

SOCIOLOGY OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT
IN GHANA: 1957-1972

by

Yaw Aboagye Debrah
B.A. Simon Fraser University (1981)

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
Sociology/Anthropology

C Yaw Aboagye Debrah 1983

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

1983

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Yaw Aboagye Debrah

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: SOCIOLOGY OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT
IN GHANA: 1957-1972

Examining Committee:

Chairperson: Dr. Ian Whitaker

Prof. R.W. Wyllie
Senior Supervisor

Dr. Gary Teeple

Dr. Robert Roggw

Dr. Robert Davies
External Examiner
Dept. of Business Administration
University of British Columbia
Date Approved: March 15, 1983

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

Sociology of Industrial Conflict in Ghana: 1957-1972

Author: _____

(signature)

Yaw Aboagye Debrah

(name)

April 12, 1983

(date)

ABSTRACT

This study endeavours to explain why industrial conflict in Ghana was weakly institutionalized from 1957-1972. Institutionalization is the process whereby industrial conflict is isolated from, and prevented from diffusing through, the entire political system. Some studies of trade unions in Western Industrial societies have argued that once unions have acquired legitimacy in society and have achieved some substantial benefits for their members, their function then becomes the institutionalization of industrial conflict through the collective bargaining process. Some social scientists thus assumed that unions would perform the same role in developing nations like Ghana.

By analysing published literature on trade unions in both Ghana and the industrialized West, trade union policies and documents of the Nkrumah, National Liberation Council and Busia regimes, as well as Ghana Trade Union Congress documents, an attempt was made to show why the regimes adopted measures aimed at repressing strikes and controlling the unions. The policies adopted by the unions to resist such measures were also studied.

The result showed that the unions in Ghana did not replicate the experience of the West. This thesis shows that in Ghana, unlike the practice in the industrialized West, the economy was planned by the state through development plans. Also the state was the largest employer and as such was much more easily drawn into industrial conflicts which then spread through

the entire political system. In Ghana the unions were incapable of isolating labour conflicts from the public arena because the collective bargaining structures were not strong enough. Furthermore, there was a major conflict of interest between the regimes and the unions due to the failure of each to recognize the legitimacy of the other's position. This manifested itself in strikes and other forms of labour conflicts. In such conflicts the unions relied on a populist ideology to achieve their objectives. The adoption of this populist ideology precipitated the conflict of interest into a power struggle between the two opposing sides. As a result of these factors industrial conflict was only weakly institutionalized in Ghana.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due to the members of my supervisory committee: Professor R.W. Wyllie, Dr. Gary Teeple and Dr. Robert Rogow; to Dr. Hari Sharma for his friendship and guidance ; to Mr. Vern Loewen, the Director of Financial Aid, SFU for the financial assistance provided for the typing and preparation of the thesis; to Mr. and Mrs. Joe Amoako-Tuffour for their assistance in the use of the computer; to Ms. Noreen Ash for the various assistance provided; and finally to all my friends, faculty, staff and fellow graduate students of the Sociology and Anthropology Department for their support and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE NKRUMAH REGIME: 1957-1966	34
ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE NKRUMAH REGIME	36
LABOUR LEGISLATION AND THE UNIONS	43
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 1957-1966	49
THE PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE NKRUMAH REGIME	56
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA	68
III. INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE MILITARY REGIME -NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL (NLC) : 1966-1969	77
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE NLC REGIME	77
LABOUR LEGISLATION AND THE UNIONS	83
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 1966-1969	90
PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE NLC REGIME.	93
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA	106
IV. INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE BUSIA REGIME: 1969-1972	122
ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE BUSIA REGIME	124

LABOUR LEGISLATION AND THE UNIONS	133
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING	139
PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THIS PERIOD ...	141
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA	151
V. PATTERNS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT: 1957-1972.	168
THE IDEOLOGY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN GHANA ...	178
CONCLUSIONS	186
APPENDIX	cciii
Note on Currency Equivalents	203
BIBLIOGRAPHY	205

LIST OF TABLES

1. Collective Agreements in Ghana, 1959-1977	56
2. Number of Unions, Membership and Strikes, 1957-1972	58
3. Size and Composition of Public Debt, 1959-1966	78
4. Annual Salary of Top Ranking Members of the Busia Regime	155

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of the trade union movement in Ghana has been a history of continuous conflict between the workers and the state. (The state is the largest employer of labour in Ghana). In Ghana industrial conflict tends to overshadow the relations between the trade union movement and the employers despite efforts to create and preserve communal working relationships, to provide some acceptable mechanisms of accommodation, compromise, and adjudication in mediating disputes, and to handle all other forms of organized conflict with their potential ramifications and implications for the whole of the political system. In spite of emphasis in recent years on common objectives and on the virtues of industrial peace and harmony, the pursuit of disparate aims on the part of both the trade unions and the regimes continues to cause strife.

This thesis seeks to explain why industrial conflict in Ghana was still weakly institutionalized by 1972, despite the legalization of trade unions, the development of collective bargaining procedures, the passage of labour legislation and the regular pronouncements on the virtues of industrial peace emanating from both employers and trade union leaders during the post-independence period. The investigation in this respect will focus on the period from 1957 to 1972. The term institutionalization whenever used in the thesis will mean the process whereby industrial conflict is isolated from, and

prevented from diffusing through the entire political system.

The development of trade unionism in Ghana has its origins in the colonial period. Official trade unionism did not begin until 1941 when the Gold Coast colonial administration passed the Trade Union Ordinance which legalized trade unions in the Gold Coast (the name of the country under British colonial rule). After 1941 the Colonial Administration encouraged the formation of trade unions based on the British model. By the time of independence in 1957 trade unionism had become an integral part of industrial relations in Ghana.

Since trade unionism was introduced in Ghana under British Colonial rule, it was thought that institutionalization of industrial conflict would be possible in Ghana just as in Britain. This notion was based on the assumption that once the Ghanaian trade unions were legalized and were able to achieve some substantial benefits for their members, institutionalization of industrial conflict would be possible. In addition the notion overlooked some differences between the social structure of Ghana and that of Britain or the industrialized west.

In Ghana, unlike the West, the state is the largest employer of labour and unionization is most developed in this sector. The state assumes the position of management and labour-management relations is therefore controlled by the state. In this regard the state in Ghana, unlike in the West, is much more easily drawn into industrial conflicts which have the

potentiality of spreading to the whole political system.

In Ghana as in most developing nations the state is the initiator of development. In such a state planned economy, the state is able to wield considerable often, unchallenged power. The state therefore is able to legislate the conditions under which trade unions would be allowed to operate. In such a country the state makes the distinction between legal and illegal strikes. Even collective bargaining certificates are sometimes controlled by the state. This is probably an indication that the recognition of trade unions in those countries does not go far enough. While trade unionism has officially been recognized or legalized, it has not been accepted in the beliefs of the authorities as a legitimate social institution.

There are a number of factors that can perhaps explain this, however, the most important is the fact that the trade union movement in Ghana is seen by the various political leaders as a competitor. There seem to be a conflict of interest between the trade union movement and the political leaders. In a society where there are virtually no strong oppositional political parties either because they are forbidden to operate or have been driven underground by the regimes, the trade union movement sometimes assumes the position of unofficial oppositional party, expressing the views and the opinions of the masses.

Furthermore, in such societies the regimes are highly vulnerable to coups and frequent overthrows. The trade union

movement is capable of engineering the overthrow of a regime. As such the activities of the trade union movement are constantly watched. Strikes undertaken by the trade unions even when they are in demand for higher wages are very often considered to be political strikes aimed at overthrowing the rulers. The political leaders therefore very often use intimidation tactics in their attempts to control the trade unions.

In his assessment of the state in developing nations, Ralph Miliband argues that in countries like Ghana where an economically dominant class or group did not exist before the establishment of the 'new' state in place of the Colonial Administration, the classical Marxist view of the state as an economically dominant class is not to be found in any meaning that makes real economic, social and political sense.¹ This being the case Miliband continues to argue that the state in such societies must be taken to 'represent' itself. This means that those people who occupy the leading positions in the state system will use their power, inter alia, to advance their own interests, and the economic interests of their families, friends and followers.²

In Ghana the ruling political leadership cannot be said to represent any particular group or class. Their rule tends to be autocratic and elitist. In addition, they rule mostly for their own benefit. Their policies are aimed at perpetuating their

¹ Miliband (1977, 108).

² Ibid, 108.

positions of power. They therefore mobilize and rely on state power to crush all potential opposition to their authority including the organized labour movement.

Dennis Austin provides evidence to support this view. He maintains that the attractive power of the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP), as well as that of the Progress Party (PP) after 1969, drew together a wide following behind the party leaders who used the resources of the state to entrench themselves in office. He continues to say that it was much less easy to see either the CPP or the PP as the political expression of a particular social stratum.³

Austin again maintains that the PP particularly had among its leaders many who belonged to the now relatively broad group of people with professional interests or indigenous businessmen: a nascent class (it might be said) of bourgeois gentilhommes. They were certainly very different from- the teachers, traders, and clerks who took office under the CPP.⁴ This analysis applies equally well to the military regimes in Ghana.

In an attempt to realize their interests the various post-independence state leaders in Ghana, irrespective of their ideological inclinations, adopted various means of control over the unions. Sometimes they adopted completely opposite measures but they were all aimed at one end---to subjugate the trade union movement to their controls.

³ Austin (1976, 3).

⁴Ibid.

The regimes adopted both implicit and explicit measures to control strikes, which are the most overt manifestation of trade union power. The trade union movement on the other hand being aware of this often, ignores the anti-strike labour legislation and proceeds with the strike anyway. The trade union movement thus resists the tendency of the regimes to control its activities. The conflicting relations between the trade union movement and the regimes result in what amounts to a power struggle. It is from this perspective then, that the conflicting relations between the regimes and the trade union movement- manifesting itself into serious industrial conflicts- should be analysed.

Firstly, it will be argued in this thesis that the power struggle itself is a manifestation of the conflict of interest between the regimes and the trade union movement. This means that the underlying causes of industrial conflict in Ghana are rooted in the conflict of interest which gives rise to the power struggle. This factor makes the institutionalization of industrial conflict extremely difficult if not impossible in Ghana.

The term power struggle whenever used in this thesis will mean any attempt by two interest groups to dominate and control one another. According to Max Weber, power is the opportunity existing within a social relationship which permits one to carry out one's own will even against resistance and regardless of the

basis on which this opportunity rests.⁵ Thus any group or individual with power, such as the regimes in Ghana, have the capacity to modify the conduct of other people in a way in which she or he desires even if there is resistance against it. Similarly the trade union movement can sometimes use its strike power to modify the conduct of others by inducing them to grant the demands of the trade union concerned.

Power can also be considered as a special case of the exercise of influence. This is the process of affecting policies of other people by means of actual or the threat of severe deprivations for non-conformity with the policies intended. In Ghana both the regimes and the trade movement are sometimes capable of this. The regimes in Ghana exercise power by granting positive rewards for conformity and negative rewards for non-conformity. Power involves effective control over policy, and there are many ways by which this control is attained.

The exercise of power involves a high degree of coerciveness, for coerciveness is always available to people with power as perhaps a last resort when all other means have failed. The political leaders in Ghana very often resorted to coercive measures in their dealings with the trade unions. Such measures included the use of state power, for example, the mobilization of the police and the military to intimidate strikers and to break strikes. Similarly the trade union movement sometimes used their strike power to coerce the authorities into granting their

⁵Weber (1962, 117).

demands.

Strikes sometimes result in untold hardship for the citizens and enormous economic cost to the state. Both factors can generate political agitation against a regime and even destabilize the regime. For these reasons some regimes sometimes readily grant workers' demands instead of risking a strike. But sometimes they resort to violent means to suppress all the demands of the trade unions. This, however, does not imply that the exercise of power always depends on violence. Power can be exercised effectively by means of manipulation. In Ghana the state leaders sometimes manipulated the trade union leaders into carrying out their policies.

Secondly, an attempt will be made to analyse the ideology of the trade union movement in Ghana. If the trade union movement in Ghana is an interest group that uses its power to acquire benefits for its members, and if this power becomes a force that the political leaders must contend with, then there must be an ideology that helps to express and build this power of the trade unions. This ideology gives the trade union movement the political force with which to fight the acquisition of benefits for its members.

Thirdly, an attempt will be made to analyse how and why industrial conflict took the form it did during the period. In this respect the analysis will concentrate on why and how the post-independence regimes in Ghana adopted policies aimed at controlling, repressing and dominating the trade union movement.

It is also concerned with the strategies adopted by the trade union movement to resist such attempts by the regimes.

The concept of industrial conflict will be understood here to mean a conflict or dispute between employers and their employees leading to a work-stoppage. This normally takes many forms but its most obvious manifestation is the use of strike action by the employees. Emphasis will thus be given to strikes which, it must be understood, represent only one form of industrial conflict. Clerk Kerr has distinguished the different types of industrial conflicts as follows:

It means of expression are as limited as the ingenuity of man. The strike is the most common and most visible expression. But conflict with the employer may also take the form of a peaceful bargaining and grievance handling, of boycotts, of political action, of restriction of output, of sabotage, of absenteeism, or of personnel turnover. Even the strike is of many varieties. It may involve all the workers or only key men. It may take the form of a refusal to work overtime or to perform a certain process. It may even involve such rigid adherence to the rules that output is stifled.⁶

Industrial conflict can be either organized (collective) or unorganized (individual) conflict. In unorganized conflict, the individual worker responds to any dissatisfying, deprivative or oppressive work situation by the only means available to him as an individual. Such means include a complete withdrawal from the source of discontent or some form of individual sabotage or indiscipline as a reaction against the immediate manifestation of his oppression. Such spontaneous, uncalculated individual

⁶ Kerr (1954, 232).

responses are often not part of a deliberate strategy to remedy the source of discontent.

Organized response to conflict, as opposed to unorganized response, is a conscious strategy to change the work-situation which is identified with the source of discontent. Organized conflict, then, is undertaken purposefully to achieve some concrete improvement of the work-situation.

A strike is a form of organized conflict and Hyman argues that for discontent to be expressed in a strike, a minimum of workers solidarity and organization is presupposed almost by definition.⁷ Striking is a collective act and requires a degree of understanding and belief in the efficaciousness of mass action. It may be true that some strikes are occasionally spontaneous outbursts due to accidental circumstances or long periods of repression but one can also say that workers who share no feelings of solidarity or common interest would be unlikely to undertake a strike. The existence of legalized trade unions as in Ghana since 1941, therefore provide the solidarity and efficient organization necessary to undertake a strike.

The term strike will be used here to mean a temporary collective stoppage of work undertaken to bring pressure on the employer, be it the state or otherwise, to grant some demands of the trade union concerned. A strike has been defined as a temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees in order to

⁷Hyman (1972, 54).

express a grievance or enforce a demand.⁸ A strike is, therefore, the collective refusal of a body of workers to continue to work under the existing terms and conditions of employment.⁹

Strikes are important weapons for workers pursuing their objectives and thus represent the power of the trade unions to back up their demands. Strikes can sometimes have far reaching and possibly unforeseen consequences. For this reason some employers sometimes attempt to suppress specific manifestations of conflict without removing the real causes of discontent. By so doing the conflict is redirected into other generally spurious channels. In such an instance, strikes may give way to less overt collective response such as slow-downs, sabotage or absenteeism.

There is also the possibility that industrial conflict may be shifted from the industrial arena to the socio-political arena. Such a situation may arise because sometimes the demands of strikers are considered to be illogical and therefore attempts are often made to suppress the strike rather than investigate its causes.

Diana Jeuda argues that strikes are all too often discussed as though they somehow existed as phenomena whose causes need not be investigated. It is sometimes assumed that strikes are bad without any consideration being given to why they occur.

⁸ Ibid, 17.

⁹Flanders (1971, 17 -18).

Often no attention is given to either the reasons why strikes are on the increase or to the kinds of measures that might deal with the root problems rather than the symptoms.¹⁰

In Ghana the underlying causes of strikes sometimes do not receive adequate attention from the authorities. Even when Commissions of Inquiry are set up to investigate the causes of strikes, their findings and recommendations are seldom implemented. The authorities are rather more interested in curtailing strikes by means of legislation or coercion.

Whenever there is a strike, the trade union concerned adopts strategies to bring about the success of the strike. The employers on the other hand often formulate strategies aimed at breaking the ranks and weakening the morale of the strikers and bring about a failure of the strike. They often counter strike efforts by using forceful responses, which include employing new workers - 'scab-labour' - to replace the striking workers. Sometimes the agents of law and order have been called in to intimidate strikers and even force them to go back to work.

In Ghana the state quickly adopts such tactics in industrial disputes, and even when the strike occurs in the private sector the regime quickly intervenes. The effect of this is that in Ghana most industrial conflicts end in a capitulation by one side or the other, and more often than not it has been the trade union which has capitulated. The Ghanaian situation, then, presents a contrary view to the conventional wisdom that

¹⁰Jeuda (1975, 45).

most forms of industrial conflict are resolved by arriving at a compromise solution. Some disputes, however, are sometimes successfully negotiated by the help of a 'third-party', which is usually a government agency or mediator. Sometimes both parties of a dispute agree to submit the issue to an agency of independent arbitration, and the decision of this body becomes binding on both parties thus ending the dispute.

The strike is an integral part of the collective bargaining institutions, which in turn is an integral part of the free enterprise system. Therefore the use of compulsory arbitration, it is argued, is antithetical to collective bargaining and it is often opposed as such by both organized labour and the employers. The strike action is what gives meaning to free collective bargaining. With the possibility of economic as well as social losses on both sides in the event of a strike, there is some pressure on both parties in the dispute to modify their positions towards a successful resolution of the dispute. Compulsory arbitration and its possibility of curtailing strikes however, makes collective bargaining relatively less effective.

Another development hostile to collective bargaining is the use of legislation to determine what should or should not be included in collective agreements. These, for instance, include union security, check-off of union dues, health and welfare plans and allowable employer payments.¹¹

¹¹ Kornhauser et al. (1954, 9). The function of collective bargaining referred to in these two paragraphs is an 'ideal type' and exists only in approximated forms in western industrial societies even though the trade unions strive to

Ghana's post- independence labour legislation provides for compulsory arbitration, unfair labour practices, check-off of union dues and union security. These, then, pose a fundamental challenge to collective bargaining and therefore to some extent influence or determine the degree of institutionalization of industrial conflict in Ghana.

In view of the important role of collective bargaining in the institutionalization of industrial conflict, the analysis of collective bargaining has been one of the theoretical tasks of some academics including Allan Flanders and R. Dubin. Collective bargaining's main purpose according to Flanders is to ensure that when labour is bought and sold its price and other terms of the transaction will accord with the provisions of the agreement. The provisions are in fact a body of rules intended to regulate, among other things, the terms of employment contracts. This means that collective bargaining is itself essentially a rule-making process, and thus has no proper counterpart in individual bargaining.¹²

Flanders compares collective bargaining of labour to the process of political negotiations and notes their resemblances. He maintains that negotiations can also be referred to as bargaining. For instance, people normally make reference to the need for hard bargaining in resolving intractable disputes. Bargaining also accordingly takes place within or among

11(cont'd) achieve it.

12Flanders (1971, 156).

political parties or between governments and any well-organized sectional interests.

Taking all these views into consideration Flanders argues that any of these forms of bargaining, whether they take place in industry or politics, are in the modern idiom 'pressure group' activities. As such the resulting deals, though they may be called 'bargains' are in reality compromise settlements of power conflicts. This means that collective bargaining sometimes takes on a political character because it is a rule-making process and involves a power relationship between organizations.

If collective bargaining is a power relationship between organizations, namely trade unions and employer organizations, then it means that it can in most cases successfully resolve the conflict of interests between employers and the employees. However, in Ghana collective bargaining is incapable of performing this function. This is probably because collective bargaining takes an increasingly political dimension. In Ghana the state is excessively involved in collective bargaining. The state, for instance, regulates the conflict resolution including grievance settlement machinery.

Some academic studies of trade unions in western industrial societies have concentrated on the role of collective bargaining in creating order in industry thus contributing to social stability. The basic argument in this respect maintains that once trade unions have acquired legitimacy in society and have also achieved some substantial benefits for their members, their

role then becomes the institutionalization of industrial conflict through the bargaining process. Fox and Flanders cite evidence to support this view point. They maintain that trade unions through the collective bargaining process have become an essential part of the mechanisms of social control in industrial society.¹³

A similar view has also been expressed by Harbison. According to Harbison collective bargaining where it operates with reasonable success performs three major functions. First, it provides a potential means for resolving the conflicting economic interests of management and labour; second, it greatly enhances the rights, dignity and worth of workers as industrial citizens; and third, as a consequence of the first two functions, it provides one of the most important bulwarks for the preservation of the private enterprise system.¹⁴ The third function of collective bargaining as indicated by Harbison implies that collective bargaining works most effectively in a free-enterprise system; there is therefore the possibility that it might not work so effectively in state planned economies as in Ghana.

R. Dubin also argues that in industrial society, the conflicts of interests in industry have been institutionalized through the collective bargaining process. He adds that by so doing it has been built, in the institutional practices of

¹³Flanders and Fox (1969, 156).

¹⁴ Harbison (1954, 275).

collective bargaining, a social device for bringing conflicts to a successful resolution.¹⁵ Other exponents of the institutionalization theory include Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser, Seymour Martin Lipset, Gabriel Almond and Robert Bates. According to Dahrendorf, in industrial society industrial conflict has become less violent because its existence has been accepted and its manifestations have become socially regulated. By collective bargaining the frozen fronts of industrial conflict are thawed.¹⁶

Dahrendorf lists a number of prerequisites which make it possible for conflict to be regulated.

A prerequisite of effective conflict regulation is the organization of interest groups. So long as conflicting forces are diffused incoherent aggregates, regulation is virtually impossible.¹⁷

In Dahrendorf's view these prerequisites have been fulfilled in industrial society.

Almond also argues that associated interest groups furnish orderly procedures for the formulation of interests and demands and the transmission of these demands. As interest groups unions thus perform a vital function. By collecting the demands of labour, by expressing them in an explicit form, and by providing opponents with accurate portrayals of the demands of their members, unions thus set the stage for the regulation of

¹⁵Dubin (1954, 47).

¹⁶ Dahrendorf (1965, 257-260).

¹⁷Ibid, 226.

conflict through the bargaining process.¹⁸

Lewis Coser also maintains that the expression of conflict can act as a useful means of reinforcing the status-quo. According to Coser conflict rather than being disruptive and dissociating may indeed be a means of balancing and hence maintaining a society as a going concern. A flexible society benefits from conflict because such behaviour by helping to create and modify norms assures its continuance under changed conditions.¹⁹

Coser applies his theory to the industrial setting by relating strikes to social conflict. He maintains that conflict when articulated in an organized manner becomes self-regulating. Organizations of employers and workers, through engaging in a struggle in which neither side obtains final victory over the other, eventually elaborates the rules of the game which both sides become anxious to protect. Despite the deprivation inherent in the structure of industry, conflict thus becomes institutionalized and peace can be concluded and maintained effectively.²⁰

Lipset similarly emphasizes the role of trade unions and collective bargaining in stabilizing the system as a whole. He maintains that when the conflict of interest group is legitimate these conflict organizations contribute to the integration and

¹⁸ Almond (1960, 34-36).

¹⁹ Coser (1956, 137, 154).

²⁰ Ibid, 129-33.

stability of the society. Trade unions, he insists, should not be viewed primarily in the economic -cleavage function, they also serve to integrate their members in the larger body politic and give them a basis for loyalty to the system.²¹

The institutionalization of industrial conflict in industrial society, it is argued, has been possible because of the legitimacy which unions have achieved. In their formative years unions were considered by both the state and employers as dangerous and subversive organizations. Therefore even the most modest union faced bitter and hostile resistance from both the employers and the state. Hyman cites evidence from Britain and the USA during the nineteenth century to support this point.²² Other authors maintain that until recent decades the courts, the police and the militia could be depended upon by the corporations to prevent any important or sustained gains in power by unions.²³

With the legitimization of trade unions, governments have attempted in many ways to win the unions to their side by conciliatory gestures, especially in time of war or economic difficulty. They do this by co-opting the union leadership on to numerous though typically ineffectual consultative committees and by offering rewards for good conduct aiming at achieving a responsible trade unionism. Some labour leaders have also often

²¹ Lipset (1965, 81-114).

²² Hyman (1972, 78)

²³ Kornhauser, et al (1954, 3).

willingly endorsed this bargain. They exercise restraint in the scale of their demands because they sit on national committees, and by so doing the state imposes a responsibility on them. The theory of institutionalization stresses the idea that situations rarely impel union leaders to use the strike weapon; and when such situations arise the conflict itself takes a notably peaceful form.

At this point it may be prudent to ask 'How is it possible for trade unions over a period of time to institutionalize industrial conflict?'. This question can perhaps be answered with reference to 'goal-displacement.' It is maintained that over a period of time the trade union movement's goals shift from winning more benefits for their members to maintaining peace and stability in industry. Trade unions as organizations are created more or less deliberately in order to achieve some specific purpose. These original goals tend to become supplemented and extended later on. Similarly, procedures devised for the efficient attainment of these goals become sanctified as ends in themselves. Thus those in charge of the organization become committed to institutional goals which are considered necessary for its security and stability but which may conflict with its principal purpose.²⁴

This is the trend which trade unionism seems to have developed over the years in industrial societies. Union leaders show excessive concern for union security which makes the union

²⁴ Hyman (1972, 80).

leadership particularly committed to the collective bargaining relationship with the employers. The union leadership thus become reluctant to take militant action where it appears to jeopardise union -employer relations. Similarly the union leadership exhibits the tendency to maintain the social legitimacy of the unions, thus accommodating their relation with both governments and employers. The result of this is that even though on some occasions the rank-and-file members may favour a strike, the pressures towards caution and conservation coming from the union leadership are normally more powerful.

In spite of all these, Hyman suggests that the theory of institutionalization of industrial conflict over-emphasizes and exaggerates the extent to which industrial conflict can become socially controlled. He maintains that the business of managing industrial conflict is a complex one, and the union which down plays rank-and-file discontent in favour of industrial peace will sow the seeds of its own destruction. He therefore cautions that there is a limit to institutionalization of industrial conflict.²⁵ Hyman's criticism sensitizes scholars to investigate the limits to institutionalization of industrial conflict in developing nations like Ghana. While the theory of institutionalization may well apply in modern industrial society it may not easily apply in Ghana even though unions have been legitimized.

²⁵ Ibid, 76.

In Ghana, even though the trade union movement is in a relatively early stages of development, the organizational goals of the unions tend to be shifted on similar lines as those of the unions in industrial societies. Over the years the unions in Ghana have been fighting for increased participation in national planning and decision making bodies. Thus the trade union movement's goals have been extended from improving the wages and working lives of its members to participation in national development. Union leaders in Ghana show concern for union security but they are not excessively committed to the collective bargaining relationship with the employers. This limits the degree of institutionalization of industrial conflict in Ghana.

Some writers have attempted to assess the role of trade unions and industrial conflict in developing nations along lines similar to those in western industrial societies. Among these are C. Kerr, J.T. Dunlop, F. Harbison and C.A. Myers. Viewing the industrialization of the western world through the writings of Marx, Webbs, Perlman and others, the authors were convinced that organized labour protest would exercise a determinative impact on the industrial progress of the developing nations. Organized labour, it was believed, would surely influence the course of industrialization. The study of the developing nations could thus profitably be undertaken through a study of trade

unions and labour protest.²⁶

However, after an extensive analysis of the role of organized labour in structuring the conditions of employment, the authors concluded that organized labour plays a relatively minor part in devising the complex of rules which bind workers in the industrial process.²⁷ If this conclusion is accepted then it means that trade unions in developing nations play a relatively minor role in devising the rules of collective bargaining and grievance settlement procedures. This in turn means that collective bargaining plays a relatively minor role in regulating or institutionalizing industrial conflict.

P.S. Gray seems to present a contrary view. He maintains that the bargaining achievements of the Ghanaian labour movement are significant. Collective agreements in his view, have produced fundamental changes in the country's national wage structure and have had a profound impact on the nature of contact between labour and management. Gray points out that although the Ghanaian trade unions operate in a volatile political atmosphere, are underfinanced, understaffed and inexperienced, they have nevertheless moved forward in a process of institutionalization.²⁸ Gray also maintains that one of the factors in reducing overall social conflict in Ghana has been the gradual growth of shared norms of conduct emerging out of

²⁶ Kerr et al, (1964). See also Bates (1970, 366).

²⁷ Bates (1970, 366).

²⁸ Gray (1980, 175).

collective negotiations between the Trade Union Congress (TUC) on the one hand and business and government on the other.²⁹

Robert Bates has also attempted to assess the role of organized labour in regulating conflict in developing nations and draws specific examples from Ghana. Bates maintains that trade unions in developing nations such as Ghana, like those in western industrial societies, can help to regulate or institutionalize industrial conflict through the collective bargaining process. He supports his point by reference to the views of Dahrendorf and Almond.

