

# **LABOUR CHRONICLE**

**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT**

October 1977



*EDITORS :*

**S. R. MOHAN DAS**

**R. MUTHUSWAMY**

**IN COMMEMORATION  
OF  
DIAMOND JUBILEE OF  
TEXTILE LABOUR ASSOCIATION  
(MAJUR MAHAJAN)  
AHMEDABAD.**

# SHRI MAHILA SEWA SAHAKARI BANK LIMITED

Established in July 1974



AN UNIQUE ENTERPRISE OF  
BLUE BLOUSE SELF EMPLOYED  
WOMEN

SHAREHOLDERS	..	6,815
SAVINGS BANK ACCOUNTS	..	10,907
TOTAL DEPOSITS	..	10,53,480.10
WORKING CAPITAL	..	13,38,301.32
PAID-UP CAPITAL	..	78,970.00
ADVANCES	..	20,497.78
INSTALMENTS OF LOAN SENT TO NATIONALISED BANKS	..	7,69,579.55

**MAHILA SEWA BANK TRANSACTS BUSINESS  
ON PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION**

**K. H. Bhagat**  
*Manager*

**Ela R. Bhatt**  
*Mg. Director*

**A. N. Buch**  
*Chairman*

**WE HUMBLY DEDICATE  
THIS SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT  
TO THE REVERED MEMORY OF  
SMT. ANASUYABEN SARABHAI  
(1885-1972)**

\* \* \*

*"The small lamp you lit in December  
1917 is a powerful light now —  
shedding its beams allaround"*



Born in 1885, in the multimillionaire family of Sarabhais of Ahmedabad, Smt. Anasuyaben dedicated herself to the service of the poor from her young age. On her return from United Kingdom in 1914, after completing her study, she plunged into this task and carried on the service ceaselessly till her last breath. She presided over the meeting called by the Warkers of Ahmedabad Textile Mills on 2nd December 1917 and lit the small lamp, which has grown into a powerful light of Textile Labour Association (Majur Mahajan). She was elected as President of the Association when it was formally inaugurated in 1920 and continued in this office till her death. Her entire life can be summed up in the words 'Tireless Toil in the cause of the Poor in a Constructive Manner.'

Though she shed her mortal coils on 11.9.1972, she lives in the hearts of millions of workers, Harijans and others in Ahmedabad. Each working class locality in Ahmedabad has a living monument of her services.

## PHILOSOPHER

FRIEND



GUIDE

### SHANKERLAL BANKER

Shri Shakerlal Banker belongs to that category of people, who from young age dedicate themselves to service of the backward sections merging their 'self' completely in such activities. Every age and every country has produced such people. They do not bother about the environment; they just start work within their capacity and resources. It would be difficult to write their biographies as their very self-effacing nature prevents them from talking about themselves. Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa and Thakkar Baba belong to this category. Shakerlal Banker is the living example of such a category.

Born in Bombay in a family of businessmen, Shakerlal Banker would have been one more businessman in the country. His mind was however working in other directions. The family had very little influence in changing his mind. On the other hand people who would have helped him in his life's mission came into his life very early.

His initiation in social work started in his college days. He came under the influence of Mr. Shinde, who was a preacher in the Bombay Prarthana Samaj and Mr. Narayan Chandavarkar, a prominent member of the same institution. It was Shinde who first asked him to start work among the Harijans in Dadar and Parel areas of Bombay. Mr. Shakerlal Banker started adult educational activities among them. He passed his B.A. with English Literature as his main subject and later his M.A. in Chemistry. However this educational background had nothing to do with the work he was bent upon carrying on. His work among the Harijans gave him further insight into their lives. He felt it was necessary that something must be done to improve their economic standards also. Many of these Harijans, who were treated as untouchables and were denied many privileges, were engaged in leather work. The work was primitive, carried on in age-old traditions. He felt that if he could study latest leather technology, he would be able to give them better service and improve their standards. As there was no

such facility for such specialised education in India, he decided to go to England. He sailed for England on 7th April 1914 but had to return to India in 1915 without completing his studies as the First World War broke out meanwhile in June 1914. On his return he came under the influence of Dr. Mrs. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society and Indian Home League. His neighbour Mr. Jamnadas Dwarakadas, who was already a devotee of Dr. Annie Besant was responsible for this. He immediately started taking interest in the Bombay Branch of Home League. He became the Secretary of the Bombay unit along with Mr. Umer Sobhani. Barrister Mohamed Ali Jinnah was the President. He worked as the Secretary of the League during 1915 and 1916.

It was during this time that he came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. This influence gradually increased and he became a confirmed Gandhian since then. When Dr. Annie Besant and Dr. Arundale of the Home Rule League were arrested, the Bombay branch wanted to arrange a protest meeting and Mr. Banker went to Mahatma Gandhi requesting him to preside over the meeting. Mr. Gandhiji's reply to this request was typical. He said 'What is the meaning of this meeting? This is not productive. On the other hand you must do the work which Mrs. Besant was carrying on'. Gandhiji then drafted a pledge that the followers of Dr. Besant would dedicate themselves to carry on the work initiated by her and suggested that volunteers may be called upon to take the pledge. The meeting was called and many young volunteers took up this pledge. Shankerlal Banker was again brought back to constructive service which was his first love, and weaned away from political action.

Smt. Ansuyaben, who was lifetime President of the Textile Labour Association was at that time doing social work particularly among the Harijans of Ahmedabad. She was also the President of the Ladies Wing of the Home Rule League movement. Shankerlal Banker used to visit Ahmedabad to meet Ansuyaben in connection with the work of the League. During one of his visits he met her in a tent on Sabarmati bed. She was at that time engaged in giving relief to people of Ahmedabad who had fled from Plague menace. The river bed had lot of tents in which accommodation was provided to these unfortunate people. That was the day when the warpers who were responsible for the first strike and the formation of the Textile Labour Association came to meet Ansuyaben, to request for her assistance in their problem. This was the starting point for Banker to get involved in constructive trade union work. He has already come under the influence of Gandhiji—so was Ansuyaben. It was a historic coincidence that on the day the warpers helped to sow the seed of the Textile Labour Association, Shankerlal Banker was present there. This Association which started on that day continues till today. This historic event was also responsible for the change in the lives of both Ansuyaben and Shankerlal Banker, who were interested in only social work, to turn to unionism. They lived and worked to see that a true Gandhian Trade Union Centre was started. Today the Association is celebrating its 60th year of existence.

In 1919 Gandhiji was drawn into the struggle of the Ahmedabad Textile Workers. Ironically it was at the initiative of a millowner that Gandhiji got him-

self involved in the affairs of Ahmedabad textile workers and then stayed on to lead their strike. Shri Ambalal Sarabhai (brother of Ansuayaben Sarabhai) a mill-owner met Gandhiji in Bombay and stated that an ugly situation was developing in the cotton textile industry in Ahmedabad resulting in a strike of the weavers. He wanted Gandhiji to intervene and avert the situation. Gandhiji during his visit to Ahmedabad studied the situation in depth and detail. He suggested that 70% to 80% of plague allowance, which was stopped, should be continued as the prices of essential commodities had risen by even four times in some cases. As this suggestion was not accepted by the millowners, Gandhiji had to lead a strike of the weavers and the famous 'Righteous Struggle' so beautifully and vividly recorded by Mahadev Desai in his book carrying the same title was launched. Gandhiji was also at that time involved in another Satyagraha by the peasants of Kheda. It was during this period that Shankerlal Banker who was with Gandhiji and very well-known to Ansuayaben got involved in actual union work. He acted as a mediary, counsellor and leader during this strike. However much of his work was quiet and silent—true to his nature. There is not a single instance in which Shankerlal Banker thrust himself forward.

In 1921 the Congress decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement at its Nagpur session. Meanwhile at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi, Shankerlal Banker had transferred the publication of his Journal "Young India" to Ahmedabad. A Gujarathi edition was also brought out. Shankerlal Banker was the printer and publisher of this journal. Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested when the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched. Mr. Shankerlal Banker had written an article in 'Young India' about this. The article was considered as objectionable and the then Government arrested him and he was convicted in Court. He was fortunate to be put in the same jail in which Gandhiji was lodged. During this sojourn of both, Shankerlal Banker completely imbibed the true spirit of Gandhism. To quote one instance when the news of the donation of Rs. 40,000 by the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association to the Tilak Swaraj Fund reached the jail, Gandhiji took up the stand that this money should be refunded as the workers should not be involved in any political struggle. Gandhiji then propounded the theory that the various activities should be kept separately. Those in charge of such constructive activities as working among workers and the down-trodden section in society should not get mixed up in political affairs. Shankerlal Banker made his choice then. He opted for constructive activities in which he has always believed. Had he then made a choice of politics, perhaps his name will be looming large among the various national leaders who had ruled this country for the past 30 years. Instead Ahmedabad became the centre of activities for Shankerlal Banker for the greater part of his life. Rarely has he gone out of this City after he completely took up union and social work in Ahmedabad.

The prison life was also another education in Gandhian discipline to Shankerlal Banker. Gandhiji made him to get up at 4 A. M. and work till 9 P. M. He was to sweep his room himself and wash his clothes. Even in washing Gan-

dhiji was particular about the economic use of soap. Shankerlal Banker was made to spin for 2 hours daily — Gandhiji then used to spin for 6 hours. When Shankerlal Banker asked Gandhiji about the meaning of this, Gandhiji told him 'You do not know the country. Travel all over this country.' Shankerlal Banker was to get this opportunity in the real sense soon.

The Congress session at Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh) passed a resolution to form the Khadi Board. Gandhiji wanted Shankerlal Banker to take up the Secretaryship of the Board. Shankerlal Banker was the Secretary of the Board for 15 years from 1924 to 1939. During this period he travelled all over the country. His work, his tours in villages of all the States in India, his experiences, got him real insight into the apathetic conditions in which our rural folks lived. The utter poverty that was ruling in the countryside and the miseries through which the villagers were passing through only hardened the determination of Shankerlal Banker to intensify his service. To quote him, the most miserable condition he saw was that in some villages people were living on 'leaves' only. A detailed description of his activities during this period is given in the book published by him 'Gandhiji Aur Rashtra Pravriti' (Gandhiji and National Work).

The immense travels and the continuous work in very hard conditions took its own toll. Shankerlal Banker's health started failing. His regret was that so much of work was to be done and he was physically incapable of attending to them, and doing full justice. When he took up the problem to Gandhiji, he was asked by Gandhiji to go back to Ahmedabad and resume his old work with Ansuyaben. Since then Shankerlal Banker was confined to Ahmedabad literally and as usual doing silent service in his chosen field.

Today he is the friend, philosopher and guide to the dedicated workers in T.L.A. He is revered by one and all. All this he earned by his selfless work. His modesty is proverbial. He inhales Gandhism and exhales 'service to the down-trodden in the society' (service to 'Dharithra Narayan' to put it in Gandhiji's phraseology). When one talks to him, rarely could he be expected to talk about himself and his activities. It is always about Gandhiji and his greatness. One of the classic reply he gives to persons asking for details of his life is, 'refer to two books I have written — 'Gandhiji Aur Mazdoor Pravriti' and 'Gandhiji Aur Rashtra Pravriti'. The very titles suggest that though these books record lot of experiences of Shankerlal Banker, Gandhiji is the hero. One has to wade through pages and pages to get a glimpse of Shankerlal's contribution and the significant silent work he has done.

This frail littleman, who is 88 now, with his charming smile and unassuming manner has achieved in this country much more than anyone else in perceivable improvements in the quality of life of the backward and downtrodden sections in society. There are many monuments in the City of Ahmedabad of the silent work that can be done by unassuming dedicated work — a brick by brick exercise needing enormous patience.

This country needs many more such Shankerlal Bankers for the 'silent and peaceful' revolution and transformation of the society.

# M E S S A G E S

V. V. Giri

'Malathi'  
4 Giri Road, T. Nagar,  
Madras-400 017  
19-5-1977

My Dear Friend,

I am happy to receive your kind communication dated 10th May.

Your objects are sublime and your good work is much appreciated for promoting self-help and self-reliance among industrial workers in running the trade unions on right democratic lines.

I wish your efforts every success.

Yours sincerely,  
V. V. GIRI

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Rajyapal  
Haryana

Haryana Raj Bhavan,  
Chandigarh  
May 19, 1977

## M e s s a g e

I am happy to know that the Institute of Workers' Education, Bombay is going to bring out a Special Supplement of its journal to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, next month.

I send my best wishes for the success of this venture and hope that it will contain useful information which may help in promoting better industrial relations.

J AISUKHLAL HATHI.

**INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE, GARMENT & LEATHER WORKS  
FEDERATION**

Rue Joseph Stevens, 8 — 1000 Bruxelles

11th May 1977

Workers' education is a vital factor in securing the progressive improvement of the position of the working-class in society and in strengthening political and occupational democracy.

I have participated in all kinds of workers' educational activities since I attended my first Workers' Educational Association class in economics under Professor Barbara Wootton as long ago as 1941. My long connection, as a lecturer, with such organisations as the Workers' Educational Association and the National Council of Labour Colleges in the UK, as well as General/Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD and later of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, has given me a deep conviction that workers' education is a prime need of our times.

However, that experience has also brought consciousness of the phenomenal progress that has been made during the last thirty years, and specially in the last decade or so, in raising the educational standards — and hence the political and social awareness — of the working class. Moreover, it is noticeable that the support for progressive social and economic policies, as well as for democratic institutions and freedom itself, is greater in those countries that have given the greatest attention to independent workers' education i.e. free from State control.

If workers' education is vital in developed countries, it is obviously also of paramount importance in less developed countries, where illiteracy and the lack of vocational skills are widespread.

Because of these considerations, it gives me deep satisfaction to be able to extend to you the greetings of the ITGLWF on the occasion of the tenth year of publication of "Labour Chronicle" and the Diamond Jubilee of the Textile Labour Association. This organisation, although now a mature one, by no means suffer from intellectual sclerosis, but rather continually looks for new areas in which to spread the gospel of free trade unionism and self-help.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I salute both the Textile Labour Association and "Labour Chronicle" in the appreciation that your co-operation will continue to bring benefits to the workers of India.

**CHARLES FORD**  
General Secretary

**MESSAGE FROM C. V. DEVAN NAIR, SECRETARY GENERAL,  
N.T.U.C. AND PRESIDENT, I.C.F.T.U.—A.R.O.**

Not many trade unions in Asia can boast a Diamond Jubilee celebration in the near future. Even fewer can justify celebration of any kind, except as an exercise in public relations.

I am sincerely happy to greet the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad on its Diamond Jubilee celebrations commencing 4 December 1977, as an occasion eminently worthy of celebration.

Staunch and consistent in its adherence to basic principles, as enunciated by the noblest political figure to have graced the Indian scene, as well as the world scene, in the 20th Century — the late Mahatma Gandhi — the TLA stands almost alone today as an organisation which has remained untarnished by opportunistic responses to the tides of political change.

The tactics of meeting new situations can and must vary, but fundamental principles are not variable. If they do, they cease to be principles.

The TLA's record of achievement, and of undeviating commitment to Gandhian principles, is of towering significance to those of us who seek to serve the interests of working men and women, in these times of unprecedented moral, political and economic crises.

Those of us who care about the vital importance of enhancing the quality of human life and motivation, will salute the TLA for its immense contribution in these fields.

You have demonstrated that a trade union organisation can truly fulfil itself only by developing a moral and social conscience which transcends narrow and petty considerations of partisan self-interest.

The TLA, and its numerous friends abroad, have just cause for rejoicing, in the knowledge that the light kindled by Mahatma Gandhi 60 years ago, has continued to burn, undimmed by the ravages of time.

I end with the prayer that when the TLA comes to celebrate its centenary, this light will burn even more strongly, and that the TLA's example will have come to inspire labour organisations beyond the barriers of your great country.

C. V. Devan Nair,  
Secretary General, INTUC  
President ICFTU-A.R.O.

MANIBEN KARA

President  
Western Railway Employees' Union,  
Grant Road Station Building (East),  
Bombay 400 007

“Textile Labour Association” is one of the oldest and strongest unions, started under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi. It is run on lines seeking understanding and co-operation of employers.

The special feature of this organization is that while working for better economic conditions for its members, it further undertakes a number of social and cultural activities for the improvement of the standard of living of the workers. It conducts schools, night classes, co-operatives, canteens and gives medical facilities even to the families of its members. All this was possible because of devoted and selfless band of workers like Shri Shankerlal Banker, Smt. Anasuyaben Sarabhai, Shri Khandubhai Desai, Shri Vasavadaji and others, who spent life time in the development of Textile Labour Association.

The latest activity undertaken by them is to help self-employed women who are enrolled as members. Loans are given to them to buy necessary goods, that are sold in the market. They, not only get work but become self-employed. This activity is greatly appreciated, as they become self-supporting.

T.L.A. is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee. It is a great occasion and I wish the Association greater and greater success.

I hope many other unions will be inspired to work for the social, spiritual and cultural upliftment of the workers, along with the improvement of their economic conditions.

MANIBEN KARA.

I am one of those who have closely followed the activities of Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad for about 30 years now and I had an opportunity to visit them and acquaint myself with their performances in the various fields.

It is the only Labour union in the whole of India, who has striven hard to follow the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi in the matter of serving the working class and has achieved a measure of success.

Mahatma Gandhi held the view that Trade Unions besides looking after the problems of the workers in their worklife should interest themselves in the whole man. He felt that the time the workers spent after their duty hours, should be channelised into rightful activities to make them good citizens. The Department of Social Work and Welfare set up by the T.L.A. has taken care of this particular aspect.

The trade unions in the highly developed countries of the West have just started negotiating with the employers a Human Contract side by side with Union Contract. While the Union Contract takes care of wages, working conditions and the like, the Human Contract provides for health, welfare and living conditions. But the T.L.A. has been the forerunner of such a Human Contract. Even here, the Human Contract began to be operated by T.L.A. with the resources of the union and the workers and did not wait for the collaboration of the employers as in the West.

T.L.A. in its 60 years of existence has been responsible to produce a galaxy of dedicated trade union leaders wedded to Gandhian School of thought, most of whom held the labour portfolio at the centre and some at the State. The working class of this country will ever remember this service with gratitude.

It is indeed very heartening to note that the T.L.A. has kept up its tradition all these years and the credit goes to the dedicated leadership and their men. Sri Arvind Buch, as the present head of the organisation has contributed in no small measure to the growth of the union by preserving the unity and stability in spite of the troubles and tribulations the union had to face in the recent past.

I do hope that the Diamond Jubilee will further inspire the leaders and the workers to hold aloft the banner of the union as a beacon light to the working class movement in the country and elsewhere.

# THE SUBSTANCE THE TLA IS MADE OF

by S. R. Mohan Das

On the occasion of the completion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Textile Labour Association, quite naturally this great institution evokes the respect and admiration universally. What is the substance the TLA made of that provided the robustness of creative strength which has been increasing all these 60 years in the midst of many vicissitudes? An analysis of substance that is the core quality of TLA's emergence as a great institution will provide the guidelines for not only understanding TLA clearly, but no work for similar core qualities which build sustaining institutions of creative contributions to the commonwealth.

The first core quality that can be identified when the nucleus of TLA emerged, the seeds — so to say — were planted, was the quality of pragmatism, feasibility, in the matter of improvements in the status quo. In other words, the organizational objectives were outlined in terms of what was the best possible under the circumstances and not what is perfect in the abstract sense. This made all the plans and activities of the organization in terms of improving things on a continuous basis from an existing situational base which may be atrociously poor. Instead of getting emotionally surcharged at the degraded standards prevailing in human affairs and with equally heightened blood pressure of emotions, seeking the perfect solutions as though they could be brought about by a magic wand of exhortations, the founders of the TLA demonstrated a pragmatic wisdom in going through the “nuts and bolts” of the problem as it existed and seeking solutions in feasibility terms of the existing situation. This made very good sense to the target groups of change. Veterans like Shankarlal Banker, Anusuyaben, Gandhiji followed this pattern.

The second core quality in the substance of TLA injected into the seeds of TLA when this great tree was planted, was to view the human groups it intended to serve at that point of time in integrated terms. The textile and other workers of Ahmedabad or Rajkot were viewed not merely in terms of their personalities in the work-life situation alone, but in the full-fledged total life terms. The concept of “quality of life” which has become the vital question in the developed societies only very recently during the latter part of the 1970's, was a fundamental view among the the pioneers of the TLA. The TLA was envisaged to be a change agent not merely in terms of improving work life conditions but in terms of the quality of life itself of the workers. This automatically brought for the TLA as an instrument the full-fledged business exercises and concerns

which any dynamic organization of union must undertake. These business exercises relate to 1) Membership service in work and non-work life areas, 2) Industrial Relations relating to work-life problems on a continuous basis, and 3) Social responsibilities.

Arising out of the first two core qualities, the third core quality was viewing the workers not just as workers alone, but as actual or potential citizens of society requiring to develop the qualities and calibre of citizenship. This perspective view contributed to the enhancement of the human dignity of the worker instead of making him the object of evangelical emancipation from above.

The fourth core quality in the designing of the TLA is the stress not on helping the "underdog", but helping people to help themselves through self-help and self-reliance methods. Using the leverage of the dignity of the human personality, the worker was imparted confidence and motivations to help himself with assistance from TLA. This was the significant commitment which produced the quality membership along with the quantity membership. The biblical principle: "Seek and Thou shalt find it", was applied by the founders of TLA sixty years ago when they went to seek not just quantity, but quality as well. They certainly found it and this has sustained the organization. The proof of this sustenance has been found in the details of history of the organization that will be found in this compendium in hundreds of ways.

The fifth core quality in the designing of the TLA by the founders was in the building of an efficiency-oriented infra-structure involving systems and procedural disciplines, again as a part of the quality of life. Such significant disciplines as accountability of the bona fides of actions, resources, their collections and deployment and demonstrated picture of the utilisation factors, generated a culture of disciplined, efficient and fair working.

The sixth core quality in TLA was its commitment to pluralistic nature of society. The founders of the TLA were not workmen themselves. In fact they were from economically affluent sections of society. They did not go through the exercise which Marxists usually quibble about "de-classing" themselves from the "bourgeoisie" to the "working class". Instead they demonstrated that human dignity was the core question that transcended all divisions, and this factor represented the motivations for generating quality of life. They sought to break down any barriers including the so-called class barrier which Marxists evolved as a reaction to the feudal barriers that prevailed. They refused to succumb to the substitution of a new barrier to the old barriers, and sought a cure to all barriers to human dignity. In this approach, the trusteeship theory was evolved. The trusteeship theory was based on an understanding of the

difficulties in change among those who were for generations accustomed to feudal authority and property norms. The objective was envisaged as to change them and not liquidate them. Since change for them was a painful factor, the trusteeship theory became the tool for cushioning the pains of change for those sections of society. Thus lifting up the workers through self-help into adulthood of citizenship based on dignity, and in the same way bringing down from the clouds the feudal overlord styles for a common citizen level became the strategic pursuit. The trusteeship concept was designed to bring about this change.

These quality norms were designed not in abstract terms but in terms of the applicable and feasible to the real life situations that obtained 60 years ago. Infrastructure of organisation, human and material resources and operations were effectively synchronised with these quality criteria and the result was a continuous organization proceeding on an even and regular tempo to grow and expand. Since its reliance was on itself and its members, the TLA never got overwhelmed or overawed by external constraints. It could make significant achievements during the very period when external constraints were considerably loaded against it. Compared to this record, the history of other trade union centres represents a chequered record of dissensions, rifts, break and general emasculation, because the other trade union centres could emerge only under the auspices of external support, with very poor involvement by workers themselves. This was one of the reasons why Gandhiji did not wish to affiliate the Majoor Mahajan with the All India Trade Union Congress when it was set up in 1920. The foresight of Gandhiji was very quickly justified when the disparate ideological components of the AITUC generated a rift with the Marxists dominating the AITUC and taking it into adventurist actions politically within four years, and after independence the entire movement being broken up with rifts and rivalries. Gandhiji kept TLA out of the AITUC even though many nationalist leaders readily joined the AITUC.

The TLA was devoid of such fragmentation exercises that befell in the labour movement in India. Though the TLA changed its culture after independence in founding the INTUC and making the INTUC survive through ruling party support and statutory methods, by 1969 it re-learned the norms the founders of TLA had laid when the borrowed power of sustenance, demanded a pay-off with compound interest from the INTUC. While the foster-child INTUC brought forth by TLA caved in this pressure, the TLA realised quickly its basic life instinct which had made what it always was, and went back to its own sustenance which it did under the most difficult and challenging pressures, which were much worse than the pressures it faced during the British Raj or the feudal employer barons' dominance. Its intrinsic robustness built up by the founding fathers stood the TLA in good stead, weathering all the storms of politics including the emergency, while its foster-child which in a moment of

unthinking impulsiveness it gave birth to viz., the INTUC, became orphanised when the ruling party of 30 years which gave sustenance to the INTUC, itself collapsed.

The saga of TLA is thus really the quality of substance which the founding fathers of TLA carefully seeded and nurtured over a span of 6 decades. It is this substance that needs to be noted and understood for any person interested in contributing towards a creative and sustained organization of any type, and much more so, a union of workers. This is the substance the TLA is made of and the TLA has an even greater future with such a history of substance.



# Sixty Years of Fruitful Endeavour

A. N. BUCH,

President, Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad

Sixty years' existence for an institution is not an insignificant period: it denotes its steady growth, progress and real service to mankind. The T.L.A. has indeed to its credit a very useful and unbroken record displaying various achievements which the institution could multiply from year to year. If we look back and trace out the history of T.L.A. in the structure of the Indian Movement in detail it would cover pages to depict all events. However it would be interesting if we have just a bird's eye-view of it as to its origin and main achievements in brief.

## **Gandhiji's Laboratory:**

It was as far back as 1917 that the seeds of this organisation were sown. The union came into being as a result of a strong and earnest desire of workmen engaged in Ahmedabad textile industry to get themselves united and to set up their organisation. Thus, it was built up through their determined and active efforts which then received blessings of Gandhiji, besides the unstinted cooperation and mature guidance from its lifelong President Smt. Anasuyaben Sarabhai. In a way, the institution is Gandhiji's personal contribution to the Labour Movement in this country, and is rightly regarded as his laboratory for his 'Experiments in Truth and Non-violence in the field of labour'.

## **Architects:**

Besides Gandhiji and Anasuyaben among other architects who reared the plant includes Shri Shankerlal Banker, Shri Nandaji, Late Khandubhai and S. R. Vasavada and others whose active, constructive and day-to-day guidance has been of immense value to the speedy and steady growth of trade unionism in Ahmedabad all these years.

## **Pre-Union Stage:**

Ahmedabad City is the second largest centre in India of textile industry next to Bombay. The textile industry employs today about a lakh and over forty thousand employees in nearly 65 units. Conditions of work prevailing in pre-union days were far from satisfactory. Workers were treated more as adjuncts of machinery rather than as human beings. These appalling conditions led to create consciousness and an inner urge for some organised action for improvement among the workers. Anasu-

yaben who had then returned from abroad and who had studied labour problems there, plunged into this activity and started some social and educational work amongst them in working class localities in 1917.

### **Warpers at War.**

Then there was a dispute of warpers of Ahmedabad Mills who were agitating for a wage increase to compensate steep rise in the cost of living. They approached Anasuyaben and requested her to lead and guide them in the struggle. With necessary directions and guidance from Gandhiji she took the lead and conducted the strike which ultimately resulted in success. It was this event which gave the principle of arbitration to the workers which comes to play an important role in the settlement of disputes between capital and labour even till today.

