

## **Labour Movement in West Pakistan 1947-1958: A Perspective on Punjab**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the growth and development of Trade Union activities in post-colonial Pakistan from 1947-58 and to address the problems of workers in newly established Pakistan. The pioneering role of Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim is highlighted who was the president of Pakistan Trade Union Federation and Railway Workes Union of Railway Work Shops, Lahore. This research is based on the analysis of the authentic material in the form of literature from scholars and Government documents. At that time state was not ready to accept the burden the demands of the workers. The state used various coercive methods to prevent the struggle of the workers. The elitists' state allied with United States of America to the issues of radical labour movement and radicalization of workers struggle in Pakistan. This study recommends that proper facilities and proper education should be provided to the workers.*

**Key Words:** Leftist; Trade Unions; State; Progressive

### **Introduction**

This study focuses on trade union activism in Pakistan during 1947-1958. Within this time span the period between 1947 and 1954 constituted very crucial phase for the labour and trade union movement as the left-wing trade unions spearhead the trade union movement in Pakistan, in terms of its expansion in new terrain as well as filling the vacuum that egression of Hindu and Sikh trade union workers and leaders had created.

It argues that the Establishment, right after Pakistan's provenance, had been pursuing such policies, of nation and state building, which allowed no space for alternative vision which Pakistani Left had been presenting. Thus in

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this sense it takes trade union activism as one of the avenues/ sites of articulation of this vision. Therefore, the Establishment began to perceive threat from this phenomenal growth and expansion of this trade union movement; in the similar stripe it had considered the growth of radical influences in politics, literature and print culture inimical to its interests. Hence, quite understandably, it suppressed the left-wing trade union movement through both direct and indirect ways. This suppression consequently culminated in placement of ban on the Pakistan Trade Unions Federation (PTUF) in July 1954. In order to develop this argument I have drawn on the works of Anushay Malik, Sadia Toor, Talat Ahmed, Kamran Asdar Ali and Taimur Rehman, which present Left as progenitor of alternative visions.

Apparently, I have addressed a broader theme as the scope, content and period of this paper shows. A cursory look on the major scholarly works of the Labour Movement in Pakistan adequately testifies the broader dimensions of this subject. As the Table 1 shows that the works of K.Mahmud ....cover the broader area and the works of Z.Shaheed ....deal with case studies of few industries in Karachi. A.Malik's unpublished work makes a micro study of labour movement in Lahore it also provides a larger view of the role of labour movement in the political resistance. The period that this paper deals is relatively critical as it coincides with the phase when the foundations of the labour movement had been laid. It throws light on the activities of trade union, just after Pakistan came into being. It also explains both various aims and key developments during the abovementioned phase. It brings into focus broad trends in the realm of trade unionism as well as

responses it elicited. It shows that how the Establishment created hurdles that placed rigorous limitations on the ...growth of trade unionism in the country.

**Trade Unions in the Pre-1947 Period**

Before presenting the details of trade unionism in Pakistan during 1947-58 it would be useful to provide a brief background of trade unionism in the pre-1947 period. The major industrial centers of Bombay, Ahmadabad, Kanpur and Patna were the nucleus of trade union activities in India; All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and Indian Federation of Labour (IFL), two central organizations which were active in pre-partition India organizing industrial workers. The majority of the stalwart leaders and dynamic workers of trade unions flee for India. They were from the areas which were now part of Pakistan. One third of the workers from the Punjab and Sind left for India. Table 1 shows the number of unions and their membership in different areas.

**Table 1: Union Membership in Selected areas in 1946**

Federations	Bengal		Sind and Punjab	
	Number of unions	Membership	Number of unions	Membership
All India Trade Union Confederation (AITUC)	112	139000	32	2000
Indian Federation of Labour (IFL)	41	106000	23	95000

**Source:** Government of India, Central Labour Commissioner Report on the representative character of the AITUC and IFL by S.C Joshi, cited in B.A.Khan, *Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations*, Karachi, 1980, p.124.

The migration of the non-Muslim workers to India created a vacuum of leadership for Pakistani workers. Several dynamic leaders of All India Trade Union Congress left for India. The partition of India proved a

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catastrophe for the trade union movement because it weakened the Pakistani branches of the leftist and socialist groups. The people who migrated to India were experienced in the field of labour movement. All they were associated with the left leaning groups of the workers

At the time of partition, there were almost 450,000 industrial workers in Pakistan. Among them one third were organized or semi-organized. While on the other hand there was not any important association or coordinating agency.

