if I have failed to live up to his exacting standards, the faults are entirely mine.

(11)

The Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, granted me a research fellowship for a period of fifteen months during 1956-57 which enabled me to complete a substantial portion of this work. I am thankful to the authorities of the Institute for the award of the fellowship and other facilities extended to me during the period of the fellowship.

I wish to thank very much the many trade unioners in Solapur who helped me in the collection of the data from the trade union records and other sources as well.

Last, but not the least, I owe a debt of gratitude to my friend, Shri A. R. Kulkarni who has helped me in innumerable ways. But for him the task would have been harder still.

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Chapter I

I N T R O D U C T O R Y

A Trade Union is defined as a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining and/or improving the conditions of the working class. The trade union movement originated and developed in the western countries as a consequence of the appearance of the newly created employer-employee relationship. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the European countries a new powerful class of industrial capitalist entrepreneurs gradually came to the forefront. Along with it came into existence a class of industrial labour, mostly of factory workers. The hard conditions of the peasantry and the artisans in the rural areas and the new openings in urban areas caused a drift from rural to urban areas. Prof. G. D. H. Cole while describing this process in England, the pioneer country of the Industrial Revolution, observed :

"Driven from the land by enclosures, made redundant or exposed to the competition of child-labour by the new machines, exposed to relentless persecution because of the fears engendered in the mind of the governing classes, both

¹ Prof. G. D. H. Cole, "A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1925", The Labour Publishing Company Ltd. (1925), Vol. I, p. 39.

by their misery and by the awful portent of the Revolution of France, and enwalled in the hideous, stinking purlieus of the new factory town, the workers underwent a long agony, from which they emerged at length exhausted and docile, into the Victorian era. In this age of misery, and as a child of this misery, the British Labour Movement was born."

The present industrial age has witnessed a conflict between the capitalist and labour classes that have emerged from it. The workers have no other weapon to defend themselves from the injustice inflicted upon them by the employers except their organised strength. This explains the formation of trade union organisations all over the world.

1.2 Changing idea of the Society and the Role of the Trade Unions

The activities of trade union organisations in the early days were looked upon with suspicion both by the employers and the governments. Various legislative measures were enacted by governments of different countries prohibiting the formation of workers' combinations. It was inevitable that trade unions had to develop in an hostile environment. Their struggle for mere existence was carried on for a pretty long time in every country. Their members in early days, had never expected to be

treated fairly and they had to fight against the taint of illegitimacy. Even the public in general was also not so sympathetic towards this movement. However, ultimately the trade unions were successful in their struggle for survival and the formation of the International Labour Organisation in 1919 marked the universal acceptance of the trade union movement by the participant government.⁴

The trade unions all over the world captured the attention of the governments of their respective countries to the conditions of the workers, which resulted in the enactment of labour legislation. By using the available machinery for conciliation and arbitration, by resorting to strikes and organising demonstrations, by undertaking ameliorating activities, trade unions grew stronger day by day. With the achievement of industrial progress and social development trade unions in some countries advocated the right of joint participation in the management of production. The profit-sharing scheme, appointment of the workers' representatives on the Board of Directors of factories, demand for equal status for the worker and the management before the law, etc. indicate the ways of approach of modern trade unions. The socialist trade unions even go further and demand that they should have a part in the control of the management of the factory.

The role that trade unions play in a society differs according to the nature of the society and the ideology of the union leadership. The trade unions in the United States strongly believe that free private enterprise can provide a rising level of both industrial efficiency and living standard. They regard collective bargaining not as a temporary expedient to be used but as a permanent device to restrict competition based on wage differences and to secure for the workers what they consider a fair share in the achievement of the private enterprise system of which they are an important part.

The British Trade Unions on the other hand express their faith in the establishment of a socialist society, and the existence of the Labour Party in the country shows their desire to become rulers whenever opportunity comes. The Trade Union Congress played an important part in framing the policy of the Labour Government after the Second World War. It, however, expressed its difference from the Communist ideology by specially emphasising the principle of parliamentary democracy.

In France there are various trade union organisations on a national plane with ideologies ranging from syndicalism to the socialist philosophy of class struggle. The existence of Christian trade unions is also a peculiar feature of the French trade union movement. The split among the socialists and communists leads to further

disunity among the French trade unions.

Under the Soviet system, a worker and a manager do not belong to the opposing classes. They are both workers of the socialist economy pursuing one and the same goal, namely the building up of a communist society. It is also claimed by the Soviet trade unions that they take an active part in drafting the legislation pertaining to industry and labour. On the other hand, they are strongly condemned by the Western democrats as appendages of the totalitarian state.

1.3 Need for a Scientific Approach Towards Trade Unionism

Problems of labour in India are coming to the forefront every day. The tremendous growth of trade unionism in our country after the independence exhibits the new strength acquired by this movement. The statistics tabulated below show this growth in a graphic manner (Table ^{No.} 1.3.1).

The number of trade unions in India during these seven years shows an increase of more than 100 per cent. Though the increase in the membership of these unions cannot be counted because less than half of the unions did not submit their annual returns to the Registrar of Trade Unions, yet from the available data it can be said

Table No. 1.3.1 : Registered Trade Unions in India with their membership (1947-1954).

Year	No. of registered Trade Unions	No. of Unions furnishing information	Membership of Unions submitting returns			Average membership per union	Percentage of women to total
			Men	Women	Total		
1947-48	2,766	1,620	15,60,630	1,02,299	16,62,929	1,026	6.2
1948-49	3,150	1,848	18,31,514	1,19,355	19,60,107	1,061	6.1
1949-50	3,522	1,919	16,88,887	1,19,565	18,21,132	949	6.6
1950-51	3,766	2,002	16,48,996	1,06,424	17,56,971	877	6.1
1951-52	4,623	2,556	18,46,992	1,36,257	19,96,311	781	6.8
1952-53	4,934	2,718	19,36,233	1,56,567	20,99,003	772	7.5
1953-54	6,029	3,295	19,25,446	1,76,476	21,12,695	641	8.4

Source : The Indian Labour Year Book 1954-55 (published in 1957), page 149.

that the total membership of the unions increased by more than 25 per cent. The declining trend in the average membership of the unions indicates that a number of smaller unions have sprung up during this period, while the percentage of female membership in the unions shows that more women are taking interest in the activities of the unions.

All the major national controversies in our country are bound up in one way or the other, with the problems of labour. The trade unions are trying to exert more and more influence on the government by various means. Many sessions of the Parliament or the State Assemblies have witnessed mammoth demonstrations of workers putting a number of demands and urging the governments to pay immediate attention to their grievances. Labour processions during the strike or lock-out have often ended in "lathi" charges, tear-gassings or police-firings followed by arrests of union leaders. The labour ministry in every state has to go through heaps of memoranda and letters of the unions, while series of interviews have to be granted to the deputations of the trade union organisations. The Indian legislatures have to put the problems of labour on their agenda every year, either in the form of introducing a new bill or amending the previous one. The labour and industrial courts are busy in giving judgments and awards on various suits

while the complaint is often made that justice is not administered in due time.

The Indian Government has introduced a number of legal measures after the independence with the hope of creating industrial harmony in the country. Various schemes like the Provident Fund, Employees' State Insurance etc. are hotly discussed by the labour class in India and it is expressed that though these schemes are good in themselves they do not help the workers much in raising their present standard of living. Hence, a general demand to increase the wage level is being made in all quarters of the trade union movement.

With the acceptance of the principles of planned economy for our country, the problems of labour have assumed special significance. The draft of the First Five Year Plan admitting the importance of the labour's co-operation for the success of the plan remarked:

"The workers must, of course, as members of the community have the full benefit of the social services and facilities available to any other section. Appropriate measures, however, must be taken to meet their peculiar difficulties and to remove their special hardships."²

² "The First Five Year Plan" Government of India, Planning Commission.(1951) p.570.

The Working Paper prepared by the Economic Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission has³ placed emphasis on "bridging the gap between the haves and the have-nots and enhancement of the well-being of the weak and unorganized sections of society", because the "achievement of social justice is a necessary condition for releasing the productive energies of the people."

Under such circumstances, the traditional outlook of looking at the problems of labour as an undesirable task must be replaced by looking at them with sympathy and concern. At the Indian Labour Conference in 1953, the then Union Minister for Labour, Shri V.V.Giri frankly stated :

"The old days, whether they are good or bad, are not going to return. Labour will no longer accept the conditions which they accepted five or ten years ago. Prudence, therefore, demands that we adjust ourselves to the changing conditions of the world rather than wait and wait for the world to adjust itself to our ways and moods. If the employers realise this, they will see a ray of hope on the horizon."⁴

The decision of the Government of India to shape our economy on the Socialist Pattern as a means to the establishment of a welfare state has a special significance from the point of view of labour.

³ Second Five Year Plan - The Frame work, The Publications Division, Govt. of India (1955), page 54.

⁴ The Economic Weekly, Vol. VI, No. 2, page 59.

Thus the recognition of the important role of labour in our economy demands a detailed and systematic study of its problems. ~~Even~~ Though increasing attention is being paid to the research in labour problems, it is far from adequate taking into consideration the present requirements. Study of labour organisations is the most neglected aspect of the research in our country. The present study is an attempt to investigate into some of the vital problems facing the trade union movement today in the industrial city of Sholapur.

1.4 Inadequacy of Research on Trade Unionism

The University research students, both Indian as well as foreign, have made some attempts so far to study the problems of labour in our country from various angles. Their studies include:

- (a) studies relating to the various labour laws passed by the Central and State governments,
- (b) studies based on the material published from time to time by the Inspector of Factories regarding industrial accidents, workmen's compensation and the benefits received by women workers from the Maternity Benefits Act,
- (c) studies concerning the problems of wages, hours of work and working conditions inside the factories,

(d) studies dealing with problems of housing of industrial workers, their family budgets and levels of living, welfare work done by the employers and the state, social security, industrial relations, etc.

The enquiry committees appointed from time to time by the Central and State governments have collected voluminous material on different aspects of labour problems and have suggested remedies to improve the industrial relations and conditions of labour. The Labour Departments of all the states regularly collect data regarding the consumers' prices, industrial disputes, strikes and lock-outs, working of the labour courts, the registered trade unions, etc. In some states local and industry-wise surveys have been conducted to find out the standard of living of the industrial workers.

The International Labour Office has published some reports on the conditions of industrial labour in India. The regular data published by the office enables us to make a comprehensive study of the Indian labour in relation to other countries in the world.

The central organisations of trade unions usually publish annual reports surveying the efforts of their members for the betterment of their wage level and working conditions. But these organisations pay little attention to the trade union research. As Shri S.D.Punekar has observed:

"India still lacks a Webb or a Cole to write a History of the Indian Trade Unionism or a History of the Indian Working Class Movement. The Indian Trade Union Congress and the various political mass parties have not yet realised that a Labour Research Department is a necessity and a valuable adjunct to their social, economic and political activities."⁵

These remarks have a special significance when the principles of trade unionism have been accepted in all quarters. An organised development of the trade union movement has a great role to play in the years to come. It is therefore, necessary to peep into the internal operations of the unions and the way in which they carry out their day-to-day functions. For this purpose the surveys and reports on a national or state plane serve in giving only a general aspect of the problem, while intricate and important local details are usually, overlooked. Special studies at the local level in all their details are necessary to have a clear understanding of the organization and functioning of the trade unions.

1.5 Why a Local Study?

Local or the branch union being the base of the trade union movement a study of these primary organisations will alone give us the exact nature of the state of affairs inside the unions in our country. Hence an attempt is

⁵ "Trade Unionism in India", New Book Co., Ltd., Bombay(1948), page 9.

made in the present study to investigate into some of the aspects of the internal life of the unions. How the constitution of the union is framed and how it works? What are the main features of the present functioning of the trade unions and how they deal with their financial problems? Whether the collective bargaining is operating successfully and the machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes works systematically? Why strikes take place and how they are conducted by the unions? What are the major problems of trade union unity and what are the repercussions of the present disunity among the workers? Whether the present unions are functioning democratically or not? How far the present leadership of the union is capable of guiding the workers towards the betterment of their lot? What is the role of the political parties and the state in the trade union movement today? These and many others are the main problems that are agitating the mind of every genuine trade union worker.

Sholapur is chosen for this study mainly because it is the third industrial centre in the Bombay State and the major section of the population belongs to the working class. The trade union movement of this city has a historical tradition, of nearly thirty years which also serves as a good basis for the study of this problem.

1.6 Method of Study

Trade unions being social organisations, for an understanding of the present state of their affairs and their problems, it is essential to study their past because past is often supposed to contain a key to the present. As P. V. Young has pointed out, "...in social research we trace historical development in order to reconstruct social processes, to link the present to the past, and to understand the early social forces which have shaped the present, with a purpose of arriving at an understanding which may aid in the formulation of principles of social laws relative to human behaviour of persons, groups or institutions, and to describe conceptually the process of social life."⁶ Trade unionism being a byproduct of industrialisation, I have thought it essential to study at the outset the industrial development of the city. Textile industry being the backbone of the city, a large part of the discussion relates naturally to the growth of cotton textile mills and handloom 'karkhanas' or factories. The reports published by the Millowners' Association, Bombay, on the working of the cotton textile mills were found very much useful

⁶ "Scientific Social Surveys and Research", Brentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1949. P. 190.

for tracing the development of the cotton mills in the city. While studying the growth of the handloom industry, I have drawn mainly upon the previous research and other published material. As regards the growth of other industries the only available source is the annual reports published by the Inspector of Factories, Bombay.

The inquiry into the past of the unions raised varieties of problems, some of which are as follows :- How the unions were formed and developed? What difficulties they had to encounter to maintain their mere existence? What steps they had taken to strengthen their organisations? How various struggles helped the unions in winning the demands of the workers? How a defeat in a struggle gave a setback to the union organisation? How the membership of the union shows a rising or declining tendency? Who were the leaders that were mainly responsible for creating the organisations etc. Answer to these questions will undoubtedly throw more light on the present characteristics of the local or branch unions. However, it is not possible to record all the events but only those which have a special significance from the point of view of trade unionism have been included for the purpose of the study.

In order to probe into the past of the unions I had to rely mainly on the records of the unions, wherever

they were available. The union records contain the union correspondence, memoranda submitted by the union to government officials and Ministers, minutes of the meetings of the managing or the executive committees, annual reports of the union, copies of the annual returns submitted by the union to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay, accounts and membership registers of the unions, resolutions passed by the unions from time to time.

It is not an easy job to go through the union records as the maintenance of the records is much neglected. The disregard shown towards this important task is seen ⁱⁿ ~~by~~ the fact that some of the trade unionists think that the office record has no use at all after the demands of the workers are accepted or an issue is over. Some of them even go to the extent that undue emphasis on keeping of record may lead to the neglect of other important work of the union office-bearers. It is true that in the initial stages of the movement the records could not be maintained properly, and sometimes they had to be destroyed, because of the fear that the names of the workers participating in the union activities might become known to the police department and such names would be enlisted in the black-list. Sometimes, the union offices were searched and records confiscated by the policemen which made it even difficult for the unions to submit their annual returns to the Registrar of Trade Unions.

In such cases the neglect of the maintenance of the union records can be understood, but after the independence such incidents are rare and unions cannot put this excuse in any way. A couple of unions in Sholapur do not have even the proceedings book of their management committee meetings. The minutes of the meetings are written on a piece of paper and punched in a file. Instead of writing the details of the proceedings, only the final decisions of the meeting are noted down and signatures of the members present at the meeting are taken. One finds it extremely difficult to study in detail the functioning of such unions through the records.

It is not uncommon to see the record of the union kept in heaps in a cupboard or on a shelf. No care has been taken to arrange the documents according to the subject, let alone the question of arranging them in a chronological order. It is also found that some of the important documents are not preserved while unimportant papers like the press-proof of a handbill, personal letters of office-bearers which have no significance from the point of view of union organisation, are carefully kept in the files. Above all, some important papers are not filed at all but kept in a bundle and wrapped in a piece of cloth.

Under such circumstances, there was no other alternative but to go through all these papers and find out

the material important for the understanding of the past of the unions. The notes taken from these records were, no doubt, proved valuable for preparing the historical outline of the trade union movement in the city as a whole.

In addition to this, I had the opportunity of securing the interviews of four textile mill workers who worked in factories even before 1920 and were active in the labour movement since its early days. The information obtained from them was not available in any other form because no records were maintained in early days. The local daily, "Sholapur Samachar" was also useful to some extent in supplying information about the past of the movement. Finally, the regular information on labour organizations published by the Bombay Labour Gazette since 1920 and also the information regarding the membership, office-bearers, income and expenditure, rate of subscription, etc. of the registered trade unions supplied to the Registrar of Trade Unions by the Unions themselves ^{under the Indian Trade Unions Act (1926)} contained in the same journal was very useful. However, the information of the unions, which were not registered under the said Act, was obtained from the union records and oral interviews with the leaders connected with the unions. This study of the history of the unions was further helpful in carrying out the investigation regarding the present working of the union as each union could

be studied in its historical set up.

In order to obtain a detailed information regarding the structure, administration and functioning of the unions, a questionnaire was issued containing nearly 40 questions. Information on union affiliation, membership, rate of subscription, composition of the members of the Managing Committee, unions' welfare and educational activities, functioning of the office of the unions, etc. was collected through this questionnaire. It was hoped in the beginning that union leaders would themselves fill in the questionnaire, but only seven of them responded to this^{re-}quest. In the remaining cases I had to fill in the questionnaire myself by interviews. In 1954-55 when the survey was undertaken, there were 25 unions in Sholapur out of which 23 furnished the information required for the purpose of the enquiry. It was not possible for me to obtain information of the remaining two unions due to the refusal of the leadership of those unions to give any sort of information to me.

I had requested all the unions to supply me a copy of the union's constitution and the accounts of the union for the last two years. In case the leader expressed his inability to do so, I had to copy down the information from the records of the union. A study of all these constitutions enabled me to analyse the organisational structure of the local or branch unions but to get the

idea of the operations of the constitutions it was essential to see the actual day-to-day working of the unions. From the minutes of the managing committee or of annual general meetings of the unions, resolutions passed in these meetings, the way these meetings were conducted, it was possible to see the internal operations of the unions. This also raised the question of democratic functioning of the trade unions. To study this aspect evidence was collected on various controversies inside the unions, on their function, on the way union elections were held, issues on which disciplinary actions were taken on members of the unions, etc. However, one of the difficulties in obtaining first-hand information was that the minutes of the managing committee meetings were not always written in detail. Sometimes, only the final decisions and signatures of the members were seen in the proceedings book, and at times only the signatures of the members present in the meeting were found without even the decisions being noted! Yet all the available material was collected to obtain a broad outline of the internal life of the union.

Having considered the inadequacy of the data thus collected from the records of the union, I requested union leaders to allow me to attend the meetings of their managing committees and the general bodies. Many unions were kind enough to allow me to do so. I got the opportu-

-nity to discuss with the members of the managing committee and even the rank and file workers before the commencement and after the completion of the meetings. I attended public meetings and witnessed demonstrations organised by the unions. I was an observer of the membership drive of the unions and attended on many occasions the labour court, Sholapur, where a union conducted cases on behalf of its members. Further, I was fortunate to see the organisation and conduct of strikes by some unions and was allowed to attend even the meetings of the strike committees during the period of strikes. I must admit that the experience gained by participant observation was helpful to me in many ways, while studying the various aspects of union functioning and administration.

Industrial peace has always been regarded as an essential requirement for the development of the national economy. But it would be incorrect to speak of industrial harmony unless the employers showed their readiness to recognise the trade unions. In this connection, the glimpse of unions' efforts to win the right to bargain collectively presents us a general picture of employer's attitude of not only discouraging the formation of unions in their factories but also of making constant attempts to suppress the unions by all possible means in their early days. Absence of appropriate labour legislation

to smoothen industrial relations has deprived the workers in those days of any machinery to ameliorate their grievances. Similarly, the legislation enacted by the central and the state governments later on to determine the industrial relations between the employers and workmen needs careful examination, taking into consideration its actual working. An attempt is made in this study to examine the experience of the trade unions in Sholapur about the working of the legal machinery to settle the industrial disputes. For this purpose, a broad survey of the working of the industrial and labour courts as well as the conciliation proceedings was necessary to find out how far this machinery has proved useful to establish harmonious industrial relations. The data relating to the number of cases filed and decided every year, the number of cases pending after every three months, the issues involved in those cases, the nature of the decisions, etc. were compiled partly from the material published every quarterly in the Bombay Labour Gazette and partly from the data supplied to me by the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour, Bombay. In order to get myself acquainted with the difficulties of the unions in dealing with the conciliation and arbitration machinery, discussions with the union leaders as well as with the lawyers were useful to a great extent. Investigations into the working of Joint Committees between the union and the management, wherever they were

formed, were undertaken to find out to what extent the industrial democracy has made progress in Sholapur.

Perhaps the most intricate, yet burning problem in the trade union movement is the problem of strikes. The month-wise data regarding the number of strikes, the number of workers participating and man-days lost in each strike, the duration, the result and the causes of the strike are published, in the Bombay Labour Gazette. I collected as much information from the union records, press reports and oral interviews with union workers about these strikes which were 129 in number between 1920-1954. From the data thus collected I made attempts to analyse them in order to find out what relationship exists between the various aspects of the strike activity. For example, relationship between duration and result, causes and man-days lost, number of strikes and their results, etc. Similarly, an attempt was made to study the seasonal variations in strikes. It was interesting to study how many strikes were sponsored by the unions and the relationship of these strikes with the duration, result, and causes of strikes. The data were helpful in finding out the answers to the important questions like (a) Do the unions instigate strikes? (b) What are the issues involved in the strikes sponsored by the unions? (c) Do the strikes organised by the unions yield better results than those not organised by the unions? It was

further possible from the data collected, to find out peculiar features of the strikes in each industry and also to study the annual variations in these strikes. Similarly efforts were made to investigate into the relationship between the rising cost of living and the strike activity of the workers.

It is admitted in all quarters of the trade union movement that outsiders have played and even to-day are playing an important role in the union work in our country. The problem of working-class leadership is being discussed in India since many years but very little has been done in this direction. Hence, I thought it necessary to make a special survey of trade union leaders in Sholapur which would throw some light on the present level of trade union leadership on a local plane. I could obtain exhaustive interviews of 34 office-bearers of the unions. Care was taken to see that each person chosen for the case study should become as far as possible a representative one. Further, emphasis was not merely laid on the life history of the individual leader but his views and attitudes on various aspects of trade union movement were also taken into consideration.

This arduous task could not have been carried out without healthy and full-fledged co-operation of the trade union functionaries. It is true that some of the union officials did think that this investigation would be of

no use to the movement as such and were rather reluctant to give the required information. But in general it must be admitted that the trade union workers gave a good co-operation. Without their consent it was practically impossible to attend the meeting of the managing and the executive committees. Many office-bearers actually helped me in going through their files and records in their offices and sometimes they had to postpone some of their engagements for this purpose. Further, discussions with various union officials enabled me to see the problems before them very closely and I could also get in touch with the controversies going on in the trade union sphere. With the help of some union workers I could observe the different activities carried out by the unions and the difficulties that they had to encounter in doing so. I found that a majority of the trade union workers were aware of the shortcomings in the movement and they claimed that these shortcomings would be eliminated during the course of time. It was an interesting experience to discuss on the same issues with persons of different ideologies and convictions. Some of them tried to impress upon me about their capacity to effectively lead the workers even in times of difficulties and others were keen on advising me what conclusions I should draw after the collection of the data. However on the whole the co-operation given by trade union officials was certainly more than I had expected before undertaking the work of collecting the data.

Chapter II

GROWTH OF INDUSTRIES IN SHOLAPUR

Sholapur was a flourishing trade centre even before the city came into the British possession on the 14th May, 1818. Large quantities of grocery, ginger, garlic, safflower, betel, surangi and other valuable products were brought from the neighbouring villages to Sholapur. It was also a centre of salt and betelnut trade between the Ratnagiri coast and the inland tracts, and for cotton, coarse cotton cloth and saris from the surrounding¹ villages.

Sholapur had no metal roads till about 1850 and all traffic went over fair-weather tracks on pack bullocks. During the four rainy months the tracks were impassable and for about two months afterwards the passage was made most difficult by the black soil and the innumerable streams on the way. During the eight dry months also the tracks were neither smooth nor easy for carts. But the communication improved much when the southern-branch of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway was made to pass through the district in 1859. Besides the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway tract was constructed in the nineties that joined Hotgi and Gadag.

¹ "Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency", Vol. XX, Sholapur (Government of Bombay), 1884, pages 254-274.

The chief agencies for spreading the imports and gathering the exports were trade centres, markets, fairs, villages shops and travelling carriers. The cultivators had generally their "adatyas" or middlemen in Sholapur through whom they sold their produce. The export trade of the district was chiefly carried on by money-lenders to whom the farmers gave their produce for repayment of loans. The import trade was chiefly carried on by wholesale traders and other petty local traders who often brought their stock from wholesale traders.

Even though cotton was the chief commodity of export from the Sholapur market, almost all the cotton exported came from outside of the district. Of the cotton which once drew to Sholapur a number of Indian as well as foreign merchants from Bombay, much came from the north and south-east of the Nizam's territory as well as Bellari, Talikoti and other parts of the Bombay-Karnatak. In the year 1866 when steam presses were erected in Sholapur, the cotton sent by rail and road to Bombay amounted to 28,000 full-pressed bales and 80,000 bundles a year.

The Bombay industrialists had to incur heavy expenses in sending cotton to Bombay from the cotton-growing region and bringing back the finished products to the villages. To the Bombay cotton purchaser in the Bijapur District,

cotton cost more than Rs. 60 per khandi. Its transport to Sholapur by car cost Rs. 4 1/2 and by rail from Sholapur to Bombay cost Rs. 20.² Similar expenses had to be incurred in despatching the manufactured cloth to this area. Naturally, some of the Bombay millowners thought it convenient to start new cotton mills in Sholapur, being a city nearest to the cotton belt in the Deccan, and in the 1877 the Sholapur spinning and weaving Company Limited began its working in Sholapur. The Company had a nominal capital of Rs. 3 lakhs,³ and was managed by Messrs. Morarjee Gokuldas and Co. of Bombay. The machinery driven by two engines, each of 40 H.P. worked 20,380 spindles and 175 looms and employed 850 workers.⁴

The development of the handloom industry in Sholapur seems to have commenced in the regime of the Peshwas. The building of roads and other means of communications accelerated the expansion of this industry. It is reported that 6,425 handlooms were working in Sholapur in 1872. But this figure appears to be somewhat exaggerated because in 1880 it was estimated that nearly 6,000 handlooms were working in Sholapur which was supposed to be the biggest

2 "Sholapur District Gazetteer", 1884, p. 265.

3 Out of this capital only 44 shares, each consisting of Rs. 1000 were held locally.

4 "The Sholapur District Gazetteer" reported that in 1884 a temporary male worker was paid 4 annas a day while a female worker or a boy was given 2 1/2 annas per day only which was nearly half the wage rate in Bombay (vide p. 250).

handloom centre in the Bombay Deccan. By this time, the handloom "karkhana" as a unit of work had made a definite progress in Sholapur due to the constant efforts of an enterprising Padmashali weaver. He started his work on one loom as an independent weaver but increased the size of his establishment and by 1880 had erected a small handloom "karkhana" with 20 looms. This weaver was the pioneer in introducing not only the "karkhana" system but had in those days introduced fly-shuttles on pit looms and also new patterns of cloth.

2.2 Development of Industries Prior to 1913.

The progress of the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mill was so rapid that in 1908 "B" unit of the mills was added in the same compound which had almost doubled the capacity of the mills. The successful operation of the mills attracted the attention of other entrepreneurs of Bombay who were desirous of extending their activity. Accordingly, the Narsinggiri Mills was registered in 1890, but actually started working in 1898. It was first a spinning mill to which in 1906 the weaving department was added. The initial capital of the company was Rs. 10 lakhs only.

The Laxmi Cotton Manufacturing Co., Ltd. was established in 1896 by Messrs. Lakhmidas and Co. with an authorised capital of Rs. 16 lakhs. A total of 32,280 spindles

and a preparatory machine was installed with a 1,500 H.P. engine which actually started work in December 1898.⁵ In 1903, an order was placed for an additional 10,500 spindles with the necessary preparatory machinery and in 1905, a separate loomshed sufficient to accommodate 1,100 looms was constructed while an order was placed for 513 looms. These looms were received and erected in 1906. In 1907 a further order for 266 looms was placed and these started working in 1908. A small dye-house was also added in 1907.

The Jam Shri Ranjitsinghji Spinning and Weaving Co. Ltd. was founded in Sholapur in 1907 with an Authorised Capital of Rs. 10 lakas. The company had 868 mule spindles and 19,952 ring spindles, while 511 looms were working. This mill did not show any remarkable progress before 1914.

The Vishnu Cotton Mills Ltd. was founded by the Bombay Company Ltd. in 1910 which was started with an Authorised Capital of Rs. 30 lakhs. However, the capital issued was actually Rs. 24 lakhs only. At the beginning the mills had 32,460 spindles and 770 looms along with the necessary preparatory machinery such as winding, warping, sizing etc. In 1912, 53 additional looms were erected making a total of 823.

5 It is said that this mill was built during the famine period by giving the labourers parched grams every day instead of wages. The workers of Sholapur even now call this mill "Futane Girani" (futane - parched; girani - mill). *gram*

During the First World War the textile mills in Sholapur experienced somewhat prosperous conditions owing to the impossibility of obtaining normal imports of manufactured cloth from abroad. But due to the difficulties in securing the machines and heavy chemicals, the industry could not extend its limits remarkably. In 1917 all the mills in Sholapur together had a paid-up capital of Rs. 65,84,050 while the total number of spindles and looms was 2,35,278 and 3752 respectively. The amount of cotton consumed was 30915 bales. All this indicates that by the end of the First World War, Sholapur had already become the third industrial centre in cotton textiles in the Bombay Presidency.

Even though the textile mills started competing with the handlooms in Sholapur by producing coarse count women's garments, the handlooms could withstand the competition with success. As Shri N.M.Joshi has remarked:

"That competition had not intensified as the prices of the handloom sarees were only slightly higher than, or sometimes equal to the prices of mill-made sarees, and these were readily paid by the consumers who showed a marked preference for the handloom sarees, which were considered more durable than the other sarees."⁶

⁶ Shri N.M.Joshi, "Urban Handicrafts of the Bombay Deccan" (1936). Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona. p.70

The Sholapur Taluka Settlement Report in 1906 estimated that the total number of looms in the city was 7900. The same Report also pointed out that by about 1900, Sholapur exported handloom cloth worth Rs. 12 lakhs per year as against Rs. 5,76,000 in 1872.⁷

A peculiar feature of the handloom industry in those days was the emergence of the stockists who in some cases also acted as financiers. They advanced loans to "Asamis" or master weavers and supplied raw materials such as yarn or dye-stuffs. They also kept an eye on the changes in designs and patterns and thus guided the 'Asamis' in the production according to the needs of the market. This period also witnessed a further development of the Karkhandari system in Sholapur. With the progress of this system, the contract work also came into prominence on a large scale and the number of independent weavers was gradually on the decline.

2.3 1918 - 1938

After the end of the First World War the countrywide depression that followed it, retarded the growth of the cotton textile mills considerably. No new mill was started after the First World War as the advantages of the local conditions could not be utilised any further. The coarse

7 "Sholapur Taluka Settlement Report, 1906". P.51.

quality of cloth that was produced in the Sholapur Mills was satisfying the needs of the markets prevailing in the adjoining areas. It is also argued that the difficulties in obtaining sufficient supply of water to the mills was also a factor for not starting new mills in Sholapur. The mill managements in Sholapur, before the First World War had recommended a scheme of increasing the water supply with their own finances but the Municipality did not find their terms suitable. Further, the township of Barsi was gradually coming to the forefront due to its nearness to the cotton belt. With the opening of the Barsi Light Railway the export of cotton was made through Barsi rather than through Sholapur. The foundations of Lokamanya Mills and Jayashankar Mills in 1922 shows the advantages the centre was enjoying.

The cotton textile industry shows a tendency of increase in the number of spindles and looms rather than opening of new mills during this period. In the year 1923 all the mills together had Rs. 65 lakhs as capital while 2,47,456 spindles and 4457 looms were in operation. The total quantity of cotton consumed during the same year was 41220 bales. A remarkable development in the post-war period was the starting of the "C" unit of the Sholapur Mills which made the total capacity of the mills upto 1,11,360 spindles including about 6,000 doubling spindles, and 2,234 looms. A big dye and a bleach house with a mercerising

plant was also erected while a spinning plant was added in the same year. The mills did not show any signs of growth till 1931 when the capital remained the same while the spindles increased by 40,000 and looms by 1,000. Even till 1937, no addition was made in spindles while a few hundred looms were added. The production of the mills also did not show any sign of rise. The cotton consumed by all the mills in 1931 was 45,541 bales while in 1937 the same was 41,852 bales only. Thus, the profits of the mills between 1927-1937 show a sign of decline. Some of the mills had to incur losses as a result of depression in the industry, which can be clearly seen from Table ^{No.} 2.3.1

The handloom industry in Sholapur continued its existence during this period as it was specialising particularly in the branch of women's garments. The difficulties of securing yarn and chemical dyes continued to haunt the handloom weavers who had to pay high prices for the raw materials. This made the industry more and more dependent on the financiers which resulted in the introduction of the contract system on a wider scale in Sholapur.⁸ A large number of stockists with extensive business operations appeared in Sholapur market during the post-war period. Dr. R.G.Kakade while discussing the growing influence of the financiers in Sholapur pointed out:

⁸ N.M.Joshi, "Urban Handicrafts of the Bombay Deccan". G.I.P.E. Poona, 1936.

Table No. 2.3.1 : Profits in Rupees of the Textile Mills
in Sholapur (1927-1937).

Year	Sholapur	Vishnu	Laxmi	N.C. Mills	Jam Mills
1927-28	7,05,267	9,86,210	9,47,510	2,57,493	1,51,357
1928-29	2,00,965	6,41,854	7,67,625	3,04,898	1,49,060
1929-30	3,42,154	6,53,583	6,13,128	3,32,954	1,16,350
1930-31	2,45,069	17,371	(1,92,494)	(4,61,092)	1,03,233
1931-32	2,72,159	3,33,970	2,52,293	(6,03,860)	1,64,038
1932-33	1,72,360	3,30,492	2,68,792	1,02,092	84,395
1933-34	60,526	3,15,340	56,004	2,055	(915)
1934-35	1,43,313	3,80,360	1,74,825	1,20,298	44,308
1935-36	63,890	1,00,115	(77,571)	60,276	54,428
1936-37	7,948	2,42,307	(753)	(1,84,744)	41,455

Source : compiled from the Annual Reports published by the Millowners' Association.

"During the years of depression the individual weaver could not find it convenient to work on his looms and he was compelled to work in the handloom karkhanas. This competition within the industry resulted in ^{the} growing ~~the~~ influence of the karkhana system. The increasing depression in the industry showed a tendency for the displacement of the independent weavers to the handloom worker. Thus from artisans they have turned into proletariat."⁹

Mr. Telang's report on the weaving industry in the Bombay Presidency submitted to the Bombay Government in 1928 shows that out of 16,997 fly-shuttle looms in the whole of Bombay Presidency more than 6000 looms were situated in Sholapur alone. But Mr. N.M.Joshi after investigations in 1932 estimated that 7500 handlooms were operating in Sholapur. In the same year 30 karkhanas worked with 5 to 10 looms while in 100 karkhanas there were 11 to 20 looms and 50 were having between 21 to 50 looms. According to the findings of Mr. N.M.Joshi the karkhana system in these days prevailed in Sholapur with the virtual exclusion of the independent weavers. The annual exports from Sholapur in the beginning of 1932 was 12 lakhs of saris with a value of 48 lakhs.¹⁰

9 Dr. R.G.Kakade "A Socio Economic Survey of Weaving Communities in Sholapur", G.I.P.E. 1947.

10 Mr. N.M.Joshi, "Urban Handicrafts of the Bombay Deccan", G.I.P.E. 1936. p 117.

In 1938 certain sections of the Factories Act 1934 were made applicable to the handloom factories employing twenty or more persons. Accordingly, in 1938, in the whole of Bombay Presidency 434 handloom factories were registered, of which 395 were located in Sholapur alone. However, the number of powerlooms in Sholapur in the same year was 39 only. The Report of the Factory Inspector in 1937 remarked that, "The industry is not in a prosperous condition and the conditions under which the workers live and work leave a lot to be desired."¹¹

There was no remarkable development of other industries during this period in Sholapur. In 1927 a dyeing and bleaching factory was started employing 52 workers. This factory was mainly doing the work of dyeing and bleaching yarn for the master weavers. In 1929 the number of workers employed in the factory rose to 68 but in 1935 the factory showed a rapid expansion and the number of workers employed rose to 127. In 1935 three more factories were registered under the Factories' Act, namely, a tanning factory employing 21 workers, a saw mill employing 32 workers and an oil mill employing 25 workers. The Annual Report of the Factory Inspector, Bombay in 1937 reported the following factories in Sholapur.

¹¹ Annual Factory Report, Bombay Province (1937), Government of Bombay publication (1938), page 28.

Table No. 2.3.2Registered Factories in Sholapur other
than Textile Mills in 1937

Name of the Industry	No. of factories	No. of workers employed
Bidi	6	73
Oil Mills	3	87
Saw Mill (Wood)	1	29
Tanning	1	39
Dyeing and Bleaching	1	127
Total	12	355

Source:

Data collected from the annual report of the Factory Inspector, Bombay, 1937.

However, the number of registered factories does not give a complete picture of the growth of small-scale industries. For example, in 1937 the Labour Gazette reported a strike in 20 bidi concerns employing 865 workers¹² while the Report of the Factory Inspector gave the number of registered factories as only 6, employing 73 workers. This shows that a number of unregistered factories existed in Sholapur which were employing less than 20 workers, but for want of evidence on records their actual number ^{could not} ~~cannot~~ be found out.

12 "The Bombay Labour Gazette", Vol. XVII No. 3, p.169.

2.4 Industries During the Second World War.

The outbreak of the Second World War was a boon to the cotton textile industry in Sholapur. The industry survived during the war period and the unprecedented rate of lucrative profits of the millowners vividly shows the "prosperity" of the industry. The night^t-shift was started on a large scale in 1939 which increased the production to a great extent. The Sholapur Mills that could distribute a dividend^a of 6 percent in 1940 increased the same upto 40 per cent in 1943 and 1944, while the Vishnu Mills had increased the same during this period from 8 per cent to 34 per cent. The Laxmi Mills was running at a loss in 1937 but it distributed 75 per cent dividend in 1944. The reserve funds of the mills during the war period exceeded their paid up capital. For example, the Jam Mills which had nearly Rs. 8 lakhs as paid up capital had more than Rs. 11 lakhs as reserve fund in 1945. The Vishnu Mills in 1944 capitalised Rs. 16 lakhs of the reserve fund and one cumulative preference share of Rs. 250 at 5 per cent per annum was given to each holder of an ordinary share by way of bonus. Thus capital of the mills was doubled making a total of Rs. 32 lakhs. The capital of the Sholapur Mills was increased from Rs. 8 lakhs in 1940 to Rs. 16 lakhs in 1941 which was further doubled in 1944. The prices of shares of the mills also show a remarkable rise. The Laxmi

Mills shares of Rs. 250 each fetched a price of Rs. 400 which shot up to 1905 in 1943. The Sholapur Mills in 1943 had a reserve fund of Rs. 131 lakhs while more than Rs. 9 lakhs were held as "other funds". In the same year Rs. 8 lakhs were accounted for the Depreciation Fund and the mill earned a profit of Rs. 91 lakhs.

It is a noteworthy fact that in spite of price controls and the excess profits tax imposed by the Government, the mills in Sholapur prospered during the war days. The mill-owners took the fullest possible advantage of the situation created during the war due to scarcity of cloth and yarn, while their augmented profits helped them tremendously to strengthen their financial resources.

The handloom industry, on the other hand, had to rely completely on the mill-made yarn and the reduction in the supply of yarn due to stoppage of imports exposed the handloom weavers to face the difficulties in obtaining the supply of yarn. The local mills began to appropriate more of their yarn and left very little for the requirements of the handlooms. After 1943 ceiling prices of yarn were fixed by the Government of Bombay but for want of proper machinery for distribution, ~~the~~ blackmarketing in yarn was rampant. The Sholapur Handloom Weavers' Enquiry Committee observed:

"Yarn dealers started hoarding with a view to

cornering supplies. This left the weaving community entirely at the mercy of those yarn dealers. As this went on unchecked, conditions became scandalous and securing yarn became a very difficult problem. Owing to shortage of yarn a good many looms had to remain idle. This led to great discontent among the weavers. As the technique of controlling supplies and distributing the same was introduced in other fields, it appears that a system of distribution of yarn came into vogue from 1st January 1945. But even this could not greatly improve the position of yarn supply, as the quantity offered fell far short of requirements.¹³

Owing to lack of control over the prices of handloom production, the merchants were in a position to charge high prices. The above committee admitted that the handloom fabrics produced in Sholapur were sold in a retail market at prices which were 50 to 60 per cent higher than their cost price. "But in spite of the enormous prices that the ultimate consumer has to pay the condition of the actual producer (weaver) has not materially improved, most of the profit going to the middleman."¹⁴

¹³ "Report of the Sholapur Handloom weavers Enquiry Committee", 1948. Published by Government of Bombay, page 7. According to the estimates of this Committee, the monthly requirements of the yarn were 33 lbs. per loom while the average monthly quote per loom did not exceed 20 lbs.

¹⁴ Ibid., page 6.

The number of handlooms during the war period shows a remarkable rise and it was estimated by the Sholapur Joint Yarn Distribution Committee that in 1945 the total number of handlooms in Sholapur was approximately 14,000. The total population dependent on this industry as estimated by the said Committee during the same period was not less than 80,000.¹⁵

There was no significant development during the war years in any other industries except the bidi factories. In 1944, there were 26 registered Bidi concerns employing 1952 workers.

2.5 Developments in the Post-War Period.

The high rate of war-time profits of the mills in Sholapur continued for some years even after the end of the war. In 1946 the Lakshmi Mills earned Rs. 16 lakhs as profit and distributed 53.5 per cent dividend to the shareholders. The Sholapur Mills in the same year earned Rs. 35 lakhs as profit and distributed 25 per cent dividend while the Vishnu Mills was in a position to distribute 30 per cent dividend. The stability of the industry was greatly superior in 1948 than in 1937. During this period the capital of all the textile mills in Sholapur increased from 66 lakhs 17 thousand to 163 lakhs 28 thousand. However, the number of spindles came down from 2,85,732 to 2,73,976 but the total

15 From the Memorandum of the Committee to the Sholapur Handloom Weavers Enquiry Committee, 1948. (Typed copy)

number of looms show a rise from 6398 to 6561 during the same period. The cotton consumed in 1948 was 54612 bales which was only 41852 bales in 1937.

But signs of depression in the industry were observed when the Sholapur Mills employing nearly 13,000 workers was completely closed down in August 1949 as the financial conditions had deteriorated considerably.¹⁶ In January 1950 the Governor-General of India promulgated an ordinance whereby Messrs. Morarka and Co. were removed from the Managing Agency and a Board of Directors appointed by the Government took over the charge of the mills. Sir Vithal N. Chandavarkar of the firm of Messrs. N. Sirur and Co. Ltd. was appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors. The mill started its working in March 1950 under the new management as provided in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Co. (Emergency Provisions) Act 1950 which had replaced the Ordinance. As the directors found that the machinery of the "A" unit was in a very bad state and that it was not possible to work that unit economically, they decided to salvage as much good machinery of that unit as possible and instal it in the "C" unit of the mills. As a result of this, only "B" and "C" units were restarted while "A" unit was closed entirely, throwing thousands of workers on the streets. Some of the old and unserviceable machinery was

¹⁶ A Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay in 1948 remarked that the mismanagement of the mills was one of the factors of this deterioration.

was sold by the directors with the permission of the Government. The old management, however, appealed in the Supreme Court against the Act which the court declared "ultra vires" and the Company was again handed over by the Government to Messrs. Morarka and Co.

The profits of other mills were also dwindling during the post-war years and the millowners thought it desirable to introduce rationalisation and increase the workload. Employment came down to a considerable extent during this period due to the policy of the millowners. Thus only 23,000 workers were employed in 1953 as against 34,000 in 1945 leaving nearly 11,000 workers without any jobs.

The textile mills in Sholapur in 1955 had a total paid-up capital amounting to Rs. 1,79,1600 which shows an increase of nearly Rs. 16,000 over 1948. But the number of spindles and looms decreased slightly. In 1955, the total number of spindles and looms was 2,69,808 and 6466 respectively. However, a large number of spindles were lying idle due to the depression. Out of 2,69,808 installed in the mills only 2,32,755 were working in 1955 while in the same year 451 looms were lying idle. But the total amount of yarn consumed shows an increase over 1948. Thus, in 1955, 55,637 bales were consumed in the mills while in 1948 the same was only 54,612. The number of permanent employees came down to 13,112 in 1955 from 18,409 in 1948.

The increase in the consumption of cotton and considerable decrease in the employment inspite of a large machinery lying idle shows the extent of rationalisation and increase in the workload in these mills.

Table No. 2.5.1 gives the conditions of the textile mills in Sholapur in the year 1955.

2.6 The Handloom Industry.

The handloom industry had to face a severe depression after the end of the Second World War. The profit of the Sholapur District Industrial Co.-operative Association which was essentially engaged in producing handloom products in Sholapur fell down from Rs. 54,304 in 1946-47 to Rs. 9,168 in 1947-48. In 1950, the Association had to incur heavy losses amounting to Rs. 45,084, while the Government of Bombay had to sanction a subsidy of Rs. 16,000 in 1951 to the Association. The prices of yarn were higher after the end of the war when the controls on prices of yarn were lifted. On the other hand, the prices of handloom cloth had fallen considerably on account of easily available mill-made cloth. This reduced the margin of profit of the industry and made it uneconomical for the "Assamis" to carry on the industry. In addition to this, the tightening conditions of the money market increased the cost of holding stocks, while accumulation of huge stocks with the merchants was remarkable.

Table No. 2.5.1 : Working of the Textile Mills in Sholapur - 1955.

Name of the Mill	Total amount of paid up capital in Rs.	No. of spindles installed	No. of spindles working	No. of looms installed	No. of looms working	Approximate cotton consumed in bales*
1. Lakshmi	48,00,000	51,972	46,904	1,219	1,210	10,196
2. Narsinggirji	20,00,000	55,488	46,580	1,170	1,015	12,085
3. Sholapur	47,96,000	95,232	78,743	2,234	2,143	13,208
4. Vishnu	47,66,500	46,496	40,563	1,331	1,291	14,682
5. Jam	15,66,500	20,820	19,965	512	356	5,466
Total	179,29,000	270,008	232,755	6,406	6,015	55,637

* 1 bale = 784 lbs.

Source : The Report of the Millowners Association, Bombay for the year 1955.

The Standing Handloom Committee of the All India Cottage Industries Board in 1949 recommended that certain fields of production should be reserved for the handloom industry. Accordingly, the Government of India prohibited the mills and powerloom factories from manufacturing sarees with borders exceeding 2.5 inches in width or with borders having jari or gold coloured silk-yarn therein. But the Report of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies in 1952-53 stated that the handloom industry had been passing "through a crisis of great magnitude." In the same year, a memorandum of the Sholapur Hatmag Assami Sangh to the Government of Bombay pointed out that nearly 50 per cent of the handlooms in Sholapur were lying idle as they could not compete with the mills. It further stated that mere reservation in the field of production did not help the industry in the absence of regular supply of yarn of the required counts at cheap rates.

The Government of India on the recommendation of the All India Handloom Board had given a further assistance following from a special fund created by the cess imposed on mill cloth at a rate of 3 pies per yard. Accordingly from October 1954 a rebate of As. 2 per rupee on handloom products was given by the Government. Further, as a relief measure for the weavers, the Government of Bombay decided to finance the Co-operative Societies in the form of loans. Sholapur Hatmag Sahakari Mandal received a loan of Rs.50,000

as recommended by the Sholapur District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. But in spite of all these efforts the conditions of industry continued to deteriorate because of marketing difficulties. More and more looms were lying idle as the demand slacked and in the year 1954 the estimated figure of the handlooms in Sholapur was about 7000 only. The local leaders of the handloom weavers and Assamis expressed fears that the industry may have to face utter extinction if substantial protection and marketing facilities are not provided by the Government.

CHAPTER III
HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE TRADE UNION
MOVEMENT IN SHOLAPUR

THE PROBLEMS of the present-day labour in Sholapur cannot be understood properly without taking into consideration the historical background of the labour movement in the city itself. The trade union movement in Sholapur has passed through various stages of its development. A number of organisations came into existence during this period and some of them disappeared after the termination of the dispute. But the valuable experience that was accumulated gradually during the course of history of these unions was useful for others in many ways. It is entirely a different question whether the trade union leadership used it effectively to strengthen their organisations. However, an analytical study of the past movement will bring to the forefront all the major issues of the labour movement in their historical set up.

The task of writing a history of the trade union movement, even on a local plane, is not so easy as it appears to be. Very few unions take necessary care to maintain and preserve their records in good condition, let alone the question of those unions which are non-existent today. However, even the scanty material that is available will enable us, if properly utilised, in judging the merits and demerits of the movement.

"When we expected to find an economic thread for a treatise we found a spider's web, and from that moment we recognised

that what we had first to write was not a treatise, but a history."¹ Thus wrote the authors who had devoted a major part of their life in studying the trade union movement in the United Kingdom. The experience of the Webbs makes it clear that the trade union movement of any place cannot be studied squarely without making efforts to understand how it originated and developed, what were the difficulties they had to face in keeping the mere existence of themselves.

A history of the trade union movement in Sholapur is the history of the achievements as well as of the shortcomings of the working class of the city during the last three and a half decades. The past struggles create enthusiasm in their minds for the future struggles and advise them on what way they should follow and what they should not in the coming days. In order to have a proper evaluation of the experience gained by the movement during this period, it will be convenient to study the history of the labour movement through stages. This will essentially give us a broad outline of the developments that took place in a particular period and the new problems that arose out of this history alone. Hence, an attempt has been made in this chapter to study the history of the labour movement in Sholapur by dividing it into ^{the following} four different periods.

The First Period (Prior to 1934):— This period may be called a period of the struggle for the survival of the trade union

¹ "History of Trade Unionism", S. and B. Webb (Revised Edition) Longmans Green & Co. 1920, Preface, Page viii.

movement in Sholapur. The early beginning of this period can be traced back to 1920.

The Second Period (1934-1938):- This is a period of the struggle for obtaining recognition for the union. This period ends at the beginning of the Second World War.

The Third Period (1939-1945):- This period covers all the years of the Second World War which can be called a period of stabilisation of the trade union movement in Sholapur.

The Fourth Period (1946-1954):- This period may be called a period of rapid progress and advancement in the trade union movement. It shows the new opportunities and possibilities for the growth of the trade unionism which also gives rise to new problems for the movement.

3.2 First Period (Prior to 1934)

The textile mill workers, the most advanced section of the working class in Sholapur were the first to lay the foundations of labour movement in the city. The first signs of their awakening can be observed after the end of the First World War, when the conditions of the workers had been ^{the}worst. They had to work for 12 hours a day in an unhealthy atmosphere. The wages of the skilled workers in the weaving department did not exceed Rs. 28 per month, while the women workers had to work from dawn to dusk to earn Rs. 7 per month. The millowners were kind enough to give a pair of 'dhotis' to the male worker and a

minge-yard 'saree' to the female worker at the end of the year. The conditions of the workers became unbearable with the rising prices. The cost of living index number for Bombay rose from 100 in 1914 to 154 in 1918 which further mounted to 175 in 1919 and reached its peak at 183 in 1920. A wave of strikes swept all over the Bombay Presidency and after the mammoth strike of the Bombay textile workers a spontaneous strike took place in Sholapur on 26th January 1920 involving more than 14,000 workers. The leader of the strikers was one Bhimrao, an ordinary worker in the weaving department of the Narsinggirji Mills and the strike is known as the "Strike of Bhimrao". In order to make the strike successful the workers resorted to whistling, throwing of bobbins and shuttles, breaking of tiles of the roofs and glasses of the windows, etc.² After the strike, the workers marched in a procession and assembled in Hom Maidan where Bhimrao addressed the meeting which was attended even by local citizens, merchants and Government officials. On one day during the strike Shri Manikchand Gujar, a local merchant addressed the meeting and told the workers to form an organisation by collecting subscription of one anna per head for the betterment of their conditions, but the idea was not very much appreciated by the workers.³

The workers decided to send a deputation to the millowners of Bombay to put their demands regarding the dearness allowance

² Oral evidence as reported by an old trade union worker in Sholapur.

³ Oral evidence as reported by an old trade union worker in Sholapur.

and bonus and to arrive at a settlement. Accordingly, ^{Shri} Chand Appabhai, their elected representative went to Bombay to see the owners.⁴ However, no settlement could be arrived at because the millowners refused to negotiate with him and he was informed about his dismissal from the mills.

On 15th February the workers decided in a public meeting to take their wages and go to their villages till their demands were accepted by the millowners. But on their way to the mills there was a clash between the workers and the policemen resulting in a firing that killed 7 workers and wounded several others. The millowners declared a lockout and in the end the strike was unsuccessful. However, the millowners granted 35 per cent dearness allowance in addition to a concession of purchasing 36 seers of Jowar in the mill grain shop for Rs. 2 only, irrespective of the prices prevailing in the market. Most of the leaders of the strikers were thrown on the streets. Many of them, including Ehimrao, had to leave Sholapur in order to search for a new job in other textile centres like Ahmedabad or Bombay.

After the coming into existence of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920, Shri Chand Appabhai and other leaders of the strikes who were victimised but had not left Sholapur, decided to form an organisation of the textile mill workers. In the beginning of 1922 a new organisation was formed with the help of some local leaders. The name of this union was Girani

⁴ In Bombay Shri Chand Appabhai met Shri Baptista Kaka and Lokamanya B.G. Tilak who also supported the demands of the workers. Shri Baptista Kaka issued a statement requesting the workers to remain united and peaceful. Shri Chand Appabhai was a representative from Sholapur to the 1st All India Trade Union Congress held in Bombay in 1920. "Sholapuracha Kamgar" (Marathi), 1945, pages 7 and 8.

Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur, and it was the first attempt to form an organisation of the workers in Sholapur. On 25th February 1922, the union made a joint representation on behalf of the textile workers of all the mills in Sholapur by distributing a leaflet in Marathi addressed to the managers of the mills demanding (1) that all the workers who had been dismissed during the strike of 1920 should be reinstated, (2) that the newly-formed labour union should be recognised by the Sholapur mill-owners, and (3) that all representations of workers' grievances made through the union should receive proper recognition.⁵ The union further gave a notice that if those demands were not accepted within eight days the workers would go on strike. The workers, however, did not wait till that period of expiry of the notice and 18,000 operatives struck work on 2nd March 1922. The strike lasted for 15 days but the workers could not win their demands.⁶ The millowners' attempt to use the blacklegs resulted in disrupting the ranks of the workers. 13 leaders of the strikers were victimised which seriously affected the working of the union. In the month of June in the same year, there was no active union as such in the city.⁷

After the failure of the strike no trace of union activities could be found till 1925 when in June the G.I.P. Railway Staff Union was formed in Sholapur. This union had its head

⁵ "Bombay Labour Gazette", Vol. 1, No. 7, Page 22.

⁶ Normal working of the mills however was resumed on 24th March 1922.

⁷ "Bombay Labour Gazette" Vol. I No. 10, Page 19.
A review made by the Labour Officer, Bombay of the trade unions in the Bombay Presidency.

office in Bombay with members scattered at various stations on the line. The rate of subscription was As. 4 for clerks and As. 2 for menial staff. The Sholapur branch enrolled 430 members with the help of ^vvoluntary workers but it could not do satisfactory work and in April 1926 the membership came down to 200 only. Hence in September 1926, Shri N. M. Joshi and Shri Eakhale undertook the work of reorganising the branch at Sholapur.⁸ Under the presidentship of Shri V. N. Moholkar, the functioning of the union was improved and in 1928 the membership of the union rose to 944. The union maintained a branch office and regular grievances were put forward to the proper authorities. However, all the major grievances were sent through the head office of the union. The union was recognised by the railway authorities on 7th December 1928. A very large majority of the union members were from the low paid staff, but certain of the higher paid employees too had joined the union. According to the railway authorities, the union was "badly conducted" and it used to put forward "impossible demands."⁹

In 1928 the textile mill workers again came to the forefront when the employees in the Sholapur Spinning & Weaving Mills struck work on account of their grievances of low wages. A meeting of the strikers was held and they resolved to remain peaceful and to submit their grievances to the agent of the

⁸ "Bombay Labour Gazette" Vol. VI, No. 4.

⁹ Memorandum submitted by the G.I.P. Railway to the Royal Commission on Labour in India, 1929, Page 51.

mill through a pleader. The local labour leaders issued leaflets to the mill workers with a view to forming a labour union and collected subscription from them to defray the expenses in connection with the printing of the leaflets etc. An "Advisory Board" for the strikers was formed and a deputation of the Board waited on the management who told them that no change has been made in the rates of wages or the accounts of the weavers. The strike soon spread over in all other mills as the workers in those mills also felt their earnings low. Meetings of the strikers were held every day to consider the strike situation and the workers were asked to remain firm and united until their grievances were redressed.¹⁰ The strike lasted for nearly eight months in which a total number of man days lost was 8,97,012.

After the formation of the union, in the first month of the strike, as a branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union, the local leaders invited the officials of the Bombay Textile Labour Union to support the demand of the Sholapur workers. The local leaders also made enquiries about the grievances of the strikers and the labour union submitted to the managements on 9th May 1928 a statement of the workers' demands which included: (1) increase in the rate of wages; (2) one month's notice in case of dismissal; (3) pay for the strike period; (4) no worker should be victimised for having taken part in

¹⁰ The union asked the strikers to go to their villages leaving their addresses at the union's office. Accordingly several strikers left for their villages. "Bombay Labour Gazette" Vol. VII, No. 11, Page 930.

the strike; (5) the system of bribery of jobbers should be investigated and (6) jowar concession should be given as usual.

The president and one of the secretaries of the union who were arrested in connection with the picketing were convicted and sentenced to three weeks' simple imprisonment. On 30th September notices of injunction prohibiting speakers in the strike meetings were served on the officials of the union. The millowners attempted to use "blacklegs" to disrupt the strike. As the memorandum of the union to the Royal Commission on Labour in India stated: "After the prosecution of the volunteers by the police the learned magistrate convicted them to pay a fine from 20 to 30 rupees. The President and the Secretary of the union were convicted under Section 447 and 341 of the penal code rules. Thus ended the picketing, thus ended the strike and thus were the labour leaders placed in their position worse than in what they were before."¹¹

It is rather difficult to obtain the records of the union, yet some documents can be traced which give us a brief idea of the union. Dr. K. B. Antrolikar, a leading Congressman in Sholapur, was the President of the union, while Shri Shah was the Vice-President, and Shri Lalit, a local pleader, was working as the treasurer. Shri P. G. Beke, a correspondent of the

¹¹ Royal Commission on Labour in India. Written Evidence (1930), Vol. I, Part I, Page 213. The union also stated: "At the time of the strike some 8,000 to 10,000 persons had the courage to join the union and fill the regular form, but failure is brought in where the strike ended in favour of the employers. The workers have not the courage to join the union now."