### **Do or Die:**

Another struggle which took place in 1918 drew the attention of the whole country in which Gandhiji himself had to face the fight with the employers who were a bit adamant, and guide the workers to their end. Workers' cost of living rose very high on account of war and their hardships compelled them to put up a just demand. Gandhiji studied their case carefully and advised them to refer the dispute to arbitration, and in case the arbitration being not granted, they were advised to be prepared for a tough fight for their just cause—say rather—'do or die:— Struggle lasted for 20 days during which Gandhiji by his speeches and writings tried to keep up their morale and strength. Stages of weakness, waverings and difference were passed through, but he advised them to adhere to their solemn pledge. There was a memorable moment when he himself was constrained to declare a 'fast unto death' for himself which naturally had an electric effect on the workers who instead of swerving from their path, acted upon his word and expressed their willingness to continue their peaceful struggle. Ultimately the dispute was referred to sole arbitration of Prof. Anandshanker Dhruva, who after hearing both the parties gave his award which conceded full and rightful demand of the workers.

### **Technique for Unionism:**

This very memorable event left a lasting and deep impression upon the working classes and brought for them, into existence a technique of settlement of disputes which can hardly be ignored by either side. All this is summed up to cement the cause for a strong foundation for trade unionism in Ahmedabad.

These very principles have a permanent value for all interested in

trade union work which, in fact, were pursued by the workers as well as industrialists to an extent all over the country since then, to their mutual advantage.

These very cardinal principles are summarised hereunder —

1. Demand made by workers must be fair and genuine, based on facts and figures and neither inflated nor exaggerated.
2. Weapon of strike should be treated as a last resort, after all peaceful methods of negotiations, conciliation and arbitration are exhausted.
3. Peaceful and non-violent behaviour is the sine qua non for obtaining justice. Violence and Gherao have no place in Satyagrah.
4. Workers should be self-reliant and self-respecting. Their attitude should always be truthful, courageous, just and free from hatred. They should always be prepared for voluntary sacrifice keeping undeterred faith in God.

Pursuit of these very principles is an easy and safest way to achieve success for the toiling masses.

### **Two Wheels:**

Industry has two wheels — capital and labour. Both should go hand in hand. In a way, they are co-partners and co-parceners sharing equal responsibility both to the industry as well as to the community at large. Gandhiji believed in positive organised strength and he aimed at creating such strength. His approach calculated to awaken real consciousness latent among the workers with a view to withstand any amount of hardships or tyranny obstructing their path. He had, therefore, laid greater emphasis on constructive activities, and with that view in mind, he had specifically mentioned about the objects, means and activities that the union should invariably follow in the constitution which was drafted by himself. Some rules and regulations laid down by Gandhiji are followed by the Textile Labour Association from its very inception spreading over a period of 60 years.

### **Union for What:**

...For it gives courage to stand up for what we think is right. Organised effort provides strength courage and safety in the job, besides promoting the right cause for seeking justice in the event of any wrong done to those united.

This is how Labour Movement in Ahmedabad is being conducted on

the principles laid down by Gandhiji and all that to the best advantage of both the employees as well as of the industry, and that accounts for continued peace and prosperity of both in particular, and community in general.

### **Main Achievements:**

Now let us turn to the main aspects of achievements of the organisation over all these years.

The organization provides:—

1. For an orderly way of redressal of workers' grievances both individual and collective.
2. Creating high sense of responsibility towards the industry and community.
3. Fair treatment on both the sides.
4. Reasonable working conditions.
5. Fair and adequate scale of wages with reasonable allowance, Bonus, etc.
6. Other trade benefits admissible as per several legislations, agreements and awards e.g. compensation for accidents, maternity benefit, leave with pay, regular working hours, safety in accordance with Factories Act, Retrenchment Compensation etc. and lastly —
7. Equal opportunity for advancement by fostering spirit of solidarity, service, brotherhood and cooperation among the masses, and promotion of civic and political interests by taking part in such activities by electing proper representatives from among the labour.
8. Family welfare activity was primarily started by late President Ansuayaben for the uplift and betterment of the workers' families. J. B. Kanyagarah, a Hostel for the backward class girls was established where about 50 to 60 inmates are taking advantage of it.

Besides academic education, they are given training in sewing, knitting, embroidery and instruction to improve their own living.

These are in brief some of the achievements and the services the organisation is rendering to its members in general. Members have thus become part and parcel of the organisation and understand the meaningfulness and the technique of unionism which ultimately serves their own

interests for betterment of their conditions of life and work through organised internal effort.

### **Democratic way of working:**

Members are quite self-reliant in running their organisation. They pay their subscription regularly as stipulated per month for proper conduct of the institution as also in consonance with the Trade Union Act. Audited accounts are regularly placed before them. There are various Sub-Committees to supervise the day-to-day working who have an effective voice of representation when and where necessary. These are: Standing, Complaint, Finance, Social Welfare, Housing and E.S.I. Grievances Committees. This brings participation of workers in day-to-day affairs of working of trade union organization.

The institution spends good deal of its resources after social activities carried on for advancement of their members besides a strong and effective cell for redressal of day-to-day grievances which are not less than about 20,000 per annum.

Funds of the Union are used for promotion of the objects set out in the constitution for which proper estimates of Budget are every year placed before the Board of Representatives for their considerations and adoption.

This is in a nut-shell a democratic organisation of labour, an institution of the workers, run for the workers and by the workers, themselves.

### **Advisory Committee:**

It is a note-worthy fact that the Constitution has provided for a competent Advisory Committee consisting of senior members under the Chairmanship of veteran labour leader Shri Shankerlal Banker whose advice and guidance in all important problems is given due weight by the Executive Committee and Boards of Representatives while arriving at a decision. And lastly, mention need be made that such fruitful results the unique organisation is achieving is partly to be attributed to the services of trained, experienced and selfless members of staff consisting of more than 250 full-time trade union workers and 150 part-time workers devoted to their services, day and night, for the common cause of the poor and the down-trodden.

### **SEWA:**

Through the initiation of the Textile Labour Association, SEWA and SEWA Women's Cooperative Bank have come into existence. These two are the vehicles of women's progress through economic freedom,

equality, fearlessness, and offering their hands and heart in the service of the motherland. The Bank has been popular and is advancing loans to the needy for self-employment.

**Unshaken it stands as a Rock:**

Adhering to the same principles throughout the period of its existence till today, the TLA stands today undeterred and undaunted, ever striving for workers' cause standing on its own legs, depending on its own strength and resources aiming at common real and steady progress all these years. The institution may, as such, be taken to be a living monument of Gandhiji's doctrines and dictums — which is no less an achievement for steady progress of the toilers.



# SIX DECADES OF MAJOUR MAHAJAN (TEXTILE LABOUR ASSOCIATION)

•        •        •  
1917 - 1977

## THE MILESTONES

FIRST DECADE — 1917 — 1926 — PERIOD OF CONFRONTATION

### 1. 1917 - LABOUR DAY

The origin of Majoor Mahajan, which has grown into a mighty organization now, was in the strike organized by a small group of textile workers in Ahmedabad—about 500 warpers, most of middle class—on 4th December 1917 under the leadership of Smt. Ansuyaben Sarabhai. The issue was wage increase to compensate them for loss of 'plague allowance' in parity with other workers in the textile mills. This day is celebrated till today as 'LABOUR DAY' by textile workers in Ahmedabad.

Smt. Ansuyaben's entry into the trade union movement on that day was accidental. After her return from England, just before 1914, Smt. Ansuyaben had been devoting herself to social work among the poor people of Ahmedabad, particularly the Harijans. This inevitably led her to work in the localities where textile workers were living predominantly. At that time she was concentrating in providing education to the children of workers by means of a chain of night schools, with the help of like-minded social workers. Her popularity among the textile workers as a social worker was responsible for the warpers' approach to her to lead them in their fight with the employers. After an initial hesitation, arising more out of her inexperience in trade union work than anything else, Ansuyaben agreed to lead them and the strike materialised on 4th December 1917. Earlier Smt. Ansuyaben started in 1914 the Majur Mahajan Mandal (A Committee of Workers' Friends) to carry on educational, co-operative and industrial activities among mill employees. This committee in addition to Ansuyaben consisted of Sarva Shri Krishnalal Desai, Amubhai Mehta and Kailash Zaveri. This was also one of the reasons that prompted the warpers to approach Ansuyaben.

The strike was a success: the warpers got substantial increase in their wages. Thus the union was born with a proud achievement of success in confrontation with employers under the leadership of a proven social worker among mill employees. All good deeds must be started with a sac-

rifice in order to succeed; Majoor Mahan's initial sacrifice was the warpers strike. The rare distincton of the union having a selfless social worker as its leader had its impact on the union throughout. The union developed a social consciousness very early and has carried on social work side-by-side with union work.

## 2. 1918 ENTRY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

The second strike in Ahmedabad Textile Industry was a memorable one as it was conducted under the direct leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who laid down for the first time the principles that were to guide the working of Majoor Mahajan. This was a historic event in as much as it sowed the seeds for what is called 'Gandhian Trade Unionism' based on the twin principles of 'Truth' and 'Non-violence.' The weavers in Ahmedabad textile mills numbering about 10,000 made a demand in 1918 for wage rise to offset the rise in cost of living. Earlier this was offset by the special 'plague allowance' given to the workers to the extent of 75% of wages and this was discontinued by the millowners. Mahatma Gandhi who had been giving advice to Ansuayaben earlier, suggested the formation of a Committee of Arbitrators representing both the employers and employees with the Collector of Ahmedabad as Chairman to look into this demand and settle it. The millowners agreed to the suggestion; later on they withdrew their representatives from the Board and declared a lockout in the mills. Gandhiji was perturbed by this development and took upon himself the leadership and led a strike of weavers. This strike lasted for 23 days. Mahatma Gandhi used to address the striking workers every day and through his daily lectures he taught the workers the way to carry on a 'righteous struggle' with Truth and Non-violence as weapons. The outcome of the strike in terms of industrial action was the acceptance of the principle of Arbitration for settlement of differences and disputes between the textile employees and employers. A detailed study of this strike is given in the publication 'The Righteous Struggle' written by Mahadevbhai Desai, (who was the personal secretary of Mahatma Gandhi) published by Navjivan Trust Ltd., Ahmedabad.

It was during this strike that Shri Shankerlal G. Banker got involved in the union work and since then has remained as a guiding spirit of the Majoor Mahajan. He has also written about the role of Gandhiji in trade union work.

The principles laid down by Gandhiji during this strike and which were later to be accepted by the Majoor Mahajan in short were:

—Workers demands should be reasonable and must be made after taking all pros and cons of the case. In case they are proved wrong, they must agree to make alterations.

- The weapon of strike should be the last resort in industrial action, to be used after exhausting all other peaceful and constitutional means.
- Workers should behave non-violently in spite of the privations to which they may be subject to and the provocation that they may have to face. There should be no ill will against anybody, particularly the employers as the struggle is to fight only the evil in the employers.
- Workers should be self-reliant and should not depend on outside help in any form. There is no shame attached to it if the workers seek alternate occupation during their forced idleness during strike and no alternate work should be considered as low or mean.
- Strike is 'Satyagraha' and therefore the workers should not yield under pressures of hardship.
- During strike the workers should be truthful, courageous, just and free from hatred or malice towards anybody. They also should be prepared for voluntary sacrifice and keep faith in God.
- Workers are co-partners of the industry and as such their responsibility to the industry and the community is great.
- The leaders of workers must have the courage to own up if their demands are unreasonable and explain the situation to the workers. If the workers are still insistent with the unreasonable demands, the leaders must quit.
- The unions have a role in shaping the workers into responsible citizens and therefore must take part in all constructive activities for social transformation and fighting social evils.

### 3. FORMAL UNION COMES INTO BEING

1920 — The Textile Labour Association as it is constituted is a federation of categorywise unions in the textile industry in Ahmedabad. The first categorywise union to be inaugurated was the Throstle Workers Union. The union was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi on 25th February 1920 under the neem tree in the compound of Ansuayaben's residence at Murzapur. The unions of other categories followed suit one by one and all of them combined together in the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad (Majoor Mahajan) with Smt. Ansuayaben as President and Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Shankerlal G. Banker as its Advisers. Since then the federation started functioning with its own personality, structure and activities.

The union's first demand after inauguration was a wage rise and reduction of working hours from 12 to 10. The issue of reduction of hours was amicably settled by negotiation and this was the first time that working hours less than those prescribed under the Factories Act were obtained by workers. At that time the Factories Act prescribed 12 hours work per day. The other issue of wage rise met with difficulty. Meanwhile the employers decided to give one month's wages as Bonus with three Diwali Holidays to the textile mill employees. The working environment was improved with better sanitary facilities and physical comforts for employees during work.

#### 4. BONUS AS A DEMAND

1921 — The textile workers made a demand for Bonus in the midst of the year. While a few millowners agreed to pay the bonus monthly, others refused. A strike therefore ensued in those mills which did not agree to pay bonus. When the matter was referred to Mahatma Gandhi, he expressed displeasure at the practice of paying monthly bonus and advised the workers not to continue the strike on this issue. The workers did not pay any heed to this and Gandhiji consistent with his principles asked Smt. Ansuyaben to withdraw her services as President of the Union and return the books of the union to the workers. Later the workers relented and accepted Gandhiji's advice and withdrew the strike.

This year the workers of Ahmedabad contributed Rs. 40,000/- to the 'Tilak Swaraj Fund'. Under the advice of Mahatmaji, the Millowners' Association decided to give Rs. 10,000/- every year for conducting educational activities under the auspices of Majoor Mahajan (T.L.A.)

#### 5. UNIQUE STRIKE

1923 — The Ahmedabad Millowners made a wage reduction of 20% unilaterally refusing arbitration in the matter. The Majoor Mahajan had demanded a minimum wage with a sliding scale. As the demand was rejected, there was a strike which lasted for 65 days—from 1-4-1923 to 4-6-1923. A unique feature of this strike was that in accordance with the principles of Gandhiji, the workers were encouraged to take up alternative work and Shri Maganlal Gandhi and his co-workers of Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati provided relief work to the mill employees. While providing work, Gandhiji took care to see that payments were properly made, work extracted and proper records maintained. A detailed description of this work is given in Shri Shankerlal Banker's book 'Gandhiji and Labour Work' (published in Gujarati and Hindi).

#### 6. ENTRY IN CIVIC ADMINISTRATION

1924 — A Harijan worker from the Spinning Department named

Kacharabhai was put up by the union to contest in the Municipal election from Saraspur area, proposed and seconded by non-Harijan workers. He was elected from this area. Thus for the first time the union took interest in public affairs.

## **THE FIRST DECADE - 1917 - 1926**

In 1926 when the first decade ended, the union has passed out of the stage of confrontation. The decade itself was one of friction, with frequent confrontations between employees and employers. However it was also the period when the union had the unique distinction of enjoying the leadership of both Ansuyaben and Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji laid the foundations for the growth of the union on lines of 'truth' and 'non-violence'. The spirit of mediation and arbitration grew between both the groups, thanks to Gandhiji's influence.

During this period Majur Sandesh, the bi-weekly newspaper of Major Mahajan (T.L.A.) Ahmedabad started publication. Since then this journal in Gujarathi is published regularly. The union was instrumental in starting a Labour Hospital, Mobile Libraries, Labour Savings Bank, Cheap Grain Shops, Labour Volunteer Corps, Physical Culture Centres. Sanitary and Hygienic education, day and night schools, and above all a prohibition drive to wean away the mill employees from intoxicating drinks. The union also got involved in civic affairs. Thus along with its union's activities in the area of industrial relations, the union also got involved in social work among textile workers.

## **SECOND DECADE - 1927 - 1936**

### **PERIOD OF AWAKENING**

1927 — More workers contested the civic elections along with Shri Gulzarilal Nanda of the Union and got elected to the Ahmedabad Municipal Council.

### **7. RESTORATION OF WAGE CUT**

1929 — The wage cut imposed by millowners in 1923 were restored partially by mutual negotiations. It must be noted here that at that time in Bombay, the textile workers and the industry were largely affected by the strike calls given by the Communist leadership. Yet the workers could not avoid the sufferings due to frequent stoppage of mills, wage-cut and unconditional rationalisation.

## 8. PARTICIPATION IN COUNTRY'S FIRST INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

1930 — When the Congress Party organized the Civil Disobedience Movement (Satyagraha) in April 1930, the workers of Ahmedabad rose to the occasion by organising picketing of liquor shops, increasing the use of Khadi and recruitment of volunteers for Satyagraha. Young workers numbering about 165 took part in the famous 'Dharasama Saltpan Raid Satyagraha' in Surat district and 65 were jailed for picketing. The Union also amended its constitution, in line with the resolution of complete independence passed by Indian National Congress at its Lahore Session in December 1929 and proposed 'Nationalisation' of textile industry as its ultimate goal.

## 9. RATIONALISATION WITHOUT TEARS

1933 — In the wake of the economic depression that set in all over the world in 1929, the Millowners Association of Ahmedabad demanded a wage-cut of 25%. The matter was referred for decision to the joint arbitration of Sheth Chimanlal Mangaldas and Mahatma Gandhiji. Later on when Mahatmaji was preoccupied with other important national work, in his place Shri Manu Subedar, a renowned economist and expert in Business Management was nominated as the arbitrator. The arbitration lasted for two years but without any unanimity between the arbitrators. The matter was then sent to Justice Patkar of Bombay High Court, who acted as the Umpire. Meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi mediated and a settlement was reached on 13th January 1935. This agreement is known to the workers as Delhi agreement. Under the agreement the wage-cut enforced was only 6.1/4%. Conditions of rationalisation with more pay for workload was negotiated. The agreement also effected the standardisation of weavers' wages which formerly varied from mill to mill. This agreement helped the millowners to introduce such schemes as were necessary to improve the working of the mills at a time of economic depression, without creating undue hardship to the workers either in wages or other working conditions.

## 10. REGULARISATION OF PAYMENT OF WAGES IN CASH

1935 — The Union was instrumental in stopping the practice of giving damaged cloth to weavers instead of wages. This was made illegal and the practice stopped, when at the instance of the union, the then Bombay State Government passed the Payment of Wages Act, 1935. The Union took up this matter through the Congress Legislature party in the then Bombay State Assembly.

## SECOND DECADE - 1927 - 1936

The second decade was one of consolidation of gains. The union faced

during this decade developmental problems in the matter of arbitration accepted by both the employees and employers and which was going through trials, stresses and strains. The arbitration system however sustained and credit for this must go to the personalities of Arbitrators like Sheth Mangaldas Girdhardas of Millowners Association, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Anand Shankar Dhruva, Sarvashri Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, F. X. De Souza, Diwan Bahadur Krishnalal M. Zaveri, Manu Subedar, Justice Madgavkar and Justice Patkar who acted as arbitrator at one time or another.

In the social level, during this decade, the achievements of the Association in the social sphere took roots and institutions catering to the need of the workers were started. The union emerged as a workers' organization in the true sense of embracing all aspects of the lives of textile workers in Ahmedabad. For the organization, this was a decade of expansion.

### **THIRD DECADE - 1937 to 1946**

#### **Period of Consolidation**

#### **11. ENTRY INTO ASSEMBLY**

1937 — Sarvashri Gulzarilal Nanda and Khandubhai Desai, representatives of the Textile Labour Association were elected in the 2 seats allotted to the Bombay Legislative Assembly for registered unions. For this purpose the union was registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act on 23.10.1935. Nandaji also joined the Government formed by the Congress Party in Bombay as Parliamentary Secretary to the Chief Minister, Mr. B. G. Kher.

#### **12. END OF ARBITRATION**

1938 — The interim report of Textile Labour Inquiry Committee appointed by the Bombay Government under the Presidentship of Shri Jairamdas Daulatram and later, on his resignation by Shri Harshadbhai V. Divatia, recommended a wage increase of 8 to 13% to the textile workers. The Ahmedabad Millowners Association, offended by this action of Government, informed the Textile Labour Association that the permanent machinery of arbitration would no longer function.

#### **13. B.I.R. ACT**

1938 — Based on the experience of Textile Labour Association, the Bombay Industrial Relations Act was brought on statute for settling industrial disputes through negotiations, conciliation and arbitration. This Act helped to stabilise relationship between employers and employees in

the textile industry. This Act gives workers equal status with employers in the matter of effecting change in service and working conditions.

#### 14. PROHIBITION

1939 — On 20th July 1939 Ahmedabad was selected for experimenting with prohibition of intoxicated drinks, and in order to wean away the mill workers from the habit of drinking and provide diversions for spending their idle time, the union started a Prohibition Department with Shri Mohanlal Vyas and Shri Shantilal Shah as heads of the department.

#### 15. TRAINING FACILITIES FOR WORKERS

1939 — A workshop was started by the union in 1939 at Saraspur for the purpose of training workers in some alternate occupation during their leisure time. During this year at a meeting of Gandhi Seva Sangh, a decision was taken to start Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, under the stewardship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to impart training to such of the young persons who wanted to take up trade union work as their mission. The Textile Labour Association, was selected for giving both theoretical and practical training. Young workers from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, U.P. Assam, Mysore, Tamilnadu and Kerala came up for training in the Sangh, and after receiving training they started the trade union movement in their respective provinces on Gandhian ideology. But before they could do something in the field, most of them were arrested for participating in the 'Quit India' movement.

#### 16. NEUTRALISATION OF INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING

1940 — The Association demanded in 1940, a Dearness Allowance to meet the increased prices of essential commodities, arising out of World War II. The matter was decided by an Industrial Court as per the provisions of B.I.R. Act and the workers were awarded 66% neutralisation, to be paid partly in cash and partly in kind. As this led to some practical difficulties, in 1941 both the employers and employees' organizations entered into an agreement for further 45% rise resulting in neutralisation to the extent of 96.66%.

#### 17. 1941 — CONCEPT OF BONUS AS DEFERRED WAGE

During the Second World War, the textile industry was making enormous profits and therefore as the workers' share the Association demanded 25% rise in general wages. The matter went to the Industrial Court and ultimately on the basis of a settlement arrived at between the employers and employees' organizations, the Court made an award of 1.1/2 months

wage as bonus for 1941 as 'deferred wage'. This principle of 'deferred wage' was later to be the basis for payment of Bonus Act.

## **18. ASSOCIATION IN LAST STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE**

1942 — The Textile workers of Ahmedabad spontaneously participated in 'quit India' movement and voluntarily struck work from 8th August 1942 for a period of 105 days. This sacrifice of the workers in the cause of the country's independence is one of the greatest achievements of T.L.A. and textile workers of Ahmedabad. The office-bearers of the union Shri Gulzarilal Nanda and Shri Khandubhai Desai, along with Shri S. R. Vasavada and Shri Somnath Dave were imprisoned. The workers resumed duty only when they received a message from Mahatma Gandhi. Meanwhile, they braved all privations even at the sacrifice of disposing of their meagre personal belongings for maintaining themselves. The workers fought by non-violent methods the massive violence unleashed by the then British Rulers.

## **19. CONTRIBUTION FOR ALL INDIA FEDERATION**

1943 — The workers felt the need for a strong constructive All India Union movement. They themselves collected a sum of Rs. 80,000/- for this purpose. This amount was spent on training workers under auspices of Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh. This training enabled the Association to provide leadership when Indian National Trade Unions Congress was formed later.

## **20. FURTHER SUCCESS IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

1944 — In the Ahmedabad Municipal elections, out of 52 seats, 17 candidates were put up by Textile Labour Association on Congress tickets. 7 of the seats were reserved for Harijans. All the constituencies in the labour areas were contested and all candidates put up by Textile Labour Association won by overwhelming majority. This provided an opportunity to the Association to provide for basic amenities to the labour areas.

## **21. ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE IN MINISTRY**

1946 — Sarvashri Gulzarilal Nanda and Khandubhai Desai were again elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly, representing the workers of Ahmedabad. Shri Nandaji joined the Congress Ministry formed in Bombay as Labour Minister. He piloted the Bombay Industrial Relations Act and this Act is still on the statute and the textile industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad are governed by it. He also arranged to provide houses for

workers under the Post War Reconstruction Scheme.

There were some unhappy incidents of communal riots in Ahmedabad. The Labour localities however kept aloof from such communal frenzies, thanks to the consistent work done by the Association in promoting communal amity among labour.

### **THIRD DECADE - 1937 - 1946**

This decade was one of pioneering achievements. During this decade there was an international conflagration and India itself was very much involved in independence struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The main achievements of the Association during this decade in the industrial area had far reaching effects on the practices in this country. Shorter working hours, neutralisation of increase in cost of living, the introduction of annual bonus and above all development of union leaders through training programmes were to have effect in the country's industrial relations in the decade to come. The Association was also able to do commendable service in the civic area.

### **FOURTH DECADE - 1947 - 1956**

#### **Decade of Allround Progress**

#### **22. FORMATION OF I.N.T.U.C.**

1947 — Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, Secretary of Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, convened a meeting in Ahmedabad on 3-5-1947 of nationalist-minded trade unionists under the Chairmanship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the President of the Central Board of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh. Trade Unions of nearly all the trades, occupations and services were represented in the session by their foremost leaders. The number of unions represented from all parts of the country was more than 200, and their total membership exceeded 3,75,000. In this Conference it was decided to form the Indian National Trade Union Congress on 4th of May 1947. A provisional executive with Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee as its President and Shri Khandubhai Desai as its General Secretary was elected.

#### **23. UNION ENTERS THE CO-OPERATIVE FIELD**

1948 — The Union sponsored the Majoor Sahakari Bank Ltd. (Labour Co-operative Bank) with a view to encourage the habit of thrift and savings and to relieve the workers from the grip of usurers and private moneylenders. From a modest beginning in 1947, this Bank has completed 29 years of its useful activities. Its present share capital stands at Rs. 15,90,560, total deposits Rs. 53,88,765, Advances Rs. 80,01,002 and the

working capital at Rs. 1,05,15,186.

## 24. STANDARDIZATION OF WAGES

The Union demanded in 1947 standardisation of wages. A special Assessor was appointed to assist the Industrial Court in deciding this issue. The Industrial Court gave an Award in 1947 itself regarding wage increases. The Award was a very comprehensive one covering standardisation of wages for all categories of workers in the Industry. This Award resulted in union consciousness among all categories of workers. Even clerks and staff of Watch and Ward Departments of several mills joined the union, swelling the total membership to more than a lakh — 1,04,000 to be precise.

## 25. MAHATMA GANDHI LABOUR MEMORIAL FUND

1948 — The death of Mahatma Gandhi in January 1948 was a stunning blow to T.L.A. The textile workers of Ahmedabad spontaneously refrained from work for three days as a period of mourning. During the mourning period, the workers gathered under the same neem tree under which Mahatma Gandhi had first taught the principles of unionism and resolved to collect three days' wages to commemorate and spread the principles laid down by Mahatma Gandhiji among the working class of India. A sum of Rs. 12,20,000 was collected on this account and this was earmarked as 'Gandhi Labour Memorial Fund' and utilised in spreading Mahatma Gandhiji's ideology throughout the country, under the guidance of Gandhi Labour Memorial Trust which was also formed.

## 26. UNION'S OWN BUILDING

1949 — Till 1949 the Association's office was situated in a hired building. As the landlord of the building wanted the premises for other use, the union had to think of shifting. This question was discussed by the workers and it was decided that the Association should have its own building. Arising out of this resolution, a building fund of Rs. 4,57,000/- was collected from the workers themselves and a building suitable to the needs for carrying on various activities of the Association was constructed. The building was ready in 1949 itself and the office was shifted in that year. The building is named as 'Gandhi Majoor Sevalaya' where various services are provided to the workers and the building is always humming with activities ever since it was built.

## 27. INVOLVEMENT IN UNION GOVERNMENT

1949 — The former General Secretary of the Association Shri Gulzarilal Nanda was appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commis-

sion and Shri Khandubhai Desai elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly. On behalf of the textile workers, S. R. Vasavada was appointed as a Member of the Committee of the Cotton Textile Working Party.