In Bates' view the formation, legalization and operation of trade unions in Ghana is a necessary step towards conflict regulation. He explains that the formation of explicit groups facilitates conflict regulation. Once groups are formed they are faced not only with the necessity of pursuing goals, but also with the imperatives of self-maintenance. The goals of unions in the short term are in conflict with goals of developing regimes. The necessity for self-maintenance, however, provides a basis for regulating this conflict, for governments can identify with the organizational interests of these labour movements, and exchange indulgences to these interests for moderation of the unions' objectives.³⁰ This argument presents some theoretical difficulties and Bates himself admits that despite the achievements of trade unions in Africa, industrial

²⁹Ibid, 175.

³⁰ Bates (1970, 371).

conflict still lingers on.

Industrial conflict in Ghana by 1972 was still not institutionalized. In western industrial societies, industrial conflict is normally between the employers and the unions. In Ghana, however, because the state is the largest employer industrial conflict becomes a conflict between the regimes and the organized labour movement. Thus the traditional form of the conflict between capital and labour, in which the state stays in the background, increasingly takes the form of a confrontation between the state and labour, with management pushed to the background.³¹

It can thus be said that industrial conflict in Ghana takes on a political dimension. For instance a prolonged strike in a developing nation like Ghana undertaken by the trade union movement could possibly threaten the power base of the regimes. This has indeed occurred in some African countries. During the summer of 1963 the three organized trade unions in the Congo (Brazzaville) overthrew the regime of President Fulbert Youlou and presided over the installation of a new regime in cooperation with the army. During the fall of the same year the unions of Dahomey (now Benin) played a pre-eminent role in the overthrow of President Hubert Maga, again in cooperation with the army.³²

³¹ Silver (1978, 76).

³² Drake and Lacy (1966, 116).

Such possible threats to their rule probably explain why the political leaders adopted measures to suppress, control, co-opt and intimidate the trade union movement. Such tactics, however, prevent industrial conflict from being voluntarily regulated through the collective bargaining process. In view of this a number of studies have been undertaken to show the conflicting relations between the regimes and the trade union movement in Ghana.

Damachi analyses the conflict or crisis between the post-independence political leaders and the trade union movement in Africa, particularly Ghana. He maintains that the conflict arises from the belief among African political leaders that the post-independence trade unions must address themselves with the problems of creating new national societies. This adds to the assumption of these leaders that the national governments will determine what form the government -union relationship must assume.

Damachi goes on to explain that this problem arises because effective union participation in the process of economic development and modernization requires a more closely prescribed role for the unions. It also requires far closer ties and cooperation between the unions and political leadership than was the case during the period of nationalism. Thus established regimes in Africa tend to develop firm controls over the trade

union movement.³³

Jeffries is another writer who is specifically concerned with the oppositional political activity of railway workers in Ghana. He argues that with the government itself being the largest employer and exerting a strong influence on wage-levels in the private sector as well, a political dimension is inevitably involved even in the most humdrum of wage disputes. Implicitly at least, these tend to bring unions into direct confrontation with the government on the most important issue of public policy, that is, the relative distribution of national wealth. Strikes might also, if they are determinedly maintained constitute serious threats to the stability of the notoriously fragile regimes.³⁴ Jeffries here talks about the inevitable clash of interest between the regimes and the trade union movement while at the same time emphasizing the power of strikes in this context.

Jon Kraus in his analysis of the state of affairs in the industrial relations arena in Ghana points out that industrial relations often have the quality of an uneasy and armed truce. The political leaders have found unacceptable the demands and strikes of workers and unions for increase wages, which are usually made to keep up with inflation. Those in state power have long sought to constrain worker -union power to influence economic decisions. As state leaders have assumed increasing

³³ Damachi (1974, 1).

³⁴ Jeffries (1978, 2).

responsibility for the level of economic activity, they have also tended to demand that unions subordinate worker-union interests to national ones defined by the state.³⁵ Kraus also points out that the relations between the state leaders and the trade union movement have often been altered politically and coercively and have not been stabilised in fact or in the beliefs of those involved.

These studies do not adequately explain why industrial conflict has not been institutionalized in Ghana. This is true in so far as they do not address the problem of the power struggles. These studies even though they point to the conflict of interest between the regimes, and the organized labour movement, they stop short of analysing their manifestations. It is true that this conflict of interest exists but that it does not necessarily mean that it they cannot be regulated or institutionalized. After all it has to some extent been achieved in the industrialized west, so why not in Ghana? These studies do not ask such questions. Perhaps an answer to this question requires the application of the power struggles analysis.

In view of such factors, Kraus is concerned with understanding and assessing some possibilities and limitations of the role of strikes and unions in post-colonial Africa. In his paper, 'Strike and Labour Power in a Post-Colonial African State : the Case of Ghana' ; he discusses the most important factors that influence the consciousness of workers and their

³⁵ Kraus (1979, 107).

propensity to organize and strike. Among the most important, he insists, has been the nature of the state and political regime. In a short-term basis, the character of the political regime including the nature of the coalition of political support upon which it rests, its ideology and its relative readiness to employ repressive measures influence the levels of collective labour protest in Ghana.

Another factor is the phenomenon of political crisis or political changes which are apprehended and acted upon by workers who sense weakness or opportunities in the political climate and therefore attempt to assert their interest. Some other important factors he insists, include the current economic condition (real wage changes, prosperity or depression), the level and political character of worker organization, and the level of management antagonism and power.³⁶ These factors vary from time to time and determine the intensity of industrial conflict in Ghana.

Kraus has suggested four major models for the study of strikes and their significance in the third world, which are as follows:

1. The liberal model, where the varying interests of capital and labour are recognized. Industrial harmony is sought by many but the right to conflict is legitimate.
2. A Colonial variant of the liberal conflict model, introduced during the terminal stages of colonial rule.

³⁶Kraus (1977, 1-2).

3. A class conflict model, which unlike the first two, is rarely if ever held by the regimes but by those who seek to replace it, and
4. A corporate nationalist model, which has been offered up by the political leaders pursuing capitalist, socialist or mixed economy routes of development under both authoritarian and quasi-democratic political systems.³⁷

Kraus maintains that the post-independence state leaders in almost all African countries found illegitimate the liberal aspects of the liberal conflict (colonial) model which assumes some different interests between capital and labour despite a stress on industrial harmony. Thus non-political strikes are considered legal by this model, and the state rarely interferes in union affairs. The state leaders attitude to union political activism may be positive or negative.

On the other hand almost all the post-independence state leaders moved to legislate and implement by political, administrative, and often coercive means some variant of a corporate nationalist model. This model is used both in those countries regarded as neo-colonial enclaves or dependencies (so-called democratic states) and in the socialist (state capitalism) mobilization regimes. This model has relatively democratic and non-democratic subtypes in ideology and structures. Both types of this model argue the essential similarities of the interests of (state or private) capital and

³⁷Ibid, 4.

labour, with varying rationales, for instance, building socialism or national development.

This model also involves the ideological assertion that Africa did not possess classes therefore unions in the post-independence period should not perceive themselves as involved in a militant struggle against employers or the state (the major employer). Strikes are therefore illegal or nearly so; and any independent union political activism is openly discouraged or actively curtailed. This model adopts various state controls over the trade unions and intervenes in the selection of top trade union leaders. In addition some corresponding carrots like check-off of union dues are held out to the unions to induce them to become control devices, and anti-strike legislation is enacted.

The difference between the democratic and non-democratic subtypes is the former's relatively low to medium levels of state intervention in or control of trade union internal politics, political party competition, and some support for democratic rights and accountability in union political life. It is maintained that in spite of efforts by the authorities to coopt union leadership, the relatively higher union autonomy and norms of accountability in the democratic types makes it possible for rank-and-file workers to press their grievances and demands more forcefully. This compels the union leadership to be more responsive to their members than to the anti-strike and

repressive pressures of the state leaders.³⁸

The corporate nationalist model perhaps best illustrates the pattern of industrial conflict in Ghana. This model does not give any extensive explanations as to why industrial conflict is not institutionalized through the collective bargaining process in Ghana. It however points out that the regimes in Ghana do not see or accept the idea that a conflict of interest exists between the employers and the organized labour. The organized labour movement on the other hand sees such conflicts of interests and seeks to redress them.

Before conflict of interests can be resolved or regulated both sides have to accept that such conflict of interests exist and need to be resolved. This, however, is not the case in Ghana. Thus the conflict of interests remain unresolved, manifesting themselves into power struggles making it extremely difficult for industrial conflict to be regulated through the collective bargaining process in Ghana.

Industrial conflict in many societies, including Ghana, increasingly finds expression in the socio-political sphere. It is therefore suggested that in the larger view of industrial conflict the problems call for a study in broad socio-political terms rather than a study solely in reference to industry. An understanding of trends and forces at work should not neglect the analysis of changing socio-political conditions and the shifting interpretation and expectations that occur in the

³⁸ Ibid, 11.

society as a whole.³⁹ In Ghana the changing socio-economic and political policies of the political leaders as well as the changing policies of the trade union movement sometimes clash with each other and consequently manifest themselves in strikes and other forms of industrial conflicts.

The rest of this introductory chapter presents the sequential structure of this study. The study is divided into five chapters. Chapters two, three and four deal with the relationship between the three regimes and the trade union movement from 1957 to 1972. Chapter five is the final chapter and it provides the summary and conclusions of the study.

³⁹ Kornhauser, et al, (1954, 9).

II. INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE NKRUMAH REGIME: 1957-1966

It was during the Nkrumah period that most of the existing labour legislations in Ghana were enacted, and as such it marked the most significant phase of post-independence trade Unionism in Ghana. It also marked the evolution of a new structure of the trade union movement that differed significantly from the colonial structure. Therefore a brief historical overview of pre-independence trade unionism is necessary.

The year 1949 witnessed intense labour conflicts between the trade union movement and the Gold Coast colonial administration. One such conflict occurred towards the end of 1949 when the Gold Coast Meteorological Services Union which had had a labour dispute over wage increases with the colonial administration for almost one year decided to strike. Their strike action led to a dismissal of some of the workers. After an unsuccessful attempt by the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress (GCTUC) to intervene on behalf of the striking workers of the Gold Coast Meteorological Services Union, GCTUC called for a general sympathy strike in 1950. At this time the CPP, which was demanding political independence for Ghana, realized that it was time to gather the full support of the workers. In this regard the CPP declared positive action on January 8, 1950, a day after the general strike began, as part of the strategy to demand self-government.

Nkrumah explained that positive action meant the adoption of all legitimate and constitutional means by the workers and people of Ghana to cripple the forces of imperialism in the country. The weapons of positive action included (1) legitimate political agitation, (2) newspaper and educational campaigns, and (3) as a last resort, the constitutional application of strikes, boycotts, and non-cooperation based on the principle of absolute non-violence.¹ He indicated that the CPP had already used the first two and it was time to use the third tool as well. From that time the CPP and GCTUC became inextricably mixed. The fact that many of the union leaders were also members of the CPP convinced the colonial administration that the general strike was a political tactic to win independence and was therefore vigorously crushed by the administration. Some of the strike leaders and some CPP leaders were imprisoned as a result. Subsequently, the trade unions were disorganized, and the GCTUC disappeared completely.

However, by early 1951, the GCTUC had once again been formed with the help of the government labour department and the individual unions began to organize. Also in 1951 under the new political constitution which had been introduced, the CPP gained a predominant place in the legislative assembly and in the government. In an election held earlier in the year, Nkrumah had been elected head of government business under the colonial administration. Consequently, the adherents of the CPP began

¹ Bourett (1960, 210).

deliberately to infiltrate the trade union movement. They were resisted by the established union leaders, who in pursuit of free trade unionism wanted to steer clear of any political affiliations.² A struggle thus began in the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress and by the end of 1952, a section of its members from the major seaport town of Sekondi-Takoradi launched a body known as the Ghana Trade Union Congress.

These were the CPP loyalists. This group, supported by the CPP, conducted a vicious campaign against the GCTUC leaders, who were considered agents of imperialism. In the end victory went to the GTUC and there was a merger of the two bodies with the leaders of the GTUC replacing those of the GCTUC. Such was the state of the trade union movement in Ghana when Nkrumah took over power at independence in 1957. Nkrumah vowed to build a strong and united trade union movement. In order to be able to do this the regime had to develop its economic and political priorities.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE NKRUMAH REGIME

Economic development in the colonial period was mainly the production of primary agricultural commodities for export, mining having been only modestly developed. Very little industrialization had taken place in the country and Ghana's domestic markets were undeveloped for Ghana's own products.

² Davison (1957, 138-139).

Export of cocoa thus remained the country's major source of foreign exchange earnings as well as the major source of government revenue. The country experienced an economic boom in the immediate post-world war two period and thus accumulated a current payment surplus. However, the surplus began to diminish in size in the 1950's, although the country continued to build up its sterling reserves through 1955. Unfortunately 1955 was the last year of real security in the country's external payments.³

From 1955 onwards annual government expenditure always exceeded income. By 1959 the regime had spent US\$329 million in laying down an economic infrastructure for industrialization, including the construction of a deep-water harbour at Tema, on improving agriculture, and on building roads, schools and hospitals. These resulted in a deficit in government expenditure. This deficit was partly made up by borrowing from the Ghana State Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB), a public corporation, which between 1951 and 1959 lent the government US\$74 million. The regime also drew upon its own reserves which by 1961 had been reduced to about US\$120 million from US\$235 million in 1955.⁴

From about 1959 government revenue declined substantially because of declining revenue from cocoa exports. There was a steady decline in the world market price of cocoa, which plunged

³ Damachi (1974, 30).

• Drake and Lacy (1966, 73) .

the CPP administration into deep economic crisis. The regime's expenditure had been rising in a period of high demand for imported consumer goods. Consequently Ghana faced a severe foreign exchange crisis. In addition to those problems Ghana had acquired a huge foreign debt. This was mainly from suppliers' credits, the payments of which the regime had already began defaulting on.

Faced with such enormous economic problems, a development plan for 1959-1964 was drawn up aimed at the economic diversification of agricultural products both for export and local consumption. This involved largely the use of high level technology, scientific and research methods in order to increase agricultural productivity. The regime also established some secondary manufacturing and processing industries to provide employment for the people as part of the economic diversification plan. The total expenditure for this plan was estimated at US\$980 million and since Ghana did not have enough revenue to finance the plan it was decided that the plan should be financed by foreign loans if necessary. In addition some measures were to be taken to cut individual and family consumption in order to conserve foreign exchange and prevent inflation. At the same time non-essential government expenditure were to be eliminated.

In view of this deficit the political leadership sought new sources of revenue. In a series of meetings with the Ghana Farmers' Council leaders, it was announced that the farmers had

agreed to a voluntary contribution of 16 percent of the price paid to the farmers on every sixty pounds of cocoa towards development effort. In addition the Finance Minister asked every cocoa farmer to accept a government bond, maturing in ten years, to cover 10 percent of the total sum owed for the crop. With the cocoa farmers contributing about one-fourth of their income towards the nation's economic development the state leaders attempted to widen the tax base to include all other workers in the country.

In the 1961-62 budget, therefore, the Finance Minister announced a new purchase tax on durable consumer items such as cars and refrigerators. There were also some increase on import duties on a wide range of commodities including textiles and food products. New procedures were instigated for collecting income taxes from all those earning over US\$1344 per annum and from business enterprises. The Minister also introduced a property tax on houses larger than average size which was defined to be two rooms and a hall. Additional revenue was also expected to be derived from a compulsory savings scheme for all workers other than the farmers.

Under the budget all workers who earned more than US\$288 annually were to have 5 percent of their wages deducted as a contribution to the National Development Bond. The Bond, which was devised by a Cambridge economist Nicholas Kaldor, would draw a 4 per cent interest and would be redeemable after 10 years. This minimum yearly income exempted the lower paid category of

skilled workers, and also the unskilled workers. The skilled workers who were economically situated just above the exemption limit would have been the hardest hit. This means that they would have been the least able to afford the bond. Kaldor, however, overlooking the increasingly unaccountable nature of the regime, maintained that the scheme was better than straightforward taxation since people were mainly asked to postpone their consumption and not to forgo it altogether.⁵ It appears that the workers, however, after taking into account the corrupt and increasingly unaccountable nature of the CPP regime certainly did not regard it as an investment but a form of dubious taxation. They were by no means sure that they would get their money back.

This austerity budget was coupled with a drive for increased foreign investment. In 1960, a policy decision was made to seek American financing for the Volta River Hydroelectric project - the basis of Ghana's industrialization plan - and loans from Eastern European countries for a number of smaller industrial projects.

In 1964, Nkrumah inaugurated the Seven-Year Development Plan which was expected to run to 1970. This plan was distinct from the previous ones, in that this was more comprehensive in scope and was production-oriented. It attempted to define the regime's socialist policies in terms of economic development. The plan envisaged a rate of economic growth of 5.5 percent per

⁵ Kaldor (1963).

annum for Ghana's economy over the period. It aimed at a total expenditure of US\$1,333 million on development projects in the public sector over the period. This plan was aimed at changing the structure of the economy from heavy dependence on primary products to making Ghana a net exporter of foodstuffs and a producer of basic lines of manufactured consumer goods.⁶

The CPP regime's most important priority was the establishment of African Socialism in Ghana. The CPP was to be a vehicle for the realization of socialism in Ghana. Every person in Ghana was supposed to become a member of the party, thus giving nominal allegiance to the socialist goals. After 1961, when Ghana became a republic and after a plebiscite on adoption of socialism was conducted and won by the CPP, the African socialism programme was fully implemented. Accordingly a socialist educational programme was implemented to raise the level of socialist consciousness both within and outside the party. Branches of the CPP were firmly established in all government offices, schools, institutions and workshops.

The ideology of this African Socialism was "Nkrumahism", a non-atheistic socialist philosophy which seeks to adapt the current socialist ideas to the solution of African problems.⁷ The TUC was made an integral component of the CPP and was expected to carry out the party's policies in the industrial relations arena.

⁶ Damachi (1974,46).

⁷ Drake and Lacy (1966,72).

To the Nkrumah regime the role of the TUC was to go beyond the traditional role of trade unions in protecting and advancing the interest of the workers in their relations with their employers. The TUC was rather to represent the wage earners wing of the CPP with their main objective as political control of the workers for economic development. The Nkrumah Cabinet identified the party with the TUC.

John Tettegeh, the Secretary-General of the TUC, maintained that under the socialist programme the first task of the revolutionary TUC was to strengthen the party continuously. In order to realize this it was necessary that the aims of the party were clearly explained to the workers so that they would consequently defend them against any kind of opposition. He insisted that unless the workers were made familiar with the party goals one could not properly expect them to exert their fullest energies towards the realization of these aims.⁸

To the regime, then, the incorporation of the TUC into the party was necessary for political as well as socio-economic reasons. The political conditions in the country were unstable and the regime still needed the support and the loyalty of mass organizations to remain in power. The organized labour movement was regarded as having the potential both for protest and for support, and therefore it was necessary to win over their leadership to the side of the regime. This was vital if mass labour protests were not to be allowed to get out of control and

⁸ Tettegeh (1958, 15).

organized labour could thus take the disciplined direction necessary for national development.

At the socio-economic level the TUC was to propagate the CPP's socialist ideas, and to mobilize and socialize the masses vis-a-vis the national goals as detailed by the state leaders. Under the propaganda of African socialism, Nkrumah hoped to win the workers to his side. However, a student of the African socialism ideology of the CPP concluded from his interviews with the CPP-TUC leaders that for many socialism was not even a perspective within which to bring modernization. It was merely a means to rationalize the acquisition of power.⁹

LABOUR LEGISLATION AND THE UNIONS

In 1956, soon after the independence, the thirteenth annual Conference of the TUC was called to discuss the post-independence role of the TUC. At this conference the TUC identified two major objectives. The first was to seek a political alliance with the CPP. It was argued by the TUC leaders that the programme of the CPP coincided with that of the TUC. The second was to reorganize the TUC which at that time consisted of house-unions (that is company unions, or unions formed within the companies), and transform it into a strong centralized and financially solvent body. The originator and instigator of these two decisions was John Tettegah, the then

⁹ Holms (1966, 311).

TUC Secretary-General, who was also on the central committee of the CPP. He in many ways exhibited complete support and loyalty to Nkrumah.¹⁰

At the fifteenth annual conference of the TUC in 1958 the proposals of the centralized structure were presented to the delegates. The centralized structure called for national industrial unions and that each of these, while enjoying complete autonomy in negotiations, would operate subject to the overall policy to be declared by the TUC.¹¹ The TUC leadership was able to convince most of the unions to accept the proposed centralized structure. However, two most powerful and independent minded unions - The United African Company Employees' Union and the Ghana Railway Employees' Union - were not prepared to lose their identity and independence for industrial type trade unionism as proposed in the new structure. Faced with such formidable opposition from these two independent-minded unions the TUC leaders appealed to the Labour Minister to legislate the new structure.

The TUC leadership successfully persuaded the regime that the passage of the legislation would be in their own interest. The TUC leadership was able to show quite convincingly that the employers would not voluntarily cooperate with the unions in introducing the proposed check-off of union dues or permit the union shop. They argued that under voluntarism, the number of

¹⁰ Lodge (1959,622).

¹¹ Damachi (1974,22).

collective agreements signed had been relatively small. This to them indicated the failure of voluntary industrial relations to develop in the way which many unions, particularly those in the private sector, wanted. They warned this led to frustration, which would always have the potential for provoking strikes, and thus hindering productivity. Having accepted these arguments, the CPP regime passed the Industrial Relations Act on December 17, 1958.

The 1958 act with its subsequent amendments were, perhaps, the most significant element in the evolution of the post-independence trade unionism in Ghana. This act led to the establishment of large national industrial unions. It provided for a statutory body, the Ghana TUC, to be the legal successor to the GCTUC. Subject to the approval of the Labour Minister, the TUC was to determine its relationship with its affiliated unions. The unions were subordinated to the TUC leadership. Only through the TUC could unions apply to the Labour Minister for certification as a collective bargaining agent.

The trade union structure that emerged, according to Damachi, had the following characteristics:

1. A single labour federation to which all unions had to belong. (TUC)
2. Industrial trade Unionism (one-factory-one union) as the sole principle of organization.
3. A high degree of internal administrative centralization.
4. Subordination of the TUC and its affiliates to the guidance

of the CPP.¹²

The advantage to the CPP of the new structure was that it brought the TUC effectively under their control. The CPP was therefore able to a significant extent to suppress all possible threats to their rule coming from the trade unions. The regime was tacitly protecting its power base against any possible threat of trade union power.

The 1958 act required that all the then existing house unions be dissolved and reorganized into industrial unions affiliated to the TUC. However, one year after the passage of the 1958 act, at least one recalcitrant company union - the United African Company Employees' Union - was unwilling to lose its legal identity and therefore refused to join the TUC.

Under the 1958 act it was possible for an unscheduled union to be in lawful existence as long as it complied with the registration provisions of the 1941 Trade Union Ordinance. In 1959 therefore an amendment act was passed to correct this anomaly. It stipulated that within two months of its enactment all registered trade unions other than those scheduled in the 1958 act should be dissolved. Thus no trade union could operate without accepting the provisions of the 1958 act. By this amendment act the Labour Minister hoped to make sure that all the existing trade unions were under the firm control of both the TUC leaders and the party, and therefore could not resort to strike action on their own accord.

¹² Ibid, p.23.

In 1960 the regime, still unsatisfied with the conduct of industrial relations in Ghana, passed a second amendment act. This act stipulated that a person who was a member of a group of employees that was specified in a collective bargaining certificate, but was not a member of the union, was not to remain employed for any longer than one month. Employment thereafter would constitute an unfair labour practice. By this legislation membership in officially approved trade unions was now compulsory for all workers within the sphere of statutory collective bargaining as well as for civil servants.

The 1960 act also gave the Labour Minister the power to establish or change the remuneration of the workers. To this end the Minimum Remuneration Instrument was passed in 1960.¹³ By this instrument the Labour Minister could establish or change the minimum remuneration to be paid to any group of workers, provided that he was convinced the action would be in the best interest of the public. This instrument applied to all categories of workers who earned less than US\$1260 annually. The law exempted farm labourers, domestic servants, pieceworkers, apprentices and part-time workers.

This minimum wage legislation was to force the private employers to follow the line of the regime in raising wages. The legislation did not define or explain what it meant by 'public interest'. But it can, perhaps, be construed that since the legislation was aimed primarily at the private sector, the

¹³ Minimum Remuneration Instrument (1960).

regime wanted to protect the workers in that sector from exploitation. However, the instrument also had some self-interest motives behind it. One wonders why the regime exempted some workers in the country from this instrument. It appears that the exempted workers were unorganized and therefore incapable of striking. The workers in the private sector, however, were organized and therefore the regime wanted to make sure that there would be labour peace in that sector of the economy. The workers in the private sector usually compare their wages to those in the public sector. Therefore if the wages of those in the private sector are substantially lower than those in the public sector it can lead to industrial disputes. Public interest then can probably mean two things: (i) protection of the interest of workers in the private sector from exploitation and (ii) avoidance of labour disputes. Both have the potentiality of generating political agitation against the rulers. The legislation thus was motivated by self-interest as well.

In 1965 another amendment act was passed to remove some of the controls of the Labour Minister over the finances of the TUC and workers' freedom of association was partially given back to them. But the workers had to be members of trade unions anyway, and the TUC still remained an integral wing of the CPP.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 1957-1966

The 1958 act provided the instruments of collective bargaining. The act required employers to meet with the representatives of certified unions in standing negotiating committees. It specifically recognized the practice of the union shop as a permissive subject of negotiations in these committees. Collective bargaining in standing negotiating committees was mandatory for both the trade unions and the employers if the trade unions concerned were certified. All trade unions were to be certified before they were allowed to participate in collective bargaining. Between 1959-1965 only TUC member unions could be certified. Application for certification was to be made by individual unions through the TUC. Certificates were not to be issued simultaneously to different unions to bargain for the same class of workers. Certification was at the discretion of the Labour Minister; this in fact was a means of controlling unions that failed to conform to the regime's policies.

The 1958 act also made provisions for the check-off of union dues. The act stipulated that employers were legally obliged to deduct unions dues from the wages of the union members, if the Labour Minister, acting on behalf of the union concerned, made an order to that effect at the request of the TUC. The act further stipulated that any individual worker might if he chose advise his employer that the check-off was not to

apply to him. But the worker himself had to take the initiative to 'contract out.' That means it had to be put in writing with a copy to the TUC. ('Contracting in' and 'Contracting out' refer to the various ways in which individual union members may either become or decline to become a union member.)

Given that a large proportion of the Ghanaian workers are illiterate, very few could actually 'contract out' in writing. Even if they could hire somebody to do that, the person would always be afraid of its political repercussions and would therefore be unwilling to offer his services. Since the TUC was an appendage of the CPP and one of the objectives of the TUC was to socialize and sensitize the workers to the objectives of the party, the workers were expected to become members of the party. Therefore any attempt to 'contract-out' could be interpreted by the regime as antipathy to the CPP and, by implication to the regime. Thus for the fear of political repercussion, the workers whether they were willing or not had to remain union members. The 'contracting-out' clause in effect was to keep workers as union members. Theoretically it was not impossible to 'contract-out' but in practice it was extremely difficult.

The dues check-off established the financial stability of the TUC. The regime was sure that once the TUC leadership was satisfied with the financial stability of the movement they would follow the policies of the regime. By granting a compulsory check-off of union dues to the trade unions the regime exercised some form of implicit control over the unions.

When a trade union is able to rely upon the employer to collect the contribution of its members then it is under no pressure to build up a system of voluntary local leaders that will provide the organizational links between the members and the paid trade union officials of the highest level. This tends to promote a bureaucratic form of organization and to weaken the grass roots vitality of the unions.¹⁴ The regime in any case was not interested in promoting a trade union movement with strong and militant rank-and-file members. It was only interested in seeking a weak and subservient union leadership that was incapable of posing a threat to the power position of the CPP.

The 1958 act also gave birth to extension orders. The act allowed for extension of collective agreements by administrative action to workplaces where workers do the same kind of work as those already covered by agreements but where employers were reluctant to negotiate. After the Labour Minister has given the notice of the extension orders to both the employers and the employees, they could communicate their objections to the order to the Minister, who was free to ignore them. By means of extension orders, collective agreements signed by a union in a similar industry could be applied to additional workers who were not covered by the original bargaining certificate.

The Labour Minister justified the extension orders on the grounds that they were convenient for both employers and unions since they saved considerable time in new negotiations. In

¹⁴ Roberts and Bellecombe (1967, 32).

addition they made it possible for working conditions in homogeneous units of commerce and industry to be covered by single collective agreements.¹⁵ The extension orders introduced unions into hundreds of small firms owned by Lebanese, Nigerian, and Indian residents in Ghana.