### **Trade Unionism and Workforce in Pakistan on the Eve of Partition**

Pakistan lacked a strong industrial base right from its beginning. The North-Western parts of India and the East Bengal had very few industries as the Table 2 shows.

**Table 2: Industries and their Numbers**

<b>Industry and its Nomenclature</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
Cotton Mills	16
Sugar Factories	9
Jute Mills	0
Iron and Steel Mills	A small iron factory used to exist in Lahore. Its function was to develop rod iron and many other instruments to be used in farming. Even this small unit in Lahore in a much depilated state.
Engineering Factories	0
Chemical Plants	0
Cement Factories	5
Textiles Mills	14

Another measure of gauging any country's industrial strength was its total electricity production. The situation was gloomy in this area as well. For

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instance, from the power houses which the country inherited, Pakistan just produced 72,700 KW electricity, out of which East Pakistan's share was 15,600 KW. Rafique Afzal, a scholar of history of Pakistan in one of his works informs "Of 14,677 registered factories Pakistan inherited only 1414 (9.6 percent of the total), out of which 41.2 percent were small scale establishments".

There was no big industrial unit like: Railway workshops, engineering manufacturing equipments and several chemical factories. There were 335 industrial units in East Pakistan at that time. All the big businesses like tea gardens and jute were owned by English men and Marwari Hindus of Calcutta. East Pakistan's economy was entirely dependent upon Calcutta because it was the capital of united Bengal. While on the other hand, it was a biggest port as well the centre of all trade activities. Ninety percent manufacturing units were within Calcutta.

All these facts and figures show that the country lacked strong industrial base, which was directly related to the workforce that the nascent country's industries employed. For instance, the numerical strength of labour force in India was 31, 42,000 (3.1) million, out of which Pakistan's share was 2, 06, 000, that constituted a meager 6.5 percent. Out of this workforce the share of labourers was even more disproportionate. It ranged 26,000 to 45,000 according to various studies.

By the same token, the number as well as the membership of the trade unions remained enormously low. The population of Pakistan at that time was 32 million. In 1947, there were seventy five (75) registered organizations in Pakistan having members 58,150 and majority of them were in West Pakistan.

These figures have extracted from Karmat Ali's work; whereas Khalid Mahmud in his important work on trade unionism in Pakistan has put these figures as 55. It would be significant to add, on the eve of partition, there were 1725 registered trade unions in the United India which claimed nine lacs union members.

As Sardar Shoukat Ali, a well-known Leftist leader and trade unionist wrote

“In Pakistan the bourgeoisie class was very dormant, and was at the mercy of the Government bureaucracy and feudal lords. Within the country, ways and means for capital formation and its movement was very limited and the ripened feudal system was a great obstacle in its growth.”

Two important scholars of Pakistan, K.Asdar Ali and Yunus Samad, on Pakistan's politics and society put it more meticulously,

“The fragmented and low concentration of industrial capital was mirrored by the weakness of organized labour. The growing Pakistan government followed an import substitution model to vigorously industrialize the economy. Within these policy parameters, labour was continuously asked to play its “appropriate and subordinate” role in relation of industrial development.”

### **Trade Unions and Leadership after Partition**

Up till Pakistan's independence, the trade unions had been functioning in the sectors and utilities like Railway, Karachi Port Trust, postal and electricity departments. However, the trade unions had been formed in the other industries all over the country. In addition to these a trade union had

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been formed in the Batala Engineering Company (BECO). Batala Engineering Company (BECO) was established following the division of India.

The establishment of the Pakistan Trade Union Federation (PTUF), proved a turning point in the history of trade unionism in the post-Colonial Pakistan. Several leftist trade unions were its member. Primarily the activities of the PTUF revolved around West-Pakistan, and it gave a new impetus to the trade union movement, bringing coherence in its activities

PTUF was established on January 14, 1948, in a conference held in Lahore in which fifty representatives of various leftist organizations of Punjab and NWFP participated. Mirza Mohammad Ibrahim was elected president of PTUF. He was a veteran and radical leader in Pakistan. , While on other hand he was also president of North Western Railway Workers Union of Pakistan. Faiz Ahmad Faiz, (a well-known Urdu poet) and Dr.Abdul Malik, trade unionists were elected as its Vice President and General Secretary respectively. A.Mailk left this Union a year later, and Afzal Khan replaced him as the Secretary General. Its other renowned leaders included Dada Amir Haider Khan, F.D.Mansur, Fazl Elahi Qurban, and Sobo Gian Chandani. We can further add the names of Comrade Lal Khan, Sardar Shoukat Ali, and C.R.Asalam in this list. Its head quarter was established in Lahore.

