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THE LENGTHENING SHADOW OF
NEW TECHNOLOGY OVER THE
INSTITUTIONALISED PROCESS OF
WAGE SETTLEMENT

RANABIR SAMADDAR

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The Lengthening Shadow of New Technology
Over The Institutionalised Process of
Wage Settlement

Ranabir Samaddar



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Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta
10, Lake Terrace,
Calcutta - 700029.

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ABSTRACT

One of the relatively less discussed aspects concerning the relationships between the labour process and the institutionalised process of wage settlement is the formal separation of the two. The process of wage settlement takes place outside the production process, the contract is bargained there and the terms settled. The worker, again formally, after agreeing to the terms thus concluded enters the production arrangement and becomes an integral part of the labour process. But a close study of the labour process will show that this cannot be separated in a substantive manner from the process of wage settlement. Conversely also this is true. The process of wage settlement can hardly be meaningfully understood without constant reference to labour process. The introduction of new technology has deepened the organic relation between the two and has made the labour process an integral part of the institutionalised process of wage settlement. An attempt is made here to gain an understanding of this relationship through a study of the trade union submissions to Bachawat Wage Boards set up for the newspaper industry in India.

1. Introduction

One of the relatively less discussed aspects concerning the relationships between the labour process and the institutionalised process of wage settlement is the formal separation of the two. The process of wage settlement takes place outside the production process, the contract is bargained there and the terms settled. The worker, again formally, after agreeing to the terms thus concluded enters the production arrangement and becomes an integral part of the labour process. But a close study of the labour process will show that this cannot be separated in a substantive manner from the process of wage settlement. Conversely also this is true. The process of wage settlement can hardly be meaningfully understood without constant reference to labour process. The introduction of new technology has deepened the organic relation between the two and has made the labour process a compulsorily substantive issue in the institutionalised process of wage settlement. Clearly the imperatives are today that the entire range of work conditions be debated, argued over, challenged and tried to be changed in the process of wage settlement. I have further argued that it is the employers who stand to gain from the above mentioned formal separation. This formalism is a 'fetish' that has to be continued. For the workers and the trade union movement however, the need lies in ending that formal separation. New technology had made it all the more imperative. The newspaper industry in India forms the field

of our study. Specifically, the Bachawat Wage Board and the trade union submissions to it will engage our attention here in course of our attempt to understand the crucial issue.

The process of Bachawat Wage Board Settlement requires political analysis for a number of reasons. The Board was appointed by the Union Government at a time when new technology had become a reality in almost all big newspaper establishments - national, regional, English and vernacular. Software had developed to certain extent. The Government's electronics policy was clear in the sense that it indicated its encouraging attitude to the technological switch over ⁱⁿ the industry. Most of the unions had accepted the switch over either passively or had remained content with the employers' as well as Government's assurance in the Parliament that there would be no retrenchment consequent upon introduction of new technology.¹ However fear loomed large everywhere with the growing realization among workers that manpower would be reduced any way - now or later. The AINEF (All India Newspaper Employees Federation) had shown earlier no clear cut lead in responding to new technology, its policy had been, to say the least, haphazard. It had of course brought out a working paper on modernization,² had spoken in glowing terms about the Statesman Employees Union's pioneering attempt to grasp the reality of automation in newspaper industry,³ had talked of hazards of new technology and as the various circulars of the time show, it tried to keep the affiliated unions informed of advances in technology

in graphic industry culling news items from international literature.⁴ But, on the whole, it had left its affiliates and the broad masses of newspaper workers to fend for themselves in face of the massive switchover in the entire industry. The Bachawat Wage Board was appointed in 1985 at such a time.

Wage revision had been overdue. The period of Palekar Award was over. Attention of workers shifted from modernization to wage board. The questions became paramount : how would the bosses after successfully introducing new technology now face labour's demand for increase of wages that could ~~xxx~~ offset the gains achieved consequent upon modernization ? Again, how would the AINEF, after dithering for over a decade almost, now squarely face the issue and try to bring in the reality of modernization in wage board negotiations ? The Bachawat Board being quintessentially a process of tripartite settlement, how would the state look towards issues of pension, occupational health and safety etc., for on that depended how the terms of reference would be constructed for Mr. Justice Bachawat ? Would the reality of modernization be inbuilt into the lengthy legalistic arguments before the Board, or would it appear as only one intervening section in an otherwise general construct where focus remains on wage increase ? These were all complex issues, for they enveloped the interpenetrating realities of technology, union consciousness, unionization, wage settlement, managerial strategy and the state. Finally, another point to be discerned is : would the reality of technology react

upon industrial relations in the process of tripartite settlement in the same way in which it would in a bipartite process ? Moreover, capital labour relationship in form of wage settlement can be different, say, in case where it is being determined at national level. To put simply, thus, would Federation's response be something different and at higher level, than a union's response at plant level ? And consequently, how would it affect the union performance in response to modernization ? For, one notable thing surprisingly neglected in the industrial relations literature in our country, is that, wage settlement would be standardized as a result of wage board-centred struggle between employers and the workers and union performance at a micro level might become irrelevant in face of the determining reality of tripartite settlement with state acting as the guarantor. This may or may not affect unionised strength in face of new technology at plant level, But conversely, with the institution of Wage Board, introduction of new technology free from the shackling constraints of wage revision, reduction of work day, occupational health and safety etc. also cannot be pursued unilaterally by the management at plant levels. In other words, Bachawat Wage Board holds the prism where the interactions between technology and class relations can be seen in complex and exasperating light.

To put simply, with each act of introducing technology, the employer would try to increase conditions of domination over labour, in fact technology would be the form through which this domination would be articulated and

conversely with each new act of introducing technology, the worker would be presented fait accompli with a new set of dominating factors - a new type of domination - through the technology and its introduction and a struggle for power would ensue. Bachawat submissions of AINEF, need to be looked into from that perspective.

2. Knowledge, Technology and Power

Challenging the domination consequent upon the introduction of new technology requires knowledge of that technology and the Bachawat Wage Board was the occasion when the union had to acquire technical knowledge of the technology and contest the terms of Wage Board arguments placed by the employers - INS (Indian Newspaper Society) and others. For if the terms were accepted per se, then the main battle would be lost in the first round itself and peripheral wage increases would mean nothing in face of the severe domination personalized through new technology. As we shall see, the Federation certainly acquired knowledge and tried to place boulders and barricades in the path of a unilateral increase of power and domination of bosses in the plants, in the industry, in the work-organization by contesting many individual features of new technology set up, through wage board arguments. Thus arguments pertaining to work organization, machine deployment, plant safety, occupational health and safety, work hour, allowances for a modern and humane living, pension etc. became crucial during deliberations. These were the grounds where domination over workers

by employers through introducing new technology was being contested. Knowledge and power here were obviously inter-linked. It is amazing how the leadership of AINEF painstakingly gathered knowledge of new technology, its terms, conditions and effects, which would put many a professional researcher to shame. Yet, the paramount question remains, as pointed at the outset, was this knowledge inbuilt into the entire arguments of the Wage Board or was it just 'another section' alongside many others in the Wage Board submissions? In other words, how were power and authority being contested - sectionally, 'other things remaining same' or pervasively, in an overall way, along the entire range of domination existing in class relations inside the factory, even at a shop-floor level? Was knowledge sufficient for mounting such a wide range challenge over new technology? The Bachawat submissions probably gave a negative answer and showed that something beyond knowledge was required. It demanded new form of argument, new form of contest and new form of organization. But we must not anticipate the story.

It is clear that both at plant level as well as industry level, workers and particularly union militants in big newspapers were gaining professional knowledge and in the placement of workers under the Bachawat pay scales workers would be getting supervisory status.⁵ This professionalization going hand in hand with reskilling meant that knowledge would no longer be a monopoly of the management. Yet the question arises, more after going through the eight

volumes of AINEF submissions to Bachawat Board, is knowledge inherently a basis of power ? What is the relation of knowledge as a power resource to other bases of power, especially those of an economic and political nature ? From the start of the decade of eighties, there was increasing professionalization and along with professionalization came increasing knowledge of technology and of industry both at federation and union level.

The functionalist interpretation of knowledge that comes naturally from a political position of industrial unionism as well as new syndicalism in fact overemphasises the role of knowledge in curbing management, mounting new forms of struggles and contesting managerial prerogatives in running the plant and the industry on a new basis. The knowledge base of the professionals is given huge importance in analysis of union struggles. Through an autopsy of the Bachawat Wage Board, we have to see how far the functionalist interpretation holds true, for we have to find out how far the professionalized knowledge could be effective in mounting challenge to the power of bosses.

The knowledge accumulated by the Federation, and used for strengthening its arguments before the Board is evident from the list of books and documents which is really amazing: ILO documents, wage agreements in some non-newspaper industries and companies, excerpts from journals on computers regarding health and safety, Pay Commission Report on pension. International Graphic Federation documents and balance sheets

of some non newspaper companies too were used and provided for consideration of Justice Bachawat.

The arguments were built on the above material which was also submitted to Justice Bachawat. The main body of submissions also carries the imprint of professionalization. The text itself would show that this massive body of submissions could hardly have been the handiwork of just a labour lawyer versed in arguing before labour tribunals, pay commissions and wage boards, unless the union/federation itself was gaining in professional knowledge. The federation filed 3 volumes of memoranda in reply to Wage Board questionnaire and the statement of case; 2 volumes of supplementary memoranda, 2 volumes of Surrejoinder in reply to Employers' memoranda, 1 volume of reply to the "Supplementary Information" memorandum submitted by the INS to the Board pertaining to latest selling price and ad rates of newspapers, plus 1 volume of "additional material", 1 volume of "fresh material" and 1 of "new material". But this was not all, a separate memorandum named "Advantages and Disadvantages of New Technology" was filed on 28.12.87, "Chart on new and old system of work in the newspaper industry and the required work force" was filed on 7.4.88 and finally on 15.4.88 a note was filed on "Clubbing of establishments for the purpose of wage fixation". In all, a massive quantity of 2216^{pages}! Really an eloquent testimony to the interacting relationships between knowledge, power and division of labour.

Yet, as we have said, Bachawat submissions raises the question : how were power and authority being contested ?

