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# GLOBAL ELECTRONICS INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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## MALAYSIA

Late last December, Texas Instruments laid off 130 workers from its plant at Ulu Klang, near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Workers were retrenched without notice, but they received severance pay based upon their terms of employment. *The Star* (December 27, 1982)

reported that TI had plans to lay off an additional 600 workers early in 1983. It said machinery was being shipped to a TI plant in Taiwan, and that the Ulu Klang plant was being computerized.

In January, Litronix offered any of its 1,100 workers in Penang full termination benefits if they would voluntarily resign. When approximately 150 workers quit, the company discouraged further resignations. Litronix had been on a four-day week since August, 1982 because of the recession. In January, following the resignations, a company spokesman said Litronix would resume its full schedule soon. *The Star* (January 14, 1983) reported that some workers regretted having resigned. It cites one 22 year-old woman, "We feared we would be kicked out sooner or later and grabbed this offer."

Meanwhile, the Malaysian government has finally taken steps toward the recognition of an electronics workers' union, after ruling earlier that they could not join the Electrical Industry Workers Union because it represented workers in a different industry. In January, Labour and Manpower Minister Datuk Mak Hon Kam announced sanction for an electronics union if workers wanted it.

Workers from several plants immediately began to set up an organizing committee, with the help of EIWU officials. The EIWU reportedly represents 6,500 workers. The electronics industry in Malaysia, primarily integrated circuit assembly for U.S. firms, employs some 60,000 workers.

Dan Nelson, managing director of Hewlett-Packard's Penang factory, told the *Star* (January 4, 1983), "It is hard to imagine what the union can offer or contribute to the employees." H-P, one of the largest employers in Silicon Valley, is considered in the U.S. to be strongly anti-union, but paternalistic toward its employees. Following Nelson's statement, the Penang Trade Union Congress challenged Nelson to a debate.