PTUF played an important role in galvanizing the workers of all sections of Pakistan. It also focused on the trade union movement of Pakistan from 1948 to 1954. It strived to mobilize the workforce by rising class vigilance and tried to educate them for the mobilization workers

A significant sign of its mounting influence was the growing number of its associated labour organizations. According to M.Afzal, its Secretary

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General, the number of its allied organizations had risen to 67 in 1950, whereas Anwar Ali, the DIG, C.I.D Punjab prepared a detail report about the actions of the Communist party in West Pakistan provided a list of 36 associated unions, the majority of them belonged to Punjab.

Throughout this period the communists were at the forefront of working class and through their continuous struggle they formed a greater harmony among the trade unions working on all Pakistan bases. In September 1950, a broad coalition of trade union organizations was formed. It was All Pakistan Confederation of Labour. These three major workers organizations, PTUF, East Pakistan Federation of Labour (EPFL) and West Pakistan Federation of Labour (WPFL), became the part of this alliance. The government gave it official recognition. M.A.Khtaib elected its president. While on the other hand Faiz Ahmed Faiz appointed as its General Secretary. However, the Leftists could not remain with this alliance for long as it became increasingly inclined to the Establishment. However, it functioned as loose confederation of three organizations, the All Pakistan Confederation of Labour (APCOL) and its affiliates and the EPFL and WPFL, the latter two alliances of labour unions were apparently its constituents, but practically to function independently.

It would be useful to show the important developments in the trade unionism between 1948 and 1954 in a tabular form. As table 3 highlighted the background and scope of trade union activities. I will narrow my focus to left wing trade union activism and highlight its major dimensions.



**Table 3: Showing the Major Trade Unions in the United Pakistan  
between 1947--1954**

<b>Trade union's Name/Nomenclature</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>	<b>Political/Ideological Inclination</b>	<b>International Affiliation</b>
Pakistan Trade Union Federation (P.T.U.F.)	1948	Left-wing/ Communist Party/ Azad Pakistan Party	Prague-based World Federation of Trade Unions
East Pakistan Federation of Labour (EPFL)	1948	Left-wing/Socialist Initially communists were part of it, but they left it developing certain differences in 1948. However, the Union continued to embrace socialist creed.	
West Pakistan Federation of Labour (WPFL)	1947	Reformist/pro- Establishment	
All Pakistan Confederation of labour (APCOL)	1950	Reformist/ It gained official recognition	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICTUF).
Punjab Labour League (PLL)	1951	Reformist/ Pakistan Muslim League	
Pakistan Mazdoor Federation	1951	Initially represented eclectic left-wing influences. But right from its inception treaded on the path of reformism. The Establishment used it to contain PTUF's	

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influence

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Other Independent Organizations which were locally organized. All Pakistan Telephone and Telegraph Union ,Petroleum Workers Union, and Naval Transport Workers Union.		They followed varied programmes
Central Labour Federation of Pakistan	c.1951—1952	Reformist/Muslim League

### **Left-wing Trade Union Activism 1947--1954**

#### **Left-wing Trade Union Activism: Its Major domains**

Since its formation it took more radical stance than any other federations and in its opening meeting it decided to observe the first day of February as "Demands Day". The day was observed in West Pakistan alone as a result of the processions and mass meetings which took place all over the country. The Management and the establishment got apprehensive of these protests and about the mounting status of labourers struggle and they used tyrannical means to control the activities of radical workers. While on the other hand several prominent leaders of P.T.U.F. were detained without any prior arrest warrants. The textile workers played a pivotal in the strikes of 1948. They were at the forefront of these strikes. The figures of this year show that their share in the overall workers' strikes was 78 %. In 1949 and 1950, there was a discernable decrease in the number of strikes. It happened

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because many of the workers leaders were in jail. During this period, intellectuals, and students took an active part in these strikes. In 1950, a meeting of PTUF was held. In this meeting the foreign policy of Pakistan was criticized, and the labour union leaders asked to raise their voice against inflation. It is said that by 1950, 67 unions were in the circle of P.T.U.F. Eighty thousand workers were with them. It is also said 2.5 to three million workers were under its influence. Pakistan Trade Union Federation attracts many workers from the sections of Pakistan Federation of Labour (PFL). They joined the PTUF and became its members.