Marathi Daily "Dnyanprakash," was the General Secretary, while Shri Sumant and Kurban Hussain were the Secretaries. All these office-bearers were outsiders but the union had a managing committee of 10 members who were employees in the mills. The union used the Constitution of the Bombay Textile Labour Union which made provision for the branches in other parts of the presidency. The Bombay Textile Labour Union had not framed any rules to regulate the connection between the head office and branch office; neither the local union had framed any rules. The union had 600 members in the beginning which increased by more than ten times as the strike was in progress. The rate of subscription was As. 4 a month for men and As. 2 for women. The union had distributed Jowar during the strike to some of the needy workers on 8th, 9th and 11th September, 1928.

After the strike had been called off ^b by the union the millowners had gone a step further in instituting a civil suit against the members of the union and its executives. In a memorandum to the Royal Commission on Labour in India, the union stated:

"Four mills have joined as plaintiffs claiming Rs. 25,000 as damages they have sustained owing to our activities, picketing etc. as they have put it in their plaint. In their plaint they have stated that they have sustained incalculable damages but as the defendants are not men of means they have brought down the figure to Rs. 25,000. Further, to recover the same they have engaged a legal acumen of the highest standing in

the Bombay Presidency, we mean, the Hon. D. F. Mulla."¹²

The union did not represent to the court that there should be an early hearing, nor did it make any application to set aside the injunction, because the union had not sufficient funds to conduct the case. The millowners took objection as the branch union was not registered under the Trade Unions Act 1927. In this connection, the Bulletin of International Federation of Textile Workers' Association observed:

"In Sholapur there is very disquieting development. The strike has been called off there and the employers have taken advantage of the new law of injunction prohibiting meetings, etc. It is feared that, as the present law stands, unless a definitely registered trade union is in existence, no dispute which takes place and which results in the forming of a union, will be able to be supported."¹³

Even though the work of the union was carried forward by the leaders in spite of heavy odds after the failure of the strike the membership of the union was gradually on a decline. In April, 1929, the union had 800 members which came down to 250 in the month of November of the same year. In the middle of 1930 the union had hardly 125 members on its roll.

¹² "Royal Commission on Labour in India". Written Evidence, 1930. Vol. I, Part I, Page 526. In a letter to the Secretary, International Federation of Textile Workers' Association, the Secretary of the Sholapur Branch union wrote: "This I suppose is the first case in the history of the Trade Disputes in India" (Letter dated 6-10-1928.)

¹³ "The Bulletin of I.F.T.W.A." (Published from London), dated 23rd October. 1928.

Notwithstanding the organisational weakness, the textile workers were becoming more and more politically conscious which was seen in their participation in the national movement of 1930. The resolution passed by the Indian National Congress demanding complete independence for India created a new atmosphere in the country. A new wave of civil disobedience swept all over the country and the workers of Sholapur were in the vanguard of the local struggle that ultimately culminated in the Government's handing over the city to the military authorities and promulgating the Martial Law. The following is the extract from the communique on the "disturbances" at Sholapur issued by the then Directorate of Information, Bombay, on 8th May, 1930:

"The first sign of trouble was noticed when the mill hands of the Sholapur Spinning & Weaving Mill left their mill on the morning of May 7, in pursuance of the instructions which they had received from outside sources that there should be a second day's hartal in consequence of Shri Gandhi's arrest."¹⁴

The strike spread over all the mills which culminated in a huge demonstration in the city joined by other citizens. The local police could not control the situation and ^{the} military was called in the city to maintain law and order. The struggle was ruthlessly suppressed by the military. The Secretary of the Bombay Textile workers, Sholapur Branch, Shri Kurban Hussain ✓

¹⁴ The Indian Annual Register, 1930. Edited by Shri N. N. Mitra, Vol. I, Page 144.

was sent to gallows along with three other local leaders. Several workers were also arrested and put in prison.

As a result of the brutal terror, the union had to suspend its activity for nearly one year, but when the atmosphere became quiet it began to prepare for the new struggle of the workers. Considering the discontent among the workers, the union sent a statement of the workers' grievances and demands, 14 in number, to all the textile mills in Sholapur. Demand for the recognition of the union and other grievances regarding pay and allowances were the major issues causing discontent. As the mills did not concede^{to} these demands and recognise the union, a general strike was announced to take place on the 24th July 1920. The volunteers of the union picketed the mills peacefully, and the strike was successfully organised. But the District Magistrate, Sholapur, issued a notification under Section 42 of the Bombay District Police Act on Shri P. G. Beke, the Secretary of the Union, prohibiting him from making speeches in Sholapur for two months. Shri Beke on receiving the notice proposed to make speeches outside the municipal limits, and therefore, a further notification extending the prohibition within two miles of Sholapur was served on him. On the 9th August a public meeting was held and a conciliation committee was appointed to mediate between the mill authorities and the strikers and to end the strike. The committee, however, subsequently decided not to function as the strike began to fizzle out. The union issued a leaflet

deploring the lack of unity among the strikers and admitted that the strike had failed. The total number of man-days lost during the strike was 1,70,959. This strike had a demoralising effect on the workers and the union again became inactive for some time. The union had only 329 members in 1931-32. The membership of the Sholapur Branch of the G.I.P. Railway Staff Union also declined considerably. In 1931-32 the union had less than 100 members which was further reduced to 65 in the next year and became almost defunct in 1933.

The leaders of the Textile Labour Union were looking after the interests of the workers in other industries and services. The President of the Sholapur Municipality in his oral evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour stated about "one gentleman from the union by name Dr. Antrolkar" who was elected by the union "as a representative of the workers generally,"¹⁵ Before 1930, there was no union of the municipal staff in Sholapur. But the Municipal President himself took the initiative in forming an organisation on 2nd February 1930, named Sholapur Municipal Staff Association. A managing committee of nine persons, each one representing his department was elected with chief officer of the Municipality as its President. In the first meeting of the managing committee, the President of the Association observed that a few members objected to the election of the Chief Officer as the President of the Association to which he replied as follows:

¹⁵ Royal Commission on Labour, Oral Evidence (1930), Vol. I, Part II, Page 469.

" the Association was formed to consider questions of general interest of the municipal staff. When a particular person was fined or punished in some way by the Chief Officer, the remedy was not to run to the Association with an appeal against the Chief Officer. It is a misleading belief that the Association is to work for even such individual small grievances referred to above as they are likely to lead to personal grudges."¹⁶

From the minutes of the managing committee, it is clear that the members did not speak frankly before the Chief Officer and the organisation was similar to the Company Union. Between 25th January 1931 and 18th July 1934, no meeting of the managing committee was held and the organisation was almost defunct during that period. Every member had to pay an entrance fee of As. 8 and the annual subscription of the Association which was progressively increasing with the salary of the person, as listed below.

<u>Monthly Salary</u>	<u>Annual rate of subscription</u>
Below Rs. 30	0- 8- 0
Rs. 30 - 60	1- 0- 0
" 60 - 100	2- 4- 0
" 100 - 150	4- 8- 0
" 150 - 400	9- 0- 0
Above Rs. 400	12- 0- 0

¹⁶ Minutes of the Managing Committee of the Association dated 23rd February, 1930.

The subscription was collected in one instalment and every member had to pay it in advance.

Table ^{No} 3.2.1 gives the number of unions and their membership during the period 1925-34. It seems from the table that the peak year in

Table No. 3.2.1

UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN SHOLAPUR (1925-34)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Unions</u>			<u>Membership of Unions</u>		
	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Unregis- -tered</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Unregis- -tered</u>	<u>Total</u>
1925-26	-	1	1	-	430	430
1926-27	-	1	1	-	200	200
1927-28	-	1	1	-	206	206
1928-29	2	-	2	2944	-	2944
1929-30	2	1	3	1262	215	1477
1930-31	2	1	3	491	215	706
1931-32	2	-	2	429	-	429
1932-33	1	1	2	329	65	394
1933-34	-	2	2	-	394	394

Source: Compiled from union records and Bombay Labour Gazette.

this period was 1928-29, i.e. when the strike of the textile workers had taken place in Sholapur. Since 1930 membership was declining. Even the number of unions registered under the Trade Unions Act, 1926 was also decreasing and in 1933-34

no registered union existed in Sholapur. This was mainly due to the political atmosphere in the country and arrest of a number of union leaders. We have already noted that one of the secretaries of the union was sent to gallows. Yet the movement was not crushed. It survived in spite of innumerable difficulties that were facing them.

3.3 The Second Period (1934-1938)

As a result of the depression, the millowners imposed a 12.1/2 per cent wage cut on the textile workers of Sholapur in 1933. The cost of living index number in Sholapur was declining rapidly. It was 92 in 1930 with 1928 as the base year; it came down to 73 in 1932 and further declined to 69 in 1933. However, the workers were not prepared to accept the wage cut.¹⁷ On 1st December 1933 notice of strike was given to the millowners but suddenly after two days all the leading workers of the union were put under arrest on the charge of treason.¹⁸ In spite of all this the workers went on strike from 15th February 1934. More than 75 workers were either fined or arrested during the strike. In this situation the Communist leaders from other centres in Maharashtra came to Sholapur to make the strike

¹⁷ In the middle of 1933, the All India Textile Workers' Conference was held in Bombay to discuss the situation arising from the wage-cut of the textile workers throughout the country and a decision was taken to organise an All-India Textile Workers' strike. The textile workers of Sholapur were the first to bring the decision into action. "Sholapuracha Kamgar" (1944), Page 27.

¹⁸ The litigations were going on for more than 4 months and severe punishments were given to the active workers and leaders of the strike.

successful and the old leadership greeted the new entrants in the union. Even though Section 144 of ^{the Criminal Procedure Code} ~~Indian Penal Code~~ was promulgated and ban imposed on public meetings in the municipal premises the strike leaders had to hold meetings outside the municipal limits. A strike committee was formed of the leading workers of all the mills which issued a leaflet warning the millowners and appealing the public. It read in part as follows:

"The millowners have allowed the policemen to enter in the mill premises. They helped the policemen of the foreign power to launch repression in the workers' chawls. Thus they have joined hands with the foreign government so that they can continue their fabulous profits. But we will not work peacefully unless we put an end to this treacherous behaviour of them. We are sure that the people and merchants in the city who have sympathy for the Indian freedom will support us in this struggle."

The Communist leaders soon gained influence among the workers and suggested that the union had no advantage in working as a branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. They took initiative in forming a new organisation named ^{the} Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union under the leadership of Shri B. T. Ranadive of Bombay on 22nd May, 1934. The old leadership decided to dissolve the former union and willingly participated in the new union. A manifesto was issued by the new union which stated:

"The textile mill workers of Sholapur fought against the wage-cut for a number of times. The blood of the workers was also shed on many occasions. But they had completely forgotten to build a permanent organisation of their own. The workers come to the union only when there is a strike. Our eyes are now opened during this strike and, therefore, we are forming this new union."

Shri G. D. Sane was the President and Shri R. G. Karhadkar the General Secretary of this organisation. This union put forward a number of demands such as (1) the recognition of the union; (2) the restoration of the old rates of wages and (3) the reinstatement of all the strikers.

The rate of subscription was one anna per month and about 250 workers joined the union, at the close of the first month of the strike. Due to a ban on holding union meetings and arrests of a number of leaders, very few meetings could be held outside the municipal limits and the strike propaganda was mainly carried on by the issue of handbills. The union showed its readiness to negotiate with the employers in order to arrive at a settlement and registered letters were sent accordingly to the managers of all the mills in Sholapur. But some of them even refused to accept the letters and those who accepted did not care to reply them. The union's efforts to end the strike with the mediation of a third party also proved to be a failure. The employers remained firm to the last and did not show any sign of a compromise. The workers

could not hold on for a long time and they resumed their work from 19th May, 1934. Thus, the strike came to an end in which 4,55,776 man-days were lost.

The employers' attitude towards the new union was certainly hostile. The agents of the employers used to petrol the workers' quarters to guard the workers' conscience from the infectious contact of some possible union agitator. Open collection of union subscription was nearly an impossibility from which fact the conditions inside the mills can well be imagined. Workers could admit union organisers in their houses only under the cover of darkness and that too after taking a number of precautions. The union attempted to represent individual grievances to the employers by correspondence, but invariably came up against the stone wall of silence.

If the employers' instrument of coercion on the labourers were economic, those of the bureaucracy were political. The memorandum by the union in 1938 to the Textile Labour Inquiry Committee remarked: "Between 1930 and the installation of the Congress Ministry in 1937, no procession could be taken out in the town and there was hardly an open space that was not closed for the public meetings. Union officials were dogged all the 24 hours by the C.I.D. men and at times even a single official was being watched by as many as three persons. Secret pressure was used to be brought on printing presses not to print anything coming from the union with the consequence that no working class paper could be run and even

handbills could be printed with ^{the} greatest difficulty. For a fairly long period, no landlord could rent his premises to the union so that the union had to go without an office. It was with great difficulty that apartments could be rented even for the private residence of the union officials. During the five years' existence of the union, usually either the president or the general secretary had been away from his post either in jail or under order of externment.

The membership of the union could not exceed 400 during 1935 and 1936, but the general elections of 1937 gave a new impetus to the growth of the union. The union decided to contest the labour seat of Sholapur and an alliance was made between the union and the District Congress Committee. Thus, the local Congress leaders supported the union candidate, Shri R. A. Khedgikar, the Vice-President of the All-India Trade Union Congress. The election manifesto of the union demanded: "48 hours' week, Rs. 30 as the minimum wage, healthy housing for the workers, unemployment allowance and old-age insurance, free and compulsory primary education, freedom of organisation and assembly, release of all political prisoners, cancellation of all repressive laws," etc. The union candidate was opposed by the former member of the Legislative Assembly, Shri Bakhle. Two other candidates, Shri Buzrook and Shri R. Manohar, also contested the seats but latter withdrew his candidature and the former could not gain any support as he was openly supported by the millowners. On 15th February 1937 the election

was held and the union candidate secured 7719 votes as against 973 votes for Shri Bakhle who lost his deposit. Shri Buzrook obtained negligible number of votes.

In the elections the Indian National Congress obtained majority in the Bombay Presidency along with seven other provinces in the country. But due to differences with the British Government, it did not accept the ministries and a call was given for an All India Anti-Constitution Hartal. The union organised a successful hartal in all the mills. The union opposed the formation of the Cooper Ministry and when Barrister Jamnadas Mehta, a minister, came to Sholapur, a strong black flag demonstration was organised on behalf of the union against him. Subsequently, the Cooper Ministry collapsed and the Congress came into power. The popular ministry cancelled the externment orders of the union leaders. The security that was demanded formerly from the union newspaper was abrogated which made it possible for the union to start a weekly newspaper "Ekjut" in Sholapur. The new ministry further appointed the Textile Labour Enquiry Committee to investigate into the conditions of the textile workers in the Bombay Presidency. The union gave evidence before the Committee and a memorandum was also submitted demanding the restoration of 12.1/2 per cent wage-cut imposed on the workers by the mill management in 1934. The Committee interviewed a number of union members working in the mills. The union was pleased to note the recommendations of the Committee regarding the restoration of the 12.1/2 per cent wage-cut.

The membership of the union began to rise in the new atmosphere. By the end of 1937 the union had 2,200 members and in September 1938 it recorded 5336 members in the register. The union newspaper "Ekjut" was popular among the workers and its circulation was nearly 1000 in the middle of 1938. But the arrest of some union leaders and the introduction of the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act created a rift between the Congress leaders and the union. Being under the influence of the Communists, the union condemned the new Act as the "Black Act" and a hartal was organised on 7th November 1938 to protest against it. The local Congress leaders, however, withdrew their support to the union and attempts were made in August 1939 to organise a rival union known as Tirangi Bawta Girani Kamgar Union. This union showed a membership of 500. It described the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act as the "Goldern Act" and appealed the workers to reap the benefits from it. But the new union did not function for a long time and the Labour Gazette of May 1941 reported that the union was removed from the list as it became defunct. Even though there were differences between the Communists and the Congress on trade union matters they co-operated on other political issues in which the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union played an important role. When the communal riots broke out in the city on 26th December 1938, the union took the lead in organising a joint Peace Committee of the representatives of the Congress, Anjuman-I-Muslimin and the union.¹⁹ Similarly, the Municipal

¹⁹ This joint committee did good work in establishing peaceful relations in the city and even Mahatma Gandhi praised the work of the union in the issue of "Harijan" (Quoted in Sholapuracha Kamgar, p. 39).

elections in 1939 were fought jointly by the Congress Party and the union leadership in which the Congress could obtain a majority for the first time in Sholapur.

In the month of February, 1939 some workers in the Sholapur Spinning & Weaving Mills died of cholera. It was found that the defect was in the water supply of the mills. The union fought the case in the court and was successful in getting the benefits amounting to Rs. 15, 000 to the families of the deceased employees. During the same year, the union also raised the grievances of the workers living in the Criminal Tribes Settlement who had to stay in barbed wire enclosures and were completely cut off from the civilian life.²⁰ Some Congress leader^s supported the demand of removing the fencing. The union went on agitating on this issue for a long time till the Government appointed an enquiry committee to investigate into the grievances of the workers. Some of the grievances were ultimately redressed.

Between 1934-39 the trade union movement was spread ~~in~~ among the Press workers, workers employed in Bidi and handloom factories, tonga drivers and shop assistants. ^{The} Sholapur Press Kamgar Union was formed in June 1935 under the presidentship of Shri C. B. Rangaraj, a press worker in a local press and Shri N. B. Khadke was the general secretary. In the beginning

²⁰ In this connection, the Textile Labour Inquiry Committee observed: "... the fact that these workers are subject to discipline of the settlement in all matters prevents them from fully participating in trade union activities. They have often in the past, owing to the rules of the settlement, been unable to join strikes. Their continued employment during strikes is naturally looked upon by the workers with suspicion and disfavour." - Report of the Textile Labour Enquiry Committee (1938), Part II. p. 366.

the union had 35 members and the rate of subscription was As. 2 per month only. The membership rose to 43 by the end of 1935 which further increased upto 47. In the month of January 1936, the Sholapur District Press Kamgar Sangh was formed on the initiative of this union and the secretary of the Sholapur organisation became the President of the new union. In 1937 the membership of this new organisation was only 59 which rose to 112 in the next year. This union was completely aloof from any political party and was interested "only in the welfare of the workers." The major activity of the union was to make petitions to the press owners regarding the grievances of the workers. The only other information that is available about this union is that in 1936 the union submitted 21 applications regarding the workers' grievances out of which 16 were successful. The main issues in these applications were the increase in the wage rates, granting concessions regarding leave, demanding proper arrangement of light for the night shift workers, etc. From the records it appears that sometimes the president or the general Secretary of the union personally used to see the press owners to put the grievances of the members of the union.

In June 1936 a Congress worker named Shri N. V. Nara took the lead in forming an organisation of the handloom workers. The name of the union was Hatmag Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur, and about 300 handloom workers became members of the union. Shri W. G. Kulkarni, a Royist, became the president and Shri N. V. Nara was the general secretary. In the first

year of its existence, the union handled 102 complaints while in 1937-38 the number rose to 124. This union settled the complaints made by master weavers against the workers also. The activities of the union were mainly confined to Shukrawar and Guruwar Peths in the city. The leadership was not favourable to the idea of strikes and so the union did not participate in any strike. The general secretary of the union had no faith in the utility of public meetings and all the activities of the union were done in the office. The rate of subscription was only two pice per month and it was collected in the union office, ^{Most} of the union members were those who brought complaints in the union office.

On 27th October, 1937, there was a strike of women workers employed by 20 bidi manufacturers demanding an increase in their wage rate. The Communist leaders in the city took up the issue and organised the workers under the banner of ^{the} Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union. Shri V. Y. Phalmari, a Padmashali leader was elected the president and Smt. Minaxibai Karhadkar, the general secretary of this union. A number of demands were put up before the bidi manufacturers by the union, important among them being (1) increase in the rate of wages per 1000 bidis manufactured from annas 6 to 7; (2) recognition of the workers' union; (3) account of the daily work to be noted on the tickets; (4) reduction of working hours to 9 per day; (5) weekly payment of wages; (6) no victimisation of workers for joining the strike; (7) rents and contributions to charity should not to be deducted from wages as hitherto and (8) the

stoppage of the system of imposing heavy fines indiscriminately and reasonable imposition of fines according to law. These demands throw some light on the grievances of the workers about the management. The union held meetings of the strikers almost daily at which Shri and Smt. Karhadkar exhorted the strikers to remain firm till their demands were granted. The leaders of the union also arranged with some local merchants to open new bidi workshops for providing employment to some needy strikers. Accordingly, about five new workshops were opened the owners of which agreed to pay the workers at annas 7 for 1000 bidis manufactured and grant certain other demands as formulated by the union. In the meantime, the Assistant Commissioner for Labour, Bombay, tried to mediate in the strike but no settlement could be reached and the strike continued further. Four weeks after the commencement of the strike, the parties approached some of the local Congress leaders to arbitrate into the matter. A committee was appointed to examine the case which gave its award on the 29th November. It included, among others, the following: (1) the rate of wages to be annas 6, pies 6 per 1000 bidis manufactured; (2) a card to be given to each worker recording the daily amount of work done; (3) no recoveries to be made by the employers on account of subscriptions to charities and rents; (4) nine-hour day; (5) all other materials except scissors to be supplied by the employer; (6) wages to be paid every fortnight; (7) a two days' notice to be given in case of discharge and (8) reinstatement of all the strikers.

As a result of the settlement, the union requested the strikers to resume work on 30th November 1937 and the strike thus ended in a compromise. The total number of man-days lost during this dispute was 28,931. The union emerged stronger during the strike, and its membership was 800 by the end of the year. The union paid attention to the proper implementation of the award. The rate of subscription was one anna per month which was collected regularly with the help of women workers. The managing committee of the union also consisted mostly of women workers.

Two more unions were formed in 1937 in Sholapur. In the month of September, the Tonga Drivers' Union was formed and 25 Tonga drivers joined the organisation. Shri Abdul Karim Lunje, a Congress worker, was the president and Shri Khajabhai Aminsaheb the secretary of the union. The subscription was one anna per month but was not collected regularly. As the membership of the union was small, the Tonga owners did not pay attention to the representation of the union. Yet the president of the union, with his personal influence, made efforts to help the Tonga drivers in various ways. Arrangements for water tanks for the horses, fixing suitable places for Tonga stands, solving some difficulties at the time of yearly inspection of Tongas, etc. were handled by Shri Lunje.

The Shop Assistants' Union was formed in October 1937. Shri Shivayogippa Gote was the president and Shri V. M. Timke

the general secretary. In the first month the union enrolled 46 members and the rate of subscription was two annas per month. The influence of the union was limited to the Mangalwar Peth only. It made efforts to increase the rates of wages and achieved partial success. The union tried to get the wages of the shop assistants standardised but could not do so due to disunity among the shop assistants themselves.

The G. I. P. Railway Staff Association that was working since 1925 was becoming inactive at the end of 1933 and the office of the Association was closed in that year. In the next year a branch of the G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union was formed in Sholapur. Nearly 400 workers joined this organisation and the growing influence of the Communists among the railway workers gave this organisation a radical colour. The union regularly organised public meetings of the workers and criticised the railway administration for not paying due attention to the workers' grievances. In 1939 a divisional conference was organised in Sholapur and the union made representations regarding various local grievances of the workers to the railway authorities. In 1937, 211 applications were sent to the railway authorities through the union office while the number rose to 234 in 1938.

The number of unions and their membership during this period is given in Table No. 3.3.1. Both the number of unions and their membership increased during this period. In 1937-38, the

Table No.: 3.3.1
UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN SHOLAPUR
(1934-1938)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Unions</u>			<u>Membership of Unions</u>		
	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Unregis- -tered</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Unregis- -tered</u>	<u>Total</u>
1934-35	-	3	3	-	850	850
1935-36	2	1	3	443	200	643
1936-37	2	2	4	341	700	1041
1937-38	4	2	6	2330	631	2961
1938-39	5	2	7	1633	631	2261

Source: Compiled from the union records and Bombay Labour Gazette.

advent of popular ministry in the Bombay Presidency and civil liberties given to the union resulted in an increase in the membership of the unions. In 1938-39, out of 7 unions 5 were registered which was a move in the right direction. However, the low membership was not a correct indicator of the union influence over the workers. The influence of the union was certainly more than the membership which was seen in the successful strikes during this period in spite of the insignificant membership of the union. The low membership also may have been due to the fear of victimisation in the minds of workers and the failure of the union leadership to convince the workers of the need for building a permanent organisation to get their grievances redressed.

3-4 The Third Period (1939-1945)

The outbreak of the Second World War created new problems for the trade union movement in Sholapur. The prices of all commodities were constantly rising and the supply of these commodities became more and more scarce as the war progressed. The Cost of Living Index Number was 74 in 1939 which rose to 113 in 1942 and 184 in 1943. In 1944 and 1945 it showed a further rise up to 201. This naturally brought to the fore-front the demand for an increase in the general wage-level, either in the form of increase in the wage-rate and dearness allowance, or in the form of a bonus. The unions also had to pay attention to the scarcity of food and other necessities of life. Political tension in the country also influenced the trade union activities in various ways.

At the outset, the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union declared its total opposition to the war and a call for anti-war 'hartal' was given on 2nd October 1939 which was successful only partially. But the immediate issue that was agitating the minds of the textile worker was the rising price level. Therefore, the union gave notice to all the mills in Sholapur demanding adequate dearness allowance. Conciliation proceedings started between the elected representatives of the workers and the millowners which resulted in a compromise. On 13th April the following terms of settlement were arrived at :

"A dearness allowance at a flat rate of an anna per head per day of attendance will be given to all operatives to cover variations between 74 and 85 in the cost of living

index number published in ^{the} Bombay Labour Gazette. In the event of an index number falling outside the unit of 74 and 85 for any period by three consecutive numbers an adjustment of the agreed dearness allowance may be made."²¹

This was a great victory for the union. By the end of the year the membership of the union was slightly less than six thousand. In order to carry on the work of the union different ward committees were formed and organisers appointed. Regular monthly meetings of the managing committee were held and grievances of the workers were discussed ^{and} which were ventilated through the union newspaper. But in the beginning of 1941 there was a general round up of Communist leaders all over India and in Sholapur all the leading Communist workers were arrested and detained. This affected the work of the union seriously, as stated ⁱⁿ by the Report submitted to the Managing Committee itself:

"There is no doubt that the arrest of the union leaders created obstacles in the growing strength of the union. In addition to this civil liberties were encroached upon by the Defence of India Act. The union could not do satisfactory work in the days following the arrests."²²

²¹ Conciliation No. 40 of 1939. Published in Bombay Labour Gazette Vol. 19 No. 8 pp. 682-85. The Management of the Vishnu and Laxmi Mills agreed to this settlement only after a strike of the workers in those mills.

²² Report submitted to the Managing Committee by the Secretary of the union on 6-12-1941.

These leaders were released in the middle of 1942 when the political atmosphere in the country was filled with turmoil. The Communist Party of India declared its "People's War" policy while the Indian National Congress gave a call to the Indian people to struggle so that the British should quit India. This created a rift between the two parties that had serious repercussions on the trade union movement in the city. The movement, after the arrest of the Congress leaders on 8th August, 1942, had spread all over the country. Efforts were made in Sholapur to organise prolonged strikes in the textile mills. But during the year 1942 the Communist Party and ^{the} Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union made sustained efforts to keep the workers out of the strike movement. However, a bomb was exploded in the Sholapur mill workers' 'chawls'. The union explained this incident to the workers in the following way:

"At this time the workers showed courage and discipline because of their staunch support to the union and its policy. One worker was killed and three others were injured in the chawl due to the explosion of the bomb. Everywhere filthy propaganda was carried on by irresponsible youths but the workers did not show any sign of vacillation. On the contrary, they put a brake on the manoeuvres of these youths and made utmost efforts to convince them that their work would bring disgrace to the Congress itself. The conditions inside the mills would not be brought under control if the workers would not have behaved with such a political consciousness and sobriety."²³

²³ "Sholapuracha Kamgar", (1945). A publication of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union, Sholapur. p. 44.

The union had to spend most of the second half of ^{the} year 1942 in conducting political propoganda through group meetings as public meetings were not allowed. When the political tension cooled down somewhat, the union made further attempts to consolidate its organisation. In 1942-43, ten meetings of the managing committee were held while in 1943-44 the number rose to 19. The average attendance of the members was 15 in 1942-43 but the same was 17 in 1943-44. In the month of December 1942 the union having considered the growing discontent among the workers about the rising cost of living made efforts to collect information regarding the prices in retail shops. The managing committee came to the conclusion that the prices of articles sold in the retail shops were higher than the controlled rates fixed by the government. The union sent a memorandum to the millowners demanding an increase in the dearness allowance but did not get any reply whatsoever. Hence the managing committee meeting of 1st January 1943 resolved to send the demand for arbitration.

As the arbitration could not bring any fruitful results from the point of view of the union it decided to concentrate its attention on the issue of bonus. The profits of the millowners were mounting high during the war period but the real wages of the textile workers decreased due to the rising prices. Therefore, the union demanded ^a bonus of three months or an equivalent of 25 per cent of the worker's annual earnings. The figures given in Table No. 3.4.1 were quoted by the union to show the genuine nature of the demand.

Table No. 3.4.1
PROFITS OF THE MILLOWNERS IN SHOLAPUR
(1939-1943)

(Rupees)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sholapur Mills</u>	<u>Laxmi Mills</u>	<u>Vishnu Mills</u>	<u>Jam Mills</u>
Paid up Capital	16,00,000	16,00,000	24,00,000	7,85,050
1939	-	1,93,574	3,48,529	2,48,242
1940	8,07,761	39,459	1,65,411	81,112
1941	15,28,854	7,57,634	5,49,184	1,87,417
1942	34,80,821	13,89,623	9,87,280	3,54,192
1943	91,05,338	21,19,803	16,27,137	6,47,917

Source: "How to win our Demands" - a booklet published by Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union, 1945. Page 7.

On the basis of these figures, the union claimed that all the millowners were in a position to pay the bonus demanded by the union as the profits of the millowners exceeded even their paid up capital.

The union, however, could not directly negotiate with the mill managements as it was not considered representative according to the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act 1937.²⁴ Therefore, it was decided by the managing committee of the union to launch

²⁴ According to the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, a union which enrolled at least 25% of the workers employed in an industry could become a representative union.

a membership drive on a large scale to qualify itself for representation. In the beginning of 1944, the union organised a vigorous campaign for enrolling 10,000 members. The workers were asked to pay one rupee as an annual subscription and the union volunteers stood before the mill gates on the pay day to collect subscription but it could not enroll more than 6,000 members.

After its failure to obtain registration, the union, in a letter dated 26th November, 1943 requested the Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay (Political and Services Department) to convene a meeting representing the Government, the mill and the union at which the issue of bonus might be settled. This idea, however, was rejected by the Government as the mills declined to agree to the suggestion of the union. Thereupon textile workers for each mill filed applications with the Government Labour Officer requesting him to hold meetings to elect the representatives of the workers so that they can give a notice of change as required by the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act.

After months of deliberations over the objections raised by the mills at Sholapur as to whether bonus was or was not an industrial matter, the Government Labour Officer, Sholapur, decided to hold meetings under Rule 18 of the Bombay Industrial

Disputes Act.²⁵ However, in the arbitration the millowners maintained that bonus was not the right of the workers as it was a question of "favour" of the millowners. No compromise was possible during the proceedings and the demand for 3 months bonus was rejected by the arbitrators. The millowners, however, granted a bonus equivalent of two months' earnings of the workers.

The problem of food scarcity was becoming more and more acute during the war days. The union took initiative in arranging a meeting of all other trade unions in the city to discuss the food situation as the government was intending to introduce rationing in the city. All the trade unions present in the meeting supported rationing on the ground that food would be made available at controlled rates instead of at exorbitant prices prevailing in the market. But the textile workers were already getting jowar at concessional rates in the mill. Hence, a special meeting of the managing committee was called on 16th October, 1943 wherein a resolution on rationing was passed with the following demands:

²⁵ The meetings began to be held from 29th May, 1944. In a representation made by the union to the Advisor, Government of Bombay, regarding the election meetings it was pointed out that the Government Labour Officer, Sholapur, failed to mention the subject matter of the meetings on the notice board. Secondly, the union complained: "..... he created obstacles by raising the question of the representative character of the meetings held inside the mill compound ... In Jam Mills the workers were so enraged that they thought of starting a satyagraha. By that time a few police officers and constables were actually on the scene to disperse the gathering." (Letter dated 12th June, 1944.)

- (1) After the rationing system will be over, jowar concession should be given to the workers as before the introduction of rationing;
- (2) Tur dal should also be supplied to the workers as before;
- (3) The amount of jowar should not be included in wages but should be paid to the workers separately;
- (4) The rationed jowar should be supplied to the workers inside the mills.

These demands were accepted by the Rationing Committee appointed by the Collector of Sholapur to supervise the work, and a representative of the union was taken on the committee. Report of the work done in the committee meetings was regularly submitted before the managing committee meetings of the union.

In the first year of the Second World War, the Communist leaders took initiative in forming the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union. This union looked after the interests not only of the handloom workers but of handloom industry as a whole. A number of master weaver looked upon the union with respect because the union was co-operating with them on issues like the supply of yarn, government protection to the handloom industry, etc. The union, however, participated in a number of strikes of the handloom workers and many of them ended successfully. From the union records is compiled a list of strikes conducted by the union during the Second World War (see Table No. 3.4.2).

Since 1940 in many cases the strikes resulted in written

agreements between the union and the employers. The union tried to settle disputes not only between individual employee and his employer but even individual disputes between worker and worker. A few of the organisers of the union actually made efforts to organise the Asami Sangh, a till now defunct organisation of the master weavers. Through this Sangh a demand for getting supply of yarn against yarn ration cards was raised and the scheme was actually launched. In 1944 and 1945, there was an agreement between the Assami Sangh and the union that every demand for wage-cut or a wage increase should be discussed between the two organisations and attempts made

Table No. 3.4.2

STRIKES OF HANDLOOM WORKERS CONDUCTED
BY LAL BAWTA HATMAG KAMGAR UNION
(1939-1945)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of karkhanas involved</u>	<u>No. of workers involved</u>	<u>Duration of strike</u>	<u>Cause of strike</u>	<u>Result of strike</u>
1939	63	630	10 days	Wage Increase	Successful
1940	185	1633	21 "	Against Wage-cut	-do-
1941		- Not available -			
1942	3	74	14 days	Wage Increase	Successful
1943	14	380	7 "	-do-	-do-
1944	34	370	21 "	Against Wage-cut	Partial success
1945	35	350	14 "	Wage Increase	-do-

Source: Compiled from union records.

to have an agreement without resorting to strike.

Apart from these activities the union supported the statutory ration for foodgrains during the period of food shortage. While raising this demand it organised volunteers to stand at the municipal cheap grain shops so that favouritism and waste of time could be avoided. During the period of kerosene shortage the union in association with the employers residing in certain areas formed a committee to distribute kerosene against kerosene ration cards prepared by the joint committee. In September 1944 a joint memorandum was submitted to the Textile Commissioner, Bombay Presidency, on behalf of ^{the} Sholapur Hatmag Assami Sangh and ^{the} Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union which demanded adequate supply of yarn to the handlooms at controlled rates. Joint efforts were also made by the Assami Sangh and the union to check the black-marketing of yarn by merchants in Sholapur. The union and the Assami Sangh jointly took initiative in organising the conference of Bombay Presidencial Handloom Weavers Association in Sholapur in April 1945 under the presidentship of Shri N.M. Joshi. More than 300 delegates from all the leading handloom centres in the Bombay Presidency participated in the Conference which demanded protection to the handloom industry and sufficient amount of supply of yarn to the handloom industry. The general secretary of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union was elected as the secretary of the executive committee of the Bombay Presidencial Handloom Weavers' Association.

In this period there was a complete lack of activity in the Municipal Staff Association. However in October 1939, some of the members of the Association gave a requisition notice and on 28th November 1939 a meeting of the managing committee was called to consider the following subjects suggested by various members:- (1) To start a library of the Association; (2) To purchase medical equipment for patients' relief; (3) To hold an annual gathering of the staff; (4) To send a representation to the Sholapur Municipality for making residential arrangements for the staff; (5) To appoint a sub-committee to suggest amendments in the conduct rules of the municipal staff and (6) To appoint a municipal staff enquiry committee to investigate into the conditions of the municipal staff.

In the managing committee the members deplored the inactivity of the Association and it was decided that the managing committee should try to meet at least in the first week of every month. In the same meeting Rs. 200 were sanctioned for the library of the staff and the municipality was requested to allot a special room for the Association. It was decided to hold the annual gathering of the Association in August 1940. In another meeting of the Association, the report of the staff inquiry committee was read out and its recommendations were considered. The managing committee criticised the recommendations as too meagre and it suggested that the minimum pay for the peons should not be below Rs.16. The committee further suggested that at least overseers and

compounders in the municipal hospitals should be given free quarters. It requested the municipality to grant grain allowance to the members of the staff considering the high prices of commodities. As suggested by the inquiry committee the managing committee demanded an increase in the dearness allowance to the entire staff. Negotiations were going on between the Association and the municipality for more than a year but nothing came out of these. The managing committee therefore, in its meeting on 18th September 1942 passed the following resolution:

"The Association looking forward to the financial conditions of the Municipality and being actuated by public spirit have appreciably lowered their demands of dearness allowance as compared with government orders and the concessions given by other sister local bodies and therefore, resolve that the minimum demand of dearness allowance for the time being should be given to the municipal staff, subject to revision in case the conditions grow worse."

The municipality accepted the demand partially and dearness allowance was given to the members of the staff ranging from Rs. 5 to 25 per month.

Seeing the activities of the Association mainly restricted to the clerical staff of the municipality an independent organisation of the menial staff was formed in September 1939 named ^{the} Municipal Kamgar Sangh. Shri P.G. Beke and Shri M.H. Shah were elected as president and secretary

of the union. In the first month only 75 members were enrolled in the union. In the beginning of 1940, the union claimed 300 members on its register and in May the union held several propaganda meetings in support of the demand for a dearness allowance to municipal workers. The Sholapur Municipality had subsequently granted, with effect from February 1940, an allowance of Rs. 2 per month to those workers getting Rs. 20 or less per month. This victory was helpful in strengthening the union and on 1st June, 1940 the union membership rose to 500. In 1941 the union had only 400 members as it was not active for a couple of months, but by the end of that year the union once again took up the issue of dearness allowance and raised a demand for increase in the dearness allowance by Rs. 2 per month. However, the Sholapur Municipality refused to accept the demand due to the "financial difficulties of the Municipality". Therefore, the union gave a call of strike to protest against the attitude of the municipal authorities. Five of the strikers were arrested on that day on the charge of "intimidating loyal workers". A meeting of the strikers was held on the 28th under the auspices of the union to condemn the municipal administration and to appeal to the public to bring pressure on the municipality in sanctioning an extra dearness allowance. The union, however, called off the strike unconditionally on the 31st and the strikers resumed work on that day. After the failure of the strike the influence of the union was on the wane and in 1943, the union had only 100 members. In

this year there was a split in the union leadership and a section of it led by Shri B.S. Chanshetti left the union and in 1944 formed a rival organisation named ^{the} Municipal Workers' Union, Sholapur. Shri B.S. Chanshetti had a good influence over the workers and the new union claimed to have enrolled 250 members in 1944 while ^{the} Municipal Kamgar Sangh could maintain the same membership. In 1945, ^{the} Municipal Workers' Union further increased its strength to 405 members and submitted 212 applications to the municipality on behalf of the workers. Shri B.S. Chanshetti was a full-time worker of the union and devoted all his attention to the work of the union. The president and general secretary of the Municipal Kamgar Sangh were active workers of the Radical Democratic Party and were busy with other political activities. Shri Chanshetti and Shri Hiralal Mangat tirelessly worked to isolate the rival union from the Municipal workers. By the end of 1945 most of the scavengers supported the new union while some sweepers backed the older union.

During the war the motor transport industry had to face difficulties due to restriction on petrol. Hence two unions were formed in 1939 to make organised efforts to solve the difficulties of the petrol etc. The Motor Transport Union was the organisation mainly of motor drivers. Dr. K.B. Antrolikar was its president and Shri D.V. Degaokar the secretary. The monthly subscription of the union was annas eight and in the beginning it could enrol 56 members. The other organisation was the Motor Touring Taxi Owners' and

Drivers' Union whose president and secretary were Shri M. V. Lakhani and Shri S. M. Mhatre respectively. The monthly subscription was annas 8 and the union had 20 members only. This union functioned only for six months after which it became defunct; no other information is available of this organisation. Even the Motor Transport Union was removed from the list of trade unions prepared by the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay, as the organisation was no more in existence. It appears that these two organisations were formed merely for the temporary purpose of getting quotas of petrol for the motors and taxis. A similar organisation named the Private Motor Drivers' Union was formed on 15th December, 1941, with Shri P. G. Beke as president and Shri J. K. Kiledar as the secretary. This organisation had 24 members in March 1942. It remained the same till January 1943, but no trace of this organisation was seen afterwards. This union was also formed for a temporary issue like the previous one and after the work was over it became non-existent.

The government peons in Sholapur also decided to form an organisation during this period and in the middle of 1939 a branch of the Government Peons and Inferior Servants' Union, Bombay, was formed in Sholapur. In the first year the branch could enrol only 7 members but the number rose to 69 in 1941. However, in 1942 the head office advised the local branch to close the union because "we being government servants it would be improper to obstruct the work of the government

during its difficult times". Accordingly, the union could not carry on during the war period.

In December 1939, the Postmen and Lower Grade Staff Union was formed in Sholapur which claimed 37 members in 1940. Shri B. L. Kavadi and Shri S. N. Jamdar were president and secretary respectively of this organisation during the war period and the union shows the same membership throughout these war years. The average monthly collection of subscription never exceeded Rs. 5. Both the president and secretary were lawyers of good standing who could not spare sufficient time for the organisation as such. They were working merely in advisory capacities. The meetings of the managing committee were held once in three months but sometimes they were postponed if either the president or the secretary was busy with other work. However, the union could help the postmen in redressing some of their grievances regarding the supply of uniforms, proper distribution of work to all the persons etc.

The Sholapur Shimpi Kamgar Union was formed on 19th January 1944. On the day of its formation, the union decided not to have affiliations with any political party. The rate of subscription was one anna per month only and in the Annual Return for 1944-45 the union had shown a membership of 86. Shri B. S. Chanashetti was the president and Shri. Pukale the secretary. The union was successful in slightly increasing the rates of tailoring workers but after the

grievance was met with the activity of the union was on the decline; between December 1945 and May 1946, the union did not collect any subscription from its members. In October 1945, the union sent Rs.5 to the Bidi Kamgar Union, Bijapur, as a donation to the strike fund. Except the president, all the office-bearers of the union were tailoring workers. The union had not maintained any other record and it was non-existent by the end of 1946.

The Shop Assistant Union (Dukan Moukar Sangh) was dominated by the Communists after 1942. The old leadership was changed and Shri D. V. Bengiri and Shri Y. K. Tumma were the president and general secretary of the union. Virtually, this was a new organisation which claimed more than 300 members in 1943 and 1944. Both the office-bearers were shop assistants and the main activity of the union was to see whether the shop owners properly observed the provisions of the Shop Act. The Union brought some such cases to the notice of the Government officials. It also did some work regarding weekly holidays, hours of work and maintenance of a register of the servants, etc.

The Tongawallas' Union showed the same membership throughout the war period. The main activity of the union was similar to the pre-war period and no change worth mentioning took place in the functioning of the union. It appears from the Annual Returns submitted to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay, that the union's membership was

exactly 25 throughout the last 8 years. The Press Kamgar Union and ^{the} Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union were not very much active during the war time. The membership of the latter union was 800 in 1939 and 1940 but it came down to 250 in 1941. Till the end of the war, the membership never increased more than 250.

Table No. 3.4.3

UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN SHOLAPUR
DURING 1939-1945.

Year	Number of Unions			Membership of Unions		
	Regis- tered	Unregis- tered	Total	Regis- tered	Unregis- tered	Total
1939-40	9	5	14	7149	740	7889
1940-41	12	3	15	4351	719	5070
1941-42	7	6	13	2521	895	3416
1942-43	8	4	12	2228	1102	3330
1943-44	8	4	12	2836	1002	3838
1944-45	7	6	13	2825	1573	4398

Source: Compiled from the union records and Bombay Labour Gazette.

Table No.3.4.3 gives the number of unions and their membership during the Second World War. In comparison with the pre-war years, the number of unions and their membership show a remarkable increase. In 1938-39, there

were 7 unions with a membership of 2261, while in the next year the number of unions exactly doubled, and their membership rose to three times as higher. This was mainly due to the rising cost of living and a natural desire of the worker to get dearness allowance to compensate this rise. The membership was gradually on a decline till 1943, because of the political atmosphere in the country. In 1940 and in 1942 a number of union leaders were arrested which resulted in a decrease in the activities of the unions. However, the number of unions did not decrease remarkably in spite of this attack on the leadership. During the last two years of the war the membership shows an increasing trend and in 1944-45, there were 4398 members in all the trade unions in Sholapur.

3.5 The Fourth Period (1946-1956)

After the cessation of hostilities in 1945, a new phase opened in the trade union movement in Sholapur. The Second World War witnessed a very steep rise in the cost of living and this increased cost was only partially compensated by way of dearness allowance. The end of the war had let loose the bitterness in the minds of the workers due to the deterioration they experienced in their living standard. The cost of living index number was 201 in 1945 which rose to 211 in 1946 and shot up to 248 and 292 in 1947 and 1948 respectively. The advent of indepen-

dence during this period further raised high hopes in the minds of the workers about a new social order wherein they would lead a better life. Hence, a number of new unions were formed in Sholapur and the membership of the union also increased remarkably.

We have already observed that the rift between the Congress and the Communist leaderships took place during the war time. After the release of the Congress leaders from jails, they took a decision to form organisations of the workers. This resulted in a rivalry between these two political parties to bring the workers under their flags. The rivalry originally started in the cotton textile mills but later on spread in other industries also.

In textile mills, the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union was the only organisation claiming representation of the workers. An attempt to form a rival organisation by the Congress leaders in 1939 could not bear any concrete results. Efforts were made during the war-time by the local branch of the Radical Democratic Party to form an organisation affiliated to the Indian Federation of Labour, but this attempt also failed. However, the formation of the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur, proved to be a challenge to the Communist leadership of the textile mill workers. The inaugural address was delivered by the late Shri B. G. Kher, former Chief Minister of Bombay. The Report of the General Secretary of the Sangh to the First

Annual General Meeting, while giving the reasons for the formation of the new organisation stated: "It is but natural that many workers will not understand why another union should be formed when there is already one union among the textile workers. But the policy pursued by the union led by the Communists in the changing circumstances was not only against the interest of the workers but it was also anti-national. It is because of this that we had to form another union."²⁶

The union decided to adhere to the Gandhian principles and to follow the model of ^{the} Mazdoor Mahajan of Ahmedabad. The policy of the union was based on the objective of winning the demands of the workers through constitutional and legal ways. The rate of subscription was fixed at annas four per month and the union could enrol 3823 members during the year 1946. The membership rose to 9122 during the next year. The General Elections in 1946 gave a further twist to the movement when the candidate supported by the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh, Shri Channusingh Chandele, was elected for the Bombay Assembly from the Labour constituency, by defeating the Communist candidate, Shri G. D. Sane who was supported by the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union. The formation of Congress Ministry in the Bombay State created a favourable atmosphere for the Sangh to improve its position still further.

²⁶ Report (1946), p. 1.

It is interesting to note the rivalry of the two organisations to mobilise the ranks of the workers behind them. On 1st May 1946, the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar union sent a charter of demands of the workers to the Labour Minister, Bombay, and a request was made to refer the demands for arbitration. The following were the main demands in the charter.

- (1) Restoration of cut in earnings since 1934.²⁷
- (2) Payment of arrears for 1938-39.²⁸
- (3) Increase in basic wages.
- (4) Cent per cent dearness allowance.
- (5) Standardisation of wages and musters.
- (6) Introduction of 8 hours' day.
- (7) Compensation for involuntary unemployment.
- (8) Revision of Standing Orders.

27 "The Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee (1937) admitted that the earnings of Sholapur workers had gone down by 20.5 per cent although cut in the wages introduced in July 1934 was one of 12½ per cent. However, the restoration of cut recommended by the Committee was only to the extent of 14.3 per cent." -- Extract from the Memorandum.

28 The Memorandum stated in connection with this demand that the Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee "left in the hands of the employer, a sum equivalent to four weeks wages for the year 1938-39 from the extra profits and which the Committee would have disbursed to the workers but refrained from doing so, because the Government of Bombay by their letter No.629/34 B dated 30.12.1937 informed the committee that they intended to confer much economic benefit on the workers by way of sickness and old-age benefit legislation." The union demanded cash payment of the amount.

In addition to the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, schemes for better and cheap housing, legislation for old age and insurance etc. were also made by the union. As no union was representative according to Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, elections were held inside the mills to elect the workers' representatives. In four mills the nominees of the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh were elected while only in the Vishnu Mills the nominees of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union were elected. The Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh instead of submitting these demands for arbitration prepared an independent memorandum of similar 10 demands and in all mills their representatives were elected. Hence, ^{the} Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union could send its demands for arbitration only through the representatives of the Vishnu Mills while the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh represented all the mills in its demands. For more than 3 years the proceedings went on and awards were given separately for each demand. Accordingly, a sum of Rs.26 was fixed as minimum wage for the textile workers in Sholapur. There were sharp differences between the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh and the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union on this issue. The Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh supported the minimum wage of Rs.26 while the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union strongly opposed it and demanded Rs.35 as recommended by the Bombay Textile Enquiry Committee. The Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union leadership condemned the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh as "the agent of the employers" while the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh accused the leadership of the rival

union as "deliberately making exaggerated demands to win the sympathy of the workers." There was an independent award in which the wages and musters were standardised. The percentage of the dearness allowance was brought down to $66\frac{2}{3}$ instead of 75. The jowar concession which the workers were getting since 1921 was discontinued. However, for an increase in every point in the cost of living index number the workers could get an increase of 1.75 pies in the daily wage rate instead of 1.63 pies given previously. Other demands were turned down on the ground that the government was going to take legislative measures in those respects.

The rivalry between these two unions showed an entirely different picture when the strike occurred in the mills. On 15th May, 1946, the entire labour force from all the mills stopped work due to the irritation of the workers over a 25 per cent cut in their rations and a general discontent about the dearness allowance. The president of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union wrote letters to the Chief Minister, Minister for Labour, and Minister for Supply, Government of Bombay, on 19.5.1946 demanding a clear assurance to restore the cut in the rations etc., but no settlement was arrived at. The Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh constantly appealed to the workers to resume work but they were not prepared to listen. On the contrary, they used to attend the meetings in large numbers, held every day on behalf of the Lal Bawta Girani

Kamgar Union. Big processions were organised of the textile workers on behalf of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union which claimed the leadership of the strike. Even Shri Channusingh Chandele, M.L.A., and the president of the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh came to attend and address the meeting of the strikers held under the auspices of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union but the workers refused to accept his advice. The strike was continued till 3rd June 1946, when it was broken due to attendance of a section of the workers in the mills. The strike thus ended without the workers winning their demands. The total number of working days lost during the strike was 3,65,027."

The Communist leadership over the the textile mill workers during the industrial conflicts was clearly observed even in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mill strike when on 28th February 1947 the women workers downed their tools due to discontinuation by the mills the system of marking absent for one-fourth day for attending the mill late. Formerly, a concession was given to them to come late by half an hour. The management also cancelled the bonus of one anna per day given to women who came in time. All the male workers in the mills supported the demand of the women workers and they also went on strike as they had also grievances about the working conditions inside the mills. The appeal made by the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar

Sangh to resume work fell on deaf ears. The Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union, on the other hand, was very much active during the strike and every day meetings of the strikers were held requesting the workers to "remain firm and united till their demands are won." An elected deputation of the workers was also sent to meet the Labour Minister, Bombay, under the leadership of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union and the strike was withdrawn on 12th March as on 14th March the issue was referred to the Court of Inquiry consisting of Shri A. K. Phadkar, District and Sessions Judge, Sholapur, and Shri F. V. Gillespie, M.L.A. The Report of the Inquiry sharply criticised the "inefficient, arbitrary, high-handed and callous management", and pointed out the "number of irregularities and deficiencies" in the administration. The Report further strongly recommended the restoration of the status quo in the attendance of women, namely, that the concession of coming 15 minutes late to the mills should be continued.²⁹ Both the unions argued the case of the workers before the Court of Inquiry.

Another strike broke out on 5th March 1948 in all the mills as the workers had grievances about the dearness allowance. The workers complained that the fall in the

²⁹ Published in the Bombay Labour Gazette, Vol. 26, No.9, pp. 715-721.

dearness allowance due to the drop in the cost of living index number was unjustifiable as they were not experiencing decrease in the dearness in practice. The Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union supported the claim and requested the government to make enquiries whether the cost of living index number was calculated properly.³⁰ As usual the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh appealed to the workers to resume work and accused the Communist leaders for instigating the workers by creating confusion in their minds. The Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union leaders called on the workers to continue the struggle unitedly and condemned the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh for its "pro-employer attitude" and "strike-breaking activities." However, the workers could not hold on for a long time and on 23rd, they resumed work without winning their demand.

The membership of the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union could not exceed 4000 in 1947 in spite of its influence during the strike period. The Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh showed more than 9000 members in 1947-48 on its rolls which enabled it to claim that it enjoyed more support among the workers than the Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union. The Lal Bawta Girani Kamgar Union criticised the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh for its enrolment of member-

30 The Labour Department, Bombay, announced that the market rates that they had collected were correct and based on actual rates.

ship with the help of jobbers, mukaddams and supervisors in the mills. Both the organisations were involved in making political propaganda in their mass meetings and made strenuous efforts to isolate the rival union and bring the workers behind them. Frequently, clashes between the followers of these two organisations were also observed in this period.

The trade union rivalry is also clearly seen in the handloom industry in this period. The Communists during the war period were in a position to dominate not only the handloom workers but they had a good influence over the master-weavers also. The chairman of the Joint Yarn Distribution Committee formed with the co-ordination of the employers' organisation was a Communist. When the Congress leaders were released in 1945, they seriously considered the formation of a workers' union in the handloom industry. They were successful in capturing the Hatmag Asami Sangh, a master-weavers' organisation. They also formed ^{the} Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh by the end of 1946. The Communist leadership of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union criticised this step of the Congressmen because the Sangh "was actually formed with the support of the handloom employees. Repeated attempts were made to disrupt the ranks of the workers to smash their solidarity."³¹ At the beginning of 1947, the new union claimed

31 Memorandum to the Sholapur Handloom Weavers Inquiry Committee. (Typed copy)

a membership of 300 while the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union had 800 members on its rolls.

The Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union taking into account the rise in the cost of living after the end of the war demanded an increase in the wages of twelve annas per four sarees. The union decided to send a memorandum to the Asami Sangh. A committee was also appointed to negotiate with it. The Union organised a series of public meetings and a meeting of the general body was also arranged. A number of strikes took place and many of them were successful. The Government of Bombay considering the unrest in the handloom weavers in the city appointed the Sholapur Handloom Weavers' Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Shri V. B. Sathe, a local Congress leader. The committee studied the conditions of the industry and the workers and observed that the wages of workers were extremely low and their living conditions "slightly higher than animals". The committee further pointed out that the domination of the industry by the middlemen was a major cause of its crisis and recommended that the government should help master-weavers in organising the industry on a co-operative basis.

The trade union rivalry in the handloom industry was of a different nature from the textile mill industry. Here the master-weavers were prepared to negotiate with both the unions, who were admitting the influence of the Lal Bawta

Hatmag Kamgar Union as its leaders had social as well as political influence over the workers. Secondly, the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union co-operated with the Asami Sangh in their demands for protection to industry, yarn at controlled rates, etc. and joint deputations were sent to the Government officials for these demands. Hence, the rivalry was not strongly felt as in the cotton textile mills. However, the influence of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union was not reflected in its membership as the Union could enrol only 800 workers as its members. The Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh did not obtain registration under the Trade Unions Act, 1926, till the 15th of September, 1949. However, the Sangh claimed 500 members at the beginning of 1948.

The Municipal Staff Association changed its character entirely during the post-war period. Formerly, it was not prepared to go beyond sending petitions to the municipal authorities. According to the constitution the chief officer was to be the president of the Association. But when the municipal board criticised the "unsatisfactory work of the staff" the Association immediately called a meeting of the managing committee on 29th December, 1945, and expressed its "pain to note the tone" of the resolution and showed its disagreement with the remarks of the general board. The managing committee, however, was prepared "to co-operate with the Municipality in improving the efficiency

of the Municipal staff if particular instances are intimated." The rising prices of necessary commodities created discontent in the municipal staff and the managing committee meeting demanded a temporary increase in salary, bonus, and extension of age-limit to 60 instead of 55. However, the managing committee on 18th February, 1947, passed a resolution which stated:

"These demands are neither accepted nor are being considered sympathetically by the Municipality. The Union had not even received the acknowledgements of the letters sent to the Municipality. Taking into consideration these facts this meeting of the Managing Committee is of the opinion that if these genuine demands are not accepted immediately by the Municipality, the Municipal Staff would have no other alternative except launching a final struggle to get their grievances redressed. Hence, the Association will have to resort to a strike ballot on this important issue."

The Municipality did not pay attention to the demands of the staff and a meeting of the general body held on 23rd April, 1947, decided to take a strike ballot on 26th April, 1947. One member of the union even offered to go on hunger strike to death if the municipality did not concede the union's demands.

In the meantime, the Municipal Workers' Union of the menial servants also gave a notice of strike demanding

more wages, bonus, uniforms, soap and towel to all workers, casual leave of 20 days instead of 15, housing quarters for the workers, extension of age-limit from 55 years to 60 years. The union also supported the demands of the municipal staff.

The Municipal Staff Association in a general body meeting on 26th April, 1947, specially convened for the purpose of taking a strike ballot found that out of 405 members of the Association, 401 cast their votes in favour of the strike and only 4 were against. This meeting also supported the demands of the Municipal Workers' Union. It was decided to form a joint strike committee of both organisations with authority to conduct the strike and negotiate a settlement. Both the unions decided to go on a strike on or before 14th May 1947, and copies of notices were sent to the President of the Sholapur Municipality, District Magistrate, Sholapur, and Minister for Local Self-Government, Bombay. However, the parties came to a compromise and an interim relief was announced by the municipality on 12th May, 1947, and the notice of strike was withdrawn. But dissatisfaction arose over the interpretation and implementation of the compromise formula. In the managing committee meeting of the Municipal Workers' Union on 8th December, 1947, the president explained to the members that during the time of negotiations, the municipal authorities agreed in principle to the demands of the union but they did not implement them in practice.

He suggested that the municipal authorities would come down only if we organise a successful strike. The Municipal Staff Association could not take a decision of strike as it decided to give some more time to the municipality to consider its demands. Therefore, the Municipal Workers' Union alone gave a notice of strike which was scheduled to commence on 11th February, 1948.

After the notice of strike was given, conciliation proceedings started and a compromise was arrived at on 30th January, 1948, by which the municipality agreed to implement the decisions of the previous agreement. However, the Municipal Workers' Union was not satisfied with the attitude of the municipal authorities and a meeting of the managing committee condemned the municipality "for sabotaging the decisions arrived at the conciliation proceedings." The dissatisfaction of the Municipal Staff Association was also rising as the demands of the Association were not considered by the municipality.