## **28. T.L.A. IN INTERNATIONAL UNION MAP**

1949/1952 A number of top ranking Congress leaders visited the Association's office and encouraged the workers to carry on the movement on the lines shown by Mahatma Gandhi. International trade union leaders who visited the institution were impressed with the working of the Association and showed admiration for all the labour activities carried on by this organization.

## **29. SUCCESS IN FIRST GENERAL ELECTIONS IN INDEPENDENT INDIA**

1952 — In the first General Elections, under the Constitution of India 1950, the workers of Ahmedabad elected, with overwhelming majority, late Saravashri S. R. Vasavada, Somnath Dave and Keshavji Vaghela as their representatives to the Legislative Assembly of the Bombay State.

Similarly the workers elected 18 councillors from the labour localities to the Municipal Corporation as their representatives. The present day improvement of the labour localities in respect of civic amenities; like water, drainage, roads, lights, schools, maternity homes and dispensaries are all largely due to the persistent efforts of these representatives along with the members of the Congress Party in the Municipal Corporation.

## **30. BONUS FORMULA**

1950 — The Labour Appellate Tribunal had ruled in 1949 that loss-making mills should be exempted from payment of Bonus. This led to an agitation for arriving at a just and equitable formula for calculation of bonus. The dispute on this issue between textile workers and millowners was referred to voluntary arbitration and a compromise was arrived at. According to this compromise, loss making mills would also give minimum 4% bonus to their workers. Later on, agreement was reached by both the parties. This agreement provided for payment of bonus for a period of five years with 'set-on' and 'set-off' formula which was then known as 'Madan Mohan-Vasavada Bonus Pact' after the names of the respective leaders of textile millowners and workers. This formula was the basis on which bonus was brought under statute later in the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.

## **31. INTUC SESSION AT AHMEDABAD**

The Annual convention of INTUC was held in Ahmedabad and the

Textile Labour Association played the host for this Convention. During this session the textile workers arranged a very useful, interesting and instructive exhibition, depicting various aspects of life of labour consistent with the fundamental principles of the Gandhian Labour Movement along with its historical background and constructive activities in the premises of the Textile Labour Association. This exhibition was very much appreciated by the large number of delegates and others who attended this Convention.

### **32. TACKLING LAY-OFF, RETRENCHMENT AND PROVIDENT FUND ISSUES**

1953-54 Some of the textile mills put up closure notices on the ground of accumulation of stocks. This issue was taken up both by the Textile Labour Association and the INTUC and resulted in the promulgation of the Lay Off and Retrenchment Ordinance in the first instance and later on, an Act by the Parliament by means of amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

Similarly the demand of the Textile Labour Association for Provident Fund and Gratuity was referred to the Industrial Court. Before the hearing of the case could be taken up, the Employees Provident Funds Act, 1952 was applied to the textile workers. The case for gratuity was withdrawn at the instance of the Court.

### **33. FAMILY BUDGET ENQUIRY**

1953-54 The Association arranged for a survey to be conducted of over 3200 working families on the budgeting habits of workers. A special staff of 25 persons with background and requisite training was engaged for this work for two years. With the help of the findings, the Association decided to take up the work of further development of activities in the co-operative area, child welfare, physical training and women's welfare. Activities covering Health, Education and education of Union representatives were taken up with great vigour. Rural relief work and Slum Clearance activities through Municipal Corporation were also taken up.

### **34. KHANDUBHAI DESAI BECOMES UNION LABOUR MINISTER**

1955 — The General Secretary of the Association, Shri Khandubhai Desai was offered the portfolio of Labour in the Central Government by the then Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. This was a matter of honour and pride for the working class of India in general and Ahmedabad in particular.

### **35. FURTHER RATIONALISATION WITHOUT TEARS**

1955 — A collective agreement was entered into between the Mill-

owners' Association and the Textile Labour Association on rationalisation permitting introduction of Four Sides in the Spinning Department and Four Looms in the Weaving Department only in the event of natural vacancies and getting higher wages. In principle, it is 'rationalisation without tears' by mutual sharing of the gains of rationalisation.

#### **FOURTH DECADE - 1947 - 1956**

This decade was one in which the Association's activities extended to the national level as it was instrumental in the formation of a truly national trade union federation and also provided labour administrators at the top government level. The union built its own building with the resources provided by the workers themselves.

#### **FIFTH DECADE 1957 - 1966**

##### **PERIOD OF PROGRESS IN SOCIAL SECURITY**

#### **36. OPPOSITION TO AUTOMATIC MACHINES AND MANAGING AGENCY SYSTEM**

There was a move by some textile mills in Ahmedabad to have automatic machinery installed on a large scale. This was likely to affect the employment position of existing workers. The Textile Labour Association adopted a resolution opposing automation and requesting the Government not to allow the import of such machinery as it may involve unemployment. Late Shri Khandubhai Desai criticised the Managing Agency system by pointing out that it deserved to be scrapped outright as it was not in consonance with the objectives of the socialist society. This ultimately led to an amendment in the Companies Act, and the commission of the Managing Agents was reduced.

#### **37. MINIMUM WAGES AND WAGE BOARDS**

Though the Minimum Wages Act was on the statute, the contents of the Act were spelt out for the first time in 1957. This was an outstanding measure to implement progressively the objective of economic and social justice.

A demand was made at the Surat Session of INTUC for appointment of a Central Wage Board which was acceded by the Government. Shri S. R. Vasavada the then Secretary of the Textile Labour Association was appointed as workers' representative on the Board. Shri Vasavada also worked as a member of the Textile Enquiry Committee.

### **38. TEXTILE TECHNICIANS UNION FORMED**

For the first time, the technicians of the Textile Industry in Ahmedabad were organized under the leadership of the Textile Labour Association. They formed their own union. The union enabled them to get their salary grades standardised and secure the benefits of Provident Fund, Gratuity, Leave etc., by an agreement with the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association.

### **39. APPOINTMENT OF BONUS COMMISSION**

1964 — The Bonus Commission was appointed to go into the question of Bonus and make recommendations. Shri S. R. Vassavada was appointed as one of its members.

### **40. D.A. ON NEW CONSUMERS PRICE INDEX**

1964 — Ahmedabad workers made a demand in 1964 for the payment of dearness allowance on the basis of the new consumers price index number published by Labour Bureau, Simla. The case was referred to the Industrial Court which gave its award in favour of the workers. The Ahmedabad Millowners' Association filed an appeal to the Supreme Court, which was, however rejected.

### **41. GRATUITY, E.S.I. ESCHEME, CASUAL LEAVE AND WAGE RISE**

1964 — Gratuity was obtained by an award of the Industrial Court and confirmed by the Supreme Court. Employees' State Insurance Scheme was inaugurated in 1964 and the scheme covered a total number of 2.25,000 industrial workers as well as their family members. The scheme was implemented in Ahmedabad very late because workers of Ahmedabad desired that the scheme should include their family members also.

The Association started an intensive campaign of contacting workers in their residential localities with a view to develop their sense of understanding and ability of working together on the basis of self-help, through the formation of Seva Mandals (Community Services) and Seva Patra (Community Collections). This movement partly helped the candidates put up by the Association in winning the Municipal elections of 1961 and the general election of 1962 for the State Assembly.

### **5th Decade**

This decade was one of progress in which social security for workers in the form of Provident Fund, Gratuity, and E.S.I. Scheme were gained for the workers. This was also a period in which the Union was able to contribute in the deliberations of national bodies such as Wage Boards, Bonus Commission etc.

SIXTH DECADE — 1967-1976  
PERIOD OF TRIALS AND SUSTENANCE

**42. 1967 — CASUAL LEAVE**

By an award the workers got 7 days casual leave per year.

**43. ASSEMBLY AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

1967 — Candidates put up by Textile Labour Association viz., Shri S. R. Shah, M. T. Shukla and J. G. Parmar were elected to the Gujarat State Assembly. Shri S. R. Shah was appointed as Labour & Social Welfare Minister in the ministry formed by Congress.

In the Municipal elections there was a majority of workers' representatives and Shri N. M. Barot was elected as the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Corporation.

**44. SICK MILLS AND NATIONALISATION**

Sri S. R. Vasavada, General Secretary of the Association was awarded 'Padma Bhushan' in 1968 for his meritorious services rendered for a number of years for the uplift of the downtrodden as well as for maintenance of industrial peace for years not only in Ahmedabad but in other industrial centres and industries in the country.

The Central Government set up the National Textile Corporation under the chairmanship of Mr. S. R. Vasavada to run sick mills. His untiring efforts resulted in the formation of a State Corporation in Gujarat in 1968 which undertook running of some of the sick mills in Gujarat giving employment to a host of the unemployed workers enabling maintenance of production also.

Shri S. R. Vasavada was elected a Member of the Rajya Sabha where he played his part for the cause of labour in particular and for the nation in general.

**45. NATIONAL LABOUR COMMISSION**

1969 — Shri S. R. Vasavada was taken up as one of the members on the National Labour Commission. His views were given due weight in the recommendations made by this Commission.

**46. 1971 — FORMATION OF NLO**

With the split in the Congress the leadership of INTUC also deviated from the principles and policy enunciated by Gandhiji. The Central orga-

nisation of INTUC joined hands with AITUC whose means and objectives were not in consonance with Truth and Non-violence.

The TLA which was founded by Gandhiji and which strictly adhered to the principles laid by him, was a parent body of the INTUC. TLA firmly believed that the working class cannot get real service from an organization which is bereft of Truth and Non-violence. It was, therefore, not possible for TLA to work in INTUC any more. The Joint Board of Representatives of the Association which met on 4th November 1971 gave serious consideration to the matter and unanimously resolved to keep aloof from all the activities of the INTUC until the political climate improved.

The Working Committee of the INTUC which met at Nagpur in 1971 decided to withdrawn affiliation of the Textile Labour Association even without calling for any explanation in the matter.

This state of affairs opened the avenue for establishment of a separate Central Organization of the unions. A Convention held in January 1972 of nearly 650 representatives from 146 trade unions from all over Gujarat adopted a resolution to form the 'National Labour Organisation' (NLO) quite independent of any political party and 112 unions consisting of 1,18,000 members readily joined the said organization.

#### **47. NLP COMING INTO BEING**

In order to arouse political consciousness among the organized labour on Gandhian lines and achieve political benefits by taking part in civic as well as State Assembly and Parliament elections, the Association was instrumental in starting the National Labour Party.

#### **48. 1972 — SAD DEMISE OF PRESIDENT AND GENERAL SECRETARY**

Towards the end of 1972, two unhappy incidents took place. Smt. Anusuyaben Sarabhai life-long President of the Association expired on 11-9-1972 at the age of 86 years. Seeds of the Labour movement in Ahmedabad were sown by her which resulted into a strong and well-organised institution run on the Gandhian philosophy that led to allround betterment of socio-economic conditions of the workers.

Within a period of not more than 2 months, Shri S. R. Vasavada, General Secretary of the Association passed away on 20th November 1972 which was a severe blow to the labour movement. His was a life-long career as a veteran Trade Unionist whose untiring efforts resulted in organising workers in several industries in the whole of the country under the banner of the INTUC and the NFIR.

#### 49. **MAXIMUM MEMBERSHIP**

1973 — The year 1973 witnessed an unprecedented rise in the membership of the Association which stood at 1,25,000.

#### 50. **AGREEMENT FOR DISTRIBUTION OF CLOTH**

1973 — Negotiations between TLA and the Millowners' Association became fruitful in reaching an agreement for giving cloth worth Rs. 101/- gratis to the employees employed in the textile mills.

#### 51. **WAGE INCREASE**

1974 — Demand for wage increase was made by the Textile Labour Association. This was taken up by the Industrial Court. Subsequently an unanimous agreement was reached between T.L.A. and the Millowners' association which was passed as an Award by Shri I. G. Thakore, President of the Industrial Court, Workers benefitted to the tune of Rs. 15 crores as a whole.

#### 52. **ELECTION OF MR. A. N. BUCH AS PRESIDENT**

1975 — Shri Khandubhai Desai, who joined as President of the Association after retirement as Governor of Andhra Pradesh died. Shri A. N. Buch was elected as President in the vacancy caused by the demise of Shri Khandubhai Desai.

#### 53. **NLO REPRESENTED IN GUJARAT STATE CABINET**

1975 — N. M. Barot, put up as a candidate on behalf on NLO as a constituent member of the Janata Front won and was entrusted with the Labour portfolio in the Cabinet of Janata Morcha (Front). After the fall of the ministry Mr. Barot resumed his activities in the Association as one of its Secretaries. He also started mobilizing workers in commercial organizations into a union.

#### 54. **1976 — CONGRESS ONSLAUGHT**

NLO put up 28 candidates to the Ahmedabad Municipality out of which 7 were elected. The elected members got places in important civic committees. At the same time the ruling Congress Party, during the time of national Emergency declared by it, directly encouraged formation of rival union in the textile industry under the auspices of I.N.T.U.C. This new union directly attacked the Textile Labour Association and other unions affiliated to N.L.O. both the Congress and INTUC adopted all sorts of methods to break the faith of workers in Gandhian ideology but miserably failed in its attempt as the workers stood solidly behind T.L.A.

## SIXTH DECADE

During this decade the Association had glorious achievements in that it was able to achieve more for members by direct negotiations with the employers and also its leaders occupied eminent positions in public life. It was also one of trial and tribulations in that veteran leaders passed away during this period and the Association had to come out of the national centre, in the formation of which it had played the leading role but its ideology ultimately triumphed. It was not only able to survive all the trials but also was able to come out with greater strength and record number of members.



## NAVAL H. TATA

It is heartening to note that the Textile Labour Association, which is popularly known as Majur Mahajan, is celebrating this year the Golden Jubilee of its existence and of sustained and useful activities for the benefit of cotton textile workers in Ahmedabad. Few trade unions have achieved the steady growth and ever widening field of action as the T.L.A. In fact, most trade unions which came into existence after the first World War in 1914-1918 have registered haphazard and halting progress, if they did survive initial years of travail. Their mushroom growth, marked by intense inter and intra union rivalry and coupled with selfish aim of its leaders to outbid and outmanoeuvre one another to win over the loyalty of the workers, have driven many of them to extinction.

The history of the T.L.A. is, however, a saga of achievements. Like other social institutions, the organisation during the last 60 years, had to pass through a chequered career of growth and decline and renewal with vigour. Even lately after the split in the political ranks of the Indian National Congress, it looked as if the T.L.A. would fall a prey to the political machinations and its edifice so assiduously built by its founding fathers including Mahatma Gandhi crumble in the face of adverse circumstances. But, thanks to the spirit of unity displayed by the office-bearers of the organisation, the T.L.A. stood firm and survived the process of disintegration, albeit somewhat scathed and shaken. Having been through such vicissitudes, during a span of 60 years, it would be a matter of great interest to other organisations to know how it managed to survive such ordeal.

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF T.L.A.:

The labour movement is essentially meant for its members, it draws its sustenance and strength from the funds provided by members. It has, therefore, to protect and further their interests. But even in the pursuit of these objectives, success has to be measured not merely in terms of the material gains secured or the extent of redress obtained with regard to day-to-day grievances. The degree to which the workers have been helped to develop their moral and social consciousness has also to be an important criterion. In India, because of Gandhiji's influence, this new dimension was almost in-built in the work of the Association, which followed his advice. Apart from carrying to the door of the employer the consequences of autocratic action, Gandhiji introduced a certain measure of responsibility in union leadership by emphasising the co-existence of rights and duties in every situation. It was mainly due to Gandhiji's influence that a measure of success was achieved in instilling into the conduct of trade union activity, the concept of ethical values and of a moral basis. The worker may be a poor man but he has to be the equal of anyone else as an honourable truth-loving, honest

and socially conscious person. The workers' complaints and demands have to be fair, reasonable and well founded and the advocacy on their behalf must have no element of evasion or exaggeration.

A distinctive feature of the labour movement in Ahmedabad is its stress on social-welfare activity, depending primarily on the resources derived from the workers' contributions. The Association runs cultural centres, undertakes activities in the field of education and health, etc. It provided the workers' community with a measure of social assistance when social insurance of the type we now have in India was nowhere on the horizon. The Association assists members in welfare programmes outside their work environments. It has introduced a measure of co-operation within workers' ranks to form societies for mutual benefit, and through all these activities, the Association could reach the community which is larger than the members of its union and their families. The T.L.A. insisted upon employers consulting union leaders in many activities which they wanted to sponsor for the good of the community. When the labour organisation in Ahmedabad extended its influence in civic affairs, and later in the legislature of the State, the welfare of the workers as distinct from mere monetary gains remained an important preoccupation of its representatives. The Association had a powerful group in the then Ahmedabad municipality, now a corporation, and its activities in that local body were as much beneficial to the community at large as they were to the union members.

The workers themselves have been taught assiduously to relate expenditure of their earnings and leisure to their real personal and family needs and betterment and to avoid waste and wrong uses. This may appear to some to be an intrusion on the personal lives of the workers and no business of a trade union as such. Gandhiji took a different view of the functions and responsibilities of a trade union, which were not confined to the securing of economic gains only but embraced the total well being of the workers as human beings and citizens.

#### EMPLOYMENT-ORIENTED POLICY LACKING:

Trade unions are essentially social organisations and in a developing country like ours, where its teeming unemployed millions are struggling to eke out a decent living, it behoves on the part of the leadership of trade unions that it contributes its share to reduce the vigour of unemployment apart from the social responsibilities cast on industry and the Government which, through its fiscal and other policies can help to eradicate poverty. In this respect, the role played by the T.L.A. to create employment opportunities amongst the weaker section of the society is worth recounting. A Labour Co-operative Bank set up in 1947, the creation of a Mahila Sewa Trust in 1975 to organise welfare of women who are self-employed citizens earning a little sum daily, and its latest efforts to organise cycle rickshaw pullers in the city of Ahmedabad so as to make them owners and stand on their own legs and become useful citizens, are examples in social responsibilities of a trade union.

The foregoing paragraphs convey briefly the Association's effort towards employment-oriented programme in the urban sector. Let us now briefly survey how far the policies of other trade unions have been employment-oriented bearing in mind the unemployment explosion which is fast approaching in gigantic proportions which our trade union leaders are intelligent enough to foresee. Without any intention on my part to criticise them, I must admit that their general approach is growth-oriented but it is concentrated in the confined sphere of industries, mining, railways and Government services. In a sense, it is a negative approach because wherever they are concerned they would like to ensure that the complement of workers within the confines of the union they represent does not shrink. Hence their agitation against such issues as rationalisation, automation and retrenchment, to an extent where they would rather burden a unit with surplus labour by invoking all available labour laws and raising disputes rather than adopt a constructive approach of letting a unit operate profitably with prospects of expansion.

Of course, there are a few exceptions, where some unions have co-operated with management on rationalisation of labour in return for higher wages and fringe benefits. But speaking of the general trend, the tendency would be to use a military term to "mark time", stamping on the same ground than march forward. It is the same philosophy which actuates them to prevent even bona-fide lay-off for which they succeeded in having a legislation. Wherever such lay-offs are genuinely justified by economic causes, the legislative bar against curtailment of production can undoubtedly put the unit on a royal road to insolvency, instead of permitting it to recover from sickness. In clinching to their point of view so rigidly the trade unions are doing themselves and the country a great disservice by eroding existing sources of employment.

With great respect, I must point out to my trade union friends that there has been very little evidence of their accent on creation of fresh employment opportunities. There is a total neglect towards the tremendous employment potential of the rural sector where they have not even cared to attempt organising rural workers. Obviously the lure of the urban industrial area is too strong to divert their attention to creation of employment opportunities in the countryside.

#### NEW FRONTIER OF TRADE UNIONISM:

In the context of social responsibilities of trade unions, I have been very much impressed by the philosophy propounded by Dr. P. P. Narayanan, President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and President of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, who believes in the new frontier of trade unionism. According to his philosophy, trade unions should not confine themselves to collective bargaining only, but must take interest in social and economic questions. As a part of his pragmatic approach, Dr. Narayanan is at present running his union in Malaysia strictly on business line. The result has been that the union is now experimenting new ideas. In addition to the union taking over some

plantations, it has started a bank and has plans for starting other industries which are needed for Malayasia's development. This plan of the union will create additional employment also in the country. It has been possible for Dr. Narayanan and his colleagues to think of such expansion only due to the professional approach instead of the traditional missionary and emancipatory approach so common in all developing countries among trade union leaders. He has been able to attract the best professional talent possible in assisting him in his union work as also in running the various industries now owned by the unions. As the union itself has become an employer, it has to deal with various problems that confront the employers in running an industry. The professional employees of the union have provided these skills.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

The election manifesto of the ruling party and the subsequent pronouncements of our Prime Minister make it quite clear that it will be the policy of Government to eradicate poverty in the next ten years. Judging from the challenge accepted by our Government, it is the moral responsibility of both the industry and labour to ensure that they also discharge their obligations to the society in a worthy manner befitting their status. Obviously, therefore, the responsibility of trade unions playing a more effective economic and socio-political role in the scheme of a democratically conceived plan does not need to be underscored. The trade unions have a stake in the national plans for economic development since they are formulated and implemented as much for equitable distribution as for maximising of production. With increased pace of industrialisation more and more rural workers will take to industrial employment. It will be the duty of the trade unions to facilitate their adaptation to the new mode of work and life. This process of socio-economic progress is likely to be hindered by various prejudices and rigidities in the society based on caste, language, provincial and communal considerations. The trade unions will have to combat these not only among the workers themselves but in the community as a whole. They will not be able to discharge these tasks adequately unless they undertake a serious study of the problems involved.

## ADAPTATION TO INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Another area in which the trade unions have also a continuing responsibility is helping the workers in their adjustment to the new industrial environment. The Director General of I.L.O. in his report to the 37th Session of the International Labour Conference pointed out that "the trade union can be one of the powerful instruments for creating a new industrial society and for helping the new recruit from the rural community to adjust to the conditions of industrial life". The trade unions can explain to the workers and make them ready to accept the vigour and discipline of an industrial society, and iron out the ills like absenteeism, high labour turnover, migratory habits, etc. Apart from its socio-psychological aspects, lack of adjustment is itself dangerous to economic development, since

it needs a committed stable and disciplined workforce to foster an appreciable degree of economic growth. The trade union's contribution may take different shapes and forms to attain this objective. They can establish community services such as educational-cum-recreational centres, provide better housing by means of establishing co-operative housing societies, etc., and organise to fulfil such needs of the workers which make their life fuller and richer, so as to turn them into a stable and committed workforce.

#### LEADERSHIP FROM WITHIN :

In a nut-shell, the trade unions must accept more responsibility as active partners in economic and social progress. They should not be content to acquire a privileged position for themselves only as they have perhaps been attempting to do. Though a gradual awareness of the strains and stresses of the process of economic growth is slowly dawning upon them, yet there is need for a more responsible leadership to grow from within which will be capable of understanding and appreciating the long-range implications of development and change. Perhaps the trade unions have outgrown the age of dependence, of being tied to the apron-strings of political parties. In this respect, they should also take a better look at their counterparts in the West, where trade union organisation activity and its effects are closely related to the structures, activities, purposes, and ideologies of the entire society. The trade unions in the West are a branch of the social tree, not an artificial appendage. And they have a responsibility to work their way up to achieve that status.

In all probability these responsibilities of trade unions are also going to increase in size in the years to come. There are about 21,388 registered trade unions at the moment whose membership is estimated to be eight to ten millions out of a total wage-earning workforce of about nineteen millions. Though these figures seem to be quite impressive, in relation to the needs of the country or the number of membership of trade unions out of the total workforce, much more has to be achieved. If one can indulge in crystal-gazing into the future, a prediction can be made that this trend is likely to continue, and perhaps increase. The basic truth remains that the trade unions themselves have a great stake in rapid economic development since that alone can create a basis for their growth and strength. In under-developed countries, the chief problem is economic growth and therefore the major questions for unions is subordination of immediate wage gains and similar considerations to the development of the country.

Ultimately, the question that looms large is whether the activities of a trade union should be confined to merely an improvement in the wages and other conditions of service of a worker or should the role of a trade union be all-pervasive so as to develop his personality both as a worker and as a citizen of the country. The working of the Textile Labour Association, furnishes a convincing answer. Since its inception, it has been carrying on extensive social and educational work for its members and their families, apart from conducting its traditional trade union activities. It has, in that respect, a record which is unique as well as highly commendable.

## ORGANIZING SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN (AN EXPERIMENT)

Ela R. Bhatt, Chief, Women's Wing, T.L.A.

I have the honour to belong to a unique organization, Textile Labour Association (TLA), founded by Mahatma Gandhi, in 1917—the biggest single union of textile workers with a membership of about 1,20,000 workers.

### WOMEN'S WING:

I happen to head the Women's wing of TLA.

The first programme of the wing was the training of women and girls of the workers for specific vocations and trades. The wing then helps them to find and even provide suitable gainful work. 1873 women in 25 centres are today being trained for sewing, machine embroidery, machine knitting, Radio servicing, as press compositor, and home helper.

### HOW WE MET THE SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN:

It was noticed while running such programmes that there were many women who were engaged in various trades and services but as they were unorganised and unprotected, they could not get the just and full payment for their honest, hard and dignified work. We have named them as 'self-employed worker'.

### UNORGANISED CATEGORY OF WORKERS IN URBAN AREAS:

This section is one of the economically weakest, out of whom majority of them are women. They shuttle between the adjacent rural and running spilling over of these workers from the rural to the semi-urban centres of work, which is unavailable at their village. This population either prefers to shuttle back and forth or make temporary settlements in slums.

This section of workers is almost entirely unprotected, unorganised and very often underemployed. Being unorganised, they are at a great disadvantage both by virtue of the nature of their work and their position. This class of workers have naturally little or no bargaining power. There are ten state enactments which ordinarily protect the interest of the industrial workers whose wages and other rights are covered by one or the other of them.

The category of workers (of whom majority are women, again) we are concerned, does not fall within the ambit of any of the labour laws. In their case, neither employer-employee relationship, nor wages nor even hours of work are fixed. All these undergo a change with each operation and position alters from situation to situation. Piece wage is the only method of payment and the only way of securing work or employment is hang around the work site till work

occurs or becomes available. In the case of handcart pulling, loading and unloading, for example, railway yards, urban community markets, agricultural produce markets, posts etc. are some of the areas of major concentration of this class of unprotected and unorganised labour.

Under the dynamic leadership of Mr. A. N. Buch, President, and the Women's Wing of TLA, an effort was made to integrate them, to size up and estimate the categories of unprotected labour women in the city of Ahmedabad. Our task concentrated on studying these women workers.

#### PROFILES OF URBAN POVERTY:

Survey work made to study socio-economic condition of the women engaged in different occupations: headloading, handcart pulling, garment making, vegetable vending, used-garment dealing, junksmithy, milk producing. What did we find?

97% of them live in slums

93% are illiterate

91% are married

On average have 4 children

61% are below age of 25

60% are under debt

78% work on rented means of production

70% have to carry their children to worksite

Average daily income ranges from Rs. 4/- to Rs. 12/- per day.

#### COMMON PROBLEMS:

Among the common problems are rented means of production, shortage of capital, shortage of raw material, inadequacy of place of work, lack of suitable market place, decentralised purchase and sale, indebtedness, large families to feed, and ill health.

#### WOMEN ORGANISED IN SEWA:

These workers whom we called self-employed workers were organised into Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in 1972. It is a trade union registered under the Trade Union Act.

#### STRUCTURE OF SEWA:

SEWA is a self-sufficient body. The members pay subscription of Rs. 3/- per year.

SEWA has a Representative Board of 153 elected group leaders from different sections of total membership. There are seven trade committees. The group leaders usually know the mechanism and the problem of their trade well. They provide the communication channel. Business meetings of the group leaders are held frequently which also serve as consciousness raising meetings, through lectures, discussions, films and demonstration.