Sectionally, as one more side of wage bargaining, or a crucial chapter on which modernization was being based and relentlessly introduced and which itself assumed a new character basing itself upon new technology ? It seems, the more the submissions were being loaded with knowledge, the more yawning became the gap between federation/leadership at the top and the unions below and the ^{gap} more clear also. Modernization demanded nothing less than a restructuring of the organizational structure of Federation, which had remained essentially a wage board oriented body. It thrived on wage board preparation, arguments etc. But modernization demanded that the technical knowledge and the challenge to power, based on that knowledge, percolate well below, that the 'new' concepts of occupational health and safety be grasped by grassroots unions, that the traditional divide between white collar and blue collar, in this case, the journalists and non journalists, gradually bridged and mutual animosity done away with the setting up of composite bodies at plant, regional and federation level, that regional bodies be formed as the main pillars of Federation and the concept of social security be made the cutting edge in wage negotiations as well as productivity deals at plant level. As we shall see the Federation responded to the demands of Wage Board splendidly, but failed at the grassroots level. Thus if power and authority of the management buttressed by new technology were challenged successfully to some extent by the Federation at the wage board level, this loss was amply compensated for the bosses at the plant level. For example, one agreement over Wage Board implementation at a plant level

included a clause like this :

The parties hereto confirm the provisions contained in the Memorandum of settlement executed on different dates with different unions as well as the letters written by the Management to the unions on the subject of introduction of new systems of work/production/new technologies.

It is agreed between the parties that as and when necessary, new technologies will be introduced in this company in its production and journalist lines.

The union and the management agree that there will be no termination of service nor any reduction in wages and benefits on account of the introduction of new technologies.

It is further agreed between the parties that the unions will extend cooperation in the matter of rehabilitation, redeployment, training and retraining of workmen whose functions have been taken over by new technologies and encourage them to acquire new skills and adapt themselves to the resulting new environment.⁶

Now certain observations are in order in the context of interpenetrating relationships between new technology, unionisation and wage board. As the example of ABP the Anandabazar Patrika (and many such examples are there) shows, wage increase may not defer modernization, but may enhance the process of modernization on the contrary, by taming an already beleaguered workforce as well as by depriving the union of the ground on which it had concentrated its fight against modernization - the ground of 'reciprocal' wage increase. Two possibilities may emerge out of the said interpenetrating relationships : the struggle against modernization in form of Wage Board submissions and arguments may give rise to and strengthen unionism at grassroots level, particularly after the Wage Board verdict. But it may be the opposite also - with the apex body of the Federation fighting the battle in form of wage board deliberations, workers and unions at the grassroots may have little to do and an on the whole prompt settlement of Bachawat claims at the plant may kill any possible unrest below, thus clearing further the path of modernization. How exactly the turnout would be would of course depend on the specific nature of the relationships between new technology, union and the wage board at a particular determined moment. But given the absence of any overall perspective on modernization and the inclination to treat it as just 'one' issue, as well as given the structural weaknesses of the Federation and of the process of unionisation among newspaper workers, the second outcome is more probable. The hard work for five years for preparing the Bachawat submissions, the enormous amount of

money that the workers had to contribute,⁷ and the brilliant and dexterous arguments vis a vis new technology - all probably would be lost. Surely wage increases have been won, social security demands vis a vis new technology like pension or health and safety measures or reduction of work day etc. have been raised to some extent. But caught in the quagmire of a tripartite system of industrial relations - particularly Wage Board bargainings, the possibilities of the Federation inspiring the unions and workers at plant level as a fall out or downward filtration of Wage Board judgements seem remote. Knowledge after all does not necessarily lead to power !

Hence we are back to the original question : how does the Wage Board feature in conflicting relationships between technology and labour - in this case new technology and the newspaper workers ?

In India, labour relations have been historically built upon an assumption that the state has the bound duty to interfere in industrial relations before it deteriorates too much. The assumption of state neutrality is strong rooted through various labour relations acts from colonial days, strengthened further through the past forty years. Labour has not merely fallen a prey to such assumption umpteen times, it is often caught in a web of industrial relations agencies, tribunals, boards etc. that make it

difficult for standing on own feet. Labour law, legal practice in labour relations are today a fast expanding territory. What has definitely been a casualty in this quagmire of tripartite structure of labour relations is the strengthening of unionisation at the grassroots level. The state will not often allow employers to run berserk against labour; but then it will not allow labour also to go all out against the bosses. By perpetuating the state of tension, the state becomes the arbiter and in name of collective bargaining, it is often either bailing out labour or bailing out bosses - mostly the latter. We have to situate the policy of instituting wage boards in this perspective of state dominated industrial relations - the triad of state, bosses and the worker. Bachawat Wage Board was no exception. Instituted against the dark background of new technology, redundancy, long due wage revision claims, Bachawat Board stole the limelight. As noted earlier, victories were won by the workers certainly at wage board level, but the long question remained as disturbing as ever : would it help workers in countering new technology at plant level ?

3. The Structure of Industrial Relations, New Technology and Wage Bargaining

Every policy maker ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ field of labour relations in post independent India has ^{been} /worried over the prospect of labour and management knocking each other out or knocking too much at the doors of courts and tribunals to sort out their

problems. It would have resulted in excessive legalization of industrial relations. Instituting Wage Boards is a form of conciliation - a formula that would put both labour and management on a tight leash and yet enable them to reconcile their differences over wages without going to court or resorting to prolonged and often violent strikes. Wage Boards thus have been form of state intervention - an extension of conciliation. In usual forms of conciliation, parties are technically free not to come to an agreement. But the wage board has a judicial status, its award is guaranteed by the sanction of state. But at a plant level, the award has to be transformed into concrete agreement and there the mandatory implementation of the award is turned into another instrument in the hand of the employers to restructure, rationalise, regulate and control labour relations as well as workflow within the factory. New technology and control of labour thus always remain paramount in the whole institutionalised process of wage settlement.

It is important to comprehend the significance of this situation. The AINEF leadership of course viewed the institution of Wage Boards - Shinde, Palekar and Bachawat as victories for trade union movement which had compelled the state to initiate a process where employers are bound to revise wages successively - a right undreamt of in many other industries. It may be really so. But then, wage board as a form of adjudication, as well as extension of conciliation principle represents a soft option. In a bargaining situation,

what a trade union, at plant or industry level, can get out of the employer depends heavily on the size and commitment of its membership. The union draws its power from its industrial strength. In proper conciliation as well as adjudication, by contrast, industrial strength still counts, but only indirectly. For adjudication replaces the pressurizing of bargaining with persuasion, state intervention and legality of the award that can be enforced on an otherwise recalcitrant employer. Thus trade unions quite incapable of securing a demand industrywide on the basis of strength can always hope for a favourable award. Bargaining is abandoned, the painstaking task of organizing the workers for wage revision and coping with new technology is also neglected. The soft option turns into sole option. Workers and unions in such a state fix all attention to the adjudication process taking place over a number of years, probably four or five, hope for a quick outcome and meanwhile the steamroller of modernisation starts moving, for all resistance has been concentrated at only one place. Wage boards thus hasten modernisation, they do not delay it - not merely in terms of economic calculations, but in terms of power calculations too - ^{they exemplify,} how modernization can be introduced overcoming labour resistance.⁸

The significance of the functional role of state intervention through forms of conciliation or adjudication in the structure of relationship between state, labour and the

employers is important. The point is not that the employees should not have demanded state intervention, but what grounds it should have chosen for the said intervention - the point is identifying the territory on which to articulate demands on the state in matters of industrial relations. This would have made the referee role of the state more difficult, the assumption of neutrality and guardianship in industrial relations more hollow. Instead, unions have chosen the grounds offered by the state and it is surprising to expect that fight against state in labour relations can then continue fruitfully. Concretely it means, the AINEF could not have ignored Wage Board, was right in concentrating its energy on it, but it was for AINEF to challenge the very terms of reference by which the Board was set up and prepare its legal discourse on wage revision and modernisation in such a way as to challenge the 'naturally' assumed absence of connection between wage revision and modernisation or new issues of social security and modernisation. By allowing the various issues of modernisation boil down to 'wage questions' in the course of the entire legal exercise, the ground was conceded from the start. A different outcome was hardly possible. Wage increase and increase of modernization were to be henceforth the twin companions. Demanding 'justice' from the Wage Board against the dark background of modernisation remained nebulous, just as remained nebulous the concept of 'fair wage' even after the massive volumes of submissions. Power, justice, state intervention, decline of union strength and modernisation - all remained in a state of mutually inextricable relationships.

For the analyst of labour scene then, viewing the whole industrial relations process vis a vis new technology will involve four crucial areas : the subjects of bargaining, the structure of bargaining, the legal framework of bargaining and the role of state in the bargaining process.⁹ But how these four crucial areas shape up depends on how workers are responding to the impact of technology on work-process and work-environment - in other words how the subjects of bargaining are being conceptualised and defined, how they are accepting the structure of bargaining - as fait accompli, or as given, whether grudgingly or simply trying to change it from a sense of disbelief and distrust; then again how much they have internalised the legality of the process - the legal discourse in industrial relations and finally how they view existence of state in the whole domain of labour relations. We must remember that the institution of the Wage Board was preceded and accompanied by strikes, protest dharnas, marches, morchas, and observance of rallies on protest days. Already there had been token strike against modernisation. Yet, surprisingly the issues of bargaining i.e. contents of submissions to the Wage Board were not defined afresh, though as we have initially noted and will subsequently see that these issues were tried to be formulated in course of submissions, but feebly, sectionally. The centrality of the wage question could not be dislodged and issues against modernisation remained peripheral to be master-argument. Thus the Bachawat submissions represent both historic continuities and contrasts. The most striking

contrast is the issues raised before Bachawat and for that we shall have to go into a brief comparison with Palekar submissions. The most striking continuity is the emphasis on wage revision - the continuing centrality of wage question even under the shadow of modernization over the entire industry. All in all, the period from Palekar to Bachawat (1978-1989) shows that despite the modernisation debate, collective bargaining and adjudication were successfully accommodated by technological change. The process of bargaining and state mediation showed that negotiations, attritions, gain sharing, productivity deals, wage revisions etc. could accept the general principle that yes, workers have an interest in modernisation and existing job conditions, but modernisation as a secular tendency was going to stay, primarily as conceived and introduced by the employers. Indeed bargaining and state intervention, as argued above, helped in the technological change.