On 15th of November, 1948, the Association in its general body meeting decided to take a strike ballot on the demands which it had made a year ago. But in the general board meeting on 30th November 1948, no decision could be taken as the majority expressed the view that the issue should be discussed after the municipality issued a schedule of pay-scales.

The Municipal Workers' Union was insisting on an

immediate strike action and on 16th November 1948, a notice of strike was given to commence from 8th December, 1948. Accordingly the workers struck work for two days. But the parties agreed to refer the dispute to arbitration and the strike was called off.

The Municipal Workers' Union in its statement of claim before the Industrial Tribunal submitted as follows:

"Some of the demands are coming in the dispute over and over again. Agreements are reached but the dispute arises over the exact terms and their implementation. Strangely enough, major demands are conceded and strike goes on round the minor demands. If the Municipality had approached the problems in a proper spirit, Sholapur City would have been saved much of its troubles due to constant strikes."

The award of the Industrial Tribunal was given on 17th February 1949, which ordered the payment of an extra allowance to the workers to compensate for the increased prices of commodities.

After four months the president of the union wrote a letter to the District Magistrate, Sholapur, on 17th June 1949, informing him about "the offence committed in respect of the above award". The said letter says: "The award is to remain in operation for one year only. This period is slowly running out but the Government which has reserved

for itself the power of launching prosecution is silently watching the flagrant breach of the award." On 29th June 1949 a meeting of the Municipal Workers' Union strongly criticised the attitude of the Government and decided to give a strike notice stating that if the demands were not conceded by the Municipality before 17th July, 1949, the workers would go on strike. The demands were 17 in number, the main among them being, increase in dearness and other allowances on the basis of Bombay Government scales, permanency after 6 months' service, introduction of payment on monthly basis in place of one on daily basis, six hours' duty for scavengers, unclean allowance, and overtime. On 13th July, 1949, conciliation proceedings took place and a compromise was arrived at according to which the demands of the union were partly accepted and a decision to form a joint committee was taken for looking into the day-to-day grievances of the workers.

There was a revival in the activities of the Government Peons' and Inferior Servants' Union when the war came to an end. In the middle of 1945 the peons in the District Court addressed a letter to the union requesting the members to take up the issues of the peons again and make efforts to redress their grievances. During the war the union unilaterally decided to stop functioning due to the atmosphere of war. The conditions of peons became worse due to the absence

of any organisation among them. The secretary of the union, Shri R. T. Panigar, took initiative in calling a meeting of all the peons by the end of 1945 and a decision was taken to reorganise the work of the union. A general body meeting on 5th May 1946, elected a new managing committee under the presidentship of Shri E. T. Mane, a prominent lawyer in the city and Shri L. H. Sonkar became the general secretary of the union. Shri R. T. Panigar was elected as treasurer. This new managing committee in its meeting dated 21st July, 1946, decided that government peons should not do any private work of the officers. The same meeting further resolved to frame a charter of demands of the government peons. The office of the union was maintained in the office of the Press Workers' Union and the union agreed to pay Rs. 5 per month as rent. A general body meeting of the union on 18th August passed a resolution demanding an increase in the wages to the peons in the Bombay Province as given by the Central Government.

The local branch, however, had a number of complaints about the central organisation in Bombay. The Bombay office did not help the local branch in any way. The managing committee on 25th August, 1946, criticised the Bombay union for its lack of interest in the local union. The treasurer Mr. R.T. Panigar did not send the subscription collected in Sholapur to the Bombay Union which caused resentment at the Bombay office. Shri Madhusudan Dalvi, president of the Nasik branch

of the union visited Sholapur and addressed a meeting of the general body of the Sholapur branch in which he stated that the Nasik branch of the union had severed connections with the Bombay office and acquired independent recognition from the Government. In the general body meeting of the Sholapur branch union on 15th December, 1946, a decision was taken to break with the Bombay office and start independent functioning. On 23rd February, 1947, the new office-bearers were elected and the charter of demands was passed demanding promotion in wages, permanency of employment, complete ban on private work of officials, 38 hours' week and union recognition. Negotiations and correspondence with the officials went on for nearly one year and in the first week of May, a reply was received by the union stating that private work would not be given to the peons, and that the union would be recognised. The other demands, however, were not accepted and the union continued to agitate for them.

The membership of the union was only 86 in 1945-46, which rose to 297 in 1947-48. Shri R. G. Kulkarni was elected the general secretary of the union in September 1947. He paid more attention to the day-to-day grievances of the peons and even though the major demands in the charter were not accepted the strength of the union was increasing. In 1950-51 the union claimed a membership of 341. It was also creditable to

the union that the private work given to the peons by the officers was considerably reduced during this period although it was not completely stopped.

The Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Union was formed on 12th March, 1948, in a meeting of Sholapur city bus service drivers, conductors and other workers. Leaders of the Poona Union were specially invited, one of whom presided over the meeting. Shri Y. D. Joshi was elected president and Shri Makbul Karbhani, general secretary.

On 13th May, 1948, the union passed the following six demands in its meeting which were sent to the management:

1. Bonus;
2. Dearness Allowance;
3. Sick leave;
4. Recognition of the union;
5. Uniforms; and
6. Holidays on festival days.

But before the union could take any further steps towards winning these demands the Sholapur municipality had decided to take over the bus service which created new problems for the bus workers. The municipal authorities did not promise to absorb all the workers into the new undertaking. Unsuccessful attempts were made to form a rival union. The municipality

asked all the workers to apply individually to the new authorities. At a general body meeting it was decided that nobody should send an individual application to the municipality. Therefore, all the workers sent applications collectively to the municipality through the union. But as all the workers of the old concern were not reappointed by the municipality, the union decided to send a deputation to the Chief Minister, Bombay State. The union asked those workers who were given orders of appointment, to resume their duties but if the remaining workers were not appointed it was decided that the workers should show black flags to the Minister who was scheduled to arrive for the opening ceremony of the new bus service. However, a large number of previous workers were not taken in by the new management which had a serious effect on the functioning of the union.

The union remained somewhat inactive till the end of 1949 when on 7th November, 1949, the managing committee decided to improve its functioning. It was further resolved to give notice of a strike and on 12th November, the union had taken a strike ballot with almost all workers favouring the strike. On 28th November, the union had given a notice of strike in which the earlier six demands were repeated. The manager of the bus company called some of the workers and asked them to

^{Withdraw}
 the strike. But a meeting of the general body held on 1st December, 1949, condemned the disruptive activities of the management and an oath was taken by all the workers in the meeting to remain firm till the demands were fully accepted.

However, the conciliator sent a telegram to the union and negotiations were carried on for three months when a settlement was arrived at by which the management agreed to consider the demands of the union and the union agreed not to give a notice of strike for one year. But the union found that the management was delaying the implementation of the agreement, hence a general body meeting of the 9th December, 1950, decided to give a notice of strike with the following 6 concrete demands:

1. Line allowance of Rs. 15 per month.
2. Extra allowance of Rs. 5 per month to the time-keepers.
3. No transfers in other departments.
4. Fines should be recovered without cash shortage.
5. Free passes to the union officials.
6. Rules should be framed for imposing fines, suspensions, etc.

The conciliator again intervened and negotiations started on these demands. The municipality partly accepted the first, second and sixth demands. The union did not press for the

other demands in the conciliation proceedings. It was further decided to form a joint committee of the municipal authorities and the union representatives to consider the day-to-day grievances of the workers. In 1951, the union claimed a membership of 84.

The clerks of the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. held a meeting on 16th May, 1948, and decided to form a union named ^{the} Sholapur Girni Karkun Sangh. In this meeting the office-bearers and managing committee of 11 persons were elected. Shri S. B. Katre was elected president and Shri S. R. Inamdar, general secretary of the union. When the union representative^s met the assistant manager to put the grievances of the clerks, the latter behaved arrogantly with the representatives. Hence, the managing committee of the union condemned the assistant manager by a resolution, copies of which were sent to the general manager, Government Labour Officer, Labour Minister and the Labour Commissioner, Bombay State. This had a good effect on the union's relations with the management but the management refused to pay any attention to the demands of the union, the principal among them being a six months' bonus. The management was prepared to give only a two months' bonus. Therefore, the union approached the conciliation officer but more than three months passed without reaching any settlement. Ultimately, the conciliation

failed and the union decided to send the issue for arbitration. The managing committee of the Sangh on 29th October 1948, criticised the Government for not taking the issue to arbitration in spite of three applications sent by the union. Hence, in the same meeting a decision was taken to give a notice of strike on 6th November if the Government did not take up the issue for arbitration. The Government did not refer the dispute for arbitration before 5th November and the union had given a notice of strike. However, the Government had then taken up the issue for arbitration. The award of the Industrial Court, Bombay, was given in March 1949, which was not favourable to the clerks.

There was a lull in the activities of the union for more than a year and in 1949 the annual general body meeting of the union was postponed for want of quorum. However, in August, 1950, when some clerks were retrenched from the mills the union took up the issue and a committee was appointed to make efforts to obtain jobs for these unemployed clerks. A deputation of the Sangh met the District Magistrate and requested him to provide work for these clerks. The collector promised to employ the clerks in the exhibition that was to be organised in Sholapur. Though it was a temporary one it gave a relief to these unemployed clerks. The Sangh requested the manager to meet its deputation but it was turned down. The

union requested the manager to start a 'hadli' clerk system which was also not agreed to.

When the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh was recognised according to the provisions of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, the Sholapur Girni Karkun Sangh passed a resolution recommending to the Registrar of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act that the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh had no support of the clerks in the Sholapur Mills but the recommendation was not accepted. At that time the issue of bonus was agitating the minds of the clerks. Hence the union passed a resolution requesting the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh to demand three months' bonus for the clerks in the textile mills. A deputation of the union was also elected to meet the general secretary of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh. In the managing committee meeting of the union on 5th September, 1951, it was decided to hold mass meeting to enlist the support of the public. The Sangh was not successful in winning a three months' bonus for the clerks. The membership of this union was 147 in 1948-49 which went up to 423 in the next year. In 1950-51 it came down to 158.

The G. I. P. Railway Kamgar Union was quite active during the early years of the post-war period when the All-India Railwaymen's Federation had given a notice of strike in 1946. The union had conducted a number of meetings to mobilise the

support of the workers for the strike but the timely intervention of the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, helped in averting the strike. In 1947, the union utilised the strength acquired by it during the preparation of strike and increased its activities. In the year 1947 more than 416 complaints were lodged with the railway authorities out of which 281 were settled amicably. In the beginning of 1948 the union had 648 members on its roll.

The Tongawallas Union became defunct during the post-war period and it had no existence since 1948. Even during 1947, only two meetings of its managing committee were held and no demands of the members were put before the municipal authorities or the Tonga owners. The Shop Assistants Union, the Shimpi Kamgar Union, the Hotel Kamgar Union and the Motor Transport Union also ceased to function during the post-war days. However, a number of new unions sprang up in these days namely, the Sholapur Technical and Supervisory Staff Union, the Godown Workers' Union, the Medical Staff Association, the S.T. Kamgar Sangh, the Telegraphic Workers' Union, the Bank Employees' Union, the Rationing Staff Association and the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh about whom we will discuss later.

In 1948, a new trend in the trade union movement was observed in Sholapur after the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India at Calcutta. The leadership of the Party

considering the fact that the strike wave had not subsided came to the wrong conclusion about the revolutionary upsurge of the working class in the country. In the name of bold leadership of the working class struggle and its hegemony in the revolution, it took to sectarian adventurism. A slogan of all-India general strike was given as it was considered the attribute of revolutionary trade unionism, without reference to the preparedness, and mood of the workers, the state of organisation, and the objective justifiability or appropriateness of the call.

This policy had its repercussions all over India. The Government of India decided to arrest the Communist leaders all over the country and in Sholapur all the principal leaders were arrested and detained in jail. After the arrest of these experienced leaders and some leaders being driven underground, the union organisations under the leadership of Communists became extremely weak. The inexperienced new leadership could not command the confidence of the workers. Exaggerated demands were put forward and constant strike calls were given some of which failed miserably. A booklet was jointly published in 1949 by the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union, ^{the} Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union and the Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union putting forth exaggerated demands like Rs.80 as minimum wage, six months' bonus with D.A., one month's paid holiday, etc. A call

was given to the workers of Sholapur to prepare for an all-India general strike of all the workers in all the industries to win these demands. The constant failure of the strikes led to the demoralisation of not only the rank and file workers but the active workers of the unions under the influence of the Communist Party.

When on 27th August, 1949, the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mills was closed for an indefinite period, the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union gave a call to break the locks of the mills and start it. The slogan, however, may have appeared very radical but was unrealistic. A demonstration was staged before the mill gates and some members of the union also made attempts to enter the mill premises but were arrested by the police. The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh requested the workers to make peaceful attempts to solve the problem. It sent a resolution to the government demanding the reopening of the mill at the earliest. The mill was closed for nearly nine months and the President of India promulgated an ordinance³² in February 1950 to take over the management of the mill in the hands of the Central Government. The Government handed over the management to Mr. V. N. Chandavarkar of the Mill-owners' Association, Bombay, and the mill was opened in April 1950.

32 Later on this became law when the bill was passed in the Parliament.

The new management created new problems for the workers in the Sholapur Mills. A number of complaints were made by the workers that the reappointment of workers in the mill was not done according to seniority etc. Unions complained that some leading trade union workers were purposely kept outside against the mill in the court as even the Bombay Industrial Relations Act was not applicable to this mill. Neither the representative union nor the Government Labour Officer could take up the grievances of the workers. Before the closure of the mill the number of workers employed was 12,292 but in May 1950 only 4,414 workers were taken back. This increased the work-load to such an extent that the discontent of the workers was mounting high.

The following figures clearly give the idea of this :

Table No. 3.5.1 ¹⁹⁴⁸
 Work-load of the Sholapur Mills between 1943-49
 and 1951-52

Item	August 1948 to Aug. 1949	April 1951 to April 1952
Working Spindles	4,94,24,675	4,12,96,952
Production of Yarn (in lbs.)	1,07,03,990	72,71,886
Average cotton of yarn	20.91	29.02
Total No. of looms in operation	10,74,176	9,28,423
Total cloth-production in yds.	3,22,70,258	3,29,81,316

Source : "Kajut" - a Marathi Weekly, Sholapur, Vol. I, No. 3,
 page 3.

This discontent was so much that a petition was sent to the President of the Indian Union by many workers to change the management and hand over the mill to the old management.³³ On October 4, 1952, the blow room tenters in this mill refused to do work on two scutchers and started working only on one. The management and the general secretary of ^{the} Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh persuaded the workers to attend the mill but with no effect.³⁴ This resulted in a strike inside the mill which continued for a long time. During this period the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union held a series of meetings and exhorted the workers to continue to work on one machine only. On October 24, the management filed an application in the Labour Court for getting the partial cessation of work by the tenters declared illegal. The strike was declared illegal by the Labour Court on October 28, and the workers resumed work without winning any demands.

Two more labour organisations came into existence in Sholapur in the textile industry since 1948, The Sholapur

33 Later on the Supreme Court declared the Ordinance and the Act as ultra vires and the mill was again handed over to the old management in 1953.

34 Bombay Labour Gazette Vol. 30 No. 5, p. 400.

Mill Mazdoor Sabha³⁵ was formed on 7th January, 1948, and was registered on 21st April, 1951. The membership fee was As.4 per month and was collected monthly. In 1948 the union had 460 members while in 1949 it reached 900. But then the number showed a tendency to decline until it had 180 members in 1955 which was further reduced to 160 in 1956. During the 7 years' time the union had filed 60 cases in the court out of which 40 were successful. This union never could influence the majority of the textile workers in Sholapur.

A section of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh led by ~~Mr.~~^{Shri} T. S. Jadhav, M.L.A., resigned from the union in 1949, and formed a new union named ^{the} Girni Kamgar Sabha. This organisation was a part of the Peasant and Workers' Party and had a considerable following among the workers who were mostly Marathas by caste. The only work that the union had done was at the time of closure of the Sholapur Mill when nearly 100 workers offered satyagraha before the mill gates. The union had leftist leanings and in 1952 this union and the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union amalgamated and a new union was formed named ^{as the} Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha.

35 This union was affiliated to the All-India Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

Thus in the beginning of 1952 there were 4 trade unions in Sholapur but the major rivalry was between the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh and the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union. The General Elections of 1952 had again raised the issue about the true representative character of the union. The Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union nominated Shri G. D. Sane as its candidate in a constituency that composed mainly of the textile workers. The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh though officially did not support the candidature of Shri Channusingh Chandele, an office-bearer of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, the union workers made efforts to get him elected. A very tough fight took place and Shri G. D. Sane got elected. Even in the municipal elections in ward Nos. 3, 10, 11, 15 and 16 where most of the textile workers reside all the candidates supported by the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union were elected. Thus the leadership of the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union had an argument that they enjoy the confidence of the textile workers but as the State and the millowners had sponsored the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh it obtained representation.

It has been already stated that the Girni Kamgar Sabha and the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union amalgamated into a new organisation, namely, the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha. Leftist victories in the general elections created a favourable background/consolidating the activities of this union. Hence this

new union, in the initial stages, made efforts to develop the organisational structure. During 1952-53 in all nine meetings of the managing committee were called. The union appointed 'moholla' organisers and steps were taken to form mill committees. Membership drive was also launched and efforts made to obtain recognition. But the union could not increase its membership by more than 4,000. Attempts to enrol more members did not continue. As one trade union worker remarked in this connection, "the workers voted for us but they were not prepared to become members of the union". However, the union organised a successful strike on 6th July, 1952, against the increase in the prices of foodgrains in spite of the opposition of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh. The union also took initiative in organising an anti-foodgrains prices increase conference in Sholapur that was held under the presidentship of Prof.N.R. Phatak. On 22nd July 1953, the annual general meeting was held in which the organisational defects were pointed out. ^{Shri} ~~Mr.~~ S. S. More, M.P., in his presidential address appealed to the active workers to strengthen the union and obtain recognition. During 1953 the union made efforts to organise study circles and increase the membership but the attempt was not a sustained one.

In July 1954 a conference was held against increase in the work-load, 'pali' system etc. But the inactivity of the

union was gradually on the increase. During 1953-54, eight meetings were held but most of the time of the meetings was devoted to the organisational problems. This number was further reduced to 4 during the next year and the attendance at the meetings was also on the decrease. The main argument of the leadership was its inability to tackle the day to day issues of the workers due to the recognition of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh by the millowners.

The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh on the other hand could take a number of cases of the workers and was paying more attention to day to day work. It was the convenor of the All-India Textile Workers' Conference in 1955 which passed resolutions demanding increase in wages, cancellation of the Appellate Tribunal and expressed its opposition to the methods of rationalisation. The Conference was attended by more than 500 delegates and was inaugurated by ^{Shri} ~~Mr.~~ Khandubhai Desai. ^{Shri} ~~Mr.~~ Ambekar in his presidential address criticised the delay in giving decisions in industrial disputes and demanded a change in the wage rates of the workers.

The trade union rivalry between the two unions resulted in ^{the} pending ^{of} a number of issues of the workers unsolved. This had a demoralising effect on the workers in the textile mills which created a feeling in the minds of a large section of

workers that the disunity among them due to political differences must come to an end. This further gave rise to a feeling of resentment about the outsiders, which was seen in a meeting held by the workers of the Laxmi Mills on 25th December, 1955, when the workers decided to form an organisation without outsiders. It was also resolved to call a meeting of the workers in all the mills and an ad hoc committee of 13 workers was appointed to convene a conference of all the workers in the textile mills of Sholapur. The name of this new organisation was ^{the} Sholapur Girni Kamgar Committee which organised a big rally of the textile workers on 1st April, 1956. The committee declared that it was not against any union and invited the leaders of all the unions working in the textile mills. Representatives of ^{the} Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha and ^{the} Mill Mazdoor Sabha attended the rally. This rally was addressed by the workers themselves and a resolution was passed demanding the following:

1. Rs. 35 as minimum wages, as recommended by the Bombay Textile Labour Inquiry Committee;
2. 100 per cent. neutralisation of dearness allowance;
3. Gratuity;
4. Loan against contributions to the Provident Fund; and
5. Right of bonus to the workers till the living wage is given.

The resolution was signed by 5000 workers which was sent to the Government Labour Officer and ^{the} Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh. A demonstration was organised before the office of the Sangh to inquire how much bonus it was going to demand from the millowners, but as there was nobody in the office of the Sangh it decided to organise another demonstration. On 22nd November, 1956, another big demonstration was organised which was addressed by Shri Channusingh Chandele who agreed to consider the demand.

However, the workers did not give a shape to this committee in the form of a trade union. No regular subscription was collected but it issued regular handbills and organised mass meeting for which funds were collected in the various departments of the mills. The constitution of this committee permitted its members to join political parties but political propaganda was prohibited on its platform. Shri B. T. Jagtap, a worker in the Sholapur Mills, was its president and Shri Manyar from the Laxmi Mills was the general secretary. A number of workers belonging to different unions joined this committee and even members of the managing committee of these unions became active workers of this committee. The committee brought to the forefront a number of leaders of workers who were not known before. It also created a confidence in the minds of the workers that if they could organise and decide

to manage their own affairs they could do so.³⁶

The conditions in the handloom industry were different in this period also. Even though the Communist leadership received a setback in 1948 due to its adventurist tactics of militant actions, the policy of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union was more hostile towards the master weavers thanⁱⁿ the previous period. Some of the demonstrations were violent in character. Some members of the managing committee expressed disapproval of this policy and they were expelled from the union. However, the union leadership realised the mistakes and those expelled members were taken back on the managing committee. At the beginning of 1950, the leaders of the union who were released, reorganised the activities of the union and gave a call of joint front with the master weavers. On the 9th August, 1950, a joint memorandum was sent to the Government of Bombay by the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union and the Sholapur Asami Sangh which demanded yarn at cheap rates and protection to the industry from competition with the textile mills. Between 1951 and 1954 a number of demonstrations were organised jointly by the union and the Asami Sangh. In some

36 Recently a new union ^{has been} ~~was~~ formed in Sholapur named "Girni Kamgar Union" in which Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha, Mill Mazdoor Sabha and this committee are jointly working. A section of the INTUC workers have also joined this union.

of these demonstrations, the Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh also participated. In the 1951 general elections the union supported the candidates of "Janata Aghadi" (People's Front) and actively worked for them. In March, 1952, the union voiced the complaints of the handloom workers when a wage cut was imposed by the Asamis and in the month of April a strike broke out in 68 factories. It continued for 9 days. A committee, appointed to conduct the strike, negotiated with the employers. During the negotiations the master weavers convinced the union leaders about their financial difficulties. The union leaders showed their readiness to accept wage-cut of 8 annas per four sarees. The decision of the negotiation committee was later on approved by the managing committee of the union and explained to the workers in public meetings. The union expressed its right to demand increase in the wages if the conditions of industry improved. But the conditions were becoming precarious every day. Hence the union took initiative in forming a joint committee of all the classes engaged in the handloom industry to get protection from the government. On 8th July, 1953, a big demonstration was organised before the office of the Collector ^{to} and ~~submitted~~ a memorandum of grievances. A deputation of the joint committee met the Minister for Supplies, Bombay State. The union participated in the Bombay State Handloom Weavers' Conference held

at Nagar and gave full co-operation to the celebration of All-India Handloom Week. In spite of the union's co-operation to the master/weavers in demanding protection to the handloom industry, the master weavers in 1954, resorted to a wage-cut and there was a spontaneous strike to fight against the offensive of wage cut by the Asamis. The union gave leadership to the strike and after 4 days the Asamis accepted to restore the wage-cut. In May 1954, the District Magistrate, Sholapur, wrote a letter to the union requesting it to send representatives for negotiations in a joint meeting of workers and Asamis. Thus in spite of the desire both on the part of the workers and the Asamis to settle the issues mutually, the conditions of the industry were such that a wage cut was restored to by the Asamis while the workers were opposing the same. Throughout the year 1954, and at the beginning of 1955, the issue of wage-cut was haunting the handloom workers who could not even work for a whole month. Under such circumstances, the conditions of the workers were becoming critical and hundreds of workers left the city by the middle of 1955 in search of jobs elsewhere.

In the Bidi industry there was no union activity as such in the early days of the post-war period. The Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union held only 3 meetings of the managing committee in 1947-48 and the number of applications sent to the employers

was only 59 during the whole period. The president, general secretary and the treasurer, all belonging to the Communist Party were arrested in April, 1948, after which the union activity was further slowed down.

In 1949 even the registration of the union was cancelled. The Rashtriya Bidi Majdoor Sangh took full advantage of the absence of Communist leadership. The membership of the Sangh was 729 in 1950-51 and it was recognised by the employers. In 1951 the union raised the issue of wage increase and demanded Rs.2-8-0 instead of Rs. 1-4-0 for manufacturing a thousand bidis. The owners declared their inability to concede the demand of the union and consequently declared a lockout and closed the concerns on 14th June, 1951. Efforts made by the Government Labour Officer to bring about a settlement proved ineffective. The lockout continued till 4th July when the owners withdrew the lockout and opened their concerns as a result of the agreement reached with the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh. According to the agreement the proprietors promised to increase the wage of the Bidi workers from Rs.1-6-0 to Rs. 1-10-0 per thousand bidis and also to pay Rs. 2 per month per worker towards the purchase of their ration as an ex-gratia payment. The agreement was binding for one year only. In May, 1952, some Bidi factory owners tried to impose a wage-cut but the attempt was foiled by the workers' strike for two

days. These struggles increased the strength of the union whose membership rose to 1046 in 1952. However, the employers were constantly trying to bring pressure on the workers to accept a wage-cut and from 7th January, 1952, they closed down their concerns. Representatives of both the parties held negotiations on the next day in the presence of the Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Bombay, and the employers agreed to restore the wage cut.

The Communist leaders after their release from prison reorganised the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union but the employers did not recognise it. In 1952, the union held a number of meetings to enlist the support of the bidi workers. In 1954 when a strike broke out in the Patel Bidi Works both the unions held meetings supporting the workers' demand regarding the payment of their outstanding wages. The strike, however, was a failure and the Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union blamed the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh for its "disruptive activities" during the strike. In 1953, the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh tried to organise a co-operative factory of the bidi workers which, however, was not successful.

In the municipality, as we have seen earlier, joint committees were formed to settle the dispute of the workers. But their working did not succeed and the complaints of the menial servants and clerks were increasing after 1949. By

the end of 1949 the Municipal Staff Association demanded house rent, scale of pay according to the recommendations of the Central Pay Commission and an increase of Rs.10 in the dearness allowance immediately. The municipality did not concede to this demand and in the middle of 1950 the Association contemplated a strike action. Efforts were made by the union to settle the issue amicably but it did not bear fruit. The Chief Officer who was the president of the union resigned from the union and a new president was elected by the managing committee on 21st September, 1952. Under the new presidentship the managing committee gave one month's notice to the municipal authorities to consider the demands. However, the municipality did not pay any attention to it. The reminder sent by the union remained unanswered. The Association decided to conduct a socio-economic survey of the staff members of the municipality so that the grievances can be put before the public effectively. However, the work remained uncomplete and ultimately the idea of such a survey was dropped. The association decided to take up the demands for conciliation. The municipality did not agree to pay the salaries according to the Pay Commission's recommendations as "it was not practicable considering the financial position of the Municipality." An increase in the dearness allowance to the extent of Rs. 5 per month was granted and a promise to consider the construc-

tion of residential quarters for the municipal staff was given. On the whole the staff was not satisfied by the outcome of the conciliation proceedings. The Municipal Workers' Union, on the other hand, could win some concessions from the employers and housing was provided to nearly half the number of workers. The union through its propaganda meetings tried to win the public support to the demands of the workers. On 12th May, 1950, the Municipal Workers' Union organised a token strike of two hours to protest against the neglect by the municipal authorities to consider the complaints regarding promotions by seniority, appointments, favouritism etc. The union put the blame of the failure of the joint committee entirely on the employers and appealed the workers to stand unitedly to fight against the municipal authorities. The membership of the union was 790 in 1953 which rose to 864 in 1955. The union opened a branch office in the Municipal colony so that the workers should find it convenient to note down their complaints easily. In 1953 the union organised a volunteer corps, a library and a reading room.

The Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Union was not functioning regularly during 1951 and only 4 meetings of the managing committee were held. But in 1952, the union raised a number of demands regarding increase in dearness allowance, housing accommodation for the bus drivers and putting an end to the

favouritism by the authorities etc. In 1953 it threatened to go on strike if the demands were not accepted but in the negotiations the municipal authorities granted Rs. 5 as an increase in the dearness allowance and as regards the complaints about favouritism the authorities stated that they are prepared to consider if particular instances were pointed out.

The Sholapur Girni Karkun Sangh limited its activities only to the cases that were pending since 1950 in the law court. When the employers recognised the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh as representative of textile clerks the Girni Karkoon Sangh could not represent the grievances of the clerks. When the conducting of the cases regarding retrenchment and dismissals was over and the decisions were given in favour of the employers the clerks lost interest in the organisation. The registration of the Association was cancelled in 1954, and in the next year the Association became a defunct organisation.

The Government Peons and Inferior Servants Union did not raise any new demands but paid more attention ^{to} ~~on~~ the day to day grievances of the peons. Even though the authorities promised that private work of officials would not be entrusted to them the complaints about the same continued to come to the office of the union. However, the number of complaints was declining. In 1951 there were 21 complaints of private work,

while in 1954 the number was 17. The second item of complaint was the transfer of peons without taking into consideration their difficulties. The meetings of the managing committee were held regularly during this period and the membership in 1954 was 341.

A branch of the All-India Telegraph Union was formed on 1st March, 1949, but during the first two years the union did not hold meetings regularly. Even in 1952 and 1953 the union did not make any demand to the higher authorities. The annual reports of the union admitted this inactivity. In 1954, joint meetings were held between the representatives of the union and the Assistant Executive Engineer. The union in its managing committee meetings discussed the issues beforehand which gave a good impetus to the union activity. All the issues were settled in these meetings which were held monthly in the Telegraph Office. The union also started a social club and arranged lectures for the staff in 1954.

In the Railways, the pro-Communist G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union had given a call of strike on 9th March, 1950, against the withdrawal of grain concessions, which was a failure. A number of union workers were arrested. For more than two years the union was inactive and in 1951 the National Railway Mazdoor Union was formed and was affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress. A number of workers who were

formerly working in the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union joined this union and the latter became defunct. The new union had a membership of 650 in the beginning which increased to 697 in 1953. In 1950 another union was formed known as the Railway Mazdoor Panchayat which was later on amalgamated with the National Railway Mazdoor Union. The union representatives had regular joint monthly meetings with the authorities and the grievances of the workers were redressed in these meetings. However, the individual complaints were solved by an application to the departmental authority or the representative of the union would personally meet the officer concerned. In 1954, there was a conflict in respect of the leadership of the union and in 1955 a new executive under the secretaryship of ^{seni}G. V. Ghatnekar was elected which improved the work of the union. Most of the office-bearers were insiders and even though they were without much experience they managed their affairs well. In 1955, the membership of the union rose to 772.

The Textile Technical and Supervisory Staff Union was formed in 1948 but it was more or less a social organisation. The membership was 86 in 1948-49 which went up to 98 in 1951-52. The union so far had not made any demand towards the employers. Occasionally they met and discussed their problems. However, the membership of this union came down to 33 in 1954-55. It was registered under the Trade Unions Act, 1926.

The State Transport Kamgar Union was formed in 1949 and enrolled 550 members. The president of the Union was Shri Channusing Chandele, a Congress leader and the general secretary was Shri Appasaheb Brahmanalkar. The union was affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress. The union later on increased its activities to the whole of Sholapur Division and a Divisional organisation was also formed. In 1950 the union raised the demand of drivers and conductors who were not getting regular weekly holidays. The health of the drivers was affected due to overwork, hence the union demanded proper medical facilities for them. The transport authorities promised to give medical aid free of cost which, however, was not implemented for two years. Regular weekly holidays were also granted to the drivers. In 1952, the union campaigned against the system of "double night out" which meant for the driver and the conductor to remain away from home for 3 days. The union demanded to put an end to this system unless facilities were given to the drivers and conductors about their meals, bath etc. Similarly complaints of hard-duty workers were also raised, and the union demanded a decrease in their hours of work. It also agitated about getting recreational facilities. The union voiced these complaints in the Divisional Works Committee meetings and by arranging mass meetings of State Transport workers. The union still has not won these

demands and is trying to bring pressure on the State Transport authorities by constant agitation.

The Bank Employees Union was formed in 1949 with a membership of 47. In 1950 the number of members was reduced to 41 which again rose to 50 in 1952. The union demanded an increase in the salaries and the dearness allowance of the employees as demanded by All-India Bank Employees Federation. In 1953, a token strike was organised which was only partially successful. The union had not made any other demands than the increase in salaries and dearness allowance.

The P. W. D. Kamgar Union was formed in 1953 with a membership of 104 workers. It obtained recognition in the next year and the general secretary of the union helped the workers in solving their difficulties by meeting the respective authorities.

Other organisations like the Sholapur Shahar Electric Kamgar Sangh, the Hatmag Vinkar Congress, the Sholapur Municipal Noukar Sangh, the Rashtriya Theatre Kamgar Sangh have been formed only recently. The Municipal Noukar Sangh has only 32 members and has no influence over the workers as such. The Hatmag Vinkar Congress was formed as a result of a split in the Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh in 1954. The Rashtriya Theatre Kamgar Sangh demanded an increase in the rates of wages and permanency in service. It gave a strike notice and

a compromise was arrived at by which the workers got an average increase of Rs.4 per month. The Sholapur Shahar Electric Kamgar Sangh had 101 members in 1953 and fought some cases about retrenchment in the court which were, however, not successful. The Shop Assistants Union and the Press Kamgar Union showed a remarkable decline in their activity and the Sholapur Shop Assistants' Union could not even hold an annual general conference in 1954-55.

In Table No.3.5.2 we have given the number of unions in Sholapur and their membership during the post-war period. This period saw a remarkable growth of the trade unionism and both the number of unions and their membership show a tremendous rise, though there appears a slight setback in the years 1948-49 and 1949-50. In 1945-46, there were 14 unions but in 1954-55 there were 25. During this period the number of registered trade unions increased from 9 to 17 while that of unregistered unions increased from 5 to 8 only. This shows a favourable trend towards getting the unions registered under the Trade Unions' Act 1926. The membership of all the unions rose from 6101 in 1945-46 to 18,679 in 1952-53 and it slightly declined during the preceding years. In 1954-55 the membership of all the 25 unions was 16,769. The membership of the unregistered unions since 1951-52 was rising while that of registered unions was falling which showed that unions with a large membership were not seeking registration under the Act.

Table No. 3.5.2

NUMBER OF UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP
IN SHOLAPUR
(1945-46 ^{to} and 1954-55)

Year	No. of Unions			Membership		
	Regis- tered	Unregis- tered.	Total	Regis- tered.	Unregis- tered.	Total
1945-46	9	5	14	4636	1465	6101
1946-47	13	5	18	6284	5134	11418
1947-48	14	6	20	15458	1806	17264
1948-49	8	14	22	9259	2990	12249
1949-50	8	12	20	8683	3955	12638
1950-51	13	8	21	11748	4090	15838
1951-52	17	4	21	15101	2910	18011
1952-53	19	4	22	14950	3729	18679
1953-54	19	6	25	12474	4675	17149
1954-55	17	8	25	10706	6063	16769

Source: Compiled from the union records and the Bombay
Labour Gazette.

Thus, the trade union movement in Sholapur has reached the present position through various stages of struggle. Innumerable problems were brought to the forefront during the course of the life of these unions. One thing is clear that the union becomes active only when there is an urgent issue agitating the minds of the workers. Many unions are still making efforts to win certain demands which they had raised a decade ago. There were advances and setbacks in the movement but on the whole it is marching ahead. Some unions were formed for a particular purpose of solving a dispute and the unions became defunct after the dispute was over.

The discussion naturally raises the problems that are involved in the present-day activities of the unions in Sholapur which will be taken up in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF TRADE UNIONS

TRADE UNIONS, like all other social organisations, have to make some rules and regulations to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently. The success of the trade union government rests with the organisational structure created by the union which is mainly reflected in the constitution adopted by the union. It provides us fairly good material in the present circumstances for the study of the problem in all its major aspects.

The constitution of the union lays down the general principles of union organisation and administration. The working of the constitution indicates the stage the movement has reached but the constitution acts as a safeguard in the democratic functioning of the union. It is the constitution of the union, if properly implemented, that acts as a check on the authority of the union leaders who are likely to use the arbitrary powers for their personal ends.

The union constitution fixes the responsibility on individual office-bearers and the efficiency in administration largely depends on the way these persons behave in carrying out their responsibilities. This does not mean that the union considers the work of the members other than the managing

committee as useless. On the contrary, without their active co-operation the structure of the union will never operate in practice and the union organisation will have no other characteristics than merely a paper organisation. Hence, the constitution provides a broad machinery for co-operation between the leadership and the rank and file workers while a sort of hierarchy is created in order to systematise the activity of the union.

The constitution is thus an indispensable requirement for the union as every democratic social organisation needs some framing of rules for maintaining ordered relationship between the various parts of the organisation. The use or abuse of the constitution in the union depends upon the outlook of the leadership itself. It is on their way of interpreting the constitution that the democratic behaviour of the union depends. As V. L. Allen observes:

"Constitutions have been devised to facilitate two way communications and to enable the rank and file to participate in the union government; they provide the means for selecting officials, dismissing them and restraining them in the use of their authority. Such constitutions help to retain the voluntary allegiance of members in that they allow for self-expression. The mechanisms which have been constructed to give effect to democracy in trade union government will work only

if the officials and rank and file want them to work." ¹

It should be, however, noted that the democratic structure of the union alone is not the sole guarantee of its democratic functioning. This can be clearly illustrated if efforts are made to probe into the internal life of the unions which will be done in a separate chapter. We are here concerned merely with the structural framework of the unions as it appears today and for this purpose, we have to deal with the constitutions of the unions in Sholapur.

A general study of all the constitutions of the local unions that are registered under the Trade Unions Act, 1926, leads us to the conclusion that all of them are based on the model constitution supplied to every union by the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay. Only minor changes are made here and there to suit the specific requirements of the union.^S_A Hence, it becomes imperative to study the model constitution as it stands today, for this will enable us to understand the present structural set up of the local unions.²

¹ "Power in Trade Union," 1954, p. 62.

² For our purpose, we have considered a local union as an independent union whose jurisdiction is only limited to Sholapur but it can have affiliations with All India organisations which are federal in nature. Branch unions, on the other hand, have their central offices in some other cities and the branch organisations have to work directly under them.

4.2 A Brief Account of the Model Constitution

This constitution runs into 31 clauses that are divided into 19 sections. At the outset, after the name of the union is mentioned, the Model Constitution sets forth the aims and objects like "to organise and unite the persons" employed in the industry and to "regulate their relations with the employers" and "to secure to the members fair conditions of life and service." It is also one of the objects of the union to try to prevent any reduction of wages and if possible, to obtain an advance whenever circumstances allow and to endeavour to settle disputes between employers and employees amicably so that a cessation of work may be avoided. The constitution further claims that the object of the union should be "to endeavour to render aid to the members during any strike brought about with the sanction of the union or a lock-out".

According to this constitution, any person employed in a particular industry who has attained the age of 15 years shall be entitled to become an ordinary member of the union on a payment of an admission fee if there is any and a monthly subscription fixed by the union provided he agrees to abide by the rules and the bye-laws that may be made by the union from time to time. Those who are not eligible to become ordinary members of the union may be admitted as honorary members for purposes of being elected or co-opted to the Managing Committee;

and they shall be ordinary members of the union during the period of their office. This provision has been made in the constitution so that outsiders may be able to participate effectively in the activities of the union. Their number is, however, determined by every union.

A member failing to pay his monthly subscription for six months with the permission of the Managing Committee or three months without the permission of the said committee shall cease to be a member of the union. But such a member is entitled to rejoin the union on payment of his arrears. A member who is in arrears with his subscription shall not be entitled to any benefits until all arrears have been paid. Similarly, members of the union participating in a strike without the sanction or approval of the Managing Committee shall not be entitled to any benefits whatever.

For conducting the affairs of the union a provision has been made of a Managing Committee which is elected by the Annual General Body Meeting. This Managing Committee which consists of office-bearers and some members should meet at least once in a month and their minutes should be recorded on paper. If a vacancy occurs among the office-bearers or the members of the Managing Committee it can be filled by the Managing Committee by co-option. The provision has also been made for removing a member of the said committee if he acts

against the interests of the union, provided he is given an adequate opportunity to explain his conduct.

The official staff of the union consists of the President, Vice-Presidents, General Secretary, Secretaries and the Treasurer. The President has to preside over all meetings of the union and the Managing Committee, preserve order, sign all minutes and is allowed to give a casting vote only. He has the power to call special meetings of the Managing Committee of the union whenever necessary. The Vice-President functions in place of the President in his absence.

While stating the duties of the General Secretary, who is the most important official in the union hierarchy, the Model Constitution states:

"The General Secretary shall take minutes of all union and committee meetings, conduct all correspondence, convene all meetings, keep all accounts, exercise a supervision over the affairs of the union and shall also keep a correct account of all receipts and expenditure. He shall prepare a balance sheet annually showing clearly every item of receipts and expenditure. He shall be responsible for submitting to the Registrar of Trade Unions all returns and notices that should be sent to that officer under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926. He shall have power to engage in consultation with the President and subject to the approval and confirmation of the

Managing Committee, any assistants for organising and clerical purposes he considers necessary, and all such assistants shall be under the control of the General Secretary."³ The Secretaries generally help the General Secretary in his work, and one of them performs the duties of the General Secretary in his absence.

The Treasurer, says the constitution, is responsible for all sums of money which may from time to time be paid into the union and for duly banking them. He has to make payments towards all expenditure sanctioned by the Managing Committee. But he has no power to draw money from the bank without first having the cheque signed by the President or the General Secretary.

The Annual General Meeting of the union which is a meeting of all the members of the union is a supreme body of the union and it is to be held in the month of April or May. This meeting adopts the report of the work done by the union and the audited statement of accounts. It also elects the office-bearers and other members of the Managing Committee for the current year. At least 15 days' notice has to be given to the members for a General Meeting and the presence of at

3 Model Constitution, Section 19.

least one-third of the members is required to form a quorum. The President and the General Secretary may call a special meeting of the General Body if a requisition is made by one-fifth of the union members, within 20 days of the receipt of the requisition. In case the President or the General Secretary fails to convene such a meeting, the requisitionists themselves shall call a meeting after due notice and the proceedings of the meeting are binding on the union.

This constitution further lays down certain rules regarding the expenditure of the union funds. All the amount has to be deposited in a bank and the General Secretary or the Treasurer cannot keep more than Rs. 50/- with him for current expenses. Some objects on which the General Funds can be expended are also mentioned of which the following are important:

- a. The payment of salaries, allowances and expenses to officers of the union;
- b. The payment of expenses for the administration of the union, including audit of the accounts of the general fund of the union;
- c. The conduct of trade disputes on behalf of the union or any member thereof;
- d. The compensation of members for loss arising out of trade disputes;

e. Allowances to members or their dependants on account of death, old age, sickness, accidents or unemployment of such members.

The Union has to make due provision for the annual audit of the accounts of the union by competent auditors appointed by the Managing Committee and any member has the right to inspect them during the office hours of the union.

The rules of the constitution can be amended, altered, replaced, rescinded or adopted to at any time by a simple majority of the members present at a General Meeting provided a previous notice of at least seven days is given to the members of the proposed alterations.

Lastly, the Model Constitution while explaining the dissolution of the union states as follows:

"The Union shall not be dissolved except by the vote of a majority of three-fourths of the members present at a General Meeting called for the purpose, provided the total number of votes cast at such a meeting is not less than two-thirds of the total number of the members then on the rolls of the union.

"The funds of the Union after meeting all the liabilities shall be disposed of in accordance with the decision of the

dissolution meeting."⁴

4.3 Constitutions of the Local Unions

It has been already pointed out that very few changes are usually made in the Model Constitution while framing the constitutions of the local unions. Some of the unions have not changed a single word in the draft of the Model Constitution except the necessary changes which are only of a technical nature. Some unions have thought it necessary to have some changes and we will have a cursory glance at them in sequel.

The Sholapur Textile Technical and Supervisory Staff Union has enlarged its objectives of the union organisation by adding three more aims, namely, to endeavour to provide against sickness, unemployment, infirmity, old age and death; to secure increasing association of the technical and supervisory staff in the administration of industry and full participation in its control. It further desires to represent the technical and supervisory staff in any committee, proceedings, association and before the court of Arbitration, Employers' or Employees' Associations.⁵ All the office-bearers of the Association

4 Model Constitution, Section 31.

5 The union defines the Technical and Supervisory Staff as "all those employed in the mills except those employed in a clerical capacity or as operatives."

except the Secretaries shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Union while the Secretaries are appointed by the Managing Committee at its first meeting. The Secretaries are thus responsible not to the General Body directly but to the Managing Committee. The Constitution further expressed its full faith in the machinery of conciliation and arbitration and says:

"When all the methods of conciliation and arbitration fail, the Managing Committee shall call ^a in emergency meeting of the General Body of the union to decide the further course of action. The General Body may by a majority of the total number of members decide to call a strike of the members. The voting shall be by secret ballot.⁶"

A similar attitude is also expressed in the constitution of the Rashtriya Girmi Kamgar Sangh, perhaps with more emphasis on the conciliation and arbitration machinery, but in the objective of the union the Sangh advocated the securing, in the end, the nationalisation of the cotton textile industry. The Sangh in its constitution allows any worker to remain as an ordinary member of the union

6 Section 32 of the Constitution.

for six months after being dismissed from the mill; but under certain circumstances the Managing Committee can extend this period up to 9 months.

A peculiar feature of the constitution of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh is the structure of its management. The Sangh has a Board of Representatives which consists of Representatives elected by the members of the Sangh in different departments of the mills on the basis of one representative for every 100 members or a fraction thereof. This Board of Representatives has all the powers of the General Body consisting of ordinary members of the Sangh. The Managing Committee of the Union and its office-bearers are selected at the Annual General Meeting from among the members of the Board of Representatives.

The constitution of the Press Kamgar Union has a special rule regarding the resolutions passed by the Managing Committee. Accordingly, the resolution passed by the said committee cannot be modified or changed for three months. The Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union has formulated a rule that a member who remains absent for three consecutive meetings of the Managing Committee, ^{shall cease to be a member. The Managing Committee} however, has the power to fill the vacancy within a month thereafter.

This union has made provision in the constitution for enrolling the workers who are victimised by the employers. Clause 4 (b) of the Constitution of the Union states: "Any ex-worker can remain an ordinary member of the union for six months after being discharged or dismissed from the mill, but under special circumstances the Managing Committee can extend this period up to nine months."

The ideologies which the unions follow are also reflected in one^{way} or the other in their constitutions. For example, the unions affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress give special emphasis on the organisation of the workers "as a class", while those affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress endeavour to achieve their objectives by using "all means based on Truth and Non-violence," and adhering to Gandhian principles. Some unions not affiliated to any all-India organizations like the Municipal Workers Union make efforts "to keep the union away from political parties."

There is no other notable change found in the union constitutions from the Model Constitution we have studied earlier. Seven unions have made no alterations whatsoever in their constitutions; they have only copied down the

Model Constitution word to word.

Every constitution of the union mentions the composition of the Managing Committee and the office-bearers who are elected by the Annual General Body Meeting of the union. Table No. 4.3.1 gives the size of the managing committees in relation to the membership of 16 unions in Sholapur for the year 1954.

We have not separately shown the President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer in this table because each union requires these three office-bearers. However, while giving the total size of the managing committee members we have included them in the table.

The table shows a vast difference in the size of the managing committee in relation to the total membership of the union. The Sholapur Technical Supervisory Staff Union with only 33 members has a managing committee of 20, while the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh has a Board of Representatives of only 21 persons. The Municipal Staff Association with 244 members can carry on its activities with only one vice-president while the Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh with only 50 members requires two vice-presidents. Similarly,

Table No. 4.3.1 : Size of the Managing Committee in Relation to the Membership of the Union in the Year 1954.

Name of the Union	Total Union Membership	Composition of the Managing Committee			
		Vice-President	Secretaries	Members of the Managing Committee,	Total including Gen. Secretary, Presidents and Treasurers
1. Sholapur Technical Supervisory Staff Union	33	2	3	12	20
2. Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh	50	2	2	15	23
3. Municipal Workers Union	864	2	1	20	26
4. Mill Mazdoor Sabha	134	2	2	8	15
5. Municipal Staff Association	244	1	1	13	18
6. Sholapur Shahar Electric Kamgar Sangh	101	2	3	15	23
7. Rashtriya Theatre Kamgar Sangh	81	2	2	11	18
8. Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union	3000	3	2	19	27
9. Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha	2000	2	4	32	41
10. Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh	300	1	2	5	11
11. Press Kamgar Union	54	1	1	4	9
12. S. T. Kamgar Sangh	550	2	2	14	21
13. Govt. Peons and Inferior Servants Union	134	2	1	15	21
14. Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh	6535	2	1	15	21
15. Hatmag Vinkar Congress	400	2	1	9	15
16. Bidi Mazdoor Sangh	550	2	2	14	21

Source: Compiled from Union Records.

the Sholapur Shahar Electric Kamgar Sangh with only 101 members requires 3 Secretaries while the Hatmag Vinkar Congress with 400 members has only one Secretary.

It is not our purpose here to find out any criterion about the correct size of the managing committee in relation to the total membership of the union. We only want to show that no definite principles are involved at present, in determining the size of the managing committee. In some cases we found that in the first general body meeting the number of so-called "active" members of the union was an important factor in determining the size of the managing committee. The idea that every active worker must be given a place in the union is dominant in this case and the number of office-bearers was also determined by the same attitude. We came across some incidents when the union in the annual general body meeting increased the number of office-bearers or the managing committee in order to get the panel elected unanimously, even by amending the constitution.

4.4 The Branch Unions

The Branch Unions exist in Sholapur in the Post and Telegraphs Department, among Railway workers and the

Government peons and inferior servants. As the constitutions of these unions which have all-India or state organisations, are passed in the All-India Conference, the local leadership has to play an insignificant part in the work of the union due to the fact that their responsibilities are very much limited in scope. This can be well illustrated by the following extract from a circular letter sent by the General Secretary of the All-India Telegraph Union to the Sholapur Branch Secretary.⁷

"Instances have on several occasions been brought to my notice by the Director General that contrary to the rules of recognition some branch unions address communications and telegrams to the Directorate representing grievances of their members, which they are not authorised to do. Your attention is drawn to the fact that according to the conditions for affiliations of branch unions, they are permitted to take up questions with the departmental authorities up to the level of the circle only. Any subject ^{to the Director General, is required to be represented} which a branch union wishes to represent through the headquarters and not by the local secretary."

7. The letter is dated 28.4.1949.

The branch unions have often complained that their power being limited to a great extent, they cannot place their grievances effectively before the superiors. The delay that is usually caused by the procedure of handling grievances through the central offices creates discontent among the workers about the union itself. Even the Collector of Sholapur once wrote to the President of Government Peons and Inferior Servants' Union, Bombay, expressing regret that he was unable to consider vague complaints from the place as far distant as Bombay. He further stated: "It is open to your members to approach me personally at any time with any grievances they have to put forward.⁸"

A prolonged controversy took place between the Sholapur Branch of the above union and its head office regarding the rights of the branch unions. The Sholapur Branch suggested some changes in the constitution of the union and demanded more powers to the branch organisations. The President of the Headquarters at Bombay wrote to the branch President as follows:

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8. A letter dated 1.10.1946. Formerly, for every grievance the local branch had to approach the central organisation. By a letter dated 22.12.1946 the President of the union gave powers to the Sholapur Branch to "communicate directly with higher authorities" if no satisfactory result was arrived at the local level.

"In the past we have had had experience of Sholapur. Please see to it that it is not repeated. You cannot have a separate account of your own. Whatever you need will be supplied to you by the head office."

The branch unions have less powers than the local unions but their central organisations are stronger than the central organisations of the local unions as the influence of the former with the employer is more than that of the latter.

The constitutions of the central organisations have made provisions to form branch organisations and rules and regulations are framed regarding the functioning of the branch unions. For example, in the case of Telegraph Traffic Employees' Union (Class III) the jurisdiction of a branch union is supposed to be the City Telegraph Office only in which its membership elects an executive committee in the annual general meeting. This branch is competent to decide all questions that may arise not inconsistent with the union constitution and not contrary to the expressed resolutions of the general body. It is responsible for the proper working and management of the branch and the scrutiny of the audited accounts also. The branch union can be recognised by the central headquarters only

on receipt of the minutes of the general body meeting establishing the local unit, the allocated quota of subscription along with the admission fee in full and subject to the agreement given in writing to abide by all the rules and regulations of the union as embodied in the union constitution. ^{The Constitution} recommends a committee not exceeding ten on the basis of proportionate representation of technical and clerical membership. In this branch union if a conference is overdue and is not called by the office-bearers responsible to call the same it will be within the competence of the two-thirds of the general members of the branch to assemble at a common place notified earlier to decide the issue necessitating the conference.

The branch union elects one delegate for every 50 members to the all-India conference. When a member is transferred from one unit to another, a transference certificate should be forwarded to the unit under information to the central headquarters. In case the member is transferred to a station where the local unit does not exist such member can continue his membership in the former unit. Similarly the office-bearers elected at central headquarters shall also be given the option to continue their membership in their respective local unit.

In the Post and Telegraph Department the Unions have a rather complex structure, and the National Federation of the Post & Telegraph Employees formed after realignment of all the old unions in the department contains 9 all-India organisations. These central organisations have circle organisations which are formed according to the regional basis and are further extended to branch organisations. Thus in Sholapur nine unions can be formed in the Post & Telegraph Department alone but at present only four are functioning in Sholapur (refer the chart on the next page). The local branches have no co-ordination among themselves as they are directly connected with the Bombay Circle. As the jurisdiction of each branch is strictly maintained the workers in a particular department who have not formed a local branch have to depend entirely on the circle union in Bombay to redress their grievances.

The Government Peons and Inferior Servants Union (Bombay) in its constitution has made a specific provision to establish branches at suitable centres. But "it will be obligatory upon the branches to carry on their work strictly in accordance with the union constitution bye-laws, policy laid down and decisions taken by the Executive and General Body of the Union". The work of the branch is

Chart No. 4.4.A : Chart showing the constituent units of the National Federation of Post and Telegraph Employees.

National Federation of Post and Telegraph Employees
(after realignment of all the old unions)

1	All India Postal Employees Union (Class III)	Bombay Circle	Sholapur branch
2	All India Postal Employees Union (Postmen and Class IV)	Bombay Circle	Sholapur branch
3	All India R.M.S. Employees Union (Class III)	Bombay Circle	Sholapur branch
4	All India R.M.S. Employees Union (Mail Guards and Class IV)		
5	All India Telegraph Traffic Employees Union (Class III)	Bombay Circle	Sholapur branch
6	All India Telegraph Traffic Employees Union (Class IV)	Bombay Circle	Sholapur branch
7	All India Telegraph Engineering Employees Union (Class III)		
8	All India Telegraph Engineering Employees Union (Class IV)		
9	All India Administrative Offices Employees Union (Class III and IV).		

managed by the managing committee and every office-bearer of the union has the right to take part in the managing committee of any branch and is not entitled to vote thereon.

The annual general body meeting of the union is held every year and every district branch elects 5 delegates to the general body which considers proposals received from the branches and issues submitted by various committees or branches. Any branch desiring that the union should declare a strike has to take a decision in its own executive and forward the same for being considered by the executive committee of the union and a slogan of strike is valid and effective only if it is passed by the three-fourths of the members present at the meeting of the executive committee. So long as the executive has not given a slogan of strike, no member of the union is entitled to carry on any propaganda in definite terms about the preparation or declaration of a strike at a meeting or otherwise.

Trade

4.5 An Appraisal of the Union Constitutions

The Model Constitution that we have studied earlier in this chapter provides, no doubt, a broad democratic structure for the trade unions which if worked out in good spirit will serve as a good instrument in developing a

sound trade union movement among the mass of workers.

"Union structure must somehow leave enough room both for leadership and for democratic control if the movement is to remain coherent in policy and united in method."⁹ This requirement has been aptly taken into consideration while drafting the constitution. It further gives us a frame of organisation for the union which relies on representative democracy and also provides "a government of the membership, for the membership and by the membership's elected representatives."¹⁰ The organisation in this constitution is so designed that the successful operation of it depends upon a well-informed membership anxious to participate in the day-to-day affairs of the union.

Most of the trade union leaders in general have no criticism to offer regarding the Model Constitution. The very fact that most of the local unions have based their constitutions on this model shows the general acceptance of the same by all. The only difference that is observed is on the emphasis to be given by the union to the constitution itself. It seems that the task of framing the

9. S. and B. Webb - Industrial Democracy, London, 1911.

10. Ibid.

constitution is much more easier than its implementation.

Nobody denies that the real appreciation of the constitution entirely depends upon a high level of active interest of the ordinary members of the union. But if for various reasons this active interest is found to be absent representative character of the organisation itself is at stake. As H. A. Clegg has pointed out, "written constitutions may help to strengthen democracy, but they cannot make democracy."¹¹ Hence we find that though in the Model Constitution there exist sufficient democratic channels by which the members can control the policies and activities of the union, the main problem is whether the workers actually use the rights given to them by the constitution. We have not come across a single incident throughout the history of the trade union movement in Sholapur when the workers have ever demanded a requisition meeting even though every union has given this right to them. Similarly, no member has ever approached the general body appealing against the disciplinary action taken against him by the managing committee of the union. This does not at all mean that the necessity did not arise to have

11. H.A. Clegg. General Union - A Study of National Union of General & Municipal Workers - Basil Blackwell, Oxford. (1934) page 336.

such a step but it exhibits the lack of interest in the rank and file workers about the constitution as such. This question will be dealt in greater detail when we shall consider the problem of trade union democracy. Clegg has further observed:

"To the members interest in the constitution itself must take second place to their concern with the union's attempt to maintain and improve their wages and conditions of work in each industry and each place of work."¹²

Even in the birthplace of the trade unionism where the trade union movement has a pretty long tradition of more than two centuries, the attitude of the rank and file is full of apathy. No wonder if one sees the lack of practical interest of ordinary members of the union in the constitution in a less developed country like India with a recent trade union history.

If the rank and file workers are disinterested in the constitution, the leaders regard it as a "nominal requirement" for the union. If a union wants registration a copy of the union's constitution is an indispensable document

12. Ibid. page 340.

that is to be submitted to the Registrar of Trade Unions. In many cases the constitution is preserved in the files of the union records and it is taken out only at the time of submitting Annual Returns to the Registrar of Trade Unions. We found that out of 21 unions we surveyed only 11 had taken care to translate the constitution in Marathi which shows that even a majority of the members of the managing committee is ignorant of the constitution simply because they are not acquainted with English. We found it difficult, in some cases, even to obtain a copy of the union constitution because the general secretary did not remember where he had kept it. Except in the records of the Government Peons and Inferior Servants Association and the Sholapur Girni Karkoon Sangh we did not find any trace of the discussion that took place at the time of passing the Constitution.¹³ The discussion that we found to be recorded in the minutes of the general body of other unions was only about the number of members of the managing committee or whether a union should have two or three vice-presidents. Never was the fundamental structure of the

13. The Government Peons & Inferior Servants' Association wanted more powers for the branch organisation while in the Sholapur Girni Karkoon Sangh there was a long discussion about the powers of the General Secretary.

constitution questioned in any union. In some unions, the work of passing the constitution was carried out within a few minutes. The general secretary simply read the draft before the general body and it was accepted unanimously without any discussion whatsoever! A sub-committee is usually appointed by the union to frame the constitution which does its job by drafting the same based on the Model Constitution. Of course, necessary modifications are made, some sections are dropped and some are added according to the requirements of the union. If at all any amendments are moved in the annual general body meeting they relate to the number of office-bearers or members of the managing committee. In some cases they relate to the rate of subscription or the number of honorary members to be taken on the managing committee.