Although some unions benefited from the extension orders, it was not always the interest of the workers that initiated the extension orders. Sometimes the self-interest of the regime was at stake. According to Gary, in some cases issuing the extension order or threat of unionization was enough to discourage businessmen from supporting the political opponents of the CPP. On the other hand, he maintains, unions could be encouraged to overlook those companies whose owners were supporters of the CPP.¹⁶ The extension orders were also meant to ensure labour peace in the private sector.

The 1958 Act prescribed in detail the grievance negotiating machinery which was to be drawn up by the unions and the employers. It also detailed the responsibilities of the government in cases of conciliation and arbitration. All employers whose businesses employed workers who belonged to a certified union were legally bound to meet with union representatives in standing negotiating committees. The employer or the union had the right to request a meeting and once proper notice of the meeting had been given it had to be honoured.

¹⁵ Gray (1980, 178-179).

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 181-182.

In the event of failure to reach an agreement, or if a dispute is unresolvable, on either party giving notice to that effect to the Labour Minister, a conciliation officer would be appointed. If an agreement was not reached by conciliation, the Labour Minister with the consent of either party, might refer the issue in dispute to an arbitration tribunal appointed by himself. If the tribunal made an award which was confirmed by the Minister, then this would have the same legality as the collective agreements.

A strike was legally possible but only in the unlikely event that neither party wished to arbitrate and the Labour Minister agreed that compulsory arbitration should not be ordered. A strike or lockout of employees in respect of whom no trade union had been certified, however, was unlawful in any circumstance.¹⁷ The 1958 act stated that unlawful striking was not in itself to be deemed as an offense, but it nevertheless prescribed penalties - a fine or imprisonment - for the offense of instigating an unlawful strike.¹⁸ What this meant was that in case of an unlawful strike, the strike leaders rather than the rank-and-file members were those who would be punished. This legislation therefore was meant to ensure the loyalty of the trade union leaders to the policies of the regime rather than pursuing an independent course.

¹⁷ Rimmer (1958,7).

¹⁸ Ibid, p.15.

The 1958 act also specified unfair labour practices as alleged offenses which could not properly be subject to conciliation or arbitration. They can only be referred to a special tribunal for settlement. Unfair labour practices included the following:

1. Discrimination against an employee for union membership;
2. Seeking to induce an employee not to join a union;
3. Failure to permit a full-time union official to confer with member employees;
4. Activities by an employee intended to cause a serious interference with the business of his employer;
5. Union recruitment on employer's premises without permission;
6. Conferences between union official and members on the employer's premises without permission.¹⁹

The above laws strike a balance between the interest of the worker and that of the employer. However, the first three laws give an indication that the state leaders wanted to prohibit any possible inducement to workers not to join unions. What the political leadership aimed to achieve was that the workers become faithful members of the TUC and for that matter the CPP. It was compulsory for every worker to become a union member, but inducing them not to become union members implied inducing the worker to oppose compulsory unionization. The regime wanted to prevent any possible opposition to compulsory unionization, since it increased the TUC membership and consequently that of

¹⁹ Gray (1981, 83).

the CPP. Apart from this, compulsory unionization was an attempt to disguise the conflict of interest between the regime and the trade union movement.

Trade unions normally seek the interest of their members by demanding wage increases and better conditions of work. The Nkrumah Cabinet, however, was not prepared to entertain any demands for wage increases. According to the Cabinet wage increases would retard the pace of economic development. In addition the regime expected the workers to sacrifice for the development of the nation. The workers on the other hand were not prepared to accept such views since in their opinion the members of the regime and the TUC leaders were enjoying many benefits to the detriment of the workers. This meant that the Cabinet had to find some means of controlling the workers and thus prevent them from opposing their policies. Therefore a TUC under the leadership of strong CPP members, it was thought, would be capable of controlling the workers.

Compulsory unionization was also an indirect way of socializing the workers to the socialist policies of the CPP so that they would identify primarily with the CPP interest and thus not seek their own interest. The interest of the workers could possibly clash with the regime's interests, resulting in strikes and other forms of labour disputes. On the whole, then, the 1958 act was intended to reduce the frequency of strikes, or

to even entirely preclude strikes.²⁰

THE PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE NKRUMAH REGIME

As table 1 shows, although almost 600 collective bargaining certificates were issued to unions between 1960 and 1962, only 20 agreements were actually signed.

TABLE 1
COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS IN GHANA, 1959-77

Year	New agreements signed	Bargaining certificates issued	Total agreement in force	Approx. % of union members covered	Number of union members
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1959-60	3	n.d.	21	n.d.	230,000
1960-61	7	200	28	n.d.	201,991
1961-62	13	393	41	n.d.	320,248
1962-63	6	75	n.d.	n.d.	380,295
1963-64	11	72	n.d.	n.d.	324,648
1965-67	17	837	n.d.	n.d.	386,750
1967-68	18	461	n.d.	n.d.	270,149
1969-70	40	247	121	48	342,480
1973	10	75	148	55	340,658
1974	59	74	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1975	59	59	n.d.	n.d.	380,000
1976	66	57	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1977	57	30	180	65	400,000

Source: Adapted from Gray (1980, 181).

By the middle of 1962 the total number of agreements in force was only 41. This suggests that collective bargaining was not

²⁰ Rimmer (1958, 7).

very important at this period. Even though numerous bargaining certificates were issued the unions hardly negotiated any collective agreements. This means that collective bargaining played a relatively insignificant role in the institutionalization of industrial conflict in Ghana during this period.

As table 2 shows, in spite of such minor gains in collective bargaining there were only a few industrial conflicts in the form of strikes during this period. This was due to many factors. One reason was that until 1960 the civil servants unions did not have the right to collective bargaining; therefore they were prohibited entirely from striking. Soon after collective bargaining rights were granted to them, the regime tightened up its control over the unions as a result of the 1961 'general strike'. This means that before 1960 all the collective agreements signed were in the small private sector.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF UNIONS, MEMBERSHIP, AND STRIKES: 1957-1972

Year	# of Unions*	Members Claimed	# of Work Stoppages	# of Workers Involved	Man-Days Lost
1957	95	128,000	45	11,858	33,005
1958	95	135,615	64	27,837	41,020
1959	24	230,000	49	8,875	21,673
1960	16	201,991	50	10,101	12,788
1961	16	320,248	40	12,259	132,483+
1962	16	380,295	4	1,690	2,800
1963	16	324,648@	8	940	1,372
1964	16	351,711	13	2,844	2,888
1965	10	386,750	13	7,100	66,570
1966	16	n.d.	32	15,027	20,427
1967	16	338,154	27	6,326	6,738
1968	17	270,149	36	52,419	156,171
1969	17	333,800	51	30,988	165,570
1970	17	342,480	58	21,467	145,107
1971	17	362,839	71	46,715	133,096
1972	17	n.d.	14	3,711	5,281

Source: Adapted from Gray (1981, 206-207).

* Functional Unions which have not been amalgamated.

+ Includes data for the 1961 general strike.

@ Decline in members the result of Parliamentary action exempting nurses from Unions, and a loss of 24,000 in Public Utilities.

number

However, the compulsory arbitration procedure almost prohibited strikes in the private sector as well. Only a few illegal strikes occurred in the small foreign controlled private sector.

Another factor that seems to have reduced the incidence of industrial conflict during this period was the compulsory check-off of union dues. The TUC leadership was satisfied with such guarantee of financial support and stability. Consequently most of the union leaders neglected their duty of fighting for more benefits for the workers. They felt that loyalty to the CPP was more important to their own career advancement than any skills in organizing or negotiating. Also sometimes personal friendship and bribery were effective in reducing union pressure to negotiate.²¹

Another reason was that the Labour Minister sometimes aided the unions in collective bargaining negotiations and dispute settlement with employers. Gray maintains that sometimes if labour's demands were refused by management, the union team would return to the TUC hall and telephone the Labour Minister, who interceded on their behalf.²²

Industrial conflict was also reduced because under the 1958 act the Labour Minister controlled the certification of the unions for bargaining purposes. This relieved the employers of the problems of having to deal with rival unions, each claiming to represent their employees. In the same way, the employees

²¹ Gray (1980, 181).

²² Ibid, p. 182.

were also protected, under the act, from employers' choosing to recognize one union and thus refusing to bargain with the others, a tendency which nearly always led to industrial conflicts. Also during this period the negotiating and dispute settlement procedures remained unchanged under the act. This apparent stability encouraged the development of a relatively peaceful industrial relations.

Despite this significant reduction in industrial conflict one major strike occurred in 1961 which significantly challenged the power of the regime. By 1961 the regime's control over the unions and its wage freeze policy diminished the ability of the unions to raise wages, or maintain real wages, especially in the public sector. This wage-freeze eroded real wages during the sharp 1961-66 inflationary period.²³ This was one of the factors that precipitated the 1961 strike.

In September 1961 the local branch of the Railway and Harbour Workers Union in Sekondi-Takoradi led a seventeen day strike which soon spread to other parts of the country turning into a 'general strike.' The immediate cause of the strike was the harsh budget introduced by the Nkrumah Cabinet in July of the same year. But the strike also had more remote and indirect causes. Jeffries maintains that the strike action was certainly motivated in part by economic grievances, most obviously the opposition to the budget proposals for a property-tax and a compulsory savings scheme. But it was undoubtedly informed by

²³ Ewusi (1971).

wider political motivations. He further suggests that at very least, the 1961 strike expressed a far-reaching disillusionment with the Nkrumah regime.²⁴

The 1961 strike, then, was a reaction against the corruption and ostentatious living of the members of the regime. This was very provocative to the workers and the population at large. A leading organizer of the 1961 strike expressed the anger of the workers in the following terms:

We had union leaders imposed on us, men with no trade union background. We heard they were buying Borgward cars with our money. They tried to persuade us the TUC was doing a good thing by establishing these shops for the workers, but the leaders took things on credit and never paid, so the shops had to close down..... Then there were the brigade officers coming home with cars loaded with foodstuffs. Then rumours about corruption in the city council started coming out through some of the junior officers. But the worse people were the Farmers Council leaders. They would come into Takoradi and throw their money around in the bars, boasting about how they had cheated our brothers and sisters in the rural areas. This was too much.²⁵

These were some of the underlying causes of the strike. The immediate cause of the strike, however, was the deduction of 5 per cent of the workers' wages from their August 1961 pay-cheques. The deduction was in accordance with the stipulations of the July austerity budget with a compulsory taxation for socio-economic development. Before the budget was announced the Cabinet refused categorically to investigate any possible financial burdens that the imposition of the budget

²⁴ Jeffries (1978, 71).

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 75-76.

measures might have on the workers.

The first major opposition to the budget from organized labour came from the Sekondi-Takoradi local branch of the RHWU. This local union set up a working committee to find out how the budget measures would affect the workers. Their findings convinced them of the need to plan a programme of action.

The budget was announced on July 15. On July 20, the local leaders of RHWU on behalf of the working committee wrote a letter to the national executives of the TUC. In the letter they asked the TUC to support a resolution calling on the regime to suspend deductions until such time that the workers' viewpoint of the whole budget proposal has been heard.²⁶ The RHWU argued that the budget proposal dwelling on the National Development Bond strikes at the very root of the income of the workers. It was most unlikely that the TUC national executives, being so friendly to the regime, would support the resolution. Nevertheless the local leaders did this in order to follow official procedures. When the TUC failed to reply the letter by the end of July, the local leaders at Sekondi-Takoradi wrote another letter to the Minister of Transport and Communication. They asked him to consider the proposals sent to the TUC. He likewise did not reply. The two letters did have the effect, however, of generating discussions at the Cabinet level.

The deductions were supposed to be carried out at the end of July. On July 30th, the Sekondi-Takoradi branch held a

²⁶ Ibid, p.93.

general meeting, and adopted a resolution to go on strike in the first week of August if the deductions were carried out. Similarly resolutions were adopted by the local branches of RHWU all over the country. However, the national executives of the RHWU rejected this action by the rank-and-file. They were then accused by the rank-and-file of having favoured the passage of the 1958 act, which they considered anti-labour.

At this time Nkrumah was away from the country visiting Eastern European countries. A three-man Presidential Commission had been appointed to run the country while he was away and was expected to handle the situation. In the face of such opposition, it suspended the deductions for the month of July but that was not enough for the pro-strike workers. Only an entire revision of the budget would be acceptable.

On August 8, the Presidential Commission announced exemptions for all employees earning less than US\$28 a month from the compulsory savings scheme. The commission, however, stated categorically that no further action could be taken until Nkrumah had returned to the country.

In view of this the local branch leaders in Kumasi sent a resolution to the Presidential Commission. They mentioned that the country's economic situation was deteriorating day by day. Therefore, among other things, they demanded the abolition of the purchase and the property taxes arguing that these would highly restrict the economic freedom of the workers. They also suggested that the purchase taxes should be amended to suit the

ordinary worker, and then expressed their anger and hostility to the TUC. They maintained that the TUC had failed to represent the workers, and by so doing had put the workers in an unbearable position. They echoed the wish of the rank-and-file members when they further suggested that the National Union of Railway and Harbour Workers secede from the TUC forthwith.²⁷

In spite of these oppositions, payroll deductions were made at the end of August. This infuriated the workers. On Monday September 4, the RHWU at Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi began their strike. Their counterparts in Accra went on strike the following day.

In response to this development the Presidential Commission declared a state of emergency and instituted a curfew at Sekondi-Takoradi. Several of the local pro-strike leaders were arrested and the army and police were put on the alert in case their services were needed to quell riots or to maintain essential services.

Meanwhile the national executives of RHWU again denounced the pro-strike local leaders and urged the strikers to return to work, refusing to officially declare a strike. The strike then unofficially continued through to the second week. The TUC leadership later realized that the strike was not only against the compulsory savings but also an opposition to the centralized structure and the leadership of the TUC. They accordingly asked that all outstanding grievances of the various national unions

²⁷ Drake and Lacy (1966, 84).

be forwarded to the TUC headquarters without delay in order to seek avenues of redress and prompt action.

By the end of the second week of the strike, a political element had been interjected into the strike. J.B. Danquah, leader of the opposition United Party (UP), organized a press conference in his home at which he announced that the UP was giving moral support to the strikers.²⁸ Nkrumah later charged that the UP in addition provided financial support to market women to feed the strikers, demonstrators and pickets. This was confirmed later by the union when they admitted that they received financial support from the UP. The 1961 July budget offered the UP an opportunity to seek an alliance with labour when the workers struck. By the UP leaders encouraging the strikers to hold fast and by cooperating with the strike leaders, the strike was turning into a political contest between the CPP regime and the UP

At this point the Presidential Commission, unable to handle the crisis, urged Nkrumah to return home. On Sunday, September 17, one day after his arrival in Accra, Nkrumah gave a radio broadcast and appealed to the strikers to return to work. He promised the strikers that their grievances would be sympathetically considered. He therefore lifted the curfew that had been imposed by the Presidential Commission, and also revoked the proclamation of the state of emergency. In addition Nkrumah ordered the release of the strike leaders who had been

²⁸ Ibid, p. 96.

arrested in connection with the strike.

The striking workers, however, in spite of these conciliatory gestures gave a defiant answer. They reiterated their demand not to return to work until all their demands had been met.

Two days after his initial broadcast, Nkrumah gave a second broadcast. This time he was more firm with the strikers. He pointed out that the strike which was in the first place illegal under the existing labour laws, had in addition taken an insurrectionary overtones. No government, he said, could allow itself to be coerced by one small sector of the community. He ordered a return to work within two days, threatening to throw the whole force of nation's military and police power against the strikers if they held out.²⁹

Two days later, after posting their long list of grievances to the TUC, the strikers returned to work. Dennis Austin has suggested that the workers finally returned to work because their funds were exhausted. Others think that the threat of force and massive violence intimidated the strikers. The fact is that both factors were operative.³⁰

What did the strikers achieve? In terms of their demands the strike was not altogether a failure. The TUC after the strike developed a new vigour and enthusiasm in settling grievances. In order to make sure that the financial hardships

²⁹ Ibid, p. 68.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 96.

of the workers were reduced, the legislative assembly tightened up the price control laws. Some months after the strike the budget measures were revised and the compulsory savings aspect was entirely abolished. In return for this the strike leaders and some leaders of the opposition UP were detained for nine months. Strike leaders in all previous strikes had never been tried, but in the 1961 'general strike' a special court was set up to try the strike leaders and the court was given the authority to issue death sentences.

Prior to the strike, on April 8, 1961, Nkrumah made a dawn radio broadcast. Among other things, he promised to check the excessive accumulation of property by the regime's officials. He criticised some of the state leaders of their arrogance and ostentatious display of wealth. He hinted that a 'clean up' at the top was being demanded by the working people who were being asked themselves to sacrifice for socio-economic development.

However, for the next six months Nkrumah did not carry out any of the principles of the April 8, dawn broadcast. Soon after the 1961 strike, however, Nkrumah made an effort to implement the principles of the dawn broadcast by 'cleaning up' the regime's officials. Nkrumah suddenly announced the dismissal of two Cabinet Ministers and some four high ranking CPP officials. They were required in addition to surrender their property to the state and were suspended from CPP membership and therefore from parliament.

One of the strikers' aims was to bring to the attention of the regime the popular discontent and disillusionment and its increasingly corrupt, autocratic and elitist character. Nkrumah's dismissal of the regime's officials and some of his other actions after the strike indicated that the strikers' aim had been recognized.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA

In order to analyse the significance the 1961 'general strike' it might be appropriate to investigate why the workers used the July budget as the major source of grievance to strike.

The CPP regime since 1958 had closed all the avenues of protest for the workers. This was one of the motives for the passage of the 1958 act. The Labour Minister at that time argued strongly for the passage of the act. He maintained that the procedures for the settlement of dispute dealt with the matters both essential to the interest of the workers and most vital to the maintenance of industrial peace on which Ghana's economic development and the encouragement of investment from abroad depended. He maintained further that the grievance settlement procedure was to enable grievances to be solved in a rational manner with full discussion and investigation, and to render the use of strikes and lockouts, which hinder the expansion of

industry, largely obsolete. ³¹

This of course was a rationalization for the eradication of strikes, since the Minister seldom investigated the causes of strike and was always unprepared to discuss with the workers their grievances. The Minister's statement portrays the attitude of the regime towards organized labour and in particular strike action. The regime's view of strikes falls under the corporate Nationalist model of strike action. That is, in the post-independence period unions are to cooperate with the regime to ensure rapid socio-economic development rather than to resort to strike action to demand higher wages and better conditions of services.

The 1958 act set up an executive board of the TUC. The membership of the executive board was elected by the supreme congress and consisted of one representative from each of the certified unions. A CPP Minister made it clear publicly that all these positions were to be occupied by CPP militants. ³² Although TUC officials were elected by the Congress, the most influential posts were filled by those who had CPP approval. Regional and local levels of trade union activity were controlled by it. The TUC under the CPP, then, it can be argued was organized mainly to further the interest of the regime and to satisfy the social and political ambitions of the TUC leadership, who were all essentially members of the ruling

³¹Parliamentary Debates(1958, 545-546) .

³²Drake and Lacy(1966, 86) .

party.

In this respect, Trachtman maintains that under the Nkrumah regime the trade union movement was no longer basically a protest movement seeking 'more' for their workers or a better position for them in society. It became essentially an organ of the state. Worker rights and conditions of employment were looked after by the union only as a by-product. And in return the welfare of the workers became a direct responsibility of the state.³³.

The CPP was determined to use the workers to build up the party. The state leaders were looking for more radical allies for political and economic mobilization. They thought that the TUC under the CPP leadership would be able to play a significant role in that respect.³⁴. It was hoped that if the workers accepted the socialist ideology then they in turn would spread it among the rest of the population, since the workers had enormous influence among the people.

The masses most often looked up to the workers for leadership and direction. The regime was therefore convinced that in order for its socialist policies to be accepted it had to win the support and confidence of the unionized workers. In order to do this the state must control the welfare function of the workers. The state leaders thus adopted a policy of alternatively inducing and suppressing the unionized workers,

³³ Trachtman (1962, 186) .

³⁴ Cowan, (n.d, 70-81) .

depending on their response to the CPP's socialist ideology.

The regime was able to achieve this by resorting to the use of positive rewards to seek compliance and win the support of the people who had the potentiality to threaten their rule. Nkrumah, for instance, appointed Tettegah as Plenipotentiary Minister and Ambassador Extraordinary. The TUC was thus, at least in the view of the regime, represented in the Cabinet. In addition the Cabinet attempted to silence all opposition within the TUC by appointing militant union leaders as labour attaches to Ghana's foreign missions. All these were in the regime's interest. This to the workers was against their fundamental interest. The unionized workers were against the imposition of inefficient, party-affiliated union leaders on them. They resented the fact that the union leaders by collaborating with the CPP leaders had neglected their duty of representing the interest of the workers.

The regime's interest then conflicted with that of unionized workers, who in the absence of the legalized strike had no other avenue to channel their discontent. The unionized workers resented the control of the CPP over the unions. Therefore the rank-and-file union members were always seeking avenues to show their resentment and frustrations to the regime.

The 1961 'general strike' was undertaken by organized labour in Ghana to make their grievances known to both the regime and the public. It occurred in a situation where the regime's control over the trade union movement had made it

almost impossible for the grievances of the workers to be redressed. The unionized workers therefore resorted to an 'illegal' strike. Under the existing labour laws the strike was illegal in the sense that there had not been any prior labour dispute such as a breakdown in collective bargaining negotiations. The strike, then, was a dramatic reminder that independent labour action in strategic sectors of the economy is always possible despite the discipline imposed by the new structure and the all-embracing party. The vigour and resourcefulness shown by the workers at all levels during the strike revealed that continued viability of a tradition of conventional trade union practices, including strikes for economic and political ends, which neither the compulsory arbitration law nor appeals for a new trade union mentality could eliminate.³⁵.

The demands and grievances of the strikers indicated that the strike occurred partly because the existing collective bargaining instrument was not fully used to seek the interest of the workers. This was probably true of the compulsory taxation which would have adversely affected the economic welfare of the workers. However instead of negotiating it through the collective bargaining process it was imposed on them. This means that collective bargaining did not go far enough during this period.

Since collective bargaining in Ghana to a large extent was very ineffective in seeking the welfare of the workers it had

³⁵ Drake and Lacy (1966, 110).

serious consequences in its ability to institutionalize industrial conflict. The result was that collective bargaining could not shelve potentially explosive industrial conflict which had the potentiality of spreading to the political system. This was because the TUC, by controlling all the collective bargaining processes could effectively determine what was to be bargained. Since the TUC leadership was largely pro-regime, it meant that collective agreements were negotiated to the benefit of the regime. Thus a political element was introduced into collective bargaining negotiations.

This was evident in the philosophy of the trade union leaders who insisted that in advancing the course of Ghana one group must be the vanguard and provide leadership. That group accordingly was the party and its affiliated organizations, which included the labour movement, should be ready to serve the party. A highly centralized union movement controlled by the leaders who were trustworthy CPP members, they insisted, would certainly facilitate the extraction of loyal services.³⁶

This shows that free collective bargaining did not exist in Ghana and this adversely affected the institutionalization of industrial conflict since the rank-and-file members of the unions resented the fact that collective bargaining had taken such political elements. They were therefore more likely to organize 'illegal' strikes to show their resentment and real grievances which were not well attended to in collective

³⁶ Trachtman (1962, 194).

bargaining negotiations. The unionized workers justified such actions on the grounds that compulsory arbitration, which in their view was antithetical to free collective bargaining, did not give enough room for workers to seek their demands through the collective bargaining process.

The 1961 'general strike', then, was an expression of the resentment over the national TUC support of the 1958 act, which unionized workers considered to be anti-labour. It was also a rejection of the policies of the regime in general. In Ghana, therefore, trade union protest over the economic conditions necessarily extended to the political realm. This is probably because in a state planned economy there is very little differentiation between political and economic policies.

The economic position of Ghana at this period to some extent influenced the CPP regime's policies and attitudes to organized labour. The Nkrumah Cabinet realized that in order to be able to carry out its economic objectives the trade union movement had to be controlled. The economy at this period was not healthy by any means. With huge amounts of foreign debts and declining revenue, the Cabinet Ministers resorted to measures aimed at restraining the consumption pattern of the people. By so doing the regime was likely to face opposition from organized labour. Therefore in order to curb this type of militant economist or consumptionist trade unionism, the regime tried to incorporate the trade union movement into the CPP. By so doing Nkrumah attempted to convince the workers through the TUC

leadership that the role of the post-independence trade unions should be a productionist rather than a consumptionist one. The TUC leaders were also expected to explain to the workers the difficulties faced by a socialist regime dependent on a capitalist world.

During this period, even though the regime claimed to be following a socialist path it still depended on the western world for foreign investment and loans. This meant that in order to be able to create a conducive atmosphere to attract foreign investors the regime had to hold down the wages of the workers. The unionized workers opposed such policies since they were fundamentally against their interest and therefore were more likely to strike for more wages and better conditions. The Cabinet Ministers perceived that strikes were capable of disrupting the development plans therefore they had to adopt legislations which by and large curtailed the rights of the trade unions.

The 1958 act and its subsequent amendments, which included such clauses as compulsory arbitration and compulsory unionization, were passed to help solve some of these problems. The regime thus attempted to use legislation to institutionalize industrial conflict and to achieve labour peace. But the 1961 'general strike' was an indication that the unionized workers were more used to the traditional system of union organization. That is, each union having its autonomy and control over its own affairs, including collective bargaining and the right to

strike. They were therefore opposed to compulsory arbitration and party control. The Sekondi-Takoradi railway workers like all other workers in Ghana were interested in restoring traditional trade union rights. This included the right to free collective bargaining and to withhold their labour if they could not secure what they wanted. They accordingly were unionist with an economist ideology but were held in check by the political party.³⁷ It can thus be concluded that most of the industrial conflicts that occurred during this period were protests against the regime's policies.

³⁷ Drake and Lacy (1966, 110)

III. INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE MILITARY REGIME -NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL (NLC): 1966-1969

On the 24th of February 1966, a group of military and police officers staged the first coup d'etat in Ghana and overthrew the Nkrumah regime. The leaders of the coup quickly formed the National Liberation Council (NLC) and assumed executive powers. By means of a decree the NLC suspended the first republican constitution, legitimized the military regime and immediately disbanded the CPP. In addition the NLC banned all political party activities in the country.

This chapter is an attempt to explain the pattern, causes, and consequences of industrial conflict in Ghana during this period. A full understanding of these requires consideration of the economic and socio-political problems that confronted the NLC at the time of the overthrow of Nkrumah.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE NLC REGIME

Under Nkrumah Ghana had incurred a substantial amount of foreign debt, which resulted in balance of payment problems for the country. By February 1966 it was estimated that Ghana's foreign debt obligation amounted to US\$488.6 million in medium-term debt scheduled to mature within five years at an interest rate of 6 percent. The long-term debt amounted to about

US\$71.1 million with an average maturity of nineteen years, at 5 per cent interest. More than 75 per cent of the unfunded foreign debt was thought to consist of suppliers' credit.¹

The Nkrumah regime had also acquired a large public spending debt because government revenue lagged significantly behind government expenditure. The Ghanaian tax structure was unable to tap on an adequate scale incremental additions to income. This means that in a period when both government expenditure and consumption were increasing at a faster rate than the economy as a whole, the proportion of total income going to taxes was rather static, thus increasing the size of the public debt.

TABLE 3

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF PUBLIC DEBT: 1959-1966 (MILLION CEDIS)

Year End	External Debt	Internal Debt	Total Public Debt
1959	12	33	45
1960	34	77	111
1961	77	88	165
1962	145	161	307
1963	155	266	422
1964	370	324	693
1965	481	410	891
1966	651	447	1098

Source: Adapted from Killick and Szereszewski (1969, 104)

¹ Kaplan et al. (1971, 284).

With such a huge public debt as shown in table 3, the NLC was faced with two immediate problems. Firstly, it became more and more difficult if not impossible to service the external debt. Secondly, it was only in a very limited way that the regime was able to reduce the internal debt because the rate of savings in the economy was very low. Much of the internal debt had been accumulated from borrowings from the monetary system. This resulted in a very marked monetary expansion which aggravated the inflationary forces already present in the economy.²

Lt-General Ankrah, the chairman of the NLC, in summarizing the economic problems facing the country at the time, mentioned that when they took over the reins of government, the country's reserve security had dwindled to a precarious level of NC96 million. But even this had been pledged against funds borrowed which were then overdue. Practically, therefore, Ghana had virtually no reserves, and the country's commercial system was under imminent threat of breakdown, a situation further aggravated by short-term commitments. An emergency operation had to be mounted at once to arrest this dangerous deterioration of the foreign exchange position to secure an appreciable inflow of foreign exchange and to rearrange the medium and long-term debt programme. The NLC, therefore, had to adopt drastic measures to reduce government spending by examining all revenues for

²Killick and Szereszewski (1969, 105).

effective savings.³

This necessitated that the NLC limit its choices in economic policy and determine its priorities in development expenditure. This also meant that it had to cut back on the expenditure of the seven-year development plan drawn up by the CPP regime. Despite such vast economic problems the NLC attempted to make Ghana a strong and progressive welfare state by stabilizing the economy. The stabilization policy was meant to correct the country's adverse balance of payment problems, arrest the inflationary pressures on the economy and provide more jobs for the rapidly increasing population of Ghana.