#### FIRST PROGRAMME:

SEWA started with the first programme of protecting its members from the exploitation of private money lenders or other big traders. These people from whom the women purchased their inputs had a great hold on them because of their weak bargaining position. For want of small capital for trade, they fell prey to the inhuman rate of interest of private money-lenders.

Another case of helplessness is where the means of labour are not their own. For example, a handcart puller or a hand-spinner is always at the mercy of the owner of the handcart or Charkha. The sword of unemployment hangs constantly above them. Their honest earnings are squeezed away.

#### CREDIT FACILITY:

Nationalised Banks with their policies to 'Serve the poor' held out hope when SEWA approached them to help these poor women workers, illiterate slumdwellers.

But the scheme of providing finances to the members of SEWA was not a simple one. We were inexperienced and so were the Banks who had neither technical know-how, conceptual clarity nor trained personnel to serve the poor. SEWA then decided to provide the infrastructure to the Banks from its own meagre resources. By the end of 1976, about 8,000 members were provided advances of about Rs. 30,00,000.

#### OUR PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES:

Our members being poor women, filthy, uncouth, accompanied by children were not much welcome by the Bank staff.

They were not consistent with their full names, mail never reached them, banks doubted their bonafide unnecessarily.

The timings and other discipline of the Banks did not suit the members at all.

Some times they mixed up with the names and branches of Banks. They repaid at wrong places.

They needed secure place to keep their cash money.

## A SOLUTION: SEWA BANK

“Behn, why can't we have our own Bank?” Members determined and 4,000 women shareholders established a women's Co-operative Bank (first of its kind) with a share capital of Rs. 60,000/- in 1974. Today 11,923 members have their own savings account. The working capital of the SEWA Bank is about Rs. 13,00,000/-. The Bank has been partly successful in releasing them from the clutches of private money-lenders. This will increase their income and strengthen their bargaining power at purchasing and marketing level.

### REPAYMENT:

Financing the poor has involved us more and more in their lives and problems. The pattern of repayment is:

44% are regular

43% are irregular

14% are serious defaulters

SEWA maintains Recovery Section with a team of 12 Field workers who are out in the field for five days a week for the follow up work to check up where the loan money has been spent, to help them to purchase raw material, to collect repayment and to strengthen the organisation by personal contact.

### MORE SERVICES:

In addition to savings and credit services, the SEWA member is providing many other services.

### SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES:

As these workers are not covered under any Protective Legislation, SEWA had to evolve its own social security scheme for the members.

We found the death rate of the members higher than industrial workers. This led up to start schemes like Maternity Benefit and Death Benefit. Then followed the widowhood benefit. Efforts for Medicare have not been successful for want of funds.

### TRAINING AND WELFARE:

Efforts were made to run literacy classes, but, they could not maintain interest due to their busy schedule of life. However, Productivity Programmes proved to be highly useful e.g. Training on Cattlecare for milk producers, maintenance of machines for garment workers and spinners, handling of better tools for junksmiths, family budgeting and picklemaking for vegetable vendors.

A low-cost housing scheme is underway, in which 900 members have deposited their savings in SEWA Bank.

Day Care Centre for children of hand-cart pullers and vegetable vendors are run by SEWA. Many more are needed.

#### LEGAL AID:

Market women have constant problems with the Police and the Encroachment Department of the Municipal Corporation. Such complaints are noted and attended by the field workers of SEWA; legal aid is also provided if necessary through an Advocate who is on the SEWA staff.

#### RESEARCH:

Surveys are being done to bring out the several economic activities done by poor women in the informal sector in rural and urban centres of the State. Following the surveys, through the same investigators, efforts are being done to organise them. This has resulted into organisations of sweepers, agriculture workers, cotton pickers, Agarbatti makers, handloom weavers and thus expansion of SEWA.

#### ORGANIZING FOR SELF-RELIANCE — Our observations:

(1) In India, in the Third world, large number of women are participating in economic activities of these countries.

The industrial unions cover a very small and insignificant part of total working women. With our little experience, we hope that if we organise the self-employed into unions and then into co-operatives they may pave a way for bringing about a total change in the women's status and their lives.

(2) The hard struggle that men face in a life of poverty is only harder and more cruel for a woman in the same circumstances. Her handicaps are obvious. There are fewer employment opportunities open to women. Her domestic responsibilities, the care of young children severely limit her employment. There are no Day-care Centre provisions made for children. Women with children work only at the expense of their family responsibilities. For a woman the economic problem of earning her daily bread is linked with her entire social and physical life.

(3) The poor have restricted access to proper medical attention. The care they do receive is often too late and of low quality. Yet the relative need for health care is the greatest among women.

(4) Even the poorest community has certain basic needs like food, medicare, housing, education which spell hope. It is the inaccessibility of these very basic amenities that makes the poor remain poor.

(5) Family welfare programmes could succeed only after the earning capacity of women and their economic status were uplifted.

- (6) The persistence of poverty testifies to the fact that problems of income-adequacy and income insecurity are common. For most of the poor women and men it is beyond their power, individually, to change their economic status.
- (7) Under such circumstances two considerations are of importance:—
- (a) The poor women and men should be effectively united in *one* organisation to be able to combat with and resist the tremendous powers of the vested interests AND:
  - (b) Effective economic and social institutions should be built which through this organisation provide the services which the poor workers badly need. Often attempts at organising the women have tended to become charitable social welfare organisations drawing upon their *own* resources in providing services to their members.

From the humble attempt of organising women into SEWA, what seems to emerge that it is possible without elaborate techniques, or high expenditure, to reach and initiate self-help programmes amongst the poor women. Moreover, these women are most ready to be organised and are capable of absorbing assistance and ideas if exposed to them.

## GANDHIJI'S EXPERIMENT OF 'TRUTH' AND 'NONVIOLENCE' IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR

L. S. DAVE

GANDHIJI has left behind him a legacy of rich ideology for those who have faith in it. Those who have properly understood the basic principles laid down by him, and follow them in right earnest will never lose anything, but are bound to attain satisfaction, for faith is the utmost treasure of life. It is a proven fact that his principles were tried and tested not once but very often in various fields. as he went on making experiments with them all throughout his life-time, and not only they were found to be a boon to the masses, but they have done immense good to the entire mankind.

GANDHIJI is no more today, but his principles are alive, and they will remain effective for any age. Obviously, principles laid down by great men live longer and influence the minds of the masses to a great extent. His principles, were in fact, based on right thinking, followed by right action. He had an abiding faith in the Supreme Power. He never thought of using wrong means to secure right ends. His means were very simple, yet at times very crucial. He faced the problems as they occurred, and faced the reality with all earnestness. He always advised his followers to keep faith in the Supreme Power that is pervading the universe, and that reliance in the inner self bears close relation with the Supreme Power so as to guide on the correct path. The twin principles of 'Truth' and 'Non-violence' which he preached and put into practice, have brought over wonderful results at home and abroad. To understand the implications of these principles, ordinarily truth and non-violence mean 'love' and 'affection' for each other, nay, for all the creations of God. He always believed that these very principles were competent enough to bring 'Sarvodaya'—meaning — good of all. He was never rigid in his ideology. He never insisted that his word was law, and that it should be carried out without being convinced. At the same time, he was also open for conviction and was bold enough to correct himself without least hesitation, or to admit the truth even before the public at large, no sooner he got convinced about any of his action or policy. It was such of his exemplary large-heartedness that attracted one and all. He had, in fact, mastered the tactful art of transforming the hearts of others and winning them over by love. He would never thrust upon his own ideas or opinions on anybody but try to explain at length his views till one gets convinced about the truth, In doing so he would never harbour hatred or ill-will in his mind. He was a practical person and he translated into action his very principles in the labour field also.

Let us have a glimpse in the early stage of his experiment made by him at Ahmedabad which ultimately gave birth to an organization which has, through its manifold constructive activities, made a remarkable change both in economic as

well as social structure of the workers engaged in the Ahmedabad Textile Industry. Thus his contribution to the country's Labour Movement was unique and based on sound principles. He was a true 'Vishnava' and he practised as such, so as to banish the poverty of the poor and the down-trodden.

Industrial revolution brought about a turn when the employer became the owner of the tools, while those who used the tools became the wage-earners. This naturally resulted into exploitation of the workers as the employers were naturally tempted to exact more and more work with less and lesser wages. Conditions of work were also humiliating. Working hours were not restricted, and workers' plight was very miserable.

Gandhiji was requested to intervene in a dispute between the employers and employees of the textile industry at Ahmedabad in 1918 where a strike was apprehended for contemplated discontinuance of bonus. Workers had approached in the first instance, Smt. Anasuyaben Sarabhai-President of the Textile Labour Association with a request that they should be given at least 50 per cent increase as dearness allowance in lieu of bonus. Situations then reached such a stage that Gandhiji was approached by the local authority to take up the matter. Gandhiji met all concerned and held discussions so as to settle the dispute amicably. The dispute was then referred to the arbitration of Seth Shri Ambalal Sarabhai, Shri Jagabhai Dalpatbhai and Seth Chandulal on behalf of the millowners, and Mahatma Gandhiji, Sardar Vallabhbhai and Shri Shankerlal Banker on behalf of the workers. In the event of any difference between the arbitrators, the Collector of Ahmedabad was to act as Umpire whose decision was to be held as final and binding. There was however some misunderstanding among the workers. Some of them struck work, as a result of which a lock-out was declared by the employers as the action resorted to by the workers was taken to be breach of discipline. Workers were firm in their demand. Employers then tried to offer them 20 per cent if they resumed work. Gandhiji held discussions with Smt. Anasuyaben, Shri Shankerlal Banker and others and after studying all facts and figures and comparing same with Bombay, he came to the conclusion that it would be reasonable to make a demand for 85 per cent only, and his suggestion was accepted by the workers. Employers were however adamant. Workers resorted to the strike weapon in a very peaceful and non-violent way under the guidance of Gandhiji. While leaving their machines which were so dear to them, their hearts were so moved that they offered flowers and coconuts ere they parted with their machines which gave them bread and butter.

The struggle lasted for about 25 days but without any bitterness. Smt. Anasuyaben and Shri Shankerlalbhai undertook a house-to-house visit of the workers to assess their conditions, and had thus an opportunity to seize the pulse of the working class in general. Numerous public meetings were held, and a number of instructive leaflets were distributed. Every evening workers gathered beneath the babul tree on the banks of the Sabarmati river when they were

advised to remain firm and peaceful and not be misled under any provocations. Gandhiji also advised workers not to depend upon any outside pecuniary help but to maintain their self-respect. Some alternative work was provided to such of the families who were hit hard. The situation then took a different turn. Mill-owners lifted the lock-out and induced the workers to resume work with 20 per cent dearness allowance. Pressure on weaker ones was also brought over. Employers employed such tactics so as to undermine the morale of the workers. There arose a bit of confusion in workers' minds, and faith of some of the bad coins was somewhat shaken from their pledge and some bitter words pierced Gandhiji's heart. It was the 22nd day of the strike. Seeing some of the dejected faces at a meeting, Gandhiji announced his decision not to take any food, nor use a car till the workers were given justice. Smt. Anasuyaben also took similar vow. A Muslim weaver came forward and requested both of them to desist from such a drastic action and offered to commit suicide himself. Tears ran through the eyes of all those present. They all felt that some serious blunder had been committed on the part of the workers and Gandhiji had been shocked by their weakness. They grasped the gravity of the whole situation and again re-affirmed their faith in the pledge and urged them not to resort to their decision. Mahatmaji was resolute in his decision, and said to the workers: "I consider it a joy to swim with you or sink with you". Employers had also not remained quite unaffected. Seth Shri Ambalal Sarabhai who was till then so firm was greatly shocked. He met Bapu and requested him to give up his fast. Bapu clarified the position that his step was primarily undertaken only to demonstrate to the workers the significance attached to their pledge and thereby to sustain them. Even then he was quite aware of the coercive effect his fast had on the other side. Ultimately a compromise was reached and the dispute was referred to the arbitration of Prof. Anandshanker Dhruva. Pending the award the workers reduced their demand by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Bapu held his view that it was against the principles of justice to take anything from a person under duress. No satyagrahi could ever do so. While workers received these joyous tidings, they had a few words of advice from Gandhiji on that day: "He who has no experience and has no self-discipline, has no right to take an oath". Bapu's fast came to an end on reaching the amicable settlement, and the millowners distributed sweets to the workers.

It may thus be observed that in Satyagrah, both the parties invariably succeed. He who struggles for the 'truth' and obtain it, of course, succeeds, but even those who oppose the truth and later realize and concede it, should also be treated to have succeeded. Gandhiji gave his message to the workers: "Starve, but keep your vow"—This message could be effective only if he himself was prepared to die of starvation, which he demonstrated by himself.

It is on these very principles that the Textile Labour Association at Ahmedabad has been able to do service to the working class and to the industry as well as to the consumers, and maintain peace and prosperity not only in Ahmedabad but throughout the length and breadth of the country in various industrial centres and numerous industries.

## THE AHMEDABAD EXPERIMENT IN LABOUR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

By Shri Jayantilal Bhikhabhai, President.  
Ahmedabad Millowners' Association

30th May 1861, the day on which the first cotton textile mill in the City of Ahmedabad started working would go down as a gold-letter day in the history of industrial development of Ahmedabad and Gujarat. Similarly 4th December 1917, the day on which the Textile Labour Association came into being marks an event of great importance in the annals of the growth and development of Trade Union movement in our country. Ahmedabad was fortunate that the seed of Trade Union movement in the City was not only sown by Mahatma Gandhi but it had the benefit of being nurtured by him in the initial period of its growth. During the sixty years that have passed since the Majoor Mahajan came into being, the sapling that was planted in 1917 has developed into a strong and stout banyan tree, spreading its branches in different areas and covering numerous activities. It was, however, not a smooth sailing all along; over the period it had also to weather many a storm some of which threatened its very existence. That it has come out unscathed is largely because the Union has been fortunate in having at its helm of affairs right from beginning, persons who have wholeheartedly worked selflessly with enthusiasm, integrity and devotion, wedded only to the cause of ameliorating the economic as well as social conditions of the working class community in general and the textile workers in this City in particular. The role played by persons like Late Miss Ansuyaben Sarabhai, Shri Shankerlal Banker, Shri G. L. Nanda, Late Shri Khandubhai K. Desai, Late Shri S. P. Dave and Late Shri S. R. Vasavada stand as shining examples of what near miracles can be achieved by a constructive and peaceful approach towards problems concerning labour and management. Fifty years back, the industrial workers in the City who mainly came from villages were not only mostly illiterate but had a deep-rooted orthodox belief in castes and communities etc. To build a strong union by persuading such a heterogenous community to join and work in cohesion was indeed a herculean task. Today the Textile Labour Association can feel justifiably proud that a large majority of the local textile mill employees are their members and have been so for a number of years.

It is interesting to note that in the very first industrial dispute which was instrumental in giving birth to T.L.A., Mahatma Gandhi laid down certain fundamental guidelines to be followed by the Union, which rested on a co-operative and constructive approach in resolving disputes that may arise between the management and labour; at the same time spread its activity more and more to social, and other fields to improve the general condition of the workers. The Mahajan has faithfully abided by these principles and has always eschewed open confrontation.

The employers in Ahmedabad have their own organisation — The Ahmedabad Millowners' Association — which came into existence in the year 1891. If industrial relations have been as peaceful as they have been in this City, it is equally due to a similar constructive and rational approach adopted by those who have the privilege to guide the affairs of this Association ever since its inception. They have equally imbibed the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, avoided confrontation and aimed at resolving disputes by discussion across the table and to the extent possible avoid taking recourse to the Court of Law.

The result of this healthy approach has been that Ahmedabad has enjoyed a long spell of industrial peace which one hardly finds in other parts of our country. Isn't it a near miracle that since 1923, the Ahmedabad Industry has had not a single major work stoppage due to industrial strife? This is in contrast to what happened and is happening in other textile centres which have repeatedly been in the grip of grave and prolonged industrial unrest. The situation was strikingly brought out in the Report of the Departmental Inquiry on Wages and Employment in the Bombay Textile Industry appointed by the Government of Bombay in 1934. The report stated that during the year 1926 to 1933, there were in textile industry in the whole of the presidency a total of 471 strikes with a total loss of 38.89 million man-days. Of this time loss Bombay City alone with 1,30,000 average number of workers was responsible for 32 million man-days, Sholapur accounted for over one million man-days with only 18,000 workers and Ahmedabad with 70,000 workers had only 0.138 million man-days!

In a small article like this, it is hardly possible to go into details of the number of labour disputes resolved by the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association and the Textile Labour Association through the process of conciliation and arbitration without recourse to the Court of Law: suffice to say that a very large number of disputes is resolved by mutual negotiations and one can say with a sense of pride and satisfaction that this has been possible because it is accepted by both the parties that labour and management are not rivals or competitors as some believe nor are they ideological enemies. On the other hand the Ahmedabad Textile Industry presents at this time a shining example where the parties have learned to accept each other as fully and unreservedly as equal and mutual partners in industry as could be justified by experience. They respect each other's integrity and have faith and confidence in each other's basic aims and purposes. Neither has reason to fear that one will exploit the other. It is adoption and implementation of such principles of mutual faith in each other that has reduced friction and industrial unrest to the minimum. It does not mean that there has been no instance when the parties have failed to negotiate an agreed solution of the problem and had not taken recourse to Court of Law for settlement of the same. If the machinery of the law had to be invoked, this also was in most cases a result of an agreement to disagree. As such whatever be the verdict of the Court, it has been accepted by the parties without in any way disturbing the cordial relations. That is because of such uniqueness, that the Ahmedabad EXPERIMENT in labour management has attracted national and international

attention. Indeed Ahmedabad has been a laboratory for carrying out successfully this experiment based on mutual trust between the employers and employees. While as described earlier the two Associations have played an important role for the success of this experiment, it is equally to the credit of the large mass of textile labour of Ahmedabad that even during periods of great stresses and strains, they have adhered to peaceful methods of resolving differences with their employers, and continued to heed to the advice of their association. It would not be too much to hope that in the years to come the Textile Labour Association which continued to be led by a group of devoted persons would be able to spread its activities not only in all parts of Gujarat but also to other States of the country, uniting the workers in various industries under unions which are truly wedded to Gandhian principles and thereby help evolve a social order wherein strikes and lockouts become happenings of the past and all industrial disputes be they be at the plant level or at the level of industry are resolved through a process of mutual negotiation.

# ROLE OF T.L.A. IN SHAPING INDIAN LABOUR LEGISLATION

By B. N. DATAR

Sixty years is a sufficiently long period in the history of an organisation to assess the work it has done in the field of its choice or supportive of it. On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad (TLA), it is thus appropriate to review the influence which it has exercised in shaping labour legislation in India, as a part of its continued effort in improving the conditions of work of textile labour in the area for which it has a special responsibility, as indeed for labour in the country as a whole. We are living at a time when, as pointed out recently by the Secretary General of an influential labour organisation from another country, 'it is not adequate for a trade union to continue work for the improvement of the fortunes of its members merely through the process of discussions within the organisation itself and with employers, but to influence adequately the community as whole so that its chosen representatives who have the responsibility of legislating for the country do not over-look the interests of labour in whatever they do; or more positively legislate in such a way that the interests of labour are promoted.' The role of the T.L.A. over the years of its influential existence in this regard is proposed to be reviewed in what follows.

Labour legislation in the country is or has become so vast that the contribution of an organisation to it cannot be reviewed in a short space; one therefore has necessarily to be selective in the matter. Of the various pieces of legislation that with special significance to workers and which can help in improving upon the minima of labour standards as laid down in other labour enactments, is the legislation which governs the relations between employers and workers. Broadly, legislation which enables workers to form trade unions, helps in laying down the 'rules of the game' as it were for day to day operations and the enactments for settling industrial disputes, could be considered as important. The influence of the T.L.A. in shaping legislation of this type can alone be dealt with in a somewhat meaningful manner. This is what is proposed to be done; the order will be chronological.

One aspect of labour legislation needs to be taken into account in the Indian situation. Under the Government of India Acts, prior to independence, the provincial legislatures had limited powers to enact labour laws. This situation continued up to the drawing up of the Indian constitution under which, in the last 27 years, labour has become a concurrent subject, for which the legislative authority is vested both with the Union Government and the State Governments. The State legislation, however, has to observe one constraint: its provisions should not be repugnant to the legislation enacted by the Parliament on the same subject.

In cases where such repugnancy occurs it is the central legislation which will prevail.

In the early years of the TLA's existence that is roughly until the implementation of the Government of India Act 1935, the role of the TLA was merely one of lobbying for legislation beneficial to labour. It is this role which it could play not through its direct participation in the legislative processes but by influencing legislators at the Centre and in the Provinces; in the latter case it was the Bombay Presidency in which TLA had its operational base. However, since the TLA was formed with Gandhiji's inspiration, it was possible for it to influence the central legislation through members of that legislature who owed allegiance to the Indian National Congress. Such influence as the TLA may have wielded on the enactment of the Indian Trade Union Act, 1926, and the first Indian legislation for settlement of industrial disputes which was passed in 1929, could fall in this category.

There is reason to believe that at least some of the legislation in the 1930's must have been influenced by the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour which presented its report in 1931. There is no evidence to show that there was any organised representation made on behalf of textile labour in Ahmedabad to this Commission. As such the influence of the TLA on Commission's recommendations could be considered as marginal. There is, however, a significant reference in the report which brought the TLA actively to public notice. With the implementation of the Government of India Act 1935, provincial legislatures on which labour was represented through their own elected leaders came into being. This had significant impact on the course of legislation for labour. Two of the stalwarts of the TLA, Shri G. L. Nanda and the late Shri Khandubhai Desai represented Ahmedabad labour in the Bombay Legislative Assembly; the former was one of the Parliamentary Secretaries in the first but short lived (1937-1939) assembly. But even this short period was adequate to lay the foundation of legislation for the settlement of industrial disputes, the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, 1938 (BID Act). This was in substitution of a rather restricted legislation on the same subject passed four years earlier.

The BID Act could be considered as the creation of the TLA and contained several elements which institutionalised for the Bombay Province, the arrangements which were being voluntarily operated in Ahmedabad and to which a halting compliment was paid in the report of the Royal Commission. Basically the Act stipulated compulsory recognition of a union which commended a fair amount of influence among workers in the local area in which the union operated. In the absence of such a recognised union there was a hierarchy of other arrangements by which labour was to be represented in labour disputes. The Government had acquired under the legislation powers to refer a dispute to the Industrial Court for arbitration and thus prevent a direct clash between the employer and his workers leading to work stoppage. The principle of arbitration on the basis

of which the Ahmedabad textile industry could maintain industrial peace since the advent of Gandhiji, thus got wider recognition in Bombay Province as it was then.

The period of Second World War was one of comparative inaction for the TLA in influencing the course of events in the labour field. Most of its leaders were behind the bars in those days. But with the termination of hostilities and restoration of elected legislatures at the All India and Provincial Levels, the TLA came back with greater influence on the Provincial Legislatures as well as at the Centre. This was because under the inspiration of the TLA trained cadres of social workers were developed for operating in the trade union field and several of these devoted personalities became labour leaders in their own right in their respective Provinces. Several of them had an opportunity of influencing local legislators or even operate from within the Government and others had similar influence in the Central Assembly. The result was that the TLA philosophy which was at one time restricted to Ahmedabad had wider acceptance in the country as a whole.

Some developments in the interim also need to be taken into account. As an offshoot of the Second World War, periodic consultation on labour matters on a tripartite basis became a part of the established procedures of the Central Government. This helped the leaders of the TLA to give expression to the policies of that organisation, how these had operated in Ahmedabad and how with the modifications the principles underlying the operation of this policy could be made to work on a wider plane. The experience of the BID Act was a useful support for this generalization, though an improved version of the same had come on the scene in Bombay Province in the form of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act 1946 (BIR Act). At the Centre also the experience of the years 1940 to 1946 led to the enactment of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, which though not strictly comparable with the Bombay Legislation had some elements common with it. It is unnecessary to go into comparative details.

The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 which sought to govern the relationship between an employer and his workers at the plant level could also be considered as the extension on an all India Plane of what had some utility in one province, and had become the part of labour legislation therein to wider geographical area. The model standing orders which were recommended as a part of the implementation of this Act had several elements of similar standing orders operating in Bombay and Ahmedabad; in the latter centre, the standing orders were a part of the agreement between the TLA and the Mill-owners Association in Ahmedabad.

Just one more example of the TLA's influence on labour legislation would suffice to emphasise the significance of the role which the organisation has played. In the early 50's the textile industry was in difficulties for two reasons: (i) lack of adequate external demand and (ii) the urgency of modernizing its process in

order to improve the competitive capacity of the industry. This resulted in a fair measure of rationalisation in the industry and closure and lay-offs of textile workers were a common occurrence. Mainly as a result of the efforts of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), a national federation, the textile wing which was dominated by the TLA and Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS), the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, was amended to provide succour to workers in such contingencies. This amendment proved beneficial to workers not only in the textile industry but in other industries too, where workers had to negotiate with the employers for settling similar difficulties. Also the very existence of these provisions did make employers cautious in their rationalisation proposals.

With the reorganisation of the states Gujarat acquired a separate identity since 1960. The influence of the TLA in that State both within and outside Government made it possible to set pace for beneficial labour legislation and it is possible that some of it may have led to similar legislation elsewhere.

To conclude: it may be worthwhile to refer to the reasons underlying this influence of the TLA. One may recount the following as the more important among them:—

- (i) The basic soundness and pragmatism of the policies and legislative measures suggested by the organisation.
- (ii) The demonstration effects which working of these measures though in a small area on the minds of persons in-charge of the legislative processes elsewhere in India.
- (iii) The authority of the TLA leaders themselves within Governments Central/ Provincial or State; senior leaders of the TLA were in-charge of the Labour Ministry at the Centre for a major part of two decades 1950-1970; and
- (iv) The influence of the tripartite arrangements at the Centre and in some of the States in which at least one wing was dominated by the INTUC, on which, influence of the TLA and the TLA trained leaders operating in other parts of the country was dominant.

## SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF A WAGE POLICY

By R. L. N. VIJAYANAGAR

The absence of a national wage policy based on rational and scientific criteria has been one of the major evils from which social and economic planning in the country has seriously suffered. The irrational wage structure has been responsible for gross disparities in the incomes of various sections of workers and a good deal of labour unrest as also the distortion of the industrial economy.

Any wage policy intended to narrow down the wide disparities in the incomes and to serve the best interests of the national economy as a whole should have solid social foundations and be realistic and rational. Somehow, the evolution of such a sensible and equitable wage policy has been neglected by our planners and administrators. Let us now consider briefly what should be the solid and sound foundations of a national and rational wage policy.

Without dwelling too deeply into the theoretical aspects of a wage policy, one could state on commonsense considerations that the wages should not be fixed in an arbitrary manner but they should bear a rational relationship with the national income which represents the capacity of the country to pay. The economic position of the region and the per capita income of the State should be another important consideration. The value added by manufacture of the particular industry and the legitimate share thereof should, of course, be a most important basic consideration in the determination of the levels of the wages. It is strange but true that even these obviously basic considerations have not been borne in mind and the wages in our country have been fixed by and large in a most unscientific and haphazard fashion.

It should not be forgotten that there are various claimants to the Gross National Product and the wage policy should aim at bringing about a more equitable distribution of the same. It has been found that workers in certain sections, by virtue of their having a better bargaining power thanks to a strong and well-organised trade union movement promoting their interest, have been able to wrest wages which are out of proportion to the national income. In many instances, wages are beyond the capacity of the particular industry or the units therein to pay. Clearly, such distortions are not only socially unjust and inequitable and dangerous in their consequences inasmuch as they breed unrest and discontent but are also highly detrimental to the interest of the industry and the national economy as a whole.