Does all the above discussion indicate that the unions in Sholapur do not function according to the constitution? The trade union leaders will say that the minute books of the managing committee meetings are examined every year by the Registrar of Trade Unions and if anything that flouts the constitution appears in the functioning of the unions the Registration may be cancelled. Even though one admits that the present unions are functioning formally in accor-

dance with the constitution, the question still remains to be asked: Is the formal observance of the constitution enough to suit the requirements of a healthy trade union movement? The answer to this question lies in the scrutiny of the operation of the constitution in the activities of the unions.

One of the main features of the constitution of a union is that it is not evolved through a detail discussion among the rank and file workers or through their experience in doing day-to-day work of the union, but it is given to them as a ready-made document. In a way, it is not evolved from below but imposed from above. This also explains the existence of apathy among the ordinary members about the constitution. Haste is usually made to get the constitution adopted because it is a requirement to obtain the registration for the union.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb, while describing the formation of the constitutions of the British Trade Unions in the early stages, pointed out:

"But it is significant to notice how slowly, reluctantly and incompletely the trade unionists have incorporated in their constitutions what is often regarded as the specifically

Anglo-Saxon form of democracy--the elected representative assembly, appointing and controlling a standing executive. Until the present generation, no trade union had ever formed its constitution on this model."¹⁴ (emphasis mine).

They further continued:

".... the congress of elected representatives either found no place at all, or else, was called together only at long intervals and for strictly limited purpose. In no case do we see it acting as a permanent supreme assembly. The trade unions met the needs of expanding democracy by some remarkable experiments in constitution-making."¹⁵ (emphasis mine).

Thus in the Western countries constitutions of the unions were in a transitional state for a number of years and were changing according to the requirements of the unions. But here we find that they appear as a ready-made framework for the union organisation. We do not want to state that the same prolonged process should take place here but we wish to emphasise the fact that the implications of a union constitution are not properly considered by the

14. "Industrial Democracy" by S. & B. Webbs, London, 1911, p. 11.

15. Ibid., p. 12.

leadership in general. This results in underestimating the importance of a constitution for the union. Therefore, although the Model Constitution provides a good basis for a democratic constitution for a union, the union constitutions have yet to reach a stage when the rank and file workers take active interest in them to meet the requirements of expanding trade union democracy.

4.6 Relations with National Organisations

National or central organisations are essential to guide the local unions in their day-to-day activities and to coordinate the functions of the unions in a region or an industry in the country. There are certain important issues like changing the labour legislation, demanding the enactment or cancellation of some measures by the Government that can be effectively tackled by the national or regional organisations alone because they can effectively mobilise the workers in the whole region or the industry. The united strength of the working class in the region, state or the nation is a mighty force that many times brings sufficient pressure on the employers to accept the demands of the workers. In this connection, we shall study how far these tasks are being carried out by the central or regional organisations.

At the very outset one cannot but feel sorry to note that there is no single all-India trade union centre in our country to guide the movement. The labouring masses are divided into various all-India organisations which have local unions all over the country. In Sholapur, a number of unions are affiliated to different all-India or state organisations. The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, the State Transport Kamgar Union, the Hatmag Vinkar Congress, the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh, the Rashtriya Theatre Kamgar Sangh, the Dyeing Vinkar Kamgar Sangh are affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress. The Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha, the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union and the Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union are affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress while the Mill Mazdoor Sabha and the Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Union are affiliated to the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. The Municipal Workers' Union is not affiliated to any all-India body but the municipal workers of the Sholapur District have formed a federation of their own and the president of the union has been elected as the vice-president of the latter organisation. The Municipal Staff Association also has no affiliations, yet the union sends representatives to the Bombay State Local Self-Government Employees' Conferences. We have already seen that the workers employed in the Post and Telegraph

Department have their separate all-India and circle organisations. Even in the railway transport, there is a central organisation for each Railway and a federation of all these central organisations has been formed, namely, the All-India National Railway Workers' Federation, whose branch already exists in Sholapur. The workers in the Public Works Department have formed a district organisation and even the government peons and inferior servants have their own district union with a branch in Sholapur. The unions like the Press Workers' Union, the Sholapur Shanar Electric Kamgar Sangh have no regional or central affiliations because the leadership of the union prefers to remain aloof from the "all-India politics of the trade union movement". In the handloom industry, a peculiar form of state-wide organisation exists. Even though the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union, the Hatmag Vinkar Congress and the Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh have different affiliations, these organisations participate jointly in the activities of the Bombay Presidency Hatmag Vinkar Sangh. The representatives of these unions are elected in the local branch of that organisation and some of them are also elected on the central executive committee.¹⁶

16. The representatives of the handloom owners are also participating in the activities of this organisation.

Quite obviously, the sound functioning of these central organisations largely depends upon the way in which their local units function and conversely, the functioning of the local unions is greatly influenced by the guidance given to them by the central organisations. We have made attempts to find out the way in which the central or regional organisations deal with the local unions. From the records of the unions in Sholapur, we get the following information.

The central organisations organise regional or all-India conferences and local unions are requested to participate by sending delegates to such conferences. Resolutions of countrywide importance are adopted in these conferences. Some important local leaders are also elected on the general council of these organisations.

The central organisations mobilise the workers in other areas to support the demand of the workers who are on strike. The unions in Sholapur had collected funds for the textile workers' strike in Bombay in the year 1953. Similarly, a number of unions in the Bombay State passed resolutions demanding the reopening of the Sholapur Spinning & Weaving Mills in August 1949. In developing such fraternal relations the central organisations play an important part whose leaders popularise the struggles in the whole region.

The central organisations hold occasional meetings of their executive committee and problems of trade union movement are discussed and union policies determined. They also send circulars on the decisions of these meetings and calls are issued to celebrate days like the May Day, Workers' Demands Day, Bonus Day, etc.

Table No. 4.6.1 gives ^{the} all-India affiliation of trade union membership in Sholapur classified according to industries in 1954-55. It seems from the table that the Indian National Trade Union Congress (I.N.T.U.C.) claims to have the largest number of workers behind it and its organisations are recognised in textile mills, Bidi factories and transport industries. However, the All-India Trade Union Congress (A.I.T.U.C.) is stronger in the handloom industry than the Indian National Trade Union Congress and the independent unions. The I.N.T.U.C. claims a membership of 8636 while the A.I.T.U.C. 5300. The Hind Mazdoor Sabha (H.M.S.) is comparatively weak in Sholapur and its three unions have only 428 members. Its union in the textile industry is extremely small, considering the number of textile workers in Sholapur. Among the independent unions the Municipal Workers' Union is the only union which has a good membership; all other unions are small. The independent

Table No. 4.6.1

All-India Affiliation of Trade Union Membership in Sholapur Classified According to Different Industries (1954-1955).

Industry	No. of members affiliated to					Total
	I.N.T. U.C.	A.I.T. U.C.	H.M.S.	Other all- India organi- sations	Inde- pend- ent unions	
Textile Mills	6454	2000	134	-	33	8621
Handloom Factories	300	3000	-	-	630	3930
Bidi Factories	429	300	-	-	-	729
Municipal Employees	-	-	244	-	896	1140
Transport & Commu- nications	1272	-	50	97	-	1419
Others	81	-	-	154	695	930
Total	8536	5300	428	251	2254	16769

Source: Compiled from union records.

union in the handloom factory follows the policy of the I.N.T.U.C. but as only one union can be affiliated to that organisation from a centre in the industry, its application for affiliation was rejected. The unions affiliated to other all-India organisations are small in size and their membership is only 251. However, the union in the railways is affiliated both to the I.N.T.U.C. and to the National Railway Workers' Federation.

4.7 Trade Unions and their Registration

Any seven workers working in the same industry in a centre after forming a union can apply to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay, for registration, and on supplying the necessary information can obtain a Certificate of Registration for it. But usually it is found that the unions take a long time to get themselves registered. The Table No. 4.7.1 showing the dates of formation of the union, application for registration and obtaining the certificate of registration of some trade unions in Sholapur indicates clearly that the unions apply late for the registration. Hence, we observe that the Sholapur Municipal Staff Association that was formed in the year 1930 applied for registration after more than twenty years of its existence. The State Transport Kamgar Union was finally registered six years after sending the first application for registration in 1949 because its registration was cancelled firstly on 31.6.1951 and secondly on 6.11.1954 under Section 10 (a) of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 as the union did not send its annual returns promptly to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay. The Municipal Workers' Union, Sholapur, also applied for registration five years after its forma-

Table No. 4.7.1: Dates of Formation and Registration of some Trade Unions in Sholapur.

Name of the Union	Date of formation	Date of application for Registration.	Date of Registration
1. Sholapur Technical Supervisory Staff Union	2 Nov. 1949	7 Dec. 1949	13 Jul. 1950
2. Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh	12 Mar. 1948	15 Dec. 1950	9 Feb. 1951
3. Municipal Workers Union, Sholapur	12 Dec. 1944	29 Oct. 1949	23 Dec. 1949
4. Mill Mazdor Sabha	7. Jan. 1948	25 Feb. 1951	21 Apr. 1951
5. Sholapur Shahar Electric Kamgar Sangh	14 Jan. 1953	16 Jan. 1953	30 Apr. 1953
6. Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur	7 Jan. 1945	13 Nov. 1945	6 Dec. 1946
7. State Transport Kamgar Union	31 Oct. 1949	Not available	10 Apr. 1956
8. Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh	20 Oct. 1950	Not available	19 Mar. 1951
9. Sholapur Municipal Staff Association	2 Feb. 1930	Not available	28 Feb. 1953
10. Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union	Oct. 1939	Not available	16 Oct. 1947
11. Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha	2 Apr. 1952	Not available	31 Mar. 1953

source: Compiled from Union records.

tion. This tendency of not getting the union registered is mainly observed because many of the employers do not insist on the registration of the unions before negotiating with them. For example, the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union lost its registration in 1949 and did not apply for the same again. Yet this union with 3000 membership is considered by the employers and the Government as the representative of the handloom workers in Sholapur. Out of 21 unions surveyed in Sholapur we found only 11 as registered in the year 1955.

As the registration of the union is voluntary, some of the unions do not attach much importance to it as they think that it is an unnecessary check by the Government on their organisations. Some unions do not get their accounts audited regularly which is an essential requirement for continuing the registration. On the other hand, even paper organisations can maintain their registration if they fulfil the requirements of the Registrar. We had come across a union which maintained its registration for 7 years by showing the same membership figures and the office-bearers. It is evidently clear that this union was successful in its manipulation by submitting the returns regularly to the Registrar. Of course, we could not get any

trace of its activity during the period of its registration.

It is binding on every registered union to submit its Annual Returns for the year ending 31st March on a prescribed form to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay State, under Section 25 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926. In this return information regarding the membership of the union, the statement of liabilities and assets, the list of securities, the general fund account, the political fund account, the auditors' declaration and the list of office-bearers for the current year is supplied to the authorities. If this return is not submitted to the Registrar within the stipulated time, the registration of the union is automatically cancelled. In many cases the Annual Returns are sent back to the unions as mistakes are found in filling in the entries. Hence, necessary corrections have to be made and resubmitted together with the information asked by the Registrar.

A glance at the Annual Returns filled by the unions returned by the Registrar for correction showed the following mistakes. In some cases the official year to which the return related is not mentioned at the top while the registered name, address of the head office of the union or even the registration number is not correctly stated.

At times the membership figures of the union are also not given and the date of submitting the returns not mentioned. Signatures of the general secretary and the treasurer are not duly made where they are required. It is also found that the amount of the general fund did not tally with the balance at the end of the year shown on the expenditure side of the general fund account. Similarly, in the case of one union the balance at the beginning of the year did not tally with the balance at the end of the previous year. The cost of newspapers purchased was shown by one union as the cost of publishing periodicals. Sometimes a copy of the resolution of the general body sanctioning the written off bad debts or irrecoverable subscription was not supplied and a copy of the remarks referred to by the auditors in their declaration was not sent with the returns. Quite often the auditors were not duly qualified.¹⁷

17. Under Rule 18 of the Bombay Trade Union Regulations, 1927, the accounts should be audited by two municipal councillors (if the union membership is below 1000) or a Registered Accountant (if the membership is above 1000).

4.8 Enrolment of Membership

The problem of enrolling members of the union has a special significance from the point of view of union organisation. A low level of union membership necessarily exhibits the low level of union organisation. Subscription collected from the members being the major source of income of the unions, it follows that a large membership can alone guarantee the financial stability of the unions.

Employers and the Government can negotiate with the union only if it has a substantial membership. A weak union is always a powerless bargaining agent with the employer. When there is rivalry between two or more unions in the same industry a union with the largest membership is recognised in the usual course. A union with a strong membership creates confidence in the workers about their organised strength which further rouses a feeling of solidarity not only among the rank and file members of the union but also among the workers in the industry who are not members of the union. Rising membership of the union indirectly brings moral pressure on the non-unionised workers to join the union.

Thus enrolment of membership is a primary task for every trade union organisation the neglect of which is ultimately bound to result in decreasing the activities and the organised strength of the union.

The rates of subscription differ considerably from union to union. The Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union collects from its members one anna per month, while the Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh, the Sholapur Press Kamgar Union, the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh and the Hatmag Vinkar Congress charge two annas per month. The Municipal Staff Association, the Sholapur Shahar Electric Kamgar Sangh, the Rashtriya Theatre Kamgar Sangh, the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, the Government Peons and Inferior Servants' union, the National Railway Mazdoor Union charge four annas per month. The Sholapur Technical Supervisory Staff Union, the State Transport Kamgar Sangh, the Sholapur Girni Karkoon Sangh charge eight annas per month. The Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh charges four annas per month if the basic pay of a worker is less than Rs.40 while it charges eight annas per month if the same is more than Rs.40. Similarly, the Telegraph Traffic Employees' Union (Class III) charges one rupee per month if the member is a Selection Grade Clerk but in all other categories the monthly rate of subscription is eight

annas only.¹⁸

Only four unions charge admission fees. They are: the Municipal Workers' Union, the Mill Mazdoor Sabha, the Municipal Staff Association, the Telegraph Traffic Employees Union (Class III). All these unions charge an admission fee equal to one month's subscription, except the Municipal Staff Association which charges eight annas, i.e. double the rate of one month's subscription. Generally it appears that unions are not inclined towards charging admission fees because they fear that it may result in reducing their membership.

A correct understanding of the union's strength lies not in the union membership alone but in an analysis of the real gains and losses in the membership also. If the union cannot continue to attract its members, a section of its membership prefers to remain aloof from the union activity. This is essentially expressed in the size of the union's turnover. Internally unstable unions are likely to function in an unorganised manner due to the disinterestedness

18. The rates of subscription in the United Kingdom vary from 6 pence to 2 shillings per week while in the United States of America, they vary from 1 dollar to 10 dollars a month. These high rates of subscription are certainly a reflection of the high rates of earnings and high rates of benefits from the unions.

of the rank and file in the activity of the union. Joseph Goldstein has pointed out that "A large turnover is both evidence and a principal cause of apathy within an organization. Evidence of apathy is to be found in membership turnover as expressed in the size and rate of annual lapsed membership."¹⁹

Unfortunately, we could obtain data for the turnover of membership of 6 unions in Sholapur for the year 1953-54 and the same of 8 unions for 1954-55. Unless the membership registers are maintained properly, it is not possible to get the data regarding the turnover of the union membership. Table No. 4.3.1 gives the data relating to the lapsed as well as the new membership of some unions.

Even though the data are not adequate to form a general opinion about the rate of turnover of all the unions in Sholapur, they seem to show somewhat clearly that the rate is extremely high in those unions about which the informa-

19. J. Goldstein. "The Government of British Trade Unions," George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1952, p. 70.

The author in this book has devised a formula to calculate the labour turnover of the union membership as follows:

(a) turnover : $\frac{\text{lapsed membership of current year}}{\text{total membership of previous year}}$

(b) turnover : $\frac{\text{new membership of current year}}{\text{total membership of current year}}$

Table No. 4.8.1

Membership Turnover of Unions in Sholapur for
the Years 1953-1954 and 1954-55

Year	No. of unions supply- ing data	No. of members at beg- inning of year	No. of members admitted during year	No. of members left during year	No. of members at end of year	Rate of turnover
1953-54	6	12,824	7,184	6,905	13,103	0.55
1954-55	8	13,217	7,328	8,116	12,429	0.59

Source: compiled from union records.

tion could be obtained. In 1953-54 six unions had a membership of 12,824 to which 7,184 were added during the year. But the number of workers left during the year was 6,905. The membership of the unions would have been higher if efforts had been made by the union leadership. In 1954-55 the number of members leaving the unions was more than the number joining them during the year. Thus we find that in this year the membership of the unions shows a slight decline. However, the data for these two years cannot be compared as only 4 unions had given information for both the years. Hence, we thought it better to study the turnover of one union in Sholapur which would give a better idea of the turnover over a long period. We have given the data of

membership turnover of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur, from 1946-47 to 1954-55 in Table No. 4.8.2. It clearly shows the extremely high rate of turnover of a union which claims the largest membership in the city. In 1948-49 when the rate of turnover was the lowest, the table shows the rate to be 0.54 which itself is high. In the year 1950-51, it was 1.17 which indicates that more workers left the union during the year than the number of members on the register of the union at the beginning of the year. Even the union leadership was aware of this fact and in the Sixth Annual Report of the Sangh, it noted that "even now workers are not inclined to remain members of the union throughout the year. Whenever they have some work in the union, they pay their subscription of four annas; otherwise, they do not wish to pay the subscription to the union."

This high rate of turnover has serious repercussions on the organisation of the union as it creates obstacles in building the union as a stable and sound organisation. Even from the point of view of union administration the union leadership always finds it difficult to keep regular contact with the rank and file which is apathetic towards the activities of the union.

Table No. 4.8.2: Membership Turnover of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur.

	1946-47	1947-48	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
No. of members on books at the beginning of the year	42	3823	9122	6355	3341	6123	6285	7848	6876
No. of members admitted during the year	3820	7922	3436	8863	7140	5718	6106	5075	4850
Total	3862	11745	12558	15218	10481	11841	12391	12923	11726
No. of members left during the year	39	2623	6203	11877	4358	5556	4543	6047	5272
Total No. of members at the end of the year	3823	9122	6355	3341	6123	6285	7848	6876	6454
Rate of Turnover of membership	0.99	0.87	0.54	0.75	1.17	0.91	0.79	0.74	0.92

Source: Compiled from union records.

4.9 Size of the Unions

The type of organisation which a union requires is dependent on its size. Unions of smaller size can be organised simply by contacting individuals by the officials of the unions but for bigger unions the task of reaching the rank and file has to be achieved through other channels of communication. A general body meeting of a union with less than 50 members can be arranged more easily than a union with more than a thousand membership. But such smaller unions have limited resources and they find it difficult to manage their affairs which we shall consider when we study the functioning of union offices and their finance.

The size of a union depends to some extent on the employment of workers in the industry or place of work. Table 4.9.1 gives the classification of unions according to their size in different industries in Sholapur. All the three unions having a membership of more than 1000 are either in the textile mills or handloom factories. A union with less than 100 members in the textile mills comprises of the technical staff while the unions of press workers, telegraphic clerks, bank employees, bus workers are also small with a membership of less than 100. In Bidi factories both the unions are having a membership between 101-500 and

Table No. 4.9.1

Size of the Unions in Sholapur in Different Industries (1954-55)

Size Group of Membership of Unions.	Textile Mills	Handloom Factories	Bidi workers	Municipal Employees	Communications & Transport	Others	Total
0-100	1	-	-	1	3	3	8
101-500	1	3	2	1	-	4	11
501-1000	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
1000 and above	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
Total	4	4	2	3	5	7	25

Source: Compiled from union records.

this low degree of union organisation was explained by the leaders as due to employment of women in this industry. The total employment of workers in Bidi factories is nearly 3000. The Municipal Staff Association and the Municipal Workers' Union have a good number of employees on their rolls but the Sholapur Nagarpalika Naukar Sangh with a membership of 50 employees has no influence over the workers. Similarly, two unions in handloom factories have less than 500 members who have no significant influence over the workers but the third union in this group being an organisation of dyeing

workers with nearly 500 employees in the dyeing factories has some hold. Thus, the influence of the union among the workers is also a factor in determining the size of the union. Table also shows that out of 25 unions 19 unions have less than 500 members on their registers.

Table No. 4.9.2

Size of the Unions in Sholapur according to All-India Affiliations (1954-55)

Size Group of membership of the unions	I.N.T. U.C.	A.I.T. U.C.	H.M.S.	Other A-I. Federations	Independent unions	Total
0-100	1	-	1	3	3	8
101-500	3	1	2	2	3	11
501-1000	2	-	-	-	1	3
1000 and above	1	2	-	-	-	3
- Total	7	3	3	5	7	25

Source: Compiled from union records.

Table No. 4.9.2 gives the classification of the unions according to their size and all-India affiliations. Out of the three unions with more than 1000 membership two belong to the All-India Trade Union Congress and one to the Indian National Trade Union Congress but the latter in this group

claims to be the largest union in the city. All the three unions affiliated to the Hind Mazdoor Sabha have less than 500 members. Out of five unions affiliated to the all-India federations, three have less than 100 members while two have more than 100 but less than 500 members. The Municipal Workers' Union is the largest union in the city which is an independent organisation without any all-India affiliations and this union comes in the third size-group. The remaining six independent unions are distributed equally between the first two size-groups.

4.10 Extent of Union Organisation

The development of trade unionism in different industries is not necessarily the same. It is the extent of union organisation that explains the level of trade union consciousness created by the leadership among the workers employed in a particular industry. It also indicates the strength or weakness of the union in the process of collective bargaining.

A study of the extent of union organisation explains us the task of bringing under the fold of the union which remained unfulfilled so far. A large number of workers do not join the union even though they are not against the

union. This happens mainly because these workers feel that they can reap the benefits of collective bargaining in spite of their not being members of the union. The task of overcoming this type of backwardness among the workers is, nevertheless, important if union functionaries genuinely desire to strengthen their demands by proper and well equipped organisation.

However, the problem of studying the extent of union organisation is not without certain difficulties. For example, the exact number of workers are not available in case of all the industries in Sholapur. The Government maintains records of only those factories and establishments which are either registered under the Factories' Act or Shops and Establishments Act. There are a number of handloom and bidi concerns which are not registered under any of these two Acts and hence, it is somewhat difficult to ascertain the exact number of workers employed in these and similar other industries. Therefore, we had no other alternative except partly relying upon the data supplied by the employers organisations which are only approximate. However, care has been taken to confirm the figures by referring them to the unions concerned. Secondly, the problem of dual membership is common in cases of industries

where rival unions are in existence. However, it is difficult to locate the extent of dual membership as it involves a voluminous task of comparing the membership registers which the unions are not prepared to hand them over outside the union offices. Hence we have included all the members claimed by the unions. It is necessary to note this important fact because it points out clearly that the exact extent of unionism is much more lower than that computed from the available data.

In Table No. 4.10.1 we have presented the data showing the extent of union organisation in Sholapur in various industries. It appears from the table that the percentage of union membership to the number of workers employed is the least in the case of workers employed in Bidi factories. This can be explained by the fact that almost all the bidi workers in the city are females among whom trade unionism has not yet spread to the greater extent due to social restrictions on women in the Indian society. These women workers have to work in the factories as well as to ~~see~~^{look to} their household responsibilities which leaves very little time for them to devote attention to other activities. The table further points out that the extent of unionism in the textile industry is relatively low as compared to that in the other industries. It is worth noting that the unionism

Table No. 4.10.1

Extent of Unionism in Sholapur in Different Industries (1954-55)

<u>Item</u>	Textile Mills	Handloom factories	Bidi factories	Municipal (Staff & menial servants)	Communications and Transport	Others	Total
1. No. of workers employed.	21624	9000	2000	1754	2500	1800	38678
2. No. of Union members	8816	4209	729	1126	1220	669	16769
3. Percentages of (2):(1)	40.7	46.3	36.5	64.2	43.8	37.2	43.1

Source: Compiled from union records.

in handloom factories is proportionately more than even in the textile mills. The main reason ascribed to this by the union leaders is that almost all the handloom workers belong to the Telugu speaking Padmasali community while in the case of the textile industry the mass of workers belongs to various groups of languages and cultures, which creates innumerable difficulties to bring all sections of workers under the fold of union organisation.

Among the Municipal employees and Transport workers trade unionism appears to be much more in extent. In the

municipality an overwhelming majority of the workers and staff members has joined the ranks of the union, while among the Transport and Communication workers the proportion joining the union is as far as 48.8 per cent.

The overall picture shows that 43.1 per cent of the workers are in the union organisation which further goes on to show that the majority of the workers in Sholapur are still outside the union. This, no doubt, is a great indicator of the weakness in the trade union movement in the city. In order that the collective bargaining strength of the union should be increased this defect should be removed at an early date.

4.11 Communications with the Rank and File

Every union has to evolve its own forms of communication with the rank and file workers. For organising the workers in their struggle for a better life, the union leadership has to educate its members and keep them informed about the policies and programmes of the union. The forms adopted by a union in keeping communication with its members depend upon the size of the union and the location of the work place. For example, the Telegraph Traffic Employees' Union can issue a circular and inform all the members about

the decisions of the managing committee but a union in a textile industry can do it only by issuing a handbill or holding mass meetings of textile workers. Leaflets and mass meetings are the two principal ^{media} ~~means~~ of communication with the rank and file workers of the union.

Generally speaking, the drafting of handbills and making speeches tend to become a specialised function of one or two middle-class organisers or whole-time officials in each union. It must be admitted that in a large number of cases the standard of agitation thus established is neither educative nor inspiring. But the standard so set becomes the accepted model in the union, and the worker feels lack of self-confidence to write or speak unless he can conform to that standard which he cannot. Hence, it would be of great interest to study the present nature of the handbills and speeches.

Handbills and speeches are undoubtedly valuable instruments of a union's educational work. They rouse the workers and explain to them the slogans of the union. But the union has to face a number of difficulties in issuing them. For example, all the handloom workers in Sholapur belong to the Telugu community who are illiterate. But the union handbill is always printed in Marathi and the

workers usually have to take the help of others to know its contents. The union, however, can conduct mass meetings in the Telugu language. The situation in the textile mills is different where the workers speak four different languages like Marathi, Telugu, Urdu and Kannada~~s~~. Yet the union leaflets are drafted and public meetings addressed in Marathi only. Even though the workers speaking languages other than Marathi are somewhat acquainted with Marathi they are not in a position to grasp the contents of the union handbills and speeches as well as the workers whose mother tongue is Marathi. The unions in the municipal services and the Railways face the same difficulty.²⁰

It is possible for a union with a large membership only to issue handbills or hold public meetings to explain its stand to the workers. The smaller unions do the same only when they require the support of the public for their demands. In order to explain to their members the issues before them they can hold the ordinary general body meetings without much difficulty. The finances of the union also do not permit

20. The classification of the population in Sholapur according to the mother tongue shows the following:

Marathi	45.19%	Telagu	16.81%
Kannada	14.20%	Urdu	13.75%
Hindi	3.16%	Others	6.86%

- based on the 1951 Sholapur District Census Handbook, Government of Bombay, 1952, pages 98-102.

them to spend on handbills and leaflets. The unions in the Post and Telegraph Department can stick up their circulars on the notice board of the Post Offices.

Handbills and speeches are supplementary to each other. In some cases a handbill is issued to explain the demands of the union and at the end of it an appeal is made to the workers to attend the mass meeting of the union where the demands are explained in detail. Some handbills contain only the announcement of the meeting and the demands are given only in the form of slogans. Literacy among the workers being at a low level, public meetings are more helpful to the union than the leaflets. But sometimes handbills are found useful when it is not possible to convey the message of the union through public meetings.

One union worker remarked: "We used handbills to explain to the workers as well as to the public the policy of the union regarding the industrial dispute when the union could not hold any public meeting due to the promulgation of Section 144 by the District Magistrate. It creates a good effect on the workers as the issue is collectively discussed by them at lunch-time in the afternoon."

But the importance of handbills and public meetings

can be glaringly observed during strikes and lock-outs. Every day holding of public meetings and issuing of occasional leaflets during strikes have become a common phenomenon in Sholapur. Replies to the charges of the employers or criticism of the rival union, report of the deputation to the Government Labour Officer or the manager are publicised through mass meetings or leaflets.

Leaflets are usually distributed and meetings are held near the work places as it is very convenient for the workers to assemble without much difficulty. But where there are more factories the union has to hold a number of meetings to convey the message of the union to the workers. In addition to this, separate meetings for the night-shift workers have to be organised at 12.30 a.m. as the workers are in a hurry to go home, the meetings are of a short duration. Hence, such meetings are useful for the exposure of the management of the mill or popularising a rally of the workers to be organised in the near future. As the houses of the textile workers are scattered in various parts of the city and their locality in some cases/ is at a distance of nearly 3 miles from

the mills, the union thinks it desirable to hold gate meetings. But the unions in the handloom industry prefer to hold meetings in the central place of the locality as all the factories are situated in the eastern part of the city and the workers stay where they work. Naturally, it is not difficult for the union to mobilize the workers for a public meeting in the locality itself. The Municipal Workers' Union and the National Railwaymen's Union hold meetings near the residential quarters of the workers because it is convenient for the workers to assemble there. The union handbills are, however, distributed near the work places as this becomes an easy task there.

The handbills and speeches in public meetings serve a good purpose in explaining to the workers the injustice that is being done to them by the employers. They are the major weapons of union's agitation and propaganda. Hence, their standard determines the quality of union's agitational work among the workers. We have gone through some of the handbills and attended some meetings of the unions which helped in finding out some peculiar characteristics of the unions' agitation among the workers.

Leaflets and speeches often lack objectivity. The picture they depict of a peculiar event or situation is so exaggerated, or worded in such a highly coloured language

that it does not make any sense to the average worker. Any student of economics will be shocked to read the following extracts from a speech of a trade union leader.

"The Government says that it has no money to spend for the housing of the workers. I emphatically say that it is a cent per cent lie. Does not the Government own a press for printing currency notes? Can it not produce as much money as it wants and use it for the purpose of the workers? But it does not want to use it in the interest of the workers. The Government raises loans from the people but when it can print more notes is it necessary for the Government to do so? I challenge the Prime Minister of India to disprove my statement."

While criticising the agitation of the present union, a trade union leader remarked:

"The agitation is carried on quite spontaneously, i.e. the speaker in the public meetings or the writer of the leaflet makes no previous efforts to understand the prevailing mood and sentiments of the workers, what are the concrete doubts and questions that are worrying them. In a number of cases instead of giving definite guidance to the workers, refuge is sought in generalised and vague

demagogy which sounds very hot but leaves the workers cold."

The use of simple language that is intelligible to the ordinary worker is always necessary to explain the issue properly to the workers. Some of the union office-bearers use the workers' own language in leaflets and public meetings which have proved successful. We have observed that in some meetings the ordinary workers can depict the working conditions more powerfully than even the union leaders. The statements like the following appear in the leaflets or the meetings quite often.

"The service inside the factory is just like a white-wash on the wall."

"The owners have taken a part of our 'roti' and are every day and night sucking the blood from the hearts of our children. If we are to keep quiet we do nothing but help the employer to kill our children."

"We are starving now and are on the way to the graveyard while the President of the Sholapur Municipality does not care a bit for us. He is sleeping peacefully in his palace but we will not allow him to do so till our problems are solved."

"The Collector of Sholapur instead of paying proper attention to our problem asks us to wait and observe the

steps the Government is taking. He should come to our locality and show how he can work on the handloom even for one day."

"The millowner of Sholapur takes more care of the loom than the worker, because if the worker dies he can employ another, but if a loom is destroyed he has to spend a lot to purchase a new one. We have to negotiate with such inhuman creatures."

"We work, work and work to give superior cloth to the people in the country. But the irony of fate is such that the wives of the moneyed people walk proudly on the streets wearing these clothes while our wives cannot come out of the houses because they have no clothes to wear."

The workers enthusiastically respond to such utterances in public meetings with loud applause or slogans of the union. But there are speakers in meetings or writers of handbills who show a tendency of long-windedness in their agitation. This mainly arises out of confused notions that every occasion for a speech and a leaflet must be utilised for putting across the whole of one's pet economic and political "theses"! A leaflet or a speech dealing with the mismanagement of the mill ration shop will not be considered complete unless it argues about the so-called

link between this issue and the "final social and economic emancipation of the proletariat." The issue of 'pali' system of the substitute workers was similarly linked up with the nationalisation of the textile industry of the whole country. The occasional use of the words like "reactionary", "fundamental", "reformist" that are not intelligible to the ordinary workers do not help in explaining the stand of the union but creates a sort of confusion in the minds of the workers. When asked for the justification of such words the writer of one such handbill argued that that was essential for the workers to get properly acquainted with these words so that they might get a correct view of the problem. It is doubtful whether the present level of consciousness of the worker permits him to grasp the meaning of such words. We have come across some educated agitators who often use English words in speeches that go over-the heads of the average worker. Sometimes alternative vernacular words are suggested to the speaker by his colleague sitting near him in the meeting and the same sentence is repeated in the simple vernacular language!

A word must be added regarding the size of the handbill. Sometimes the handbills are so short that they do not give a correct idea of the issues involved, but sometimes they are

so lengthy that they become a target of criticism even by the union office-bearers. In the managing committee meeting of one union a member remarked:

"The union handbill was not read in full by the workers as it was too lengthy. Therefore, this time our handbill should be brief and simple. The arguments of the rival union should be answered effectively and clearly. It will have a good effect on the workers in general."

The above discussion does not indicate that there are only defects in the drafting of handbills and delivery speeches in the mass meetings. There are some leaders who effectively explain the union policy to the workers and educate them through the workers' own experience in every day life. But these are exceptions and in general the union agitation is found somewhat defective as described above. There are agitators who honestly know their own weaknesses and frankly show their readiness to improve the quality of their agitation. Their main contention is that it will take time for the movement to overcome the weaknesses.

In addition to this the unions often use other means of communication like sticking posters to the walls near the workplace, writing on walls or on tar roads with chalk

sticks etc. A taxi fitted with a loudspeaker or a small procession of union workers shouting slogans of the union are also some of the means utilised by the union to conduct agitation and to create enthusiasm about the activities of the union. Slogans in a popular form have always been useful in keeping the issue constantly agitating the minds of the workers. But the problems and forms in all these means are basically the same as mentioned above. If the posters and wall newspapers are short forms of handbills, the slogans are counterparts of speeches.

4.12 Organisation and Conduct of Union Meetings

If the administration of a union is to be democratic in a real sense, it is highly necessary that the meetings of the managing committee and the general body should be held regularly and conducted properly. Then alone the members of the managing committee and the rank and file workers can get the opportunity to discuss the issues involved in the day-to-day work of the union and the ways and means can be worked out to improve the functioning and administration of the union.

In Sholapur, general meetings of the union members are

held only on the occasion of the annual general conference of the union. It is obligatory under the rules of registration that a general body meeting must be held once in a year. But there are some unions who do not even hold their annual general meetings. For instance, in 1953-54, four unions in Sholapur did not hold such meetings while in 1954-55 the number of the same was six. We have inquired into the causes for not holding such meetings and we were told the following reasons. In one union the office secretary had left the city without giving charge of the record to another official. In another case the meeting could not be held as the president of the union had no time to make preparations for the meeting owing to his other political activities. There was no other person in the union to do the job. Two unions carried out the functions of the annual general meetings in the ordinary meetings of the managing committees. One union had decided to hold a meeting after six months as it had no funds to arrange a meeting. In one union the accounts were not ready and serious allegations were made against some officials which resulted in postponing the issue of holding the annual general meeting. It seems that these are all lame excuses because in spite of these difficulties, the meetings should have been held to keep the rank and file workers informed of the union affairs.

If trade union democracy has any meaning at all, it was the duty of the union leadership to allow the rank and file workers to take a decision on the problem.

The union leadership is elected by the whole membership in order to run the organisation in the workers' best interests; therefore, the leadership, which can at any moment forfeit the confidence of the ordinary workers, should always be responsible to the whole membership. Secondly, the general meeting establishes contact between the leadership and the rank and file workers. Thirdly, the tasks carried out in the general meetings, viz., review of the activities of the union, passing accounts of the union finances, election of new office-bearers and formulating demands of the workers, are extremely important from the point of view of healthy trade union movement. Refusal to hold an annual general meeting of a union amounts to showing disregard towards the rank and file members of the union.

The meetings of the managing committees are also not held at regular intervals. Table No. 4.12.1 shows the number of managing committee meetings held by unions in Sholapur for the years 1953-54 and 1954-55. In 1953-1954, five unions held more than 12 meetings of the managing committee but 13 unions held less than 7 meetings. Thus a

majority of the unions met once in two months on an average. In 1954-55, we also see 10 unions out of 24 meeting less than 7 times during the year. In this year, only 4 unions held 12 or more meetings while 8 met eight to 11 times during the year. It is desirable that these meetings be held more frequently than at present.

Table No. 4.12. 1

Number of Managing Committee meetings held
by Unions in Sholapur (1953-54 and 1954-55)

Year	Managing Committee Meetings					Total
	3-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12 & above	
1953-54	6	7	5	2	5	25
1954-55	4	6	8	2	4	24*

* Information of one union could not be obtained.

Source: Compiled from union records.

In Table No. 4.12.2 we have noted the frequency of the managing committee meetings of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union, Sholapur, from 1944-45 to 1954-55. It seems from the table that though the total number of meetings held during the year is fairly good, there were sometimes gaps between the two meetings. For example, from December 1950 to June

Table No. 4.12.2: Frequency of the Managing Committee Meetings of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union, Sholapur. (1944-45 to 1954-55).

Year	Month : Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
1944-45	1	-	1	3	-	2	2	-	1	1	1	2	14
1945-46	1	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	7
1946-47	2	-	1	(record not available)					2	-	-	-	-
1947-48	3	4	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	14
1948-49	1	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	9
1949-50	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	7
1950-51	-	-	1	3	2	-	1	-	2	-	2	-	11
1951-52	1	4	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	13
1952-53	3	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	11
1953-54	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	3	10
1954-55	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	-	-	2	17

Source: Compiled from union records.

1951, there was no meeting of the managing committee. Similarly, the managing committee meeting in July 1952 was followed by a meeting in November in the same year. The table shows that on many occasions there was a gap of about two months between two meetings. On the other hand, if the issue is important and urgent, more than one meeting is called and in May 1951~~+~~² there were four meetings of the managing committee. In 1954-55 we find that the meetings were regularly held throughout the year except in the months of January and February.

It would be interesting to note the attendance of members to those meetings. Table No. 4.12.3 gives the average attendance of members in each month to the meetings of the managing committee of the same union. The data show a remarkable difference in the attendance of these meetings. If the members find the agenda of the meeting important, they attend in large numbers. In July 1952 twenty-three out of twenty-five members attended the meetings. But there are occasions when the meetings had to be adjourned for want of a quorum. Between the years 1945-46 and 1948-49 every year one meeting was adjourned for want of quorum. But in 1949-50 three meetings had to be adjourned for want of sufficient attendance to the meetings. In 1950-51 and 1951-52 one meeting was postponed due to the same reason

Table No. 4.12.3: Average attendance of members to the meetings of the Managing Committee of the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kaugar Union, Sholapur, (1944-45 to 1954-55).

Year	No. of members of the Mg.Com.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March.
1944-45	20	10	-	10	13	-	14	13.5	-	10	13	11	12.5
1945-46	20	11	12	-	9.5	-	-	7*	-	-	12	-	-
1946-47	20	12.5	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	6*	-	-	-
1947-48	20	7.5	8*	12	-	9	9	-	12	12	-	14	11
1948-49	20	9	-	-	7 ^u	10.5	14	11	-	9.5	12	-	-
1949-50	20	5*	-	14	-	11	7*	12	5*	-	-	-	-
1950-51	20	-	-	10	12	10	-	10	-	11.5	-	5.5	-
1951-52	25	10	9.5	12	20	17	21	-	15	12	-	-	16
1952-53	25	17	16	21	23	-	-	-	18	-	13	16	13
1953-54	25	15	20	-	20.5	-	14	-	-	12	-	9*	13
1954-55	25	15	12	18	16	11	15	11.5	10	9*	-	-	9*

* Adjourned for want of quorum.

Source: Compiled from union records.

but in 1952-53 all the meetings had quorum to conduct the proceedings. In 1954-55 two meetings were postponed for want of quorum.

We have observed the number of meetings of the managing committees of different unions and found that there is ample scope for improving the standard of conducting these meetings. We are giving some of our observations below.

First of all, the meetings are not started punctually. Sometimes they start an hour late after the scheduled time. At times, we found that even important office-bearers of the union also do not attend these meetings in time.

Secondly, minutes of the last meetings are not read in the meetings by many unions. Thus in such cases the members are not informed of the decisions of the last meetings. The minutes of the meeting are also not recorded properly.

Thirdly, a majority of the members does not participate in the discussions while the same persons again and again take part in the deliberations. However, in one union we found that the president of the meeting asked each and every member of the committee to express his opinion one by one and a decision was taken only after considering the views of all the members.

Fourthly, sometimes the discussion is derailed and even the president cannot control the meeting. More than one person speak at one and the same time and their views are not conveyed to all the members in a peaceful manner. On one occasion, we found that the president had to give a threat of resignation if all the members did not behave in a disciplined manner. We were told that in one of the meetings of a certain union, in 1952, a member was actually beaten by another member. In another union meeting serious charges and counter-charges were hurled against the members of the managing committee, which were found to be baseless after an inquiry.

Fifthly, sometimes the leading members make lengthy speeches which are at times boring to the other members. The officials on many occasions do not come to the meeting with prior preparations. For example, in a meeting a demand for bonus was discussed without stating the profits of the mills and it was decided to discuss the issue in the next meeting after obtaining the figures of profits. If adequate preparations had been made earlier, the waste of time could have been avoided.

Finally, the meetings should not last for a long time. Some meetings were continued even after midnight. The

workers who had to go for work the next morning are naturally anxious to finish the work as early as possible. If the discussion is properly organised, it may become lively and up to the point.

4.13 Some Aspects of Office Functioning

The office of the trade union is supposed to be the centre of all the union activities. The efficiency of the union organisation largely, if not wholly, depends upon the way in which the union office functions. But sometimes due to financial difficulties a union cannot hire even a room for the office. In such cases, the house of the general secretary is used as the office of the union and if the general secretary is changed, the office of the union is also shifted to the house of the new general secretary.²¹ The Post and Telegraph Workers' Union, the Government Peons and Inferior Servants' Association, the Press Kamgar Union, the Public Works Department Workers' Union are some of the examples. These unions do not think it necessary to have

21. Sometimes while electing the general secretary in the annual general meeting of the union the factor whether his house can be used as the office of the union is taken into consideration.

even a signboard. Other small unions who cannot afford to have an independent office use the office premises of other unions or political parties. The Mill Mazdoor Sabha and the Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh use the offices of the Praja Socialist Party for their office work. The office of the Rashtriya Bidi Mazdoor Sangh is housed in the office of the Hatmag Vinkar Congress and the office of the Lal Bawta Bidi Kamgar Union exists in that of the Communist Party. The larger unions like the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha, the Municipal Workers' Union and the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union have their own independent offices while the unions like the Municipal Workers' Union, and the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union have maintained their branch offices.

The union whose office address is given as a house of the secretary has no office work other than merely keeping the record and holding the managing or executive committee meetings of the union. If a worker has any grievance or complaint he comes to see the secretary who writes an application for him. Of course, the time factor in doing the work is essentially determined by the convenience of the secretary. In such cases the problem of day to day office functioning cannot arise so acutely as in the case of those unions who maintain independent offices of their

own. Naturally, we have to consider the office functioning of the unions who have their own offices.

One trade union worker who rather took an extremist view of the present nature of the office work remarked as follows:

"It cannot be said that the majority of the trade unions are equal to the task. The general standard of office work is poor and amateurish while not a few unions are notorious for their utter neglect of the job and unsympathetic attitude towards the needs of the workers. Cases of workers are not taken up in proper time, sometimes petitions are so carelessly drafted that the workers' interests are more harmed than helped; a number of charge sheets lie unanswered even after the final date for the reply has expired. These features are present in a greater or lesser degree in many unions."

In some unions the job of receiving complaints of the workers, writing petitions to the employers or the Government Labour Officer, representing cases to the Labour Courts or the conciliation officer is not the specific responsibility of any particular office-bearer. The two or three union organisers who look after all the day-to-day activities of the union, do these jobs whenever time,

opportunity and adjustments with union jobs permit them to deal hurriedly with one or two such cases. The union leaders also admit that a division of labour in the work of the union is desirable but they say that the unions in Sholapur today are unable to maintain a team of paid whole-timers and hence it is not possible to arrange the work of the office systematically. The honorary office workers have to do the trade union work after their service hours and they are not in a position to pay as much attention as the work of the union requires. Secondly, these people cannot necessarily attend the office regularly due to other engagements.²²

There are a number of cases where the union office is not regularly kept open at fixed times every day to suit the convenience of the workers, and it is sometimes kept closed altogether for half the days in the week. The worker who has an urgent application to be drafted sometimes wanders about searching for the union secretary at the latter's house or even at his favourite restaurants. One member of the managing committee criticised in the meeting the way in which the office bearers of the union

22. This problem will be dealt with in further detail when we will discuss the trade union leaders in Sholapur.

behave with the ordinary workers as follows:

"The worker is often repelled from the union office by the sort of behaviour he encounters there. He is not patiently and politely listened to; the attitude of the office comrade is irritable as though he is doing the worker a great favour for which he ought to be properly grateful. Sometimes the worker is told that there is no time to deal with his case and therefore he should come back another day."

In the same meeting, the president of the meeting remarked:

"The worker coming to the union office must be treated with the maximum consideration, tact and sympathy. Often he may not be able to express himself clearly and precisely, yet he must be listened to patiently and helped to explain the essential facts of his case. He must never get the impression that he is not taken seriously, however small the issue at stake may be. If it is an urgent case no effort should be spared to deal with it immediately."

The drafting of petitions is one of the most important jobs to be done in the union offices. But all the unions are not keeping records of the applications sent through the office. However some unions maintain such registers

from which we can get an idea of the work done by the union through the office.

The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh maintains a register of complaints and their results are also noted down in it. Table No. 4.13.1 gives an idea of the applications sent through the union and their results.

The Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha launched 382 complaints in 1953-54 and 402 in 1954-55. Most of them related to the unpaid wages and dearness allowance, leave with wages, bonus etc. As this union is not recognised by the managements the application sent through this union is not treated by the officials in the mills. Therefore, complaints of an individual nature can be sent through this office. If there is any collective grievance the union sends an application by collecting signatures of all the workers concerned.

The State Transport Kamgar Sangh submitted 512 applications in 1953-54 and 438 in 1954-55. In these years the number of successful applications was 326 and 298 respectively.

The Municipal Workers' Union in 1953-54 launched 618 complaints of which 427 were successful while in 1954-55

the number of complaints launched was 584 of which 413 were successful.

Table No. 4.13.1

Complaints launched through the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur, and their Results (1951-52 to 1954-55)

Year	Total No. of complaints launched.	Of which successful	Of which indefinite	Of which unsuccessful
1951-52	498	221	139	138
1952-53	494	222	193	79
1953-54	465	129	244	92
1954-55	783	391	189	203

Source: Compiled from union records.

The Lal Bawta Kamgar Union has a different method of settling grievances of workers. Here, the workers come to the union for arbitration and the disputes between the workers and the master weavers as well as disputes between workers are settled by the mediation of the union. The union settles the disputes not only relating to industrial matters but also social. In 1952-53, the union settled 378 disputes out of which 51 related to domestic affairs, 45 to either beating a worker by a master weaver or a master

weaver by the worker, 72 about non-payment of loan by the workers, 44 about working conditions and 121 on other personal matters. In 1953-54 the number rose to 452 out of which 73 were of a domestic nature, 37 related to beating; 151 were complaints about non-payment of loans by the workers, 62 related to working conditions and 129 about other personal matters. It is further interesting to see that in 1952-53, on 93 occasions the master weavers had come to the union for a settlement, while on 138 occasions the dispute was among the workers themselves and in the remaining cases the workers had complained against their master weavers.

The Rashtriya Hatmag Mazdoor Sangh is also doing the work of mediation in disputes and in 1954-55 it dealt with 309 cases. The complaints were of a similar nature as dealt with by the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union. These unions can play this role mainly because of the influence of their leaders on the Asamis as well as on the workers.

Other unions have not kept any record of the applications sent through their offices. Hence, it is difficult to assess the work done by them.

4.14 Financing of Trade Unions

No sooner trade unions start working, funds are required for office rent, furniture, stationery, salaries of part-time or full time officials and others. A regular source of income affords a timely help to officials and men whose job it is to execute the union policies and programmes. The level of union income and expenditure determine in no small measure the efficiency of union administration and the quality of union government. The essential financial requirements of a trade union are the same as those of any other business organisation; it must secure a steady flow of income and so control expenditure that a surplus is achieved and reserve funds are gradually built up. A union without a reserve fund is always in a weak position. Income, expenditure and the rise of the union funds are matters of constant concern to those who manage the affairs of unions. The conduct of financial administration of a union is as important to the processes of democratic government in a trade union as it is to government in the state. No subject arouses as much controversy as the financial side of trade unionism in the union meetings.

Trade unions always complain about their inadequate finances and there is a tendency in a section of the union leadership to ascribe all defects of union administration to the financial difficulties. Under such circumstances, it would be interesting to study the financial difficulties of the unions in Sholapur in order to examine the main problems connected with the financial administration of these unions.

We were able to obtain financial statements of 21 unions in Sholapur for the years 1952-53, 1953-54 and 1954-55. Table No.4.14.1 gives the income data of 21 unions, from which it appears that the balance which the unions have at the beginning of the year is more than the total income during the whole year. This represents the accumulated fund of the unions and which is growing gradually. But this does not mean that all the unions leave some amount at the end of the year. For example, in 1952-53 the balance of all these unions at the beginning of the year as shown was Rs.38,815-6-0, of which Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh had Rs.7,519-0-3 and the Municipal Staff Association Rs.22,565-1-5 in the bank deposit. Thus, these two unions alone had 77.5 per cent of the balance at the beginning of the year of all the unions in Sholapur. The balance of the remain-

19 unions was only Rs.8731-4-7 of which 4 unions had more than Rs.1000/- while 2 had between Rs.500-1000 only. Nine unions had less than Rs.50 at the beginning of the year. Fourteen unions had opened their accounts in the bank while

Table No. 4.14.1

Income of 21 Trade Unions in Sholapur
(1952-53 to 1954-55)

Income	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
	Rs.As.Ps	Rs.As.Ps.	Rs.As.Ps.
1. Balance at the beginning of the year	38,815- 6-0	40,643- 5-6	43,218- 9-6
2. Subscription from members of unions	30,102-13-6	28,904-15-0	26,541- 7-6
3. Admission Fee	177- 8-0	154- 4-0	188- 8-0
4. Donations	622- 3-6	522-13-0	618- 8-0
5. Interest	1,189- 4-6	1,322- 6-9	1,463- 5-9
6. Other income	..	307-10-3	..
Total	70,907- 3-6	71,855- 6-6	72,030- 6-9

Source: Compiled from union records.

the remaining unions had no surplus funds to keep in a bank. The treasurer or the secretary of the union is not allowed to keep more than Rs.50 with him and the surplus is to be

kept in the bank. The secretary of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, however, can keep with him Rs.100 for day-to-day expenses.

Out of the 21 unions supplying information the annual income of 12 unions in 1953-54 was less than Rs.1000 of which again 5 unions had their annual income less than Rs. 500. Four unions had their annual income between Rs.1000 and Rs.2000 while two had the same between Rs.2000-3000. Only 3 unions had annual incomes of more than Rs. 3000. This shows that in a majority of cases, the level of income is low. The income of the Telegraphic Traffic Employees' Union in the same year was only 371.

Quite obviously the major item of income is the subscription collected from the members of the union. We have already noted that only four unions in Sholapur charge admission fees and naturally income derived from it is not significant. In 1952-53, it was Rs.177-3-0 but in the next year it was Rs.154-4-0 only. Similarly the unions could not collect a large amount by way of donations either from members or sympathisers. In 1952-53 all the 21 unions collected by way of donations only Rs.622-3-6. Even though it was slightly reduced in 1953-54 and again increased in 1954-55 it does not give a remarkable difference

in the amount collected by the unions. The major part of the interest (item No.5) goes to the two organisations having larger finances accumulated with them. Under such circumstances the unions have to manage their affairs within these limited resources.

Table No.4.14.2 gives the total expenditure of 21 unions in Sholapur for the years 1952-53, 1953-54 and 1954-55. It appears from the Table that the major item of expenditure is the allowance paid to the office-bearers and office-staff. In 1952-53 a sum of Rs.12,565-15-0 were given to the officers and staff of the union. Rs.4,587-0-0 were spent in the form of rent for the offices in the same year. Thus out of Rs.30,263-14-0 as the total expenditure during the year Rs.17,152-15-0 i.e. 56.6 per cent were spent on the salaries of the union functionaries, rent and other charges. In 1953-54 and 1954-55 the same items were 63 and 63.2 per cent of the total expenditure of the unions which is an increasing proportion of money spent on these items. We have not here included the amount spent on stationery, postage and printing etc. As the maintenance of full-time paid workers, the office of union and other items like stationery and postage is the first requirement of running the union, it is but natural that major share of the unions' expenditure is

Table No.4.14.2: Expenditure of 21 Trade Unions in Sholapur
(1952-53 to 1954-55)

Items of Expenditure	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
1. Salaries, allowances and expenses of officials	Rs.As.Ps. 6,846-14-0	Rs.As.Ps. 7,126- 9-0	Rs.As.Ps. 7,822- 6-0
2. Salaries, allowances and expenses of establishment	5,719- 1-0	6,371- 6-0	6,841-12-0
3. Auditors' Fees	575- 0-0	575- 0-0	575- 0-0
4. Legal Expenses	1,268-14-9	1,342- 8-0	1,495-11-0
5. Expenses in conducting trade disputes	1,614-15-0	503- 9-0	533- 4-0
6. Compensation paid to members for loss arising of trade disputes	100- 0-0	--	--
7. Educational, social benefits to members	102- 3-0	86- 0-0	141- 0-0
8. Rents and rates	4,587- 0-0	4,549- 0-0	4,574- 0-0
9. Stationery, Printing and Postage	1,608- 8-0	1,717- 2-0	1,758-10-0
10. Travelling Expenses	2,148- 0-0	1,497-11-0	1,649- 3-0
11. Newspapers	547- 6-0	498- 7-0	534-11-0
12. Propaganda	1,828- 0-0	1,642- 0-0	2,107- 1-9
13. Other expenses	3,318- 0-0	2,727- 9-0	2,918-14-0
14. Total Expenditure	30,263-14-0	28,636-13-0	30,931- 8-0
15. Balance at end of year	40,643- 5-6	43,218- 9-6	41,098-14-0
16. Grand Total	70,907- 3-6	71,855- 6-6	72,030- 6-9

Source: Compiled from union records.

given for these items. As a result of this the union cannot spare much for the welfare activities. Unless the finances of the union are increased it is practically impossible for a union to start welfare activities. However, the outlook of the leadership towards these activities also is an important factor. The unions who have more than one thousand rupees in the bank have not even undertaken any welfare activity. There is only one instance during these three years when a union had paid Rs.100 to a member when he lost his job in a trade dispute. The amount spent on educational and social benefit is extremely insignificant and the work was mainly purchase of some books for the library of the union. One union had paid the salary of a teacher for two months for conducting literacy classes in the workers' locality but this was discontinued afterwards due to the financial inability of the union. Legal expenses are mainly paid to the lawyers of the union but the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh has a lawyer on its staff who does the work of the union. Therefore, this expenditure does not express the real amount paid to the lawyers by the unions. The sum shown as the expenditure in conducting trade disputes is the amount spent by the unions during strikes. In 1952-53 the expen-

diture is more due to the strike in the textile mills. The amount spent on travelling was sanctioned when union representatives went to attend a conference on a state or national level or even as a fraternal delegate to a conference of some union. This amount further includes the travelling expenses of leaders as well as of lawyers who went to Bombay for appearing before the Industrial Court or Labour Appellate Tribunal. As regards the expenditure on propaganda it should be mentioned that in 1952-53 out of Rs.1,828-0-0 spent by all unions, the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha and the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union had spent Rs.1,206-14-0 which throws light on how much union under Communist influence spent on their propaganda activities.

We have already discussed about the enrolment of membership of the union. The subscription thus collected is handed over to the treasurer of the union who keeps the accounts of the union. The accounts are audited and passed in the annual general meeting of the union. But the managing committee has to discuss the financial condition of the union and hence the accounts are placed before the managing committee for its approval. Unions often find it difficult to balance their budgets and they have to find out ways and means for the same.

On many occasions the office rent of the union of the union is not paid for months together. Similarly the bills of printing press, of hiring loudspeakers are also not paid. Under such circumstances sometimes the salaries of the officials are not paid in full. In one managing committee meeting of the Lal Bawta Kamgar Union in 1953 the Secretary was requested to accept less salary due to financial difficulties of the union. In the same year the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union decreased the number of paid full-time office workers from 3 to 2. In a letter to the Circle Secretary on 9.4.1955 the Sholapur branch secretary of the Telegraphic Traffic Employees Union wrote that the branch union could not celebrate the Demands Day Celebration on 20.4.1955 as it had no funds.²³ The Government Peons and Inferior Servants Union in 1954 paid only one way railway fare to the delegate who attended the Provincial Conference of the union.

Thus apart from some exceptions unions are facing a number of difficulties which create obstacles in their activities. The remedy lies only in strengthening the

23. When the circle office refused to pay the funds the branch office-bearers did not pay the quota of one month to the circle office. The circle office, however took no action against the branch union.

organisation by increasing the membership of the union and collecting subscription regularly. In case of branch unions a demand is made that they should be allowed to keep more share of the subscription with them. At present all the branch unions in the Post and Telegraph Department have to pay 10 per cent of their subscription to the Federation, 40 per cent to the Central Office, 25 per cent to the circle office. Thus the local branch has to manage within the residual 25 per cent of the subscriptions collected by it.

The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh is financially the ~~most~~ strongest^{est} organisation. In Table No.4.14.3 the income of the Sangh is given from 1946-47 to 1954-55. The collection of subscription was on a rising level upto 1949-50 which was Rs.2,348-4-0 in 1946-47 and 17,984-14-0 in 1949-50. But in 1950-51 it was reduced to Rs.4,695-12-0 but the situation was improved in the next year and in 1952-53 the Sangh could collect Rs. 13,163-4-0 by way of subscription. In 1953-54 and 1954-55 the total collection showed a slight decline and in 1954-55 the total amount of subscription collected was Rs.10,591-4-0. In spite of the huge finances collected by the union it appears that all the members do not pay the subscription for the whole year. For example, in 1954-55 the Sangh had a member-ship of 6454 while the total amount

Table No. 4.14.3 : The Income of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur from 1946-47 to 1954-55.