Except at the apex level i.e. at the Wage Board level, at plant level or regional level the Federation did not take up issues of modernisation with the management or the government. Thus given the nature of the wage board oriented organisation and the simultaneous attention on wage revision through Wage Board and disregard of issues of modernisation at plant and shop floor level, an almost oligarchic leadership as well as worker apathy in the trade unions were bound to emerge. This tendency was simultaneously reflected at the top as well as grassroots union level below.

The AINEF rightly claimed the position of the sole bargaining agent of newspaper workers. But did it take up issues of modernization, where workers would involve themselves, thus legitimizing its status ? The structural, organizational and environmental factors, we have seen, foreclosed the growth of AINEF from a wage board oriented body to a dynamic federation of unions of newspaper workers - both journalist and non journalist - at regional and plant level. The existing pattern of union-management-state relations as well as the structure of the union contributed in foreclosing that development. It is against this background that we have to see the lengthening shadow of new technology over institutionalised process of wage settlement. The history of AINEF and the dynamics of the institutionalised process of wage settlement against the background of new technology show that an oligarchic leadership was not inevitable, but was the concrete result of the particularities of the process.

A wage board oriented organization fails in these respects as it breeds inactivity and passivity below. There is thus irony in the situation, for while at the Wage Board level the Federation tries hard to link the issues of modernisation and wage revision, at below the live issues are not fought owing to lack of orientation and direction - the issues consequent upon the introduction of modernisation and thus an oligarchic leadership starts controlling the union movement.

Let us go further into the dynamics originating from the triad of state, union and bosses - the three active agencies in industrial relations and see how the relations between union leadership and the rank and file are affected by the tripartite structure. A trade union is after all a communication system also and communication plays a crucial role in the making of the organization. The decision making process in the union and the communication system on the other hand are mutually related and dependent. The AINEF circulars and the letters during the whole Bachawat period show a one way communication - information flowing from top to bottom only. The formal structure of the Federation and the informal networks of the Federation provided the necessary channels that controlled flow of information. But this very controlled flow of information showed that ground level information, a two way flow of communication were not needed as a major input of the decision-making process leading to Submissions to Wage Board etc. Rather the nature of wage board organization and the concentration of energy at the top dictated that the communication flow be simply one way. An oligarchic leadership and wage board oriented industrial relations are thus mutually linked. Bosses were helped in unilaterally introducing modernisation against this background.

During the Bachawat deliberations, all eyes remained fixed at the top, thus the level of worker participation and involvement in union resistance against modernisation declined. Though unions were not divided according to party affiliation,

yet factional tendencies and shifts emerged in such a milieu. Worker participation, union democracy and the open endedness of the organization were not enough, they were defeated by the very structure of industrial relations. Everywhere at the company level, agreements had to be negotiated with the master criterion laid down by the Award. Thus, positions were reworked, placements redesigned and the Award acquiring the character and status of inviolability, ambitions had to be cut down, social security demands summarily dropped, workers placed according to placements dictated in the Award. Though the employers were never taken in by the 'inviolability' of the Award and the implementation depended largely on how they sought to view it, the unions were bought by the 'sacrosanct' character and once again introduction of new technology succeeded remaining beyond any serious challenge. Thus Wage Board not merely paralysed the organisation to a great extent, it even determined the orientation of thought at both Federation and union level by laying down master definitions of various crucial issues pertaining to wage revision. For example, what constituted 'fair wage' a very contentious issue, argued at length by the AINEF before the Wage Board - again failed in incorporating the phenomenon of modernization in its definition and elaboration and to the unions below thus, 'fair wage' and modernisation remained two unconnected issues. However, of that later.

4. Process of Wage Determination and the Related Issues :

The study of wages has mostly been study of wage determination, but we have to see now in the context of Bachawat Wage Board, how the process of wage determination determines other issues, particularly the technological set up, the pattern of industrial relations and bargaining, the structure of unionisation. Conversely, one has to see, again in the same context, how these issues influence the process of wage determination.

The state of wage theory is responsible to a large extent for the telling absence of such studies where the focus is on the interpenetration of the process of wage-determination and the process of industrial relations as well as ^{the} structure of unionisation against the background of technology. In the process of wage board deliberations, the wage administrator's viewpoint reigned supreme in Justice Bachawat's questions and comments and sometimes in the arguments of AINEF also. Not surprisingly, the argument of the employers - the INS - reflected the dominant market argument. The questions raised by Justice Bachawat related to infrastructure of wage determination, particularly to the issue of 'clubbing' or otherwise as the Times of India Group had been pursuing in the post Palekar period, showing new printing centres as separate companies for printing but publishing the same newspaper; questions were further addressed relating to cost of production, tariffs and revenue, financial position of the industry showing the 'capacity to

pay' new placements and position, wage policy structure including various allowances and retirement benefits, and impact of modernisation on the industry.

We had remarked that the Federation's version of 'what constituted fair wage' included considerations emanating from new technology in its Wage Board submissions, but those considerations were not the bedrock on which the submissions were built. On the other hand it reflected the ideas propagated by the wage administrators - namely, that fair wage should confirm to the locally accepted wage, that it should confirm to the rising fortunes of the industry, that it should reflect the international pattern of wage fixation in newspaper industry, and finally in order to work satisfactorily, it should be conducive to job satisfaction, above all it should be just. Thus, what constituted just, would imply the above conditionalities, plus a sense of satisfaction. The economic yardstick of minimum wage was obviously not enough in determining what constituted fair wage, though that yardstick was used as an argument.¹⁰ It is again interesting to note, that in the Wage Board discourse on wages - fair wage, living wage, minimum wage - technology as a determinant is absent.

The citation of Marx and Engels on the question of what constitutes fair wage in Wage Board submissions of AINEF raises interesting questions.¹¹ The AINEF leadership mostly belonging to the two Communist Parties¹² has been

clearly aware of the classical Marxist views on wage and the views of Marx and Engels on the issue of "fair wage". This should have automatically led them to posit the wage question against the background of technology and necessary labour time. But the prevalent legal discourse on wage adjudication almost dictated that such a leadership should fall in line.

Hence after quoting Marx and Engels, it quoted the 42nd Amendment Act, references to Fourth Pay Commission, the Fair Wage Committee, as well as the verdict of the Supreme Court in the Standard Vacuum Refining Co. case. The notable point is that nowhere in the said Supreme Court judgement, or reports of Fair Wage Committee and the Pay Commissions, wage is linked to technology and upgrading of work environment is accepted as the natural companion of revision of wages taking place against the background of revision of technology. The relation between wage determination and technology still remained reified to the mind of a union leadership brought up in communist politics and the reification owes not a little to the structure of industrial relations prevalent in India.

We may venture into thinking along another line. In the tradition of party-led ^{unionism}, serious industrial studies have been few and ^{far} between in union literature. Studies on labour process as well as on changes in work organization under the impact of technological change have

been singularly absent. Union studies on work organization not being a familiar ground, the AINEF could hardly be expected to posit the wage question against the background of new technology and the changing work organization. Tellingly, one could find in AINEF literature, for example in its Silver Jubilee Souvenir, large amount of space being devoted to declarations of peace, disarmament, secularism etc., hardly anything on work organization in the industry or on the changing technology.

What the AINEF failed to grasp, it can be mentioned in this context, was that the Wage Board, the Award, and the company based agreements on the basis of the Award were in the nature of capital-labour 'accord' that the bosses wanted to achieve. In the broad range of unionized newspaper offices, accomodation was needed to facilitate accumulation.¹³ Thus a set standard for wage negotiation, bargaining, and productivity deals and a tightening of work organization was absolutely necessary. The Wage Board's functional role was thus set against the background of new technology. It signified further that unionisation and mechanization that appeared as a simultaneous process would no longer be necessarily so and modernization would now try to promote deunionisation. The reasons are not much difficult to seek : the earlier structure of centralized union leadership which was motivated by wage bargaining was becoming inadequate in face of new technology; ironically, while the centralized union leadership was busy in wage bargaining, the local

unions were left rudderless and defenceless against the modernising onslaught. The problems thrown up by modernization were also 'new'. It called for a new type of response, not forthcoming. Thus modernisation promoted the tendency of deunionisation. The more the wage accord was facilitated, and other issues remained unattended, the less the union structure remained relevant. A new arrangement of division of labour, a spate of issues involving social security, an antiquated union structure, new work norms - all these meant that the employers' strategy on wage determination would be to go through the wage board, accept higher wages to the extent unavoidable, then operate plants with relatively skilled, small, non-union, low cost labour force. A 1980 technology after being introduced in an industry, would not be satisfied with Taylorization. Production technology demanded something more. Ironically, the AINEF fell into that trap. We shall now go into that and shall see that one of the most significant victories of the newspaper owners during the entire Wage Board period was its success in redirecting the debate over social security away from the issue of wage entitlement and putting forth an unquestioned assumption that the two are delinkable. And whenever social security questions came up in the wake of modernization, these were viewed as necessary or conducive to productivity and that mysterious thing, 'job satisfaction'. Thus, all said and done, wage and social security remained delinked.

I have argued earlier that being forced to agree to an adjudicated process of wage settlement was not all that a setback for the bosses, for they were precisely at that time engaged in introducing new technology and wage revision became an integral tool for labour control by the management. So too became the question of social security an integral part of the same strategy.

Thus, the Wage Board was not opposed to raising social security issues before it by the AINEF, nor were the employers fanatically resistant. What was needed for the Federation, therefore, was to link the process of wage settlement with the process of settling social security measures and treat wage as really 'compensation' in the widest sense of the term - compensation for intensification of work, compensation for job insecurity, compensation for a high price rise market, compensation for surplus hours worked, compensation for an intensive work environment, for having to assume increasing operational responsibilities, mental strain, physical efforts and finally compensation for a unilateral introduction of new technology by the bosses whereupon the workers have to cooperate in industrial restructuring and the necessary accumulation process. In other words, wage settlement would no longer remain just an economic issue to be settled through collective bargaining, it would become the contending point in power - the centrality of the wage question in industrial relations would again appear after assuming a new form. The AINEF failed in

apprehending this centrality in new form while confronting the wage board phenomenon.

In its Wage Board submissions, the social security demands can be found broadly in three places : in the 1st volume of submissions, the AINEF places its charter of demands involving various allowances, leave, working hours etc.; in the 3rd volume, these demands are explicated; finally in 2nd volume of Rejoinder and Supplementary Memorandum, the AINEF elaborates its views on "Modern Technology and its Impact on Working Conditions".¹⁴ Though the last item is in the Rejoinder and Supplementary Memorandum, this is the basis on which the AINEF has argued earlier in their main submissions. However, the point remains, why the 'main' is in the 'supplementary' ?