While workers in certain organised industries receive adequate wages and enjoy a number of welfare amenities and some of them have been successful in obtaining more and more, large sections of labour, as in the rural economy and

in various other industries and occupations, however, remain badly off. There should be an attempt to ensure that the benefits of planning and development are not restricted only to a few fortunately placed sections, but percolate to the entire community and that the wage policy becomes as comprehensive as well as a balanced one taking into consideration the various conflicting needs. The aim should be to see that everyone gets a fair deal while income disparities are minimised and the interest of the industry concerned and the country's economy are not harmed as is often the case because of labour having claimed and received a disproportionate share of the GNP.

In the matter of the fixation of wages in India, no proper guidelines have been laid down or followed. On the one hand, it has been largely a mechanical and arbitrary process and on the other, political pressures and pulls have played a major part in determining what wages and increases therein should be. In adopting measures for the betterment of the industrial workers, the interests of the community as a whole should not be overlooked because obviously it is possible to raise the standards of living of sections of industrial workers by methods which would involve the diminution of the national income that is available for other sections of the community. It must be remembered that the creation of conditions of employment ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities relates to all workers whether agricultural or otherwise. Obviously, a need-based minimum wage is a desirable objective not only for Government employees and industrial labour but also for every working citizen of India. Too large a slice of the national cake has so far been consumed by what have come to be the privileged classes of industrial workers. Instead, the national cake is to be distributed so that everyone gets his due share and no one obtains too huge a chunk thereof or is deprived of his slice.

How disproportionate is the sharing of the national income can be seen from the Report of the Norms Committee appointed by the Maharashtra Government some years ago. The Committee was constrained to give vent to its sense of desperation at the multiplicity of widely divergent industrial wage scales found in the State of Maharashtra in the following terms: "A large number of awards and settlements that have been examined have shown such a wide disparity in wage scales not only in different industries but also in similar industries that the Committee feels that it will be difficult for them to recommend norms for the payment of wages or dearness allowance." The disparities and divergences in the industrial wage scales have since then become wider and more glaring even as between the minimum level of earnings of workers employed in different industries in the self-same area. It is interesting to note that industrial workers doing the same types of jobs used to get more or less the same level of pay, for example, in Bombay, an employee in a textile mill or the workshops of the Central (then G.I.P.) Railway at Matunga, or a pharmaceutical, chemical or engineering factory before Independence and in the pre-planning era. But, today,

the differences between the pays of those who had started at the same levels have become increasingly wide.

In view of the high degree of importance which the fixation of wages has acquired in the context of ensuring a balanced growth of the entire economy, elaborate care is required to be devoted to the actual procedure of determining them strictly on the basis of all the relevant economic data and consideration. The wages should be determined keeping in view the national and regional levels of incomes, the conditions of the industry concerned as well as of the individual enterprises therein. Needless to say that disparities should not be allowed to grow, but should be bridged if socialistic aims and professions should have meaning and substance, while the benefits of a reasonable minimum wage should be extended to all sections of the community.

If the fruits of the economic progress are to percolate through all the strata of the population, a rational wage policy should be evolved and implemented at the national level under the share of the industrial labour in the national product will be determined in such a way that it will neither widen the existing income disparities among the different sections of the working class in the same area or jeopardise the future growth of the economy as a whole by impinging on the processes of capital formation.

It must be remembered that in the ultimate analysis it is the gross national product that provides one universal source from which all wages and salaries, rent, interest, profits, direct and indirect taxes and depreciations are met.

It is, therefore, obvious that in order to ensure uninterrupted all round economic progress, it is essential that the value secured for the goods and services generated in the economy is large enough not only to provide depreciation but also to enable a well balanced relationship to be maintained between the shares of the various participants in the GNP, namely, the Government, the labour, the management and capital.

The wage structure should not be such as to take away too large and disproportionate a share of the GNP compared to other claimants thereof as otherwise the growth of the economy as a whole as well as the health of the industry concerned will suffer. Sickness has been caused in some of the basic industries of the country like the textile industry by too excessive a share of the value added by manufacture being taken away by Government through taxes and by labour by way of wages and fringe benefits. Hardly any surplus has been left to these industries after payments of the abnormally high wages and the enormous taxes so that their financial health has suffered and they have stagnated. Such disproportionate claims on the value added by manufacture by wages of the workers is detrimental to the healthy functioning and the development of the industry concerned and to the national economy as a whole and against their own long-range interest.

Wages, incomes, prices and taxation should be delicately balanced economic forces but it is surprising to note that in such a vital area the concept of the equitable and rational sharing of the value added by manufacture has not been thought of by our planners and administrators.

Workers should be made to understand that if wages and benefits like bonus are beyond the capacity of the industry to pay, they themselves would stand to lose in the long run. They have to realise that their own needs and aspirations should not be divorced from the national economy and its limitations and the welfare of the community as a whole. If, due to the wage policy, the earnings of weaker sections of the population continue to be low, this would mean that because of the lack of purchasing power, there would be insufficient demand for the articles produced by the workers, which would be against the latter's own interest.

It is high time a value added by manufacture approach is adopted in respect of both taxation and fixation of wages. It is only when a rational and equitable wage policy on the above lines is evolved and implemented that there will be real wages distribution in the country and not of mere money wages.

It is to be hoped that the Government, which has declared its intention to go ahead with such a policy, will do so soon in the interest of greater social justice and sounder working of the industries and the national economy.

# ROBUST UNION DEMOCRACY.

by

M. T. SHUKLA.

Secretary, Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad.

Trade Union Movement should be essentially a democratic one. Workers choose their Union and follow the rules of the Union's constitution. In this sense the T.L.A. Ahmedabad, is a robust and responsible democratic Union of workers. This is indeed a gift given to workers of India by Gandhiji.

At the time of the formation of the Union, Gandhiji advised the workers to chalk out a Constitution of the Union and to follow it in true spirit and sense. He said "it is the Union which will give you strength but at the same time the Union members must show robust understanding and responsible behaviour towards the industry and the community." This philosophy is still T. L. A's philosophy in its sixteenth year.

The T.L.A. has a membership of more than a lakh out of about 1,30,000 workers employed in 65 mills in the city. These members elect their representatives on the basis of one for first 50 members, and another for 75 members each. The election of representatives takes place triennially.

## ELECTIONS :

The election procedure of the representatives is very elaborate and systematic too. The Executive Committee appoints a small Election Committee headed by one of the Secretaries. The time-schedule is announced and nominations are invited. Scrutiny of nomination papers etc. are done by the Committee according to the election rules and after everything is okayed, elections are held at the mill premises. Accordingly, 3400 representatives get elected, and records for the election are properly maintained. The outdoor staff of the Union numbering about 100 keeps engrossed in this particular activity for about three months during the election year. After the election of representatives, the Executive Committee members are also duly elected, and in the first meeting of the new Representatives Board, they pass a vote of confidence in the office-bearers and thus the Union is functioning democratically. The chart attached shows the democratic structure of the union.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING :

The members of the T.L.A. have both robust common sense and responsible behaviour in the field of collective bargaining as well as in the adminis-

tration of the Union. The T.L.A. every year, enters into a number of agreements as collective bargaining agent both with the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association in case of general matters, and with individual employers in cases of individual matters. The democratic functioning of the workers in such cases is noteworthy. Whatever is to be decided either with the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association or with the individual employers, the terms and conditions of the agreements are discussed fully by the Executive Committee before entering into respective agreements. All agreements have, as usual, the sanction either of the Executive Committee or the Sub-committee appointed by the Executive Committee known as Grievance Committee.

A good number of collective bargaining agreements on the general matters during the period of last four decades were reached between the Textile Labour Association and Ahmedabad Millowners' Association. Some of the general agreements with the Millowners' Association were pace-setting viz; Five Years Bonus Pact. Free Cloth to the workers, Seven Days' paid leave for educational tour, and maintenance of the number of same women workers etc.

Beside the agreements on industrial matters the occupational Executive Committees of the Association make earnest efforts to settle a number of grievances of the workers about the claims of seniority, promotion, internal disputes of workers, unfair treatment of some representatives, and matters coming under the Union constitution. It is very interesting and thought-provoking to observe the functioning of such committee. One of the Secretary happens to be the Chairman of the Committee. Prior intimation is usually given to the parties in dispute. The meeting-clerk presents the written complaint of the party to the Executive Committee members, and the hearing then takes place. Disputants are summoned and allowed to present their claims personally. After hearing of the parties is over if the Committee feels inclined to appoint a Sub-Committee to visit the mill and the department concerned to acquire first-hand knowledge and information from the workers concerned, such sub-committee is also appointed for the purpose. The Sub-Committee submits its report to the Committee. The Committee, after taking a careful view of the Sub-Committee's version, arrives at a decision which becomes binding on the parties. If the decision needs a reference to the management, the management is approached to implement the same. It is gratifying to note that the managements also respect the decisions of such of the Occupational Executive Committees.

The worker members of the Association, are quite conscious of their rights and keep a constant check on their elected representatives. The monthly dues are usually collected by the representatives on the pay-day. While paying subscription members generally ask the representatives about the solution of their pending grievance. In case the representatives are not able to give satisfactory response to the query the members sometime hesitate to pay their dues. Thus the representatives are obliged to pay attention to the complaints of individual members till they are dealt with.

In democracy it so happens that after the elections are over the elected representatives are found to be negligent to their constituents. But in the case of the Textile Labour Association, the representatives who are elected at the interval of three years have to be more cautious, conscious and responsible to the members, as the constitution itself provides for recalling one who is less responsive. In the case of representatives who show callousness to members, or who pay less attention to the legitimate grievance of the members on submission of an application with sixty six-percent of signatures of members concerned to the Union, such representatives are rendered unseated from their position and in such cases bye-elections are held for such vacancies. By-Elections have also to be held in cases of representatives who violate the rules of the Constitution of the Union and who openly flout the decision of the Executive Committee. They are asked to resign or expelled from the Union.

#### DEMOCRATIC FINANCE PROCEDURE:

The Union similarly acts democratically in financial matters also. The budget for every year is prepared and presented before the Central Executive Committee in the first instance and before the Joint Board of Representatives. Items of expenditure are also shown in the budget for carrying on different activities of the Union. While discussing the budget items, members do evince keen interest and sometimes make several queries asking for more details or information regarding working of various activities of the Union. The Committee usually takes a couple of days for discussion of the budget at length, while the sub-committee goes into every detail of the budget wherever expedient. No expenditure is incurred by the Union which is not included in the budget. The Finance Committee also attends every day and checks each and every voucher of expenditure.

Similarly, the sub-committee nominated for guiding social and welfare activities of the Union also meets once in a quarter and offers constructive suggestions wherever necessary. Members of the Committee pay visit to the places of these activities and see the work on site themselves. The Union spends 25% of its income for the social and welfare activities as per the Constitution.

The Union office is humming with workers and activities like workers Education Programmes, classes for shorthand, radio repairing, sewing and embroidery, self-employed women's organisation and its Bank, Khadi shop and Kutir for sale of hand-made products. Hundreds of members and representatives visit the Union office every day either for their grievances or for Union activities.

#### PRESS PUBLICITY AND WORKERS' EDUCATION:

The Union has its own Printing Press and publishes its Bi-weekly paper 'Majur Sandesh' to communicate important news and views to the worker members. Besides the bi-weekly organ of the organisation, the Union has pub-

lished a number of booklets and hand-outs for the education of workers on labour and industrial matters.

The Union has recently started an independent centre for workers' education known as "Vasavada Labour Institute". Besides this centre, workers have also started Workers' Education Society.

If any one has inclination to get acquainted with such of the democratic functioning of the workers' organisation, the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, is indeed a model, and a visit to 'Gandhi Majoor Sevalaya' would prove to be useful and enlightening from the point of view especially as to how, workers run the administration of their union in a democratic manner by themselves.

Following observation in the words of Mahatma Gandhi speaks for itself :—

"Ahmedabad Labour Union is a model for all India to copy. Its basis is non-violence, pure and simple. It has never a set-back in its career. It has gone on from strength to strength without fuss and without show".

"It has to its credit very successful strikes which were wholly non-violent. Millowners and labour have governed their relations largely through voluntary arbitration. If I had my way, I would regulate all the labour organisations of India after the Ahmedabad model".

The Directory of Trade Unions published by the All India Trade Union Congress in 1925 gives the following information about the Association:

This federation is one of the most highly organized and ably conducted unions in India. It has been doing almost everything for its members that can be done in trade union movement and has been for all practical purposes recognized by the Mill-owners' Association of Ahmedabad. It has conducted many a local strike and has come out successful on more occasions than one. It pays to its members a number of benefits including the strike benefit and has introduced from 1 June 1925 the system of victimization benefit from half to full pay. It has successfully introduced the system of collecting subscriptions by localities. It has also initiated a scheme for opening savings bank account for members. The bank is going to pay interest at the rate of 6 per cent. The Union has recently hired a chawl with 58 tenements and has arranged to let these to its members at Rs. 3.50 per tenement instead of Rs. 4.50 which they would have required to pay to the contractor. It has been conducting 20 schools, maintaining a hospital, and lending money to members at a cheap rate of interest. The following account of the Union from the March issue of the Labour Gazette will give some more idea about it: "This union is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable outgrowths of the Trade Union movement to be found in India. Its organization differs TOTO CAELO, from the organization of Trade Unions as understood in other countries. In fact, it might almost be said to be modelled on the organization of a District of British India. The special feature on which the above comparison is based is the system of personal complaints. The office maintains a series of complaint books in foil and counterfoil, and so numerous are the complaints that a special clerk is engaged almost wholly on recording them. Every conceivable type of complaint appears on the counterfoils, from an allegation against a jobber or mukadam of having smacked the complainant's head to a complaint that the other workmen hamper the complainant in drawing water from a top or well. Each complaint receives personal attention; and the Mills appear to afford a surprisingly large degree of power to the Secretary, who enters the premises, records statements; and passes orders, much as a District Officer might do. The system is therefore essentially a development of indigenous customs, the personal complaint (often of a trivial nature) being an essential and characteristic feature of Oriental administrative methods. It is not, of course, to be understood that the complaint book is the sole activity of the Labour Union. On the contrary its office in the Ahmedabad bazar is divided into numerous sections each of which present a considerable body of files and records. Amongst other things, the Secretary, who is an ex-Economics student, is conducting rental enquiries, and contemplates collection of family budgets." The Union conducts a Gujarati weekly periodical, called the *Majoor Sandesh*.

From p.p. 94/95 of Indian Trade Unions — A Survey  
V. B. Karnik.

Mr. M. D. Mistry of the Vasavada Labour Institute, Ahmedabad interviewed a cross section of people from Ahmedabad to ascertain how they view the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, which has been in existence in the City for 60 years now. The views expressed by the people to Mr. Mistry are recorded here verbatim.

### **A Departmental Union Representative in a Mill**

“T.L.A. has an excellent organizational set up. Union workers rush to it at the speed of a fire brigade to solve the problems of union members. I am a member of this union for the past 30 years. When I once realised that the then representative of the union in my department was not representing our cases effectively, I contested and got myself elected as a representative and now I am an executive member also. For us T.L.A. is a court where we settle all our internal disputes’ (disputes between labour and labour).

### **A Senior representative of the Association**

T.L.A. is a temple for us. I visit the Association’s office daily just to satisfy my inner conscience that I visited the office and met the people. I am very much satisfied with the present working of the Association and its policies. After all it is we, who formulaite the policies and take decisions on important issues pertaining to the whole industry. This involvement of people like us in decision-making makes the policies sound.

### **A member of the Association**

I learnt the art of representation and other skills like how to speak, what to speak and above all, what not to speak. I had only primary education but T.L.A. has been the training institute for me. Whenever I visit the Association to record my grievances to union officials, I sit beside the people and watch them during work. I have also attended training classes specially run for members. This helped my learning process. Of course it also requires an eagerness to learn in oneself. Generally I am satisfied with the working and activities of the Association. Sometimes I feel that workers should be given more programmes to keep them alert towards the union. It does not mean that I preach strike, etc., but we must organise processions etc., not frequently but atleast once in a year. I believe this will at least satisfy the agitational urge of the workers.

### **A Lady Representative**

My sons are in school now. I took inspiration from the union office only to educate them. I saw our union workers representing our legitimate cases before the management of the mills. I am illiterate but I realised the need for educa-

tion. I am aged now and I made amends by deciding not to keep my children as illiterates. In this matter I sought help and guidance of the union officials.

### **Professor of Industrial Relations**

I have been in touch with T.L.A. for the past 9 years. TLA was a trade union once but now it seems to me that it is more a social organization than a trade union. The new generation has accepted this because,

1. Its name is associated with Gandhiji
2. For many years it was in power and had a good relation with the ruling party
3. It is running various social welfare activities.

It has a docile image and its attitude is that of a trader, i.e. you pay subscription and we will do this and that etc. It tries to project Gandhiji's image and under the garb of harmony, industrial peace, Gandhian Philosophy, it resists any agitation by workers. I wonder about this approach of TLA because it emerged and grew from strike and now it denies the workers any opportunity to show their resentment even on legitimate issues. This seems to be why non-TLA unions or those not affiliated to NLO (National Labour Organisation) are growing very fast. These unions are not willing to accept the TLA's leadership and its ideology and approach.

I believe that agitation is not good and so is peace. There should be a balance kept between these two.

According to my thinking, to avoid this situation, TLA's leadership should be open minded and they should try to satisfy the workers. It is high time that the Association thought and analysed itself of its sixty years' role and the changes needed to meet the present highly altered circumstances.

### **President of an Employers' Association**

Textile Labour Association is a unique organisation as it has adopted a Gandhian approach in settling industrial disputes. It always solves labour problems through constitutional ways.

The workers in Ahmedabad do not agitate in support of their demands. It is not due to the fact that we accept their demands in toto. It is not also correct to say that T.L.A. resists workers from agitational path. The word 'agitation' does not necessarily represent the impression of going on strike, resorting to go-slow, mammoth processions etc., only. It also implies resentment through constitutional means. To my mind it is the hidden effect of Mahatma Gandhi on this City which inspires both the organisations to settle disputes on table. Sometimes we do not mind even to pay more to the workers as we also want to maintain in-

dustrial peace in the City. That does not mean that we have no difference of opinion but we do find solutions. Besides we also believe in trade union activity because we know that a strong union can only provide industrial peace.

### **General Manager of a Textile Mill**

I am an admirer of T.L.A. with which I have been in live contact for the past 26 years. It does not fight in street but always insists on settlement through negotiations, if it fails in its approaches to labour courts. It is not true that militant trade union can only help to prosper the life of its members. If this equation is correct, then workers of Bengal and Bihar should have been prosperous than their counterparts in other states in India. This is not happening. Ahmedabad workers are at par with those in other centres. TLA's office-bearers besides always take a long term view. Its leadership never involves workers in any political movement to build up their image or for personal interest.

In the Diamond Jubilee year, TLA should evolve a system to have effective control over its representatives. When these representatives loose popularity, it does ultimately tarnish the image of TLA itself.

### **An Ex-Police Commissioner of Ahmedabad**

When I was the Police Commissioner I got full co-operation of T.L.A. in maintaining industrial peace in the City. Its work was marvellous during the time of riots in 1969 and Nav-Nirman Samithi agitation. TLA must expand its union activity. Since I was the Commissioner, there was not a single strike in the textile industry; but we have to keep an eye on other sectors. I wish at the time when T.L.A. is completing sixty years, it would expand its activities to cover all sections of the society.

### **General Manager of a Textile Mill**

I have been in contact with T.L.A.'s activities for the past 27 years and in my view T.L.A. has deviated slightly from its original path. It does lot of good things and never hesitates to show resentment in order to achieve the workers' legitimate demand. I have experienced this in the past. The crux of its success lies in its spirit of accommodation. This helps the industry to prosper and the city enjoys industrial peace. However last year it committed the mistake of not participating in the election of joint management council and this gave open ground to the other union. I think such a step weakens the T.L.A.'s position. But on the whole I appreciate T.L.A.'s working, its dedicated staff and its hold in the industrial front.

### **President of Industrial Court**

T.L.A. must prepare its second rank, if it has to serve another sixty years. My views are largely based on the performance of people who represent workers'

case on behalf of T.L.A. I very much appreciate the missionary zeal of the staff, their ability and knowledge of industry, law etc. They are cleverer than others but still it requires hard work. I very much admire T.L.A.'s social welfare activities and if these are extended, the lower strata of society may also benefit by T.L.A. in future.

### **A cloth merchant in the labour locality**

We remember T.L.A. once a while, particularly at the time of Diwali festival. We read the press note issued by T.L.A. during this time with interest. Our sales depend on the amount of bonus the workers get. If workers get a higher percentage of bonus, our sales naturally increase. Last year we had a great setback as the workers did not get any Bonus. In my view T.L.A. is a good union for workers.

### **Peddle Rickshaw-puller**

I have been plying rickshaw on rental basis for the past 20 years and was paying Rs. 3/- daily as a rent. Major Mahajan emancipated people like me from the clutches of peddle rickshaw owners who tortured us for many years. With the help of T.L.A. people like me own the means of our livelihood and we live now with self-respect. I earn Rs. 10 a day and the credit for this goes to Major Mahajan. The Association also helps us in getting licences, in sickness, at the time of any natural calamity and in any social problem. It is a lighthouse which showed us the correct path.

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## GANDHIJI'S VIEW OF TRADE UNION WORKER

While inaugurating the Textile Labour Association on 25th February 1920, Mahatma Gandhi posed the question 'Why do workers want to form the Union?' and answered the question himself 'In the past Thugs and Pindharas used to form their unions and their aim was to loot the people. If this is the aim of forming the union, it is better that the union is not formed. The functions of a real union are to cultivate integral strength and to improve the life by securing adequate wages and healthy living conditions while serving the industry to the best of one's ability and capacity.'

Then he asked the then leader Smt. Anasuyaben "Why did you think of forming the union? Do you want to become a 'Sardar' (leader) or 'Sewak' (worker) of the workers?". When Smt. Anasuyaben requested Gandhi to explain what he had in mind, he explained that 'Sewak acts like a mother, and attends to cure the ailment and even gives bitter medicine while Sardar acts like a politician and does all sorts of manoeuvres to keep up his position. He said a trade union leader should act like a 'Sewak' and not a 'Sardar'.

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Prof. Ramesh M. Bhatt  
Coordinator  
Centre for Management &  
Professional Training  
Gujarat University.

When Textile Labour Association, completes its glorious career of sixty years of service to the working class, one would certainly like to look back with a view to design its future in the years to come. Even when the political parties are proclaiming of returning to Gandhi's thinking, T.L.A. which was built up by Gandhi himself has added responsibility of sharing its value system. Organizational form, approach to the problems and methodology with other Unions and the Government.

T.L.A. took roots out of non violent struggle, led by Gandhi himself. This act of Gandhi integrated working class with nationalist movement. The freedom movement got mass base even in the urban areas. Later through his satyagraha at Borsad, Bardoli and Dandi, he mobilized the rural masses, the peasant masses, into the struggle. Freedom movement became a mass movement under Gandhi's leadership.

His plea for swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods, attracted the Indian entrepreneurial class toward his movement. As the enemy was common, Gandhi could reconcile the entrepreneurial and working class interests. Particularly in Gujarat, because of Gandhiji's influence an enviable model of industrial relations could develop and take roots. Principles of arbitration and direct negotiations have brought not only industrial peace in Gujarat but marked improvement in the conditions of the industrial workers.

What was more important was the model of Union he developed. Gandhi was not interested in 'using' working class in independence movement. Workers were not pawns in his game. Like all revolutionaries, Gandhi wanted the working class to grow and develop into a class, which would be worthy of the freedom and which would as a trustee of the industry on behalf of the nation, would see that the poorest of the poor also are not forgotten. He advised and succeeded in persuading the textile workers to put on Khadi so as to provide employment to the rural poor. The industrial workers were to unionize not only to protect their legitimate interest but also to remember the lowliest of the low, with whom Gandhi identified himself.

Thirdly, Textile Labour Association worked for the Total amelioration. A worker should not only earn more, but should be a better worker, better neighbour, better family member. The Union should serve even his wife, sons and

daughters. They should be educated, and enlightened. Their health must be protected. Their children should be prepared for better life through better education and upgrading of skills. The quality of labour should also improve through voluntary and civic efforts. Even today, T.L.A. runs one of the finest net-work of training classes, recreational activities, libraries, ward offices, hospital for boys and girls, health programme, full fledged hospital, Majoor Bank, Khadi bhandar and sends its members as corporators in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. It has helped workers to organise large number of co-operative housing societies. It also contributes funds for relief work whenever public has been asked to contribute. The T.L.A. has distinguished itself by providing 'total service' to its members.

One of the important development of a number unconventional activities by T.L.A. was Gandhi's insistence on 'Self-reliance' which served more than one purpose. Swarajya meant self rule and we must develop our capacity to govern ourselves by building up peoples' Own organisation. It was also an act of protest against the British rule, and it also contributed towards the total development of the working class, through learning to manage their own affairs. It was a concept of workers' participation in management of unions.

Gandhi did not live longer after independence to define the role of trade Unions in free India. However, as Gandhi remained in the forefront of freedom movement led by Indian National Congress, the leaders of T.L.A., with the support of other national leaders of Congress, founded an All India Organisation— Indian National Trade Union Congress, INTUC, because the political support of congress party could get enacted a number of labour legislations. It also could provide industrial peace which ruling party would require. In founding and nurturing the INTUC, T.L.A. had a vital role. Three of its leading figures, Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, Late Shri Khandubhai Desai and Late Shri S. R. Vasavada, enjoyed even ministerial positions and commanded considerable influence in the Government on Labour issues.

The positive and constructive relationship with the Government also resulted into at least four giant organisations, under the umbrella of the Central Govt., namely, the Office of Provident Fund Commissioner, Employees States Insurance Scheme, Central Workers Education Board and State Labour Welfare Boards.

T.L.A. and INTUC also could receive wide support from working class, because they could deliver the goods. INTUC became the largest single labour organisation and continued in that dominant position till the political situation changed.

After independence, we accepted parliamentary form of Government wherein competitive politics was the basic assumption. Along with competitive party system grew competitive unionism. Unions grew along the party lines. The split

in the congress party in 1969 was also the result of competitive unionism. It thought that adopting left of the Centre stance and conceding the demands of the union, it can strengthen its political base.

However, because of the competitive politics and competitive unionism, economic situation of the country deteriorated to unmanageable extent. The split also led into a split between T.L.A. and INTUC, the later still maintaining positive and responsive relationship with the congress party. Yet the economic conditions were so hopeless, that the Government had to declare internal emergency. Along with all the people trade unions also lost all their rights and liberties.

The T.L.A. though isolated from INTUC, could survive the Congress split, and Emergency and political assaults of the Congress Party, only because of its constructive and positive role in politics, sound and democratic organisation providing total service to the working class and honest and sincere commitment to Gandhi's principles and values. To be fair it should be noted that it set up another All India Organisation, namely National Labour Organisation and a political party—National Labour Party N.L.O. could not make much head way beyond Gujarat and N.L.P. could not take root even in Gujarat. The N.L.P. supported and joined Janata front and in the last election only supported the Janata Party, without merging NLP with it.

With the Congress Party out of power in the last parliamentary elections. INTUC is facing the severest crisis since its inception. The State elections have further eroded its unity and solidarity. Its leadership will have go through severe and hard headed analysis of their relationship with political parties and other unions, if it is to survive the bi-party political system, which we are trying to develop. They must also learn a costly lesson that political parties, whenever their existence is threatened, would not care to sacrifice the trade union or working class interest, because, they are in a political minority.