The researcher has divided the left-wing trade union activities into three broad categories: (i) First organizations that work within the government institutions; (ii) Second the left wing trade unionism in the non-governmental industrial sectors (iii) third, in which the subaltern working peoples were involved. The leftists were with these working classes and trained them for their rights. In the first sphere we can include the state's institutions and utilities such as Railways, Postal Department, Mint, Department of Transport, Irrigation and Planning and Works and Military Engineering Services (M.E.S) in the cities of Punjab like, Lahore, Lyallpur and Rawalpindi. Among these trade unions the leftists had gained full control over the North Western Railway Workers union. Railway was the largest repository of labour force in the urban areas.

The leftist trade unionists were in the forefront of the trade union activities of Bata and Service Shoe factories, Batala Engineering Company (BECO), Mela Ram Cotton Mills Lahore and Textile Mills Okara. The leftists' trade union organizations also developed their influence in the textile and

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The following unions were formed among the sweepers, laundry men and Tonga Drivers by the leftists to mobilize the subaltern workers. The trade unions of sweepers of Lahore, Sialkot and Mianwali were affiliated with Pakistan Trade Union Federation. Subalterns are generally considered as isolated and destitute community on account of their marginalized status. One can distinguish them from the other segments of society on the basis of their experiences of subalternity. However, the subalterns were working all over the Pakistan in every sphere of life.

However considering the leftist involvement in the trade unionism of subalterns, have been divided into two categories. First, such labourers the subaltern workers belonging to the menial occupations or those jobs which were not considered socially respectable or had less nuisance value in society and the second, subalterns workers linked with industries as the semi-skilled or un-skilled labourers or associated with the lower rungs of the supervisory machinery in the government departments. The leftist trade unionists established unions in several such departments where the lower rungs were working. Comrade Sandhe Khan (1897-1986) was the chief planner of the Tonga Driver Union in Lahore since their restoration in late 1930s. In 1950, he did a big job for widening the span of this union. He established its branches in the different big cities of Punjab. He was also founder of the Hotel and Tandoor Association in Lahore. He served as its General Secretary; its president was Sardar Muhammad Alam Khan, who was the proprietor of Delhi Muslim Hotel Lahore, which was located in Old Anarkali. The purpose

of this union was to provide legal protection to the Tandoor owners. Another goal of this union was that the people get sugar and flour on cheaper rates.

### **Major Issues**

The primary focus of the radical and leftists organizations was to provide the better working facilities at the work place. This struggle for those workers who were belongs to the lower rungs of the manufacturing establishments. To achieve these goals for the betterment of the workers they adopted a strategy. These strategies have been mentioned clearly in the PTUF's constitution. As it declared by the PTUF. The PTUF will adopt all the peaceful and democratic methods including legal action, persuasion, propaganda, meetings, negotiations, demonstrations and as a last resort strike or such acts as the PTUF may suggest time to time". More significantly, the leftist trade unions particularly the NWR workers' trade union, tried to mobilize the labourers, on the issues about their day to day lives, like low wages, price hike and black marketing, through its action oriented initiatives such as holding of rallies and demonstrations.

The PTUF's constitution stated the key aims and objectives of the Union as, the nationalization of "industrial sources', production and transport". It pledged to make efforts for the betterment of socio-economic conditions of the working class, as well as the fortification and endorsement of their privileges and wellbeing. It further pledged to defend the basic rights of the workers such as "freedom of speech, pen, association, assembly, strike, work and right of subsistence for workers". The desire to support other sister unions was also expressed. It reminds of the aims of securing "equal treatment

Labour Movement in West Pakistan 1947-1958: A Perspective on Punjab irrespective of religion, class and nationality". That is why since the division a large numbers of Mazdoor unions were acknowledged all over the province.

### **Strategy/Activism**

More significantly, the leftist trade unions primarily the NWR workers trade union, tried to mobilize the labourers, on the issues concerning their day to day lives, like low wages, price hike and black marketing, through its action oriented initiatives such as holding of rallies and demonstrations. Their awareness was reinforced through the slogans of '*Roti, Kapra Aur Makan*' (Bread, Clothing and Housing). It was the catchphrase which Pakistan People's Party adopted in 1967 since its inception.