In the revision of wages, the AINEF demanded basic pay, dearness allowance, house rent allowance, night shift allowance, city compensatory allowance, medical allowance, leave travel allowance, education allowance, pension scheme, local conveyance allowance, plus issues of working hours and leave. Now, as we shall see, first by comprehending the social security provisions only in form of allowances and secondly by not making the provisions integral to wage determination, the AINEF fell pray to that managerial strategy which saw social security grants as parts of Theory Y, in terms of Hawthorne's results. 'Wage as compensation' is severely narrowed thus and the tension over wage revision

is thus lessened. The whole process of demanding wage as compensation is emasculated, for social security provisions will not be meant to compensate (nor can all damages to working capacity be compensated), and they would be geared to producing 'job satisfaction' only.

The Palekar Award fixed basic wages, dearness allowance, house rent allowance and night shift allowance, while earlier the Shinde Wage Board had recommended, in addition to wage scales, dearness allowance and gratuity. It may be seen that the critical issues arising in the background of modernization involved health, specifically occupational health and security, pension, shorter working hours as well as the placement problem under new set up. All these implied further that 'wage' be redefined.

If 'minimum wage' implied the minimum for reproducing labour power and if that involved the concept of 'need based wage' - it meant that local wage level, industrywise wage level, the minimum nutritional requirement, the rise in consumer price index etc. be taken as the bedrock of calculation. From this, 'fair wage' would be just a logical extension, implying that the worker would justly require recreational and more human facilities. But modernisation meant that this close circle of conceptualisation around the minimum, the need based and the fair be broken and the internality of labour relations be stressed more thoroughly. After all, nutritional basis etc. arose out of the poverty

studies of sixties and willy nilly that involved a neoclassical dimension. Nutrition requirement or consumer price index certainly implied the issue of requirement of reproduction of labour power. But, as I have argued, it restricted at the same time the legitimacy and the gamut of compensation and delivered very little punches on the structure of class relations within the factory. By taking extraneous factors as basis of wage determination, it left the internal one free from attack; but modernisation precisely demanded that internal structure be subjected to a thorough critique and the process of restructuring the work flow be not left unchallenged. All this meant that pension, occupational health and security, shorter working hours should be turned into integral parts of wage question and the assumptions of an undisturbed class relations within the plant too be challenged.

5. New Technology, New Issues

Let us take up the example of occupational health and security in this context. As we have seen, the AINEF demanded medical allowance. Either workers were enjoying ESI facilities in different newspaper companies, or if their pay was above the limit, they were getting often paltry medical allowance - in The Statesman, for instance Rs.75/- per year - six rupees a month ! Now even if this was revised upwards or the company paid out worker's ESI contribution, how would that tackle the problem of occupational health and security ? The AINEF itself had argued about the detrimental effect of continuous night shift on

newspaper employees and working journalists and occupational hazards involved in night shift by quoting extensively from an ILO publication, titled "Night Work".¹⁵ It argued about effects of night work on biological and psychological rhythms.

And, the most damning indictment came during the submission of Rejoinder and Supplementary Memorandum, a massive 148 page memorandum on the impact of modern technology on working conditions.

In the Rejoinder, studies on effects on eye, nerve, spine, reproductive organs of women, brain etc. were reported in details. The computer, the visual display system, the position of chair, the air conditioning system, the chemicals the more and more stress on night work etc. were discussed. The AINEF was thus surely clear on one point, that damage to health due to occupational factors cannot be compensated in a real way, it cannot be cured, it can only be prevented. Thus, medical allowance would in no way, nor for that matter, other medical facilities, would help in reproduction of physical capacity expended during work hour. Though, the AINEF mentioned all these, yet the thrust was on medical allowance. While it argued that "it is no more a question of doubt that the health of the employees is primarily a concern of his employer",¹⁶ the stress was on allowance, and the quantum of medical aid. The Second Pay Commission had said that nature of treatment and the class of treatment should not depend upon the status of the employee, but should depend upon the nature of illness

itself. The AINET drew the attention of the Wage Board to the observation of Second Pay Commission and then concluded by saying :

newspaper employers should also give medical assistance by way of medical allowance to their employees on the following terms :

Class VII	Rs. 30 p.m.
" VI	Rs. 40 "
" V	Rs. 50 "
" IV	Rs. 60 "
" III	Rs. 70 "
" II	Rs. 80 "
" I	Rs. 90 "
" IA	Rs. 105 "
" IB	Rs. 120 "
" IC	Rs. 135 " 17

It was thus mountain producing the mouse : The employers, as proved later on in various agreements, willingly swapped health provisions with allowances. It was a serious come down, for firstly, the workers previously under ESI system now desired opting out of it and switching over to the allowance system, and second, the workers thus lost a moral argument against the capitalist work-organisation. This was a classic instance, where social security provisions instead of being a fight against modernisation and an integral part of redefining the wage question, became through the

'allowance' entity a part of managerial strategy to ensure job satisfaction and worker-compliance to modernization.

The definition of wage conceived in terms of 'job satisfaction' was thus a waylaid trap for the Federation. The philosophy of 'social welfarism' was another such device to remove attention from modernisation and restructuring of the industry.

This predominant philosophy of social welfarism engulfed the union movement and wage was stripped of 'compensation' argument. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, has defined wages as

"all remuneration capable of being expressed in term of money, which would, if the terms of employment, expressed or implied, were fulfilled, be payable to a workman in respect of his employment or work done in such employment".

The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 also defined wages in similar terms.¹⁸ Thus, what was needed was to challenge this conceptualisation of wage before the Wage Board. Instead, the AINEF thought by buttressing the 'social:welfarist' dimension, it could put the press barons to a tight corner. Naturally it failed, for it could not link therefore the integral relations between wages, modernisation, social security and compensation. The AINEF could have, on the

contrary, argued that modernisation irrespective of anyone's desire or explicit stipulation was going to change the terms of employment and hence wages had to be revised. But probably, that would have been too raw an argument which could have antagonised Justice Bachawat and the hence the Federation even while walking on the borderline of that strategy skirted the question ultimately. Thus 'Why Wage Revision ?'¹⁹ in Bachawat submissions makes interesting reading for the way it has ordered the causes and omitted the most paramount one, namely modernization. As the AINEF saw the question, revision was needed, for 'the concept of a living wage is not a static concept',²⁰ for the region-industry standard continuously gets updated, for prices rise and 'the addition of dearness allowance does not sufficiently make up the gap between the wages and the cost of living'.²¹ Revision was needed further because the 'concept of need based minimum wage has to translated into reality',²² for wage related elements like allowances, bonus, social security and fringe benefits assume importance for 'economic and practical' reasons, for ensuring labour-capital cooperation; and finally since the Working Journalists Act in section 8 provides that 'the Central Government may in the manner hereinafter provided (a) fix rates of wages in respect of working journalists; (b) revise from time to time at such intervals as it may think fit the rates of wage',²³ wage-revision has become an imperative. Thus modernisation, that paramount factor in redetermination of wages, remains unmentioned, though as we shall show the shadow of modernisation always

hovered over the wage board process and the Federation was aware of it.

Strangely then, while arguing on the extent of jurisdiction of the Wage Board, the AINEF strongly supported for taking a broad view of what the Working Journalists Act defined newspaper employees as 'newspaper employee means any working journalist, and includes any other person employed to do any work in, or in relation to, any newspaper establishment'.²⁴ But it did not basically question the terms of reference of the Board, set up by the Government and did not argue that 'conditions of service' as envisaged in the Act of 1955 have to be thought anew, that pension has to be made integral to wage or that social security provisions should be perforce included in the adjudicating process. The Bachawat Wage Board was constituted under Section 13(c) of the Working Journalists Act by the Ministry of Labour of the Government of India vide its order No. S.O. 528(E) dated 17 July, 1985 and issued Notice on behalf of the Board on 6 August 1986. Thus, the AINEF got full one year to construct its basic thrust on wages, yet it remained reticent in questioning the entire ground on which the Board was constituted and prove its inadequacy.

We shall see again and again, how this half hearted effort to intergrate the wage question with modernisation cost the Federation dearly. The management triumphed even while agreeing to 'substantial' wage increase in some cases,

for it succeeded in a good trade-off silently and in the power struggle inside the plant the worker stood defeated.

The AINEF in its submissions on the financial position of newspaper industry and the state of the industry before and after the Palekar Award argued quoting the Supreme Court judgement in Ahmedabad Mills owners case that, for the purpose of wage fixation, the gross profit has to be taken into account because agents' commission or depreciation or R & D etc. are ultimately geared to realising the profit and wages payable to employees are a first charge and all other liabilities take place after wages.²⁵ It referred to the other Supreme Court judgements in Gramophone Company case, Indian Link Chain case, Unichem Laboratories Limited and quoted the Court :

..... When an Industrial Tribunal is considering the question of wage structure and gratuity which in our opinion stands more or less on the same footing as wage structure, it has to look at the profits made without considering provision for taxation in the shape of income tax and for reserves. The provision for income tax and for reserves must in our opinion take second place as compared to provision for wage structure and gratuity, which stands on the same footing as provident fund which is also a retiral

payment towards provident fund and gratuity is expense to be met by an employer like any other financial position. It shows that the burden of payment of gratuity and provident fund can be met without undue strain on the financial position of the employer, and that burden must be borne by the employer.²⁶

This judgement too ends significantly with upholding 'considerations of social justice'. The AINEF quoted the court which had asserted in Unichem Laboratories Ltd. that the Tribunal was justified in computing gross profits without deducting taxation, depreciation and development rebate. Thus, it is clear that the AINEF was clearly aiming for a strategy that would forestall managerial attempt to put hindrance to wage revision on grounds of modernisation expenses. It was further aware that owing to modernization, labour cost's share in relation to total manufacturing cost was going down. It showed from the summarised financial position of 45 newspapers submitted by management (INS) to the Wage Board, this decline in emphatic terms :

Table I
Labour Cost to Total Manufacturing Cost

	1980	1984	1985
Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.	18.87%	17.47%	15.05
Express Newspaper, Bombay	17.89%	13.00%	-
Hindusthan Times	15.50%	14.69%	-
Malayala Manorama	11.01%	8.56%	-
Mathrubhumi	16.65%	14.00%	-
Andhra Jyoti	15.07%	11.95%	-

Source : AINEF submissions, Vol.I, p.v.