In order to achieve these objectives the state leaders decided to renegotiate the country's external debts, cut Ghana's imports substantially and rationalize the import license system. In 1966, therefore, the investment budget was cut by 17 per cent, and in 1967 by 20 percent. ⁴ In 1967, to help correct the country's unfavourable balance of payments, the regime devalued Ghana's currency, the cedi, by 30 percent (the pre-devaluation value of the cedi was 98 US cents).⁵ In 1968 the interest due on suppliers credits and long-term official capital doubled to about US\$23 million, and the principal was due for repayment under the 1966 debt reschedule.

³ Ankrah (1966).

⁴ Kraus (1970, 198).

⁵ NC=New Cedis whenever used in the thesis.

In the public sector, the NLC decided to sell some of the large over-staffed, unproductive and profitless state owned industries to private firms. In addition, attempts were to be made to stimulate foreign and domestic private investment. The NLC consequently sold nine of the state enterprises to the private sector and invited private participation in another six which were running at a loss.

Unfortunately, however, the economic policies of the NLC produced some unpleasant side-effects. Of these were reductions in economic activities and employment opportunities, which consequently created severe unemployment in the country. The unemployment was due to the lay-offs in the overstuffed state enterprises. The highest lay-offs occurred in the State Farms Corporation and the Workers' Brigade, resulting in substantial cuts in government expenditure. By early 1969, unemployment was still growing despite efforts by the state leaders to rehire the unemployed in other productive sectors of the economy. From 1966-67 between 40,000-50,000 workers or 10-12 percent of the wage labour force was unemployed.⁶

Socio-politically the NLC justified its overthrow of the CPP regime on the grounds of the latter's dictatorial orientation, economic mismanagement and corruption. In addition to the decree which legitimized its rule, the NLC sought legitimization by its promise to observe individual rights and restore civilian rule under a constitution which would prevent

⁶ Kraus (1977, 28).

further dictatorships. The regime, moreover, promised to do so as soon as it could deal with Ghana's overwhelming economic problems.

The regime thus purported to present the liberalization of political life. Therefore, although all political party activities were essentially banned, the nature of the NLC's legitimacy required it to restore the right of autonomous existence to a wide range of associations and even to encourage representative groups to engage in bargaining with the regime.⁷

In order to make its position immediately clear, the NLC made public its policies towards organized labour. Lt-General Ankrah, in a policy statement, stressed the important role that the TUC could play in the country's economic development. He maintained that the state leadership was going to promote an efficient and truly cooperative labour movement, the activities of which were to be purely economic and which would not be allowed to involve itself in politics.⁸

The NLC members ideologically and politically were committed to a liberalization of the country's political structures, yet they were concerned that liberalization should not be carried so far as to erode their own power base. Jeffries maintains that liberalization meant that there would be little overt interference in the affairs of the TUC; that the legal provisions against strike actions, although formally retained,

7 Ibid.

8 Ankrah (1966, 12).

would be less severely administered, and that the Secretary-General of the TUC would be accepted as the regime's leading adviser on industrial relations.⁹

The NLC's economic and political priorities, then, to some extent determined the degree of institutionalization of industrial conflict. It needed organized labour to motivate the workers to work hard in order to achieve the economic targets set by the development plans. However, instead of explicitly controlling the unions to achieve this aim the NLC relied on the promise of union participation and cooperation in national planning.

LABOUR LEGISLATION AND THE UNIONS

Four days after the coup, the NLC appointed Mr. B.A. Bentum, the General-Secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Union as acting Secretary-General of the TUC. Bentum had been the chairman of the TUC executive board in 1964 but was dismissed by the then National -Secretary of the TUC, Mr. Ampah, for allegedly giving information on TUC corruption to the police. Bentum was also appointed a Junior Minister in the 1965 Nkrumah cabinet. In spite of this, his personal contact with Mr. Harlley, the Inspector-General of Police and a member of the

⁹ Jeffries (1978, 112).

NLC, secured him an appointment to the post.¹⁰

Bentum was appointed partly because Harley was able to convince his colleagues that his appointment would be in their interest. Harley maintained that Bentum was opposed to Nkrumah but was appointed to the Nkrumah Cabinet because of his popularity in the TUC; that Nkrumah wanted to win him to their side by the Cabinet position so that he in turn would influence the workers to accept the CPP's policies. Harley also maintained that Bentum was still popular in the TUC despite his Cabinet position since he still opposed the policies of the CPP.

Harley, moreover, assured his colleagues that by his personal friendship with Bentum he was sure that the latter would be the best man to serve their needs. He would be more inclined to follow the policies of the regime, Harley assured them, than anyone else, since the appointment would be a favour done to him. Harley made it clear that in order for the NLC to establish its control over the workers the TUC would need a leader they could to some extent influence if not control.

Kraus maintains that the regime saw in Bentum someone who would control the workers and unions during the retrenchment, and in the relative democratization of union life, through reorganization and elections as a means of removing union leaders of the Nkrumah period.¹¹ It is obvious here that the NLC wanted to use Bentum as an indirect means of controlling the

¹⁰ Kraus (1977, 29).

¹¹ Ibid.

workers. The appointment of Bentum thus was motivated by self-interest of the NLC.

Upon his assumption of office, Bentum appointed a constitutional committee to draw up a new constitution for the TUC. The work of the committee according to Bentum was to build a trade union movement that really did stand for workers of the country. Under the previous regime, according to Bentum's assessment, trade unions had become merely passive instruments for the dictates of the political party.¹² The new structure was to be an independent but nevertheless democratic and responsible trade unionism.¹³ The TUC was not to be affiliated to the regime in any way and was to adopt an apolitical line in respect to party politics. The TUC's main purpose would be to promote the interest of the rank-and-file members, rather than controlling or restraining them.

The TUC was also to be responsible; in Bentum's terms responsibility meant accepting the view that strike action by workers would have adverse consequences on the weakened Ghanaian economy. It was the responsibility of the TUC to educate the rank-and-file to this reality. According to this view strikes should be officially condemned except where the workers had no other choice but to resort to strike on an employer's refusal to negotiate or implement agreements. He therefore pleaded for cooperation with the state leaders and employers.

¹² Bentum (1971, 63-64).

¹³ TUC (1966, 3).

The NLC, realizing the potentiality of strikes to destabilize a regime, had cautioned the TUC leadership to minimize strikes and if possible avoid them altogether. The avoidance of strikes was to their interest since it implied no potential threat to their rule from the organized labour movement.

In exchange for restraining workers from resorting to strike action the TUC leadership appealed for the right of the TUC to be represented on national decision making bodies. In addition the TUC was to press for egalitarian reform of the national wage and salary structure. The TUC emphasized that the workers could be encouraged to forgo strike action only if their interests were fairly well represented in the regime.

On June 5th and 6th, 1966, Bentum called the TUC National Delegates Conference at Legon where the draft constitution was placed before it and subsequently approved and adopted. At the same time elections for Secretary-General and leaders of the national unions were conducted. Bentum was democratically elected by the unions as Secretary-General. The union structure that emerged, like that of Tettegah, was still monolithic. The difference was that under the Bentum structure, the national unions were granted more power over and responsibility for their own affairs.

Under the TUC's new constitution the national unions were to be responsible to their members, on whose wishes they based their working programme. The highest authority of the TUC was

derived from the Quadrennial Congress of Delegates, which was attended by nominated delegates of the national unions and the members of the executive board. The TUC executive board was to mediate disputes between employers and the national union, bearing in mind the interest of the workers concerned.

Under the new constitution, however, a vote of non-confidence by two-third majority of delegates would be required to demand the resignation of the Secretary-General.¹⁴ This provision required that the Secretary-General become more accountable to the union members than to the state leadership. Such a provision was lacking under the CPP-TUC Constitution during the Nkrumah period. What Bentum was attempting to do, then, was to build a trade union structure that would be free of control from any regime and could thus press for the welfare of its members.

After establishing himself as the Secretary-General, Bentum refused to support wholly the policies of the NLC towards the trade union movement. The NLC members thought that, having appointed him to the position initially, he would be inclined to follow their policies. This in fact was an underestimation of Bentum's ability to pursue an independent course. Bentum pursued a balanced course trying to satisfy both organized labour and the state leadership at the same time. By so doing some members of the NLC became doubtful of his willingness to follow their line.

¹⁴ Ibid, 6.

In 1968 Bentum again called the TUC National Delegates Conference at Tamale where the post of Secretary-General was again contested in a free and democratic election. By subjecting himself to elections for the second time Bentum was trying to cut further the favour done to him by the regime for his appointment. He wanted to rid himself of any moral obligations he owed to the regime in order to make it possible to pursue a more independent course. By this action Bentum lost the favour of most of the members of the NLC and consequently at the elections they backed a rival candidate, Mr. John Alex Hamah, for the Secretary-General position. But even with the support of the state leadership Hamah could not defeat Bentum at the election.

This action by the NLC showed that even though it claimed to be committed to a policy of liberalization it tried in subtle ways to influence the running of organized labour in the country by taking sides in the TUC elections. The regime in pursuit of its own interest wanted to see Hamah elected as TUC leader because it could no longer trust Bentum to represent its interest. The regime wanted a stooge who would place its interest over and above that of the workers.

Having been totally humiliated by the defeat of Hamah, the NLC did not make any more attempts to get involved in the politics of the TUC. The NLC had to satisfy itself that Bentum would be able to guide the TUC towards a disciplined and responsible path. It also refrained from intervention in the

politics of the TUC because it did not wish to strain any further its relationship with organized labour by changing a popular leader. Such an attempt, the regime felt, could jeopardize its power position, which was not stable at that time. Also it wanted to present to Ghanaians and organized labour in particular that its liberalization policy was still intact. However, the most important reason for tolerating Bentum as TUC leader was that the regime was sure that he had not diverged from his policy of restraining strikes.

At its 1969 TUC Delegates Conference in Kumasi, the TUC decided after the NLC had lifted the ban on political parties that labour should be free to vote for any political candidate of its choice. The delegates also voted unanimously to prevent all high-ranking officers of the TUC and the national unions from holding office in any of the parties.¹⁵

At the same conference the TUC voted in favour of economism ('bread and butter trade unionism') instead of political unionism. It also reiterated its determination to fight for more benefits and improve the welfare of the rank-and-file members. It was also decided that the TUC should continue to contribute meaningfully to national development by cooperating with the NLC and employers.

Since this policy was in line with the regime's policy for the revival of the economy, the NLC, in response to the TUC resolution, decided to give the TUC more participation in the

¹⁵ Bentum (1969, 64).

National Manpower Board. Among other things the board was to formulate plans and policies for the development, education and training, and effective utilization of human resources in all sectors of the national economy.¹⁶ The Manpower board in many ways was one of the most respected bodies of development planning in Ghana.

However, the degree of TUC participation on the board and other boards was more token than substantial. The composition of the board was such that the TUC could not make any meaningful impact on decision-making. The NLC gave the TUC a token chance to participate on the boards. Despite this the TUC was not consulted when the national economic plan was being formulated. The TUC was informed after the plan had already been drawn. Consequently its implementation led to conflicts between unions and the NLC.¹⁷

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 1966-1969

Only a few amendments to the labour laws were passed during this period. Under the TUC's new constitution the authority for conducting collective bargaining and settling industrial disputes were returned from the TUC to the national unions. The rights of the TUC to intervene in disputes were restricted to instances where an impasse had clearly been reached, or where

¹⁶ Damachi (1974, 76).

¹⁷ Ibid, 77.

TUC intervention was formally requested by the trade union concerned.¹⁸

The NLC amended the Civil Service Act of 1960. Under the provisions of this act, compulsory trade union membership had been imposed on the junior civil servants by the CPP regime. After the 1966 coup, the NLC's liberalization policy made it possible for civil servants to protest against this act. The civil servants suggested to the NLC that the compulsory membership clause should be removed. In response to this protest the regime passed the Civil Service Amendment Regulation of 1967 (Decree 134) removing the compulsory membership clause from the 1960 Civil Service Act.¹⁹

This amendment decree gave the union members the choice to decide to continue or terminate their membership. Those who decided to remain union members were given forms to sign authorizing their dues to be deducted at source. This process of 'contracting in' led to a drastic decline in union membership as most of the civil servants opted out of the unions. Consequently, the financial strength of the TUC was severely weakened.

As table 1 indicates, the number of bargaining certificates issued after the 1966 coup increased tremendously but only a few new agreements were actually signed. The increase in bargaining certificates issued and the new agreements signed after 1966 was

¹⁸ Ibid, 78.

¹⁹ Decree 134 (1967).

due to the vigour and desire of the unions to make use of the NLC's liberalization policy, a condition that hardly existed during the Nkrumah period. Also, the NLC, like the CPP regime, routinely continued the practice of granting extension orders. Also, prior to 1966 employers of Public Corporations had been prohibited from collective bargaining. After 1966, however, the NLC changed this law and they were allowed to sign collective agreements.

Gray attributed the increase in collective agreements signed to the dynamism of the Ghana Employers Association. According to Gray, the Ghana Employers Association began to encourage the signing of group agreements - individual contracts between a single union and a variety of similar or related industries. Typically a group agreement covered working conditions for several firms, which were negotiated by GEA and the unions, and left the wage talks to the individual companies involved. Gray further maintains that in 1971 there were over 100 firms covered by such agreements.²⁰

Yet another reason for the increase in collective bargaining was that the NLC's liberalization policy encouraged an atmosphere of free negotiations which made it much easier for trade union negotiators to gain the expertise in negotiating procedures and the TUC made efforts to train more bargainers. Between 1966 and 1969 the trade union negotiators gained more confidence in their ability to negotiate.

²⁰ Gray (1980, 184).

PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE NLC REGIME.

In spite of the gains in collective bargaining this period witnessed intense labour conflicts. There was relatively more industrial conflict in this period than during the CPP period. This was partly because the TUC made sure that employers followed the collective bargaining laws or collective agreements. Some employers, however, doubted the unions' ability to enforce compliance to the legislation and therefore refused to do so. In addition some employers failed to implement agreements which had been signed. Several workers complained about arbitrary dismissals, suspensions, and unpaid bonuses. These were ignored by the management. Some companies also failed to contribute to medical care schemes for their employees. All these contributed to the frequent industrial conflicts.²¹

Furthermore, the NLC sometimes unofficially backed the TUC in collective bargaining in order to maintain or boost its popularity with organized labour. Thus at this period there was some increase in victimization, lockout, and resistance to negotiations and bargaining.

Another cause of strikes was the NLC's deflationary and stabilization policies aimed at reviving the economy. This policy resulted in an enormous increase in unemployment in the country, which became a major concern for organized labour. As

²¹ Gray (1981,60).

more and more workers were laid-off financial pressure was increased on those still working to provide for members of their external families who were unemployed. The unemployed, who were not receiving any income or support from any other source, put more pressure on their unions to in turn to put pressure on the regime to redeploy them.

Despite the efforts by the Commissioner of Labour (Minister of Labour under the military regime) to redeploy the unemployed, the unemployment problem continued to grow. The NLC argued that in order to be able to redeploy all the workers the economy had to be revived first. It apparently was more interested in pursuing the enormous economic problems facing the country than solving unemployment. The workers, therefore, resorted to strike action to back their demands. In the pursuit of its deflationary and stabilization policies, the state leadership did not fully appreciate or anticipate the repercussions of this policy on the workers, who were in financial difficulty, and at the same time had the freedom to protest their increased suffering.

Damachi also attributed the frequency of strikes during this period to a number of factors. According to him the unions had just emerged from the repression and fear under the CPP, and had been given back their rights to organize freely and carry out normal activities. Moreover, they realized how important their role was in the development process when the NLC dismantled every CPP organ other than the TUC. As a result the unions believed that they held the balance of power in the

country, and were thus not prepared to be repressed by the NLC or any other subsequent regime. The idea that people were told that they were free made the unions the watchdog of the masses ready to combat any action that seemed repressive to them.²²

By the end of 1966, the workers were experiencing financial difficulties because of the rising cost of living. In April, 1967, the NLC set up the Mills-Odoi Wage and Salary Review Commission. It was assigned the duty of examining the wages and salary structure of the government (public) employees and making recommendations for possible increases. David Egyir, chairman of the TUC executive board, was appointed to the committee.

In July 1967, the regime devalued the Ghanaian currency by 30 percent, which consequently increased the prices of imported goods and raised the cost of living. As a compensation to the workers, therefore, the NLC granted an across-the-board 5 percent wage-salary increase to all government employees and 7 percent to the unskilled workers. The TUC was not consulted before the wage-salary increases were announced. Consequently it criticised the increases for being inadequate.²³

The report of the Mills-Odoi Commission was released in mid-1968 and it also granted across-the-board increases: another 7.1 percent to unskilled workers; 4.8-7.1 percent for skilled and semi-skilled workers, and an average increase to salaried civil servants of about 6 per cent in addition to payment of

²² Damachi (1974, 78).

²³ Kraus (1979, 142).

social security costs. Both the commission and the regime accepted the establishment of an annual increment for the unskilled and other manual workers.²⁴ The TUC had asked for an increase in the minimum wage from 65 pesewas per day to NC2.00 (116 per cent) hoping for NC1.00. However, the two increases taken together increased the minimum wage from 65 to 75 pesewas per day and other wages proportionately. This barely returned the real wages to the level of 1965, when real wages had sunk to their lowest point.²⁵

As expected, the TUC denounced the Mills-Odoi Commission's report, and in view of other criticisms from the Civil Servants Association the NLC set up a new Review Committee. However, this committee dismissed the criticisms as unfounded and baseless.

In 1968 the regime set up the Mensah Incomes Commission to help reduce inflation in the most reasonable way in order not to adversely affect the financial positions of the workers. Much to the dismay of the workers, this commission in its report without any reference to prices set up a maximum of 5 per cent on wage increases in collective agreements, but refused to consider price controls. The regime accepted the recommendations and Bentum, who was a member of this commission, resigned in disappointment

The regime's acceptance of the Mensah Incomes Commission's recommendations meant that it wanted to have implicit control

²⁴ Mills-Odoi Commission (1967).

²⁵ Kraus (1979, 141).

over collective bargaining. Under the impression that higher wage demands cause inflation, the NLC was prepared to set limits on wage-demands whether or not the cost of living was rising higher than that. To the NLC it was more important to keep down inflation than to promote the welfare of the workers. This policy, however, later increased the degree of industrial conflict in the country.

Between 1967 and early 1969, Bentum entertained hopes of being able to gain increases in wages of workers by legitimate means without recourse to strikes. During this period, therefore, Bentum stood solidly behind the state leaders in condemning strikes. His reaction to the Railway Permanent Waymens' Association's nation-wide strike was an uncompromisingly tough line. He supported the Commissioner of Labour for the arrest of the strike leaders since he considered the strike politically motivated. He further warned the national executives of the RHWU that unless steps were taken to dismiss the undesirables from the union he would be forced to recommend to the executive board of the TUC to review their affiliation to the TUC.²⁶ However, he concluded rather sadly 'I do not want to be a Secretary -General who only breaks strikes.'²⁷ A few days later Bentum learned that the railway management had persistently refused to deal with the strikes' demands. Bentum, thus, criticised management's role in strike development. The

²⁶ Jeffries (1978, 113).

²⁷ Ibid.

TUC leadership, as a gesture to the NLC for the relative freedom granted to them had to cooperate with the Commissioner of Labour by heeding and enforcing his warning against strikes.

The increase in such industrial conflicts was partly the result of the liberalization policy of the NLC and partly the vigour and enthusiasm of the unions to fight for their welfare. The liberalization policy, however, had its limits and therefore as the strikes continued the authorities began to adopt repressive measures to deal with them.

In spite of these repressive measures the unions became increasingly militant as the prices of commodities continued to rise. This militancy manifested itself in more strikes. This is evident from Table 2. From 1966-1969 there were 146 strikes involving 104,760 workers and a total loss of 348,906 man days.

In view of such an enormous industrial strife, the NLC became highly intolerant with strikes and regularly intervened in industrial conflicts, often dismissing the strikers. The regime arrested strikers, and sanctioned the firing of workers who refused to return to work. Union dissidence was closely watched by the police as a likely basis of CPP-inspired disruption of the NLC regime. The NLC denounced strikes as the work of subversives, saboteurs and agitators.²⁸ Strikes were regarded officially as conspiracy to overthrow the NLC.²⁹

²⁸ Kraus (1977, 29).

²⁹ Ibid.

The NLC, therefore, took an uncompromising line regarding strikes, which was similar to that of the CPP. Like the CPP, the NLC regarded strikes as damaging and harmful to the Ghanaian economy. The NLC threatened stern and harsh measures if the strikes did not cease. General Kotoka, an NLC member, in a radio-TV broadcast in December 1966 addressed the 'problem' of strikes. Some of our workers with the support of their union leaders and pressure groups, he said, have taken the law into their own hands by resorting to illegal strikes and lockouts for resolving minor grievances. These workers, he continued, have shown neither the will nor the desire to respect our newly-won freedom and in salvaging Ghana from economic chaos.³⁰

The most important strike issue during this period was wage increase. Other important issues were severance pay after lay-offs, dissatisfaction with working conditions, and dissatisfaction with managers' attitudes and behaviour towards the local union leadership. Some employees actually undertook strikes in demand for the removal of management staff. Still others were caused by illegal dismissal of employees or by claims of bonus.

The opposition of Bentum and other TUC leaders to strikes from 1966-1968 can be seen as the result of the regime having promised genuine cooperation with the unions, and also having restored trade union rights and autonomy. However, by early 1969 the TUC leadership began to grow weary of the lip service which

³⁰Ibid.

the NLC was paying to union cooperation. The TUC leadership thus revised their earlier position against strike action. The Commissioner of Labour's tactics of dealing with strikes infuriated the TUC leadership and they denounced the regime accordingly. The TUC leaders argued that strikes were the consequences of the deteriorating economic position of workers and they could only be curtailed if the state leaders improved the economic positions of workers.

As the strikes continued, the relationship between the TUC and the NLC deteriorated further. In March 1969, the police opened fire on striking gold miners at Obuasi, killing three of them. In May the previous year 4,500 gold miners of the state owned mines at Tarkwa protesting against late pay were attacked by the police in an attempt to disperse them. In June 1969, the police gassed and shot at striking miners again at the Tarkwa mines. This led Bentum to threaten a general strike if the shooting of workers continued.

The authorities ignored this warning and again in October 1969 the regime intervened quickly to suppress a strike organized by 2,500 dockworkers of the state owned Ghana Cargo Handling Company at Tema. In May of 1968 these dockworkers, who were members of the Maritime and Dockworkers Union (MDU), undertook the strike to demand the dismissal of the general and personnel managers who, the workers charged, practised discrimination, favoritism, nepotism and arbitrariness in the dismissal and promotion of the employees.

A committee was therefore appointed to investigate these charges and the two managers were temporarily relieved of their post pending the finding of the investigation. In October, however, without the committee reporting its findings, the two were reinstated. The 2,500 workers therefore went on strike. The company reacted to the strike with a lockout and subsequent dismissal of the workers, with the approval of the Commissioner of Labour. Leaders of the TUC and MDU made unsuccessful attempts to get the workers reinstated. The Commissioner authorized the company to refuse unconditional rehiring of the workers but did approve selective rehiring. The TUC thus denounced the regime's dismissal of workers as illegal under the existing labour laws and the TUC Secretary-General led a delegation to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to protest. By these dismissals the NLC encouraged employers to deal harshly with striking employees and this relieved management of the pressure of dealing with grievances.

It is worthwhile noting that in all these disputes the unions ignored the procedures for grievance negotiations. The unions had previously complained to the NLC that the processes involved in the appointment of a conciliator and an arbitrator were too time-consuming. The unions, therefore, suggested that the appointment of a conciliator after a deadlock in negotiations has been reached should be within fourteen days. The appointment of a second was considered unnecessary, therefore that section of the labour legislation should be

repealed. They also suggested that the arbitrator should submit his report within a specified period of time. Moreover they asked for the amendment of the legislation in order to make the award enforceable by law within a specified time limit after it has been published in the Gazette. The trade unions again asked that the Commissioner of Labour should uphold the report of the arbitrator without any interference. In addition the award should be directly communicated to the parties in the dispute with a copy forwarded to the Commissioner for its publication in the Gazette.

The complaint of the trade unions concerned the dispute settlement procedure under the existing labour laws. The trade unions under the NLC refused to accept compulsory arbitration, arguing that it was too restrictive. The unions therefore continued to strike, ignoring the procedures laid down by the legislation. The regime similarly intervened in labour disputes by ignoring the dispute negotiating procedures. Sometimes employees were locked out by the employers who, backed by the Commissioner of Labour, also ignored the dispute negotiating procedures. So if the employees' actions were illegal the employers as well acted illegally by the dismissal and lock out of employees.

During this period, the dispute negotiating procedures as laid down by the labour laws were hardly used. In effect dispute negotiating procedures broke down, with the employers, backed by the regime intimidating strikers. An example of such

intimidation tactics occurred at the Ashanti Goldfields Corporations miners strike at Obuasi in March 1969.

This strike had several underlying causes, which included the following:

1. Lack of adequate housing for the workers at the mines.
2. The question of production bonuses, which were based to some extent on the quality of the gold content in the rock blasted for a month.
3. Another bonus which was supposed to be paid annually.
4. The Corporation's refusal to provide a midwifery requested by the employees, which the corporation maintained was the responsibility of the government.
5. The workers' dissatisfaction with the lower rate of pay for underground workers.³¹

The immediate cause of the strike, however, revolved around some sort of severance pay which the workers were claiming after the corporation sold all its shares in late 1968 to Lonhro, a transnational mining company. When the takeover became effective in January 1969, the management backed by the Commissioner of Lands and Mineral Resources refused to grant the demands of the workers. Both the management and the Commissioner, argued that nothing had changed within the Corporation and that employees would not be affected by the takeover as they would continue to serve on existing terms.

³¹ Ata-Bedu Commission (1970).

After a series of meetings involving management, representatives of the NLC, the TUC and the local union leaders, the local branch of the Mines Workers' Union still insisted on some form of payment because of the takeover. The management, on the other hand, persistently refused to grant any such severance pay. The local union leaders therefore threatened strike action which took place on March 3rd.

A few days prior to the strike, the management and the NLC collaborated to grant the severance pay in order to prevent a strike. At this point, however, the mood of the employees was so tense that the manner in which the severance pay was offered as an 'undefined dash' caused a breakdown in relations between union leaders and the rank-and-file which caused a strike and its attendant disturbances on March 3rd.³²

On March 2nd, the local union leaders had organized a meeting with the local union members. At this meeting the union leaders were unable to explain the nature of the 'dash' which management had promised to pay to the workers when they were asked for clarification. This generated an atmosphere of confusion, disorder and chaos. The rank-and-file then angrily chased the local leaders out of the hall with stones and sticks. Since the workers did not understand what the management meant by the 'dash' they decided to go ahead with the strike.

The strike was followed by clashes with the police, who shot and killed three miners and wounded many others.

³² Damachi (1974, 82).

Consequently, the NLC appointed a Commission of Inquiry under Justice Kwame Ata-Bedu to investigate the causes of the disturbances and especially the circumstances leading to the shooting death of the three miners.

In its report the commission was highly critical of the conduct of the policemen. The report criticized the lack of proper supervision in the execution of the orders to shoot. It exonerated the strikers for the alleged attack of the Obuasi Police Station, and blamed the police for shooting instead of using tear gas to disperse the crowd. However, the report concluded that the employees' demand for the severance pay was improper and the strike therefore was unlawful under the 1965 Industrial Relations Amendment Act.³³

In spite of the Commission's report the regime did not take any action either against the management of the corporation or against the Ghana Police Force. Rather it suggested that the Inspector-General of Police had been instructed to consider the introduction of more modern methods of dispersing rioters. The NLC also suggested an intense trade union education in labour legislation for the miners, and compensation for the families of those who were wounded or died from the shooting. It is evident from the regime's action that in the end the miners were not absolved from blame. That is, to have resorted to a strike action was illegal, and therefore they deserved to be shot.

³³ Ata-Bedu Commission (1970).