Items of income	1946-47	1947-48	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51
1. Balance carried forward	Rs.863- 8- 0	107- 1- 9	34- 7-11	169-14- 6	52- 6- 9
2. Cash in the Bank.	" -	2000- 0- 0	6333- 9- 0	1717- 2- 0	7718-11- 0
3. Subscriptions.	" 2348-14- 0	8514- 4- 0	8303-12- 7	17984-14- 0	4695-12- 0
4. Donations.	" -	-	162- 0- 0	108- 0- 0	133- 0- 0
5. Interest.	" -	8- 9- 0	40- 9- 0	31- 1- 0	50- 0- 0
6. Miscellaneous.	60- 0- 0	-	-	-	885- 0- 0
Total	" 3272- 6- 0	10629-14- 9	14874- 6- 0	20010-15- 6	13534-13- 9

Items of income.	1951-52	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
1. Balance carried forward	Rs. 77- 2- 6	33- 3- 3	51- 5- 6	42-11- 9
2. Cash in the Bank.	" 5758-11- 0	7486-13- 0	10849- 2- 0	11888- 7- 0
3. Subscriptions.	" 13140- 8- 0	13163- 4- 0	11682- 0- 0	10591- 4- 0
4. Donations.	" 680-10- 6	189- 4- 0	105- 0- 0	163- 0- 0
5. Interest.	" 81- 2- 0	119- 5- 0	134- 5- 0	144- 5- 0
6. Miscellaneous.	" -	-	-	43-12- 0
Total	" 19738- 2- 0	21041-13- 3	22821-12- 6	22873- 7- 9

Source: Compiled from the Union records.

of subscription collected during the whole year is Rs.10,591-4-0. This shows that at a rate of four annas per month the worker has paid on an average Re.1-10-0, i.e. subscription of $8\frac{1}{2}$ months only!

Table No.4.14.4 gives the expenditure of the Sangh during the same period. It shows how it was possible for the union to increase its expenditure gradually year by year. In 1953-54 and 1954-55, the amount spent on officers' allowance was reduced but the salaries of the office staff was increased. In 1954-55, the Sangh had taken bonds of Rs.3,000 of the State Development Loan. But throughout the period the Sangh had spent very little on propaganda work. In 1947-48 no amount was spent for the purpose. The highest amount spent on this item was in 1949-50 and it was Rs.824-1-0. In 1950-51 only Rs.10-12-0 were utilised for the propaganda work. In 1954-55 the total amount spent on this subject was Rs.62-12-0 which was even less than the amount spent on postage during the same year. In the Sixth Annual Report of the Sangh for 1951-52 it admitted that the work of propaganda was not done effectively by the Sangh. In 1948-49 the Sangh had spent Rs.1,758-10-6 for building a part of the office and in 1951-52 again Rs.2,987-10-6 were spent for the same purpose. The Sangh had not spent any amount for the welfare activities.

Table No. 4.14.4: The Expenditure of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh, Sholapur, from 1946-47 to 1954-55.

Items of Expenditure		1946-47	1947-48	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51
1. Officers' Allowance.	Rs.	-	441- 5- 6	1991- 3- 6	2449- 4- 3	2237-14- 0
2. Salaries of office staff.	"	245-12- 0	1089- 4- 4	2404- 8- 9	2676-15- 3	1928- 8- 0
3. Office rent and light.	"	53- 8- 0	92- 0- 0	339- 0- 0	376- 9- 3	1808- 4- 6
4. News papers.	"	63-15- 0	109- 0- 0	95- 8- 0	185- 8- 0	155-12- 0
5. Printing.	"					476- 8- 9
6. Stationery.	"	{ 471- 2- 0	924- 0- 0	{ 2223- 6- 9	1275- 8- 9	204- 0- 0
7. Postage.	"			88-12- 0	52- 9- 9	47-14- 0
8. Furniture.	"	93- 0- 0	115- 0- 0	1324- 7- 6	1567-11- 0	173- 0- 0
9. Propaganda.	"	109- 2- 6	-	311-15- 0	324- 1- 0	10-12- 0
10. Travelling.	"	33- 6- 0	853-14- 6	-	-	-
11. Reference Books.	"	-	23-13- 6	181- 0- 0	96- 7- 0	94-11- 6
12. Legal Fees.	"	39- 4- 0	363- 6- 0	985- 6- 0	598-14- 0	48-13- 0
13. Audit fees.	"	-	-	100- 0- 0	100- 0- 0	100- 0- 0
14. Rastriya Mazdoor Congress.	"	-	147-14- 0	705- 0- 0	1495-11- 6	337-14- 6
15. Other expenses.	"	56- 2- 0	102- 4- 0	2237- 2- 6	540-10- 0	82- 0- 0
16. Balance in the Bank.	"	2000- 0- 0	6333- 9- 0	1717- 2- 0	7718-11- 0	5758-11- 0
17. Cash-in-hand.	"	107- 1- 9	34- 7-11	169-14- 6	52- 6- 9	77- 2- 6
Total	"	3272- 6- 0	10629-14- 9	14874- 6- 0	20010-15- 6	13534-13- 9

Items of Expenditure		1951-52	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
1. Officers' Allowance.	Rs.	1819- 8- 0	2839- 6- 0	1590- 0- 0	1620- 0- 0
2. Salaries of office staff.	"	2645- 7- 0	2791- 1- 0	3137- 1- 6	3341-3- 6
3. Office rent and light	"	729- 4- 3	706-10- 9	655-12- 0	802-12- 3
4. News papers	"	93- 6- 0	147- 9- 0	134-11- 0	201-13- 0
5. Printing	"	505- 0- 0	560- 0- 0	235- 0- 0	177- 8- 0
6. Stationery	"	208- 8- 9	159- 0- 0	64-13- 0	146-10- 6
7. Postage.	"	320-14- 9	311-13- 3	351- 3- 3	344-13- 3
8. Furniture	"	268-11- 6	319- 3- 0	282- 7- 3	186- 9- 6
9. Propaganda	"	685- 0- 0	491- 8- 0	26-10- 0	62-12- 0
10. Travelling	"	592- 6- 6	727- 0- 6	602- 9- 6	585-11- 0
11. Reference Books	"	55-12- 0	81- 9- 9	280-14- 3	275- 4- 3
12. Legal Fees	"	31-14- 0	17-12- 0	28- 0- 0	303- 5- 6
13. Audit fees	"	100- 0- 0	100- 0- 0	100- 0- 0	100- 0- 0
14. Rastriya Mazdoor Congress	"	977- 5- 0	447- 7- 0	3125- 5- 0	1585- 7- 0
15. Other Expenses	"	3185- 0- 0	441- 5- 6	11366- 3- 0	3307- 8- 0
16. Balance in the Bank	"	7486-13- 0	10849- 2- 0	11886- 17- 0	9580- 9- 0
17. Cash-in-hand	"	33- 3- 0	51- 5- 6	42-11- 9	67-14- 6
Total	"	19738- 2- 0	21041-13- 3	22821-12- 6	22873- 7- 0

Source: Compiled from the Union records.

of the workers but it takes interest in the Government Labour Welfare Centres. Due to the high collection of sibscription it was possible for the Sangh to save a part of the income and build a strong financial reserve for the union.

Chapter V

TRADE UNIONS AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

In the previous chapter we have dealt with some aspects of trade union organisation and administration. In the pages that follow we are going to discuss some other important activities of trade unions in Sholapur pertaining to industrial relations.

Trade unions on the one hand and the individual employer or the associations of employers on the other hand are the main components of what is called the system of industrial relations. The relationship is maintained essentially through the institution of collective bargaining. Every democratic government has to view with concern the problem of preserving stable industrial relations and along with the collective bargaining a legal machinery is created to settle the industrial disputes without resorting to conflict. As a result of this trade unions have to participate in conciliation and arbitration proceedings before considering the possibility of a strike. The method of joint consultation between the representatives of the workers and the management is also considered as one of the means to establish 'industrial peace'. The relations between

the employers and the employees have further been intertwined with our social system and trade unions have to pay keen attention to the problems created by various legislations. The success or failure of the union largely depends on the way it behaves in the collective bargaining and the settlement of industrial disputes.

According to J. Richardson, "Collective bargaining takes place when a number of workpeople enter into negotiations as a bargaining unit with an employer¹ with the object of reaching agreement on conditions of employment for the workpeople concerned." But Jack Barbash goes a step further and describes collective bargaining as a "continuous process involving negotiations, the emergence of a collective agreement and the administration of the agreement."² Viewed broadly, the right of the workers to bargain collectively is an essential requirement for smoothening industrial relations. The traditional "master in our-own-house" attitude of the employers has always resulted in discouraging the creation of channels of communications between the employers and the employees.

1

J. H. Richardson - An Introduction to the Study of Industrial Relations, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1954, page 229.

2

J. Barbash, The Practice of Unionism, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1956, page 181.

The right of the workers to form organisations of their own for the protection of their interests is meaningless if the right to bargain collectively is refused to them by the employers. Hence, collective bargaining has often been regarded as a primary function of the trade unions. The employers' denial for recognition of this right of the workers has often resulted in attacking the very foundations of trade unionism. A section of the union leadership also undermines to a great extent the importance of collective bargaining in the trade union movement. According to them no industrial harmony is possible in the Capitalist Society, which is based on the exploitation of the workers. They think that such a harmony is possible only in a socialist society. However true their argument may be one thing is clear that till the socialist society comes into existence the workers have to work under the capitalist system of production and no union leadership can escape responsibility in making efforts to settle the relations under the present circumstances. The attitude of refusing to negotiate with a capitalist employer is in no way less detrimental to the growth of trade union movement than the employers' attitude of not recognising trade unions as representatives of workers.

In countries where collective bargaining is highly

developed, many agreements between the representatives of the employees and the employers are nationwide in character. Their range also extends to greater details in the regulation of working conditions. In India, except where the employer is the state as in the case of the railways, the Post and Telegraphs, etc. the bargaining is almost done on a local basis. The local agreements, where they have been concluded, have contained provisions in accordance with the various needs of the area or locality. As a result of this several agreements have been adopted in the same industry in different centres and the lack of coordination is found in not following the same principles in different agreements. However, no other form could be adopted in the absence of a strong co-ordinated movement in the country.

The experience of collective bargaining process in Sholapur will, no doubt, bring to the forefront the problems that the unions had to face in the various periods and those which the unions have to tackle today.

Even before the formation of unions in Sholapur the workers made some attempts on their own to ameliorate their grievances. According to the oral evidence, the women workers working in the winding department of the Laxmi Mills had a common grievance against the manager who used to molest them whenever he visited the department.

On one day, the women workers planfully threw bobbins on him at the time of his visit to the department and when he fell down on the floor they beat him severely. The workers in the other departments had sympathy towards these women workers and they did not intervene in the affair. The manager, however, did not take any action against the women workers and stopped visiting the department thenceforth. A similar evidence shows that in 1917 the workers in the Vishnu Mills assembled before the office of the manager and demanded increase in the rate of wages. When their demand was accepted they joined their duties paying tribute to the 'benevolent' manager. Incidents of the same type occurred in the Narsinggirji and the Sholapur Mills before 1920 which indicate the desire of the workers to improve their conditions in the early stages by resorting to collective action.

We have seen in Chapter III how the millowners refused to negotiate with the representatives of the workers during the 1920 and the 1922 strikes. In the 1922 strike a demand regarding a right to represent the grievances of the workers through the union was turned down by the managements of the mills. Though the Indian Trade Union Act, 1926 gave legal recognition to the unions, it was not binding on the employers to recognise

the unions. Therefore, by this Act the workers obtained a right to organise but not a right to bargain collectively. Hence, we see that in 1928, ^{Swi} Mr. N. M. Joshi, ^{the} father of the Indian Trade Union Movement, was badly treated by the manager of the Sholapur Mills and at the time of the settlement of strike the management refused to recognise the strike leaders as representatives of the union but agreed to negotiate with them as 'friends'. During the thirties, in the ordinary course, the employers refused to meet the representatives of the unions except when they were compelled to do so in the event of a strike. A memorandum submitted by the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union to the Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee stated,

"Relations between ours, the only textile workers trade union in Sholapur, and the local millowners have at no time been such that the representatives of the two could sit across a table and talk to each other on any issue. Some talking at each other has, no doubt, been done on occasions, or to be plain, during strikes but anything approaching negotiations between us has never proceeded beyond that point. The owners have never recognised our union. On the contrary the mere suspicion that a worker is in touch with the union has usually led to his dismissal."

In the handloom industry the conditions were some-

-what different. The master weavers as well as the workers belonged to the Padmashali community. It had a closely knit network of caste organisations known as 'Dnyati Panchayats' and even before the formation of the first union of handloom workers in 1934 the disputes between the workers and the masterweavers were settled by these Panchayats. However, this method was costly to both the parties of the disputes as both of them had to pay a large amount to the Panchayat in addition to the amount spent on Toddy drinks offered to the members of the Panchayat. The formation of the workers union saved these costs of both the parties, which also explains the lesser opposition to the union by the handloom master weavers as compared to the mill-owners in Sholapur.

The Sidi factory owners did not recognise the union but after a strike in 1938 they had to negotiate with the union even though they did not officially recognise the union. The G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union was recognised by the railway authorities, who were prepared to negotiate with the officials of the union, but the union officials often complained that the authorities did not pay due attention to the representations made by the union. The Sholapur Municipality refused to recognise the union but the President of the Municipality expressed his readiness to discuss with the representative of the

union the grievances of the workers. However, on the initiative of the Chief Officer of the Sholapur Municipality, Municipal Staff Association was formed in 1930. The Chief Officer explained to the members that the workers should not come to the union for 'trifling issues'. During this period, in no other industry we find existence of any union or the machinery for bargaining collectively for the workers.

The Bombay Industrial Disputes Act 1938, made provision for the appointment of Labour Officer who had the power to enter any place used for the purpose of any industry or the office of any union and was entitled to call for and inspect all relevant documents which were necessary for the due discharge of his duties. He could also convene a meeting of the employees or employers and was entitled to appear in any proceeding under this Act. The Act further provided for registering the agreement between the representatives of the workers and the employees. The unions as well as the employers opposed the appointment of Labour Officer. The unions expressed the fear that the Labour Officer might side with the employer and the right to bargain collectively would be encroached upon by him. The employers were dissatisfied because of their refusal to sit around the table with the union representatives. The Labour Office was instituted in

Sholapur in 1940. But the conditions during the war period were not favourable for the functioning of this office as efforts were made to maintain industrial peace with the help of Defence of India Rules which empowered the Government to prescribe wages and conditions of work and restrictive provisions were applied to the cessation of work in any place employing more than 100 persons.

During the second world war the millowners in Sholapur were firm in not recognising the union even though the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union adopted a 'no strike' policy. However in the handloom industry there was actually a pact in 1944 between the Sholapur Hatmag Asami Sangh, an organisation of the master weavers and the Lal Bawta Hatmag Kamgar Union for settling the disputes between the workers and the master weavers by collective bargaining. Every issue of a wage cut or a wage increase was to be brought before a joint meeting of the two organisations and efforts were made for an amicable settlement. But the machinery was short-lived and in 1947 the union, in its memorandum submitted to the Sholapur Handloom Weavers Enquiry Committee, stated, "The written agreements to settle disputes through joint meetings was turned into methods of delay and obstruction" and pointed out that "if the employers abandon this attitude and agree to the methods of

collective bargaining the industry would be saved from a good many industrial disputes and strikes."³

The Municipal authorities during the war period found it difficult to sidetract the union as the workers were solidly behind the union. The President of the Sholapur Municipality was ready to reply the letters of the Union ~~was~~ and meet the union representative but he was not prepared to recognise the union. The Bidi factory owners had occasionally negotiated with the union representatives but due to the lack of day to day activity of the union itself, the process of collective bargaining failed to develop any further. In the Railways, however, the union representative could often meet the authorities and put the ⁱgrevances of the workers but the steps to redress the grievances were rather slow. As the union complained, its representative had to listen to the stereo-typed answers from the superiors.

The Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946 and the Bombay Industrial Relations Rules of 1947 made a special provision concerning the approved union which has a membership of more than 15 per cent of the employed

³ From the typed copy of the Memorandum submitted to the Sholapur Handloom Weavers Enquiry Committee, 1947.

workers. Accordingly, the officers of the approved union got the right to meet and discuss with an employer or any person appointed by him, the grievances of its members. The rules formed under the Act further state that :-

(a) the discussion shall ordinarily be held on two days in a week during such hours as may be fixed by agreement between the employer and the union except in urgent case when it may be held on any day and at any time by previous appointment;

(b) the union shall ordinarily communicate in advance the nature of the grievances which it desires to discuss and

(c) the name of the office authorised in this behalf shall either be communicated to the employer in advance or such officer shall carry a letter of authority...⁴

The privileges of the approved union are :-

(1) The right of inspecting any place where their members work;

(2) collecting union subscriptions ⁱⁿ on their employers' premises, and

⁴ Rules under the B.I.R. Act, 1947, Rule No. 28.

(3) legal aid at government expenses in case of important proceedings held before Labour Court or Industrial Court.

The obligations are :-

- (1) Membership subscription cannot be less than four annas,
- (2) Executive Committee should meet at an interval of three months,
- (3) all resolutions passed should be recorded in the minute book and
- (4) accounts should be audited by the Government auditor, no resorting to illegal strike.

The Registrar Bombay Industrial Relations Act 1946 recognised by the notification on 18th February 1948 all the concerns in the cotton textile industry of Sholapur as undertakings in that industry for the purposes of the Act and in 1949^{the} Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh was recognised as the approved union for the cotton textile workers in Sholapur. This step deprived other unions in the textile industry of their right to negotiate with the employers on behalf of the workers in that industry. Hence,^{the} Lal Sawta Girni Kamgar Union became extremely hostile towards this newly approved union. For example, in its memorandum to the Labour Commissioner, Bombay in 1949 the union wrote as follows:-

"The Labour legislation not only favours the capitalists but boosts up the pro-capitalist and bogus trade unions. The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh has always been helping the employers in effecting reduction in the number of workers and in increasing the workload The Government Labour Officer has been turned into a recruiting officer for this union. Membership of this union is thus boosted up under compulsion and under Government capitalist patronage."

The Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh on the other hand claimed its recognition by the employers as a sign of their correct trade union policy and its faith in the ideology of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. However, a heated controversy arose between the unions and among the workers about the genuineness of the negotiations between the Rashtriya Sangh and the mill management. The charges and countercharges regarding the attitude towards the employers continue, even now, to be the main issue in the unions' agitation.

In other industries the category of approved union does not exist. But the number of unions recognised by the employers shows a sign of progress in recent years. The recognition may not be in the form of a document or a contract, but the employers show their readiness to negotiate with the representatives of the unions.

Table No. 5.1.1 : Number of recognised Unions and their membership (1950-55).

Year	No. of unions	No. of recognised unions	Membership of the recognised unions
1950-51	21	8	10,406
1951-52	21	10	11,543
1952-53	22	11	13,923
1953-54	25	12	13,410
1954-55	25	14	13,515

Source : Compiled from Union records.

It is clear from the table that the number of recognised unions shows a trend in a progressive direction. The total membership of the recognised unions and the percentage of their membership to the total membership of all the unions is also increasing gradually. But the table also indicates that much is desired even now in this direction. In 1954-55 only 14 unions were recognised by the employers while 11 were still awaiting their recognition. The industry-wise classification of the recognised unions shows that 2 unions in Municipality, 2 unions in textiles, 2 in handloom factories, 3 in transport, 4 in Post and Telegraph Department, 1 in Bidi factories and 1 of Government peons have been recognised in Sholapur. It would be

interesting to see the time required by these unions to obtain the recognition from the employers. Of the 14 unions that were recognised till 1955 by the employers in Sholapur 3 obtained in one year after their formation, 5 after two years, 4 after three years, 1 after four years and the remaining 1 had to work without recognition for five years. Of the 11 unions that were not recognised by the employers in 1954-55, 3 are in existence for one year, 1 for two years, 2 for three years, another 1 for four years and the rest for more than five years. Even now the founders of a new union are not necessarily confident of obtaining recognition from the employers ab initio.

In the light of the above, it can be stated that the traditional opposition of the employers to accept the right of the workers to bargain collectively is gradually on the decline. However, there exist extreme limitations on the scope of the collective bargaining and it has yet to attain a stage when it will be recognised as a full-fledged method of determining wages and working conditions.

5.2 The Concept of Industrial Democracy

The term 'industrial democracy' was used first by Sidney and Beatrice Webb while analysing the working of democracy within the trade union itself. But later on

during the First World War this concept was carried over from trade unionism to the industrial relations between employers and workers. After the Russian Revolution in 1917 the term "Democratization of Industry" was used by the left wing trade unions in the world synonymously with public control or socialisation of industry as a whole. This definition was also carried further and direct control of the workers over the industry was advocated as a real form of industrial democracy. Thus this concept is undergoing a constant change and still divergent views are expressed in the trade union literature.

The Government of Bombay offered "a common platform for discussing all the day to day issues" and the Bombay Industrial Relations Act was passed in 1947 with the object of "creating machinery for the peaceful and just settlement of disputes." According to the Government a joint committee of the employers and the union representatives is "the starting point in the formation of industrial democracy."

However, efforts to form joint committees on a local plane were made even before this Act. With the approval of the Railway Board, the administration of the G.I.P. Railway decided in January 1924 to introduce "staff councils" to consider questions governing conditions of employment and the wellbeing of the staff generally,

and also to provide a regular method of negotiation for issues arising between the railway authorities and the employees. These councils were restricted only to the white collar employees. Secondly, these councils were not representative in character and had a right only to put their grievances in such committees while it was entirely left to the authorities to decide their fate. It is also reported that in May 1925 a works committee was formed by the management for the weaving department of the Sholapur Mills. But the committee could not win the confidence of the workers as it was composed of the 'yes men' of the management. Both these efforts were discontinued shortly for want of response from the employees. No trace of any further effort to create a joint standing machinery is found before 1947 for regulating the relations between the employers and the workpeople except in the handloom factories during the wartime when a joint committee of representatives of the unions and the master weavers was formed to settle the differences mutually.

Under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act a joint Committee can be formed in a factory by an agreement between the employer and the registered union with at least 15 per cent of the workers as members of that union.⁵

⁵ Sub-section 3 (b) of Section 48 of the B.I.R. Act, 1946.

This machinery is of course voluntary as the consent of the employer is necessary for its formation and it may be dissolved by giving 3 months notice. The joint committee can take up for discussion the questions like reduction or increase in the number of persons in the factory, dismissal of any worker, hours of work and the rest intervals, quality of materials and equipment given to the workers and their adequacy, interpretation of awards, agreements and settlements, etc. The powers enjoyed by the Committee are limited by the restrictions imposed on it. For, example, the joint committee cannot discuss the issue like the attendance of the workers and late coming, liability to search and entry into premises by certain gates, termination of employment of a worker etc. Questions relating to conditions to grant leave or holidays are beyond the powers of this committee. The members of the joint committee can propose any change other than changes in standing orders or regarding any such matter affecting the relations between the employer and workers.

In Solapur, after the recognition of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh as the approved union in the textile industry in 1949, joint committees were formed in 1951. But except the management of the Vishnu and the Laxmi Mills no other mill management gave necessary co-operation in working of the committee^s. This complaint

was made even in the Annual Reports of the Rashtriya Sangh for the years 1952-53 and 1953-54 and an appeal was made to the millowners to pay attention to the union's complaint. In the Annual Report of the Rashtriya Sangh for 1954-55 even the mention of these committees was dropped. The management of the Narsingirji, the Jam and the Sholapur Mills did not care to call the meetings of the joint committees. Even in the Joint Committees of the Laxmi and the Vishnu Mills, only minor issues like introduction of mercury tube lights in the departments, improvement in the dining sheds in the mills were tackled while in all other important issues the union had to rely on the awards of the Labour Courts. In 1954-55 only 4 such meetings were held in both these mills. The representatives of the workers were not elected from the workers but were nominated by the union.

A similar joint committee was formed between the Sholapur Municipality and the Municipal Workers' Union in 1951. Five representatives each of the Sholapur Municipality and the Union were taken on the committee. The decisions of this committee could be taken only when both the parties supported it. If the parties could not come to an agreement the issue was to be referred to the Conciliation Officer, Bombay. It was agreed that the meeting of the Joint Committee should be called

at least once in a week. In the beginning the committee did good work and most of the grievances of the workers were settled through this committee. Another Joint Committee between the Municipal Staff Association and the Municipality was formed for the same purpose. Later on both the unions found that the representatives of the Municipality, who were mainly municipal councillors, did not attend the meetings on many occasions. Secondly, those councillors were not properly acquainted with the Municipal administration and hence, they could not appreciate the grievances of the workers. The Municipal authorities often complained that the unions made exorbitant demands without considering the financial position of the Municipality. In a letter to the President, Sholapur Municipality dated 7th October, 1951 the Municipal Workers' Union levelled a charge that the Representatives of the Municipality in the Joint Committee did not work according to the provisions of law. The Municipal President, however, replied that the Joint Committee was formed to settle petty matters amicably and that the decisions of such meetings were only recommendatory and were not necessarily binding on the municipality. The Municipal Staff Association also severely criticised the municipal councillors for their lack of elementary knowledge of certain rules and regulations and suggested in December, 1951 to

the Municipality that instead of these councillors the departmental heads should be sent as representatives of the Municipality. However, this suggestion was not acceptable to the Municipality. Naturally, after six months of existence both the joint committees became mere paper organisations, leaving the relations between the employers and employees, perhaps, more strained than before.

Though no joint committee had been formed in the railways, regular monthly meetings were held between the representatives of the National Railway Mazdoor Union and the railway authorities since 1952. According to the union the grievances of the worker can be pointed out effectively in such meetings but in some cases there was delay in implementing the decisions due to the administrative deficiency. There are cases when the ordinary grievances were not redressed even for six months. The union is trying to get the grievances settled earlier by agitating among the workers. However, it is trying to put more and more complaints in such meetings. In 1953-54, 73 complaints were put in such meetings while in 1954-55 the number rose to 81.

In the Telegraph Department the joint meetings between the union representatives and the Assistant Executive Engineer began to be held once in a month

since October 1954. In these meetings the union representatives could put their grievances before him while the issues were settled amicably and to the satisfaction of both the office and the union. The union found this practice helpful to the employees in the department though issues like increase in the pay scales, dearness allowance, etc. could not be raised in such meetings. However, issues like obtaining concessions in relief period for the night shift employees, training of all senior telegraphists in testing within duty period, making available a cupboard for keeping tiffin carriers in the resting room, providing mosquito curtains for the Late Fee telegraphists, etc. were frankly discussed in these monthly meetings. According to the union the success of these meetings was largely due to the sympathetic attitude of the Assistant Executive Engineer towards the employees' grievances.

In the State Transport Department a Joint Committee was formed in the middle of 1954, known as Divisional Works Committee.⁶ The meetings of this committee are usually held once in a month and the Divisional Controller personally attends the meetings. If necessary he asks

⁶ The jurisdiction of this committee is the whole Sholapur Division of the State Transport and not limited to Sholapur City alone.

other officers to attend the meetings. In these meetings local grievances are put forth by the representatives of the union but even now the employees within the occupation are not in a position to put their views frankly. In 1955 the General Secretary, who was an employee, was changed because he could not represent the grievances of the workers effectively and boldly before the authorities. In the annual general meeting of the union he admitted his weakness as an employee and an outsider was elected in his place who had no fear of victimisation. Even the present General Secretary experienced that the members of the Joint Committee who are employees are afraid to express their views frankly before their superiors. The meetings are held regularly but the employees are passive listeners while the major responsibility of giving vent to grievances has to be taken by the outsider General Secretary.

Considering the experience of the joint consultation in the various industries and the places of employment it can be concluded that the machinery has not satisfied the expectations of either the trade unionists or the employers. So far joint consultation exists mainly in the government organisations and local self government institutions. Private enterprise is not yet prepared to assimilate the idea of joint

consultation at all levels in industry.

Finally, unless a joint committee works successfully on a local plane no results can be expected on a national plane. Even the decisions of the Indian Tripartite conferences can be implemented only if the local joint committees carry on their deliberations properly and effectively. However, there are limitations to the success of this machinery also and joint consultation is not the only remedy to avoid industrial conflict. "Joint consultation may help to reduce antagonism, and difficulties will remain."⁷

5.3 State Intervention in Industrial Disputes

State intervention in industrial disputes is undertaken in many countries mainly by providing a system of conciliation and arbitration to settle the industrial disputes peacefully. Whenever the negotiating machinery between the union and the employers breaks down and industrial warfare becomes imminent the government intervenes in the matter to avoid open conflict. Unless

⁷ H.A.Clegg and T.E.Chester, Joint Consultation an article in "The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain" 1954. Edited by Allan Flanders and H.A. Clegg. Basil Blackwell Oxford, page 364.

this intervention is impartial the machinery will lose all its significance. Hence, great precaution has to be taken to see that this system is free from all sorts of pressures.

Kurt Braun defined conciliation or mediation as "an attempt to settle industrial disputes with the help of an outsider who assists the disputants in their negotiations."⁸ A conciliator cannot force the parties to accept his recommendations and the utmost he can do is to persuade the parties to arrive at an amicable settlement. Conciliators are often described as a flying ambulance squad that comes on the scene where the conflict occurs between the interests of the workers and employers.

Arbitration on the other hand, is the settlement of industrial disputes through binding decision by one or more outsiders. The award of the arbitration is final and both the parties have to accept it irrespective of their liking unless the higher authority gives a different award. Thus, arbitration is more judicial in character than conciliation "It is also attributable to suspicion caused by uncertainty as to what the outsider would make the basis of his award and whether

⁸ Kurt Braun - Labour Disputes and Their Settlement. The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1944, p. 53.

his judgement would be fair, mature, expert and practical."⁹ Hence, in countries like Great Britain both employers and unions are traditionally opposed to compulsory arbitration. In Great Britain mutual consent is required before a dispute can be referred to arbitration except in cases of emergency. However, in a number of western countries compulsory arbitration has been practised for a pretty long time.

In India prior to the passing of the Trade Disputes Act as an all India measure in 1929 no official machinery as such was in existence for conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes. The Employers and Workmen (Disputes) Act of 1930 was passed to make provision for the speedy termination of certain disputes between workmen engaged in railways and other public works and their employees. This Act was extended to Sholapur district in 1931. It mainly dealt with individual cases and did not provide any elaborate machinery for the settlement of disputes in other industries. But the Act was not brought into practice at all and the Government of Bombay in its memorandum to the Royal Commission on Labour in India admitted in 1930 that it had no information to which extent the Act had been made use of in the Bombay Presidency.

⁹ Problems of Indian Labour - A Symposium, page 48.

However, a periodical wave of strikes throughout the country since 1920 brought pressure on the Government to pass an all India legislation to check the strike struggles of the workers. The Indian Trades Disputes Act, 1929 made provisions for the investigation and settlement of trade disputes. Both investigation and arbitration were made voluntary in the Act and when the case was referred to the third party for investigation the parties had to refrain from strike or lockout.

The Bombay Trade Disputes Conciliation Act 1934 went a step further and provided for the creation of conciliators so that all disputes could be referred to conciliation at the request of the parties both on application made by the labour officer or on the knowledge of the Conciliator himself. The Act further made it possible for the machinery to be maintained throughout by permanent officials of the Government Labour Office. The Act had also made provision for the delegates of each party to be represented before the conciliator and if each party should have groups then each group should have a representative delegate or delegates. In the Indian Trade Disputes Act, 1929 investigation and conciliation was voluntary while the Bombay Trade Disputes Conciliation Act 1934 made investigation compulsory and arbitration voluntary.

The Bombay Industrial Disputes Act 1938 made conciliation compulsory. Before a strike or lockout could be declared a notice was to be given. This Act had made provision for the creation of chief conciliator, special conciliators appointed by the Government and Boards of conciliation. It also created a Court of Industrial Arbitration in order to decide industrial disputes referred to it. Another important feature of the Act was the framing of Standing Orders to regulate relations between employers and employees in all industries.

By an amendment in 1941 this Act made arbitration compulsory in certain cases and the Government was given powers to refer any dispute to the arbitration of the Industrial Court if it was satisfied that the continuance of any dispute was likely to cause serious or prolonged hardship to a large section of the community or cause a serious damage to industry or outbreak of disorder or breach of public peace. A further amendment was introduced to prohibit strikes in places of employment and to give further powers to the Government to cause such strikes to be stopped by order. Any contravention of this order meant fine or imprisonment or both.

During the war period the Government of India had taken a decision to make applicable to all industries

Rule 31A of the Defence of India Act. The powers assumed by the Provincial Governments under the Act amounted to a complete stoppage of industrial warfare if the Government considered it necessary for the purpose of defence. According to Part VI of the Defence of India Rules, all prejudicial acts i.e. acts which were likely to cause, produce or instigate, directly or indirectly the cessation of work in any place employing more than 100 persons were prohibited. The essential services (maintenance) ordinance and the National Services (Technical Personnel) Ordinance empowered the Government to prescribe wages and conditions of work when those restrictive provisions were applied.

The Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946 covered a wider field than the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, 1938. In addition to the machinery for conciliation and arbitration the new Act included a machinery for the regulation of relations between employers and the workers.

The Bombay Industrial Relations Act created Labour Courts which enabled the transfer of minor disputes to them instead of Industrial Court which was henceforth to be a higher court of appeal.¹⁰ The Labour Courts

¹⁰ No civil or criminal court can call into question the decisions, orders or awards of the Labour Courts.

have been invested with the power to decide as to the propriety of an order passed by the employer under the standing orders. Further, they can decide any change made by an employer or desired by an employee in respect of industrial matter and matters arising out of such a change. It is for them to determine whether a particular strike, lock-out or any change is legal or not, try offences punishable under this Act and where the payment of compensation for an offence is provided for, determine the compensation and order its payment. The Labour Courts have the power to require any employer to withdraw any change which is held by it to be illegal or carry out any change provided such change is a matter in issue in any proceedings before it under this Act. The statement of objects and reasons of the Act categorically states the purpose of instituting the Labour Court as "to ensure impartial and relatively quick decision regarding illegal changes, illegal strikes and lockouts and the complaint that either side may bring up."¹¹

As regards the conciliation machinery the Act made provision that the maximum duration of conciliation proceedings should be one month. The Act has reduced the penalties for illegal strikes and increased those

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Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1947.

for illegal lockouts. An attempt towards compulsory arbitration has been made in this Act where it makes strikes and lockouts illegal in public utility services if they are undertaken without notice, or during or after conciliation or arbitration proceedings or even before a period has elapsed after an award has been given or decision arrived at by a conciliator or Board of Conciliation or Chief Conciliator.

Under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Industrial Tribunals have been created consisting of one or more persons of the status of a High Court Judge to adjudicate on the matters under dispute. The Industrial Tribunal is the supreme authority under the Act and its award is binding on both the parties to the disputes. According to the provision of the Act, the Government has the power to refer any dispute to the Board or Court or Tribunal. It is requested to do this by an application made by the parties to the disputes, whether jointly or separately, if it is satisfied that the parties applying represent the majority of both the employers and workers. In case the dispute refers to a public utility service, a term which includes any industry which Government might, in the interest of public from time to time notify as such, and where a notice of strike or lockout has been given, the Government has power to refer the dispute to conciliation or adjudication at any stage of

the proceedings. Where a dispute has been referred to the Tribunal or Board, the appropriate Government may prohibit the continuance of any strike or lockout which may be in existence at the date of reference.

5.4 Working of the Conciliation Machinery in Sholapur

Though the conciliation machinery is in existence in India since 1929 on the statute it has been utilised very sparingly. The machinery provided by the Industrial Disputes Act 1929 was brought into usage in the whole of India on only 5 occasions till 1936. This Act was totally unknown to the workers of Sholapur. The Bombay Trade Disputes Conciliation Act of 1934 had provided the creation of conciliators so that all disputes could be referred to conciliation at the request of the parties concerned. Under this Act only one conciliation took place in Sholapur by the end of 1937. During the strike of Bidi factory workers demanding increase in the rate of wages, etc. the Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Government of Bombay, who in his capacity as an Assistant Conciliator visited Sholapur with a view to mediate in the matter. As a result of the discussions which he and the District Magistrate of Sholapur had with the parties, agreement was reached on several points but no agreement could be arrived at on the major demands.

When attempt at an amicable settlement of the dispute could not bring good results, the issue was referred for arbitration.

The Bombay Industrial Disputes Act of 1939 was made applicable to the textile industry in the Bombay province. The Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Union, Sholapur condemned the act as the "Black Act" and efforts were made to organize a strike to protest against the Act. However, the union thought it essential to take as much benefit of the machinery as is possible to serve the interest of the workers. But the union was not representative as it had less than 25 per cent membership of the total employed workers. The union gave a notice to hold elections inside the mill premises to elect the representatives. On 11th March, 1940 the representatives of the Laxmi Mill workers sent a notice of change demanding a "dear food allowance" of 12½ per cent of their wages. The conciliation proceedings were started at Sholapur on 18th March, 1940. The conciliator himself stated : "In connection with these conciliation proceedings I visited Sholapur three times and also met the parties twice in Bombay. Both at Sholapur and at Bombay I met the parties jointly and separately on several occasions. As a result of these discussions it was finally agreed that a compromise should be effected..."¹²

¹² Bombay Labour Gazettee, Vol. 19 No. 2 pages 1021-1027 (Application No. 15 of 1940 to the Industrial Court, Bombay).

Thus, the conciliation was successful but the joy of the textile workers of Sholapur in seeing the success of the first conciliation, however, was very shortlived. The elected representatives of the workers were served with notices of summary dismissal. They, however, filed an application for the declaration that the mill management by serving these notices made an illegal change. The Labour Officer, Sholapur in submitting the complaints to the Industrial Court expressed his view in very emphatic terms that the dismissal was "legally faulty, most unfortunate and inopportune and also savoured of victimisation."¹³ The management of the Laxmi Mills refuted the charges levelled against them by the Labour Officer. The court could not come to help the workers and it dismissed the workers' applications stating that it is very difficult to say whose version approximates the truth.¹⁴

The victimisation of the workers' representatives participating in the conciliation proceedings and the failure of the union to fight the workers' case in the court created a sort of hostile attitude in the minds

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

of the textile workers in Sholapur towards the concilia-
tion machinery.¹⁵

The Union thought it undesirable to use the machin-
-ery. But when the issue of bonus was agitating in
the minds of the workers for a long time the union re-
quested the Labour Officer, Sholapur to hold elections
to elect the workers representatives. However, it
took months for the Labour Officer to hold such meet-
ings because the mills raised a legal point as to whether
it was obligatory on their part to allow such meetings
to be held on the grounds inside the mills. The use
of arbitration was also made very rarely. Though the
Session Judge of Sholapur was a member of the Industrial
Court between 1939 and 1947 only 5 cases were decided
by the members of the Industrial Court at Sholapur.¹⁶

¹⁵ Shri A. D. Shroff in Conciliation and Arbitra-
tion pointed out the defects of the machinery created
by the Industrial Disputes Act 1938 in the following
words : "The first and important drawback was that the
Industrial Court created by the Act composed of men
known only for their judicial training and experience
with the result that the issues involving economic know-
ledge were decided in an arbitrary manner. This point
was further accentuated by the fact that members of the
judiciary have normally a very conservative trend of
mind and hence the industrial court failed to win the
confidence of the workers."

¹⁶ The other two members of the Industrial Court
were the High Court Judge of Bombay who acted as the
Honourable President of the Industrial Court and the
District Judge of Ahmedabad.

Out of them 4 were decided in 1940 and one in 1941.

By and large it can be stated that the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act 1938 was not used in Sholapur on a large scale during the Second World War. One of the important factors for this can be said to be the promulgation of the Defence of India Act and ^{the} Government's decisions to make applicable Rule 31A of the same Act to all industries.

The advent of popular ministry in the Bombay province in 1946 again brought the problem of industrial relations to the forefront and the Government of Bombay prepared a new bill taking into account the experience of the last few years. The working of the Labour Courts in Sholapur has been separately dealt with subsequently. But so far as the conciliation proceedings are concerned it can be stated that more use is being made by the unions and the management of this machinery to settle the disputes than previously when the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act 1938 was in operation. The Conciliation proceedings in the textile industry are carried over according to the provisions of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act 1947 while in other places of work like the Municipality they are taking place according to the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. In 1949-50, 12 conciliation proceedings took place in Sholapur out of which 4 were carried out under the Industrial Disputes Act. The total number of conciliations was

22 in 1954-55. Of these 22, 4 were on the issue of pay and allowances, 2 on bonus, 8 on discharge and reinstatement, 3 on leave and hours of work and 5 on other issues.

In 1949-50 seven conciliations were successful while in 1954-55 the number was 17. All those cases which failed were afterwards referred to arbitration. Of the 17 successful conciliations 13 related to the textile industry and 3 to the Municipality and 1 to the Bidi factories.

From 1949-50 to 1954-55 there were 112 conciliations. Of them 11 were concluded in 11 days, 19 in 15 to 30 days, 6 in 31 to 45 days, 18 in 46 to 60 days, 14 in 61 to 75 days, 19 in 76 to 100 days, 12 in 101 to 125 days, 7 in 126 to 150 days and 6 over 150 days. The time required for the conclusion of the conciliation is calculated from the date of making an application for it to the date of final result. On many occasions the conciliator took a number of days for the preliminary negotiations with the parties. Therefore, unions often complained about the delay in deciding the matters in conciliation. For example, in the meeting of the Managing Committee of the Sholapur Girni Karkoon Sangh dated 22nd July, 1948 a severe criticism was made by the members as the conciliation proceedings could not be started though two and half months had passed since

the union had given a notice of conciliation. When the representatives of the union had been to the conciliator for conciliation they found that the representatives of the mills demanded more time. Thus even before starting the conciliation proceedings the union in its managing committee had decided that if conciliation fails, it should be prepared to go to the Industrial Court for arbitration. In the next meeting of the conciliation the representatives of the mills were not given powers to take a final decision.

The atmosphere of suspicion is a serious handicap for the success of conciliation. We find that the following instructions were given to the representatives of the Municipal Staff Association appearing before the conciliator by the members of the Managing Committee in 1951 :-

"Our representative should not bind himself in any way. He should only get the view of the opponent. A meeting of the Executive Committee should be held immediately after the conciliation and points of dispute should be considered in it."

Even after the conciliation results in a compromise it is not certain always that the decisions are implemented in practice. The Bus Kamgar Sangh in its Managing Committee meeting of 26th May 1950 resolved to go

on strike because the Municipal authorities did not abide by the decisions accepted by both the parties in the conciliation proceedings. Similar resolution was passed by the Municipal Workers Union in the next year. However, in both the cases the threats were helpful to the workers. The unions usually give a notice of strike if they feel that the conciliation proceedings should be started within a short time.

Thus we see that though increasingly the conciliation machinery is being used the proceedings start in an atmosphere of suspicion and lack of faith in itself. Also more emphasis is given on arbitration than on conciliation.

5.5 Working of the Labour Courts in Sholapur

A separate Labour Court was established in Sholapur in 1948. Under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, the Labour Courts are the courts of original jurisdiction and the Industrial Court is the special court of Appeal, revision and reference in respect of the industrial matters covered by the Act. These two courts between themselves form the 'Labour Judiciary'.

In order to see how far the Labour Courts have benefited the workers it is necessary to study the data relating to the number of cases filed and decided in the Labour Court, Sholapur.

It will be seen from Table 5.5.1 that the number of cases filed in the Labour Court since 1950 are gradually on the increase. However, the number was the highest in 1951 which was mainly due to the differences between the workers and the employers regarding the interpretation of the award on the standardisation of wages of the textile workers in Sholapur. Another reason for the same was the victimisation of a large number of workers as a result of rationalisation in the weaving and spinning departments of the textile mills. The table shows that except during 1950 and 1952 the number of cases filed is more than that of the decided in the Labour Court. (In 1950 out of 250 cases decided during the whole year 189 were done so in the first quarter alone i.e. nearly three times more than the cases decided during the rest of the year. This was possible because a large number of cases were of the same type as the issue involved was mainly the reinstatement of the discharged workers. Of the 250 cases decided during 1950, in 220 cases the issue involved was the reinstatement of the victimised workers and in 190 cases compromise was arrived at.)

One has to admit that the efficiency of the Labour Court cannot be judged by the number of cases decided during the year as the time required to decide the cases depends upon the nature of the issues involved in

Table No. 5.5.1 : Quarterly Review of the cases filed and decided in the labour court, Sholapur (1949-1955).

Year	No. of cases filed during					No. of cases decided during				
	Quarter					Quarter				
	I	II	III	IV	Total	I	II	III	IV	Total
1949	74	46	59	67	246	34	64	51	28	177
1950	21	20	27	10	78	189	32	18	17	256
1951	26	54	70	43	193	17	14	57	38	126
1952	28	40	35	40	143	37	64	47	48	196
1953	37	35	31	46	147	25	28	36	31	120
1954	23	31	26	65	145	39	20	18	39	116
1955	25	57	48	42	172	30	58	24	51	163

Source : Compiled from the data published in the Bombay Labour Gazette.

the cases. However, trade union leaders have a reason to complain that unnecessary delay is caused in giving the judgements as the cases remain pending for a long time. Table No. 5.5.2 shows the number of cases pending in the Labour Court at the beginning of each quarter of an year since 1949. In 1955 the number of pending cases in the court shows a sign of increase and the trend continues even for the next year.

Table No. 5.5.2 : Number of cases pending in the Labour Court Sholapur. (1949-55)

Year	No. of cases pending on			
	1st January	1st April	1st July	1st October
1949	09	13	24	123
1950	186	13	6	15
1951	8	17	57	70
1952	75	66	42	30
1953	22	34	41	36
1954	51	35	20	18
1955	80	75	24	98

Source : Compiled from the data published in the Bombay Labour Gazettee 1949-50.

It would be further interesting to see how much time a case takes for obtaining a decision in the Labour

Court. In this connection data are available with a trade union lawyer who has maintained a record of the cases he had conducted in the Labour Court between 1948-1955. The data show that out of 158 cases for which he had appeared in the Labour Court 31 were decided in less than 3 months, 26 between 3 to 5 months, 43 between 6 and 8 months, 17 between 9 and 11 months while 41 cases required one year or more to get the judgement from the judiciary. We have not considered here the additional time required if the union desires to go in an appeal to the Industrial Court on the decision in the Labour Court, Sholapur. This evidently brings to the forefront the problem of settling the disputes in a shorter period of time which is highly essential from the point of view of maintaining industrial peace. We have come across some cases which required more than 5 years to get the final decision of the Industrial Court since the filing of the application in the Labour Court.

Now we pass on to the issues involved in the cases filed in the Labour Court. Table No. 5.5.3 gives the type of cases decided in the Labour Court, Sholapur.

It can be seen from the table that the tendency towards organising illegal strikes shows a remarkable decline. However, this statement can be made only on the assumption that the employers would not loose a single

Table No. 5.5.3 : No. of cases decided in the Labour Court, Sholapur classified by their causes (1949-1955).

Year	Illegal strikes	Illegal changes	Discharge and reinstatement	Others	Total
1949	13	52	34	68	117
1950	4	13	220	19	256
1951	3	34	74	15	126
1952	5	33	79	79	196
1953	1	20	68	39	120
1954	1	25	74	16	116
1955	2	50	62	49	163

Source : ~~Table~~ Compiled from the data published in the Bombay Labour Gazette.

opportunity to get a particular strike declared illegal by the Court. During the period under review no union had ever given a call for an illegal strike. However, there are cases when the workers had refused the advise of the union to go back to work inspite of the warning given by the union about the illegal nature of strike.

The cases regarding the illegal changes are usually filed by the unions because changes regarding the closing of a department, reducing the number of workers without considering the provisions in the law are often made, by the managements. However, some times the unions find

it difficult to prove that the change is illegal. For example in 1953 an application was filed by Sitaram Maruti and 24 others in the Frame Department of 'B' Section of the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Company alleging that they are entitled to the wage rates as given by the award of the Industrial Court and that the mill had been paying lower rates as compared to previous wage rates.¹⁷ The applicants prayed for a decision that the above act of the mill amounted to an illegal change. But the Court found that the applicants had not issued a summons to the mills to produce the rates fixed by the management as being award rates. "Nor had they secured a certified copy of the rates supplied by previous management to the Industrial Court or to the Technical Expert the rates fixed for slubbers working on 203 or rates for further mixing." The Court, therefore, found that the applicants had not produced "satisfactory proof for a declaration of an illegal change" and finally the application was dismissed. Such types of cases of a technical nature can be multiplied. However we have mentioned it here to show the nature of the complications which a union has to face in order to prove that a particular change is illegal.

¹⁷ Labour Court, Sholapur Case No. 15 of 1953.

Table No. 5.5.3 points out that the disputes between the union and the employers regarding the illegal changes do not show any sign of remarkable improvement. The number of cases in 1950 was only 13 but later on it increased in 1951 and 1952 and though it was declining in 1953 it again rose up in 1954 and 1955.

The cases regarding the discharge and reinstatement are seen to occupy a major part of the cases decided by the court. In many cases the worker is not given the opportunity to explain his conduct or reply to the charges levelled against him. In his application to the Labour Court, Sholapur one Mohamed Kalesaheb an employee of the Warsinggirji Mills, alleged that he was illegally and improperly dismissed by the company on the ground that he had committed a theft in connection with the company's property. During the enquiry the company's witness made a statement as follows :-

"The applicant was taken to the Manager's office and was asked to sit in the verandah outside the office. The Manager asked me as to what his defence was and after speaking to the applicant I told the Manager that he admits the offence as before and begs to be pardoned. I did not present the applicant before the Manager nor did the applicant ask me to present him before the Manager. After this the Manager asked me to prepare a dismissal order."¹⁸

¹⁸ Labour Court Sholapur Application No. 114 of 1952.

The court found the order of the Manager illegal because he did not hold an inquiry as required by Standing Order 22 and ordered that the applicant should be reinstated. However, if the Manager dismissed a worker after holding an enquiry the Court held such order as perfectly legal and proper.¹⁹

The cases in the column 'others' refer mainly to those relating to discontent regarding the working conditions, payment of compensation and other individual grievances. Their number is not negligible which also reflects on the industrial relations that are existing today.

Table No. 5.5.4 gives the results of the cases decided in the Labour Courts, Sholapur.

Table No. 5.5.4 : Results of the cases decided in the labour court, Sholapur (1949-55).

Year	In favour of employers	In favour of employees	Mutual settlements	Dismissals	Withdrawals	Total
1949	23	25	17	51	61	177
1950	3	26	190	36	1	256
1951	1	19	32	72	2	126
1952	1	23	75	89	8	196
1953	2	21	44	29	24	120
1954	1	12	56	34	13	116
1955	-	8	77	27	51	163

Source : Compiled from the Bombay Labour Gazette.

It is clear from the table that decisions entirely in favour of employers and employees are on the decline while more and more emphasis is given on mutual settlement. However, divergent views are expressed by the trade union leaders about this trend in the Labour Court.

A section of the leadership maintains that it is a healthy sign for the trade union movement and further it may be claimed as an indicator of growing industrial harmony in the city as such. According to them the employer in some cases is not prepared to accept the union's suggestions in conciliation proceedings but he shows his readiness to grant some concessions in the Labour Court. Another opinion is that unnecessary delay in giving the judgement in the court compels the union to arrive at a compromise settlement. The leaders of this view argue that the workers are not in a position to fight the cases to the last as in the cases of victimisation. If some sort of concession is given to them they are prepared to compromise on the issue. There are other leaders who express suspicion about some leaders indulging in underhand dealings with the employers leading to a compromise with them in the courts.

A pretty large number of cases are dismissed in the court every year as they are not in tune with the legal requirements. The Court insists that the applicant must prove that he is competent to make an application

in the Labour Court under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act. The number of cases withdrawn was the highest in 1952 while it was ^{the} lowest in 1955. Recently, the number of cases being dismissed in the court shows a declining tendency.

The number of cases withdrawn was at the top level in 1949. But it was strangely reduced from 61 to 1 in 1950. Later on it again was on the increase till 1953 when it reached the figure 24. With a setback in 1954 it again rose to 51 in 1955. The number of cases dismissed in the court ^{is} ~~are~~ declining but the same about the cases withdrawn from the court show^s an ascending trend during recent years.

As in most of the cases the workers or the unions are the applicants in the labour courts the cases that are dismissed or withdrawn from the court are treated as settled unfavourably to the workers. This has led some of the leaders to the conclusion that it is due to the defective provisions in the legislation itself.

Unions often complain about the inconsistencies in the judgements by the Labour Courts. This had further led them to conclude that the Labour Courts are partial in giving their judgement. It is not possible here to discuss in detail ^{the} various judgements given by the Labour Courts. However, one glaring example of an inconsistent

judgement would give some idea of the extent of such inconsistency.

Shri Tiwari and Shri Moralwar were employees of the Jam Mills. Shri Tiwari had applied for reinstatement and compensation.²⁰ His pay was Rs. 350/- per month net. If this 'net' means basic he could not be treated as an employee under the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act because under that Act employees getting Rs. 350/- or more as basic pay are not covered. The court observed regarding his contention in the following manner :

"As regards the first contention that he was drawing Rs. 350/- per month it is important to note that his salary is Rs. 350/- net per month. It seems to me that until there is made an apportionment of the salary dividing it between basic pay and the dearness allowance the salary of an employee must be considered to be a basic salary only. It is possible that this view ignores the usual distinction between the basic pay and the dearness allowance which is based on the practice of fixing the basic pay relating to cost of living prevailing in 1939 i.e. before the Second World War. It cannot be forgotten that the basic pay can also be

²⁰ Application No. 212/57 dated 23-4-1957 before the Bombay Tribunal.

fixed on the cost of living prevailing in some year after the war say 1947 or some year afterwards. If basic salary were fixed on the latter basis then the question of dearness allowance cannot arise except to a small extent and the basic salary cannot be much different from that the applicant was being paid under the order of appointment. The amenity of housing accommodation provided to him cannot be ignored in such context when basic pay and dearness allowance are taken into consideration in determining the question whether the applicant is an employee. There is no evidence of the kind of housing accommodation provided to the applicant but Rs. 25/- may safely be taken as a value of the housing accommodation provided to him. This can be regarded only as allowance and cannot be regarded as a part of the basic pay. But even apart from this I have held that Rs. 350/- the applicant's salary has to be taken as his basic pay and if this view is correct it follows that the applicant is not an employee governed by the B.I.R. Act."

Shri Moralwar, an employee in the same Mills, was getting Rs. 185 'net'. After hearing the above award he contended that 'net' meant basic. When the award for supervisory staff came, which provided for increase in pay scales and D.A., Shri Moralwar contended that the management was now bound to pay him D.A. as formerly he was not getting any D.A. at all. He applied to the

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Labour Court for declaration of illegal change that he was not being paid according to the award. The management contented that his pay of Rs. 185/- net meant basic pay plus D.A. and the Court upheld this contention. The judgement of this case says, in part, as follows :-

"In this connection a reference may properly be made to the wages got by the applicant before the Award. His wage or salary before the award was Rs. 185/- net. Thus the salary was a consolidated one and he did not get dearness allowance apart from his salary. Since the rise in the cost of living due to Second World War the wages of all workers had been raised and it has been the practice to give the basic wage as based on the cost of living existing before the war and to give the dearness allowance proportionate to the prevailing rise in the cost of living as compared with the cost of living before the war. The salary, therefore, given to the applicant must be held to comprise both the basic wage or salary and dearness allowance and the applicant's claim that the whole of his salary of Rs. 175/- or Rs. 185/- should be taken as basic salary without dearness allowance cannot be held to be tenable. The Company's action, therefore, in splitting his former wage

²¹ application No. 256/50 dated 9-10-1957 before the Bombay Tribunal.

as basic wage and dearness allowance cannot be said to be wrong and improper."

Thus, in the same Mill in the first case the court held that the employee's consolidated salary should be treated as basic salary while in the second it said that the consolidated salary may be split into a basic wage and dearness allowance. In both the cases the decision was favourable to the employers and against the employees.

5.6 Trade Union Lawyers

The lawyer is the first professional whose services are regularly utilized by the union in its activities. With the advancement of the T.U. Movement and increasing labour legislation manifold legal problems have been created relating to bargaining relations between the union and the employer or employers' organisation as well as regulations affecting labour relations and employment conditions. The introduction of the Industrial Relations Act of 1946 further raised the importance of the lawyers in the activities of the trade unions.

The approach of the trade union lawyer to the problems of industrial relations differs from that of the T.U. leader. The union leader is mainly concerned with the normal relations between the workers and the

employers and he always emphasises the bargaining through the organised strength of the members of the union. The union lawyer, on the other hand, looks from the point of view of purely legal mechanism by which unions and employers are forced to submit to a particular decision. The union leader attaches importance to the collective relationships while the lawyer does so to the individual relationship. It is because of this that the lawyer has become a controversial figure in the T.U. movement.

The lawyer has become a figure of resentment in a section of the Trade union circle. Some of the leaders even argue that the lawyer is imposed on the T.U. movement by the various legislations and T.U. functioning has to rely greatly on him. This attitude of the union leadership towards the lawyer is universal. Even in a country like U.S.A. with a good background of the T.U. movement the attitude of the unions towards their lawyer is still that of resentment. Mr. R. M. Segal while pointing out the causes of this attitude remarked,

"First of all, labour unions have a historical resentment against lawyers, based on the injunctions in labour disputes which were obtained by company lawyers and granted by judges. Secondly, unions had some bitter experiences with employers' lawyers in collective bargaining and carry over their feelings to all lawyers. In addition

lawyers are prone to be technical and legalistic in field where basic relationships are the dominant feature. In a few instances, the union has had the unpleasant experience with labour lawyer of being overcharged in the unions opinion....."²²

It is not merely a coincidence that the union leaders in Sholapur voice the same complaints about the lawyers. Recently, one of the union lawyers when offered a post of a labour officer by one employer left the union work to join the services with a higher salary. This has resulted in lowering down the prestige of the union lawyer.

At present there are only three labour lawyers in Sholapur who have also a long tale of grievances about the unions and their leadership. According to them the Trade Unions underestimate the importance of legal work to be carried out day today. Trade unions give more emphasis to agitation than to legal work. In some cases the union workers take it for granted that the case is bound to fail in the court which often results in not making sufficient efforts in defending the workers interests

²² Labour Union Lawyers, An article by Robert M. Segal in Industrial and Labour Relations Review, Vol. 5 No. 3 April 1952, page 344.

in the courts of law. Instead of taking all the possible benefits of the acts, the leaders work under the impression that no benefit will be given to the workers in the present judicial system. Due to this attitude of the leadership some of the illegal acts of the employers are carried out while the workers interests are not guarded. In some cases opposition to a part of the legislation was equated with the opposition to the whole legislation. The above criticism is leveled mainly on the left wing leadership in the movement. The Right wing leadership, according to them, considers the legislation as an accepted fact and does not pay necessary attention in making efforts to change the legislation that is defective from the point of view of the workers. This leadership, they say, is afraid of loosing the confidence of the government in case of a conflict of opinion. Sometimes political considerations also intervene and the opposition to defects in the legislation is watered down. They feel that they have to work under difficult conditions and are not paid sufficient remuneration. They have to do additional work of the union for which no remuneration is paid by the union. The average monthly income of the T.U. lawyers does not exceed Rs. 150/-.

According to the Rules under the Industrial Relations Act 1947 the following maximum fees can be charged by the lawyer for Legal Aid.

Table No. 5.6.1 : Table of maximum fees for Legal Aid.