Thus, it could argue that wage increase could not significantly alter the process of newspaper modernisation. It had already noted the close association between growth of big houses and growth of big press and noted that

a perusal of the above compilation of the balance sheets and profit and loss accounts will show that between 1981 and 1984-85, the subscribed capital of the industry in respect of 45 companies has increased from Rs.898 lakhs to Rs.1189 lakhs and the reserves have increased from Rs.2571 lakhs to Rs.6852 lakhs. The gross assets during this period increased from Rs.7215 lakhs to Rs.14,901 lakhs. At the

same time the gross revenue of these companies has increased from Rs.27.998 lakhs to Rs.38,375 lakhs".²⁷

The Report of the Newspaper Fact Finding Committee was also cited by the AINEF during the course of its submissions. All these show, the AINEF was mostly implicitly, but sometimes explicitly also arguing that modernisation did not at all reflect the financial burden of the industry and its so-called ill condition, but rather the well off condition of the industry and hence could afford a wage revision. But, the point remains, why did the AINEF argue that notwithstanding modernisation, the industry could afford wage revision and not argue that because of modernisation, it should pay more ? This remains once again an intriguing enquiry.

It stated in clear terms that borrowings do not show a weakness in the financial structure of the organisation and it is resorted not because of non-availability of capital as such, but it is a part of the system itself. As it showed from the Report of Fact Finding Committee that the wealthiest newspapers were the most indebted also and paid a lot as interest and the period (1984-85) was the one when they went in for large scale modernisation. A few examples are given in Table II.

It countered management's argument also to the effect that borrowings could have been occasioned by wage rise or rise in newsprint cost - the two factors most cited by INS. In fact, one of the most absorbing parts of the entire submissions²³ is the deep analysis of the financial position of the industry, and the dissection of the financial statements of 45 newspaper companies (Table III).

Table II

Borrowings of Some Major Companies (1984-85)
(Rupees in lakhs)

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Subscribed Capital</u>	<u>Loans</u>	<u>Interest paid</u>
1. Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd.	199.33	1793.02	214.27
2. Indian Express, Bombay	86.50	892.06	141.50
3. Indian Express, Madurai	4.05	490.10	75.18
4. Hindusthan Times Ltd.	21.38	966.55	65.98
5. Kasturi & Sons Ltd.	44.00	899.86	107.38
6. The Statesman	79.33	441.96	65.48
7. Mathrubhumi	6.27	254.56	35.36
8. Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.	17.00	544.41	60.40
9. Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd. Kottayam	37.00	62.51	73.70

Source : AINEF Submissions, Vol.I, pp.256-258.

It argued that interest paid on the borrowings utilised for the purpose of capital expenditure cannot be considered as a revenue expenditure and thus modernisation and expenditure incurred in it implied capacity to pay.

It may be seen that the growth of paid up capital was rather tardy. Loans increased, so increased the reserve and revenue. In any case, the way the modernisation of Indian newspaper industry proceeded through the decade, the AINEF argued, showed that the industry could pay the worker, as "the obvious inference is that old reputed establishments can command other resources for working capital".²⁹

Table III

Financial Position of 45 Newspaper Establishments :
Rupees in lakhs (1981-85)

<u>Items</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1985</u>
Subscribed Capital	898.19	1189.39
Reserves	2571.09	6852.15
Loans	6068.25	9913.92
Current Assets	7623.38	9582.96
Current Liability	5178.46	7141.20
Gross Assets	7215.10	14901.89
Adt. Revenue	10711.79	19366.28
Circulation Revenue	9334.92	16316.66
Other Revenue	1458.93	1632.47
Gross Revenue	27998.38	38375.10
Gross Profit	1058.28	2167.85
Losses	56.89	115.05
Interest Paid	886.50	1268.52

Source : Submissions of AINEF, Vol.I, p.262.

The period of modernisation was perused by the Federation in other ways also, as an evidence of industry's capacity to pay more. It showed that the industry had prospered by comparing the state of industry before and after the Palekar Award. The industry had increased the selling price of newspaper substantially. In one case, Desh of Calcutta, the rise was 400% from 1.1.79 to 30.11.86, Times of India, Delhi 185.7%, Jugantar 200%, Kerala Kaumudi 309%, the average rise 180%. This rise was much more than the rise during 1965-1978 though the period was half than the earlier one. Yet the rise in circulation was not that spectacular, albeit steady. The rise in circulation revenue was also phenomenal; and in every other way - display and classified ad. rates and ad. revenue - the increase was again noticeable. The AINEF concluded

..... It will be seen that the number of newspaper establishments (which) derived income from advertisements below 25 per cent were 112 in 1977 while those derived income advertisements between 50% and 74% were hardly 26, and above 75% was nil. Whereas the position is, in 1983, more than 26 newspapers derived income from advertisements above 75% and 144 as against 26 papers derived income between 50% and 74%. While hardly 50 newspaper secured income below 25% 196 newspapers between 25% and 49%.³⁰

Basically then, the AINEF's submission was that the newspaper industry was better in post-Palekar period than what it was in pre-Palekar times. Indeed, it argued that its growth was more in the period between Palekar Award and Bachawat Board than between Shinde Award and Palekar Tribunal. But this raises two very pertinent questions on the mode of argument of AINEF. If indeed as the submission ran, modernisation coincided not with a crisis period of the industry, but a growth period, which was the case, should not the AINEF have reckoned with the possibility that this expansion might immediately be followed by a crashing out of some independent newspapers, by more monopolisation, by more borrowing, more indebtedness, liquidity shortage and above all job shrinkage and hence the likely future had to be covered up with adequate social security provisions? In other words, the crucial task becomes once again to link modernisation with a new set of trade union demands, a new way to challenge the existing power structure in the industry. But the second question is more important. If, as the Federation argued, after the Palekar Award, wage increase was accompanied by heavy modernisation and increase of prices of newspapers and ad rates, was not this trend likely to repeat in post-Bachawat period immediately after the Award of wage revision? And hence, should not the Federation have thought of articulating demands for countering the possibility that would offset wage increase? Pension, reduction of work hour, and other likely issues were very vital for such a strategy. For example, the AINEF could have argued for a total ban on non-compliance to Press

Council's directive regarding news-advertisement ratio (60/40), so that it could be 'more ad if only more news', in other words, more newspapers - more jobs. Or, it could have said that wage revision should not be apart from verdicts of Press Commissions, it should be part of a comprehensive deal. It is sure that both the Government and the Wage Board would have objected to this way of arguing and would have been aghast at this attempt to flout the rules of the game. Once again the terms of reference would have been questioned and the authors of the game, modernisation - wage increase - job shrinkage-state neutrality - state welfarism, would have been put to great discomfort.

However, in this context when we are discussing possible alternative lines of argument, it must be kept in mind that the way in which AINEF analysed the state of the newspaper industry, is itself valuable, for it shows how labour itself views the relation between two very important processes - labour process and the process of valorization. It is important to note that this relationship has upto now not received enough attention. The entire Bachawat submissions of the Federation may be viewed as an attempt by labour to view the said relationship from its own perspective.

The Federation had criticised Justice Shinde's award of wage fixation on the basis of the newspaper for which the employee worked and did not take into account that newspapers often belonged to group, chain or a multiple

unit. This tendency has particularly gained after the introduction of new technology, where the engineering department, binding department, stores, offset rotary machine section, process department and in some cases even the composing section did work for all the newspapers belonging to a multiple unit.³¹ The Federation was thus clearly aware of the particular nature of accumulation process in the newspaper industry and thus now demanded what has been popularly termed as 'bunching' in Wage Board arguments in regard to classification of newspapers for determining its revenue and paying capacity. This itself was a revolutionary demand, for can anyone imagine workers demanding standardised wage, & say, in all the units of one Birla company ? The Indian Express group objected to the Bachawat Award supporting AINEF's demand for 'bunching', which sparked off the Indian Express strike in New Delhi in January, 1990.

What is immediately notable is that in arguing for 'bunching', the AINEF is not merely raising the issue of minimum wage, it is hitting at the accumulation method directly. But again, it does not link a critique of the valorisation process with a critique of labour process. But from AINEF's own submissions even, it is clear, new technology demands multiple editions and chain linked publications and the demand for 'bunching' clearly hits the managerial strategy that would argue for unequal wages for employees working for different units of the same chain. A critique of valorisation process demanded that it be

coupled with a critique of labour process too in the Wage Board submission through demands regarding newer norms of placement, norms of reskilling programme, norms of authorization of modernisation programme, norms of work day, of night shift, of occupational health and safety etc. Sadly, the combined critique was lacking, Once again we find the same half hearted attempt to combine the issue of modernisation with wage revision. The AINEF's high consciousness about the phenomenon of modernisation can be further evinced from two other points raised by it : first, it ~~w~~ noted usefully, referring to ILO, which "while talking about collective bargaining in respect of modernisation, had in mind the change in service conditions as a result of modernisation", that "in the newspaper industry ever since the management have resorted to heavy mechanisation and automation there has been no collective bargaining. Practically everywhere the automation was brought about unilaterally by the newspaper employers".³² However, the AINEF should have looked inward and asked itself back, why such a thing happened and was not its own wage board oriented nature to blame at least partially for that ?

Second, it brought the Fair Wages Committee Report to its support, as the Committee in the chapter dealing with wage differentials had held that the following factors should be taken into account :

- (i) degree of skill
- (ii) strain of work
- (iii) experience involved
- (iv) training required
- (v) responsibility undertaken
- (vi) mental and physical requirements
- (vii) disagreeableness of the task
- (viii) hazards attendant on the work; and
- (ix) fatigue involved.