One wonders why even against the opposition of the trade unions to compulsory arbitration and conciliation, the commission nevertheless based its findings on the section of the 1965 Industrial Relations Amendment Act dealing with conciliation and compulsory arbitration. Similarly one needs to understand why the NLC refused to repeal those sections dealing with grievance and dispute settlement procedures making legal strikes almost impossible. This obviously had consequences on the degree of industrial conflict in Ghana and attempts will be made to discuss them in the next section.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA

The NLC regime sought to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana by a variety of means which included 1. Cooptation of union leaders and cooperation with the organized labour; 2. labour legislations; and 3. repressive, harsh and punitive measures. On the assumption of power the NLC pursued a policy of institutionalization which in many ways resembled that of the CPP regime. If there was any difference at all in the policies of institutionalization it was the methods used in their application. The aims were not dissimilar. Both regimes intended to secure control of the unions and to ensure labour peace.

Although the NLC had legitimized its rule by means of decrees, it still needed to win the credibility and confidence of the people. The attainment of this goal to some extent depended on the ability of the NLC to relieve the people of some of their economic hardships. In order to achieve any meaningful social harmony in the country, it had to be able to sustain an economy that would at least be able to satisfy the minimum necessities of the people. An economy that would inflict less hardships on the people than under previous regimes. Any further sagging of the economy could possibly generate political agitation against them. The NLC, then, had a key interest in reviving the economy in the maintenance of its rule.

In view of this the NLC adopted some economic policies aimed at reviving and stabilizing the economy. The adoption of these policies was likely to have serious repercussions on the workers. The regime assumed that it would be in the interest of all the workers as well as every other Ghanaian to accept those economic policies. Nevertheless, the NLC anticipated that opposition could come from organized labour. Such opposition in their view could be misguided but could be corrected with cooperation.

To avoid any such initial opposition from the organized labour the regime attempted to win to its side the TUC leaders and by so doing encourage them to preach the good intentions of the regime to the rank-and-file membership. Specifically, it wanted the TUC leaders to influence the rank-and-file into

refraining from strike action. Bentum's appointment therefore was to the attainment of this objective.

Bentum, like Tettegah under Nkrumah, was to use his influence to ensure cooperation between organized labour and the NLC. Unlike the CPP, the NLC hoped to achieve this through indirect control rather than direct control. The NLC therefore asked for cooperation between organized labour and the state leadership. Cooperation here in fact meant that the workers should try as much as possible to avoid strike action.

The NLC recognized the power of organized labour in the country. It also recognized that organized labour could be a formidable opposition to any regime in Ghana. In view of this the regime was to make sure that its liberalization policy did not become excessive. It thus adopted a hardline policy in respect to strikes and other forms of labour conflicts. The rationale for employing these policies was not dissimilar from that of the CPP regime. Strikes, according to the NLC's policies, were economically damaging, wasteful and in addition an impediment to the development of the Ghanaian economy. How successful was this policy of cooperation?

In the initial years of the regime, the TUC leaders sought cooperation with the state leaders, depending on their response to the needs of labour. Bentum and the national union leaders sought to restrain the rank-and-file from taking any militant action for the fear of reprisals from the authorities. Also they did not want to strain the relatively harmonious and

accomodative relations between the NLC and organized labour.

In view of this the TUC leadership attempted to persuade the rank-and-file that the regime was genuinely interested in seeking their welfare. The union leaders maintained that the NLC would increase wages as soon as the economy improved. They pointed to union independence and freedom as some indications of the regime's concern for labour. The TUC leadership argued that it was better to gain wage increase through legitimate means rather than confrontation. Until about the beginning of the third year of the NLC rule the TUC leadership was able to restrain the workers from resorting to strikes to back their demands. In this respect they were capable of minimizing strikes in the country.

However, in due course it became apparent to the workers that the NLC was not prepared to improve their situation. As inflation rose and prices of commodities increased accordingly the workers began to demand wage increases. The state leaders encouraged employers to decline to workers' demands for wage increases since in their view increases in wages contributed to inflation. This response from the regime angered the workers - the rank-and-file - who very often went on strike against the advice of the labour leaders.

What we see here, then, is a regime which is eager to achieve its interests and although it is aware of the needs of labour, it refuses to recognize the legitimacy of these needs. The effect of this was that in the first two years of the NLC

rule, the national union leadership very often sided with the Commissioner Of Labour to denounce strikers and the local union leaders who led those strikes. Both the TUC leadership and the NLC considered strikes to be the work of subversive elements who wanted to overthrow the regime.

In this respect, then, a political cooperation developed between the TUC leadership and the regime but it was not enough to eradicate strikes. This apparent political cooperation was a contradiction of the policies of the NLC and the TUC leadership. Both parties had promised to cooperate and build a trade union movement that would be apolitical. The NLC had promised not to politically interfere in trade union affairs and the TUC similarly promised to build an independent labour movement that would not allow political interference from any regime. However, the cooperation between the TUC leadership and the NLC increasingly took a political dimension.

Kraus points out that a major weakness here was the persistent belief of the TUC leadership that their position was not 'political' and would not be considered as such by the state leadership or the rank-and-file members with whom it disagreed strongly on many issues. A sharp contradiction therefore developed between this stance by the TUC leaders, the developing militance of the policies of the local union leaders and the rank-and-file members, and the interests of those who held state

power.³⁴

This further resulted in a development of a sharp tension between TUC officials, on the one hand, and local union leaders and rank-and-file on the other. The rank-and-file accused the TUC leaders of cooperating to disregard their demands and thus their welfare. The rank-and-file and their local union leaders, therefore resorted to strikes, ignoring appeals for restraint from the TUC leadership, whenever they felt it was necessary to back up their demands.

Almost all the strikes that occurred during this period were initiated by local branch union leaders or the rank-and-file workers. In almost all cases the national leaders supported the authorities attempt to end the strike although their enthusiasm for so doing varied, as did their support for the strikers.³⁵

The national union leaders refused to support the strikers because they were still confident that the NLC would genuinely cooperate by improving working conditions for the workers. Also the Commissioner of Labour pressured them to put an end to illegal strikes. But as the strikes increased during the later part of 1968 and early 1969, and the state leaders became more and more repressive the national union leadership in steadily increasing numbers changed their positions regarding strikes and came to support the workers. Thus a tension developed between

³⁴ Kraus (1977, 31).

³⁵ Ibid, 32.

the TUC leadership and the regime, resulting eventually in a breakdown of the cooperative and harmonious relations between the regime and organized labour.

This in fact is an interesting example of the democratic sub-type of the corporate nationalist model of strike action. In spite of the attempts by the NLC to coopt union leaders, the norms of accountability to rank-and-file members made it impossible for the TUC leaders to wholly and indefinitely support the NLC's policies towards strikes.

In the pursuit of industrial peace the NLC, like the CPP regime, resorted to positive inducement methods to win the potentially militant union leaders to its side. By so doing it hoped to curtail the threat from the trade unions. To this end the regime appointed some of the union leaders to governmental positions.

The NLC gave union leaders places on far more governmental positions than did its predecessor. For instance there were nine trade unionists among the 150 appointed members of the Constituent Assembly to draw a new civilian constitution for Ghana. Bentum himself was appointed a member of the Political Advisory Committee. Because of their political connections the TUC leaders did not denounce the large-scale dismissal of workers from 'overstaffed' state enterprises. They, however, urged the Commissioner of Labour to attempt to find them alternative viable employment and for that reason a Redeployment of Labour Commission was established.

Similarly, by the appointment of unionists to the national decision-making bodies, the NLC hoped to convince the workers that their welfare was a priority of the regime. In reality the contribution of the representatives of the workers on these committees was more token than substantial. It was thus a political strategy adopted to silence discontent and opposition from the labour movement.

The regime's economic policies resulted in massive unemployment and the workers consequently refused to accept the view that those policies were necessary for economic revival and vehemently opposed it. The rank-and-file showed clearly here that their interests were different from those of the NLC and in fact all other groups in the nation. They perceived their day to day survival as their primary interest and unemployment made it almost impossible for the worker and his family to survive from day to day.

There was thus a major conflict of interests between the state leaders and the unionized workers which precipitated the strikes during this period. The reasonable degree of similarity between the regime's goals and the official goals of the TUC as declared by the TUC leaders, however, could not restrain or postpone the conflict of interests between them indefinitely. Since there was no compromise on the views of either party industrial conflicts such as strikes were inevitable. On the whole, then, the NLC failed in their effort to institutionalize industrial conflict by means of cooperation and cooptation of

TUC leaders.

The NLC also attempted to institutionalize industrial conflict through labour legislation. It is worthwhile noting that the TUC was the only organizational structure affiliated to the CPP which survived the demise of the Nkrumah regime. All other organizations affiliated to the CPP were disbanded. The NLC persistently refused to disband the TUC because it considered that organization to be a potential socio-economic and political ally. It needed the TUC's cooperation in the revitalization process of the sagging Ghanaian economy. The TUC membership had clearly constituted one of Nkrumah's power bases. The NLC intended to use them likewise, to strengthen its own power base. To consolidate and maintain its rule the NLC needed powerful political allies, it therefore intended to build strong friendly relations with the TUC.

Even though the NLC gave Bentum the authority to decentralize the TUC structure which was inherited from the Nkrumah regime, decentralization did not go far enough. This was because the NLC refused to completely dismantle the centralized TUC structure. Bentum's authority was to democratize the system within the centralized structure. Kraus argues that the NLC maintained the CPP-built centralized structure of the TUC because the NLC preferred a strong TUC to keep down strikes.³⁶

The NLC needed the centralized TUC to organize and motivate the workers just as the TUC had done under Nkrumah but now

³⁶ Kraus (1979, 137).

without the African socialist ideology to encourage the workers, effective participation in economic development. The NLC thus maintained those legislation that would help to maintain their rule while it changed those that conflicted with its interest.

In 1967, upon the request of the junior civil servants the NLC repealed the 1960 Civil Service Act and passed the Civil Service Amendment Regulation (Decree 134). The regime capitalized on their request and passed Decree 134 which removed compulsory union membership for the junior civil servants. The political leadership, fearful of the power of the TUC and the potential threat it could pose to the regime, seized this opportunity to limit the potential power of the TUC. By making trade union membership voluntary among the civil servants the political leaders hoped to reduce the TUC's influence over the workers. The NLC was afraid that the TUC leadership might become too powerful and difficult to control. By allowing the workers to 'contract in' the act reduced both the numerical and financial strength of the TUC. With less money going to the TUC it could not afford to finance any prolonged strike or any political activities aimed at discrediting the regime.

While it is true that the NLC needed the TUC to organize and motivate the workers to achieve its political and economic objectives, it did not want the TUC to be so powerful as to challenge its rule. The NLC, thus, was looking for indirect means of eradicating strikes and also minimize the threat posed by the TUC. Decree 134 was aimed at achieving these goals. The

TUC leadership thus viewed this amendment as anti-labour. They noted that while Decree 134 was in fact not aimed at dissolving the unions its application was towards that end.³⁷ Decree 134, then, was used by the regime to achieve its own political interest as well as satisfying the junior civil servants.

Just as the civil servants felt that compulsory union membership had been unfairly imposed on them, the unionized workers also argued that compulsory arbitration and conciliation were restrictive on the rights of trade unions and appealed to the Commissioner of Labour to repeal them. The unionized workers complained that the section of the labour law dealing with compulsory arbitration and conciliation made it almost impossible for the workers to undertake a legal strike.

However, the NLC considered a repeal of that section of the law against its own interest. The regime was by no means sure that their cooperation with the TUC leaders would be enough to restrain the workers from striking. To repeal the conciliation and compulsory arbitration meant that it might be easier for the workers to strike. The NLC, despite its liberalization policy, refused to repeal the anti-strike legislation.

The NLC anticipated the possibility of organized labour using strikes to achieve their objectives. In addition strikes could undermine the credibility of a regime since it could suggest to people that the regime was uninterested or unwilling to improve their conditions. A strike could thus be used

³⁷Gray (1981,60).

implicitly if not explicitly to challenge the power of the regime. Therefore the NLC after careful consideration decided to retain the anti-strike legislation. By so doing it hoped to at least minimize strikes and any possible threats from the organized labour movement.

The effects of collective bargaining in the institutionalization of industrial conflict at this period was almost negligible. Even though more bargaining certificates were issued at this period only a few agreements were actually concluded. It is extremely difficult to tell the total number of unions covered by agreements because no figures on this exist for the period. It appears that the extension orders introduced collective agreements to firms where their later administration and enforcement were neglected. The administration of collective agreement was rather poor during this period. This was one of the reasons for the frequent industrial conflicts during this period.

Collective bargaining, then, performed no more significant role in terms of shelving industrial conflicts than during the Nkrumah period. It is in fact true to say that the increase in collective bargaining certificates issued in many cases when they were used created more conflicts as both the employers and the unions failed to agree on many issues, which frequently resulted in industrial conflicts. Similarly some employers failed to abide by collective agreements and unions' desire to enforce compliance resulted in many industrial conflicts.

The NLC also introduced a political element into collective bargaining when it backed some unions in collective bargaining negotiations. This increased the bargaining power of some unions and the employers who resisted such union demands were likely to be victimized by strike action or other forms of industrial conflict.

In spite of the collective agreements in force at this period almost all the strikes that occurred were 'illegal' in the sense that most of the strikes had no reference to collective agreements and the dispute negotiating procedures were ignored. An example of such a strike is the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation miners' strike in 1969. The immediate cause of the strike - the severance pay- was not in any collective agreements but the workers felt that there was the need for management to pay this when the management of the corporation changed. When the management refused to pay, the dispute should first have gone to a conciliation and then if no agreement was reached to compulsory arbitration.

In this case the grievance and dispute negotiating procedures were ignored by both parties involved in the dispute. Generally both collective bargaining and dispute negotiating procedures were either neglected or not used effectively at this period. Collective bargaining, for instance in the case of the Obuasi Miners, did not accommodate all the needs and interest of the workers. This is evident from the remote grievances of the miners.

This was equally true of most of the workers in the private sector where wage increases were sought through collective bargaining negotiations. During this period the NLC introduced wage restraint programmes as part of its policies to reduce inflation and this affected the ability of unions to negotiate for higher wages in the private sector. This, however, is not to mean that there were no gains in collective bargaining in the the private sector at all. Some unions in that sectors did benefit from collective agreements.

In the public sector the NLC in its attempt to restrain wages transformed the collective bargaining function of negotiating wages to salary-wage commissions appointed by the state to recommend wage increases. This meant that whenever any such commission made an award and it was accepted by the NLC the recommendations were imposed on the workers. The unionized workers resented such practices since in their view it was against free collective bargaining. The unions refused to accept wages recommended by such state appointed commissions and this resulted in strikes. Since the collective bargaining machinery could not effectively perform its function of seeking the interest of the workers there were always potential areas of conflict which from time to time exploded into strikes.

Another strategy which the NLC attempted to use to achieve industrial peace was repression or breaking of strikes. The NLC regime considered strikes to be the work of subversive elements. Strikes according to this view were motivated by the CPP

elements who wanted to overthrow the NLC regime. The NLC refused to accept the view that strikes were caused by dissatisfied workers in demand for better wages and conditions of work. The NLC did not accept this view because it refused to accept the view that workers had their own interest to pursue. To the NLC the interest of the nation had to be over and above all other sectional interests. Strikes according to this view were the work of unpatriotic citizens who wanted to undermine the NLC's rule.

This view of the regime is an indication that regardless of whether strikes are caused by subverters or not, the regime recognized that strikes were a force to be reckoned with. The NLC therefore felt threatened by this power of the trade unions and therefore used a variety of means including intimidation, terror, repression and harsh measures to undermine the power of the trade unions.

In addition the regime introduced fines and imprisonment terms for illegal strikes, which in effect meant any strikes. Unlike Nkrumah who punished the leaders of only the 1961 strike, the NLC punished all strike leaders for each and every strike. These measures, however, were not enough to eliminate strikes, in fact the incidence of strikes increased. Since the NLC did not hesitate to intervene in industrial disputes, it was much easier for industrial conflict to spread to the political arena.

The NLC was happy with its liberalization of industrial relations, but this did not mean that the regime did not have

any control over the trade unions. Certainly it had but it was much more discreetly done than its predecessor regime. The NLC subscribed to the corporate nationalist democratic sub-type model in respect to strike action. The trade unions in theory but not in practice were granted some autonomy and freedom but the state leaders did not respect their capacity to use all the power at their disposal as the regime was highly opposed to strikes. The NLC considered strikes to be destructive to the economy.

On the whole, then, none of the regime's policies aimed at curtailing strikes and other forms of industrial conflict was successful in that respect.

IV. INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THE BUSIA REGIME: 1969-1972

In September of 1969 the NLC held a general election in Ghana. This was the first stage in the process of gradually handing over power to an elected civilian administration. Of the large number of political parties jostling for a majority in this election, the three major ones were as follows;

1. The Progress Party (PP), led by Dr. Kofi Busia;
2. The National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), led by Mr. Komla Gbedemah and
3. The United Nationalist Party (UNP), led by Mr. Joe Appiah.

In this election the PP gained the majority, winning 105 out of a total of 140 seats in the Legislative Assembly (Parliament).¹ The National Alliance of Liberals became the official Parliamentary opposition, winning 29 of the remaining seats. The United Nationalist Party won 2 seats, and the rest of the seats went to other minority parties.

In October 1969, the NLC officially handed over power to the PP. The leadership of the PP consisted of some members of the old United Party (UP), banned by Nkrumah, together with some new politicians who appeared on the political scene after the NLC lifted the ban on party political activities. The PP was composed of men like J. Kwesi Lamptey, Victor Owusu, R.R.

¹ Damachi (1974, 90).

Amponsah, Jatoe Kaleo, S.D Dambo and William Ofori -Atta, all of whom had either been detained by Nkrumah and released after the 1966 coup, or who had returned from exile after the coup. The new politicians included men like Dr. W.G. Bruce-Konuah, Dr. Jones Ofori-Atta, Mr. K.G. Osei-Bonsu and Mr. J.H.Mensah (author of Nkrumah's Seven-Year Development Plan).

The NAL consisted mainly of former CPP enthusiasts who had become dissatisfied with Nkrumah's socialist inclinations after 1961. Gbedemah himself was the Minister of Finance in the Nkrumah cabinet until 1961, when he was dismissed by Nkrumah for an alleged embezzlement of public funds, and thereupon fled into exile.

Both the ruling and the opposition parties promised to provide an honest and democratic leadership, a promise which the electorate hoped would be fulfilled, given the leaderships' history of opposition to the Nkrumah regime. The PP regime, however, was confronted by enormous economic and socio-political problems that, among other things, affected its relationship with the trade union movement, and very often led to industrial conflicts. In order to clarify this relationship, we need first to examine the nature of the problems faced by the PP political leaders.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE BUSIA REGIME

The Busia regime inherited an enormous public debt (ie. internal and external debts) from the two previous post-independence regimes. The external debt consisted mainly of suppliers credits, loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and loans for the Volta River Authority to provide hydroelectric power for Ghana. The bulk of the external debt was owed to British and EEC countries but heavy sums of money were also owed to Spain, Israel, U.S.A., Yugoslavia, United Arab Republic, Australia and Japan.² The internal debt consisted of loans from the Ghana State Cocoa Marketing Board, the Bank of Ghana, Treasury bills, money raised from National Development Bonds, and Ways and Means Advances.³

The country's foreign exchange reserves had diminished drastically because of the debt repayment and servicing obligations, which outweighed the net foreign exchange earnings. In order to conserve some foreign exchange and to obtain relief from the external debt, the NLC had rescheduled the foreign debt repayment in 1966 and 1968, but these reschedulings had resulted in further repayment difficulties for the country.

Busia , therefore, concluded that without a new long-term arrangement for foreign debt repayment, it would be very difficult for Ghana to improve her balance of payments and

² Owusu (1972, 56) .

³ Ibid.

foreign exchange position. This also meant that it would be equally difficult to initiate a programme of rapid economic development to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population.

Busia, hoping to settle the unpleasant question of Ghana's foreign debt once and for all, appealed to Britain to assist Ghana in setting up an international consortium to arrange a long-term loan of 108 million pounds sterling, thus giving Ghana adequate time to honour its debts and promote economic growth. Consequently, at the 1970 rescheduling Conference, Ghana requested of its creditors a composite fifty-year refinancing loan, including a ten-year period of grace at a two percent rate of interest. (This was based on an Indonesian precedent). The object was to get the creditor governments to take over debts owing to private investors in the creditor countries, allowing Ghana to repay the governments over a longer period of time at a rate of interest well below commercial rates.*

Even though debts owed to the Eastern European nations had been rescheduled at favourable rates, the Western countries failed to give the Ghana what it had asked for. The Busia regime was optimistic that its pro-western orientation would bring about substantial economic benefits, but this optimism, at least in 1970, was shattered.

In spite of this set-back, the Busia regime was prepared to create an attractive economic atmosphere in order to attract foreign investors from abroad. It, therefore, continued with

* Ibid.

some of the austerity measures of the NLC in order to counter the balance-of-payments crisis. In addition, some measures were taken in an attempt to reduce inflation and imports. These policies unfortunately slowed down the economy and increased unemployment. The NLC had already laid off some civil servants and some employees of state corporations. By the time Busia took office, more than 64,000 jobs had been abolished.⁵ By 1970, however, unemployment was still rising and was estimated at between 350,000 and 600,000.⁶ The Busia regime, then, looked for ways and means to solve this problem without having to create new jobs in the sliding economy. To this end on November 18, 1969, it passed the Aliens Act (Aliens Compliance Order or The Residence Permit Compliance Order).⁷

Under this act, all aliens resident in Ghana without a permit were required to register within a fortnight: that is, specifically by December 2, 1969, or face deportation. The motive behind the passing of the act was both to ease the mass unemployment problem and relax the over-demand for social services while cutting down non-Ghanaian commercial activities, especially petty trading. By so doing, it was hoped to create opportunities for Ghanaians and thus boost the popularity of the PP.

⁵ Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour. (1969).

⁶ Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour. (1970).

⁷ Aliens Act (1969).

This legislation affected mostly aliens engaged in menial jobs, but it also affected Lebanese, Indians, Syrians and other African petty tradesman such as Nigerians, who had been the principal middlemen in trading in Ghana. In fact, the effect of this legislation on easing unemployment was minimal. The Ghanaian economy was further depressed as a result of the law as the aliens left the country and few Ghanaians were prepared to take over the menial jobs they had vacated.

As part of the Busia regime's economic programme, in August 1970 the Ghanaian Business Promotion Act was passed by which the regime was to assist in promoting Ghanaian-owned businesses. The legislation stipulated that all non-Ghanaian enterprises or companies should provide programmes of training for their Ghanaian employees in order for those workers to attain the skills necessary for the running of those enterprise. This legislation also stipulated that all categories of enterprises whose annual sales were NC500,000 or less were to be exclusively reserved for Ghanaian ownership. Among these categories were taxi services, bakeries, beauty shops, commercial transportation by land, printing, the manufacture of concrete blocks, advertising and publicity. The future reservation of further categories of business was left to the discretion of the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet.⁸ Again, this programme was aimed at creating viable employment opportunities for Ghanaians, and thereby making the

⁸ Business Promotion Act (1970).

PP popular.

Ghana's economic problems were aggravated by a drop in the world market price of cocoa in 1970. This drastically reduced state revenue, so much so that the state could not pay the cocoa farmers promptly with cash, even when state agents bought their cocoa at a very low price. This delay in payment discouraged the farmers from harvesting and marketing the cocoa quickly. It also encouraged them to smuggle the cocoa across the border into neighbouring countries such as Togo and the Ivory Coast, whereby they were paid promptly and could obtain much higher prices.⁹

It would seem that the Busia regime, at least according to Jeffries, came to power without any clearly formulated economic programme, and prior to the budget of July 30, 1971, it simply proclaimed its commitment to the 'privatisation' of the state sector. The PP leadership made its appeal to the people on the basis of an increase in national discipline. Vague avowals were made of its special concern for the poorest sections of the national community - the rural populace and the unemployed.¹⁰

In the July 1971 budget, however, the regime presented its economic policies in a more systematic manner. It identified its priority as rural development, with a greater amount of Ghana's resources to be directed towards that end. The rural development programme involved two phases, as follows:

1. In the first, emphasis was laid on the concerns of the rural

⁹ Owusu (1972, 59).

¹⁰ Jeffries (1978, 120).

populace;

2. The second was considered to be in the longterm general interest of both the rural and urban populace alike. ¹¹

The first policy consisted in the provision of pipe-borne water, electricity, and health centres for the rural areas so as to reduce the disparity in the standards of living between urban and rural dwellers. Jeffries argues that this was presented by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning as an essentially altruistic, compassionate policy, calling for sacrifice on the part of the politico-administrative elite as well as the urban dwellers. In reality, however, the motivation clearly had an element of electoral interest.¹² The PP's political support came mainly from the rural communities and it therefore wanted to solidify that support.

The second phase was meant to make Ghana self-sufficient in food to supply the rapidly increasing population. It was hoped that an abundance in the food supply would have the effect of reducing the cost of living in the urban areas. It was also aimed at gradually improving Ghana's balance of payment position by cutting down drastically the importation of foodstuffs. In order to achieve these objectives, the state leaders intended to construct more roads to link the urban to the rural areas so that food products could be transported to the urban areas. This would also improve communication links.

¹¹ Ibid, p.121.

¹² Ibid.

In the budget statement, the Finance Minister also expressed the desire to solve the unemployment problem by creating new jobs through the rural development programme. In addition, the regime hoped to create employment avenues by undertaking some housing projects, especially in the urban areas. This socio-economic policy was aimed at lowering the cost of living, and especially at offsetting the high rents, housing shortages and transportation costs in the urban centres. The Cabinet was to rely on this policy rather than wage increases to alleviate the economic difficulties of the lower paid workers. Attempts were also made to increase cocoa and other agricultural exports, by granting price incentives to farmers. In addition, some export substitution industries were also developed.

In spite of the efforts by the Busia Cabinet to improve the depressed Ghanaian economy, prices of consumer goods continued to rise, and inflation was also on the increase. The workers, therefore, were anticipating that it would consider raising wages in order to help them improve their standard of living. This anticipation was turned into frustration as the Cabinet did not commit itself to any such wage increases. During its first eighteen months in power, the Busia regime refused to consider raising the minimum wage, even though the economic position of the lower-paid workers continued to deteriorate.

In view of this, the Labour Minister, Dr. Bruce -Konuah, announced on May 9th 1971, the intention of the regime to close the widening gap between the lower and the higher income groups.

The Campbell Commission was appointed to look into the problems of the workers and the service conditions of the employees of the public service, with the aim of bridging this gap.¹³ The workers, at this time, anticipated that measures would soon be taken to relieve their situation. This anticipation of relief was turned into deeper frustration and mistrust of the regime's sincerity with respect to solving their problems when the Finance Minister failed to make public the recommendations of the Campbell Commission.

In the July budget, however, the Finance Minister, Mr. J.H. Mensah, speaking on behalf of the Busia regime, argued that wage increases to a level that would be able to alleviate poverty would be impossible without a proportionate increase in productivity. The Cabinet therefore felt justified in rejecting demands for wage increases. The Minister announced that upon a careful examination of the information and advice offered by the Campbell Commission, the regime had come to the conclusion that it would require a very large proportionate increase in the wages of the lower-paid public servants to compensate them for changes in the cost of living since the last increases in wages. Furthermore, similar increases would be required to close the gap between their incomes and those of higher-paid officers. The Minister continued that in view of the existing inability of the country to provide more food, housing, transportation and other essential goods and services for the workers, any increase in

¹³ Ibid.

wages would undermine the stability of the whole economy. It would also be self-defeating.¹⁴

The regime's budgetary policies showed little or no interest in worker problems. The Finance Minister further argued that a pre-condition for the success of the budget was above all industrial peace. Strikes in the mines, according to him, had been without any basis of genuine industrial grievance.¹⁵ He pointed out that the state in the past had lost a substantial amount of revenue due to strikes in the mines. The irony of this policy was that without considering the welfare of the workers, the Minister still hoped to achieve industrial peace in the country.

In the 1971-72 budget statement, the Busia regime announced the introduction of a National Development Levy. This was a form of taxation which required every working person to contribute to development efforts. This levy was introduced as an attempt to get enough funds to finance the expensive rural development programme. Under the budget, all workers earning less than NC34 per month were exempted from paying the levy. The levy was to be a form of proportional taxation scaled according to the individual's scale of income, rising from 1 percent tax on incomes below NC1,000 per annum, to 5 percent on the chargeable incomes of corporations. In addition to the levy, the higher-paid public officials were to give up some allowances for

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 122.

¹⁵ Mensah (1970).

car maintenance and entertainment, and the subsidy on government bungalows was reduced. As expected, the lower-paid workers protested since the levy affected them more than it did the higher-paid workers.