Type of work	Industrial Court (in Rs.)	Labour Court (in Rs.)
For each conference with legal advisor	40	20
For drawing up an application, written statement, memorandum of appeal, or petition of more than 15 foolscap typed pages	50	25
For drawing up an application, written statement, memorandum of appeal, or petition of less than 15 foolscap typed pages	30	15
For appearance in Court (per day)	80	40
For opinion of legal advisor in writing	60	30
For appearance in Chamber matter or for appearance before the officer of the Court	20	10
Fees for retainer	30	30

Source : Section 35 of the Rules under the Industrial Relations Act, 1947. Vide page 330 of Labour Code Vol. 1, Part II, Edited by C.C.Bhat and G.P. Vyas, Law Publishers, Ahmedabad, 1948.

Fees in excess of those prescribed in the above table may be given to senior counsels or legal practitioners of high standing in important matters before the Industrial Court. However, in practice this table is never observed while making payment to the union lawyer, because the unions cannot afford to make such a payment.

Even the Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh pays only Rs.100/- per month to its lawyer who has to appear in a number of cases every month. The legal practitioner of the Lal Bawta Girni Kamgar Sabha charges only Rs. 10/- per case if the worker comes through the union. If the worker approaches him independently he charges Rs. 50/- per case. The Municipal Workers Union and the Bus Kamgar Union have no definite rules for the payment of their lawyer but the payment is made taking into consideration the financial position of the union. The lawyer also shows his readiness to receive the same as he is also sympathetic to the cause of the workers. The Government Peons and Inferior Servants Union and the P.W.D. workers Union have elected a lawyer as their president who does the legal work for the union without accepting any remuneration. In 1953 the Sholapur Girani Karkoon Sangh had collected special funds from its members to make necessary payments to the lawyer.

The payment that is made to the lawyers is no doubt inadequate and they are doing the work with the humanitarian motives. Yet trade unions complain that the cost of legal proceedings is more than their present capacity to pay.

5.7 Problems that influence the system of Industrial Relations.

In the foregoing paragraphs we have examined the existing industrial relations in Sholapur along with their historical background. The available evidence suggests that even though broad legal framework has been created to settle the industrial disputes harmoniously it has its own drawbacks and shortcomings. This leads to analyse the major problems that influence the system of industrial relations.

One of the first questions that is strikingly evident is the role the collective bargaining is playing in determining union management relations. The extent of collective bargaining is even now extremely limited and direct negotiations with the management are not frequently used to ameliorate the workers' grievances. The unions complain that the management are not usually ready to give anything to the workers through the unions because they are afraid that it would enhance the prestige of the unions. If the employers recognise the unions merely because they are compelled to do so by legislation we cannot expect that direct negotiations between the unions and the employers can take place in good spirit. Trade unions further feel that they can bargain effectively when they have a force of organised labour behind them and they treat it as a precondition to

collective bargaining. It is true that now-a-days employers find it difficult to carry on their work without paying attention to the demands of the union yet they treat trade unionism as undesirable but inevitable. The employers' attitude towards the workers' right to bargain collectively on the one hand and the failure of the trade union leaders to develop strong organisations on the other hand are the main obstacles in developing collective bargaining on a fullfledged scale in Sholapur.

Even the experience of the joint committees show that the success of these committees depends much more on the spirit of their working. The approach of the Assistant Executive Engineer towards the employees in the Telegraphic Department is worth mentioning here. The joint committees cannot function effectively in the absence of fair union - management relations. It would be improper to expect agreement between the union and the management on all issues. However, the working of the machinery should be brought into practice in such a way that all possible ways would be adopted to sit and discuss the differences at the round table.

The Government plays more important part than the collective bargaining machinery in determining the relationship between the union and the management. The working of the conciliation and arbitration machinery shows that both the unions and the employers rely more

on this legal remedy, especially on arbitration than arriving at a settlement by mutual negotiations. Thus, collective bargaining still plays a secondary role in regulating industrial relations in Sholapur.

Legal compulsions in industrial relations are not always helpful in settling industrial disputes. O. Kahn-Freund called the history of the arbitration legislation in the nineteenth century in Great Britain as "a story of frustration and failure"²³ and according to him it is "due partly to repeated attempts to introduce legal compulsions into industrial relations." In Great Britain both conciliation and arbitration are voluntary to-day and the British Trade Unions are strongly opposed to compulsory arbitration. Experience of the Trade Unions in recent years had made it increasingly clear that the litigation in the court of law has worsened the relations between the union and the management. In every important case either the union or the management approach the Industrial Court, Bombay and it is often said that the lawyers are becoming more prominent than the Trade union leaders.

²³ The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain. Ed. A. Flanders and H.A.Clegg. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1954, page 91.

The cost of labour disputes and delay in obtaining the decisions from the Labour Courts is also another point of criticism that is leveled by the unions. Unions are not in a position to spend for litigation as the management can afford to do so. But even the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Vishnu Cotton Mills, Ltd. in his speech before the shareholders in 1950 stated regarding the delay in labour disputes as follows :-

"Special reference was made last year to the high cost of labour in Sholapur. Some progress has been made during the year by agreement with the union, but two major proposals for the redeployment of labour are still pending before the Courts, including one where notice was given a year ago. The delay in getting such matters dealt with by Labour Courts is a very serious handicap."²⁴

Trade Union leaders do not think that there should be no legislation at all, but they feel that the present intricate machinery should be simplified. Many cases of dismissals were held perfectly legal in the court as the workers had no idea of the provisions in the law and unknowingly behaved in an illegal manner. For instance,

the absence without prior permission of the proper authorities in the mill was formerly tolerated. But recently rules were made strict and many workers were removed from the muster roll. Trade unions have also not carried out their responsibility in educating the rank and file workers. ^{Shri} ~~Mr.~~ N. H. Pandya, Secretary, Bombay Legal Aid Society criticised the present legal machinery in a graphic manner.

"You may have the best laws in the world, but if the working class and other poorer sections of the community (and if they form by far the largest number) are unable to seek the protection of these laws, what is the value of the laws?"

"You may have the best judicial machinery, but if the working section of the community are not able to set the machinery in motion owing to their inability to meet the requisite costs, what is the value of such machinery?"

"If the machinery is set in motion, but is slow as to be practically immobile, if justice is delayed -
²⁵
 is not justice denied?"

The present machinery to settle the industrial disputes needs amendment so that the confidence of both the parties is restored in it. It is found that adequate efforts are not made to settle the disputes by mutual negotiations but more reliance is ~~seen~~^{placed} on the arbitration machinery. It is the duty of both the parties in the disputes and the state to see that the issues should be ordinarily settled by negotiations and collective bargaining. It has a special significance even from the point of view of social justice at large.

"The striker is unloved,
unhonoured, and unsung;
and above all, he is largely ¹
unstudied." - K.C.J.C.Knowles.

Chapter VI

TRADE UNIONS AND THE STRIKES

In the previous chapter we examined the operation of the collective bargaining system and the machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes. We have now to consider the efforts of the unions to win their demands if this machinery fails to bring about a settlement. Hence, it is the purpose of this chapter to study the strike movement in Sholapur in its wider economic and social setting and to make an attempt to analyse the strikes which may help us in clearing some of the misconceptions regarding the strike activity of the unions.

Strikes are collective stoppages of work undertaken to bring pressure on the employers in the event of industrial disputes. Strike activity is sometimes also called the continuation of collective bargaining. "Collective bargaining would have little meaning were it not for

¹ "Strikes - A Study in Industrial Conflict", Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1952), page xi.

the possibility of a strike, with attendant losses on both sides, since there would be little pressure on the parties to modify their position and reach agreements."² It must be remembered, however, that the subject of strike is full of controversies which have occupied a large space in the trade union literature. On many occasions the issues involved are confused and the strikes acquire a political rather than economic character. The leftist trade unionists may cite the increased number of strikes as a sign of awakening of the workers while the rightists will characterise it as a sign of industrial unrest.

Mr. Chamberlain in his study on "Social Responsibility of Strikes" indicated that unions and managements failed in only the strike aspects of their relationships and more was expected from them by the public in general. While examining the price of strikes, he categorically stated: "How serious a strike must become before the government is warranted in intervening is not a question that can be answered solely by statistics -- it depends on the public's willingness to pay the price of a strike."³

² "Industrial Conflict", edited by A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin and A. M. Ross, McGraw Hill Book Company Inc., New York, 1954, p. 12.

³ Chamberlain N.W., "The Social Responsibility of Strikes", Harper and Brothers, New York (1953), p. 288.

Prof. Richardson maintains that the fundamental issues in the strikes are the desire of the governments "to protect themselves against coercion and to safeguard the community against inconvenience and loss" on the one hand and "the demand of the workers that they should be free to withdraw their labour collectively if they are dissatisfied with their working conditions",⁴ On the other. He further expressed his opinion that while acting together the workers are exercising their individual rights simultaneously. Mr. Arthur Kornhauser while judging industrial conflict as a human conflict goes on to draw a conclusion that "an essential of democratic social systems is the acceptance of conflict relationships, controlled as far as feasible to insure compromise and accommodation."⁵

Prof. Knowles while pointing out the limitations of the negotiating machinery stated: "Indeed, in industrial as in international affairs, the establishment of negotiating machinery is no guarantee against warfare, for whether the machinery is used or not depends largely on how far rival interests are in fact compatible, as well as the capacity of both sides to fight."⁶

⁴ Richardson J.H., "An Introduction to the Study of Industrial Relations", George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London (1954), p. 204.

⁵ "Industrial Conflict" (Edited), McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., New York (1954). p 85.

⁶ "Strikes, a Study in Industrial Conflict", Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1952). p. 143.

Thus a study of strikes overlaps into various aspects which make the problem more complicated. As will be seen, however, this subject has received less attention than it deserves.

6.2 Annual Fluctuations in Strikes

As the official strike statistics are available since 1920 for Sholapur, it is possible to construct a time series for a period of nearly 35 years. The data published every month by the Bombay Labour Gazette give us the number of strikes, the number of workers involved and working days lost in each strike. However, stoppages of work due to political issues and disputes not connected with industrial matters are excluded from the statistics, which will have to be studied separately.

In Table No. 6.2.4 is given the number of strikes occurring annually since 1920 along with the number of workers involved and the working days lost. The number of strikes indicates the preponderance of separate outbreaks of industrial conflicts. But in order to get a correct measure of unrest, it is essential to study the number of workers involved which gives us the magnitude of the strike and the number of working days lost enables us to observe the severity of the strike. Thus in 1928 though there was only one strike during the whole year the number of workers involved was 16,928 but in 1942

Table No. 6.2.1 : Number of strikes and their effects in Sholapur (1920-1954).

Year*	Total number of strikes	Number of work people involved	Number of man-days lost
1920	1	14,015	Figures not available.
1921*	-	-	
1922	1	18,000	-
1923-1927*	-	-	Figures not available.
1928	1	16,928	8,97,012
1929	3	2675	5,202
1930*	-	-	-
1931	1	15,000	1,70,959
1932-1933*	-	-	-
1934	1	17,248	4,55,776
1935-1936*	-	-	-
1937	2	1,185	29,225
1938	2	129	2,341
1939	5	546	1,006
1940	18	5,485	14,576
1941	3	492	1,121
1942	14	3,147	16,090
1943	6	706	2,951
1944	4	545	3,505
1945	0	1,145	6,185
1946	7	26,883	3,77,043
1947	3	12,804	62,151
1948	17	51,842	3,76,794
1949	9	8,772	26,408
1950	3	163	652
1951	5	4,699	24,634
1952	6	3,290	33,638
1953	5	4,470	15,978
1954	6	1,065	8,169

* In 1921, 1923-27, 1930, 1932-33, 1935-36 there were no strikes in Sholapur.

Source : Compiled from Bombay Labour Gazette.

even though there were 14 strikes the number of workers involved was only 3,147. It can be inferred from this that the magnitude of the strike in 1928 was bigger ~~in~~ ~~than~~ than in 1942. Similarly, more workers were involved in 1946 than in 1928 but the number of working days lost was more in 1928 than in 1946 which shows that the magnitude of the strikes in 1946 was larger than that of in 1928 but severity was less.

The data presented in the Table further shows that the strikes before 1937 were less in frequency but were severe and greater in magnitude. Between 1920-1934, nine years passed without any strike activity by the workers. From 1937 to the end of the Second World War, the number of strikes increased remarkably but the number of workers involved and the working days lost declined considerably. During this period, no year has passed without the occurrence of a strike. During 1946-48 again the number of work people involved as well as the number of working days lost show an upward trend. The frequency of strikes in this period was at its peak in 1948 when there were 17 strikes during the whole year. After 1950 strike activity shows a declining tendency and the severity and the magnitude of strikes lowered down greatly.

Table No. 6.2.2 gives the number of strikes classified according to different industries. We have

Table No. 6.2.2 : Strikes in different industries in Sholapur (1920-1954).

Year*	Textile mills	Handloom Factories	Bidi Factories	Munici- palities Services.	Others	Total
1920	1	-	-	-	-	1
1922	1	-	-	-	-	1
1928	1	-	-	-	-	1
1929	3	-	-	-	-	3
1931	1	-	-	-	-	1
1934	1	-	-	-	-	1
1937	1	-	1	-	-	2
1938	1	-	1	-	-	2
1939	-	5	-	-	-	5
1940	1	17	-	-	-	18
1941	2	1	-	-	-	3
1942	4	0	-	1	3	14
1943	3	3	-	-	-	6
1944	1	3	-	-	1	5
1945	4	-	1	-	1	6
1946	3	3	-	1	-	7
1947	2	1	-	-	-	3
1948	11	5	-	1	-	17
1949	3	4	-	1	1	9
1950	2	1	-	-	-	3
1951	1	1	1	1	1	5
1952	2	-	2	-	2	6
1953	-	1	4	-	-	5
1954	-	0	-	-	-	0

* In 1920, 1923-'27, 1930, 1932-'33, 1935-36 there were no strikes in Sholapur.

Source : Compiled from Bombay Labour Gazette.

classified cotton textile mills and handloom factories independently because the problems involved in these industries are of a different nature. The various aspects of strikes in these industries also show different tendencies. The bidi factories and the municipal services are also noted separately while in the category of 'others' includes the strikes of workers engaged in the saw mill, leather, tailoring and engineering industries.

It can be seen from the above table that prior to 1937 all the strikes occurred in the textile mills. In 1937-38, the bidi workers took to strike. Although handloom workers entered a little later in the strike activity, they outnumbered all other industries during the Second World War. Between 1939-45 there were 15 strikes in the textile mills but the number of strikes during the same period in handloom factories was 34. In 1942 there was the first strike of the municipal workers while two strikes were of clothing workers and one was of saw mill workers. The last 3 strikes are included in the group of 'other' industries. In 1944 there was a strike of wood cutters and in the next year a strike of tannery workers occurred in the centre. Between 1946-1949 the number of strikes of the textile workers increased to 19 but that of handloom workers decreased considerably, it being only 13 during the period. After 1950 the number of strikes in the textile mills dropped appreciably and

in 1953 and 1954 there was no strike at all in the industry. In the handloom factories also till 1953 the number of strikes was only one every year except in 1952 when there was no strike in the industry at all. In 1954 however all the 6 strikes occurred in this industry only. In the bidi factories the workers struck work 7 times during the period and in 1953 out of 5 strikes in all the industries, 4 were of the workers employed in these factories.

6.3 Seasonal Variations in Strikes.

In addition to the annual fluctuations in strikes, it is interesting to examine the seasonal movement in the behaviour of strikes. "The seasonal timing should reveal the strategic ability of the organised workers to make their demands felt at the moment when it is most inconvenient to the entrepreneurs and when they are most likely to acquiesce in the face of pressure."⁷ The seasonal pattern may explain the extent to which weather conditions exhort the workers to go on a strike. However, the influence of other random factors should not be overlooked while making any generalisations.

⁷ J. I. Griffin, "Strikes - A Study in Quantitative Economics", Columbia University, New York, 1939, p. 51.

Table No. 6.3.1 gives the indices of seasonal variations in the number of strikes, the workers involved and the working days lost in Sholapur during the period 1920-1954.⁸ In ^{the} Chart, indices of seasonal variations in strikes are shown graphically. (Chart No. 6.3.A). The curve showing the seasonal variations in all industries indicates a definite peak in March, followed by a second peak in June. In the month of November there seems to be an upward trend in the strike activity. The curve of the strikes in the textile mills shows the influence of the intensive strike activity of the workers in the textile mills in March and November. There are, however, very few strikes in January, June, August, September, October and December in the textile mills. The curve of the strikes in the handloom factories shows a peak in April. In March and August there were more strikes than the average, while in January, September, October, November and December there were very few strikes in this industry. The seasonal variation in the handloom industry reflects the existing pattern of business in it. In other

⁸ The factor of seasonal variations has been derived by averaging the number of strikes occurring in each month of the year in the whole period. These averages have been further reduced in the form of a percentage of the average monthly number of strikes for all the years. This percentage has been taken to represent the index of seasonal variation in the number of strikes. Similar indices for the number of workers involved and the number of workdays lost have also been calculated.

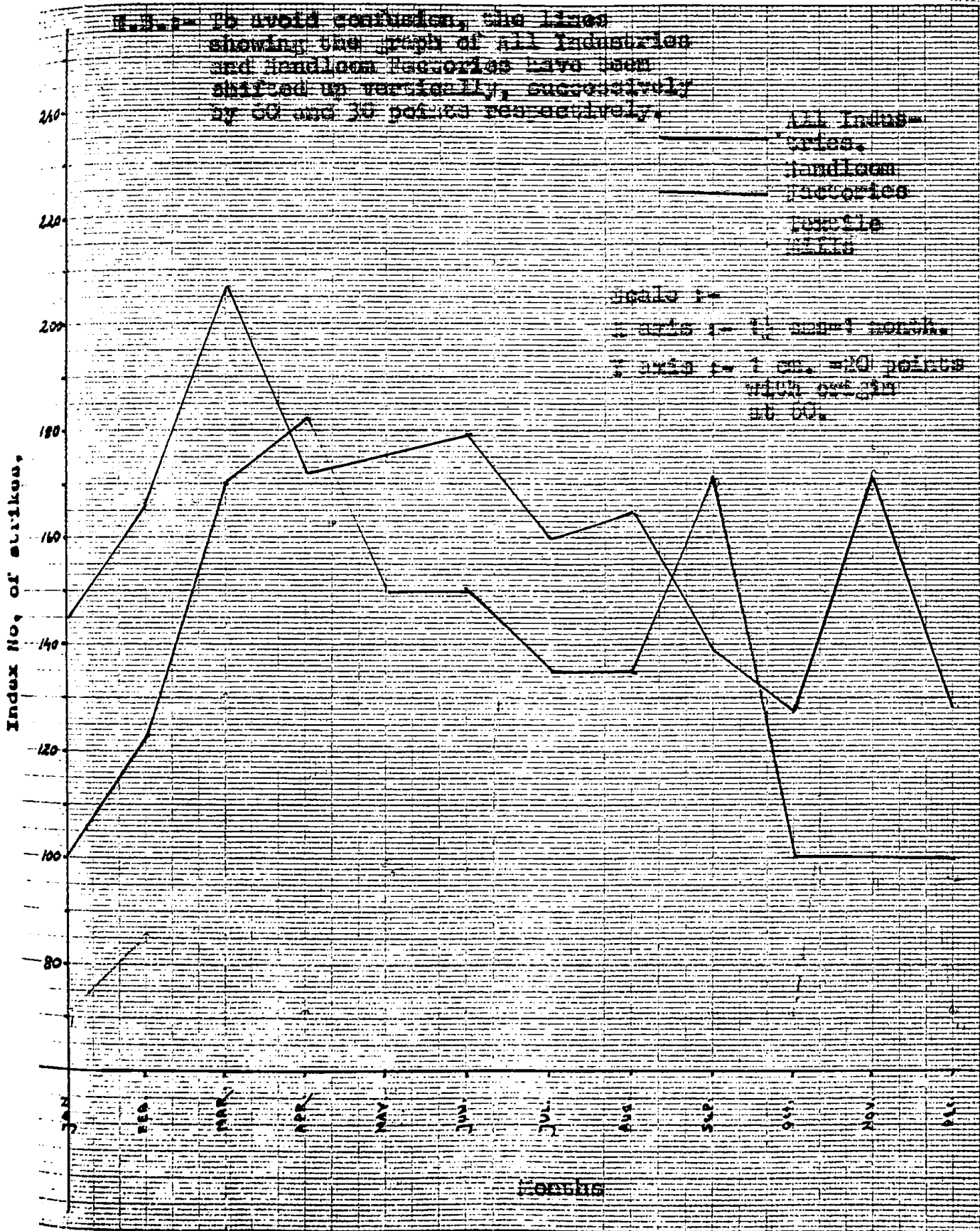
Table No. 6.3.1 : Indices of seasonal variations in the number of strikes, number of workers involved and number of man days lost in the strikes in Sholapur during 1920-1954.

Months	Textile Mills			Handloom factories			Others			All Industries		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
January	71	68	30	70	89	46	84	129	75	85	73	38
February	85	111	196	93	44	30	-	-	-	106	126	22
March	130	191	415	140	137	147	-	-	-	146	256	467
April	71	73	102	152	131	145	84	7	16	112	84	117
May	99	109	197	120	143	449	126	51	8	115	62	230
June	71	260	6	120	99	106	126	182	110	119	105	15
July	212	138	90	105	70	51	126	226	106	90	130	106
August	71	8	100	105	60	40	84	56	120	105	155	113
Sept.	71	106	45	140	284	72	112	37	86	79	94	17
Oct.	71	58	13	70	10	6	84	58	55	68	95	17
Nov.	177	79	5	70	18	9	84	105	493	109	15	16
December	71	1	0.3	70	118	99	84	88	32	68	8	2

1 :- No. of strikes; 2 :- No. of workers involved; 3 :- No. of work days lost.

Source :- Calculated on the basis of the original data published in the Bombay Labour Gazette.

Chart No. 6.3.A : Indices of Seasonal Variation in the number of strikes (1920-54).



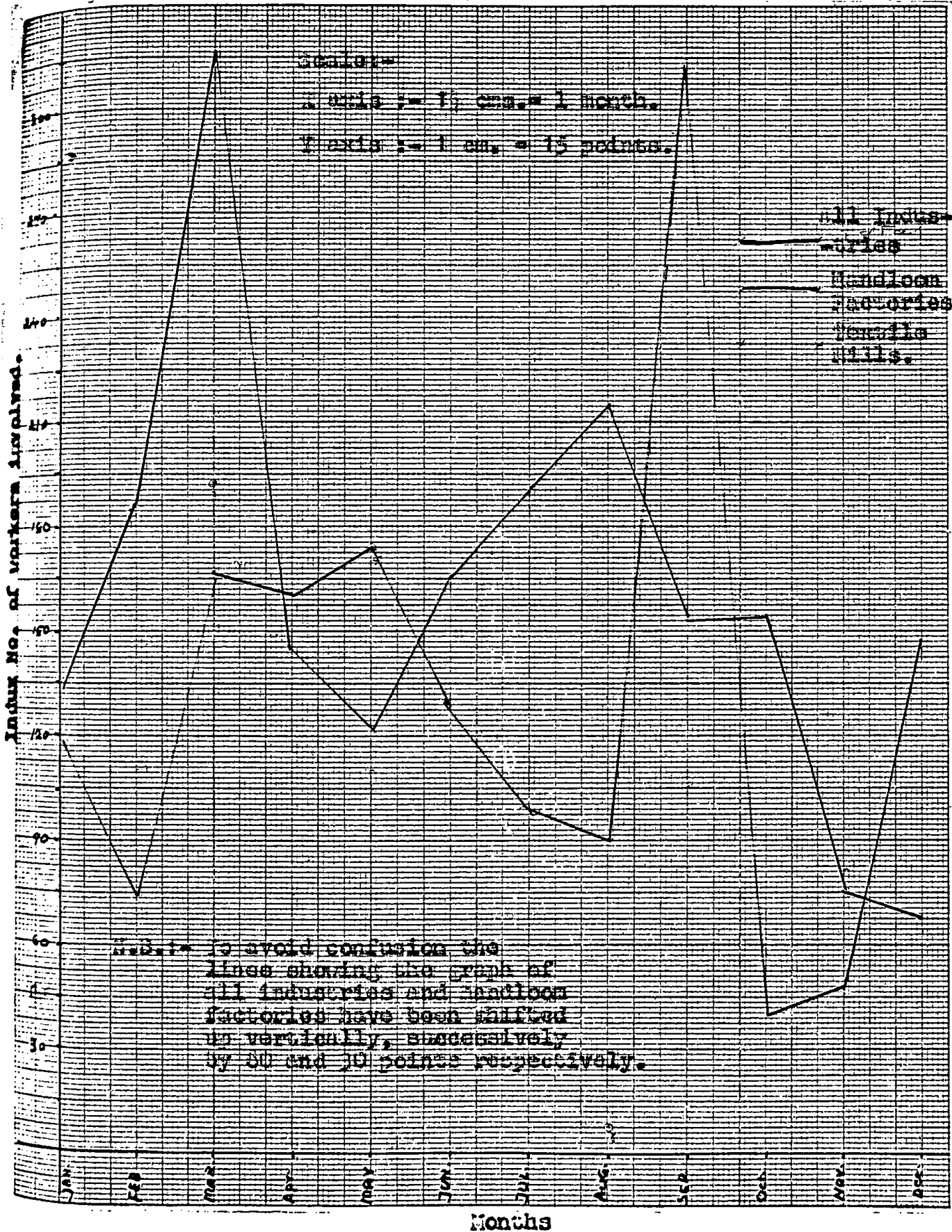
industries there were no strikes in the months of February and March. No definite pattern is observed here except that the strikes are more in May, June and July.

The seasonal index for the number of workers involved in strikes shows a somewhat different pattern as can be seen from the Chart No. 6.3.B. The peak for all industries is in the month of March as in the case of the number of strikes seen in Chart No. 6.3.A but with this difference that the former peak is more sharply accentuated than the latter. In the textile mills the peak for the number of workers involved is in the month of June when there are very few strikes. In the handloom factories the proportion of workers' participation is more in March, April and May but the peak is in the month of September. However, this peak is influenced by the strikes in 1940, while the June peak of workers involved in strikes is similarly influenced by the big strikes in 1928 and 1946. This shows the existence of the different factors like economic conditions, organisational strength of both the parties, etc. that influence the strike activity.

But this analysis of the data regarding seasonal variation of strikes seems to be influenced by some very large strikes in Sholapur. Therefore, this may not give a general picture of the seasonality of the strike

Chart No. 6.3.3 : Indices of Seasonal variations of the workers involved in the strikes in Sholapur (1920-54).

No. of workers



activity. For example, a strike in textile mills in the year 1928 resulting in a loss of 8,97,012 man days will no doubt influence to a great extent the variations in the months of April to October. Similarly, February, March and April are influenced by a strike in the same industry causing a loss of 4,55,776 man-days. Therefore, it is necessary to make an attempt to study the seasonality of strikes by excluding the data relating to these strikes which are four in textile mills, two in handloom factories and two in bidi factories. The results are given in Table No. 6.3.2.

In the textile mills even after excluding these very large strikes the highest peak appears in the month of July as before but its height is reduced remarkably. The index number of strikes in textile mills in this month was 212 in our previous analysis which now comes down to 172. Secondly, the peak in March is higher than in November while previously the peak in November was higher. In the case of seasonal variation for the number of workers involved the highest peak is not in June but is shifted to March. The highest peak for the seasonal variation of the man-days lost is also seen in the same month but there is an appreciable reduction in the steepness in the curve showing the rise and fall.

In the handloom factories the highest peak showing the seasonality of the number of strikes remained in

Table No. 6.3.2 : Indices of seasonal variations in the number of strikes, number of workers involved and number of man days lost in the strikes in Sholapur (excluding very big strikes) during 1920-1954.

Months	Textile Mills			Handloom factories			Others			All Industries		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
January	82	78	65	75	98	72	93	130	102	89	91	68
February	104	125	167	90	51	61	-	-	-	105	116	52
March	136	197	212	131	144	168	-	-	-	132	122	168
April	82	86	148	147	211	161	93	8	39	108	120	159
May	113	101	169	95	122	198	113	51	21	106	94	192
June	82	171	36	116	106	112	113	183	158	111	113	54
July	172	127	117	95	77	83	113	227	147	110	128	138
August	82	25	138	95	69	74	93	66	174	109	132	149
September	82	122	72	131	139	93	104	37	104	84	118	88
October	82	73	39	75	19	19	93	59	88	72	112	59
November	121	93	29	75	37	35	93	90	104	102	31	55
December	82	4	8	75	127	124	93	89	64	72	27	8

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1 = No. of strikes, 2 = No. of workers involved, 3 = No. of work days lost.

Source :- Calculated on the basis of the original data published in the Bombay Labour Gazette.

April as before but the same showing the number of workers involved is seen not in November but in April. However, the peak indicating the highest number of working days lost remained in May though the index for the same was drastically reduced from 449 to 198.

In other industries after excluding 2 very large bidi workers' strikes the highest peak for the number of strikes remains as before in the month of March. But the peak showing the highest number of man-days lost is changed from November to August. The index number for the same reduced from 493 to 104.

Now, considering the indices for all industries taken together we find that the highest peak for the number of strikes remained in the month of March as before, but the apex for the number of workers involved has been shifted from March to August. The maximum peak for the number of man-days lost is found in May instead of in March.

Therefore, the influence of these very big strikes was operating in our previous analysis and their elimination gives us somewhat different results regarding the seasonal variations of strikes.

6.4 The Causes of Strikes.

We will now proceed to analyse the statistics of the

causes of strikes in Sholapur. It is difficult to ascertain the main cause of every strike as in many cases the strike takes place for the attainment of a number of demands. The strike of the bidi factory workers in 1937 had 14 causes in all while the notice of strike served to the Sholapur Municipality by the Municipal Workers' Union in 1949 contained 17 demands. Sometimes the immediate cause may be an accidental one while a long-term discontent exists among the workers, on other questions. For example, in 1947 there was a strike in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd. because of the withdrawal of the 15 minutes' concession in coming late granted to the women workers. But the court of inquiry appointed to investigate into the causes of the unrest and discontent among the workers observed:⁹ "It appears from the evidence before us that all the workers in general in the mills had a number of grievances when we inspected the mills on 28th¹⁰ we noticed a number of irregularities and deficiencies. The whole atmosphere was unpleasant and gloomy and every officer appeared to have an indifferent attitude."

⁹ Report of the Court of Inquiry in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd., Sholapur. March 1947. Bombay Labour Gazette, Vol. 31, No. 9, pp. 715-21.

¹⁰ 28th March, 1947.

Thus the immediate cause of strike may be the culminating point of a series of grievances among the workers many of which may be of a trifling nature but their effect constitutes a menace to industrial peace. In the earlier strikes, when the workers had no experience of industrial disputes they had struck work and after that they formulated their demands. Hence, the internal evidence regarding the progress of the disputes must be considered in finding out the main cause of a strike.

The Bombay Labour Gazette classifies causes of strikes under five groups: Pay and allowance, personal, conditions of work, discipline, etc., bonus and others. We have made the classification elaborate in order to have a more detailed analysis of the causes of strikes. In Table No. 6.4.1 the main causes of all strikes in Sholapur are tabulated for the period 1920-1954. The data show that a large proportion of strikes was due either to the demand for an increase in the rate of wages or the restoration of the wage cut.¹¹ Even though there are more strikes in general, demanding an increase in the rate of wages than the restoration of the wage-cut in 1939-40, there are more strikes on the latter issue because of the depression in handloom industry. Even after 1948 the

¹¹ Strikes demanding an increase in the rate of wages are known as offensive strikes while those demanding the restoration of the wage cut are called defensive strikes.

Table No. 6.4.1 : Causes of strikes in Sholapur (1920-1954)

Year *	Increase in the rate of wages	Restoration of the wage cut	Bonus	Reinstatement	Recognition of the union	working conditions	Breaking of the previous agreement by employer	Unsatisfactory award	Others	Total
1920	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1922	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
1928	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1929	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
1931	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
1934	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1937	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
1938	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
1939	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1940	7	9	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	18
1941	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
1942	10	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	14
1943	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	6
1944	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1945	2	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	6
1946	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1947	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
1948	5	9	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	17
1949	1	2	1	2	-	1	-	1	1	9
1950	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
1951	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	5
1952	1	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	6
1953	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5
1954	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Total	52	43	8	7	1	9	2	1	6	129

* In 1921, 1923-27, 1930, 1932-33, 1935-36 there were no strikes in Sholapur.

Source : Compiled from the Bombay Labour Gazette.

same tendency is observed in the textile mills as well as in the handloom factories. During the Second World War there is seen a general demand of the workers for increased wages due to the increase in the cost of living. The demand of bonus was also made the main issue of strike six times during war-time to meet the gap between the rising prices and falling real wages.

Among the other causes the issues relating to working conditions and reinstatement are prominent while only one strike took place each on the demand for recognition of the union and unsatisfactory award. Breaking of the previous agreement by the employer was the cause of two strikes during the whole period.

The occurrence of a large number of strikes on the issue of wages can be explained by the fact that there was always a sort of dissatisfaction among the workers about their low earnings. Lack of proper machinery for the adjustment of wages with the rise in the cost of living was an important factor in giving incentive to the workers for a concerted action. Till 1948 minimum wages were not fixed for the textile workers, let alone the question of other industrial workers. Even the minimum wages that were fixed for the textile workers were a cause of discontent. The Textile Labour Inquiry Committee recommended Rs. 35 as minimum wage for the textile mill workers while the award of the Industrial Court was only

Rs. 26, 66.7 per cent of the dearness was compensated by the dearness allowance which resulted in a fall in their real wages with the cost of living going up. In the case of handloom workers even such a machinery was not in existence and the industry itself faced the depressing conditions due to its inability to compete with the textile mills. The wages of the handloom workers were falling and in 1954 the average monthly wage of a handloom weaver was not more than Rs. 30.¹²

In 1953 the Bidi Owners' Association openly opposed the implementation of the minimum wages recommendation of the Wage Board and declared a lock-out. In no other industry any machinery worth the name exists for the fixation of the wages. Thus naturally the issues relating to wage rates form a pretty large proportion in the causes of strikes. This leads to paying less attention to other grievances such as working conditions, etc. on which issue only six strikes occurred throughout the whole period under investigation. The Sholapur Handloom Weavers' Inquiry Committee observed that the housing conditions of the handloom workers were little better than the conditions of animals. Yet no strike occurred on this issue even once!¹³

¹² Calculation made by ^{the} Lal Sawta Hatmag Kamgar Union, Sholapur.

¹³ In contrast to this in Great Britain, as Knowles observed: "Strikes are taking place less and less on basic

Table No. 6.4.2 gives the causes of strikes classified according to different industries. It seems from this table that except in the handloom industry the workers engaged in all other industries or services resorted to strikes more for demanding increase in their wage rates. The municipal workers had struck work three times to demand more wages but not even once for the restoration of the wage-cut. The peculiar feature in the handloom industry reveals the extent to which handloom weavers have to face cuts in their wage rates. All the seven strikes on the issue of reinstatement and one strike on the question of union recognition took place in the textile mills while out of nine strikes on the issue of bad working conditions seven occurred in the textile mills and only one each in handloom and bidi factories. Bonus was made an issue of strike three times by the textile mill workers and five times by the handloom workers, but other industries did not follow them. The workers employed in the textile mills and bidi factories had both to go on strike once for violation of the previous agreement by the employer, while the municipal workers were alone in resorting to strike against the unsatisfactory award.

6.5 Duration of the Strikes

The duration of the strike has a great influence upon the employers and the employees. Both the parties

questions of wages and hours and more on apparently minor questions of working arrangements. This is no doubt partly due to the extension of national negotiation machinery dealing with the basic questions." -"Strikes - A Study in Industrial Conflict" - Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1952), p. 228.

Table No. 6.4.2 : Causes of Strikes in different Industries (1920-1954).

Cause ----- Industry	Increase in the rate of wages	Restora- tion of the wage rate cut	Bonus	Rein- state- ment	Recogni- tion of the union	work- ing condi- tions	Break- ing of the pre- vious agree- ment by employer	Unsatis- factory award	Others	Total
Textile Mills	18	10	3	7	1	7	1	-	2	49
Handloom factories	22	28	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	56
Bidi factories	4	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	10
Municipality	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5
Other industries	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9
Total	52	43	8	7	1	9	2	1	6	129

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Source : Compiled from the Bombay Labour Gazette.

have to suffer a great deal and if a strike is a protracted one, especially the conditions of the workers who have no other alternative source of income become precarious. In Table No. 6.5.1 all the strikes in Sholapur between 1920-54 are listed according to their duration.

The table shows that throughout the period, the strikes lasting only for one day occurred only 15 times, while 58 strikes took place that lasted for ^{two or} more than two days but less than ~~five~~^{six} days. In the next duration group of 6 to 15 days, the number of strikes is reduced to 33. 16 strikes had a duration of more than 16 but less than 30 days while 7 strikes lasted for more than one month. The average duration of the strikes fluctuates from time to time. It was the highest in 1928 and lowest in 1950. Before the Second World War, the duration was remarkably large, most of the strikes occurring in the textile mills. The 1920 strike lasted for 47 days while the strike in 1928 had a duration of more than 6 months. In 1934 the strike was continued for 94 days. The absence of any negotiating machinery and the attitude of the employers not to recognise the union explain why the strikes were so much protracted. During the Second World War, however, the average duration of strike decreased drastically and in no year was it more than 7. After the end of the Second World War the number rose suddenly to 16.23 in 1946 and 13.66 in 1947. During the war period

Table No. 6.5.1 : Duration of strikes in Sholapur (1920-54).

Year*	One day	2-6 days	6-15 days	15-30 days	30 days and above	Total
1920	-	-	-	-	1	1
1922	-	-	-	1	-	1
1928	-	-	-	-	1	1
1929	-	2	1	-	-	3
1931	-	-	-	1	-	1
1934	-	-	-	-	1	1
1937	-	1	-	-	1	2
1938	-	-	1	-	1	2
1939	-	5	-	-	-	5
1940	2	7	9	-	-	18
1941	-	3	-	-	-	3
1942	2	7	5	-	-	14
1943	1	3	2	-	-	6
1944	-	2	2	-	-	4
1945	-	3	2	1	-	6
1946	-	3	1	1	2	7
1947	-	-	2	1	-	3
1948	3	7	2	5	-	17
1949	3	4	2	-	-	9
1950	2	1	-	-	-	3
1951	1	1	1	2	-	5
1952	1	3	1	1	-	6
1953	-	3	-	2	-	5
1954	-	3	2	1	-	6
Total	15	58	33	16	7	129

* Source: Compiled from the Bombay Labour Gazette

* In 1921, 1923-27, 1930, 1932-33, 1935-36 there were no strikes in Sholapur.

pressure could be brought on the employers but this was not so possible after the end of the war. After 1948 the average duration was again reduced till it was 1.66 in 1950. During this period, 8 strikes lasted for only one day and no strike was prolonged for more than 30 days. Between 1951-1954 the average duration increased fluctuating between 7 and 12 days. The average showed a rise because of the occurrence of more strikes in the group of 15-30 days' duration.

Table No. 6.5.2 gives the duration of strikes in Sholapur from 1920-1954 classified according to different

Table No. 6.5.2 : Duration of strikes in different industries (1920-1954)

Industry	One day	2-6 days	6-15 days	15-30 days	above 30 days and above	Total
Textile Mills	10	17	8	10	4	49
Handloom Factories	2	31	18	3	2	56
Bidi Factories	-	5	2	2	1	10
Municipality	2	3	-	-	-	5
Other Industries	1	2	5	1	-	9
Total	15	58	33	16	7	129

Source : Compiled from the Bombay Labour Gazette.

industries. Out of 15 strikes which lasted only for one day 10 occurred in the textile mills while in bidi factories not a single strike ended in a day. In the handloom factories and municipal services two strikes each occurred in this category. In the next two groups of duration, i.e., between 2 to 6 days and between 6 to 15 days the handloom factories led the rest. It is seen from the table that in the municipal services no strike lasted for more than 6 days. The largest number of strikes in other industries was in the group of 6-15 days duration, but textile mills, handloom and bidi factories and the municipal services were in the group of 2-6 days' duration. In the last two groups, the textile mills are on the top which indicates that the capacity to fight a protracted strike is more among the textile workers than those employed in the handloom and bidi factories. We have already noted that in the textile industry prolonged strikes took place prior to the Second World War.

The relationship between the causes of strikes and their duration can be very well studied from Table No. 6.5.3. It is seen from this table that except on the issues of increase in the wage rates or restoration of the wage cut very few strikes lasted for more than 15 days. If we further exclude issues like bonus, reinstatement and recognition of the union, most of the remaining strikes came to an end even before 6 days. Out of 9 strikes where

Table No. 6.5.3 : Number of strikes classified according to their main causes and duration (1920-1954).

Duration of the strike	Increase in the rate of wages	Registration of the wage cut	Bonus	Reinstatement	Recognition of the union	Working conditions	Breaking the previous agreement by the employer	Unsatisfactory award	Others	Total
One day	4	3	-	1	-	3	1	1	2	15
2-6 days	27	18	3	4	-	4	-	-	2	58
6-15 days	12	12	4	2	-	1	1	-	1	33
15-30 days	3	9	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	16
Above 30 days and above.	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Total	52	43	8	7	1	9	2	1	6	129

Source : Compiled from the Bombay Labour Gazettee.

the issue of working conditions was involved 7 were withdrawn within 6 days and the lone strike condemning the unsatisfactory award was concluded in one day. The desire of the workers to fight hard on the issue of wages can be seen by the fact that all the 7 strikes which lasted for more than 30 days occurred on these issues. Similarly out of 16 strikes with a duration of 15-30 days, 12 were fought on the issues relating to their wages.

6.6 Results of the Strikes

The result of a strike is perhaps the most important aspect of strike activity of the union. The justification for using this weapon as a last resort in settling industrial disputes is sometimes observed in its results. The results of strikes may be classified in four ways as has been adopted by the Bombay Labour Gazette: firstly, it may entirely be favourable to the workers if their demands are accepted by the employers and may in that case be described as "successful". Secondly, it may be entirely favourable to the employer if the workers are made to join work without winning any concessions from the employer and the strike is a 'failure' for the workers. Thirdly, it may result in a compromise between the workers and the employer when the demands of the workers are partially accepted by the employer and the workers also show readiness to forego some of their demands. Such

strikes may be described as partially successful ones. Finally, some strikes result neither in favour of the employer nor of the workers and both parties are not satisfied with the result. Yet the industrial warfare is given up and the dispute is terminated. The results of such strikes may be described as "indefinite".

In Table No. 6.6.1 are presented the results of all the strikes from 1920-1954 in these four categories. It can be seen from the table that out of 129 strikes throughout the period 48 resulted in favour of employers while only 30 resulted in favour of workers. However, 31 ended in a compromise between the employers and the workers. The table indicates that between 1920-1938 all the strikes except two resulted in favour of the employers. During the Second World War 12 strikes resulted in favour of the workers while 18 in favour of the employers. Another noteworthy feature in this period is that 19 strikes ended in compromise between the employers and the workers. This was mainly due to the war-time conditions when the scarcity of cloth was on the increase and the workers could extract concessions from the employers by bringing sufficient pressure. Between 1946-49 the proportion of strikes 'favourable' to employers was more than the proportion of strikes favourable to the workers and compromises put together. In this period 14 strikes failed in winning concessions to workers while only 7 were

Table No. 6.6.1 : Results of Strikes in Sholapur (1920-1954)

Year	Favourable to workers	Compro- mises	Favourable to employ- -ers	Indefi- nite	Total
1920	-	-	1	-	1
1921	-	-	1	-	1
1928	-	-	1	-	1
1929	1	-	2	-	3
1931	-	-	1	-	1
1934	-	-	1	-	1
1937	-	1	1	-	2
1938	-	-	2	-	2
1939	1	1	3	-	5
1940	4	5	4	5	18
1941	-	1	2	-	3
1942	2	5	7	-	14
1943	2	4	-	-	6
1944	2	2	-	-	4
1945	1	1	2	2	6
1946	2	1	3	1	7
1947	-	1	1	1	3
1948	3	-	8	6	17
1949	2	2	3	2	9
1950	2	-	1	-	3
1951	2	2	-	1	5
1952	2	2	1	1	6
1953	1	1	3	-	5
1954	3	2	-	1	6
Total	30	31	48	20	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazette.

successful and 4 were compromised. This could happen because by that time war-time 'prosperity' had disappeared, and the fear of employers regarding the coming depression resulted in their becoming adamant in not giving concessions easily. However, the conditions were changed and the employers had to give way in the next period. Between 1950 and 1954 the number of strikes in favour of workers was 10 while only 5 strikes resulted in failure. During the same period there were 7 compromises between the parties concerned.

Table No. 6.6.2 gives the classification of the results of the strikes in Sholapur according to different industries in which they originated. Here also the contrast between the textile mills and handloom factories is clearly observed. Majority of the strikes in the textile mills proved to be failures but in the handloom factories more strikes were successful than failures. The owners of the handloom factories showed a more compromising attitude towards the strikes than the textile mill managers. Most of the strikes with indefinite result have occurred in these two industries. In the bidi factories 6 strikes were either favourable to the workers or were compromised but 4 were favourable to the employers. In the municipal services only 5 strikes took place during the whole period out of which 2 were indefinite while each of the remaining 3 was favourable

to the workers, compromised and favourable to the employers respectively. In other industries 4 were favourable to the employers while only 2 were favourable to the workers and 2 resulted in a compromise. The dissimilarity of the results in different industries shows the comparative bargaining strength of the parties in various disputes. Of course, the balance of forces changes according to other circumstances, yet the table gives the total result of all the changes that have occurred from time to time.

Table No. 6.6.3 shows the relationship between the causes and results of the strikes during the period 1920-1954. It illustrates that more strikes were successful on the issue of restoration of the wage cut than that on increase in the wage rates. But more strikes were

Table No. 6.6.2 : Results of strikes in different industries.

Results+ ----- Industry	Favourable to work- -ers	Compro- mise	Favour- able to employers	Indefi- nite	Total
Textile Mills	3	3	25	8	49
Handloom factories	17	15	14	9	56
Bidi Factories	2	4	4	-	10
Municipality	1	1	1	2	5
Other Industries	2	2	4	1	9
Total	30	31	48	20	129

Source: Bombay Labour Gazette.

Table No. 6.6.3 : Main causes of strikes classified by their results (1920-1954)

Causes										
Results	Increase in the rate of wages	Restoration of the wage cut	Bonus	Reinstatement	Recognition of the union	Working conditions	Breaking of the previous agreement by employer	Unsatisfactory award	Others	Total
Favourable to workers	8	13	1	1	-	3	1	-	3	30
Compromise	17	9	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	31
Favourable to employers	18	15	1	5	1	4	1	-	3	48
Indefinite	9	6	3	-	-	1	-	1	-	20
Total	52	43	8	7	1	9	2	1	6	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazettee,

either favourable to the employers or compromised on the issue of increase in the rate of wages than the other one. A success in the strike where the problem of wage cut is involved amounts to maintaining the status quo, while a compromise in such a strike means accepting a partial wage-cut. In the nine strikes on the issue of increase in the rate of wages the result of which was indefinite the employers agreed to give a small increase in the rate of wages but the workers were not satisfied with that increase, however they had joined work without winning their demands. Similarly, in the six strikes on the issue of restoration of the wage-cut the employers were willing to reduce the amount of wage-cut, but not to the satisfaction of the strikers. On the issue of bonus the workers achieved victory in only one strike but a compromise was achieved at in three strikes. On the same issue the employers were successful once and prepared to give some concessions thrice which were inadequate according to the workers. But the employers were somewhat firm on the issues of reinstatement and union recognition. Out of seven strikes on the issue of reinstatement five resulted in favour of employers while in only one case the workers were victorious. Even on the issue of union recognition the employers were firm to the last ditch. Strikes caused due to the demand for improvement in the working conditions were successful in three cases out of nine but only once the result was a compromise, while in four strikes the

employers did not give way. In one case the workers were successful in compelling the employer to retreat in his attempt to break the previous agreement between the union and the employer but in another case they themselves had to retreat. In the strikes due to other causes the success was equally divided between the workers and the employers.

Table No. 6.6.4 gives the results of the strikes in Sholapur classified according to their duration. It seems

Table No. 6.6.4 : Results of strikes classified according to their duration (1920-1954)

Result of strike ----- Duration of strike	Favour- able to workers	Compro- mise	Favour- able to employers	Indefi- nite	Total
1 day	6	-	3	6	15
2-6 days	16	17	16	9	58
6-15 "	7	11	12	3	33
15-30 "	1	2	11	2	16
Above 30 " and above.	-	1	6	-	7
Total	30	31	48	20	129

Source: Bombay Labour Gazette.

that of the strikes of duration upto 6 days, the proportion of them favourable to workers is more than that of the strikes proved to be failures. After 6 days the strikes

favourable to the employers show an increasing tendency in proportion to the strikes favourable to the workers. Out of 7 strikes which lasted for more than a month six were favourable to the employers and only in one case there was a compromise. - It should be noted that not a single strike was successful that continued for more than 30 days. As the table further shows the chances of a compromise are on the decrease as the duration of the strike increases. This can be explained by the fact that as the tension increases along with duration both the sides become more and more inclined to fight to the last. There is a limit to the workers' power of sustenance and ultimately they have to retreat in spite of their unwillingness to resume work.

6.7 Degree of Union Participation in Strikes.

The part played by the unions during the strikes has on many occasions created controversies in the trade union movement. Unions and their leaders have been often condemned as instigators of strikes and enemies of industrial peace. It is because of their strike activity that trade unions are accused of being obstructive to the national progress and prosperity. The occurrence of a strike raises varieties of other problems concerning the union's activities. Do the unions reduce or increase the duration of strikes? Whether unionization of the workers reduces or extends the frequency and severity of industrial

disputes? How far the unions have affected the results of strikes? An attempt will be made here to throw some light on these problems, taking into consideration the experience of strikes in Sholapur during the last 35 years.

The participation by the unions has been considered as follows : First of all there are strikes which are sponsored by the unions themselves in which case the union makes preparations for the organisation and conduct of strikes. Secondly, spontaneous outbreaks, arising out of some long-standing or accidental grievance, take place which are later on supported by the union. In such cases also the union helps in conducting the strike but it is not well prepared and has to hurry in bringing all the workers on strike under a unified leadership. It also happens, as in the case of textile mill workers' strike in 1923, that the union is formed after the commencement of the strike. Even though in both types of participation, the union is the leader during the strike the degree of it is different, because in the former category, the union is well prepared while in the latter it is either quite unaware of the situation or it came into existence afterwards. Thirdly, there are strikes which are conducted without the help of the union. The workers in the factory themselves take the lead and make all the decisions during the strike.

In Table No. 6.7.1 all the strikes between 1920-54 are

Table No. 5.7.1 : Union participation in strikes in Sholapur (1920-1954).

Year	Sponsored by union	Spontaneous but later joined by union	Strike without the union	Not known	Total
1920	1	-	1	-	1
1922	1	-	-	-	1
1928	-	1	-	-	1
1929	-	-	3	-	3
1930	1	-	-	-	1
1934	-	1	-	-	1
1937	-	1	-	1	2
1938	1	1	-	-	2
1939	2	3	-	-	5
1940	1	16	1	-	18
1941	1	2	1	-	3
1942	4	8	2	-	14
1943	5	-	1	-	6
1944	3	-	1	-	4
1945	2	4	-	-	6
1946	5	2	-	-	7
1947	2	1	-	-	3
1948	5	12	-	-	17
1949	5	2	-	2	9
1950	1	2	-	-	3
1951	4	1	-	-	5
1952	4	1	1	-	6
1953	5	-	-	-	5
1954	6	-	-	-	6
Total	58	58	10	3	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazette.

classified in the different union participation categories enumerated above. The information regarding the three strikes, however, could not be obtained. It seems from the table that only in 58 strikes out of 129 during this period did the union take initiative in organising them while in an other 58 strikes the union joined after their commencement. In 10 strikes the union did not play any part at all. The data clearly show^s the fallacy in the charge that it is the union which always instigates the strike. It is true that in most of the cases the union leads the workers during the strike but it does not sponsor each and every strike. The table further shows that before the Second World War the unions sponsored only 3 strikes while 4 cases were of a spontaneous nature and the remaining 4 were neither organised nor conducted by the unions. However, during the Second World War the number of strikes organised and conducted by the unions rose to 18 but the number of spontaneous outbursts rose to 33, and the number of strikes without the unions was only 5. - In this period the union-organised strikes outnumbered the strikes without the participation of union but were still lagging far behind the number of spontaneous strikes. Between 1946-49, the union^s sponsored 17 strikes and the number was exactly equal to the spontaneous outbursts of the workers. There was not a single strike during the period where the union^s did not participate in one way or the other. The situation changed further

between 1950-54 when 20 strikes were sponsored by the union^s while in only 4 cases there were spontaneous stoppages of work. There was only one strike in this period without the union^s' leadership. The facts go on to show that unions are increasingly taking more and more active part in organising and conducting the strikes.

Table No. 6.7.2 gives the degree of union participation in the strikes in different industries. It shows that 29 strikes in the textile mills were spontaneous, while only 10 were sponsored by the unions. It is noteworthy that out of 10 strikes without the participation of the union, 9 belonged to the textile mills. In handloom factories the picture is entirely different where more strikes were organised by the union than were spontaneous. In the Sidi factories 9 strikes were organised by the union while only one was spontaneous. In the municipal services all the strikes were ordered by the unions and in other industries 3 strikes were union-organised while 4 were spontaneous. The table indicates the influence of the unions over the workers as well as the unions' grip over the day-to-day grievances of the workers in a particular industry. It is true that larger the number of workers engaged in the industry the more difficult becomes the task of judging the readiness of the workers for a strike struggle. The chances of spontaneous strikes increase if the union is not strong enough to be in close touch with the rank and file workers.

The main causes of strikes and the degree of union participation in these strikes, can be studied from Table No. 6.7.3. It is seen here that the unions sponsored more strikes demanding increase in the rate of wage than

Table No. 6.7.2 : Union participation in strikes in different industries.

Union Parti- cipation ----- Industry	Spon- sored by union	Sponta- neous but later joined by union	Strike without union	Not known	Total
Textile Mills	10	29	9	1	49
Handloom Factories	31	24	1	-	56
Bidi Factories	9	1	-	-	10
Municipality	5	-	-	-	5
Other industries	3	4	-	2	9
Total	58	58	10	3	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazette.

the restoration of the wage-cut while the number for these two causes is the same in the case of spontaneous strikes which were joined by the union later on.¹⁴ On the issue

¹⁴ The Jholapur Handloom Weavers' Inquiry Committee criticised the union working in the handloom industry for not raising any other issue during the strikes other than wages.

Table No. 6.7.3 : Main causes of strikes and union participation in them (1920-54)

Causes of strikes ----- Union participation	Increase in the rate of wages	Restoration of the wage cut	bonus	Reinstatement	Recognition of the union	Working conditions	Breaking of the previous agreement by the employer	Unsatisfactory award	Others	Total
Sponsored by the union	24	20	4	2	1	2	-	1	4	58
Spontaneous but later joined by the union	23	23	3	1	-	5	2	-	1	58
Strike without the union	4	-	1	3	-	2	-	-	-	10
Not known	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	3
Total	52	43	8	7	1	9	2	1	6	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazette.

of bonus the unions took initiative in only half the number of strikes while in cases of reinstatement union gave a call of strike only twice relying on the spontaneity of the workers on other occasions. Even during strikes on the issue of working conditions, union organised the strikes only on two occasions out of 9. All the two strikes caused due to the breaking of the previous award by the employer were spontaneous and supported by the union afterwards. Out of 10 strikes conducted without the support of the unions 4 occurred on the question of increase in the rate of wages, one on bonus, three on reinstatement and two on working conditions. The strike for the recognition of the union was naturally sponsored by the union and the lone strike on the issue of unsatisfactory award was also union-organised. The picture, however, does not give the minor causes of the strike which imposes limitation on the analysis of the data.

Table No. 6.7.4 gives the degree of union participation in strikes classified according to the results of the strikes.

It is interesting to note that 21 strikes sponsored by the unions, and 6 spontaneous stoppages of work resulted favourably to the workers, while 17 and 12 strikes of these two categories respectively were compromised. In cases of strikes resulting in favour of employers 15

Table No. 6.7.4 : Union participation in strikes classified according to results of strikes (1920-1954).

Union participation ----- Result of the strike	Sponsored by the union	Spon- tane- ous but later joined by union	Strike without union	Not known	Total
Favourable to workers	21	6	1	2	30
Compromise	17	12	2	-	31
Favourable to employers	15	25	7	1	48
Indefinite	5	15	-	-	20
Total	58	58	10	3	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazette.

Table No. 6.7.5 : Union participation in strikes classified according to duration of strikes (1920-1954).

Under parti- cipation ----- Duration of the strike	Sponsor- ed by the union	Sponta- neous but later joined by union.	Strike without union	Not known	Total
One day	4	8	2	1	15
2-6 days	27	25	4	2	58
6-15 days	17	16	-	-	33
15-30 days	6	7	3	-	16
above 30 days and above.	4	2	1	-	7
Total	58	58	10	3	129

Source : Bombay Labour Gazette.

were sponsored by the union while in 25 spontaneous outbreaks the union participated later on. Even among the strikes the result^{of} which was indefinite only 5 were sponsored by the union while 15 were spontaneous. This shows that more strikes are either successful or compromised when participated by the union, while more strikes have either failed or obtained indefinite results if they are spontaneous. This further proves that unions cannot conduct strikes effectively in all cases without prior preparation. The table also notes that of the 9 strikes that were conducted without the unions, compromise was arrived at on only two occasions while the strike resulted in a failure in the remaining 7 cases. This points out the necessity of union organisation to lead the striking men effectively from the beginning of the strike.

Table No. 6.7.5 states the relationship between the degree of union participation and the duration of the strikes. It is clear from the table that 4 strikes sponsored by the union and 8 spontaneous ones lasted for only one day which indicates that more spontaneous strikes occur of very small duration than the union-organised ones. In the periods of other duration, the number of union-sponsored strikes is more than the spontaneous outbreaks of strikes. The table further shows that the duration of strikes can be more even if there^{is} no union involved during the strike. Spontaneous strikes sometimes last

for more than two days which can be ascribed either to the earnest desire of the workers to win their demands or the organisational work done by the union as a whole in spite of any previous preparation. Further, the spontaneous mass action also implies a feeling of solidarity. In this connection, J.I. Griffin remarked :

"While it is true that strikes are occasionally spontaneous outbursts due to accidental circumstances or long periods of repression, one may generalise to the extent of saying that workers with no feeling of solidarity or common interest would be unlikely to undertake a strike."¹⁵

Trade union organisations have played their part in creating a feeling of solidarity or common interest among the working class.

¹⁵ "Strikes - A Study in Quantitative Economics", Columbia University Press, New York, 1939, p. 98.

Chapter VII

TRADE UNION LEADERS

The study of the trade union leadership has a special significance in the trade union movement. It is mainly the leadership that actively guides the day-to-day functioning of the union. The effective working of the union constitution largely depends upon the abilities of the leadership in the union. The skill of the leader in negotiating with the employer or putting the case before the labour officer determines to some extent the success in the collective bargaining. In the trade union leader we can find out the accumulated experience of the struggles that the union had waged for the betterment of living and working conditions of its members. He is held responsible both for the achievements and the shortcomings of the movement. "To ask what sort of a man the labour leader is, is also to ask what sort of organisation he is running and what sort of country he is running it in."