But the problem remained that Federation had no scientific study involving these factors and hence could not integrate these factors in its wage claims. It had conducted no pilot study also. It had, of course, ILO, WHO and other documents as supporting evidence. But the judicial process requires first, primary evidences and assertions. Even a casual perusal of the factors cited by the Fair Wages Committee shows the notion of compensation involved in the process. But when the Federation did not know how much to be compensated, how could it claim what was to be the compensation? And in order to arrive at how much to be compensated, it required a critical study of the labour process -- in other words, how labour was reacting to nature and other given material of production, to each other, how it was being made to work, and finally how much it was being made to work extra. But the Federation lacked substantive evidences of required skill, strain, experience, training, fatigue, hazards, requirements etc. The problem was further compounded by lack of attention to another factor. Labour process

involves the process of superintendence also, just like process of group work, assembly line etc. The AINEF knew that modernisation would result in a new work flow and reskilling in every case would not be same. Thus, wage differentials would accrue from that. If PTS operators gained much, the orderlies or drivers would not gain to that degree. In the absence of any well-worked out rationale, in each individual case of newspaper establishment, there would be disputes among workers regarding placements and the management could then turn the very act of negotiating wage revision agreement on the basis of Bachawat Award against the workers and the union. Thus the exposition on modernisations was only grafted onto the main body of the argument, but was not integrated. Hence, para 8.155 sounded half empty, as it contended :

In terms of wages, it means that the rates of wages for every kind of work done with the application of modern technology must be higher as compared to what was given under the old technology.³³

Yet, inspite of all the loopholes in AINEF's submissions, the way it fought for minimum wage and argued about the minimum standards of required food and housing, clothing fuel and lighting, health and efficiency, medical requirements, children's obligations, recreation and social obligations, and finally other amenities, and insisted on

strict compliance with the stipulations of Factory Act, 1948 that guides the printing and allied trades in India, showed that the entire process of wage determination was a process of class struggle also. The submissions of AINEF to the Wage Board bore the print of that.

The Federation argued that newspaper employees had been for long granted only two retirement benefits - gratuity and provident fund, and both were inadequate. Provident fund benefit would be in fact more inadequate, for as the Federation noted, 50 per cent of P.F. savings was of the employee himself and in many cases this portion was already withdrawn by the employee for marriage, long term sickness or house purchase. Hence pension can be the "only real retirement benefit which an employee is entitled to and should be given",³⁴ and the Federation argued, "It is, therefore, urged that the Wage Board should frame the pension on the identical terms as those provided by the Fourth Pay Commission".³⁵ Yet it was never argued that modernisation has made pension most imperative and pension meant not merely retirement benefit, but job security too in the context of workers' struggle against reduction in manpower level, 'golden hand shake', redundancy, retrenchment and other forms of rationalisation.

The INS had submitted that pension was not wage and therefore the wage boards could not recommended any pension for journalists and non journalist employees. The Federation got busy in refuting the contention and argued in details

showing Court judgements as well as the precedence of Pakistan that "pension is a wage as defined under the Act" - the Industrial Disputes Act. (para 8.6). But this was basically a defensive exercise, for by making an aggressive stance, the owners succeeded in pushing the imperatives consequent upon modernisation to the background and avoiding any talk of their own obligations too. The Federation continued arguing that if workman had fulfilled the terms of employment, he would become entitled to remuneration in the post employment period.

Thus the argument revolved round establishing pension as 'wage' and this being basically a defensive exercise, the offensive strategy of establishing the owner's onus for providing pension in the backdrop of modernisation was not pursued by the Federation.

We have noted that the Federation had argued extensively on the industry's 'capacity to pay' revised wages, allowances and pension. But as its Written Submissions on Tentative Proposals Made on Direction of Hon'ble Wage Boards During Their Hearing in Delhi From January 10 to 19, 1989 shows, even when it was given by the Wage Board an opportunity to submit its opinions on tentative proposals of the Board, it did not link modernisation with the issue, nor did it tell the Board that the greatest lacunae in the tentative proposals was that the Board had not viewed the entire question in the perspective of modernisation. It was content with cryptically remarking that revision should have been more.³⁶

It is little surprising the objections to the tentative proposals simply rested on a Supreme Court judgement, not on substantive grounds, Or, was the AINEF led into really believing that the wage rise was enough - implying enough compensation ? To many, it was certainly unexpected as far as the extent of revision was concerned, and which is why it ended with a perfunctory objection. This possible perfunctoriness will be all the more surprising, if one goes through the list of new machines and new designations and compare them with the earlier ones. It will show the amount of deskilling and needed reskilling and this will also strengthen our observation that only a conceptualisation of compensation could have effectively utilised the issue of wage revision in the new work process. We can present them in a table for convenience as well as for showing how the arguments for wage revision fell short of fully grappling with the phenomenon of modernisation. (Table IV)

In fact arguing along this line, the Federation could have gone further and shown that with reskilling and the revised work flow, workers now were assuming much more operational and sometimes managerial responsibility and hence they needed to be paid more. In composing, processing and printing - all the three main areas, workers were becoming operators and hence placement would be now a real ticklish question. It would not merely be a question of revision of post, but an appreciation of the new role of workers at each stage of production.

Table IV

New Machines, New Designations, Old Machines, Old Posts

Name of the Machine with its function	Designation of the person who works on this new machine	Designation of workers on corresponding existing machine	period of training required for existing hands to switch over to new machines	Period of training required for new hands
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Phototypesetting machine sets the matter for printing through computer terminals.	PTS Operator, Terminal Operator, EKB Operator, Key Board Operator, etc. etc.	Lino Operator, Mono Operator, Ludlow Operator	6 months	1 year
2. Processor Processes the matter set by PTS machines and develops the Bromide.	Processor Operator, PTS Assistant	none	6 months	6 months
3. Cameras (Computerised)	Camera Operator	Camera Operator (highly skilled)	6 months	2 Yrs.
4. Scanner Processes the colour transparencies, separates the colours and prepares negatives for Plate making	Scanner Opttr.	do -	6 months	2 Yrs.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
5. Ultraplus Platemaker (Exposer) Exposes the negatives on photosensitive plates	Plate maker/Offset Rotaryman	Plate maker/Colour	6 months	2 Yrs.	
6. Autoneg (Processor) Develops the photosensitive plates exposed by (5) for printing (5 and 6 are combined and are done by the same person)	--do--	--do--	6 months	2 Yrs.	
7. Offset Rotary Prints the news-paper in black and white and colour	Offset machineman/Rotaryman	Rotaryman	6 months	2 Yrs.	
8. Electronic Teleprinters Transmits and receives messages/news stories	Teleprinter Operator	Teleprinter Operator	6 months	2 Yrs.	
9. Computers	a. Computer Operator	--	6 months	2 Yrs.	
	b. Computer Programmer	--	6 months	2 Yrs.	
10. Central Computer Unit	a. Electronic Engineer & Computer Programmer	None	6 months	9 months to 1 year	
	b. System man, Controller				

Certain new jobs have emanated from automation and are done manually, not directly related to working the machines.

Pasteup man (Pastes the bromides, photograph, ads, headings as per lay out)	The identical job was done by the compositors, make-up-man but the new job requires higher skill.	For a skilled compositor 6 months of training is required. 2 Yrs. for a new hand.
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Process Assistant Retouches the nega- tives prepared by Camera/Scanner and removes the blemishes left by the Camera	Indential job was done by Colour Retoucher
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Artist

Together with
Paster the
artist is
required to give
finishing touches
to the final
page as well as
designing full
pages also.
This is a fully
and qualified artist
job. The volume and
dimension has
increased.

Artist

Similar work
as mentioned
in Working
Journalists
grouping.

Training

3-5 years
diploma
course or
equivalent
training
required.

As expected, grievance mounted, a mad scramble ensued, the union was accused of caring for the 'skilled' labour only, union following dwindled and it became evident that the Federation's line of thinking fell short of reality at the plant level.

The Wage Board had to appoint a one man committee to submit report on job description, evaluation and upgradation.

Dilsukh Ram, Independent Member of the both the Wage Boards for working journalists and non journalist newspaper employees, was asked to undertake the job study. The terms of reference also set by the Boards for placement of jobs ~~also~~ clearly show the shadow of new technology over the institutionalised process of Wage settlement. These included

- (a) all jobs which have been newly created as a result of application/introduction of new technology/modernisation since the publication of Palekar Tribunal Award;
- (b) jobs of which upgradation on account of higher skill, occupational hazards, etc., have been demanded by the Employees and/or their submissions to the Wage Boards.

The questions put to the INS by Mr. Dilsukh Ram also show the same connection, questions like nature of technological change, whether new categories and groups of employees have come into existence consequent on modernisation and if so what have been the scales of pay and other allowances allowed to them, nature of training and retraining, etc.³⁷ The AINEF, in fact, caught the thread, but as we have been continuously trying to show the half nature of this comprehension, it did so only partially. In a very interesting demand regarding groupings, the Federation argued that

..... a super group, a group higher than the Group-I of the Palekar Award should be created to accommodate the following categories which have sprung into existence on account of the introduction of new technology in printing....³⁸

Who would be forming the new group ? The AINEF went on to list them with which the Wage Board partly complied on the basis of positive opinion of Dilsukh Ram -

1. P.T.S. Operator
2. P.T.S. Engineer (machanic)
3. Offset Printing Foreman
4. Printer (composing Supervisor)
5. Supervisor
6. Camera Operator (Process and Offset)

7. Colour Separation Scanner
8. Senior Printer
9. P.T.S. Controller
10. Display Advertisement Operators
11. Key Board Operator
12. VDT Operator
13. Electronic Key Board Operator
14. Terminal Operator
15. Computer Operator
16. Scanner. ³⁹

It may be seen that most of the above designations (i.e. barring 3, 4 and 5) for which the super group was claimed belong to the pre-press section work. While the Federation admirably pointed out the shift in work process from hot metal to cold one and rightly argued that a "differential has to be made on the basis of the skill involved in both the jobs"⁴⁰ (underline Federation's), it failed to note that such a formula for wage restructuring might create problems for the union at plant and company level wage agreement. Since, the benefits would mostly be accruing to the skilled workers of pre printing stage, this would surely create tension among the workers particularly belonging to printing stage and other employees too. In short, the Federation's outlook was once again myopic. Having failed in placing the issue of modernisation at the heart of wage revision, it now erred doubly. It placed the question of skill in so isolated a way, that the workers now faced a

potential fracture. As proved by later events, the management was only too pleased to pamper to the issue of skill; the while point was mystified and the entire question of modernisation of work conditions, of worker's life, of the social security measures etc. succeeded in sinking beneath the mystification of skill of a certain stratum of workers.