The motive behind this levy and its implementation, were similar to those of the compulsory savings scheme introduced by the Nkrumah regime in its July 1961 budget statement. The workers protested and resorted to strike action in 1961; likewise, a decade later, they were to do the same. The Busia regime's economic and socio-political priorities, then, to an extent influenced detrimentally the degree of industrial conflict in Ghana.

LABOUR LEGISLATION AND THE UNIONS

During the Busia era the TUC was still based on Bentum's structure, until its dissolution in 1971. Up until this time, it was still composed of an affiliation of national unions. Until 1971 there was no other centralized trade union movement in the country. The TUC structure was still monolithic.

Upon the assumption of office in October 1969, the Busia regime proclaimed itself to be in favour of free and democratic trade unionism in Ghana. In his address to the Third Biennial Conference of the TUC, Busia had this to say:

This congress makes history. For it is the first in the second republic, and for the first time you are meeting in a free and democratic Ghana. One of the important business you have ahead of you is the election of

officers. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that it is in the interest of my government that there should develop in this country a strong and free trade union movement. The government believes in true freedom, one condition of which is that it should not interfere with your elections. We desire a trade union movement that will work in concord, love and peace, a movement that will unite the workers to serve our nation's needs.¹⁶

This trade union policy of the Busia regime corresponded with that of the TUC itself, which had adopted a non-partisan line to party politics. The TUC had decided to remain neutral in party politics so as to be able to contribute fully to the development of the nation. It also wanted to maximize workers' benefits whilst at the same time keep out of trouble with the PP leadership. With such favourable policies formulated by the state leaders, the TUC was encouraged to continue its participation in the boards established originally by the Nkrumah regime which continued to operate during the NLC period. These included the National Advisory Council of Labour, the Manpower Board and the Social Security Board. The PP although diametrically opposed to the CPP's policies towards the trade unions, did not find it necessary to dissolve these boards.

The TUC leadership, in view of Busia's policy of cooperation with organized labour, adopted some resolutions at its 1970 Winneba Congress. Among other things, the following were adopted:

1. That the Congress takes this opportunity to reassure the Government that the congress will continue to explore the avenues for better harmonious relations amongst us so that

¹⁶ Busia (1969).

in the end labour conflicts can be turned into labour cooperation.

2. That the congress supports the government's rural development programme while also wishing that attention must be given to the improvement of the fishing industry.
3. That in considering the present high cost of living without any effective machinery to control the soaring cost of commodities, the Congress appeals to the government as a matter of urgency to raise the minimum wage from 75 pesewas to NC1.50 (one cedi fifty pesewas) per day.
4. That the Congress do call on the National unions to avoid illegal strike action as much as possible and instead adopt the laid-down procedure for settling all grievances. That the branch unions should be so educated to refer all cases that might culminate into strike action to their national unions for proper guidance and advice. That management should as much as possible prevent provocative attitudes and unnecessary delays in resolving problems and grievances of workers and cooperate with the trade unions to develop a healthy industrial atmosphere.¹⁷

Having adopted these policies, Busia was optimistic that the TUC would concur and cooperate towards national development by particularly avoiding strikes. Busia failed to realize that cooperation with the TUC would only be assured if the Cabinet sought to promote the interests of the workers.

¹⁷ Damachi (1974, 96-97).

By September 1971, the regime had still refused to grant the workers the minimum wage of NC1.50 which had been requested the year before. The TUC leadership became openly critical of the regime for its failure and unwillingness to bridge the income gap between the rich and the poor, and especially of its unwillingness to promote the welfare of the workers. This resulted in straining the then existing cordial relations between the regime and the TUC; an era of confrontation and antagonism was now under way. The workers now had no reservations about resorting to the use of strike action to back up their demands. The regime, anxious to maintain the industrial peace they considered to be vital for economic development, resorted to harsh and repressive measures to silence the union demands.

In spite of Busia's promise not to interfere in trade union politics, the Busia regime, like all other previous regimes in Ghana since independence, attempted to change the TUC leadership when it realized that it could not control Bentum. The Ministers were intolerant of the demands of Bentum and other trade union leaders for wage increases for the workers and were unable to influence Bentum to restrain those demands.

In 1970, in a bid to overthrow Bentum as Secretary-General of the TUC, the General-Secretary of the Petroleum and General Transport Workers' Union, Mr. Osei-Mensah, accused Bentum of being unconstitutional and interfering with the administration and constitutional rights of the national unions. At the TUC

Third Biennial Conference, Osei-Mensah carried out a vicious propaganda campaign against Bentum. Some right-wing PP Ministers such as Mr. Amponsah and Mr. Victor Owusu, endorsed Osei-Mensah's bid for Secretary-Generalship of the TUC. These two Ministers campaigned on behalf of Osei-Mensah against Bentum. It must be noted that it was Amponsah who, as a UP Member of Parliament, opposed Nkrumah bitterly on the the latter's trade union policies. Mr. Amponsah, as an opposition member, argued for voluntaristic trade unionism, and he was bitterly opposed to CPP militants filling the top positions. However, once he became a Minister under Busia, he seemed to favour PP favourites occupying the TUC leadership.

The PP leadership had supported Osei-Mensah because they thought that since Osei-Mensah originated from the home region of Busia, and was a supporter of the PP as well as a personal friend of its Ministers, it would be much easier to influence him than Bentum to adopt the line of the regime towards the trade unions. However, organized labour under Bentum had decided to remain politically neutral. Therefore this attempt by the political leaders to support their favourite candidate was interpreted by organized labour as an attempt to impose a union leader on them. Consequently, they voted 94 to 17 in favour of Bentum. With the defeat of Osei-Mensah, Busia disassociated himself from any attempt to impose party politics on the trade unions or to check the freedom of the trade unions. For the time being, the Cabinet reiterated its stand of cooperating fully

with Bentum.¹⁸

The Busia regime was now threatened by the power of the TUC after it had challenged their own position by voting overwhelmingly against their favourite candidate. It feared that the TUC was too free and autonomous and therefore too powerful for its activities and leadership to be controlled. This fear became even more manifest when in a speech the TUC leader remarked that Ghana's labour movement was not only powerful but also responsible. If it had not been responsible, the events immediately before the Third Biennial Conference of the TUC would have changed the course of history in Ghana.¹⁹ This statement, an obvious reference to the PP leadership's attempt to remove Bentum from the TUC leadership, in a sense, then, was an indication of a conflict of interest between the TUC and the regime.

At this juncture Busia and his Ministers decided to look for alternative means of controlling the unions. In September 1971, the PP regime passed Act 383, or the Industrial Relations Amendment Act of 1971. This act abolished the centralized structure of the TUC created by the 1958 act.²⁰

¹⁸ Workers Bulletin (1970,2).

¹⁹ Bentum (1970).

²⁰ Industrial Relations Amendment Act (1971). A detailed discussion of this act will be provided in the final section of this chapter.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Until the passage of Act 383, there were no major changes in the existing collective bargaining and grievance negotiating procedures during the Busia period. During this period, the political leadership reacted strongly to what it considered an insufficient commitment of labour and management to settling disputes. It frequently blamed the TUC leadership rather than management for industrial conflicts. The Ministers' lack of sympathy for the causes of labour protests and their isolation from leading unionists led to suspicion of the TUC, even when the latter supported the process of orderly negotiations.²¹

During this period the trade unions repeatedly complained about the dispute negotiating procedures and requested changes in that aspect of the labour law. The Labour Minister, however, refused to change the grievance and dispute negotiating procedures. During the period, the settlement of disputes was frequently delayed or stymied by difficulties in communication between the contending parties.²² Gray also points out that the lack of respect for the negotiating process shown by the Ministers served as a cue for some private sector firms. In addition, the PP Ministers, like the NLC members, encouraged some employers to take a 'hard line' against the unions.²³

²¹ Gray (1981 89).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid, p. 91.

In spite of these problems, some employers continued to honour the grievance and dispute negotiating procedures. Joint standing negotiating committees in some private firms, and even within the public corporations met regularly. The Ghana Employers Association, on behalf of the employers, also introduced a new procedure for independent mediation of disputes with the industrial relations department of the TUC, rather than government conciliation. In addition, the compulsory arbitration procedure continued during this period.

The number of bargaining certificates issued and the agreements in force also continued to rise during this period. As Table 1 indicates, between 1969-1970 40 new agreements were signed. At the same time, 247 bargaining certificates were issued. Similarly, 121 total agreements were in force. According to Gray, these significant achievements in collective bargaining was due in part to the fact that conflict-regulating contacts between private employers and unions were strong and could not be abrogated by the PP regime. Secondly, the regime itself recognized the usefulness of collective bargaining, as it issued collective bargaining certificates in 1971 for the first time to four public sector unions. In addition, the Busia regime, like all the other regimes after independence, continued the practice of issuing extension orders.²⁴ Despite the gains made by collective bargaining during this period, incidence of strikes remained at about the same high level as under the NLC.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 102.

PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT DURING THIS PERIOD

Upon the assumption of power in late 1969, Busia appealed to the TUC to help reduce and, if possible, eliminate strikes. The TUC was able to establish a cordial relationship with the regime since the Labour Minister made efforts to redeploy the 2,200 striking dockworkers who had been dismissed by the NLC. The Busia Cabinet, however, lost confidence in the TUC leadership as it proved unable or unwilling to reduce the potential for strikes. As indicated in Table 2, in 1970 and 1971 there were a total of 129 strikes, involving 68,182 workers and a loss of 278,203 man days. The TUC acted consistently with its official stand on strikes adopted under the NLC. The labour movement continued to persuade its officials to follow the official procedures for the settlement of disputes, arguing for peaceful industrial relations in the interest of the national economy. However, its leaders maintained that there could not be peace if certain anomalies within the system were not corrected.

The TUC leadership also argued that the dilatory and inadequate procedures for settling disputes were often deliberately exploited by management. This, together with the widening income gap between the lower-paid manual workers and the top-level salariat, were primarily responsible for the high level of strike action. Until these basic sources of conflict were remedied, the argument continued, it would be useless and

improper for the TUC leadership to take a sterner line against strikes.²⁵

As the real income of the workers continued to fall between 1970 and 1971, and the Busia Cabinet refused to respond to the demand for reduction of differentials, the TUC leadership revised its stand on the condemnation of strike action to criticism of the regime's inaction. Between June and August 1971, a number of strikes occurred in the country. These included: (1) Sanitary workers, (2) Public Works Department workers in Accra, (3) Dockworkers at the Tema Shipyard, (4) Railway Enginemen in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, (5) Electricity Corporation workers, (6) Post and Telecommunication workers, (7) State Transport Corporation workers and (8) State Construction Corporation workers.

All these strikes took place to back demands for increases in wages and benefits. The postal workers struck both before and after an agreement was reached, rejecting it on the grounds of its insufficiency. The construction workers struck against a three-year delay in implementing the promotion of experienced lower-level workers, and because of dissatisfaction with the high rate of unemployment in the country.²⁶ Other causes of strikes were wage arrears, protests against dismissals, and the refusal of management to sign previously agreed collective

²⁵ Jeffries (1978, 126-127).

²⁶ Kraus (1977, 39).

agreements and wage increases.²⁷ By the middle of 1971, relations between the Busia regime and the trade union movement had deteriorated badly.

In June 1971, the members of the Maritime and Dockworkers Union at the state-owned Tema Shipyard and Drydock struck to protest delays in the signing of a 1969 collective agreement. The Labour Minister claimed to have given an ultimatum to the workers that unless they returned to work, they would be dismissed. The TUC denied any information about that. However, the Minister ordered a lock out of the employees. When the TUC confronted the Minister, he admitted that there had been a misinterpretation of the ultimatum notice. The Minister nonetheless refused to consider unconditional rehiring of the dismissed employees but allowed that they should be considered alongside new recruits in hiring.

By July 1971, there were still more strikes, and the Ministers began to grow impatient of them. The extreme conservatives among the party members argued that the regime should dismiss the strikers and hire party supporters among the unemployed to replace them. Consequently, the Labour Minister issued a 'return to work-or-be dismissed' ultimatum to striking Public Works Department employees and the Railway Enginemen. When they failed to respond to the Minister's ultimatum, they were dismissed.

²⁷ Ibid, (1979, 144).

In all these strikes, the unions ignored the machinery for dispute settlement, arguing, as under the NLC, that it was too time-consuming. In spite of this position taken by the workers, a working committee of the TUC executive board agreed that most of those strikes would have been avoided had management used the existing grievance and dispute negotiating procedures, instead of trying to intimidate the strikers with dismissals.²⁸ It is clear that both the employees and the employers ignored the grievance and dispute negotiating procedures.

The Busia regime regarded the high incidence of industrial conflict as having adverse effects on the already crippled economy and as threatening to its own power base. It therefore resorted to heavy-handed anti-strike measures, as had all other previous regimes, with quick dismissals, or threats of police repression, and prosecution for unlawful assembly. The PP Ministers resorted to such harsh measures despite their so-called democratic policies. They did not find it necessary to probe into worker grievances to see whether a strike was justified or not. In spite of such heavy-handed measures adopted to deal with strikes, the workers were not intimidated away from using strike action when they felt it was necessary. Strikes, then, could not be curtailed either by such measures or by legislation.

The Busia Cabinet also often actively intervened in trade union disputes in an attempt to undermine the influence of the

²⁸ Gray (1981, 90).

TUC leaders. Such intervention occurred in the leadership dispute between the Railway Harbour Workers' Union (RHWU) and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICWU). In February 1969, the RHWU elected Mr. A. Quartey and M. Twum as its General-Secretary and National Chairman respectively. The NLC, which was then in power, dismissed both for allegedly being inefficient. The union therefore protested to the TUC, which declared the NLC's action arbitrary and succeeded in reinstating these officers. However, in the first TUC election during the Busia period both men, having become too aligned with the PP, were voted out of office by members of the RHWU. The two defeated men were so embittered that they decided to form a new union called the Railway and Harbour Employees' Union (RHEU) with an initial membership size of 1,000, and they applied to the TUC for affiliation.

The TUC was unwilling to recognize two separate unions for the same class of employees. This was against the 1958 Industrial Relations Act and its subsequent amendments. The TUC therefore went to court to stop the registration of the new union and for the meantime appointed a committee to try to mediate the dispute among the members of the RHWU.

At this juncture, however, the Labour Minister intervened, taking away from the TUC the sole authority to determine which unions should be registered. The Minister quickly passed a bill through Parliament guaranteeing the legality of the RHEU. The General Secretary of the RHEU was an active supporter of the PP,

which probably contributed to the Minister's eagerness to legalize the breakaway union.

Another major dispute in which the Labour Minister interfered involved the Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). Early in 1969, A.K. Tevie, the national chairman of the union, was not re-elected by the union. He therefore capitalized on worker discontent over the monthly dues rate. He formed the Manufacturing, Commercial and Allied Workers Union (MACAWU). He promised to pay more attention to worker interests and to push for a 50 percent increase in wages, and this won him an initial following of about 800 members. MACAWU, like RHEU, applied for affiliation with the TUC but was unsuccessful.

In order to acquire the legality of existence, MACAWU, on August 23, 1971, amalgamated with RHEU to form a new trade union movement called the Ghana Confederation of Labour (GCL). This was a precedent in Ghana, where since 1950 there had been only one national trade union movement. Some members of the Busia regime attended the inauguration ceremony on August 23, and the state-owned newspapers, the Ghanaian Times and the Daily Graphic, hailed the arrival of the GCL.

What the regime was attempting to do was to help the GCL to develop in such a way that it could challenge the TUC by drawing some members away from the TUC. In any case, the Labour Minister had to provide the legal assistance for the GCL to exist since, under the existing labour laws, only one trade union movement could legally exist in the country. Soon after its inauguration,

the leadership of the GCL started a campaign of attack on the TUC leadership, basing this at first on the ostentatious living of the TUC leadership. They also claimed that they had to leave the TUC because the TUC was not concerned with rank-and-file interests but rather with confrontation with the regime.

Soon after the formation of the GCL, the Labour Minister recognized the Cooperative Distillers' Workers' Union (CDWU), despite the fact that they produced an illegal gin called 'Akpeteshie', and the CDWU joined the GCL. The Minister did not bother himself about the illegality of the CDWU as long as they were prepared to join the rival labour movement and help towards its development. The Minister intended to build up the GCL against the TUC by any means, legal or illegal.

A few months after the formation of the GCL the Labour Minister suggested that the TUC amalgamate with the pro-regime GCL, but the TUC, now supported by the Parliamentary opposition party, refused. The suggestion of the Minister was viewed with skepticism, mistrust, and as a calculated attempt to break the united force of the TUC.

After all these incidents, the TUC still committed itself to its stand of political neutrality, but it felt that it needed allies to curtail the intervention of the Cabinet Ministers in trade union affairs. The TUC thus formed an alliance with the National Union of Ghana Students (NUOGS), which was equally disgusted with the regime's labour policies and was also sympathetic to the problems of the workers. This alliance was

aimed at forming a consultative council to seek solutions to the problems of the workers. The PP, realizing the potential force of the students in Ghana, considered this alliance as an attempt to bring down their rule. They therefore decided to clamp down on the TUC by rigorously asserting their authority over it.

Under Bentum, the TUC still pressed the political leaders to bridge the income gap and also took it upon itself to advise or make suggestions on national issues. It went as far as to suggest that the TUC should be consulted by the Finance Minister on the budget. This suggestion infuriated the Cabinet. Hostile attacks were made on the TUC, and the whole Congress was set on a confrontation course with the regime.

In view of this, Bentum threatened to support a public demonstration and strikes by workers against the National Development Levy. The Internal Minister responded by warning that any strike on the National Development Levy would be considered a political strike and therefore would be given special treatment. As the confrontation escalated, on August 17, 1971, the Labour Minister accused the TUC leaders of using trade unionism to achieve their own political ends. Dr. Bruce-Konuah then revealed the regime's intentions of amending the existing labour laws to remove all anomalies and to bring it in line with the provisions and spirit of the constitution²⁹ and thus normalize the relations between the unions and the regime.

²⁹ Jeffries (1978, 133).

The underlying purpose of this amendment was to dissolve the TUC, the political leaders having failed in their efforts to intimidate the TUC. By dissolving the centralized structure of the TUC, they were trying to off-set Bentum's popularity and cut the TUC down to a proper size and discourage the movement from acting like an unelected political opposition party.

The Ministers were still afraid that Bentum might possibly call a general strike. Therefore on September 8, 1971, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. N.Y.B Adade, in a bid to prevent any such action on Bentum's part, issued a notice freezing the assets of the TUC. This meant that if workers went on a 'general strike', the unions could not provide any money to support them. He also instituted police raids on the TUC headquarters and the homes of its executive leaders. Bentum was physically assaulted during one of these raids.

On September 9, 1971, Act 383, or the Industrial Relations Amendment Act of 1971, was passed hurriedly by the Legislative Assembly under a certificate of emergency. The vote was 86 to 21. The members of the ruling party, as the CPP had done before them, voted en masse for the amendment. The 1971 act handed the responsibility of determining the liabilities of the TUC to a board of receivers which had the responsibility for determining the liabilities of the TUC and for remitting to the member unions their share of the remaining funds. This board of receivers were to be paid from the Congress funds and could legally sell or transfer all TUC property.

Two days after the passage of the 1971 act, about 8,000 workers in Sekondi-Takoradi went on strike. This strike was in support of Bentum and the TUC leadership as well as in opposition to the budget, and in particular to the National Development Levy. Strikes and demonstrations also took place in Tema, Accra and the other regional capitals. This general strike lasted only a few days (September 12-17) because the regime took immediate action to suppress these strikes. For instance, 500 workers of the state-owned Transport Corporation were immediately dismissed to deter other workers from striking.³⁰ Jeffries maintains that the regime was able to break the strikes because of Bentum's failure to call and coordinate an official 'general strike'. As it was, Bentum's declaration of support for this demonstration against the regime's policies threw the responsibility of taking strike action unto the leaders of the individual unions, most of whom were unprepared.³¹

In spite of these setbacks, labour showed firm support for Bentum's opposition to the budget proposals. Almost all the national unions adopted resolutions to form a new centralized union movement with Bentum as its leader.³² The strikers demanded the suspension of the Development Levy and the recognition of Bentum as the TUC Secretary-General. The workers complained of the aristocracy of the PP leadership and supported

³⁰ Ibid, p.135.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid, p.136-137.

Bentum for speaking for the poor people in telling the 'aristocrats' what sacrifices they should be making. The strikers also supported the TUC's demand for reform of the wage structure. The 1971 'general strike', then, was the reaction of organized labour to the policies of the Busia regime.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA

In its relationships with the trade union movement, the Busia regime, like its two predecessors, was determined to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana. Consequently, the Busia regime adopted measures quite similar to those adopted by the two previous regimes to institutionalize industrial conflict. Prominent among these measures were:

1. Union cooperation and cooptation of union leadership.
2. Labour legislation.
3. Harsh and repressive tactics.

As already pointed out, the Busia regime faced enormous economic problems on its assumption of office. Nevertheless, it determined to embark on an expensive rural development programme in order to maintain its support from the rural community. The PP leadership anticipated that if it were to win any subsequent elections, then it had to satisfy the rural voters who were the party's stronghold.

The adoption of these rural development policies necessitated a new taxation policy for all working people in the

country, including both the farmers and urban workers. Since the rural dwellers were those who were to enjoy the overall benefits of the regime's economic policies, they had no cause to complain. The urban workers, however, resented the idea of being taxed through the National Development Levy to finance rural development programmes from which they could not hope to derive any immediate benefits.

The regime anticipated opposition from the urbanized workers but considered this opposition to be misguided since it was based, as they saw it, on self-interest. However, it adopted measures to offset such opposition. One such policy was Busia's declaration that PP regime was in favour of free and democratic trade unionism in Ghana. By this policy, Busia assured the trade union movement and its leadership that the state leaders would not interfere in the affairs of the movement. He further appealed to the TUC for cooperation in national development. Cooperation here again meant restraining the workers from resorting to militant actions, such as strikes, which would affect production and development.

As a gesture to Busia for his promise of non-interference in trade union affairs, the TUC leadership adopted policies aimed at achieving cooperation with the ruling political leaders. Having adopted these policies, however, Busia failed to heed the TUC leaders' warning that cooperation would only be effective if he sought to promote the interests of the workers. Busia failed to realize that the workers had their independent

interests to pursue. Moreover, he assumed that the TUC's promise of cooperation meant unflinching loyalty or subservience to the regime's policies. This was a misguided assumption.

This became evident as the workers resorted to strikes when the Busia Cabinet refused to increase wages. In almost every industry, the unions resorted to strikes in protest against the Ministers' unwillingness to see to their economic welfare. These strikes were probably justified. The Ministers were, perhaps, wrong in arguing that wage increases should be matched by proportional increases in agricultural production, since at least a couple of years is required for any agricultural programme launched to yield any results. What were the workers to do in the meantime - the period between the implementation of the agricultural programme and the period when the programme begins to yield results? To the regime, the workers were expected to bear their financial problems bravely during this period.

Busia and his Ministers relied too heavily on an optimism that the agricultural revolution programme would be successful. They failed to realize or tried to conceal their realization that the implementation of a programme does not necessarily guarantee that it will be successful. Since there was an obvious degree of uncertainty about the success of the agricultural programme, the Ministers should have given the benefit of the doubt to the workers by compensating them in the meantime. It must be noted that the basic foodstuffs in July 1971 cost about

50 percent more than in September 1969, when the regime was elected.³³ Many workers were finding it extremely hard to make a living.

Jeffries argues that, whether it is considered in terms of social justice or regarded as a precondition for raising productivity, some increase in the minimum wage was surely justified, even if it offered only relatively temporary relief. He further argues that it could have been financed by severe cuts in the salaries of higher-paid wage earners and the political elite.³⁴

How elitist, then, was the Busia regime? The regime exhibited significant elitist tendencies. In an attempt to deal with the reaction of the masses to PP elitism, just as Nkrumah had responded to mass reaction to CPP elitism in 1961 by firing some of his Ministers, Busia announced a reduction in his salary and that of his Ministers. (This is shown in Table 4.) To them, this was an example of their willingness to sacrifice for developmental efforts and as their contribution towards national development.

³³ Ibid, p124.

³⁴ Ibid.

TABLE 4

Annual Salary of Top Ranking Members of the Busia Regime

Position	Salary Before August 1971	Salary After August 1971	Reduction
Prime Minister K.A. Busia	18,000	12,000	6,000
Cabinet Minister	14,000	12,000	4,000
Ministerial Secretary or Deputy Minister	10,000	8,000	2,000
Regional Chief Executive	10,000	8,000	2,000

Source: Adapted from Jeffries (1978, 125).

If viewed uncritically, this seems to be impressive, but the question is - would Busia and his Ministers have been motivated to announce these reductions had the workers not protested? It is doubtful whether they would have, but the fact of the matter is that on its assumption of office, the Busia regime set up for themselves salaries and allowances almost twice as much as those enjoyed by their counterparts in the Nkrumah regime. The irony here is that when Busia was the leader of the opposition UP during the Nkrumah period, the UP criticized these same elitist tendencies in the Nkrumah Cabinet.

Whilst the Busia regime had refused to grant any wage increases to the workers, they were more than willing to grant

wage increases to other Members of Parliament (MPs). In May 1970, responding to demands for increases in the allowances of the MPs', they granted increases which led to the MPs' total pay pocket rising to 7,000 cedis annually. At the same time, the Busia regime characterized the demand by the Secretary-General of the TUC for increases in the minimum wage from 75 pesewas to NC1.00 per day as unrealistic and calculated to incite workers against the regime by making demands that were impossible to be met.

In March 1971, whilst the regime was again arguing that it could not afford any increases in worker wages, it announced that it had been spending 2.8 million cedis on the construction of 'rest-houses' (motels) in the various regions of the country for the leaders of the PP. One month later, it granted the privilege to judges of retirement on full salary.

In view of these actions on the part of the regime, the unionized workers perceived rightly that their interests had been neglected. And they felt justified in resorting to the use of their strike power to back their demands. Consequently, the cooperative relations between the TUC and the state leaders began to break down. Since the interests of the regime conflicted with the interests of the workers, the cooperative policy was ineffective in institutionalizing industrial conflict.

The Busia regime, eager to see the success of its economic policies, attempted to coopt the union leadership in order to

make sure that they followed its policies. Unlike its two predecessors, however, the Busia regime did not allocate political positions to trade union leaders. This is perhaps because Busia and his Ministers considered the TUC leadership to be their political competitors. On their assumption of office, the Busia Cabinet attempted to cultivate friendly and harmonious relations with Bentum and other TUC leaders. The TUC leadership, on the other hand, promised them cooperation as long as the interests of labour were seriously looked after.

The Busia Cabinet expected absolute cooperation from the TUC leadership. But the TUC leadership could not afford to cooperate absolutely with them to the neglect of the needs of the rank-and-file members. Therefore, in due course, the TUC leadership began to demand a wage increase for the workers. This infuriated the Ministers, who were not prepared to tolerate any wage increase proposed by the TUC leadership. The Ministers thus became skeptical of the willingness of Bentum and other TUC leaders to follow the policies of the regime. As a result of this the regime went against its declared policy of non-intervention in TUC affairs and attempted to change the TUC leadership. The Ministers wanted to elevate Mr. Osei-Mensah to the TUC leadership because they thought that Osei-Mensah would pursue the interests of the regime. They, however, were unsuccessful in this objective.

The PP leadership also attempted to intervene in the TUC leadership because it entertained some fears that Bentum was

still loyal to Nkrumah. They perceived Bentum as a Soviet-trained Communist who would use labour disputes to discredit the regime, or if possible to bring it down. This, in fact, was a misconceived perception of Bentum, who always took a moderate stand as far as strikes and wage demands were concerned.

At the July 1970 TUC congress, for example, the delegates asked for the minimum daily wage to be raised from 75 pesewas to NC1.50 pesewas, but Bentum was able to persuade them to let it stand at NC1.00. Later, as the rate of inflation rose, Bentum came to support the NC1.50 pesewas minimum wage, whilst pointing out that the actual rate should be NC2.50 pesewas, based on the regime's own figures. Arguing that the minimum wage should be based on a family of four - a man, wife, and two children, the actual figure needed to feed a family of four would be NC3.30 pesewas, whilst the existing minimum wage was 75 pesewas.³⁵

On numerous occasions in the past, Bentum had also successfully intervened in labour conflicts, and had fruitfully negotiated compromise agreements between employers and unions, while also being able to get strikers back to work. Some labour disputes that could possibly have developed into explosive political issues were cooled off by Bentum, a skilled negotiator who conscientiously followed the new constitution of the TUC.

As Secretary-General of the TUC, Bentum neither pursued a radical political course nor a subversive one. He steadfastly

³⁵ Ibid, p.129.

maintained a neutral political stand, and Busia and his Ministers could have gained enormously from his constructive criticisms. But they were intolerant of suggestions and criticisms coming from the TUC. Confronted with this intolerant and intransigent attitude, Bentum was inclined to openly attack the policies of the Busia Cabinet.