Pakistan Trade Union Federation held a conference in April 1950, in Lahore. Labour leaders and workers took part in this conference, while on the other hand World Federation of Trade Unions represented by Mr. Thornton, who was the chief of the communist dominated labour organization of Australia. Thornton addressed the conference outside Mochi Gate.

Anwar Ali's report also mentions PTUF's links with communist dominated labour federations in Paris, Prague, Moscow and Peking; it pin points the visits of two international delegates during early 1950s. While referring to the visit of Mr. Thornton ,the chief of labour organization of Australia, which was known for its communist leadings , he provides details about his visit and his contribution and speech in labour conference organized by PTUF at Mochi Gate Lahore in April 1950. He also mentions the visit of T.F. Mcwhinnic, spokesperson of Paris Trade Union Federation to Lahore, and how the CPP had arranged demonstrations, and appointed a woman and other Railway workers for his reception", and how he observed

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these demonstrations during a Tonga ride. Anwar Ali also underscores that these links were established at reciprocal basis as they were further commented with the visit of Mazhar Ali and Tahira Mazher Ali to Prague ‘on invitation’. The leadership of these trade unions played an efficient role in providing legal and moral support to their activists in their struggle for labour rights.

It was the period when the left-wing trade unions led a number of strikes in Lahore, Karachi, Lyallpur, Rawalpindi and Okara. They adopted the strike movement as a proactive strategy to press for their demands. The Table 4 shows the increasing influence of Leftist trade unions over the labourers.

**Table 4: The Number of Industrial strikes organized in the West Pakistan between 1947 and 1950**

Year	Number of Strikes	Number of Strikers	Number of working days Lost
1947	24	14,206	16,989
1948	57	36,231	135,580
1949	72	44,582	101,723
1950	32	16,836	83,164

Source: S.Hussain, *Pakistan Economics*, Karachi, 1950, p.101

The Table 4 shows that there were fewer strikes in 1950. One can attribute it to a number of factors. For instance the country’s economic state of affairs stabilized temporarily due to Liaquat Ali Khan decision not to devalue currency in line with decision of the other countries in the Common Wealth as well as the Korean boom, which brought down cost of living temporarily, as

well as led to a minor increase in the wages of workers. But similarly important was the fact, the government had put the main labour leaders in jail.

The following associations, All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association (APPWA), Peace Committee and the Civil Liberties Union were the part and parcel CPP. In this regards these years, were very important because the labour movement worked in close collaboration with the aforementioned associations. The latter two organizations were left-wing organizations which were established to muster support of the civil society for the causes of world peace and civil liberties, in 1949 and 1950. Thus we find greater collaboration between intellectuals and labourers in the struggle for democratic and political rights. This phase was very important because the CPP had been pursuing the strategy of using labourers as the main agency of bringing revolution in Pakistan.

Since the early 1950's the PTUF had developed critical standpoint on Pakistan's foreign policy and between 1951 and 1953 it participated in a number of political demonstrations against Pakistan's Establishments' growing economic reliance upon the Anglo-American bloc and the latter's intrusive role in formulation of Pakistan's foreign and defense policies. These demonstrations were mainly held in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Lyallpur.

### **Labour Movement and Establishment**

The ruling elite of the country was afraid of growing political activities of labourers and in response they started a new wave of intimidation against the workers. In the early 1950s numerous labour leaders were arrested and put behind the bars. The following table shows the growth of trade



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unionism both in terms of increase in number of trade unions and as well as increase in membership figures between 1947 -1954.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Unions</b>	<b>Membership</b>
Dec. 1947	55	58150
1948	150	109720
1949	181	157246
1950	251	137800
1951	209	393137
1952	352	394923
1953	394	424563
1954	382	410755

Source: B.A.Khan, *Trade unionism and Industrial Relations*, p.26.

The growing popularity of the leftist trade unionism made the government unnerved, and it began to perceive threat from other leftist trade unions of the Punjab. Anwar Ali, labels it as a “powerful instrument of mischief”. His judgment about PTUF clearly shows his cynicism against a labour alliance. The mention of Mirza Ibrahim and the PTUF’s activities in Punjab, in the de-classified documents of US state department in the 1950’s, confirm the fact that, US diplomatic officials in Pakistan had been keeping the labour movement under strict vigilance. One can argue that both the establishment and US diplomatic officials shared same skepticism against the labour movement which had increasingly come under the influence of the left. Thus the clique of Establishment, under these influences left no stone unturned to control the left-wing trade unionism in Punjab.

Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim was detained under the Public Safety Act on 15 February 1948. This led to strong protests by the railway workers and on 16 and 17 February about 20,000 workers of the Mughalpura Railway Workshop went on token strike. Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim remained incarcerated for three years.

Besides targeting Mirza Ibrahim, it resorted to an organized attack to weaken the movement. They arrested all the active trade union workers in the province including Faiz Ahmed Faiz. They filed false cases against all these workers and put them behind the bars. Dada Amir Haider is one of the examples. During 1947-58, State institutions, including police and secret agencies, frequently used coercive laws to arrest radical workers and trade unionist. Law enforcing agencies made frequent use of Public Safety Act, as an effective instrument, to stifle the leftist dissent and the escalating radical influence over trade unions.

To prevent the growing influence of labor movement in Punjab, the state used a counterfeit weapon. They used the following methods to overcome the impact of workers. They fired the workers without assigning any reason. For this purpose they used: First, the Disciplinary Action against the trade union activist in the form of their dismissal from their jobs. In this way they disturb the workers and increase their financial problems. Thus they used to think that they would stop the workers from their lives. Secondly they favoured the rightists trade unions give them financial support to weakened the communist one. Thus the state utilizes the whole power to press the revolutionary workers movement in the country. Despite these difficulties, the

revolutionary workers movements achieved their goals and force the government to fulfill their demands.

The Establishment finally, took an extremely controversial move to place ban on the PTUF. As it imposed ban on it on 24 July 1954, by describing it as one of the CPP's front organizations. The same day the CPP was also banned, along with 14 other affiliated organizations.

### **Trade Unionism in the post-1954 period up till 1958**

Up to this point I have discussed the nature and dimensions of trade unionism in Pakistan till 1954. This section I will shed light on major trends in trade unionism during 1954-58. The placement of ban on the PTUF was a severe blow to the cause of trade unionism in Pakistan. It created a big vacuum in the realm of labourers' struggle for their basic and legal rights. Though the communists and their supporters tried to regroup and allied themselves under the banner of United Trade Union Federation. This trade union was established in 1956, and its head quarter was located in Karachi. It made a claim of affiliation with seventeen trade unions. Its leadership further claimed that 15,000 members had joined their trade union. However, the Establishment did not give this organization, like its precursor, sufficient room to maneuver, and it met the same fate. There were 635 registered trade unions having collective membership of 3,766,000 up till 1958.

The APCOL amended its program to remove the clause that called for constitution on "cooperation with political parties and establishment of a socialist society", through a constitutional amendment.

Though during 1955--1958 there was significant increase in the number of trade unions,

**Table 6: Numbers of Trade Unions and their Members between 1955 and 1958**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of Trade Unions</b>	<b>Members</b>
1954	382	410755
1955	974	325610
1956	524	316642
1957	611	366317
1958	621	337064

Source: B.A.Khan, *Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1980

One can read this increase in both ways. For instance we can argue that the consciousness for the workers' rights was fostered by the PTUF. Thus, it eventually had set the pace of establishment of the new trade unions, as the trade unionists explored the promising new avenues which were opened up as a result of expansion in the process of industrialization. But on the other hand decline in the overall membership of the trade unions points towards the fact that a large number of bogus and pocket unions had also been established. This Table 7 provides its clearer picture.

**Table 7: Fall in Membership of Trade Unions**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of Trade Unions</b>	<b>Members</b>
1955	474	325610
1956	524	316642
1957	611	366317
1958		337064

Source: B.A. Khan, *Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations*, p.26

The way in which the Establishment had been suppressing the left-wing trade unionism is clearly evident from substantial decline in the membership of the Railway Workers Union which was considered as the most powerful trade union in the country in the early years after partition.

**Table8: Decrease in Numbers of Unions and fall in Membership of the Railway Trade Unions between 1947-1960**

Year	No of Unions	Membership	Total Members
1948-49	20	71,038	157,246
1951-52	12	53,119	129,408
1959-1960	12	4,384	51,370

Source: B.A.Khan, *Trade unionism and Industrial Relations*, p.26.

