

contract of employment. The employers' rights based on the freedom of contract are not absolute and these have to be adjusted with the claims of industrial workers for social justice, though the relationship between the labour and management is based on the Contract of Employment. The author of the book takes note of this aspect by making a brief reference to the implication of freedom of contract in the changed social context. The author makes a brief survey of the various machineries provided in the Act of 1947 for settlement of industrial disputes through conciliation, adjudication and arbitration. In the chapter on Adjudication, the author has drawn a distinction between compulsory adjudication and voluntary adjudication — a doubtful distinction as it would imply that in the case of latter, the parties can approach the adjudicating machinery without a reference by the appropriate Government under the Act of 1947. Ideally, perhaps, such a provision would have been justified, but in reality, it is not so.

The second part of the book deals with some of the areas where the conflict between the labour and management most commonly arises, for example, wages and dearness allowance, bonus, reinstatement, leave and holidays and retirement benefits. The book takes into account the principles by the help of which the demands and counter-demands relating to these areas are adjudicated upon, which provide, no doubt, some guidelines which are legally significant.

Bonus has, in recent years, become a major issue of conflict between labour and management. Under the payment of Bonus (Amendment) Act, 1976 special provisions

have been incorporated with respect to payment of bonus linked with production and productivity. The book contains an appendix on production bonus which provides guidelines which will be found useful by the employers in case an agreement or a settlement has been arrived with the employees for the payment of bonus linked with production and productivity. However, after the publication of the book an Ordinance was passed in September 1977 which later on resulted in the passing of the Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Act 1977. The Act received the assent of the President on December 24, 1977.

The author has drawn from the code of discipline the norms for the recognition of trade unions, and rights of recognised trade unions, vis-a-vis minority union. However, it would have been pertinent to refer to the legislation passed by the State of Maharashtra in respect of these matters. The State of Maharashtra has broken fresh grounds in its enactment titled 'Recognition of Trade Unions and Unfair Labour Practices Act, 1972' (Maharashtra Act No I of 1972) which came into effect in September 1975.

The book has been written in a lucid style providing practical guidance to managers, trade unionists, personnel and labour officers and students of labour-management relations.

Asit Kumar Bose

Working Class of India — History of emergence and movement by Sukomal Sen. Calcutta, K. P. Bagchi & Co., 1977. Rs. 60.00.

This book is a welcome addition to the

list of studies on Indian industrial labour and the author deserves appropriate recognition for his painstaking efforts. For some reason or other, neither academic scholars nor trade unionists have upto now devoted as much attention to this subject as it deserves. It is therefore good to know that at least a member of the group, intimately involved in trade-union work, has devoted time to seriously pursue such a study.

In his Preface, the author has rightly stated, "to write on the emergence and movement of the Indian Working Class has been a great deal more difficult than I had expected as the subject is not merely history in the conventional sense." In order not to follow the path of conventional history, the author has tried to present the subject in its totality and to trace the interlink between its various facets. He presents his analysis through twenty chapters. The first chapter provides the international background through a rapid resume of the evolution of capitalism in Britain and its impact on India, one of her cherished colonies. Chapter two deals with the disintegration of traditional Indian economy which came about as a logical corollary to the growth of capitalism in the metropolitan country. Chapter three deals with the development of capitalist economy in India and the emergence of the working class. Last three chapters deal with the last phase of national struggle and the Indian working class, 1945-47; trade unions of Government and other White Collar employees and, finally, working class in the new perspective, 1947 onwards (upto 1974). The other 14 chapters concern primarily with the history of trade-union movement in India. The chapter dealing with the trade union

movements of White Collar employees is the best written chapter and here the author has certainly added something new to our knowledge of trade union movement.

In the first few chapters however (particularly chapter one to chapter five), the author has not added much to what is already known. He has recapitulated, obviously out of necessity, the important events only with a view to linking them up with his own specific model of analysis. To a great extent, he has succeeded in his task although one may not wholly agree with his analysis of the different events covered in the book. A few examples may be cited in this connection. Writing about the "first political strike of Indian Worker at Bombay" (July 1908, in connection with Tilak's arrest), the author pertinently cites Lenin's comment on this event, along with that of D. C. Home and A. I. Chicherov. The Author quotes Lenin's following comment: "In India too, the Proletariat has already developed to conscious political mass struggle and, that being the case, the Russian-Style British regime in India is doomed." (p. 108). But he has not stated whether Lenin in his statement was rather expressing his optimism or the observation that really described an objective assessment of the reality. Is it not necessary to re-examine this formulation or should we accept it uncritically and build up our analysis on the basis of this comment? Then again, in chapter nine (the foundation of the All India Trade Union Congress, 1920), while writing about some of the industrialists and businessmen who attended the inaugural session of the AITUC, the author cites the following names: Lallubhai Samaldas, H. P. Thakersay, Lalji Narainji etc. The implication of indus-

trialist/businessmen's association with a newly formed organisation which was to champion the cause of the working class, needs some rational and fuller explanation.

While writing about the past, one must necessarily begin with a view about the present. Normally, the model of history tends to validate the author's current attachments. The book under review has been no exception. For example, the book gives an overall impression that upto the time of the split in the Indian Communist Party (1964), all the failures of working class movements were due to the reactionary attitude of non-communist trade union leaders, while subsequent to the split, it was due to the reformist activities of the non CPI (M) trade union leaders. There is an element of truth in this analysis but it still remains blurred inspite of the

author's repeated assertions. Can we really assess the activities of the AITUC in the period 1948 — 50, by just saying that during this period "the Communist Party of India as well as the AITUC committed certain left sectarian mistakes?" Has it anything to do with the policy pursued by the Cominform? One would expect a critical re-examination of the role of the Communist International vis-a-vis its impact on the functioning of the AITUC particularly during the decade 1926—36.

These are some of the points which, in the reviewer's view, need further clarification. Class consciousness can grow only when the spirit of self-righteousness of the class is replaced by a spirit of self criticism.

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