Bentum, as the chief executive of the TUC, became a leader of a powerful, but unofficial, opposition party. This was probably the major source of the Ministers' suspicion of him and hostility towards him, whether he was a Communist or not. Jeffries describes the power of the TUC under Bentum in the following terms:

The prevalence of urban unrest at these policies, and Bentum's immense prestige with the rank-and-file of the labour movement, made him capable of transforming the TUC into what was less a pluralist pressure group than a powerful oppositional party or movement. Certainly this tendency in the TUC presented a far more serious challenge to the standing of the regime than that posed by the official parliamentary opposition whose leaders were generally as detached from the urban masses as those of the Progress Party.³⁶

Jeffries goes on to argue that it was partly due to this lack of an effective, responsive opposition party that many urban dwellers looked to the TUC to perform the function of expressing 'mass' grievances. The populist tendency of the TUC ideology reflected sensitivity to this pressure.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid, p. 131.

³⁷ Ibid.

Considered from this perspective, then, the TUC was a force to be reckoned with in the Ghanaian political sphere. It had the real strength of a political party and could engage any regime in a power struggle. It is this threat which the Ministers wanted to minimize by pushing PP supporters into the TUC leadership. By so doing, they hoped to curtail strikes and avoid political competition with organized labour. However, the Ministers' attempt was unsuccessful in this respect and it therefore had to turn to other means to control the TUC and thus attempt to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana. The Busia regime turned to the use of legislation to support those trade unions that seceded from the parent unions to form rival trade unions. It backed these secessionist trade unions as long as their leadership promised to follow its policies and instructions. The regime supported such secessionist trade unions irrespective of the fact that some of them were violating the existing labour legislation. Its policies in this area were clearly motivated by self-interest. During this period, the PP leadership needed rival organizations that would be able to break the TUC monopoly of influence over the workers. The TUC was becoming too powerful and thus threatening to the 'stability' of the regime. Rival trade union centres as well as rival trade union organizations were needed to split up the TUC membership and thus minimize the TUC's influence over the workers.

This policy affected the solidarity of the trade unions and the workers in the 1971 'general strike.' The strike was unsuccessful partially because of the division in the workers front. The boycott of the strike by rival and splinter unions effectively divided the ranks of the workers, and reduced the morale of the strikers. In the September 1971 strike, therefore, the PP regime's tactic of 'divide and rule' as a means of controlling the workers was successful; however, it was not sufficient to eradicate strikes.

In an attempt to eradicate strikes, the Busia regime passed an amendment to the existing labour laws in 1971. This legislation dissolved both the TUC and GCL. In addition, the constituent unions of the GCL were disbanded since the state leaders no longer needed them to compete against the TUC. The only unions that remained in existence were the national trade unions that formally constituted the TUC.

The 1971 act did not make any major changes in the existing collective bargaining machinery. In fact, the Busia regime continued with most of the provisions of the existing industrial relations. It changed only those aspects of the existing labour laws which were against its interests. As under the 1958 act, the 1971 act gave the Labour Minister control over the collective bargaining process in cases of a deadlock in negotiations. It also gave the Labour Minister the power to break any strikes considered to endanger the national economy, the country's security and the defence or the lives and property

of substantial numbers of people.

Under the 1971 act whenever there was an industrial dispute or strike, the Labour Minister could issue an order requiring the dispute to be negotiated. This order was binding on both the employers and the employees concerned in the strike or lock out. Such a settlement was to override the provisions of any existing contract or collective agreement. Under the law, this was to be preceded by an order requiring the strike or lock out to be subjected to a ninety-day cooling-off period which might be extended indefinitely in order to facilitate the negotiation of the dispute. These two orders in effect amounted to a complete ban on strikes and lockouts.³⁸

What this section of the law meant in practice was that the Labour Minister was now legally free to intervene in any strike or lock out which threatened the economy of the nation. It is important to note here that the act did not indicate which strikes would constitute a threat to the national interest and which would threaten the security and defence of the nation. Since every strike to some extent affected the lives of the people, be it by way of hardship or otherwise to them, it may be concluded that the legislation in practice could be applied to all strikes. Thus the right to strike was effectively taken away from the unions as the state leaders equated strikes with subversion.

³⁸ Industrial Relations Amendment Act (1971).

The 1971 act stated that every trade union that was certified for collective bargaining could bargain collectively not only on behalf of employees specified in the certificate but also on behalf of every employee in the same industry. This guaranteed the benefits of collective agreements to every member of the industry, whether he was a union member or not. This provision discouraged union membership since workers could enjoy the benefits of unionism without paying dues and joining the union. This led to a decline in union membership and consequently in the financial strength of the unions.

The 1971 act also abolished the compulsory check-off of union dues introduced in the 1958 act. Under the 1971 act, an employer could deduct union dues from an employee's wages only if the employee had 'contracted in' in writing to become a union member. Dues were to be paid to the individual unions, instead of to a central organization as under the 1958 act. The elimination of the compulsory check-off of union dues made it extremely difficult for the unions to obtain funds for their operations. The financial independence of the TUC which had existed since the passing of the 1958 act was almost ended. Without enough money, the unions could not carry on many of their activities and therefore lost considerable power and influence in Ghana.

The 'contracting in' clause introduced by the 1971 amendment act was aimed at reducing the membership size of the unions. Since most of the Ghanaian workers were illiterate, they

found it difficult to 'contract in' in writing, even if they wished to do so. Consequently, they did not bother to 'contract in'. This was the direct opposite of the Nkrumah policy whereby the workers had to 'contract out', a policy aimed at compulsory unionism. In Busia's case, the 'contracting-in' procedure reintroduced the universal 'open shop' which had ceased to exist in Ghana with the passage of the 1958 act. Union membership now became voluntary for all workers ('open shop'). The motive behind this policy was to weaken the strength of the unions, for the smaller the union membership, the less impact the unions would have on national affairs. The Labour Minister could then argue that the unions represented a minority of the workers. Their demands could therefore be ignored and/or repressed much more effectively. In this respect, then, the regime was successful; union membership declined drastically.

Under the 1971 act, the Labour Minister could deny certification to any union that he considered did not meet 'the spirit' of the act.³⁹ This was the same as the 1958 legislation, where the CPP Minister could deny certification to a union. It is worthwhile noting that the legislation did not specify what the 'spirit of the act' meant. This, in fact, was a means of controlling unions which refused to follow the regime's policies. A political element was thus introduced into the collective bargaining process.

³⁹ Damachi (1974, 102).

According to Gray, the law passed ostensibly to protect the rights of individual workers could easily be used by the Labour Minister punitively, as it legitimized the non-recognition of unions for a wide variety of causes. In theory, even a minor infraction might arouse the critical eye of the Labour Minister as all existing unions had to re-register within six months and thus subject themselves to the Minister's scrutiny.⁴⁰ In reference to the 1971 act, Kraus maintains that if its rationale was liberal, its intention was punitive.⁴¹

The 1971 labour legislation was aimed at returning the trade unions to the colonial structure of a multiplicity of trade unions without any strong central coordinating body, of financial insolvency, and of political subservience. To Busia and his Ministers, such a structure was necessary for them to be able to oversee the activities of the unions as well as to be able to use them as instruments for national and political development. But after a decade of the centralized structure, the trade unions were well developed and it was too late to force them back to a position of absolute weakness.⁴²

Seen in this respect the 1971 act was not sufficient to curtail strikes in the country. The defiance of the workers to the legislation and the subsequent 'general strike' bear testimony to the view expressed by the former Labour Minister

⁴⁰ Gray (1981, 50).

⁴¹ Kraus (1979, 145-146).

⁴² Damachi (1974, 107).

under Busia, Mr. Jateo Kaleo, that strikes are human problems and they cannot be solved by legislation.⁴³ The Busia regime also adopted harsh and repressive measures either to break up strikes or to intimidate strikers. This regime, more than either of the two previous regimes, was more cautious in the use of such measures. Since the PP needed the votes of the people to remain in power, it did not want to risk antagonising labour to the point of losing the votes of even its supporters within the labour movement. However, the state leaders argued that it was necessary to use such measures in dealing with political strikes. The Busia regime was just more subtle in the use of such means for institutionalizing industrial conflict in Ghana.

On the whole, the Busia regime was almost unsuccessful in its attempts to institutionalize industrial conflict. But this attempt involved the regime in a power struggle with the organized labour movement. This in turn had the effect of spreading industrial conflict from the industrial relations arena to the entire political system. Damachi maintains that the trade unions contributed greatly to the overthrow of Busia by persistently politicizing and indoctrinating the workers and the general population against the regime's policies. Their denunciation of the Ministers created mistrust of the regime in the country, and consequently precipitated a military coup in

⁴³ Jeffries (1978, 127).

January 1972 which overthrew the Busia regime.**

In the attempt by the Busia regime to control the unions and use them to promote economic development, the regime in fact turned out to be the losers. They were overthrown, and the TUC emerged victorious from its struggle with them. This is evidenced by the fact that the new military regime under Colonel Acheampong, in need of legitimization, quickly restored the TUC, promised to reconsider the devaluation of the cedi and abolished the Development Levy.

** Damachi (1974, 107) .

V. PATTERNS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT: 1957-1972.

The intention of this chapter is to give a comparative analysis of the various methods adopted by the regimes to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana. It considers how the trade union movement used a populist ideology to resist those actions aimed at preventing the TUC from using its ultimate and most troublesome weapon - the power to strike. This chapter also attempts to summarize the results of this study. This requires reference to the theoretical propositions and issues discussed in the introductory chapter as well as the empirical analysis offered in chapters two, three and four. In conclusion, an attempt will be made to present a systematic set of theoretical statements derived from this study.

In Ghana all the post-independence regimes attempted to neutralize the strike power of the trade unions because as far as they were concerned the interests of the trade unions conflicted with theirs in far too many ways. All three regimes considered their prime objective to be the promotion of economic development. They thought this was necessary to improve the socio-economic conditions in the country and prevent political agitation against the regimes. A fairly successful economic development programme therefore meant that the political leaders would be able to consolidate their positions. In the firm belief that wage increases would only help to increase inflation the political leaders during this period were vehemently against any

increase in wages. They often refused to grant the demands for wage increases coming from organized labour. These demands seemed absolutely unrealistic and illogical to the political leaders, and severe measures were adopted to crack down on the trade unions. They therefore became the strongest opponents of the trade union movement in Ghana.

It is worthwhile noting that during the entire period the most frequent cause of labour protest was demand for increases in wages. Other causes of strikes were the establishment of state wage-salary review commissions to make recommendations to the regimes for possible wage increases. The workers, regarding this as antithetical to collective bargaining, refused to accept the recommendations of these commissions since they almost always set up a ceiling on wage increases.

From 1966-1971 the workers waged strikes to protest against the rising unemployment which was a direct product of the regimes' economic policies and also in support of their demands for severance pay after lay-off. In addition the workers struck to express dissatisfaction with working conditions and with managers' attitudes and behaviour towards local union leaders. The causes of strikes from 1966-1972, unlike during the Nkrumah period were directly related to the workers' occupational milieu. This may be due to the fact that during the Nkrumah period all avenues for worker protests had been closed by the regime whilst during the NLC and Busia periods, because of the liberalization of political life, the workers had been able to

voice their frustration and resentment much more easily.

All the post-independence political leaders were eagerly in search of foreign capital investments into the economy. They therefore wanted to create a conducive atmosphere in the nation for foreign investment. This included harmonious labour relations without labour protests or strikes. Since they anticipated opposition from organized labour to their policies but considered such opposition to be misguided they attempted to coopt the union leadership to their side in order to eventually win over the workers.

In pursuit of this objective, the Nkrumah regime passed the 1958 act which created a centralized structure for the labour movement under the control of the CPP. In order to ensure full control of the TUC it appointed CPP supporters, at least in name, to the TUC leadership. This meant that its policies regarding the TUC could be effectively implemented. Also, Nkrumah appointed militant trade unionists to ministerial and other influential and prestigious positions. However, his manoeuvres to coopt union leaders did not result in the absolute subservience of union leaders to the CPP regime. This was evident in the case of both Tettegah and Bentum who, even though appointed as Ministers under Nkrumah, still stood up for the welfare of the workers. At a significant point in his tenure as leader of the TUC Tettegah moderated his support of the CPP's policies in order to represent the employment and welfare interests of the workers more fully. This came with the

realization that his popularity was declining among the unionized workers as a result of his devotion to the CPP.

When Tettegah called for increases in wages for workers and their meaningful participation in national decision making bodies, and thus in national development, the CPP leadership removed him from the top TUC position to head the Workers' Brigade. When his popularity increased with the Workers' Brigade he was transferred back to the TUC, but a CPP supporter was appointed as his deputy to act as a 'watchdog' over Tettegah. When it later became clear that Mangus George could not restrain Tettegah's influence and popularity the CPP leadership in 1964 created a new post, that of National Secretary of the TUC, and appointed a protege of Nkrumah-Kwaw Ampah- to fill that post. The post of Secretary-General was subordinated to the post of National -Secretary. Consequently Tettegah lost his influence and control over finances and became just a member of the administrative personnel in the TUC. Under Ampah, the TUC was firmly incorporated into the party structure and the TUC was assigned the task of spreading party propoganda and socializing the workers to African socialism. It was hoped that this would eventually make them party supporters and discourage them from resorting to strike action. The state leaders thus expected the TUC to play the role of helping to promote economic development.

The initial appointment of Bentum to the TUC leadership after the 1966 coup was motivated by self-interest of the NLC members. When later Bentum failed to support fully the interests

of the NLC, they attempted to push Bentum out and replace him with their favourite candidate, Alex Hamah. Their attempt, however, was futile. The NLC, like its predecessor appointed TUC leaders to governmental positions. The aim of all these actions was to prevent strike action from the organized labour force.

The PP, unlike the CPP, did not incorporate the TUC into the party structure. However, it continued the process of democratization of the trade unions started by the NLC. The PP did not initially appoint any of their favourites to the TUC, but it appealed to organized labour to exercise restraint in the use of strike action. When the TUC leadership failed to cooperate with the PP to the fullest, the PP leadership attempted to push Bentum out and replace him with their favourite, Mr. Osei-Mensah. They resorted to that action because they thought that it would be easier to influence a TUC leader who was a member of the party than it had been to influence Bentum. Having failed in this effort, it then promised to cooperate with Bentum since Bentum was still committed to condemning strikes; he favoured the alternative strategy of securing benefits for the workers by the legitimate means of negotiations. When Bentum later abandoned this position in favour of striking, the PP Ministers attempted to promote a rival trade union movement, the GCL, to break the monopoly of the TUC.

All three regimes relied on labour legislation to control the labour movement by a variety of rewards and sanctions. The

1958 act created a compulsory check-off of union dues; by this means the TUC became financially stable, but at the same time the CPP regime could withhold money to any union that failed to abide by its wishes.

The Nkrumah regime also introduced a contracting out policy to enforce compulsory closed-shop trade unionism. Under these arrangements it was impossible for any wage-earner who was a non-union member to obtain a job since only union members could be hired for any vacant position. In 1958 it passed the Labour Registration Act which provided for compulsory registration of workers.¹

Under the act the Minister of Labour could require persons seeking employment to register with the labour office and obtain a registration card. It could be an offense for an employer to hire a worker who did not possess such a card. This act was meant to ensure that unemployed workers could only get jobs through the labour office. In effect this act ended the process whereby unions could refer unemployed workers to employers, since the unions were now legally bound to refer job seekers to the labour office. This act thus prevented a worker from depending entirely on the union for employment since the regime alone now had the power of finding a worker a job if ever he was unemployed.

According to Damachi this was a controlling device created to prevent the workers from giving their loyalties to the TUC. The CPP leadership was afraid that the TUC might become too

¹Labour Registration Act(1958).

powerful and popular in such a way that it could threaten its influence and power positions.² The labour office was also to check recalcitrant workers who refused to support or follow the regime's policies. If a worker hoped to get a job from the labour office he either had to be a party supporter or at least not an opponent of its policies. In 1962, however, the party moved to assert its full control over the workers by withdrawing the labour registration cards. These were replaced by party cards to ensure loyalty to the CPP and minimize any possible TUC influences.

During the Nkrumah period strikes were made extremely difficult, if not impossible, as the state leaders established firm control over the unions. The dispute and grievance settlement machinery as specified under the labour laws involved compulsory arbitration in the case of a deadlock in negotiations. This made it almost impossible for workers to strike or management to lock out employees. The workers could strike only if the Labour Minister refused to order compulsory arbitration. This, in any case, was very unlikely. In practice then, the workers could not strike. The 1958 act was clearly aimed at reducing the frequency of strikes and, if possible, to curtail them altogether.

The NLC, like the CPP, also used labour legislation to control the trade unions. In spite of their so-called liberalization policy, the NLC was cautious toward and even

² Damachi (1974, 35).

against strike action from the organized labour movement. The NLC considered the TUC to be too powerful and a threat to its own power position. In order to minimize this threat from the TUC it passed Decree 134 which abolished compulsory unionism. Decree 134 made trade unionism voluntary in Ghana, leading to a decline in membership and, consequently, membership dues, making the trade unions financially weak. In practice fewer members meant less influence by organized labour on the workers. Decree 134 was in fact, anti-labour and was intended to keep strikes down.

The Busia regime, like its two predecessors, also used legislative instruments to attempt to control the trade unions. Both the PP and NLC refused to disband the TUC centralized structure inherited from the CPP because they needed the TUC to control workers in order to achieve their economic targets. Having failed to achieve this objective, the PP, responding to the threat of a 'general strike', moved quickly in 1971 to pass legislation dissolving the TUC. This 1971 Industrial Relations Amendment Act only allowed trade unions registered by the Labour Minister to operate. All existing unions had to re-register and face rigorous official scrutiny every six months. This was a control device to wipe out unions that failed to respond favourably to the regime's policies.

The 1971 act was anti-labour in many ways. To further reduce the membership size of the TUC, the legislation strengthened voluntary unionism. Workers who desired to be union

members were required to 'contract in', and the check-off of union dues was to apply to only those who 'contracted in' in writing. This adversely affected the financial and numerical strength of the trade unions. The act limited the use of union dues to only 'union activities' which excluded the paying of strike money to striking workers and the financing of a political cause. These measures ensured that the trade unions would be financially incapable of sustaining a prolonged strike. Similarly the unions could not involve themselves in political activities detrimental to the popularity and support of the PP. Since the union leaders had always relied on guaranteed check-off of union dues, they had no expertise in union organizing and recruitment and therefore had extreme difficulty recruiting new members after the passage of the 1971 act. In effect the 1971 act dealt a crippling blow to the power of the TUC. With the TUC dissolved, the unions had no centralized coordinating agency to organize strikes.

Even after the passage of the 1971 act the PP, like the NLC, refused to heed the workers call for a repeal of the procedures of compulsory arbitration and conciliation under the existing labour laws. The PP feared that a repeal of those sections of the labour laws could lead to frequent strikes by workers. They were therefore determined to maintain the legislation to hold down strikes. In addition, they introduced fines and terms of imprisonment for 'illegal strikes', which in reality meant any strikes.

Under all three regimes collective bargaining did not play any important role in improving the working conditions and welfare of the workers. This was because collective bargaining agreements were not effectively administered during the entire period. Some collective agreements signed were not implemented by the employers, who always doubted the trade unions' ability to enforce compliance. It is important also to realize that during the Nkrumah period collective bargaining was limited to the small, foreign-controlled, private sector. It was not until 1960 that collective bargaining was introduced in the public sector. Prior to this time collective bargaining was entirely prohibited in the public sector. This also meant that strikes were also prohibited in the public sector. It can be inferred from this that workers interests were not sufficiently represented by collective bargaining and therefore they resorted to 'illegal strikes' whenever they felt these were vital to enforce their demands.

When all other means of controlling the strike power of the TUC failed, as organized labour proved unwilling to heed the advice of the political leaders to refrain from strike action, all three regimes resorted to repressive and harsher measures to curtail the trade unions' strike power. During the 1961 strike Nkrumah relied on state power - the police and militia - to intimidate the strikers and neutralize the strike. This tactic continued during the NLC and PP periods when officials of the

police special branch attended trade union meetings.³ The NLC also sanctioned the dismissal and shooting of strikers. Using similar tactics the Busia Ministers mobilized state power to intimidate the trade unions. For instance, in 1971 the TUC headquarters were raided by the police force and some TUC officials were assaulted by the police. By these actions the regimes attempted to prohibit or curtail strikes in Ghana. In spite of these measures strikes continued both in the private and public sectors. The strikes spread through the entire political system as the state leaders intervened to repress the strikes. This in effect was an indication that institutionlization of industrial conflict was far more complex than first perceived by the political leaders in Ghana.

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN GHANA

It may be appropriate to examine why all the various measures adopted by all the regimes to institutionalize industrial conflict failed. Why, in spite of the repressive measures, the promise of cooperation and the attempts to coopt the trade union leaders, did the trade union members still resort to strikes? Perhaps an answer to this question may be found by examining the ideology of the trade union movement in Ghana.

Since the political leaders did not recognize the interests of organized labour as legitimate the trade unions faced a lot

³ Kraus (1977).

of opposition from them in the pursuit of the interest of the union members. In this regard the trade union movement developed a form of populist ideology - urban populism - to help it fight for the acquisition of benefits for its membership.

There has been a tendency on the part of the regimes in Ghana to try to eliminate all popular movements that offer potential opposition. These include all opposition parties. With respect to the trade union movement, however, all the regimes have been unsuccessful in that regard. There has been the tendency, then, to live with the unions but to keep a close eye on them. Organized labour, on the other hand, realized their important role in society and had in many cases championed the cause of the masses by criticizing the wealth, authoritarianism and corruption of the political leaders from a populist perspective.

In a systematic analysis, Richard Jeffries has examined the populist tendencies of the trade union movement in Ghana. His study of the populism of Ghanaian trade unionism is predicated on Peter Worsley's definition of populism as: 'A style of popular participation rather than a systematic ideology.'⁴ This view of populism, however, involves subscription to two cardinal principles:

1. The supremacy of the will of the people over every other standard of traditional and other institutions, and over the

⁴ Worsley (1970) see also Jeffries (1975, 265-6), Jeffries (1978, 56).

will of other strata - Populism in this case identifies the will of the people with justice and morality.

2. The desirability of a direct relationship between people and leadership unmediated or certainly unobstructed by institutions. Such styles of popular participation are generally accompanied by a high valuation of the virtues and cultures of the uncorrupted simple folk, a converse distrust of the wealthy, over-educated, idle, parasitic and fundamentally urban elite.⁵

Jeffries explains that those who subscribe to the populist ideology see the social structure in dualistic terms of an elite-mass division and opposition.⁶ The trade union movement in Ghana, however, exhibited an urban form of populism which was consistent with the following definition of populism by Peter Wiles:

Populism is any creed or movement based on the notion that virtues reside in the simple people, who are the overwhelming majority. Populism is moralistic rather than programmatic. Logic and effectiveness are less valued than correct attitude and spiritual make-up. This means that unusually much is demanded of leaders in respect to their dress, manner and way of life. Populism is in each case loosely organized and ill-disciplined. It is a movement rather than a party. This ideology is loose and attempts to define it exactly arouse derision and hostility. Populism is anti-intellectual. It is strongly opposed to the establishment, and to any counter-elite as well. It arises precisely when a large group, becoming self-conscious feel alienated from the

⁵ Jeffries (1975, 265-266) see also Jeffries (1978, 56) and Worsley (1964).

⁶ Jeffries (1978, 56).

centres of power.⁷

Almost all of the above characteristics of populism were evident in the trade union movement in Ghana from 1957 -1972. The union movement in Ghana, in addition to its pursuits of the interest of the workers, had also on some occasions fought for better conditions for the masses. (Masses is here defined to include non- unionized workers, the unemployed and the farmers living mostly in the rural areas.) In this case the trade union movement saw the interests of the masses as central to all other concerns. The desirability of direct relationship with the leaders was evident in their persistent demands to participate in national decision making bodies. The trade unions also criticized the immorality of political leaders by making reference to their corruption. They also protested on numerous occasions against growing elitism on the part of the political leaders in Ghana. The trade union movement in Ghana during this period seemed to represent the voices of the people. However, it was not a political party, but resembled a movement of popular opposition to the ruling group.

The ideology of the trade union movement was fairly loose and not well defined. Indeed, some unions exhibited the populist ideology more than others. The Sekondi -Takoradi Railway and Harbour Workers' Union was more populist than most other trade unions in Ghana. This was evidenced by the fact that this union started and organized both the 1961 and 1971 'general strikes'.

⁷ Wiles (1969, 166-167) .

Both strikes had some similarities in so far as they were protests against the 1961 and 1971 budget proposals of the Nkrumah and Busia regimes respectively. The workers protested against the imposition of excessive taxation on the masses. Both strikes were also motivated by the populist tendency of the unions, with the workers showing their resentment to the growing elitism, corrupt and ostentatious living of the party officials under both Nkrumah and Busia.

The populist ideology originated from the important role played by the trade unions in the nationalist struggle especially in the 1950 'general strike' which led indirectly to the achievement of independence by the CPP. The workers had hoped that independence would help create a more egalitarian society offering progress and benefits to all. This hope was shattered as a result of the elitism, corruption and self-seeking of the post-independence political leaders.

The CPP, for instance, did not take any serious steps to reduce the inequalities in the wage and salary structure in Ghana; neither did it meaningfully improve the economic and social conditions of the masses. The workers who were most adversely affected by the political leaders' corruption saw the excessive wealth of the state leaders as the direct cause of their impoverishment. The 1961 'general strike', then, was a protest by the rank-and-file members against this political development. The strike brought home to Nkrumah the growing elitist, corrupt, oligarchic and authoritarian tendencies of the

regime and consequently the growing gap between the political leaders and the rest of the population. Nkrumah responded to this mass reaction by disciplining some leading party members. A number of Ministers were dismissed and suspended from party membership.

The 1961 strike surprised the CPP since they thought that their cooperative relations with the unions could prevent any such 'general strike' from taking place. The strike made it clear to them that cooperation did not go any further than the TUC leadership. The rank-and-file members were against any form of cooperation that was against their interests. Tettegah correctly perceived this and therefore revised his view of cooperation with the CPP to fight for more benefits for the rank-and-file members. This stand by Tettegah, however, cost him dearly for he was demoted by Nkrumah.

Under the NLC the TUC pursued even more populist policies. Bentum, as TUC leader, built up a responsible trade union movement and he won the admiration and respect of the majority of the unions' rank-and-file members. Bentum, as a member of the TUC executive board under Ampah, criticized the degree of CPP central committee influence over the major decisions concerning the administration of the TUC. Furthermore, he criticized the increasing detachment of the TUC leaders from the rank-and-file members. Both factors together in Bentum's view prevented the union leaders from seeking the interests of the workers.

Bentum's achievement, as a populist TUC secretary-General, has been eloquently expressed by Jeffries as follows:

The steadily-pursued policy of Bentum was to democratize the structure of the national labour movement, and assert its independence of government and of party, while seeking to unite the movement around the concept of acting as the 'watchdog' or the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the society. Under his leadership, the TUC projected itself as a kind of loyal but radical opposition, pressing for egalitarian reforms in the national wage and salary structure, and articulating policy alternatives on virtually the entire range of governmental issues. It tended to adapt its policies on strike actions, alternatively condoning and condemning them, according to government's responsiveness on the general issues of socio-economic and political reforms.⁸

Bentum was very successful in the pursuit of this objective and acquired the reputation as a responsible trade union leader genuinely interested in the rights and welfare of labour. The PP Labour Minister Dr. Bruce-Konuah, commenting on Bentum's popularity among the unionized workers said:

'You ask a worker which union he belongs to, and nine times out of ten he replies simply, "Bentum's TUC"'.⁹

During both the NLC and PP periods the relationship between the regimes and the TUC was cordial in the initial years, but this gradually dissolved into confrontation and hostility. The trade unions protested against the anti-union policies of the NLC and sometimes went on strike to denounce it and its insensitivity to the plight of the masses.

During the Busia period, Bentum's persistent attacks on the unwillingness of the PP political leaders to improve the rapidly

⁸ Jeffries (1975, 273-274).

⁹ Jeffries (1978, 108).

declining financial position of the workers in the face of the PP leadership's growing elitism and accumulation of wealth, characterized him as determined and charismatic trade union leader. Like Nkrumah, Busia reacted to the populist pressure by reducing the salaries of the PP top executives but that was not enough to satisfy the workers. In 1971 the unionized workers organized a strike as a protest against the increasingly authoritarian character of the PP political leaders, who claimed to subscribe to democratic principles. The strike was also in support of Bentum's role as a spokesman for the masses in which he voiced their concerns and predicaments and at the same time attacked the PP political leaders' unwillingness to sacrifice for the general good. It was also a protest against the increasing socio-economic inequalities in Ghanaian society. In that respect, Bentum represented the urban as well as the rural masses and the TUC constituted an effective political force seeking the interest of the masses. The 1971 'general strike', then, should be perceived as a major political and ideological confrontation between the Busia regime and organized labour.