It will be worthwhile to quote in certain parts Mr. Dilsukh Ram who added certain comments in his own hand at the end of the 327 page Report :

With the advent of computerised phototypesetting the working environment has undergone a change. It is stated with great satisfaction that the phototype setting operator sits in air conditioned comfort with no fumes and dust and operates with effortless ease. The picture is not so rosy as it is made out to be. The technological advances have had an impact on the working conditions. They have given rise to physiological, psychological and sociological problems and they have to be studied in their entirety and remedial measures taken..... There is inter-relationship between work, performance and stress.....
41

As stated earlier automation has affected the factory side and gradually but surely 'light is putting an end to lead'. A whole new era of chemicals has come into existence with its effects on those who handle them. This should be an area for study as they affect the health of workers..⁴²

From the material furnished it is seen that work load has increased and productivity has also increased. This is demonstrated by the number of copies printed and increase in circulation figures.....⁴³

Needless to say while the suggestions of Dilsukh Ram like those working ^{on} VDTs should not work for more than 4 hours a day; that they should not work for more than one hour at a stretch. There have to be rest pauses. There should be a rest pause of 15 minutes; that the eyes of those engaged in VDT operation should be first tested before they enter upon their work; there should be periodic eye tests to ensure that the operators do not suffer from any disability; the special problems of the women workers should be kept in view before they operate VDTs were important; for they would improve the work condition and more importantly they admitted of the necessary link between wage revision and improvement of work condition, they failed in meeting the challenge of unilateral introduction of new technology adequately. Thus these remained only half way suggestions, for the power

situation within the plant was not going to be altered by these. We have shown earlier also that this confrontation by the organised workers to new technology was bound to be half way, for having argued at length and at times brilliantly on the effects of new technology on work process,⁴⁴ the Federation failed in integrating the exposition into its basic strategy for wage revision. Thus, the Federation could not advance beyond conceiving of 'allowances' and the power structure remained undisturbed as the basic labour process was maintained without much change.

6. Discourse Constraints :

We can understand the half way nature of the response from a study of the discourse constraints too. Whether true in other cases or not, in legal discourse, one of the binding factors would be the precedents, the earlier structure, the division and the definition of what constitutes respectively the substantive and the peripheral and the circumstantial also. In legal discourse furthermore the assumption regarding juridical neutrality is inherent and the challenge mounted against this perceived neutrality is of necessity subversive. All these limited the Federation's challenge to new technology, for briefly we can note :

- (a) The Federation had to base its arguments on Supreme Court judgements. This meant that the shibboleth of 'welfare state', 'social justice', 'fair wage' etc. had to be the ground on which the Federation could construct its arguments.

- (b) The Federation had to make the Fair Wages Committee Report its main plank. Thus, the phenomenon of modernisation could only be used as a side element of strategy and not the main one. Even when, the Federation got chance of rejoinder to employers' arguments and submissions, it stubbornly clung to Fair Wages Committee Report. It quoted para 15 of the said Report, which had said :

While the lower limit of the fair wage must obviously be the minimum wage, the upper limit is equally set by what may broadly be called the capacity of industry to pay. This will depend not only on the present economic position of the industry, but on its future prospects. Between these two limits the actual wages will depend on a consideration of the following factors and in the light of the comments given below :

- (i) the productivity of labour;
- (ii) the prevailing rates of wages in the same or similar occupations in the same or neighbouring localities;
- (iii) the level of national income and its distribution;

and

- (iv) the place of the industry in the economy of the country. It is obvious that in the conception of Fair Wages Committee, technology, power relations and trade union struggles enter in a very round about way. On the basis of such a conception, the Federation could go only half way in devising a strategy to countenance modernisation in wage revision struggle and particularly in the wage settlement process.⁴⁵
- (c) The domination of 'allowance' concept also ruled over conceptualising the issues of social security and issues of occupational health and safety.
- (d) Finally, the Federation could only negotiate and manoeuvre within the given arena of wage settlement. The institutional process had its own dynamics. As we showed earlier, in the prevailing structure of industrial relations, the Federation could not hope to do much. It could not ignore the process, it had to mobilise professional knowledge. It could at best hope that by using the extant form of legal discourse on wage settlement and mobilising knowledge, it would be able to not merely effect revision to an appreciable extent, but in course of that revision, a change in

power relations also. It could not help, if in the process, union power at the below was weakened or a unilateral introduction of new technology by the bosses got legitimacy through wage board agreements at plant or company level.

In short, the discourse constraints show that the Federation acted as only the child of its time. It would have been perhaps utopian to think of more and expect that the dominating triad of technology, bosses and the structure of industrial relations would be vanquished by a spirited and professional attack by the workers. Class power could not be expected to be so easily vanquished. In a way the Federation's warning was fundamental - "investor's approach cannot be accepted in the approach to settle the wage problems".⁴⁶

7. New Technology, Labour Process and Wage Settlement :

The more one ponders over the discourse constraints which set the absolute limits of AINEF's arguments and submissions, one will be almost willing to conclude that given the fundamentals, the trade union movement in newspaper industry made the best out of the wage revision case under the shadow of automation.

The advent of new technology and the progress of the industry from Palekar to post Palekar period showed what Marx had said long ago that the unity of the labour process

and the process of valorisation constitutes the capitalist process of production. The Bachawat Wage Board proceedings show, that labour process is never beyond challenge from labour and the challenge is on two fronts : first, it challenges continuous effort on the part of capital to render control over the labour process more and more efficient; second it challenges thus the process of valorisation and consequently the process of capital accumulation. This challenge from labour is itself a constituent part of the capitalist labour process. Bachawat proceedings have further pointed to one error in the otherwise very remarkable and fundamental analysis by Braverman - an error pointed by Sweezy years ago.⁴⁷ Braverman had not included labour struggle in his analysis of labour process under monopoly capital. Labour studies today have to view labour struggle in the background of the interaction of the two processes. The Wage Board proceedings gain significance from that perspective.

The problematic now takes a complicated turn. How much labour can be an active agency in the labour process, implying how much labour can alter the objectivity of the process, particularly in view of managerial control techniques and theories, is itself a debatable point. We know that a large part of Braverman's exposition depends on his 'deskilling' thesis. The Wage Board proceedings witnessed the ceremonial announcement of the 'deskilling' of an entire generation of workers, the demise of monopolisable skills (linooperation, block making, proof reading etc.) among certain strats of

the collective worker. Along with the deskilling, the control of work and worker by the management assumes new hierarchical work relations. The study of Wage Board submissions assumes complexity and significance, for it reflects the said 'deskilling' as well as the creation of new hierarchy on the basis of new technology jobs - and who knows, whether the new hierarchy consisting of new technology jobs created out of wage settlement will act as a newer control technique, or a newer fountain of challenge to the work-regime ?

The industry had definitely prospered during the post Palekar phase, it went in for modernisation, took huge sums as loans and yet did not sink. If this was a clear reflection of the valorisation process, this process itself entailed the imperative of an adjustment in the labour process, which means capital had to involve as well as control labour in the modernisation agenda. This in turn signified labour as an active agency which did not accept the compliance unquestioningly. It protested, though the protest too was later on absorbed by the management. The Wage Board was the arena where the complexity of the situation was evident, or more appropriately, the complex forces with their interrelationships, built up the arena.

The INS submitted facts about state of the industry to the Wage Board. Class IB newspaper had shown a rise in gross profit from 1979 to 1985 by 30.35%, class IA, 182.14%,

class I 184.09%, class II 241.57%, class III 267.85%, class IV 270%, class V 6.66%, class VI 125%, and class VII 500%. Thus, progress had been registered in every class of newspapers. The consolidated position would be more revealing (Table V).

In short, evidences are abundant and they show that Bachawat Wage Board was instituted at a time of newspaper growth and growth-financed modernisation and the wage claims of the workers were raised against such a background. The wages certainly rose after the Award, though not to the extent of gross revenue rise or gross profit rise. The Federation

Table V

Consolidated Position in the Post
Palekar Period
(Rupees in lakhs)

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>Percentage Rise</u>
1. Gross Block	5125	14909	190.91%
2. Net Worth	2354	5068	115.29%
3. Borrowings	3494	11391	226.01%
4. Total Finance	5850	16457	181.31%
5. Gross Revenue	16884	47580	181.80%
6. Newsprint Cost	7949	25368	219.13%
7. Revenue Net of Newsprint Cost	8933	22209	148.61%
8. Interest	472	1708	261.86%
9. Depreciation	244	1433	487.29%
10. Gross Profit	1401	3319	136.90%

Source : INS Submissions, Vol 2, Annexure 6

Note : Gross profit arrived at before depreciation and tax, but after payment of interest.

marshalled an array of statistical accounts to prove that the industry had grown, had the 'capacity to pay' and argued that 'investor's approach was impermissible'. But the impression is strengthened, the more one goes through the voluminous literature of Wage Board, that the Federation was only half-aware that the valorisation process was going to be accompanied by a suitable labour process also, implying suitable changes in work-process. We have shown, the Federation resisted certain changes, advocated certain changes itself to counter new work conditions. But, it could not help. Nor could it have done much also, even if it were fully aware, for after all, the structure of industrial relations built upon the interacting twin processes of valorisation and labour is a given reality - a sort of boundary within which labour acts.

It is too early to say how the shift, mentioned above, will influence the behaviour of the worker and his union. This is a time of transition, Palekar, and more than that, the Bachawat proceedings reflected that. But if we have emphasized change, we must be cautious, we must not overemphasize it. In referring to the discourse constraints, we had shown how the Federation had no option but to continue thinking and arguing from within the same framework, even while trying to break out of it. This is clear, knowledge alone could not rescue the modern worker in newspaper printing, for power structure depended on many other factors else knowledge. Where the whole conditions of production of surplus value depended on maintaining the power structure inside the factory, the challenge emanating mainly in form

of wage revision, was bound to be limited. As we argued, the new issue demanded newer forms of articulation. A wage board oriented organisation was hardly suitable for that. This was, it may be contended, a very fundamental question, for the old structure of industrial relations, old form of trade union organization, old ways of conceptualisation and articulation would by nature make possible only a half genesis of new response to new technology. The element of continuity thus should cause hardly any surprise.