Another interesting phenomenon to be considered is the merger of four political parties into one party. All the parties have their trade unions. Will the union leaders, who have joined Janata Party will be willing to merge their Unions into one national organisation? If past performance is an indication although all political parties have been merged each constituent has tried to maintain its base in fact, be that party property and funds, student wing or other basis. It seems Union leaders will not agree to merger, because it would weaken their own position in the Janata Party. It would not be surprising if Janata Party allowed its party workers to run their own separate and independent unions.

If this is the national scene, what can be the role of T.L.A.? Soon after independence it provided leadership and base for establishing INTUC, which largely served the role of responsible and responsive Union. Can it play a similar role again?

It seems, time has come again for T.L.A. to play its historical role in the trade-union movement and ultimately protecting the interests of the weaker sections of the society, without jeopardising the democratic frame work of our society. There are a number of reasons why it can and should be done.

First, the Janata Party has committed itself to Gandhian idea of Decentralization of power. Broadly, it would mean more and more power in the hands of people at the administrative level. Local administrative units will be strengthened. It also means that a pluralist society, with increasing number of power centres outside the Government will be created. Trade Unions that are committed to democracy and parliamentary form of Government can also be such centres of power. Secondly they should be independent of party affiliations. They should not allow themselves to be used as tools of any political party. They should be independent of them to protect their own stability and freedom to act in the best interest of the working class. It does not mean that they keep away from political participation. Whenever, election takes place they can recommend which parties and which candidates to elect. They can also influence the thinking and working of the political parties inside and outside the parliament and state legislatures, without sharing power with them.

Secondly, the trade unions will also have to accept self-imposed discipline, for preserving the civil liberties they enjoy. After all, they are part of a community and community interest or public interest, will have to be of paramount importance in their operations. Desperation on their part can lead to loss of freedom for themselves and the community as a whole, as has been experienced by us during the emergency. Trade unions, while evolving their policies, strategies and programmes will have to give top priority to national interest as can be expected of all other groups and sections. Though, they are basically sectional organisation, they must attach due importance to the national interest. If they are independent of political parties, they will be able to perform this role most effectively. They will be able to draw attention of the public, whenever political parties, in and out of power, try to undermine public interest for their narrow partisan interests.

Thirdly, the concept of industrial democracy or workers participation in management, has been accepted by the Government. The problem is how to make it real and effective and workable. Here also the prime need is of equipping the working class for participation. As a preparation for managing an industrial unit, they can be deeply and seriously involved in managing the provident fund, Health and Insurance Scheme and Welfare Boards. The workers should also be involved more and more in managing their unions. Today, management of union does require professional approach. If it can be taken serious, management of union is as educative and satisfying to the workers as joint management councils. It is highly desirable that these organisations should be decentralized and workers and the management are invited to manage them.

Fourthly, the participation of the Unions in the public issues may not be confined only to labour issues or labour problems. Today, all economic and political issues are so complicated that we cannot deal with one without touching the other. When the unions work in co-operation with or are affiliated to a political party, they have to compromise and accept the discipline of the party. Infact in most cases, the political leaders take decision about reconciling the public interest and working class interest, or various sectional or group interest. In taking these decisions they are largely guided by their either acquiring or perpetuating power.

What is suggested here is that the trade unions without leaving reconciliation of interest to the political leadership, should do it themselves. Unions, by taking this task upon themselves would not only build up their image in the public mind but also will be able to play a positive role of chastening the working of the party system.

Public interest, Certainly, it would involve lot of data collection studies, discussions and presentation of trade union views before the public. This itself is a highly educative process for the unions and the political parties.

Unions can play positive role, only when they accept that like any other group, they are also the guardian of public interest and capable of placing public interest above sectional interest including their own. They will have to be guided by the principle of trusteeship. It is not the Government or the political parties alone that are capable of protecting public interest. All sections and more particularly, the trade unions can also play this role equally competently if they accept that they are also the trustees of the industrial unit in which they work and the community which they serve.

Fifthly, the trade union movement will have to expand itself and be out-ward bound. Political awakening is spreading much faster than the spread or organised industries and trade unions. There is a vast mass of unorganised labour in the cities and towns and landless labour in the rural areas. There is a considerable feeling that the benefits of the economic development have been certainly shared by the industrial labour, but they have not gone beyond it. Organised labour has become a 'Privileged' class, it is argued. This feeling can be cleared if the trade unions take positive and definite steps to take the movement to other unorganised workers in urban as well as rural areas. It is when the industrial labour and agricultural labour, are organised under a single federating union that both will be able to develop proper perspective towards the socio-economic problems of the society.

It must be admitted that the entire discussion is based on the presumption of parliamentary form of democratic government, a government where civil liberties are assured to all the citizens and where change of the rulers is possible through ballot box.

It seems that T.L.A. is most suited to play the role which has been outlined here. Because of its historical background and its organisational form it can offer a model, which with suitable modifications for local needs, can be tested to be developed by other Unions. INTUC, if it is to survive play a positive role may also think of developing an independent and responsible trade union movement. There are large number of unions, which are independent and not affiliated to any political party. They may also like to join an independent national trade union organisation.

In 1947, we had a ready made model built by Gandhi himself and we could draw inspiration, organisational strength and leadership from it. By 1977, we have developed INTUC and a large number of small independent unions. Let us hope and pray that the celebration of Diamond Jubilee by T.L.A. be an occasion for searching and seizing opportunities for developing independent, responsible and democratic trade union movement in the country. It is hoped T.L.A. will again rise to the occasion, provide a forum for identifying new roles and image for the trade union movement.

# Role of Textile Labour Association in Women Uplift

by Prof. Miss M. S. Shah,

Maharashtra Institute of Labour Studies, Bombay

The 60 Textile Mills — 52 in private sector and 8 in public — in Ahmedabad employ about 1,40,000 workers of which 5000 are women. 85% of these workers i.e. 1,20,000 have been organized under the banner of Textile Labour Association. One of the historic factors to be remembered in the growth of textile Labour Association is that way back in 1917 when the warpers wanted to agitate, they sought the leadership of a woman—Smt. Ansuyaben Sarabhai. She was the first President of the Association and continued her association with the T.L.A. till her death in 1972.

Ansuyaben Sarabhai belonged to the aristocratic family of Sarabhais in Ahmedabad. She was the sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, who was one of the leaders of the Millowners Association. She was educated in U.K. and had earned a Diploma in Social Work. When she returned to India, she started social work among the poor people in Ahmedabad and naturally women and children, who were the worst sufferers. From 1914 onwards she had started her social work and was instrumental in educating mill workers and particularly the women through simple lessons in health care, hygiene and child welfare. In view of the fortunate leadership of a confirmed and committed social worker in Ansuyaben Sarabhai, from the outset the Textile Labour Association was involved in women upliftment. The Gandhian philosophy to which the Textile Labour Association was pledged also helped in the process as Gandhiji had always put stress on equality of women and the need to enhance their social status in all respects.

At present the Textile Labour Association spends 30% of its revenue towards social and welfare activities. The Association's revenue in the form of annual subscription comes to around Rs. 6,00,000. The Annual Budget is approved by the Joint Board of Representatives. In 1975 the budget sanctioned for welfare activities amounted to Rs. 1,74,000. Women and child welfare activities form part of it. The expenditure in 1974 and 1975 on these heads was as follows:

1) Women welfare activities	— 1974 Rs. 10,000
	1975 18,000
2) Child Welfare activities	1974 Rs. 13,000
	1975 Rs. 15,000

The Association has multifarious activities for women. From its beginning it had a separate women's wing. Its first welfare activity dates back to 1927 when the Association started a Hostel for Harijan and Backward class girls, mostly from workers' families. So far 700 girl-students have taken advantage of this service. Out of these 531 have completed Matriculation, graduation. 539 girls who had been inmates of the Ashram are gainfully employed.

Welfare centres are opened both areawise and based on needs. In 1974 there were 25 such centres. In these centres 1600 women were being trained in sewing, embroidery, knitting, doll-making, machine-knitting, Ambar spinning, typing, radio repair, home help service etc. The sewing classes are the most popular ones. Expert tailors and teachers are appointed for guidance in cutting, sewing, garment-making and doll-making. In addition demonstrations are arranged in bigger classes in modern knitting-machine's working. In the three years 1969-1971, 18 camps were organized in hand-spinning on Ambar Spinning Wheel. 343 women attended them. 55 brought their own wheels. Certificate courses in sewing are conducted at the welfare centre. The Association has also arranged for literacy classes along with sewing classes. The Association's women's wing also makes efforts to secure jobs for trained women. The Association also supplies subsidized cloth to the trainees for practising on the machines. All the cumulative effects of the efforts put in by the women's wing of the Association are now bearing fruit. The literacy rate among women belonging to the working class families has gone up. At Saraspur Centre, handspun, hand woven Khadi garments are prepared all the year around. Sewing classes prepare readymade garments on order. Saraspur Centre also has undertaken the responsibility of providing readymade garments to one textile mill. In addition other garment plants in Ahmedabad also recruit the women trained in the various welfare centres.

Throughout the year cultural programmes, festivals, and competitions are arranged at the welfare centres. Women are taken on excursions and tours to religious places — expenses to be met by the women out of their own savings. A voluntary Corps of 60 girls is formed by the Association. This corps known as 'Shakti Dal' helped in rehabilitation of destitute women and children after the communal riots in 1969-70. In 1970-71 these girl cadets assisted in conducting election of shop stewards of the union in textile mills. The Association has also established Mahila Mandals (Women's Associations) in various localities of the City. A special publication is brought out for women through the Association's women's wing.

Since 1972 the Association has added a new feather in its cap. Under the selfless and dynamic leadership of Shri A. N. Buch, a new association

namely 'Self Employed Women's Association' (SEWA) has been formed. SEWA has derived its inspiration as well as its strength from the developmental extension work that TLA has always done. It is ideologically as well as financially dependent on T.L.A. The membership of SEWA has already crossed 6,000. It covers women from various walks of life and professions such as garments stitching, sewing, cutting, drawing fibres, knitting, embroidery, vendors of vegetables, fruits, milk, curds, eggs, domestic work, maids, midwives, washerwomen, baby-sitters, cotton blowers, junk-smith workers, second-hand cloth sellers, head loaders, spinners, printers, incense-stick-makers, medicine pounders, basket-makers, rope makers, bidi workers, hand cart drawers, casual workers etc. The work of SEWA got momentum from 1974. On 9th June 1975 Mahila Sewa Trust was formed. The objective of the trust is to make service available for health and nutrition programmes, production of goods, fostering co-operatives amongst women following similar occupations.

The success of SEWA must be measured in terms of the various hurdles it had to surmount. Its basic function was to organize tradition bound, superstitious, illiterate women. It needed much spale work. SEWA's devoted General Secretary Mrs. Ela Bhatt had to organize about 1000 meetings at various places. Local leaders in various mohallas were entrusted with the work of mobilising these women. A new system was to be generated, new values were to be taught. With the objectives of economic regeneration and social uplift of economically and socially oppressed women, SEWA had an uphill task. In the initial stages the institution of money-lenders was the main obstruction to its activities. Yet SEWA has successfully meet all the challenges and has passed the take-off stage within a span of three years. Credit for this must go to the indefatigable faith, hope and hardwork of Shri A. N. Buch, the trustees and Smt. Ela Bhatt.

Mahila Sewa Sahkari Bank run by SEWA is a unique bank. It not only acts as bank for women in various vocations but also serves a useful purpose in inculcating ideas of thrift and banking habits in these women. Whenever a loan is sanctioned, payment is made directly to the suppliers of the equipment, instead of the borrower. This ensures that the ignorant is not fleeced by any of the exploiters. Under a scheme both nationalised and private banks advanced monies to these women through Mahila Sewa Sahkari Bank.

SEWA has now field workers to contract and help the women indeed. These workers are qualified in sociology and allied sciences. Therefore they are able to understand and communicate properly with these women. SEWA has a representative board of 153 selected group leaders from different vocational groups from among his membership. There are 7

section committees representing different vocations. These group leaders provide a vital channel of communication.

Social work among the ignorant and illiterate women poses lot of problems. Mere exhortation and pleadings will not work. Only those who have an empathy with these women would be able to motivate them. By the consistent service among these women, T.L.A. and its women's wing have established that it is possible not only to motivate these women but also encourage them to stand on their own legs and above all shed age-old prejudices and customs that have stood in the way of their emancipation and uplift.

SEWA runs a creche service for the self-employed women. Though the service is meant to provide a place for leaving the children while their mothers were at work, subtly this service teaches cleanliness to these women. These women who normally do not care for cleanliness have now learnt to bring the children to the creche after washing them, combing the hair dressed with clean clothes. This is how SEWA inculcates new values in these women.

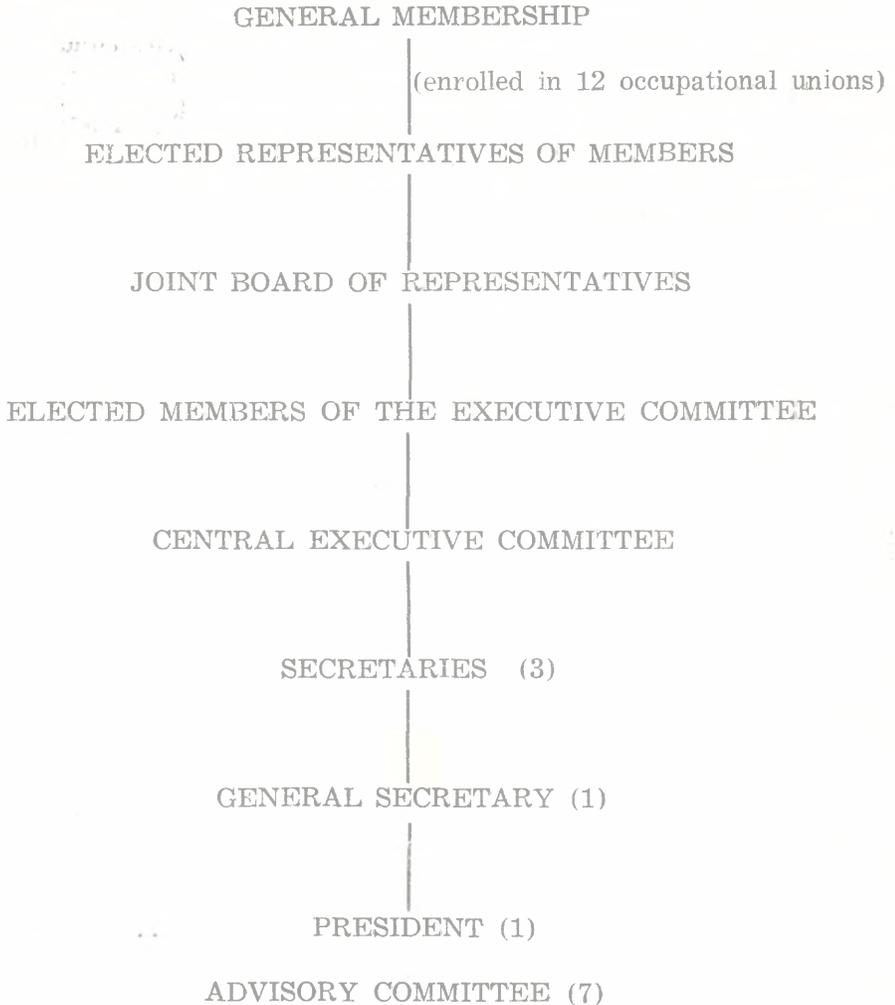


## APPENDIX 'A'

### TEXTILE LABOUR ASSOCIATION, AHMEDABAD

#### STRUCTURE, WORKING AND ACTIVITIES

##### STRUCTURE



**MEMBERSHIP:** Total number of workers employed in the 65 textile mills in Ahmedabad is approximately 1,33,275 including 4022 women. Out of these the total membership of the Association stands at 1, 14, 919.

**ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBERS:** Elected once in three years on the basis of different occupations on the basis of 1 representative for the first fifty or less primary members and one more for every additional 75 members. The elections are keenly contested. Election rules providing for qualification, disqualification, procedure, dispute settlement are prescribed. The last election was held in 1975. The elected members constitute the Joint Board of Representatives and the total number according to the last election stands at 3307. The number of female representatives is 100.

This board is vested with authority and power to decide all questions of policy in conducting trade union activities as well as activities pertaining to social and welfare of the working classes. Important items such as Annual Budget, allocations of various grants for different activities etc., are placed before this Board and passed after discussion, if and when found necessary. The office-bearers of the association are elected by the Joint Board.

Within the Joint Board, the occupational Board of Representatives usually meet to discuss questions pertaining to their respective occupations.

#### **CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

This at present consists of 118 members including 34 honorary and 4 female members. This Committee looks after details in all matters that fall within its purview and jurisdiction as per the provisions of the Constitution. The Annual Budget is also placed before this Committee every year and its every item is carefully scrutinised and discussed by the Committee before placing before the Joint Board of Representatives.

The occupational Representative Board have their own executive committees to go into details in all matters relating to the particular occupation.

#### **SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

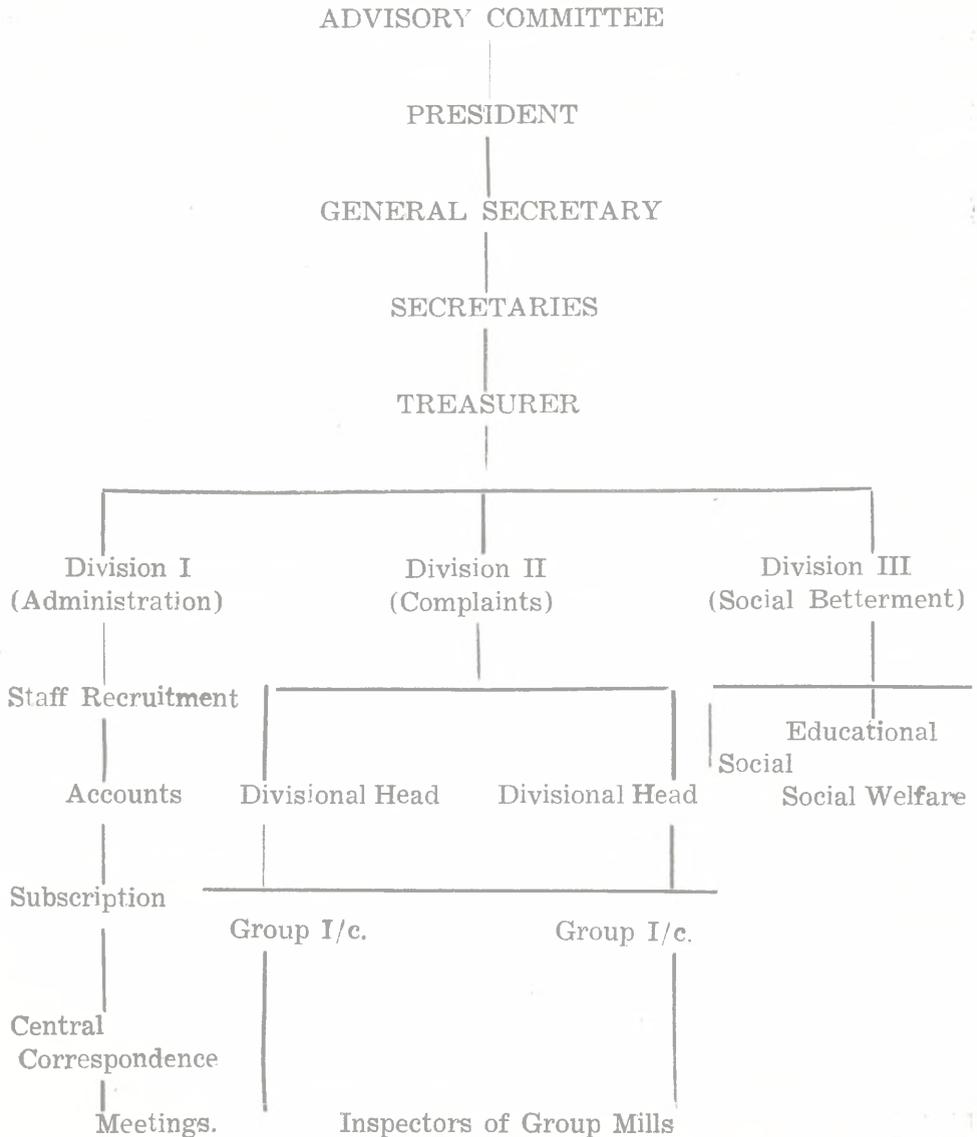
In addition special committees are appointed by the Joint body of Executive Committee. At present the following committees are functioning:

- (a) Complaints Committee
- (b) Finance Committee
- (c) Social and Welfare Activities Committee
- (d) Standing Committee.

These committees formulate policy, discuss ways and means of implementing the policies and also review the progress from time to time. The workers associate themselves with day-to-day administration and working of the Association through these Committees. Some of these committees like Complaints and Finance Committees meet often while Social Welfare Activities Committee meets once every two or three months.

The Standing Committee is a very important committee. All matters of importance as well as internal complaints of occupational units are referred to this Committee.

### DAY-TO-DAY ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNION WORK



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The Committee meets periodically to consider important questions relating to main problems covering principles, policy and administration. Mahatma Gandhi used to preside over this Committee till his death. The Advisory Committee consisted of the following eminent persons in the past:

### Mahatma Gandhi (till death)

Smt. Anasuyaben Sarabhai	Do.
Shri Khandubhai Desai	Do.
Shri S. R. Vesavada	Do.
Shri S. P. Dave	Do.
Shri N. K. Shaikh	Do.
Shri V. T. Kachhy	Do.
Shri C. K. Shah	Do.

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda was also associated with this Committee. Shri Shankerlal Banker (88) who has been associated with this Committee ever since its inception is the Principal Adviser of the Association.

## PRESENT MEMBERSHIP:

- Shri Shankerlal B. Banker
- Shri A. N. Buch, President
- Shri S. R. Shah, General Secretary
- Shri M. T. Shukla, Secretary
- Shri N. M. Earot (Secretary since 11-4-77 Labour Minister in Gujarat State Cabinet)
- Shri R. M. Shukla, Secretary
- Shri M. B. Joshi, Treasurer

Shri L. S. Dave is working as Assistant to the Committee.

## OFFICE STAFF

The Association has a full-time paid staff of 200 members attending to work in various divisions. The staff consists of Post Graduates, Graduates, Under Graduates, workers from the industry, technicians.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION .

This Division is responsible for recruitment of staff, maintenance of staff records and discipline, all accounts, collection of subscription and maintenance of individual members' accounts, all matters pertaining to

calling of meetings, agenda, Minutes etc. It also attends to various statistical information required by the Association in addition to filing of returns etc. All correspondence to the Association are attended to by this this section and proper files are kept by them.

#### COMPLAINTS SECTION:

The complaints section attends to individual grievances of the members through a grievance procedure. The complaints at shop-floor level are firstly attended to by the shop-representative of the Association. If he fails, he would direct the workman to register his complaint with the union office. When the complaint is recorded, the inspector allotted to the particular mill will personally visit the mill and inquire into it. He tries to get the grievance settled through mutual negotiations with the concerned officers of the mill. If he also fails, he would forward the complaint with his own remarks to the officers in charge of a Group of ten to twelve mills. The Group Officer will then contact the top management of the concerned mill for redressal of the grievance. If the issue is not settled at that stage, the matter will be referred to the Divisional Officer, who is in charge of about 35 mills. The Divisional Officer is the authority to decide whether to pursue with further negotiations on unsolved issues at his level or refer the matter to the Labour or Industrial Court as provided under the B.I.R. Act.

Grievances affecting the workers as a group are usually negotiated with the Millowners' Association. The issues are first discussed by the Executive Committee which sets out the terms and conditions which should be the basis for agreement and the approach in bargaining.

Group-in-charges attend to matters which are taken to Labour Court and Conciliation. Matters pertaining to law at the Labour Court and matters referred to the Industrial Court are attended to by full time lawyers who are also full-time trade union workers.

The Complaints Committee oversees the work done by the Complaints Section to see that complaints are attended to expeditiously. This Committee also scrutinises conditions of agreement with individual mills.

The total number of complaints recorded during 1975 was 21080, out of which about 60% were successfully redressed through negotiations, 10% were compromised and 30% were closed because of their trivial nature. At the end of the note an analysis of the complaints received during 1975 under various heads is given.

In addition the Complaints section also attended to issues relating to benefits under the Maternity Benefit Act, the Workmen's Compensation

Act and the Employees State Insurance Act by contacting the various authorities on behalf of the members.

## SOCIAL BETTERMENT DIVISION:

This work is carried on through 20 experienced full time social workers who are placed in charge of 20 wards of the city. The duties of these workers included:—

- formulating the monthly programmes for holding group talks, carryon surveys of physical conditions of habitation,
- keeping in touch with library and reading rooms activities,
- preparing ground for the classes of Workers' Education,
- attending to personal complaints of members re. house rent, harrasment by anti-social elements, mutual quarrels among workers etc.
- grievances of the insured persons under E.S.I. Scheme,
- mobilising workers to propagate better sanitation, eradication of social habits like drinking and gambling, arranging programmes for healthy entertainment and celebration of festivals.

Some workers trained in the classes arranged by social worker have also enrolled themselves as volunteers in union's social activities.

The other fields of activities of the Association, which are supervised by the 'Social Betterment' section are listed below.

1. **SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRES:** There are 25 hired as well as owned buildings in labour localities. These are used as Area Local Offices. They provide centres for a common meeting ground for workers in the locality and useful reading material is provided for them.

2. **EDUCATION:** Ever since its inception the Association has spent a sum of Rs. 20,00,000 (2 million) after the social, moral and basic education of workers and their children. Since the taking over of compulsory primary education by the Municipality and the City Social Education Committee, the Association has restricted its activities to the area of primary education.

(a) **NURSERY SCHOOL:** The Association conducts one nursery school with 50 children. A trained nursery teacher is in charge of this school

(b) **STUDY HOME:** The need for a separate school for Harijan children arose when Harijans were not inclined to send their children to school. In the then social milieu, Harijans could not join schools in which caste Hindu children were in majority. It was in these circumstances separate schools for Harijans were thought of. Shri Muldas Vaishya was in charge of the school when it started. Veteran Harijan Trade Union Worker Sjt. Keshavji Vaghela assisted in this work. The school was made residential-cum-teaching to provide incentive to Harijans.

Under this scheme the study homes at Saraspur and Asarwa were opened in 1937. These provide some facility for study to the children of the workers who have very little space in their one-room tenement for study. The students study at these homes and go to their houses twice a day for their meals. Each home is managed by a full time Superintendent. The inmates are provided with bedding, books, breakfast and a pair of uniforms. Majority of the inmates belong to the backward Vaghri community staying near the Home. The total number of students attending both the study homes at present is 57.

(c) **GIRLS' HOSTEL: (J. B. KANYAGRAH)**

This hostel was started in 1927 with the objective of providing facilities for study and allround development of young working class girls. Most of the girls admitted in this hostel hail from the Harijan community. The hostel provides accommodation for about 40 girls. A full-time Lady Superintendent is in charge of the Hostel, She looks after the educational and cultural development of the girls. Arrangements for imparting training in spinning, sewing, knitting, embroidery cooking, home-keeping, accountancy, decoration, music, handicrafts are made in this hostel.

(d) **SCHOLARSHIP:** So far the Association has granted 1246 scholarships (including girl students) of the total value of Rs. 12,000/- to children of union members studying in High School standard from VIII to XI.

(e) **LIBRARIES AND READING ROOMS:** In addition the Association maintains 60 libraries and reading-room in different working class localities. The membership of these libraries is nearly 74252 and 4,61,680 workers took advantage of the service provided by the reading rooms in 1975. Libraries are provided with books on various subjects suitable to the working class.

### 3. SEVAL DAL AND GYMNASIA:

The Association has raised a Corps of Volunteers drawn from the workers. The members are trained to maintain order and discipline at

the time when vast meetings are held by the Union. They also endeavour to keep cleanliness in their localities and carry on union propaganda, when called for. The strength of the Corps is 400 at present.