Twentyfive years ago when the trade union movement was comparatively young, the name of the union leader

¹
C. Wright Mills, "The New Men of Power", Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1948, p. 3.

was to be heard only when there was a strike. He was known as a revolutionary or as a rebel and at times he was called a man with a "glib tongue".² Trade union leaders were the vanguard agitators who brought to the forefront the evils of capitalism. They were often condemned as the organisers of the discontent among the workers and were regarded as dangerous elements. But the condemnation of the leaders in such phrases will take us nowhere nor will it help us in understanding the shortcomings of the present leadership. If there are any defects in the union leadership they should be boldly pointed out but it should be done only by studying the leadership systematically. Unfortunately little attention has been paid so far ~~to~~^{to} the study of the leadership of the trade unions. No study of the trade union organisations would be complete without a proper evaluation of the leadership the union possess. But as V. L. Allen pointed out, "trade union leaders have been neglected by historians and sociologists alike. Most probably this has been due to the general neglect of the study of the leadership in political democracies....."³

² H. H. Strutton, Manager, Sholapur Industrial Settlement, Royal Commission on Labour, Oral Evidence, page 582.

³ V. L. Allen, "Power in Trade Unions", Longman, Green and Co., London, Second Impression, 1954, p. 185.

Even though a labour leader is often called a union-made product, his outlook towards the union and his method of functioning greatly influences the working of the union. This brings to the forefront the necessity of studying the trade union leaders independently in order to know them thoroughly. In this connection, the following remarks of Mills are noteworthy:

"We can move our camera across the universe of unions, taking snapshots of a variety of actors; we can ^vmove through time, taking pictures of men at the different movements in the course of union history. But in order to get a representative portrait of the labour leader today, we have to gather systematic information about a large number of labour leaders."⁴

The importance of the labour leader rests with the power that he enjoys in the union. We have already seen how the constitutions of the unions have given wide powers to the officials. But these powers have a meaning only when the leaders are backed by the strength of a mass of workers behind the union and they are capable of guiding the workers efficiently in winning their demands. Mere strength of the union with an incapable leadership may win the workers demands here and there but will not result in developing a stable organisation. On the other hand, however able the leadership may be, the employers

⁴ C.W.Mills, "The New Men of Power", Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1948, p. 9.

will never pay attention to its words if it has no influence over the workers.

In this chapter, we are mainly concerned with the study of abilities and qualities of the trade union leaders. This may enable us to understand the type of the leadership that is guiding the present trade union movement in Sholapur. This will further help us in our study to see how far the present level of leadership satisfies the requirement of the needs of the trade union movement today.

7.2 Leadership at National and Local Levels

The national leadership no doubt carries out an important task in the trade union movement by bringing together the accumulated experience of the local unions and formulating a trade union policy on the national plane. It enjoys more powers than the local leadership but along with these powers more responsibilities are also accompanied. Incorrect guidance given by the all-India leaders may prove to be a cause of severe setback to the movement all over the country. Hence, persons with a long experience in trade union movement are usually elected to such responsible positions. However, every national leader was sometime back a local leader which shows that local leadership is the raw material from which the national leadership is chosen.

The leadership at the local level is directly in touch with the rank and file and can very well understand the problems of the workers while the national leadership has to rely on the information supplied by the local leadership and it may happen that sometimes the real picture is likely to be painted with somewhat exaggeration or underestimation which makes it difficult for the higher leadership to analyse the situation correctly. The reports of the local unions are at times given in a way that suits the national policy of the organisation. The futile call of all-India strike of the railway workers in 1949 was given by the All-India Trade Union Congress which was ascribed to the wrong policy of the central organisation and the overestimated reports of the local units.

The national or state leadership derives its power from the local leadership and the strength of the local leadership determines its own strength. Without a capable and efficient local leadership the central leadership cannot fulfil its tasks effectively. In this respect the national leadership has a special responsibility to train and guide the local leadership. If the national leadership fails to point out the mistakes in the working of the local leaders and improve their quality of work then the responsibility of the shortcomings of the local leadership partly lies on the shoulders of the central leadership.

If the administrative efficiency is essential for the proper functioning of the trade unions the importance of leadership at both these levels is further increased because it is the way in which the personnel responsible for the governing of the union behave in their every day work. Leadership which forgets to grasp the significance of efficiency in their work may find it difficult to remain for a long time in the positions which they hold at present. Hence it is high time that proper attention is paid to the problem of local leaders by the trade union leadership at all levels, including the central leaders themselves.

7.3 Investigational Procedure

A survey of the local trade union leaders was thought necessary to get a proper idea of the present level of leadership. In what follows an attempt has been made to state the observations that were made during the course of the investigation along with the conclusions that were arrived at later on.

All the office-bearers were treated as leaders because they were elected for the purpose of leading the unions. They usually are the prominent persons in the unions who had won the faith of the rank and file workers through their work. They are elected in the annual general meetings of the union^s to carry out the programme

chalked out by the union^s. Hence, it was decided to interview all the office-bearers of the union. The president, vice-president, general secretary, joint or assistant secretary and the treasurer are the positions of power that are held by the union leaders.

A list of all the office-bearers was prepared from the names supplied by the unions. Nineteen unions gave the information of 107 office-bearers working in them. But it was found that only 102 persons were holding these posts, 5 names being repeated because these persons were holding important posts in more than one union. A questionnaire was drafted and it was thought desirable to canvas it in person instead of allowing the leaders to fill it themselves. This was for two reasons. Firstly, it was found at the time of collecting the information regarding the unions that it took months for the leaders to return the questionnaire with the required information. In order to avoid this delay it was preferred that the questionnaires should be filled personally.

The interviews had to be taken at the convenience of the leaders. Some of them were free to grant an interview only after 10 p.m. Sometimes the interviews were taken in the offices of the unions or at their homes. It was preferred to take the interviews in the homes because various interruptions in the offices came in the way. Some of the interviews took more than three hours as the leader

was keen on narrating a particular incident during the strike or a lock-out. At times questions outside the scope of the questionnaire were discussed during these interviews but interesting information was obtained during their narrations. Some Telugu leaders could not speak Marathi which made it necessary to take the help of the interpreters.

It was not possible to interview more than 84 leaders. The interviews of the 18 leaders could not be obtained for the following reasons: Six of them had left the city at the time of the interview, 2 of them had accepted jobs in other cities and 2 had gone to workⁱⁿ the unions of other centres. The remaining two were out of Sholapur for a long period. In addition to this, one leader had died after his election as the office-bearer. Five leaders were not kind enough to grant an interview because they did not approve the idea of the research project in spite of all possible explanation^s given to them. The rest of the leaders did not refuse to give interviews but in spite of giving a number of appointments, their interviews could not be obtained. Hence, a copy of the questionnaire was given to each of them with a request to fill in the information required for the study. But none of them did so as they could not find time due to 'other work'. Three of them explained that the questionnaires were lost and even though new ones were supplied to them

they remained unfilled for reasons best known to them! Thus efforts were made to obtain information from the maximum number of leaders. Table No. 7.3.1 explains the extent of persons interviewed in relation to the total number of leaders.

Table No. 7.3.1 : The Size of the leadership sample.

Office bearers	Total number of office bearers	Total number of persons	Number of persons interviewed	Percentage of persons whose interviews could not be obtained.
President	19	19	15	21
Vice-President	20	19	14	26
Gen. Secretary	19	19	16	16
Asstt. Secretary	31	28	25	11
Treasurer	18	17	14	18
Total	107	102	84	17

Source: Leadership investigation sample.

From the table it appears that the percentage of persons whose interviews could not be obtained, to the total number of trade union leaders is more in case of presidents and vice-presidents than other posts. Fifteen out of 19 presidents and 14 out of 19 vice-presidents were interviewed.

Even though 10 general secretaries and 25 assistant secretaries were interviewed the percentage of those who could not be interviewed is 10 and 11 respectively. It was not possible to obtain interviews of 3 treasurers.

Classification of the different office-bearers whose interviews could not be obtained is given according to their cause in Table No. 7.3.2.

In addition to this, one treasurer had died after his election to the post. Thus, in all, interviews of 18 leaders could not be obtained.

There were certain difficulties in getting interviews of leaders who could not speak Marathi. This happened

Table No. 7.3.2 : Causes of not obtaining interviews of different office-bearers of trade unions.

Cause + ----- Office bearers	Left the city	Refused to give inter- view	Not re- fused but in- terview could not be ob- tained	Total
President	2	1	1	4
Vice-President	1	2	2	5
General Secretary	1	-	2	3
Assistant Secretary	2	1	-	3
Treasurer	-	1	1	2
Total	6	5	6	17

Source: Leadership investigation sample.

mainly in case of unions working in handloom and bidi industries. We had to take the help of an interpreter to interview 7 Telugu leaders. The response in their cases was naturally somewhat less than that of leaders who could speak the Marathi or the Hindi languages.

7.4 Qualifications for Union Leadership

The growing importance of trade union movement demands a higher standard of ability on the part of the union leaders. To form an organisation of labourers is comparatively an easy task but to maintain and develop it is a job to be carried out patiently and systematically. Without a properly qualified leadership the further advancement of trade unionism is bound to get retarded. This is true in cases of national as well as local leadership, but here we are concerned mainly with the local leadership.

At the outset, the subject of qualifications for the trade union leadership raises two questions. Firstly, what are the present qualifications of the trade union leaders and secondly, whether these qualifications are adequate enough to lead the mass of labourers in ameliorating their conditions. Let us start the discussion by dealing with the first.

In our everyday life we find that education is supposed to be one of the most important criteria in deter-

-mining the qualifications of an individual. Leadership in the trade union movement cannot be kept apart from this standard by which the individuals can be judged. Our investigation shows that the trade union leaders in Sholapur possessed the educational qualifications as shown in Table No. 7.4.1.

The above table shows that only 10 out of 84 union leaders had education above the matriculation level while 41 or nearly 50 per cent had not even obtained education of high school level. Among the 25 persons who are of the matriculation level or above, 18 are either general secretaries or assistant secretaries which indicates that the secretary's is a post which usually requires a higher educational qualification. Taking into consideration the present conditions of legal work where most of the work is conducted in English it is necessary that the secretary should be a person with an education at least of the matriculation level. But in the small industries like handloom or bidi manufacturing where the owners themselves are not acquainted with English and the Industrial Relations Act and other acts are not applicable to all the factories, an ordinary educated secretary can do the work effectively. Out of 37 leaders who were educated in vernacular schools only 13 were educated above the 4th standard while the remaining 19 did so below the same standard. Similarly, in the case of the 18 leaders who had

Table No. 7.4.1 : Education of the Trade Union Leaders ^{classified} according to the office held by them.

Educational level ----- Office bear- -ers	Literates with no formal schooling	Vernacular		High school		Matri- culated	Under gradu- -ates	Gradu- -ates	Total
		1st to 5th stds.	5th to 7th stds.	1st to 4th stds.	4th to 7th stds.				
President	-	4	3	3	2	-	1	2	15
Vice-president	3	2	4	2	-	1	1	1	14
General Secre- tary	-	3	3	1	1	6	-	2	16
Asstt. Secretary	1	7	3	3	1	7	1	2	25
Treasurer	-	3	5	2	3	1	-	-	14
Total	4	19	18	11	7	15	3	7	84

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

obtained education in high school ll left the high school even before reaching the 4th standard. Thus nearly 55 per cent of the leaders were educated below the high school 4th standard.

The union leaders make various attempts to see that their poor education should not come in the way of the union work. For example, both the present ^{ide} and general secretary of the Municipal Workers' Union are not well acquainted with English, yet they can manage to maintain their leadership by consulting a lawyer on all legal matters. There are cases when the general secretary is less educated than the assistant secretary but the former can invest the responsibility of legal and other work to the latter while he can manage the other work of the union. We have come across 5 leaders who are poorly educated but by making sincere efforts, they have studied English and now are in a position to draft elementary petitions in English.

Even though educational qualifications are desirable for a labour leader it cannot be said that any educated person can be a good union leader. Otherwise persons with lower education would not have risen to higher positions. They managed to do so because they have a long experience of trade union problems and they can grasp the problems quickly with the help of their past experience. Table No. 7.4.2 shows the duration of the trade union career of the leaders classified according to their education.

Table No. 7.4.2 : Duration of Trade Union career of the leaders ^{classified} according to their education.

Educational level ----- Duration in years	Literates (with no formal schooling)	Vernacular		High school		Matri- culates	Under- gradua- tes	Gradua- -tes	Total
		1st to 5th stds.	5th to 7th stds.	1st to 4th stds.	4th-7th stds.				
Upto 5	2	4	4	3	1	7	-	1	22
5 - 10	1	9	6	4	2	1	1	1	25
10-15	-	2	4	3	4	4	1	2	20
15-20	1	2	2	1	-	2	-	-	8
20-25	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	5
25 and above	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	4
Total	4	19	18	11	7	15	3	7	84

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

From this table, it is evidently clear that out of 59 leaders who acquired education upto the matriculation standard 45 have experience of union work for five or more years while 23 of them have participated in the trade union movement for ten or more years. Thus by actively taking part in the work of the union these leaders coming from the category of less educated persons have acquired qualities that have enabled them to lead the mass of workers. It is likely that had they had the opportunity to get a higher education, they would have turned into better union leaders. But practical experience proved not a bad substitute in spite of the limitations to it. Four leaders could not get education above the vernacular school but they have an experience of not less than 25 years. They have no administrative ability but their opinions are respected by other members of the managing committee and on many occasions they even give advice to other unions.

In general 37 leaders have the experience of trade union work for 10 or more years while 17 of them for 15 or more years. Twenty-two leaders with an experience of less than 5 years can be called a leadership with a small experience; eleven of them belonged to new unions while 13 are working either as assistant secretaries or vice-presidents. Only 3 of them are working as the general secretaries.

Table No. 7.4.3 gives the duration of the career of the union leaders classified according to the post held by them. It shows that 10 out of 15 presidents had a

Table No. 7.4.3 : Duration of the Trade Union career of the leaders/according to the post held by them. *classified.*

Duration in years ----- Office bearers	0-5 yrs.	5-10 yrs.	10-15 yrs.	15-20 yrs.	20-25 yrs.	25 years and above	Total
President	2	3	5	3	1	1	15
Vice-president	3	7	-	2	2	-	14
Gen. Secretary	3	4	5	1	1	2	16
Asstt. Secretary	10	7	6	1	1	-	25
Treasurer	4	4	4	1	-	1	14
Total	22	25	20	8	5	4	84

Source : Leadership Investigation Sample.

personal experience of 10 or more years and 9 out of 16 general secretaries have been also doing union work for the same duration. But in the case of vice-presidents, assistant secretaries and treasurers the picture is a different one. Four vice-presidents out of 14, 8 assistant secretaries out of 25 and 0 treasurers out of 14 have a trade union career of 10 or more years. Thus, like educational qualifications, the presidents and the general

secretaries are more experienced in the trade union movement. Two assistant secretaries have an experience of 15 or more years and we inquired why they could not become the general secretaries. In one case, the assistant secretary was merely literate without any formal school education and in another case the person could not take more responsibility due to family difficulties. In both these cases, the general secretaries were less experienced than the assistant secretaries. Similarly, in the case of two vice-presidents who have a trade union experience of more than 15 years they remained vice-presidents because they are in responsible positions of political parties. Therefore, they could ^{not} accept the somewhat heavy responsibilities of presidentship.

In table No. 7.4.4 we have classified the office-bearers of unions in Sholapur according to their study of trade union legislation, capacity to write union leaflets, to speak in public meetings and their acquaintance with the technical aspects of the work done by the members of the union. It appears from the table that out of 22 leaders who have studied trade union legislation, 13 are either presidents or general secretaries. Only 2 vice-presidents and 5 assistant secretaries have stated that they studied the labour legislation. Out of 14 treasurers only 2 are acquainted with the labour legislation. As regards the capacity to speak in public meetings, the

Table No. 7.4.4 : Office-bearers of the trade unions classified according to their capacity in different aspects of union work.

Aspect of union work ----- Office bearer	Study of Trade Union Legisla- tion		Capacity to speak in pub- lic meetings		Capacity to write union leaflets		Acquaintance with the technical aspects of the work done by the member of the union		Total
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
President	6	9	12	3	8	7	10	5	15
Vice-President	2	12	8	6	5	9	11	3	14
Gen. Secretary	7	9	12	4	11	5	15	1	16
Asstt. Secretary	5	20	15	10	7	18	18	7	25
Treasurer	2	12	8	6	3	11	12	2	14
Total	22	62	55	29	34	50	66	18	84

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

presidents and general secretaries prove to be more able than the other officials. 12 presidents can address union mass meetings while only 3 cannot do so but only 8 vice-presidents can speak in public meetings while 6 cannot! Similarly, if we consider the capacity to write union leaflets we find that a majority of the presidents and general secretaries can do this work but a majority of the other officials cannot do so. However, about the acquaintance of a leader with the technical aspects of the work done by the members of the union, the conditions are rather different. 10 presidents are acquainted with it while 5 are not, but only 3 vice-presidents are not acquainted with these technical aspects. Thus, less number of presidents are acquainted with these technical aspects than the vice-presidents. We found that this is mainly because more presidents were outsiders who have no knowledge of the technical aspects of the work in the industry. It should be noted that 15 out of 16 general secretaries are acquainted with the technical aspects as they have to know these things without which they would find it difficult to carry out their responsibility. But about the assistant secretaries the proportion of those who do not know the technical aspects is more. In this aspect the treasurers appear to be more well versed than the presidents.

If we analyse the above-mentioned abilities of the unions' leadership from the aspect whether a leader is paid

by the union or not, we find an interesting result. 9 out of 13 paid union leaders have studied labour legislation and all of them are capable of speaking in public meetings while only one cannot write union leaflets. 10 leaders are acquainted with the technical aspect of the work done by the members of the union while 3 are not. It shows that the unions do consider these abilities while appointing paid full-time workers for the union. Table No. 7.4.5 is self-explanatory so far as this aspect is concerned. However, in the case of 4 leaders, they are paid even though they have not studied labour legislation, but these are paid officials of unions working in handloom factories mainly where the knowledge of legislation is not much needed.

It has been pointed out that mere possession of practical experience has its limitations. The impact of education on the abilities of union leaders in carrying out various activities of the union can be very well observed from Table No. 7.4.0.

It appears from this table that 62 of the leaders (75 per cent) admit that they have not studied trade union legislation at all. Even a majority of the matriculates admit that they had not studied the labour legislation. Of the 22 who have studied the subject, only 16 persons can genuinely claim a knowledge of it. Among them 3 are

Table No. 7.4.5 : Paid and unpaid office bearers classified according to their capacity in different aspects of union work.

Aspects of union work ----- Paid or unpaid for work.	Study of Trade union legisla- tion		Capacity to speak in public meetings		Capacity to write union leaflets		Acquaintance with the technical aspect of the work done by the members of the union		Total
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Paid	9	4	13	-	12	1	10	3	13
Unpaid	13	58	49	29	22	49	56	15	71
Total	22	62	55	29	34	50	66	18	84

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Source : Leadership investigation sample.

Table No. 7.4.6 : Office bearers of trade unions classified according to their capacity, in different aspects of union work and their educational level.

Aspect of union work -> ----- Educational level	Study of T.U. legislation		Capacity to speak in public meetings		Capacity to write union leaflets		Acquaintance with the technical aspects of the work done by the members of the union.		Total
	Yes	No.	Yes	No.	Yes	No.	Yes	No.	
Literates with no formal schooling)	-	4	1	3	-	4	4	-	4
Vernacular school education	-	37	21	16	7	30	33	4	37
High School Education	6	12	15	3	10	8	16	2	18
Matriculates	6	9	9	6	8	7	12	3	15
Undergraduates and graduates	10	-	9	1	9	1	1	9	10
Total	22	62	55	29	34	50	66	18	84

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Source : Leadership investigation sample.

lawyers who are naturally well-acquainted with the legislation. Further, it will not be correct to state that all have studied all the Acts pertaining to labour problems. Our investigations show that only 13 leaders have studied the Bombay Industrial Relations Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act. 9 leaders have studied the Factories Act and 11 the Industrial Disputes Act. The Payment of Wages Act was studied by 6 leaders while the Minimum Wages Act by 8 of them. The Employees' State Insurance Act and the Provident Fund Act was studied by 4 persons. Only 8 leaders stated that they have studied the Indian Trade Unions Act (1926). If we are to analyse the extent of the study of labour legislation on the basis of individuals, we find that 4 have studied six Acts each, 5, five Acts each, 3, four Acts each, 2, three Acts each and 8, one act only.

The capacity to speak in public meetings, however, does not depend much on education. 55 out of 84 (or nearly 66 per cent) can address union public meetings. 21 leaders can speak in mass meetings in Marathi only while 4 in Telugu only and 2 in Urdu only, while one in Kannada only. 16 can speak in Marathi and Telugu, 6 in Marathi and Hindi, 4 in Marathi and Kannada; 2 can speak in Marathi, Hindi and Telugu. The table No. 7.4.6 shows that only one person who is merely a literate can speak but the remaining three cannot do so, which shows that some sort of schooling is

necessary for a person to learn the art of speaking in union public meetings. 6 matriculates stated that they cannot speak in public meetings while one graduate was also honest enough to admit his inability to speak in public meetings. When asked the reason for this they said that they have no confidence to speak in public meetings. Some leaders with nominal education have developed their power of oratory to such a level that they have become the leading agitators in Sholapur. They can rouse the feelings of the workers by effectively depicting their living conditions which is not possible sometimes even for the educated persons.

On the other hand, capacity to write union leaflets largely depends on their education. The table shows that 34 leaders alone are in a position to prepare a draft of the union leaflets. Only 7 leaders who had taken education in a vernacular school can write a union leaflet while 30 leaders in the same category cannot; 13 persons who were educated in high schools or have passed the matriculation examination can write a handbill while 15 cannot do so. In the case of those who have taken college education 9 can write while only one cannot do so. This shows that with the increase in education ability to draft a union leaflet also increases.

It is generally admitted that the trade union leaders are not good writers. They defend by arguing that they

have to appeal to an uneducated mass where the only concern is whether the handbill effectively rouses the workers for a common action and properly answers all the doubts in their minds. Sometimes the handbill is drafted in a hurry and little attention is paid to the grammatical correctness or punctuations, etc.

If this is the case about the union leaflets, then one need not be amazed to know that 13 leaders cannot write applications at all! Of course, 4 of them are merely literates and naturally it is not expected of them to write applications. The rest of the 9 leaders are nominally educated in vernacular schools. Out of these 13 leaders, one is president, 5 vice-presidents, 2 assistant secretaries and the rest are treasurers. Nobody is the general secretary among them. We could not understand, in the beginning, how 5 persons who are incapable of writing ordinary applications can maintain accounts of the union and function as treasurers of the union. Our enquiry later on brought out the fact that they were given these posts because they were good collectors of subscriptions of the union! In these cases the accounts were maintained by other office-bearers but they were signed by these treasurers.

The labourers who are actually working or who had previously worked in the mills or factories naturally are acquainted with the technical aspects of the work done

by the members of their union. This knowledge is highly essential for the union leaders because then alone can they understand the actual grievances of their members at the work-places and can suggest measures for improving the working conditions. 15 out of 84 leaders in Sholapur have no such technical knowledge of the work done by the members of their union. All of them are outsiders in the union and their ignorance about this aspect is likely to result in making their case before the management less effective. These leaders admit their defects but criticise the employers for not allowing the union leaders to enter the premises of the mills or factories. However deplorable the attitude of the employers may be, the union leadership also cannot escape their responsibility. They could have got themselves acquainted with these technical aspects by visiting similar establishments in other centres.

We have already noted that union leaders have risen to their present position because of their experience in the movement even though some of them lack in educational qualifications. But experience alone will not give them a complete idea of the nature of their participation in union activities.

Table No. 7.4.7 shows the participation of union leaders in trade union conferences, deputations to various authorities, mill or works committees and legal proceedings

Table No. 7.4.7 : The participation of union leaders in various union activities.

Union activities-> Office bearers	Strikes		T.U. Conferences									Deputation to the					Legal Proceedings			
	Participated	Conducted	All India			Provincial			Regional			Minister	Dist. Magist	Rate Emplo-	Others	Mills or Works Com- mittees	In con- ducting cases helping lawyer	Involved in the case	Given	Witness- ses
President	7	6	1	7	1	1	7	1	3	1	2	12	8	8	1	5	1	4	1	3
Vice presi- dent	5	3	1	5	-	2	4	-	2	1	-	7	4	4	4	2	-	1	-	-
Gen. Secretary	3	3	-	5	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	7	4	3	5	5	2	4	-	1
Jt. Secretary	8	3	-	5	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	3	1	-	3	-	-
Treasurer	7	2	-	5	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	3	-	-	-	-
Total	30	17	1	27	1	3	29	1	6	2	2	28	21	15	14	16	3	12	1	4

Source : Leadership Investigation Sample.

classified according to positions held by them.

Participation in the trade union conferences is an important activity of the union leadership. In such conferences local leaders get the benefit of experience of the labour leaders in other centres. The table goes on to show that 31 leaders participated in all-India trade union conferences as delegates while 34 did so in Bombay provincial (or state) trade union conferences. But the same number for the regional conferences is only 12. This indicates that sufficient attention is not paid to regional conferences where particular conditions on the regional plane can be discussed in detail. The delegates attending the conferences at all these levels exchange their views and experiences which broadens their outlook towards the trade union movement. As only a limited number of delegates can be sent to these conferences, the unions send some observers who cannot participate in the discussions. Yet they are benefited by attending the proceedings of the conferences. 9 leaders in Sholapur attended all-India conferences as observers while 13 have done so in provincial (or state) conferences, and only 4 attended the regional conferences in this capacity.

The leaders who were organisers of the conferences have acquired excellent experience of organisation. A leadership that can evolve a machinery for making proper

arrangements for delegates and conference proceedings can only be entrusted with such a responsible task. Only 2 leaders in Sholapur were organisers of all-India conferences while 3 were organisers of provincial (or state) conferences and 5 were those of regional conferences. Even though the number is small, it shows the capacity of these leaders in the sphere of organisation. 4 leaders in Sholapur in 1950 were working on the committees of the all-India organisations and 12 were members of the provincial (or state) committees of these organisations. No one is the office-bearer of any all-India organisation but three are office-bearers of the state organisations. One leader in Sholapur as the general secretary of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh attended in 1950 the conference of the International Labour Organisation as a representative of Indian workers.

The union leadership is engaged often in sending deputations to state ministers, district magistrate, employers or other government officials. Only 18 leaders participated in the deputations to the employers while 30 have done so in the deputations to the ministers. The number of leaders participating in the deputations to the district magistrate is 21 which is also more than the number to the employers. 14 had participated in the deputation to various government officials like the Factory Inspector, the Labour Commissioner, the Government

Labour Officer, etc. The trade union leaders complained that the employers pay little attention to their deputations which compelled them to approach the higher authorities. The intervention of the district magistrate becomes necessary even in minor issues like giving holidays on the May Day or the polling day of civic elections.

Another example of the elementary stage of joint consultation between the management and labour is seen from the fact that only 15 leaders had participated in the works or joint committees. This number is small because in many factories such committees are not formed at all.

The leadership's experience regarding the legal proceedings is far from adequate. Only 3 have participated in conducting cases while 13 have helped the lawyers in the legal proceedings. One was involved in the case and four had only appeared as witnesses in the labour court.

17 leaders have been witnesses to different inquiry committees appointed by the Central and State Governments regarding labour matters. One leader was a workers' representative of the all-India Trade Union Congress for the Indian Tripartite Conference in 1947.

We have so far studied the present qualifications of the trade union leaders in Sholapur. We shall now pass

on to the second question, namely, whether the present qualifications are adequate enough to lead the mass of workers.

As regards education it must be admitted that in general the leadership in Sholapur is poorly educated. In this connection, it would not be out of place if we refer to the similar data regarding the education of American labour leaders. C. Wright Mills has given the data of formal education of the leaders of the American Federation of Labour which shows that 25 per cent had taken college education, 14 per cent were high school graduates, 26 per cent acquired some high school education, 34 per cent were taught in Grammar School and one per cent got no education at all.⁵ Judging from this standard and considering the low educational level in our country, it would not be proper to expect better educational standards at this stage from the trade union leaders. However, much is desired if the individual abilities of the leaders are to be increased. The legal part of the union work is acquiring increasing importance but the leadership is not capable of coping with the situation. There is a tendency to consider all laws on industrial matters as attacks on the workers and hence requiring no

⁵ C. Wright Mills, "The New Men of Power", Harcourt, Bruce and Co., New York, 1948.

attention except to combat them in a general form. The trade union leaders must know the rudiments of the technique of the trade in which he is running the union, so that he can understand the problems of wages and work-load, of speed-up and piece-rates better and can represent them with correctness. Mere past experience without the overall outlook of trade unionism is not helpful for the further growth of trade union movement. We shall deal with this aspect in further detail in the concluding remarks of this chapter.

7.5 Social and Welfare Activities of Trade Union Leaders.

A section of the union leadership is found taking interest in some sort of social and welfare activity. However, the work done is in their own individual capacity, as trade unions do not take any initiative in such matters. Our enquiry showed that 39 leaders do not take active interest in any type of social and welfare activity. Table No. 7.5.1 gives a general idea of the interest displayed in these activities by the trade union leaders in Sholapur.

It is important to note that the largest number of union leaders are working in their own community organisations. 21 leaders or 25 per cent of the leadership in Sholapur are working in these organisations which shows the influence of the caste system on the workers in spite

Table No. 7.5.1 : Social and Welfare Activities undertaken by union leaders.

Social and welfare activity undertaken in -----	Co-op. society	Library work	Literacy class	Charitable institutions	Youth organisations, etc.	"Basti" improvement activity	Community organisations	Cultural activities	Other activities	Total
Office bearer										
President	5	1	2	-	4	1	4	-	3	15
Vice-President	3	-	1	3	1	2	3	4	-	14
Gen. Secretary	4	1	-	-	-	1	3	-	7	16
Asstt. Secretary	3	-	1	-	4	4	7	1	-	25
Treasurer	2	1	-	-	3	1	4	-	1	14
Total	17	3	4	3	12	9	21	5	11	84

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Source : Leadership Investigation Sample.

of coming together of the workers of all castes in the factory system. All these leaders hold important posts in these caste organisations. 11 are secretaries, 6 presidents, 4 treasurers while others are either vice-presidents or assistant secretaries of these associations. 12 were important leaders of their caste organisations even before they joined the trade union movement.

The second largest group doing such activities belong to that of the leaders doing work in co-operative societies. 8 out of these 17 leaders are working on the committees of the co-operative credit societies of their departments where they work. Others work in the co-operative consumers' societies which are being run in the workers' localities.

12 leaders are engaged in doing work in the youth organisations and in sports clubs but only 3 leaders take interest in library work while 4 participate in conducting literacy classes. Considering the present illiteracy among the workers, the data show that few leaders are paying attention to this problem. Similarly, cultural activity is also not carried on with keen interest as only 5 leaders take part in it. 2 of them have organised singing squads while 3 others actually participate in a traditional Telugu folk drama. These programmes attract a large number of workers and they constantly demand such performance in their 'bastis' on holidays and festivals.

However, sufficient attention is not paid by the leaders in increasing their activities in that directions. 9 leaders regularly take interest in 'basti' improvement work. They take the complaints of the workers to the municipal authorities and make efforts to improve the atmosphere in their surroundings.

14 leaders take interest in more than one activity and most of them carry out these social and welfare activities in the localities where they stay. In many cases the activities are restricted to a group only. On the whole, it is seen that such activities cannot assume a mass character in the absence of concrete guidance given by the unions.

7.6 Rise of Leadership in the Unions.

The rise of a leader in the union depends on his ability to lead the workers effectively. The present trade union leaders had to work for a number of years to acquire the present positions of power in the organisation. In this section an attempt is made to see how much time the leaders require to become union officials and through what stages they have to go before acquiring the present status in the union. In table No. 7.6.1 we have given the time required by the trade union leaders in Sholapur for rising to present positions classified according to posts held by them. It appears from the table that 8 vice-presidents

Table No. 7.6.1 : Time required by the trade union leaders for rising to the present position classified by the office held by them presently.

Present position of leaders	Directly risen	Time required in years to rise to the position										Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 and above	
President	3	-	1	-	1	3	2	-	1	1	3	15
Vice-President	8	1	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	14
Gen. Secretary	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	-	1	1	-	16
Asstt. Secretary	16	2	4	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	25
Treasurer	7	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	14
Total	37	5	10	2	4	7	8	2	4	2	3	84

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Source: Leadership investigation sample.

and 10 assistant secretaries had risen directly to the present positions while ^{only} 3 presidents and 3 general secretaries could do so. This indicates that usually it takes time for the leaders to rise to the status of the general secretary or president. This can be explained by the fact which was clearly observed in the earlier paragraphs that these two posts require persons with more experience and ability. The same conclusion can be drawn if we see the cases of leaders who have not risen to the present position directly. Three leaders had to work for more than 10 years to become presidents but no vice-president had to work for more than 6 years to rise to ^{that} position. 7 out of 14 treasurers had risen directly to the present post but 5 had to work for 5 or more years before they were given the present responsibility.

Many leaders had to go through some stages before the rank and file members invested them with the present responsibility. From the table No. 7.6.2 it can be seen that 29 leaders had to work as members of the ^{the} Managing Committee from one to ten years before they rose to their present position in office. 4 of them had to work for one year only while 14 had to work for more than four years. Twelve leaders had to take two steps of the ladder of leadership. First, they were elected as members of the managing committee of the union, then after some period they were taken on the executive committees, and finally

Table No. 7.6.2 : Time required by the trade union leaders in Sholapur for rising to the present position classified by the way they have risen.

Stages in the rise to the present position	Directly risen	Time required in years										Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 and above	
From membership of Managing Committee to the present position via membership of Executive Committee	-	-	1	-	2	3	1	1	3	-	1	12
From membership of Managing Committee to the present position	-	4	8	2	1	4	7	1	1	-	1	29
Directly risen to the present position	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All others	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	6
Total	37	5	10	2	4	7	8	2	4	2	3	84

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Source : Leadership investigation sample.

they were elected as union officials. In the 4th row of the table ^{omitted} ~~exhibited~~ 'All others' six cases are given ^{relating to} ~~where~~ the office-bearers ^{who} were either demoted or were not participating in the union for sometime. Thus a gap was created in their trade union leadership. 19 out of 84 persons had to work either as a member of the managing committee or the executive committee for more than five years while 28 required a period of less than 5 years. Out of those who became leaders after working for sometime as members of the managing committee, 14 took three or less years. But only one could do so in the same time from those who had to work on the managing committee and thereafter on the executive committee as well.

When a member wins confidence of the rank and file he is naturally taken on the managing committee. He is promoted to a higher position if he is successful in increasing his influence over the members of the union and the period required to do so depends upon his abilities in conducting various activities of the union. A rise in the rank of leadership by demagogic utterances is not always impossible. It is generally observed that a speaker in public meetings takes less time to become an official than a person who writes petitions in the office of the union.

We have already seen ~~earlier~~ that the ability to carry out various types of union activities can be acquired by

participating in union activities. Practical experience in many cases does the work of schooling for the trade union functionaries. However, it is not possible for a new union to get any experienced leader from its own rank. In such cases the office bearers approach either another existing union in another industry or any political party. Naturally some advanced members of the union are likely to become leaders of the union directly. In the annual general meetings, a new managing committee is elected and those who win the confidence of the ranks rise to the higher positions. In some cases the process is a gradual one and as the Table No. 7.5.2 shows two of the members had to work for more than ten years as members of the managing committee to become the office-bearers of the union.

Among the 37 leaders who directly became office-bearers only 14 had previous experience of trade union work in other unions. Others had to make efforts to acquire the abilities after their election to important positions of power in the unions. Whether they are accepted as leaders by the ranks in the period that follows largely depends on their success of acquiring these abilities.

It would be helpful to see the relationship between the time required by the union leaders for rising to the present position and the type of the leadership. Table No. 7.6.3 shows that out of 37 leaders who have risen

Table No. 7.6.3 : Time required by the trade union leaders in Sholapur for rising to the present position classified by the type of the leaders.

Leadership type	Directly risen	Time required in years										Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 & above	
Insiders	8	3	5	-	4	6	7	2	4	2	3	44
Outsiders	29	2	5	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	40
Total	37	5	10	2	4	7	8	2	4	2	3	84

397

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

directly to the present status, 29 are outsiders and only 8 are insiders. This throws light on the present conditions inside the trade unions where outsiders can rise more quickly to positions of power than the insiders. No outsider had taken more than 6 years to become the official of the union while 11 insiders had to work for more than 6 years to reach the present status of leadership. Only 3 insiders could rise in one year and 5 in two years but others had taken more than 4 years for rising to the present position. Apart from 29 outsiders who had risen directly, 9 leaders had risen within 3 years while the remaining 2 had taken 5 and 6 years respectively.

If we observe the period of working in the present positions by the trade union leaders in Sholapur we find that 20 are maintaining their positions for more than five years. Among these twenty leaders, 14 had directly become office-bearers of the union. Table No. 7.5.4 further shows that 40 leaders have remained in the positions for three years or less, of which 13 had directly become officials of the union. 13 of these 18 leaders were the office-bearers of entirely new unions and quite obviously the ranks of these unions had to choose inexperienced yet the best available leadership in the beginning. The table does not indicate any specific relationship between the way of rise in the leadership to the present positions and the period of maintaining them. It clearly shows that

Table No. 7.6.4 : Period of work in the present position by the trade union leaders classified by the way they have risen to power.

Stages in the rise to present position	Period of work - years in the present position											Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Above 10	
From membership of managing committee to present position via membership of executive committee.	-	-	-	4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	12
From membership of managing committee to the present status.	11	2	2	8	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	29
Directly risen to the present position	8	7	3	2	3	†	7	-	-	-	7	37
All others	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6
Total	19	14	7	14	10	1	8	-	1	-	10	84

399

Source: Leadership investigation sample.

leaders who have directly risen to the present position maintain their leadership for a long time, like those who have risen gradually. One of the reasons for this may be lack of availability of better and more competent persons.

Table No. 7.5.5 gives the classification of the office-bearers of unions according to the period of their work in the present positions. No vice-president or assistant secretary is working in this position for more than 7 years, while 14 assistant secretaries are working only for one year. 4 presidents and 5 general secretaries are working in their present position for more than 10 years while only 1 treasurer is doing the work for the same period. 3 presidents and 2 general secretaries are working for 7 years but only one vice-president, one assistant secretary and one treasurer are ^{work}~~work~~ing for the same period. It shows that the positions of president and general secretary are more stable than the others.

A study of the relationship between the period of work in the present position and the type of the leadership also shows the predominance of outsiders ⁱⁿ~~over~~ the movement. Fourteen insiders are working for one year and 13 for 2 years. But the number of outsiders working for the same period is only 3 and 1 respectively. However, as table No. 7.5.6 shows, in all the rest of the columns the out-

Table No. 7.6.5 : Office Bearers of the Trade Unions and the period of their work in the present position.

Office bearers	Period of work - years in the present position											Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Above 10	
President	-	1	-	3	3	1	3	-	-	-	4	15
Vice-President	2	6	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	14
Gen. Secretary	1	1	1	2	3	-	2	-	1	-	5	16
Asstt. Secretary	14	2	3	4	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	25
Treasurer	2	4	1	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	14
Total	19	14	7	14	10	1	8	-	1	-	10	84

401

Source: Leadership Investigation Sample.

Table No. 7.6.6 : Period of working on the present position by the trade union leaders in Sholapur classified by the type of the leaders.

Leadership type	Period of work - years in the present position											Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Above 10	
Insiders	14	13	3	6	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	44
Outsiders	3	1	4	8	6	1	6	-	1	-	10	40
Total	19	14	7	14	10	1	8	-	1	-	10	84

402

Source: Leadership investigation sample.

-siders are more in number than the insiders. Only 2 insiders are working for 7 years but no one is working for more than this period. But 10 outsiders are working in the same position for the last 10 or more years while 6 are working for the last 7 years. Among 7 leaders who are working on the present post for the last 3 years, 4 are outsiders while 3 are insiders. Among 14 leaders working for last 4 years as union officials on the same positions 8 are outsiders while 6 are insiders. Similarly, among 10 leaders carrying the present responsibility for the last 5 years, 6 are outsiders while 4 are insiders. Thus, outsiders not only rise quicker to the level of leadership than the insiders but their period of tenure in the positions of power is more than the insiders.

At present, 4 presidents are insiders while 11 are outsiders. Out of 14 vice-presidents 9 are insiders and 5 are outsiders. The number of insiders and outsiders, so far as general secretaries are concerned, is 6 and 10 respectively. 17 insiders and 3 outsiders are working as assistant secretaries while ~~the~~ 3 treasurers are insiders and only 0 are outsiders. Outsiders are in an overwhelming majority among presidents and general secretaries while they are in a minority among vice-presidents and assistant secretaries.

We have not been able to study in detail the reasons for relinquishing the offices held by the leaders. But

from the information available it appears that the following are the main reasons for the same:

- (1) Death of a leader.
- (2) Retirement of the leader due to old age or prolonged sickness.
- (3) A political party asks its member who is also a trade union official to work in other unions or in other trade union centres.
- (4) Resignation of the union leader due to his differences with the union.
- (5) Dismissal of the leader from the union when the union loses confidence in him due to his 'anti-union activities'.
- (6) A victimised union leader has to leave the city in search of another job.
- (7) A leader gets frustrated and demoralised.
- (8) Due to individual difficulties or inability the leader himself expresses his disapproval to work in the position of leadership.

7.7 Economic Conditions of Trade Union Leaders.

The general impression that the union leaders are drawing fabulous sums of money from union funds is far from correct. Leaders voluntarily accept a lower rate of remuneration because the financial conditions of the union are not as sound as to pay a higher salary. Hence, the belief that union leaders participate in the activities

only with economic interest is erroneous. Secondly, the proportion of the paid leaders is very small in comparison with the total number of leaders in the union. From our enquiry of the trade union leaders in Sholapur it is clear that only 13 leaders out of 84 receive payment for their work in the union. Others get their income either from their occupation or from their relatives, friends or parties, etc. Table No. 7.7.1 shows the income of the trade union leaders in Sholapur from their union or from their occupation outside the union or other sources.

Table expresses clearly that out of 13 leaders who are paid by the union, 7 get a salary of less than Rs. 45/- per month. The highest salary paid to the union leader is Rs. 150/- per month which is paid to the general secretary of the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh while the lowest is Rs. 20/- only per month being given to the General Secretary of the P.W.D. Workers' Union. The general secretary of the State Transport Kamgar Sangh is paid Rs. 100/- per month while the president of the Municipal Workers' Union receives Rs. 75/- per month from the union. The secretary of the National Mazdoor Union gets only

^o The wife of this official is a primary school teacher who also earns Rs. 75/- per month which enables ~~them~~ ~~him~~ to maintain their family.

Table No. 7.7.1 : Income of the trade union leaders .

Source of Income	: Income :							Total
	Below Rs. 500 to 1000	Rs.501 to 1000	Rs.1001 to 1500	Rs.1501 to 2000	Rs.2001 to 2500	Rs.2501 to 3000	Above Rs.3000	
From Union only	7	4	1	1	1	-	-	13
From Union as well as from occupation outside the Union	12	16	11	11	4	4	5	63
From Union as well as from other sources	2	3	3	-	-	-	-	8
Total	21	23	15	12	4	4	5	84

406

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

Rs. 60/- per month. Two full-time officials even complained that they do not get even this meagre payment regularly. 63 leaders get income from their occupations outside the union and 24 of them earn more than Rs. 125/- per month. The conditions of these part-time officials are certainly better than those who devote full-time attention to the union work. 8 of the leaders maintain themselves either by collecting funds from their friends and sympathisers or get help from their relatives while only 2 of them are paid by the party to which they belong.

It will be helpful to see how far the labour leaders contribute to the total income of their families. Table No. 7.7² shows that 41 out of 84 leaders are the sole earning members in the family. Of the remaining 12 contribute more than 50 per cent to the income of their families while 31 contribute less than 50 per cent. Thus 53 leaders bear the major part of their family responsibilities. The Table also shows that 47 or majority of the families of the trade union leaders earn less than Rs. 1,500/- per year and 4 of them earn even less than Rs. 500/- per year. Only 16 leaders earn less than 30 per cent of their family income but 8 of them belong to families earning less than Rs. 1,500/- a year. The largest annual income of the family is Rs. 5,600/- while the lowest is Rs. 360/- only.

But merely the total annual income of the family will not give a complete idea of the economic conditions

Table No. 7.7.2 : Income of the Trade Union Leaders ^{and its} ~~in~~ proportion to the total income of their families. _^

Total income of the family (in Rs.)	Proportion of leader's income to total family income (%)										Total
	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	
0-500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
501-1000	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	4	-	7	15
1001-1500	-	5	3	-	2	3	-	-	1	14	28
1501-2000	-	1	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	8	13
2001-2500	-	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	8
2501-3000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Above 3000	-	4	-	3	-	1	1	-	-	3	12
Total	-	13	3	11	4	4	3	4	1	41	84

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

of a trade union leader. For this purpose, we have to consider the size of the family of the union leader. Table 7.7.3 gives the size of the family of the trade union leaders and their average annual income. It seems from the table that 48 or majority of the leaders have 6 or less persons in their families. Only 13 leaders have families consisting of more than 9 persons. The average number of persons per family comes to 6.1 of which 2.0 are earners and 4.1 are dependants. In the case of smaller families the average annual income per earner as well as per member of the family is usually high. The average annual income per earner in the families of trade union leaders works out to be Rs. 838.99 per year while the average annual income per member of the family works out to Rs. 273.34 only. The table also indicates that with the increase in the size of the family the number of dependants also shows a sign of increase. The prevalent influence of the joint family system among the trade union leaders is observed in these large families. The inequalities of incomes among the leaders is also another peculiarity that is clearly brought by the above data.

The leaders in the lower income groups have to face financial difficulties and are compelled to borrow money when they are hardpressed. Table No. 7.7.4 shows that only 34 out of 84 are not indebted. It is also clear from the table that the major cause for indebtedness is the

Table No. 7.7.3 : Load of dependency, per capita earnings and per capita income of the families of the trade union leaders in Sholapur.

No. of members in the family	No. of families	Total No. of members in the families			Average annual in- come per mem- ber in the family (ks.)	Average annual in- come per earner in the family (Rs.)
		Total	Earners	Dependents		
1-3	13	44	16	28	487.84	1341.56
4-6	35	161	58	103	387.95	1076.89
7-9	23	120	44	76	173.66	473.63
10-12	4	62	14	48	129.19	572.14
13-15	3	81	23	58	223.95	788.29
Above 15	6	44	13	31	228.07	771.92
Total	84	512	168	344	273.34	838.98

Source : Leadership investigation samp

Table No. 7.7.4 : The Extent and Causes of Indebtedness among trade union leaders

Cause	Household expenses	Marriage	Illness	Unemployment	Others	Total
Extent						
Not indebted	-	-	-	-	-	34
Below Rs. 500	16	5	4	-	-	25
Rs. 501 - 1000	11	1	-	1	-	13
Rs. 1001-1500	3	1	-	-	-	4
Rs. 1501 - 2000	3	-	-	-	-	3
Above Rs. 2000	3	-	-	-	5	5
Total	37	7	4	1	5	84

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

inadequate finances for the household expenses on account of which 37 leaders had to borrow money for this purpose. Of them 10 borrowed upto Rs. 500 while 11 borrowed between Rs. 501 to 1000. The remaining 6 leaders in this group borrowed more than Rs. 1000/-. The other causes of indebtedness are marriage expenses, illness, unemployment, etc. 7 had borrowed money for marriage expenses, 4 for illness and only one did so owing to his unemployment.

The column 'others' indicates the debt incurred in business, for election expenses, etc. The amount of average indebtedness due to the requirements of household expenses is Rs. 727.70, while the average amount borrowed for marriage is Rs. 533.33. The same for illness is Rs. 199.60. The indebtedness due to unemployment is Rs. 700. The average indebtedness for the business purposes is Rs. 11,833.33. The largest amount borrowed is Rs. 20,000/- which was done for the needs of business. The smallest amount borrowed was for the household expenses which was Rs. 115/- only. The average indebtedness for all the leaders is Rs. 941.64.

7.8 Time Devoted to Work of the Unions.

The systematic and regular functioning of the unions partly depends upon how much time the leaders spend for the union work. Strong unions can be built only if they

have a capable leadership that will devote sufficient time to mobilise the workers behind the unions. In this regard, the officials of the unions can be divided into two groups: namely, full-time officials and part-time officials who can be further sub-grouped into paid and honorary. However, no part-time leader receives any payment in Sholapur. Three- full-time presidents, one vice-president, four secretaries, three assistant secretaries and two treasurers are paid by the unions while three presidents, one vice-president, four general secretaries are doing the work of the union voluntarily. No assistant secretary or a treasurer is found to be a full-time official working on paid basis. Among the part-time officials 9 are presidents, 12 are vice-presidents, 8 general secretaries, 22 assistant secretaries and 12 treasurers, all of whom are doing the work voluntarily. Table No. 7.8.1 gives the time devoted every day by the union leaders both paid and honorary.

The table indicates that out of 13 full-time officials who are paid 2 are doing work for six hours every day. One for seven hours and 10 are doing for eight hours daily. But out of 8 honorary full-time workers 5 are working for four hours, 2 for five hours, and one for six hours every day. This proves the fact once again that paid full-time officials give more time for the union work than the honorary officials. Here, however, a question may be raised

Table No. 7.8.1 : Full time and part-time officials of the unions ^{classified} according to the time devoted for the union work.

No. of work-hours devoted per day		One hour	Two hours	Three hours	Four hours	Five hours	Six hours	Seven hours	Eight hours	Total
Type of officials										
Full time officials.	Paid	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	10	13
	Hon.	-	-	-	5	2	1	-	-	8
Part-time Officials	Paid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Hon.	31	25	4	3	-	-	-	-	63
Total		31	25	4	8	2	3	1	10	84

414

Source: Leadership investigation sample.

whether the leaders doing work for four hours can be called full-timers at all! 3 of the part-time officials also work for four hours daily.

Among the honorary workers, 31 are doing work for one hour only per day while 25 are doing so for two hours every day, which means that 56 out of the 84 leaders in Sholapur do not devote more than two hours daily for the union work. Only four honorary workers are working for three hours daily.

Table No. 7.8.2 shows the classification of the office-bearers according to the time devoted by them to the union work. 7 presidents, 8 general secretaries in Sholapur work for two hours or less daily while the number for the treasurers is 12. This is so because usually the treasurer has to do less work than other officials. But it has been shown in the same table that 2 treasurers work in the union for 7 and 8 hours respectively. These are whole-timers and they are expected to do the other work of the union. Generally full-time officials have to bear the main brunt of the union activity whatever may be their position in the union.

If the above data is converted into the man-hour units, we find that daily 54 hours are given by the presidents, 33 hours by vice-presidents, 56 hours by the general secretaries, 66 hours by assistant secretaries and 34 hours

Table No. 7.8.2 : Office bearers of the Union classified according to the time devoted for the Union work in Shelapur.

No. of work hours devoted per day	One hour	Two hours	Three hours	Four hours	Five hours	Six hours	Seven hours	Eight hours	Total

Office bearers									
President	3	4	3	1	-	1	-	3	15
Vice-President	5	5	-	3	-	1	-	-	14
Gen. Secretary	4	4	1	3	1	-	-	3	16
Asstt. Secretary	11	8	-	1	1	1	-	3	25
Treasurer	8	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	14

Total	31	25	4	8	2	3	1	10	84

Source: Leadership investigation sample.

by the treasurers. It then comes to average 3.6 hours daily by the president, 2.4 hours by the vice-president, 3.5 hours by the general secretary and 2.6 hours by the treasurer. We can say from this that on the whole, the president and general secretary have to do more work than the other officials. If we examine the data regarding the work done by the full-time and part-time officials, we find that 99 hours are given daily in all by the full-time paid officials, 36 hours by the full-time honorary officials and 105 hours by the part-time honorary officials. If considered in averages, it states that a full-time paid official spends 7.4 hours daily, a full-time honorary official 4.5 hours daily and a part-time honorary official 1.7 hours daily for the union work.

It is observed from the data collected that on an average the trade union leaders in Sholapur spend 2.9 hours daily for the union work. However, bearing in mind the limitation of the above average figure, we are stating this only to point out that more work in hours is necessary if the activities of the unions are to be broadened. This can be done by increase in the hours of work or by increasing the number of full-time officials.

It is general to maintain that the trade union leaders cannot devote more time because they have family responsibilities. In this regard we find three types of leaders.

First, leaders who are the heads of the family, secondly, leaders who are not heads of family but have some responsibility in the family and third, leaders with no responsibility in the family.

Table No. 7.8.3 illustrates the family responsibilities of various office-bearers. 59 leaders are heads of the families while 9 have some responsibility in the family and 16 have no responsibility as such in their families. Among the 59 leaders who are the heads of the family, 9 are presidents, 11 vice-presidents, 9 general secretaries, 20 assistant secretaries and 10 treasurers. But 2 presidents, 2 vice-presidents have no responsibility in their families. Due to the joint family system some elder persons in their families look after their family matters and, therefore, they can spare more time for union work. Similarly, 5 general secretaries, 3 assistant secretaries and 4 treasurers have also no responsibility in their family.

However, if we consider whether all the persons with no family responsibilities devote more time to the union work, we find that this is not so.

Table No. 7.8.4 gives the relationship between the type of family responsibility of the union leaders and the time they devote for the union work. 9 full-time officials who were the heads of the family can devote

Table No. 7.8.3 : Family responsibilities of various office bearers of unions in Sholapur.

Family responsibility ----- Office bearers	Head of the family	Some responsibility of the family	No/ responsibility of the family	Total
President	9	4	2	15
Vice-President	11	1	2	14
Gen. Secretary	9	2	5	16
Asstt. Secretary	20	2	3	25
Treasurer	10	-	4	14
Total	59	9	16	84

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

Table No. 7.8.4 : Family responsibility of the trade union leaders and the time devoted to the union work.

No. of work-hours devoted to union work per day.	One hour	Two hours	Three hours	Four hours	Five hours	Six hours	Seven hours	Eight hours	Total
----- Family responsibility.									
Head of the family	22	18	4	5	-	1	-	9	59
Some responsibility of the family	4	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	9
No responsibility of the family	5	7	-	2	1	-	-	1	16
Total	31	26	4	8	2	2	1	10	84

420

Source : Leadership investigation sample.

eight hours daily for the union work while 5 other leaders with no responsibility in the family can spare only one hour a day and 7 such persons can give only two hours a day. On an average, it is seen that the heads of the family give 2.9 hours, the persons with some responsibility in the family 3.3 hours and those with no responsibility in the family 2.6 hours daily for the union work. Family worries are likely to take away some of the spare time of the union officials but this does not seem to be the only cause for giving less time by the union leaders for the work of the union.

7.9 Party Affiliations of Trade Union Leaders.

The influence of political parties over the trade unions is perhaps the most controversial problem in the trade union movement. There is observed a traditional feeling among the leaders to have some sort of political alignment. The effects of the political parties on the ideological atmosphere in which the labour leaders behave cannot be neglected in any study of trade union movement.

Our examination of the leadership of trade unions in Sholapur shows that out of 84 leaders interviewed 50 admitted that they were members of the political parties. It is likely that some of the leaders may be unwilling to disclose their party affiliations. Some independent leaders

may not be direct members of any political party but they might be inclined to this or that party. Certainly, there is no evidence to judge how many leaders are really independents as they claim to be. So far as our inquiry shows there are 34 leaders who claimed to be independent. Table No. 7.9.1 gives the Party affiliations of the trade union leaders classified according to their office positions.

The table shows that the Congress has 21 leaders as its members and can claim to have the largest number of trade union leadership on its register. But the Communist Party is not lagging behind which has 18 members as trade union leaders. The Praja Socialist Party (P.S.P.), the Peasants and Workers' Party (P.W.P.), and the Scheduled Castes Federation (S.C.F.) are comparatively parties with less influence in the trade union movement which have 8, 2 and 1 members respectively among the union leadership. The Congress has 6 presidents, 4 vice-presidents, 4 general secretaries, 2 assistant secretaries and 5 treasurers while the Communist Party has 3 presidents, 3 vice-presidents, 4 general secretaries, 5 assistant secretaries and 3 treasurers ^{among} ~~of~~ the union leaders. But from this we cannot find out any preference of positions of leadership by these parties. However, among the secretaries or assistant secretaries, nearly half the number belong to the group of independents.

Table No. 7.9.1 : Party affiliations of the trade union leaders.

Party ----- Office bearers	Con- gress	Communist Party	P.S.P.	Peasants and workers Party	Sche- duled caste Federa- tion	Total Party Men	Inde- pendence	Grand Total
President	6	3	1	1	4	11	4	15
Vice-President	4	3	2	-	1	10	4	14
General Secretary	4	4	1	-	-	9	7	16
Asstt. Secretary	2	5	4	1	-	12	13	25
Treasurer	5	3	-	-	-	8	6	14
Total	21	18	8	2	1	50	34	84

Source: Leadership Investigation Sample.

The next question naturally arises: Do responsible Party functionaries occupy important posts of leadership in the unions? Table No. 7.9.2 shows that out of 50 leaders who are members of the political parties, 32 are ordinary members, 14 are members of the local committee of the Party while 4 are members of the Provincial Committees. 7 members of the local committees are presidents, only one is general secretary, 3 are assistant secretaries and 3 are treasurers while 2 members of the Provincial Committee of the Party are vice-presidents and a same number of them are general secretaries of the unions. This shows that important Party functionaries take active interest in the union and even though their number is small, they have a great influence in the working of the union. It is found that these leaders when they are busy with their other political activities cannot find sufficient time for carrying out their union responsibilities. When they are in key positions like that of the general secretary the work of the union suffers greatly. It is true that they give instructions to other assistants about the work but anyhow the tasks are not carried out effectively.

It will be useful to investigate the experience of the trade union leaders affiliated to different political parties. This will enable us to understand how much experienced leadership each Party possesses. Table No.7.9.3 showing the duration of the trade union career of the

Table No. 7.9.2 : Present position inside the party of the trade union leaders classified according to the office held in the union.

Present position inside the party ----- Office bearers of the unions	Ordinary members	Members of the local committee	Members of the provincial committee	Total Party Members	Independents	Grand total
President	4	7	-	11	4	15
Vice-President	8	-	2	10	4	14
Gen. Secretary	6	1	2	9	7	16
Asstt. Secretary	9	3	-	12	13	25
Treasurer	5	3	-	8	6	14
Total	32	14	4	50	34	84

Source : Leadership Investigation Sample.

Table No. 7.9.3 : Duration of trade union career of the leaders according to their party affiliations.

Party affiliation ----- Duration in years	Congress Communist Party	P.S.F.	F.A.P.	S.C.F.	Total	Inde- pendent	Grand Total	
Upto 5 years	6	3	-	-	1	10	12	22
6 - 10 years	8	4	8	1	-	21	4	25
11-15 years	3	7	-	1	-	11	9	20
16-20 years	1	4	-	-	-	5	3	8
21-25 years	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	5
Above 25 years	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	4
Total	21	18	8	2	1	50	34	84

Source : Leadership Investigation Sample.

union leaders according to their Party affiliations indicates that the Congress and the Communist Party have leaders with good experience of trade union work. However, the strength of independents is more than any political party. Both the Congress and the Communist Party have 4 leaders each whose trade union career is more than 15 years but there are 9 independents falling in that category. 7 members of the Congress and 11 members of the Communist Party have a total experience of more than 10 years while the number of independents coming in this class is 18. The Praja Socialist Party and the Peasant and Workers' Party have entered in the trade union field of Sholapur at a later stage as they are formed only recently. And naturally their leadership is less experienced in trade unionism. Yet in these parties no leader has experience less than five years. Another remarkable feature that is evident from this table is that 12 independent leaders have an experience of less than five years while the total of all the political parties in the same categories is only 10. It indicates a trend among the new entrants in the leadership to prefer remaining independents than to joining any political party.