We have seen, there was some structural change in the work process, which resulted in changes in occupational order, which in turn resulted in upward mobility to a limited extent. But this upward mobility dissatisfied a larger section than what it was able to satisfy. We further saw that the state could once again become a coordinating device for generating profit. Finally, we saw the class conflict once again securely locked in a new framework that would not question the basic rules of the bargaining game. But could we say, an 'overarching consensus' has again been achieved? Contrary to what some think,⁴⁸ elements of an ideological response born of new technology will become more and more active in the mortal conflicts of power around division of labour. In other words, the lengthening shadow of new technology over the institutionalised process of wage settlement⁴⁹ shows that the dominant area of enquiry still remains power and division of labour.⁵⁰

Notes and References

1. Labour Minister's Statement in the Parliament, referred to in the AINEF circular 5/85. (30.4.85).
2. Modernization in Newspaper Industries - study done by National Confederation of Newspapers and News Agency Employees' Organizations (New Delhi, 1983).
3. Modernizing Onslaught on Newspaper Employees - A Working Paper on Modernization, published by the Statesman Employees' Union (Calcutta, 1982).
4. For example, circular no.5/81 (17.5.81) spoke of declaration of Fifth International Consultative Conference of Trade Unions in Graphic Industry; circulars 1/8 (16.2.83), 2/8 (2.3.83) and 3/8 (14.3.83) circular no.22/85 (3.10.85) even gave lengthy extracts from a book, "Electronic Illusions"; circular no.21/86 (86.6.86) reprinted the communique of the Sophia Conference of trade unions in graphic industry; other circulars, notably 26/86, 28/86, 29/86 also continued the Report; another circular, 31/86 (31.7.86) reprinted the Global Charter for work-Environment; circular 25/87 (9.11.87) circulated the Declaration of Moscow Symposium of New Technology, apart from these, excerpts from some journals were also circulated from time to time.
5. In The Statesman, Calcutta, this was most apparent where implementation of Bachawat, transition to new technology and new placements were almost simultaneous.

6. Clause V of Memorandum of Settlement in Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd. signed between the Management and ABP, Hindusthan Standard & Desh Employees & Workers' Union, Ananda Bazar Group Employees' Union, Ananda Bazar Group of Publications Journalists' Union and IJA (Indian Journalists' Association) Ananda Bazar Group Unit coordinated by Ananda Bazar Sangbadik Asangbadik Jukta Committee - signed on 26.10.89.

In the section, Short Recital of the Case, (p.4) there was a revealing para. It ran like this :

In course of the discussion, the management pointed out that things have been rendered further difficult on account of the present low productivity of the workmen, heavy absenteeism and late attendance, non implementation of devices and system meant to reduce wastage and improve business efficiency.

7. Between 1985-88, the circulars of the Federation would often desparately ask for contribution from the unions towards Wage Board cause announce extra levies for that purpose. Indeed, one out 4 circulars would be asking for additional contribution.
8. On the role of state in industrial relations in India, see E.A. Ramaswamy : Power and Justice - The State in Industrial Relations , Chap.2 (Delhi, O.U.P., 1984). It is significant that the various Reports of the Working Groups on Labour Administration set by National Commission on Labour failed to link the three crucial

elements; labour unrest due to modernization, state and the employers. Ramaswamy is also silent on that. In fact in trying to concentrate on state's role, he has forgotten the milieu - the interpenetrating relationships between the three components of the triad.

9. See the interesting book, Richard Rowan (ed.) : Collective Bargaining Survival in the 1970's (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1973).
10. Submissions filed by All India Newspaper Employees Federation Before the Wage Board for Non Journalist Newspapers and News Agency Employees (hereafter referred to as 'Submissions'), Vol.2, (New Delhi, (n.d.) pp.390-406.
11. ibid, pp.379-383.
12. The AINEF President, S.Y. Kolhatkar, is a veteran leader of CPI(M), particularly of Maharashtra and K.L. Kapur, the General Secretary is an important trade union functionary of CPI.
13. On the connection between accomodation and accumulation, see for example, William Segal and Peter Philips : "Production Process, Work Organization, and Labor Relations in the Post-war California Food Processing Industry" in Review of Radical Political Economics, Vol.20, Nos.2 & 3, pp.208-13.
14. Submissions, Vol.1, p.42; vol.3, pp.631-916; Rejoinder vol.2, pp.408-556.

15. Vol.3, pp.834-862.
16. Submissions, Vol.3, p.872.
17. Ibid, p.873.
18. Clause IX, 1948.
19. 'Why Wage Revision' ? in Vol.I, pp.43-61.
20. ibid, p.44, p.47
21. ibid, p.50.
22. ibid, p.52.
23. ibid, p.56.
24. Section 2(C) of Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, Chap.3 of Vol. I, submissions.
25. Labour Law Journal (LLJ) - 1 - 1966, p.1.
26. LLJ-11-1971, pp.594-595, quoted in Vol.I, pp.127-28.
27. Vol.I, p.252.
28. Apart from the submissions, this was reflected elsewhere also. See, for example, the lengthy Letter of AINEF to all units, dated 8.11.89.
29. Vol.I, p.263.
30. ibid, p.308.
31. Submissions, Vol.II, pp.338-39.
32. ibid, p.540.

33. ibid, pp.529-30.
34. ibid, p.901.
35. ibid, p.906.
36. Written submissions of AINEF on Tentative Proposals Made on Direction of. Hon'ble Wage Boards During Their Hearing From January 10 to 19, 1989 (23.1.89), pp.73-74.
37. Dilsukh Ram Committee Report on Job Description, Evaluation, Upgradation etc., submitted to the Bachawat Wage Boards (1.8.88), pp.5-19.
38. Ibid, p.93.
39. Submissions, Vol.2, p.615; see also p.97 of Dilsukh Ram Committee Report.
40. See in this connection Worker's Attitude to Technological Change by Alan Touraine (Paris, OECD, 1965) and the critique of 'new syndicalism' by Nichols and Beynon in Living with Capitalism : Class Relations and the Modern Factory (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).
41. Dilsukh Ram Committee Report, pp.329-30.
42. ibid, p.332.
43. ibid, p.336.
44. See in this connection, an 89 page note submitted before the Wage Boards For Journalists and Non Journalists entitled Advantages and Disadvantages of Modern Technology by the AINEF on 28.12.87. It can be reasonably claimed to be one of the clearest expositions

of new technology by a trade union body. A discerning observer can read in this perspective Vol.3 of submissions, which deals mainly with allowances. An example of the half way confrontation can be found from chap.XIII dealing with Night Shift Allowance. The demand on night shift allowance is built, once again, on the arguments concerning the health hazard of night shift and other related problems. But instead of arguing then for rationalisation of workhour, roster etc. it goes on to claim that night shift allowance should be granted handsomely. See also Vol.2 of Rejoinder and Supplementary Memorandum of AINEF, Chapter VII, titled "Modern Technology And Its Impact of Working Conditions", pp.403-550.

45. Like the compulsive heritage of Fair Wage Committee Report, on another issue where the AINEF had no other option than to construct its argument on given ground was the question of capacity to pay. The Federation ripped apart the financial statements of 60 major newspapers submitted by the INS to the Wage Board and showed that the industry had the capacity to pay. On the question of deducting depreciation, tax and development reserves, it argued admirably and showed "in deciding the capacity to pay for incremental wage burdens, gross profits as determined by the Supreme Court in the cases of Ahmedabad Mill Owners' case, Indian Link Chain and Unichem Laboratories alone will have to be taken into consideration before deducting

depreciation, transfer to statutory reserves, taxation and any investment allowance". It had to further argue against the observation of Cement Wage Board. Here too the discourse constraint is evident. For the point is not that gross profit before the above mentioned deduction has to be the basis, but more the gross profit, more the loans showing the capacity to pay back, and more the development reserve, depreciation reserve as research and development expenditure, more the money should go to the wages fund ! see the arguments of Dederation in Surrejoinder and Replies to Questions Posed and Clarifications - Replies Sought by the Wage Boards, Vol.1, pp.13-21.

46. ibid, p.217.

47. Paul Sweezy's Introduction to Harry Braverman's Labour and Monopoly Capital; (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974) see in this connection, Marx : Capital, Vol.1, Chap.7 (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976).

48. The deideologization of union is an argument that naturally flows from a functionalist perspective which views union as only an interest group. The name of such a preacher, first coming to mind would obviously be Lipset; Lipset, Trow and Coleman : Union Democracy : The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union (Glencoe, Free Press, 1956).

49. Apart from an analysis of the position of the industry in the Bachawat period as compared to Palekar period. Which we have looked into a little, it will be interesting to note that the recommendations of the

Palekar Tribunals didnot contain any single major reference to technology. The point is not that new technology had not become so much a reality in 1979-80, but that the Tribunals never felt that technology had anything to do with the institutionalised process of wage settlement, or that work environment must be taken into account in determining remuneration of work. Thus, the Palekar Report Spoke of minimum, need based, fair, living and other norms of wage, spoke of adjudication of Industrial Tribunals, Wage Boards, Commissions and even judicial intervention by the High Courts and the Supreme Court. But not a single word on technology and conditions of work could be found there. See Recommendations of The Tribunals for Working Journalists and Non Journalist Newspaper Employees, 12 August, 1980 (New Delhi) pp.49-67. Once again, in Chap.X where the Recommendations discuss Revision of Pay Scales and Wages, technology and work conditions are conspicuously absente. Then again, the Palekar Report does not stretch the concept of 'wage' in view of work conditions in the industry and sticks to the traditional view (chap.II, sec.IV, chaps.VII and X). This we have seen was soon going to be challenged in Bachawat deliberations. Finally, a look into the groupings of non journalist newspaper employees as recommended by Palekar (Chap.II, Sec.III, pp.4-6) will also show the marked difference caused by new technology later reflected in Bachawat proceedings.

50. Dietrich Rueschemeyer : Power and the Division of Labour , Chap.5 (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1986).

sm.

117. The Decline of India's Cotton Handicrafts : 1800-1905 a Quantitative Macro-Study.
AMALENDU GUHA
118. Reification of Intellect.
ARUN PATNAIK
119. Public Sector Industry and the Political Economy of Indian Development.
AMIYA KUMAR BAGCHI
120. Is there any Transfer Burden of Debt ?
PRABIRJIT SARKAR
121. New Technology in Indian Newspaper Industry—A Critical Appraisal.
RANABIR SAMADDAR
122. The Chandernagore-Jugdha Letters : A Look at the Feic's East Bengal Trade from 1750 to 1753.
RILA MUKHERJEE
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