Six gymnasia with 500 members are maintained by the Association.

#### 4. WOMEN WELFARE ACTIVITIES:

These activities are carried by a batch of 25 social-service minded women workers. Their activities include,

--contacting working class women and look into their problems and difficulties,

--organising literacy classes,

--imparting training in various arts such as sewing, knitting, embroidering, cooking, use of simple remedies in cases of minor ailments, music, garbas (dance peculiar to Gujarat State),

--organizing entertainment programmes, dramas, picnics, outings, radio programmes.

8 part-time female social workers are also attending to these duties through six different centres selected for this purpose. The number of participants at these six centres is 250. The sewing work among the women has become very popular and paying too.

#### 5. CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:

With a view to ensure proper physical development, character-building and social education of the workers' children, this activity was started in April 1955. In 1976 16 children's centres were conducted and 965 children including 418 girls took advantage of the work. These centres are looked after by part-time staff of 19 trained workers and supervised by a full-time qualified trade union worker.

#### 6. SOCIAL WORK AMONG BACKWARD CLASSES:

Among its members, the Association has to deal with various members coming from backward communities like Harijans, Vagharis, Thakores etc. They are mostly employed in the spinning departments of the textile mills. Social work among these people is carried on by social reform organizations. The efforts of these organizations have resulted in a considerable change and reform in the outlook and customs of these people. The children of these people are also now getting educated. The Asso-

ciation provides service to these people in this transformation process.

7. **MEDICAL AID:** A maternity home is run in the memory of late Smt. Kasturbai Gandhi. An allopathic dispensary with full time qualified doctors in charge of them is also attached to this Maternity Home. Previously the Association was running two Ayurvedic Dispensaries. Some of the insured workers, even though covered under the E.S.I. scheme, come for treatment at this dispensary on payment of nominal fees as prescribed by the Association; because of the service provided in the hospital.

## 8. EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE SCHEME

The Association has set up a special section to look into the grievance of persons insured under the Act and guide them in securing benefits in time.

## 9. CO-OPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS.

The Association has been engaged in promotion of co-operative organizations since 1929. The Association has sponsored the following co-operative institutions:

Housing Co-operative Societies	2762
Credit Co-operative Societies	74
Consumers' Co-operative Societies	64
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2900</b>

The estimated number of houses constructed by the workers under the co-operative scheme is 20,000 at an estimated cost of Rs. 12 crores.

The major co-operative institution sponsored by the Association is the Major Sahakari Bank which was started in 1947. It has now a paid up capital of Rs. 16,60,440. The working capital of the Bank at present is Rs. 1,08,00,000/-. The bank grants loans at reasonable rate of interest and this has helped the workers to get out of the clutches of the money-lenders to some extent. It also tries to encourage the habit of saving among workers.

## 9. TRAINING IN ALTERNATE OCCUPATIONS

At the time of the strike in 1923 Mahatma Gandhi advised the workers that when they went on strike there was nothing wrong in seeking alternate employment during the strike period as this would make the workers self-reliant. Similarly at the times when they workers face

adverse circumstances both personally and officially, they should be able to carry on by taking to some alternate occupation. In order to equip the workers to take to such alternate occupations, the Association is arranging for tailoring classes both for men and women. Number of persons who have taken advantage of this scheme are so far 93 men and 1575 women.

#### 10. AMBAR CHARKHA CENTRE

A centre for spinning on the ordinary spinning wheel was started at Bapunagar in 1962. The number of spinning wheels at the centre was 300. The activity was subsequently expanded in 1966. In the course of 2 years, two Ambar Charkhas were put to use. The spinners earned Rs. 10,500/- as remuneration for spinning and Rs. 2,24,553 worth Khadi was purchased.

#### 11. KHADI HAT

In 1931 Mahatma Gandhiji advised the workers to use hand-spun and hand-woven (khadi) cloth. With a view to pursue this objective, the Association opened a Khadi Shop in 1931. It is now run on so-operative basis. The Hat has effected sales of Khadi and other village industries' goods worth Rs. 15,88,709. It has 8963 members as its shareholders on its register.

#### 12. WORKERS' JOURNAL

Textile Labour Association publishes a Bi-weekly journal 'Majur Sandesh' in Gujarati. This journal deals with local problems, offering guidance to the workers in general. The Association has its own Printing Press which facilitates the printing of the journal and other publications dealing with labour and allied subjects.

#### 13. GRAM SEVA

The Rural Relief Department of the Association looks after grievances of workers arising at their native places, most of them hailing from North Gujarat, Saurashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

#### 14. RESEARCH LIBRARY :

The Association has an up-to-date Research Library containing valuable books on labour, economics, politics, civics, trade unionism, industry, trade, commerce and allied subjects particularly for office use, as well as for the use of members of staff and research students who avail its services with great benefit.

The schools for training welfare workers conducted by the Universities

of Delhi, Bombay, Patna, Baroda and Gujarat occasionally depute batches of their students for internship at the Textile Labour Association to cover short-term and long-term courses of practical training. Worker trainees under the Workers' Education Scheme invariably visit the institution for the purpose of practical training offered by the Association.

#### 15. WORKERS' FAMILY RELIEF SCHEME

In memory of Shri Khandubhai Desai, President of the Association, who died in 1975, the Representative Board of the Association resolved to institute the 'Khandubhai Desai Workers' Family Welfare Scheme in 1976. Any member of the Association voluntarily donating his one day's leave wage to this scheme is entitled to the death benefit to the extent of Rs. 100/- in the initial stages of the scheme, to increase proportionately in future depending upon the annual yield of the investment of funds under the scheme. This scheme has been initiated on the basis of 'self-help' and 'self-financing' which have been the motto of the Association ever since Mahatma Gandhi laid down his principles governing trade unions.

At present the scheme has at its command an aggregate fund of over Rs. 12,00,000 voluntarily donated by the workers employed in the Ahmedabad textile industry.

# APPENDIX "A"

## STATEMENT SHOWING NATURE OF COMPLAINTS.

1975

Sr. No.	CLASS	Frame	Throstle	Reeling	Winding	Weaving	Waving	Sizing	Ble. Fini. Cejender.	Jobber- Mukadam	Eng. Mec.	Clerk	Non-Union	General & Gratuity	Coolie.	Pending
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Pay ..	292	332	10	154	585	68	31	396	154	84	28	54	627	67	16
2	Hours ..	7	19	—	11	15	4	1	19	1	7	—	1	2	4	3
3	Holidays ..	6	5	—	3	16	—	—	5	3	9	—	1	—	—	5
4	Conditions of work ..	331	432	8	171	437	49	46	283	145	78	18	8	11	58	6
5	Unjust Panalties ..	214	300	5	157	552	49	41	257	231	1120	6	9	8	26	38
6	Treatment and Proce- dure.	118	116	8	97	517	13	12	110	54	33	8	7	5	26	18
7	Tanitary arrangements & conveniences.	7	4	1	3	15	—	2	2	1	1	—	—	—	1	1
8	Relating to the Union	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
9	Muster ..	624	786	17	396	919	89	57	723	145	194	4	58	35	100	39
10	Housing & Welfare ..	8	1	—	1	3	2	—	52	13	14	—	—	6	—	21
11	Miscellaneous ..	2	6	1	1	16	—	1	57	2	2	—	—	—	—	3
															TOTAL	12599
															Pending:	8481
															Total	21080

## APPENDIX B.

	YEAR	MEMBERSHIP
I	1939	27,663
	1940	30,539
	1941	49,268
	1942	28,423
	1943	43,699
	1944	64,274
	1945	54,116
	1946	51,795
	1947	49,234
	1948	52,846
	1948-49	1,04,180
II	1949-50	79,185
	1950-51	78,347
	1951-52	73,410
	1952-53	75,302
	1953-54	1,81,139
	1954-55	82,201
	1955-56	80,587
	1956-57	78,811
	1957-58	97,795
	1958-59	95,876
	1959-60	1,01,114
III	1960-61	1,04,046
	1961-62	1,01,315
	1962-63	96,448
	1963-64	84,826
	1964-65	94,654
	1965-66	93,687
	1966	1,03,601
	1967	1,11,296
	1968	1,00,691
	1969	1,01,742
	1970	1,07,099
IV	1971	99,019
	1972	99,892
	1973	1,19,935
	1974	1,18,234
	1975	1,25,553
	1976	1,12,194

APPENDIX ' C '

Statement showing the detail of Membership, Complaints recorded and  
Annual Subscription Rupees from 1958 to 1976

Year	Membership	Complaints	Annual Subscription
1956 March	80,587	18,238	6,35,832.4-0
1957	78,811	25,572	5,94,861-7-0
1958	97,795	21,881	6,88,191.50
1959	95,876	22,487	7,65,651.25
1960	1,01,114	24,571	8,17,190.22
1961	1,04,046	23,255	8,82,084.55
1962	1,01,315	20,531	8,71,473.03
1963	96,448	21,530	8,88,126.40
1964	84,826	22,719	8,80,734.00
1965 March	94,654	20,235	8,61,657.00
1965 December	93,687	14,445	7,23,065.07
1966 December	1,03,064	18,037	11,31,008.95
1967 December	1,11,296	19,065	12,13,640.36
1968 December	1,00,691	19,353	12,13,236.70
1969 December	1,01,742	17,207	11,18,861.45
1970 December	1,07,099	19,988	12,87,440.30
1971 December	99,019	18,422	11,85,213.50
1972 December	99,892	19,286	13,01,876.65
1973 December	1,19,935	22,429	16,30,424.32
1974 December	1,18,234	21,886	19,04,450.90
1975 December	1,25,553	21,188	20,95,581.30
1976 December	1,12,194	21,023	20,23,524.80

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF T.L.A. IN A NUTSHELL

- Pre-natal: post-natal and maternal care through the Maternity Home and Dispensary at Khanpur.
- A Creche for the children of working mothers at Dhariapur.
- Thirty five pre-nursery classes in hired buildings as well as under the shade of a tree or a Hut in the slums area.
- Help to orphans in labour localities by giving them free clothing.
- Twenty game centres for school-going children in labour localities conducted by the trained personnel for the purpose.
- Five Gymnasiums for workers and their children under the guidance of trained physical culturists.
- Tuition classes for workers children in labour localities for three months prior to annual examination.
- Two Day Hostels for students where students stay and study. They take their meals at home.
- A girls' Hostel for Backward community with accommodation for about 60 inmates. Girls are partly from rural areas.
- Twenty Youth Centres where youth gather together for outdoor as well as indoor games.
- Volunteer Corps consisting of 500 disciplined workers for serving the community needs they are mostly from the Textile Industry.
- Educational help to the tune of Rs. 300/- given to each of the Medical and Engineering student of the workers.
- Help to encourage cultural and religious activities of Bhajan Kirtan, Musical training, Satyanarayan Katha, Musayaras.
- Celebration of national festivals with the help of cultural centres of the organisation.
- Vocational training such as Type-writing, Radio Repairing and Wire-man Classes.
- Sewing Classes numbering 30 for the girls and women folk of the workers.
- Three special classes for Knitting and Embroidery.
- Formation of Mahila Mandals and importance of training in home craft and good house-keeping.

- Organising self-employed women and men and to help them in advancement of their trades.
- Workers' Education in mills as well as residential areas.
- Twenty five Libraries and 120 Reading Centres in residential working class areas.
- Legal aid to members in civil, as well as criminal matters.
- Aid to village-level problems of members in their native places.
- A special cell to organise the unorganised and agricultural workers.
- Attendance to Municipal and civil problems.
- Encouraging educational activities and social reforms in the socially and educationally backward communities through their community organisation viz. Muslim Seva Mandal, Thakor Sudharak Mandal, Vagharis Sudharak Mandal, etc.
- Formation of community development centres in slum areas for the spread of cleanliness, literacy, thrift, prohibition and good and healthy living.
- Helping the sick patients to get treatment at the dispensaries and hospitals.
- Helping Blood Bank through Blood donation Camps.
- Helping Family Planning Scheme in its propaganda.
- Helping the members or their heirs to get the sum of the Provident Fund, Gratuity and Insurance from the respective authorities.
- Aid to the family members varying from Rs. 100/- to Rs. 300/- from Khandubhai Desai Parivas Sahayak Yojna to the members of the Scheme.
- Help to people in distress due to natural calamity.
- Organising Consumers stores, Credit and Housing Societies through Cooperative Movement.
- Workers' Cooperative Bank with 43,000 members and a working capital of about 1 crores of rupees.
- Encouraging rural employment through production centres of Khadi in villages and propagating use of Khadi cloth among workers.

The TLA spends 25% of its revenue for the socio-economic development activities of workers. Looking to the Labour population of the city, all these activities mentioned above require a very wide range and a lot of money. Success of the institution lies in the unique technique whereby the organization endeavours to bring out the potentiality of workers by making them active partners in the constructive activities.

## APPENDIX E'

### Khadi and Village Industries

The Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, has given continued attention to uplift of Khadi and Village handicrafts since it provides wages to unemployed and partially unemployed people in villages and it has striven to see that its products are sold in the cities. The textile workers generally hail from villages and an appeal is being made to them to help their brethren in villages by purchasing khadi and by introducing it as their daily wear. The Association has been undertaking this work for more than four decades and the relative figures are given below:—

#### Sales of khadi and village industries products.

Year			TOTAL SALES Rs.
YEAR			TOTAL SALES
1931	..	..	54,614
	9 months)		
1932	..	..	85,947
1933	..	..	77,304
1934	..	..	69,837
1935	..	..	86,390
1936	..	..	1,05,115
1937	..	..	1,52,153
1938	..	..	1,87,290
1939	..	..	2,41,773
1940-41	..	..	3,11,771
	(15 months)		
1941-42	..	..	3,21,584
1942-43	..	..	1,94,235
1943-44	..	..	2,10,402
1944-45	..	..	2,53,835
1945-46	..	..	1,42,533
1946-47	..	..	1,11,365
1948-49	..	..	1,62,56357
1950-51	..	..	4,57,082
1952-53	..	..	6,13,138
1953-54	..	..	6,05,534
1954-55	..	..	12,30,128
1955-56	..	..	9,59,065
	Total	..	75,45,947

From April 1976, the Majur Mahajan Khadi Hat wherefrom the sales of khadi are being made was turned into a Co-operative Society in order that rank and file workers can become its shareholders. The sales of the Khadi Hat society are given below from 1956 to 1975-76 which will give an idea that more and more people purchase khadi for their daily wear:—

Year	Khadi Sales	Sales of village handi- crafts products	Total Sales.
			Rs.
1956 (April-June)	..	..	3,21,348
1956-57	..	..	8,21,760
1957-58	..	..	8,54,380
1958-59	..	..	9,33,115
1959-60	..	..	9,03,813
1960-61	..	..	9,88,655
1961-62	..	..	8,78,461
1962-63	..	..	8,53,912
1963-64	..	..	8,39,585
1964-65	..	..	6,28,491
1965-66	..	..	7,50,050
1966-67	..	..	7,68,704
1967-68	..	..	7,81,516
1968-69	..	..	6,71,374
1969-70	..	..	8,17,923
1970-71	..	..	10,65,052
1971-72	..	..	9,55,801
1972-73	..	..	7,75,598
1973-74	..	..	7,92,685
1974-75	..	..	9,64,206
1975-76	..	..	14,94,280
Total	..	..	90,47,546
		15,10,627	1,03,23,890
		1956 to 1968 sales	
		Total Sale	1,93,71,436

Hundreds of workers visit the office of the Textile Labour Association daily and at times when there is a meeting of the Joint Board or any such important meeting, thousands of workers assemble and so the TLA felt that in case a Khadi shop is opened in the compound of TLA, it can more effectively cater to the needs of workers and thereby khadi movement can get more impetus. From July 1971, an additional shop in the compound of TLA was opened. The following figures of retail and wholesale sales will bear the testimony to its increased utility.

Year	Khadi and Village Industries Products		TOTAL
	Retail sales	Wholesale sales.	
1971-72	2,51,327	8,97,358	11,48,685
1972-73	3,54,666	13,55,798	17,10,464
1973-74	4,59,497	16,93,583	21,53,080
1974-75	5,93,752	25,49,821	31,43,573
1975-76	5,44,617	19,10,736	24,55,353
Total	22,03,809	84,07,296	1,06,11,155

The Association thought that a Khadi Store of production and sales if opened in a working class locality will help to supplement the income of working class men and women in their spare hours and such produced goods can also be effectively sold at the very place. For this purpose, Bapunagar Khadi Karyalaya was opened and its utility can be seen from the figures given below:—

Year	Sales of Khadi and Yarn	Sales of Cotton Tapes and other implements.	Total Sales
1971-72	1,43,207.40	47,274.50	1,90,381.90
1972-73	1,43,094.43	82,136.68	1,25,231.11
1973-74	1,50,660.94	60,529.54	2,11,190.48
1974-75	2,45,967.84	48,045.73	2,94,013.57
1975-76	2,55,261.21	97,479.08	3,52,740.29
Total	9,38,181.82	3,35,465.53	12,73,657.35

The Khadi work has extended to some more centres and the following figures show the progress achieved in the above direction :

Name of Centre	Year	Khadi woven in metres	Khadi Worth
			Rs.
A. LATH :	1974-75	5798	24,167
	1975-76	4532	23,463
		10,330	47,630
B. DHANDHUKA:	1974-75	3089	12,763
	1975-76	6348	33,164
		9437	45,927
C. SURENDRANAGAR:	1974-75	780	3,565
	1975-76	10051	52,816
		10831	56,381

Apart from production of khadi other goods of daily use are being manufactured and the relative details are given below —

Year	Matresses	Ground sitting cloth in length	Pieces of ground sitting cloth	Total worth
				Rs.
1975-76	1373	460	7038	49,766

In this manner the textile workers of Ahmedabad have in a humble way, carried out the constructive activities cultivated by Mahatma Gandhi and make the working class understand the importance of khadi and village industries for economic welfare of the masses.

APPENDIX ' F '

Amount received by the workers or dependents under E. S. I. Act, 1948, during the following years through Textile Labour Association, Ahd.

S. No.	Year	Under Medical appeal Tribunal Court, No. of accident cases	Compensation amount	Under E. I. Court No. of Fatal Accidents.	Compensation Amount
			Rs.		Rs.
1	1964	—	—	—	—
2	1965	11	7,228	0	0
3	1966	12	13,142	0	0
4	1967	15	65,235	0	0
5	1968	0	0	5	1,00,000
6	1969	3	6,300	1	20,000
7	1970	11	33,200	5	1,00,000
8	1971	13	75,340	8	1,60,000
9	1972	65	2,57,000	2	40,000
10	1973	92	2,47,800	9	1,80,000
11	1974	110	3,00,000	4	80,000
12	1975	60	2,50,000	9	1,80,000
13	1976	60	3,60,000	6	1,20,000
	Total	452	16,15,335	49	9,80,000
Grant Total: No. of Accident: 501					
Amount of compensation Rs.					25,95,335

N.B.—Above all the court case number of accident cases of the Medical Board cases were settled by correspondence and thousands of rupees are received by the workers during these years through T. L. A.

No fee is charged from dependents to contest the case and the Scheme is operated as welfare measure for textile as well as non-textile workers.

APPENDIX ' G '

Amount received by the workers or Dependents under W. C. Act, 1923 during the following years through Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad

Sr. No.	YEAR				Number of Accident and fatal cases disposed off.	Compensation Amount (in Rs.)
1	1952	..	..	..	384	1,47,185.00
2	1953	..	..	..	496	1,70,976.00
3	1954	..	..	..	596	1,91,450.00
4	1955	..	..	..	769	1,94,937.00
5	1956	..	..	..	509	1,95,991.00
6	1957	..	..	..	585	2,10,181.00
7	1958	..	..	..	524	1,74,307.00
8	1959	..	..	..	518	2,12,182.00
9	1960	..	..	..	540	2,36,995.00
10	1961	..	..	..	546	2,85,987.00
11	1962	..	..	..	450	3,68,842.00
12	1963	..	..	..	383	3,22,083.00
13	1964	..	..	..	307	3,04,711.00
14	1965	..	..	..	54	89,077.00
15	1966	..	..	..	80	3,27,760.00
16	1967	..	..	..	109	2,13,911.00
17	1968	..	..	..	36	67,418.00
18	1969	..	..	..	45	3,03,251.00
19	1970	..	..	..	20	76,946.00
20	1971	..	..	..	25	75,340.00
21	1972	..	..	..	5	17,532.00
22	1973	..	..	..	2	20,220.00
23	1974	..	..	..	10	45,000.00
24	1975	..	..	..	16	37,060.00
25	1976	..	..	..	21	62,000.00
				Total	7030	39,51,342.00

**APPENDIX ' H**  
**THE MAJOUR SAHAKARI BANK LTD.**  
 Salapose Road, Opp. G. P. O. Ahmedabad 380 001.  
**Bank's Progress over the last 25 years.**

			1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976
<b>Membership:</b>								
A. Individuals	..	..	23,400	25,613	34,910	37,094	37,619	48,143
B. Mahajans	..	..	7	7	7	7	7	14
C. Co-op. Societies	..	..	23	61	99	110	114	123
	Total	..	23,430	25,681	35,016	37,211	37,740	48,280
Share Capital (Rupees)	..	..	4,19,760	5,66,550	9,27,620	10,94,520	11,79,0 0	15,90,5 0
<b>Deposits:</b>								
A. Savings (Rupees)	..	..	2,63,268	5,33,977	8,73,339	10,13,245	13,75,902	13,99,906
B. Current (Rupees)	..	..	3,45,253	4,61,855	8,71,413	7,73,958	6,03,527	4,61,329
C. Fixed Deposits (Rupees)	..	..	1,49,394	5,99,406	12,26,168	13,22,424	16,87,163	28,91,639
Cash Certificate (Rupees)								
D. Call Deposits	..	..	36,663	62,050	8,806	—	—	6,35,891
	Total (Rupees)	..	7,94,578	16,57,288	29,79,726	31,09,627	36,66,592	53,88,765
Advances (Rupees)	..	..	9,49,366	18,98,188	34,65,518	41,07,170	56,16,555	80,01,002
Reserve Fund (Rupees)	..	..	39,890	1,52,353	4,35,864	5,33,239	10,96,435	18,22,072
Other Funds (Rupees)	..	..	—	38,277	66,742	5,35,814	6,46,587	8,92,592
Profits (Rupees)	..	..	22,844	42,378	74,692	61,884	95,209	76,443
Working Capital (Rupees)	..	..	13,05,748	25,58,197	46,46,406	56,52,507	74,32,835	1,05,15,186

## Textile Labour Association Ahmedabad

## CHRONICLE OF MAIN EVENTS

Year	Subject
1917	* Warpners' strike for plague bonus—first and foremost incident-pre-Union period. * Smt. Anasuyaben Sarabhai addressed the workers of the spinning department on 4-12-1917 a beginning of a movement.
1918	* 20,000 weavers' dispute — Gandhiji's fast-compromise.
1920	* Founding of Union on 25th February, 1920
1921	* Workers contributed Rs. 40,000 to Lokmanya, Tilak. Swaraj Fund.
1921	* Gandhiji and Seth Mangaldas Girdhardas—arbitrators decided about Bonus and holidays.
1922	* No. of Mills — 56 No. of Spindle — 11,33,588 No. of Looms — 26,266 * Strike in all mills in support of their demand for Bonus — dispute referred to arbitration of Gandhiji and Seth Mangaldas Girdhardas and Shri Madanbhushan Malaviya as Umpire.
1923	* General strike (April 1st to June 4th) for MOA's refusal to grant arbitration for wage-cut dispute.
1924	* Entry of organized labour in civic affairs Starting publication of TLA's organ "Majur Sandesh".
1930	* Bapu's Dandi March — Participation by workers—Chandolla Message.
1931-32	* Indore (Bhandari Mills') strike.
1932	* Nadiad New Shorrock Mill Strike.
1933 Sept.	* Wage-cut proposal by Millowners' Association.
1933 Oct.	* Negotiations at Wardha.
1934	* Arbitration proceedings at Bangalore.

Year	Subject
1934 Aug.	* Further negotiations at Patna.
1934	* Resuming arbitration at Ahmedabad before Sjts. Manu Subedar and Seth Chamanlal Parekh.
1934 Sept. Oct.	* Resuming arbitration in Bombay (at Victoria Mills), before Sjts. Manu Subedar and Seth Chamanlal Parekh.
1935	* Differing awards by Arbitrators-Dispute referred to Justice Patkar as Umpire and his award.
1936	* 20 per cent wage-cut proposal by MOA again Arbitration proceedings before Gandhiji and Seth Kasturbhai Lalbhai — Wardha.
1936 Dec.	* Differing Awards.
1937 Jany.	* Dispute referred to Justice Madgaonkar as Umpire — hearing at Poona and his Award.
1937	* Formation of Gandhi Seva Sangh — Training of Workers in T.U. movement.
"	* Two seats provided to T.L.A. in Provincial Assembly.
"	* Registration of T.L.A. under T.U. Act.
"	* Payment of Wages Act in force from 29-3-1937.
1937-38	* Onslaught of Communists thwarted.
1938	* Govt. of Bombay appointed Textile Labour Enquiry. Committee Shri S. R. Vasavada as one of its members.
	* Industrial Disputes Act in 1938.
1939 July	* Prohibition department was started.
	* Standing Order decided under the Act.
1939-40	* Demand for D.A. to neutralize rise in the cost of living—Notice of strike on 26-2-40 to MOA first.
1939-40	* Award delivered by Industrial Court on 26-4-1940.
1941	* Demand by TLA for 25% rise in wages.
1942	* Role of Labour in national movement—'KARENGE YA MARENGE' Quit India Movement.
	* Agreement for Bonus of 2½ months basic wages for 1942.
1943	* Secretaries of TLA (Sjts. G. L. Nanda, K. K. Desai, S. R. Vasavada and S. P. Dave were imprisoned.)

Year	Subject
1943	* MOA's demand to reduce percentage of neutralisation of D. A. Late Shri Bhulabhai Desai argued out the case on behalf of TLA Petition was dismissed by the Court.
1946	* Communal riots in the city — Labour remained aloof.
"	* Formation of Textile Workers' Federation.
"	* Shri Nandaji & Shri Khandubhai were again elected. to Provincial Assembly on labour seats — Nandaji became Minister of Labour Enactment of B.I.R. Act.
"	* Reduction of hours of work—48 from 54.
1947, 15 August	* Independence Day'.
"	* Communal riots broke out again in the city Labour aloof from it.
"	* Formation of INTUC.
"	* Work among Rly Labour.
"	* Opening of Khadi Hat.
"	* Founding of Labour Bank.
1947, 3rd May	* Nandaji convened meeting of Nationalist minded Trade unionists under Presidentship of Sardar Vallbhbhai Patel.
1948	* Standardization of Wages — Award. Rise in membership up to 1,04,000.
"	* "Three days" were observed for the sad demise of Gandhiji and workers resolved to collect 3 days' wages to commemorate and spread his principles.
1948	* E.S.I. Scheme enacted.
1949	* TLA offices shifted in new building constructed by workers' contribution to the tune of over five lakhs.
1949	* Shri Khandubhai — nominated as member of Constituent Assembly.
	* Shri S. R. Vasavada — as member of Cotton Textile Workers Party.
	* Employment Exchange for workers was introduced.