The brand of urban populism exhibited by the Ghanaian workers resulted from the solidarity they derived from their organization. They spoke for the poor whose aspirations for social mobility were frustrated. Populism here was a response to the lack of adequate opportunities in a stagnating economy, in a country with increasing rural-urban migration without jobs, that

is urbanization without industrialization.¹⁰ The workers resorted to populism to secure their interests, to seek benefits and improvements in their lives and to put pressure on the political leaders to redistribute the national wealth by closing the income gap as well as the elite-mass gap.

The populist ideology of the workers in Ghana, then, identified and voiced the grievances of the common people. In so far as it successfully articulated these grievances, workers' protest became a political force that posed a threat to the power base of the rulers. It can thus be maintained that the populist ideology of trade unions became an effective tool in the struggle between the regimes and organized labour to achieve the interests of labour. It was effective in the sense that organized labour, by acting as a medium for voicing the discontent of the common people, gained their support, making any form of protest, be it a strike, demonstration or otherwise, a threat to the regimes.

CONCLUSIONS

TOWARDS A THEORY OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN GHANA

This thesis has attempted to show the futility of the efforts of all three regimes to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana between 1957 and 1972. Ghana, like most other

¹⁰Jeffries (1975, 277).

developing nations, was having problems in institutionalizing industrial conflict. One of the major reasons for the failure of institutionalization of industrial conflict in Ghana was the conflict of interests between the regimes and the trade unions. In view of this conflict of interests and their desire to win benefits for their members the trade unions adopted the populist ideology to express their interests and shape their strategies. Once the trade unions adopted this populist ideology, they became a political force which precipitated the conflict of interests into a power struggle between the regimes and the trade union movement.

This conflict of interest itself could be contained within the system but it was its manifestation -the power struggle - which posed a threat to the stability of the regimes, who responded by attempting to crush that threat. The conflict of interests could be contained by adopting conciliatory policies which would be acceptable to the trade unions and thus reduce the causes of industrial conflict. The policies of the various ruling groups in Ghana, however, were not directed at removing or minimizing the root causes of this conflict but rather at attacking its manifestations such as strikes. Cooptation of union leaders, passage of labour legislations, the resort to harsh and repressive measures - these were aimed at intimidating and breaking the power of the trade unions.

It was the power struggle and the challenge that organized labour posed to the political leaders that made them regard the

trade unions as political competitors. As a matter of fact the trade unions relied on their populist ideology as a political means in the pursuit of their economic objectives. This was necessary in view of the opposition they faced from the political leaders in the attainment of their economic interests. The trade unions adopted a populist ideology in order to be taken seriously. This however did not necessarily mean that the trade unions were primarily political organizations. Rather, it was a populist protest movement protesting against socio-economic deprivations in a society where there was a grossly unequal distribution of resources.

In a developing nation where the state is the largest employer, strikes in support of demands for wage increases are sometimes considered by the political leaders to be politically motivated. This in fact was the case in Ghana during the entire period of this study. Often, such strikes were considered by the political leaders as open attempts at political sabotage. The post-independence state leaders preferred not to settle labour disputes by negotiations, but rather to resort to threats and force in order to repress strikes. In such instances the trade unions refused to be so coerced and therefore resisted any use of force to break the strikes.

The political leaders very often accused the trade unions of staging political strikes to realize their political interests. In view of this the political leaders became less interested in investigating the root causes of the strikes than

in crushing them. Since there were always periodic pockets of resistance from the unions, labour disputes which could have been settled peacefully became highly explosive and transformed into political conflicts. At that point the trade unions, because of their populist inclinations, were often able to mobilize the support of the masses against the rulers. With that political force to back their demands the conflict was transformed into power struggles between the regimes and the trade unions.

In order to explain why these power struggles have made it impossible to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana, one needs to go back to the conflict theorists. According to Dahrendorf a prerequisite of effective conflict regulation is the organization of interest groups. So long as conflicting forces are diffused, incoherent aggregates, regulation is virtually impossible.¹¹ While this may be true in developed nations, it is not always true in a developing nation like Ghana. When the 1958 act created the centralized TUC structure, Nkrumah realized that the TUC could become too powerful and therefore adopted some checks and balances to minimize the possible threat from the TUC. In spite of these, however, the effective organization and solidarity created by the centralized structure helped the trade unions to undertake strikes. As interest groups the unions aimed to further the interests of their members. They sought to achieve this in various ways, one

¹¹ Dahrendorf (1965, 226).

of which was strike action. The common solidarity derived from the organization of trade unions in conjunction with the populist ideology became an effective force to achieve their objectives.

The continuous power struggle between the regimes and trade unions was also a direct result of the failure of both parties to recognize the legitimacy of the other's position. According to Dahrendorf:

For effective conflict regulations to be possible, both parties to a conflict have to recognize the necessity and reality of the conflict situation and in this sense, the fundamental justice of the cause of the opponent.¹²

The union-regime relations in Ghana lacked this fundamental element. In the pursuit of their economic development programmes the regimes had to deal with such economic problems as rising cost of living and increasing public debt. The political leaders therefore made appeals to the people to make sacrifices, ostensibly for the interest of the nation. They considered the trade union members to be better off than the other citizens of the nation because they have jobs. The unions were thus asked to sacrifice for the benefit of the other citizens of the nation, namely the rural folks and the unemployed. In this respect organized labour was asked to moderate its demands for wage increases and benefits. All the regimes argued that increases in wages to workers when added to cost of development schemes, results in adverse balance of payments. In view of this trade

¹²Ibid. p225.

unions were argued to assist in the development process by moderating or if possible forgoing wage increases. This view was unacceptable to the trade unions which argued that wage increases would motivate the workers to work harder and thus increase productivity. Restraining wage demands or refusing to grant wage increases accordingly would result in lower productivity. Conflict of interest between the unions and the political leaders was bound to result from two such opposing views.

The unions resisted vigorously any attempt by the political leaders to freeze wages or to take money away from the workers in the form of taxes. Whenever any of them formulated and implemented such a policy the unions protested by undertaking strikes. The trade unions adopted this position because at the same time that the political leaders were calling for sacrifices from the people they themselves showed little or no willingness to make sacrifices for the benefits of the nation. The political leaders were, therefore, not considered to be genuinely representing the public interest. The unions considered them to be a privileged elite group who assumed national leadership only to maintain their own private interests against the interests of the other segments of society.

Since organized labour proved unwilling or unable to assist in the regimes' development efforts, they characterized organized labour as selfish economically privileged group who were unwilling to make sacrifices for the common good of other

citizens of the nation. Consequently the state leaders considered the interests of labour as illegitimate and were often unwilling to bargain, negotiate or compromise with the demands of organized labour. Instead they used intimidation and state power to crush labour unrest. When the political leaders resorted to such coercive measures industrial conflict ceased to be institutionalized.

Dahrendorf goes on to explain that recognizing the justice of the interests of one's opponents' does not mean that the substance of the opponents interests has been recognized as justified at the onset. Rather, recognition means here that both parties accept their conflict for what it is, namely an inevitable outgrowth of the authority structure of association. Furthermore, Dahrendorf maintains that wherever the attempt is made to disputes the case of the opponent by calling it 'unrealistic' or denying the opponent the right to make a case at all, effective regulation of conflict is not possible.¹³ This in fact is an accurate description of the position of the political leaders in Ghana. Having the dominant position in the power structure, they often refused organized labour the right to voice its demands or make its case. The demands of labour for wage increases were often labelled by the political leaders as unrealistic and designed to incite agitation towards the rulers.

Another means by which the political leaders in Ghana attempted to avoid granting legitimacy to the interests of

¹³ Ibid.

labour was to consider the regimes' interests and that of organized labour as being common. Even when legitimate conflict existed these were misleadingly called common interests. This in Dahrendorf's view does not facilitate the institutionalization of industrial conflict. Dahrendorf maintains that one factor for effective conflict regulation is the recognition and even emphasis of systematic divergence and opposition. The attempt to obliterate lines of conflict by ready ideologies of harmony and unity, in effect, serves to increase rather than decrease the violence associated with the manifestation of the conflict.¹⁴

Dahrendorf's view is relevant to Ghana as all three regimes emphasized common goals with the TUC and therefore attempted to coopt union leaders to preach these common goals to the rank-and-file members. As such the political leaders ignored areas of potential conflict which eventually exploded into serious breakdowns in industrial relations and made institutionalization impossible. In the attempt to suppress the specific manifestation of conflict without removing the real causes of discontent, industrial conflict shifted from the industrial relations arena to the political arena.

Dahrendorf suggests additional reasons for the failure of institutionalization of industrial conflict which are applicable to Ghana. According to Dahrendorf the first and foremost form of conflict regulation appears to consist in the operation of certain institutions which provide the framework for discussions

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 226.

of and decisions about conflicting issues.¹⁵ Bates quotes Weiner to show the usefulness of such institutions:

They provide an opportunity for organized interest to become aware of the alternative demands upon the limited government resources. Organized groups learn to limit their demands by the awareness of what is possible; they learn to consider the effects of their demands upon others.¹⁶

The trade union movement in Ghana for a long time demanded the right to participate in the national decision making bodies. The unions believed that by their participation they would become better informed about development policies and thus contribute more meaningfully. For a long time Nkrumah rejected any suggestions to involve unions in national decision making bodies. When eventually unions were allowed to participate, their participation was limited to ineffectual consultative bodies. As labour was underrepresented in these bodies it could not make any meaningful contribution to the decision-making process.

This underrepresentation of union officials was an attempt by the political leaders to limit the power of labour on these bodies. This meant that the political leaders were not prepared to accord legitimacy to the interests of labour. A major grievance of labour in both the 1961 and the 1971 'general strikes' was the failure of the political leaders to consult fully with them in the preparation of the budgets of the

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 228.

¹⁶ Bates (1970, 375).

respective years. The political leaders failed miserably to develop a meaningful consultative relationship with interest groups like organized labour. Consequently organized labour became unwilling to cooperate with them in public policies. The ability of the political leaders to institutionalize industrial conflict was drastically minimized as a result.

During this period, the state assumed a prominent role in the society as the initiator of development plans and the owner of most of the industries and mining operations. Consequently the regimes moved quickly to suppress strikes and at that point the regimes as representatives of the state ceased to be neutral agents mediating between labour and management. This meant that the conflict of interest between labour and management shifted from the industrial relations arena to the socio-political arena and became a conflict of interest between labour and the regimes.

Bates argues strongly in support of this view. According to Bates when the state is the largest employer, there can be no independent process of collective bargaining, and the conflict between labour and management cannot be excluded from the public arena. Under these circumstances, the representatives of the state rather than private management seek to impose constraints upon wages and discipline on labour. He goes on to say that there is an inevitable clash between the goals of developing regimes and the interests of labour which diminishes the utility

of the trade unions as agencies for conflict regulation.¹⁷

In Ghana the trade unions were incapable of isolating labour conflicts from the public arena, because the collective bargaining structures were not strong enough. Moreover, the regimes based their dispute and grievance negotiating procedures on conciliation and compulsory arbitration, which the unions considered to be antithetical to free collective bargaining and therefore unacceptable to them. Consequently the unions continued to strike by disregarding these policies as detailed under the legislation. The failure of the political leaders and the trade unions to come to a compromise on this issue therefore made it impossible for industrial conflict to be institutionalized in Ghana.

Also, sometimes collective bargaining was introduced in some firms for political reasons to punish political opponents of the regime. This was especially so during the Nkrumah and NLC periods. On some occasions the political leaders backed unions in collective bargaining negotiations, thus victimizing certain employers who refused to be intimidated by the unions. In other occasions the political leaders encouraged the unions to undertake strikes. In the pursuit of such political objectives the unions were supported financially by the rulers.¹⁸

Another reason for the failure of institutionalization of industrial conflict in Ghana was that, in spite of the

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 337.

¹⁸ Gray (1981, 97).

legalization of trade unions, the political leaders did not accept them as legitimate social institutions. The unions were considered to be subversive elements bent on undermining their rule. Therefore they did not hesitate to call in the police and the militia to suppress worker protests. These tactics ensured the victory of the regimes over the unions. In this regard Coser's view of the use of strikes and collective bargaining to institutionalize industrial conflict is ineffectual in its application in the Ghanaian context.

The pattern of strikes in Ghana during the entire period followed Kraus' classification of the corporate-nationalist model. The Nkrumah regime followed the non-democratic sub-type of the model. It argued that strikes were not necessary in the post-independence period since there was a similarity between the goals of the CPP and that of the trade union movement. In this regard all strikes were illegal or nearly so, and the trade unions were to socialize and politicize the workers to the CPP's concept of African socialism. Top union leaders were selected by the CPP political leadership to ensure effective control over the unions. Seldom did union leaders make any attempts to promote rank-and-file interests in spite of the pressures from the CPP leadership on the union leaders to follow their policies.

The NLC and the PP followed almost the same policies as the CPP except that they both followed more closely the democratic sub-type of the corporate-nationalist model where the

rank-and-file were more effective in pressing their grievances and demands. During the Nkrumah period it was only during the 1961 'general strike' that the rank-and-file members were able to press their grievances more forcefully. After 1961, however, the CPP maintained effective control over the unions, which made it impossible for the rank-and-file to assert their rights openly. During the NLC and Busia periods, however, the rank-and-file more openly asserted their demands. This was probably due to the fact that the populist ideology of the trade union movement was much more developed during the NLC and Busia periods than it was previously. The populist ideology together with the accountability of union leaders to the rank-and-file from 1966-1972 made the union leadership more responsive to the needs of the union membership despite the repressive and anti-strike measures adopted by the rulers.

The extent of the power of organized labour in a developing nation like Ghana is described by Friedland as follows:

Because of their strategic location in the centres of urban population, the unions constitute a potential threat to the political leadership, particularly since they are traditionally oriented towards channelizing discontent. This position is exacerbated by growing unemployment in the urban centres. It should also be noted that unions constituted at the time of independence, a communication network independent of political parties and, therefore, were capable of acting autonomously for purposes of mobilizing a crucial sector of the economy against the newly independent governments.¹⁹

The unions were perceived by the political leaders as

¹⁹ Friedland (1968, 22).

constituting the strongest, stable political force and the regime therefore made efforts to control this power which was threatening to their rule. They sometimes attempted to influence the unions and win them to their side. They also adopted such paternalistic policies as providing training courses for union leaders. In addition, the political leaders promoted the organizational and financial interests of loyal unions. By so doing they moderated the clash between the interests of labour and their own development policies but they were not enough to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana.

The political leaders adopted such policies because of the enormous influence of the unions in the society. The trade union movement in most developing nations often plays a mediating role between the rulers and the masses. If the trade unions give their support to the regimes, they can popularize the regimes and their policies. On the other hand, the trade unions can capitalize on the shortcomings of the regimes such as the widening elite-mass gap and depopularize the regimes. The trade unions can do this because they are closer to the people socio-economically. Also, by criticizing the ineffectiveness of the regimes' economic development plans and their lack of concern for the welfare of the masses, they made themselves spokespersons of the masses. The trade union movement played exactly the same role in Ghana.

In this respect the trade union movement wielded considerable power in Ghana but it must be realized that the

sources of trade union power did not equal that of the rulers who were backed by state power. Nevertheless the trade unions resisted the controlling tendencies of the rulers. They sometimes assumed the role of unofficial opposition parties to challenge the policies of the political leaders. Trade union dissent when conjoined with the activities of the opposition parties represented a fundamental threat to the regimes. The policies of the regimes in Ghana towards the trade union movement, then, should not only be seen as attempts by a stronger party to control the trade unions. Rather, it must be viewed as attempts by the political leaders to keep themselves afloat in a politically insecure and unstable environment.

Overall, then, the political leaders in Ghana failed to formulate and implement some crucial policies which would have had the effect of institutionalizing industrial conflict in Ghana. In view of the findings of this study it is suggested that any attempt to institutionalize industrial conflict in Ghana should include the following:

1. Both the regimes and the trade unions should make genuine efforts to accept the interest of the other party as legitimate, and thus reconcile their differences. This is a means of eradicating the conflict of interest and consequently its manifestation - the power struggle. This needs to be done rather than attacking strikes, which are manifestations of the conflict of interest. The most effective means of institutionalizing industrial conflict is

to remove discontent rather than attempts to remove the manifestations of the discontent of workers. By uprooting the root causes of industrial conflict there would be no need to mobilize resources to crush or break strikes and other forms of industrial conflict.

2. Instead of dismissing the demands of organized labour for wage-increases as 'illegal', 'unrealistic' and 'impracticable', the political leaders should make efforts to grant fair wages to the working people. This should be done through the collective bargaining process, and the implementation and administration of collective agreements should be monitored by a third party, such as a labour relations board.

These are some of the ways of bridging the elite-mass gap, and thus attempting a restructuring of the Ghanaian society on an egalitarian basis. Any move towards this end is likely to reduce the masses' resentment of the privileged political leaders, which makes it possible for the trade unions to mobilize their support against the regime in an industrial conflict. These can be achieved by taking into consideration the limitations of the country's economic resources and accordingly formulating and implementing viable economic programmes. The regimes are not trapped by either the unions or economic factors. The state leaders can simultaneously pursue viable socio-economic projects and make concessions to the unions. The trade unions should be allowed effective participation in

economic development in order to familiarize themselves with the nation's economic problems.

The adoption of such policies could reduce the demands of organized labour for wage increases. Both measures (1 and 2 above) together could result in increased cooperation between the regimes and organized labour. All these could minimize the conflict of interest and its manifestation the power struggle between the regimes and the trade union movement thus institutionalizing industrial conflict in Ghana.

APPENDIX

Note on Currency Equivalents

NOTE ON CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Until November 5, 1958.

The British pound sterling was the currency in circulation in Ghana. One pound sterling was worth US\$2.80.

November 1958 - July 1965.

The Ghanaian pound at par with the British Pound sterling was in use.

July 1965-February 1967.

The Cedi was the currency in circulation in Ghana. It was worth as follows:

One pound sterling	= C2.40
US\$1.00	= C0.857
US\$1.66	= C1.00

(C =Cedis)

February 1967-July 1967.

The new Cedi was the currency in

circulation. This was worth as follows:

US\$1.00 = NC0.714

US\$1.40 = NC1.00

(NC=New Cedis)

July 1967-December 1971.

The New Cedi was devalued and
was worth as follows:

US\$1.00 = NC1.02

US\$0.98 = NC1.00

In December 1971 the New Cedi was further devalued
by 44 percent.

Sources: Levine (1965, X) see also Naseem (1970, 18-19)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- Almond, Gabriel A. "Introduction". In G.A. Almond and J.S. Coleman, eds. The Politics of Developing Areas. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1960, 3-64).
- Ankrah, J.A. Lt. Gen. "The Future of the Military in Ghana". African Forum, Vol. 2, No.1, Summer (1965, 5-16).
- _____. The Rebirth of Ghana: Broadcast to the Nation. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, March 2, (1966).
- Austin, Dennis. Ghana Observed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, (1976).
- Bates, R.H. "Approaches to the study of Unions and Developments". Industrial Relations, Vol. ix, No. 4, (1970, 364-378).
- Beling, W.A. ed. The Role of Labour in African Nation-Building. London: Praeger, (1968).
- Bentum, B.A. Trade Unions in Chains. Accra: TUC 1967.
- _____. Trade Unions in Ghana. Accra: TUC, (1971).
- _____. "TUC is Responsible". Ghana Workers' Bulletin. Vol.3, No.9, September (1970, 1-8).
- Bourett, F.M. Ghana: The Road to Independence, 1919-1957. Stanford: Stanford University Press, (1960).
- Busia, K.A. The Way to Industrial Peace. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1969).
- _____. Speech to the TUC Congress. Accra: TUC, August (1970).
- Coser, Lewis A. The Functions of Social Conflict. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, (1956).
- Cowan, E.A. Evolution of Trade Unionism in Ghana. Accra: TUC, Accra, (1961).
- Dahrendorf, Ralph. Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press, (1965).
- Damachi, U.G. The Role of Trade Unions in the Development Process: With a Case Study of Ghana. New York: Praeger, (1974).

- _____; Seibel, H.D. and Tranchtman, L. eds. Industrial Relations in Africa. New York: St. Martin's Press (1979).
- Davison, R.B. "Labour Relations in Ghana." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, Vol. 310, (March 1957, 133-141).
- Drake, St. Clair and Lacy, Leslie A. "Government versus the Unions: The Sekondi-Takoradi Strike, 1961." In G.M. Carter ed. Politics in Africa: 7 Cases, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc, (1966, 66-118).
- Dubin, Robert. "Constructive Aspects of Industrial Conflict." In A. Kornhauser; R. Dubin; and A.M. Ross ed. Industrial Conflict, London: McGraw-Hill, (1957, 37-47).
- Ewusi, Kodwo; The Distribution of Monetary Income in Ghana. Legon: Ghana Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research. (1971).
- Flanders, Allan. "Collective Bargaining: A theoretical Analysis." British Journal of Industrial Relations. Vol. 6, No. 1, (March 1968, 1-26).
- _____. "The Nature of Collective Bargaining." In A. Flanders ed. Collective Bargaining, Harmondsworth: Penguin, (1971).
- _____, and Fox, A. "The Reform of Collective Bargaining: From Donovan to Durkheim." British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, July (1969, 151-80).
- Friedland, W.H. "Labour's Role in Emerging Socialist States." In W.A. Beling ed. The Role of Labour in African Nation-Building. London: Praeger, (22-38).
- Gray, P.S. "Collective Bargaining in Ghana." Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 2, Spring (1980, 175-190).
- _____. Unions and Leaders in Ghana: A model of Labour and Development. London: Conch Publishers, (1981).
- Harbison, Frederick H. "Collective Bargaining and American Capitalism." In A. Kornhauser; R. Dubin; and A.M. Ross eds. Industrial Conflict, New York: McGraw-Hill, (1954, 270-279).
- Holms, J.D. Ideology and Socio-Political Development in Nkrumah's Ghana. Ph.d. Thesis, Chicago: University of Chicago, (1966).
- Hyman, Richard. Strikes. London: Fontana, (1972).
- Ionescu, Ghita and Gellner, Ernest. eds. Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics. London: MacMillan, (1969).

Jeffries, Richard. 'Populist Tendencies in the Ghanaian Trade Union Movement.' In R. Sandbrook and R. Cohen eds. The Development of An African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation and Action. London: Longmans, 1975, 261-279.

----- . Class, Power and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1978).

Jeuda, Diana. "The Role of Strikes in Trade Union Strategy." In R.H. Preston ed. Perspective on Strikes. London: SCM Press, (1975, 45-65).

Kaldor, Nicholas. "Taxation for Economic Development." Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.2, No.1, March (1963,7-23).

Kaplan, Irving; MacLaughlin, J.L. Marvin, B.J. Moeller P.W.; Nelson, H.D.; and Whitaker D.P. Area Handbook on Ghana. Washington D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, (1971).

Kerr, Clerk. "Industrial Conflict and its Mediation." American Journal of Sociology. Vol.LX, No.3, (1954,230-245).

----- ; Dunlop, J.T.; Harbison, F.H.; and Myers, C.A. eds. Industrialism and Industrial Man. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1964).

Killick, A. and Szereszewski, R. "The Economy of Ghana." In P. Robson and D.A. Lury eds. The Economies of Africa. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, (1969,79-125).

Kornhauser, A.; Dubin, R.; and Ross, A.M. eds. Industrial Conflict. London: McGraw-Hill, (1954).

Kraus, Jon. "Arms and Politics in Ghana." In C.E. Welch Jr. ed. Soldiers and the State in Africa. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, (1970, 154-221).

----- . Strikes and Labour Power in a Post-Colonial African State: The Case of Ghana. The Hague: The Institute of Social Studies, September (1977).

----- . "The Political Economy of Industrial Relations in Ghana." In U.K. Damachi; H.D. Seibel; and L. Trachtman eds. Industrial Relations in Africa, New York: St. Martins Press, (1979, 106-168).

LeVine Victor T. Political Corruption: The Ghana Case. Stanford: Stanford University Press, (1975).

Lipset, S.M. "Political Sociology." In R.K. Merton; Leonard Broom; and Leonard S. Cottrell Jr. eds. Sociology Today, Vol.1. New York: Harper and Row, (1965, 81-144).

- Lodge, George C. "Labour's Role in Newly Developing Countries." Foreign Affairs, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4, July (1959,).
- Lofchie, M.F. and Rosberg, C.R. Jr. "The Political Status of African Trade Unions." In W.A. Beiling ed. The Role of Labour in African Nation-Building, London: Praeger, (1968, 3-19).
- Mensah, J.H. "Budget Statement." Ghanaian Times, August 25, (1970).
- _____. "Budget Statement." Ghanaian Times, July 27-30, (1971).
- Miliband, Ralph. Marxism and Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1977).
- Naseem, Ahmad. Deficit Financing, Inflation and Capital Formation: The Ghanaian Experience 1960-1965. Munchen: Weltforum Verlag (1970).
- Owusu, Maxwell. "The Search for Solvency: Background to the Fall of Ghana's Second Republic, 1969-1972." Africa Today, Vol. XIX, No. 1, (1972, 53-61).
- Rimmer, Douglas. "The Industrial Relations Act 1958." Economic Bulletin of Ghana, Vol. 3, No. 4, (1959, 6-15).
- _____. "The New Industrial Relations in Ghana." Industrial and Labour Relations Review, Vol. 14, No. 2, January (1961, 208-226).
- Roberts, B.C. and Bellecombe, L.G. Collective Bargaining in African Countries. New York: St. Martin's Press, (1967).
- Sandbrook, R. and Cohen, R. eds. The Development of an African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation and Action. London: Longmans, (1975).
- Silver, Jim. "Class Struggles in Ghana's Mining Industry." Review of African Political Economy, No. 12, May-August (1978, 67-86)
- Tettegah, John. Towards Nkrumahism: The Building of Socialist Ghana. Accra: TUC, (1958).
- Tranchtman, Lester N. "The Labour Movement in Ghana: A Study in Political Unionism." Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 10, January, (1962, 183-199).
- Weber, Max. Basic Concepts in Sociology. New York: Philosophical Library, (1962).
- Wiles, Peter. "A Syndrome not a Doctrine: Some Elementary Theses on Populism." In G. Ionescu and E. Gellner eds. Populism:

Its Meaning and National Characteristics, London: MacMillan, (1969, 166-179)

Worsley, Peter. Third World. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1964)

_____. "The Concept of Populism." In G. Ionescu and E. Gellner eds. Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics, London: MacMillan, (1969, 212-250).

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS.

Ghana. Aliens Act (Aliens Compliance Order/ The Residence Permit Compliance Order). Accra: State Publishing Corporation (1969).

Ghana. Business Promotion Act. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1970).

Ghana. Civil Service Act. Accra: Government Publishing Department, (1960).

Ghana. Industrial Relations Act. Accra: Government Publishing Department, (1958).

Ghana. Industrial Relations Amendment Act. Accra: Government Publishing Department, (1959).

Ghana. Industrial Relations Amendment Act. Accra: Government Publishing Department, (1960).

Ghana. Industrial Relations Amendment Act. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1965).

Ghana. Industrial Relations Amendment Act (Act 383). Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1971).

Ghana. Labour Registration Act. Accra: Government Publishing Department, (1960).

Ghana. Minimum Remuneration Instrument. Accra: Government Publishing Department, (1960).

Ghana. Ministry of Labour. Annual Report. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1969).

Ghana. Ministry of Labour. Annual Report. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1970).

Ghana. N.L.C. Decree 134 (Civil Service Amendment Regulation). Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1967).

Ghana. Parliamentary Debates. 1958 Cols. 545-546, Accra:

Government Publishing Department, (1959).

Ghana. Report of the Ata-Bedu Commission of Inquiry into the 1969 Obuasi Disturbances. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1970).

Ghana. Report of the Mills-Odoi Commission on the Structure and Remuneration of the Public Services in Ghana. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, (1971).

NEWSPAPERS

Ghana Workers' Bulletin. Accra: TUC, (1969-71).

Ghanaian Times. Accra, (1969-71).

West Africa. London, (1969).

GHANA TRADE UNION CONGRESS DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

Comprehensive Report of the 1966 TUC Extraordinary Congress. Accra: TUC, (1967).

Proposal Submitted by the TUC to the Campbell Wage and Salary Review Commission. Accra: TUC, (1971).

The Report of the First Biennial Congress of the TUC of Ghana June 1966. Accra: TUC, (1967).

TUC Executive Board Resolutions. Article XII, Vol.26, October, (1966).