Division within trade union was another important factor that negatively impacted the labour movement. On the eve of partition there were two groups i.e. leftists and non-Marxist socialists the later were the followers of Mubarak Sagar. In addition to these there were pro-Muslim league elements called reformist and we see that the non-Marxist socialist and reformist acted under the influence of establishment against the left. They considered the struggle of the workers for the revolutionary change in the existing system. While the second group called themselves reformists. They wanted to struggle to bring change within the prevailing system. Both the "reformists" and "radical" groups were prominent in the trade union activities soon after 1947. The workers of the following departments and industries like railway, post, seaport, textile, and airport and in some cases cement factories were very vibrant in the trade unions.

There were very strong trade union currents among the workers of railway, post, seaport, textile, and airport and in some cases cement factories.

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Clashes erupted among the trade union movement due to international affiliations in 1949. This conflict led to the division of the movement. Four new federations were established two in West Pakistan and two in East Pakistan. In 1950 Abdul Malik formed the All Pakistan Confederation of Labour (APCOL) by the amalgamation of the Labour Federation of West Pakistan and one of the East Pakistan federations.

This conflict among the workers movement proved harmful for the rights of the working class. Despite this frustration, the labor movement continued and succeeded owing to the collective political environment of the country.

After independence, the AITUC's successor renamed itself as Pakistan Trade Union Federation (PTUF) and became an associate of World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU). The IFL's progeny in Pakistan organized itself as Pakistan Labour Federation (PLF), afterward renamed as All Pakistan Federation of Labour (APFOL). The APFOL associated itself with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICTUF) in 1951.

Anwer Ali, who was an antagonist of the communists in Punjab, while comparing the leftist trade unions with the rights' rivals, affirms that, "A number of competitor organizations exist but they work in a desultory manner and their bodies lack the audor and zeal of the communists."

Pakistan Trade Union Federation was associated with International Trade Union Federations. This association created angst among the workers of this federation and leaders. This discontent was raised on ideological grounds. Some workers support this alliance while the other section of the PTUF opposed it. This conflict of the workers divided the PTUF into two parts. Pakistan Workers Federation (P.W.F) was formed under the auspices of

Socialist Party. The workers elected Khawaja M.Hussain its President and Malik Qurban as General Secretary. The majority of the members of this federation were from railway and textile trade unions. The Federation was strengthened from the textile and railway Trade Unions which became its members. The officials of this federation affirm that 10 % organised workers from different industries were its members in 1957.

So in this way the communist workers organizations lost their harmony. Since then they never met together on the same plate form for the same cause of workers welfare. PTUF member of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) lost its membership. Both the newly conventional organizations were not associate any internationally Organization until 1958.

### **Conclusion**

This paper provides a broad over view of the significant developments in the histories of trade unionism in the West Pakistan and laid particular emphasis on the left-wing trade unionism, which the originations like the Railways Workers Union and the PTUF spearheaded. This historical overview shows that the left-wing trade unions had succeeded in organizing a strong trade union movement in Pakistan. It is evident from the fact that in the period between 1947 and 1951 the membership of trade unions showed an increase of 650 percent. By 1951, 209 trade unions had been established in the country and 393,137 workers had joined the trade unions. It is showed that though the trade unionists faced extremely unfavorable circumstances from 1948 onward, nevertheless the trade union movement continued to flourish till July 1954, the period when the Establishment had allowed the PTUF to survive, albeit in very stressful circumstances.

Whereas, these trade union organizations were very strong and dynamic all over the Pakistan. In 1954 there were 252,000 (two lakh and fifty two thousand) workers who were the members of trade union organizations, relatively two times bigger than in 1948.

One can highlight a number of other factors which further facilitated the proactive role the left-wing trade unions played during the preliminary phase of the trade union movement in Pakistan. For instance, leadership of these trade unions comprised both the educated bourgeoisie, and local leadership that the workers provided. The left-wing intellectuals like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, C.R.Aslam, Shaukat Ali, Eric Cyprian and many others guided the locals through their outside participation as long as the Establishment allowed them till 1959. They not only held responsible positions in the trade unions but also extended their intellectual and moral support in a number of ways. They helped the semi-illiterate workers in drafting the explanations and providing replies to the warning notices which the workers received on account of their participation in the trade union activities. Similarly, they provided legal assistance to the trade unionists in cases where the Establishment or the management of their respective industries had initiated legal action against the workers.



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