- 1950 \* First General Election under the Constitution  
 — Shri S. R. Vasavada,  
 — Shri S. P. Dave &  
 — Shri K. R. Vaghela  
 were elected to Bombay State Legislative Assembly  
 with thumping majority.
- 1949 \* LAT's Award — ordering exemption to loss-making  
 mills from payment of bonus — Dispute led to com-  
 promise  
 — Madan Mohan — Vasavada.  
 — Pact for 5 years for Bonus.
- 1951 \* Ordinance for P.F. was promulgated subsequently  
 P.F. Act was enacted in 1952.
- 1952 \* Annual convention of INTUC held at Ahmedabad  
 hosted by TLA.
- 1953-54 \* Closure of some mills and promulgation of Lay off &  
 Retrenchment Ordinance then Act was enacted.
- " \* P.F. Act applied to Textile workers.
- " \* Family Budget Inquiry was conducted by TLA  
 consisting families.
- " \* Shri Khandubhai Desai was appointed as Labour  
 Minister in the Centre.
- " \* Collective agreement reached between TLA & MOA  
 for introduction of four sides in Spg. & Four looms  
 in Wvg.  
 (Rationalization without Tears)
- 1955 \* Agreement reached between MOA and TLA for  
 resolving disputes through collective bargaining.  
 \* Agreement providing for Bonus for a period of five  
 years 1953-to 1957.
- 1957 \* Implementation of Labour Policy as laid down in  
 First Five Year Plan.  
 \* INTUC's demand made at Surat Session for Wage  
 Board was acceded to Shri Vasavada was nominated  
 as one of its member.  
 \* Shri S. R. Vasavada appointed as member of the  
 Textile Labour Inquiry Committee.

Year	Subject
	* Technicians were organized under the banner of TLA.
	* Appointment of Bonus Commission Shri S. R. Vasavada as its member.
1959	* Retirement age for the clerks working in the Mills decided.
1960	* Agreement regarding recommendation of the Wage Board was arrived at between the MOA and the TLA.
1963	* Contribution to P.F. raised from 6¼% to 8-1/3%
1964	* TLA's demand for D.A. on the basis of New C.P.I. number. —Payment of Gratuity. —Employees State Insurance Act & Scheme covering 2,25,000 industrial workers inaugurated in Ahmedabad.
1965	* Award of the Supreme Court regarding D.A. in August 1965.
1966	* National Labour Commission for Labour was constituted in 1966.
1967	* Industrial Courts Award on leave mill wages for workers.
1968	* National Textile Corporation was constituted by the Govt. of India.
	* Second Wage Board submitted its Representation to the Govt.
1967	* Award regarding — Casual Leave of seven days with full wages per year.
1968	* Award of Padma Bhushan' to Shri S. R. Vasavada General Secretary of Textile Labour Association by President of India.
1968	* Shri Khandubhai Desai appointed as Governor of Andhra Pradesh.
1968 April	* Unemployment Relief measures under-taken by TLA for the unemployed of closed mills.
1968	* N.T.C. (Guj.) was constituted in November.
1968, 31-8-68	* Shri S. R. Vasavada was elected as member of Rajya Sabha.

- 1968, Sept. 19 \* Token Strike of Govt. employees (excluding Railway-men).
- 1968, Sept. 24 \* Visit of Mr. Boiter, General Secretary of ICFTU.
- 1969 \* Appointment of National Labour Commission with Shri S. R. Vasavada as one of its members.
- " \* Gandhi Centenary Celebrations.
- " \* Khadi Exhibition by TLA.
- " \* Communal riots broke out in the City.
- 1970, 28-3-70 \* Shri Vasavada was re-elected in Rajya Sabha 28-3-70.
- " \* Visit of Shri Jaisukhbhai Hathi.
- 1971 \* Celebration of "Atithi Sanman Din" 4-12-71.  
Procession by TLA—Khadi clothing worth Rs. 35,000/-.
- " \* Award to Bangla Desh Samiti.
- " \* TLA's demand for 40 hours a week as per recommendation of N.L.O.
- " \* Bonus Agreement granting 8.33%.
- " \* Visit of Mr. W. Jenkins, Director General of I.L.O.
- 1972 \* Formation of 'National Labour Organization' (NLO) and 'National Labour Party.' (NLP)
- " \* Seven candidates were put up by NLP in the Assembly election.
- 1972 \* Bonus Review Committee was constituted under Chairmanship of Shri B. K. Madan.
- 11-9-72 \* Sad demise of T.L.A.'s lifelong President, Smt. Anasuyaben Sarabhai (at the age of 86 yrs.) on 11-9-72.
- 20-11-72 \* Passing away of TLA's General Secretary Shri S. R. Vasavada M.P. on 20-11-72 (at the age of 70 yrs) after 42 yrs. of valuable services to the organization.
- " \* Shortage of electric supply and introduction of staggering of weekly holidays in mills.
- " \* Grand procession by TLA to Sabarmati Harijan Ashram where workers rededicated themselves to Gandhian ideology.

1972

\* TLA's demand for repayment of P.F. amount after 20 yrs. of service in the Industry. Submission of memorandum to Union Labour Minister by Executives of TLA at Delhi.

"

\* Noteworthy activities of Guj. N.T.C. by restarting nine sick mills in Gujarat giving employment to 20,000 workers wherein TLA was represented by its Secretary Shri A. N. Buch.

"

\* 'Payment of Gratuity Act' in force from 16-9-72.

\* Support & Cooperation extended to Shri P. G. Mavlanker who was elected to Loksabha

\* Visit of Mr. Charles Ford, Mr. Edger Akiwa. Mr. Moviomura distinguished Labour leaders to T.L.A.

1973

\* Unprecedented rise in TLA's membership. tional Textile Garments Federation.

\* Industrial Court's revised order for leave with wages to the workers.

1974

\* Workers were given cloth worth Rs. 101/- gratis as per Agreement between the TLA and MOA, in view of workers' contribution towards prosperity of the Industry.

"

\* Increase in workers' wages awarded by Shri I. G. Thakore, President, Industrial Court, Gujarat, as per compromise arrived at between the TLA and MOA.

\* Workers were thus benefitted to the tune of Rs. 15 crores.

"

\* Compulsary Deposit Ordinance was promulgated by Central Govt. providing for depositing 50% of the increase in wages as well as D.A. with effect from 6th July 1974 with a view to curb the inflation.

"

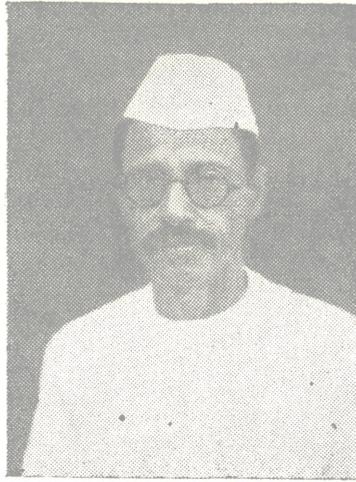
\* Third shift was closed in some of the mills on account of accumulations of stocks resulting into unemployment of a large number of workers. On TLA's representation to the Govt. resumption of work was undertaken.

"

\* Workers' Training Class was inaugurated by Shri J. B. Diwan, Chief Justice, of the Gujarat High Court when Governor Shri K. K. Viswanathan was present as Chief Guest.

- ” \* Visit of President Theo-Dos-Dyke of Railway Brotherhood Union, USA, and Max Swedlow of I.L.O. Director Ernest Steed and Asst, Manager Mr. Joy of N. Y. Ladies Garments Workers Union.
- ” \* Shri N. M. Barot visited Geneva for a fortnight.
- ” \* Smt. Elaben Bhatt, Chief of Women’s Section visited U.S.A.
- 1975 \* Workers were given cloth gratis akin to last year.
- ” \* Shri Khandubhai Desai, President of TLA, and ex-Governor Andhra Pradesh, expired on 17-4-1975.
- \* 26 6-75 \* Emergency was declared on 26-6-1975.
- \* Shri Arvindbhai Buch was elected as President in the vacancy caused by the demise of Shri Khandubhai Desai.
- \* Shri Navinchandra Barot was elected to the Gujarat State Assembly. He was appointed as Minister of Labour to the State.
- 1975 \* Ordinance was promulgated directing the mills to pay minimum bonus at the rate of 4% for the year 1974; and loss making mills were exempted from payment of bonus.
- \* During the year Municipal elections were held. Out of 28 candidates put up by the Janata Morcha were elected.
- 1976 \* Workers donated a substantial sum towards Khandubhai Desai Workers’ Family Welfare Fund.
- \* Industrial Court of Gujarat Awarded advance to the employees of the textile mills in Ahmedabad to enable them to celebrate the Diwali Festival holidays.
- \* A very important agreement was reached between the MOA & TLA by which mills were directed to maintain same total number of female operatives as on 1st January 1976.
- \* Elections were held by the employees in 64 mills in Ahmedabad city to constitute Joint Management Council when majority of the members elected belonged to TLA.
- 1977 \* General Elections of Loksabha. Janta Party formed the popular ministry.
- \* Again Shri N. M. Barot was nominated as Labour Minister of Gujarat State on 11-4-77.

## WHO'S WHO



SHRI GULZARILAL NANDA

- Born** 4th July 1889 — M.A., L.L.B.  
1921 Joined Non-cooperation movement  
Professor of Economics, National College, Bombay  
1922-1946 Secretary, Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad  
1932 & 1942-44 Jailed during Satyagraha movements  
1946/1950 Parliamentary Secretary, Bombay Government  
1947 Was largely instrumental in Organizing Indian National Trade Union Congress
- 1950-51 } Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Government of India  
1960-63 }  
1951-1952 Minister for Planning, Government of India  
1952-1957 Minister for Planning, Irrigation & Power, Government of India  
1957-1963 Minister for Planning, Irrigation & Employment  
1963-1966 Minister for Home Affairs, Government of India  
1970-1971 Minister for Railways, Government of India  
1971 Chairman, Kurushetra Development Board  
Vice Chairman, Citizens Central Council
- 27.5.1964 to 11.6.1964  
11.1.1966 to 24.1.1966 Acted as Prime Minister of India

**PUBLICATIONS:** 'Some Aspects of Khadi'  
'History of Wage Adjustment in the Ahmedabad Textile Industry'  
'Approaches to the Second Five Year Plan'  
'Some Basic Considerations'  
'Guru Tej Bahadur — Saint and Saviour'



(LATE SHRI KHANDUBHAI K. DESAI)

- Born** 23.10.1898 at Bulsar in Surat District (Gujarat State)
- Education:** B.A. from Gujarat Vidyapeth — Earlier had discontinued his study in Bombay in order to join Non-cooperation movement in 1920
- 1922-1975** Worked in the Labour Movement in Ahmedabad. Started career as Asst. Secretary of T.L.A. then was General Secretary and at the time of his death was the President
- 1932-33 & 1942** Imprisoned for taking part in Satyagraha
- 1937** Elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly.  
Member of the Textile Labour Enquiry Committee
- 1946** Elected as a Member of the Constituent Assembly
- 1952** Elected to Indian Parliament. He served on following committees:
- Railway Grainshop Enquiry Committee
  - Dearness Merger Committee
  - Fiscal Commission
  - Director, Industrial Finance Corporation of India
  - Director, Employees State Insurance Corporation
- Was also connected with Indian National Congress' organizational activities. Was Vice-Chairman of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, Member of the All India Congress Committee and the Congress Working Committee for several years.

1947	Elected as the first Secretary of the Indian National Trade Unions Congress. President for 3 terms—2nd, 3rd and 4th sessions.
1950	Led the workers' delegation to ILO
1953	Delegate to the Asian Regional Conference of ILO held in Tokyo
1954-1957	Labour Minister of Government of India
1961	Appointed Chairman of Oil India Limited He was also a member of the first National Defence Council, Board of Trade, Khadi and Village Industries Committee, Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation and Governor of Andhra Pradesh for one term.

(LATE) SHRI SOMNTH P. DAVE

Born at Ranpur, Ahmedabad District on 18.10.1906

EDUCATION: B.A., LL.B.

Joined T.L.A. in 1930 Since then he has occupied the following important positions:

Secretary, Textile Labour Association

Secretary, Gujarat Provincial Branch of Indian National Trade Unions Congress

General Secretary, National Textile Workers' Federation

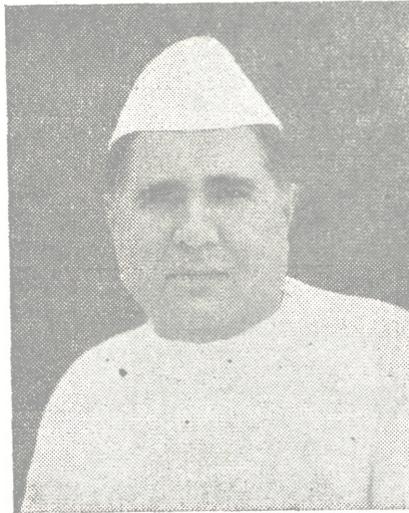
President, Tata Chemical Workers' Union, Mithapur

Do. Ahmedabad Electricity Workers' Union

Do. Ahmedabad Municipal Motor Workers' Union

Do. Shivrajpur Mine workers Unions and other unions

Municipal Councillor, Ahmedabad for 9 years  
 Member, Senate of Gujarat University  
 Member of Bombay Legislative Assembly  
 Member of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation and its Standing Committee  
 Member, Working Committee of I.N.T.U.C.  
 Visited Geneva twice as representative of Indian workers in International Labour Conference and Industrial Committee



(LATE) SHRI SHAMPRASAD RUPSHANKER VASAVADA

- Born 16.2.1903 at Junagadh (Saurashtra)
- Education: B.A. (Hons) from Bhauddin College, Junagadh — 1925  
 M.A. with History and Economics — 1927
- 1927 Started career as a teacher in Proprietary High School
- 1929 Joined the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad.  
 Successfully led the Prohibition campaign during 1929-30 and organized picketing of liquor shops.
- 1930 Took charge of the trade union activities at Indore
- 1932-33 In the absence of Shri Gulzarilal Nanda and Shri Khandubhai Desai, who were imprisoned, returned to Ahmedabad to work in T.L.A.
- 1937 Took responsibility of Labour Sub-Committee of Gandhi Seva Sangh of which Sardar Vallabhahai Patel was the Chairman and Shri Shankerlal Banker was the Secretary. He brought together young men from different parts of the country and trained them in trade union organization and administration

- 1946 Elected as one of the Secretaries of T.L.A.
- 1947 President of the Indian National Textile Federation, which post he occupied for a long time  
 President of INTUC for 2 terms — 6th and 8th sessions  
 General Secretary for 6 terms from 9th to 14th sessions  
 A member of the Working Committee of INTUC for many years.

#### PUBLIC ACTIVITIES:

- 1950 & 1952 Member of the Legislative Assembly, Bombay.
- 1936-1950 Member of the Ahmedabad Municipality. Worked as Chairman of Sanitary Committee
- 1961 Member of the Gujarat State Assembly. Chairman of Majoor Sahakari Bank for a long time

#### FOREIGN VISITS:

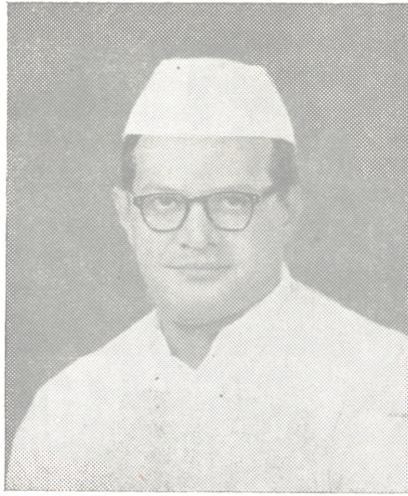
Represented Indian Labour In the I.L.O. Textile Committee since its inception.

Attended Asian Regional Conference in Tokyo in 1953.

Visited Geneva, Zurich, Munich, Prague, Dusseldorf, London and Manchester in 1959 as a member of the Working Group of Government of India to study the problems of rehabilitation and modernisation of the textile industry.

#### COMMITTEES:

1. Saurashtra Textile Labour Enquiry Committee
2. Gujarat State Advisory Committee
3. Cotton Textile Fund Committee (Ministry of Commerce)
4. Director, Sindri Fertilizers and Chemical Co. Ltd.
5. Hindustan Steel Limited
6. Member, Handloom Board
7. Ambar Charkha Enquiry Committee
8. Central Advisory Council of Industries
9. Reviewing Sub-Committee, Ministry of Labour & Industry
10. Director, Air India International
11. Director, Indian Airlines
12. Ahmedabad Telephone Advisory Committee
13. Senate Member, Gujarat University
14. Bonus Commission
15. Standing Labour Committee
16. Central Prohibition Committee
17. Capital Project Board (Gujarat)
18. Textile Commissioner's Advisory Committee



SHRI ARVINDLAL NAVRANGRAI BUCH

Born in 1920 -- Passed B.Sc. Ferguson College, Ponna

1942 Joined Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association occupying various positions.  
Now President of the Association

In addition President of more than 30 trade unions in Gujarat State from various industries.

President of National Labour Organisation (NLO)

President of All India Federation of Bank of India Officers' Associations

President, Self Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad

Chairman, Mahila Bank of SEWA

Member, National Savings Board

Member, Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation

Former Member of Gujarat State Textile Corporation

Former Member of the Second Wage Board for the Cotton Textile Industry representing labour has served as a member in several Boards and Committees appointed by the respective Ministries at State and Central Level in various spheres like Factory Advice, Technical Education, Vocational Training, Employment Guidance, Apprenticeship, Medical Services, Arbitration Promotion Panel

Former Treasurer of Indian National Trade Union Congress

Former General Secretary of Indian National Textile Workers Federation.

#### INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES:

Vice-President of the Textile Workers Asian Regional Organization (TWARO) Tokyo

Substitute member of the Executive Committee of the ARO of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Brussels, Belgium

Attended as a member or as Adviser or as a Delegate at the

ILO Annual Conferences, Geneva

ICFTU Annual Session, Stockholm

UNESCO Workers' Education Seminar, Paris

ILO Textile Workers' Committee, Geneva

Duke of Edinborough Conference, Canada

Asian Regional Labour Conference, Tokyo

ICFTU-ARO Meeting at Singapore

Asian Regional Working Group of ILO at Manila, Phillipines (1969)

Seminar of DOMEI, a most representative Central Workers Organisation of Japan

First World Congress of International Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation at Amsterdam (1972)

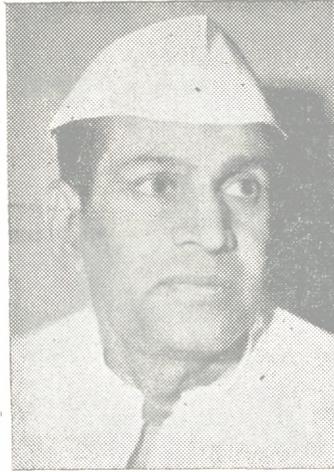
Expert Group on Air-Pollution I.L.O. Geneva 1973

Presidium Meeting of International Textile Garment and Leather Workers' Federation at Brussels in 1973

Seminar for Trade Unionists for Africa and Asia held at Bonn in February-March 1976

In addition he also attended the Land Grant University Centenary Celebrations, USA and EXPO 1970 as arranged by TWARO and DOMEI.

Visited U.S.A. on an invitation from AFL/CIO affiliated union in September-October 1976 to study the working of trade unions and condition of work, wages and other problems of U.S.A. workers.



SHRI SHANTILAL R. SHAH

Born at Nadiad (District Kaira) on 28-4-1914

**EDUCATION:**

Merit Scholarship for passing Matriculation Examination as first in the centre. B.A. (Hons) with Economics and Politics — 1936 Secured Gaurishanker Oza Gold Medal during his college education. Worked as Fellow in Bhavnagar Shamaldas College for two years.

Took training under the training scheme of Gandhi Majoor Sevak Sangh and joined the Textile Labour Association in 1938.

Services lent to Prohibition Department of Government of Bombay and he also undertook labour welfare activities conducted by the Labour Welfare Department of the Government.

Resumed his work in T.L.A. in 1950.

General Secretary of T.L.A. since December 1972.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

Municipal Councillor elected in 1961

Elected to Gujarat State Assembly in 1967

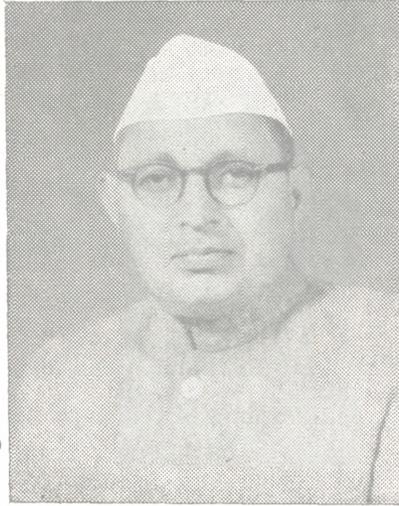
Minister for Labour, Social Welfare, Prohibition and Housing, Rehabilitation and Transport of Government of Gujarat — 1967 to 1971.

Committees on which he has worked:

Minimum Wage Committee  
Technical Education Committee  
State Labour Advisory Board  
E.S.I. Committee.  
Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation,  
Rajasthan Textile Advisory Committee  
Prohibition Advisory Committee  
Director, Gujarat Finance Corporation.

International field:

Attended as representative of Labour ILO Conference at Geneva—1956  
Took part in the First 'Duke of Edinburgh Conference' held at Oxford under the auspices of UNO. Visited France, West Germany, Netherlands etc., and acquainted himself with the labour activities in those countries.



SHRI MANHARLAL T. SHUKLA

Born — 6.1.1915

Joined T.L.A. about 1947 and has been in the field since then. At present he is a secretary of the Association.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Councillor in Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for 15 years. Worked in various capacities as member of the School Board, Standing Committee, Chairman of the Health Committee, Dy. Chairman of the Recreation and Cultural Committee.

Member of Gujarat State Legislative Assembly — 1967 — 1970

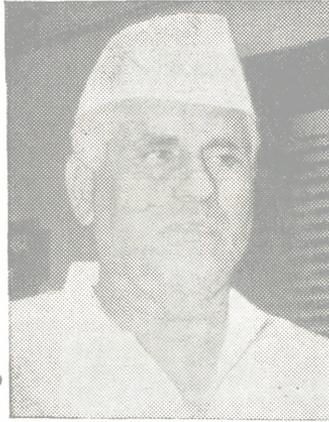
Member of Employees' State Insurance Corporation — 1960 — 1971

Member of the Allotment Committee of the Housing Board at Ahmedabad  
President, National Labour Party.

#### INTERNATIONAL FIELD:

Visited U.S.A. in 1955

Visited European countries as a delegate of workers in the capacity of consultant on Worker Education and Trade unionest of long standing in 1970.



SHRI NAVINCHANDRA MOTILAL BAROT

Born 1924 — Education: B.A. LL.B. of Bombay University

Joined Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association in 1949 and is a Secretary of the Association.

General Secretary, National Labour Organization.

Connected with more than 29 trade unions in various industries as President or Vice-President.

President, All India Brooke Bond Employees Federation

Do. Textile Technicians and Officers' Union, Ahmedabad

Chairman, Workers' Co-operative Bank (Majoor Sahakari Bank Ltd.)

Vice-President, All India Lipton Employees Federation

Vice-President, All India Avery Employees Federation.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Member, Legislative Assembly, Gujarat State Elected in June 1975

Minister in charge of Labour, Local Self Government and Town Planning (1975 and 1976)

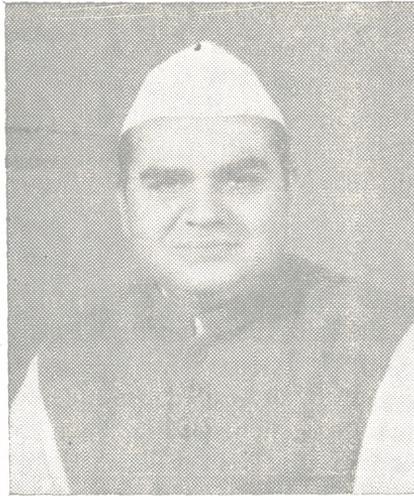
Minister in charge of Labour since June 1977  
Chairman, Privilege Committee, Gujarat Assembly  
Member, Gujarat University Senate  
Corporator, Ahmedabad — 1969 to 1974  
Chairman, Standing Committee, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation 1969-74  
Trustee, Gujarat Vidyapith (University founded by Mahatma Gandhi)  
Trustee, Sardar Smarak Bhavan.

#### COMMITTEES:

Former member of the Bombay State Labour Board  
Former Director of Hindustan Salt Limited, Jaipur  
Member, Wage Board for the Cotton Textile Industry, Gujarat State  
Member, Minimum Wage Advisory Board, Study Group for Hotel Industries,  
Study Group on Labour Legislation, Gujarat State Labour Legislation  
Sub-Committee, Ahmedabad City Metropolitan Advisory Committee, Norms  
Committee and Committee for unorganized and unprotected workers.  
Vice-President, Indian National Trade Union Congress  
General Secretary, Indian National Commercial and Salaried Workers'  
Federation.

#### INTERNATIONAL FIELD:

I.L.O. Committee 1956(Salaried Workers' Conference)  
D.G.B. Conference, Berlin, 1964  
I.L.O. Annual Conference, 1969  
Round Table Role of Labour Legislation in Developing Economy-Geneva  
1944  
Seminar on Multinational Corporations, Jakarta 1974  
Member of the Government delegation to ILO Annual Conference 1977.



### SHRI MOHANLAL BAPULAL JOSHI

Born 3.4.1918 — Education B.Com. (Bombay University)

Joined Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association in 1941 and is in charge of Accounts, Research and Complaints Sections.

Treasurer and Chief Accountant of T.L.A.

Treasurer, National Labour Organization and National Labour Party.

Chairman, Labour Co-operative Bank

Chairman, Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Member, Gujarat State Housing Board

Member, National Committee of Technical and Vocational Training,  
Government of India.

#### INTERNATIONAL FIELD:

Attended I.L.O. Meeting — 1957

Trade Unions and Co-operative Meeting, Denmark.



MRS. ELA RAMESH BHATT

Earned Magsaysay Award for outstanding social work in 1977.

Born on 7-9-1933. Education: B.A. (English), LLB., International Diploma in Labour & Co-operative (Israel). Chief of Women's Section T.L.A. since 1968. Earlier taught English in SNDT Women's University College and worked as Employment Officer in Labour Department, Government of Gujarat.

#### OTHER POSTS HELD

General Secretary, Self-Employed Women's Association  
Managing Trustee, Mahila Sewa Trust  
Managing Director, Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Ltd.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Member, Gujarat State Social Welfare Board  
Gujarat State Samaj Shikshan Samiti  
International SOS Village  
Gujarat Museum Society

#### RESEARCH PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN:

1. Survey of the condition of the textile workers rendered unemployed due to the closure of the textile mills in Gujarat
2. A study on the Impact of Education on the women of the Harijan Community
3. Study on the indebtedness of the textile workers
4. A survey of the Co-operative Credit Societies of the Mill Employees
5. The Impact of Welfare on the State Transport Employees of Gujarat State
6. The Economic condition of the Self-Employed Women Workers in Garment Industry

7. The Economic Status of Used Garment Dealers
8. The Economic Status of Handcart Pullers
9. The Economic Status of Vegetable Vendors
10. The Economic Status of Junk Smiths
11. Economic Status of Milk Vendors
12. Indebtedness of Textile Workers of Saraspur Mills.

#### PUBLICATIONS:

1. 'Gujarat-ni-Nari'
2. 'Profiles of Self-Employed Women'

#### INTERNATIONAL FIELD:

Represented India in Seminar on Women Leadership in Japan—1972.

Represented India as AID participant in U.S.A. in August 1973.

Invited as a Panelist on Women at Work in U.N. sponsored by IWY Conference, Tribune in Mexico—June 1975.

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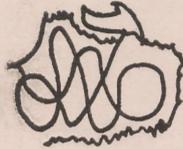
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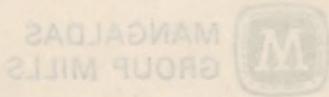
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