fidence of the FLN...with the mission of laying the groundwork for the UGTA congress in a national conference of workers' representatives." (Ibid., p. 108.) This conference took place in October 1968 in Algiers according to the plan projected here.

"After ascertaining the National Executive Commission's incapacity to establish suitable conditions for holding a normal congress, the conference will declare that this body's mandate has expired. On the basis of these findings, the conference will consider the party's proposals." (Ibid., p. 109.)

This "groundwork" for the Third Congress could be compared with the brutal intervention by the apparatus of Khider, then general secretary of the FLN, in the preparations for the First Congress of the UGTA in January 1963. And this is not my comparison but that of the document itself. "The First National Congress held in January 1963 made it possible...to clarify the position of the unions with regard to the party in power....Malicious persons tried to spread the idea that the government housebroke the unions, when in fact there was nothing but general confusion and contradictory speeches....The party had to intervene to prevent a syndicalist deviation which would have had serious consequences. In the conditions of the time, there was no democracy it was bound to respect except that based on revolutionary legitimacy and the higher interest of the nation." (Ibid., p. 27.)

Gangster methods similar to Mohamed Khider's were used to mop up pockets of resistance represented by certain local union councils like those in Algiers or Skikda. The document provided "theoretical" justification for these moves in the following manner:

"In the capitalist economic system, the revolutionary trade-union movement must accord an important place to local union councils." (Ibid., p. 74.) "The local councils fulfilled their mission with honor....To the extent that these bodies are still retained, the role that they can play is one of coordination and of inspiring cooperation among different trade unions. They must now assert themselves as real transmission belts between the leadership and the ranks." (Ibid., p. 73.)

The resolution of the Third Congress reproduced all these directives. It excluded the possibility of any conflict between the unions and the state bodies, subjecting the UGTA to FLN control.

The new general secretary of the UGTA is Abdelkader Benikous, a member of the Fédération de l'Education et de la Culture [Teachers' and Cultural Workers' Federation]. He takes the place of Mouloud Oumeziane, the former secretary.

Oumeziane remains, however, a member of the Executive Commission. Is he there as a representative of the opposition or as a hostage? The future will tell.

THE GHERAEO MOVEMENT

By Sharad Jhaveri

Gujarat, India

The spectre of gheraos is once again haunting the minds of industrialists here. West Bengal workers are resorting to this novel weapon more and more.

A.K. Jain, president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said at a two-day tripartite state Labor Advisory Board meeting, which opened in Calcutta June 10, that during the past three months there had been more than 160 cases of gheraos. According to him, in a number of cases the gheraos were accompanied by violence and intimidation.

J.M. Parson, president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that tea plantations witnessed the worst type of gheraos. (Indian Express, June 11, 1969.)

This meeting, in which employers and the United Front government of West Bengal talked with representatives of various trade unions, did not reach a consensus on the problem of gheraos.

"Gherao" means virtually a state of siege laid by the workers against the employers in the very premises of the factories. Economic issues are involved in most of the gheraos and the workers resort to this weapon to win immediate redress of grievances.

The significance of gheraos for the development of class consciousness among the workers can be properly assessed only in the light of a class analysis of the labor policy of the Indian bourgeoisie.

They have elaborated an intricate and time-consuming machinery involving a plethora of complex labor and industrial-dispute laws, to settle grievances and
direct the class struggle of the workers into peaceful channels and into closer and closer cooperation with the capitalist state. By law as well as by their endorsement of the Agreement to maintain industrial truce, the trade unions must function within this framework. By its very nature, the machinery engenders bureaucratism, red-tapism, and a special expertise on labor problems that is separated from the workers.

Trade-union activity in India at present demands full-timers who, when they hail from the ranks of the Communist or Socialist parties, tend to be sucked into the apparatus, increasingly pacified, and reduced to the level of business unionism.

Dissatisfied with what happens to their grievances when they are processed through this machinery, the workers are increasingly leaning toward direct action.

Gheraos have several advantages from the standpoint of the class struggle. It is a form of direct action involving many workers as against the petitioning, letter-writing, and parleying carried on by bureaucratic leaders behind the back of the rank and file.

Gheraos leave employers no alternative but to immediately consider long-standing grievances of the workers and to concede to their demands if they want to be released.

Gheraos convince the workers that direct action pays off.

Gheraos often give rise to an immediate confrontation with the bourgeoisie and their state. This can become conspicuous, especially when the police or military intervene in behalf of the employers. This raises the question of the class character of the state and direct action in relation to government power.

Gheraos teach the workers to disregard the norms of bourgeois legality, so assiduously cultivated by both the state and the trade-union apparatus.

Once again West Bengal has proved to be a breeding ground for gheraos. One need not be surprised at this. As admitted by the West Bengal labor minister, there had been no wage revision for a decade in the engineering industry. The jute workers, not without reason, were pressing for wage increases. In the tea industry, most gardens had not properly implemented the wage-board recommendations.

The Supreme Court of India has ruled gheraos to be illegal, holding that workers who engage in them can be prosecuted under the Indian penal code.

The West Bengal unit of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the labor organization of the Congress party, the classic party of Indian capitalism, does not support gheraos.

On the other hand, the United Trade Union Congress of the Revolutionary Socialist party, one of the members of the United Front in West Bengal, favors them.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) displays an equivocal attitude toward gheraos. The United Front government of Kerala which is dominated by the CPI(M) proposes to adopt a stern posture against gheraos in Kerala. M. Basavapunniiah, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPI(M), defines the party's attitude toward gheraos in a lead article scheduled for publication in the party's official journal People's Democracy.

He equates gheraos with other forms of struggle such as civil disobedience, satyagraha (Gandhi's passive resistance), picketing, and hunger strikes. But he hastens to add that the CPI(M) will not idealise gheraos as a miracle weapon to fight working-class battles. He admits that the gherao weapon is not used by the working class as confidently and frequently under the Congress government as under the United Front government in either West Bengal or Kerala. He attributes this to the prolabor policy of these two governments. But it can also be taken as a sign of dissatisfaction with the vacillating policy which these governments display toward labor.

The CPI(M) leader disapproves of the capitalist campaign against the workers' right to resort to gheraos. But he expresses his concern over a gherao in essential services.

The CPI(M) leader disapproves of the capitalist campaign against the workers' right to resort to gheraos. But he expresses his concern over a gherao in essential services.

The Naxalites, the so-called true Maoists, do not seem so far to have elaborated their stand on the problem of gheraos. This omission is not surprising, since in general the Naxalites have no programme worthy of the name for proletarian struggles in the cities.

In their obsession with the peasantry and encircling the cities from the villages, in their rash, adventurist, isolated, and in essence terrorist acts, they have momentarily forgotten the gheraos.

In view of the extremely volatile economic situation in India, and particularly with a professedly prolabor regime holding office in West Bengal, the incidence of gheraos is likely to increase in the near future in West Bengal.