12 leaders under investigation changed their party affiliations. However, we have not included among them the leaders who left the Congress Party when the Communist Party, the Congress Socialist Party (now P.S.P.) and the

Peasants and Workers' Party broke away from that party and formed new parties. 3 Congressmen resigned from the party and became independents while 3 Communists and one Praja Socialist did the same. 2 communists resigned from the party and joined the Congress one member of the Peasants and Workers Party also joined the Congress. 2 Communists resigned from the Party but after one year they again joined the same party. Among these 12 leaders who changed their political affiliations, 7 preferred to remain independent than joining other parties.

Out of the 19 unions surveyed, 4 unions have no leaders belonging to any political party. In 5 unions there are only Congressmen working while in 2 unions only Communist Party members are among the leaders. In one union both members of the Communist Party and the Peasants and Workers' Party are working. In 2 unions only Praja Socialist Party workers are leading while^e in one union Praja Socialist Party and Congressmen are doing work. In one union the Scheduled Castes Federation members are taking a leading part. In the rest of the 3 unions no domination of any political party exists and the leaders of different political parties are working together.

7.10 Difficulties of the Trade Union Leaders

During the course of interviewing the trade union leaders an attempt was made to find out the difficulties

that they have to face while doing the union work. Like all others the union leaders have also their own individual problems and it is interesting to see what the leadership feels regarding its own problems. However, 31 leaders in Sholapur stated that they usually have no difficulties in doing the work. Of the remaining 53 leaders 28 stated that they have financial difficulties and their home worries obstruct their work a great deal. 7 leaders expressed that in spite of their desire to do more union work they cannot do so because of their indifferent health while 7 others stated that they cannot do the work of the union openly due to the pressure of the bosses. 4 of them were threatened by their superior authorities as they came to know about the activities of the union officials. 13 felt that their educational qualifications were inadequate to carry out their responsibilities. 2 union officials stated that being Brahmin by caste they are looked upon with suspicion by a large number of workers. One of them even admitted that he finds it difficult to mix with the ordinary workers as he comes from the middle class family. An assistant to a wholesale sari merchant who is also an official of the union working in handloom industry stated his individual difficulty in a peculiar way. "I have to go for purchasing sarees to the master weavers with whom I have to bargain and demand sarees at a lower price. While being an official of the union I demand more wages to the handloom

workers. Whenever I bargain with the master weavers they suggest me to request the union to demand less wages so that the price of the sarees would be lowered. Hence I find it difficult to tackle both these jobs simultaneously." A female worker of the Bidi factory stated that she gets tired by doing home work and the job in the factory which makes her impossible to spare time for union work except on holidays.

Sixteen of the present leaders were victimised by their employers for participating in the union activities. This created fear in the minds of other workers and they hesitate to become officials of the union. The imprisonment of the leaders by the Government is also an important factor that creates difficulties in the movement. The reason for the arrest may be political but this affects the movement. Table 7.10.1 shows the imprisonment of the trade union leaders for participating in the trade union activities ~~only~~.

The table clearly shows that 31 leaders have been arrested on various trade union issues. Only 6 independent have been arrested among the leaders who were interviewed. This shows that the problem of party policy is also a factor in determining the imprisonment of the leaders. The reasons for the arrests are as follows :-

- (1) Instigating the workers to go on strike.
- (2) Participation in 'satyagraha' before the mills.

Table-No. 7.10.1 : Period of imprisonment of the trade union leaders for participation in union activities.

Duration of imprisonment ----- Party of the union leader	No imprisonment	Below six months	One year	One and a half years	Two years	Two and a half years	Three years and above	Total
Congress	14	4	-	1	-	1	1	22
Communist Party	5	3	3	2	1	3	1	18
Praja Socialist Party	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	8
Peasants and Workers Party	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Scheduled caste federation	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Independents	28	2	-	-	-	2	2	34
Total	53	13	4	3	1	6	4	84

Source : Leadership Investigation Sample.

- (3) Organising demonstrations of workers.
- (4) Breaking the ~~144~~ Section ¹⁴⁴ (banning the assembly of more than four persons) of the criminal procedure code.

Six of the present leaders had gone underground when warrants were issued to arrest them. They guided the movement by remaining 'absconded'. Two of them were arrested while they were absconding while the rest of them came overground only when warrants issued against them were withdrawn.

Some of the leaders complained that the repression of the government on the leaders compels them to remain away from the union work for a long time which affects their union activities.

In Table No. 7.10.2 we have given the imprisonment of union leaders in Sholapur according to the posts held by them. As the table shows 5 out of 15 presidents, 4 out of 14 vice-presidents, 7 out of 25 assistant secretaries and 4 out of 14 treasurers had to undergo imprisonment. But 10 out of 16 general secretaries had been to jail for participating in the union activities. It is evident that in the case of the general secretaries, the risk of getting imprisonment is more than those in any other position. Even if we study the leaders with longer period of imprisonment we find that out of 4 leaders who were imprisoned

Table No. 7.10.2 : Imprisonment of Union Leaders and the posts held by them in the Unions.

Duration of imprisonment ----- Office Bearer	No im- prison- ment	Below 6 months	One year	One and half year	Two years	Two and half years	Three years and above	Total
President	10	1	1	-	-	2	1	15
Vice President	10	2	-	-	-	1	1	14
General Secretary	6	3	1	1	-	3	2	16
Asstt. Secretary	18	4	1	1	1	-	-	25
Treasurer	9	3	1	1	-	-	-	14
Total	53	13	4	3	1	6	4	84

Source :- Leadership investigation sample.

for union activities for three years or more, 2 are general secretaries and only one president and one vice-president. No assistant secretary was imprisoned for more than 2 years and no treasurer was imprisoned for more than one and a half years. Even among the leaders who were convicted for two and a half years, 3 were general secretaries, 2 presidents and 1 vice-presidents. Thus whenever the Government finds the activities of the unions detrimental to its concepts of law and order, the general secretary is usually the first victim.

The period of imprisonment of a leader can be correlated with the type of the leader. Of the 53 leaders who were not arrested at all, 34 were insiders and 19 outsiders. Even as regards the period of imprisonment it seems that the outsiders have to undergo imprisonment for a larger duration than the insiders. All the 4 leaders who were put behind the bars for more than 3 years are outsiders. Similarly, 4 outsiders had undergone imprisonment for two and a half years while only 2 insiders had done so. Out of 31 leaders who were arrested for union activities, 21 were outsiders and only 10 were insiders. This also shows that outsiders had to undergo more imprisonment than insiders.

Chapter VIII

C O N C L U S I O N

The investigation carried out on the labour organisations in Sholapur has given us a general view of the problems facing the local trade unions in the industrial city. Apart from certain local peculiarities the problems of the trade union movement in Sholapur are not basically different from those in India as a whole. However, it is necessary to view them in the light of the general advancement of the trade union movement in our country.

8.2 Achievements of the Trade Union Movement

In the early days when factories were started in our country there was no law to govern the working conditions. The whole family of workers was toiling hard in these factories from 12 to 16 hours a day. There was complete absence of Sunday holiday and ~~no~~ check on the starting and closing time of the factories. For want of any regulations children had to work as grown-ups and when the workers died in the factory not much importance was attached to it by the employers.

The protests of the working men in the early days were extremely feeble and did not take ~~any~~ any form of

organised struggles for a pretty long time. It was none but the trade union movement in our country that created a consciousness in the minds of these workers that they can redress their grievances if they come together and make organised efforts. However, the trade unions in the early days had to struggle hard for their mere existence and to defend the interests of their members.

The conditions of the workers have changed considerably during the last forty years. The labour movement in our country has secured the acceptance of certain principles and laws embodying them. What are the achievements during the last 40 years of the life of the industrial worker in India? They may be stated as follows:-

1. Eight hour day.
2. Holiday on Sunday.
3. Rest intervals during the working period for meals.
4. Prohibition of child labour.
5. Compensation for accident.
6. Maternity benefit and leave during the period of confinement.
7. Leave with pay.
8. Timely payment of wages without any illegal deductions and limit on fines.
9. Provident Fund and Insurance.
10. The minimum wage limit.

11. Right to bonus.
12. Wages linked to the cost of living.
13. Compensation for involuntary unemployment.
14. Machinery to settle industrial disputes.

With the advent of Independence new aspirations have been created in the minds of the workers. The Government of India has also enacted a good deal of labour legislation to meet the aspirations. The trade union movement has acquired a new strength in India and new opportunities have been created for the further development of healthy trade unionism.

The working class of Sholapur, as we have seen, has contributed its share in the struggle all over India for the betterment of the living conditions of the workers.

8.3 Organisational weakness of the Trade Unions

The study of the organisational set up of the unions in Sholapur has shown us a number of weak points in the structure of the union organisations. Even now trade unions are seen active only when there is an urgent issue agitating in the minds of the workers. Multiplicity of the unions has further resulted in increasing the organizational weakness and financial instability of the unions. Thus, inspite of the increase in the membership of the unions their organisation remains almost stagnant.

Dr. S. D. Punekar in his 'Introduction' to the "Trade Union Movement in India"¹ remarked about this situation in the following manner :

"The political division of trade unionism affects the movement in many ways. Firstly, it leads to multiplicity and consequent rivalry among trade unions. Secondly, it exploits the trade unions for political purposes, thereby completely neglecting their legitimate activities. Thirdly, it discourages a worker, who has no interest in any political party but who may be keen to pursue industrial and economic activities, from becoming a trade unionist. Fourthly, it does not allow the ordinary workers to rise in the labour movement, by maintaining the hold of outsiders over them. Lastly and generally, political unionism leads to general weakness of trade unions."

He further states,

"In the absence of any inherent strength of trade unions there has been a tendency to rely heavily on Government sponsored industrial relations' machinery in preference to methods of mutual insurance and collective bargaining. In India considerable time and money

¹ A.S.Mathur and J.S.Mathur, Trade Union Movement in India, 1957. Chaitanya Publishing House, Introduction by S. D. Punekar, pages x-xi.

of trade unions are wasted in pleading cases in Labour Courts or before adjudicators, and hence essential cultural and welfare activities are not undertaken."

Dr. Punekar calls this a vicious circle which, according to him, must be broken if trade unionism has to develop on proper lines. This raises to the forefront an important issue about the role of political parties in the trade union movement, as this issue has a special significance from the point of view of trade union unity.

It would be unfair, however, to criticise the political parties for all the defects in the trade union movement. It is necessary to admit that a part of the weakness is mainly due to the inefficiency of the leadership itself. If we do not separate this aspect from the political one we may not be able to improve the standard of union administration and organisation. Suppose, all political parties agreed, on one fine morning to remain aloof from the trade unions, all the defects in the movement will not be wiped out. One of the reasons for the weakness of trade unions is the backwardness and illiteracy of the workers who are to be educated patiently and systematically. Of course it is true that a peculiar feature of the trade union movement in our country is the formation of unions on the basis of political affiliations.

3.4 Political parties and Trade Unions

It is an admitted fact that political parties in India have played an important role in building the trade union movement. They have supplied the workers the leadership, popularised the workers demands in other sections of the community and initiated the development of trade unions as big mass organisation^s. The history of the trade unionism in India would be meaningless if the role of the political parties is not taken into consideration. We have seen that even in Sholapur political parties have been the pioneers in building the unions in the city.

However, the problem was not so much complicated before 1947 as there was only one central trade union organisation in India, viz. All India Trade Union Congress (A.I.T.U.C.). The Indian Federation of Labour was in existence during the second world war period but it had no substantial following among the workers. Leaders of all the political parties were working in the A.I.T.U.C. and inspite of differences of opinion the trade union movement was united. Even the differences during the thirties were patched up and the central organisation became stronger after the achievement of unity in 1938.

After the Independence every political party made frantic efforts to bring the Indian workers under its

fold. This resulted in a wide split in the trade union movement by the formation of different all-India organisations. Thus in 1947 ^{the} Indian National Trade Union Congress (I.N.T.U.C.) was formed under the leadership of ^{the late} Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel. In 1947 there was a further split in the A.I.T.U.C. and a section of it belonging to the Socialist Party of India took the lead in forming ^{the} Hind Mazdoor Sabha (H.M.S.). The Indian Federation of Labour amalgamated with the H.M.S. In 1951 there was another split in the H.M.S. and a section of it under the leadership of ^{Shri} Mrinal Kanti Bose broke away to form an independent organisation namely, ^{the} United Trade Union Congress (U.T.U.C.). The Communist Party of India became the dominant group in the A.I.T.U.C. Thus, soon after the Independence we got four central organisations based on different ideologies. The division in the ranks of the workers on this account has, no doubt, proved harmful to the collective bargaining strength of the workers.

It is often stated that political parties come in the way of trade union unity and the argument is further carried out to say that trade unions should be kept away from politics. It is true that on many occasions political parties have confused trade union issues with political ones and often trade union and party work have been considered almost identical. As Dr. Punekar has observed

in the paragraph quoted earlier in this chapter, it has discouraged the workers without any political affiliations to join the union. At times the weapon of strike has been misused to express the political strength of ~~the~~^a party against ~~the~~^a rival party while the other party has used strike breaking tactics to show that the claim of its rival party is baseless. Thus the workers have been the victims of the political rivalry and as a result of this the trade union movement at large has also suffered a severe setback. It is often stated that trade unions in our country are over-politicalised.

As we have seen in our study a majority of the trade union leaders belong to one or the other political party. A strong condemnation of political parties for taking interest in trade union activities would not lead us anywhere. Political parties can claim to have a right to work in ~~the~~ trade union organisations and many members of ~~the~~^a union are likely to take interest in political parties. However, the interests of the workers should not be allowed to suffer due to the differences in political ideologies. It is necessary, for this purpose, to have a clear cut demarcation between the political and the trade union platform^s. Political parties may carry on their activities among the workers, but they should do so on their own party platform. Similarly no political resolution should be passed by a trade union

unless it obtained a 3/4th majority of votes. If ^{the} trade union platform is kept separate from the party platform and if principles of trade union democracy are accepted by all political parties there would not be much difficulty ~~in~~ in bringing all the trade union organisation together.

In England a separate labour party was formed after the trade union movement emerged as a strong force in the country. In our country, however, the development has taken place from the other end. Under such circumstances formation of a new Labour Party in our country, as suggested by many students of trade unionism, will not solve the problem but will add to a further split in the movement itself. The solution therefore lies in forming one single trade union centre in our country and demarkating the trade union platform from the party platform.

8.5 Problems of Trade Union Unity

Problems of trade ^{union} unity are widely discussed in all sections of the trade union movement. The urge for unity among the ranks of the workers is so powerful that even the leadership has to find out ways and means for uniting itself. It would be interesting to study the policies of different trade union organisations ~~towards~~ ^{regarding} trade union unity.

G. D. Ambekar in his presidential address at the 8th Annual session of the I.N.T.U.C. in May 1956 discussed at length the question of trade union unity. He strongly criticised the Communists for their policy and stated that the slogan of trade union unity given by them is merely 'a tactical move'. "Moreover," he said, "how can there be a unity when even today their whole approach is the approach of class war and class conflict." However, he felt that there is much ^{ground} common between the I.N.T.U.C. and the H.M.S. He suggested that the two organisations should evolve a code of behaviour on the following lines :-

"(1) Where the INTUC unions are strong and running on proper trade union lines, the H.M.S. should not create rival unions and withdraw where they are weak or not running on proper lines;

"(2) where the H.M.S. unions are strong and running on proper trade union lines, the INTUC should not start rival unions and should withdraw from those industries where they are not strong and well organised;

"(3) There should be discussions on common issues in the beginning at the top level;

"(4) where there is no agreement of approach on any particular issues, each organisation should be allowed to follow its own course and nobody should criticise the other organisation and start rivalry and competition of proving who is right as the ultimate results are bound to show who was right....."

The Working Committee meeting of the H.M.S. in June 1956 enunciated the following principles for trade union unity :-

(1) Unreserved acceptance and rigid adherence to the principles and methods of democracy in the activities of the unified central organisation and affiliated trade unions and in the internal functioning of both.

(2) Complete freedom from interference by the Government or by political parties.

(3) Existing rivalries among several unions in the same field should be resolved by providing for the workers to select a union of their own choice through secret ballot.

The Working Committee of H.M.S., however, felt that mere working adjustments with only the INTUC or the AITUC were not adequate for the purpose as it thought that it might "actually hinder the cause of overall trade union unity."

In the same year the General Council meeting of the AITUC in Calcutta formulated the following nine point platform for organisational unity of the trade union centres :

(1) Unreserved acceptance of, and respect for democratic functioning of the trade unions;

(2) Regular and democratic elections of the executive bodies and office bearers;

(3) Proper representation to all trends in the leading organs of the common organisation;

(4) Right of every worker and trade unionists to belong to any political party of his own choice;

(5) Freedom from interference in the internal affairs of the organisation by the Government, employers and political parties;

(6) All vital decisions affecting the workers interests, including important collective agreements with the employers, to be endorsed by the general body of the workers;

(7) All decisions on political issues to be conditional on 75 per cent majority in their favour;

(8) In the normal course, strike action to be taken only as a last resort and after properly ascertaining the wishes of the workers;

(9) "Rival" unions in the same factory, industry or undertaking be wound up either by :

- (a) allowing the workers to select the union of their choice through a secret ballot, or
- (b) merging them together on the basis of proportional representation to their respective membership; or
- (c) any other democratic and mutually agreed procedure.

The UTUC supported the proposal of the AITUC of a Round Table Conference of the representatives of all national centres to discuss and devise ways of achieving unity. It also was in agreement with the resolution of the working committee of HMS.

If we study all these proposals it is not difficult to see that there is a common ground for ^{the} trade union unity among all the central organisations. However, due to various political considerations they have not yet been able to evolve a common programme for the organisational unity of all the trade union organisations in India.

Recently the movement towards trade union unity had made considerable headway. A meeting of the representatives of all central organisations was held under the chairmanship of Shri Gulzarilal Nanda (Labour Minister, Government of India) after the sixteenth Indian Labour Conference at Nainital. The meeting formulated a code of conduct which laid down the principles of inter-union relationship. If the code is implemented properly it would certainly minimise the rivalry between the unions and would further create an atmosphere for uniting the trade union movement in our country.

The formation of one single united central trade union organisation in India will not only bring together

all those unions that are affiliated to various central organisations but also will bring under its fold many independent local unions which have not joined any central trade union organisation.

3.3 Trade Union Democracy

The need for democratic functioning of unions is very widely stated today. However, as we have seen earlier, trade union democracy is meaningful only when the rank and file workers take active interest in the day today working of the union. At present members of the union take interest only in getting their grievances redressed while they are not worried over the organisation of the union. They keep complete faith in their leader with the hope that he would do everything for them and they follow his instructions without considering the soundness of them. If a leader represents the workers' grievances properly, if he writes petitions regularly, if he creates enthusiasm in the minds of the workers in the public meetings he can easily win the confidence of the rank and file workers. But this is not enough if ~~the~~ trade unions are to develop as permanent organisation^s for the wellbeing of the workers.

The workers pay subscription to the union only when there is some urgent issue facing them. There is a strong apathy in their minds towards the union functioning

and its administration. They do not behave in this way deliberately but it is mainly because they are not aware of their rights and responsibilities. Now the days are gone to continue the structure of the union based on the pillar of one or two active wholetimers. It is high time that ordinary rank and file workers should be taught and encouraged to actively participate in the day today work of the union.

The government is trying to supervise the working of the local unions by inspecting the 'Annual Returns' submitted by the unions to the Registrar of Trade Unions. But this machinery is far from adequate to guarantee the democratic functioning of the unions as the 'Annual Returns' can be manipulated without being noticed by the Registrar of Trade Unions. This can be done effectively only by a central organisation which is not being done at present. It is desirable that the representatives of central organisations should inspect the working of the local unions at regular intervals and give them suggestions to improve the functioning of the union.

The functioning of trade union democracy rests on the conscious and vigilant rank and file members of the union. This is possible only if a programme of trade union education is undertaken on a vast scale to educate the members of the union in ^{the} principles of trade unionism.

8.7 Trade Union Education

The problem of active trade union cadre is extremely urgent under the present circumstances. The union leaders always complain that they are overworked and the members of the managing committee are not in a position to carry out the responsibilities effectively. Even the present leadership finds it difficult to cope with the day to day needs of the union work. This raises the question of trade union education which is in no way less important than the problem of trade union unity.

The All India trade union organisations have not paid proper attention so far to this pressing problem, but recently there are encouraging reports about the moves of these organisations. The INTUC College at Indore and AITUC's decision to start "N.M.Joshi Memorial School for Trade Unionism" in Bombay are two important steps in this direction. The Government of India has also taken initiative in formulating a Workers' Education Scheme in collaboration with trade union organisations, employers and universities. Under this scheme 10 centres will be opened all over the country where T.U. teachers will be trained who will further teach the workers in the factories. The workers attending the courses will be given paid leave for an hour every day. All the worker trainees are to be deputed through the unions only.

The problem of trade union education has a three-fold aspect: First the training of T.U. leaders, second, the training of T.U. Cadres and Third, the training of rank and file workers. A trade union education scheme should cover all these aspects if it wants to satisfy all the requirements of the union.

A vast educational programme would result in initiating the rising of the T.U. leadership from the insiders. The dependence of the present trade union movement would be gradually decreased and workers would be able to manage their affairs themselves.

3.8 Trade Union Research

Research in trade unionism is a highly neglected subject ~~in the trade union movement~~ for which the movement has suffered greatly. At present in our country there is not a single trade union journal devoted entirely for the discussion of the problems of the movement in India. On many occasions local trade union workers are greatly confused by reading charges and counter-charges of central leaders who do not substantiate their arguments by factual data. Sometimes they are also propaganda oriented.

Trade Union research has a special significance from the point of view of policy framing of the All India Organisations. If the delegates attending All

India Conferences are provided with the relevant data they can form their opinions and express their views effectively. This can be done only if a research department is attached to the ^secretariat of the All India organisations. Of course, this involves financial expenditure and the present conditions may not be favourable for it. However, if government shows its readiness to help such departments financially trade union organisations may be in a position to undertake such responsibilities. The government also can avail of the cooperation of T.J. organisations in the collection of statistical data pertaining to labour. It is desirable that universities should also undertake research programmes on a more extensive scale in co-operation with trade union organisations. Thus, with the co-ordination of government, university and trade unions a broad programme of trade union research can be undertaken that will help in bringing to the forefront various problems facing the trade union movement in our country.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : QUESTIONNAIRE RELATING TO THE ORGANISATION
AND ACTIVITIES OF TRADE UNIONS IN SHOLAPUR

1. Name of the Union.
2. Address.
3. Date of Formation.
4. Date of Registration.
5. Date of passing the Constitution.
6. Industry which the Union covers.
7. To which All-India Organisation the Union is affiliated.
8. What are the political affiliations of the Union.
9. Name of the organisation in the industry, if any, before the formation of your union.
10. Rate of subscription of the union.
11. Method of Collection.
12. Does your Union charge any entrance fee, if so, how much?
13. Number of members for the year 1955-56
 - Male:
 - Female:
 - Total:
- 14.1 Give the membership figures of previous years, if possible (yearwise)
- 14.2 Is the membership register kept properly?
- 15.1 Number of members of the managing committee coming from :
 - (a) the workers
 - (b) the outsiders
 - (c) Total

- 15.2 Give figures of previous years if possible (yearwise).
- 16.1 How many managing committee meetings were held during 1955-56.
- 16.2 Give figures of previous years if possible (yearwise).
- 16.3 Are the minutes kept regularly?
- 17.1 How many office-bearers of the union are wholetimers?
- 17.2 How many of them are paid by the union?
- 17.3 Rate of payment?
- 17.4 Are they paid regularly?
18. Are the accounts of the Union regularly audited?
19. Are the annual returns regularly sent to the Registrar of Trade Union, Bombay?
20. Is the Union recognised by the employers?
21. Are there works committees or joint councils inside the factory or at the place of work?
22. Do they function systematically? If not, why?
23. Does your union represent in them?
24. What are the duties that they carry out?
25. How are your relations with the rival union if there is any, in your industry.
26. How many cases your union has conducted in the Court during the last seven years? (yearwise).
 - (a) No. of cases filed:
 - (b) No. of cases successful:
 - (c) No. of cases unsuccessful:
 - (d) No. of cases pending:
27. Have you anything to suggest regarding the functioning of the Labour Court?

28. Have you anything to suggest regarding the machinery for settling industrial disputes?
- 29.1 Did you the Union resort to any strike?
- 29.2 What part did the Union play in conducting it?
30. Did the Union contest any elections and if so, what was the success therein?
31. Please give a brief account of the welfare work done by the Union, if any.
32. Educational work of the Union:
- (a) No. of classes conducted by the Union to educate its members.
 - (b) Attendance at each class.
 - (c) Does the Union maintain a library? If so, what is the number of books in it and how many of them were lent to workers in a year?
 - (d) Does the Union maintain any reading room?
33. If the Union conducts any other activity for the benefit of its members, please state them.
34. Has the Union made any special efforts to organise women? If so, please state them.
35. Has the Union made any special attempts to bring untouchables to the union? If so, please state them.
36. Are the union workers victimised for participating in the trade union activities. If so, give details.
37. Office functioning:
- (a) Office hours.
 - (b) Area in sq. ft.
 - (c) No. of rooms.
 - (d) No. of letters despatched.
 - (e) Is there any office secretary?
 - (f) Does your union accommodate office of any other union?
38. Are the outsiders helpful to the union. If so, in what respect?
39. Please supply the copies of the statements of accounts of the Union (give copies of the last two years).

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40. Any other information relating to the above questions.

NOTES :-

Record of participation in T.U. activities.

(1) Strikes:

(2) Conferences:

(3) Deputations:

(4) Mill or Works' Committees:

(5) Legal Proceedings:

(b) Political career:

Are you a member of any political party?

If so, when did you join?

Have you ever changed party affiliations?

If so, name the parties:

Are you holding any post in the Party?

Have you ever contested ^{for} a seat in the Municipality or the Legislative Assembly?

Have you ever been elected on these bodies?

If so, give the period:

(c) Any other social or welfare activities:

(d) Were you ever victimised for participating in T.U. activities? If so, give the details.

Were you ever arrested for participating in the Union activities?

If so, give the details:

Was any disciplinary action taken against you for your T.U. outlook?

(e) What type of work you are doing in the Union:

- (1) Office work:
- (2) Organisational work:
- (3) Both:

Have you studied T.U. laws? If so, name the laws.

Did you speak in public meetings?

Did you write union leaflets?

Are you acquainted with the technical aspects of the work done by the members of the union in their workplaces.

(f) What are your personal difficulties in doing union work?

Do you wish to adopt the T.U. activity as a life career?

Other biographical remarks, if any:

(v) What are your views on:

- (a) Problem of one union in one industry:
- (b) Present system of collective bargaining:
- (c) Problem of outsiders in the T.U. Movement:
- (d) Political Parties and Trade Unions:
- (e) Present state of affairs in the Union:

Notes:

APPENDIX C : The Model Constitution supplied to trade unions by the Registrar of Trade Unions, Bombay.*

NAME

1. The name of the Union shall be the _____ and it shall, in the following rules, be referred to as the "Union".

OBJECTS

2. (A) The objects of the Union shall be :-
- (a) to organise and unite the persons employed in the _____ industry in the _____ city and to regulate their relations with their employers;
 - (b) to secure to the members fair conditions of life and service;
 - (c) to try to redress their grievances;
 - (d) to try to prevent any reduction of wages, and, if possible, to obtain an advance whenever circumstances allow;
 - (e) to endeavour to settle disputes between employers and employees amicably so that a cessation of work may be avoided;
 - (f) to endeavour to provide against sickness, unemployment, infirmity, old age and death;
 - (g) to endeavour to secure compensation for members in cases of accidents under the Workmen's Compensation Act;
 - (h) to provide legal assistance to members in respect

of matters arising out of or incidental to, their employment;

(i) to endeavour to render aid to the members during any strike brought about with the sanction of the union or a lock-out.

(j) to obtain information in reference to the _____ industry in India and outside;

(k) to co-operate and federate with organisations (of labour), particularly those having similar objects, in India and outside;

(l) to help, in accordance with the Indian Trade Unions Act, the working classes in India and outside in the promotion of the objects mentioned in this rule, and

(m) generally, to take such other steps as may be necessary to ameliorate the social, economic, civic and political conditions of the members.

(B) For the attainment of these objects, the union may organise centres in various localities of the _____

ADMISSION OF ORDINARY MEMBERS

3. Any person employed in the _____ industry _____ in _____ district) who has attained the age of 15 years shall be entitled to become an Ordinary member of the union on payment of an admission fee of annas _____ and a monthly subscription of _____, provided he agrees

to abide by rules and bye-laws that may be made by the union from time to time.

ADMISSION OF HONORARY MEMBERS

4. Persons who are not eligible to become ordinary members of the union may be admitted as honorary members of the Union for purposes of being elected or co-opted to the Managing Committee and they shall be honorary members of the Union during the period of their office. -Subject to the provisions of section 22 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, their number shall not exceed___.

FINES AND FORFEITURES

5. A member failing to pay his monthly subscription for six months with the permission of the Managing Committee ~~for six months~~ or three months without the permission of the said Committee, shall cease to be a member of the Union. But he shall be entitled to rejoin the Union on paying his arrears.

BENEFITS

6. No member of the Union shall be entitled to any benefits that the Union may decide to give to its members unless he has been a member for at least six months and has paid all contributions.

7. A member of the Union who is in arrears with his subscription or dues shall not be entitled to any benefits until all arrears have been paid and a period of two months has elapsed from the date of payment of such arrears.

8. Should the members of the Union go on strike without the sanction or approval of the Managing Committee, they shall not be entitled to any benefits whatever.

REGISTER OF MEMBERS

9. The union shall keep a register of all its members containing their names and particulars of their place of work, their residence, etc.

10. The register shall be open to inspection by any member or officer of the union at the Head Office during the hours during which the Office of the Union is open on any week day excluding holidays.

OFFICE BEARERS

11. The Union shall have a President, not more than _____ Vice Presidents, a General Secretary, _____ Secretaries, and a Treasurer. All of them shall be elected at the annual General Meeting of the Union and they shall be eligible for re-election.

MANAGEMENT OF THE UNION

12. The Managing Committee; subject to the provisions of section 21 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, the affairs of the Union, financial and otherwise, shall be conducted by a Managing Committee consisting of the office-bearers and _____ other members elected at the annual general meeting. The same Managing Committee will continue functioning till the new one is appointed.

VACANCIES AND REMOVALS

13. Should a vacancy occur among the office-bearers or the members of the Managing Committee it shall be filled by the Managing Committee by co-option.

14. Any office-bearer of the Union or a member of its Managing Committee can be removed by the General Meeting of the Members by a three-fourths majority for committing any fraud or having acted against the interests of the Union, provided the office-bearer or the member to be removed is given adequate opportunity to explain his conduct.

MEETING OF THE MANAGING COMMITTEE

15. The Managing Committee shall meet once a month on such days and at such place as may be fixed by the General Secretary in consultation with the President.

16. The presence of at least one-third members of the Managing Committee shall be necessary to form a quorum. No quorum is necessary for adjourned meetings.
17. At least three days' notice shall be given for a Managing Committee meeting.

DUTIES OF THE OFFICE-BEARERS

18. The President and the Vice-Presidents :- The President shall preside over all meetings of the Union and the Managing Committee, preserve order, sign all minutes and shall be allowed to give a casting vote only. The President shall have power, if necessary, to call special meetings of the Managing Committee or of the Union, whenever necessary. One of the Vice-Presidents shall function in place of the President in his absence.
19. The General Secretary:- The General Secretary, shall take minutes of all union and committee meetings, conduct all correspondence, convene all meetings, keep all accounts, exercise a supervision over the affairs of the Union and shall also keep a correct account of all receipts and expenditure. He shall prepare a balance-sheet annually showing clearly every item of receipts and expenditure. He shall be responsible for submitting to the Registrar of Trade Unions all returns and notices that should be sent to that officer under the Indian

Trade Union Act, 1926. He shall have power to engage, in consultation with the President and subject to the approval or confirmation of the Managing Committee, any assistants for organising and clerical purposes he considers necessary, and all such assistants shall be under the control of the General Secretary.

20. The Secretaries :- The Secretaries shall generally help the General Secretary in his work. One of them shall perform the duties of the General Secretary in his absence.

21. The Treasurer :- The Treasurer shall be responsible for all sums of money which may from time to time be paid into the Union and for duly banking them. He shall make payments towards all expenditure sanctioned by the Managing Committee. He shall not have the power to draw money from the Bank without first having the cheque signed by the President or the General Secretary.

GENERAL MEETINGS

22. There shall be held in the month of April or May an Annual General Meeting of all the members of the Union, to transact the following business :-

- (a) To adopt the report of the work done by the union and the audited statement of accounts;
- (b) To elect the office-bearers and other members

of the Managing Committee for the current year; and

(c) to transact such other business as may be brought forward with the permission of the Chairman.

23. The President or the General Secretary may call a General Meeting of the members of the Union whenever he thinks necessary and shall call it on a requisition signed by one-fifth of the total strength of the union within twenty days of the receipt of the requisition. In case the President or the General Secretary fails to convene such a meeting, the requisitionists themselves shall call a meeting after due notice and the proceedings of the meeting shall be binding on the union.

24. At least 15 days' notice shall be given to the members for a General Meeting.

25. The presence of at least one-third members shall be necessary to form a quorum at a general meeting. No quorum is necessary for adjourned meetings.

GENERAL FUNDS

26. The general funds of the union shall consist of the subscriptions from members, donations etc. They shall be deposited in a Bank or Banks, approved by the Managing Committee in the name of the union and the account shall be operated by the Treasurer and any one of the President or the General Secretary. The General Secretary

or the Treasurer shall not keep more than Rs. 50/- with him for current expenses.

OBJECTS ON WHICH THE GENERAL FUNDS CAN BE EXPENDED

27. Subject to the provisions of section 15 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 the general funds of the union shall not be spent on any other objects than the following, namely :-

(a) the payment of salaries, allowances and expenses to officers of the Union;

(b) the payment of expenses for the administration of the Union including audit of the accounts of the general funds of the Union;

(c) the prosecution or defence of any legal proceedings to which the Union or any member thereof is a party when such prosecution or defence is undertaken for the purposes of securing or protecting any rights of the Union as such or any rights arising out of the relations of any member with his employer/or with a person whom the member employs;

(d) the conduct of trade disputes on behalf of the Union or any member thereof;

(e) the compensation of members for loss arising out of trade disputes;

(f) allowances to members or their dependants on account of death, old age, sickness, accidents or unemployment of such members;

(g) the issue of, or the undertaking of liability under policies of assurance on the lives of members, or under policies insuring members against sickness, accident or unemployment;

(h) the provision of educational, social or religious benefits for members (including the payment of the expenses of funeral or religious ceremonies for deceased members) or for the dependants of members;

(i) the upkeep of a periodical published mainly for the purpose of discussing questions ~~of~~ affecting employer/s/ or workmen as such.

(j) the payment, in furtherance of any of the objects on which the general funds of the Union may be spent, of contributions to any cause intended to benefit workmen in general, provided that the expenditure in respect of such contributions in any financial year shall not at any time during the year be in excess of one-fourth of the combined total of the gross income which has up to that time accrued to the general funds of the Union during that year and of the balance at the credit of those funds at the commencement of that year and

(k) subject to any conditions contained in the notification, any other object notified by the appropriate

Government in the Official Gazettee.

ANNUAL AUDIT

23. The Union shall make due provision for the annual audit of the accounts of the Union by competent auditors appointed by the Managing Committee in accordance with Rule 13 of the Bombay Trade Unions Regulations, 1927.

INSPECTION OF BOOKS OF ACCOUNTS

29. The books of accounts of the Union shall be open to the inspection of any member or officer at the head office of the Union during the hours during which the office of the union is open on any week day excluding holidays.

AMENDMENT OF RULES

30. The rules may be amended, altered, replaced, rescinded or added to at any time by a majority of the members present at a General Meeting provided previous notice of at least seven days is given to the members of the proposed alterations.

DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION

31. The Union shall not be dissolved except by the vote of a majority of three-fourths members present at

a General Meeting called for the purpose, provided the total number of votes cast at such a meeting is not less than two-third of the total number of the members then on the rolls of the Union.

The funds of the Union after meeting all the liabilities shall be disposed of in accordance with the decision of the dissolution meeting.

and became its vice president in 1949. In 1952 he was elected as president of the Sangh.

He attended six All India Conferences of the Indian National Trade Union Congress as the delegate of the Sangh and was one of the leading organisers of the All India Conference of Indian National Textile Workers' Federation that was held in Sholapur in 1955. He was a leader of the deputation to the District Magistrate in 1952 regarding the delay in the execution of the award of the Industrial Court, Bombay, on the engineering workers. He is working on the Joint Committee in the Vishnu Mills since 1950 and is a trustee of the Provident Fund Scheme. He participated in the legal proceedings only once in the case of ^a textile worker in 1955.

At present, he is doing the organisational work of the Sangh. He can speak in public meetings and can write union leaflets but has not studied labour legislation at all. He has no personal difficulties in doing trade union work and wishes to adopt trade union activity as a life career. He gives a few hours every day for the work of the Sangh.

He supports the idea of the one union for one industry but thinks that this can be done only when political parties are kept aloof from the trade union movement. According to him the present system of collec-

-tive bargaining is a satisfactory one because the labour is not properly educated and does not know its own good. Hence, from his own point of view, no other system except conciliation and arbitration will help workers in solving their difficulties. Even though he strongly opposes the domination of political parties in the trade unions he thinks that on important issues of national interest trade unions should wholeheartedly back the programme of the democratic political party. He says: "Trade Unions should think about the nation first, the workers next and the political party last." He is of the opinion that the present state of affairs in the union is satisfactory. Even though all the office-bearers cannot find time to adjust themselves to participate in the regular discussions the decisions are taken after consulting most of the responsible members of the union. According to him, the workers are doubtful about the accounts of the union because in the past, "Communists have not given their proper account sheets."

He thinks that to serve labour is to serve God, and feels that our nation mainly consists of poor labourers and farmers whose conditions must be improved remarkably if we want to attain prosperity.

He is also a member of the City Congress Committee and takes interest in the activities of the Youth Congress.

Provincial Handloom Weavers' Conference and in 1951 was a delegate to the All-India Handloom Weavers' Conference. He gave evidence before the Sholapur Handloom Weavers' Inquiry Committee (1947). At present, he is a member of the executive committee of the Bombay Provincial Handloom Weavers' Conference. He was a founder member of the Padmashali Samaj Seva Mandal Sholapur in 1937 and continues to participate in the activities of the Mandal.

He is a member of the Sholapur City Committee of the Communist Party since 1939 and was a member of the Provincial Committee of the Party from 1951-1954. He has spent 8 years and 3 months in prison so far. He unsuccessfully contested the seats in the Sholapur Municipality in 1952 and 1954 but was elected in 1957. Between 1952 to 1956 he worked as a Secretary of ^{the} Municipal Janata Aghadi, an organisation formed by the leftist parties and trade union organisations to work unitedly in the Sholapur Municipality. He was one of the leaders of the united front of all the organisations in Sholapur handloom industry which was formed to demand protection to the handloom industry. In 1954 he founded the Sholapur Plot Bhadekari Sangh and was elected its General Secretary. In 1955, he organised a conference of the Plot tenants in Sholapur and got a number of complaints redressed.

He is engaged in various other activities besides

this injustice inflicted upon him, he got exasperated and strongly felt the need to fight against such social injustice. In 1945, he joined the Congress Socialist Party and was asked to do the trade union work by the party. He belongs to a joint family and his elder brother looks after the family affairs.

For some time he was doing work among the Municipal employees and in 1948 he was elected as the honorary member of the executive committee of the Municipal Staff Association, Sholapur, and in the year 1954 he became President of the Association. In 1948 he was also elected on the executive committee of the Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh and in 1951 he was President of that organisation. He participated in the activities of the Mill Mazdoor Sabha and in 1952 he was an honorary member of the executive committee while in 1954 he became Secretary of this union. Thus, he is presently working in the important positions of three trade union organisations.

In 1948 he made efforts to organise a protest strike of the textile workers but it was a failure as "adequate preparations were not made." He was a delegate to the All India Conference of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha at its Calcutta Session in 1955. He also participated in all the provincial conferences of the Bombay branch of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

He was one of the leading members of the deputation that put the case of the workers employed in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. when the mill was about to close in 1948. He participated in the delegations to the District Magistrate, Sholapur, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the said mills on the same issue. In 1949 he was a leader of the deputation to the Home Minister on behalf of the Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Sangh.

He is well experienced in the legal proceedings. He participated in six conciliations between the bus workers and the authorities and ten conciliations between the Municipal staff and the authorities; one adjudication on behalf of the Municipal Staff and another on behalf of the bus workers. He appeared in the Labour Court in three cases of the textile workers and six other cases regarding the Workmen's Compensation Act.

He has to do both the office and the organisational work. He can write leaflets and speak in public meetings fluently. He complains that he is unable to do work in other unions for want of good health. He was offered important positions in two other unions but he had to decline the request because of this reason. He desires to adopt trade union activity as a life career and according to him: "Labour should come to the managerial fold is the main motto of my life."

Apart from the trade union activities he takes prominent part in various political and social activities. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Sholapur District Central Co-Operative Bank in 1953-54. He worked as a secretary of the City Congress Committee, Sholapur (1946-47), Kouni Milap association (1946-47), Sholapur City Journalists' Association (1951), Sholapur District Famine Relief Committee (1952), Coa Vimochan Samiti, Sholapur Branch (1954-55), Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, Sholapur Branch (1955-56). He is a member of the Maharashtra Provincial Committee of the Praja Socialist Party and also works as the Secretary of the Sholapur District Committee of the same Party. He is a full-time worker of the Party on the trade union front.

He is a strong critic of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act (1948) because he thinks that the Act has bolstered up trade unions affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress. He even goes to the extent of suggesting that the present conciliation and arbitration machinery should be scrapped and the collective bargaining must be restored based on the organisation of strength of the workers. While disapproving the present legislation, he suggests that there should be only one labour code for all workers engaged in different industries. He regards outsiders as necessary for the trade union movements for at least one more generation.

difficulties of the family. Leaving aside his ambition he had to work as an apprentice for the mechanical fitter in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mills. Being un-touchable by caste, the other Hindu workers were not prepared to train him in the job and in the beginning he had to do the work of cleaning the machine, oiling it and other sundry work of a coolie. After one year though he was capable of doing the work of the mechanical fitter and was actually doing the job efficiently he was given the wages of a coolie and was designated as such in the mill. He had to do the additional work of a sweeper but was not paid for that work. He saw the cases of a number of untouchable workers against whom such indiscrimination was practised. He also found that seniority of the untouchable workers was rarely considered while giving promotions. In the weaving department the untouchable workers were not allowed to work and no worker was even prepared to teach them the work. He noticed that some of the untouchable workers managed to enter in the weaving department by keeping their caste undisclosed.

In 1943 when he was given the work of the motor starter on the wages of a coolie and the work of the mechanical fitter was given to other touchable worker who was in no way more skilled than he, he was extremely annoyed seeing the injustice and resigned the job. ~~Having observed the deplorable conditions of the untouch-~~

Having observed the deplorable conditions of the untouchable workers, he decided to devote his life for the cause of them. He joined the Scheduled Castes Federation in 1945 and soon became a full-time worker of that organisation. His organisational abilities pushed him ahead and within two years he was taken on the city committee of the Scheduled Castes Federation and by 1950 he was elected Secretary of the District Committee of that organisation.

He was elected member of the Sholapur Municipal School Board and is working ^{there} since that time. He founded the Ambedkar Vidyarthi Boarding in 1953 for the benefit of the untouchable students and the Asprushya Samaj Sudharak Mandal in 1954 to introduce social reforms among the untouchables. He is working as the Secretary of the Sholapur District Backward Class Education Board ^{since} ~~in~~ 1955. He is now a member of the Provincial Committee of the Scheduled Castes Federation.

Since 1950 he is taking keen interest in the trade union movement. In 1953 he made efforts to form an independent union of the untouchable workers but was convinced that such a step will only create disruption ^{among} ~~in~~ the workers. So he along with his party cooperated with other unions in Sholapur. He was elected in 1954 as Vice-President of the P.W.D. workers' Union in his absence.

He can speak fluently in public meetings but cannot so efficiently write union leaflets. He has not studied any labour legislation so far. He mainly does the organisational work of the union. He attended the Sholapur District Conference of the Government Peons and Inferior Servants in 1955.

From his experience he feels that the workers are not conscious of the trade union movement and do not regard trade union as a permanent organisation. According to him it is the outlook of the union leadership that is mainly responsible for the failure to educate the workers in trade unionism. He even criticises the trade unions for not tackling the social problems of the workers. The problem of untouchability is not yet tackled effectively, because according to him the union leadership fears that the majority of the touchable workers, due to their ignorance, may withdraw their support of the union. But he feels the urgency of this problem because the untouchables constitute the lowest stratum among the workers who are looked upon as inferiors by the employers as well as by a large section of the workers; If special efforts are made to compensate for this neglect, the untouchable workers will then only feel like joining the unions in large numbers.

He does not approve of the present system of conciliation and arbitration as the urgent problems of the workers

remain pending for a long time. The workers, due to the time-consuming process, lose their faith in their own organisation and also get frustrated in the end. The trade union movement suffers greatly due to this. He feels the necessity of outsiders in the trade union movement for giving it a proper shape. They are going to carry out important functions till the actual workers are trained in doing these tasks. He criticises the political parties for bringing trade unions under their domination and suggests that this movement should be kept aloof from all political controversies whatsoever.

He is a full time worker of the Party which pays him an honorarium of Rs. 50/-. His wife is a municipal primary school teacher.

Case No. 5 : Shri _____
President, Municipal workers Union,
Sholapur.

He comes from a Lingayat family and was educated up to high school III standard. His father was strenuously making efforts to make him a good wrestler but he was not at all for it. He joined the trade union movement in 1943 when he was only 18 years old. His contact with the union came through the Radical Democratic Party of Shri M. N. Roy and he became the President of the Municipal Kamgar Sangh. He was also a member of the local executive

committee of the Party. In 1944 he had a conflict with the Party and left the union to start a rival union named Municipal Workers' Union. His union became so popular among the workers that within a year the old union ceased to function. Since 1944 he is working as the President of this union.

In 1946 he organised the Motor Workers' Union and Shimpi Kamgar Union, while in 1948, he founded the Medical Staff Association. In 1949 he was the Secretary of the Godown Workers' Union. All these unions were dissolved after some days as they were formed for temporary demands. He organised three strikes of the Municipal workers in 1944, 1946 and 1947 and attended the sessions of the Bombay Presidency Municipal Workers' Conference in 1948 and 1949. He was a leader of the deputations to the District Magistrate on the Municipal Workers' demand in 1948, 1951 and 1954. He was a member of the Joint Committee consisting of the representatives of the Municipality and the union but he found that the resolutions passed in the meetings were not brought into practice.

He had taken initiative in organising a library for the workers in the office of the union and a volley ball team in the Bhangi quarters. He had also made efforts to start a literacy class among the municipal workers in 1953-54 but had to close it because sufficient

number of workers did not participate in it. He is not a member of any political party, neither does he think of joining any. But he takes interest in the peace movement. He was a delegate to the world Peace Congress held in Helsinki (1954) and has toured in the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia.

He has to do the office as well as the organisational work of the Union. Though he is not well acquainted with English, he has made efforts to study some of the Labour Laws. He cannot fluently speak in public meetings but can write union leaflets. He wishes to adopt the trade union activity as a life career but he feels that his present salary of Rs. 75/- per month which he gets from his union is inadequate. However, he owns a plot of land and gets nearly Rs. 1000 per year from the same. He is the head of the family of ten members and besides himself his younger brother is earning Rs. 60 per month.

He criticises the present machinery of settling the industrial disputes and holds the employers responsible for their typical mentality of not giving anything to the workers through the union. He charges them of deliberately not observing the provisions made in the law while compelling the union to approach the court on every demand. He admits difficulties in creating leadership

from the ordinary workers due to the lack of education in them. He does not object to the political parties working in the union but upholds that the discipline of the union must be maintained. Otherwise, he fears that the trade union organisation may be involved in political controversies that will drag the union in the political field and the day-to-day work of the union may be neglected.

Case No. 6 : Smt. _____
Treasurer, Lal Sawta Sidi Kamgar
Union, Sholapur.

She comes from a higher middle class Hindu family and has obtained the G.A. degree of the Karve University. While taking education a general patriotic feeling and national sentiments were prevailing in her mind. Naturally she was greatly attracted in the beginning towards the Gandhian philosophy. She deeply felt the social injustice and a sort of hatred was created in her mind about the social conditions prevailing in those days.

Her elder brother was a prominent Communist worker through whose contact she was gradually attracted towards the Marxist ideology, and when she completed her education she decided to devote her life for the struggle against social inequality. She earnestly felt in those days that the trade unions are the only social organisations that would guarantee the equality in the society and she was

convinced that the working class would act as a leader in the struggle against inequality. Hence, she was attracted towards the trade union movement.

She joined the Communist Party of India in 1933 when the Party was illegal. Her contacts with the union came through the Party. She is now frank enough to admit that in those days she had no clear-cut ideas of demarcation between the trade union work and the Party work. She first started her trade union career as the Treasurer of the Lal Sawta Cirni Kamgar Union and was doing the work till 1944 with some intermittent gaps due to imprisonment. In 1938 she was elected as the General Secretary of the Lal Sawta Bidi Kamgar Union. She participated in the historic strike of the textile workers in 1934 and was the leader of the strike of Bidi workers in 1938. She had also done some organisational work during the token strike of the textile workers against the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act in 1939 and the Anti-war Strike in 1940. She was a delegate to the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Conference in Amalner in 1943 and participated in the organisational work of the same conference in Sholapur in 1945. She presided over the Nagpur and the Bombay Bidi Workers' Conference in 1939 and 1944 respectively. She had given witnesses before the Labour Commission in 1939 regarding holidays for workers and Labour Investigation Committee in 1947.

She was imprisoned four times for her trade union activities for the total period of five years and six months. She can speak well in public meetings and can write union leaflets. Apart from union work, she has participated in a variety of other social activities. She was a founder of the Sholapur Branch of the All India Women's Conference. In 1943, she was a member of the executive committee of the "Navyug Vyakhan Mala" and in 1956 a member of the "Natya Mahotsava Samiti" in Sholapur. She had started literacy classes for women workers but she could not find any favourable atmosphere and the classes were closed after a few days. She was a member of the Famine Relief Committee in 1953 when famine raged severely in the Sholapur district. She was a member of the Social Welfare Centre and organised a milk centre for the children of the workers. She has written a number of short stories and translated a novel in Marathi. Besides, she has contributed a number of articles to magazines. She was a delegate from India to the World Mothers' Conference in Switzerland in 1956 and has toured Czechoslovakia. Since 1953 she is working as a member of the Municipal School Board Sholapur.

She has no desire to continue to work in the trade union movement. According to her she was formerly attracted due to the revolutionary fervor but later on she found that her real liking and ability were better

suites to literary and other social activities.

She resigned from the membership of the Communist Party in 1949 when she was in the Yerwada Prison because she had differences with the policy of the Party. She has no intention to join the Party again in the near future. -However, she claims to be a sympathiser of the Communist Party even now.

She feels that outsiders are necessary for the trade unions as the risk of victimisation of actual workers still exists due to the vindictiveness of the employers. "It is immaterial," she says, "whether a trade union worker is outsider or not. The real problem is whether he is a genuine trade union worker." She is of the opinion that the ideal condition is that of the workers managing their union themselves because they alone can take a grip of their problems quickly and there is a natural urge in their minds to ameliorate their conditions. But she thinks that the time is yet to come for such an atmosphere in our country. She is highly dissatisfied with the way the parties give guidance to trade union workers and thinks that the present state of affairs inside the unions is unsatisfactory. She criticises the present system of collective bargaining as dilatory, because the employers always try to find out loopholes in the legislation instead of looking at the genuine grievances of the workers.

was no guarantee of employment and the conditions of the workers were similar to those of contract labour. But the formation of the union created new hopes in the minds of the workers who can get their grievances redressed with their organised strength."

He had a zeal to work in the union but he constantly felt that he was not educated. He was thinking of learning English with the help of a teacher but he could not continue this for a long time as it came in the way of his union activity. However, he got the opportunity to attend the Provincial Conferences of the P.W.D. Workers at Poona in 1954 and at Kolhapur in 1956. In these conferences he came into contact with P.W.D. workers in other centres in Bombay Province. He could learn much from the discussion with these workers. "Really speaking," he says, "these discussions helped me personally more than the deliberations of the conferences which were no doubt valuable."

In 1955, he participated in the demonstration before the Bombay Legislative Assembly in Poona to put the demands of the P.W.D. workers before the government. In the same year he was a member of the deputation on behalf of the union to the Minister of Public Works, Bombay State, where he boldly put the case of the workers. "Before meeting the Minister," he says, "I was not confident whether I would be able to put the case effectively."

But when the Minister asked me questions, I could put the conditions of the workers before him properly."

Later on he tried to speak in public meetings of the union but as the union did not hold such meetings regularly he could not get opportunity to speaking in meetings. He made attempts to study the Minimum Wages Act 1943 with the help of the General Secretary of the union but he can only give a brief outline of the provisions of the Act.

He has not joined any political party so far and desires to remain aloof from the political parties. However he wishes to adopt trade union activity as his life career.

He thinks that outsiders are necessary for the trade union movement so long as the workers are not able to run the union on their own. Unless the workers do not study the labour legislation, they will not be able to run their union by themselves. He feels that political parties should help the unions to organize the workers and educate them but they should not cause any split in the movement. On the problem of one union in one industry he thinks that if the workers are united there cannot be more than one organisation. Multiplicity of organisations is the result of disunity among the workers. Hence, trade unions should try to strive for complete unity among the workers.

Case No. 8 : Shri _____
Assistant Secretary, Sholapur
City Bus Kamgar Union.

He comes from a Lingayat family and was educated upto English fifth standard. He is 28 years old and at present works as a time-keeper in the Municipal Bus Service. He earns Rs. 104/- per month from his occupation. He has to maintain a family of 7 persons and is the head of the family. He is the only earning member in the family.

He was one of the founder members of the union. He was elected on the managing committee of the union and in the next year he became the Joint Secretary of the union. Being a time-keeper he was in touch with all the workers in the Bus Service. Therefore, he could enrol the membership of the union without much difficulty. However, being an employee he can spare only two hours daily for the union work. Every day after his duty is over, he attends the office of the union and writes the application of the workers, etc. He also looks after the correspondence of the union with the Municipal authorities. He participated in the conciliation proceedings in 1951 but he feels that being an employee he cannot speak frankly about the workers' demands before the superiors. He had experienced on a number of occasions that whenever he represented a grievance to the higher authority he could not speak frankly with them due to

the fear of victimisation.

He can speak in the union meetings but he does not usually speak for fear of victimisation. He said that some active union workers were victimised earlier for their participation in union activities. However, as he explained, they were thrown out of their job under different pretexts. He cannot afford to lose the job because he is the only earning member of the family. He desires to adopt the trade union activity as a life career but says that trade union workers must be given a guarantee against victimisation.

He is not a member of any political party as he has not formed any opinions so far. But he is reading literature on politics and is a member of the General Library. He may join a party if he is convinced about its ideology, but he is strongly against joining a party without knowing its aims and objects properly.

According to him outsiders are essential to the trade union movement because they can work more boldly than the insiders. He has no objection if political parties work in the union but he feels that these political parties should take into consideration the interests of the workers and not those of the party alone. He is of the opinion that collective bargaining has no meaning if the employers continue their tactics of bringing

pressure on employees if they dared to stand by the members of the union.

Case No. 9 : Shri

Treasurer, Hatmag Vinkar Congress.

He comes from a Padmashali family and has taken education upto vernacular first standard only. He is 23 years old. He left the school and became a handloom worker at a very young age due to poverty in the family. Since his childhood he saw the whole of his family working from dawn to dusk but could not get enough to make their both ends meet. Even now his two brothers and his mother also are working on handlooms. His father is an old man and is unable to work due to sickness. His elder brother's wife is also doing work to earn something. In spite of all these efforts the whole family earns Rs. 130 per month only. The number of members in the family is 15. The family stays in the Karkhana and cooks their meals in the nearby place. I have seen their kitchen and found earthen and aluminium vessels. There are not enough dishes to serve all the persons at the same time. Hence they take their meals in batches. The family is heavily indebted. It had to borrow money from the master-weaver in whose karkhana they work. The total amount of indebtedness is Rs. 1400/- and the main cause of indebtedness ^{was} ~~were~~ his and his brother's marriage. They also borrowed money when his wife was undergoing tuberculosis treatment.

Being disgusted with the way of life he joined ~~in~~ the union in 1950. He used to attend meetings of the union and at times used to visit the office also. He was pleased to note that the union was doing some work to redress the grievances of the workers. He thought it necessary to do some work of the union for the betterment of the conditions of the handloom workers. He became an active worker of the union. However his main work was to collect subscription every week. He was taken on the managing committee of the union in 1954. When asked about his impressions of the managing committee, he stated:

"It was all new to me. Throughout the meeting, I did not speak anything. When I came to know about my election I thought that I would not be able to do the work of the union effectively but the President of the union encouraged me and told me that after a few days ^I ~~he~~ would learn many things. However, the first meeting of the managing committee inspired me to do the work of the union more vigorously."

He used to attend these meetings regularly, but for the first six months he did not speak anything. Gradually he learnt the art of speaking in the managing committee meetings and could express his feelings and opinions. He used to collect more subscription than any other member in the managing committee. Hence in 1955 he was elected

as the Treasurer of the union and since May 1955 he is working as a full-timer of the union.

When asked whether he can keep the accounts of the union he replied that he does not know it. The President of the union keeps the accounts and his main responsibility even now is to collect subscription of the union. He also looks after the Nira shop that is being run by the union. For two hours he attends the office of the union. However, if any complaint comes in the office of the union he can only take down notes on the paper and later on get it written when the General Secretary of the union comes in the office. He is paid Rs. 35 per month by the union. He has to work 10 hours a day out of which 5 hours are spent in the Nira shop.

Since 1954 he is the member of the Indian National Congress. His main political activity is during the time of elections. He has made attempts to speak in public meetings. In 1955 he had taken a leading part in one strike in a handloom karkhana which resulted in a success to the workers.

He feels that the present union rivalry is deplorable and that all unions should come together in the interest of the poor handloom workers. He criticises master weavers that they are not looking towards the conditions of the workers sympathetically and at the time of negotia-

-tions they treat the union workers as inferiors. He has no objection even if the outsiders work in the union because according to him, "all have a right to work in the trade union movement." However, he strongly objects bringing differences of the political parties inside the trade unions. In this connection, he says: "Leaders of different parties say the same things and sometimes workers like me find it difficult to understand why they are quarrelling inspite of their similar views."

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